

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES**

January 21, 2004

8:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Paul Seaton, Chair
Representative Peggy Wilson, Vice Chair
Representative Cheryll Heinze
Representative Dan Ogg
Representative Ralph Samuels
Representative Les Gara
Representative David Guttenberg

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW: ADF&G DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

TAPES

04-1, SIDE(S) A & B

CHAIR PAUL SEATON convened the meeting of the House Special Committee on Fisheries at 8:30 a.m. Representatives Seaton, Wilson, Heinze, Ogg, Samuels, Guttenberg, and Gara were present at the call to order.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

DOUG MECUM, Director, Division of Commercial Fisheries (DCF), Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), gave a general overview of the 2003 salmon season including highlights and problem areas. He discussed ADF&G's ability/success to manage within escapement goals, and problem areas in 2003. He provided an overview of the state's harvesting capacity, focusing on pink salmon.

MR. MECUM discussed the issue of Prince William Sound hatchery cost-recovery contracts' obstructing the management and full utilization of common property resources. He also discussed the related issues of roe stripping and carcass dumping. Next he highlighted Southeast Alaska, addressing the over-escapement and

underutilization issues. He continued with the highlights of the 2003 salmon season and offered the preliminary forecasts for the 2004 salmon season, delineated by area and species. He showed graphics depicting the historic ex-vessel value and harvest levels in the Alaska salmon industry.

MR. MECUM continued with an explanation of the 2003 pink salmon over-escapement estimates by region. He showed that there was some significant over-escapement, especially in Prince William Sound, but noted that statewide over-escapement was not historically extreme. Discussing salmon processor capacity in 2003, he explained that ADF&G's 2003 processor capacity survey showed that there was enough capacity to accommodate the [department's] 2003 salmon return projections. However, larger than expected returns did result in the underutilization of salmon resources due to inadequate processor capacity. Mr. Mecum explained that the 2003 processor capacity survey results were a factor in the governor's determination to not admit foreign processors.

MR. MECUM also addressed the history and management of salmon hatchery programs in Alaska. He explained that the department has only recently met total production targets and that the common property/cost-recovery ratio was also very close to management goals. He discussed the economics of producing hatchery pink salmon with respect to decreased market prices and increasing global supplies.

[Written testimony in response to the committee discussion surrounding the Valdez pink salmon management issue was received from Valdez Fisheries Development Association Inc. on February 18, 2004.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

COMMITTEE ACTION

The committee took no action.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at 9:53 a.m.

NOTE: The meeting was recorded and handwritten log notes were taken. A copy of the tape(s) and log notes may be obtained by contacting the House Records Office at State Capitol, Room 3, Juneau, Alaska 99801 (mailing address), (907) 465-2214, and after adjournment of the second session of the Twenty-Third Alaska State Legislature this information may be obtained by contacting the Legislative Reference Library at (907) 465-3808.