Alaska Troller

WINTER 2013

FDA Moves to Approve GE Salmon

The fate of AquaBounty's Atlantic salmon mash up with a Pacific Chinook salmon and an Arctic eelpout hangs in the balance as we approach FDA's April 26th comment deadline on genetically engineered salmon (GE). Have you made your views known?

AquaBounty claims that the genetic boost they've given their fish will make them grow to market size more quickly than a typical Atlantic salmon. Supporters believe that this template provides the recipe to lessen the impact of farmed salmon and feed the world. Skeptics question whether or not the product has been adequately tested to assure its long term safety, both for humans and the environment. Who's 'right'? Who knows? For now, ATA stands with the skeptics.

The AquaBounty GE salmon is being analyzed by FDA as an animal drug, not a food. This limits the review process and allows the trade secrets to be kept under wraps. While the promoters point to over 15 years of study and review, the public was really only invited to the discussion in late 2009, and then just barely. There are scores of other GE fish and animals on the horizon and 'Big' Agriculture and Biotech are busy nurturing developers, while this salmon is offered as the test case.

The precise path for getting GE fish to market is still a mystery. FDA says the permit will only allow GE salmon eggs to be shipped from a facility on Prince Edward Island, Canada and grown to commercial size in upland tank farms in Panama. So why would the FDA spend so much time and money approving a product that won't even be raised on US soil? The clue might be found in an article touting AquaBounty's latest $500K grant from the USDA, where the firm's chief executive points to willing farmers ready to grow GE salmon in at least four US states. The US has invested millions in GE salmon, and despite the company being on its lips numerous times, AquaBounty always finds a willing benefactor to keep it afloat. There is a lot of money riding on these fish and you can bet that heavy pressure is already on FDA to allow them to be Made (and sold) in the USA.

Concerns of the public are repeatedly batted away by AquaBounty and its supporters, who claim the fish is safe to eat and no threat to the environment. The review process did little to alleviate concerns and was shrouded in secrecy. When documents were finally unveiled, long term, peer reviewed safety studies were absent. Minimal testing was done; with sample sizes often less than 10 fish to study important questions like allergenicity. Many of the GE test fish were not full grown and none were raised at a production scale farm, so not representative of a finish product.

As for risks associated with escaped GE fish, we're told not to worry – all fish will be sterile females. Yet it is well known that the process of creating such a fish is imperfect, which is why FDA will allow a 5% margin of error. If capable spawners escape containment in Panama, FDA claims they won't survive the warm climate, despite the fact that other trout have been successfully introduced there. We already know farmed fish can be resilient – we catch farmed Atlantics in Alaska. What if they reach a river system – in Panama or the US? Invasive species already cost this country and others billions of dollars a year. GE fish just seem like a bad idea – on so many levels.

ATA has been working with organizations around the world who share concern over the GE issue. Hopefully you will join us and comment to the FDA by April 26. Don't have much time? No worries – it's easy! Just go to www.regulations.gov, where you can submit a letter or a quick note in less time than it takes to ice the boat.

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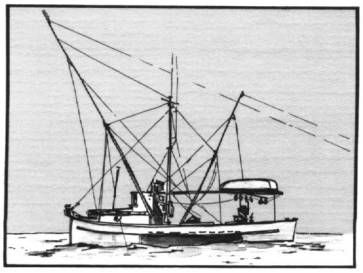

2013 Chinook Quota

All Gear	**176,000**
Troll	129,862
Seine	7,568
Drift Gillnet	5,104
Set Gillnet	1,000
Sport	32,466
Transboundary Rivers	
Stikine	
Terminal Run Forecast	22,400
Alaska	0
Canada	0
Taku	
Terminal Run Forecast	26,100
Alaska	0
Canada	0

ATA Raffle: May 2013
$2,500 Grand Prize
Cool Prizes - Great Odds!
Call Today.

Preliminary 2012 Harvest Review

CHINOOK	Quota Allocation	Treaty Catch	AK Hatchery Add-on	D8 Stikine Exempt	D11 Taku Exempt	Harvest Total
All Gear Quota	**266,800**	**241,118**	**53,113**	**US TAC = 0**	**US TAC = 0**	**295,542**
Troll	197,272	191,839	17,184	0	0	209,366
Winter		43,153	4,736	0	0	47,888
Spring		16,760	8,446	343	0	25,549
Summer		131,839	4,002	0	0	135,927
Annette Island		2	0	0	0	2
Total Troll		**191,839**	**17,184**	**343**	**0**	**209,366**
Seine	11,472	5,994	15,113	0	0	21,107
Drift Gillnet	7,737	6,591	10,750	968	0	18,309
Set Gillnet	1,000	240	0	0	0	240
Sport	49,318	36,454	10,066	0	0	46,520
Total	**69,527**	**49,278**	**35,929**	**968**	**0**	**86,176**
Total All Gear	**266,800**	**241,118**	**53,113**	**1,311**	**0**	**295,542**

COHO	Catch	2012% Commercial	Avg % Commercial (1989-2012)	BOF Allocation %	Deviation from Allocation 2012	Deviation from Allocation 1989-2012
Troll	**1,200,896**	**63.8%**	**63.8%**	**61%**	**5%**	**5%**
Seine	280,142	14.9%	14.3%	19%	-22%	-25%
Drift Gillnet	303,047	16.1%	14.9%	13%	24%	15%
Set Gillnet	98,677	5.2%	7.0%	7%	-25%	-1%
Total Commercial	**1,882,762**					
Sport	Unavailable					
Marine						
Freshwater						
Total Sport	Unavailable	**% of Total Coho Harvest**				
Total All Gear						

CHUM	2012 Catch	West Behm Canal	Neets Bay	Homeshore	Sitka Sound	20 yr Average 1992-2011
Total Troll	**475,563**	362,174	47,998	26,095	24,487	276,885

Winter Fishery	Total	Permits	Landings	Pounds	Avg Wt.	Avg. Fish Ticket Price
2013 (thru 3/30/13)	**14,699**	**366**	**2,186**	**185,727**	**12.6**	**$8.42**
2012	20,103	299	2,452	247,465	12.3	$7.76
5 yr Avg (2008-12))	16,048	231	2,131	209,207	13.0	$7.54
10 yr Avg (2003-12)	22,814	234	2,551	302,039	13.2	$6.03

The Wheelhouse View

By President Steve Merritt, F/V C'est La Vie

When I was a young fisherman I joined ATA out of respect for the judgment of ATA board members like Tony Guggenbickler and Lance Ingle. They understood the politics of trolling and I, being quite new to the fishery, had very little interest in all that. My focus was catching fish, period. Over time, I began to realize that catching fish and defending the troll fleet's political interests are directly related. Twenty years later and ATA president, I now understand that without the dedication of past ATA board members, the troll fishery I built a life on would probably be very different – and not in a good way. It is my turn to represent the fishermen of this fishery in the political arena. I hope to continue what those before me started and inspire the next generation to see the importance of ATA.

There have been many changes in the troll fishery since I began—some negative, but also a lot of positives that ATA helped influence. This can be seen in the development of spring hatchery openings, protections for the winter fishery, and early coho retention and season extensions, just to name a few. ATA has been heavily involved in three stakeholder processes to disperse treaty Chinook mitigation monies that have directly and indirectly benefited the fleet through enhancement, troll infrastructure, marketing, and direct cash payments. On the federal level there have been successful accomplishments like bilge water permit moratoriums, habitat protection, and preventing passage of lax offshore fish farming bills.

By far, the most frustrating and disappointing issue for ATA is the Pacific Salmon Treaty. ATA has very little control in this arena and I warn you not to set expectations too high. We have to be careful to choose battles we think can be won. The ATA Board spends countless hours on treaty issues and the first thing I learned is that it is 10 times more complicated than you think. There is Canada, NMFS, the Bolt Decision and Baldrige Stipulation, Panels and Technical Committees, Transboundary Rivers, and state, federal, and tribal commissioners all interacting in one big complicated mess.

The state sends highly qualified representatives to treaty - don't sell them short. They are doing the best they can with the hand they have been dealt. Alaska's commissioner has only one vote – there are three others who have to agree, plus the feds.

Several fishermen have voiced disappointment and are demanding action from ATA and the state to increase the quota. It is easy to capture the rage of fishermen who feel the impact of treaty cuts—we all feel it! I have heard the expression "break windows" and calls to stage a public demonstration to express our anger. Yet sometimes throwing rocks is not the right approach – those rocks could bounce off a wall and the only broken windows would be Alaska's. With some treaty Chinook stocks returning at the lowest levels since the 1970's, there are no simple solutions for negotiating more fish for Alaska. Despite our anger, we must make prudent decisions that are in the best interest of our trolling future. ATA is committed to that.

This is the time for the fleet to be united on the political front. We have the upcoming 5-year Chinook review and the 2018 treaty negotiations to get ready for. NMFS is out of control and on an anti-commercial fishing rampage. Board of Fish meetings, enhancement allocation, fish farming problems and genetically engineered salmon all loom on the horizon. A strong central representative organization is the best way to deal with these things.

Unfortunately, ATA is facing big economic challenges. As we all are experiencing, the cost of everything has gone up. The office and travel budgets have been hit hard and both are crucial to inform and represent the fleet at the Board of Fish, Council, congressional hearings, etc. We also need more money in our treaty and legal funds. The ATA board always has legal questions that need answering—that's not cheap.

Membership is improving, but large gains in this area are needed to make up for the generation that is retiring and other lost funding sources. The formation of coalitions and other organizations is taking its toll on our funding. ATA has fought for this fleet for 88 years and always will be the best representative for our interests, but it takes money to continue this work. So if you have a trolling buddy or supplier that isn't a member, please make the effort to get them to join. It will be the best money they ever spent to help protect their financial future.

ATA MITIGATION GOALS

- Develop multi-year program to offset the lost treaty harvest opportunity of hook and line Chinook fishermen.
- Provide meaningful mitigation to each affected Southeast troller.
- Work with other Stakeholders to define mutually beneficial projects.
- Develop and improve troll related infrastructure.

Oncorhynchus tshawytscha

- Distribute mitigation benefits throughout the Southeast/Yakutat. region.

TROLL MITIGATION TEAM

Steve Merritt, Troller
30 yr. fisherman, SPC Member, ATA President

Howard Pendell, Troller
39 yr. fisherman, SPC Member, Treaty Rep

Rich Davis, Troll Processors
43 yr. fisherman, SPC Board, Former Treaty Rep

Dale Kelley, ATA / Troll Deckhand
25 yr. ATA Executive Director, Treaty Rep

Treaty Mitigation: Phase II Set to Begin

The next phase of the SE Chinook mitigation program has launched This program is intended to offset the losses of troll and sport fishermen under the 2009 Pacific Salmon Treaty. **All total, ATA secured over $6.45 million for direct payments to trollers, plus millions more for infrastructure and enhancement.** It's taken quite a bit of time to get where we wanted to go. Trollers and anglers on the Stakeholder Panel agreed on the current project list last May. The Governor's Fish Cabinet accepted the Stakeholder's plan in June and the agencies crafted new regulations for the program, which went through a lengthy approval process. The Lt. Governor recently signed the regulations and the agencies are off and running. Hopefully the fleet will be pleased with the results.

Direct Pay Program

Applications were mailed to qualified trollers around March 1, so if you don't have one yet, make sure CFEC has your current address. You can also find the forms online. **Deadline to apply: May 13th**

The 2013 direct payment will cover two fishing years: 2010 and 2011, making it very important to apply on time. There is one application for both years. In 2014, qualified trollers will get one final application to cover fishing year 2012. The new program is slightly different than the one used for the 2009 season. 75% of the fund will be shared by trollers who landed at least one king salmon; 25% will be split according to individual tonnage. $3.3 million will be paid out in 2013, and the fleet will receive $1.5 million in 2014.

If you qualified for the last round but did not receive payment, you are in luck! Due to the short notice of last year's payments, ATA was able to secure a second chance for about 70 qualified trollers who missed out. Those trollers should get a separate application. This is a one-time deal for the 2009 fishery only — there will be no similar program for 2010-12. Don't forget to get those applications in the mail! **Suggestion:** use 'Certified Mail'.

Infrastructure

You should be able to ice up in Pelican this summer, thanks to this fund and a lot of hard work by folks in Pelican. The equipment will produce 35-40 tons of ice per day, and there is a 60 ton storage bin. This was ATA's top infrastructure priority. On our list this year is more ice, dock/work float, and boat haul-out improvements in key areas. The sport reps are looking for cleaning stations and ice. The state is currently taking proposals. **Deadline: April 16th.**

Enhancement

Funds will target more coho and Chinook projects in the Southern areas, along with inside remote release sites for Chinook. These hatchery projects are being paid for by both troll and sport funds, and the fish will be shared by all user groups.

Categories and Funding (in thousands)	Current Program	2010-11 Program	TOTAL Mitigation
Enhancement	$1,050	$2,300	$3,350
Infrastructure (Commercial)	$ 760	$1,750	$2,510
Infrastructure: (Sport Fish)	$1,633	$850	$2,483
Direct Payments: 2009	$ 115		$115
Direct Payments: 2010-2012	$4,842	$1,500	$6,342
Consumer Research		$300	$300
TOTAL	**$8,400**	**$6,700**	**$15,100**

Mitigation Program Updates: www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fisherymitigation.2012_2014program

Chieftain Metals Stops Water Treatment at Tulsequah Chief Mine Site

Redfern Resources went bankrupt in 2009 and Chieftain Metals quickly announced its intent to purchase the Tulsequah Chief Mine site. Commercial and sport fishermen, regulatory agencies, elected officials, Governor Sarah Palin and the US State Department immediately contacted the Canadian government, to express longstanding concerns related to acid drainage at the mine site. In response, British Columbia officials stated that, as a condition of the company's acquisition of the mine site, Chieftain Metals would be required to address acid mine drainage. Further assurances were made to Alaskan's and the U.S. that a permanent cleanup would be done once the Tulsequah Chief mine site is reclaimed. Many were skeptical about Chieftain's ability to follow through on the clean up requirements.

In March 2012, Chieftain installed an Interim Water Treatment Plant. Just three months later, in a letter to Environment Canada, Chieftain noted its intent to close the plant at the end of June, due to technical and financial problems. By July, Chieftain released a report calling off water treatment until the company can raise the $300-500 million necessary to develop the mine. Ironically, earlier letters by both ATA and Juneau Mayor Bruce Botelho predicted such problems. Chieftain's financial challenges are large, from an apparent absence of investors to the Taku River Tlingit First Nation's resistance to an access road. It seems unlikely that this operator will be able to raise the funds needed to reinitiate mine operations any time soon, if ever. Options to address acid mine drainage must be developed, and in a way that does not rely on the presence of a working mine.

The Taku River produces more coho and Chinook than any other river in Southeast—contributing 40% of Southeast's Chinook return. At the urging of ATA and others, a Legislative Task Force was formed last spring to review options to better protect the river. The river's trans-boundary status, among other things, makes it rather complicated. Hearings were held and a report was filed. The Juneau legislative delegation is now considering their best course of action. Fishermen are encouraged to contact legislators with their concerns.

From the Director's Desk…

When I was a kid, my parents always said that time was flying by, while I'd complain that it just crawled. Funny how quickly my folk's concept of time became my own. Know the feeling? Each year more issues get piled on and the pace gets faster and faster, leaving me wondering just how much more fun we can stand. The legislature left Juneau after one of the most disorienting sessions I've seen. They ran the gamut from barbless hooks, to waxing another fine Board of Fish (BOF) member, and nearly annihilating the ADFG budget in Southeast. Luckily, we were able to defend most of the Department's budget and have so far prevented the legislature from wading into fisheries management. But Vince Webster will leave the BOF on June 30 and the search is on for a knowledgeable commercial representative from Bristol Bay. We'll have to revisit many of the same bills next year, and it will probably be another battle to try and secure some semblance of balance on the BOF.

Disappointing news for trollers this spring was the low king salmon quota. Production is down for many Chinook stocks, which is reflected in the abundance based quota. Biologists now say that there was less fish in 2012 than the model predicted. The 2013 forecast indicates lower returns for some of the stocks we catch, like early Fraser River, West Coast Vancouver Island , and a significant set of 'driver stocks' - the Upriver Brights from the Columbia River. Recently, the Brights have been returning at near record levels and a record is forecast this year. However, an unusually high number of young fish in the mix has muddled things. Typically, we harvest 5 year old Chinook in Southeast, but nearly 43% of the Bright run is expected to be 3 year olds —more than twice the norm! Most 3 year olds are under 28". There will also be about 10% more 4 year olds. So, the fish might be in the fishery, but not big enough to harvest. This shift in age class could explain some of the more petite fish we've been seeing. Of course, the additional 15% treaty cut we've been getting since 2009 just adds insult to injury. It's possible that the small fish could point to increased abundance and quotas in the next year or two—time will tell. But while we await that answer, you can bet that time will crawl. Keep the Faith! dk

ATA's mission is to preserve, promote, and perpetuate the fishing industry in Alaska. To that end, we work for conservation, sound management, good public policy, and safety at sea for the general welfare and mutual benefit of all.

Calendar

April		
26	GE Comment Deadline	http://www.regulations.gov
May		
3-5	ATA Board Meeting—Members Welcome!	Prospector Hotel, Juneau
13	Chinook Mitigation Applications Due	http://commerce.alaska.gov/dca/grt/ChinookSalmon_DirectDistGrants.html
TBD	ATA Port Meetings	
TBD	ATA Raffle	
June		
3-11	North Pacific Fishery Management Council	Centennial Hall, Juneau http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/index.html

Special Thanks

Seafood Producers Cooperative
Sitka Sound Seafoods
Triad Fisheries
Mike & Barb Rugo

Your exceptional support helps ATA stay on the job.

Board of Directors: Nominations Open thru May 31st

The following seats are open for nomination:

At Large, Sitka (2), Juneau, Wrangell, Lower 48

Northern Rural, Southern Rural, Handtroll

- Both the candidate and the person who nominates them must be ATA members in good standing. Powertrollers nominate and elect powertrollers; handtrollers nominate and elect handtrollers.
- Board term is 2 years - November 2013 to Nov. 2015.
- ATA pays board meeting expenses, which includes two board meetings a year and teleconferencing.

Contact the office right away if you are interested in running or nominating someone for the board.

2013 Priorities

Treaty/ESA
Board of Fisheries
Offshore Aquaculture
EPA / DEC Regulations
USCG Safety Regulation
Healthcare

Welcome New Members

(Thru Dec 31, 2012)

	Boat	Home Port	Type
Joe Daniels	Sophia	Portland	PT
Nelson Merrell	Imperial	Juneau	PT
Eric Grundberg	Happy Time	Petersburg	PT
David Clarke	Suki	Bellingham	PT
Jason Andersen	Cinnabar	Sitka	PT
Brad Jurries	Miss Teale	Craig	PT/P
Howard Starband	Miss Amy	Hoonah	HT
Craig Ring		Ketchikan	HT
Edward Brown	Aquilla	Oak Harbor	CW
Mike Montagne		Port Angeles	CW
Kayla Cantelow	New Day	Port Angeles	CW
City of Wrangell		Wrangell	B

Upgrades

Ken Ash	Jettison	Sitka	Retired
Monte McFarland	Rocinante	Sitka	PT/LIFE
Tony McDonald	Red Hook	Petersburg	PT/G
Eric Oen	Comet	Sitka	PT/S
Tele Aadsen	Nerka	Bellingham	CW/P
Bruce Weyhrauch		Juneau	B/S

Did we miss you? Give a call!

Are you helping with the ATA/ADFG Call-In Program?

If not, phone in soon. Not sure what it is? Give a call and we'll fill you in.

ATA 586-9400 / ADFG 747-8434

ATA is grateful for the support of our Business Members and encourages your patronage of these fine establishments...

Anderes Oil, Ketchikan
Bruce Weyhrauch, Juneau
City of Craig
City of Port Alexander
City of Pelican
City of Wrangell
Hill Bar & Liquor, Craig
E.C. Phillips & Son, Ketchikan
First Bank, Ketchikan
Hammer& Wikan, Petersburg
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Madison Lumber, Ketchikan
Murray Pacific, Ketchikan
Murray Pacific, Sitka
Ocean Beauty XIP
Ottesen's True Value Hardware
Petersburg Fisheries, Petersburg
Petro Marine, Seward
Precision Boatworks, Sitka
Seafood Producers Co-op
Sea Mart, Sitka
Seattle Marine, Seattle
Service Auto Parts, Ketchikan
Shoreline, Pelican
Sitka Boat Watch
Sitka Sound Seafoods
Taku Oil, Juneau
Taku Smokeries, Juneau
The Boat Company, WA, DC
The Office Bar, Hoonah
Timber & Marine Supply, KTN
Tongass Trading, Ketchikan
Trading Union, Petersburg
Triad Fisheries
Union Machine Shop, Ketchikan
US Seven Oceans, Mukilteo
Yakutat Seafoods, Yakutat

Board of Directors

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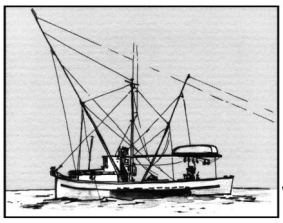

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___Renewal ___ New Member

Category	Power	Hand	Crew	Processor	Other Business
Basic	**300**	**200**	**75**	**500**	**250**
Silver	**350**	**250**	**110**	**1000**	**500**
Gold	**400**	**300**	**160**	**2500**	**1000**
Platinum	**500**	**400**	**300**	**5000**	**2500**
LIFE	**3000**	**2000**	**750**		
1st YR Initiation Rate	**150**	**100**			
Retired Troller	**50**	**50**	**50**		

For Your Convenience…

You may include payments to these groups along with your ATA dues:

____**United Fishermen of Alaska** ($175)
____**Commercial Fishermen of America** ($50)
___ **Halibut Coalition** ($)

Name:_____ **F/V**: _____

Address:_____ **City/Zip**:_____

Phone/Cell: _____ **E-Mail**: _____

Crew Size: ___ **Ice Boat**: ___ **Freezer Boat**: ___ **Direct Seafood Marketer**: ____ **Processor**: ____ **SPC**: ____ **UFA**: ____

Other Fisheries:_____

Are you willing to volunteer some time and/or expertise to ATA? Yes ____ No ____ **Call-In Program?** Yes___ No___

DONATION: $ _____ Please use my extra donation for: Legal ____ Treaty ____ General Purposes ____ Publicity ____

T-SHIRTS: Slate, Forest Green (L, XL)

		Qty.	**Size(s)**	**Color(s)**
Long-sleeve	$25	____	_____	_____
Short-sleeve	$25	____	_____	_____

HATS: navy oilskin / light blue microfiber

		Qty.	**Color(s)**
Hat:	$25 - **TEMPORARILY OUT OF STOCK**		
Raffle Ticket:	$20	____	

Method of Payment: Check _____ Mastercard _____ Visa _____ **Need a Receipt?** A receipt for tax purposes is sent to all members in late January. Check only if you want an extra receipt. **Yes___ No___**

Account #_____

Exp. Date:_____ **Amount: $**_____ **Signature:**_____