

February 27, 2013

Dan Tonnes
NMFS Northwest Region
7600 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, WA 98115

Dear Mr. Tonnes

Pursuant the Terms and Conditions for conservation of listed rockfish in the Biological Opinion authorizing Puget Sound salmon fisheries, the Puget Sound tribes and WDFW provide the following summary of salmon fishing gear lost during the 2012 season in marine areas 7 – 13.

Tribes continue to require their fishermen to report lost gear to their fisheries management or enforcement agencies. Some tribes state this in fishing regulations; others are in the process of revising fishing ordinances. Some tribes have informal agreement to pass information about verified incidents of gear loss to the Northwest Straits Commission (NSC). WDFW regulations require their fishers to report lost gear to the NSC hotline. NWIFC and WDFW staff contacted fisheries and/or enforcement agents to collate the following information. We also requested and received in December, 2012 a summary of gear loss incidents reported directly to the NW Straits Commission and recorded in their database.

Those incidents reported by commercial fishermen to their respective agencies or directly to NSC are described below. NSC received reports of lost gear from citizens (not fishermen), some of which led to recovery of gear. Other incidents were not verified (described on the NSC database as not found). The NSC database also lists reported losses that likely ended up involving un-attended gear.

Reported gear loss:

There were no incidents of lost gillnets reported by non-Treaty fishermen to the NSC during the 2012 salmon season. On August 15th, a Nooksack Tribal fisherman reported seeing some gillnet gear snagged on Point Roberts Reef. This was in turn reported to the NSC hotline. No snagged nets were seen or recovered in this area. NSC received a report of a Treaty gillnet snagged on some mooring buoys in Port Susan. Tulalip Fisheries responded and on 9/26, Tulalip Enforcement officers removed the fouled gear.

Un-reported gear loss:

The NSC received a report of a gill net seen floating East of Camano head. The person who reported the net also tried to retrieve the gear but was not successful. On 10/2, a portion of gill net was reported at Sandy Point. Lummi Enforcement was contacted and found the location but did not find any gear. On 11/16, a report was made that lost gear was seen in Sinclair Inlet. Suquamish Enforcement responded and was not able to locate any gear. These last two incidents may have actually involved un-attended gear that was unknown to the reporting party at the time.

WDFW and the Puget Sound tribes will continue to coordinate with NSC on locating and expediting recovery of lost gear. Please contact us if you require further information.

Sincerely,


Kendall Henry, WDFW


Keith Lutz, NWIFC

CC: Susan Bishop, NMFS NWR