

THE GREAT SALMON CHASE OF 1980 (OR HOW TO MAKE....)

Compared to last year, the fishing started terribly slow. The canneries offered ridiculously low prices (25 cents/lb for Pinks) so we went on strike in the middle of June. With a large run of Reds in Bristol Bay anticipated, combined with an expected record run of Pinks in Kodiak, had depressed the price. But they struck in B Bay until almost half the run went by and we stayed out in support, missing our entire red season. There were a few scabbers, but one, the Inez L, had their power skiff sunk when they went out a second time.

Finally, around the 15th of July, two small canneries offered 40 cents for the Pinks and the association accepted it. And to keep the strike going, they worked out a deal where 40 boats would work and supply the settled canneries with enough fish. The money goes directly to the association, who will distribute it among the 500+ permit holders in Kodiak. This was a good plan as it allowed the fisherman to start working while putting a lot of pressure on the unsettled canneries. But the only reason it worked was because everyone stuck together and were patient. So slowly other canneries followed the lead and finally the biggest, King Crab, signed the contract on the 21st. (In past years verbal agreements were used, but, after last year when the canneries broke their word with the king crab fishermen and dropped the price shortly after their strike settled and they were fishing, a signed agreement is in order.)

So we did our last minute shipping and left town at 4 PM on the 23rd, a sunny, warm day, rafted up four abreast; the Awtam, the PG92, the Toyon and the Sywash. Everything went smoothly until shortly after Whale Pass, when the Seattle crabber Constellation overtook us. Their wake upset our balance and our raft broke in two, not without its moments of excitement. But we got completely separated without further incident and continued on our way, as the fog and night descended. Pulled into Zacher Bay through the warm, moist fog around 2 AM.

The day started early with lots to do before noon opening. Piled the new Silver seine and some other junk on the beach by the cannery and patched the holes in the Big net. So by the time the deck was cleared off and all the last minute preparations completed, it was 11:30 and time to go fishing.

So we ran up to the head of the bay and joined the rest of the approximately 25 boats and jockeyed for position. At 12, most everyone let it go but we were one of the few who didn't. Dick just slowly ran between some of the sets for half an hour looking for fish. We finally set up a tow-haul, with Dick out in the middle and me nosing up of a boat that already had a set out. We slowly towed towards the mouth of the bay, scooping along several other sets. The first salmon set of the season went without a hitch, no snags or kelp and we caught about a 1000 Pinks.

After brailing and cleaning up, we steamed around Zacher Bay looking for another set, but without finding one. So we headed out towards the mouth of Vyak Bay and a little hot spot Dick had from past years. So we set out a standard one-way "g" trap and caught up on our sleep. We relaxed long enough, about 4-5 hours, to allow 3,000 or so to swim into our friendly parlor. After getting those aboard, we slapped it out again, but only got 20-30 fish, because the entire trap collapsed. So we decided to call it a day and ran back to the tender in Zacher and finished unloading by 2:30 AM, 4100+ fish, highest boat in the bay.

Got up at 6 AM and ran back out to our hot spot and set the trap again. The fish started showing some and by the end of the day we had made 5 sets and caught 6700 fish. The Toyon, Sywash and PG92 joined us in the afternoon so the tender came out to us. It took us until 3 AM to pitch the fish and clean up, but certainly well worth it.

Next morning work at 5 AM and being worried about someone taking our spot, I convinced Dick to go out and set the trap. Everyone else went back to bed so I stayed up to keep an eye on things.

Though early in the morning and over cast, it was quite warm with only a breath of wind. So I sat on the flying bridge reading a book, drinking coffee and thoroughly enjoying the quite, something that doesn't happen often enough with two kids on board.

Around 7 AM I heard a noise, almost like waves breaking on rocks, but it was essentially flat calm. But finally spotted the source, 3 whales spouting out in the middle of the bay, a mile or so away. So I grabbed my camera and ran after them in the skiff.

They were nowhere in sight when I got to where they were, so I shut down the kicker and waited. And about 10 minutes later they surfaced again, so I started up and ran towards them. They dove before I got to them so I shut down and again waited.

Before long, they surfaced and close by, so I was able to run right up to them. I followed them about 50-75 feet to the side and slightly in front. What a show! They were 30-40 feet long and jet black with a small dorsal fin, and when they spouted, the water went 20 feet in the air. I don't know if there was any reason to worry about them overturning the skiff, but my heart was racing and my knees shaking. The thought of having an encounter with those whales in a 13 foot skiff out in the middle of a big bay alone, was slightly unsettling. Followed them for one more set of soundings and spoutings, then left them to return to the boat. Found out later they were Pilot whales.

Pulled in the set after a few more hours and the best to date, probably 3500 fish. Made two more traps for the rest of the day and continued to do well. We finished delivering around 3 AM again, getting 5900 fish. Can't hardly believe it, but after only 2½ days we've put in almost 17,000 fish!

Up again at 5 AM and laid out the trap. Slept away the morning and pulled it in around noon,

another good set 2-3000. Laid it out again, but the wind kept picking up and it got a little rough. Fortunately we were able to hold it in shape and so left it out until 8PM. Unfortunately there was a boat anchored just a little distance away and watched us brail 23 times, one of our biggest sets. After getting them all on board, we were sitting too low in the water with the swells to want to put on any more fish. So we anchored up and waited for the tender and Dave took a turn on our trap (only got 50 fish in two hours - and lots of kelp)

The Invader, with an all woman crew, came over before the tender arrived and told us she wasn't going to leave us alone and planned on corking us if we didn't let her use our spot. I don't like getting pushed out of our fishing, especially when there are fish elsewhere, if they'd take time to find them. Found out from the tender when they arrived that Les, on the Toyon, scooped up 10,000 fish in one set, the back-outs in Zacher Bay. Delivered 5,7000 fish, bringing us up to 22,000 for the first 3½ days of the season. Truly amazing!

Least we get maxed-out of our spot, we got up at 4 AM and waited for it to get light enough to set. And just after starting to slapping it out, Mary, the skipper on the Invader, stuck her head out to see if the spot was open. But she didn't give up that easily and started hooking off the end of our trap, taking turns with two other boards. It wouldn't have been so bad except they towed right up within 10 feet of our cork line, plunging and making a lot of noise right where the fish normally schooled up. And all morning the seas kept building and boats started coming in from the outside and four of them started taking turns tow-hauling 2-300 yards down the beach, in front of us. Needless to say, the fishing dropped off dramatically. For the three sets of the day, we only delivered 2200 fish, though that really isn't too bad. So to date our catch stacks up like this:

Pinks	24,655	74659 #	\$4479.54
Chums	207	1547 #	104.42
Sockeye	63	327 #	39.24
			<u>\$4623.20</u>

Up at 5 AM and set out the trap but the tide was running too hard and collapsed it, so picked it up. Tried to tow-haul, but didn't do very well, But by that time, the tide slacked off a bit and the next trap held. So three traps - 6 hours of work and 8 hours of relaxing and living later, we're 2800 fish richer.

Another 5 AM morning but we gave the first set to Dave. We set our seine from his trap outward to try to lead in some more fish, but the tide pushed us around too much. He pulled in around 11 AM and we traded positions. After a few hours he closed his up but only got a few dozen fish, so slid on down the beach to where he's been working and did his thing. We got in two traps for the day, just barely able to hold the late one because of increasing weather. And with a delivery of 2400 we

broke over 30,000 total, which is almost unbelievable for the first 6½ days of fishing. The pressure around us is bound to increase, though because Fish and Game is closing the south end and the entire east side.

The tender had to leave to unload some other boats and so we had to anchor up. Kenny had our spot light and so couldn't find our anchor buoy, so we just hung off Dave's stern. But it continued blowing quite hard and around 2:30 AM we woke to the sound of the stern bouncing on the rocks on shore. We all jumped up and ran around the boat in our underwear and were able to get off the beach, without grinding up the prop too bad. It was fortunate that the seas weren't any bigger than they were, because we bounced up and down a few times and could have done some real damage, had it been worse. So we picked up and moved behind a small island to wait out the night.

Another early morning and set out the trap. But the wind combined with the tide collapsed the set, so we hauled it over the stern. There hadn't been much action anyway, so we headed across to the opposite point and then took a slow tour of the bay, Spirdon.

While cruising around we heard a report that Les was overdue in town. He had a hydraulic valve fail and so got a ride on the Peter Pan plane the night before. We talked to them just before they headed for town, as they circled above us. Dick asked if they could spot fish before they left, but Les said they couldn't see anything as it was getting misty. But we didn't think much of the report, as planes are late often around Kodiak.

We kept cruising around looking for, but not finding, fish. We tried another trap and once again the tide flattened it out. By the time we got it in over the stern it was close to slack water so we slapped it out again. We then heard a report that the plane had been spotted on Spirdon lake, about three miles from us, so we all relaxed. We figured they had just set down there because of weather or problems. And before long the tide started to wreck the trap again, but we closed it up and tried to make something of it, but only saved a little over 100 fish. Fred showed up, so Dick went flying and we tied up to the PG and the Sywash, who were anchored up. Before long Dick and Fred came back and Dick took Neil, who had come over with Fred originally, to the beach in the skiff. The plane Les had been on had been found, or what was left of it, spread all over the top of a ridge, not two miles from where we had been fishing. For some reason or another, the pilot was where he shouldn't have been and he slammed right into the side of the hill. And at 130+ mph, and the hill probably appearing suddenly out of the fog, Les and the pilot and two other passengers didn't have a chance.

In case it isn't quite clear, Les was the skipper of the Toyon and Neil is his son. And everyone in our four boat group knew Les, some more than others. It was real hard on Dick, as Les was probably his best friend ever, having known him for almost 20 years. We just couldn't believe it, we just sat around the boats in a daze. We had just seen Les the day before and it didn't seem possible.

As we found out more, the tragedy loomed larger over us. The pilot turned out to be Steve, who about half of us knew. And one of the passengers was Jeff, who was Kenny's best friend. Jeff was married almost a year ago and Ken was his best man. And the three of them had been sharing an apartment in town. The fourth person was the skipper of the Denae Marie, and everyone from Kodiak knew him. So Fred took Neil and Rob back to town and we ran the three boats to the Zacher Bay cannery. After sitting by himself for a while below, Dick came out and wanted to talk with someone, so we sat on the back deck drinking beer, getting drunk and philosophizing about death and life and whatever else. Dick said he was leaving for town in the morning and I was to run the boat in his absence. We were to try to catch something but if we didn't, there wasn't any worry.

Fred came and picked up Dick in the morning, and I went over to the Abby Jo, which was at the dock because they had been having problems with it. Around noon the three boats started cruising around looking for fish and we rendezvoused at Brown's Lagoon. None of us saw any fish, so we ran back to the cannery without making a single set. We tried to keep busy, played some basketball and did a few other things to try to keep our minds off the obvious, but it was still tough, especially on Kenny.

The wind came down enough to try fishing where we had been, so first Dave and then we headed out. Dave took the trap site so we went down the beach and tried two tow hauls. The first one was a disaster with everything possible going wrong. But the second one went well and we got 100-150 fish, as much as the other boat we were trading sets with got. We gave that up and waited for Dave to pull set and then set out our own trap. For my first attempt, I was real pleased with the shape of the set.

Got up at 5 AM and pulled it in. Had a snag at each end and had problems with the leads flying, and might have lost a few fish. But we got around 700 fish, so couldn't complain too much. Dave set a trap, so we went around Chief Point to check out a few spots on the outside.

Looked all around and only found fish in one spot, right in front of a little stream. There were jumpers and finners right in the surf and we got excited, deciding how we were going to get them off the beach. But then Mike got to thinking and checked the ADF&G chart and it turned out to be a registered creek. So we continued on our way. Set out the lead down the beach a ways to try a heart trap, but the tide was running too strong and we pulled it right back in. So we cruised around a little more and then went back in to Spirdon Bay.

Dave was still holding trap so we tried another tow haul. But I guessed the tide wrong and it didn't work out too well. Didn't even see any jumpers so we anchored up for the afternoon. Mike and I tried to hike up to the crash site to pay our respects to the victims, but the growth on the hillsides turned out to be over our heads, so after fighting it for 1½ hours we gave up and returned to the boat.

A King Crab tender finally showed up, The Rosemary, so we off loaded what we had. Dave pulled up his set to deliver and we slapped ours out. Held it until dark, 10 PM, and pulled it in. The Rosemary had to leave for the mainland, so we delivered what we got in the set, over 900, giving us 1700 for the day. Not a lot but at least it was better than we had been doing.

We tried the morning set, but after only 2½ hours the tide started to collapse it. Rather than take a chance of losing what we could see in it, we pulled it in and got almost 1000. Dave put his out so we cruised around to look for some fish. Didn't find any action, so we tried a trap behind Dave about ¼ mile down the beach.

We picked up at the same time as Dave but didn't get anything out of it, being all snagged up. Dave got snagged up too, actually pursuing up about a 500-pound rock. He thought he had 2-3000 but was only able to save 600. So we laid out ours and let it soak until 10 PM before picking it up. It turned out to be our best set since Dick left, getting over 1000. So we delivered to the Pacific Lady, who was waiting nearby, the fish still flopping around in the hold. This delivery gave us 3755 since Dick went to town, about 600 more than Dave.

Dave took the morning set and held it until 1:30 PM and picked it up, getting about 2000, having a real nice show. So we put it out and left it until 9 PM and pulled it in, getting 8-900. It was overcast and drizzly but fairly warm and calm so we slapped it out to let it fish over night.

Up with the first light and pulled it in, but only got 2-300 for 7 hours soak. The fish just don't seem to move at night as much around here. Dave came in behind us and put his out and we went to deliver.

Our cannery, Kodiak King Crab, had stopped buying fish for 48 hours because they were falling behind their tenders. Not enough cannery help combined with a shortage of cans and Sea-Land vans created the problem. But there was a cash buyer across the bay so that's where we went to unload. The boat was the Lopez Isle, and they paid 1 cent/lb. cash and 40 cents/lb. at the end of the season. So we delivered 1100+ fish and got \$39 and some beer (not that we had run out).

The tides were getting bigger again so when Dave snagged up the water made a real mess of his set and he lost some. Couldn't blame his techniques because when we picked our set up we had the same problem. After toying on it for 3 hours to make it hold shape, we still got washed up on a snag and half collapsed the set. We had the best show we had seen in a while but only saved 700. Can't really complain, though, because we could have lost them all.

Dick came in with Fred a little before we picked up. He didn't stick around though, he went up into Uyak to the Toyon. He had some more bad news for Neil, whose grandmother died since he came back to the boat from town. It was tough for him, losing three relatives in three months. (His uncle, Wayne, who fished Kodiak, died in June of cancer.) So we went up to the tender and delivered

and visited with the crews of the PG and Sywash, who were also tied up alongside.

Dave and Kenny were sitting around waiting for Dick to arrive with the Toyon, so we got a chance at the morning set. I didn't do a very good job of laying it out, but after pulling on it here and there it looked like it would fish so we left it to soak. Dick finally arrived, so the three boats headed for the east side. And we got back to fighting strength and I was demoted to skiff man. Shortly after the tide started to collapse the set, so we hauled it in, pulled out 5-600 fish and put it out again.

Around noon we spotted another seiner headed our way and we started to worry about competition after just getting rid of it. And who should it turn out to be but Wayne Treat and the Katie Marie. They had been south at Karluk River, grinding it out with 100 or so other boats and fighting the weather almost every day. They had about 27,000 in but had gotten burned out on the struggle and were headed to better grounds.

Found out that their pilot, Howard Bodie, the same one who flew herring for us, crashed the day before, at the south end. The only thing Wayne knew about it was that no one was hurt. The lesson never seemed to stop coming on how tough it is up here.

Dick, having just been in town, had the low down on a lot of the fishing spots and he put a broadside into Wayne's plans. So after thinking about it a while, he decided that they were running away from fish. So we waved goodbye as they turned around and headed back the way they just came. He wasn't too excited about the run because it was blowing SW and that was right in his face. And that meant the fishing would be tough, as SW blows straight onto the unprotected spot where they had been (and that's the direction the wind has been blowing all season).

Got back into full trap swing, with three sets. Scooped up 1500 in the first two sets, but the last was the best, getting almost 1600. Delivered almost 3100, our fifth biggest delivery of the season. And this zoomed us into the 40,000 range in style.

Were experiencing minus tides so we decided to check Zacher Bay for back-out fish. So after delivering we steamed up the bay and lay on the hook until morning.

Mike got up first and looked for fish but didn't see anything, so Dick and I slept while Mike continued to watch. Around 9 AM Dick decided to leave when he saw a jumper, so we went over for a closer look. Some fish started showing, so we made a set, right on the beach. Scooped up 500 fish and hundreds of little flounder and Dungeness crab. After cleaning up that mess, went back to the trap for two sets to complete the day and delivered almost 1500.

Another three-trap day, with no excitement other than one very snagged up set. Fishing slowed down as everywhere else but still managed to deliver over 1700. Up again at 6 the next day and 3 traps for about the same amount. Couldn't complain, though, as we did better than anyone else that we heard of.

Three traps again the next day with slightly better results. Wasn't around to pick up the last set though because I flew into town with Fred to see a doctor. Been having bad stomach pains for 7 straight days, and finally decided to do something about it. Had a beautiful flight over the island in the early evening light. It was calm and clear with the mainland seemingly only a couple of miles away. And the rugged terrain of the interior of Kodiak contrasted sharply with the coast. The grey of volcanic ash with the whites and blues of snow fields and glacial ice, finally turning to green in the deep valleys. Also flew over the crash site, not much to see. Only the tail section of the plane was fairly intact, the rest was a jumble of wreckage. Certainly not a very big scar on a large, lonely hillside to claim four lives.

Stopped off at the Toyon in Ugat Bay to see how they were doing. Neil had the boat high and dry because he was having problems with it. The support for the cutlass bearing had torn loose, so the shaft was banging around in the shoe. So I drew up plans for two strips that would hold things together temporarily and we continued to town, arriving with the last light of the day.

Up early so as to get everything done so I could get back to the boat as early as possible. Made the parts for Neil then to the doctor's office. He gave me a quick check-up and came to the conclusion that I had a mild ulcer. So he wrote out a prescription and instructed me to also get a bunch of Maalox and not to eat for two days.

Met Fred at noon to work out a schedule for flying back out, but it couldn't happen right away. The weather had come down and nobody was flying anywhere. It didn't clear up, so spent another night with Joan.

The next day started very grey but started to improve late in the morning. Looked clearer to the south so Fred ran the parts down to Neil to kill some time. After a while, it lifted a little more so we loaded up the plane to give it a try. It turned into an exciting ride, zooming around, over and under patches of clouds and fog. Followed the coast all the way around, which made for a long but exciting ride. And just when it looked like we were going to make it, the ceiling dropped, forcing us precariously close to the water. But it didn't get any worse, so Fred lowered his flaps to slow our wind speed and we continued on.

Came around Chief Point and approached the trap site but no boat was there. Started to think all the fancy flying was wasted, but then spotted the seine in the water and then the tender not too far away, with Dick tied up alongside delivering. It's illegal to leave a set out without keeping the registered boat attached to it. Dick figured it to be too nasty out for a Fish & Game plane to be out. Needless to say, they were surprised to see us.

They had done well in my absence, over 4000 fish in 1½ days. They had just finished delivering so we went back out, picked up the set, and laid it out again.

The next day (Aug. 16) was a little windy out of the SE, but not too bad. But it must have blown some fish in because it was an excellent day with almost 4500 fish. Having just broken into the 50,000 range, that pushed us quickly along towards 60,000. The next day, the last of the opening, it blew like hell. We rode it out all morning and then picked it up around noon when it seemed to subside a little. And what a set! It was definitely the best one of the season, getting over 4500. With that kind of fishing we had to lay it out again, in spite of the fact that the weather was building again. Before long we realized we couldn't stay, considering how low in the water we were. So we dropped anchor right behind the little island that was just outside of the trap sight. But because it was blowing so hard we drug anchor twice, so ended up tying a line to a big rock on shore and hanging off it.

After a few hours I ran over to the trap, through 3-4' seas, and found it collapsed on both ends. So I spend some time pulling on it here and there, trying to make it look like it might catch something. Waited at the boat for the weather, but it continued blowing and the 6 PM closure time came and went without being able to pull up the set. With all the fish we had on board, plus only having a 35 hp kicker in the skiff and the two kids, there was just too much chance of ending up on the beach, which would be disastrous. But around 8 the wind subsided a little and the sea came down some so we took a chance and ran out to pick it up. We got it in without incident and got about 1000 more fish out of it. We were fortunate, though, because it started to really blow again as we were just finishing up.

The tender arrived shortly before we finished so we went right over to deliver. The seas kept building, though, and it turned into a race to finish delivering before it got so rough we couldn't stay tied along side. We just barely got away with it, our second best delivery of the season with a good show of Reds. It was really kicking up, so we tied back up to our rock line and spent the night hiding behind our little island.

By morning the wind had come down some, so we headed across to Larson Bay. The cannery there in the native village has the largest canning line setup on Kodiak, but they had just finished for the season. It was like a ghost town, with only a handful of people left. We stayed the night anyway and in the morning headed for Zacher Bay.

With the first closure of the season, it was finally time to play. So we picked up the scallop drag and steamed to the beds, which are only ½ mile or so from the cannery. Didn't know if it was going to work, but sure enough, we got about 30 on our first drag. Dick grabbed a butter knife and showed us how to open and clean them and we devoured the first batch raw. And talk about a treat! They were so fresh the button was still flexing as you put it in your mouth. And it was moist, tender and sweet, much better than any other scallops I've had in the past. So we got back to work and drug three more times and in three hours' work we picked up 150-175. When they were cleaned we ended up with about 25 lb. of meat and the biggest buttons I've ever seen.

When we got back to the cannery, I looked up Kevin, who was running the Abby Jo, to see how things were going. As it turned out, they had been having trouble and had been broken down for 4 days. It had been running bad and suddenly got worse, so he quit running it. Under orders from his boss, Kevin pulled the head and found out what the problem was. The head gasket was blown and for some reason the pistons had started to decompose. The only thing I can think could cause it was the water in the fuel problems they had when they first got the boat. Needless to say, Kevin was bummed out, but I don't think he was personally responsible. The rest of the boat looked fine, so he had definitely taken care of it. So they had plans to have it towed to town by one of their big tenders, as the lease was coming to a close. Since there was nothing I could do for the boat, we headed for town the next morning, but not before picking up some shrimp chafing gear and a cedar log off the beach.

Waited in town for four days for the next opening and then went up to Kazuyak, where Dick spotted a few fish. All the fish were in Berabra Cove, which isn't very big, and by the time the opening came around there were 15 boats. The only one that did any good was a beach seiner. They were working out of two skiffs so they were able to get right up to the mouth of the creek in the shallows, under 2 feet. It was a dirty, sticky set, but worthwhile as they caught 2-3000. We tried a few little sets that night and the next morning but without too much luck. It was a beautiful sunny warm day, so a few of us decided to walk up the creek.

This was my first chance to walk along a creek full of fish and it was quite exciting. The stream was full and even though it's only 3-4' wide, it held a lot of fish. They would see something coming and get riled up and ten feet of the creek would boil as they tried to get away. And as we walked along, we kept calling out for "Mr. Bear", and anything else that came to mind. There were half-eaten fish and bear tracks, shit and trails everywhere and we didn't want to startle one eating his lunch. There were so many fish that we decided that since all the other boats left, it was time to "rob the creek." So we left the Awtam anchored and combined efforts with the Sywash. They laid the seine across in front of the stream and Mike, Dick and I went upstream to plunge. It ended up more like pushing, though, because they were so thick that was the only way to make them move. So we kept moving them down and the water kept getting deeper. I was in the middle and by the time we got to the boat I was neck deep in water and still plunging. But when the fish are that old they don't like salt water so they swam right by, bumping into me constantly. Some of them stayed down though and we got 2600 fish to split two ways. We tried it two more times but didn't do well at all. We would push them down but they'd just turn around and head back. So we just laid around in the sun for the rest of the day and dried off. I definitely had more fun fishing that day than ever before.

Made a couple of sets the next day without any luck, so we got a tow from the tender, who was

leaving for Litnik. There wasn't much action there either, so we set out a trap and did some sleeping. That's all we did for the rest of the opening, one day, and caught a couple hundred silvers. Not a big day but enough to make it worthwhile. We kept our last batch of fish and steamed for town after it closed at 6 PM. Delivered the fish the next morning, but kept 16 aside to freeze to take home.

They announced another opening to occur in two days and they moved the markers in at Litnik almost a mile so we headed back to where we just were. Sure glad it was only a short run, about four hours. A lot of other boats took advantage of the nearness and by opening time there were 20-25 boats. There weren't many fish showing as it was high tide and they were mostly inside the markers. The Alaskan Warrior set right on the markers for back-outs, with Kenny on the Sywash right behind them. We didn't set out but were in line to go right after them.

After about two hours of falling tide the fish started boiling down the stream, into the Alaskan Warrior's set. We kept holding, even though everyone was yelling at them to close up. Usually you take half-hour turns but they felt that since it was the first set of an opening they could hold it as long as they wanted. After 2½ hours they finally closed it up and we put ours out behind Kenny. We closed up just after Kenny and were the first of the three sets to get all the fish aboard. We went to the tender to deliver as the other two kept working.

While we slept Kenny delivered and got over 4000 fish and we were real happy for him. And when we went back up to the line to check for morning back outs, the Alaskan Warrior was still hauling fish aboard. They ended up with the killer set of the opening anywhere on the island, getting over 12,000 fish, though mostly humpies. It sure was frustrating having that many fish caught right under your nose when you barely get 500, but I guess everyone gets to have their day. That pretty well cleaned out the bay so most of the other boats left. So we got in line first for the evening back out set.

The tide wasn't going to be as low, and there weren't as many fish, so we took the Awtam up the creek and left Dave with the PG92 behind to make the set. It's a fairly large stream and we probably went almost another mile further up. There were too many sports fishermen around to be able to break out the plunger, but Dick had another plan. By gunning the engine in gear in the mud and stirring it up, the fish go downstream to get to clear water. As the tide dropped, we kept working our way downstream, pushing the fish in front of us. And by this time, it was dark, and by using the spotlight, which they don't like, we kept the pressure on. But we didn't move fast enough and we got stuck in a shallow spot. After grinding up a bunch more mud we gave up and shut her down, having to wait for the rising tide.

We were still ½ mile above Dave so Neil and I jumped in the skiff and took over. Glad I didn't put on a new prop because I ground it in the mud and sand all the way down. There were a lot of fish

in front of us and another skiff that was filled with a bunch of sport fishermen who were unwittingly helping us.

It was quite shallow in front of Dave with lots of grass and the skiff wouldn't hardly move. So I jumped into chest-deep water with plunger pole and tried to herd the fish into the set as Dave closed. But we experienced the same problems as before. The fish started moving back upstream before we could get around them. I was in the skiff for three hours closing it up, soaking wet and cold, being the middle of the night. But we did ok, getting 1600 humpies and 150 silvers. All in all it was a fun set, and a fitting way to end the season, as all we did the next day was wash out the seine. So we headed for town early the next day to make the memorial services for Les.

Other than the obvious one fault, we had an excellent season, and a record breaker for Dick. His previous high was 180,000 pounds last year and we almost made 220,000 pounds this year. And I can't imagine working for anyone else that could have treated me better than Dick.