

PROPOSAL 97

5 AAC 05.200. Fishing districts and subdistricts.

Divide District 2 of the Yukon Area into two subdistricts, as follows:

We believe the only solution for the fish buyer to consistently buy good quality summer chum salmon during the summer fishing season from District 2 is to divide District 2 into two subdistricts that can be opened separately or combined.

5 AAC 05.200. Fishing districts and subdistricts

(b) District 2 consists of that portion of the Yukon River drainage from the northern edge of the mouth of the Anuk River upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at Toklik, and includes the Anuk River drainage.

(1) Subdistrict 2A consists of that portion of the Yukon River drainage from the northern edge of the mouth of the Anuk River upstream to the upriver boundary of Statistical Area 334-22. This subdistrict includes Statistical Areas 334-21 and 334-22.

(2) Subdistrict 2B consists of that portion of the Yukon River drainage that includes Statistical Areas 334-23, 334-24, and 334-25. The lower boundary of this subdistrict is the boundary line between Statistical areas 334-22 and 334-23. The upriver boundary of this subdistrict is the regulatory marker located at Tokik or the upstream boundary of District 2.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Divide District 2 into two subdistricts, 2A and 2B.

The Yukon River commercial fisheries consist of a gauntlet type fishery from the Yukon River delta up along the mainstem to the U.S./Canada border and within the Tanana River. Two races of chum salmon occur in the Yukon River drainage, summer chum and fall chum salmon. Summer chum salmon are distinguished by rapid maturation in freshwater, and smaller body size. Average weight is approximately 6 to 7 pounds. Summer chum salmon spawn primarily in run-off streams in the lower 700 miles of the drainage and in the Tanana River drainage. Although summer chum salmon are harvested for subsistence throughout the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River drainage, with minimal harvests within District 5B, 5C, and 5D, commercial fisheries have recently been confined to District 1, 2, and 6, the Tanana River, and sporadically in subdistrict 4A. The District 1 and 2 commercial fisheries for summer chum salmon are a flesh-based fishery, with a premium price paid for silver bright summer chum salmon with good flesh color and quality. The summer chum salmon market for District 1 and 2 demands silver bright summer chum salmon with good flesh quality and color. However, because summer chum salmon rapidly mature in fresh water, the color of the fish along with the quality and color of the flesh deteriorates rapidly as they migrate up the Yukon River. By the time these salmon migrate into the upper statistical areas of District 2, starting with Statistical Area 334-23, these fish become obviously water marked with degraded pale color flesh and poor overall quality. Processors in District 1 and 2 that buy summer chum salmon from fishers must purchase the best quality summer chum salmon to remain competitive. However, because Yukon Area commercial salmon fisheries are prosecuted on a district-wide basis in the lower Yukon, it is difficult for the processors to purchase only good quality summer chum salmon from the entire District 2 fishery.

If nothing is changed, processors may refuse to purchase any District 2 harvests that appear to contain water-marked salmon or may not purchase summer chum salmon harvested in District 2.

We also considered not buying color-marked salmon, but we believe that this would lead to wanton waste and it is difficult to determine the portion of fish that are water-marked in that specific harvest. We also considered limiting fishers to the lower portion of District 2 or by Statistical Area, but this is problematic because fishers may fish in one statistical area and report their catch from another statistical area. We believe the only solution is to divide District 2 into two subdistricts that can be opened to commercial fishing by the department separately or combined.

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PROPOSED BY: Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association (HQ-F18-080)

PROPOSAL 98

5 AAC 05.331. Gillnet specifications and operations.

Decrease gillnet depth in Districts 4–6 of the Yukon Area, as follows:

5 AAC 05.331. Gillnet specifications and operations. (f) In District 4 - 6, gillnets with (1) greater than six-inch mesh may not be more than 45 meshes in depth; (2) six-inch or smaller mesh may not be more than 50 meshes in depth.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Yukon River is quite wide at all mouths (south, middle and north) and salmon are quite spread out (Yukon District Y-1), as salmon travel up the Yukon River there is less area for them to swim where the Yukon River narrows (Yukon Districts Y-2 through Y-6); therefore, gillnet depth restrictions should be more restrictive not less as they currently are as salmon travel up the Yukon.

PROPOSED BY: John H. Lamont

(EF-F18-061)

PROPOSAL 99

5 AAC 05.330. Gear.

Allow use of beach seine gear to harvest salmon during open commercial fishing periods in Districts 1 – 3 of the Yukon Area, as follows:

5 AAC 05.330. Gear. (a) In Districts 1 - 3, **beach seine gear, set gillnets, and drift gillnets** [SET GILLNETS AND DRIFT GILLNETS] only may be operated, except that in District 1 after July 15 set gillnets only may be operated in the following locations:

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? 5 AAC 05.362. Yukon River Summer Chum Management Plan (k)(1)(B)(2) allows the use of beach seine (and dip net) gear only during the Yukon River Summer Chum commercial fishing opportunities in Districts 1 - 3 in effort to conserve the Yukon River Chinook salmon stock.

Since being introduced to this regulation, and adapting to a new style of fishing, we have found that the use of beach seine gear greatly increases the quality of fish being caught by eliminating net marks and bruising in comparison to those being caught in gillnet gear.

I propose that the use of beach seine gear be allowed as optional gear during **all** Yukon River District 1-3 salmon commercial fishing opportunities, including Fall Chum and Coho, which are currently limited to the use of gill net gear only. Chinook salmon caught in beach seine gear (during fall commercial openings) may be kept for personal use or may be released alive.

PROPOSED BY: Jaylene Fitka

(HQ-F18-042)

PROPOSAL 100

5 AAC 05.333. Fish wheel specifications and operations.

Adopt maximum size and depth restrictions for fish wheel baskets, as follows:

5 AAC 05.333 Fish wheel specifications and operations.

(a) (1) fish wheel baskets may not be larger than 5' X 8' or 40 square foot total area and cannot dip deeper than six feet into the river.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Implementing fish wheel basket size and depth limitations during times of Chinook Salmon conservation on the Yukon River. Fish wheels are self propelled large dipping baskets and paddles that dip salmon and other fish species out of the river that are lead into the baskets by way of leads, leads lead salmon from the shore (shallow water) directly out to the baskets where they are captured and dumped automatically into holding bins without human exertion.

If nothing is done, commercial fishers in districts 4 - 6 using fish wheels will continue to commercially harvest large numbers of summer chum salmon with little or no physical effort. I don't think it is equitable for commercial fishers from districts 1 - 3 to have to manually dip baskets into the river with only a 5' diameter hoop and basket to try and commercially harvest surplus summer chum salmon while allowing chinook salmon to pass up the river to spawning grounds.

PROPOSED BY: John H. Lamont

(EF-F18-062)

PROPOSAL 101

5 AAC 05.310. Fishing seasons, and 5 AAC 05.369. Yukon River Coho Salmon Management Plan.

Open and close the commercial fishery for fall chum and coho salmon in the Yukon Area by emergency order, as follows:

5 AAC 05.310. Fishing seasons

Except as provided in 5 AAC 05.320 - 5 AAC 05.380, salmon may be taken only as follows:

(1) in Districts 1, 2, and 3, the commissioner shall open **and close** the season by emergency order [AND CLOSE THE SEASON ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1 AT 12:01 A.M. BY EMERGENCY ORDER];

(2) in District 4: except as specified in 5 AAC 05.369, in Subdistricts 4-A, 4-B, and 4-C, the commissioner shall open **and close** the season by emergency order [AND CLOSE THE SEASON ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 1 AT 12:01 A.M. BY EMERGENCY ORDER];

(3) in District 5, in all subdistricts, the commissioner shall open **and close** the season by emergency order [AND CLOSE THE SEASON ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 1 AT 12:01 A.M. BY EMERGENCY ORDER];

5 AAC 05.369. Yukon River Coho Salmon Management Plan

(e) In a year when a directed commercial coho salmon fishery is opened under this section in

(1) Districts 1, 2, and 3, the commissioner shall close [,BY EMERGENCY ORDER] the coho salmon fall season **by emergency order** [NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 10];

(2) Subdistrict 5-A, and Districts 4 and 6, the commissioner shall close [BY EMERGENCY ORDER,] the coho salmon fall season **by emergency order** [NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 5];

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Remove the set dates for closing the fall chum salmon and coho salmon fall season fisheries in all districts and subdistricts within the Yukon Area: Climate change is most likely responsible for alterations in environmental conditions and salmon migrations in many Alaskan rivers, including the Yukon River. In recent years, there has been a desire to fish later in the fall fishing season in some sections of the Yukon Area because of later running fall season salmon and also because of delayed ice formation on the river. However, both the fall chum and coho salmon fall season fisheries throughout the Yukon Area close by a set date in regulation, unless closed earlier by emergency order. Because salmon migrations, as well as environmental conditions, have been altered by climate change, we seek to remove all set closure dates for the fall season fisheries and recommend that the closures occur through emergency order.

Note that an emergency petition was accepted by the BOF and a proposal was generated for deliberation at the March 2018 statewide meeting that removed the October 1 closure date for the District 6 fall season fishery, **5 AAC 05.310 (4)**. This proposal was passed unanimously by the BOF at this meeting. The basic rationale for removing the set dates for the all other Yukon fall seasons fisheries is similar. This proposal, with the suggested language, replaces the set closure date for all fall season fisheries throughout the Yukon Area with a closure specified by emergency order. If nothing is done, an emergency regulation may be requested in several years to extend the fisheries beyond the closure date in several districts and/or subdistrict fall season fisheries. The removal of the set date in lieu of closing the seasons by emergency order is not anticipated to have

any negative effects on the commercial or the subsistence fisheries. Additionally, it would allow the department more control of the termination of the fall season fisheries within the Alaskan portion of the Yukon River Drainage. This would benefit the commercial fishers of the Yukon Area by allowing them to fish longer and possibly harvest more fish during the fall season fisheries.

PROPOSED BY: Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association (HQ-F18-079)

PROPOSAL 102

5 AAC 05.200. Fishing districts and subdistricts.

Include the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers in District 1 of the Yukon Area, as follows:

5 AAC 05.200. Fishing districts and subdistricts (a) District 1 consists of that portion of the Yukon River drainage from the latitude of Point Romanof extending south and west along the coast of the delta to the terminus of Black River upstream to the northern edge of the mouth of the Anuk River and all waters of the Black, **Pastolik and Pastoliak** Rivers.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like the Board to include the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers in the Lower Yukon District Y-1. These two rivers are similar in nature to the Black River (located in the southern boundary of Lower Yukon District Y-1) and should be included in the Lower Yukon District Y-1.

PROPOSED BY: John H. Lamont

(EF-F18-055)

PROPOSAL 103

5 AAC 05.350. Closed waters.

Repeal closed waters within 500 yards of the mouth of the Pastolik River and the Pastoliak River, as follows:

5 AAC 05.350. Closed waters

(11) repeal

It would just repeal the language in 5 AAC 05.350 Closed waters (11)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Repeal (11) the waters within 500 yards of the mouth of Pastolik River and Pastoliak River, as specified in 5 AAC 39.290 (a)(2);

So that the Yukon River District Y-1 commercial fishers can commercially fish within these two rivers located within Yukon District Y-1.

PROPOSED BY: John H. Lamont

(EF-F18-059)

PROPOSAL 104

5 AAC 05.350. Closed waters.

Repeal closed waters in the lower three miles of the Pastolik and Pastoliak rivers, as follows:

Repeal 5 AAC 05.350. Closed waters (11)

5 AAC 05.350. Closed waters

Salmon may not be taken in the following waters:

(11) the waters [WITHIN 500 YARDS OF THE MOUTH] of the Pastolik River and Pastoliak River upstream from a point located 3 miles up each river [AS SPECIFIED IN 5 AAC 39.290(a)(2);]

Allow commercial fishing in both river drainages like the Black River, stat area 334-11.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Replace the current regulation that closes the waters within 500 yards of the mouth and all the waters of the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers with a regulation that closes the upstream waters of the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers from a point located 3 miles upstream in each river.

Changing this regulation would allow commercial and subsistence fishing in the lower 3 miles of each river. Extremely shallow water and the presence of numerous, persistent sandbars outside the mouth of these rivers preclude any fishing outside the mouths of these rivers.

We believe that fish originating in the Yukon River, mill in these rivers before continuing their migration to and up the Yukon River. Fishers catch the salmon as they are exiting the Pastolik and Pastoliak Rivers after milling in them. This is the same rationale for allowing commercial and subsistence fishing within the Black River, statistical Area 334-11, of the Yukon Area. http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/fishing/PDFs/commercial/yukon/yukon_district1.pdf

If nothing is done, fishers who have traditionally fished within these rivers will continue to be disenfranchised from the commercial and subsistence fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Cyril Okitkun

(HQ-F18-037)
