

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

#81-88-FB

Late Kenai River King Salmon
Management Plan

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#77-27-FB,
#78-42-FB,
#79-50-FB,
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Goal:

The goal of this plan is to insure a sustained yield by achieving an adequate spawning escapement of late run king salmon through the subsistence, commercial and sport fisheries and into spawning areas of the Kenai River Drainage.

Findings of Fact:

The guidelines in this plan for managing the sport fishery on late run Kenai River king salmon are based on the following findings of fact:

- (a) The numerical size of the late Kenai River run has not been accurately defined because of the glacial characteristics of the Kenai River and the unreliability of sonar estimates for king salmon. Consequently, the necessary spawning escapement goal is not known. However, historical commercial catch data indicates a run of limited size that could be damaged by increased harvests.
- (b) Since the mid 1970's commercial catches and catch rates have increased as follows: Prior to the mid 1970's the eastside set net fishery caught an average of 4,300 late run kings at an average rate of 12.9 kings per fishing hour. Since the mid 1970's catches have increased to an average of 7,100 late run kings at a catch rate of 31.5 kings per fishing hour.
- (c) In addition to the ongoing commercial set net fishery, an intense sport fishery exists. This fishery, with 60,000 man-days of effort, now harvests an average of 4,200 late run king salmon. The intensity of this fishery is expected to continue to increase because of the special attraction of king salmon to sports fishermen.
- (d) The combined harvest of late run Kenai king salmon by all user groups should not be allowed to dramatically increase as the viability of the stock may be damaged. However, any reduction in commercial fishing time in the eastside set net districts to significantly reduce the incidental harvest of king salmon could result in sockeye returns to the Kenai River system above optimum escapement levels.
- (e) Increased sockeye runs in the Kenai and Russian River are anticipated for the next five years based on the achievement of desired escapement goals for the 1976-1980 parent years. Increased Kenai River sockeye runs will result in increased fishing time for the commercial fishery. This increased fishing time will further increase the incidental commercial harvest of late run Kenai king salmon.

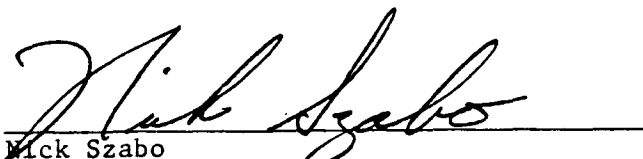
Management Directives:

Based on the facts stated above, the sport fishery on late run Kenai River king salmon will be regulated according to the following criteria:

- (1) Sport harvest of late run king salmon in the Kenai River shall be on an equitable 1:1 basis with the commercial set net fishery in statistical areas 244-20,30,40 (Upper Subdistrict of the Central District) that occurs during regularly scheduled 12 hour commercial fishing periods each week after July 1.
- (2) To determine the allowable sport harvest of late run king salmon in the Kenai River, the commercial set net harvest of late run king salmon from the Upper Subdistrict will be statistically projected after July 20th to estimate the remaining commercial catch likely to be harvested from July 20th until the end of the run or about the end of July. This will be added to the commercial harvest between July 1 and July 20 as determined from fish tickets.
- (3) The king salmon harvested from the commercial set net fishery in the Upper Subdistrict during extra fishing periods in addition to the two regularly scheduled 12 hour weekly fishing periods and during any subsistence fishing periods will be subtracted from the allowable 1:1 sport harvest of late run king salmon from the Kenai River.
- (4) The sport fishery for late run king salmon in the Kenai River is to be closed by emergency order when the sport catch exceeds the eastside set net commercial harvest levels by more than ten percent to allow for a reasonable opportunity to implement the necessary management measures.
- (5) This policy will be modified during those years when the late run king salmon return is either substantially greater or less than historic levels as determined by appropriate biological indicators, i.e., sport and/or commercial catch rates. The hydrological and oceanographic, etc. conditions will also be considered in the analysis of the biological indices. During years when these conditions preclude management by the basic policy, the Commissioner shall determine the appropriateness of an in season emergency order.

ADOPTED: Juneau, Alaska
January 23, 1981

VOTE: 6-0 (Beaton absent)



Nick Szabo
Chairman