

PROPOSAL 94

5 AAC 47.055. Southeast Alaska King Salmon Management Plan.

Amend the *Southeast Alaska King Salmon Management Plan* to manage for a resident priority by implementing specific closed periods and reducing annual limits for nonresidents, as follows:

The proposal is to close nonresident fishing two days per week beginning June 16 except in hatchery special harvest areas. Also the nonresident seasonal limit should be reduced from three fish to two fish or one fish beginning June 16, except in hatchery special harvest areas.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? For thirty years the Board has provided a resident priority in this management plan because there is no other available means for residents to access king salmon. That priority is in danger now because of two things - the fishing power of the nonresident guided fleet, primarily in outside waters near Sitka, Prince of Wales Island and Elfin Cove/Cross Sound, and because king salmon abundance is currently low under the U.S. - Canada treaty provisions.

The department has stated they cannot assess what the king salmon catch is in-season and does not know the June guided catch totals until August. This is unacceptable. A sharp uptick in June nonresident catch will cause the quota to be taken prematurely and all fishing closed, including to residents. This is inconsistent with the management plan. The solution is to get better catch data faster, such as by electronic reporting. Until that happens the nonresident catch should be slowed considerably the last half of June so that the quota is never exceeded and the resident fishery continues uninterrupted.

This will help alleviate the rapidly growing catching power of the guided sport sector, (which already takes 2/3 or more of the available treaty fish quota), and it will protect the resident fishery so that it won't close in the summer due to the sport allocation being achieved.

PROPOSED BY: Ralph Fenner

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