

PROVISIONAL  
BOARD OF FISH AND GAME  
POLICY STATEMENT ON MANAGEMENT OF MIXED STOCK FISHERIES OF  
ALASKAN SALMON

An important principle of salmon fishery management is that, insofar as possible, any harvestable surplus produced by a stock of salmon should be taken insofar as is practical after the returning fish of that stock have separated from other stocks with which it may migrate. Mixed stocks may be salmon-bound for various spawning areas, or salmon of different species, or salmon that arrive at the same spawning area at different times.

The preferability of single stock management as compared with mixed stock or multiple stock management stems from the fact that in single stock management optimum harvest rates are more likely to be achieved if they are based on the productivity of each individual stock. The cumulative harvests from individual stocks harvested separately at rates optimum for each stock are greater than the harvest obtained by exposing a number of mixed stocks to some average harvest rate.

Management of certain mixed stock fisheries in Alaska is complicated by the relatively long time that may elapse before salmon passing through these fisheries arrive at their parent stream. This may be due to the distance between the mixed stock fisheries and the parent streams and/or the fact that salmon may mill in the vicinity of the mixed stock fishery prior to resuming migration to parent streams.

Optimal regulation of harvest and escapement requires that the magnitude of the total number of fish returning to a river or stream be estimated prior to the time all of the fish pass through a fishery and become unavailable for harvesting. In most cases the first reliable estimates of run strength are obtained when returning salmon reach areas in or adjacent to their parent river or stream and school in a manner that allows an estimate of run strength.

The inability to assess run strength while salmon are moving through mixed stock fisheries, especially those distant from parent rivers or streams, makes optimum regulation of harvest and escapement of these salmon extremely difficult.

In view of the above stated principles it shall be the policy of the Board of Fish and Game that:

(1) In the case of long standing, historic fisheries which operate to a large degree on mixed stocks and for which it is not feasible for participating fishermen to relocate in more inshore fisheries operating on more discrete stocks, such fisheries may be continued provided that the harvest rate and/or fishing effort on stocks passing through such fisheries does not, on the average, increase and provided that this harvest by these fisheries is not detrimental to the conservation of these stocks.

(2) In the case of long standing, historic fisheries which operate to a large degree on mixed stocks but for which fishermen participating in these fisheries can feasibly participate in the harvest of these same and other stocks in more inshore fisheries operating to a greater degree on discrete stocks, preference shall be given to the fishery that serves the State's best interests.

(3) Development of new fisheries will be discouraged when such fisheries would operate to a great extent on mixed stocks subsequently passing through more inshore fisheries operating to a greater extent on discrete stocks and capable of full utilization of such stocks.

(4) This policy shall not prevent the modification of any fisheries deemed necessary by the Board and the Department of Fish and Game for the full utilization of Alaska's salmon runs, particularly in years when unusually large returns of salmon are expected.

In all decisions relating to the regulation and management of mixed stock fisheries, it is the express intent of the Board that over-riding consideration be given to the conservation of affected salmon stocks when the impact of possible regulations on the conservation of such stocks is in doubt.