

PROPOSAL 81

5 AAC 06.330. Gear.

Allow the use of stationary, non-entanglement nets to harvest salmon in the Bristol Bay Management Area, as follows:

Create 06.330(c): Salmon may also be taken by stationary non-entanglement nets in the districts described in 5 AAC 06.200 so long as any such fish harvesting net is operated within 1,000 feet of the mean high water line, remains 300' from any other Gear as defined in 5 AAC 06.330, and utilizes mesh size not less than two and one-half inches and not larger than three and one-half inches. This provision will become invalid on December 1, 2028.

This would provide 3 seasons of fishing with alternate gear in order to test the primary research objectives.

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

I would like the board to create an alternate gear type for the Bristol Bay fishery, even if it is only temporary in nature or as authorized by the Commissioner like they did in the Kenai area in 2024 on a case-by-case basis.

During the last 30 years we have witnessed immense change in the seafood market, such as aquaculture salmon surpassing wild salmon products, novel product forms emerging, Russia has a significant place in the salmon market using fish traps and they are nearing 100% utilization, multi-faceted sustainability messages have emerged, gill nets can only mitigate so much incidentally caught salmon under conservation concern, and a highly volatile ex-vessel value price cause fishermen to doubt the economic viability of the fishery.

Primary research objectives:

1. Evaluate the ability of an alternate harvest method to exclude harvest for stocks of concern, such as the Nushagak Chinook salmon.
2. Evaluate the commercial viability of alternative harvest methods in Bristol Bay.
3. Establish a market premium that could be obtained by alternate harvest methods.
4. Provide a conduit for a multitude of critical research projects, including enumeration, for all five salmon species.

I will provide further substantive detail on the merits of this proposal through the public comment forum along with feedback from other leading experts in our fishery.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. I made a similar proposal in 2019 at the board of fish meeting and during the past two years spent countless hours discussing this issue with a panel of industry experts ranging from veteran processors who managed and ran many of the successful major processors in Bristol Bay, drift and set gillnet fishermen (resident and non-resident), and biologists who are involved in the data aggregation and sampling that keep our fishery sustainable.

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