

**PROPOSAL 162 - 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan.**  
Establish an Optimum Escapement Goal for Kenai River late-run king salmon, as follows:

Establish an Optimum Escapement Goal (OEG) of 15,000 – 40,000. The corresponding change in management plan language would be:

(b) The department shall manage the late run of Kenai River king salmon to achieve **an optimal** [A SUSTAINABLE] escapement goal of 15,000 – **40,000** [30,000] king salmon...

Higher in-river runs produce tremendous sport fishery benefits with no significant impact on future production or yield for escapements up to 40,000. The proposed upper goal of 40,000 includes the historical average escapement and maintains high production and yield according the Department’s recent escapement goal analysis. Returns from all historical escapements below 40,000 exceeded replacement and produced substantial yields. There was no significant correlation with returns for escapements between 22,500 and 40,000.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Kings are designated primarily for sport fish use and sport fisheries are optimum at when kings are abundant. However, the top end of the new SEG for Kenai late-run king salmon (15,000 - 30,000) is less than the historical average escapement (37,000). Management to reduce in-river runs of Kenai kings at higher run sizes would inappropriately reduce sport fishery opportunity. When escapements are projected to exceed the upper end of the SEG but still fall within the range of historical average, no management action in addition to the normal fishing regulatory regime should be taken to further reduce the escapement.

**PROPOSED BY:** Kenai River Sportfishing Association (HQ-F16-071)  
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