

STATE OF ALASKA

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BOARD OF FISHERIES

BOARD OF FISHERIES FINDINGS REGARDING COMMERCIAL
COHO SALMON ALLOCATION IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA

During its Spring 1989 meeting in Juneau, the Board of Fisheries made findings regarding coho salmon allocations in Southeast Alaska. The board felt compelled to make these findings for the following reasons:

- 1) After relatively good adult coho returns in 1985-87, 1988 returns declined significantly and escapements fell short in many Southeast Alaska systems.
- 2) The economic future of the Southeast Alaska troll fishery appeared to be in serious jeopardy due to increasingly shorter chinook troll seasons (as a result of conservation and Pacific Salmon Treaty concerns), and possible faltering Southeast Alaska coho stocks.
- 3) Alaska Department of Fish and Game fisheries managers were concerned about their ability to adequately manage coho stocks being harvested in increasing numbers in outside-off-shore mixed-stock fisheries. Their apprehension was manifested in a coho management measures which should change harvest allocation patterns if coho stocks continued to decline. Potential effects of this plan were unacceptable to user groups.
- 4) Apprehension was voiced by various user groups, particularly commercial trollers, looking for direction and stability in their fisheries.
- 5) Multi-user group committees were unable to resolve the Southeast coho conservation and allocation issue.

The board therefore established historical commercial harvest guideline allocations for coho salmon to the seine, drift gill net, set gill net, and troll fisheries as follows:

Purse Seine-----	19%
Drift Gill Net-----	13%
Set Gill Net-----	7%
Troll-----	61%

The board intended these percentages to be guidelines only, and understood that actual percentages will vary from season to season given natural fluctuations in salmon abundance and distribution. The board expects that these allocation guidelines be met as closely as possible over the long term. Fluctuation due to direct management action was unacceptable. The board further explained that these guidelines should not cause major disruption to any of the traditional commercial fisheries upon which this historical allocation is founded. In-season adjustments by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game managers to attempt to achieve these long term allocations are not appropriate. The board specifically stated that subsistence, affected by the allocations between commercial gear types.

The board of Fisheries justified its actions in the following ways:

- 1) A commercial coho management plan for southeast Alaska is necessary to conserve stocks under optimum sustained yield principles for all commercial user groups.
- 2) A plan is necessary to lend stability to current fisheries. This stability is provided by guideline allocations set by the board and based on historical coho harvest data (by commercial group) collected by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The boards arrived at the above percentages by looking at the last 20 years of harvest data and taking the approximate averages.
- 3) Lastly, the board felt it was not only justified, but prudent to formulate management guidelines which could assist future boards in coho allocation issues and prevent a vast duplication of human time and effort in reviewing the fishery for every future board decision. Thus, the allocation guidelines mark an assessment, or summary, of past activities and provide a baseline for the fishery from which future boards can proceed.

Date

Gary Slaven, Chairman
Alaska Board of Fisheries