

Hearings scheduled on southeast troll plan

Public hearings have been scheduled in five Southeastern Alaska communities during mid-November on the draft environmental impact statement and fishery management plan for the Commercial Troll Fishery off the Coast of Alaska. The schedule is as follows:

November 14--Juneau (Elks Club) 9 a.m. November 15--Ketchikan, (Marine View Hotel) 9:30 a.m. November 16--Petersburg, (City Hall) 1 p.m. November 17--Sitka, (Centennial Building) 2 p.m. November 18--Pelican (School Gym) 10 a.m.

The fishery management plan for the troll fishery has been printed and mailed. The notice of availability appeared in the Federal Register Oct. 14. Appearance in the Register automatically starts the 45-day review period required by law for the environmental impact statement, a part of the fishery management plan. The record will remain open for written comments through Nov. 28 and the comments compiled from the hearings and mail will be taken under consideration by the Council during the Dec. 1-2 meeting to be held in Anchorage.

The latest plan, third in a series developed by the Council, was drafted by a team from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the National Marine Fisheries Service with help from

staff members of the Washington Department of Fisheries who had assisted in preparation of a similar plan for the Pacific Fishery Management Council.

Included in the plan are recommendations for closing the troll salmon fishery north and west of Cape Suckling and two proposals for regulating the fishery north and west of Cape Spencer. The first sets an open season for chinook from April 15 through June 30 and for coho from June 15 to June 30 west of Cape Spencer. The second would prohibit troll fishing north and west of Cape Spencer. The plan also proposes a limited entry system already in effect and administered in state waters by the State of Alaska.

Copies of the draft plan are available for review at public libraries and Alaska Department of Fish and Game offices throughout the state. They may also be obtained from the council at the Anchorage office.

Two additional fishery management plans, grouper and Tanner crab, were approved during the September meeting of the Council and have been distributed to the office of the Secretary of Commerce, for review starting Oct. 18. Copies of those plans will not be available in quantity until after review by the Secretary. At that time, the Council will have copies available for all interested parties.