

## **PROPOSAL 136**

### **5 AAC 09.365. South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June Salmon Management Plan.**

Amend the *South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June Salmon Management Plan* to implement a chum salmon harvest cap to reduce commercial fishing time, as follows:

ONC proposes that the Board of Fisheries amend the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June Salmon Management Plan, 5 AAC 09.365, to incorporate a harvest cap during the June fisheries using all gear types. More specifically, set a cap of 280,000 chum salmon and close the commercial fishery for the remainder of June once that cap is met. This request is consistent with historical records, where concerns over large commercial harvests of chum together with weak Yukon River fall chum runs, resulted in a cap limit that, if met, closed the fishery for the remainder of June.

Alaska Peninsula is one of six Fisheries on the migratory path of Coastal Western Alaska (CWA) chum salmon - Alaska Peninsula, Bristol Bay, AK Peninsula, Bristol Bay, Kuskokwim, Yukon, Norton Sound and Arctic. Therefore, based on preliminary estimates for CWA chum from 2021, the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June should account for approximately one 6th of the chum salmon for the season. Currently, the management plan does not identify any harvest limits for chum salmon. Establishing a cap would ensure that migrating chum reach their spawning grounds to the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim region, as well as Bristol Bay, Alaska Peninsula, Southcentral Alaska, Japan, and Russia. ONC understands that while the request may present difficulties to commercial fishermen in the South Alaska Peninsula Management Area, we all, across user groups and Management Regions, have the shared interest and responsibility to protect the CWA chum salmon stock. When chum salmon are abundant, we all thrive; in times of hardships, we all must work together and share the burden of conservation to ensure abundant populations in the future.

ONC suggests incorporating the chum salmon harvest cap into a new section between (d) and (e). The South Unimak and Shumagin Islands commercial fisheries are limited to harvesting 280,000 chum salmon during the month of June using all gear types. If reached, it would result in a closure of the fishery for the remainder of June.

### **Regulation of 5 AAC 09.365 South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June Salmon Management Plan:**

“(a) The South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fisheries harvest both sockeye salmon and chum salmon in a mixed stock fishery during the month of June. The sockeye salmon are predominantly Bristol Bay and Alaska Peninsula origin. The chum salmon are bound for a number of areas, including Japan, Russia, the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim, Bristol Bay, the Alaska Peninsula, and southcentral Alaska. These salmon stocks have historically been harvested along the south Alaska Peninsula during the month of June. This management plan is intended to be consistent with the Policy for the Management of Sustainable Salmon Fisheries (5 AAC 39.222) and the Policy for the Management of Mixed Stock Salmon Fisheries (5 AAC 39.220).

(b) The South Unimak fishery takes place in the Unimak District, the Southwestern District, the East Pavlof Bay and the West Pavlof Bay Sections of the South Central District,

and the Bechevin Bay Section of the Northwestern District.

(c) The Shumagin Islands fishery takes place in the Shumagin Islands Section.

(d) In the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands fisheries, the commissioner may establish, by emergency order, commercial fishing periods as follows:

(1) for set gillnet gear,

(A) beginning June 6, commercial fishing periods will begin at 6:00 a.m.

and run 64 hours until 10:00 p.m. two days later; beginning June 10, commercial fishing periods will begin at 6:00 a.m. and run 88 hours until 10:00 p.m. three days later; commercial fishing will then close for 32 hours and reopen at 6:00 a.m. two days later;

(B) notwithstanding (A) of this paragraph, the final commercial fishing period will end at 10:00 p.m. on June 28;

(2) for seine and drift gillnet gear,

(A) beginning June 10, commercial fishing periods will begin at 6:00

a.m. and run 88 hours until 10:00 p.m. three days later; commercial fishing will then close for 32 hours and reopen at 6:00 a.m. two days later;

(B) notwithstanding (A) of this paragraph, the final commercial fishing period will end at 10:00 p.m. on June 28.

**(e) Commercial harvest of chum salmon will not exceed 280,000 fish to ensure that migrating chum reach their spawning grounds to the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim region, as well as Bristol Bay, Alaska Peninsula, Southcentral Alaska, Japan, and Russia. Therefore, the fishing periods, as specified in (b) of this section, may not be fulfilled once this limit is met.**

**(f)** [(e)] All salmon caught by a CFEC permit holder must be retained, and each CFEC permit holder must report the number of salmon caught, including those taken but not sold, on an ADF&G fish ticket. For the purposes of this subsection, "caught" means brought on board the vessel.

**(g)** [(f)] Notwithstanding (d) of this section, commercial salmon fishing will close in the waters of the Volcano Bay Section of the Southwestern District south and east of a line from Arch Point Light at 55\_ 12.30' N. lat., 161\_ 54.30' W. long. to a point on Belkofski Peninsula at 55\_ 09.50' N. lat., 161\_ 57.80' W. long. and in the portion of the West Pavlof Bay Section south of Black Point (55\_ 24.48' N. lat.), if the harvest of sockeye salmon from the South Central District, the Volcano Bay Section of the Southwestern District, and the Belkofski Bay Section, excluding those waters inside of a line between Vodapoini Point and Bold Cape, reaches 191,000 sockeye salmon based on fish ticket information.

**(h)** [(g)] Notwithstanding (d) of this section, commercial salmon fishing is closed to purse seine gear in the waters of the Volcano Bay Section of the Southwestern District, the Belkofski Bay Section of the Southwestern District, excluding those waters inside of a line between Vodapoini Point at 55\_ 01.88' N. lat., 162\_ 24.80' W. long., and Bold Cape at 55\_ 01.24' N. lat., 162\_ 16.40' W. long., and the South Central District."

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC) is the federally recognized Tribe for the Native Village of Bethel, Alaska. Bethel is located along the delta of the Kuskokwim River, approximately 90 miles inland from the Bering Sea and approximately 398 miles northwest of Anchorage. ONC serves approximately 4,500 Alaska Native residents from all villages throughout Yukon-Kuskokwim (YK) Delta, over 3,800 of which are enrolled as Tribal members.

ONC would like to address the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June Salmon Management Plan, 5 AAC 09.365. More specifically, we would like to establish a chum salmon (*Oncorhynchus keta*) commercial harvest cap of 280,000 for all gear types during the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fisheries.

The Alaska Peninsula consists of a mixed stock fishery during the month of June, where chum salmon populations are bound for a number of areas, including the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim (AYK) region. ONC, and many subsistence users across the YK Delta, have concerns on the extreme disparity in harvest between the Alaska Peninsula commercial and Kuskokwim and Yukon River subsistence fisheries. This commercial fishery harvested approximately 1,168,601 chum in 2021<sup>1</sup>, while subsistence users on the Kuskokwim and Yukon Rivers harvested approximately 9,621<sup>2</sup> and 1,253<sup>3</sup> chum salmon, respectively. Tribes along the YK Delta are experiencing food security hardships and loss of culture when not allowed to fish, while the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands are harvesting an abundant amount of chum salmon for commercial uses. The stark contrast between the chum salmon commercial harvests on the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June Salmon Commercial Fishery and subsistence harvests on the Kuskokwim is a direct result of the lack of harvest limits for chum salmon.

**References:**

<sup>1</sup>Regional Report No. 4K22-01 - 2021 South Peninsula Salmon Annual Management Report and 2020 Subsistence Fisheries in the Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, and Atka-Amlia Islands Management Areas

<sup>2</sup>Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) Draft Preliminary Kuskokwim River Salmon Harvest Estimates 2021 Postseason Surveys

<sup>3</sup>Yukon River Salmon 2021 Season Summary and 2022 Season Outlook, Regional Information Report 3A22-01 ADF&G

**PROPOSED BY:** Orutsararmiut Traditional Native Council (HQ-F22-018)

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