

PROPOSAL 79

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

Create additional step-down measures to the KRLRKSMP as follows:

I believe we can create an additional step down measure as part of the paired restrictions. This additional step down would rewrite (d) as follows:

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

(1) close the sport fisheries in the Kenai River **above River Mile 10** and in the salt waters of Cook Inlet north of the latitude of Bluff Point to the taking of king salmon;

(2) close the commercial drift gillnet fishery in the Central District within one mile of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline north of the Kenai River and within one and one-half miles of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline south of the Kenai River; and

(3) **The ESSN fishery shall be open for 24 hours per week. Gear would be reduced to one net per permit, not more than 29 meshes deep.**

All parts of the previous paragraph (d) would become (e) except the king salmon escapement goal would be 13,500 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to fork....

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Board of Fisheries adopted an OEG based on an artificially inflated SEG for Kenai River Late run Chinook salmon. The SEG of 13,500 Late Run Kenai River Chinook Salmon is not based on science. The lower bound of the SEG should be 12,000 late run chinook salmon. Regardless, during times of low chinook salmon abundance there should be some opportunity for all user groups to harvest late run chinook salmon on a very limited and reduced fishery when the escapement falls between the SEG and the OEG.

There is no known information on how fry from a mixed stock fishery interact in river. We establish biological escapement goals for each species and for each river system for a reason. We know rivers have a finite carrying capacity to support salmon fry. By closing commercial fisheries and allowing unchecked numbers of sockeye and pink salmon to spawn. We are likely impacting the ability of chinook salmon fry to survive as they compete for food with large numbers of fry from other salmon species.

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