

PROPOSAL 171

5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

Reduce the Kenai River personal use bag limit for king salmon to one salmon less than 36” in length, as follows:

(1) in the Kenai River as follows,

(B) the annual limit is as specified in 5 AAC 77.525, except that only one king salmon, **less than 36 inches in length**, may be retained per household, **king salmon caught 36 inches and longer in length must be released**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Low abundances of “large” Kenai River king salmon trigger inseason restrictions to commercial, personal use, and sport fisheries. By management plan intent language, Kenai River king salmon are to be managed primarily for sport and guided sport use. In an effort to put more large Kenai River king salmon inriver and provide all user groups more fishing opportunity Alaska Sportfishing Association suggests limiting Kenai River Personal Use Dip Net harvest to king salmon under 36 inches in length. This proposal is a package with a similar proposal for Upper Cook Inlet commercial fisheries.

Harvest of king salmon under 36 inches in length would still be allowed in the Kenai River personal use fishery. Any king salmon caught 36 inches or more in length, however, would be required to be released. When salmon are being caught rapidly in the personal use fishery—this size limit has the added benefit of making it easier to identify (by size) those king salmon required to be released. With this size limit, the dip net fishery could proceed without emergency inseason restriction, and unintended violations that currently occur—when dip netters mistakenly harvest small king salmon (at times king salmon harvest would currently be prohibited) would likely decrease. Personal use fishery participants would still have the opportunity to harvest a smaller king salmon. All king salmon 36 inches or larger released, and escaping through the personal use and sport fishery, would count toward achievement of the Kenai River “large” king salmon escapement goal. Therefore, escapement of more “large” king salmon helps maintain fishing and harvest opportunity for all user groups.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Sportfishing Association/Martin Meigs (HQ-F19-083)
