

## **PROPOSAL 124**

### **5 AAC 01.190. Subdistrict 1 of the Norton Sound District Chum Salmon Management Plan.**

Repeal the *Subdistrict 1 of the Norton Sound District Chum Salmon Management Plan* from Title 5, Chapter 1 of the Alaska Administrative Code and readopt in Title 5, Chapter 4, as follows:

### **5 AAC 04.XXX. Subdistrict 1 of the Norton Sound District Salmon Management Plan.**

(a) The purpose of this management plan is to provide the department with management guidelines for the sustained yield of salmon stocks in Subdistrict 1 of the Norton Sound District. The department shall manage, to the extent practicable, the subsistence, sport, and commercial fisheries in Subdistrict 1 to achieve escapement goals.

(1) in the subsistence fishery,

(A) subsistence salmon fishing will be opened and closed by emergency order on a stream-by-stream basis, to be determined by the department, when salmon stocks are abundant enough to achieve escapement goals and provide a harvestable surplus;

(b) Commercial chum, coho, pink salmon fisheries may be opened in the waters east or west of Cape Nome, or both, by emergency order, only after the department projects escapement goals or needs will be achieved and harvestable surpluses of Nome Subdistrict salmon stocks will adequately provide for subsistence uses.

(1) In the commercial fishery from June 20–July 31,

(A) If chum salmon escapement is projected to be exceed the lower bound of the escapement goal range, the department may allow up to 48 hours of commercial fishing per week;

(B) If chum salmon escapement is projected to exceed the midpoint of the escapement goal range, the department may allow up to 96 hours of commercial fishing per week;

(C) If chum salmon escapement is projected to exceed the upper bound of the escapement goal range, the department may allow up to 144 hours of commercial fishing per week;

(D) If chum salmon subsistence fishing is restricted, the commissioner may, by emergency order, close a commercial fishery and immediately reopen a commercial pink salmon fishery during which chum salmon may be retained, but not sold;

(2) In the commercial fishery from August 1-September 7,

(A) If coho salmon escapement is projected to fall below the long-term average escapement and/or subsistence fishing time is reduced in season, commercial fishing will be closed.

(B) If coho salmon escapement is projected to approximate the long-term average escapement, the department may allow up to 96 hours of commercial fishing per week.

(C) If coho salmon escapement is projected to be above the average escapement, the department may allow up to 120 hours of commercial fishing per week.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** It is recommended that the Nome Subdistrict chum salmon management plan be amended to provide guidance for management of commercial and subsistence fisheries and placed under commercial sections of regulation like all other Norton Sound Subdistrict management plans. Re-draft the Nome Subdistrict salmon management plan as follows:

If adopted, this proposal would provide the department with guidance and flexibility to adjust commercial fishing time based on observed escapements and projected run abundance from June 20 to September 7. The existing regulations were developed during a time when chum salmon were declared stocks of concern and the local subsistence fishery was closed or managed under Tier II regulation. Stocks have recovered, monitoring of salmon escapements is much improved, and escapement goals have been refined. In other words, regulatory management needs to catch-up with management in practice.

Currently regulations do not allow for commercial salmon fishing in the Nome Subdistrict prior to July 2 irrespective of chum salmon abundance and limited fishing effort in the Nome Subdistrict. Under the current management plan, fishing periods are restricted to no more than two 24-hour periods per week.

Estimates of chum salmon run abundance to the Nome Subdistrict since 2010 have ranged from well above average to record setting. Escapements of chum salmon at most Nome Subdistrict streams have exceeded the upper bound of escapement goal ranges leading to underutilized harvest surpluses. The proposed changes would allow the department to continue managing for a subsistence priority while providing more flexibility to commercially harvest surpluses in times of abundance.

**PROPOSED BY:** Northern Norton Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F18-010)  
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