



ONCORHYNCHUS

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter, American Fisheries Society
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Early Chinook salmon tagging off commercial salmon troll vessels to validate the origin of fish harvested off Southeast Alaska, circa 1950.

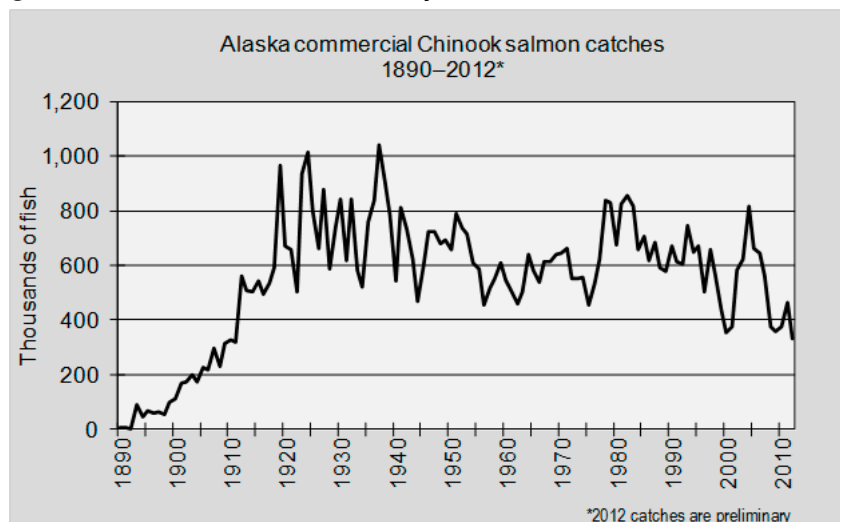
Photo from Parker and Kirkness (1956).

The Alaska Chinook Salmon Production Enigma... What's Going On?

Joe Orsi

"What's Going On?" may remind you of an R&B song by Marvin Gaye from the 1970s, but it's actually the question I keep asking myself about Chinook salmon in Alaska today. Chinook salmon, our Alaska state fish, is an iconic species that has recently experienced an unprecedented state-wide decline in production (i.e., reduced harvest, marine survivals, and recruit-per-spawner). In fact, the reported commercial landing of 330,000 Chinook in 2012 was the lowest since the early 1900s. Causes for this Chinook decline are thought to be rooted in poor early marine and overwinter conditions impacting year class strength. However, a host of other possible explanations exists. The seriousness of this problem was highlighted by a 2012 "commercial fishing disaster declaration" issued by the Federal Government for areas of Western and Southcentral Alaska. Furthermore, to address this problem, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game published a "knowledge gap analysis" and recently sponsored a *Chinook Salmon Symposium* in Anchorage this past October.

At the Chinook Salmon Symposium, I presented information from several NOAA research projects focused on marine ecology of juvenile (first ocean year) and immature (≥ 1 year in ocean) Chinook salmon in Southeast Alaska (SEAK). A month later at a University of Alaska seminar, I presented information on Chinook salmon marine interactions,
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Historical commercial Chinook salmon harvest in Alaska, 1890–2012
(C. Tide, ADF&G, pers. com.; note - errors are the responsibility of the author).

The President's Corner



Mark Wipfli, AFS Alaska Chapter President. Photo by A. Bersamin.

Mark Wipfli

It's early March and a balmy 34°F and sunny in interior Alaska as I sit down to write this piece, and there's definitely a serious case of spring fever in the air! It's great. The promise of long, warm (well, relatively speaking, for Alaska) and sunny spring and summer days, and the wonderful anticipation of fishing (no longer through the ice!), gardening (outdoors!), and being on the water (liquid!) in the coming months!

A very important opportunity may be coming our way in a few years as fishery specialists and AFS members. We have a chance to share the greatness of Alaska and bid for the national AFS meeting to be held in Anchorage, Alaska, in 2017. There was some earlier discussion about an Alaska bid for 2016 but it was too close to another west coast AFS meeting in 2015. To turn in a bid for Alaska, we'd need to assemble a committed group of folks from the Alaska Chapter to become a planning committee, within the next couple of months. We need a small handful of you whom are motivated, organized, committed, and cooperative-

Continued on next page

Alaska Chinook Catch, continued

spatial and temporal distributions, ocean life history strategies, age-sex-size structure, and fishing/harvest patterns. One important aspect covered during the seminar was the recent decline in the average size of Chinook salmon harvested in Alaska. Over the past two decades, the average size of Chinook salmon landed has declined significantly in commercial and sport fisheries. The negative slopes in these regressions suggest average Chinook weight in Alaska fisheries has declined 0.2 to 0.6 pounds per year. In contrast, data on Chinook from the commercial troll fishery of SEAK in the 1970s and 1980s showed an increase in average Chinook weight that occurred following an increase in the marine legal size limit from 26 to 28 inches; however, average weights in this fishery are presently near an all time low.

Earlier historical records give further insight to Chinook salmon harvest and size in Alaska. In the early 1900s, Cobb (1921; cited in Parker and Kirkness [1956]; for additional information email joe.orsi@noaa.gov) reported, "For some years the Indians here [Southeastern Alaska] had been catching king salmon for their own use during the spring months, and about the middle of January, 1905, king salmon were noticed in large numbers in the vicinity of Ketchikan." This soon led to commercial exploitation with some unexpected consequences. By the 1920s and 1930s, Port Alexander on southern Baranof Island in SEAK had become known as the "king salmon capital of Alaska." However, this heyday was short lived as it was confounded by construction of the barrier dams on the upper Columbia River in the mid 1930s that blocked access to some 600 miles of upriver spawning habitat extending into Canada. Parker and Kirkness (1956) reported that previous tagging studies documented Columbia River stocks as major contributors to this SEAK fishery and attributed the decline of Chinook salmon troll landings off SEAK to the dams. One exceptional Chinook salmon stock harvested in this fishery, the Columbia River "summer hogs," was a summer-run fish that returned to the Columbia River at an average weight of 30 pounds. In fact, the largest Chinook salmon in the world weighed 126.5 lbs and was taken in a fish trap off the northeast tip

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The President's Corner, continued

minded that can take this bull by the horns. Once the group is identified, the Chapter Executive Committee will work with the group on drafting and submitting the bid letter to national AFS. Please step up and help us hold another national AFS meeting as successful and rewarding as the last one we had in Anchorage in September 2005! Please contact me (mwipfli@alaska.edu or phone 907-474-6654) by May 15 if you are interested in being on the planning committee, chairing that committee, or know of somebody who is.

On a different note, a major project that has been on the horizon for some time is the Susitna-Watana Hydro Project, to be located about 180 river miles upstream from Cook Inlet. This huge project involves an enormous number of Alaska stakeholders and partners. The Alaska Energy Authority is proposing 58 studies within wildlife biology, hydrology, fisheries, aquatic ecology, and other disciplines as part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission licensing phase currently underway. The pre-project field studies aim to be an exhaustive effort to map and understand watershed and ecosystem function and structure before any construction begins. Many water

resource and fisheries specialists within the Chapter are, or will be, involved in the broader effort. For more information see <http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/>.

One final topic important to highlight is a possible conference to be jointly sponsored by the AFS Alaska Chapter and the Alaska Section of the American Water Resources Association (AWRA). Currently in the very early stages of discussion, the joint Alaska conference would potentially occur sometime in next few years. Although AWRA is a much smaller society than AFS, their mission and water resource focus compliments AFS' very nicely. Holding joint meetings with sister societies in related natural resource and environmental fields can be excellent opportunities to network more broadly than we commonly do, help us better understand the broader research and management issues within the state, and appreciate and learn new and different approaches and perspectives to research, teaching, and management that help broaden our outlooks and fisheries perspectives. I look forward to hearing your suggestions or reactions to this idea. ?

Alaska Chinook Catch, continued

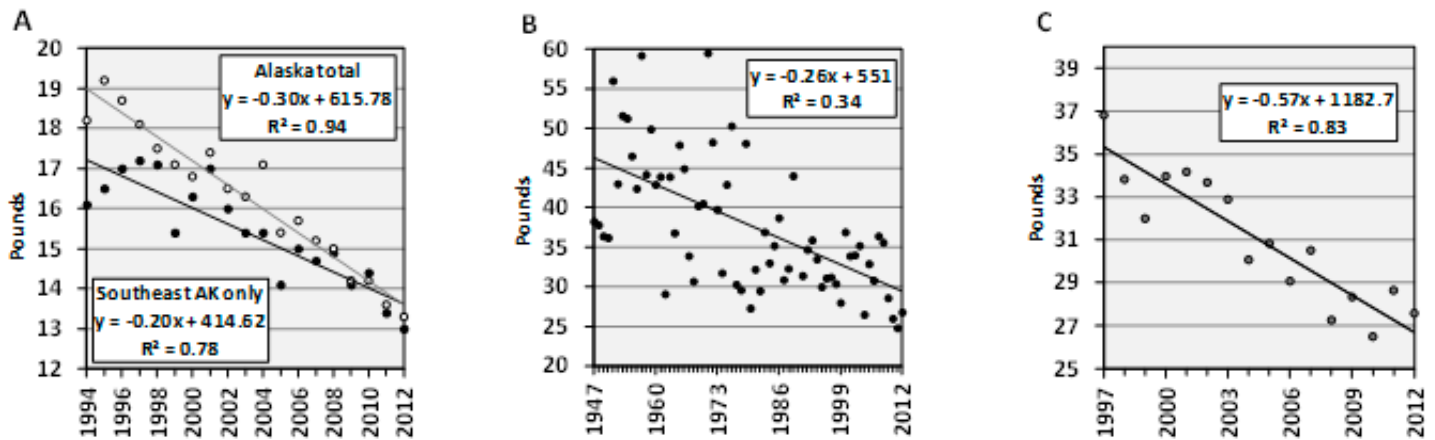
of Prince of Wales Island, SEAK in 1938. This fish now resides in a museum in Petersburg, serving as a reminder of these spectacularly-sized Chinook salmon that once frequented Alaskan waters.

So have other large-sized Chinook stocks in Alaska disappeared, and are large-sized fish indicative of healthy productive populations? I can't answer the first question, but the concept of declining size of salmon over time is not new. *Ricker (1981)* described this "fishing down" effect on Chinook size as a result of hook-and-line commercial fisheries off the coast of British Columbia from 1920 to 1980. In essence, the probability of older fish surviving to maturity declines as fishing pressure increases. Declining size, while not addressed at the Chinook Salmon Symposium, should be considered. Historically, Alaskan stocks of Chinook have been some of the oldest and largest fish along the Pacific Rim. Chinook salmon can live up to five marine winters

at sea (5-ocean), with males returning as age 1- to 5-ocean fish and females as 3- to 5-ocean fish. Not surprisingly, *Skaugstad and McCracken (1991)* reported that 5-ocean fish, have higher fecundity (~12K eggs/skein) compared to their smaller and younger 3- and 4-ocean siblings (~9K eggs/skein). If declining size at harvest translates to a loss of larger, older, and more productive females on the spawning grounds, then loss of older fish would negatively impact production. Also, there could be ecological consequences from losing the larger/older female segment of the population. For example, larger fish may better utilize (or access) larger spawning substrate or faster water, or dig deeper redds to deposit eggs. It would be prudent to validate if a reduction in age and size at maturity of Chinook is indeed taking place. If the proportion of smaller/younger spawning fish is skewed toward males, this could potentially set up

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Alaska Chinook Catch, continued



Declines in Chinook salmon weight over time in: (A) commercial fisheries in Alaska (white dots) and Southeast Alaska only (black dots), 1994–2012 (ADF&G 2012); (B) the winning weights in the Juneau Golden North Salmon Sport Derby, May 1948–1976 and August 1977–present (Territorial Sportsman 2012); and (C) mean weights of the top 30 fish in the Juneau Spring King Sport Derby, May 1998–2012 (Spring King Salmon Derby 2012).

a “negative feedback loop” of declining female abundance (and size) that would reduce egg production (or viability) and the subsequent number of returning adults to Alaska rivers.

One purpose of my provocative title is to stimulate new research direction and studies to better understand mechanisms responsible for declining Chinook salmon production in Alaska. Retrospective studies are needed on age, size, sex, and growth of selected index stocks of Chinook in Alaska to evaluate linkages to long-term trends in productivity. Similarly, continued research on the early marine conditions

and ecological interactions of Chinook is needed, particularly given climate change and ongoing dynamic oceanographic conditions. Chinook salmon are a highly migratory species; they are encountered or harvested as immature fish their entire ocean life history, which can extend across international, federal, state, regional, or tribal boundaries (and fisheries). Numerically, Chinook salmon represent <1% of total salmon landings in Alaska and comprise <0.01% of epipelagic fish communities in the Alaska Coastal Current (Orsi *et al.* 2007). So Chinook are not only rare and challenging to sample, but their potential inter-specific interactions are huge considering that a 5-ocean fish spends a total of 1,825 days at sea from smolt to adult! Examining Chinook ocean distributions and fishery encounters more closely, and paying particular attention to the stock and age components of immature Chinook, may be key to developing basic ocean life history models by stock; such models are needed to assess both ecological and fishery interactions related to natural and fishing mortality.

Traditional and local knowledge concerning historical and emerging fishing practices are also important areas of inquiry to help disentangle the Chinook salmon production enigma. One example is the reduced gillnet mesh size recently adopted for the Yukon to protect larger fish that were traditionally targeted with large mesh. What changes have occurred over time in other fisheries? One development in sport and charter fisheries has



Largest known Chinook salmon in the world (126.5 lbs), caught in a fish trap off Prince of Wales Island, Southeast Alaska in 1938 and currently mounted for display next to a cardboard cutout. (Photo from Clausen Museum, Petersburg, Alaska).

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Alaska Chinook Catch, continued

been the use of trolling downriggers, a technology largely unheard of a few decades ago but which is effective at targeting deeper dwelling, immature Chinook. Could cumulative catch and release mortality, as suggested by *Kerns et al. (2012)*, be a bigger issue than previously thought due to multiple hook-and-release encounters? More specifically, what about selective removal of the largest Chinook by hook-and-line fishing contests in coastal fishing communities throughout Alaska? To what extent are fish being “sorted” at sea with mainly the largest individuals retained for awards? It may sound a little counter-intuitive, but perhaps the legal size limit may actually be contributing to smaller sized fish (*Borrell 2013*). This is not too farfetched since the current legal size limit of 28 inches for SEAK includes not only all 3-ocean and older fish, but also the fastest growing 2-ocean Chinook component. If the fastest growing 2-ocean Chinook are “culled” ahead of their slower growing cohorts, then the fastest growing fish may incur a higher fishing mortality rate. If the growth rate has genetic linkages, we may be removing this faster growth trait from the population, leaving only slower growing, and smaller, individuals.

Observations on hooked and released Chinook may also provide insight to unsuspected sources of mortality. Having worked on several marine Chinook hooking mortality and gear selectivity studies, I can attest that the lethality of hooking injuries can be misleading. At first glance, a “nick” injury of the gill arch/filament seems innocuous, but a large percentage of these fish bleed out minutes later. For example, in one hooking mortality study, 76% of Chinook examined post mortem from holding pens exhibited a gill injury, but only 21% of these fish were assessed as having a serious injury at the time of landing (*Wertheimer et al. 1989*). Short-term (4–6 d) marine hooking mortality for Chinook caught and released off commercial salmon troll gear has been estimated at ~20% per encounter. When compounded for multiple encounters, a fish hooked and released, say three times, would have a probability of survival of $(1.0 - 0.2)^3 = 51\%$. Further inland, freshwater short-term hooked-and-released mortality of Chinook has reported to average

8% on the Kenai River in Alaska (*Bendock and Alexandersdottir 1993*). Have validated estimates of hooked and released mortality for Chinook been applied to actual release rates in Alaska fisheries so managers may consider this associated mortality?

Finally, Alaskan stakeholders may need to make “proactive” policy decisions to keep our Chinook salmon resource sustainable. These decisions will require a shared responsibility among resource users, relying heavily on local fisheries managers. Several “best practices” could be implemented through public education or regulations to minimize encounter rates or lethal wounds in Chinook salmon fisheries. Examples that come to mind are: (1) time/area fishing closures to minimize encounters when legal-sized Chinook may not be retained or when encounter rates of sublegal-sized, immature Chinook are high; (2) discourage sport/charter hook-and-release after a legal fish is retained, particularly in fishing contests; (3) limit gillnet fishing at night when Chinook are not targeted but tend to be close to the surface; and (4) encourage the use of a single-hook terminal tackle to reduce gill injury and avoid the lethal consequence of a fish “breaking off” with multiple hooks intact.

I hope this article has stimulated ideas for the future work needed to help turn around the Chinook production decline in Alaska. I also hope my introductory jingle of “What’s Going On” with Chinook does not digress to another Marvin Gaye song entitled “Mercy Mercy Me.” If we can take the appropriate steps to better understand and address this Alaska Chinook salmon production “enigma,” then this species might once again become “KING” in Alaska.

Joe Orsi received a B.S. in Fisheries from the University of Alaska in Juneau in 1981 and has worked as a Fisheries Research Biologist at the NOAA Auke Bay Laboratories in Juneau for over 30 years. He currently serves as principal investigator of the Southeast Alaska Coastal Monitoring project, examining relationships among climate, regional and basin scale indices, and salmon production in Southeast Alaska as part of the Ecosystem Monitoring and Assessment Program at NOAA’s Ted Stevens Marine Research Institute. 🐟

Allen Bingham Retires from ADF&G

After nearly 32 years of service to the people and fishery resources of the State of Alaska, Allen Bingham is retiring in April from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). Allen was recognized recently for his contribution to operational planning, creel survey methods, and statistical analysis of fisheries data statewide. In particular, his biometric and supervisory contributions helped change the face and stature of the ADF&G Division of Sport Fish.

Allen's career with ADF&G started in July 1981 as a Consulting Biometrician and Data Processing Project



Allen Bingham with retirement gift of a Ray Troll picture. Photo by Gwyn Wiedmer.

Manager directing the design, implementation, daily operation, and maintenance of database systems associated with the Susitna Hydroelectric Aquatic Studies. Following a transition to the ADF&G Division of Sport Fish in 1986, Allen helped trigger a "new era" in scientifically-based planning and stock assessment to facilitate sport fishery management. Of particular note was the use of modern creel survey techniques to estimate harvest, catch, and effort throughout the state, and Allen helped make the Statewide Harvest Survey the most relied upon source of recreational harvest and participation information in Alaska. Allen became Chief Biometrician of the Division of Sport Fish in 1999, focusing on recruiting and mentoring a cadre of biometricians to work closely with project biologists to design stock assessment projects, plan project implementation in the field, analyze the data, and report on the results. Recently, Allen was instrumental in helping the division develop

protocols for acquiring, analyzing, and reporting on the economic contributions of recreational anglers to the economy of the State of Alaska.

In addition to his "day job," Allen's passion for this chosen field was also expressed through his longstanding contributions and service to professional societies, particularly the Alaska chapters of the American Fisheries Society and American Statistical Association. Allen joined the American Fisheries Society in 1974 and he has served the Alaska Chapter in a variety of ways over the years. For instance, he was Chapter Secretary/Treasurer for 1997–1998, Chapter Treasurer for 1998–1999, and applied his prowess to develop and maintain an electronic database of the Chapter membership for over 15 years. Allen helped guide the Chapter into the electronic age by creating the original websites for both the Alaska Chapter and Western Division in the late 1990s, serving as Webmaster to manage the Chapter's list server from 1999 until 2011, and creating the Communications Committee, serving as chair during 2002–2012. There have also been numerous ad hoc Chapter contributions such as serving on the Rules and Bylaws Committee and serving as registration chair for various meetings, including the 16th Lowell Wakefield Fisheries Symposium and AFS joint meeting in 1998 and the 135th Parent Society Meeting in 2005. Allen also received the 2007 Alaska Chapter Service Award, and, at a retirement party in Anchorage, the Alaska Chapter presented Allen with a lifetime membership to the American Fisheries Society and the Alaska Chapter. This was the first lifetime membership ever presented by the Alaska Chapter's Executive Committee.

As Allen and his wife Diana will be relocating to Washington State, retirement will bring a new set of opportunities. For now, we know that Allen's professionalism and passion have been extremely productive and will have a lasting impact on fishery research and management for the aquatic resources of Alaska. 🐟

Call for Session Proposals: The 40th Annual Meeting of the Alaska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society

Philip Loring

Please join us in planning and celebrating the 40th annual meeting of the Alaska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, to be held October 7–11, 2013 at the Princess Fairbanks Lodge in Fairbanks, Alaska! We are currently accepting session proposals that align with the chosen theme of this 40th meeting:

“The Practice of Fisheries: Celebrating All Who Work Toward Sustainable Fisheries in Alaska.”

This theme was chosen in celebration of the many varied peoples who contribute to the health and sustainability of Alaska’s fisheries and fishing communities, whether as biologists, fisheries managers, students, artists, and so on.

This theme will be exemplified through a broad array of sessions, including keynotes, contributed oral sessions, and a poster session, and a long list of social activities and tours.

Sessions can focus on the practice of fisheries science or management, can be disciplinary or interdisciplinary, and should include 4–6 presentations at a length of 20 minutes each, including time for questions. Sessions often cover topics such as: Marine Fisheries; Freshwater Fisheries; Habitat; Recent Advances in Fish and Fisheries; Hatcheries; Human Dimensions; Modeling; Food Webs; Research Methods, etc. If you are interested in chairing (or co-chairing) a session, send a short (250-word) abstract and a (tentative) list of speakers to ploring@alaska.edu for consideration by June 15.

The tentative schedule includes continuing education workshops, and organized tours will be held on the first two days of the meeting (October 7 and 8) and a welcome reception will be held Tuesday evening, October 8. The keynote



Participants tour Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak in conjunction with the Alaska Chapter AFS meeting at Kodiak in October 2012. Photo by Bill Bechtol.

address and plenary session will be Wednesday morning, followed by concurrent oral sessions, with a poster session, social, and open mic (new event) Wednesday evening, October 9. Thursday and Friday, October 10 and 11, will be dedicated to concurrent sessions, with the banquet Thursday evening along with entertainment and an auction. The annual business meeting will be held late Friday morning, after which student awards will be presented before the meeting adjourns. In addition to the open mic night, new elements for this year’s meeting will include: a trivia challenge with prizes during the banquet; and 20-minute “learning studios” in which experts will offer mini-lessons on fisheries-related topics to small audiences.

If you have questions or recommendations, or are interested in helping with meeting planning, social activities, or local arrangements, please contact Chapter President-Elect and Program Committee Chair Philip Loring (ph: 907-474-7163; email: ploring@alaska.edu). Again, the deadline for session submission is June 15.

Hope to see you all in Fairbanks this fall!! 🐻

Short Course

Statistical Methods for Estimating Abundance of Natural Resources

Management and research for natural resources starts with a basic understanding of the abundance of a resource, from which temporal changes and relationships to other factors are established. If the resource is easily visible, it is often counted or estimated from a sample of plots. If the resource is only partly visible, distance sampling methods can be used. If the resource is not visible, mark-encounter methods may be used. For all methods, appropriate designs can help extract the most information for survey effort.

A modular course on statistical methods for estimating abundance in natural resources will be offered June 8–9, 2013 in Anchorage, Alaska. This

short course is co-sponsored by The International Environmetrics Society and the Alaska Chapter of the American Statistical Association. Leaders in their respective fields will present the course as the following four half-day modules (instructors in parenthesis): (1) Plot-Based Spatial Methods (Jay Ver Hoef); (2) Distance Sampling Methods (Steve Buckland); (3) Mark-Encounter Population Estimation Methods (Gary White); and (4) Sampling Designs (Don Stevens). Continental breakfast prior to the course, coffee breaks, and lunch are also provided. For additional information and fees see <http://ties2013.com/shortcourse.htm>

International Pacific Halibut Commission Merit Scholarship

The International Pacific Halibut Commission funds several Merit Scholarships to support University, Technical College, and other post-secondary education. The scholarship fund has been established to assist the further education of Canadian and U.S. students connected to the halibut fishery and its industry. Generally, a single scholarship valued at \$2,000 (U.S.) per year will be awarded. Scholarships are renewable annually for the normal four-year period of undergraduate education, subject to maintenance of satisfactory academic performance. A committee of industry and IPHC representatives will review applications and determine recipients based on academic qualifications, career goals, and relationship to the halibut industry. The scholarships for 2013 will be available for educational entrance or continuation in fall 2013. Additional questions can be directed to either Eva Luna (206) 634-1838 (ext. 7661) or Bruce Leaman (ext. 7672). Applications are available through the IPHC offices and must be postmarked no later than June 28, 2013. Applications may also be downloaded from the IPHC website at: <http://www.iphc.int/opportunities/scholarship.html>

Bristol Bay Watershed Resolution

At the mid-year meeting of the American Fisheries Society (parent society) during March 1–2, 2013, the Governing Board considered a society resolution *“For Recommending a Formal Independent Scientific Review and Survey of Potential Environmental and Socioeconomic Consequences of Large Scale Mineral Extraction in the Bristol Bay Watershed.”*

Based on membership comments and discussion with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officials, the board decided to withdraw the resolution from membership voting at this time. In particular, it was noted that the EPA had already completed an independent peer review of the issue and the board did not want AFS to appear as undermining the EPA efforts.

Nominations sought for the Oscar E. Sette Award

The Oscar Sette Award Committee of the AFS Marine Fisheries Section seeks nominations for the 2013 Oscar E. Sette Award. The award is presented to an individual who has demonstrated sustained excellence in marine fishery biology through research, teaching, administration, or a combination of the three. Specific criteria for the award may be viewed at this link to the Section’s webpage: http://sfrc.ufl.edu/mfs/index_files/Sette_Award.htm. Nominations must be submitted no later than May 31, 2013.

Renew your AFS membership online

www.fisheries.org/afs/membership

Student Subunit Happenings

Kari Fenske

Mark your calendars for the Student Symposium on Friday, April 26th, 2013! This annual, student-planned and student-run event is a chance for students to give presentations about their research. All Alaska AFS Chapter members are encouraged to tune in via video conference; contact Kari Fenske at khfenske@alaska.edu for more details.

Matt Evenson (Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Fairbanks) presented a seminar titled "Management of Chena River Chinook Salmon" to the Fairbanks students, which ties in very well with the subunit's research project that is currently underway. The subunit has narrowed down the initial project objectives to concentrate on identifying overwintering habitat of local resident and migratory fishes in the Chena River. The first sampling trip on March 2, 2013 was a great



Thomas Farrugia samples through the ice as part of the Chena River project by the Student Subunit. Photo by Kurt Heim.

learning experience, as club members drilled through a meter of ice below the Moose Creek dam to set minnow traps; however, no fish were captured on this first attempt. Trips are currently planned for many more locations on the upper and lower Chena during the remainder of the spring semester. For more information on the project visit <https://sites.google.com/a/alaska.edu/studentafs/2012-research-project>.

Congratulations to Kyle Shedd, who, on March 1, publicly defended his Masters thesis titled, "The Evolutionary Ecology of Kokanee and Trophic Dynamics of Mercury Ecotoxicology in a Unique, Nonanadromous Ecosystem in Southwest Alaska."

Marine Fisheries Student Travel Awards

Up to two student travel grants will be awarded to support students attending the annual AFS parent society meeting. Each award will consist of \$500 of travel support, and a one year student membership to both the American Fisheries Society and the Marine Fisheries Section. Recipients must be currently enrolled students (undergraduate, M.S., or Ph.D.) and be presenting a paper or poster on a marine fisheries related topic at the Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society. Applicants need not be members of the American Fisheries Society at the time of application.

Complete applications should include: (1) a letter of interest that includes: reasons for wanting to attend the meeting, and statement of need for travel support; (2) current resume or CV (2-page

maximum) including a listing of publications, honors, awards, and previous presentations; (3) title and abstract of the accepted paper(s) or poster(s); and (4) proof of student status (e.g., photocopy of a current transcript or a letter from a major professor).

Applications should be submitted via email, preferably compiled into one file (e.g., Word, RTF, or PDF format). Applications will be reviewed by the Student Travel Award Committee comprised of members of the Marine Fisheries Section. Applications for the Annual Meeting are due May 9, 2013, and successful applicants will be notified by June 20. Applications and question should be directed to: Dr. Syma Ebbin, syma.ebbin@aya.yale.edu.

Alaska Chapter Students

Named Outstanding Western Division Student Subunit

The Student Subunit of the Alaska Chapter AFS is proud to announce that they have been named Outstanding Student Subunit by the Western Division of the American Fisheries Society! The Subunit will be given the award at the April 2013 meeting of the Western Division in Boise, ID.

The Subunit includes students from Anchorage, Juneau, Fairbanks, and Kodiak. Each campus has unique events at the local level, and the whole Subunit participates in collective events, such as helping with the AK Chapter annual meeting and organizing the Student Symposium. The award is given to a Western Division student subunit that exhibits a commitment to the mission of the American Fisheries Society, through activities and membership dedication to achieving the goals of the AFS strategic plan. The award application process involved collaborative efforts by Kari Fenske (current Subunit President), Emily Lescak (Anchorage leader), Kurt Heim (Fairbanks leader), and Karson Coutré (Juneau leader) to summarize group activities occurring between March 2012 and February 2013. In the past year, the Student Subunit has helped sponsor the annual Student Symposium, hosted a job panel, planned and implemented a Subunit-led research project, participated in several outreach activities in our local communities, and conducted other activities to help our members network and grow professionally. Because of the structure of our Subunit governance, many of these great events were organized by past subunit leaders, including Thomas Farrugia, and dozens of actively participating students. A big thanks to all of our great student members whose involvement and enthusiasm has made the Alaska Chapter Student Subunit outstanding! 🐟

Continuing Education 2012 Committee Report

Tammy Hoem Neher, Committee Chair

The Continuing Education Committee designed and distributed a survey in June 2012 to solicit interest in the types of continuing education (CE) workshops that Chapter members would be interested in. Responses from a total of 74 people placed a >50% favorable rating on the following workshops: Spatial Statistics; Basic GIS; Fundamentals of Stock Assessment; Meta-Analyses in Fisheries; Incorporating Social Science; Professional Development; Communicating Science; Technical Writing; Genetics; Applied River Geomorphology; and Mark-Recapture. From questions about the potential timing of CE workshops in relation to the Wednesday through Friday occurrence of the annual AFS Alaska Chapter meeting, most respondents indicated a preference for Monday or Tuesday, but >50% said they would attend on a Sunday. Based on this input and ranking of the responses, instructors were identified for the following workshops: (1) Mark-Recapture; (2) Basic GIS; (3) Scientific Writing; (4) Hands-On DIDSON; (5) Hydroacoustics; (6) Communicating Science; and (7) Aircraft Survival (contingent on the availability of US Coast Guard trainers and facilities). The Hydroacoustics

instructor was subsequently unavailable and the course cancelled. Ultimately, most workshops did not meet minimum target enrollment size of 4-8 people and, with concerns expressed about the high cost of some workshops, the more expensive workshops were cancelled, leaving courses for which instructors donated their time. Enrollment for the workshops was: Aircraft Survival (11 participants), Hands-On DIDSON (4 participants); and Scientific Writing (6 participants). Although this participation was relatively low, lots of very positive feedback was received from individual participants.

We are looking forward to some great workshops for the annual meeting at Fairbanks in 2013, including Otolith Microanalyses Techniques (with use of the Advanced Instrumentation Lab). Please contact Tammy Hoem Neher (tdneher@gmail.com) with ideas or suggestions on workshops in which you would like to participate. 🐟



Environmental Concerns and Alaska Chapter Advocacy

Cecil Rich, *Environmental Concerns Committee Chair*

Concerned about an environmental issue that affects fish and think the voice of the AFS Alaska Chapter should be heard? The membership of the Alaska Chapter represents a wide breadth of knowledge and experience in the field of aquatic science. The Environmental Concerns Committee (ECC) was established by the Chapter to coordinate technical review and advice on environmental issues affecting fish and aquatic resources in Alaska when the Chapter's opinion or position is solicited by members or by external organizations or agencies. Examples of possible actions include a letter to policymakers stating the Chapter's position on an issue, a resolution for review by the Resolution and Bylaws Committee on issues that require major policy statements, or a coordinated scientific review (e.g., Environmental Impact Statement). Guidelines for this process are found in the section "Advocacy Policy and Procedures" within the Alaska Chapter's *Procedures Manual*. The overall intent of these advocacy guidelines is to focus the Chapter in using the expertise of its membership to provide science-based information to inform public policy on fisheries and aquatic habitat issues.

A short response time associated with EIS comments and legislative action often precludes using the resolution process with full membership approval. In such cases, the ECC may generate a Chapter statement on an issue through the following steps. (1) An issue is raised by ECC member or Chapter member at large for consideration by the ECC. The proposer must also provide a draft statement and supporting materials. The ECC Chair then refers the draft statement to ECC members for review. (2) The ECC Chair consolidates comments and redrafts the statement or assigns an ECC member, or other Chapter member with appropriate expertise, to redraft the statement. The revised statement is sent back to ECC for potential approval, or potential revision. (3) An ECC-approved statement is then sent to the Chapter Executive Committee for review and potential approval. If approved, the statement is sent out under Chapter President's signature.

For questions about this process or to bring forward an issue for possible action, contact Cecil Rich, ECC Chair, at cecil@gci.net.

Meetings and Events

Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society Western Division



April 15–18, 2013: This meeting will be held in Boise, ID. The topic of the meeting will be "Fisheries: Learning from the Past and Looking Towards the Future." For more information, please visit <http://www.wdafs.org>.

Migration and Survival Mechanisms of Juvenile Salmon and Steelhead in Ocean Ecosystems

April 25–26, 2013: This international workshop sponsored by the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission will take place in Honolulu, HI. More information is available at http://www.npafc.org/new/events/workshops/workshop2013/workshop_home.html.



23rd Annual Conference of The International Environmetrics Society

June 10-14, 2013: This meeting, jointly sponsored by TIES and the Alaska Chapter of the American Statistical Association, will be held in Anchorage, AK, with the theme of "Quantitative Methods, Applications, and Issues in Natural Resources: assessment, regulation, development, use, and conservation." For more information see <http://ties2013.com>.



Continued on next page

Meetings and Events, continued

International Conference on Engineering & Ecohydrology for Fish Passage



June 25–27, 2013: This meeting will be held at Oregon State University in Corvallis, OR. For more information please see: <http://fishpassage.umass.edu/>.

World Conference on Stock Assessment Methods for Sustainable Fisheries

July 15–19, 2013: This meeting will be held in Boston, Massachusetts. For more information, visit www.ices.dk/news-and-events/symposia/WCSAM-2013/.



143rd Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society Symposium

September 8–13, 2013: This meeting will be held in Little Rock, Arkansas with the theme “Preparing for the Challenges Ahead.” For more information, visit <http://afs2013.com/>.



2013 Arctic Science Conference

September 26–28, 2013: The conference, sponsored by the Arctic Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), will be held in Kodiak, Alaska with the theme “Fisheries and Watersheds: Food Security, Education and Sustainability.” For more information visit <http://arcticaaas.org/meetings/2013/index.html>.



ECSCA 53: Estuaries and Coastal Areas in Times of Intense Change

October 13–17, 2013: This conference, co-sponsored by the Estuarine Coastal Sciences Association, will be held in Shanghai, China. For more information, visit <http://www.estuarinecoastalconference.com/>.



40th Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society Alaska Chapter

October 7–11, 2013: This meeting will be held in Fairbanks, AK with the theme “The Practice of Fisheries: Celebrating All Who Work Toward Sustainable Fisheries in Alaska.” The meeting chair and program contact is Philip Loring (ploring@alaska.edu).



ONCORHYNCHUS

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