

King Salmon Allocation

My name is Doug Rhodes and I live on Prince of Wales Island. I have been a commercial salmon fisherman since 1974 in Southeast Alaska and have also been a long time sport fisherman. I currently am a Salmon gill netter and longliner, but was also a commercial troller for 25 years. I am also a member of the East Side Prince of Wales Advisory Committee and my comments on king salmon allocation weren't included in the minutes from the last meeting, so I'm writing them now as I can't make the Ketchikan meeting.

Rather than picking one King Salmon Allocation proposal to support, I support any proposal that would keep the Charter/Sport quota at or below the 20% allocation number. This would allow the unregulated (not limited entry) charter/sport fishery to continue to fish for more than one king in the early season and then revert to a one king limit later in the season, and yes may need to be reduced in the future. The charter fleet has been over the 20% allocation for several years and without limited entry they need to find a way to keep under this number.

The real solution would be to impose limited entry upon the charter fleet which is a commercial gear group. When commercial salmon fishing had limited entry imposed on them in 1975 it was seen as a way to keep the fleet and the resource strong and not allow any more commercial gear groups to harvest those resources. At the same time the state didn't want to limit the sport fish take as it was mostly made up of resident fishermen and very very few charter fishermen existed, if any, in 1975. In the last few years resident sport fishermen have had to face restrictions because of increased charter catches, and that is unfair.

Since that time charter fishermen and charter lodges have taken off and grown exponentially cutting into what was a mostly resident sport fishing quota. When charter king salmon catch numbers are allowed to swell past the 20% allocation, it has to come from somewhere, and that place is the commercial quota, and that is unfair!

According to the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission website there are currently 2,225 hand troll licenses in Alaska and there are 1,078 power troll licenses. This number has not grown since 1975 and in fact has declined due to some of the permits being interim-use permits which expire when the owner passes away or doesn't fish it for a period of time.

Although this is beyond the scope of these meetings, I believe that in the future, the only real answer is to remove some of the commercial troll permits, have charter fishermen buy those and carve a new fishery out of the existing troll fishery for commercial charter fishermen. Troll permits would hold value, king salmon limits could become larger for the charter operators, the quota could come out of a segment of the commercial quota- and we wouldn't have to fight over this every three years!

Charter fishing is commercial fishing and until we do something to address this we will be fighting at the table all of the time. Until then, we need to keep the Charter/Sport catch within the 20% allocation!

Respectfully Submitted,

Doug Rhodes
Craig, Ak