

PROPOSAL 73

5 AAC 18.362. Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan.

Establish a closure in the Inner Ayakulik Section of at least 24 hours between commercial salmon fishing periods, as follows:

Any inner Ayakulik commercial salmon fishery shall from June 10th to July 15th have a mandatory stand down period of not less than 24 hours between commercial openers.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like to address the issue of king salmon bycatch during commercial salmon fishing at the mouth of the Ayakulik river where sockeye is the target species. The only current management tactics used for reducing king salmon bycatch while sockeye seining is non-retention. This is not a solution. If a stand down period between commercial openers existed it would act as a pulse fishery, allowing for most king salmon and Biological Escapement Goal sockeye to move uninhibited for half the time, while allowing commercial salmon seiners the opportunity to "mop up" excess sockeye as they built up in between openers, thus defeating the perpetuated fear of over escapement. King Salmon migrate in smaller more drawn out patterns to the Ayakulik than sockeye do, where they trickle in over a period of time. Whereas sockeye, because they number in the hundreds of thousands trickle and surge and everything in between. The King salmon on this drainage most often come surging in fast, not lingering in the ocean out front. The sockeye will mill around for any period time, sometimes for days on end.

The pulse style fishery would not have a gauntlet of death for kings at all times but only theoretically for half the time at most, theoretically doubling their chance to spawn and not affecting sockeye commercial harvest in any negative manner. King salmon have no legitimate chance of making their upstream migration to spawn when an inner Ayakulik commercial salmon fishery lasts for more than 24 hours or extended until further notice at the height of the run. The whole mouth of the river is blocked off by a salmon seine net during these times allowing for nothing to come upstream. That includes all sockeye deemed in excess of BEG and every king salmon. There is no discrimination here. One seiner can act in a brutalitarian manner here putting an effective strangle hold on the whole system. This king salmon stock is a once thriving population is reduced to the brink of extinction, stamped with stock of concern status. Fish and Game has done little or nothing to help these fish. If any given commercial opener on the inner Ayakulik were to be fished in this proposed manner it would have the desired effect as a "Mopup fishery" targeting excess sockeye, with little ramifications for the overall strength of the king salmon run.

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