

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES
FINDINGS

KODIAK SAC-ROE HERRING MANAGEMENT PLAN

(Finding #96-03-FB)

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board), at a regularly scheduled meeting which began November 29, 1995, took action on the Kodiak Management Area (KMA) herring sac-roe fisheries and adopted a management strategy which will be found at 5 AAC 27.535(e).

Prior to taking action, the Board considered information contained in oral and written reports by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). The board also accepted public testimony from 78 individuals and from interested advisory committees. In addition, the board accepted testimony from a sub-committee of the Kodiak Fish and Game Advisory committee that was developed to address the topic of management of the KMA herring sac-roe fishery.

This document does not attempt to explain the board's reasoning or to summarize the information presented to and considered by the board; that information can be found in the administrative record. The purpose of this document is to express the general underlying intent behind the board's action and provide general guidelines to facilitate further consideration of this issue if the board's action does not achieve its intended purposes.

FINDINGS:

1. The overriding underlying intent behind the board's adoption of the KMA herring sac-roe management strategy was to address conservation concerns. These concerns were caused, in part, by recent growth in the KMA herring seine fleet, increased processing capacity, commercial harvest of herring with low roe percentages, increased harvests, frequent and extreme exceeding of guideline harvest levels (GHLs) in individual management units, and indications that localized stock depletion has occurred. The board was also concerned that ADF&G did not have sufficient management tools to satisfactorily monitor catches and manage the fishery under existing regulations and management strategies.
2. The secondary intent in adopting the KMA management strategy was to preserve the historical harvest balance between seine and gillnet fishers without setting specific allocations by gear type. The board finds the historic gillnet harvest to range, in round numbers, between 20 and 30 percent.

Since 1982, KMA has been managed under a liberal harvest strategy. The season opened on April 15 and closed on June 30. Fishing periods were the same for both seine and gillnet gear groups, and ran for 24 hours every other day, starting on odd numbered days at 12:00 noon. In 1995, in order to reduce the risk of exceeding GHL's, ADF&G was forced to depart from this harvest strategy. During 1995, fishing periods were reduced to ten hours during daylight hours; although ADF&G's concerns centered primarily on the harvesting power of the seine fleet, this reduction in fishing time applied to both seine and gillnet fisheries.

3. It is the intent of the board that the KMA management strategy will allow ADF&G to manage individual harvest units for harvest at or near their respective GHL's.
4. It is the intent of the board that the KMA management strategy will allow ADF&G to prevent overexploitation of herring stocks, including stocks which migrate through several management units. However, it is recognized that if more than one management unit is closed when a GHL is reached, it will be a significant departure from historical management actions and will adversely affect the historical harvest balance between gear types.
5. It is the intent of the board that, under the KMA management strategy, catch percentages by seine and gillnet fishers will remain within historical normal ranges.
6. If the intent of the board, as described above, is not achieved through the KMA herring sacroe harvest strategy, the board expects ADF&G or interested parties to bring this issue back before the Board through an agenda change request.
7. Future board consideration of whether the KMA management strategy has had an unforeseen effect should be made in light of the board's intent in adopting the plan.
8. The board may consider significant deviations from the historical average harvest percentages between the seine and drift fleets to be compelling new information. However, there has been significant variation in harvest percentages in the past, and consideration of any agenda change request based on changes in the balance between the drift and seine gear types will require consideration of these historical ranges. Table three from ADF&G's presentation to the board in Kodiak is attached, and is incorporated by reference to assist in any future consideration of agenda change requests dealing with this management plan.

Adopted: January 29, 1996
Anchorage, Alaska

Vote: 7-0


Larry J. Engel, Chairman
Alaska Board of Fisheries