



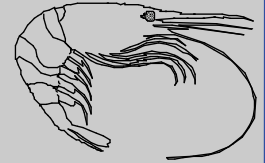
~1st 2010~

# Mid-Season Pink Shrimp Update

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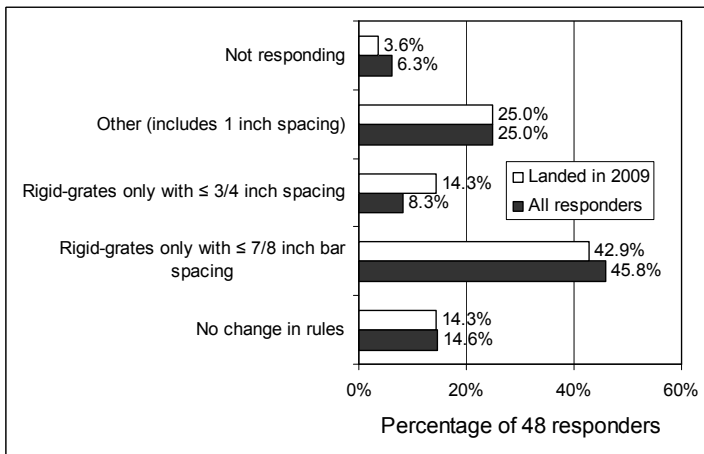


**TO: OREGON SHRIMP INDUSTRY**  
**FROM: Bob Hannah and Steve Jones**  
**Subject: Proposed Regulation Changes**  
**Date: 10 June 2010**

## Results of BRD survey

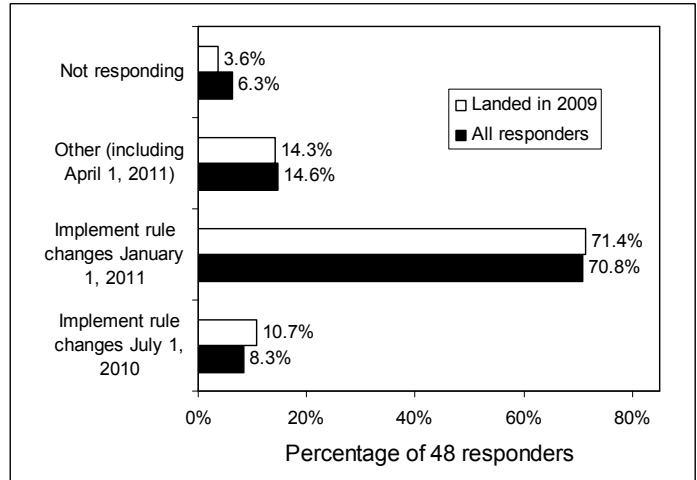
Surveys were sent to 139 shrimp permit holders. Forty-eight responses (35%) were received. Of the 49 vessels that landed shrimp in Oregon in 2009, 28 (57%) responded to the survey. Responses on the individual questions were as follows.

**Question 1** – What rule-change do you support for reducing the catch of eulachon smelt in Oregon shrimp trawls?



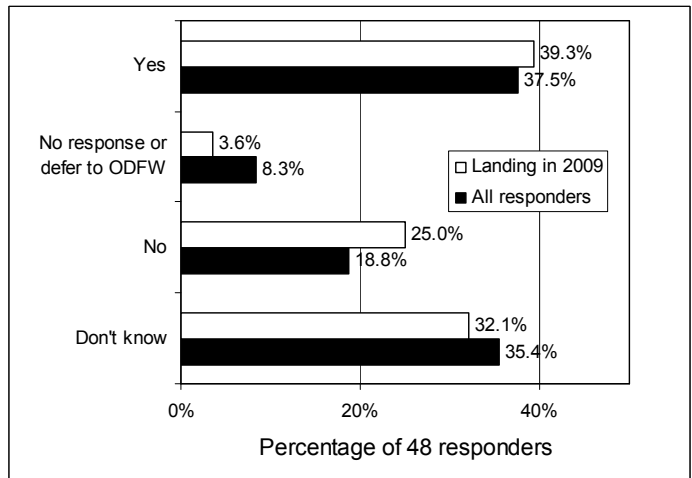
Most (46%) of the permit holders responding favored the option of restricting BRD use to rigid-grates only and favored setting the maximum vertical bar spacing to no larger than 0.875 inches (7/8 of an inch). There was also some support for a maximum bar spacing of 1 inch (13%) and 0.75 inches (3/4 inch, 8% of responders). Combining vessels that favored any bar spacing of 1 inch or less totaled 79% of responders. Vessels landing shrimp in 2009 had similar responses, but were more supportive of limiting BRDs to just 0.75 inch bar spacing, possibly due to more fishing experience with these type of BRDs.

**Question 2** – If a change in the BRD rules is deemed necessary, when would you like to see the change become effective?



Responses to question 2 were very strongly in favor of delaying the effective date of changes to the BRD rules until January 1, 2011 (71%). Some suggested using April 1, 2011 as an effective date. One responder commented that acting in-season in 2010 would create problems with backlogs at BRD fabrication facilities due to a large influx of orders. Vessels that landed shrimp in 2009 had similar responses.

**Question 3** – If Oregon BRD rules were changed to disallow accelerator panels (also called “down panels”) to help eulachon smelt pass through trawl nets more quickly, with less stress, would this negatively impact your shrimping operations?



Responses to question #3 were split fairly evenly between “yes, it would negatively impact my operation” (38%) and “don’t know” (35%), although there was a contingent that either don’t use accelerator panels or believe they aren’t necessary for good BRD performance (19%). This category was larger amongst vessels landing in 2009 (25%) than for all survey responders.

## Survey Comments

There were a variety of additional comments received along with the survey. A selection of comments, organized by topic, is shown below.

### On the eulachon problem:

“Getting a jump on this coming problem is a good idea. I think we catch very few eulachon if any”.

“Lets use good science for these proposed changes”

“If they close the fishery would that have a negative impact, probably more jobs lost, and there goes the working man, but maybe the state of NMFS will give us all jobs! If it has to do with global warming it is not going to matter bit, just don’t pay it! Its called cycle.”

“We ..... view this problem as an industry problem, not an us against them problem”. “We may want to change sizing late who knows”

“I understand getting out in front of the issue and support it, but at this date I think it would be difficult to implement changes to BRD’s until years end”.

“Please help save this fishery!”

“Maybe ask the federal government to go and rebuild the rivers in Washington, that Mt St. Helens destroyed in the eruption. It seems mother nature wiped out the smelt not the shrimpers”.

“I don’t believe that our little fleet of west coast shrimpers has much adverse effect on this species. Perhaps the smelt are getting gobbled up by all the groundfish that trawlers on this coast are no longer allowed to harvest”.

“ We have rigid grates – to date we have not had much of a smelt prob – they seem to cyclical because in the 80’s we had a lot of smelt – 90’s not so much and again in the 2000’s not so much – don’t know if its because they are depleted or they go through the grates or flow out – if the grates are close enough together – it seems we might have a hang up – plug up effect and they will plug up everything goes out the top – also even at close ¾” spaces smelt would go through -??- Maybe we might want to monitor smelt volume coming off of pickers – you have observers – have them measure bycatch volume to see if there is an impact problem”.

“The smelt haven’t been in the shrimp. They are getting out through the BRD.”

“I saw more(150-200) small (3-4 in.) smelt last year than I have seen in 10+ years.”

” Lets see what the feds take on the issue of smelt bycatch then make the steps necessary to insure the shrimp fleet remains a sustainable and well managed fishery”.

### On BRD Types, spacing:

“Soft Panels should no longer be option as a BRD. Allow rigid grates only with no greater than 1 1/8” is a proven BRD tool”

“A proposed change in a fishery should be before the start date or season opener”

“Where is the data that shows accelerator panels will cause stress to smelt?”

“Grates larger than 1 ¼” have been prove to be a waste as BRD device. Soft panels are a joke, they’re a failed BRD”.

“I currently use grates with 3/4 inch bar spacing and so far haven’t seen much problem”

“ I have 3/4 inch grates; the above changes don’t hurt me.”

“my present BRD’s have 1 inch spacing”

“Allow rigid grates only, with no greater than 1” bar spacing as shrimp loss is too great under 1”.

“Would like to see survey results for narrower bar spacing before requiring fleet to invest and change – so we know if it does any good”

“7/8” or ¾” spacing, whichever is proven to work best”.

“I marked 7/8”on first question but would like whatever works best without harming shrimp catch excessively”.

“Smaller spacing will not work, it will wash shrimp out of the top hole cut pay check are out of business, see ya”

### On the timing of implementation:

“I would like a 2 month heads up at least”

“When my present gear is replaced”

“April 1, 2011” (several)

“As far as dates/effective dates, sooner the better if it will help us negotiate better terms for the future of our industry”.

### **On accelerator panels:**

“Probably not but won’t know for sure till I test it myself. I will be doing this in April or May”

“I opened up my accelerator panels in my nets six years ago.

“I use accelerator panels now, but they are easy to remove”.

“not sold on down panels having any impact on smelt being stressed, or on there ability to pass through. Might even help create a slack area of water movement, that allows smelt to exit the hole in top of net. More research is needed before action is taken”.

“I don’t use downpanels and I seem to catch alright”.

“I would expect that it would (impact negatively). I need to see the research data”.

“Would like to see more data about eliminating down panel. From what I hear its probably not a big deal.”

“I have not used accelerator panel since 2004”

## **Conclusions**

The survey and comments show that the majority of Oregon shrimpers support changing the BRD rules to make them more restrictive, to reduce eulachon bycatch. About 79% support moving to rules that allow only rigid-grate BRDs with 1 inch or smaller maximum bar spacing. The survey also suggests that the shrimp fleet has concerns about moving too quickly to require changes in Oregon’s BRD rules; some time to adjust to the changing rules is preferred. Some would also like to see some more data on how gear changes might reduce eulachon bycatch and/or influence shrimp catch rates or eulachon condition.

## **Proposed staff recommendation**

Based on these survey results, discussions with fishermen and our understanding of the future challenges of conducting a fishery that captures as bycatch a species that has been declared threatened under the Endangered Species Act, we propose to recommend the following changes to Oregon’s BRD rules to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission within the next 9 months:

Effective April 1, 2011, allow only rigid-grate BRDs with a maximum bar spacing of 1 inch.

Effective April 1, 2012, allow only rigid-grate BRDs with a maximum bar spacing of 3/4 of an inch.

This approach has the benefit of making it clear to all interested parties that Oregon is moving effectively to minimize the “take” of eulachon smelt, while allowing sufficient lead time for the industry to test gear and adapt to the changing rules. The “phased” approach also has the benefit of allowing some time before fully requiring rigid-grate BRDs with 3/4 inch bar spacing, just in case substantial problems with using these BRDs arise for some vessels. To date, ODFW research shows that 3/4 inch BRDs can be constructed and used with virtually no loss of shrimp, however, research-scale tests simply can’t show how these narrowly-spaced BRDs will work in all types of shrimp nets. We recommend that all vessels begin working with rigid-grate BRDs with 3/4 inch bar spacing as soon as is practicable to learn how to use them with minimal shrimp loss and to reduce eulachon bycatch as much, and as quickly, as possible.

This recommendation reflects the best advice of MRP’s Shrimp Project staff. The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission makes the final decision on all changes in rules regulating fishing in Oregon.



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