

**PROPOSAL 123**

**5 AAC 21.353. Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan.**

Rename Drift Gillnet Area 2 to the "Conservation and Northern District Allocation Sanctuary Area", as follows:

Under the Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan part (g) item (2) rename the "Drift Gillnet Area 2" to the "Conservation and Northern District Allocation Sanctuary Area"

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The northern district sockeye and coho commercial set net and sport fisheries have been highly restricted since 2012. Northern district user groups in recent years have had restricted fishing for all Northern Cook Inlet species that have escapement goals.

The Department is not taking the direction of the preamble of the Central District Drift Gillnet Management Plan. "The department shall manage the commercial drift gillnet fishery to minimize the harvest of Northern District and Kenai Coho in order to provide sport and guided sport fishermen a reasonable opportunity to harvest these salmon stocks over the entire run, as measured by the frequency of inriver restrictions."

Cook Inlet is being exclusively managed for the Kenai River sockeye, as evidenced in area wide emergency orders for the drift fishery, which have frequently been implemented, at times when northern district streams are being restricted, due to low Coho and Sockeye abundance.

Attaining the optimum escapement goal for Kenai River sockeye, should not take priority over attaining minimum escapement goals of Northern District stocks. If no board action is taken, northern stocks will continue to suffer. The Coho sport fishery on the Little Susitna and Jim Creek (2 of the most participated in fisheries in the Matsu Valley) have largely been restricted since 2012. The Cook Inlet commercial fishery is a mix stock fishery; northern bound fish need more protection. Reasonable opportunity to harvest Coho Salmon on Jim Creek and the Little Susitna River for the duration of the run has not existed consistently in the last 11 years.

Establishing Area 2 as a sanctuary / corridor for northern bound fish, allows for the protection of northern stocks and does not restrict commercial fishing time for the drifters.

**PROPOSED BY:** Ben Allen

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