

RC 13**Proposal 66 - To amend the Nushagak River Coho Salmon Management Plan.**

Testimony in support of proposal 66 by one of the authors

As you can see there are three sections to our proposal; A, B, and C.

- A) Would Change the escapement goal to 90,000 biological escapement goal. This is something that we discussed with our ADF&G Manger, Tim Sands. It seemed like a good idea at the time, and came out of our frustration because of the lack of funding for coho counts for the future, we thought it would be simpler to mangle for a fixed goal in the absence of sonar counts. As there would be no escapement data with which to form an accurate forecast to manage by . The Department does not anticipate funding for Coho sonar counts on the Nushagak River in the future. In our opinion, this is not the most important part of the proposal. We are willing to compromise on this section if the Department would rather keep the 60,000 to 120,000 range
- B) Section B holds the main intent of the proposal and would change the start date for the Nushagak Coho Management Plan from July 23 to August 1. After a sonar study that was conducted from 2011 through 2013, it exemplified the strong stocks of the Nushagak Coho run. The counts shows that the Nushagak Coho run was having record returns and we believe it no longer warrants the conservative start date on July 23. We propose a new start date of August 1st. Since 2013, the counting of Coho is no longer funded, and the Department does not anticipate funding in the future. Harvest data, being possibly the only prevailing data in the absence of sonar counts. ADF&G records an average of only 6% of the Coho run is in by July 23 this would be very little data with which to make management decisions. With an average of 23.8% of the Coho run in by August 1st, the Department would have data to work with, but this would still allow plenty of margin to manage for any short falls in the run.
- C) The third part of the proposal is section C, which pertains to Pink Salmon fishing within the plan prior to August 1st. Since we are proposing the start date of August 1st for the Nushagak Coho Management Plan, this regulation would be obsolete.

Thank You,

Tom O'Connor