

Closed Waters and Gear (2 proposals)

PROPOSAL 210

5 AAC 21.350. Closed waters.

Close waters to drift gillnetting on the west side of Cook Inlet within one mile of shore from the West Forelands to Sea Otter Point, as follows:

Commercial drift boats must stay 1 nautical mile offshore of the beach & the mean high tide line, on the west side of Cook Inlet from the west forelands, to sea otter point.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Commercial drift boats deploying their nets right on the beach, and in front of stream mouths, choking off the mouths of streams preventing salmon from entering the streams on the west side of cook inlet. the drift fleet is fishing so close to the beach that brown bears at silver salmon creek are taking fish directly out of the nets as the boats are fishing.

PROPOSED BY: Mel Erickson

(EF-F19-026)

PROPOSAL 211

5 AAC 21.331. Gillnet specifications and operations.

Eliminate the four set gillnet per person limit, as follows:

5 AAC 21.331. Gillnet specifications and operations

Amend gillnet specifications and operations as follows:

(d) A set gillnet may not be more than 35 fathoms in length and 45 meshes in depth. South of the latitude of Anchor Point, 30 fathoms of seine webbing may be used on the shore between high and low water levels. A person may not operate [MORE THAN FOUR SET GILLNETS WITH] more than 105 fathoms of set gillnet in the aggregate per permit. [EXCEPT THAT]

(1) ON FIRE ISLAND A PERSON MAY OPERATE MORE THAN FOUR SET GILLNETS, BUT THE AGGREGATE LENGTH OF THE NETS MAY NOT EXCEED 105 FATHOMS;]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Eliminate the four set gillnet per person restriction, or change the restriction to six set gillnets per person/permit holder. There is no reasonable grounds for limiting the number of nets a person can operate to four when there is a maximum length of a gillnet, as well as maximum gillnet in the aggregate. Many circumstances arise in which it is safer and reasonable to fish smaller sets of gear, including inclement weather, swift tides, rock hazards, and fishing from the beach using a running line pulley system.

The current regulation is contradictory, in that it states that a person may not operate more than four set gillnets, yet (i) states that “A CFEC permit holder who holds two Cook Inlet set gillnet CFEC permits may operate an aggregate length of set gillnets not to exceed 210 fathoms in length...” If a set gillnet may not be more than 35 fathoms, and a person may not fish more than four set gillnets, it is impossible for a CFEC permit holder with two permits to fish a length of set gillnets of 210 fathoms.

Other solutions considered: The main other solution considered to remedy this problem would be to amend 5 AAC 21.331 in a way that a person may not operate more than 6 set gillnets, instead of 4. We do not reject this solution, and would support it amended to this if it was seen by the board as a better solution.

PROPOSED BY: Tyonek Fish and Game Advisory Committee

(HQ-F19-132)
