Fish Factor

Harvest management top budget item for fisheries
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SitNews - Alaska’s commercial fisheries programs could get a slight boost if the Governor’s budget for the
next fiscal year gets a nod from legislators.

The proposed FY2013 operating budget for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, including all state
and federal funds, is just over $209 million, a 5.1 percent increase. For commercial fisheries, the
department's most expensive unit, a budget of $70.5 million is a 4.4 percent increase.

Governor Parnell also is proposing a bond package that includes $10 million to help Seward prepare to
homeport large at-sea processing boats owned by communities in the Kuskokwim region. The vessels now
are based in Seattle, and it could begin a transfer of other big boats to remain in Alaska year round.

In the ADF&G budget, Commissioner Cora Campbell listed harvest management as a top budget item for
fisheries. The report highlighted Yukon River salmon fisheries as a management priority due to its continued
low productivity of Chinook. Another is managing Southcentral region Chinook salmon fisheries in the face
of low numbers of returning adults. The state Board of Fish has designated seven king salmon “stocks of
concern”, six in Northern Cook Inlet and one in Kodiak.

The ADF&G budget report cites several fishery successes in the past year. Managers achieved a huge
milestone in rebuilding Alaska snow crab stocks to sustainable levels within a federally mandated 10 year
time frame, while still providing a viable harvest. Also mentioned: Alaska’s 2011 salmon harvest was the
3rd best since 1975; and the second best for groundfish in a decade. Click to the Fish and Game budget
here.

Prison trumps people

Fish and Game will lose 59 staff positions under Governor Parnell’s proposed budget. The commercial
fisheries division will lose 13 full-time positions, and 46 part-time positions.

Of the 288 vacant, permanent state government positions to be cut, most are in three agencies. Health and
Social Services at 65; ADF&G at 59; and the Dept. of Transportation would lose 58 jobs.

Deleted positions in other agencies range from 22 to zero within the university system, according to an
Associated Press report. The AP said: “Parnell's spokeswoman said most of the positions were vacant at
least 11 months. The deleted posts are intended to help the state better absorb positions needed for a new
prison.”

Future fishermen

Building future fishing leaders is the goal of the Alaska Young Fishermen’s Summit (AYFS) scheduled for
mid February in Juneau. The Summit began in 2007 as a way to address the many changes the industry and the business of fishing have undergone in recent years. The two day event provides basic training on four fronts: managing the financial aspects of a fishing business, participating in the regulatory processes, Alaska’s role in the world seafood market and the science and management of sustainable fisheries.

“It’s complicated -- there are state managed fisheries, federally managed fisheries, hatcheries, people are looking at more financing to get into the fisheries, and the global marketplace has changed,” said AYFS co-organizer Sunny Rice, a Sea Grant Marine Advisory agent in Petersburg.

Summit attendees will hear from fishermen who have participated in the political process, network with young and old fishing veterans, and mix with a wide range of industry experts -- including Fish and Game Commissioner Cora Campbell, who will talk about “where and how a young fisherman can get involved.” Fishermen also will see the Alaska legislature at work in Juneau.

Nearly 200 fishermen have taken part in the AYFS so far and Rice said one thing is for sure -- young people are eager for a fishing career.

“I’ve seen an exciting uptick of young people wanting to get into the fisheries and they are coming at it with a cool perspective,” she said. “They think it is exciting and they are really dedicated to all the things that go along with it. It’s not just because it’s the closest job nearby that can make them some money.”

The AYFS is set for Feb 13-14 in Juneau. Some travel scholarships are available, as are Alaska Airlines discounted constituent fares. Rice cautioned that lodging in Juneau is really tight. Register by January 12 to reserve a hotel room at a special rate. Contact Sunny Rice at sunny.rice@alaska.edu or 907-772-3381 http://seagrant.uaf.edu/map/

Christmas sea miracles

As we reflect on the reason for the season, let’s not overlook the wonders of the deep. Sponge Bob, for example, could be the next rage in fiber optics. Researchers at Bell Labs have found that a certain type of sponge grows a network of glass fibers far more advanced than any found in today’s telecommunications networks.

New Zealand researchers have found that adding fish oil to animal feed reduces the release of methane gas by sheep by 25 to 40 percent. Over 20 percent of global methane emissions comes from farm animals.

For hundreds of years Asian cultures have used jellyfish to treat arthritis, high blood pressure and back pain. Some jellyfish have a special bio-luminescence that is useful in medical research.

Chitin, a substance found in the shells of crab, shrimp and other crustaceans, is packed with medical miracles. The carbohydrate that makes up chitin bonds with red blood cells to form an artificial clot and seals massive bleeding wounds in just 30 seconds. The shrimp based bandages are being used by our troops in Afghanistan.

Russian researchers have created a product from enzymes in king crab shells that helps heal severe burns. They claim that sea urchin pigment is remarkable for its anti-oxidant, anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory properties.

The venom of the cone snail is being used to treat severe chronic pain that doesn’t respond to other treatment. Just a few micrograms is said to be one thousand times more potent than morphine. Close to 15 drugs derived from marine organisms are in various stages of testing for cancer treatments. The lowly sea squirt appears to be especially promising.

This year marks the 21st year for this weekly column that focuses on Alaska’s seafood industry. It began in 1991 in the Anchorage Daily News, and now appears in over 20 newspapers and web sites. A daily spin off – Fish Radio – airs weekdays on 30 radio stations in Alaska. My goal is to make all people aware of the economic, social and cultural importance of Alaska’s fishing industry to our state, the nation and the world.

http://www.sitnews.us/LaineWelch/122711_fish_factor.html
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