



From ViedeF97@aol.com
Sent Monday, February 23, 2009 12:53 pm
To salmonbycatcheis@noaa.gov
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Subject Salmon Bycatch EIS

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From: Ann Strongheart, Nunam Iqua-YK Delta area, and Victoria Briggs, Ugashik - Bristol Bay area

We are commenting on the proposed cap limit for the Chinook By-catch and specifically to the Alternative 4 - the "preferred one".
The use of a cap set based on the history of what has already hurt us does not show good judgement. To use a method that has no history or is expected to be successful is to doom the Western Chinook Salmon fishery.
A science based method of using either a percent of the bio mass or based off a projected return, as are other AK salmon fisheries, would use a much better method.
The huge increases in the by-catch seen since 2002 and the effects we are seeing in our villages should be reason enough to changed what is happening.
When the environmental study shows the catch is higher outside of the set aside areas than in them tells us the old ways MUST be changed.
Do not bow to the trawler companies and those that SHOULD be watching our backs, but look at the impact of the method on the returns and villages.

We are two women in two different villages in Western Alaska. We have seen the devastating effects of the lack of Chinook runs in the last few years.
In Bristol Bay the Chinook not only serve as some of the earliest subsistence food we gather but also as a growing money maker for our households.
With the lack of returns this last 3 years especially we have been stretched to the limits on having enough food to support our families in the early summer before our Sockeye runs start.
On top of this not having this run of fish, that has been steady for many previous years, to allow us an early market has hit our family incomes dramatically.
The YK Delta has seen an even more families hurt by the lack of this fishery as it is the main money maker for approximately 300 boats.
The lack of returns in the YK Delta alone created an effect where over 80% of the fishermen lost money this past year. This happened on top of a restricted subsistence access so that we now have families that can't feed theme selves.
If you are not already aware of the issue, food drives and NATIONAL attention to the effects of these by-catch limits on the families of Western Alaska please familiarize yourselves. If this continues, as it might well given the ocean return rates expected , you will see even more negative news coverage in the months to come.
We have faith in your ability to manage this fisheries correctly and to continue to assist us in maintaining our way of life. Please, Please use GOOD, SOUND science to set these caps.
Sincerely,
Ann Strongheart
Victoria Briggs

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