

Maximum Length of Gill Net Set

JUNEAU — The maximum length of gill net which may be used by Bristol Bay commercial fishermen this season has been set at 25 fathoms per drift gear license holder and 12-1/2 fathoms per set net license holder, the Department of Fish and Game announced recently.

Michael L. Nelson, area biologist for Bristol Bay, said the gill net length restrictions are only for the emergency order period, which is June 16-July 17 for the Nushagak District and June 23-July 17 for other districts in Bristol Bay.

Before and after the emergency order period, the maximum allowable length of net will be 150 fathoms for drift nets and 50 fathoms for set nets.

Two years ago, the Board of Fish and Game adopted a sliding gear scale for the Bristol Bay commercial salmon fishery which determines the length of net each gear license holder may fish.

The length is based on the forecasted red salmon harvest and the total fathoms of gill net registered by all commercial fishermen.

Nelson said that although commercial fishing license appli-

cations received prior to the April 15 deadline have yet to be completed, the number of fathoms licensed to date has already exceeded the level which would reduce the length of net to the minimum.

As of May 15, fishermen had registered 154,520 fathoms of gill net gear for Bristol Bay. Fishermen registered 307,000 fathoms of net in 1972, while 409,000 fathoms were registered in 1973.

During the emergency order period, gear license holders may combine their units of allowable gear to a maximum of 150 fath-

oms for drift nets and 50 fathoms for set nets. However, each gear license holder who combines his gear with another must be physically present while the gear is being fished and must assist in the operation of that gear.

The Department of Fish and Game anticipates that there will be little or no fishing time allowed between June 23 and July 17 with the possible exception of the Togiak district.

Fishing after July 17 is anticipated but not guaranteed and some districts may be further closed if necessary to further protect various salmon stocks.