

PROPOSAL 54

5 AAC 06.XXX. New section.

Adopt an Eastside Bristol Bay late-season management plan, as follows:

Late-Season Waiver of Lines:

No lines on east side after escapements are met.

(h) Regarding the Eastern commercial fishing districts of Bristol Bay, pertaining to the drift gillnet fishery: When two adjacent river systems have reached their escapements goals such that ADF&G managers have waived the 48-hour transfer period into the districts, AND both districts' fishing schedules have no non-concurrent closures, then during the time of concurrent openings, the boundary lines between those two adjacent fishing districts shall be as follows:

(1) Ugashik to Egegik Late-Season Section: The western boundary line of the areas between the Ugashik and Egegik Districts shall be all waters east of a line from 57° 43.54' N. lat., 157° 43.80' W. long. then continuing to 58° 11.00' N. lat., 157° 38.10' W. long., exclusive of waters west of the Stat 3-mile Jurisdictional Limit, and except those waters within, and those waters draining into, the regular districts described in 5AAC 06.200.,

(2) Egegik to Naknek-Kvichak Late-Season Section: The western boundary line of the areas between the Egegik and Naknek-Kvichak Districts shall be all waters east of a line from 58° 11.00' N. lat., 157° 38.10' W. long., then continuing to 58° 43.73' N. lat., 157° 42.71' W. long., except those waters within, and those waters draining into, the regular districts described in 5AAC 06.200.

(3) The geographic location of where the fish were landed shall be indicated on the fish ticket.

I) The district closest to the point of landing shall receive tax revenues generated by the landing.

II) The district closest to the point of landing shall have those fish counted towards the drift gillnet tally for purposes of tracking allocation.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?

Late-Season Waiver of Lines for East-Side Districts: No lines on east side after escapements are met.

The presence of fishery enforcement is a very necessary component of fishery management. Imagine how many boats would brazenly set illegally during the emergency order if there were no adverse consequence; imagine the difficulty of managing the runs if the fish poached by these "pirates" were not counted in early-season run assessments. Now please consider the inverse of this situation, when at the end of the season if someone were to set a mile or two (or ten) over the line... the fish caught then would have zero impact on fishery management, at a time when all rivers had their escapement, every district is open on a 24-hour schedule and ADF&G is no longer keeping track of the districts in which the vessels are fishing.

The situation as it currently exists: Presently at the end of the season, after most boats have gone home and enforcement efforts have basically disappeared, fishing continues much like it has all season long. Fishermen throughout the district give each other as much room as practicable, but toward the boundary lines there's less room to be given when the fish are moving across the line, *but there's always more room over the line.*

A subtle late-season "line show" plays out where the most brazen fishermen, who are willing to risk a ticket for the reward, get a disproportionately larger paycheck because their net (which is way over the line) is the first in front of the small trickle of fish entering the district. It's pretty much the same cast of characters all the time, who are greatly rewarded for their risk.

The above scenario does not have to exist. When the runs are biologically secure, and the fishery is wide-open, what is the purpose of boundary lines? Their mere existence rewards illegal activity, lowers the value of the catch (through competitive, rather than sensible harvesting practices), and diminishes everyone's paycheck except those fishing illegally).

Situation if this proposal were enacted: If there were more liberal boundary lines between districts in the late-season, fishermen would go to the place where there is the most consistent fishing, as far as practicable from other fishermen. They'd work their gear with the already significant challenges of tidal fluctuations, weather, and SEALS ("Ort! Ort! Ort!").

The revenues earned by the fishermen would be more evenly distributed, and no one would be rewarded for illegal fishing activity.

The public safety and fleet-monitoring aspect of this expanded fishing area would be very manageable. The entry-pattern of the fish in the late season would create a very predictable fishing vessel placement scenario; boats will be working the beach/flats/bars at low water, spaced out .25 to .5 miles apart (or more if practicable), and never would you find a concentration of boats fishing "on top" of each other. There will also be effort on the regular tide streaks where fish come across in deeper and swifter-moving waters.

Taxes would still be properly accounted: Taxes for fish landed outside of a district's boundary would be placed under the district to which the landing was closest when the fish were landed.

Enforcement efforts would remain unchanged, since there is presently almost no enforcement in the late season.

Public Safety (SAR) would be increased to a degree with the expanded area. .

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(HQ-F22-008)
