

PROPOSAL 35

5 AAC 21.XXX. The Kachemak Bay Wild Fish Priority Management Plan.

Create a *Kachemak Bay Wild Fish Priority Management Plan* as follows:

Utilizing **Section 5 AAC 39.220 Policy for the Management of Mixed Stock Salmon Fisheries**

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Accumulate and synthesize the stock specific data available from the collaborative of Research and Educational facilities available on the Kenai Peninsula and apply this to LCI

"Priority should be given to encouraging rehabilitation of depleted indigenous fish populations";
"Recognize cumulative impacts when considering effects of small incremental developments and action affecting critical habitat resources.";

"protect natural substrate and aquatic vegetation...to maintain aquatic habitats." **5AAC 95.610**

(a) In applying this statewide mixed stock salmon policy for all users, conservation of wild salmon stocks consistent with sustained yield shall be accorded the highest priority.

(b) In the absence of a regulatory management plan that otherwise allocates or restricts harvest, and when it is necessary to restrict fisheries on stocks where there are known conservation problems, the burden of conservation shall be shared among all fisheries in close proportion to their respective harvest on the stock of concern. The board recognized that precise sharing of conservation among fisheries is dependent on the amount of stock-specific information available.

(c) The board's preference in assigning conservation burdens in mixed stock fisheries is through the application of specific fishery management plans set out in the regulations. A management plan incorporates conservation burden and allocation of harvest opportunity.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? CREATE The Kachemak Bay Wild Fish Priority Management Plan to structure guidelines for ADFG to acknowledge and document food web and natural trophic status in fish interaction and to focus on wild fish priority in mixed stock fisheries in surrounding river systems and their nursery estuaries.

In 1975 at no cost, before hatcheries the wild component of portfolio wild streams provided harvest of 844,125 pinks in the southern district. Even during low salmon abundance of 1960's and 70's still annually averaged 250,000 pinks for common property fisherman. For the last thirty years under hatcheries pink harvest averaged 60,000. Where is this wild fish component now?

Wild systems are below escapement goals:

Humpy Creek Barabara China Poot Port Graham

Escapement 2012 – 2019 50,000 11,500 3903

Escapement 2020 – 2022 1,800 5,492 153 606

ADFG's performed 4-5 years of in season otolith sampling during harvest and found significant percentages of wild unmarked sockeye and wild unmarked pink salmon. Neither wild sockeye nor wild pinks are accounted for or documented in reports.

Estimated wild sockeye component

Sockeye purse seine averaged 49% wild. This means for every 100,000 harvested, 49,000 are wild

CIAA sockeye cost recovery, averaged 3.4% wild, this means for every 100,000 harvested, 3,400 are wild.

Estimated wild pink salmon component

pink salmon purse seine, averaged 35% wild, so every 100,000 scooped up, 35,000 wild migrating.

CIAA pink salmon cost recovery averaged 6.3% wild, so every 500,000 scooped up, 33,150 are wild.

The 52,400 wild sockeye and 68,150 wild pink component remain masked as nonexistent in this mixed stock hatchery/wild harvest.

Like a ratchet that keeps tightening the pressure, hatchery production is leading to unsustainable fishing mortality rates for wild salmon. The mixed stock fisheries in the Southern District are not adequately acknowledged or monitored as there is no money. With priority focus on hatchery production for perpetual cost recovery, harvest rates are set related to total abundance of fish in an area; as if the wild fish were not there. If this area gets a Wild Fish Priority Plan, this focus can be shifted to state directive.

This plan can dovetail with the overlapping jurisdictions of the Legislatively Designated Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat, its Regulatory Management Plan Regulation 5AAC 95.610 and the Kachemak Bay State Park Management Plan for diversity and abundance of indigenous species of fish.

Board Authority: AS 16.20.510. Regulations in Critical Habitat Areas.

Manage the Kachemak Bay to maintain wild fish priority.

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