

RC 049

ORAL TESTIMONY

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ORAL TESTIMONY -PATRICK PIKUS

1/8/14

Good morning (or afternoon). My name is Pat Pikus. I live in Kodiak and have been a salmon fisherman all my life. I represent my family and we own the vessel Polar Star, a 58' seiner.

I oppose proposals 88-91

I do not feel that it is effective to try to micromanage a fishery as complex as Alitak in the ways laid out in these proposals.

I oppose proposals 92-94

The Cape Igvak Salmon Management Plan is a historical success and one of the most effective management plans in the state. It is important to note that while 15% of Chignik sockeye are allocated to Kodiak Area salmon fishermen, our average historical catch is less than 11%.

I oppose proposal 95

The Westside and Spiridon Management plans have done an excellent job managing the Westside, Karluk, and Telrod salmon runs. I don't see a need to allow a set gillnet-only opening, when set netters as a group average 75% of central section sockeye.

I oppose proposals 96 and 97.

I urge the Board of Fish to approve proposal 98.

Proposal 98 provides a seine permit holder with the opportunity to remove a seine permit, vessel and it's gear. If amended, proposal 98 would allow joint ventures to operate with improved gear, such that 50 fathoms of lead web, (7'), would be replaced with 50 fathoms of legal seine web for a total length 250 fathoms of seine. Currently, there are 376 salmon purse seine permits available in the Kodiak area, and in 2013, only 170 were actually fished, leaving a balance of 206. Far too many permits were issued when limited entry went into effect. I believe we need to provide a mechanism to reduce the potential for entry of a large number permits into the fishery.

The Kodiak purse seiners have not realized any changes in gear specifications that improve economic or operational efficiency. The set-gillnet sector, however, has been granted several improvements, including:

1. Joint ventures
2. The ability to place hooks in any configuration
3. A lead that is not included in the "Aggregate"
3. Seine webbing used as a lead that may extend 50 fathoms seaward of the beach at the low tide of the day.
4. Changes in opening and closure times to accommodate specific users.

All of these have led to an increase in fishing efficiency for the set-gillnet sector. I believe it would only be fair to allow purse seiners improved gear, when the increase is tied to the formation of a joint venture. Over the long-term this will lead to less competition for both seiners and gill-netters.

There are precedents for allowing a gear improvement in a joint venture situation. In the Bristol Bay drift gillnet fishery, joint ventures are allowed a longer net. And in Kodiak, the set gillnetters in a joint venture are permitted to fish 3 nets instead of two. These sectors are given some gear flexibility in a joint venture, so why shouldn't the purse seiners?

I would also like to address some of the concerns raised about this proposal:

1. Purse seine permit values. I would argue that the Board of Fish should not be making decisions based on permit values. Kodiak purse seine permits right now are valued at around \$41,000, which is small compared to the overall cost of a purse seine operation, which includes the vessel, deck hardware, skiff, and seine. I don't believe that a slight rise in permit values would be a significant impediment to anyone serious about entering the fishery.

2. Large vs small boats. If the Board considers this proposal as amended (where a joint venture can replace lead web with seine web, with no increase in overall length), then there is no advantage for bigger boats over smaller boats. Additionally, the cost to make the change would be minimal, since it would only entail replacing the lead web with seine web for 50 fathoms of the net.

3. Lead vs hook. An all-seine net is actually only a significant improvement when fishing with the boat-end of the net away from the shore, where that end of the net is forming the hook. When fishing with the boat up against the shore, that end of the net acts as a lead regardless of having lead web or seine web, and would not provide a significant improvement.

4. Long-term benefits. I foresee it taking some time, but gradually the number of latent permits would come down as operators see the advantage of having two permits on board. Hypothetically, you could end up with a maximum of $376/2$ or 188 vessels on the grounds, instead of a potential 376. Even 188 boats would be too many for this fishery.

5. Dual permit holder. Some proponents argue that two permit holders would only offer a short term fix. Therefore permits should be locked as a dual permit. I prefer the Board of Fish to decide after hearing testimony.

6. Incentive. Others argue that replacing lead web is not adequate incentive for seiners to acquire an additional permit and that additional length should be added. Again I prefer the Board of Fish to decide.

Proposal 99. I support proposal 99 (dual permit holder if the same consideration is given proposal 98

Proposal 91. Many of us seiners are quite willing to forego the June 9th, 33 hour opening in Alitak to allow additional escapement for Upper Station.

Thank You Patrick Pikus

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Pikus". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "P".

December 20, 2013

Boards Support Section
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
Attn: BOF Comments

Re: Proposal 98, to allow Kodiak Area CFEC seine salmon permit holders to operate additional gear under a dual permit or joint venture.

To whom it may concern:

I am the original proposer of proposal 98. After talking with many people and attending the Kodiak Fishery Advisory Committee meeting, I would like to offer to the Board of Fish an amendment to my original proposal for its consideration. This amendment is an effort to address the concerns of the committee.

I would eliminate option 1 from consideration, making option 2, the joint venture option, the basis of the proposal. I would also eliminate the addition of 50 fathoms of total net length from consideration, and instead suggest that under a joint venture the permit holders be allowed to operate with a full 250 fathoms of seine, instead of a maximum of 200 fathoms of seine and 50 fathoms of lead. The total net length would remain the same at 250 fathoms.

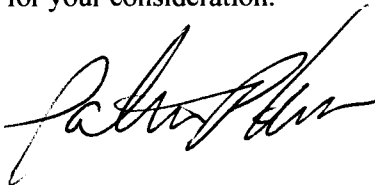
The proposal language would read as follows:

Allow a joint operation if two separate permit holders are on board.

- 1.) With two permit holders on board, the combined maximum length of gear would be 250 fathoms, with up to 250 fathoms of seine.
- 2.) The two permit holders would be required to register with ADF&G their intent to combine permits and while so registered the permits would not be allowed to operate separately from one another. Termination of the joint operation would have to be registered with ADF&G.
- 3.) The vessel would be required to clearly display an indication of a joint operation on its ADF&G permanent license plate number. Upon termination of the joint operation, the display must be removed.
- 4.) Both permit holders would be responsible for the lawful use of the gear.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Patrick J. Pikus
Polar Star, Inc.
P.O. Box 2843
Kodiak, AK 99615

December 2, 2013

Boards Support Section
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
Attn: BOF Comments

Re: Proposal 98, to allow Kodiak Area CFEC seine salmon permit holders to operate additional gear under a dual permit or joint venture.

To whom it may concern:

We support the adoption of proposal 98 and moving it forward into regulation, with option 1 (allowing dual permit holders) being the preferred option.

There are currently about 376 permits annually issued in the Kodiak area purse seine salmon fishery. In the 2012 fishery, the most recent for which the data are available, only 166 of the available permits were actively fished. This means that there are over 200 latent permits out there, which we would argue is an excessive amount given the characteristics of this fishery. Although the Kodiak area is relatively large, boats tend to concentrate in certain locations at certain times during the season due to the vagaries of geography and the timing of the salmon runs, such that overcrowding becomes a problem. Indeed, at certain sites the lineup can be such that boats may only make 3 or 4 sets in an entire day. If a significant number of these latent permits become active, which is a distinct possibility given the current renewed interest in the Alaska salmon fisheries, overcrowding in the fishing grounds may become a serious problem moving forward into the future. Also, during peak pink salmon years, the processors sometimes institute a daily catch limit, as happened recently in the 2013 season. An excessive increase in active permits would likely lead to more days of catch limits. And with the market being as fickle as it is (surely many remember when pinks were less than 10 cents a pound), the case of overcrowding on the grounds, more daily catch limits, and a low price would diminish the economic viability of the Kodiak salmon fishery for the active participants.

We see this proposal as a means to incentivize current permit holders to acquire a second permit (either themselves under option 1 or to have a crewman with a permit under option 2), thus reducing the potential of harm from excessive latent entry in the future. The proposal would help provide long-term stability for the current active participants that depend on the fishery. Allowing a 20% increase in seine length to 300 fathoms seems a reasonable incentive that shouldn't create any problems on the fishing grounds, and shouldn't harm those fishing with the current 250 fathom net. There is a precedent for this model; such a situation already exists in the Bristol Bay drift gillnet fishery (5 AAC 06.333), where joint operations, with two permits on board, are allowed a longer gillnet. Kodiak area purse seine permit prices are relatively low because there are so many of them. The cost of acquiring a second permit would not be excessive when compared to the overall costs involved in the fishery. Thus, we would argue that this proposal represents a reasonable way to achieve the goal of reducing the number of latent permits in the Kodiak Area purse seine salmon fishery.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(all of the undersigned are Kodiak area purse seine permit holders)

December 22, 2013

Boards Support Section
Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game
Attn: BOF Comments

Re: Proposal 95, Establish certain set gillnet-only fishing periods, beginning June 28, in the Central and North Cape sections.

To whom it may concern:

I oppose the adoption of proposal 95 by the Board of Fish.

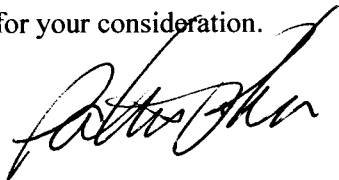
The Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan has proven to be an effective management strategy for all the wild salmon runs on the west side, which I believe has been generally equitable to all of the resource user groups. The timing and size of the salmon runs is going to naturally vary year to year somewhat, which gives rise to year to year fluctuations in how well the various user groups do, both in an absolute sense and relative to each other. Sometimes mobile seine gear has a really good season relative to set gillnetters, and sometimes vice versa. Such is the nature of the salmon fisheries.

The specific purpose of this proposal is to shift some of the harvest of the Telrod Cove enhancement sockeye from mobile seine gear to set gillnetters by allowing for a set gillnet-only 5-day opening in the Central section beginning June 28 if the minimum Karluk early-run sockeye escapement is not reached. However, if the set gillnetters were to have an exclusive opening, at least *some* portion of their catch would be natural-run fish returning to Karluk and other systems. They would be intercepting at least some of the fish needed to meet the Karluk escapement. What if there were a surge of Karluk sockeye during this period? The provisions of the management plan are in place primarily to protect the natural salmon runs, especially Karluk. This strategy should not be preempted in an attempt to alter the harvest of the Telrod Cove enhancement sockeye run.

According to the proposal, to date there have been four years, 2008-2011, where there was a smaller than usual Telrod Cove sockeye harvest by set-gillnetters. The program began in 1988, so for a large majority of the program's existence, the management plans have achieved the desired goals for both the natural runs as well as the Telrod enhanced run. So why change them? If the proposal were to go into effect, it would shift the harvest patterns. Then in the future the situation could switch back, such that it could be said that the mobile seine gear sector is disadvantaged. Then what? Remove the set-gillnet only provision? Then there is the added complication of cost recovery, which is a big variable in the timing of the opening of the Telrod Cove SHA. The failure to achieve cost recovery goals would be harmful for all users. All in all, I would argue that it is not practical to try to manage the relative harvests of the mobile seine and set-gillnet sectors by a proposal such as this. I urge the Board of Fish to reject proposal 95.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Patrick J. Pikus
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P.O. Box 2843
Kodiak, AK 99615

YEAR

GEAR REGULATIONS

- Prior to 1983 The aggregate length of set gillnets used by an individual may not exceed 150 fathoms. No more than two set gillnets may be operated by the individual holding the gear license. Set gillnet shall be operated in substantially a straight line. No more than 25 fathoms of each net may be used as a single hook. Seine webbing may be used as a lead on the shore end between high and low water marks. The inshore end of a set gillnet must be attached to the shore above the mean low water mark.
- No part of a set gillnet may be placed or operated within 900 feet of any part of another set gillnet.
- 1983 25 fathom of setnet may be used as a single hook, in any configuration.
- 1985 Joint venture set gillnet sites.
- Shoreward end of a set gillnet must be attached to the beach above the lowest tide of the day. Set gillnet attachment points must be 900 feet apart and cannot be attached inside closed waters.
- Seine webbing used as a lead may extend on the shoreward end of a set gillnet and may not extend more than 50 fathoms seaward of beach at low tide of day except for Moser-Olga Bay Section where seine webbing used from high tide mark seaward and no portion of the seine web may be in water deeper than five feet during the lowest tide of the day.
- Seines may not be used as a stationary trap.
- 1988 For Moser Bay set gillnets outside Bun Point, minimum lead length of 20 fathoms or seine webbing from high tide seaward no deeper than five feet at lowest tide of the day.
- No minimum distance between set gillnet gear in Olga Bay closed water openings. No running lines or buoys in water prior to openings in normally closed waters,
- Shoreward end of set gillnet attached to point of land or rock within five feet of the lowest tide of the day (also defined rock - naturally located).
- 1990 In the Alitak District distance from attachment point to set gillnet limited to legal lead distance for that gear location.
- Purse seine maximum depth limit 325 meshes with mesh not over 7".
- Set gillnets maximum depth limit 125 meshes.
- 1995 Shoreward attachment point for Alitak set gillnet no more than 2.1' below water surface at mean low water (Alitak Bay tide). If attachment point under water at any time it must be marked by permanent survey monument and certified as no more than 2.1' below water surface by registered surveyor. Set gillnet may be attached no more than 2' from monument and never deeper.
- 2002 Seine webbing no greater than 3.75 inch mesh size, or polypropylene webbing 3 millimeters or greater in diameter, may be used on the shoreward end of a set gillnet.
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