

PROPOSAL 19 - 5 AAC 58.060. Lower Cook Inlet Winter Salt Water King Salmon Sport Fishery Management Plan. Amend *Lower Cook Inlet Winter Salt Water King Salmon Sport Fishery Management Plan* by starting the season August 10, as follows:

- (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 **August 10** [OCTOBER 1] through March 31.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This proposal would amend the plan's designation of "winter" occurring, from the current stated date of October 1, to the proposed date of August 10, in efforts to increase recreational angler safety while maintaining the effectiveness of management actions.

According to ADF&G records for each of the past several years, the Anchor River weir was removed on August 3rd because most of the returning king salmon were already in the river.

In each of the past 5 years the Kenai River sonar (located over 8 miles up-river) was removed between Aug 10-15th because most of the returning king salmon were already in the river.

Despite the fact that the salmon returning to these Cook Inlet spawning aggregations were in-river and unavailable to recreational salt water anglers, the Lower Cook Inlet recreational troll fishery 5 king salmon limit remains in place until September 30th.

The October 1 date set forth in the management plan arbitrarily and unnecessarily restricts sport fishing opportunities for the Lower Cook Inlet recreational troll fishery. Further, if there are some stragglers, they benefit from the existing "Special Harvest Zones" and "Conservation Zones" established to protect returning spawning stocks.

Marine weather conditions in Lower Cook Inlet are a significant factor for these recreational anglers; many of whom fish from small vessels and a good number will fish alone on occasion. The marine weather after October 1 is significantly more variable and dangerous than the months of August and September.

Changing the plan's designated start of "winter" from October 1 to August 10 is unlikely to have any effect on management concerns, but could significantly improve angler safety in the fishery.

In the event that, in a future year, weir logs or river sonar logs indicate a significant shift in late-arriving king salmon, there would be sufficient time for responsive management measures to be undertaken.

PROPOSED BY: Pete Zimmerman, spokesman for Cook Inlet Recreational Fishermen
(HQ-F16-054)
