

East POW AC Meeting Feb. 9, 2020

Call to Order: 2:03pm

Roll Call:

Members Present:

JR Parsley
Kurt Whitehead
John Ryan
Perry Olson
Ray Slayton
Dave Egelston via phone
Della Colburn via phone

Members absent: Gary Anderson-unexcused, William Pattison-unexcused

Number needed for quorum: 5

Fish and Game staff present: Craig Schwanke-ADFG

Guests present: Matt Beck via phone, Kim Redmond, Monty McDonald, Delores Louckes, Tom Beck, Nick Gefre, Jim Beard, Ron Leighton, Ann Parsley, Dennis Pollock, Skip Escoban, Tom Harden, Neil Schoenfelder

Correspondence: John read 2 letters from Gregg Cook. One was a letter of resignation. The other was a letter regarding the SARA hatchery in Whale Pass, asking the advisory council to submit a letter of support for the Neck Lake hatchery.

Craig Schwanke gave a presentation on Non-Pelagic Rockfish

Craig Schwanke's gave a power point presentation on Non-Pelagic rockfish fishery management:

Personal use and sport fishing was closed for Yelloweye. Subsistence fishing doesn't need to release rockfish at depth like they do with sport fishing.

Commercial fishing manages for Demersal Shelf Rockfish(DSR)-Yelloweye, China, Copper, Quillback, Rosethorn, Tiger, Canary

Sportfishing manages for non-pelagic rockfish which includes Silvergray, Bocacio, Redstripe, as well as the DSR fish.

Current management for SE Outside waters:

84% of DSR Total Allowable Catch (TAC) allocated to commercial fisheries
16% of DSR TAC allocated to sport fisheries managed by Emergency Order

Map of the survey locations on the W side of POW.
Charts of increased catch rates and declining stocks.

Southern Southeast ROV Survey is mainly off Dall Is. They've been tracking the Yelloweye biomass trending down for several decades since they've been doing the surveys since 1994.

Charter logbook program reports all the rockfish the charters catch and release.

WA and OR have experienced the same thing and they closed their harvest in the early 2000's and are just now experiencing a rebuild 20 years after they shut everything down.

Federal subsistence groundfish regulations: 30 hooks and 20 halibut per day is the SHARC card(subsistence) and you can NOT keep non-pelagic rockfish but there are no requirements to release the fish.

State subsistence ground fish regulations: if you are not targeting halibut you can use hand line or long line with unlimited hooks and no bag limit. If targeting halibut you can only use 2 hooks and retain 2 halibut daily.

The different regulations are confusing.

Hopefully ADFG will come up with informational brochures showing all the different regs.

Discussion about splitting out the Yelloweye from the rest of the DSR?

Craig said we can put in a proposal to BOF to separate the yelloweye rockfish from the others.

Yelloweye make up the largest harvest in the data.

Yelloweye is the main fish in the harvest data. ADFG is seeing fewer older fish.

Deepwater release for rockfish is mandatory starting 1.1.2020.

Survival can be as high as 98% when using deepwater release techniques.

The swimbladder will expand 3 times from 66' up to the surface.

Recommended to use 3-7lbs. to release the fish and release the fish at 100' or depth of capture.

Jan. 1, 2020 there is no retention of nonpelagic rockfish and all salt water anglers are required to release rockfish with a deep water release and all anglers are required to have a deepwater release mechanism on board the vessel.

Pelagic rockfish live up to 30 years.

Non-pelagic rockfish live up to 120 years and mature around 10 years.

High release mortality due to barotrauma unless using deepwater release techniques.

Rockfish have a closed swim bladder which is different than other fish and their swim bladder will triple in volume from 66' to the surface. Lingcod, halibut and salmon have an open swim bladder so those fish can get rid of the air.

Barotrauma can be reversed with recompression by deepwater release.

They don't know if barotrauma damages the eyes but it doesn't seem to since they've conducted many studies showing long term survivability.

Have your deepwater device ready to use on all rockfish.

Device should weigh at least 3lbs and many large yelloweye will need up to 7lbs

Avoid rocky areas if you do not want to catch rockfish and keep your bait off the bottom.

Full retention is required for bycatch in the commercial fishery.

The question was posed why the commercial fishermen don't have to deepwater release? Craig said that is a good question.

Why are all the non-pelagic rockfish closed instead of just the Yelloweye rockfish.

BOF Proposals are due 4.10.2020.

The question posed: Why did the smallest user group (16%-sportfishermen) get hit with the closure?

The bycatch from the commercial industry will continue since halibut longliners are able to retain bycatch.

End of Craig Schwanke's presentation.

Old Business:

Fake residency: update from Kurt, John and Perry. Many of these residents are claiming residency and exploiting our resources. The biggest loophole in AK is the word "domicile". The judges are dismissing these cases based on the definition of the word domicile. The state can recoup money these fake residents are cheating the state out of if we can close the loophole.

One option is to submit a proposal to the state on the definition of the word "domicile."

If we can put the burden of proof on the resident to prove residency instead of having the state to prove these people are not residents that would be the best option.

One way to do this is to align the PFD's requirements with the state residency requirements.

In AK you can be a registered voter in 30 days. The main convictions that are coming is because the person is buying a resident license in another state.

We can submit a proposal to the BOF for a change in the definition of the word "domicile."

Motion made and seconded to change the definition of the word domicile to the BOF. Motion passed in full agreement.

New Business:

Jim Beard of Coffman Cove has expressed interest in being a part of the East POW AC.

Kim Redmond stated he would like to be considered to be part of the East POW AC and that he has lived in Thorne Bay since 1976 and has been a local resource user that hunts and fishes.

Motion was made and seconded to have Kim Redmond and Jim Beard be considered for the next meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Whale Pass:

The inner bay needs to be closed to commercial crab fishing year round and possibly in other areas.

Motion made and seconded to submit a proposal to close the commercial crab fishing in Whale Pass. Motion passed in full agreement. If non-residents can fish for crab in the inner bay then commercial fishing should be allowed to fish is the main argument the commercial crabbers are using.

John spoke about the different regs for non-residents. Perry spoke about limiting the non-res and having an annual limit of crabbing. Closing non-res sport fishing and commercial fishing in front of your community is likely the best option. JR said there is enough pressure from the non-res and the commercial fishermen that the locals are taking notice. In Hollis they asked for a closure directly in front of Hollis so all the communities could get crab and it works well. Tom Harden spoke about his testimony at the BOF to the support the Hollis non-res/commercial closure.

Issues in Neck Lake and 108 creek. Should a proposal be made to close the 108 creek? Craig has some data for 108 creek but not much. 108 has summer run coho and fall run coho. JR said there are some complaints regarding the sport fishing on 108 creek.

Neck lake fishing issues: should a curfew be installed? The BOF might not support a curfew. Should some proposals be made for restrictions and/or for reducing the bag limit? SARA is suffering but what needs to be done to keep the hatchery? Is it possible to do an Emergency Order closure so ADFG has more control? The largest abusers of sport fishing regulations statewide usually occurs around the hatcheries. JR said another option would be to close the inner bay to sportfishing. Discussion about reducing the production of coho to 600K at the hatchery. We all agree it would be great to keep the Neck Lake hatchery. We should reach out to the SARA and ask them for advice. Tom spoke about a daily closure instead of having a boundary restriction. The lodges are benefitting greatly from the hatchery so it is worthwhile to figure out a solution. We all agreed to gather more intel and have JR reach out to SARA.

Beach seine issues: We can submit a proposal to restrict beach seiners to keep from choking off a creek. Low flow seine fisherman can easily cork the entire run in many drainages when there are low flows/lack of rain during some seasons.

A motion was made and seconded to submit a proposal to keep personal use beach seiners from choking off entire creeks. Motion passed in full agreement. The personal use beach seiners shouldn't be able to obstruct more than half the creek.

Coffman Cove:

A motion was made and seconded to send a letter to BOF concerning the high number of "friends" charter operations. Motion passed in full agreement.

A motion was made and seconded to submit a proposal regarding closing the commercial Dungeness crab season around Coffman. Motion passed with one (Ray Slayton) in opposition. The non-res and tourists are crabbing the area to death. It is a very real problem in Coffman Cove. Perry spoke about restricting the non-res to 2 crabs per day and 2 pots per person/4 pots per boat. Discussion ensued regarding the DIY crabbers that are taking advantage of the resources.

A motion was made and seconded to submit a letter to BOF to start a net fishery observer program for king salmon conservation. The motion passed unanimously. The bycatch of kings in the gill net and seine industry is staggering.

A motion was made and seconded to submit a proposal to make a regulation change to define an area around Coffman Cove so fishermen/boaters can return to the dock safely. The motion passed unanimously. There needs to be a way to safely navigate from the fishing grounds to home. There are so many gill netters in and around the cove and in front of the cove that it is a major safety issue. Safe passage is needed. There is no subsistence fishing in front of Coffman and there has never been. There is a closure just to the N around Salmon Lake but the problem around Coffman Cove is a safety issue. Reach out to Bo Meredith regarding the issue.

A motion was made and seconded to make it mandatory to report lost nets in all of SE. The motion passed unanimously.

Thorne Bay:

Shrimp pot tunnel eye opening issues: Many rigid shrimp pots have 16" tunnel eye opening perimeter while the regulation is 15" perimeter. Should we make a proposal to change the regulations to a 20" perimeter which is how many of the rigid pots openings are made and most are 2" x 8". If we submit a proposal to increase the opening size on rigid pots then they will be legal. **A motion was made to change the statewide regulation for rigid shrimp pots to increase the opening to 20" which would make them legal. The motion passed unanimously.**

Hollis:

Should we ask the BOF to promote the definition of bag limit. The regulation is: the person who hooked the fish owns the fish. There are no boat limits. **A motion was made and seconded to promote the definition of bag limit. The motion carried unanimously.** Kurt pointed out that trolling vs mooching is a double standard. Trollers have a definite advantage in that whomever grabs the rod gets the fish while the moochers that are fishing for other species have to let their over limit fish go. This is a moot point for trollers because the person who doesn't have their limit grabs the fish.

Kasaan:

The commercial shrimpers are continually over shrimping Twelve Mile Arm. **A motion was made and seconded to submit a proposal restricting the commercial shrimpers in Kasaan Bay and Twelve Mile Arm. The motion passed unanimously.** The main problem is the commercial shrimpers are fishing while the shrimp have eggs due to the Asian markets. Canada and Oregon have changed their regulations to STOP shrimping when they have eggs and they now have sustainable commercial harvests.

At the last BOF the commercial shrimpers main argument was "they have no where else to shrimp" in district 2.

A motion was made and seconded to submit a proposal to change the start of the commercial spring shrimping season to April 15 to protect the female shrimp/eggs. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made and seconded to submit a proposal to regulate the commercial crabbing in front of Kasaan. The motion passed unanimously.

Statewide:

State issues licenses to non-res so they can no longer print several copies to retain multiple bag limits. **A motion was made and seconded to write a letter to submit to BOF to address the duplicate license issue in SE. The motion carried unanimously.** Discussion ensued about how anglers can print a new license every day, thereby having a clean harvest record for the day and cheating the system.

A motion was made and seconded to submit a letter to BOF to request a definition for "shrimp". The motion passed unanimously. Two years ago ADFG changed the shrimp regs and now the wording is ambiguous. A "shrimp" should be a whole shrimp not a whole shrimp OR a shrimp tail.

Next meeting scheduled for March 15 @ 2pm in Thorne Bay at the city hall.

Meeting adjourned @ 5:03pm.