

PROPOSAL 106

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

Restrict legal set gillnet gear when the Upper Subdistrict commercial salmon fishery is open within 600 feet of shore as follows:

Improve selectivity of the 600-foot fishery tool by use of shallow gillnets. Direct or incentivize use of 29” rather than 45” gillnets in 600-foot openers of the east side set net fishery under paired restrictions Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan 5 AAC 21.359.

(F) Upper Subdistrict set gillnet commercial fishing periods that are limited under this section may be limited under this section may be limited to fishing within 600 feet of the mean high tide mark and are exempt from hour [AND GEAR] limitations identified under (e)(3)(A)-(E) of this section.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Additional tools are needed to selectively harvest Kenai sockeye in the commercial east side set gillnet fishery during periods of acute low abundance of Kenai kings. Harvest of king salmon is a significant constraint on the opportunity to catch more-abundant sockeye in the Upper Cook Inlet set gillnet fishery.

Paired restrictions in the Kenai Late-run king management plan provide for use of 600-foot fishery openers to allow for some sockeye harvest opportunity when achieving the king goal is in question and even low catches of kings can trigger complete closure. This has typically been a tool of last resort.

The Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan (e)(3)(F) currently exempts Upper Subdistrict set gillnet commercial fishing periods within 600 feet of the mean high tide mark from hour and gear limitations that otherwise apply under paired restrictions.

Paired restrictions otherwise provide for limitations in the eastside set net fishery. Current regulations allow for CFEC permit holders to use more setnets when nets are 29” deep rather than 45” deep. Shallower nets are more selective for harvest of sockeye than kings because kings often travel deeper in the water column.

Shallow nets are a critical tool which enhances the opportunity of the commercial setnet fishery to harvest abundant sockeye while reducing harvest of king salmon. This tool is particularly important during periods of low king abundance which trigger paired restrictions in the Kenai King Plan.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai River Sportfishing Association

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