

## **PROPOSAL 64**

### **5 AAC 18.331. Gillnet Specifications and Operations.**

Modify gillnet specification and operations to increase the allowable size of the hook as follows:

#### 5 AAC 18.331. Gillnet Specifications and Operations

...

(c) Set Gillnets must be operated substantially in a straight line, except that no more than **50** [25] fathoms of a set gillnet may be used as a hook. A hook may be used in any configuration.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The percentage of the sockeye and pink salmon poundage caught annually by Kodiak Island's Westside set gillnet fleet has declined significantly since 1990.

By regulation, Kodiak's Westside set gillnetters may only fish in the Central Section of the Northwest Kodiak District. The Central Section is not a terminal area; but salmon returning to the inner bays of the Northwest Kodiak District, to the common property fishery of the Telrod Cove SHA, and to the Inner and Outer Karluk sections of the Southwest Kodiak District, travel through it. All of these are managed by the 1990 Westside Management Plan and all have been historically targeted by set gillnetters. However, because set gillnets are fixed gear and are prohibited by statute from fishing in these terminal areas, set gillnet fishermen have only one opportunity to catch these fish. With these facts in mind, any changes to the Westside Management Plan which attempt to allocate an historically equitable percentage of salmon to Westside set gillnetters must include an equitable percentage of the salmon swimming to these terminal areas.

The percentage of sockeye salmon harvested by Westside set gillnetters out of the total of all sockeye salmon caught by all gear groups in the Northwest Kodiak District, Telrod SHA and Inner and Outer Karluk Sections of the Southwest District has declined from a 23-year average (1990-2012) of 50% to a 34% average in the years 2013-2022.

The percentage of pink salmon harvested by Westside set gillnetters out of the total of all pink salmon caught by all gear groups in the Northwest Kodiak District, Telrod SHA and Inner and Outer Karluk Sections of the Southwest Kodiak District has declined from a 23-year average (1990-2012) of 30% to 19% in the years 2013-2022.

In the most recent five years (2017-2022) the set gillnet fleet's percentage of the catch in these areas has fallen even more precipitously - to 29% for sockeye and 14% for pinks. This loss of catch percentage by Westside set gillnetters since 1990 has resulted in a significant loss of income for the set gillnet fleet. If not reversed, this trend of declining catch share and declining income may result in the demise of Kodiak's Westside set gillnet fishery.

A larger hook will increase set gillnet efficiency, thereby helping the set gillnet fleet achieve a more equitable harvest percentage.

**PROPOSED BY:** Northwest Setnetters Association

(HQ-F23-078)

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