

YUKON COMMERCIAL FISHERIES PROPOSAL 88

YUKON DELTA FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

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2010 BOARD OF FISHERIES AYK MEETING

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- **2010 Proposal 90:** *Prohibit subsistence and commercial gillnets over 6-inch mesh size on the Yukon River*
(Amended by the Board: Established a maximum mesh size of 7.5 inches in salmon fisheries on the Yukon, starting with the 2011 season. C/A 6-0)
 - This maximum mesh size has not been altered by the Board of Fisheries since then.
 - The seven- and one-half maximum mesh size is included in the subsistence salmon fishing gear specifications regulations (5 AAC 01.220) but not in the commercial salmon fishing gear specifications regulations (5 AAC 05.331), and also as reflected in Proposals 84 and 88, respectively

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PROPOSAL 84: Repeal and replace Yukon Area **subsistence** salmon fishing gear specifications.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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- 5 AAC 01.220 is amended to read:
 - (c) The following restrictions apply to subsistence fishing:
 - **(1) a gillnet may not exceed seven- and one-half-inch mesh size;**
 - (2) the aggregate length of set gillnets in use by an individual may not exceed 150 fathoms; (3) each drift gillnet in use by an individual may not exceed 50 fathoms in

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PROPOSAL 88: Repeal and replace Yukon Area **commercial** salmon fishing gear specifications.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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- 5 AAC 05.33 I. Gillnet specifications and operations. Repeal and replace Yukon Area commercial salmon fishing gear specifications, as follows:
 - 5 AAC 05.33 I is amended to read:
 - **(c) Salmon may be taken only with gillnets of six-inch or smaller mesh during periods established by emergency order.**

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HISTORY OF GILLNET MESH SIZE RESTRICTIONS IN THE LOWER YUKON AREA (DISTRICTS 1, 2, 3)

- Prior to 1973 there were no mesh size restrictions (unrestricted) in the Lower Yukon Area
 - Fishing periods were **NOT** established by emergency order.
 - Fishing periods were on a schedule.
 - There was no directed summer chum salmon fishery.
- Beginning in 1973, 6-inch maximum mesh size regulations from late June through early July became effective to harvest a portion of the large summer chum salmon runs.
 - This resulted in a king salmon season, June through early July, using unrestricted mesh size gillnets, and
 - a summer chum salmon season in July, using gillnets with a 6-inch maximum mesh size gillnets.

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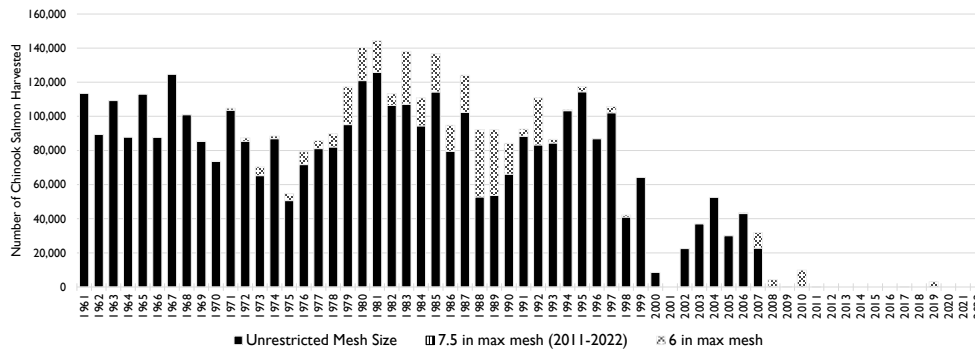
HISTORY OF GILLNET MESH SIZE RESTRICTIONS IN THE LOWER YUKON AREA (DISTRICTS 1, 2, 3)

- Beginning in 1985, a six-inch maximum mesh size regulations by emergency order designed to allow “special” summer chum salmon fishing periods **during the king salmon season** became effective to harvest chum salmon. We believe that this was the first use of emergency order authority on the Yukon.
- Commercial fishing for king salmon remained on a schedule, except for the “special” chum salmon fishing periods, established by emergency order.
- Beginning in 2011, the seven- and one-half inch maximum gillnet mesh size regulation to harvest salmon became effective in the Yukon Area, replacing the unrestricted mesh size.

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KING SALMON COMMERCIAL HARVEST IN DISTRICTS 1 AND 2 BY MESH SIZE, 1961-2022.



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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

- Through 2010, a maximum mesh size for gillnets was not included in regulation because it was not restricted.
- The commercial fishing schedule precluded the use of emergency orders to allow fishing periods.
 - District 1 fished on Monday and Thursday;
 - District 2 fished on Tuesday and Saturdays.

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

- Emergency orders were first used on the Yukon to allow “special” chum salmon commercial fishing periods, **during the king salmon season.**
- At some unknown time, emergency order authority replaced the fishing schedule, probably because of reduced run sizes.
- The language of the 1985 regulation that allowed chum salmon fishing periods during the king salmon season through emergency orders most likely persisted after the schedule was terminated.

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

- Subsistence salmon gear specifications regulations included the maximum seven- and one-half inch gillnet restriction, the commercial salmon gear specifications fishing regulations did not.
- The regulation is poorly written, confusing and not readily available.
- The commercial fishing gear specifications regulations should clearly stipulate that the maximum mesh size used in commercial fisheries throughout the Yukon Area should be seven- and one-half inch.
- In addition to the seven- and one-half inch and six-inch maximum mesh size restrictions, five- and one-half inch and four and three quarters inch mesh size restrictions should also be included in the commercial gear specification regulation.

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PROPOSAL 88:
SUGGESTED LANGUAGE

- 5 AAC 05.331 is amended to read:
- (c) Salmon may be taken only with gillnets of **seven- and one-half inch or smaller**, six-inch or smaller, **five- and one-half inch or smaller, or four- and three-quarters inch or smaller** mesh during periods established by emergency order.
- Comments:
 - Seven- and one-half inch or smaller mesh: king salmon directed fishery;
 - Six-inch mesh or smaller mesh: summer chum and fall season directed fisheries; I I
 - Five- and one-half inch or smaller mesh: summer chum salmon directed fishery; and
 - Four and three-quarters inch or smaller mesh: directed pink salmon fishery.

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