

PROPOSAL 148

5 AAC 09.332. Seine specifications and operations.

Amend the seine specification to reduce the allowable size gear as follows:

(a) Purse seines or hand purse seines may not be less than 100 fathoms nor more than 250 fathoms in length. A purse seine or hand purse seine may not exceed 325 [375] meshes in depth. Seine mesh may not be more than three and one-half inches, except that the first 25 meshes above the headline may not be more than seven inches.

(b) **A lead [LEADS]** may not be [less than 50 fathoms nor] more than **100 [150]** fathoms in length. **The aggregate length of seine and lead may not be more than 250 fathoms in length.** Only one lead may be used with a seine. [A LEAD MAY BE ATTACHED TO ONLY ONE END OF A SEINE, AND THE LEAD MAY NOT BE ATTACHED TO THE BOAT END OF THE SEINE.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The rapid increase of chum salmon caught in the June fishery in the South Unimak and Shumagin Island purse seine fishery. The South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fishery has averaged approximately 572,000 chums per season over the past five years (2020–2024), which is among the highest five-year average in decades. Chum stocks in the Artic-Yukon-Kuskokwim region are struggling to even meet escapement goals. The huge changes made in the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fishery in 2004, coupled with the rapid growth of the purse seine fleet in recent years has resulted in this recent huge increase in chum interception in the June fishery. Purse seiners harvest over 90% of the chums caught in the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fishery.

Current regulations allow the aggregate length of purse seines and leads in this area to be up to 400 fathoms in length. That is 60% longer than what is allowed in Kodiak and Lower Cook Inlet (up to 250 fathoms), and 78% longer than what is allowed in Chignik and Prince William Sound (up to 225 fathoms). Longer seines = more fish per set.

Current regulations also allow purse seine depth in this area to be a maximum of 375 meshes. The deeper a purse seine, the more chums and chinook salmon it will catch as they travel at greater depths than sockeye, pinks, and coho. This fishery is supposed to be targeting traveling sockeye salmon, and not chums and chinook.

Bring the purse seine regulations in this area into line with the purse seine regulation in Chignik, Kodiak, Cook Inlet, and Prince William Sound. Shorten the seines and reduce the allowable depth in order to reduce the interception of migrating chums and chinook. 250 fathoms in length and 325 meshes deep is more the adequate to harvest targeted salmon species, as is evidenced by the purse seine fisheries in Chignik, Kodiak, Cook Inlet, and Prince William Sound.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. No

PROPOSED BY: Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

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