

Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Management Plan (5 proposals)

PROPOSAL 111

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

Adopt a Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon optimal escapement goal as follows:

Kenai River escapement (for greatest returns) 450,000 – 750,000 sockeye.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Kenai River Escapement – waste over escapement is contrary to food security.

PROPOSED BY: John McCombs (HQ-F23-068)

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 (HQ-F23-082)

PROPOSAL 113

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

Adopt an optimal escapement goal for Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon as follows:

The escapement goal for the late-run Kenai River sockeye will be 600,000 to 800,000, regardless of run strength. Meeting this escapement goal will take precedence over all other management objectives.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In order to meet national standards set by Magnuson-Stevens Act, escapement goals for the Kenai River late-run sockeye have to be set to achieve Maximum Sustained Yield (MSY).

PROPOSED BY: Teague Vanek (EF-F23-070)

PROPOSAL 114

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

Adopt an Optimal Escapement Goal for Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon as follows:

Delete 5 AAC 21.360 (a) (b) (c) replace with the following.

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

- (a) The department shall manage the Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon stocks primarily for commercial use based on abundance.
- (b) The Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon commercial, sport, and personal use fisheries shall be managed to

(1) Meet the BEG of 700,000 to 850,000 late-run sockeye salmon as measured at the sonar counter located at Kenai River mile 19 and distribute the escapement of sockeye salmon evenly within the BEG range in proportion to the size of the run.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Set one Sockeye Salmon Kenai River Late-Run management escapement goal of a BEG of 700,000 to 850,000 sockeye at the Kenai River sonar counter located at river mile 19.

PROPOSED BY: Central Peninsula Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F23-031)

PROPOSAL 115

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

Modify intent of the *Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan* as follows:

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

(a) The department shall manage the Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon stocks primarily for commercial uses based on abundance. [THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ALSO MANAGE THE COMMERCIAL FISHERIES TO MINIMIZE THE HARVEST OF NORTHERN DISTRICT COHO, LATE-RUN KENAI RIVER KING, AND KENAI RIVER COHO SALMON STOCKS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE PERSONAL USE, SPORT, AND GUIDED SPORT FISHERMEN WITH A REASONABLE OPPORTUNITY TO HARVEST SALMON RESOURCES] **The department shall also manage the common property fisheries with a reasonable opportunity to harvest salmon resources.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Delete unnecessary language in the Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan. This management plan directs the department to minimize the commercial harvest of Northern District coho, Late-run Kenai River king, and Kenai River coho salmon resources. That language restricts the flexibility for the managers to manage on a real time basis, based on in season abundance, to harvest the surplus of all salmon species and results in gross over-escapements and the waste of valuable harvestable salmon surpluses. This language has resulted in tens of millions of harvestable salmon going unharvested and negatively affects the commercial fishing industry, communities, National food source, interstate commerce, economies and also decreases future salmon production resulting from the effects of over escapement. It also violates the Magnuson Stevens Act. The sports fishery has a reasonable opportunity to fish because of the fact that salmon run into thousands of streams in the Cook Inlet drainage from May to October and most all are open to sports fishing. If one system is not open, for escapement reasons, a sports fisherman have many other system they can fish. In comparison the commercial fisherman, when restricted or closed down, has no other area to fish because they are restricted to the areas and their gear type by their limited entry permit they own. There is unfair and has no parity in reasonable opportunity between commercial and recreational fisheries under the current management plans. There are no conservation concerns on coho and most coho runs are harvested well below acceptable 60% to 70% exploitation rates, with many exploitation rates being less than 5% and most less then 2%. Because of overly restricted commercial fishing management plans only around half of the CFEC permit holders are currently participation in the Cook Inlet fishery, thereby reducing their harvest potential by half.

PROPOSED BY: Central Peninsula Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F23-032)
