

PROPOSAL 169

5 AAC 27.110. Fishing seasons for Southeastern Alaska Area.

Repeal commercial set gillnet sac roe herring fisheries in Sections 1-E and 1-F, as follows:

5 AAC 27.110. Repeal commercial sac roe herring fishing in Sections 1E and 1F.

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

West Behm Canal Herring Fishery Background

West Behm Canal is located in Southeast Alaska, approximately nine nautical miles north of downtown Ketchikan. Before statehood when the federal government was managing and assessing herring stocks in the Ketchikan area, the West Behm Canal herring stock was considered a minor stock of herring. Historical records from the 1950' s show that the nautical miles of herring spawn fluctuated between 1 and 8 miles in West Behm Canal on an annual basis. Fisheries occurred in the area throughout the 1960' s and 1970' s with the purse seine bait fishery as the largest component. The department of Fish and Game, under a more conservative fishery regime, closed the fisheries in 1980. The amount of spawn continued to fluctuate between 1 and 6.5 miles of between 1980 and 1992. So, during the 42 years from 1950 and 1992 the miles of spawn ranged from 1 and 8 miles.

The Board of Fisheries, during the January 2003 meeting in Sitka, established a herring fishery in West Behm Canal after hearing and reading extensive testimony from interested parties with widely differing viewpoints.

Since then there has only been one opening in 2011. And none since. The herring in this area have still not recovered. Taking the action the board took in 2018 on repealing sac roe fishing in Sections 15B, 15C, and 11A. I believe the same action is warranted for the same reasons in Sections 1E and 1F (West Behm Canal).

PROPOSED BY: Don Westlund

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