

PROPOSAL 116

5 AAC 57.160. Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-run King Salmon Management Plan; and 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan.

Limit sport fisheries for king salmon on the Kenai River based on inseason abundance, as follows:

In the sport regulations under the lower Kenai River Mainstem. Date range January 1 - August 31st;

Add to Kenai River Jan 1st - June 30th: If the minimum escapement goal for King Salmon has not been obtained by "Actual Sonar King Counts" by June 10th, or projected to make minimum escapements by June 15th through actual sonar escapement numbers established thru June 10th, the Early-run King Salmon Run will be shutdown until it reaches the projected minimum goal by "Actual Sonar King Counts" on or before June 30th. Late Kenai River King Salmon Management Plan begins July 1st, which, at that time the Early-run King Salmon management expires.

Add: From RM 0-50 Kenai River King Salmon Late Run Sport Management Plan: If the King salmon escapement has not reached the minimum escapement goal of 13,500 Chinook/King salmon by July 19th, nor can be forecast by actual sonar count averages thru July 19th, be able to make the minimum escapement goal by July 23rd, then the sport fishery shall close completely until July 31st or minimum escapement goals are met by actual sonar numbers. No fishing for King Salmon is allowed after July 31st, unless actual maximum escapement has been achieved by actual sonar numbers before August 1st..

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The issue important in my mind is that many Kings are getting caught on weak years before they have a chance to escape. With the restrictions on the commercial fisherman there has to be some evenly paired restrictions. Commercial fisherman don't even fish for the Early-run King Salmon, but seem to get the blame. As a drift fisherman I catch very few kings, and the one's I do are probably 66-75% "Jacks." It is important the sport fisherman help preserve our resource, like we the commercial fisherman do. It is important that if Kings are not showing up before June 15th on the Early-run or July 23rd on Late-run Kings, commercial fisherman are not the only ones getting the restrictions to preserve the run. Especially so on the Early-Run, which ends on June 30th and most commercial fisherman in the Central District don't even participate. Drift fishing doesn't open until the 19th of June and Set-netters in July. Most drifters don't even start fishing until the last days of June. When escapements until July 19th aren't up to par for Late-run King salmon, equal and assertive restrictions should be placed on the sport sector. Sport fisherman mostly control their own destiny at this point with the current restrictions in place on set-netters in early and mid-July, and the very low catches of the drift fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Mark Walker

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