

State Department will try to reduce Japanese salmon take

JUNEAU--Governor Bill Sheffield announced earlier this month that the State Department is sending a diplomatic note to the Government of Japan asking that US/Japan bilateral discussions begin as soon as possible to find a way to eliminate interceptions of Alaska salmon in the Japanese high seas mothership and land-based gillnet fisheries.

"Dramatic new information on salmon interceptions was brought to our attention last fall from a study funded in part by our Alaska Department of Fish and Game," Sheffield said. He added that this information substantiated suspicions that major in-

terception of Alaska salmon were still occurring in the Japanese high seas fisheries, despite the area pullbacks following the 1978 renegotiation of the International North Pacific Fisheries Convention (INPFC).

"Based on that new data, I asked our representatives at the INPFC meeting last fall to see that the U.S. vigorously encourages Japan to end the wasteful harvest of important Alaska salmonstocks taken on the high seas, which has long been a stated U.S. policy," Sheffield said.

Based on Alaska's requests, U.S. State Department Fisheries

Ambassador Ed Wolfe, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fisheries, met last week in Anchorage with state officials, INPFC Commissioner, and other Alaskans affected by Japanese interceptions and discussed strategies to deal with the issue. Those meetings resulted in the U.S. request to the Government of Japan to initiate bilateral discussions in the near future.

Sheffield said the state would be fully involved in the negotiations with Japan. "Our objective here is to reduce and eventually eliminated Alaska salmon interception on the high seas," The Governor said.