

## ***Gear, Gillnet Specifications and Operations, and Seine Specifications and Operations (5 proposals)***

### **PROPOSAL 62**

#### **5 AAC 18.330. Gear.**

Increase commercial salmon fishing opportunity for set gillnet permit holders as follows:

#### **5 AAC 18.330. Gear**

...

(b) In the Northwest Kodiak District, salmon may be taken only by purse seines and beach seines, except that in the Central Section, salmon may also be taken by set gillnets. **In the Central Section, set gillnet fishing shall open 48 hours before seine fishing may occur. Seine fishing may only occur during combined set gillnet, beach seine, and purse seine fishing periods. In the Central Section, during continuous combined set gillnet and seine fishing periods, seine fishing shall be closed for 48 hours after each 5-day continuous combined fishing period, allowing one 48-hour set gillnet only fishing period per week.**

**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.

Advanced opening periods for set gillnet fishermen in the Central Section of the Northwest Kodiak District can help set gillnetters regain an equitable harvest percentage.

**PROPOSED BY:** Northwest Setnetters Association (HQ-F23-075)  
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**PROPOSAL 63**

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

Allow permit stacking in the set gillnet salmon fishery as follows:

To amend:

**5 AAC. Alaska Admin. Code 18.331 Gillnet Specifications and Operations**

**A CFEC permit holder who holds two Kodiak setnet permits may operate no more than 4 set gillnets with no more than 300 fathoms of set gill net gear in the aggregate.** No single set gillnet be more than 150 fathoms in length. Both of the permit holder’s five digit CFEC permit serial numbers, followed by the letter “D” to identify the gillnet as a dual permit set gillnet must be located on the identification buoy and the site markers required by 5 AAC. 39.280. At least one cork every 10 fathoms along the cork line must be plainly and legibly marked with CFEC permit numbers of the CFEC permit holder. All identifiers must be displayed in a manner that are plainly visible and unobscured and have permanent symbols in color that contrasts with the background.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Kodiak salmon setnet fishery is in trouble. Our average ex vessel value has significantly diminished, leaving operations marginal. From 2001 to 2021 it ranged from a low of \$29,000 to a high of \$71,435. Our average earnings have not exceeded \$71,000 for 34 years, since 1989.

Despite two decades of healthy runs on the entire island, setnetters are no longer solvent, with an average ex vessel value of \$46,000. On the other hand, the mobile gear type’s average earnings have skyrocketed from \$100,000 to \$350,000. The Kodiak salmon fishery is robust, yet environmental issues have plagued our gear type with month-long algae blooms, and macrocystis clogging nets. Smaller salmon are returning, going through the smallest, feasible web we can fish.

Kodiak setnet operations are typically a family affair. Children can hold a permit as young as 10. Many of us are dependent on our income and must continue salmon fishing. We are aging, and are “the graying of the fleet” Operation expenses are hard to meet.

Price declines, the inability to hire experienced crew, and having children leave, make our livelihoods marginal at best. When children leave for more lucrative employment, it results in “stranded equity,” a useless permit and gear. Crewmembers aren’t interested in Kodiak.

There has been very little change to the limited entry program since the 1970s. Yet, in response to the salmon industry’s economic disaster declared in 2002, the legislature passed the law that allowed 2 (salmon) permits in one name. In 2008, the BOF passed new wording (5 AAC. 18331)

that one owner of (2) SO4K permits could fish 2 permits of gear. For 3 years, up to 38 setnetters took advantage of the new regulation. It ended in 2010 for unknown reasons.

Based on these facts, we could return to sustainable income and protect our assets If you approve this proposal., as many of us have spent our entire working lives in this fishery.

In 2002, the BOF took action for Bristol Bay salmon fishermen when their fishery collapsed, allowing one vessel to fish 2 permits. We believe you should reinstate the language in the AAC Alaska Admin. Code 18.331 that was approved in 2008--solely for SO4K setnet permits. It allowed one CFEC salmon setnet permit owner to fish two sets of gear. This would alleviate economic hardship and uncertainty in our fishery-allowing us to utilize the potential value of a useless permit. and gear.

Further details will be available at the 2024 meeting.

**PROPOSED BY:** Lacey Berns

(EF-F23-050)

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**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.

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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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**PROPOSAL 65**

**5 AAC 18.XXX. New Section.**

Prohibit the use of aircraft to locate salmon for the commercial taking of salmon or to direct commercial salmon fishing operations in the Kodiak Management Area as follows:

We recommend that the following regulation be placed in the Kodiak Area Commercial Salmon Fishing Regulations at the end of Article 3 Salmon Fishery section.

**5 AAC 18.XXX. Use of aircraft unlawful** A person may not use or employ an aircraft to locate salmon for the commercial taking of salmon or to direct commercial fishing operations in the Kodiak Area.

If the above proposal passes, we recommend that (f) found in **5 AAC 18.332. Seine specifications and operations** be removed from regulations.

[(f) IN THE MAINLAND DISTRICT, IT IS UNLAWFUL TO TAKE SALMON WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF AN AIRCRAFT DIRECTING THE OPERATION OF THE SEINE GEAR.]

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** We would like the board to address the use of aircraft in the Kodiak Area. Currently there is aircraft restriction language in the regulations for the Mainland District only of the Kodiak Area. The remaining districts of the Kodiak Area should be addressed.

The use of aircraft to locate salmon benefits a small portion of the Kodiak Area salmon fleet and diminishes opportunity for other members of the fleet.

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**PROPOSAL 66**

**5 AAC 18.332. Seine specifications and operations.**

Increase purse seine length in the Kodiak Management Area as follows:

**AAC 18.332. Seine specifications and operations.**

- (a) No purse seine or hand purse seine may be less than 100 fathoms or more than 250 [200] fathoms in length. No seine may be less than 100 meshes or more than 325 meshes in depth. At least 50 fathoms of a seine must be 150 meshes in depth.
- (b) One lead no more than 100 fathoms in length may be used with each purse seine or hand purse seine. The aggregate length of seine and lead may not exceed 250 fathoms. Leads must be removed from the water within two hours after a season or fishing period closure. Each lead must have at each end a buoy, cork, or float plainly and legibly marked with the operator's five-digit CFEC permit serial number.
- (c) Beach seines no less than 100 fathoms nor more than 225 fathoms in length may be used.
- (d) Beach seines may not be less than 100 meshes in depth.
- (e) When an anchor is used during the operation of a purse seine, hand purse seine, or beach seine, only the shoreward end of the seine or lead may be anchored; the seine shall be attached to the licensed vessel, and the vessel may not be anchored, except that, in the operation of a beach seine, an additional anchor, used to anchor the vessel to a beach, may be used only while retrieving the beach seine.
- (f) In the Mainland District, it is unlawful to take salmon with the assistance of an aircraft directing the operation of the seine gear.
- (g) Seine mesh size may not be more than seven inches.
- (h) A ring, strap, purse, or tow line may be attached to the corkline, ribline, or leadline of a beach seine. Hydraulic power may be used to set, retrieve, or purse a beach seine. A beach seine must be set from, and hauled to, a beach, or to a vessel anchored to a beach. One end of a beach seine must remain on a beach above the water surface at all times during the set.
- (i) A beach seine has ceased fishing when all of the leadline is out of the water.
- (j) Overlapping panels of net web may not be used in seine leads.
- (k) Notwithstanding 5 AAC 39.240, a CFEC purse seine salmon permit holder may use a registered salmon seine fishing vessel, when it has seine gear on board, to tow another registered salmon seine fishing vessel with seine gear on board if the permit holder for the vessel being towed is on board one of the vessels.
- (l) A purse seine is considered to have ceased fishing as specified in 5 AAC 39.260(c).

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Current regulations were written during a time when leads were detachable, and common practice was to leave a lead anchored and to make sets off the end of the lead. This style of fishing has completely ceased to exist in the Kodiak Management Area, as every net is now utilizing a sown-in lead. The proposed language would align seine nets used in the Kodiak management area with other areas in the State such as Prince William Sound. The previous requirement for 7 inch lead web stemmed from concerns that these leads could be fished from skiffs as a separate net in order to rob creeks, however with the current fishing practice of sown-in leads, this concern is nullified.

**PROPOSED BY:** Kodiak Seiners Association

(HQ-F23-084)

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