

To: National Marine Fisheries Service

<<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/bycatch/default.htm>>

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From: Fred Huntington Sr. <fredsrhuntington@hotmail.com>

In response to the 2009 Chinook (Yukon River King Salmon) projections.

I have always stated the fact that the Bering Sea Pollock Fishery and the Yukon River Drainage as been harvesting the same fish for the last half a century, and ADF&G have not concern this issue and have always regulated the Yukon Fisheries. Using Window openings, Limited hours, Limit gear, Limit Commercial fishing, not giving the Yukon River fisherman be it commercial or subsistence use a fair share of the Yukon River Chinook Salmon. Over the last twenty years its been stated that over and over the Chinook salmon have been getting smaller in size and numbers have been smaller. The run have been targeted to a science with today's technology it is not hard to know when and where the fish are passing any fishing site at and what depth.

This issue has a number of issues, Gas prices, Hours of fishing, how many fish allowed taking, and this is from the mouth of the Yukon to the head waters, across the Canada border.

With this issue a change in the way of lively hood is taking place, Most of the fisherman in this Middle Yukon River have been fishing because of the most important stable diet that one could use during the long winter months in which we have been using for time memorial. At present this is Natives and non Natives, be it use for personnel consuming or for trade or barder. Either way at the price we pay for a gallon of milk or a loaf of bread has no comparison as to what it cost in any city in the United States. We pay for a gallon of gas at \$7.00 a gallon and for heating fuel at \$6.30 for a gallon.

During the winter a hundred gallons of heating fuel could last 10 days for some homes in this area during the minus 50 degree Fahrenheit. This has had a negative effect on the populations in the rural villages; many folks have moved to the bigger cities Fairbanks, or Anchorage.

We have sacrificed a lot in order to have a life out in our Yukon River villages. When and how this problem could be solved is near impossible. Last year as stated 150,000 Chinook salmon have passed the sonar at Pilot Station, It was also stated that 122,000 Chinook had been caught by the Pollock fisheries in the Bering Sea. This was the December season, There was also an earlier season with no record of by catch. These Chinook bound for the Western Rivers of Alaska, Out of the 275,000 Chinook a very small portion have made it pass the Canada border. It is also the Tanana River, Andreiska River, and all the tributaries on the Yukon River do have spawning grounds.

There are also the possibilities of the Hatcheries that are putting fish in the river system. This is also larger than the wild salmon been heading down the river to head out to the sea. Which could also be eating the wild stock of salmon while heading to the high seas. One concern is what I will do if I couldn't be allow to catch my winter supply of fish. There are other salmon in the river, Summer Chums, Fall Chums, and the White fish, Shee fish. However will I be able to fish during the Chinook run? I use a set net which is in an Eddie along the banks of the river. I harvest all the fish I catch in my salmon net. A lot of the openings as they are limited I can't afford to let many salmon go no mater if its Chinook or Chum. I use all including the White fish, and Shee Fish.

Now if I wasn't able to get a moose too. You know with the limited jobs in this region of the Yukon, I would be in for a very hard winter, I have three boys at home with me and they have been trying to get the education available to them. Two don't have diplomas the other has been taking courses with the University of Alaska rural campus for a trade with the dreams of a job on the future gas pipeline. Or other mining companies. I feel most of what I am saying go for most of the River Population.

Should we limit the fishing? We have no choice however the same goes for the Bering Sea fisheries too. It cannot and will not do any good to limit the Yukon Fisheries and continue to let the Pollock fisheries to harvest any by catch bound for any Alaskan rivers. As I see it I and a lot of folks will be looking for handouts of the Government although because we are who we are may not qualify for the benefits of a hand out.

I have been fishing this area of the Yukon River all of my life. I grew up here and have no intentions of moving to the bigger City of Anchorage, or Fairbanks.

Should the regulations be to limit than it should be only for the Chinook salmon through out the Yukon, Kuskokom and the Bering Sea, The falls pass and many of the state fisheries who are harvesting the Chinook salmon until numbers can be stabilized. I have been taught that what I have would be passed down to the next generation and they would enjoy the same of what I have been enjoying the most of my life. With all this said and done. I do believe we are in for some changing times as we continue to wipe out the stock Of Chinook salmon on the Alaskan rivers. As I notice I may have spell Kuso wrong but we know where that is. Thank you for letting me voice my statement may it take you closer to your task of saving the Chinook salmon.