



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

## Department of Fish and Game

DIVISIONS OF SPORT FISH AND COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

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# MEMORANDUM

TO: Dave Rutz, Director, Division of Sport Fish  
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THRU: Thomas D. Vania, Regional Supervisor, Division of Sport Fish, Region II *TV*  
Bert Lewis, Regional Supervisor, Division of Commercial Fisheries *BL*

FROM: Tim McKinley, Regional Research Coordinator, Division of Sport Fish, Region II *TRM*  
Jack Erickson, Regional Research Coordinator, Division of Commercial Fisheries *JE*

DATE: October 4, 2019

SUBJECT: Addendum to Upper Cook Inlet Escapement Goal Memorandum dated March 26, 2019

This memorandum finalizes the recommendation to discontinue the escapement goal for Lewis River king salmon.

The current Lewis River king salmon sustainable escapement goal of 250–800 fish was established in 2002. In 2011, this stock was designated a stock of management concern. At that time salmon migration was effectively eliminated by natural changes to the channel such that it no longer flows into Cook Inlet. Attempts to restore the channel and fish passage proved unsuccessful. Few if any adult king salmon have been documented in this river system since these natural channel changes cut off access to saltwater. It is unlikely these channel changes and associated blockage of fish passage will allow for a viable population of king salmon in the Lewis River.

In the March 20, 2019 Upper Cook Inlet escapement goal review memorandum, the department delayed a final recommendation on Lewis River king salmon sustainable escapement goal until after the 2019 season. This delay was to allow for final evaluation of the channel and population. The 2019 season did not change the department assessment of the unviable nature of this king salmon population. In a separate document, the Upper Cook Inlet 2019 Stock of Concern memo, the Upper Cook Inlet escapement goal committee is recommending that the stock of management concern designation be discontinued for Lewis River king salmon, since its connection with Cook Inlet is intermittent at best. For the same reasons, the department is recommending that the escapement goal for Lewis River king salmon be discontinued.

An oral update on Upper Cook Inlet escapement goals will be given at the October 2019 Work Session. A more detailed oral report concerning escapement goals and stocks of concern will be presented to the Alaska Board of Fisheries in February 2020. This report will list all current and recommended Upper Cook Inlet escapement goals, as well as a detailed description of the methods used to reach recommendations.