

PROPOSAL 166 - 5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area.
Modify season dates and area for Kenai River late-run king salmon management, as follows:

Add to Kenai River – Lower Kenai River Mainstem and Skilak Lake

King Salmon

- **Kenai River mouth upstream to RM 13.8 (Sonar Site)**

July 1 – July 7: 1 per day , 1 in possession

Change:

Kenai River mouth upstream to 300 yards below Slikok Creek:

- **July 8 – July 31: 1 per day, 1 in possession**

[JULY 1 – JULY 31: 1 PER DAY, 1 IN POSSESSION]

300 yards below Slikok Creek upstream to Skilak Lake:

- **January 1 – June 30** [JANUARY 1 – JULY 14]
- **July 8 – July 14** [JANUARY 1 – JULY 14)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The current season dates and area for the Kenai king late run (LR) provide inadequate protection for late returning early run (ER) fish , which are still present when the LR opens on July 1. We propose limiting the Chinook fishery to downstream from the sonar counter at RM 13.8 from July 1 through July 7. This proposal would also offer some protection for early returning LR kings, as well as main stem spawners that spawn above the new king counter at mile 13.8.

Pass through king fisheries have successfully occurred on nearly all of the Kenai Peninsula king rivers for the past 30 plus years. The Anchor, Deep Creek, and Ninilchik Rivers are only open on select weekends for the lower (approximate) two miles. The Kasilof River is closed above the bridge, at mile (approximate) eight. The Kenai River, which receives the most intense pressure of all king rivers in Alaska, is open on regular years up to the outlet of Skilak Lake, about fifty miles upriver. Almost all spawning of main stem kings occurs in the lower fifty miles.

Telemetry data shows that in some years, up to 40-50% or the ER main stem spawners are still below the Soldotna bridge on July 1. Most of these fish move above the Soldotna bridge by July 10, so this would provide a measure of protection to these main stem ER spawners, who are the most noticeable missing component of our recent ER king escapements. Essentially, all kings above the king counter at mile 13.8 on July 1 are ER fish. Fishing above the counter on July 1

makes no sense, especially when looking at all of the conservation measures that we have seen with the ER over the past several years.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai Area Fisherman's Coalition

(HQ-F16-010)
