

PROPOSAL 102

5 AAC 21.359 Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan.

Provide additional commercial salmon fishing opportunity with set gillnet gear in the Upper Subdistrict as follows:

(3) close the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Upper Subdistrict of the Central District, **except provided in (e) (3) (h) of this chapter**

(e) (3) (h) if the in season projected escapement of Kenai River late-run king salmon 75 cm mid-eye to tail fork and longer is projecting to meet the SEG of 13,500 fish, and the Kenai or Kasilof rivers sockeye salmon management objectives are being met, fishing with set gillnet gear shall be allowed for a minimum of 24 hours per week, within 600 feet of the mean high tide mark in the Upper Subdistrict. Commercial fishing opportunities under this provision will be structured to maximize harvest of surplus sockeye salmon and minimize harvest of king salmon, based on in-season analysis of ADFG fish tickets, escapement, and other available information. The operation of a set gillnet by a CFEC permit holder in these openers will be restricted to;

(i) up to four set gillnets that are each not more than 35 fathoms in length, 105 fathoms in aggregate length, and 29 meshes in depth, or two set gillnets that are each not more than 35 fathoms in length and 45 meshes in depth; set gillnets used that are not more than 29 meshes in depth must be identified at the end of a gillnet with an attached blue buoy that is not less than nine and one-half inches in diameter; or

(ii) up to two set gillnets that are not more than 35 fathoms in length and 29 meshes depth or one set gillnet that is not more than 35 fathoms in length and 45 meshes in depth; set gillnets used that are not more than 29 meshes in depth must be identified at the end of the gillnet with an attached blue buoy that is not less than nine and one-half inches in diameter.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Recent efforts to conserve Kenai River late-run king salmon and meet the Kenai River late-run king salmon optimal escapement goal of 15,000 large fish have resulted in a foregone yield of Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon and Kasilof River sockeye salmon, and have inflicted severe economic impacts to the fishers, as well as the Central Peninsula borough and all of the local communities. This proposal would provide the Alaska Department of Fish and Game an additional tool to harvest surplus sockeye salmon with set gillnet gear when Kenai River late- run large king salmon sonar projects 13,500 fish, which is the sustainable escapement goal for Kenai River large late-run king salmon established by the department, thereby assuring that a sustainable level of king salmon escapement is achieved while providing additional sockeye salmon harvest opportunity beyond what is currently allowed. The current plan closes the sockeye-targeted set gillnet fishery and immediately liberalizes the commercial drift fishery, the personal use fisheries, and commercial guided in-river sport sockeye fisheries to target sockeye salmon. All because we are attempting to achieve a politically driven OEG not the biologically backed SEG.

PROPOSED BY: Travis Every

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