

PROPOSAL 75

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

Remove the Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon OEG as follows:

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

(b) The department shall manage the late run of Kenai River King salmon to achieve **the sustainable escapement goal of 13,500-27,000** [AN OPTIMAL ESCAPEMENT GOAL OF 15,000-30,000] king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer as described in this section.

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(d) If the projected late-run king salmon escapement is less than **13,500** [15,000] king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer the department shall

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In 2020 the Board adopted an Optimum Escape Goal (OEG) for Kenai River Late-Run Chinook. This OEG of 15,000-30,000 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to trail fork and longer (or Large Kings) is the highest goal ever placed on this run and it was done during a time of relatively low abundance. It has no defensible conservation purpose and was only done in order to easier allow the department to restrict the East Side Setnet Fishery. Prior to the adoption of the Large King goal in 2017 we had a Sustainable Escapement Goal (SEG) of 15,000-30,000 all fish and the adoption of the SEG of 13,500-27,000 Large Fish was a significant raising of the goal. King salmon sizes are diminishing across the state and this large king goal is increasingly unreasonable every year. Placing an OEG on top of that is completely indefensible. The Boards use of OEGs in analogous situations in other areas (ie. the Nushagak) has been to place the OEG onto the non-struggling run in order to allow management greater flexibility to protect the weaker stock. In fact this is also what has been done in Cook Inlet on both the Kenai and Kasilof sockeye goals and they still regularly exceed the high end of the goal. Placing an OEG on the struggling stock makes no sense whatsoever and merely exacerbates all of the struggles and management issues within the area.

PROPOSED BY: Joseph Person

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