

## **PROPOSAL 178**

### **5 AAC 01.220. Lawful gear and gear specification.**

Allow chum salmon to be taken by drift gillnets after August 2 in Yukon River Subdistrict 4-A downstream from the mouth of Stink Creek, as follows:

5 AAC 01.220(e)(2) is amended to read:

...

(2) in Subdistricts 4-A downstream from the mouth of Stink Creek,

(A) king salmon may be taken by drift gillnets from June 10 through July 14, unless closed by emergency order;

(B) from June 10 through August 2, the commissioner may open, by emergency order, fishing periods during which chum salmon may be taken by drift gillnets; **and**

**(C) chum salmon may be taken by drift gillnets after August 2.**

...

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Though drift gillnets have not been legal gear in the upper Yukon River Area since 1976, they have historically been an important gear type for subsistence salmon fishing. Fishermen report having to travel downriver to District 3 to subsistence fish for salmon with drift gillnet gear. Though they can harvest salmon with drift gillnet gear much more efficiently than with set gillnet gear, traveling long distances to do so can be cost prohibitive for some. Subsistence fishermen from many communities have informed the department about the loss of suitable set gillnet fishing sites due to bank erosion causing changes to the efficacy or loss of the eddies where fish congregate. This has led to increased competition in Subdistrict 4-A for viable set gillnet sites.

King salmon returns on the Yukon River have been low the past 5 years and fishermen have been supplementing reduced subsistence king salmon harvests with other species of salmon that are more abundant and having a harvestable surplus. This regulation change would allow subsistence fishermen to harvest a biologically allowable surplus of fall chum salmon moving through Subdistrict 4-A below Stink Creek after August 2 and would align subsistence drift gillnet regulations within Yukon River District 4.

Regulatory changes at the Statewide Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) meeting in March of 2018 allowed the department to open subsistence salmon fishing with drift gillnets, by emergency order, in Yukon River Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C so subsistence fishermen could more effectively harvest abundant summer and fall chum salmon in order to supplement low king salmon harvests. The board's decision was based on limited stationary gear fishing locations in this area of the river, and that drift gillnets would allow fishermen to capitalize on the surplus of summer and fall chum salmon better than set gillnets. Limiting salmon fishing to stationary gear alone has resulted in fishermen not having reasonable opportunity to meet their subsistence salmon needs.

Also, at the recent Alaska Board of Fisheries Emergency Petition Meeting held in Anchorage on July 17, 2018, on a vote of 7-0, the board found an emergency based on the Native Villages of Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, and Holy Cross's petition to allow subsistence harvest of chum salmon with drift gillnets after August 2 in Subdistrict 4-A below Stink Creek on the Yukon River.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Board of Fisheries

(BGP)

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