

Craig AC Fish & Game Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes January 8, 2024-Craig City Hall

Call to Order: 6:01pm

Roll Call:

Members present: 12

14 total Members & 1 alternate

Number needed for a quorum: 8

Craig AC Members	Officer	Designation	Present	Absent	Expiration
Ellen Hannan	Chair	Hunting	x		June 2026
Mike Douville	Vice Chair	Longline	x		June 2025
Kurt Whitehead	Secretary	Hunting Guide	x		June 2026
Mike Sheets		Trapping	x		June 2026
Dave Creighton		Charter	x		June 2027
Ray Douville		Shellfish	x		June 2027
Braden Harding		Charter	x		June 2025
Mike Kampnich		Gillnet		x (excused)	June 2025
Joel Steenstra		Herring Pound	x (online)		June 2027
Derek Anderson			x (online)		June 2027
Julie Yates			x (online)		June 2027
Sandra Marker			x		June 2025
Clinton Cook		Subsistence	x		June 2026
Madison Stumpf		Charter		x	June 2026
Kirk Agnitsch		Alternate		x	June 2025

ADFG Staff present: Craig Schwanke (ADFG sport fish), Patrick Fowler (ADFG), Kristy Tibbles (ADFG board support-online)

Guests present: Harriet Wadley(online), Kim Landeen (SEAGO-online), Jim Farmer, Bill Farmer, Cody Cowan (ATA-online)

Approval of Agenda:

Moved and seconded to approve the agenda for 1.8.2024.

Vote: Unanimous approval

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:

Meeting minutes from previous meeting are not complete but will have them prior to deadline.

Reports:

Public: None

Chair: None

ADFG: None

Old Business: None

New Business: SE AK Finfish/Shellfish Proposals

Prop 104: Allocate 5000 king salmon for the AK all gear quota to a king salmon subsistence fishery and establish provisions for king salmon subsistence fishery

Moved/seconded to adopt

Discussion: This will be a new fishery. The Treaty will have concerns and fish need to be sealed and need to meet treaty obligations. It creates problems for the dept to prosecute the fishery. This creates complexity for the regs and for the anglers. If passes the BOF the Treaty must then approve. The sampling of the fishery is the hardest thing for ADFG to prosecute. The only other subsistence fishery in SE AK to use a rod/reel is the sockeye fishery near Sitka. This allocation would come off the top as well as the comm net fisheries afterwards the troll gets 80% and sport fishery gets 20%.

TAC breakdown:

4.3%-seine

2.9%-gillnet

1000 fish-set gillnet

The remainder is split 80%-20% to troll vs sport fishery.

Majority/against: There is a potential for abuse. There is large loophole for cheating. There's a lot of concern for kings and creating another fishery isn't good timing. The majority of the 5000 fish will come from the troll fleet and this would equate to losing 1 day of our fishery and we are already losing fish to the sport fleet. Trollers live here and they need to fish to eat but they also need to pay bills. This is an honest good effort to help locals but there might be a better way to do it. We support subsistence and resident protections but this is a difficult fishery to pull off. One of the major issues the past few years is the model used for king abundance is flawed. Lobbying the treaty to negotiate to increase AK's harvest is possible but very difficult. AK already has a target on our back at the treaty negotiations so there will likely be opposition to increase our harvest share and Canada will be pushing hard to lower our treaty share. None of us agree with resident priority. **Bill Farmer:** As a troller, I can't afford to give up those fish.

Minority/for: This will create complexity for regulations. Looks more opportunity for food security. This will be a household permit like other subsistence fisheries. Many locals need food security and this will be a huge benefit for real residents. Subsistence is a priority by the state and hopefully this will generate meaningful discussion and the hope is that we can achieve it without it coming out of the troll fleet. The treaty doesn't care how the pie is cut, that's up to the state. The tribes buy a lot of fish from trollers and distributes to its members.

Vote: Fail: Opposed split: 8-No/4-Yes(Ellen, Mike D., Clinton, Mike S.)

Prop 105: Modify sport fishing regulations in the EEZ

Discussion: State has authority to manage its fishery in state water within 3 miles and beyond in the EEZ. The state needs to align state waters with federal waters so we don't lose its delegation authority so we are forced into this. We can't have different bag limits for res vs non-res in federal waters due to federal law. Halibut regs can use a guided angler bag limit vs non-guided hence the disparity in halibut regs. The state prefers to use the non-res bag limits in the EEZ. One of our big issues in SE AK is that feds don't differentiate b/n residency with halibut regs and the unguided boats are able to fish under resident bag limits thereby creating the incentive for these anglers. This will impact resident anglers fishing in the EEZ.

No Action

Prop 106/107: Prohibit non-res on charter vessels that have taken fish in the EEZ from offloading fish in state waters

Discussion: See above

No Action

Prop 108: Modify mgt. and allocation provisions of the SE KSMP

Moved/seconded to adopt

Discussion: The number of charter vessels has remained static or is decreasing other than in KTN but there has been an increase in the number of trips per vessel. There is no cap on the number of vessels that can get a guides license through the state but the main limiting factor with charter vessels is the Charter Halibut Permit (CHP) which was capped in 2007 and has decreased due to the retirement of the non-transferable permits. When permit holders of non-transferable permits die, only the transferable permits will remain which is why there has been a decrease in the number of CHP holders. The charter industry doesn't have limited entry. The state needs a Task Force to study the entire sport fishing industry and recommend management strategies. The treaty allocation reduction is one of the largest hurdles for all of us. CHP holders are not tied to homeports so we have the ability to move around SE AK. The pie is getting smaller and more people are cutting it up. The metric currently used to forecast the king salmon abundance level has been indicating there are fewer fish than what has been showing up so that forces all of us into the lower abundance level which is hard for all of us.

Majority(Opposed): The rolling 9 year avg is an issue with this prop. There is an increase in charters that don't guide for halibut and an increase in the DIY boats that are contributing to the overages. The increase in the DIY boats, seasonal residents and all the sport anglers are driving the increase in the sport numbers. There is no rolling avg. with the troll industry. The sport fleet might need a limited entry system. There can't be unlimited numbers on a fixed amount of fish. The charter fleet pays nothing into salmon enhancement. The troll fleet needs stability as well.

Minority(Supported): For the 25 yrs the state has operated under a KSMP the sport fleets avg is 20.2%. This prop would offer paybacks if the sport fleet is over 22%. In tiers of high and mid abundance, the troll fleet has no concerns and receives fish from the sport fleet. It's only in low abundance that troll has issues. Kim Landeen: There is a need for both short & long term protections for the troll fleet since we are not allowed to go over the TAC with the treaty allowing some allocations shift so the 9 yr rolling avg is used and the sport fleet can't exceed 22% in two successive years or there is a payback provision and this is a mechanism that will prevent it. There's not sufficient allocation to provide for residents and minimal opportunity for non-res. There is regional growth in KTN but there is not overall growth in the charter fleet. Saying there is unlimited exponential growth in the sport fishery, historically that just isn't true. One of the main issues is the treaty has reduced the total TAC to AK and the pie isn't as big as it used to be and the entire sport fleet fishes under the 20%, not just guided anglers. All resident harvest, unguided harvest and guided harvest come out of the 20% so the charter fleet is much closer to 12% than 20%. 20% is not sufficient to feed residents and non-res in the sport fleet. CHP's are further limited to the number of rods they can fish on the boat; there are 4 rod, 5 rod and 6 rod permits. The charter fleet does not currently have enough allocation to manage the sport fishery @ 20%. If troll demands we stay at 20%, that will force us to ask for more allocation. We all want resident protections. The state provides for the utilization of its resources for the maximum benefit of its people. King salmon are worth much more to the charter fleet than they are to the troll fleet and the charter fleet contributes a significant amount of sales tax to the city of Craig. Without the economic impact of the charter fleet this island and the community of Craig will be severely impacted. If the charter fleet is tied to 20% it will negatively impact many of our small businesses.

Vote: Fail: Split: Opposed 7-no/5-yes(Kurt, Dave, Joel, Derek, Braden)

Prop 109: Modify the structure of the KSMP by removing mgt. tiers

Moved/seconded to adopt

Discussion: This prop attempts to front load our king salmon and without that the sport fleet will take heavy losses. We aren't sure why the sport fleet keeps going over their cap. In low abundance, there are about 20,000 fish for the entire sport fishing fleet. The vast majority of our clients won't come up for 1 or even 2 annual kings in June. The 3 annual kings in the month of June allows them the **opportunity** to fish. There is not sufficient allocation in low abundance and the 20% hard cap doesn't work for the charter fleet.

Question for Patrick Fowler: What does the 20% hard cap do to the sport fleet in years of low abundance? ADFG has a good indicator in early to mid June which would force ADFG to restrict non-res to 1 or 2 annual fish and this is

the kiss of death for the charter fleet since we don't have other salmon to fish on in June/early July and our clients will not come back and be very upset with the Emergency Order mandate.

Vote: Fail; Split; Opposed 11-1(Yes-Mike S.)

Prop 110: Manage the sport fishery in-season to achieve the annual king salmon allocation to the sport fishery

Moved/seconded to adopt

Discussion: Patrick Fowler: We can't go over our TAC with the treaty so there are basically 2 types of management; EO to make sure we don't go over or borrowing quota from other gear types to prevent using EO measures. Instability in the season will reduce marketability. The charter fleet is taking cuts in the lingcod, black rockfish and DSR/Yelloweye so at some point the clients either go somewhere else or they just don't travel to AK. This will manage the sport fishery to 20%. The Ketchikan(KTN) fleet has a different business model than the lodges on the outer coast of PoW & Northern SE b/c we book multi-way groups and don't have access to 10,000+ cruise ship passengers/day. The 1 annual king in June would severely negatively impact the guides on the outer coasts. POW's business models are completely different than the KTN charter business models. We don't have all the info on any RC's.

Vote: Fail; Split; Opposed(6-no/5-yes Ray, Julie, Sandra, Clinton, Mike) Joel Steenstra signed off

Prop 111/112: KSMP

No Action

Prop 113: Modify the provisions of the SE AK KSMP and increase the sport allocation of king salmon

Moved/seconded to adopt

Discussion: This will be a higher allocation shift and damaging to trollers.

Vote: Fail; Split; Opposed (7-no/4-yes Kurt, Dave, Derek, Braden)

Prop 114: Withdrawn

No Action

Prop 115: KSMP

Moved/seconded to adopt

Discussion:

Vote: Fail; Split; Opposed (8-no/3-yes Julie, Sandra, Ray)

Prop 116/117: KSMP

Moved/seconded to adopt

Discussion: These props remove the ability to stay within the 20%.

Amended to include both props in one vote

Vote: Fail; Split; Opposed (9-no/2-yes Sandra, Ray)

Prop 118: KSMP

No Action

Prop 119/120: Close non-res sport fishery for kings 2 days/week

Moved/seconded to include both props in one vote

Discussion: Mike: ADFG has the ability to manage the sport fleet to its 20%. The trollers want to see whatever prop is chosen keeps the sport fleet to 20%. If approved, this would help the sport fleet stay under 20%. This is not the best mgt. tool and will negatively impact charter businesses and result in a re-allocation shift. This will also create negative consequences for the staffs of the businesses. With all the reductions we've taken the past many years we have reached rock bottom regarding marketability. We have to have opportunity for our anglers. The positive economic impacts of the sport fishing industry cannot be overstated. Flight services, sales taxes, lodging, groceries, retail, employment, fuel, etc. The benefits of the sport fishing services to our island and community is huge.

Vote: Fail; Split; Opposed (9-no/2-abstain Ray/Julie)

Prop 121: ADFG's bookkeeping prop so at the very least there will be a king salmon fishery

No Action

Prop 122/123/124/125/126/127/128/129:

Discussion: Charter captains and trollers generally shake kings immediately and get them back in the water. If 122 passes, anglers could get cited by removing the fish from of the water. How do you measure the fish and make sure it is 28" without removing it from the water.

No Action

Prop 130: Allow for remaining troll king salmon allocation after winter and spring troll fisheries to be harvested during a single retention period starting July 1

Moved/seconded to adopt

Discussion: This would front load the troller season. There is low king escapement during the troll fisheries and it will impact the stocks that are passing during that time. No other fishery has a split season and most trollers want to fish their kings in one shot then switch their gear over to cohos.

Vote: Pass; Split; Support (7-yes/4-no Kurt/Dave/Derek/Braden)

Prop 131: Establish criteria for establishing a limited harvest troll fishery in August and allow for more than one limited harvest fishery

Discussion: This would limit opportunity for trollers that have bigger boats that can fish kings more effectively than smaller boats. The proposer has a smaller boat, promotes hi-grading and takes away opportunity from other trollers. It's good to see trollers managing trollers.

Vote: Fail; Split; Opposed (7-no/4-yes Kurt/Dave/Derek/Braden)

Prop 132: Establish a min size limit for king salmon of 26.5" from snout to fork of tail in the spring troll fishery

Moved/seconded to adopt

Discussion: This would change a long standing reg that is uniform across the fisheries. Don't retain fish unless they are 28.25" long. This would be a more defined way to measure fish.

Vote: Fail; Split; Opposed (8-no/3-yes Mike S./Julie/Ray)

Prop 134: Expand landing and retention requirements for king salmon by purse seine permit holders and establish penalties for violating landing requirements

Moved/seconded to adopt

Discussion: There is a loophole in the regs that allows the judge to fine seiners who illegally retain kings over 28" during non-retention periods to be fined \$150 per offense instead of \$150/fish. This prop would close the loophole. There are just a few members of the fleet that habitually retain kings during non-retention periods and this will help prevent it as well as help our king salmon. A long standing seiner of POW was consulted and he said this will help curtail the illegal activity and preserve our resources. **Ray:** It is morally criminal to toss a dead fish overboard.

Vote: Fail; Split; Opposed (5-yes/2-no (Mike D./Clinton)/4-abstain(Braden/Ray/Julie/Sandra)

Ellen is unanimously elected to be the Craig AC rep @ the BOF

Meeting Adjourned @ 10:18pm

Minutes recorded by: Kurt Whitehead

Minutes approved by: Ellen Hannan

Date: Jan. 14.2025