

PROPOSAL 6

5 AAC 58.XXX. New Section.

Create a management plan and establish a guideline harvest level for the lower Cook Inlet summer salt water king salmon sport fishery as follows:

- (a) **The goal of this management plan is to stabilize the sport harvest of king salmon in the mixed stock salt water fishery in lower Cook Inlet from April 1 through August 31;**
- (b) **The lower Cook Inlet salt waters include all salt water south of the latitude of Bluff Point at 59 40.00’N. lat excluding shore-based harvest;**
- (c) **the bag and possession limit is 2 king salmon any size;**
- (d) **the annual limit and harvest record specified in 5 AAC 58.022 applies to king salmon 20” or greater harvested in this fishery;**
- (e) **the guideline harvest level is X,XXX king salmon**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The king salmon harvest in the lower Cook Inlet summer fishery has continued to increase in recent years due to shifting effort from the upper Cook Inlet summer king salmon fishery as a result of emergency order (EO) preseason and inseason restrictions and closures. Guided effort towards king salmon in Cook Inlet salt waters may also be increasing with restrictions to guided fishing for Pacific halibut from the federal Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan. From 2002–2013, the king salmon harvest in this fishery averaged approximately 5,300 fish annually. In the last three years, the harvest has increased over 50% from the 2002–2013 average to an average of approximately 8,300 fish and in 2021 was over 11,000 fish. Based on genetic mixed stock analyses of this fishery from 2014 through 2018, 98% of the king salmon harvest are from stocks originating outside of Cook Inlet. In 2023, the department restricted the bag limit from 2 to 1 king salmon in this fishery due to concerns with harvest of Cook Inlet stocks as they migrate through lower Cook Inlet salt waters. Adopting a management plan with a guideline harvest level would help better identify appropriate harvest level for this mixed stock fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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