

Submitted by Theresa Peterson

Amendment Language:

In the event the Cape Alitak seine area and the Alitak Bay, Moser Bay, Olga Bay set net sections are closed and the Humpy Deadman section is open, set gill netting will be allowed from the entrance of Sulua Bay seaward 1000 yards and around the Hepburn Peninsula to a point 1 mile inside of Deadman Bay.

Attachment point and shore lead specifications for the Alitak Bay set net section will apply with the exception that no attachment point elevation surveys will be required. There will be no minimum distance between nets, no preselection of sites and no lines, buoys or anchors will be allowed in the water prior to an opening or left in the water for more than 5 hours after a closure. The area will also remain open for seining.

Rationale:

The traditional sockeye runs that the Alitak District is managed by are experiencing very weak returns and cannot support a viable traditional set net fishery until recovered.

Recovery, whether by nature or management, will take many years. The set net fishery as currently managed will not survive to recovery without additional opportunity to harvest the abundant non sockeye stocks of Alitak Bay. Under current conditions, there are several camps that have closed, others for sale with no buyers and others where the setnet families come down for a brief interlude to check on their cabins. Other camps fish from the first opening to the last with hopes of breaking even and even greater hopes of coming out ahead.

The intent of proposal 68 was to provide harvest opportunity after September 5th. However, due to lack of markets and the difficulty to remain in the region for weeks without any setnet fishing time in traditional areas, the proposal as written has not provided any additional harvest opportunity.

The coastline of this proposed open area is shallow with many reefs, rocks, snags and kelp beds and is rarely used by seiners. Stationery set net gear targeting pink salmon could be fished here with very little potential for gear conflict.

(over)

Limited entry qualified seventy-three SO4K permits from the Alitak District and most of these permits still fish in the Alitak District on the sites that qualified them. The largest qualifier for these permits was from economic dependence on a fishery. The economic dependence of the qualifying years (1965-72) was primarily from the value pink salmon returning to Deadman Bay and Dog Salmon River in Olga Bay.

In the past 10 years pink salmon harvest average has diminished by nearly 50% of previous seasons and many setnet camps are boarded up with latent permits after decades of continuous use.

Protection of the late run Upper Station sockeye run has totally disenfranchised the Alitak set net traditional fishery from the fish that created the permit dependence qualifications.

The proposed amendment is not expected to generate a significant amount of income from pink salmon for the diminished setnet fleet. However, the amendment will provide a sliver of opportunity to target pink salmon for Alitak setnetters interested in bringing gear out and giving in a try.

