

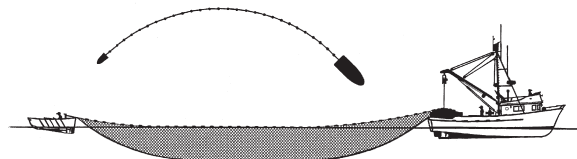
SALMON PURSE SEINERS

Salmon purse seiners catch pink, sockeye and chum salmon. The pink and sockeye salmon fisheries usually occur during the later half of the summer in the San Juan Islands and Strait of Georgia. The chum salmon fishery starts in early October and lasts through the end of November. This fishery takes place in Puget Sound and Hood Canal.

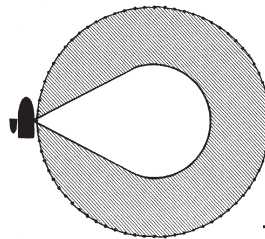
Purse seines are nets used to encircle fish. The top of the seine is called a float line, kept buoyant by corks. The seine is held in a vertical position by a weighted lead line. The seine also has a rope (called a purse line) running through rings on the bottom. This is used to draw the seine together, creating a "purse" to contain the fish.

Fishermen aboard purse seiners often use sonar and eyesight to find schools of salmon or other fish. Once a school is located, a smaller boat (or skiff) takes one end of the seine and encircles the fish with it. Seines are typically 300 fathoms (1800 feet) long. The mesh size is regulated to allow only the targeted species and sizes of fish to be caught. The purse line is winched in to close off the bottom of the seine. Then the seine is brought aboard, either by running it up through a hydraulic block and stacked on the back deck or winding it up on a large hydraulic reel positioned on the back deck of the boat. The end of the seine (the bunt) is brought on board and the catch is kept in a fish hold filled with refrigerated seawater until it is delivered to a buyer.

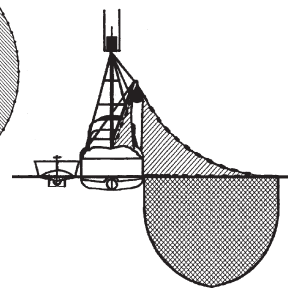
Purse seiners range from 50 to 68 feet in length. The smaller (21-foot) skiff is usually kept on the back deck or towed behind the purse seiner. The crew typically consists of three to four people.



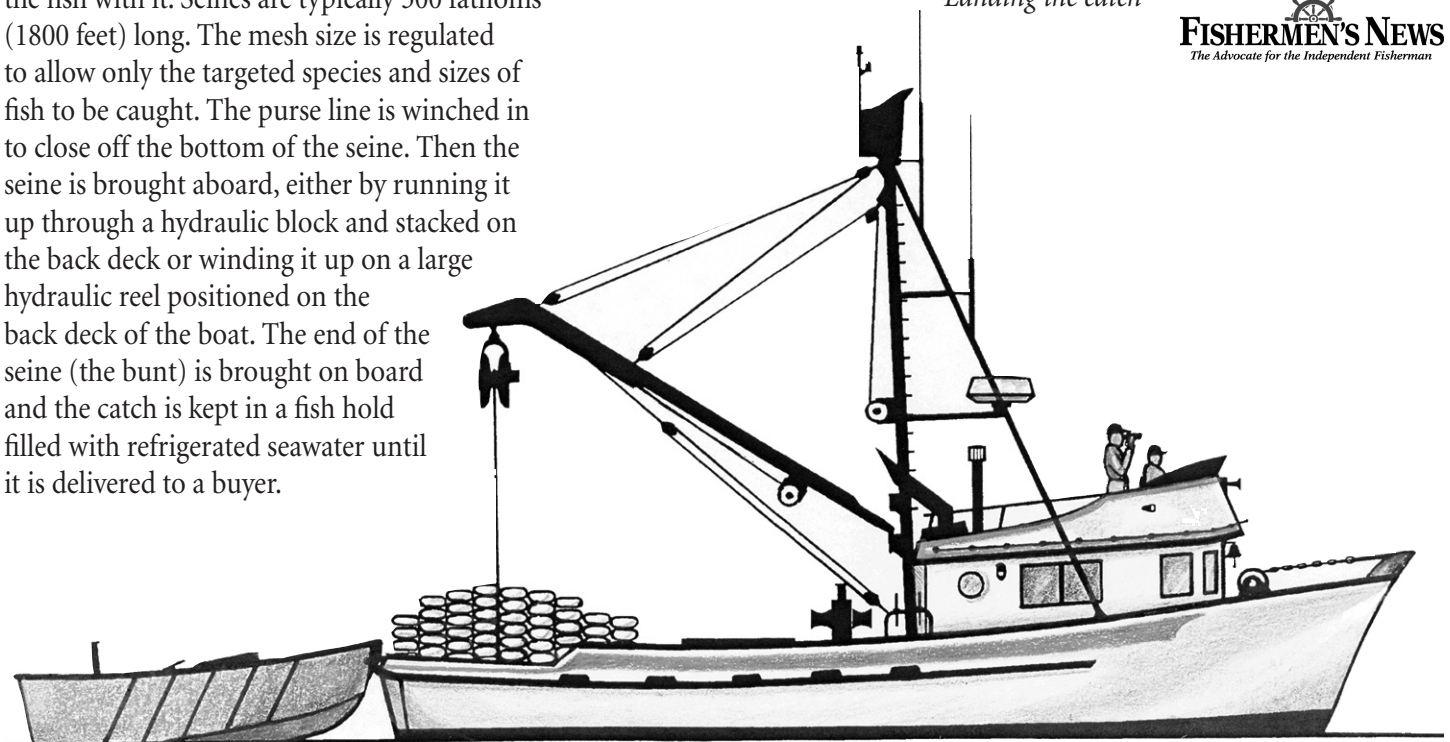
Setting a seine



Pursing a seine



Landing the catch



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Washington Sea Grant Program offers classes and workshops, supports research on salmon biology and ocean conditions and produces technical reports and instructional videos to help salmon fishermen improve their operations while using environmentally sound methods to acquire, process and market their catches. For more information on Washington Sea Grant Program, visit the WSGP Web site, wsg.washington.edu or call 206.543.6600.

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