

Gear and Seasons (2 proposals)

PROPOSAL 67

5 AAC 18.331. Gillnet specifications and operations.

Allow the use of single filament mesh web in a set gillnet in the Kodiak Area, as follows:

Notwithstanding 5 AAC 39.250(c), in the Kodiak Area, a person may use single filament mesh web in a set gillnet.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Kodiak salmon setnet fishermen are experiencing increasing extreme slime events. 2017 and 2018 were the worst that have occurred. During these time periods – approximately 26 days in 2017 and 21 days in 2018 - setnets were coated with slime and rendered unfishable. The slime occurred during some of the most productive time periods, late July and early August, for Kodiak setnetters. The slime we are experiencing is so heavy it is difficult to leave our web in the water. It becomes so heavy that it breaks the net from the setnet frame.

The multi-strand web we are legally allowed to fish is very susceptible to capturing and holding this heavy slime and it is difficult to clean with water pressure pumps. We believe that single filament mesh web may be less susceptible to absorbing and holding slime and may be easier to pump clean and catch fish again.

To test this theory, four Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game Commissioner Subsistence Permits have been issued to Northwest Setnetters Association members. These permits will be used during heavy slime events in the 2019 salmon season to test fish single filament mesh web alongside our multi-strand web and ascertain its benefits. These results will be presented to the Board of Fisheries meeting scheduled for Kodiak in 2020.

What will happen if problem is not solved? Kodiak setnet fishermen will lose valuable fishing time due to nets becoming “slimed”.

PROPOSED BY: Northwest Setnetters Association (HQ-F19-063)

PROPOSAL 68

5 AAC 18.330. Gear.

Repeal the sunset date for the use of commercial set gillnets in the Alitak District, as follows:

Readopt and remove sunset

5 AAC 18.330. **GEAR**

(d) in the Alitak District,

(3) notwithstanding subsection (d) (1) of this section, in the Humpy-Deadman and Cape Alitak Sections north of a line from Cape Trinity at 56, 44.80`N lat., 154,08.90` W.long, to Cape Alitak at 56,50.58`N lat.,154,18.50` W. long, after September 4 salmon may also be taken by set net gear.

(The provision of this paragraph do not apply after December 31,2019) remove

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? At the 2017 Kodiak BOF meeting after considerable discussion proposal 57 was adopted to allow set gill net fishing in the Alitak District in all waters between Cape Alitak and Cape Trinity after September 4. It was determined that the change would sunset Dec. 31 2019 and that the changes could be reevaluated and made permanent by a new proposal if no gear conflicts had resulted from the changes. To my knowledge no gear conflicts occurred and there was very minimal effort by set netters or seiners after Sept. 4 in the Alitak District during the 2017-18 seasons. Therefore the fishery should be allowed to continue.

"PROPOSAL 57 - 5 AAC 18.330. Gear. Allow set gillnet gear in the entire Alitak District after September 4, as follows: 5 AAC 18.330. Gear (d) (2) (d) In the Alitak District, salmon may be taken (1) in the Humpy-Deadman and Cape Alitak Sections by purse seines and beach seines only; (2) in the Alitak Bay, Moser Bay, Olga Bay, Dog Salmon Flats, Outer and Inner Upper Station, and Outer and Inner Akalura Sections by set gillnets only, except that after September 4, salmon may be taken also by purse seines and beach seines. Also after September 4 set gill net gear maybe used in the entire Alitak District."

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Problem: Lack of fishing time for the Alitak District set net fishery. The Alitak District set net fishery is a bankrupt fishery. It operates from retirement accounts, selling assets and cannery credit. The fishery is predominantly managed on sockeye returns to the Olga Bay systems on which fishing time has been severely restricted in recent years. Many of the set netters have been totally disenfranchised from other healthy local stocks that transit the area during sockeye restrictions. Opening the entire Alitak District to set net gear after Sept. 4 would allow those with the fortitude and means an opportunity to regain some of the loss created by restrictions imposed for sockeye management.

PROPOSED BY: Pete Hannah and Rick Metzger (EF-F19-040)
