

Fisheries panel seeks roe-stripping ban

by Warren Jarvis

for the Tundra Times

In the seemingly never-ending and often bitter battle between minimizing waste and maximizing profit, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council struck a blow against an industry that last year alone dumped roughly 111 million pounds of fish into the sea.

In a meeting in Anchorage, the council took action last week to endorse a recommendation to the U.S. secretary of the Department of Commerce that roe-stripping be banned in all waters for 1990.

Roe-stripping, a process whereby the egg-filled ovaries are removed from pollock, has come under increasing fire not only for the wasted fish but also for the possibility of fouling other fishing nets with rotting bodies.

Other concerns expressed at the meeting were the possibility of such egg-gathering harming the pollock populations. Supporters, however, pointed out that roe-stripping wastes less than 5 percent of the total North Pacific harvest and said that more fish are wasted by processors refusing to accept fish under a certain size than are wasted by roe-stripping.

The roe-stripping vessels achieve

continued on page twelve



photo by Chris Cushman

Kate Graham and Val Angasan discuss fisheries issues during a break at the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council.



• North Pacific panel attacks roe-stripping

continued from page three

their profit by quickly removing the eggs, then tossing overboard the remainder of the fish and all other seafood that had been caught in the net.

The emergency measure recommended by the council would prohibit roe-stripping in the 1990 season. The measure must be approved by the secretary of commerce before it will have the force of law.

Clarence Pautzke, executive director of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, says getting that approval should not be a problem,

although he added that the Commerce Department would "really have to get jumping on it" to have the measure defined and in place by 1990.

In another action, the council recommended a split in the pollock quota. The reason for this, Pautzke said, was so the quota doesn't all get taken in one chunk, leaving the groundfish industry shut down for the rest of the year in the Gulf of Alaska.

For trawlers, the recommended rule would limit their catch for each of the first two quarters of the year to 30 percent of the 2,000 metric ton limit. Any percentage not caught would be added to the remaining 40 percent for the se-

cond half of the year.

The 750 metric ton limit for long-line fishermen would be apportioned at 20 percent during the first quarter, 60 percent during the second, and the remainder of the quota may be caught over the rest of the year.

In other proceedings, the council decided to begin addressing the conflict between inshore and offshore fishing and processing.

The debate centers on whether the larger offshore fishing vessels, such as factory trawlers, are harvesting too much of the seasonal limit, thus jeopardizing the livelihood of shoreside communities and

processors.

According to Pautzke, recommendations for resolving the problem will be presented for public review in June, with action planned for the council's September meeting.

The council also extended the trip limit of 10,000 pounds for halibut in the Pribilof Islands area to encompass the entire season, rather than 10,000 for the first 50 percent of the limit and 20,000 thereafter, as well as recommending a delay in the opening of that season.

These measures were adopted, Pautzke said, to give more opportunities to smaller vessels.