

Gear specifications (7 proposals)

PROPOSAL 75

5 AAC 06.333. Requirements and specifications for use of 200 fathoms of drift gillnet in Bristol Bay.

Allow permit stacking in the Bristol Bay commercial salmon drift gillnet fishery, as follows:

5 AAC 06.333. Amendment Requirements and specifications for use of 200 fathoms of drift gillnet in Bristol Bay. Allow one person holding two drift gillnet limited entry permits to operate up to 200 fathoms of drift gillnet gear in Bristol Bay.

Adopt and allow "Permit stacking" one person owning two permits to operate both permits in the same way two separate Bristol Bay drift gillnet CFEC permit holders can under 5 AAC 06.333

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? 5 AAC 06.333, allows "dual permit vessels" for two separate permit holders. I recommend the Alaska Board of Fisheries amend the current regulation to include "Permit stacking" allowing one person owning two permits to operate both permits in the same way two separate Bristol Bay drift gillnet CFEC permit holders can under 5 AAC 06.333

The Board's authority to allow permit-stacking is set out in AS 16.05.25 I (i), which was enacted in 2006 as House Bill 251 (HB 251)

Allowing one person to operate two permits has many direct benefits.

It will allow the fishery to get closer to fully realizing the optimum number of drift vessels/permits. This will benefit both drift and set net permit holders, by the reduction of one vessel, and 100 fathoms of fishing gear for every vessel that becomes a dual. Due to the exponentially increased costs for operating a vessel that we have seen, coupled with the low ex-vessel prices this is more essential than ever.

Allowing captains to purchase a second permit allows them to invest in their business and saves them the unpredictable expense of a lease that is a lost cost. It will also decrease the demand for emergency transfer permits allowing for the lease costs to be more affordable for fisherman staring out.

It will help the fisherman who may have to choose between loss of income or family obligations. For example, husbands and wife, who both have permits, currently have to decide between losing part of their income and one of their permits if they want to have children or to find a family member to watch their children while fishing so they do not lose part of the income. With the cost of living right now most people cannot afford to lose income, or may not have someone they can trust to watch their children for that long.

The captain operating the vessel and holding both permits will be fully responsible for operating in a lawful manner. Unlike currently regulations where the second permit holder, who may not have the same control as the captain, is held just as responsible.

The main argument in past years against both the current dual permit vessels. Along with the proposed single owner, dual permits. Has been; that it could be a factor in increasing the cost of permits, therefore possibly reducing the number of new fishermen entering the fishery. The new entrant's data from CFEC actually shows the opposite to be true. Bristol Bay Has experienced a

higher rate of new entries after dual permit were allowed in 2004 when compared to prior years as well as other drift gillnet fishery around the state. The only thing that Has proven over time to reliably reduce the value of permits. has been the reduction of profitability of the fishery as a whole. I don't believe any stakeholder in the fisheries sees that as an ideal goal.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain.

PROPOSED BY: Justin Arnold

(EF-F26-030)

PROPOSAL 76

5 AAC 06.333. Requirements and specifications for use of 200 fathoms of drift gillnet in Bristol Bay.

Allow permit stacking in the Bristol Bay commercial salmon drift gillnet fishery, as follows:

Amend language and add to the existing regulation; 5 AAC 06.333. Requirements and specifications for use of 200 fathoms of drift gillnet in Bristol Bay. Allow permit stacking in the Bristol Bay commercial salmon drift gillnet fishery, as follows: Allow a Bristol Bay Drift fisherman who owns two Bristol Bay Drift permits to fish from the same vessel and operate 200 fathoms of driftnet.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current regulation allows Two Bristol Bay drift gillnet CFEC permit holders to concurrently fish from the same vessel and jointly operate up to 200 fathoms of drift gillnet gear under this section, except (1) in the Togiak District; (2) in a special harvest area. This regulation is the product of negative economic impacts on our salmon fishery experienced in the early to mid 2000's, during this economic downturn a special State of Alaska fisheries task force was created to look at ways to make the fishery more economically feasible, following legislation allowed one individual to own two permits aimed at reducing the number of participants in the fishery and making it economically sustainable to operate through the up and down economic cycles of the Bristol Bay salmon market.

Most recently the Bristol Bay Salmon fishery has experienced another economic downturn that has had negative impacts on the entire fleet of Bristol Bay Drift fishermen. This negative economic downturn has Bristol Bay Drift fishermen looking for alternatives to be economically sustainable in cyclical seafood environment.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. This proposal was put together and has broad support among the Bristol Bay Drift fleet.

PROPOSED BY: Abe Williams

(EF-F26-067)

PROPOSAL 77

5 AAC 06.333. Requirements and specifications for use of 200 fathoms of drift gillnet in Bristol Bay.

Allow permit stacking in the Bristol Bay commercial salmon drift gillnet fishery, as follows:

This proposal is for a new Bristol Bay permit category, the "E" permit, which mirrors exactly the current "D" permit in privileges and restrictions. It is created of 2 single permits, under one name, which are permanently consolidated. The "E" permit can never be "undone". The current "D" permit and "Single" permit regulations would stay exactly the same.

These “E” permits would have their own value which the open market would find. The number of E permits would be limited to 300. E permits would be regulated exactly the same as "D" permits. The benefit to the "E" permit holder is everything stays under one name, and less stress to achieve 200 fathoms of legal drift gear and long-term stability and planning.

The benefit to the fleet is "cost free" permanent fleet reduction. 1 less potential vessel fishing, and 100 fathoms less gear in the water permanently with every “E” permit. 300 "E" permit consolidations would permanently remove 30,000 fathoms of potential gear.

To achieve this amount of permanent gear reduction in a traditional buyback would cost \$30 million @150k for a single permit. Basically, the cost of buying and retiring 200 single permits.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Excessive fishing capacity in the Bristol Bay Gillnet fishery. The fishery is not economically stable.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. I have presented this idea to many board members of the BBRSDA and any watershed person who will engage with me. Limiting "E" conversions to 300 is my attempt at maintaining liquidity and mitigating watershed concerns which have been expressed to me.

PROPOSED BY: Glenn Biernacki (EF-F26-113)

PROPOSAL 78

5 AAC 06.333. Requirements and specifications for the use of 200 fathoms of drift gillnet in Bristol Bay.

Allow permit stacking in the Bristol Bay commercial salmon drift gillnet fishery, as follows:

A single person may hold two Bristol bay drift permits (S30T) and fish both of those permits on a single vessel. Allowing them 200 fathoms without a second person holding a permit on the vessel.

The permit holder of both permits would only be assessed 3 points in total for the first violation of “Fishing in closed waters”, “Fishing during closed season or period”, Fishing with gear not allowed in fishery”, “Fishing before expiration of transfer period”, "Fishing with under length or over length vessel”. If another violation occurs in the 3 year probationary period the second offense would be 6 points. Giving the permit holder a total of 9 points. Essentially treating the owner of both permits as one person which they are regarding demerit points.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like to address the issue of the Dual permit or “D” permit in the Bristol Bay drift fishery. I believe if you can legally fish two permits aboard one vessel then you should be able to own and fish both permits. The fishery has changed dramatically since fishing a D became allowed in 2004. The capabilities of the fleet have changed as well as the global market for our fish. We now have fewer processors set up to buy for 2025 than I’ve seen in my 17 year Bristol Bay career both as a crewman and vessel owner/operator. With accounting for inflation we’ve had record low ground prices recently. Stacking permits have been beneficial for putting less net in the water and allowing fishermen to have less boats to deal with on the grounds which are already crowded as it is. This helps everyone in the fleet make more money. Crewmen benefit from this as well by making more money and giving them more opportunity to invest into the fishery if they’d like. In 2024 there were around 1200 vessels fishing most of the season with 441 registered D boats. Every D boat helps the rest

of the fleet by taking 600 feet of net out of the water and a vessel. In 2023 according to the state and a recent National Fisherman article the average vessel grossed \$105,030. I believe it was similar for 2024 as well. The final numbers haven't been released but the fishery was only up from 117 million in 2023 to 128 million dollars in 2024. This is not much money when you look at the current cost of insurance, fuel, nets, parts, upgrades, and RSW systems people invest in every season just to go fishing. The D allows the potential for more profit for everyone.

An argument against stacking is it could make it harder for people to buy into the fishery. I don't believe this is true. Many people can't afford to buy a second permit and will still need to hire a permit holder to be their D or will medically lease their dual permit. Also allowing permit stacking would allow families to keep permits in the family. This could benefit everyone from local watershed residents to people who currently shuffle a D permit around. There is plenty of access to the fishery currently. Used boat prices are at an all time low, and you can buy a great boat for cheaper than you could over the last 7 years. I feel many people who want to buy a permit and be a dual permit holder before buying their own boat won't be affected much by this change to the current regulation. Another problem I've seen is deckhands with medically transferred permits in their name receive CFEC points for a ticket due to the operator. If they were to buy a permit for the next season now they have points against their name for something they didn't do. Essentially punishing the dual permit holder making it harder for them to individually succeed later on. There will still be a demand for permit holders looking to secure a spot as a "D" for the season. It is common practice to lease a permit and take that money out of the overall gross, which affects crew so they make less off the D then if the owner could own both permits.

There was a CFEC optimal vessel study done saying the optimum number of boats to fish Bristol Bay is 800-1200 vessels. I feel making it possible to own and fish two permits could keep the fishery healthy and sustainable and within that optimal range.

With over 1800 permits in existence even if every boat was a "D" boat you would still have 900 plus boats and I don't see that happening. As far as tickets and points go with the cfec a dual permit holder would only receive a total of 3 points for their first offense total for both permits. With an additional 6 points to their name upon a second violation within the 3 year probationary period. It seems if you accessed 3 points per permit for a first offense all of the sudden if they made a second mistake they'd be suspended from the fishery which seems harsh. An example would be if someone got web in the wheel and got ebbed out over a line and got their net back late they would only receive a total of 9 points. Not 18 points. For both offenses.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. I've spoke with many peers who are for stacking. Clearing up space on the fishing grounds and giving everyone more space.

PROPOSED BY: Hayden Hinschied

(EF-F26-129)

PROPOSAL 79

5 AAC 06.331. Gillnet specifications and operations.

Increase offshore operation distance for set gillnets in Ugashik District, as follows:

Increase maximum offshore operation distance for set gillnets in Ugashik District, as follows:

(m)(8) [in the Ugashik District, in that portion of the east bank of the Ugashik River from a point at 57° 30.74'N lat., 157° 24.10'W. Long. To 57° 32.27' N. lat., 157° 24.36'W. long., no part of a set gillnet may be more than 800 feet from the 18-foot high tide mark.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? An extensive mudbank is continuing to develop along the inshore end of our area in which we fish our set gillnets. This impedes us from fishing as effectively as we have in the past(decrease in functional fishing time). The current offshore distance limitation of 800 feet from the 18-foot high tide mark precludes us from fishing the full extent of our allowable gear and denies us the efficient use of the fishing time allowed. We continue to lose opportunities due to fewer hours of available fishing time because our nets are not in the water.

In 2016 the BOF adopted the “criteria for Board Deliberations on Commercial Set Gillnet Proposals Impacted by Coastal Erosion” (2016-238-FB) which outlines the criteria that the board will consider and weigh when deliberating on a proposal related to set gillnet sites impacted by coastal erosion. The case stated above clearly fits Criteria #1 which states that issues that arise form land that has either eroded or accreted through natural or artificial causes contiguous to the leasehold.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. This proposal was developed with the help of the Ugashik Village Set Netters.

PROPOSED BY: William Albecker, Lisa Albecker & Ugashik Village Set Netters
(EF-F26-083)

PROPOSAL 80

5 AAC 06.331. Gillnet specifications and operations.

Allow joint venture set gillnet fishing operations in Bristol Bay, as follows:

Add new regulation: 5 AAC 39.2XX. Joint Venture Set-net Fishing Operations.

(a) In Bristol Bay, two salmon set gillnet CFEC permit holders may form a Joint Venture and combine their gear under the following conditions:

- (1) a Joint Venture permit must be obtained from a local representative of the department before a Joint Venture may start operations;
- (2) only one Joint Venture permit per year will be issued for each Joint Venture;
- (3) the Joint Venture permit must be signed by both CFEC permit holders and each must have a copy of the Joint Venture permit readily available for inspection;
- (4) the Joint Venture permit may be canceled by the department upon the request of one of the Joint Venture operators;
- (5) the gear and site markers required by 5 AAC 39.280 must bear the five-digit CFEC permit serial number of both permit holders;
- (6) no single set gillnet may exceed the regulatory maximum length prescribed in regulation for the applicable fishing area,
- (7) a Joint Venture may operate no more than the regulatory maximum amount of gear per CFEC permit allowable for the applicable fishing area; and
- (8) both parties of the Joint Venture are legally responsible for the operation of all gear of the Joint Venture.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently, the opportunity for Joint Venture (JV) set-net operations in Alaska commercial fisheries is limited to the Kodiak area under 5 AAC 18.331. This provision has been a useful tool for Kodiak set-net harvesters from which other set-net harvesters can benefit.

JV operations, where one permit holder may deliver fish harvested under a partnered permit holder's CFEC permit, can help communities and fleets respond to economic, geographic, and logistical constraints while improving product quality and revenue.

Extending this provision to Bristol Bay set netters would give small-scale family operations greater flexibility in tailoring harvest strategies particularly in remote or under-capitalized areas. The limitation to two CFEC permits per JV adheres to the limited entry program's owner-operator intent while providing this flexibility.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. This proposal was developed in parallel with the discussions surrounding HB 117 and the request for clarification in delivery norms and requirements from impacted set-net fleets.

PROPOSED BY: Jamie O'Connor (EF-F26-169)

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.

PROPOSED BY: Reid Ten Kley

(EF-F26-159)
