

## **PROPOSAL 81**

### **5 AAC 55.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Prince William Sound Area.**

Modify the area open to sport fishing near the Main Bay Hatchery, as follows:

PWSAC recommends making Main Bay language consistent with Wally Noerenberg Hatchery but keep the distance closer for MBH and at the distance it has been as well as providing a visible cork line at the distance required. 5 AAC 55.023(3) the waters of Lake Bay of Esther Island inside ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately 100 feet seaward of the Esther Hatchery broodstock holding pen are closed to sport fishing;

### **5AAC 55.023(10) the waters of Main Bay inside a line of buoys located approximately 60 feet seaward of the Main Bay Hatchery broodstock holding pen are closed to sport fishing;**

[(10) IN MAIN BAY, SPORT FISHING IS PROHIBITED FROM A VESSEL THAT IS (A) WITHIN 60 FEET OF THE MAIN BAY HATCHERY BARRIER SEINE;AND (B) INSIDE THE MAIN BAY HATCHERY BARRIER SEINE AND SHOREWARD TO THE HEAD OF THE BAY.]

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** 1) Snagging hooks are consistently becoming entangled in the Main Bay barrier seine compromising barrier seine integrity and usefulness. Through multiple tide series this causes additional mesh to become entangled with a snagging hook, resulting in lifting leadlines or sinking corklines eliminating barrier seine integrity and allowing unwanted fish passage behind the barrier seine.

2) Snagging hooks in the barrier seine pose a safety concern for personnel removing and cleaning the barrier seine.

3) Snagging of Main Bay sockeye intended for use as broodstock inside the barrier seine broodstock enclosure when not fishing from a vessel. The State of Alaska has strict sockeye salmon culture protocols that have allowed for the successful culture of this species. Culling broodstock with open wounds is part of the protocol to help minimize IHN transmission in brood holding areas. Snagging inside the barrier seine on fish intended as brood increases the number of wounded fish staff encounter and are required to cull and may increase the incidence of IHN in Main Bay Hatchery brood.

The barrier seine is designed and operated to protect salmon intended as brood and allow orderly fisheries on fish swimming outside the barrier seine to continue for all user groups. If nothing were changed, barrier seine integrity will continue to be compromised, whether by snagging tackle, boat or propellor damage, whereby tens of thousands of fish can be lost to all user groups. Until all Main Bay brood collection is secured in the freshwater brood pond, the barrier seine must remain in place. Barrier seine removal occurs as soon as all brood are secured in the freshwater brood pond and occurs on or before July 15th. When the barrier seine is not in the water, fishing is open to up to 300 feet from the fish ladder.

As a solution, barrier seine dive inspection frequency and snag hook removal was increased to weekly in 2023. This was at additional cost to PWSAC and the Main Bay operation but ultimately proved unsuccessful. Planning and coordinating dives after heavier weekend traffic was still not sufficient to remove problematic snagging gear and maintain barrier seine integrity.

**Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain.** The proposal was developed in consultation with Cordova Fishermen United and ADF&G Area Management.

**PROPOSED BY:** Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation (HQ-F24-057)

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