

PROPOSAL 98

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

Modify the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Upper Subdistrict when restricted to achieve the Kenai River late-run king salmon optimal escapement goal as follows:

5AAC 21.359 (d)(3)

(3) Restrict the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Upper Subdistrict of the Central District as follows. In the Kasilof Section, fishing will be restricted to within 1200ft of the mean high tide mark and gear will be restricted to not more than 29 meshes in depth; with two openings per week from 7am-7pm on Mondays and Thursdays. In the Kenai section, fishing will be restricted to within 600ft of the mean high tide mark and gear will be restricted to not more than 29 meshes in depth; with two openings per week from 7am-7pm on Mondays and Thursdays. [CLOSE THE COMMERCIAL SET GILLNET FISHERY IN THE UPPER SUBDISTRICT OF THE CENTRAL DISTRICT.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? At the final point of paired restriction in the current Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon management plan, when the goal is not projected to be met there are a suite of restrictions across the various fisheries managed by the plan. Of these, the Upper Subdistrict Set Gillnet fishery is the only directed sockeye fishery that is completely closed down. All other sockeye fisheries continue to be prosecuted. This is completely inequitable and if it continues will be the end of this fishery. Some level of fishing is clearly warranted, and required to attempt to manage to the sockeye goals in both the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers. Setnet harvest of large Kenai kings under the restrictions in this plan utilized over the last several years have demonstrated that while fishing with heavy restrictions king salmon harvest is extremely minimal. With encouraged releasing practices and heavily restricted gear it seems clear that a baseline skeleton of the fishery could continue to operate even in times of low king salmon abundance.

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(EF-F23-041)
