

Letters to the **EDITOR**

River mouths not the only fishery

Dear Editor:

Popular thinking poses the Bristol Bay terminal salmon fisheries model as the answer to our conservation concerns. According to the terminal management model, we concentrate commercial fishing effort exclusively at river mouths. Often, we assume that this effort is directed on single, unmixed stocks.

We forget, if we ever knew, that on an average year, according to ADF&G, Bristol Bay fishermen harvest four to six million salmon of non-local stocks. These "intercept" numbers rival in size any other complete sockeye fishery in the state.

Across the state from the Southeast to the Yukon, mixed stock fisheries are the norm. There is no spawning, for example,

in the Yukon River delta where the better part of the lower Yukon commercial salmon stocks returning to their various widely disparate natal drainage's.

Focusing our conservation concerns on our many small streams with historical runs of 50-500 fish (where "every fish counts") it quickly becomes clear that the terminal fishery model has practical limits.

Oversimplified thinking which contrasts pure "terminal" fisheries against baneful "intercept" fisheries does not help us develop sound management plans.

Indeed, we realize that good management policy must concern itself with the ratio of fishing intensity to the size and concentration of different stocks. Often a

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dispersed fishery management model, involving low density fishing effort, represents best policy for those of us with conservation concerns.

*Thank you,
Flip Felton
Homer, AK*