



Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission

House Fisheries Committee

April 7, 2022



Photos Courtesy of ASMI



Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission

OUTLINE

Background.....	3
Limited Entry Act.....	4
Policy Objectives.....	5
2021 Overview.....	6
2021 Outcomes.....	7
Research.....	8
Data Processing	9
Licensings	10
Adjudications	11
Commissioner Update.....	12



Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission

BACKGROUND

- At the time of statehood, Alaska's salmon fisheries were largely controlled by lower 48 canning companies that used fish traps to overharvest the resource.
- In 1960, Governor Egan noted to the First Alaska State Legislature, "From a peak of three quarters of a billion pounds in 1936, production dropped in 1959 to its lowest in 60 years."
- A rebound in salmon runs and the removal of fish traps encouraged many new people to enter the fisheries during the 1960s.
- By the early 1970s, salmon runs again declined to record low levels
- Two laws were passed to try to limit participation, both of which, violated article VIII of the constitution and were later repealed



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LIMITED ENTRY ACT

- In 1971, the Alaska Legislature proposed a constitutional amendment to address the concerns identified by the courts by adding the following language to Article VIII, Section 15:

No exclusive right or special privilege of fishery shall be created or authorized in the natural waters of the State. This section does not restrict the power of the State to limit entry into any fishery for purposes of resource conservation, to prevent economic distress among fishermen and those dependent on them for a livelihood and to promote the efficient development of aquaculture in the State.

- The Limited Entry Act was implemented in 1973 and established the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission in 1974



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POLICY OBJECTIVES

Mission

...to promote the conservation and the sustained yield management of Alaska's fishery resource and the economic health and stability of commercial fishing in Alaska by regulating and controlling entry of participants into the commercial fisheries in the public interest and without unjust discrimination.

This is accomplished by:

- Monitoring the economic health of 200+ open access and 66 limited entry fisheries.
- Limiting entry to Alaska fisheries to achieve conservation and development goals.
- Adjudicating permit applications for limited fisheries.
- Enforcing statutory requirements governing permanent and emergency permit transfers.
- Assessing court ordered demerit points in specific salmon fisheries.
- Promulgating regulations to further the purposes of the Limited Entry Act.
- Providing fishery data and other relevant information to policymakers and the public.
- Issuing vessel licenses, commercial fishing permits, and emergency/permanent transfers



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2021 OVERVIEW

- Quasi-judicial commission supported by four sections:
 - Licensing
 - Adjudications
 - Research
 - Data Processing
- 19 staff positions
- \$7.2 million in receipts in 2021
- \$3.2 million to CFEC operating budget
- Appropriations Include
 - \$5.1 million to Commercial Fisheries Division operating budget
 - \$21,610 to Department of Commerce capital projects
 - \$292,105 to Fisherman's Fund



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2021 OUTCOMES

- All pending application cases completed and unchallenged
- 32 Adjudication decisions issued
- 31 Commission decisions issued
- 16,161 commercial fishing permits issued
- 8,290 vessel licenses issued
- 1,794 permit transfers processed
- Licensing records scanning project is 25% complete
- Overhaul of downloadable paper forms
- \$4.8m processed through online renewal (LEON)
- Started a in-house licensing system upgrade
- Comparative analysis of economic distress indicators
- Started second half of Cook Inlet Set Gillnet Optimum Numbers study
- Improved upon existing Data Processing and Research reporting
- 3 published research reports



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CFEC RESEARCH

Core Functions

- ➔ Fishery Limitation Research (petitions)
- ➔ Optimum Number Analyses for Limited Entry Fisheries
- ➔ Economic Reporting
- ➔ Monthly Permit Value Reports
- ➔ Annual Transfer Study
- ➔ Annual Gross Earnings
- ➔ Board of Fish Reports
- ➔ Original Research Reports
- ➔ Buyback Consultations & Implementation
- ➔ Regulatory Proposal Review and Comment
- ➔ Data Sharing with Agencies and Private Sector
- ➔ Permit Holder Surveys & Ex-Vessel Price Estimates
- ➔ Monitoring of Fisheries
- ➔ Ad hoc Data Requests
- ➔ Internal Policy Research



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CFEC DATA PROCESSING

Core Services

- ➔ Application Development
- ➔ Licensing Automation
- ➔ Technology Infrastructure & Networking
- ➔ Network Maintenance and Security
- ➔ Database Management
- ➔ Legacy Application Services
- ➔ Server Virtualization
- ➔ Enhanced Desktop Utilities
- ➔ Website Maintenance
- ➔ Technical Support & Service
- ➔ Internal Reporting

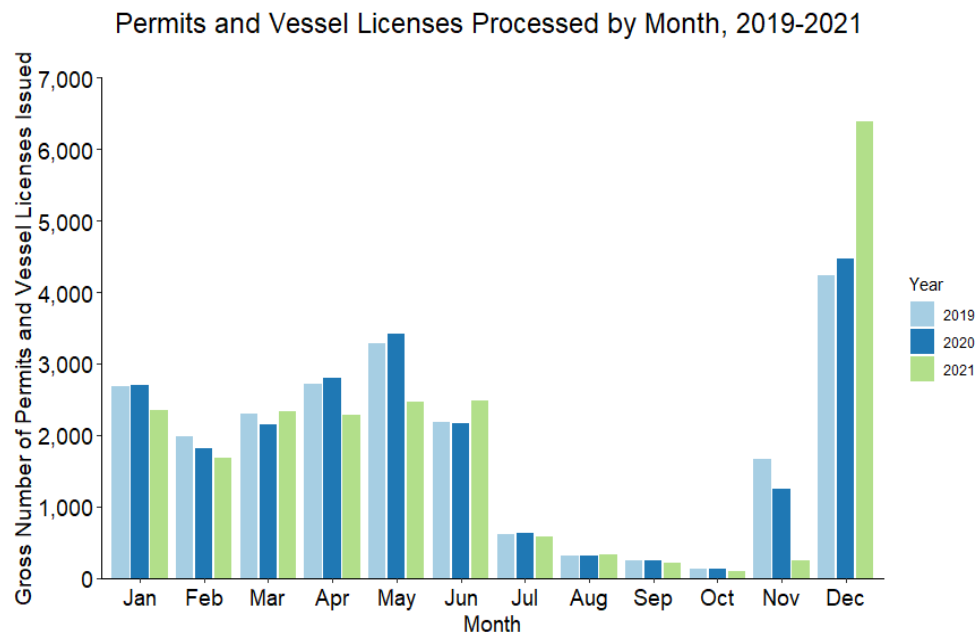


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CFEC LICENSING

Core Statistics

- ➔ 16,161 Commercial Fishing Permits
- ➔ 8,290 Vessel Licenses
- ➔ 3,833 Interim-Use Permits in Open Access Fisheries
- ➔ 901 Permanent Transfer Requests Processed
- ➔ 893 Emergency Transfer Requests Processed
- ➔ 17 Interim-Entry Permits in Limited Fisheries





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CFEC ADJUDICATIONS

Core Functions

- ➔ Schedule, research, and conduct administrative hearings;
- ➔ Write decisions based on those administrative hearings on issues including emergency transfers, permanent transfers, permit fee refund requests, reinstatement of forfeited permit requests, appeals of the assessment of demerit points, and fee arrearages based on residency;
- ➔ Assess demerit points and suspend fishing privileges for convicted violators of salmon fishing laws under AS 16.43.850-895;
- ➔ Receive, record, and prepare for archiving all commercial fish tickets filed within the state;
- ➔ Maintain historic Commission records and manage active cases;
- ➔ Record and assist with record requests from the public or other government agencies;
- ➔ Classify, adjudicate, and maintain a tracking system for limited entry permit applications;
- ➔ Research legal or historical information for the commissioners or for the commercial fishing public when appropriate.



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COMMISSIONER UPDATE

- Final Commission Decisions
 - CFEC Adjudications section is caught up with all hearings and decisions
 - The Commission has one emergency transfer decision pending review
- 2022 regulations package and proposals
 - Review of administrative fees
 - Qualification for reduced fee permits for finfish
- Engage in correspondence with commercial fishermen to better understand the changing needs of the fisheries and to assist with questions
- Review all responses to external requests
- Provide guidance to the agency through the Executive Director
- Exercise the general duties and powers of the commission AS 16.43.100

Questions?

