



THE  
**AuCoin**REPORT

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## Update: Salmon Seasons

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August 1982

Dear Friend:

Oregon fishermen are again caught up in a controversy regarding salmon seasons. Commercial and recreational fishing for coho were stopped this year when the quotas allowed by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Pacific Fisheries Management Council were exceeded.

These quotas are based on the Oregon Production Index, an indicator of the number of salmon available in the Oregon Production area. However, many fishermen contend that the OPI is inaccurate and report sightings of fish greater than the OPI.

It's time to clear up this annual controversy for everyone's benefit. As a step in that direction, I've asked the General Accounting Office to study the OPI and other fishing season management methods to find out if how sound those methods are.

You can help by sending me your suggestions of technical issues to include in the study. I would ask that you send them to me within the next few weeks.

On another front, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Justice and Commerce, at my urging, overrode White House objections and approved funding for the Columbia River Hatchery program (\$10.4 million) and several fisheries research and development programs (\$8 million) for the next fiscal year.

The Administration proposed eliminating the program over the next three years and recommended cuts for next year which would reduce the annual production of salmon and steelhead from Columbia River hatcheries by more than 70 percent. This would have been another economic blow to our region and had to be stopped.

Sincerely,

LES AuCOIN  
Member of Congress



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

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## House of Representatives

### GAO ASKED TO STUDY FISHERIES QUOTAS

**HON. LES AU COIN**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 13, 1982

Mr. AuCOIN. Mr. Speaker, fishermen along the coast of Oregon have been engaged this summer in a controversy centering on the salmon seasons set by the Pacific Fisheries Management Council and the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission. As anyone who is familiar with the fishing industry knows, these management agencies have the authority under the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act to regulate fishing.

The Pacific Fisheries Management Council establishes quotas, the maximum number of fish which can be harvested without depleting the resource. Quotas for salmon are based

on the Oregon production index, which is developed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to indicate the availability of the resource in the Oregon production area. For years, fishermen have contended that this index is faulty.

This year, the use of the Oregon production index has produced the shortest commercial fishing seasons for coho on records: Fishing between Leadbetter Point, Wash., and Cape Falcon, Oreg., lasted 8 days and fishing between Cape Falcon and Cape Blanco was stopped after 12 days. On top of that, confidence was strained further by three announcements within 1½ weeks that changed various seasons. One of which by the Department of Commerce was a complete flip-flop which closed and reopened the season within a span of 3 hours.

Recent flip-flops in Government decisions in setting Northwest ocean salmon seasons raise questions about

the way those decisions are made. Along with my colleague from Iowa Mr. SMITH, the chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee with jurisdiction over the issue, I am asking the General Accounting Office, the watchdog arm of the Congress, to do a program audit to get the answers.

Angry fishermen are saying one thing and Government fish managers another about how many fish can be caught every season. No one knows if the Government is right or if its wrong. That is why a respected third party needs to come in, sort out the confusion, and produce some answers. This controversy boils up every year, it is getting worse and this latest series of on-again, off-again seasons is the last straw.

I want the General Accounting Office to study the current method of establishing fisheries quotas and determine if these methods are sound scientifically.

# THE AuCoin REPORT

*Les AuCoin*

M.C.



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

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