

PROPOSAL 66 – 5 AAC 06.368. Nushagak River Coho Salmon Management Plan. Amend the Nushagak River Coho Salmon Management Plan to establish a fixed escapement goal, change the fishery start date, and repeal language pertaining to pink salmon escapement, as follows:

5 AAC 06.368 is amended to read:

(c) If the total in river coho salmon return in the Nushagak River is projected by the department to be less than **90,000** [100,000 BUT AT LEAST 60,000] fish by August 25 the department shall close, by emergency order, the [DIRECTED COHO] salmon commercial fishery in the Nushagak District by **midnight August 1** [July 23]

REMOVE; (1) [DURING EVEN-NUMBERED YEARS, MANAGE THE PINK SALMON COMMERCIAL FISHERY TO ACHIEVE A PINK SALMON ESCAPEMENT RANGE OF 1.2 TO 2.4 MILLION FISH (0.3 TO 1.5 MILLION FISH ABOVE THE BIOLOGICAL ESCAPEMENT GOAL) AND CLOSE THE DIRECTED PINK SALMON COMMERCIAL FISHERY NO LATER THAN 12:00 MIDNIGHT, AUGUST 1. DURING COMMERCIAL FISHING PERIODS UNDER THIS PARAGRAPH THE USE OF COMMERCIAL GILL NET WITH WEBBING LARGER THAN FOUR AND THREE QUARTER INCHES SHALL BE PROHIBITED FOR ALL FISHING PERIODS AFTER 12:00 MIDNIGHT JULY 23.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?

(A) Change escapement trigger on the start date of the Coho Management Plan from a range of 130,000 to 70,000 to the biological escapement goal of 90,000 by August 25. This would give the department a fixed number to manage for instead of a broad range.

(B) Change the Coho Management Plan start date from July 23 to midnight August 1. It is difficult if not impossible to project coho escapement by the regulation date July 23 with only an average of 6% of the coho escapement in at that time. This hinders the ability to harvest potential surplus sockeye, pink, and coho salmon after July 23. By August 1 there is an average of 23.8% of coho escapement in, which provides the department needed information to manage the coho salmon season and ample opportunity to manage for shortfalls in the coho run.

(C) Eliminate 5AAC 06.368 (C-1) language pertaining to pink salmon from the Coho Management Plan. This language is cumbersome and no longer needed to protect the coho salmon run. This still maintains the ability to fish for pink salmon until midnight August 1.

PROPOSED BY: Travis Ball and Lloyd T. O'Connor (HQ-F15-002)
