

**PROPOSAL 98 – 5 AAC 21.353. Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan.**

Reduce sport fishery bag limit for coho salmon on the west side of Cook Inlet and close drift gillnet fishing in Areas 3 and 4 for remainder of season if coho salmon sport fishing is restricted or closed in the Little Susitna River, as follows:

5 AAC 21.353. CENTRAL DISTRICT DRIFT GILLNET FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN.

(a) The purpose of this management plan is to ensure adequate escapement of salmon into the Northern District drainages and to provide management guidelines to the department. The department shall manage the commercial drift gillnet fishery to minimize the harvest of [**Northern District and Kenai River**] coho salmon in order to provide sport and guided sport fishermen a reasonable opportunity to harvest these salmon stocks over the entire run, as measured by the frequency of inriver restrictions. The department shall manage the Central District commercial drift gillnet fishery as follows:

(1) weekly fishing periods are as described in 5 AAC 21.320(b);

(2) the fishing season will open the third Monday in June or June 19, whichever is later, and

(A) from July 9 through July 15,

(i) fishing during the first regular fishing period is restricted to the Expanded Kenai and Expanded Kasilof Sections; additional fishing time is allowed only in the Expanded Kenai and Expanded Kasilof Sections of the Upper Subdistrict;

(ii) fishing during the second regular fishing period is restricted to the Kenai and Kasilof Sections of the Upper Subdistrict and Drift Gillnet Area 1;

(iii) at run strengths greater than 2,300,000 sockeye salmon to the Kenai River, the commissioner may, by emergency order, open one additional 12-hour fishing period in the Kenai and Kasilof Sections of the Upper Subdistrict and Drift Gillnet Area 1;

(B) from July 16 through July 31,

(i) at run strengths of less than 2,300,000 sockeye salmon to the Kenai River, fishing during one regular 12-hour fishing period will be restricted to the Expanded Kenai and Expanded Kasilof Sections of the Upper Subdistrict;

(ii) at run strengths of 2,300,000 to 4,600,000 sockeye salmon to the Kenai River, fishing during one regular 12-hour fishing period per week will be restricted to either or both the Expanded Kenai and Expanded Kasilof Sections of the Upper Subdistrict or Drift Gillnet Area 1;

(iii) at run strengths greater than 4,600,000 sockeye salmon to the Kenai River, there will be no mandatory restrictions during regular fishing periods;

(C) from August 16 until closed by emergency order, Drift Gillnet Areas 3 and 4 are open for fishing during regular fishing periods;

(D) from August 11 through August 15, there are no mandatory area restrictions to regular periods, except that if the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery is closed under 5 AAC

**(E) if coho salmon sport fishing is restricted or closed in the Little Susutna River**

**(i) All coho fisheries on the west side of Cook Inlet shall have a reduced bag limit from three coho to two coho.**

(ii) All drift gillnet fishing in Areas 3 and 4 shall close for remainder of the season. 21.310(b)(2)(C)(iii), regular fishing periods will be restricted to Drift Gillnet Areas 3 and 4.

(b) For the purposes of this section,

(1) "Drift Gillnet Area 1" means those waters of the Central District south of Kalgin Island at 60° 20.43' N. lat.;

(2) "Drift Gillnet Area 2" means those waters of the Central District enclosed by a line from 60° 20.43' N. lat., 151° 54.83' W. long. to a point at 60° 41.08' N. lat., 151° 39.00' W. long. to a point at 60° 41.08' N. lat., 151° 24.00' W. long. to a point at 60° 27.10' N. lat., 151° 25.70' W. long. to a point at 60° 20.43' N. lat., 151° 28.55' W. long.;

(3) "Drift Gillnet Area 3" means those waters of the Central District within one mile COOK INLET AREA 103 of mean lower low water (zero tide) south of a point on the West Foreland at 60° 42.70' N. lat., 151° 42.30' W. long. ;

(4) "Drift Gillnet Area 4" means those waters of the Central District enclosed by a line from 60° 04.70' N. lat., 152° 34.74' W. long. to the Kalgin Buoy at 60° 04.70' N. lat., 152° 09.90' W. long. to a point at 59° 46.15' N. lat., 152° 18.62' W. long. to a point on the western shore at 59° 46.15' N. lat., 153° 00.20' W. long., not including the waters of the Chinitna Bay Subdistrict.

(c) The commissioner may depart from the provisions of the management plan under this section as provided in 5 AAC 21.363(e).

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Coho salmon stocks on the west side of Cook Inlet (Area's 3 and 4) are being over exploited by commercial drift gillnets after August 11. Management of coho salmon on the west side of Cook Inlet should be managed for a sportfish priority as is the Northern District and Kenai River.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has failed to identify an adequate coho escapement goal for any west side Cook Inlet streams. Sportfish participation has increased dramatically in the last decade and these systems cannot continue to support commercial harvest without threatening sustainability

**PROPOSED BY:** Mark Glassmaker

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