

PROPOSAL 105

5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan.

Increase the Kenai River late-run king salmon sustainable escapement goal range to 15,000-35,000 salmon, as follows:

(a) The purposes of this management plan are to ensure an adequate escapement of late-run king salmon into the Kenai River system and to provide management guidelines to the department. The department shall manage the late-run Kenai River king salmon stocks primarily for sport and guided sport uses in order to provide the sport and guided sport fishermen with a reasonable opportunity to harvest these salmon resources over the entire run, as measured by the frequency or inriver restrictions.

(b) The department shall manage the late run of Kenai River king salmon to achieve a sustainable escapement goal of **15,000-35,000** [13,500 - 27,000] king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer as described in this section.

(c) In the sport fishery,

(1) if the sustainable escapement goal is projected to be exceeded, the commissioner may, by emergency order, extend the sport fishing season up to seven days during the first week of August;

(2) from July 1 through July 31, a person may not use more than one single hook in the Kenai River downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake;

(3) that portion of the Kenai River downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake is open to unguided sport fishing from a nonmotorized vessel on Mondays in July; for purposes of this paragraph, a nonmotorized vessel is one that does not have a motor on board.

(d) If the projected late-run king salmon escapement is less than **15,000** [13,500] king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer, the department shall

(1) close the sport fisheries in the Kenai River and in the salt waters of Cook Inlet north of the latitude of Bluff Point to the taking of king salmon;

(2) close the commercial drift gillnet fishery in the Central District within one mile of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline north of the Kenai River and within one and one-half miles of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline south of the Kenai River; and

(3) close the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Upper Subdistrict of the Central District.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Continued weak returns of Kenai River king salmon. The trend towards lower numbers of returning king salmon on the Kenai River has resulted in lower escapement goals. Sustainability of these iconic fish stocks is in jeopardy.

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