



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

December 17, 2001

Mr. Frank Rue
Commissioner
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 25526
Juneau, Alaska 99802-5526

Dear ~~Mr.~~ ^{Frank} Rue:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is required under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) of 1972 (as amended in 1994) to monitor and report on twelve fisheries, many of which include State of Alaska salmon fisheries. These fisheries are categorized as having moderate levels of direct mortalities of marine mammals. We have been monitoring and reporting on fisheries under the Alaska Marine Mammal Observer Program (AMMOP). AMMOP is a rotational program aimed at observing various fisheries, via contractual arrangements, that may interact with marine mammals. The goal of AMMOP is to assess the interactions of protected species and commercial fisheries. See Table 1 in the attached AMMOP booklet for a complete categorization of Alaska fisheries under the MMPA.

Under AMMOP, we observed the Cook Inlet salmon set and drift gillnet fisheries in 1999 and 2000. We were scheduled to observe the Kodiak set gillnet fishery in 2001, however the coverage was delayed to allow for additional information gathering and public outreach. We have now scheduled observation of the Kodiak commercial salmon set gillnet fishery in 2002 and 2003. We anticipate observing the salmon drift gillnet fishery in Southeast Alaska in 2003 and 2004, with outreach beginning in 2002. Because observing all Alaskan fisheries at once is not possible, NMFS rotates the observer coverage to areas of highest concerns or where data are lacking. NMFS is reviewing contract proposals for Kodiak at present.

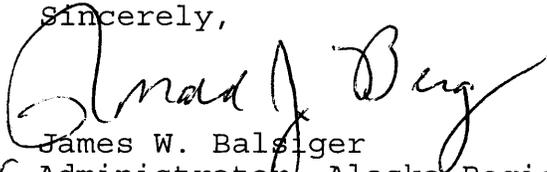
We continue to have excellent cooperation with Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) fisheries managers and scientists and with their assistance, have been able to better understand the operating details of the State fisheries. The coordinated effort has helped to initiate local connections with fishing associations, answer questions and address industry concerns, and make in-season program adjustments to reflect fishing effort.

Any questions regarding the operation and objectives of the program can be directed to Amy Van Atten at (907) 586-7642. I have also attached the AMMOP booklet and a letter which have been sent to all permit holders in Kodiak. Please let us know if ADF&G has any



particular informational needs that can be obtained with this program. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,


For James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region

Attachments (2)
cc: Amy Van Atten