

Area M Salmon Fishery

- Majority of fleet is year-round Alaska Residents
- Fishery targets sockeye

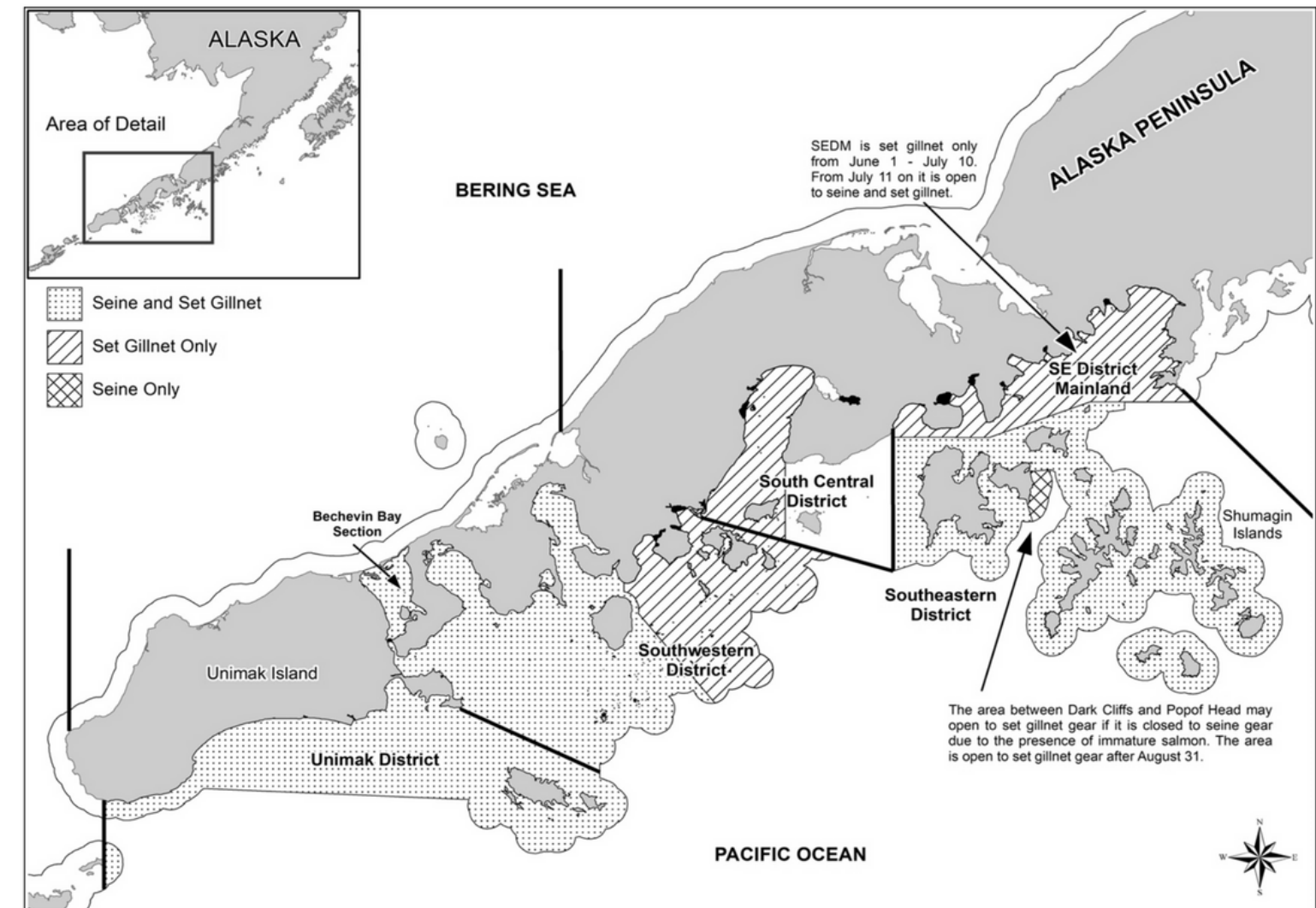


Figure 140-1.—Map of the June South Alaska Peninsula fisheries for areas currently allowed for set gillnet and seine gear.

Alaska BOF Proposal 140

WHAT PROPOSAL 140 SOUGHT TO DO?

Close commercial salmon fishing during specific windows during Area M June fisheries in hopes to get more chum up to the AYK

Proposal was replica of Fish and Game Management Plan from 2001-2003 which **decimated** the region, **increased** chum harvest, and had **no noticeable benefits** to AYK chum stocks

WHY PROPOSAL 140 FAILED

■ **No Guarantee**

No assurance chum would move through the area during times of closure because windows were arbitrary and not based on scientific data

■ **Science**

Area M harvest rate of CWAK stock is 5.5% of total Bristol Bay, Kuskokwim, Yukon and Norton sound escapements and harvests in those areas.

2016-2019 heat wave decimated Yukon chum affecting 2021-2022 runs

ACTIONS THE BOF ADOPTED

22% REDUCTION

First fishing period
shorted by 22%

CLOSURE 2.4 TIMES LONGER

Closure between 1st
& 2nd period is 2.4
times longer

25% LESS FISHING TIME

Second fishing
period shortened by
25%

CLOSED AN ENTIRE AREA

Closed Sanak Island
Section & Unimak
District to all gear
types

PRE & POST BOF ACTIONS ON AREA M

Pre-BOF Action	Post-BOF Action	Difference
88 hours for 1st fishing period	68 hours for 1st fishing period	22.7% less fishing time
32 hour closure between 1st and 2nd fishing periods	76 hour closure between 1st and 2nd fishing periods	2.4 times longer closure
88 hours for 2nd fishing period	66 hours for 2nd fishing period	25% less fishing time
Sanak Island Section of Unimak District open for all gear types	Sanak Island Section of Unimak District closed to all gear types	Complete loss of fishing opportunity in Sanak Island Section

COURTESY UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS



COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

Will ensure more passage of CWAK
chums because closures will be
based on near real-time data



TRIGGERS & CAPS

ADFG will restrict fishing time
and close areas if exceeded



AREA M AND PROPOSAL 140

Proposal 140 did not pass, but actions were taken that restrict fishing time in Area M

The Board of Fisheries did not adopt proposal 140, but they **did take actions that will significantly change the way fishing is operated in Area M**. There were several other proposals aside from 140 that sought to limit fishing time in Area M, some of which were adopted.

Why Proposal 140 did not Pass

Proposal 140 asked to shut down Area M fishing during specific times during the season in hopes to get more chum salmon up to AYK. This would not have been effective because migration of chum salmon cannot be nailed down to a specific time. Measuring the success of a fixed closure during a specific time would have been difficult given the low harvest rate and distance from Coastal Western Alaska (CWAK) streams. **In short, proposal 140 could not guarantee** it would lead to increased chum passage to AYK.

What actions did the BOF take to limit chum catch in Area M?

- The Board adopted triggers and hard caps for the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands sections, which require ADFG to **restrict fishing time** and **close these areas** if they are met.
- The Board is expecting that the cooperative management agreement be adhered to. This plan requires the fleet to stand down and create 'windows' for fish, **when they are passing through**. This is important, as the main intent behind Proposal 140 was to create windows for fish to pass through on their migration to CWAK. **ADFG staff stated on the record that having random closures based only on calendar dates could not guarantee that fish migration would overlap with closures, and therefore could not guarantee that Proposal 140 would lead to increased passage.** The cooperative plan also improves data collection and incentivizes behavioral changes in the fleet that will lead to reduced chum harvest at all levels of abundance. Over the long term, this will lead to improved management.
- Lastly, while the Board's action may seem like it doesn't dramatically reduce fishing time, the maximum **fishing time allowed by regulation will be less** in practice due to chum avoidance directed by fishermen. The total time will be based on chum encounter rates (i.e., if there are a lot of chum, the fleet will fish less; if there aren't many chum, the fleet will fish more within regulatory parameters).

MORE ON THE
OTHER SIDE

Area M Fisherman are not managing themselves

There is confusion as to what **“Cooperative/Adaptive Management”** means. This does not mean Area M fishermen are allowed to fish whenever and wherever they wish. The cooperative management agreement is coordinated with ADFG via the MOU, but the **State retains full authority over management** of the fishery via time/area closures, fixed closure areas, limits/caps, and ADFG in-season authority to restrict and close fisheries.

The Board also supported and expects the fleet to implement the cooperative management agreement which requires **100% of the fleet** to sign on, share all harvest data, monitor chum harvest, and stand down or move fishing locations when directed, to create opportunity for chum to pass through. **This adaptive approach is the only way to ensure more passage to coastal western AK, as opposed to fixed closures in regulation that don't correspond to what's occurring on the grounds.**

Likewise, processors are not managing the fishery. They are responding to the incentives created by RC 190, which include working cooperatively with their respective fleets to ensure that each respective fleet is adhering to the adaptive management agreement. The management of the fishery continues to be both time and area and ADFG in-season authority.

In 2022, Area M fishermen voluntarily stood down 217 hours out of the 352 hours they were permitted to fish resulting in 61% of reduced fishing time. This was a choice made by fishermen to help reduce chum harvest.

Supporting information may be found on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Board of Fisheries Area M Meeting Page at:
<https://tinyurl.com/ybu6vmac>

