

PROPOSAL 55

5 AAC 27.510. Fishing Seasons and periods for the Kodiak Area.

Open the Kodiak Area sac roe herring fishery April 1, as follows:

I would like to see the opening date of the Kodiak Herring Sac Roe fishery be changed, by regulation, from April 15th, until April 1st.

5 AAC 27.510. Fishing Seasons and Periods for Kodiak Area. (a) Unless otherwise provided for by emergency order, herring may be taken during the sac roe season from **April 1** [APRIL 15] through June 30, as follows:

(1) from **April 1** [APRIL 15] through May 7, fishing periods for purse seines are from 12:00 noon until 9:00 p.m. on odd-numbered days, and from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon on even-numbered days if a harvestable surplus is available: from May 8 through June 30, fishing periods for purse seines are from 12:00 noon until 10:00 p.m. on odd-numbered days, and from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon on even numbered days if a harvestable surplus is available;

(2) from **April 1** [APRIL 15] through June 30, the fishing periods for gillnets are from 12:00 noon on odd-numbered days until 12:00 noon on even-numbered days;

(3) repealed 4/9/2005

(4) after April 30, a CFEC permit holder must register with the department before participating in the sac roe herring fishery.

(b) Herring may be taken during the food and bait season from September 1 through February 28 only during fishing periods established by emergency order. A CFEC permit holder must register with the department before participating in the food and bait fishery.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently, the Kodiak Area Sac Roe herring fishery cannot open, by regulation, until April 15th.

Over the past decade or so, Sac Roe Herring fisheries around Alaska have been occurring earlier and earlier in the spring. These fisheries historically take place when the fish come in from deeper water to spawn. The other active sac roe fisheries, in Sitka, AK and Togiak, AK are opened on an EO (Emergency Order) basis, so they can open at any time that herring are observed, then tested; before they spawn. These fisheries have been opening earlier in the spring than normal, and spawns have taken place, much earlier than in the past. This may be due to Climate change, or other factors, but the reality is that herring are coming in to spawn much earlier in the spring, than they have in years past.

Because of the set opening date of the Kodiak Fishery (Currently April 15th) in many recent years, large spawns have taken place, well before the fishery is allowed to open. Therefore, the fish are long gone, or unmarketable because they are "spawned out", before the fishery is legally even allowed to open.

If we do not make this change, harvestable surpluses of Sac Roe Herring in the Kodiak Area will continue to be foregone, and a valuable fishing opportunity will continue to be lost by Kodiak Area Herring fishermen, the local processors, and the Community of Kodiak.

