

Northern District King Salmon Management Plan (5 proposals)

PROPOSAL 199

5 AAC 21.366. Northern District King Salmon Management Plan.

Amend the *Northern District King Salmon Management Plan*, as follows:

(a) The purpose of this management plan is to ensure an adequate escapement of king salmon into the Northern District drainages and to provide management guidelines to the department. The department shall manage the Northern District king salmon stocks primarily for sport and guided sport uses in order to provide sport and guided sport fishermen with a reasonable opportunity to harvest these salmon over the entire run as measured by the frequency of inriver restrictions. The department shall manage the Northern District for the commercial harvest of king salmon as follows:

[(10) IF THE DESHKA RIVER IS CLOSED TO SPORT FISHING, THE COMMISSIONER SHALL CLOSE, BY EMERGENCY ORDER, THE COMMERCIAL KING SALMON FISHERY THROUGHOUT THE NORTHERN DISTRICT FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE FISHING PERIODS PROVIDED FOR UNDER THIS SECTION;]

(10) If the sport fishery on the Deshka River

(A) is closed or if retention of king salmon is prohibited, the commissioner shall, by emergency order, close the commercial king salmon fishery throughout the Northern District for the remainder of the fishing periods provided for under this section; or

(B) is restricted to retention of king salmon under 28 inches or less in length as measured from the tip of snout to tip of tail, the commissioner shall, by emergency order, reduce the time allowed per fishing period provided for in this section to no more than six hours in duration.

(12) If the sport fishery on the Little Susitna River

(A) is closed or if retention of king salmon is prohibited, the commissioner shall, by emergency order, close the commercial king salmon fishery in the General Sub-district of the Northern District including areas 247-41, 247-42, and 247-43, for the remainder of the fishing periods provided for under this section; or

(B) is restricted to retention of king salmon under 28 inches or less in length as measured from the tip of snout to tip of tail, the commissioner shall, by emergency order, reduce the time allowed per fishing period provided for in this section to no more than six hour provision in the General Sub-district of the Northern District including areas 247-41, 247-42, and 247-43.

(13) If the inseason Deshka River run projection is below the sustainable escapement goal; the commissioner may, by emergency order, close the commercial king salmon fishery throughout the Northern District for the remainder of the fishing periods provided for under this section.

(14) If the inseason Little Susitna River run projection is below the sustainable escapement goal the commissioner may, by emergency order, reduce the time allowed per fishing period provided for in this section to no more than six hours in duration throughout the Northern District.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Amend the *Northern District King Salmon Management Plan* to align paired restrictions between the sport fishery and set net fishery. Without direction within a plan, different conservation restrictions to different user groups unavoidably cause unequal sharing of the conservation burden. Perceived unequal sharing of conservation burdens has resulted in emergency petitions submitted to the Board of Fisheries.

PROPOSED BY: Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission/Mike Wood (HQ-F19-048)

PROPOSAL 200

5 AAC 21.366. Northern District King Salmon Management Plan.

Close the Northern District commercial king salmon fishery when the sport fishery in the Susitna or Knik Arm drainages are restricted, as follows:

Amend item (10) of the Northern District King Salmon management plan to state the following "if any rivers / streams in the Susitna and Knik Arm drainages, where King Salmon sport fishing is allowed, have harvest restrictions, the commissioner shall close, by emergency order, the commercial King Salmon fishery throughout the Northern District until the King Salmon sport fishery harvest restrictions are rescinded

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? King Salmon harvest opportunity in the Susitna drainage, has largely been denied by emergency order regulation consistently since 2009. King Salmon harvest in Unit 2, has not even occurred since 2012 (in 2012 the King Salmon fishery closed on June 25, which is prior to peak run strength within Unit 2).

According to the Northern District King Salmon Management Plan, "the department shall manage King Salmon stocks primarily for sport and guided sport uses in order to provide sport and guided sport fishermen with a reasonable opportunity to harvest these salmon over the entire run as measured by the frequency of inriver restrictions."

Road accessible wild King Salmon sportfishing harvest opportunity, with the exception of the Little Susitna River (which is primarily a boat fishery) has not occurred since 2012 in the Knik Arm and Susitna Drainages.

According to a 1985 Board of Fisheries Finding signed by the Board Chair, the Northern District King Salmon set net fishery was opened, on the premises of "available Chinook surpluses for harvest." Additionally this finding stated "If there is no harvestable Chinook population identified beyond the sport fishery requirements, the Northern District commercial set net fishery will be closed."

PROPOSED BY: Ben Allen (EF-F19-054)

PROPOSAL 201

5 AAC 21.366. Northern District King Salmon Management Plan.

Amend paired restrictions in the Deshka River king salmon sport and commercial fisheries, as follows:

This proposal requests that the Board change section (10) to the following.

1. If the Deshka River sport king salmon fishery is open to sport fishing, including catch and release sport fishing, the Northern District commercial king salmon fishery shall be open unless otherwise regulated in this management plan.
2. When the Deshka River sport king salmon fishery is regulated by emergency order to reduce sport fishing harvest through gear or time restrictions, the Northern District king salmon commercial fishery fishing periods shall by emergency order be 7:00 am to 1:00 pm on Mondays.
3. If the Deshka River sport king salmon fishery is closed to sport fishing, the Northern District commercial king salmon fishery shall be closed to fishing.
4. If the Deshka River sport king salmon fishery is reopened open to sport fishing, including catch and release sport fishing, the Northern District commercial king salmon fishery shall be reopened unless otherwise regulated in this management plan.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In section (10), copy below, the Northern District King Salmon Management Plan states that if the Deshka River is closed to sport fishing the commercial king salmon fishery shall be closed for the remainder of the season.

(10) if the Deshka River is closed to sport fishing, the commissioner shall close, by emergency order, the commercial king salmon fishery throughout the Northern District for the remainder of the fishing periods provided for under this section; and

At times the Deshka River has been closed to sport fishing and later reopened to catch and release, which is sport fishing opportunity that results in king salmon mortality, however the commercial king salmon fishery is not reopened. This results in lost harvest opportunity on other Northern District king salmon stocks for the commercial fishers while the sport fishery is open. The current practice of allowing catch and release in the Deshka River while keeping the Northern District closed shifts the larger conservation burden onto the commercial fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Northern District Set Netters Association of Cook Inlet/Stephen Braund
(HQ-F19-060)

PROPOSAL 202

5 AAC 21.366. Northern District King Salmon Management Plan.

Amend the *Northern District King Salmon Management Plan* to allow operation of one set gillnet per permit, as follows:

Amend 5 AAC 21.366 (5) to read “No CFEC permit holder may operate more than one set gillnet **per permit** at a time.”

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? When the Board of Fisheries adopted the Northern District King Salmon Management Plan in November 1985, a person could

only own and operate one CFEC S0H4 set net permit for Upper Cook Inlet. The Northern District Management Plan further regulated gear to one net per permit during this fishery.

In 2011, when the Board of Fisheries modified the regulation to allow a Cook Inlet set net fishers to own and operate two set gillnet permits (S0H4), provisions for when the Northern District Management Plan is in effect were not addressed. This results in making the current language in 5 AAC 21.366 (5) confusing and inconsistent with the intent of the Board of Fisheries action in 2011 and subsequent regulation.

This proposal would clarify regulation and allow one net per permit during the period regulated by the Northern District Management Plan. This proposal is consistent with Board of Fisheries action where the Board of Fisheries voted to allow one net per permit in the Kasilof River Special Harvest Area.

This proposal is a bookkeeping measure to eliminate confusion in the management plan, make the current language consistent with the original intent of the gear restriction, and make the two regulations consistent.

PROPOSED BY: Northern District Set Netters Association of Cook Inlet/Stephen Braund
(HQ-F19-061)

PROPOSAL 203

5 AAC 21.366. Northern District King Salmon Management Plan.

Provide additional fishing periods in the Northern District king salmon commercial fishery when the Dëshka River king salmon sport fishery is liberalized, as follows:

5 AAC 21.366(a)(2) would be amended to include a new subsection, as follows:

(2) fishing periods are from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Mondays;

If the Dëshka River king salmon sport fishery bag limit is increased to two or more king salmon per day, the commissioner may open, by emergency order, one additional commercial fishing period per week, as defined in 5 AAC 21.360(i), not to exceed 6 hours in duration;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Northern District King Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 21.366) was first adopted in 1986. The purpose of the plan was to provide for a small, conservative commercial fishery on Northern Cook Inlet king salmon stocks, while ensuring sport and guided sport fishermen with a reasonable opportunity to harvest these stocks over the entire run as measured by the frequency of inriver restrictions. To meet these objectives, the management plan specifies gear, time, and area restrictions to the commercial fishery in order to moderate king salmon harvest. Moreover, the commercial fishery has a king salmon cap of 12,500 fish, which if met, closes the fishery. This cap was met only one time, the first year of the fishery, primarily as a result of set gillnet fishermen from the Upper Subdistrict fishing in the Northern District. After registration requirements went into effect in the early 1990's,

harvest declined considerably and for the past 10 years has averaged around 1,800 king salmon per year. Genetic stock identification data show that less than half of these kings are Susitna River king salmon. Estimates of the total run of king salmon in the Susitna River are more than 100,000 fish annually; thus, the commercial fishery harvests less than 1 % of the annual run of Susitna River king salmon.

Currently, the management plan states that if the Deshka River king salmon sport fishery is closed, the entire Northern District king salmon commercial fishery closes. However, the management plan does not provide any kind of option for increased commercial fishery opportunity if the Deshka River sport fishery is liberalized.

In the essence of "sharing the burden of conservation," this proposal seeks to also "share the wealth," by providing the Northern District king salmon commercial fishery with a little extra fishing time when the Deshka River king salmon sport fishery is liberalized. Specifically, if the Deshka River king salmon sport fishery bag limit is increased from 1 fish per day to 2 or more fish per day, the Northern District king salmon commercial fishery will be provided an additional day of fishing per week not to exceed 6 hours in duration. This would apply only to the time period covered by 5 AAC 21.366, or May 25 through June 24.

PROPOSED BY: Betty Gilcrist

(HQ-F19-024)
