

PROPOSAL 100

5 AAC 21.359 Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan.

Allow a 600-foot set gillnet commercial fishery when Kenai River late-run large king salmon escapements exceed 13,500 fish as follows:

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(d) if the projected late-run king salmon escapement is less 15,000 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer, the department shall

(1) close the sport fisheries in the Kenai River and in the salt waters of Cook Inlet north of the latitude of Bluff Point to the taking of king salmon

(2) close the commercial drift gillnet fishery in the Central District within one mile of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline north of the Kenai River and within one and one-half miles of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline south of the Kenai River; and

(3) close the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Upper Subdistrict of the Central District, **except provided in (c) (3) (h) of this chapter**

(c) (3) (h) if escapements of Kenai River late-run king salmon 75 cm mid-eye to tail fork and longer exceeds 13,500 fish and the Kenai and Kasilof river sockeye salmon management escapement objectives are being met, fishing with set gillnet gear may be allowed by emergency order within 600 feet of the mean high tide mark in the Upper Subdistrict. Commercial fishing opportunities under this provision will be structured to maximize harvest of surplus sockeye salmon and minimize harvest of king salmon, based on inseason analysis of ADFG fish tickets, escapement, and other available information. The operation of a set gillnet by a CFEC permit holder in these openings will be restricted to;

(i) one set gillnet, per permit, that is not more than 35 fathoms in length, and 29 meshes in depth. Set gillnets that are not more than 29 meshes in depth must be identified at the end of the gillnet with an attached blue buoy that is not less than nine and one-half inches in diameter.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Recent efforts to conserve Kenai Rive late-run king salmon and meet the Kenai River late-run king salmon optimal escapement goal of 15,000 large fish have resulted in foregone yield of Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon and Kasilof River sockeye salmon. Since the adoption of the KRLRKSMMP, the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers have exceeded their Board of Fish mandated in-river and BEG sockeye salmon goals every year. This proposal provides ADFG an additional tool to harvest surplus sockeye salmon with set gillnet gear when Kenai River late-run large king salmon sonar goal exceeds 13,500 fish, which is the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) for Kenai Rive late-run large king salmon established by ADFG, thereby assuring that a sustainable level of escapement is achieved while providing additional sockeye salmon harvest opportunity beyond what is currently allowed. In considering these emergency order openings the department will evaluate the number and size of king salmon harvested in the set gillnet fishery and manage conservatively to minimize

king salmon harvest as well as the need to ensure provisions of other related management plans are met.

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