

PROPOSAL XXX - 5 AAC 27.XXX. New Section. Establish a commercial open pound herring spawn on kelp fishery in Sitka Sound as follows:

The change in regulation would allow existing Sitka Sound sac roe seine permit holders to choose open pound spawn on kelp as an alternative to seining. This proposal has been before the board before and has been met with some confusion on whether the Board has the ability to render a decision on it. If the Board, for some reason, still does not have the ability to decide on this proposal then the proposer requests the Board send a letter to CFEC making it clear that the Board supports the concept of allowing open pounds as an alternative to seine gear for existing Sitka Sound sac roe seine permit holders and would like CFEC to adjust the administrative area boundary accordingly to allow the Board to make a final decision on the proposal. The Board is allowed to express their view of the proposal to CFEC.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? An experimental open pound herring spawn on kelp fishery was conducted in Sitka Sound in 1998 and 1999. This project identified open pounds as a viable alternative to the sac roe fishery and produced published studies, data, and video which demonstrate the positive results of this alternative harvest method. This proposal has been presented to the Board at various times since 1996. In short, allowing open pound spawn on kelp as an alternative harvest method would increase the value of the Sitka Sound herring fishery while removing less fish from the biomass which are two things fishery managers should strive for. Fisheries for forage species such as herring have come under increased scrutiny over the years so it is more important than ever to make changes which promote conservation and increase the value of the extracted resource. This proposal does that.

PROPOSED BY: Darrell Kapp

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