

AK Bristol Bay Salmon Drift Gillnet Fishery

Fishery type: Gillnet

Current category: Category II*

Basis for current classification on the LOF: Based on analogy with other Category II AK gillnet fisheries that operate in the same manner as this fishery.

Current list of marine mammal species/stocks injured/killed: Beluga whale, Bristol Bay; Gray whale, Eastern North Pacific; Harbor seal, Bering Sea; Northern fur seal, North Pacific; Pacific white-sided dolphin, Central North Pacific; Spotted seal, AK; Steller sea lion, Western U.S.

Estimated number of current participants: 1,862

Take Reduction Teams/Plans that affect this fishery: None.

Year added to the LOF: 1996

Category when originally listed: Category II

Basis for original classification on the LOF: This fishery was categorized as a Category II based on logbook data. Observer coverage was inadequate to determine mortality and serious injury levels of marine mammal stocks across all fisheries, but available data suggested that, if observer data were available, serious injury and mortality levels may have been greater than the Potential Biological Removal (PBR) levels for each stock with which this fishery interacts. Also, known mortality and serious injury was greater than 1% of PBR for harbor seal (Bering Sea stock) and beluga whale (Bristol Bay stock).

Estimated number of participants when originally listed: 1,741

Past names, if any: AK Bristol Bay drift gillnet (until 1999).

Gear description/method for fishing: This fishery uses drift gillnet gear with continuous soak times for part of the net, while other parts of the net are tended. Fishing effort occurs during the day and night, with a continuous number of sets per day.

Target species: Although sockeye salmon is the most abundant salmon species that returns to Bristol Bay each year, Chinook, chum, Coho, and pink salmon returns are also important to the fishery.

Spatial/temporal distribution of effort: This fishery generally operates from June 17 to the end of August in Bristol Bay. Approximately 80% of the salmon catch in Bristol Bay is caught with drift gillnets. The Bristol Bay Management Area consists of five management districts including all coastal and inland waters from Cape Newenham to Cape Menshikof. There are eight major river systems in the area, and these form the largest commercial sockeye salmon fishery in the world.

Levels of observer coverage each year[†]: This fishery has not been observed by the Alaska Marine Mammal Observer Program.

* The fishery is classified by analogy to other gear types or fisheries that are known to cause mortality or serious injury of marine mammals.

[†] Observer coverage levels include the latest information reported in the most current final Stock Assessment Reports (SAR).

Management and regulations: This fishery is managed by the AK Department of Fish and Game as a limited entry fishery with gear restrictions on the mesh and net size, and area closures.

History of Changes on the LOF

2009 LOF:

- Removed the superscript “1” following Steller sea lions (Western U.S.) in the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery. Although Steller sea lions were reported taken in this fishery in logbook entries prior to the 1996 LOF, there have been no reported interactions since 1993. Therefore, takes of this Steller sea lion stock re not driving the classification of the fishery. Inclusion of the superscript was a typographical error
- Estimated number of participants updated from 1,903 to 1,862.

2006 LOF: Added a superscript “2” in Table 1 after this fishery, indicating that this fishery is classified by analogy.

2001 LOF:

- Estimated number of participants updated from 1,884 to 1,903.

1999 LOF:

- Clarified that the fishery was classified as Category II based on the absence of observer data, similar gear type to other Category II fisheries, and the temporal and spatial overlap of this fishery with the marine mammal stocks listed as injured or killed.
- Renamed the fishery the "AK Bristol Bay salmon drift gillnet" to specify the target species of the fishery.
- Estimated number of participants was updated from 1,882 to 1,884.

1998 LOF:

- Spotted seal (AK) and Pacific white-sided dolphin (Central North Pacific) added to list of species/stocks incidentally killed/injured in this fishery. The 1997 SAR for each stock reported that mortalities were recorded in logbook records in 1990 (5 spotted seals and 3 white-sided dolphins), and 1991 (1 spotted seal). Logbook data for drift and set gillnet fisheries were combined. As a result, some of the mortalities may have occurred in the set gillnet.
- Estimated number of participants updated from 1,741 to 1,882.