

PROPOSAL 150 - 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. Start the Kenai River king salmon sport fisheries as unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure, no retention, as follows:

I encourage a new approach to managing King Salmon on the Kenai River that includes a proactive, conservative approach beginning with single hook, no bait, catch and release only fishing on opening day. Fisheries managers would have the ability to step up and allow bait and/or harvest as the run develops and provided more information about the true strength of the run. Catch and release fishing results in very low mortality (according to ADF&G's study), and therefore would be a great way to continue allowing opportunity, while simultaneously minimizing harvest of these special and unique fish in need of additional protection during a time of low abundance.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? It's no secret that the Kenai River King Salmon have had several tough years in a row, and despite the period of low abundance, the decision has been regularly made to open the river to full harvest on July 1st. Given the unpredictable and borderline-crisis status of this run, the July 1st opener is an irresponsible management practice, at best. If the fishery shows signs of a weak run, the decision can be made to further restrict, but there's no way of knowing if it's too late, and there's no way to go backwards and put back those fish that have already been harvested. So why not add some proactive strategies to our current reactive management plan? It would be a logical, conservation minded, and responsible addition to the current reactive strategies utilized by ADF&G, and widely supported by the community that cares most about the sustainability of our special fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Mark Wackler

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