

PROPOSAL 15 – 5 AAC 58.022. Waters; seasons; bag, possession, annual, and size limits; and special provisions for Cook Inlet–Resurrection Bay Saltwater Area.; and 5 AAC 58.060. Lower Cook Inlet Winter Salt Water King Salmon Sport Fishery Management Plan. Modify the king salmon bag and possession limit north of the latitude of Bluff Point, the Cook Inlet harvest record requirement, and the *Winter King Salmon Management Plan* to include all Cook Inlet salt waters from September 1 through March 31, and review the guideline harvest level, as follows:

5 AAC 58.022(b)(1) is amended to read:

(b).....

(1) in waters of Cook Inlet north of the latitude of Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.):

(A) king salmon:

(i) may be taken from January 1 – December 31; bag and possession limit of one fish; no size limit; an annual harvest limit of five king salmon 20 inches or greater in length, except as provided in **(iv) and** in (c) of this section;.....

...

(iv) from September 1 – March 31, king salmon are not required to be entered on a harvest record and do not count against the annual limit set out in (a)(1) of this section;

(2) in the waters of Cook Inlet south of the latitude of **Bluff Point (59° 40.00' N. lat.)** [THE ANCHOR POINT LIGHT AT 59° 46.14' N. LAT.], including all of Kachemak Bay, to the latitude of Cape Douglas at 58° 51.10' N. lat., and east to the longitude of Gore Point at 150° 57.85' W. long.:

(A) king salmon: from **September 1 – March 31** [OCTOBER 1 – MARCH 31], king salmon do not need to be entered on a harvest record and do not count against the annual limit set out in (a)(1) of this section;

...

5 AAC 58.060 is amended to read:

5 AAC 58.060. [LOWER] Cook Inlet Winter Salt Water King Salmon Sport Fishery Management Plan. (a) The purpose of the management plan under this section is to meet the Board of Fisheries' goal of slowing the growth in the sport harvest of king salmon in the salt waters of [LOWER] Cook Inlet during the winter, which occurs from **September 1** [OCTOBER 1] through March 31.

(b) In the winter salt water king salmon sport fishery in [LOWER] Cook Inlet

(1) the guideline harvest levels is **x,xxx** [3,000] king salmon;

...

(c) For the purpose of this section, [LOWER] Cook Inlet consists of the salt waters **west of the longitude of Gore Point at 150° 57.85' W. long. and north of the latitude of Cape Douglas at 58° 51.10' N. lat., including all of Kachemak Bay.** [SOUTH OF THE LATITUDE OF THE ANCHOR POINT LIGHT AT 59° 46.14' N. LAT., INCLUDING ALL OF KACHEMAK BAY, TO THE LATITUDE OF CAPE DOUGLAS AT 58° 51.10' N. LAT., AND EAST TO THE LONGITUDE OF GORE POINT AT 150° 57.85' W. LONG.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In response to public concerns regarding regulations adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) at the 2001 Lower Cook Inlet meeting, the board formed a Local Area Management Plan (LAMP) Committee charged with exploring options to slow the growth of the Cook Inlet winter king salmon fishery. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) provided Statewide Harvest Survey (SWHS) and coded wire tag data on king salmon catch from the area that indicated sport effort and harvest were increasing, but the department was not able to provide specific information regarding stock of origin of that harvest by area or time of year. The department supported Proposal 437 submitted for the October 2002 board meeting stating the “Lack of winter fishery statistics precludes the development of definitive management objectives...the winter fishery plan is a broad approach that will stabilize the winter king salmon sport fishing opportunity and harvest...” Proposal 437 went on to become 5 AAC 58.060. *Lower Cook Inlet Winter Salt Water King Salmon Sport Fishery Management Plan*. Since the creation of the plan in 2002, the department has collected SWHS data reported by season and genetics data to contribute to the discussion and understanding of potential impacts of the winter king salmon fishery on local Cook Inlet stocks.

The boundary defined in the *Lower Cook Inlet Winter Salt Water King Salmon Sport Fishery Management Plan* creates an unnecessary disparity between king salmon bag, possession and annual limits within Cook Inlet. The timing of the spawning migration of Cook Inlet king salmon stocks occurs from April through August. By including September in the winter fishery plan, anglers will no longer be required to record the king salmon harvest in the month of September as a part of their annual limit. In addition, the new regulation would align the king salmon annual limit during the period of time when spawning Cook Inlet stocks are present in Cook Inlet. This proposal would modify the timeframe of the winter king fishery by including September, and expand area to include all of Cook Inlet. This change would simplify the sport fishing regulations in the winter fishery.

The guideline harvest level (GHL) of 3,000 king salmon was established to slow the growth of the sport harvest of king salmon in the marine waters of Lower Cook Inlet. If the board’s intent was to limit the harvest of Cook Inlet stocks, then the board may want to consider if an increase should be considered to account for the contribution of nonlocal feeder king salmon harvest in Cook Inlet from September through March.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F16-118)
