

A view on management of herring fisheries

(Editor's Note: This article does not necessarily reflect the views of the Tundra Times. Response from interested parties is encouraged.)

By JAMES A. DOMINISH

One of Alaska's greatest resources, the Prince William Sound Herring Fishing (1910-1950) which once saw 20 her-

ring processors employ 3,000 workers, is dying again.

Decline of Herring stocks along with Market Value was the major reason for the downfall in the 1940's and 1950's. Prince William Sound Herring Stocks were left alone for about twenty years to rebuild.

In the past ten years, the State of Alaska's Board of Fish-

eries action has promoted the wasteful purse seining. That has been the practice of bagging thousands of tons of immature herring stocks, holding them up for 12 through 16 hours until they were checked by the processors who decide whether the female egg content is enough, and then releasing them to die. Ten consecutive years of this practice has led Prince William Sound's Herring Quota of 5,000 tons to produce only 168 tons. Needless to say, drift-gillnet regulating is guaranteed to catch only mature fish.

The fish processors who control the Alaska Board of Fisher-

ies have recently scored their biggest coup by outlawing the Drift Gilnet Herring Fleet. The Drift Gilnet Herring Fleet is the true answer to the end of the wasteful practices of the Purse Seine Fleet!

If we had an Alaskan Board of Fisheries dedicated to the preservation of the Herring Runs, a viable Drift Gilnet Fleet of 400 boats could have utilized 1,200 fishermen, mainly from the South Central Area, and year after year, a highly profitable drift gillnet fishing would have been maintained. Perhaps the appointment of four out of seven

seats to the Alaska Board of Fisheries being controlled by the herring seiners has been their answer for grabbing everything now and leaving nothing for the future generations.

Study the herring depletion in the South East and the island of Hokaido of Japan and you will see that political optimum yield ruled over maximum sustainable yield.

When are our fisheries going to be based on stock preservation so that there is something left for the future generation?

Twenty years of statehood has changed nothing!