Graying of the Fleet in Alaska’s Fisheries

Defining the Problems and Assessing Alternatives

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Graying of the Fleet

- Limited entry and catch share programs affect fishing communities [Carothers & Chambers 2012; Apgar-Kurtz 2012; Olson 2011; Lowe & Carothers 2008]

- Barriers to entry most commonly perceived negative impacts of these programs [Carothers 2013]

- Youth in rural coastal Alaska highly value fishing careers, but express minimal opportunities for entry and advancement [Lowe 2012]

- 2012, Alaska State Legislature passed resolution stating “graying of the fleet” is a pressing concern for whole state
“We're an aged, aging fleet. When a bunch of us die, I don't know if turning over that quota share is going to be a positive effect cause I think it's gonna have to disperse - I don't know how many young guys have a cash flow to buy into it.”

Kodiak fisherman, 2011

“There’s a huge graying of the fleet. I’m 63 years old. My main complaint about the whole way that all this giving fish away to individuals goes is that the young guys don’t stand a chance…”

Kodiak fisherman, 2010
Common theme in previous research

...limited-entry, it pretty much took everybody’s dreams away of being fishermen and running your own boat. You know, ‘I can’t afford to buy a permit. I can’t afford to buy gear and a boat’. And along come IFQ’s (individual fishing quotas), you know, and it just added to it. It just took the dream away. Or the goal away, whatever you want to call it. (Ouzinkie Fisherman)

You look at it now, if you aren’t in the fishery and you aren’t made, it’s going to be pretty tough to get in there. I don’t see how, you know, unless you got a rich dad or a rich uncle... (Old Harbor Fisherman)
Would you advise a young person to get involved in fishing?

Carothers. In press. Marine Policy
Alaska Limited Entry Permit Holders
Net Change in Statewide Permit holdings 1975-2013

ARL: Alaska resident of rural community, local to fishery
ARN: Alaska resident of rural community non-local
AUL: Alaska resident of urban community local
AUN: Alaska resident of urban community is nonlocal
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska resident</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska rural local</td>
<td>49.8%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
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<td>22.2%</td>
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# State Permit Distribution

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-2,281 or 28% of total

Shriver et al. 2014 CFEC
Study Objectives

- To better understand barriers and upward mobility within fisheries among new fishery participants
- To examine factors influencing young people's attitudes towards fisheries
- To identify models of successful pathways to establishing ownership-level fishing
- To explore and present potential policy responses to address the “graying of the fleet” careers among coastal residents
Study Communities
Research Questions

Q1. What are the perceived and experienced barriers to entry into, and upward mobility within, fisheries among local youth and new fishery participants in fishing communities in the Bristol Bay and Kodiak Archipelago regions of Alaska?
   How do these barriers vary by geographic, demographic, socioeconomic and cultural variables?

Q2. What geographic, economic, social and cultural factors influence young people’s attitudes towards and level of participation (actual and desired) in Alaska fisheries?
   How do these perceptions vary by geographic, demographic, and socioeconomic and cultural variables?
Q1&2: Barriers to entry & youth engagement

- Economic challenges
  - Permits & quotas ~ 83% of value of fishing operation; multi-species salmon, crab, halibut, sablefish $4.5 million (Rosvold 2007)

- Rural outmigration
Research Questions

- Q3. What are models of successful pathways to establishing ownership-level fishing careers among young residents?

- Q4. What policy responses may address graying of the fleet, and how might we best structure alternative models within the state and federal legal frameworks?
Q3 & Q4: Successful models & alternatives

- Research and summarize novel approaches
  - BBEDC’s permit retention program
  - Apprenticeship programs, e.g., Maine lobster fishery
  - Canadian Prince Edward Island’s first entry program
  - Norwegian provisions for small-scale fisheries
  - Iceland’s “coastal fishing” alternative for ITQ fisheries

- Review and summarize state and federal legal frameworks to better understand alternatives best suited for Alaska’s fisheries & communities
Methods

- Key informant and semi-structured interviews
  - So far, 38 in Kodiak and 10 in Bristol Bay; ongoing

- High school student survey
  - Winter/Spring 2015

- Literature review and data compilation
Emerging Themes – Bristol Bay

- Entering fishery, give up stability; “gamble”, “no guarantee”
- Challenge of combining other employment w/ fishing (Dillingham)
- Economic hurdles significant
- Togiak, most fishing permits handed down or gifted
  - A few going through BBEDC’s loan program but need three years of tax returns
  - Subsistence lifestyle best attribute about living in community
Emerging Themes – Kodiak

- Need for entry level opportunities
- Costs of starting up
- Markets and processors; complaints about price
- Loan options there, but young people don’t know about them
- Skills – business & management
- Concern about non-locals; incentives for Kodiak-based boats
- Close-knit community
Is there anything you’d like to see available for young people in fishing in Kodiak?

- "I would like to see some sort of halibut or black cod, some of these IFQ fisheries, I would like to see a portion in some sort of community pool, some way that you can access that fish in a way that makes it profitable. So that people could diversify more, we’re having trouble finding fisheries to diversify in. I went into herring this year and it was a financial disaster and cod jigging really wasn’t that much better for people from what I hear. If somehow we could, if guys could just access some halibut without financially impaling themselves I think that would be great."
In terms of the community, there’s probably a spectrum of those who are doing real well and those that are struggling. Do you have a sense of what factor separate those who are doing well and those who aren’t?

"Yeah, I think there’s are two things. One is that people that grow up doing it have a major advantage, those that fished with their fathers and then they start fishing themselves. They seem to really just dive right in and can be successful right off the bat. And the other, whether or not people were given quota. When people talk about people in town being wealthy, people say, “well he’s got Qs.” That’s what they say, or “his dad has Qs.” And there’s sort of this divide between those who have quota and those who don’t. And there’s not much mobility between there..."

-Young Kodiak Fisherman, Male
"Some of it’s probably luck. A fair amount of the success in this industry, some of its luck. But a lot of it’s determination and being aggressive. If you’re not aggressive you’re probably not going to get very far. You look at some of these guys who are highliners, they’re aggressive. They’re very driven, motivated and disciplined. And you know, I think that’s what it takes. You have to fight for your fish sometimes and if you’re not willing to do that, there’s really no point in even trying. There’s a fine line between gentlemen’s fishing and still looking out for yourself. You just have to be aggressive; I think is probably the best way to put it.”

- Young Kodiak Fisherman, Female

"If there isn't something beyond money, people probably wouldn't stick with it. (fishing) Even the highliners, they just love it. If people didn't love it, they wouldn't do it.”

- Older Male
Expected outcomes

- Better understanding of mechanisms that create the graying of the fleet problem
- Documentation and comparison of barriers to entry and upward mobility in two important fishing regions in Alaska
- Examination of factors that affect youth desires for and participation in Alaska’s fisheries
- Description of successful pathways to ownership level participation
- Development of potential policy responses that may address graying of the fleet
http://fishermen.alaska.edu/

Carothers, C. In press. Fisheries privatization, social transitions, and wellbeing in Kodiak’s fishery systems. Marine Policy.


