

## Letter to the Oregon Salmon Troll Fleet

As many of you have probably already heard, an increased enforcement effort by the Oregon State Police (OSP) operating out of Newport and Depoe Bay has resulted in several trollers being cited for fishing with more than the allowed 4 spreads per line. The relatively high percentage of non-compliance (at least 25%) has raised concern with the OSP and with fishery managers, as well as with the majority of the fleet, who are complying with the law.

We felt it was a good idea to send out a letter to help explain:

1. The reasoning behind this regulation in the first place,
2. The penalties for being caught,
3. The probable penalties to the fishery if the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) re-adjusts its calculations to account for reduced compliance

First of all, the 4-spread rule came about *because the fleet begged for it*. Back in the spring of 1990, the Oregon Troll fleet was being faced with huge block closures of the salmon fishery during the months of June, July, and August because of the hooking mortality impact calculated on Coho. We tried arguing to the PFMC that we could avoid Coho by various voluntary techniques, but got nowhere with the Salmon Technical Team (STT) of the PFMC.

Finally, a group of fishermen from Coos Bay suggested the idea of a mandatory reduction in spreads per line in order to get a better calculation of the hooking mortality issue. The Oregon Salmon Commission and the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) got together and designed a test study in an attempt to provide more accurate information to the STT.

The 4 spreads gear selection study was done in May and June of 1990, and was again tested in August and September of 1995. The final segment was done on the southern Oregon coast in 1996.

There were at least 10 different salmon trollers involved, and they fished approximately 210 boat-days, ran and recorded over 80,000 hooks, and caught over 11,000 salmon during the months of May, June, August, and September. The studies were conducted from Cascade Head to Brookings, in all kinds of weather and oceanographic conditions.

The results of all three studies were the same – reducing our spreads to 4 per line resulted in a savings of from **53% to 69%** on Coho, and there was no significant reduction in Chinook catch. On any given day, there were some Chinook caught above the 4<sup>th</sup> spread. The numbers of Chinook caught above the 4<sup>th</sup> spread were only occasional and were **statistically insignificant – mathematically, statistically, insignificant**. The study wasn't faked, and every salmon troller had an observer on board recording every Chinook, Coho, and rockfish contact on every hook!

Since 1991, Oregon Salmon Trollers have abided by the 4-spread rule and **have only had one-half of the summer closures that they would have had** without the vision of some fishermen in their fleet and the cooperation of ODFW.

The bottom line in the fishing business is always dollars at the end of the season. The undertaking of this action and application by members of the management teams has put **millions of additional dollars** into the economics of the Oregon Salmon Troll Fleet. Yes, a few extra Chinook might have been caught, but without the extra time on the ocean provided by the 4-spread rule, the bottom line would have been must less.

The penalty for violation of OAR 635.003.0004 (4-spread rule) is up to a \$7,500 fine and/or up to a year in jail. It is also within the power of ODFW to revoke a troll permit for blatant violation of any rule.

PFMC has the legal authority to close fishing in an emergency action if their Salmon Technical Team calculates that actual impacts to critical stocks (Coho, Rockfish, shaker Klamath Chinook, etc.) are over what they calculated pre-season. If our Coho impacts are recalculated based on the kind of non-compliance that we have been hearing from the OSP, we could be closed down for the better part of June, July, and August.

The Salmon Advisory Subpanel is working closely with the Salmon Technical Team, Oregon State Police, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, and the Oregon Salmon Commission to avoid any further closures in 2004 than those adopted in April.

The outcome depends solely on the Oregon Salmon Trollers and their willingness to continue to comply with the 4-spread rule.

The consequences of non-compliance would be felt by the entire Oregon Salmon Troll Fleet.

As some of you know, the PFMC Ad Hoc Allocation Committee attempted to change the gear array of West Coast Trollers in June of 2002. The recommendation was to move the West Coast Salmon

Troll Fleet outside of 100 fathoms to avoid rockfish stocks of concern, namely Canary and Yelloweye. So far this has not occurred, but it is on the list of **to be considered**. The work accomplished on the 4-spread study also indicated that the incidental hook-ups of rockfish was reduced when using only 4 spreads. Would the Oregon Salmon Troll Fleet like to do all of their trolling outside the 100 fathom curve with the groundfish industry? We think not.

The West Coast Salmon Fleets are enjoying a long overdue upswing in public demand and acceptance of **Wild Ocean Caught Salmon**. The good press about **Wild Salmon**, as well as the rebound in fish numbers due to good ocean conditions is providing a great opportunity. We have also been quite successful at getting out the facts that we are responsible fishermen and have a sustainable fishery. These things are directly responsible for the record prices we have been receiving this spring for Chinook.

This is 2004, not at all like the old days in any aspect of our lives, especially the fishing industry. None of us likes all the rules that we have to deal with, some of which have resulted in people being pushing out of fisheries they had participated in for years.

Currently the Salmon Commission Regulatory Committee and the Oregon Salmon Advisor are working with the Salmon Technical Team and ODFW in an attempt to provide some relief to the 4-spread rule in 2005. There is now a 12-year data set in place using the 4-spread rule and it looks like some changes could come in the spring of 2005.

We have ahead of us the prospects for some of the best years in the ocean salmon fishery since the 80's, and we need all the time on the water we can get. Please continue applying the 4-spread rule.

## Oregon Salmon Trollers Receive Top Dollar In Spring Season

Oregon Trollers started off the Spring of '04 receiving the highest prices on record for **WILD Oregon Salmon**. Production started off well with 103,000 pounds coastwide the first week, but dropped off abruptly by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Landings totaled just under 400,000 pounds through April 30, 2004 compared to 823,000 pounds during the Spring of 2003.

The bright spot was the increase in price per pound. Prices for the first six weeks of 2004 through April 30 averaged (all grades) **\$4.82** per pound. The Spring 2004 season produced prices more than 3 times higher than the \$1.57 per pound in 2003.

Prices remained high going into May with California finding few concentrations of salmon and Washington closing on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May for a count with good fishing the entire coastline.

Several reasons contribute to the great price including: consumer concern with farmed salmon compared to **WILD** salmon, less **WILD** salmon being landed, and the efforts of the Oregon Salmon Commission and First Purchasers through Governor Kulongoski's **BRAND OREGON** promotion and the continuing participation in the **Seafood Oregon** promotion.

Troll FRAM Coho Impacts with **no** gear spread credits – 2004 Base Model

Catch Area	Jan – June	July	August	Sept – Dec	Total
Tillamook	544	775	770	816	2905
Newport	4060	1940	2065	1303	9367
Coos Bay	2573	1403	1138	371	5485
Brookings	271	240	147	19	677
CA KMZ	0	0	0	113	113
Ft. Bragg	0	791	244	44	1079
So. Calif.	1430	241	50	11	1731
Total	8878	5390	4413	2677	21358

Falcon – Humbug = 17758    KMZ = 1580    So Horse = 2810

Troll FRAM Coho Impacts with gear spread credits – 2004 Base Model

Catch Area	Jan – June	July	August	Sept – Dec	Total
Tillamook	312	445	441	468	1666
Newport	2327	1112	1184	747	5371
Coos Bay	1132	617	501	163	2414
Brookings	90	80	49	6	226
CA KMZ	0	0	0	113	113
Ft. Bragg	0	791	244	44	1079
So. Calif.	1430	241	50	11	1731
Total	5292	3286	2468	1552	12599

Falcon – Humbug – 9450    KMZ = 678    So Horse = 2810

**LATE NEWS**

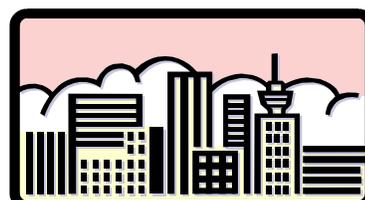
Jim Olson and Doug Fricke of Washington Trollers Association and Don Stevens, Regulatory Committee of the Oregon Salmon Commission and Chairman of the Salmon Advisory Subpanel, are putting WDFW and ODFW on notice that West Coast Trollers want an incidental retention of Ling Cod. Letters are in the works to request both agencies move this issue into the Pacific Fishery Management Council’s agenda at the June meeting in San Francisco.

**Ling Cod will most likely be taken off the “Overfished” listing by PFMC at the June meeting.**

**Salmon Commission Participates in Seafood Oregon and Brand Oregon**

Seafood Oregon is a joint marketing campaign with the four seafood commodity commissions of Albacore Tuna, Dungeness Crab, Salmon, and Trawl. We have combined resources to hire a manager for Seafood Oregon to work for all of us marketing and promoting our products.

The Brand Oregon program is the state’s program to market Oregon and its products. We have tied in with this program using “Oregon Wild” to denote our seafood. With the assistance of the Brand Oregon program, there were about 30 billboards in the Portland and Salem area promoting salmon during the month of May, with radio spots occurring frequently during the month. Shrimp has billboards and radio spots at this time, with sole and Dungeness Crab later in the year.



**Seafood Oregon Travels to Chicago**

The four Oregon Seafood Commodity Commissions traveled to Chicago in late May for the National Restaurant Association (NRA) trade show. Seafood Oregon had many compliments on the booth design and the Oregon Pink Shrimp and Dungeness Crab fry leg pieces that were available for tasting. Most who sampled our seafood were very impressed and wondered where they could get the products. This was a great opportunity for creating awareness of Oregon seafood. The Salmon Commission plans to participate at other trade shows with Seafood Oregon.

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Kevin Bastien • Sec/Treas • Newport (Fisherman)  
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Tagline is the official newsletter of the  
Oregon Salmon Commission

**Check It Out!** [www.oregonsalmon.org](http://www.oregonsalmon.org) The new website put together by the Oregon Salmon Commission will get the message out to all with internet access. Comments are always welcome!