

## **PROPOSAL 145**

### **5 AAC 09.350. Closed waters and 09.369. Northern District Salmon Fisheries Management Plan.**

Restrict commercial fishing for salmon along the coast and in offshore waters of the Outer Port Heiden Section and restrict fishing in offshore waters of the northeast portion of the Ilnik Section, as follows:

This proposal seeks to restrict fishing both along the coast and in offshore waters of the Outer Port Heiden Section and restrict fishing in offshore waters of the NE portion of the Ilnik Section. The purpose of these area restrictions as to direct more commercial fishing on local Northern Peninsula sockeye salmon stocks, particularly the Meshik River and Ilnik River stocks, that migrate within known channels in each Section. This proposal seeks to further limit the distance open to commercial fishing along the shore and offshore in the Outer Port Heiden Section and off shore in the NE portion of the Ilnik Section. The offshore boundary limit would be from 3 miles at the newly described northern open water boundary of the Outer Port Heiden Section (see below for location) to 2 miles offshore at the line that separates the SW and NE portions of the Ilnik Section at Unangashak Bluffs (159°10.25' W. long.).

These closures will also improve fish quality because of a shorter transport from fishery to processor and also provide for the harvest of Meshik and Ilnik River sockeye salmon stocks.

### **5 AAC 09.350. Closed waters.** Salmon may not be taken in the following locations:

(3) Outer Port Heiden: waters of the Outer Port Heiden Section

(A) repealed 6/5/2016;

(B) east of a line from **56 E59.68' N. lat., 158 E46.45 W. long** [57 E05.52' N. LAT., 158\_E34.45' W. long.] to 57\_E08.85' N. lat., 158\_E37.50' W. long.;

**also, seaward waters are open to commercial fishing within the Outer Port Heiden and Ilnik Sections from a 3 miles seaward from a point on the shore 56 E59.68'N lat., 158 E34.45' W. long., to 2 miles seaward from the point on the shore, 159 10.25' W. long., that describes the line that separates the SW from the NE portions of the Ilnik Section.**

### **5 AAC 09.369. Northern District Salmon Fisheries Management Plan**

(j) In the Ilnik Section,

(1) notwithstanding 5 AAC 09.320(a)(4), from June 20 through July 20, (A) commercial salmon fishing will be permitted in the Ilnik Section

(i) southwest of the Unangashak Bluffs based on the abundance of Ilnik River sockeye salmon; and

(ii) northeast of the Unangashak Bluffs based on the abundance of Meshik River and Ilnik River sockeye salmon, combined; **Commercial salmon fishing will be permitted in seaward waters within the Outer Port Heiden and Ilnik Sections from a 3 miles seaward from point on the shore 56 E59.68'N lat., 158 E34.45', to 2 miles seaward from the point 159 10.25' W. long that describes the line that separates the SW from the NE portions of the Ilnik Section.**

(I) The Outer Port Heiden Section is open from June 20 through July 31 to commercial salmon fishing in those waters west of a line from **56 E59.68' N. lat., 158 E46.45 W. long** [57 E05.52' N. lat., 158\_E34.45' W. long.] to 57 \_E08.85' N. lat., 158\_E37.50' W. long. **within a line 3 miles**

**seaward from a point on the shore 56 E59,68'N lat., 158 E34.45' W. long., to 2 miles seaward from the point on the shore, 159 10.25' W. long., that describes the line that separates the SW from the NE portions of the Ilnik Section**, based on the abundance of Meshik River sockeye salmon. If the commissioner closes the portion of the Egegik District as specified in 5 AAC 06.359(c) for the conservation of Ugashik River sockeye salmon stocks, the commissioner may, by emergency order, close the Outer Port Heiden Section, and immediately reopen the Outer Port Heiden Section, with additional fishing restrictions that the commissioner determines necessary.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** 1. Overescapement of sockeye salmon into the Meshik and Ilnik Rivers. Escapements into the Meshik River have exceeded the high end of the current SEB of 86,000 salmon the last 4 years, 2014-2017, ranging from 95,500 in 2014 to 191,725 in 2017. In the Ilnik River, sockeye salmon escapements have exceeded the high end of the current SEG of 60,000 sockeye salmon in 2016 and 2017. In 2016, 124,000 salmon escaped to spawn; in 2017 a record 238,000 sockeye salmon escaped to spawn. This escapement is nearly 4 times the upper end of the current SEG. This proposal seeks to adjust the Sections so that more local Northern Peninsula salmon stocks are harvested, resulting in more appropriate escapement to the Meshik and Ilnik Rivers. Note also that WAS SIP indicated that Northern Peninsula sockeye salmon stocks contributed an average of 48% to the SW Ilnik harvest (3 years); 30% to the NE Ilnik harvest (3 years); and 21% to the Outer Port Heiden Section harvest (2 years).

2. Quality of delivered fish that are harvested in the Outer Port Heiden Section; Most fishers are fishing very near the northern boundary of the Outer Port Heiden district. Delivery of these fish is delayed by the long travel distance from the point of harvest to the processor, resulting in degraded quality salmon.

3. Additionally, frequent very rough seas within the Outer Port Heiden Section makes it very difficult to fish and to transport fish to processor, resulting in waste and fish being delivered that are poor quality.

If nothing is done, escapements to the Meshik and Ilnik Rivers will continue to exceed the upper end of the SEB. Additionally, poor quality fish will continue to be delivered to processors because of the long travel distance and time. Other solutions considered was to close the northern portion of the Outer Port Heiden Section, as described above, but limit fishing to 1.5 miles from shore in both the open portion of the Outer Port Heiden and the NW portion of the Ilnik Sections, but this would eliminate much of the Outer Port Heiden Section to fishing because of shallow water.

**PROPOSED BY:** Lower Bristol Bay Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F18-023)  
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