

Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan (8 proposals)

PROPOSAL 67

5 AAC 18.362. Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan.

Restrict commercial salmon fishing in the Inner Ayakulik Section as follows:

No commercial salmon fishing may take place on the inner Ayakulik section after August 20th until 20,000 Coho have escaped upriver.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Commercial Coho overharvest by set gillnet and seine in Southwest Kodiak is what I would like to address. There is no management plan for adequate Coho escapement in late August and September on the Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers. Salmon seiners generally fish wide open here after mid August at Ayakulik and mid September at Karluk. These fish are vital for subsistence use, as a sportfishing resource, and as a food source for bears and other wildlife late in the year. During low water episodes a boat blocking off a river mouth can easily catch a large portion of a coho run when they are schooled heavy. They are incredibly vulnerable and susceptible to overharvest. I want a Coho management plan that promotes healthy natural escapement numbers of fish before commercial fisherman can fish wide open blocking of a whole river mouth.

PROPOSED BY: Stig Yngve

(EF-F23-030)

PROPOSAL 68

5 AAC 18.362. Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan.

Restrict commercial salmon fishing in the Inner Karluk Section as follows:

There will be no commercial salmon fishing on the Inner Karluk Section after August 25th until 5,000 Coho have been counted through the weir or surveyed in Karluk Lagoon by August 25th, 10,000 by August 30th, and 15,000 by September 10th.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Commercial Coho overharvest by set gillnet and seine in Southwest Kodiak is what I would like to address. There is no management plan for adequate Coho escapement in late August and September on the Karluk River. Salmon seiners generally fish wide open here after mid September. These fish are vital for subsistence use, as a sportfishing resource and as a food source for bears and other wildlife late in the year. During low water episodes a boat blocking off a river mouth can easily catch a large portion of a Coho run when they are schooled heavy. They are incredibly vulnerable and susceptible to overharvest, especially in the vicinity of Karluk Lagoon and the Inner Karluk Section. I want a Coho management plan that promotes a healthy natural escapement of fish before commercial fisherman can fish wide open on the inner Karluk Section or block off the Karluk River/Lagoon mouth.

PROPOSED BY: Stig Yngve

(EF-F23-031)

PROPOSAL 69

5 AAC 18.362. Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan.

Amend the *Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan* to implement commercial salmon fishing periods for set gillnet permit holders to increase harvest opportunity as follows:

The solution is to provide a minimum number of fishing days to the Kodiak set gillnet fleet without compromising sustainable management objectives. The Department can actively extend or close planned openers to protect escapement. This proposal only applies to the set gillnet gear, all other gear types remain status quo.

5 AAC 18.362. Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan.

The Central and North Cape Sections must be managed.

From June 1 until August 15, the set gillnet fishery will open for 105 hours and close for 63 hours per week. From August 16 through the end of the season, the set gillnet fishery will open for 102 hours and close for 66 hours per week.

The Commissioner may supersede the weekly set gillnet schedule with emergency general openers and closures to achieve the management plan.

Note: existing regulations remain unchanged other than numbering, (1) becomes (3), (2) becomes (4) and so on.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This proposal increases set gillnet fishing days without changing other gear types. The setnet fleet has lost a relative proportion of the salmon harvest in the Westside Management Plan. Increasing the number of fishing days is the most effective mechanism to maintain the historical harvest volume of set gillnet gear without interfering with adjacent gear types. This proposal allows the BOF to adhere to a management plan that increases the opportunity and number of fishing days for the Kodiak set gillnet fleet, with abundance-based flexibility to increase or decrease planned fishing days as determined by the Department.

PROPOSED BY: Erik OBrien (EF-F23-058)

PROPOSAL 70

5 AAC 18.362. Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan.

Modify the *Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan* to establish an allocation between gear groups as follows:

5 AAC 18.362. Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan

(a) The goal of the Westside Kodiak Management Plan is to achieve escapement and harvest objectives of sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk, Ayakulik, and other Westside minor sockeye salmon systems, and of pink, chum, and coho salmon returning to systems in the Southwest Afognak, Central, North Cape, Anton Larsen Bay, Sharatin Bay, Kizhuyak Bay,

Terror Bay, Inner Uganik Bay, Spiridon Bay, Zachar Bay, Uyak Bay, Outer Karluk, Inner Karluk, Sturgeon Bay, Halibut Bay, Outer Ayakulik, and Inner Ayakulik Sections. It is the intent of the board that salmon bound to these systems be harvested to the extent possible by the traditional fisheries located in all 17 sections **and to establish the allocation of sockeye and pink salmon between the commercial set gillnet and combined purse seine and beach seine fisheries within the Northwest Kodiak District including Telrod Cove SHA, and the Inner and Outer Karluk sections of the Southwest Kodiak District, and to establish management measures for ADF&G to achieve the allocation objectives as described in (b) of this management plan.** The department shall manage the Northwest Kodiak and the Southwest Kodiak Districts and the Southwest Afognak Section in accordance with the guidelines set out in this plan.

(b) Consistent with 5AAC 18.362 ADF&G shall manage the Northwest Kodiak District and the Inner and Outer Karluk sections of the Southwest Kodiak District set gillnet and combined purse seine and beach seine fisheries during the fishing periods specified in 5AAC 18.362 to achieve biological escapement goals into the various systems in the Kodiak Management Area and to distribute the harvestable surplus of sockeye and pink salmon in the Northwest Kodiak District including Telrod Cove SHA, and the Inner and Outer Karluk sections of the Southwest Kodiak District, to the set gillnet and combined purse seine and beach seine fisheries as follows:

(1) set gillnet 50% of sockeye salmon caught in the Northwest Kodiak District including Telrod Cove SHA, and the Inner and Outer Karluk sections of the Southwest Kodiak District

(2) combined purse seine and beach seine 50% of sockeye salmon caught in the Northwest Kodiak District including Telrod Cove SHA, and the Inner and Outer Karluk sections of the Southwest Kodiak District

(3) set gillnet 30% of pink salmon caught in the Northwest Kodiak District including Telrod Cove SHA, and the Inner and Outer Karluk sections of the Southwest Kodiak District

(4) combined purse seine and beach seine 70% of pink salmon caught in the Northwest Kodiak District including Telrod Cove SHA, and the Inner and Outer Karluk sections of the Southwest Kodiak District

(c) For the purpose of calculating the set gillnet and combined purse seine and beach seine allocations specified in (b) of this section, the accounting period is June 1 to October 15

(d) To achieve the allocations specified in (b) of this section, consistent with the management principles of 5AAC 13.362 and other provisions of this chapter, the Commissioner may establish, by emergency order, set gillnet and combined purse seine and beach seine open fishing periods and these periods may be established at different times to obtain the set gillnet and combined purse seine and beach seine sockeye and pink salmon allocations specified in (b) of this section or at other times consistent with 5AAC 13.662

(Note: Language in sections (b) through (g) in the existing management plan 5AAC 18.362 would remain unchanged except that they would be re-lettered to consistently accommodate and follow the newly added sections described above. Existing section (b) would become section **(e)**, section (c) would become section **(f)**, section (d) would become **(g)**, section (e) would become **(h)**, section (f) would become **(i)** and section (g) would become **(j)**.)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The percentage of the sockeye and pink salmon poundage caught annually by Kodiak Island’s Westside set gillnet fleet has declined significantly since 1990.

By regulation, Kodiak’s Westside set gillnetters may only fish in the Central Section of the Northwest Kodiak District. The Central Section is not a terminal area; but salmon returning to the inner bays of the Northwest Kodiak District, to the common property fishery of the Telrod Cove SHA, and to the Inner and Outer Karluk sections of the Southwest Kodiak District, travel through it. All of these are managed by the 1990 Westside Management Plan and all have been historically targeted by set gillnetters. However, because set gillnets are fixed gear and are prohibited by statute from fishing in these terminal areas, set gillnet fishermen have only one opportunity to catch these fish. With these facts in mind, any changes to the Westside Management Plan which attempt to allocate an historically equitable percentage of salmon to Westside set gillnetters must include an equitable percentage of the salmon swimming to these terminal areas.

The percentage of sockeye salmon harvested by Westside set gillnetters out of the total of all sockeye salmon caught by all gear groups in the Northwest Kodiak District, Telrod SHA and Inner and Outer Karluk Sections of the Southwest District has declined from a 23-year average (1990-2012) of 50% to a 34% average in the years 2013-2022.

The percentage of pink salmon harvested by Westside set gillnetters out of the total of all pink salmon caught by all gear groups in the Northwest Kodiak District, Telrod SHA and Inner and Outer Karluk Sections of the Southwest Kodiak District has declined from a 23-year average (1990-2012) of 30% to 19% in the years 2013-2022.

In the most recent five years (2017-2022) the set gillnet fleet’s percentage of the catch in these areas has fallen even more precipitously - to 29% for sockeye and 14% for pinks.

This loss of catch percentage by Westside set gillnetters since 1990 has resulted in a significant loss of income for the set gillnet fleet. If not reversed, this trend of declining catch share and declining income may result in the demise of Kodiak’s Westside set gillnet fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Northwest Setnetters Association (HQ-F23-076)

PROPOSAL 71

5 AAC 18.362. Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan.

Modify the *Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan* to allow the department more flexibility for fishing periods in the Outer Karluk Section as follows:

5 AAC 18.362. Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan

...

(e) The Inner and Outer Karluk Sections must be managed

- (1) From June 1 through July 15, based on early-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk System; the commissioner may open, by emergency order, fishing periods in the Inner Karluk Section only if the department determines that the midpoint of the early-run escapement goal range will be achieved; in the Outer Karluk Section, from June 16 through approximately July 15, the commissioner **may** [SHALL] open fishing periods to occur at the same time as open fishing periods in the Central Section.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Under the Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan, early season management of the Central Section of the Northwest District and the Inner and Outer Karluk sections of the Southwest District is driven primarily by escapements of early-run Karluk sockeye, which occur mainly in June and early July.

The Westside Management Plan states that openings in the Outer Karluk Section of the Southwest District shall occur when the Central Section is open between June 16 and July 15. The word “shall,” has created a situation where the Outer Karluk Section is open whenever the Central Section is open. However, since the Outer Karluk Section is a near terminus area, with fish concentrating near the mouth of the Karluk River, opening the Outer Karluk at the same time as the Central Section, which is further north and farther away from the Karluk River, can create a conservation concern during weak returns.

If the Outer Karluk Section is not required to be open during Central Section openings, managers could keep the Outer Karluk closed until escapement goals are met, thereby decreasing the risk of overharvesting during weak returns while increasing the chances for Central Section openings. This would create greater fishing opportunities for both the set gillnet and seine fleets in the Central Section, including smaller seine boats, which sometimes can’t fish the exposed Outer Karluk Section due to weather.

Additionally, given the close proximity of the Outer Karluk Section to the Karluk River, a higher concentration of Karluk bound chinook salmon can be expected to be caught in the Outer Karluk Section than in the Central Section. Allowing the Outer Karluk Section to remain closed while the Central Section is open could increase the odds of reaching minimum escapements goals for Karluk River chinook salmon.

PROPOSED BY: Northwest Setnetters Association (HQ-F23-077)

PROPOSAL 72

5 AAC 18.362. Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan.

Modify the Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan to increase fishing opportunity in the Southwest Afognak Section as follows:

5 AAC 18.362. Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan.

...

(d) The Southwest Afognak Section must be managed

...

(3) From approximately July 6 through August 15, based on pink salmon returning to the major pink salmon systems in the SW Afognak Section and the NW Kodiak District, **or based on pink salmon returning to the Karluk system**; from July 6 through July 25...

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like to add language to the SW Afognak pink salmon management to bring it in line with the change in the NW Kodiak’s central section and North Cape section made in the last Kodiak BOF cycle. SW Afognak pink salmon openings had been the same as Central section and North Cape section openings. The change “or based on pink salmon returning to the Karluk system” should be added to the SW Afognak section pink salmon management to bring it in line again.

PROPOSED BY: Oliver Holm

(HQ-F23-094)

PROPOSAL 73

5 AAC 18.362. Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan.

Modify the Westside Kodiak salmon Management Plan to increase fishing opportunity as follows:

5 AAC 18.362. Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan

...

(f) The Sturgeon and Halibut Bay Sections must be managed

(1) from June 1 through approximately June 22, as mixed-stock fisheries directed on early-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk, Ayakulik, and Olga Bay systems; the department shall not open any commercial fishing periods during this time;

(2) from approximately June 23 through July 15, based on early-run sockeye salmon returning to the Ayakulik and Karluk systems, except that the Sturgeon Section must also be managed with consideration for early-run chum salmon returning to the Sturgeon system;

(3) from approximately July 16 through August **15** [24],

(A) in the Sturgeon Section

(i) on odd-year cycles, based on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system;

(ii) on even-year cycles, **from approximately July 16 through August 15**, based on [LATE-RUN SOCKEYE AND ON] pink salmon returning to the Karluk **and Sturgeon River** systems;

(B) in the Halibut Bay Section

(i) on odd-year cycles, from approximately July 16 through July 31 on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Ayakulik system, and from approximately August 1 through August 24 on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system;

(ii) on even-year cycles, from approximately July 16 through July 31 on late-run sockeye salmon and pink salmon returning to the Ayakulik system, and from approximately August 1 through August 15 [24] on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system and on pink salmon returning to the Ayakulik system;

(4) from approximately August 16 through August 24,

(A) In the Sturgeon section

(i) on odd-year cycles based on late run sockeye returning to the Karluk system;

(ii) On even-year cycles based on late run sockeye returning to the Karluk system and pink salmon returning the Sturgeon and Karluk systems;

(B) In the Halibut Bay section

(i) on odd-year cycles based on late run sockeye returning to the Karluk system;

(ii) On even-year cycles based on late run sockeye returning to the Karluk system and pink salmon returning the Ayakulik system;

(5) [4] from approximately August 25 through September 5, based on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system; and

(6)[5] after approximately September 5, based on late-run sockeye salmon and coho salmon returning to the Karluk system.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Under the current language in the management plan, the Sturgeon Section of the Westside Management Plan of Kodiak Island is managed in early years on Karluk pink salmon and late run sockeye salmon with no provisions for management of the Sturgeon River which has seen large returns in the past 2 even years. (2020, 2022) The proposed language would allow the Department of Fish and Game to effectively manage the Sturgeon Section for both Karluk and Sturgeon pink salmon so that during years of

abundance those stocks can be fully utilized, while at the same time providing protections on even years where one or both stocks could be weak.

PROPOSED BY: Kodiak Seiners Association (HQ-F23-106)

PROPOSAL 74

5 AAC 18.200; 5 AAC 330; 5 AAC 362. Description of fishing districts and sections, Gear, and *Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan* to increase fishing opportunity

Modify fishing districts and sections, gear, and *Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan* to increase fishing opportunity as follows:

5 AAC 18.200. Description of fishing districts and sections

(9)(i) **Outer Kizhuyak Bay Section**[CENTRAL SECTION]: all waters of the Northwest Kodiak District bounded by a line from Termination Point (57° 51.37' N. lat., 152° 24.15' W. long.), to South Point (57° 53.00' N. lat., 152° 22.00' W. long.), to Ouzinkie Point (57° 54.80' N. lat., 152° 31.27' W. long.), to Shakmanof Point (57° 55.50' N. lat., 152° 35.36' W. long.), to a point at 57° 54.20' N. lat. on the east shore of Kizhuyak Bay; north of 57° 52.25' N. lat. in Anton Larsen Bay; north of 57° 51.07' N. lat. in Sharatin Bay; north of 57° 50.00' N. lat., and south of the latitude of Inner Point (57° 54.05' N. lat.) in Kizhuyak Bay;

(ii) **Outer Uganik Section: all waters of the Northwest Kodiak District** west of a line from Inner Point (57° 54.05' N. lat., 152° 47.75' W. long.) to Bird Point (57° 55.30' N. lat., 152° 47.50' W. long.); south of a line from Occident Point (57° 57.42' N. lat., 152° 51.75' W. long.) to Last Timber Point (57° 58.60' N. lat., 152° 59.05' W. long.); south of the latitude of Raspberry Cape (58° 03.58' N. lat.); north of 57° 50.00' N. lat., and west of 153° 12.60' W. long. in Terror Bay and Uganik Bay passages; north of the line from Rock Point at 57° 46.47' N. lat., 153° 29.30' W. long., to 57° 46.27' N. lat., 153° 32.90' W. long., in the South and East Arms of Uganik Bay; **North of the latitude of Cape Ugat (57° 52.279' N); and by midstream Shelikof Strait.**

(iii) **Outer Uyak Bay Section: all waters of the Northwest Kodiak District south of latitude of Cape Ugat (57° 52.279' N);** west of 153° 46.33' W. long. in Spiridon Bay; west of a line from Carlsen Point (57° 34.70' N. lat., 153° 50.15' W. long.) to 57° 35.60' N. lat., 153° 49.10' W. long., in Zachar Bay; all waters of Inner Uyak Bay north of the latitude of the southernmost tip of Amook Island (57° 25.72' N. lat.) to the west shore, and north of the latitude of the northernmost tip of Amook Island (57° 33.16' N. lat.) to the east shore; north of the latitude of Rocky Point (57° 39.78' N. lat.); and by midstream Shelikof Strait;

5 AAC 18.330. Gear

(b) In the Northwest Kodiak District, salmon may be taken only by purse seines and beach seines, except that in the **Outer Kizhuyak Bay, Outer Uganik, and Outer Uyak Bay Sections** [CENTRAL SECTION], salmon may also be taken by set gillnets.

5 AAC 18.362. Westside Kodiak Salmon Management Plan (a) The goal of the Westside Kodiak Management Plan is to achieve escapement and harvest objectives of sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk, Ayakulik, and other Westside minor sockeye salmon systems, and of pink, chum, and coho salmon returning to systems in the Southwest Afognak, **Outer Uyak Bay, Outer Uganik, Outer Kizhuyak Bay** [CENTRAL], North Cape, Anton Larsen Bay, Sharatin Bay, Kizhuyak Bay, Terror Bay, Inner Uganik Bay, Spiridon Bay, Zachar Bay, Uyak Bay, Outer Karluk, Inner Karluk, Sturgeon Bay, Halibut Bay, Outer Ayakulik, and Inner Ayakulik Sections. It is the intent of the board that salmon bound to these systems be harvested to the extent possible by the traditional fisheries located in all 17 sections. The department shall manage the Northwest Kodiak and the Southwest Kodiak Districts and the Southwest Afognak Section in accordance with the guidelines set out in this plan.

(b)(i) The [Central and] North Cape Sections must be managed

- (1) from June 1 through approximately June 15, as a mixed-stock fishery directed on early-run sockeye salmon returning to Karluk, Ayakulik, [AND] Olga Bay, **and Buskin and Litnik** systems; the commissioner shall open, by emergency order, at least two commercial test fishing periods of 33 hours in length;
- (2) from approximately June 16 through July 5, based on early-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk, **Buskin and Litnik** systems;
- (3) from approximately July 6 through August 15, based on pink salmon returning to the major pink salmon systems in the Northwest Kodiak District[, OR BASED ON PINK SALMON RETURNING TO THE KARLUK SYSTEM];
- (4) from approximately August 16 through August 24, based on pink salmon returning to the Northwest Kodiak District and on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system;
- (5) from approximately August 25 through September 5, based on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system; and
- (6) after approximately September 5, based on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system and coho salmon returning to the Northwest Kodiak District

(ii) The Outer Kizhuyak Bay section must be managed

- (1) from June 1 through approximately June 15, as a mixed-stock fishery directed on early-run sockeye salmon returning to Karluk, Ayakulik, and Olga Bay, systems; the commissioner shall open, by emergency order, at least two commercial test fishing periods of 33 hours in length;
- (2) from approximately June 16 through July 5, based on early-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system;
- (3) from approximately July 6 through August 15, based on pink salmon returning to the major pink salmon systems in the **Kizhuyak Bay, Outer Kizhuyak Bay, Anton Larson Bay, and Sharatin Bay Sections of the Northwest Kodiak** [NORTHWEST KODIAK DISTRICT, OR BASED ON PINK SALMON RETURNING TO THE KARLUK SYSTEM];
- (4) from approximately August 16 through August 24, based on pink salmon returning to the **Kizhuyak Bay, Outer Kizhuyak Bay, Anton Larson Bay, and Sharatin Bay Sections**

of the Northwest Kodiak [Northwest Kodiak District] and on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system;

(5) from approximately August 25 through September 5, based on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system; and

(6) after approximately September 5, based on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system and coho salmon returning to the Northwest Kodiak District

(iii) The Outer Uganik Bay Section must be managed

(1) from June 1 through approximately June 15, as a mixed-stock fishery directed on early-run sockeye salmon returning to Karluk, Ayakulik, and Olga Bay, systems, **or sockeye returning to the Uganik system**; the commissioner shall open, by emergency order, at least two commercial test fishing periods of 33 hours in length; (2) from approximately June 16 through July 5, based on early-run sockeye salmon returning to the **Uganik and** Karluk system;

(3) from approximately July 6 through August 15, based on pink **and chum** salmon returning to the major [PINK] salmon systems in **Uganik and Terror Bays** [NORTHWEST KODIAK DISTRICT, OR BASED ON PINK SALMON RETURNING TO THE KARLUK SYSTEM];

(4) from approximately August 16 through August 24, based on pink salmon returning to the **Uganik and Terror Bay Systems** [Northwest Kodiak District] and on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system;

(5) from approximately August 25 through September 5, based on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system; and (6) after approximately September 5, based on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system and coho salmon returning to the Northwest Kodiak District

(iv) The Outer Uyak Bay Section must be managed

(1) from June 1 through approximately June 15, as a mixed-stock fishery directed on early-run sockeye salmon returning to Karluk, Ayakulik, and Olga Bay systems; the commissioner shall open, by emergency order, at least two commercial test fishing periods of 33 hours in length;

(2) from approximately June 16 through July 5, based on early-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system;

(3) from approximately July 6 through August 15, based on pink salmon returning to the salmon systems in the **Uyak, Spiridon, and Zachar bays, and pink salmon returning to the Little River System** [NORTHWEST KODIAK DISTRICT], or based on pink salmon returning to the Karluk system;

(4) from approximately August 16 through August 24, based on pink salmon returning to the **major salmon systems of the Uyak, Spiridon and Zachar Bays, and pink salmon returning to the Little River System** [NORTHWEST KODIAK DISTRICT] and on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system;

(5) from approximately August 25 through September 5, based on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system; and

(6) after approximately September 5, based on late-run sockeye salmon returning to the Karluk system and coho salmon returning to the Northwest Kodiak District.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Northwest Kodiak district is a critically important area for the seine and setnet fleet. It includes some of the largest bays on the island, many of the largest salmon systems, and two remote communities that are economically dependent on the salmon industry.

Since 2008 many pink salmon systems in the Northwest Kodiak district have chronically failed to produce at prior historical levels of production. While systems in other districts have been able to rebound from the pink salmon run failure of 2016, the Northwest Kodiak district still lags far behind in salmon production levels. Terror, Uganik, and the greater Uyak bays once provided consistently prolific runs, especially on even-years, but now produce relatively smaller numbers of pink salmon. The Central section of the Northwest district encompasses all of these bays and is by far the largest section in the Kodiak Management Area (KMA), stretching from the northeast corner of the island all the way westward to Rocky Point, encompassing dozens of large and uncorrelated salmon systems. This section is managed as a single block based on local salmon stocks as well as sockeye and pink salmon returning to the Karluk River in the Southwest Kodiak district.

Managing such a large area as a single block forces managers to open areas with weak stocks in order to provide harvest opportunities on stronger stocks elsewhere in the section. This management tactic does not provide the refined conservation approach utilized elsewhere in the KMA where sections are divided into smaller areas with more closely correlated salmon systems. Additionally, the Central section is also currently managed on even years based pink returns to the Karluk system in addition to local stocks despite no indication that Karluk bound pinks migrate through much of this area. This proposal applies a more conservative approach to managing the area while still providing an equitable conservation burden divided between gear types, and ensuring that historical access rights remain intact.

Additionally, June management of the North Cape section does not properly account for local sockeye abundance in the Buskin and Litnik systems, both of which are critically important systems for subsistence users. No commercial fishing is permitted in June in the Northeast Kodiak district in order to provide ample subsistence opportunity to Kodiak locals. However recent restrictions on subsistence harvests in the Buskin River warrant the implementation of measures to provide the department with additional tools to protect these fish from commercial harvest while subsistence restrictions are in place. Additionally, while Afognak Bay is also often closed to commercial harvest for most if not all of the salmon season, Litnik sockeye are still likely incidentally caught in the North Cape section, and the department should have more ability to close this section when subsistence restrictions are in place.

The central section should be divided into three smaller sections similar in size to other sections in the KMA. These new sections will be managed independently based on salmon returning to streams within those areas. The adoption of this proposal will allow management to better conserve weaker stocks in individual sections while providing ample harvest opportunities on those sections with more abundant stocks. Additionally, the Outer Uyak bay section will be managed based on the abundance of local pink salmon or the abundance of pink salmon headed to the Karluk system. The three distinct sections will be the Outer Uyak Bay section, the Outer Uganik section, and the Outer Kizhuyak bay section. The sections are to be defined below along with the updated management plan.

PROPOSED BY: Chris Johnson

(HQ-F23-052)
