



Alaska Trollers Association

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Dr. Phil Mundy (Phil.Mundy@noaa.gov)
Director Auke Bay Laboratories
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Dear Dr. Mundy:

I am writing on behalf of the Alaska Trollers Association (ATA) to recognize the contributions of your salmon research staff and encourage continuation of their programs. As you work with the Obama Administration to identify NMFS' priorities in Alaska, I hope you will reserve adequate funding for current and future Chinook salmon projects at Auke Bay Lab and the Little Port Walter (LPW) Marine Station.

From the lab to the most sophisticated technical salmon teams, ATA is well aware, and greatly appreciative, of the level of expertise and commitment the Alaska Region of NMFS has brought to bear on salmon issues.

In the mid-1980's, as prospects for a comprehensive salmon treaty with Canada loomed on the horizon, a number of highly contentious issues confronted the Pacific Salmon Treaty (Treaty) negotiators. Important to ATA was finding the means to mitigate the Southeast trollers for deep harvest cuts they were slated to take upon treaty signing.

To secure the State of Alaska's agreement to reduce its harvest by a Treaty cut of roughly 100,000 Chinook salmon per year, the federal government agreed to work with the state and develop a hatchery mitigation program. A primary goal of mitigation was to deliver 100,000 hatchery Chinook each year 'to the holds' of Alaska trollers. These hatchery salmon were also anticipated to provide fishing opportunities for all other user groups.

With the hatchery program came the need to develop brood stocks and define enhancement protocols to protect wild salmon stocks. To do that, ADF&G asked NMFS to initiate a research program for Southeast Chinook salmon. ATA strongly supported the program.

Today, Chinook salmon produced at NOAA's Little Port Walter hatchery (LPW) contribute directly to both commercial and recreational fisheries in our region and help to meet the original Treaty mitigation objective. Since its inception, NMFS staff estimates that LPW has added to the common property fisheries of Southeast Alaska roughly \$20 million worth of Chinook salmon.

NMFS Alaska's salmon scientists fulfill important rolls on Pacific Salmon Commission technical teams; provide important data and support for state and federal fishery managers; and help secure the health of wild salmon through their cooperative programs and information sharing with hatchery

operators. The following is sampling of LPW projects that have already been successfully implemented, and/or show promise for the future:

- A variety of **fish culture techniques have been developed by LPW that are in wide-spread use** in Southeast Alaska and other parts of the state.
- LPW has **maintained separate spawning populations over multiple generations** with their distinct life history differences intact. This provides tremendous research opportunities.
- LPW **developed Chickamin and Unuk River broodstocks** for use in hatchery programs throughout the region.
- **Long-term data series on marine survival** of LPW Chinook salmon provide valuable information to ADF&G managers and the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC).
- The LPW coded-wire tag recoveries are an important component of the **exploitation rate analysis** utilized by the PSC Chinook Technical Committee.
- Both the Unuk and Chickamin broodstocks are good contributors to Southeast fisheries, which **helped to rejuvenate spring troll fisheries** and provide an **assist to scientists evaluating hatchery marine survivals**. This in turn is useful in developing effective production and management strategies, so trollers can **better access hatchery fish while conserving wild stocks**.
- Auke Bay Lab and LPW staff **worked with ATA and ADFG on a 15 year troll logbook** program, which resulted in a unique data set that could assist in the study of salmon and other marine animals.
- LPW provides **opportunity for ongoing collaborative research** with ADFG, hatchery operators, and industry.

Since its inception, NMFS salmon program has been an asset to our region, by developing and improving hatchery protocols; expanding our understanding of hatchery stocks and how they interact in the wild; conducting, enabling, and advising on salmon data collection projects; and, helping to deliver hatchery salmon to fulfill Treaty promises made to Alaska fishermen.

ATA believes there is a need to continue and expand the efforts of Auke Bay Lab and LPW Hatchery. We hope you agree and will work to secure the salmon component of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center's research program.

If I can be of help on this or other matters, please don't hesitate to call.

Best Regards,

Dale Kelley
Executive Director

cc:

Douglas Demaster, Science and Research Director, Alaska Fisheries Science Center

Dr. Bill Karp, Deputy Director for Science and Research, Alaska Fisheries Science Center

Dr. Phil Mundy, Director, ABL Division, Alaska Fisheries Science Center

Eric Schwaab, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service

Cora Crome, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish & Game

David Bedford, Deputy Director, Alaska Department of Fish & Game / AK PSC Commissioner