

## Gear Modifications Earl Krygier 2026 BOF

This PC supports proposals: 147, 148, 151, & 152 and opposes proposals 149, 150 and 153.

This is a general comment about gear modification and how it has evolved and continues to increase harvest capacity and why supporting proposals to constrain gear modifications that increase catching power and oppose proposals to increase harvesting capacity is correct conservation.

During my 45-year career and my formative fishing years, I have been on every type of West Coast fishing vessel: trollers, gillnet, seine, trawl, Factory Trawl, longline, crab and scallop, I have observed firsthand the technological changes showcased at the annual Seafood Expo in Seattle and Boston. I sat on state, national and international groups that manage salmon, groundfish and crab; and state and national scientific funding organizations that have funded hundreds of millions of dollars in fishery research to understand stock and technological changes. It is my strong opinion that technological advancements in vessels, gear and electronics have made the single greatest change in harvesting power than any other impact. **This is important because historic fleets and old technology's catching power used when regulations were developed do not reflect the impacts of the modern fleet and its catching power on those regulations.** Modern vessels can catch more fish in less hours than in the past and with new electronics they are as efficient as vessels using spotter planes. Because of this evolution in harvest power, old management tools are not adequate to assure regulatory compliance. ADFG has a data gap by not requiring number of sets and fish per set per day as they do in crab fisheries to determine Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE). Rather relying on the number of vessels making landings and poundage reported. Because there is such variation in vessels, some possessing exceptional harvesting capacity, making estimates of CPUE to manage inseason requires significant Kentucky windage.

The new 58' X 22' seine and even some gillnet vessels can harvest comfortably in weather conditions over 20 kn. In Area M, even most setnet fishermen use vessels with electronics as floating cabins rather than beach-based buildings as in Cook Inlet and Kodiak, which allows them to fish offshore at night under current regulations. The most competitive seine vessels have a full suite of electronics on both the main vessel and the skiff that allows them to find fish and bring their fishing group in on the Bonanza. Some have side scan sonar, all have "Starlink" communications, and computer systems that accurately display their current and past fishing hot spots and share this information with their fishing groups.

Vessels (both seine boats and skiffs) used to be made of fiberglass and wood, today the vessels are aluminum or steel with large engines and great size for stability and power. With powerful new hydraulics they use pot pullers, pinch rollers, shives, gripper wheels and

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power blocks which eliminate some crewmembers but double or triple efficiency. Almost all systems have at least one full backup and some vessels have three backup systems including circulating pumps, and gear handling equipment to keep them fishing 24/7. These systems have superfast hydraulics that can set and retrieve a large Area M seine within 12 minutes (it used to take 30 minutes); using bag splitters and picking booms to speed operations and no longer have to braille the fish over the side into the hold.

Net web development has been another major change, made of spectra and other new materials that allow a vessel to hang 50% rather than 30% increasing their capture power. Because of its strength, large vessels with large powerful seine skiffs can tow against the tide without being swept away. Even the lead and cork lines have changed, instead of 3 pound per fm., 8 pounds per fm. is now common, with added cork to support the weight.

At this Board Meeting you will be asked to consider nearly 60 proposals. Please use this information I provide to help evaluate the impact of each proposal before you. Consider whether those proposals which ask to increase access and harvest or those asking to constrain access and harvest that actually lead you to follow the “Policy for Management of Sustainable Salmon Fisheries” (SSFP:5AAC 39.222) and the “Mixed Stock Salmon Policy” (5AAC 30.220). Thank you for your consideration.