Greenpeace Says Pollock Harvest Too High

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{audio}/images/stories/mp3/1204_greenpeace_pollock.mp3{/audio}

Anne Hillman/KUCB and Jay Barrett/KMXT

As the North Pacific Fishery Management Council kicks off its meetings in Anchorage today, Greenpeace is trying to build awareness over what it sees as danger to the state's most lucrative fishery. Anne Hillman has more:

Greenpeace USA launched a television ad in Anchorage and Seattle this week to draw attention to what it sees as overfishing of pollock in Alaska waters.

-- (Pletnikoff not right 5 sec "There is a lot ... things are not right.") (kmxt folder)

George Pletnikoff, originally from the Pribilof Islands, is the Alaska Oceans Campaigner for Greenpeace. He says communities in Alaska need to support a more precautionary approach to fishery management in order to protect their

jobs and their communities. The new television ads depict an unemployed fisherman in yellow rain slickers and nor'easter hat panhandling on the street corner because pollock were overfished.

*-- (AFR Greenpeace commercial 30 sec "...from overfishing."
Music fades)* (kmxt folder)

Greenpeace argues that the North Pacific Fishery Management Council should cut the harvest for next year even further than National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration scientists propose. Using data from fisheries observers and two other surveys, fisheries biologist Jim Ianelli suggested cutting the Bering Sea pollock quota from 1-million tons to 815,000 tons for 2009. It's the lowest Acceptable Biological Catch in over three decades and a 45 percent decline from the peak of 1.49 million tons in 2004.

Pletnikoff says NOAA's own numbers show a decrease in biomass and the need for the cut:

*-- (Pletnikoff because ...22 sec "I'm not saying we don't ...
because of their science.")* (kmxt folder)

But Ianelli says the decrease is just part of a natural fluctuation cycle. The drop in quota looks extreme because pollock stocks were unusually high in 2003 and

2004.

Pollock - 1 "...allowable quota." 15 s

Ianelli
says when looking at the survey data, the actual population of pollock is increasing.

Pollock - 2 "...and the year after that." 26 s

Ianelli
says fleet is able to avoid some of the younger fish and not endanger the growth of the population. That means they don't need a further cut in quota. The North Pacific Fisheries Management Council will set the official 2009 pollock quota at their meeting in Anchorage
next week.

In Unalaska
I'm Anne Hillman, with reporting from Jay Barrett in Kodiak.

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