

## **PROPOSAL 112**

### **5 AAC 21.360. Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan.**

Increase the upper bound of the Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon inriver goal range as follows:

Increase the upper end of the inriver goals at a consistent high level across sockeye run tiers in order to avoid potential confusion and conflicts in escapement priorities between the bottom end of the king goal and the upper end of the sockeye inriver goals.

To make it more likely that the management objective can be achieved. – in order to increase the likelihood that the goals can be achieved

The lower end goals must always take priority over the upper end goals.

(c) ...

(1) at run strengths of less than 2,300,000 sockeye salmon,

(A) the department shall manage for an inriver goal range of 1,000,000 – **1,600,000**  
**[1,200,000]** sockeye salmon past the sonar counter at river mile 19; and

...

(2) at run strengths of 2,300,000 - 4,600,000 sockeye salmon,

(A) the department shall manage for an inriver goal range of 1,100,000 – **1,600,000** **[1,400,000]**  
sockeye salmon past the sonar counter at river mile 19;

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The current utility of inriver goals identified for three abundance tiers of Kenai sockeye is marginal at best. The inriver goal ranges are narrow and difficult to hit due to the inherent variability in sockeye numbers and run timing, and competing priorities with other management priorities. As a result, inriver goals are achieved just a quarter of the time. Fishery managers are subjected to undue criticism when inriver goals are not met even when the sustainable escapement goal is achieved.

In the *Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan*, inriver goal ranges are identified to distribute escapement throughout the SEG with higher goal ranges at higher run sizes and allocations for sport harvest upstream from the sonar. The 3-tier sockeye inriver goal ranges were adopted in 1999 during a period of substantially higher sockeye and king runs. We are currently in a period of low king and average sockeye abundance which is a much different situation than when the 3-tier goal strategy was adopted.

Management for inriver goal ranges creates confusion regarding management priority when it is not possible meet the low end of the Kenai king goal while also remaining within the upper end of the reduced inriver goal range.

Current data on production from large escapements of Kenai River late run sockeye also indicates that maximum sustained yield is produced by escapements substantially greater than previously thought. The upper ends of the current inriver goal ranges in the lower two sockeye abundance tiers are substantially less than escapements that have been observed to produce high sustained yield.

**PROPOSED BY:** Kenai River Sportfishing Association

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