

King Bycatch Decision Due Next Week

Wednesday, 29 May 2013

{audio}/images/stories/mp3/bycatch.mp3{/audio}

Jay Barrett/KMXT

One of the hot-button items on the agenda next week for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's meeting in Juneau will be king salmon bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska, specifically in the non-pollock trawl fisheries. A couple of the Kodiak fishermen who will be at the meeting were on KMXT's Talk of the Rock this week discussing the issue. Terry Haines says he understands the emotions people in Western Alaska and Cook Inlet have over declining chinook stocks.

One of the delicate issues around chinook bycatch is that the target species are valuable to other parts of the state, like Kodiak

The alternatives to mitigate the problem include hard caps of bycatch between 5,000 and 12,500 chinook, and could be apportioned either geographically or by boat type. Full retention of all salmon could also be implemented.

George Hutchins, the skipper of the trawler Elizabeth F, says the issue is being used to institute catch-share rationalization, which he thinks is unnecessary:

And like the Bering Sea when Crab Rationalization was put in place, Hutchins fears the Gulf fishery will consolidate and price many out of the industry.

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting starts June 5th in Juneau. We've got links to the agenda and chinook bycatch documents [KMXT.org](http://www.kmxt.org).