

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

POLICY #80-81A-FB

STATEMENT OF POLICY CONCERNING  
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HERRING AND  
SMELT-CAPELIN FISHERIES

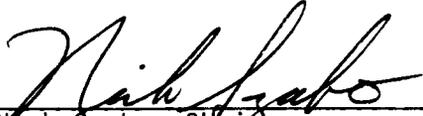
The seasonal occurrence of smelt, capelin and herring in coastal waters of the Bering Sea overlap to varying extent depending on location and year. Present commercial fishing regulations do not provide for any restrictions on the taking of smelt and capelin. It is possible that a legitimate fishery for smelt or capelin may result in incidental catches that could result in overharvests of herring. Also current herring fishery regulations (e.g., prohibition of purse seining of some districts) could be circumvented by fishermen claiming they are fishing for smelt or capelin.

It is recognized that there is potential for development of a capelin fishery in the Bering Sea and that specific regulations will need to be developed if the fishery expands. The emphasis of this policy statement is to minimize potential adverse impacts that development of smelt-capelin fisheries may have on herring stocks and fisheries.

The Board directs the staff of the Department of Fish and Game to take necessary action through emergency order authority to insure that current herring fishing regulations are not circumvented and to minimize the incidental capture of herring as a result of fisheries targeting on smelt or capelin through one or more of the following measures:

- (1) area-time closures should be utilized to contain smelt-capelin fisheries in areas of low herring abundance.
- (2) when the incidental herring catch made after the close of the commercial herring season approaches or exceeds 10% of the total commercial herring catch or individual landings are consistently composed of 20% or greater incidence of herring, the smelt-capelin fishery will be closed.

The Board further directs the staff of the Department of Fish and Game to incorporate specific management strategies relating to smelt-capelin fisheries in management plans prepared for each Bering Sea herring district.

  
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Nick Szabo, Chairman  
Alaska Board of Fisheries

Adopted: December 15, 1980  
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Anchorage, Alaska