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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release to the PM's OF SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 1946.

Containing changes of importance to both fishermen and packers, the new regulations for the protection of the commercial fisheries of Alaska in 1946 were issued today by Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug.

These regulations, recommended by the Fish and Wildlife Service, are based upon testimony presented at public hearings held in Seattle during the past year and upon investigations of fishery biologists and law enforcement officers on duty in Alaska.

More herring will be available again this year for processing into much-needed oil and meal as the result of the increase in herring catch quotas which feature the 1946 regulations. In the Kodiak and southeastern Alaska areas herring are sufficiently abundant now, because of a series of successful spawning years, to permit the taking of an additional 150,000 barrels during the 1946 season, raising the total take in these two areas to 700,000 barrels.

In the Kodiak area the quota has been increased from 300,000 to 400,000 barrels and in the southeastern Alaska area from 250,000 to 300,000 barrels.

Persons engaged in the salmon industry will be interested in a number of changes in seasons which have been made in the southeastern Alaska area in order to more nearly synchronize open seasons with the pink salmon runs in the various districts.

In the Icy Strait, eastern and western districts, the opening dates for commercial fishing will be from 5 to 10 days later than last year. In most districts the 36-hour weekly closed period has been extended to 60 hours during all

but the last two weeks of the season, and several days additional fishing time have been added at the end of the season. If additional fishing time is warranted following the end of the principal fishing season, provision has been made for a series of 51-hour open periods, alternating with short closed periods.

Other changes in southeastern Alaska reduce the closed season on salmon trolling by 10 days, and shift the opening date for fall fishing from October 20 to October 15. A proposed postponement to May 1 of the opening date for taking sablefish was suspended for the current season when it developed that such postponement would cause unexpected hardship to local fishermen.

Because the Service anticipates a red salmon run of less than normal volume in the Bristol area this year and an increase in fishing operations, the mid-weekly closed period has been extended from 24 to 36 hours to apply in all sections of the area. The Egegik district has been reopened to commercial fishing after a one-year closure.

To provide additional protection for both the red salmon and pink salmon runs in the Alaska Peninsula area, the 36-hour weekly closed period has been increased to 60 hours. On the south side of the Peninsula, the regular season will terminate August 10, two days earlier than last year. On the north side of the Peninsula a catch limit of 500,000 red salmon is provided for the Port Moller section, and the open season is increased by 15 days to permit the greater utilization of other species of salmon.

In the Kodiak area the salmon fishing season will end one day earlier than last year, and the fall season will open on September 10 instead of September 1.

In the Prince William Sound area the salmon fishing season will terminate this year at 6 a.m. on August 7, an extension of 36 hours over 1945. The usual even-year opening date of July 10 will be in effect.

Salmon traps must be made inoperative within 24 hours after the close of the season, instead of within 12 hours, as formerly.

War time has been replaced by standard time as a basis for the enforcement of the Alaska commercial fishery laws and regulations.

On March 5 Acting Secretary Chapman announced a number of amendments to the regulations with respect to the operation of salmon fishing traps in Alaska. Briefly summarized, these changes prohibit occupants of 10 or more trap sites from acquiring additional sites; provide for the settlement, by the Department of the Interior, of disputes over available trap sites; and serve notice that anyone who merely leases his rights to occupy trap sites in 1946 instead of assuming the responsibilities of occupancy himself will stand to lose such rights in 1947.

These changes were the result of public hearings held in Washington, D. C., from February 21 to 25. Hearings will be resumed at various points in central and southeastern Alaska in October of this year, according to an announcement made by the Department.

Among the areas barred to commercial fishing under the new regulations is the area around the mouth of the Karluk River on Kodiak Island. An exception to this prohibition is made in favor of the residents of Karluk Indian Village, for whom lands and waters in this area were reserved in 1944, and other persons who may obtain permits from the Karluk Village authorities.

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