

Federal Regulations On Salmon Fishing Start Affecting The Local Industry

Federal regulation of commercial salmon fishing is affecting the local fishing business, according to several persons associated with the industry in Santa Cruz.

There are 250 to 300 boats here used for commercial salmon fishing, according to Brad Posey, treasurer and member of the board of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen Association.

Though Posey gave no figures on how much revenue is generated by salmon fishing here, he said for every \$1 received by the fisherman for fish, an estimated \$5 to \$7 is received by related industries, such as markets, gear stores, and fuel suppliers.

The price of salmon is up 55 to 60 cents over last year, according to Skip Tara, manager of Stagnaro Bros.

He predicted that as supplies dropped, the price for salmon will increase, but he didn't estimate the impact on his sales because "salmon is not 100 percent of our business."

There was an attempted blockade of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco by fishing boats Tuesday, broken up by the U.S. Coast Guard, which was a protest against a federally imposed quota on the number of fish that may be caught, as well as the closure of the salmon season for June.

Closure of the season during June will have a serious impact on area fishermen, Posey said, because it is during these

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weeks that the highest concentrations of salmon are found locally.

"June in this area is the peak season," he said, when about 40 percent of the total catch usually is taken.

Fishermen were ready to agree to a two-week closure during June if no quota was imposed, he said, but were never given an opportunity to attend a hearing to protest the quota or present their proposal.

A demonstration by Santa Cruz area fishermen is scheduled to take place during Sunday's Day on the Bay celebration at the wharf, Posey said.

Boats from Monterey, Moss Landing, Santa Cruz and Half Moon Bay will gather and anchor off the wharf, he said, displaying signs to call the public's attention to the fishermen's problems.

About 100 boats are expected to participate.

The problems of the fishermen are complex, according to Russell Moody, past president and co-founder of the Santa

Cruz Commercial Fishermen's Association, but he said, "The main problem is that families dependent on fishing are being manipulated by regulatory agencies that aren't in tune with the realities of fishing."

The "academic theories" of the federal Pacific Fisheries Management Council "are not in tune with what we find in the ocean," Moody said.

Posey said the quotas, the sorest point among local fishermen, were imposed by the Fisheries Council because the salmon runs on the Klamath River are down.

He blamed the drop on dams and "illegal gill netting. We feel (the council) is using this to keep us off the stocks. They're using the easy way out without considering the impact on the salmon industry," he said.

"Fish and Game (Department) statistics show that California salmon fisheries are in good shape," Posey said, "except for the Klamath River."

During the first two weeks of May,

when the season opened, approximately 62,000 fish were taken south of Point Arena, Posey said. The allowed season total for this area is 265,000, and though Posey had no figures for the last two weeks of May, he estimated the total take would be "about 150,000. This leaves 115,000 fish that may be taken from this area," he said.

"If the fish don't show up north, and those boats come south (to fish), the quota could easily be filled by mid-July," said Posey.

"Quotas are very prejudicial," he continued, saying larger boats can fish when the weather is bad and are more mobile than smaller craft.

"There are a thousand reasons why quotas aren't a good management tool for salmon fisheries, he said.

Tara said keeping count of the number of fish is a problem. There could be "variances," he said, and incorrect counts this year could determine next year's quota.

"Last year's season was pronounced a disaster," said Posey, and the federal government supported Small Business Administration loans to fishermen in financial trouble.

"Reagan's administration has stopped them," he said, and we're going to have a lot of independent salmon fishermen going bankrupt this year."