

***Gear/Methods and Means (6 proposals)***

**PROPOSAL 87**

**5 AAC 39.105. Types of legal gear.**

Define eel stick, as follows *(To be heard at the Arctic / Yukon / Kuskokwim meeting and deliberated during the Statewide Finfish and Supplemental Issues meeting):*

5 AAC 39.105(d) is amended to read:

...

(30) a cast net is a circular net with a mesh size of no more than one and one-half inches and weights attached to the perimeter which, when thrown, surrounds the fish and closes at the bottom when retrieved;[.]

**(31) an eel stick consists of a single straight or bent pole, equipped with notches or projecting tines, used through the ice to take lamprey.**

...

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** This would add eel sticks as a legal gear for commercial and subsistence fishing. An additional department proposal was submitted to add this as a legal gear type for subsistence fishing. The commercial fishery for Arctic lamprey (eels) operates under a commissioner's permit that allows commercial permit holders to use dip nets and eel sticks; however the eel stick is not included in regulations. Statewide provisions (5 AAC 01.010 (1)) for subsistence gear would refer to and include this addition. Eel sticks are traditionally used in Districts 2, 3 and 4 for harvesting Arctic lamprey for commercial and subsistence purposes through the ice. Eel sticks are described in Subsistence Division Technical Paper No. 289 (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/techpap/tp289.pdf>)

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F22-059)  
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**PROPOSAL 153**

**5 AAC 39.145. Escape mechanism for shellfish and bottomfish pots.**

Define escape mechanisms for collapsible 'slinky' groundfish pots, as follows:

AWT and ADF&G have been working on wording that will be easily understood and enforceable. A drafted RC will be submitted at the BOF meeting detailing how an escape mechanism is to be rigged on these newer collapsible style pots.

...

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** With the recent addition of collapsible groundfish pots "slinky pots" in the sablefish fisheries the current regulations for escape mechanism create confusion for users and enforcement on how to properly rig this style of pots. With there being no true bottom, it is unknown where the opening must be placed as the language is currently written, and if the pot lays to rest with the opening on the ocean floor, it will not properly act as an escape mechanism.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Wildlife Troopers

(HQ-F22-073)

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**PROPOSAL 82**

**5 AAC 39.250. Gillnet specifications and operations.**

Modify the dates sinking of gillnets is allowed in the Yukon Area from October 1 to April 30, as follows (*To be heard at the Arctic / Yukon / Kuskokwim meeting and deliberated during the Statewide Finfish and Supplemental Issues meeting*):

5 AAC 39.250(d) is amended to read:

...

(d) The float line and floats of gillnets must be floating on the surface of the water while the net is fishing, unless natural conditions cause the net to temporarily sink. The restriction of this subsection does not apply in the Arctic-Kotzebue Area (5 AAC 03.100), the Norton Sound-Port Clarence Area (5 AAC 04.100), the Yukon Area (5 AAC 05.100) **from October 1 to April 30**, the Kuskokwim Area (5 AAC 07.100), and the Kodiak Area (5 AAC 18.100).

...

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** This proposal would modify the dates when gillnets are allowed to be fished without the float line on the surface of the water in the Yukon Area. During salmon seasons, from May 1 to September 30, the float line and floats must be floating on the surface. Submerged gillnets are less visible and may be difficult to observe if fishing illegally during closed periods. Allowing a gillnet to be in a fishing condition with floats not visible on the surface of the water is a navigation hazard.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F22-062)

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**PROPOSAL 154**

**5 AAC 39.155. Seine drums unlawful.**

Allow the use of purse seine drums as follows:

**Delete this section**

**[5 AAC 39.155. Seine drums unlawful**

It shall be unlawful to have mounted aboard any seine vessel a seine drum or reel around which a seine can be coiled or rolled.]

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

Existing Law

**Sec. 16.10.120. Use of drum or reel in operation of purse seine.**

A person may not use, employ, or operate a drum or reel around which a purse seine is coiled, rolled, or looped for purposes of taking or removing fish from a body of water located on or over land or tideland owned by the state or over which the state has jurisdiction. This section does not prevent the use of power blocks or the use of a reel mounted on a seine skiff to haul in or let out the separate purse seine lead which is temporarily connected to the purse seine proper, as these terms are generally employed or used in the fishing industry. DELETE THE UNDERLINED PRAISE

**5 AAC 39.155. Seine drums unlawful**

It shall be unlawful to have mounted aboard any seine vessel a seine drum or reel around which a seine can be coiled or rolled.

History

The law banning seine drums dates back to the late 1950's when most of the fishing fleet was in the process of converting from hand pull seines to the new modern Power block systems, also full pursing was the only method used. The average time to haul back the net was 30-60 minutes and a typical day for the average seiner was 10-12 sets. In 1959 a group of seiners also converted their boats to using seine drums, this dramatically changed the efficiency of the process and could feasibly double the number of sets compared to the power block equipped boats. The Law was introduced in 1959 to level the playing field

Why would I like this regulation changed?

The fishery has evolved continuously over the years since 1959 and technology has made the law banning drums antiquated. In today's seine fleet the power block and drum have the same level of efficiency, power block equipped boat can make the same sets per day and in some instances even more than a boat equipped with a drum.

The main reason I would like to change this regulation is the safety aspect. Power blocks can weigh up to 1000 lbs. and having the hanging over a crew piling gear is an incredibly risk of fish, rings, heavy leads falling on individuals below causing injury. As a business owners any injury in not acceptable and it's our job to provide the safest work place possible and I greatly believe that using a drum would lessen the risk for overhead injuries.

Aging and more seasoned crew members are being replaced with young more competitive high speed paced.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jason Burke (EF-F22-029)

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**PROPOSAL 155**

**5 AAC 75.028. Use of underwater spear and speargun**

Allow a person using a spear or speargun to take fish while swimming at the water's surface, as follows:

5 AAC 75.028 is amended to read:

Subject to applicable seasons and bag and possession limits, a person who is completely submerged or swimming on the surface may use a spear or speargun in salt water to take fish if the spear or speargun is not tipped with an explosive charge.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Current regulations stipulate that anglers must be completely submerged while taking fish with a spear or speargun which effectively prevents spearfishing while snorkeling in shallow bays or other areas where some fish species tend to congregate. Adoption of this proposal would allow anglers to use spears or spearguns more effectively while using snorkeling gear, especially in shallow water, by permitting them to be either swimming on the surface or being completely submerged. Since spearfishing anglers must adhere to local bag and possession limits, seasons and closed waters, those wishing to spearfish do not present a conservation concern for any species already targeted by anglers with rod and reel. This proposed regulation provides clarification to the existing regulation while still being enforceable and not creating a conservation concern.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F22-072)  
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**PROPOSAL 156**

**5 AAC 77.010. Methods, means, and general restrictions**

Prohibit the use of felt soled wading footwear while personal use fishing in freshwater, as follows:

5 AAC 77.010 is amended to read:

**(n) The use of footgear with absorbent felt or other fiber material on the soles is prohibited while personal use fishing in freshwater.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Felt soled wading footgear have been identified as a primary vector for transferring invasive species such as whirling disease, didymo (rock snot), New Zealand mud snails, and zebra and quagga mussels to freshwater systems.

The board prohibited the use of felt soled footgear when sport fishing in 2010. Extending the precaution to freshwater personal use fisheries would be consistent with previous action and prevent Alaskans from unknowingly spreading these species retained in moist felt soles of wading footgear.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F22-069)  
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