

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE

January 27, 2023

3:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Click Bishop, Co-Chair
Senator Cathy Giessel, Co-Chair
Senator Scott Kawasaki
Senator James Kaufman
Senator Forrest Dunbar
Senator Matt Claman

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Bill Wielechowski, Vice Chair

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Representative CJ McCormick

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION: STATUS OF THE ARCTIC YUKON AND KUSKOKWIM FISHERIES

- HEARD

SENATE BILL NO. 10

"An Act providing for trapping licenses for active members of the Alaska National Guard and military reserves without charge; making sport fishing, hunting, and trapping permanent identification cards available to certain disabled veterans without charge; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR JESSE KIEHL, District B
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 10.

CATHY SCHLINGHEYDE, Staff
Senator Jesse Kiehl

Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented the sectional analysis for SB 10 on behalf of the sponsor.

JOHN STURGEON, President
Safari Club Alaska
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation in support of SB 10.

TROY ECK, State Commander
Veterans of Foreign Wars
North Pole, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation in support of SB 10.

DOUG VINCENT-LANG, Commissioner
Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)
Anchorage, Alaska.

POSITION STATEMENT: Delivered a presentation on the status of the Arctic, Yukon, and Kuskokwim fisheries.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3::26 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR CLICK BISHOP called the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Dunbar, Kawasaki, Claman, Co-Chair Giessel and Co-Chair Bishop. Senator Kaufman arrived soon thereafter.

SB 10-HUNTING/TRAPPING/FISHING: DISABLED VETS

[3:31:22 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 10 "An Act providing for trapping licenses for active members of the Alaska National Guard and military reserves without charge; making sport fishing, hunting, and trapping permanent identification cards available to certain disabled veterans without charge; and providing for an effective date."

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SENATOR KAUFMAN joined the committee.

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SENATOR JESSE KIEHL, District B, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of SB 10, stated that this legislation brings parity between several license types and benefits Alaska's service-disabled veterans. Under current law, Alaskans

60 years of age qualify for a lifetime hunting, fishing, and trapping license. Current law also provides that Alaska's service-disabled veterans are entitled to a lifetime hunting and fishing license, but not a trapping license. There doesn't seem to be any explanation for this exclusion. SB 10 adds trapping to the service-disabled veteran lifetime hunting and fishing license.

SENATOR KIEHL noted that when he introduced the bill last year, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) asked him to add trapping to the annual free hunting and fishing license for active duty members of the Alaska National Guard and the military reserves and he was happy to do so. He highlighted that SB 10 has support from outdoor groups and veteran service organizations. It's a small token of appreciation and respect for these men and women.

[3:34:04 PM](#)

At ease

[3:34:42 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP reconvened the meeting and recognized that Representative CJ McCormick was in the audience.

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SENATOR CLAMAN commented that it was a good bill.

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CATHY SCHLINGHEYDE, Staff, Senator Jesse Kiehl, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, presented the following sectional analysis for SB 10 on behalf of the sponsor:

Sec. 1: Makes a conforming change to a cross reference in the statute exempting service- disabled veterans from buying waterfowl conservation tags.

Sec. 2: Makes a conforming change to a cross reference in the statute exempting service- disabled veterans from buying king salmon tags.

Sec. 3: Adds a free trapping license for active-duty National Guard members and military reservists. Makes a conforming change to remove service-disabled veterans from the free license statute.

Sec. 4: Makes service-disabled veterans who live in Alaska eligible for a free permanent ID for hunting, fishing, and trapping.

Sec. 5: Makes a conforming change to repeal and reenact language for clarity.

Sec. 6: Adds an effective date of January 1, 2024.

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SENATOR DUNBAR asked whether the definition for "active members of the Alaska National Guard and military reserve" would include members of the Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Program, which is paid for with Title 10 funds.

MS. SCHLINGHEYDE replied that the definition was in the current statute and it cross-referenced a statute about mortgage eligibility for veterans. The definition in that statute is one weekend per month and 15 consecutive days per year.

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SENATOR KAWASAKI asked if the conditions for Alaska residency would apply.

SENATOR KIEHL answered that the bill is for Alaska residents and it uses the existing definition for residency that is in the fish and game laws. The bill does not change those laws.

CO-CHAIR BISHOP turned to invited testimony.

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JOHN STURGEON, President, Safari Club Alaska (SCAA), Anchorage, Alaska, stated that he was representing the 700 members of Safari Club Alaska in support of SB 10. It adds trapping to the existing hunting and fishing license for disabled veterans. SCAA views this as a small price for the state to pay to show these veterans that their service was very much appreciated.

[3:39:17 PM](#)

TROY ECK, State Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars, North Pole, Alaska, stated that he works with veterans throughout the state every day and they view the ability to acquire a hunting and fishing license as one of the best benefits they enjoy in Alaska. Adding trapping would get even more veterans outside into the available areas. When veterans get outside, their health and happiness improves, and their productivity and community service increases. He agreed with the previous

comments that this was a small token that would mean the world to many veterans in the state.

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CO-CHAIR BISHOP found no questions or comments, and held SB 10 in committee.

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At ease

PRESENTATION: STATUS OF THE ARCTIC, YUKON, AND KUSKOKWIM RIVER FISHERIES

[3:42:17 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP reconvened the meeting and announced a presentation on the status of the Arctic, Yukon, and Kuskokwim (AYK) fisheries.

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DOUG VINCENT-LANG, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Juneau, Alaska, stated that the AYK fisheries encompass the geographic area from the Arctic Ocean down into the Fairbanks region, the entire Yukon and Kuskokwim river drainages and all the drainages that flow into the Bering Sea, including in the Nome area. He advised that he would talk about what the department knows about run status of these fisheries and what it is doing to address the situation.

He explained that an important consideration for the Yukon River is that the state does not have unilateral control over management of the King salmon and the fall chum salmon runs because of a Pacific salmon treaty obligation to pass fish that are commonly shared between the US and Canada. For both runs, about 60 percent occurs in US waters and 40 percent in Canadian waters. In both cases, a panel sets border passage objectives. ADF&G is the lead negotiator for the US.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG displayed a bar graph of the total King salmon run in the Yukon River drainage from 1997 through 2022. He pointed out that run size the last three years was well below the 183,000 fish average. The King salmon run in 2022 was the lowest on record. He said the evidence indicates that poor marine survival is the cause. It doesn't appear to be related to fresh water, but the department is also looking at the fish disease *Ichthyophonus*.

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COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG displayed a bar graph of the Yukon River King salmon harvest levels in Alaska from 1982 through 2022. The solid red bars reflect the amounts necessary for subsistence. The graph clearly illustrates that except for 2019, the state has not met harvest levels for subsistence since about 2010.

The harvest opportunity in 2014, 2015, 2019, and 2020 was almost nonexistent. He clarified that there had not been any inriver harvest in other fisheries such as commercial, personal use, and sport fisheries. Subsistence was the only inriver harvest in the last 10 years was subsistence and that production had been insufficient to meet ANS amounts [amounts necessary for subsistence] for Yukon River King salmon.

CO-CHAIR BISHOP asked for a description of the treaty obligation past the Eagle sonar project, [the final count before the fish enter Canadian waters].

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG answered that it's 42,500 to 55,000 fish.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG displayed a bar graph of the total Yukon River summer chum salmon run from 1998 through 2022. He said this run is not treaty obligated but there are treaty considerations in managing the fishery. These fish are typically for substance harvest by either fish wheels or gillnets. Gillnets are fairly indiscriminate, so the department has to be careful not to allow the harvest of other species such as fall run chum salmon or King salmon.

The graph shows that drainage-wide escapement was high until about 2020 and then it dropped precipitously. This was not the result of poor parent year escapements. The green bars show that escapements were adequate to provide runs of about 1.5 million fish but in 2021, with no significant harvest, about 220,000 fish returned. ADF&G is beginning to piece together what happened to those summer chums. He noted that he'd expand on that later in the presentation.

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COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG displayed a bar graph of the Yukon River summer chum salmon harvest by type from 1998 through 2022. It shows that the [83,500 to 142,192] amounts were met until 2019. In 2021 and 2022 the summer chum salmon fisheries were severely restricted to meet escapement goals.

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COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG displayed a bar graph of the Yukon River fall chum salmon run size from 1974 through 2022. The escapement goal ranges were met from 2004 through 2019. There were harvest opportunities for both the US and Canada. But then the escapement goal was not met in 2020, 2021, and 2022.

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COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG displayed a bar graph of the Yukon River fall chum salmon subsistence and personal use harvests from 1990 through 2022. The blue bars show the subsistence harvests and the two black lines show the [89,200-167,900 amounts necessary for subsistence. In the years that harvests did meet the ANS amounts, it was at the bottom of the range. The last three years the subsistence harvests were the ANS minimum. There has been virtually no opportunity to fish in that river so the escapement objectives and King salmon numbers are met.

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COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG noted that the presentation did not include slides for coho salmon and other fin fish species, but coho have not met the escapement goal in the last three years in the Yukon River, and coho salmon fisheries have been severely restricted as a result of not meeting escapement objectives. This resulted in more directed effort on the harvest of nontraditional subsistence foods such as whitefish and other salmon species such as sockeye and pink salmon. Anecdotal information suggests that these fish are beginning to show the stress of increased harvest and likely reduced production because whitefish like to feed on salmon eggs and those supplies are reduced. Sockeye seem to be the species that is still surviving in the ocean and the result is that more of these fish are showing up in the Yukon River drainage, particularly when lakes are associated. His belief was that there would be more sockeye opportunities over time.

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COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG displayed a bar graph that showed the Kuskokwim River King salmon subsistence harvest from 1990-2022. He noted that with few exceptions the escapement goals were met, which was very different than the Yukon River and there wasn't a clear explanation for the difference.

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COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG displayed a bar graph of the Kuskokwim River King salmon subsistence harvest from 1990-2022. It showed that the lower end of the current ANS ranges were not being met.

Escapement goals were met, but the subsistence harvest opportunity was only about 20,000 to 30,000 fish. Unlike the Yukon, fish are getting into both the middle/upper and the lower river drainages but most of the subsistence opportunities are in the lower river. He noted that the ongoing lawsuit between the federal government and the State of Alaska prohibits ADF&G from managing the lower river. Last summer, restrictions were placed on the upper part of the river because the US Fish and Wildlife Service allowed lower river harvests that ADF&G disagreed with but did not have emergency order authority to stop the harvest. The result was that some upper river escapement goals were not met. He said it would be troubling if this were to continue.

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COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG displayed slide 10 and noted that the Kuskokwim River was seeing the same run failures for chum salmon as in the Yukon River drainage. The ANS amounts were largely being met until 2019 but fell off dramatically after that. Subsistence harvests have been limited to meet escapement goals. He added that what is bright about chum salmon in both rivers is that there was an increase in escapement. ADF&G anticipates chum salmon runs to increase but it was unclear whether it would be enough to meet escapement and reasonable subsistence harvest opportunities.

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COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG displayed slide 11 and relayed that the returns for coho salmon on the Kuskokwim River have been reduced since 2018 and subsistence fishing was restricted in 2022. The ANS escapement goals were met in six of the nine years from 2013-2021.

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COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG turned to slide 12 to discuss sockeye salmon in the Kuskokwim River. Similar to the experience on the Yukon River, sockeye salmon are showing up in greater numbers on the Kuskokwim River. Some of the lake systems on that river are showing increased productivity and people are increasingly relying on sockeye as a food source instead of the less available chum and King salmon.

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CO-CHAIR BISHOP asked for confirmation that sockeye salmon eat different things than chum, coho and King salmon.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG agreed; sockeye primarily feed on plankton in the ocean whereas chum and Kings start as

zooplankton feeders and then transition to eating other fish. He said what's happening to chum salmon is somewhat a mystery, but one thought is that with 68 million sockeye now returning to Bristol Bay, close to 1.8 billion sockeye fry probably are going into the Bering Sea system and near-shore waters of Bristol Bay. They're devouring things that are part of the food web for crab and many fish, including chum, coho, and King salmon. The high number of cod and pollack are likely also contributing to the declines.

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COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG paraphrased the text on slide 13 that read as follows:

Summary

Overall, king salmon have seen reduced productivity the past decade and chum and coho salmon over the past three years. This has resulted in closed commercial, sport and personal use fisheries and severely restricted or closed subsistence fisheries. This has impacted local communities, rural culture and practices, and economies.

On the other hand, sockeye salmon have seen increased productivity, but commercial opportunities are limited due to bycatch of chinook, coho or chum salmon.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG relayed that what's happening in the lower Kuskokwim River led the fight between the state and federal government. The state opened several subsistence sockeye salmon fisheries when it saw sockeye numbers increase and the federal government didn't like that decision. The state was preempted but the next year the federal government did the same thing.

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COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG turned to slide 14 and discussed the following bullets:

What are we doing about this?

- Distributed food to communities impacted by closures. This was food security money which is now exhausted. We are working with non-governmental organizations to fill this need if it arises again.

- Began a new department marine science program to begin unraveling what is happening in the ocean as most evidence is pointing to low marine survival and productivity.
- Provided [\$1.5 million] funding and participated in the International Year of the Salmon marine survey program. Data analysis is ongoing. [ADF&G staff participated to get a better idea of what is happening beyond the near shore marine area.]
- Formed a Bycatch Task Force to review this issue and to make recommendations - report handed to Governor in December 2022. Being used by the BOF and NPFMC. [The report provides a map for how to move forward on bycatch.
- Working with the industry to address chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea trawl fisheries and have formed a committee to develop a problem statement and list of alternatives for analyses.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG relayed that one specific recommendation was to have the North Pacific Fishery Management Council look at the issue of chum salmon bycatch and whether a bycatch cap was appropriate for the trawl fisheries. The council formed a workgroup of the trawl industry and affected YK inriver users to identify alternatives to address chum salmon bycatch. The council will initiate an analysis at the April meeting to address the issue.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG said what's tricky about chum salmon bycatch is that nearly 80 percent that are caught in the Bering Sea are Asian origin hatchery fish. When the department looked at the year when 200,000 fish returned, about 1.2 million chum were missing and about 20-30,000 were bycatch in the Bering Sea trawl fishery. Bycatch isn't the smoking gun, but the council still is taking steps to reduce bycatch. Included is the consideration of whether to have a chum salmon bycatch cap. The department is moving carefully since the majority of the chum are Asian origin. A King salmon bycatch cap has been instituted. The fleet is well under that threshold, but reducing the bycatch of chum salmon could unintentionally increase the harvest of King salmon. He noted that the industry voluntarily instituted restrictions and ways to test fish areas and move the fleet to reduce bycatch and that resulted in significant reductions in chum salmon bycatch last summer.

- Worked with fishermen to reduce the harvest of chum salmon in South Peninsula mixed stock fisheries this past summer.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG said the department knows that chum salmon spend up to two months in the northern Bering Sea close to the river mouths before they head down into the Gulf of Alaska south of the Alaska Peninsula. The South Peninsula fishery primarily targets sockeye salmon headed to Bristol Bay, but there is incidental harvest of chum salmon. Two years ago, the June fishery that primarily harvests fish going to coastal Western Alaska had an incidental harvest of 1.2 million chum salmon, which was much higher than the historic average. The department told the fleet to reduce the harvest or it would be done with time and area executive authority. Through voluntary measures and test fishing, the fleet reduced the incidental harvest to about 500,000 fish, which was closer to the long-term average.

- Collected new genetic information [about the incidental harvest of chum salmon] to inform Board deliberations on South Peninsula fisheries this February.

CO-CHAIR BISHOP asked him to share the conversation they had about the genetics of chum salmon.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG said the hope is that the new genetic information will show hot spots spatially and temporarily so the department can take action to reduce the incidental catch of chum salmon that are heading to the AYK region.

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SENATOR DUNBAR asked if he was referring to the total catch or bycatch when he mentioned 1.2 million and 500,000 fish and where bycatch data comes from for the South Peninsula fisheries.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG clarified that he was talking about incidental harvest. Bycatch refers to the harvest of a prohibited species. The numbers came from fish tickets and the department knows that a large percentage of the incidental catch in that fishery were Asian origin fish. The board will have that data when it tries to reduce the catch of Alaska chum salmon.

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SENATOR KAWASAKI asked if the data about bycatch in the Bering Sea that affects the Yukon River was readily available.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG said he would supply the numbers, but they're posted regularly on the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council website. The website also has the information in reports from staff.

SENATOR KAWASAKI referenced the graph on slide 3 that showed the Yukon River King salmon harvest numbers since 1982. He observed that the bottom fell out of the commercial harvest starting in 2008 and it never recovered. He requested the anticipated bycatch for six years both before and after 2008.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG said he'd provide the information and could also give a presentation on what the department knows about bycatch in the Bering Sea trawl fisheries.

SENATOR KAWASAKI asked for information during that timeframe when the different administrations imposed restrictions on the trawl fleets.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG agreed to provide the information and restated the offer to give a presentation.

CO-CHAIR BISHOP requested he send the information to his office and he would distribute it to the committee.

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SENATOR DUNBAR asked how quickly the department was able to get information about genetics and the Asian origin of certain runs out to the public because it wasn't common knowledge.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG said both ADF&G and the National Marine Fisheries Service have genetics labs. The federal lab does most of the work on bycatch and it takes six to eight months for that data to be released. The department collected South Peninsula fishery data this year that will inform the Board of Fish deliberations in February.

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COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG continued to discuss what the department was doing about the reduced productivity of salmon runs in the AYK fisheries.

[Original punctuation provided.]

- Developing spend plans for identified fisheries disasters. Included research as an element of

each spend plan. Also worked with Congress to ensure communities has access to disaster funds.

- Working with partners to address science issues inriver.
 - We are studying Ichthyophonus as factor affecting inriver returns of Chinook salmon.
 - We are beginning an inriver radio telemetry study to inform placement of a mid-river sonar in the Yukon River.
 - We are beginning a study of fall chum near the border to determine inriver factors affecting survival.
- Working with the BOF and Canada on options to provide a limited number of salmon for culture camps. We are exploring using our educational permit system to provide a limited number of summer chum for culture camps to help maintain culture while the runs rebuild.

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CO-CHAIR BISHOP expressed appreciation for the culture camps.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG continued discussion of the following:

- Working with Canada on ideas for rehabilitation via hatcheries in the Yukon. Open to ideas in the Kuskokwim and Norton Sound regarding inriver incubation boxes.
- Working with Federal Partners to leverage Infrastructure and Build Back Better dollars.
- Cooperation in the Kuskokwim River is hindered by the US government's lawsuit against the State of Alaska.

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CO-CHAIR GIESSEL asked for more information about the hatchery in Fairbanks.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG explained that it's a sport fish hatchery that was paid for by sport fishermen and it's at full capacity.

SENATOR KAWASAKI asked about the \$1.5 million that the Senate added to the fish and game budget last year to study bycatch in the YK area that the governor vetoed.

CO-CHAIR BISHOP recalled that the funding to study the Kuskokwim was vetoed.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG said the belief was that the money would be used to immediately differentiate the origin of salmon from the Kuskokwim, Yukon, and Norton Sound area. However, the geneticists from NOAA and the department said the foundational science to answer that question was lacking. There are numbers on chum salmon bycatch and the department is continuing to collect numbers on the Coastal Western Alaska versus Asian chum distribution without that money.

SENATOR KAWASAKI asked if he was saying that the \$1.2 million wouldn't have improved the study.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG said the department is looking for the genetic sequence to differentiate the salmon but the assumption with the funding was that the question could be answered and neither the NOAA lab nor the department's lab could do that in that timeframe. He also recalled that the assumption was that the assessments could be done in-season for the daily trawl. However, a lot more thought and design is required prior to spending the money on that question.

SENATOR KAWASAKI suggested that the money could have been used over a number of years.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG said staff was looking at the most recent data to find the right sequence to determine which fish were Bristol Bay chum, which were Yukon chum, and which were Kuskokwim chum in order to better target actions to reduce the right chum harvest in the South Peninsula fisheries.

SENATOR KAWASAKI said the legislature ought to know what the department needs.

[4:28:27 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BISHOP asked if there was any evidence to support the contention that hatchery fish are competing with these salmon in the ocean.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG replied that the department is looking at the question of hatchery releases straying into natural systems. The department is also looking at the impact of hatchery fish on King salmon in the open ocean. It's probably a

complex mix of variables, including temperature, the quality of the food, and competition from marine mammals.

CO-CHAIR BISHOP commented that there are lots of hatcheries throughout the world.

SENATOR KAWASAKI asked if a practical consideration for hatchery fish would be to consider the carrying capacity of the biomass in that ecosystem.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG said the ocean is very large and not enough is known to answer the question about whether hatchery fish and wild fish are in the same part of the ocean to be competing. The International Year of the Salmon started looking at that question and the group that inherited that [five-year initiative] will continue that research.

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SENATOR KAWASAKI asked if the department had requested funding from the legislature or other sources to make that study happen.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG replied that the department received funds through the North Pacific Research Board and contributed \$1 million toward that effort last year. The state can't lead that effort independently; it has to be international between Russia, Japan, Canada, and the US. In the study last year, Canada took the eastern Gulf, the US took the middle Gulf, and there were plans to cooperate with Russia for the rest but US citizens moved off those ships after the invasion of Ukraine.

[4:33:36 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR commented that relative to the size of the catastrophe, it seems that more money could be found to focus on the issue of salmon declines. He said the questions about the effect of bycatch and hatcheries on salmon runs was interesting, but what changed that caused the collapse in 2008 of the Yukon River King run and a further collapse in 2019 and 2020? For example, did large new hatcheries open in Asia or did a new fishing fleet start up?

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG replied there's not a single smoking gun. The hatchery releases grew in the 1980s but there hasn't been a significant increase globally in hatchery releases in the last 10 years. The ocean is warming and that changes the phytoplankton and zooplankton. Species like cod and pollock are doing well in that environment, but crab and some salmon species are not and the reasons aren't entirely understood. Up until

about two years ago, the department managed the fisheries by focusing on the inriver system. When he became commissioner four years ago he recognized the importance of the marine environment and that's when the Marine Science Program was implemented. Now more is understood about the near-shore environment. The governor's budget has money to expand that science program into the southern Bering Sea in the Kuskokwim area, the South Peninsula, and Southeast Alaska so comparative data can be gathered. It is much more difficult and very expensive to design a research plan for the open ocean.

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CO-CHAIR GIESSEL noted that she recently read an article about salmon in the Kaktovik area, which is one of the things the legislature's Arctic Policy Commission from 10 years ago speculated about when it discussed the warming oceans. She asked if the article was accurate.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG answered yes; species were moving around in the new ecosystem. He also noted that somebody from Barrow harvested a moose last year.

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL added that she also read about reports of people in northern Canada seeing salmon.

COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG relayed that the governor's budget has money for the state to start looking at the Arctic to decide what a responsible fishery looks like, at least in US waters.

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CO-CHAIR BISHOP commented on the necessity of bringing all assets to bear to figure this out before the genetics of the Yukon River King salmon are lost.

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COMMISSIONER VINCENT-LANG emphasized that these salmon species are not providing subsistence harvest opportunities, but they are far from going extinct. He cautioned against the idea of listing any of these species because subsistence and directed take would disappear but incidental catch would be allowed.

CO-CHAIR BISHOP said the committee would take him up on the offer to discuss additional fisheries in the state.

[4:42:23 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee,
Co-Chair Bishop adjourned the Senate Resources Standing
Committee meeting at 4:42 p.m.