

# Not Able to Fish In Over 80 Years

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Mr. Howard Rock, Editor  
Tundra Times  
P.O. Box 1287  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Dear Howard:

Here is a short history of Bristol Bay Fisheries. Thought you might like to print it in the Tundra Times.

This year for the first time in over eighty (80) years, the people of Bristol Bay, other Alaskans and Fellow American Citizens are not able to fish commercially and only limited subsistence use for red salmon unless an unexpected run shows up, which did show up, but not very much.

The Bristol Bay red salmon run was once one of the World's Greatest Fishery.

Before the arrival of the white man in Alaska, the Native people of Bristol Bay and other Natives of Alaska lived off the land, lakes, rivers and sea which they still do. The predominate food of these people was salmon and still is.

The entire salmon was utilized for food and clothing, such as rain gear and boots, also the skin was used for tents and served as a cover for boats and kayaks. Additional salmon was dried for dog food; dog teams which were and still is to some extent being used for winter transportation. Dogs were also used in the summer time for packing when there was no snow.

Along with the salmon, the predators followed, beluga, whale, seals, gulls, terns, and various fish-eating birds. Trout on the rivers and lakes are prying on the salmon year round. These predators were and are still utilized for food; one of my favorites is still a real fresh airborne sea gull egg in early spring. The above mentioned predators were used for centuries without damage to the natural resource and environment.

Conservation was practiced by these original Americans, never taking more than they could use. Then about 1893, the white man arrived to exploit and process the red salmon, which they did very dramatically. They exploited the Bristol Bay Region so bad without conservation

practice, that in the early 1940's, steps had to be taken to save the red salmon, of which was put in force until after World War II.

In early 1950's, the Japanese again came into the picture negotiating a very successful treaty with Canada and the United States (North American Fisheries Treaty) to catch the Bristol Bay salmon on the high seas. The reason I say again is that in the mid 1930's, the Japanese fleet caught record catches.

The North American Fisheries Treaty, which was signed by the United States, Canada, and Japan, gladly signed the agreement so that they could take Bristol Bay and Western Alaska salmon on the high seas and lay off the other fisheries, salmon and tuna from Southeast Alaska, Canada, Washington Coast, Oregon Coast, California Coast, on down to Southern South America.

Consequently, the Japanese got so good at catching Western Alaska salmon, they caught 12% to over 50% of the salmon that was heading for Bristol Bay.

The Japanese say they take only an average of 12% of the Bristol Bay run. They use in excess of 400 mother ships, gill-netters and other support vessels to catch this 12%. The economics just isn't there to use such a large fleet to just catch this 12%. 12% sounds real phony at this point.

They, the Japanese, use miles and miles of legal and illegal gear, in season and out of season. They prey upon immature salmon. They've been caught time and time again hundreds of miles east of the treaty lines. Also they've been caught in the Gulf of Alaska with salmon. They're constantly violating the North American Fisheries Treaty.

These people, the Japanese fishermen, are the real modern day predators of salmon, along with some of our big politicians, who are suppose to represent us, but for selfish reasons have sided with the Predators rather than help us solve the problem of eliminating the high seas fisheries for salmon.

I've heard from various people that the Native Alaskans are wasteful, destructive to the environment, but think a while — the Alaska Natives were since time began, without running out of natural resources. The environment was not nor was it ever damaged by the first and original Americans. The damage began in 1893 when the exploiters

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came, and the modern day predator (Japanese) arrived on the scene in the 1930's to the present.

The trend of killing one of nature's greatest gift of mankind has steadily increased. This increased destruction of a great natural resource that could be beneficial for future population of the United States and the world, is just about gone.

The only way it could be saved is by proper management and through government channels by telling them, "High seas fisheries for salmon just doesn't work." This fishery has to be saved.

When the oil and other non-renewable resources are gone, this major fishery should still be a major resource. With your help, it could be for all Americans and the rest of the world alike.

Sincerely yours,

Bristol Bay Native Corp.

Harvey H. Samuelsen

President