

PROPOSAL 104

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

Adopt an optimal escapement goal and amend the paired restrictions in the *Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan*, as follows:

Adopt Kenai Late Run King Salmon Conservation and Management Plan revisions as follows:

Sustainable Escapement Goal	Current	13,500 – 27,000 big fish
Optimum Escapement Goal	Proposed	16,500 – 30,000 big fish

Preseason Assessment

The Department shall, using all available information, provide the public with a projection of total run size of Late-Run Kenai River King Salmon at the earliest possible time. Prior to June 20 make a determination of whether projected run of Late-Run Kenai River King Salmon is large enough to support the full amount of fishing mortality provided for in the Combined Kasilof Salmon Management Plan, the Late-Run Kenai River Sockeye Salmon Management Plan and a full season of fishing with bait and retention of Kenai River king salmon of all sizes in the Kenai River sport fishery.

Early Season Conservation Regime

- A. If the projected run is large enough to support full fisheries while also meeting the King OEG, then the Department may implement normal fisheries by existing regulation:

Escapement within or above OEG range (with normal fishing)

<u>Kenai River King Sport Fishery</u>	<u>Set Net Commercial Fishery</u>
Bait allowed / Retention of all sizes allowed	Inriver goals, EO limits & windows as per Kenai late Run Sockeye Management Plan based on sockeye run size tiers

- B. If the projected run is not large enough to support full fisheries, then the Department shall implement a front-end Conservation Period management strategy:

Kenai River King Sport Fishery (see note 1) Set Net Commercial Fishery (see note 2)
Within OEG Range

Bait prohibited, no size restriction; or,	No more than 24 hours per week
Bait prohibited, size restriction (36" TL); or,	No more than 18 hours per week, restrictions on number and depth of nets 600 ft fishery
Bait prohibited, no retention.	No more than 12 hours per week, one deep or two shallow nets, 600 ft fishery exempt but limited to one net per permit

Between lower bound of SEG range & lower bound of OEG range

Bait prohibited, no retention; or,	No more than 12 hours per week, one deep or two shallow nets, 600 ft fishery exempt but limited to one net per permit
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Closed	Closed
<u>Below SEG range</u>	

Closed

Closed

1 Kasilof regulations identical to those implemented for the Kenai River.

2 The prohibition of bait and the prohibition of retention are the triggers for paired restrictions in the Kenai and Kasilof area set net fishery effective June 25: Paired restrictions are applied to the entire Upper Subdistrict set gillnet commercial fishery (including the East Foreland Section).

Personal use fishery regulation paired as per the existing plan at any point in the fishing season: No bait in sport fishery triggers no retention of kings in the PU fishery.

In Season Regime

In-season assessments of Kenai king run strength are made in July by ADF&G based on a combination of sonar count, harvest and other fishery data. Confidence in estimates increases as the run progresses from the 25% point (July 17 on average) through the 50% point (July 26 on average). Based on in-season assessment of run strength using all available data, the following management actions may be taken:

- A. If the projected run is large enough to support full fisheries, then the Department may implement normal fisheries according to existing regulation:

Run size forecast within or above OEG range

<u>Kenai River King Sport Fishery</u>	<u>Set Net Commercial Fishery</u>
Bait allowed / Retention of all sizes allowed	Inriver goals, EO limits & windows as per Kenai late Run Sockeye Management Plan based on sockeye run size tiers

- B. If the projected run is not large enough to support full fisheries, then the Department shall implement an in-season conservation management strategy:

<u>Kenai River King Sport Fishery*</u>	<u>Set Net Commercial Fishery</u>
<u>Within OEG range:</u>	
Bait prohibited, no size restriction; or,	No more than 24 hours plus net restrictions on number and depth of nets. 600 ft. exempt but only one net per permit.
Bait prohibited, size restriction (36" TL); or,	No more than 18 hours plus net restrictions on number and depth of nets. 600 ft. exempt but only one net per permit.
Bait prohibited, no retention.	No more than 12 hours plus net restrictions on number and depth of nets. 600 ft. exempt but only one net per permit.

Below OEG range

Closed	Closed
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** Kasilof regulations identical to those implemented for the Kenai River.*

August Regime

- Sport fishery closes after July 31.
- Continue to operate East Side Set Net Fishery under paired restrictions in place when the sport fishery ends with a bait restriction.

- Under existing SEG, continue to operate under paired restrictions unless escapement is projected to exceed 20,000 big Kenai kings (approximate midpoint of SEG range).

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Board previously adopted paired restrictions in the Kenai River sport fishery and East Side Set Net commercial fishery to share the conservation burden during periods of low king abundance. However, the current regulations do not provide adequate protection of escapement or equitably share the king conservation burden – the commercial set net fishery continues to catch a large percentage of the combined sport and commercial harvest share as king runs continue to languish at low levels. During low king runs, inadequate early season limitations risk inseason closures which are disastrous to both the sport and commercial fishery. The current plan does not adequately protect late run kings during the last week of June while they are moving and staging outside of river mouths or in August when a significant proportion of the large females are returning. Finally, the current SEG is not based on maximum sustained production which is the appropriate standard for the sport priority king run – rather it is based on a lesser maximum sustained yield standard which favors an increased allocation to the commercial fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai River Sportfishing Association

(HQ-F19-122)
