

PROPOSAL 76

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

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

The solution I recommend is using the SEG, rather than the OEG, when managing Late Run Large King Salmon. Or moving to an All King Salmon Count.

Regulatory Language:

5AAC 21.359. (b) The department shall manage the late run of Kenai River king salmon to achieve a sustainable escapement goal of 13,500 - 30,000 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer as described in this section.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like the board to use the Sustainable Escapement Goal (SEG) rather than the Optimum Escapement Goal (OEG) for management of the Late Run large king salmon. It is obvious that king salmon all over the west coast are trending toward a smaller and smaller king salmon, including the Kenai River. Many studies support this observation. An "All king salmon count" paints the picture of a much healthier stock in the Kenai River. We can only hope that ocean conditions change and we see an environment where king salmon can stay out longer, grow bigger and survive longer. The OEG is set way to high and in fact seems unattainable. Closing down sockeye fisheries in Cook Inlet completely, for some user groups, by setting an unattainable OEG is leading to catastrophic results economically and most likely biologically for future sockeye runs. Utilizing the SEG will sustain the king salmon run and let fish managers do the right thing with regard to sockeye. The current system is illogical and harmful to other fisheries and the economy of the Upper Cook Inlet.

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