

YUKON FISHERIES NEWS

A Publication of the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association



SUMMER 2013

Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association

A United Voice for Yukon River Fishers

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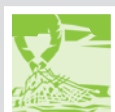
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YRDFA reserves the right to include or omit any submissions to the **Yukon Fisheries News**. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and may not necessarily reflect the views of YRDFA.

YRDFA on the Road: Managing Our Nation's Fisheries Conference in Washington, DC

By Becca Robbins Gisclair, YRDFA Policy Director

In early May, fishermen, agency staff, Council members, fishing groups and conservation groups all gathered in Washington, D.C. for the 3rd "Managing Our Nation's Fisheries." The North Pacific Fishery Management Panel offered travel funding for all members of their Council, Advisory Panel and Scientific and Statistical Committee to attend the meeting, so as a member of the Advisory Panel, I was able to attend. Fortunately I got my registration in early: capacity was limited to 600 and there was a long waiting list of people who couldn't get in!

The conference, like everything else in fisheries policy has an acronym – "MONF" (pronounced moan-if). This was the 3rd in a series of MONF conferences – the last one was held in 2005 at the outset of the last reauthorization of the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation Act (MSA). The MSA governs management of federal fisheries in federal waters from 3 to 200 nautical miles offshore. The MSA is up for reauthorization again this year, and one hearing on the statute has already been held. Reauthorization provides an opportunity for Congress to make changes to the MSA, and when reauthorization time comes around every interest group has their hit list of recommendations.

The conference was designed to focus discussion on key areas which may be topics for change in the MSA. The overall theme was "Advancing Sustainability." The conference opened with several keynote speakers, including several of Alaska's own: Senator Mark Begich and Deadliest Catch captain Keith Colburn. One of the most riveting keynotes came from Barton Seaver, a chef and host of "In Search of Food." Barton focused on sustainability from both an ecological and a community perspective. His statement that "sustainability means we must restore and protect communities that bring us

our dinner," struck me as particularly relevant to the Yukon, as well as Alaska overall, where many of our small fishing communities are facing overwhelming challenges.

After the keynotes the conference was divided into three separate tracks, with multiple panels on each topic. Participants could choose between the three topics: 1) Improving Fishery Management Essentials, 2) Advancing Ecosystem-Based Decision Making, and 3) Providing for Fishing Community Stability. There were many fascinating speakers, and it was challenging to choose one room to sit in. I primarily attended the sessions on providing for fishing community stability, while popping in on some of the other sessions.

Several themes consistently emerged throughout multiple sessions. The impacts of climate change on fishery management, and the need to adapt as we move forward, came up time and again. Similarly, the critical nature of having good data on fishery resources, particularly stock assessments, and the need to engage in cooperative research with fishermen was a common theme. Ecosystem management – considering the needs of the entire ecosystem as we set target fishery catch limits – was also a central theme. Of particular relevance to our interests in Western Alaska, there was a great deal of discussion about the need for subsistence (and recreational) considerations to have a higher degree of importance in decision-making, as well as formal inclusion of subsistence within the MSA.

While there was plenty of discussion about what could be improved in the MSA, there was a strong contingent of people who thought that no revisions

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associate members	
Interior Alaska Fish Processors Inc.	Asa/carsarmiut Tribal Council
Boreal Fisheries	Allakaket Traditional Council
Holy Cross Traditional Council	Algaaciq Tribal Government
Koyukuk Tribal Council	Beaver Village Council
Ruby Marine	Birch Creek Tribal Council (Dendu Gwich'in)
City of Nulato	Nulato Tribal Council
Pitka's Point Tribal Council	Ruby Tribal Council
Yupit of Andreafski	Evansville Tribal Council
Ohogamiut Traditional Council	City of Hooper Bay
Kotlik Traditional Council	Louden Tribal Council

board of directors	
District / Seat #	Representative
Coastal, Seat 1	Lester Wilde
Y-1, Seat 1	Aloysius Unok
Y-1, Seat 2	Michael Jimmy
Y-1, Seat 3	Michael James
Y-2, Seat 1	William Alstrom
Y-2, Seat 2	Mike Peters
Y-2, Seat 3	Alexie Walters
Y-3, Seat 1	Leroy Peters
Y-4, Seat 1	Fred Huntington, Sr.
Y-4, Seat 2	Richard Burnham
Y-5, Seat 1	Charlie Wright
Y-5, Seat 2	Stan Zuray
Y-6, Seat 1	Victor Lord
Y-6, Seat 2	Phillip Titus
Koyukuk, Seat 1	William Derendoff
Yukon Flats, Seat 1	Jan Woodruff
Canadian (non-voting)	Pauline Frost-Hanberg

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lifetime members		
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Anchorage William R. Beans Steve Hayes Nina Heyano Jill Klein Larry Lujan Doug B. Molyneaux Jack Shultheis	Manley Hot Springs Linda Johnson Steve O'Brien	Rampart Georgianna Lincoln
Aniak Stephen L. Hill	Marshall Andy Boot Aloysius Coffee Gabe Evan David C. Fitka Jaylene Fitka William Manumik Mike P. Peters	Ruby Florence L. Esmailka Harold Esmailka
Anvik Ronald Kruger, Sr. Robert Walker	Mountain Village Fred M. Beans, II Fred P. Beans Meghan A. Beans Morgan C. Beans John Lamont William Lawrence Sarah Peterson Kate Thompson Matthew Waskey, Sr. Harry Wilde, Sr.	St. Mary's Jerry W. Alexie William F. Alstrom Francis Beans Lillian Johnson Jolene Long
Bethel Timothy C. Andrew Terence Reeve Aloysius Wasuli**	Nenana Philip Argall Doug Bowers Ted Suckling	Tanana Lester Erhart Gerald Nicholia Joseph Zuray Katlyn Zuray Stan Zuray
Cooper Landing Robert Gibson	Nome Frank Carruthers	Tok Bronk Jorgensen Thor Jorgensen
Delta Junction David Davenport		Wasilla Axel Alstrom* Ernest Demoski
Eagle Andrew Bassich Jan Woodruff		Outside Alaska Bill Fliris Richard Kocan Donald Kramer
Emmonak Andrew C. Kelly, Sr.		
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*sponsored by Alakanuk Native Corp. **sponsored by Kotlik Yupik Corp. ***sponsored by Pilot Station Inc.		

<p>Yukon Fisheries News is published by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association 725 Christensen Drive, Suite 3-B, Anchorage, AK 99501 Phone: (907) 272-3141 / Fax: (907) 272-3142 • TOLL-FREE 1-877-99-YUKON (98566) www.yukonsalmon.org</p> <p>Funding for this publication provided by the USFWS through the Restoration & Management Fund</p>

A Message From the Director

By Jill Klein, Executive Director



YRDFA is preparing for the in-season salmon management teleconferences that take place every summer from June through August.

These teleconferences have become a weekly place where fishing communities and fisheries managers meet to discuss the salmon runs. The calls open with a village identification and subsistence report where people from the coast to the border and into the Canadian headwaters have an opportunity to report. At the beginning of the season, people report on river conditions such as water levels and debris loads in the water that impact fishing conditions. We hear about salmon entering the river and we follow the run as it moves up river throughout the season. Fisheries managers listen to the subsistence reports and then give their reports on the test fisheries that give information on run abundance and timing. The 2013 Yukon River Salmon Fisheries Outlook for Chinook salmon is poor to below average. Many people call in at the beginning of the season to see where the first Chinook salmon are caught and to learn about run strength and timing. It used to be that people wanted to know if and when commercial fishing for Chinook salmon might take place, but we know going into this year that there will not be any directed commercial fisheries on Chinook salmon and there will be limited subsistence fishing too.

This year, the focus on the calls may be a little different. We typically want to hear from fishing families about the salmon they are catching, the quality of the fish, the abundance of the fish and their effort required to catch the fish. While this is all important information, in this approaching season, there are already agreed upon closures that will be put in place to protect the first pulse of Chinook salmon and possibly the second pulse of Chinook salmon if the run comes in as predicted (poor to below average). Managers have suggested that we discuss how people are handling the first pulse closures and what they are doing to prepare for harvesting other salmon or animals in the summer and fall seasons. People should expect that harvest reductions will be taking place on Chinook salmon and are necessary to move salmon up to their spawning grounds.

The summer chum, fall chum and coho salmon outlooks are for average to above average run sizes. This means normal subsistence harvests are expected and commercial harvests are potentially available. See Jessica Hildebrand's article about how her family used chum salmon last year instead of Chinook salmon.

We know salmon bycatch is an important issue impacting Yukon River and other Western Alaska salmon fisheries.

We are dedicating time to discuss this issue on the first teleconference, promptly starting at 1:00

on June 4, but the following teleconferences in June and July will need to be focused on in-river management of the fishery. We will want to take

the time to discuss run assessment, pulse closures and fishing schedules. Once the bulk of the Chinook salmon run has moved up the river and towards the Canadian border, we can dedicate some time again to discuss salmon bycatch on the teleconferences.

We look forward to your participation on the in-season management teleconferences. See the

ad in this newsletter with the time and number to call into. ☾

*These teleconferences
have become a weekly
place where fishing
communities and
fisheries managers
meet to discuss the
salmon runs.*



YUKON RIVER FISHING FAMILIES:

Please complete your subsistence harvest calendars and turn them in to Fish and Game at the end of the season to qualify for one of 32 cash prizes!

See your calendar for details.



YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

Need a calendar? Call (907) 459-7274

Tracking the Chinook Salmon Run, Village By Village

Catherine Moncrieff, YRDFA anthropologist describes the in-season harvest survey program during the Chinook salmon fishing season

Since 2002, the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) has been partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to gather subsistence information from fishing households in a project called Yukon River In-Season Subsistence Salmon Interviews. This year the project will take place in Alakanuk, Marshall, Russian Mission, Holy Cross, Kaltag, Huslia, Galena, Nenana, Fort Yukon, and Eagle.

The surveyor, a local person who lives in one of these communities, uses a simple survey form to collect information weekly about each fisherman's subsistence harvest in their village during the king (Chinook) salmon run. They also collect observations made by the fishermen about run strength,

quality, and condition of the salmon from active subsistence fishing households. The interviews take place between Thursday and Sunday during the king salmon season in each of the 10 villages. Some interviewers use a boat to speak with subsistence fishermen at their fish camps, some make phone calls, some talk with fishermen in town, and others use a combination of these methods.

On Monday every week, the surveyor summarizes the observations he or she has collected in a weekly update. This weekly summary is sent to YRDFA where we compile the data from all 10 villages and pass it on to the managers Monday afternoon. The fisheries managers use this information in preparation

for the weekly in-season salmon management teleconferences with the entire river, which takes place every Tuesday at 1:00 pm during the months of June, July and August. The surveyor themselves also participate in the YRDFA teleconferences and they share their reports on the call in addition to anyone who may join in from their home communities.

This year I would like to welcome the following surveyors and invite you to hear their reports on the Tuesday teleconferences. I hope that you welcome them if they visit your fish camp or cutting table to ask about your observations of this year's Chinook salmon run.

Alakanuk – Martin Henry
Marshall – Norma Evan

Russian Mission – Jeremy Wigley
Holy Cross – Rita Paul
Kaltag – Craig Semaken
Huslia – Vina Bilow
Galena – Sandy Scotton
Nenana – Ana Alexii
Fort Yukon – Andrew Firmin
Eagle – Nathan Helmer

To listen to the reports from the in-season harvest survey program, you can participate in the Tuesday Teleconferences at 1:00 pm by calling the toll free number 1-800-315-6338 and entering the participant code 98566# when prompted. ☞

This project is funded by the Office of Subsistence Management Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. Please contact Catherine with any questions about this program at 907-382-8990.

Yukon River Fisheries Inseason Management Teleconferences

EVERY TUESDAY

June through August

1:00 pm Alaska Time | 2:00 pm Yukon Time

1-800-315-6338

Participant Code YUKON# (98566#)

Get Involved

Discuss fishing conditions & management strategies with managers and fishers throughout the Yukon River Drainage


Tracking the run, one week at a time!

Agenda

- Subsistence Reports
- Management Update and Strategy
- Local Input, Questions, and Closing Comments

Subsistence Questions

- Are your catches up or down relative to last year?
- How far along are local fishers in their subsistence harvests? (are they 25% done? 50% done? 100%?)
- What is your assessment of run strength?
- What is the quality of the fish?
- What are the current river conditions? (water level, clarity, amount of debris)
- Each year, please note when the first king salmon is caught in your community



YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION
Facilitated by YRDFA • yukonsalmon.org

Sponsored by the Office of Subsistence Management
and the Yukon River Panel

GREAT PLANS AHEAD IN *Alakanuk*

By Teddy Willoya

During the start of the spring season, I was able to travel to Alakanuk to train our in-season harvest surveyor. I had the opportunity to interview Troy Beans and Mary Ayunerak about their spring and summer plans. Here are the questions and answers:

Alakanuk



• What are your spring preparation plans?

Troy: Stock up on shells for hunting, preparing for hunting water fowl- geese, cranes, swans, ducks, preparing emergency/disaster plans in case the river floods, prepping the boat, putting away snowmachines, and spring cleanup.

Mary: Cleanup yard, breakup prep, put everything up high in case of flood, before breakup go ice fishing and jig fishing.

• What is your favorite spring activity?

Troy: Hunting and subsistence gathering - eggs and fishing - whitefish and sheefish.

Mary: Fishing, geese hunting, and putting away food for summer use.

• What are your summer plans?

Troy: Boating, fishing, spending time around the bonfire with my family, cutting fish-smoking, drying, freezing, seal hunt in the late summer, sometimes harbor seals are sometimes found in the river, summer is my main traveling season for visiting family upriver.

Mary: Being at fish camp, cutting fish and preparing fish, and picking greens.

• What is your favorite summer activity?

Troy: Playing basketball outside, being out with my family, and taking fishing trips for the day.

Mary: Cutting fish, berry picking, seal hunting, moose hunting, punk gathering, riding with my family, and to travel the river.



The Background, Point of View, and Goals From Our New Lifetime Member: Jessica Hildebrand



A view of Last Chance from a nearby hill.

My name is Jessica Hildebrand. My parents are Rodney and Celene Hildebrand; my paternal grandparents are Victor and Edith Nicholas, and my maternal grandparents are the late Leo and Delores Kriska. I grew up at a homestead located 6 miles from Koyukuk and 12 miles from Nulato. On the homestead, better known as “Last Chance,” is our family’s house, my parent’s privately owned business, our fish cutting area, smoke house, and numerous old cabins and caches. My parents also own a house in Nulato that we went back and forth to for school



(L-R) Maudrey Kriska, Karen Kriska, Jessica Hildebrand, Holly Hildebrand, and Celene Hildebrand cutting fish in the early morning.

and I our subsistence lifestyle. In the fall we harvest moose for the winter, but my favorite time has always been fishing season during the summer. Harvesting salmon is such a beautiful experience. I love when our whole family works hard together, bonding, and putting away this important

during the winter, but you would never catch us away from Last Chance during the summer.

This is where my best childhood memories were made and where my parents taught my siblings



(L-R) Jessica Hildebrand and Rodney Hildebrand pulling in the gillnet and checking for fish after a drift.

resource for Alaskan Natives. During fishing season, my dad stays out on the river all night trying to catch a decent amount of Chinook for the women in the family to work on in the morning. Seining is typically the men’s duty but when my brothers were too young to go out with my dad, I would always volunteer myself (admittedly to get out of the hard work of cutting fish in the early mornings) to go with him. Although my mom, adamant on making sure my sisters and I knew how to process salmon, would never let me sleep



(L-R) Josephine Semaken, Celene Hildebrand, and Edith Nicholas standing in front of the chum they worked on in fall 2012.

in when there was fresh salmon to be put away, I will never regret the lack of sleep I endured to spend my nights seining on the Yukon River with my dad.

I remember everything we talked about while drifting for hours, but one thing always stuck in my head. He told me about a time 10 years or so before when he and his friend pulled in 28 Chinook in one drift. This shocked me because we had been seining for many hours already, had drifted about 12 times, and barely caught 8 Chinook. It also saddened me to realize that our precious Chinook numbers are depleting and right before my eyes. This was when I decided that I would go to college and get a degree that would enable me to work in a field where I could help conserve salmon. So when I was 14 years old I moved to Fairbanks to receive a better education at James T. Hutchison High School, I enrolled for college with a declared major before I graduated, and I did my senior project on conserving salmon. I just completed my 3rd year at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) working towards a Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Science, and have started my 2nd year as the data technician with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) located in the Fairbanks Fish & Wildlife Field Office - Subsistence Branch (FFWFO – Subsistence Branch).

I was lucky enough to have Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge Manager, Mike Spindler, on my panel when I presented my senior project and he told me to get in contact with former TCC fish biologist, Lisa Kangas. Lisa is now an environmental specialist for Alyeska Pipeline Service Company and my mentor. After I got in contact with her in November 2011, she brought me to meet Aaron Martin, the fish biologist supervisor of the FFWFO - Subsistence Branch. Aaron told me all about the internships with the USFWS and I knew that this position would be perfect for me. Words cannot explain how happy and excited I was when I got the call letting me know I got the position. I will always be grateful for this amazing learning experience with wonderful people.

As the data technician, I consolidate the numbers of Chinook salmon, Chum salmon, and other species that pass through the fish and wildlife weir and sonar projects as they get reported in to me from the field crews daily. After consolidating the numbers, I redistribute them to different agencies. During my daily routine, the low Chinook numbers compared to other

species always hits close to home for me. However, I've been able to form objectives for myself that I think may make a difference. For example, before I worked for USFWS, I was resentful towards the restrictions and regulations that were set during fishing season. Then I became aware of the reasoning for them and now have a new outlook. I want to voice these reasons to my fellow subsistence community so we can all become aware and take action together to save our Chinook salmon for the generations to come.

The restrictions and regulations are not made to keep Chinook salmon from us; they are put in effect to protect the threatened species that are important to all of us! Instead of being bitter towards the restrictions and regulations, we need to accept them and work towards sustaining Chinook together. I've already made an impact on my own family by persuading them to harvest more Chum than Chinook last year. Chum can be just as rich as Chinook in some areas and can be harvested without having such drastic effects on their numbers. My mom, once angry with the rules as well, now appreciates them and has been relaying the information I've given her to others in our village. She processed Chum the same as Chinook last year, and has been showing others that there is not too much of a difference between the two when stripped, filleted, jarred, or canned. I believe that if we all make the sacrifice of choosing to harvest Chum and let the Chinook pulses pass through to get to their spawning grounds that their numbers will begin to rise as more make it there.

Making the sacrifice now can help save the Chinook salmon from becoming extinct and the subsistence community needs to be aware of this. As a Koyukon Athabascan who lives a subsistence lifestyle, I do understand where the frustration is coming from. But it is time to stop fighting the restrictions and regulations and do our part because we, US Fish & Wildlife Services, and Alaska Department of Fish & Game all want the same thing – for Chinook salmon to last. Knowledge is power and the more people



(L-R) Jessica Hildebrand, Jennifer Volz, Katie Shink, Jordan Fox, and Micah King taking a break on the way to the Gisasa River Weir project site.

who become aware and make the sacrifice, the more we will help make a difference in saving Chinook. So voicing the reasoning for the restrictions and regulations, and persuading others to choose to make the sacrifice or even just cut back a little on what Chinook is taken, is very important to me and what I hope to achieve. 🌙

Family Fish Camp 2013

*Having Fun and
Playing Games*

*Learning
From Elders*

Cutting & Putting Up Fish

*Mentoring in
Higher Education*

<u>VILLAGE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DATES</u>	<u>CONTACT</u>
Galena	Galena Cultural Program and Bishop Rock	Now-Aug. 15	March Runner: (907) 656-1711
Nenana	Nenana Native Council and Fish Camp Site	July 8-Aug. 1	Nenana Native Council: (907) 832-5461
Nulato	Grandma Edna's 4 Mile Camp	Aug.12-16	Nulato Tribal Council: (907) 898-2339
Pilot Station	Saint Vladimir & Yakov Campsites	July 25-29	Father Stan: (907) 549-3827
Tanana	16 Mile Camp	Aug. 8-18	Tanana Tribal Office: (907) 366-7170

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and **YUKON RIVER DRAINAGE FISHERIES ASSOCIATION**

THE TANANA VALLEY WATERSHED ASSOCIATION (TVWA)

Healthy Communities Through a Healthy Watershed

Established in 2006, The Tanana Valley Watershed Association (TVWA) services have included both research and restoration projects. TVWA Board and staff have worked to provide information on the condition of the watershed by compiling existing information and filling knowledge gaps. We also work to promote measures that will maintain and enhance the quality and beauty of the watershed by creating educational programs to: promote greater appreciation, understanding and awareness; promote sustainable ecological practices, and advocate proactively on issues impacting the watershed.

TVWA has a legacy of maintaining and enhancing restoration programs that focus on watershed and ecosystem functions and processes. We look forward to supporting sustainable resources for community-based conservation that empowers individuals to address the economic, social and environmental health of our watershed. We are committed to encouraging and facilitating development of knowledge within interested communities in the Tanana Valley to promote more effective watershed conservation and/or restoration. Our objectives are to increase awareness through education, restoration, collaborative research, and diverse partner involvement.

The Tanana Valley Watershed Association believes public awareness will enable individuals to understand how their actions impact water quality and habitat for fish and wildlife. By understanding our connection with nature, we

will better appreciate how these impacts affect our quality of life. TVWA provides residents with the information, insight and tools to make positive changes in the watershed. We believe increasing public awareness of how our actions impact water quality and habitat for fish and wildlife will lead to understanding our connection with nature. We will better appreciate how these impacts affect our quality of life and will work together to protect vital resources and the natural beauty of our region for current and future generations.

Chena Salmon Project

Public concern over salmon returns has provided an opportunity to educate the public about salmon biology and promote the stewardship of our local salmon resources. This project teaches the public about the salmon lifecycle and habitat needs, while highlighting related community issues such as riparian habitat restoration, bioengineering for erosion, stormwater drainage, water quality and human impact on local salmon habitat.

Citizen Scientist

Our project sampled juvenile fish at 14 sites along the lower Chena River weekly from the 15th of May to the 1st of October. Overall 124 individuals volunteered to assist with data collection.

Outreach

Project promotion at Summer Solstice, Golden Days, Farmers Market & Downtown Markets.



Setting the Traps

Four Gee-type minnow traps were baited and set for 24 hours for each sampling once per week per site. Traps were placed in a variety of habitat types including cut banks, slough mouths, in woody debris, on rip-rap, and along gravel and silty beaches. All captured fish were identified to species.

Training


We held a training event for volunteers before sampling started. To ensure data collected was uniform and accurate data, we sampled with each group for a period of time depending on the group.

Results

We caught 1,511 juvenile fish, of which 849 (56%) were Chinook salmon.

Sampling

The fork length of the first 30 Chinook salmon identified at each site each week was measured using the ruler on a medium Photarium viewing box. Fish were released after identification and measurement. An Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) Fish Resource Permit SF2012- 148.

For more information about the TVWA or the Chena Salmon Project, contact Jewelz Nutter, Executive Director, twatershed@gmail.com 



are necessary, or that some of the provisions related to rebuilding stocks should be rolled back. From this discussion, it seems that a large part of the debate over MSA reauthorization will be over whether to continue the strong science-based management which was applied in the last reauthorization, or whether these critical conservation measures should be rolled back.

Overall, the conference was an excellent opportunity to meet people from other parts of the country with similar concerns, and to share ideas and experiences. There was a strong contingent of Alaskans at the conference – over 60 out of 600 participants by one count. While we certainly have our share of issues in Alaska federal fisheries management (bycatch being a primary concern), hearing about fishery issues on the East Coast and the Gulf States certainly brought some perspective to how much worse it could be, and made many of us Alaskans happy our issues (on a federal level) aren't quite that bad. Of course once we start talking about our state salmon fisheries in Alaska it's a whole different story, but that's a topic for another day. Since many of the science-based management measures are based on the "Alaska model," the experience underscored the need to maintain those standards in this next round of reauthorization.

The conference was intended to be a sort of kick-off to MSA reauthorization, and for the ideas generated to feed into this process. In the past concerted lobbying efforts by interest groups and fishermen have had more influence on MSA reauthorization than the MONF findings, but the conference certainly served to get the conversation started.



Alaska Senator Mark Begich addresses the Managing Our Nation's Fisheries Conference in Washington, DC on May 7, 2013

The House and Senate are expected to hold several hearings on the MSA in the coming year. In preparation, Senator Begich is hosting a series of roundtables within Alaska to talk about MSA priorities. One session was held in Kodiak already, and a roundtable focused on tribal and subsistence issues will be held this summer. As the governing law for federal fisheries, MSA reauthorization has

a direct impact on Western Alaska interests, and we'll be providing more details as they become available.

You can view the full findings from the conference at: http://www.managingfisheries.org/2013%20documents/MONF_Findings.pdf

YRDFA staff and board members would like to express our sympathy to the people of Galena who experienced the recent flooding.

We wish them a speedy rebuilding of their community and hope that they can participate in the important subsistence fisheries they depend on this summer.

We hope that other communities affected by floods like Circle and Eagle are rebuilding and that the Yukon River will be ice free soon with minimal impacts to other Yukon River communities.

Beach Seining 101

By Angel Alstrom, YRDFA Program Assistant from Saint Mary's

The Alaska State Board of fisheries (BOF) is allowing new gear to be used on the Yukon River based on the following proposal as passed by the BOF:

"Establish times when a commercial gillnet permit holder in the Lower Yukon Area districts 1-3 may use dip net and beach seine gear to commercially harvest chum salmon during the summer season, including specifications and operations provisions for dip net and beach seine gear." For details of the proposal as passed by the BOF go to the BOF website and click on the Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim meeting link to find a meeting summary and related documents.

In my own interest to learn about this new gear, I wanted to give you some helpful tips on how to beach seine before trying out this newly approved gear in the Yukon River.

Find a Suitable Place

Best places for beach seining to be conducted are on sandy beaches, or gravel bars. Firm

sloping beaches are favorable, but not required. It is not good to beach seine in places that have irregular bottom topography, lots of debris or large rocks, or any large aquatic vegetation because the net will get snagged or lifted and reduce fish retention (Hahn, Bailey, and Ritchie).

Test the Site

To prepare your beach seining site you should do a trail sweep with a bare lead line to clear the site of any snags. If there are snags you should mark them with a float and line. Once the site is clear of snags you then do additional trials with your seine (Hahn, Bailey, and Ritchie).

Helpful Tips

Beach seining is more effective when there is an abundance of fish.

Salmon are known to turn on their side, push their snouts under the lead line, and wiggle to escape [Hahn, personal observation]. This is to be avoided by keeping the lead line ahead of the cork line, and it would help to have a longer net.

Adding additional leads or chain to the lead line can reduce fish loss. Additional tow lines may also prevent the seine from rolling upon itself, which is caused from dense vegetation.

Noise and vibrations are induced by moving seines and are perceived by fish, so vibrating the tow lines may help keep the fish from escaping.

The bigger the fish, the faster they swim, so keep in mind to have more rapid deployment and faster retrieval.

Salmon tend to stay in deeper water during daylight. The amount of light affects the ability of fish to detect and avoid the sample gear, so seining during the evening or night may increase the effectiveness of seining (Hahn, Bailey, and Ritchie).

Information was found in the book, "Salmonid Field Protocols Handbook: Techniques for Assessing Status and Trends in Salmon and Trout Populations," by David H. Johnson, Brianna

M. Shrier, Jennifer S. O'Neal, John A. Knutzen, Xanthippe Augerot, Thomas A. O'Neil, and Todd N. Pearsons, plus 37 contributing authors as referenced above.

While this information was found in a field book, and actual field conditions are different in many locations, I thought it may be helpful to learn a little about beach seining. We at YRDFA wish all of you luck in trying out this new gear and hope you find success in using it to harvest intended chum salmon while leaving Chinook salmon free to swim up the river to make escapements for future generations. 🐟

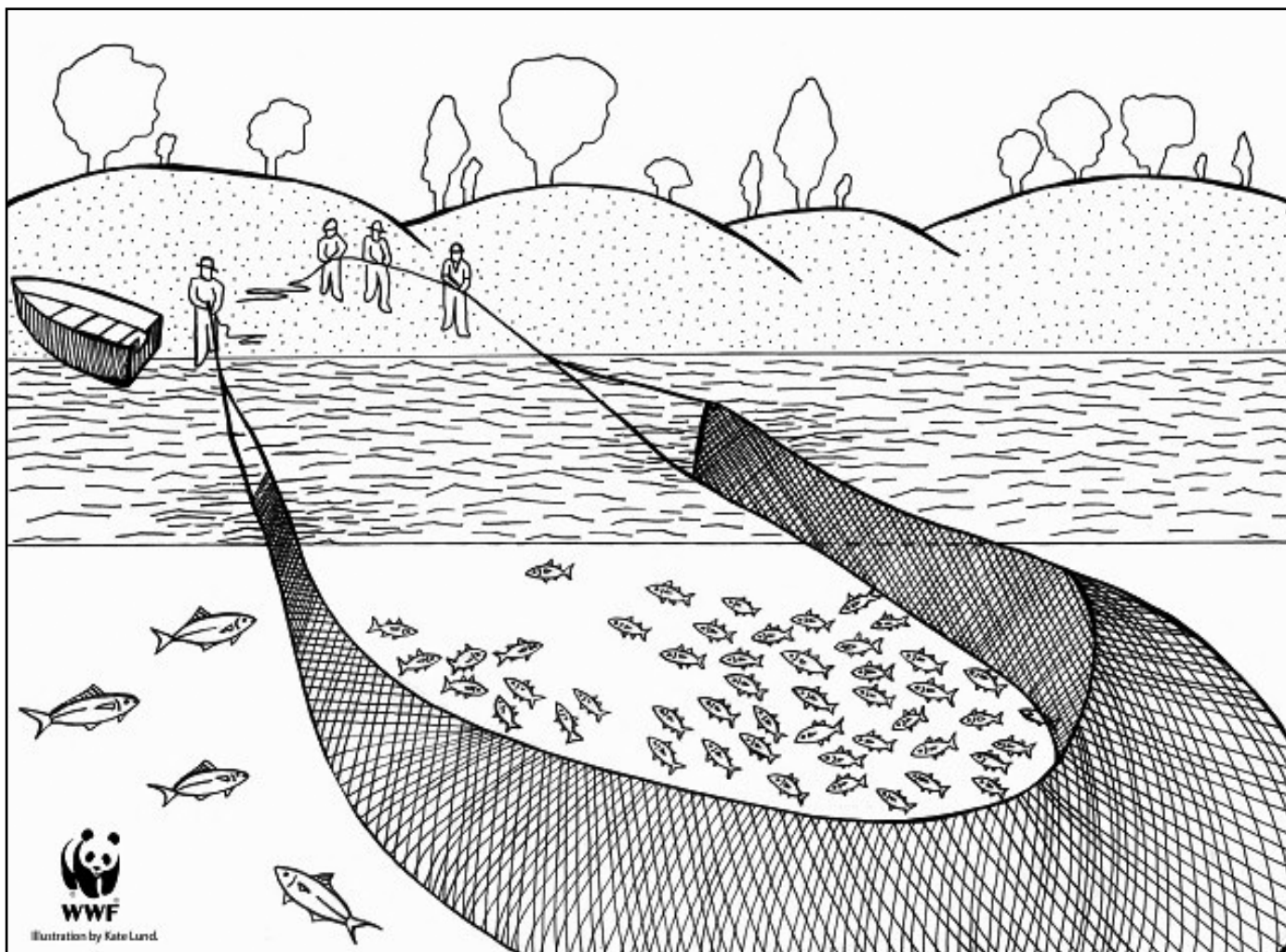
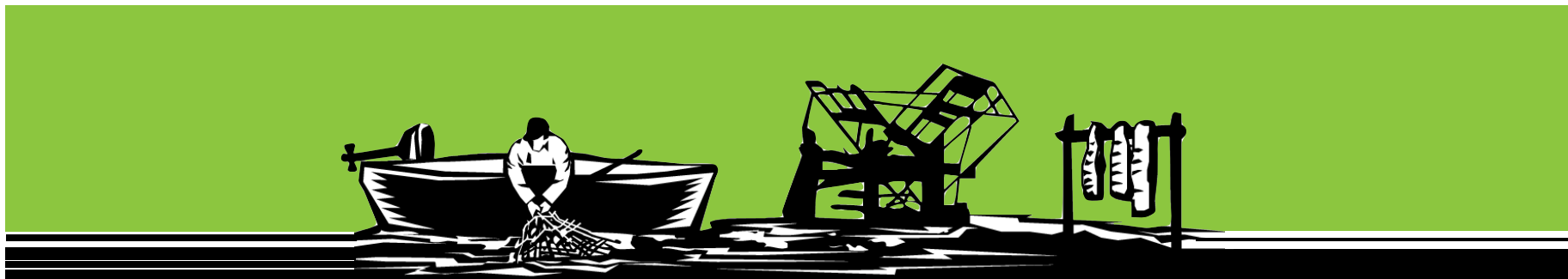


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