



Alaska Board of Fish, Kodiak, Alaska, January 9-12, 2024

Setnetters in the Central Section of the Northwest Kodiak District have experienced an unsustainable decline in the percentage of salmon harvested relative to Kodiak's Seine Fleet. To save our historic fishery from extinction we have submitted proposals 62, 64, 70 and 71.

This booklet contains data, maps and graphs that show the scope of the problem of lost catch share, followed by descriptions of the proposals NWSA has submitted as possible solutions.

Proposal 70 asks for an allocation for our gear type. Consistent with the Westside Management Plan, the proposal would achieve biological goals and distribute the harvestable surplus of salmon between gear groups. We believe this proposal is the most comprehensive and measurable way for setnetters to regain their historically equitable share of the catch. Proposal 62 would allow seine free fishing time for setnetters and Proposition 64 would add allowable length to setnet hooks. Both proposals would help regain a more equitable harvest percentage for setnetters. Proposal 71 is a housekeeping proposal that adds flexibility for the managers and benefits the resource and all gear types.

Please feel free to reach out to any of the Northwest Setnetters Board of Directors:

Mark Beardsley: President, Uyak Bay, 907-401-0015

Toby Sullivan: Vice President, Uganik Bay, 907-360-8837

Wallace Fields: Treasurer, Uyak Bay, 907-942-4380

Jane Petrich: Secretary, Uyak Bay, 907-942-2724

Virginia Adams, Viekoda Bay, 631-830-1613

Jamin Hall, Uganik Bay, 907-512-6066

Adelia Myrick, Uganik Bay, 907-654-9094

Adam Wischer, Kupreanof, 541-610-7630

Thom Wischer, Kupreanof, 907-539-7105

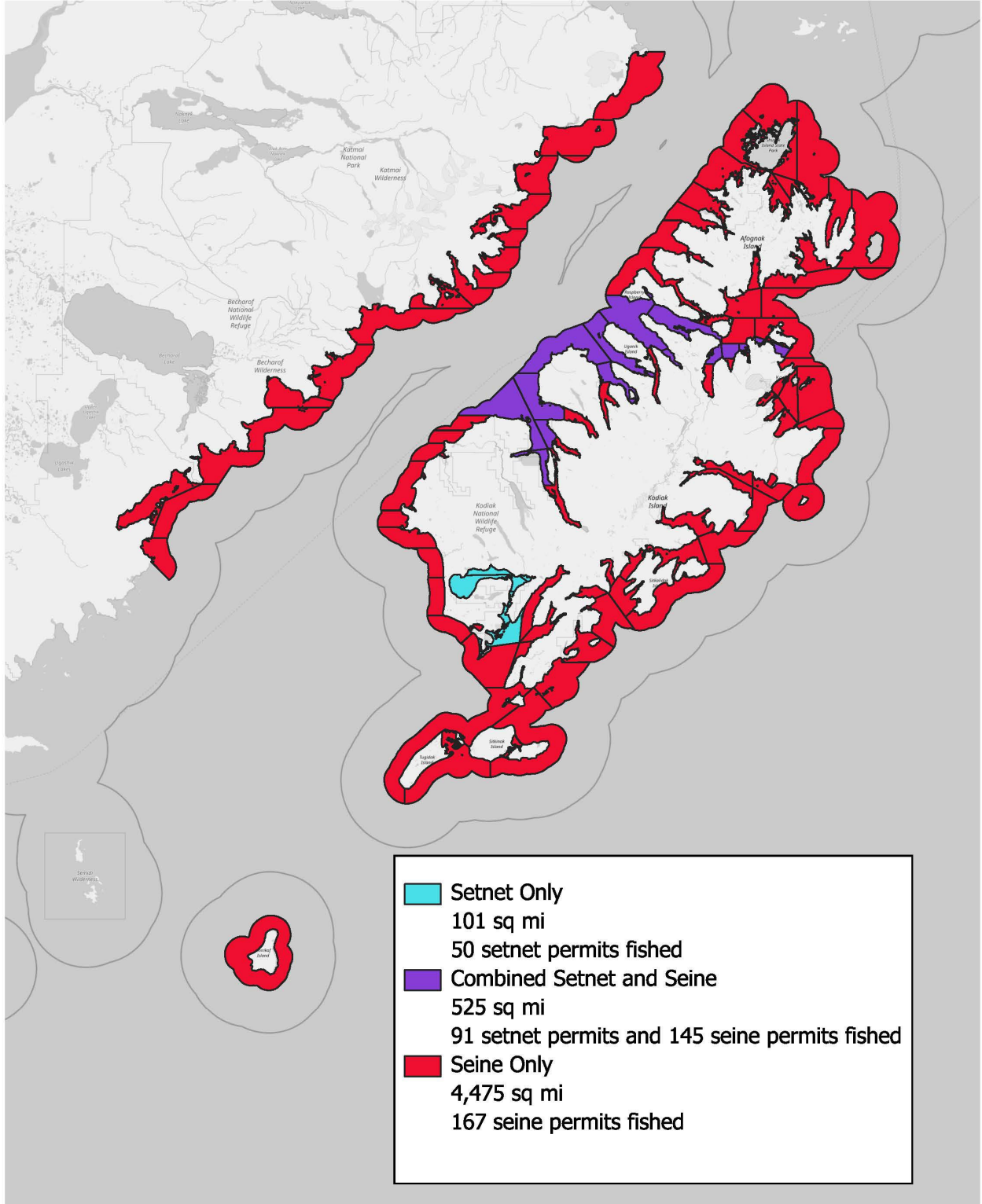
Orientation: A Note on the Fisheries

- The Central Section of the Northwest Kodiak District is where our fishery occurs. It is the only section of the Kodiak Management Area that is open to both seines and setnets. One other area on the island is open to setnets only while the seine fleet has the rest of the island and mainland as exclusive fishing grounds. Although not separated by regulation, the setnet fisheries in the NW District are, in reality, completely distinct from the setnet fisheries in the Alitak District. Seiners have almost 8x the square miles available for fishing. See the map on the following page.
- Fishermen in the Central Section are managed based on salmon returning to the systems of the inner bays of the NW District and to the Karluk River, all of which are bounded by seine-only areas. Northwest Setnetters opted to include these areas adjacent to the Central Section in our proposals because this is where the salmon we are managed on can be harvested, and to discourage the Department from simply pushing the harvest into terminal areas and leaving setnetters, who cannot move, out of fish.
- Seiners have three opportunities to harvest fish – before the fish enter the Westside Management Area, inside the Central Section, and finally, in the terminal areas of the Inner Bays and Karluk Sections.
- Our data starts with 1990 because that is when the Westside Management Plan was put into place.
- The Central Section represents about 10% of seine real estate, 20% of their time-in-area opportunity, and 20% of their annual harvest. The Central Section is 100% of the NW Setnetters' real estate, time-in-area opportunity, and harvest. NW Setnetters have no other alternative fisheries resources; the seine fleet does.

	<u>Seine</u>	<u>NW Setnet</u>
Total Available Mi ² in the KMA	5,008	540
Central Section Mi ²	540	540
% of KMA Mi² Represented by the Central Section	11%	100%
Average Annual Time-in-Area in the KMA	4,898,547	949,331
Central Section Time-in-Area	949,331	949,331
% of Time-in-Area Represented by the Central Section	19%	100%
% of Pink Harvest from the Central Section	20%	100%
% of Sockeye Harvest from the Central Section	21%	100%

Kodiak Commercial Salmon Fishing Sections

Sections are color-coded by allowable gear types.
Permits fished is the average number of permits fished 2013-2022.



The Problem

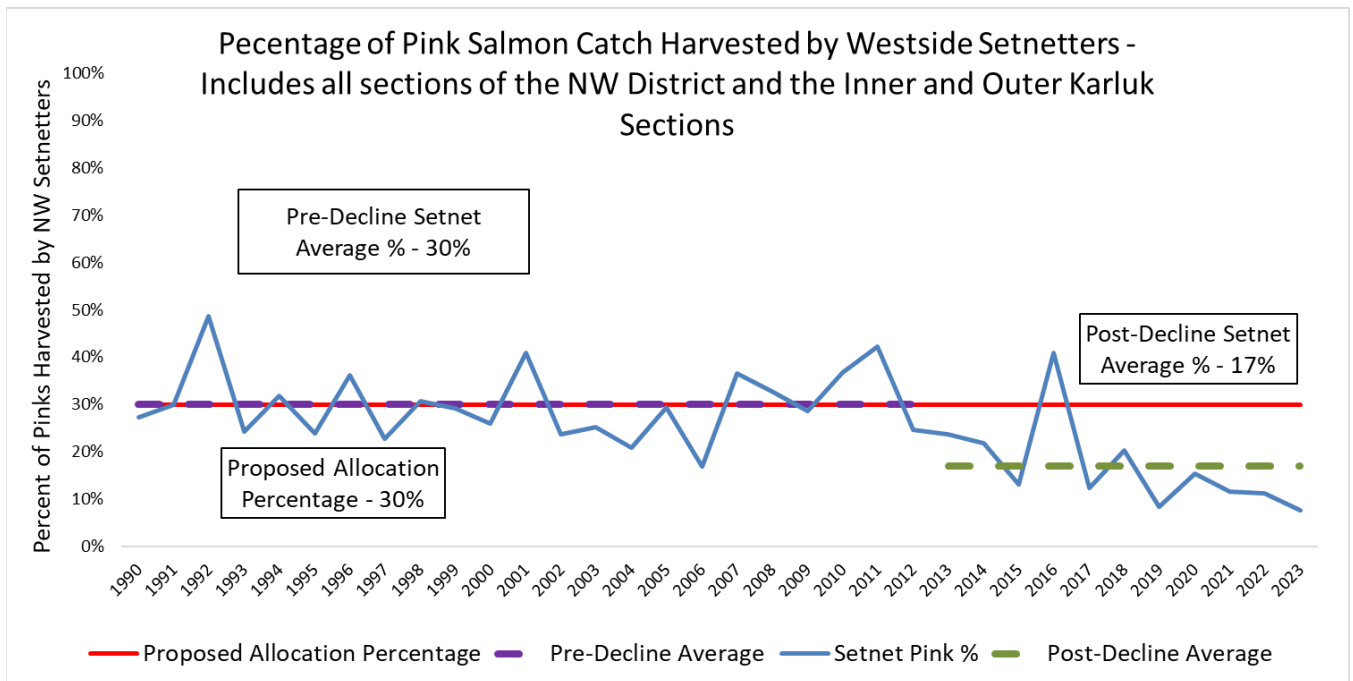
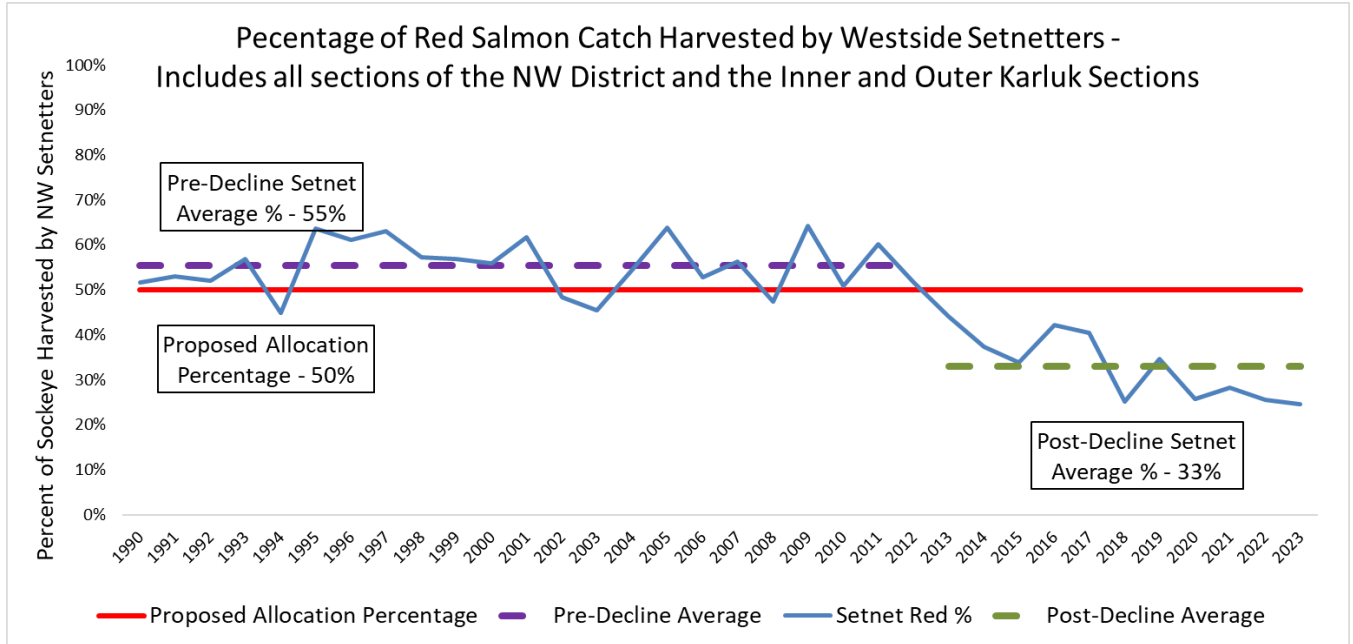
- There has been a steep decline in the West side setnet harvest percentage of both red and pink salmon. The following two graphs illustrate this long-term, significant trend, which began in 2012 with the downturn in the percentage of harvest. 2013-2023 was chosen as the decline period because the percentage change was statistically significant and not just a matter of interannual variability.
- The decline in percentage is also mirrored in pounds of harvest, dollar value, and per-permit earnings.
- These data are robust. If we re-analyze the trends by looking at just the NW District or just the Central Section, the trends remain.
- Likewise, if we exclude harvest after Sep 15 or after Sep 1, the trends remain.
- The decline in setnet annual earnings, both as a fleet and on a per-permit basis, has made it difficult to gear up for a four-month season or to find crew members willing to fish for increasingly low earnings. If this loss of catch share is not reversed and restored to previous equitable levels, the number of setnetters who can operate profitably will continue to fall and the demise of Kodiak's westside set gillnet fishery will be assured.
- The value of fish harvested by all users plummeted for everyone with the 2008 Karluk crash, but while the setnet fishery continues to decline, the seine fishery has recovered its value.



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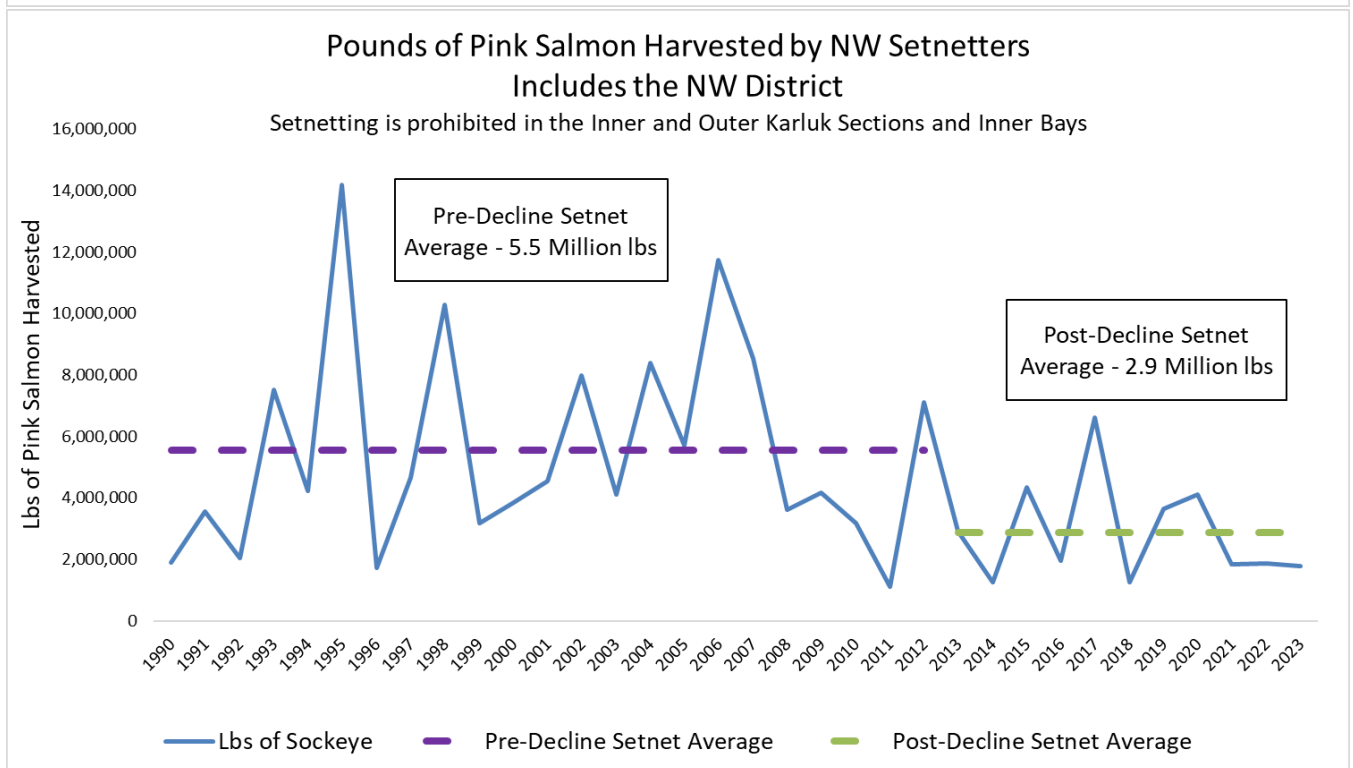
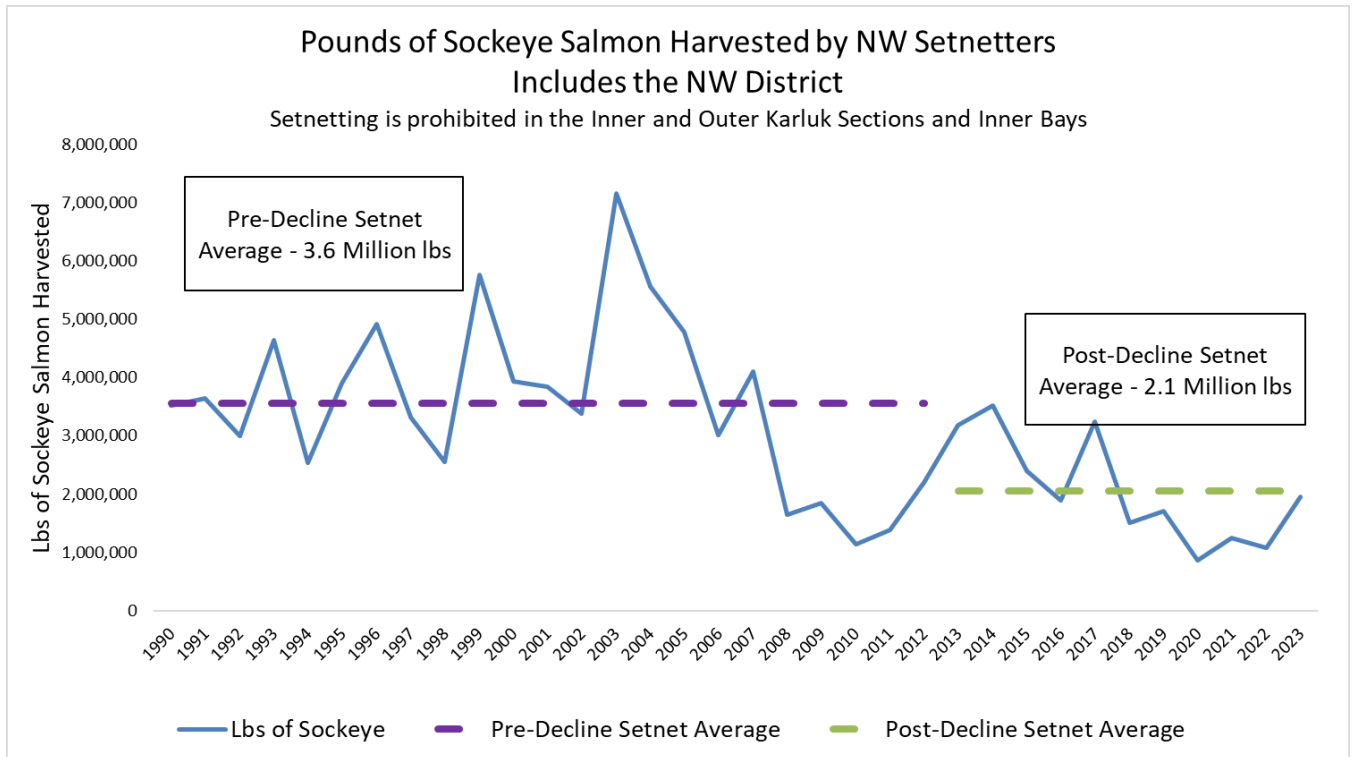
Setnet Percent of Harvest

These graphs show that the NW setnet percentage of harvest for both pink and sockeye salmon has been depressed for a decade.

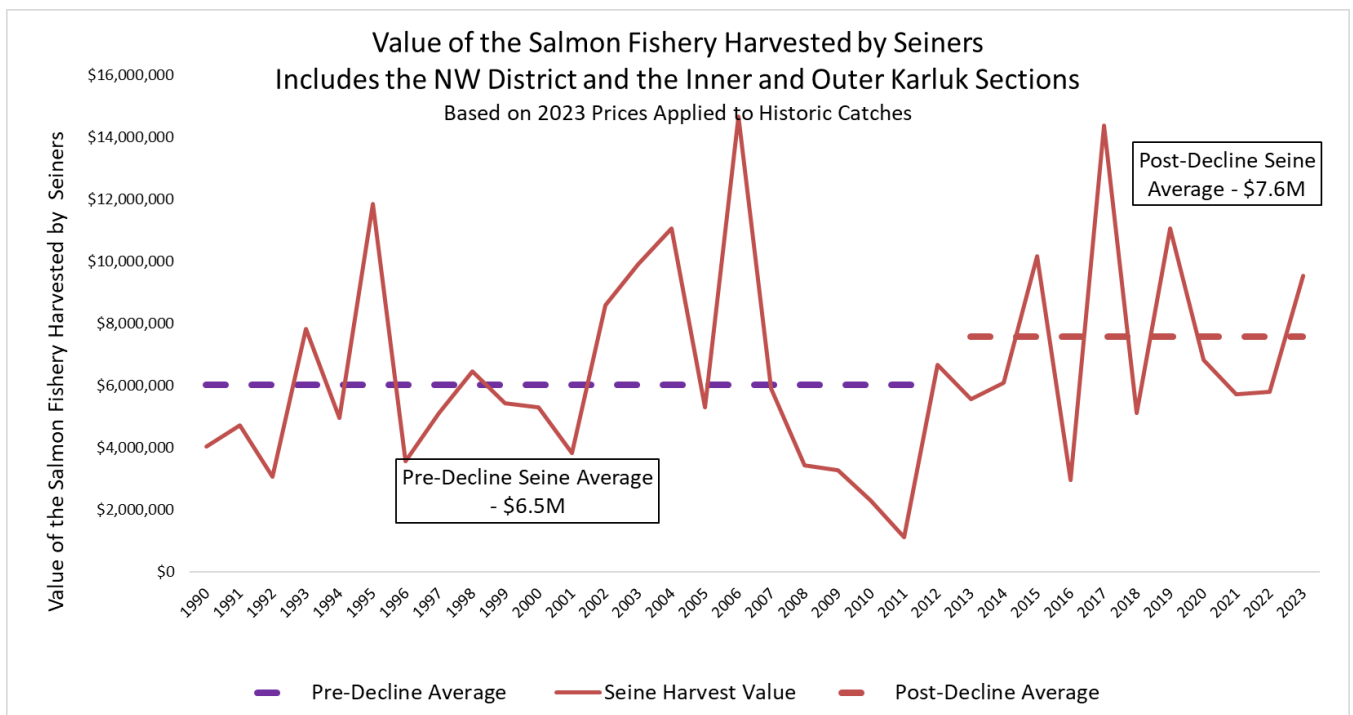
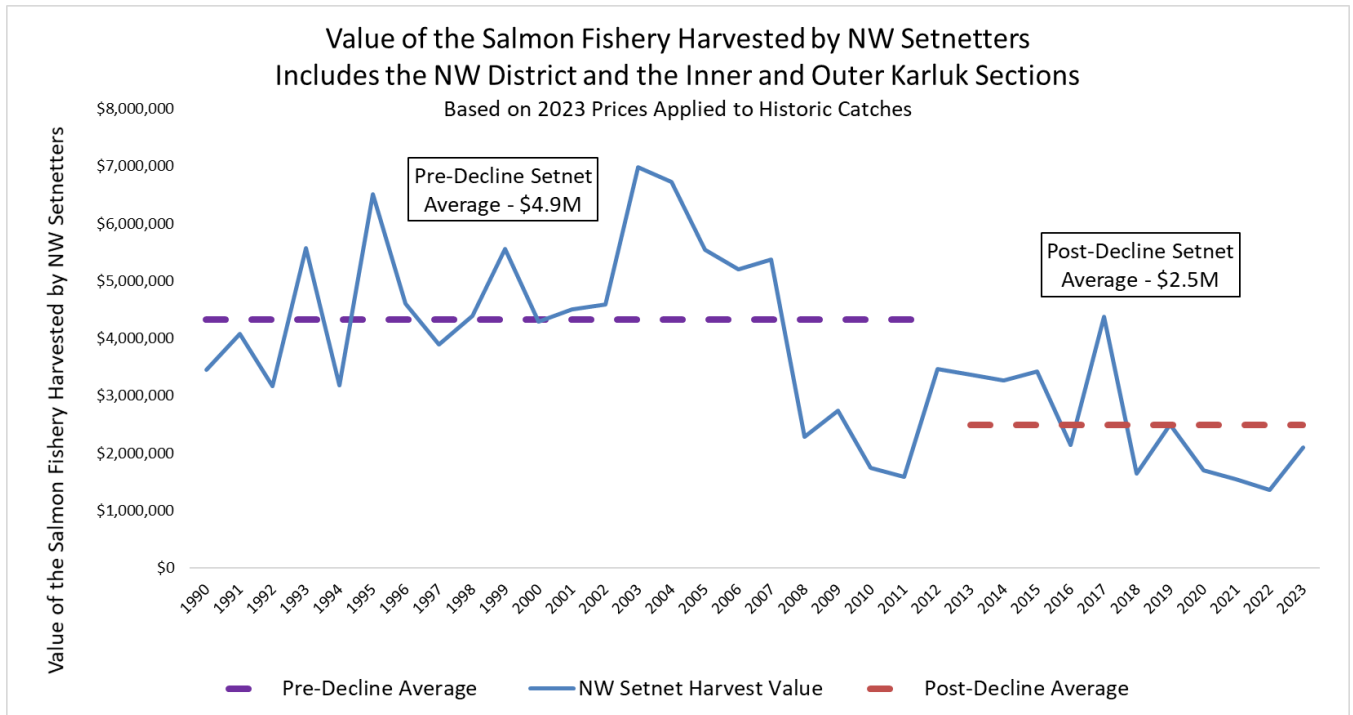


Setnet Harvest in Pounds

These graphs show that the NW setnet harvest in pounds for both pink and sockeye salmon has been depressed for a decade.

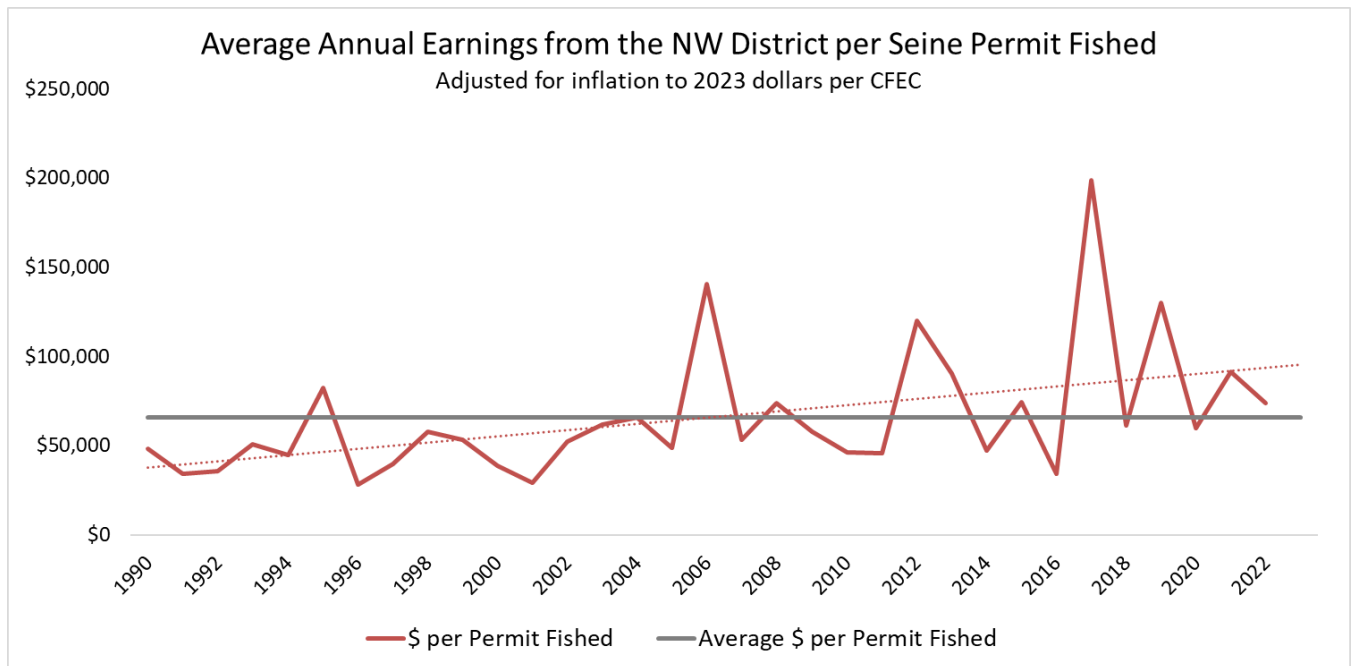
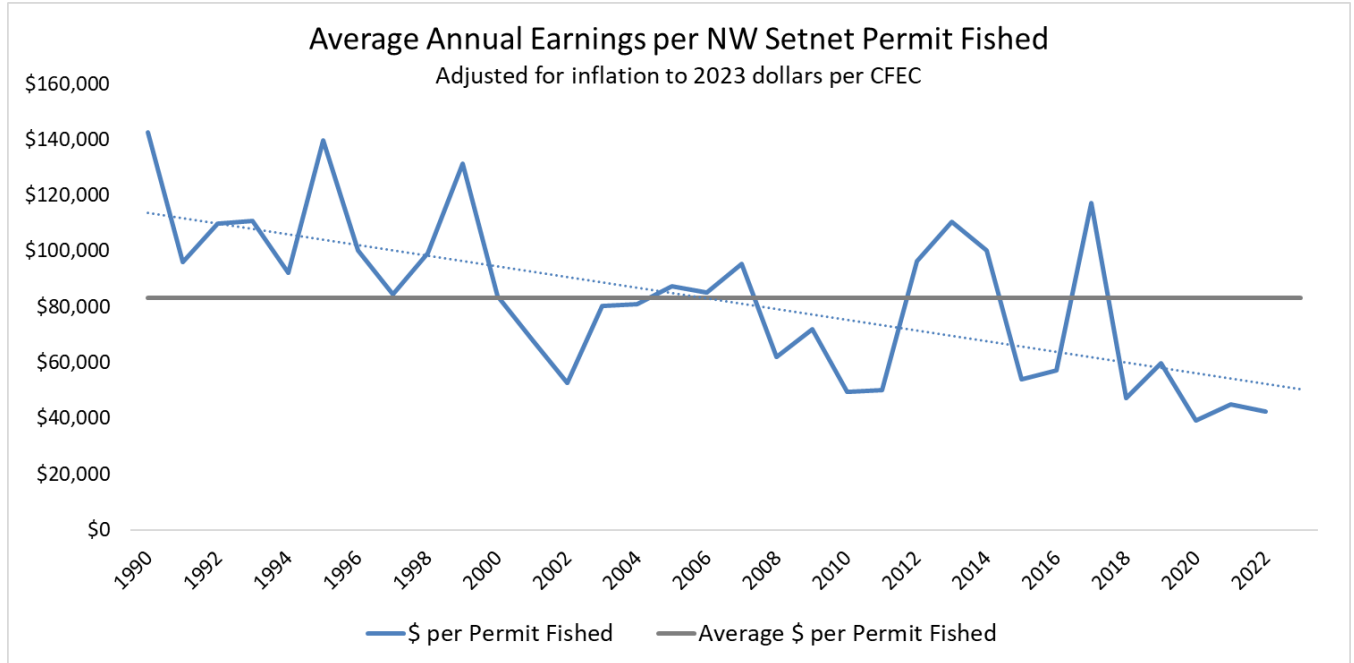


Revenue Change – It can be clearly seen that NW setnetters have never recovered from the 2008 Karluk crash, while the seine fleet is doing better than ever. (Revenue data from the CFEC. *CFEC Permit Holdings and Estimates of Gross Earnings in the Kodiak Commercial Salmon Fisheries, 1975-2022* www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/regprocess/fisheriesboard/pdfs/2023-2024/kodiak/CFEC_23-06N.pdf)



Revenue per Permit

These graphs show that the per permit revenue for NW setnetters has been on a steady decline, while it has slowly increased for seiners in the NW District.



Robust Data – The trends are the same regardless of spatial or temporal choices for data analysis. In fact, if only the Central Section was used for analysis, Setnetters would be asking for a HIGHER percentage of sockeye in Proposal 70.

