

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 J Berns

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