

Susitna Chinook Sportfish Opportunity and Harvest

Provided by Ben Allen

The table provided in RC 3 p.44 illustrates sport vs. commercial Chinook harvest for 2013-2017. By adding an 8% catch and release mortality to overall sport harvest, I computed overall mortality as part of the sport harvest and compared the sport impact/harvest vs. commercial impact/harvest, when compared to the entire run.

	Commercial	Sport	Total Run
2013	.08%	2.8%	127,757
2014	1.5%	3.10%	90,492
2015	1.1%	4.3%	136,996
2016	2%	6%	97,426
2017	3.2%	5%	63,275

These numbers indicate that both stake holders (northern district setnetters and sport users) have a minimal impact on the fishery. Additionally, these figures indicate that the Chinook priority user group (the sportsfishery) has nearly the same impact as the commercial fishery. Total run numbers, provided by the department in RC 3, clearly show run strength are dependent on factors outside of northern district user groups.

The intent of proposal 200 is to show the Board how limited sportfish Chinook opportunity has been in the Susitna Drainage. The sportfishing industry desperately needs some level of predictability moving forward. Current management and penalization of the least impactful user groups is unacceptable. I (Ben Allen) own one of the oldest (founded in 1978) and reputable guide/charter business's in the Matsu Valley. Today, I do not have 1 King Salmon trip booked in the Susitna drainage, due to the uncertainty of regulations and management for 2020.

In the Chinook sportsfishery, catch and release and harvest of Chinook under 28", are two valuable tools that the Department can use during times of low abundance or uncertainty in the Chinook fishery. Complete closure should only be a last resort.

There is clearly a contradiction in management, when the Department allows Chinook sportfishing and harvest opportunity within the saltwaters of Cook Inlet, but denies the Northern district priority user group opportunity to participate with any level of certainty or predictability.