

**PROPOSAL 20 - 5 AAC 58.060(a). 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 extending season to April 30, 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 October 1 through **April 30** [MARCH 31].

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** This proposal would amend the plan's designation for the end date of "winter" fishery, from the presently stated March 31, to the proposed end date of April 30.

According to ADF&G records for the 8 year period of 2007-2014, a total of 38,248 king salmon entered the Anchor River. Yet, for the same 8-year period, a total of only 32 king salmon entered the Anchor River prior to May 13.

Years of data confirm that the numbers of king salmon passing the Anchor River weir prior to May 13 is very low and virtually insignificant. Yet despite these facts, this management plan imposes the 5 king salmon limit after March 31 on a salt water troll sport fishery that catches primarily non-local "feeder" king salmon and not king salmon returning to Cook Inlet spawning aggregations.

This management plan's March 31 date is not reflective of actual migration data for king salmon returning to Cook Inlet spawning aggregations.

The March 31 date set forth in the management plan arbitrarily and unnecessarily restricts sport fishing opportunities for the Lower Cook Inlet recreational troll fishery. Particularly in light of the fact that the fishery catches primarily non-Cook Inlet "feeder" king salmon. In addition, king salmon returning to Cook Inlet spawning aggregations benefit from designated "Special Harvest Zones" and "Conservation Zones" established to protect stocks of concern.

The sustainable salmon fisheries policy states that salmon management objectives should be appropriate to the scale and intensity of uses (5 AAC 39.222(c)(3)(A)). The policy also provides that the burden of conservation should be shared among all fisheries in close proportion to their respective use (5 AAC 39.222(b)(4)(D) and (f)(4)). This idea of proportional burden sharing is also found in the mixed stock policy, which likewise provides that the burden of conservation should be shared among all fisheries in close proportion to their respective harvest on the stock of concern (5 AAC 39.220(b)).

The management plan's March 31 date imposes more of the conservation burden on the Lower Cook Inlet recreational king salmon troll fishery than is warranted in light of its very low impact on Cook Inlet king salmon stocks of concern. The best available information shows that the proposed April 30 amendment to the management plan will not generate any sustained yield concerns on Cook Inlet Chinook salmon spawning aggregations.

The Lower Cook Inlet recreational salt water troll fishery does not pose a threat to conservation of either Cook Inlet king salmon stocks or visiting non-local feeder king salmon.

However, it is an extremely important fishery for both the local economy and for personal and family consumption. King salmon fishing in what is typically viewed as the “off” season is very important for providing residents with the opportunity to obtain fish for personal or family consumption. Particularly in light of strict harvest restrictions on many traditional fishing locations, the chance to harvest abundant non-local feeder king salmon for personal consumption is a very important recreational fishing opportunity. One that should not be restricted any more than absolutely necessary.

For many recreational anglers, the current March 31 imposition of the 5 king salmon limit is viewed as an unnecessary restriction, one that is not rationally related to conservations, and a limit on their ability to catch fish for consumption purposes. As a result, their number of fishing trips would be reduced, along with the associated economic inputs, while their resentment may increase. Beside the economic impacts from the accumulation of lost recreational fishing opportunities, anglers may find themselves purchasing imported farmed salmon as an inadequate substitute.

Changing the plan’s designated end of “winter” from the currently designated March 31 date, to the proposed date of April 30, is highly unlikely to have any effect on management concerns, but would have considerable benefit to the Lower Cook Inlet recreational feeder king troll fishery participants, their families, and the local and regional economy.

**PROPOSED BY:** Cook Inlet Recreational Fishermen (CIRF) Pete Zimmerman, spokesman  
(HQ-F16-051)

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