

# Agreement calls for monitoring Japanese fleet

The United States and Japan have reached a new agreement that will increase the number of observers on Japanese fishing vessels using high seas driftnets and require the entire fleet to have satellite transmitters, according to the Alaska Congressional Delegation.

Under the one-year agreement, 98 vessels from Japan's squid driftnet and large mesh driftnet fleets will be monitored during the 1990 fishing season by 47 U.S., 10 Canadian and 41 Japanese observers.

Only 32 Japanese driftnet fishing vessels were covered by observers under last year's agreement, the delegation said.

The new agreement also requires every vessel in the Japanese driftnet fleet to carry a satellite transmitter that will provide U.S. officials with immediate information about the movement of the driftnet fleet.

This will help ensure that observers are posted in all areas where Japanese driftnet vessels are fishing rather than concentrating their efforts in regions where only a few vessels are located, according to the delegation.

"Japan finally seems to be realizing that its fishery interests have to start dealing cooperatively with the rest of the world," said Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska. "We are going to have to work together for the sake of the fish out there."

The agreement is the result of negotiations required by the 1987 Driftnet Act, authored by Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska. Under the law, the governments of Japan, Korea and Taiwan must reach driftnet monitoring and enforcement agreements with the United States or face a ban on the importation of their products from the sea.

In addition to the Driftnet Act, the United Nations last December approved a resolution introduced by the United States at Stevens' request calling for a moratorium on all high seas driftnet fishing by June 30, 1992.

The moratorium would remain in place until it is agreed that the unacceptable impacts of driftnet fishing can be prevented and the conservation of ocean resources can be ensured.