

Mitchell Act Program Update:

I would like to express to NMFS some concern the Washington Coastal Tribes have with the Mitchell Act budget situation and possible reductions in production for 2004. As you know the Coastal tribes fish on the Columbia River Hatchery fish in the Treaty Troll fishery. A reduction in these hatchery fish could have a significant effect on the Tribes troll fishery.

The Washington Coastal Tribes recognize the Columbia River Tribes are participating in discussions on Mitchell Act funding issues and support their role in the decision making process among the agencies that produce these fish. However, the Washington Coastal tribes are concerned about the potential impact of reductions in this program on their fishery and would like NMFS to consult with them, keep them informed, and to include them in any future meetings on hatchery closures or hatchery reductions.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Coastal Tribes would also encourage NMFS to look at making cuts in non-production activities funded with Mitchell Act monies before making any decisions on shutting down hatcheries or cutting fish production.

Thank-you