

## Fishing Expo a Prime Spot to Lobby for Bristol Bay

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

The Pacific Marine Expo was held last week in Seattle, wrapping up on Thursday. The annual event is like a larger version of Kodiak's Com Fish Alaska in the spring. Dillingham driftnetter Verner Wilson, who's off-season job is with the World Wildlife Fund, attended this year and helped staff a booth on the tradeshow floor.

The booth he worked at was for the Fish Basket Coalition, which seeks to protect Bristol Bay's salmon fishery from non-renewable resource extraction proposed for the area.

He said there was plenty of support for the Save Bristol Bay cause, and thousands of postcards were handed out for fishermen to send to the president, their senators and congressmen.

The many conference topics ranged from vessel stability to marketing, how proper fish-handling can boost their value, and the screening of a movie about Coast Guard rescues. Among the lecturers was University of Alaska economist Gunnar Knapp, who gave a talk regarding the economic importance of Bristol Bay's salmon industry to the West Coast states, where many of the boat-builders, processors and fishermen are based.