

# Phaseout only partial solution

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Alaska Congressional Delegation believes the March 8 agreement between the U.S. State Department and the Japan Fishery Agency on North Pacific salmon interception represents only limited progress in the attempt to address several major high seas marine life issues.

The agreement calls for the phaseout and eventual elimination of fishing by the Japanese mothership fleet in the Bering Sea by 1994. It also moves Japan's land-based fishery fleet's fishing area west by one degree of longitude, and calls for intensified fishery enforcement and research on the origin of salmon.

"This is only a partial solution to the problems facing the North Pacific's living marine resources," says Senator Ted Stevens. "The State Department dealt only with the impact the Japanese fleets had on Alaskan salmon resources, but high seas drift-nets create a devastating curtain of death for other living marine resources as well as salmon.

"Environmental concern over drift-nets is growing, and it will become a major issue in Congress," adds Stevens. "Alaska will be involved when the issue comes to the forefront."

"I am not satisfied with this agreement," says Senator Frank Murkowski. "After eight rounds of meetings between the State Department and the Japanese delegation, this agreement - as I understand it - says in another eight years we should be able to solve about a quarter of the

salmon interception problem."

"Although we didn't get everything we asked for, another step has been taken towards the eventual elimination of the wasteful high seas salmon fishery," says Congressman Don Young. "I have been working on this important issue for a number of years, and progress has been slow, but progress has been made. My efforts in this area will continue until none of our Alaska salmon are caught by foreign fishermen."

All three members of the Alaska Delegation plan to explore other avenues and ways to combat the interception of salmon and other marine life on the high seas.

"We entered into these negotiations in good faith with the intention of ending the interception of Alaska salmon. Unfortunately, we have not succeeded," says Senator Murkowski. "I'm pursuing whatever options are remaining on this issue."

"The Soviet Union and the U.S. have a common interest in the conservation of high seas fish stocks. When Japan claims a right to fish salmon of Asian origin, it means salmon of Soviet origin," notes Senator Stevens. "Other species of fish such as pollock go unregulated in the international waters of the Bering Sea, which prohibits the U.S. and Soviets from regulating our own stocks within our respective 200-mile limits. These issues can only be addressed by direct consultations with the Soviets over the management of the high seas resources of the North Pacific."