



the set was being bled.. It takes about 20 minutes for a 5-10,000lbs. It takes about an hour for 15- 30,000lbs, depending on crew size, the size of the cod, and how clean the tow is. Depending on how big the deck is and how it is configured, the observer could decide if they could watch and do basket samples at the same time. Or, they could just fill their baskets and set them aside until they have watched the set be bled.

In any case,.. I believe the caps are way too low. There was not enough historical data for caps to be based on historical catch of salmon in the Western Gulf non-pollock trawl fishery. I was present at many of the meetings and testified against these caps. There wasn't a lot of opposition because frankly, we hadn't had that many salmon in the cod fishery. But,.. as I had testified,.. conditions could change. And they have. It could be warmer water,.. but I think it has more to do with an increase in hatchery fish abundance in general. I believe these stocks are very healthy and that a much higher cap would not be a threat to these stocks, and especially not a threat to the gulf stocks that are almost non existent in our by catch genetics.

Again, I appeal to the council to re-visit this salmon cap for the non pollock trawl gulf fishery. That it would actually be based on good and current science instead of the zeal of the anti- trawl lobby that pushed it through the council process. There was no basis beyond the non-existent historical number. The justification was that it was just dangerous to not have a cap. There was never any evidence to show good or bad salmon numbers..

I believe that it is important to always strive to reduce bycatch. With the Commissioners motion and the councils vote to stop progress on the only bycatch reduction plan that made sense, it has been very frustrating for Fishers and Industry to address this issue. I know the circumstances and that the council was basically forced into a corner with the Commissioners power vote. And with that vote,.. we are still faced with the race for fish. We have taken measures to reduce bycatch with halibut excluders and salmon excluders. We have put bigger mesh in our nets to keep from killing smaller cod and smaller fish in general. But,.. the incentive to avoid areas of higher bycatch when it is the best fishing for target fish, is very hard when some one else is loading up in that area. The quota is not so large that you can sit to the side, and still make a season. Now,.. with these high counts of hatchery fish in our bycatch numbers, we are facing closures. We were able to get a full compliance for our first stand down on February 21st. But later, on March 1st, when we were trying to avoid a premature season closure, 3 larger boats from outside the area, would not wait... So,.. these little cooperative efforts are not something we can count on,..

Thankyou, as always for the opportunity to weigh in with my perspective and appeals... I appreciate those of you who truly try to serve the publics best interests..

Sincerely,

Jody R Cook