

PROPOSAL 81

5AAC 01.220 (n) (3) (4) Lawful gear and gear specifications.

Implement a Yukon River drainage subsistence salmon permit to allow retention of king salmon less than 24 inches in length with an annual limit 10 fish during times of king salmon conservation, as follows:

Allow limited retention of (24 inch and under) Chinook in a subsistence chum opener with dipnets and/or manned fishwheel on the Yukon River under emergency order per the following:

5AAC 01.220 (n) (3) (4) Lawful gear and gear specifications add section (5)

(1) Starting in the 2023 fishing season, during times when the commissioner determines it is necessary for the conservation of king salmon, the commissioner may, by emergency order, require that in the Yukon River drainage, king salmon may be taken only under the authority of a subsistence fishing permit with the following conditions:

(A) annual limit of 10 king salmon under 24 inch in fork length (tip of nose to tail fork) caught in a dipnet or manned fishwheel only

(B) the commissioner may, by emergency order, implement one or more of the gear limitations specified in 5 AAC 01.220 (n) (2) and n (3) for fishing under the permit;

(C) permit holders must complete and return permits, including daily records of king salmon harvested, each year by October 31;

(D) once the annual limit is reached, additional king salmon may not be taken except in compliance with all applicable regulations and emergency orders;

(E) only one small king subsistence permit may be issued to a household each year;

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What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Retention of Chinook (king) salmon is normally not permitted during summer chum subsistence openers when Chinook salmon conservation management is applied on the Yukon River. Under 5 AAC 01.220 (n) (3) (4) Lawful gear and gear specifications, the ADF&G commissioner may allow, by emergency order, Chinook retention utilizing specific gear types. Adding a section (n) (5) to allow retention of Chinook salmon 24inches and under while utilizing only dipnets or manned fishwheels will focus on the retention of small king salmon only.

There are multiple needs for subsistence fishermen as well as fish in years of extreme low abundance. With the continued downward trajectory of Chinook salmon in size and run strength and the periodic crashes of summer and fall chum salmon, the pressure for food security is immense.

When there is an allowable chum opener for subsistence with a gear type restriction to dipnets and manned fishwheels, the retention of small Chinook salmon under 24 inches (60.9cm / approximately 6 pounds) caught in a dipnet or manned fishwheel should be allowed.

The theory is that these undersized kings do not substantively contribute to ASL (age-sexlength) spawning aggregate in a time when focus is on increasing size genetics. Further, a very limited harvest of undersized kings utilizing only dipnets and manned fishwheels as a gear type will allow easy measurement of a fish from nose to fork in tail, allowing bigger fish to be released unharmed from a net or fishwheel live box.

However, recognizing that small (jack) male salmon can contribute to increased abundance, this recommendation should be tied to estimated spawning abundance in both Alaskan and Canadian Chinook stock.

PROPOSED BY: Fairbanks Advisory Committee Fisheries Sub-Committee (HQ-F22-039)
