

PROPOSAL 206

5 AAC 21.366. Northern District King Salmon Management Plan.

Reduce the number of king salmon that may be commercially harvested in the Northern District of Upper Cook Inlet as follows:

5 AAC 21.366. Northern District King Salmon Management Plan.

(a) The purpose of this management plan is to ensure an adequate escapement of king salmon into the Northern District drainages and to provide management guidelines to the department. The department shall manage the Northern District king salmon stocks primarily for sport and guided sport uses in order to provide sport and guided sport fishermen with a reasonable opportunity to harvest these salmon over the entire run as measured by the frequency of inriver restrictions. The department shall manage the Northern District for the commercial harvest of king salmon as follows:

(1) except as specified in (8) of this section, the season will open for commercial fishing periods with the first fishing period beginning on the first Monday on or after May 25, except when May 25 falls within a closed period, in which case the season opens the next following open period and continues through June 24, unless closed earlier by emergency order;

(2) fishing periods are from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Mondays;

(3) the harvest may not exceed [12,500] **2,000** king salmon;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Modernize the Northern District king salmon commercial fishery harvest cap to reflect the modern-day commercial fishery and reduced king salmon production. The harvest cap of 12,500 king salmon was set back in 1986 and no longer is appropriate given all the significant changes to king salmon production and how the commercial fishery is prosecuted from 35 years ago.

The number of permit holders participating in this fishery rapidly declined beginning in 1993, which is the first year set gillnet fishermen were required to register (prior to fishing) to fish in one of three areas (ND, Upper Subdistrict, or Greater Cook Inlet) for the entire year. The registration requirement served to eliminate a common practice of fishing in multiple areas in UCI during the same year.

King salmon are also listed as a Stock of Management Concern for the Theodore River, Lewis River, Chuitna River, Alexander Creek, Willow Creek, Sheep Creek, and Goose Creek.

Annual Northern District directed commercial king salmon harvest averages:

1993–2007 = 2,373

2008–2011 = 2,246

2012–2018 = 1,309

All Years = 2,067

The above harvest estimates are only for the directed commercial king salmon fishery and do not include an additional harvest of 200 – 500 king salmon in the subsequent Northern District sockeye salmon fishery. With only one period each week during the directed king salmon fishery, the department has ample time to collect harvest reports and close the season if the harvest cap is met.

PROPOSED BY: Tom Vania

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