

PROPOSAL 131

5 AAC 01.720. Lawful gear and gear specifications.

Implement maximum gillnet mesh-size restrictions in the Chilkat Inlet and River subsistence salmon fishery, as follows:

(5) in District 15, in the waters of Chilkat Inlet and Chilkat River, the maximum allowable gillnet mesh size is 5 3/8" prior to August 1st.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This proposal addresses the need for conservation of the Chilkat Chinook salmon population through the use of a maximum gillnet size restriction of 5 3/8" through August 1st in the Chilkat Inlet and Chilkat River areas of the District 15 Southeast Alaska subsistence fishery. Considering low returns of Chinook salmon to the Chilkat River system over the last 10 years, changing to maximum size of gillnets allowed to be fished in the Haines area subsistence fisheries could help curtail Chinook salmon from being caught in the subsistence fishery both in the salt water and Chilkat River. Prior to August 1 gillnets with a mesh size of 5 3/8" or less would still allow sockeye and pink salmon to be caught while allowing Chinook a better chance of bouncing off gillnets and reaching their spawning grounds. A mesh restriction should also reduce catches of larger, productive female spawners. After August 1st most Chinook salmon have reached their spawning grounds; relaxing the mesh restriction off would allow users who are targeting chum and coho Salmon to use larger mesh sized nets to more effectively catch those species. If this change is not adopted there could be Chinook salmon incidentally harvested at a time when the Chilkat River is seeing record low returns. This conservation measure is commensurate with other restrictions applied to Southeast Alaska commercial and sport fisheries by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

PROPOSED BY: Upper Lynn Canal Advisory Committee

(EF-F17-068)
