

PROPOSAL 63 – 5 AAC 06.331. Gillnet specifications and operations. Change the seaward minimum distance between set gillnet gear in the Clark’s Point area in the Nushagak District, as follows:

5 AAC 06.331(n)(2) is amended to read:

From the cannery dock at Clark’s Point to an ADF&G regulatory marker at First Creek, 500 feet from the mean high tide mark, or to the minus 3 foot low tide mark whichever location is closer to the mean high tide mark. **Except between 50° 49.945' N lat., 158° 33.456' W long., and 58° 49.241' N lat., 158° 33.061' W long. (at Clark’s Point Bluff mudflat) 750 feet from the mean high tide mark, or to the minus three foot low tide mark whichever location is closer to the mean high tide mark.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The existing regulation for the set net distance limit of 500 feet from the mean high tide mark results in the lack of sufficient water to fish for the set net sites on Clark’s Point bluff mudflat between 50° 49.945' N lat., 158° 33.456' W long., and 58° 49.241' N lat., 158° 33.061' W long. The set net sites in the specified area are now severely limited by the existing regulation as it does not accommodate the need for an extended limit in this area so the sites can have adequate fishing water/time. The specified area has always been a mud flat, but over the years it has filled in making the mud flat longer and the area within and beyond the 500 feet distance shallower. This expansion of the mud flat exacerbates the need for an extended distance beyond 500 feet.

Extending this regulation to a 750 feet limit in the specified area would put the offshore distance in line with other set net areas that are situated in similar large mud flats in the Nushagak District. Other set net areas with long mud flats have either 700 to 1,000 feet limits for set netters. First Creek to Third Creek on Ekuk beach, Flounder Flats (Third Creek to Etolin Point), and Igushik are prime examples of similar mud flats with an extended adequate distance (700-1000 feet) to get sufficient water to fish. Clark's Point Bluff is the only fishing area with an extended mud flat that is restricted to 500 feet, severely reducing our sites access to adequate water and fishing time.

Extending the limit in the specified area to 750 feet would:

- a. Exhibit regulatory consistency with other similar areas in the Nushagak district.
- b. Adjust the regulation to accommodate for the reduced fishing opportunity due to the expanding mud flat.
- c. Provide adequate water for the set netters in the affected area to be able to have the opportunity to have sufficient fishing time/water for a successful season.

If this regulation does not change it will:

- a. Continue to arbitrarily restrict the specified set netters from having sufficient water to fish due to environmental changes therefore unnecessarily restricting the set netters opportunity for successful fishing seasons.

Other solutions we considered but rejected included a low tide set. However, due to the length of the mudflat it could be an unreasonable distance and hazard for gillnetters and set netters to be fishing that far out into the Bay.

PROPOSED BY: Alannah Hurley

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