

# U.S., Russia Fishery Agreement Meets Approval By Gov. Hickel

Governor Walter J. Hickel last weekend supported the one-year fishery agreement signed earlier in the week by the United States and Russia for what it accomplishes and for its probable effect on other fishery agreements.

"The agreement will halt Russian fishing at the 12-mile limit off much of our coast, and I feel that it sets up a good climate for us in the coming renegotiation of our crab pot agreement with the Russians," Hickel said.

"Our ultimate goal is to have no foreign fishing within the 12-mile limit. This is a step in that direction," he said in a statement released from the Governor's Office in Juneau.

Under this agreement, the Russians will respect a 12-mile fishing limit off Alaska, except for two areas of the Aleutian chain and one area near Yakutat.

In these areas, the Russians will not be interfering with our gear and they will not be catching stocks we are presently interested in," Hickel said.

He added that the Russians understand that they will have to move out of these areas "when we begin to use these stocks or some gear conflict develops."

If such a move becomes necessary, it would be made when the agreement is renegotiated annually.

The two concessions allowing the Russians to fish to the three-mile limit on the Aleutian chain protect the Adak and Unalaska king crab industry, Hickel pointed out.

Soviet fishing to the three-mile limit is permitted under this agreement between 169 and 173 degrees west longitude, and again from 178 degrees 30 minutes west longitude to the west end of the Aleutian chain.

The third area in which the Russians may come to the three-mile limit is in the Gulf of Alaska west of Yakutat, between 140 degrees 30 minutes and 142 degrees, 30 minutes west longitude.

"Our fishing interests are not hurt by these concessions, and they create a favorable climate for the renegotiation of the crab pot agreement with the Russians," Hickel said.

The agreement affects six large king crab areas from 15 to 35 miles off Kodiak Island, and thus beyond the 12-mile limit.

From July through October the Russians stay clear of these areas with their trawl gear, which damages the crab pots.

"We are looking for a renewal and perhaps some extension of this agreement in December," the Governor said.

This agreement also helps protect American halibut gear off Kodiak Island during the critical part of the season from May 9 to May 23, he said.

The Soviets have agreed to refrain altogether from fishing off the northeast and southwest of Kodiak Island during that time.

Hickel pointed out that the agreement also allows Russian ships to conduct loading operations only at eight points inside the 12-mile limit off Oregon, Washington and Alaska.

The three Alaskan points are near Forester Island, on the east side of Kayak Island and on the west side of Sanak Island.

"I want to remind Alaskans that the Soviets are now unilaterally refraining from fishing salmon on the high seas and from fishing halibut off Alaska, on the continental shelf," the Governor said.

"This week's agreement is beneficial to Alaska.

"The State Department is currently negotiating with Japan about the new American 12-mile limit for fisheries.

"We are hopeful that this agreement with the Russians will help us toward an understanding with Japan that also will be good for Alaska," Hickel said.