

For Immediate Release

January 25, 2010

Contact: Karen Gillis, Executive Director

Email. karen.gillis@bsfaak.org

Cell 907-441-7609

Tel. 907-279-6519



New Book Assesses Salmon of Western Alaska

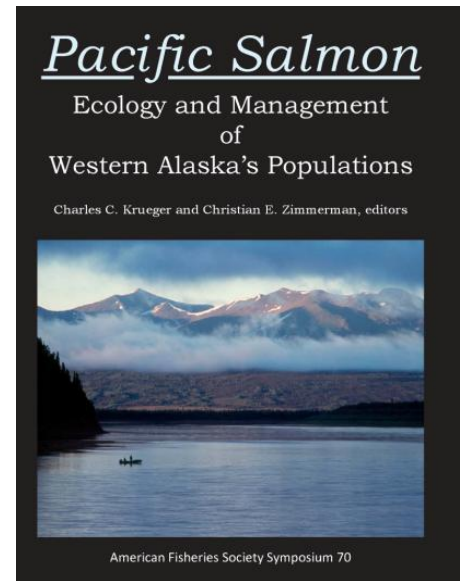
In an Area Plagued by Disasters this Publication Draws on Comprehensive Salmon Science

[Anchorage, Alaska] – The Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim (AYK) Sustainable Salmon Initiative (Initiative) announces the release of a major new book entitled, *Pacific Salmon: Ecology and Management of Western Alaska's Populations*, a state-of-the-art assessment of salmon stocks and management practices in the drainages of the Kuskokwim and Yukon rivers and for the rivers that drain into Norton Sound. The book, sponsored by the Initiative and published by the [American Fisheries Society](#), covers the freshwater, estuarine, and marine ecology and management of salmon and is the first-ever comprehensive appraisal of the region's salmon resources.

The launch of this book could not be timelier; less than 2 weeks ago, United States Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke declared a [fisheries disaster](#) for Yukon River Chinook salmon in response to extremely low salmon returns in 2008 and 2009. A pioneering assessment of salmon stocks and management, this compendium is the result of years of research, and summarizes a major symposium held in 2007. Covering the freshwater, estuarine, and marine ecology and management of salmon, it is the first-ever comprehensive appraisal of the region's salmon resources.

Contributors conclude that the major challenge to management of these resources is the variability of estuarine and ocean survival of salmon affecting the number of adult salmon returning to the fishery. When salmon returns are so unpredictable, fishery managers face severe challenges in regulating subsequent harvest.

Pacific salmon support subsistence and commercial fisheries crucial to the sustainability of many rural western Alaskan communities north of Bristol Bay. Salmon returns have been in decline in many of these watersheds for more than a decade, creating numerous hardships for the people and communities that depend so heavily on this fishery resource. Poor salmon returns have led to severe restrictions on commercial and subsistence fisheries, and to repeated disaster declarations by the state and federal government. The [Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim \(AYK\) Sustainable Salmon Initiative](#), an innovative partnership among state, federal and native partners, was formed in 2001 to fund new research to understand the causes of these declines, and to support improved management of these stocks.



- Continued-

Bering Sea Fishermen's Assoc.
110 W. 15th Ave, Unit A
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

(907) 279-6519

(888) 927-2732

WWW.AYKSSI.ORG

Arctic • Yukon • Kuskokwim

Dr. John White, chairman of the AYK Sustainable Salmon Initiative and resident of Bethel, Alaska, commented, “This publication serves as an access point to information that formerly resided in a variety of storage media - from the minds of managers and researchers, to drawers of historical files, to websites, to the primary literature. It is unique in two ways: first, because it links ecological and management information across the freshwater and marine ecosystems of the region - embracing the entire lifecycle of the salmon, and second, because it includes chapters concerning the human dimensions of salmon use and management.”

Containing 61 chapters, this book addresses a wide diversity of topics, including: historical descriptions of the region’s salmon fisheries, ecology of juvenile salmon in rivers and estuaries, population genetics, high seas distribution of salmon, and salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fisheries. The book includes special sections on the economic, social, and cultural significance of salmon, and on governance associated with salmon management. Reviews of several other fisheries, such as those in Washington and Oregon, provide lessons learned elsewhere that can be applied to Alaska’s salmon fisheries. Several chapters conclude with recommendations for future research to promote a better understanding of the region’s fisheries. The book includes color maps of the region, and color plates of Pacific salmon by renowned artist Joseph Tomelleri.

The book’s chapters were written by a wide variety of authors from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, NOAA Fisheries, US Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, university scientists, and even a resident and fishing guide from Aniak, Alaska.

This 1,235 page treatise on Alaska salmon is available for purchase from the American Fisheries Society (<http://www.afsbooks.org/>).

###

The AYK Sustainable Salmon Initiative was formed in response to recent salmon declines. Native regional organizations joined with state and federal agencies to form an innovative partnership to cooperatively address salmon research and restoration needs. This partnership includes the Association of Village Council Presidents, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Kawerak, Inc., Bering Sea Fishermen's Association, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, NOAA Fisheries, and the US Fish & Wildlife Service. For more information about the Sustainable Salmon Initiative go to www.aykssi.org.

###

This project was funded by award #NA04NMF4380162 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, administered by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative (<http://www.aykssi.org/>). The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Department of Commerce, or the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.