

PROPOSAL 91

5 AAC 29.100. Management of the summer salmon troll fishery.

Reallocate the annual troll harvest allocation between the winter, spring and summer troll fisheries, as follows:

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(c) The department shall manage the summer king salmon troll fishery as follows:

(1) the department shall manage the summer king salmon troll fishery (A) to take [70 PERCENT OF THE REMAINING TROLL KING SALMON HARVEST ALLOCATION, CALCULATED AS THE ANNUAL TROLL HARVEST ALLOCATION MINUS THE WINTER AND SPRING TROLL HARVESTS OF TREATY KING SALMON, IN AN INITIAL OPENING BEGINNING JULY 1;]

(i) 100% of the remaining troll king salmon harvest allocation, calculated as the annual troll harvest allocation minus the winter and spring troll harvest of the treaty king salmon, in an initial opening beginning July 1, if the remaining number of Chinook available for harvest totals 85,000 fish or less.

(ii) 60% of the remaining troll king salmon harvest allocation, calculated as the annual troll harvest allocation minus the winter and spring troll harvest of the treaty king salmon, in an initial opening beginning July 1, if the remaining number of Chinook available for harvest is between 85,001 and 150,000 fish

(iii) 70% of the remaining troll king salmon harvest allocation, calculated as the annual troll harvest allocation minus the winter and spring troll harvest of the treaty king salmon, in an initial opening beginning July 1, if the remaining number of Chinook available for harvest is between 150,001 and 200,000 fish.

(iv) 80% of the remaining troll king salmon harvest allocation, calculated as the annual troll harvest allocation minus the winter and spring troll harvest of the treaty king salmon, in an initial opening beginning July 1, if the remaining number of Chinook available for harvest is greater than 200,000 fish.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In the 2019 treaty agreement where Alaska is forced to pay back any treaty Chinook it overharvests, it is very important to have the best management strategy possible. Managing in season instead of just giving a set number of days is the best way to avoid over harvesting. On a set amount of days, the manager can only estimate the catch rate and if off significantly, Alaska will be over its treaty quota. It would be much safer to have enough fish to absorb the first day bonanza and still allow the department to manage in season. With August quota's less than 35,000 fish managing in season is difficult.

By having too many fish left to harvest in the second king opening has its problems too. There is a risk of not being able to catch it before the season ends. When the troll fleet has had more than 60,000 fish to harvest in August, it has resulted in king seasons lasting up to 28 days just to catch it. In some cases, it was not caught and left on the treaty table.

When the troll fleet has had 2 day king openings it costs trollers money. Cohos are at a peak in August. With a fair start closure combined with days waiting to offload a handful of kings, it doesn't pencil out due to lost coho fishing time.

It strains the processing infrastructure as well. The fleet was just iced for the king opening and some ice machines haven't recovered from that, yet now are forced to ice the entire fleet again. Processing a small surge of kings amidst the coho fishery can be costly as well.

If less than 35,000 fish were to be left for the August opening it would be smarter to have harvested them in the July opening. A single opening in July of 85,000 fish is easier for the department to manage and the fleet would be better off financially.

So, this proposal is an attempt to find a balance between having too few or too many Chinook to harvest in the August king opening. Hopefully it results in the second king opening being longer than 4 days and less than 15.

PROPOSED BY: Steve Merritt

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