

PROPOSAL 62

5 AAC 27.865. Bristol Bay Herring Management Plan.

Allow all commercial gear types to fish for herring simultaneously in Bristol Bay, as follows:

The Board of Fisheries should allow the option of all commercial gear types to simultaneously fish for Bristol Bay herring in all open areas by repealing 5AAC 27.865(b)(3). The department would still have emergency order authority and can use its discretion to limit time and area for this fishery.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The current Bristol Bay Herring management plan directs the department to open the commercial herring fishery by separating the gillnet and seine gear groups by area during any opening. Due to the low number of participants over the last 6 years, this management approach is unnecessary. There is no risk of gear conflict by allowing all gear types to fish simultaneously in the same areas. In fact, by restricting the gillnetters and seiners to only fishing in separate areas by regulation, the result is an unnecessary disadvantage for both groups to access areas where the resource is congregating. Additionally, the Togiak herring season is very short (lasting roughly 10 days) due to herring spawning behavior and weather challenges. By increasing access for all participants during this short fishery, the result will be more efficient and effective harvest of high-quality herring for all users.

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