

PROPOSAL 135

5 AAC 09.365. South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June Salmon Management Plan.

Amend the *South Unimak and Shumigan Islands Management Plan* to reduce commercial salmon fishing time in the Shumagin Islands Section, as follows:

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(X) The ADF&G will maintain a sockeye catch ratio approaching South Unimak at 82% and Shumagin Islands at 18%. If Shumagin Island Section fishery achieves 18% of the June Salmon Management Plan catch based on daily reports, the ADF&G shall shutdown this section until fish ticket reports total less than 18%.

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What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The South Unimak and Shumagin Island June Fishery has shifted, placing greater pressure on stocks in the Shumagins. In 1975 a sockeye GHL based on Bristol Bay forecast was implemented at 6.8% Unimak and 1.5% Shumagins. The percentages were based on historical catch data (1997 S. Pen AMR, p.2) This GHL remained in place until it was removed in 2001. While the annual amount of sockeye caught varied, the catch ratio between the areas remained at approximately 81.93% Unimak (June) to 18.07% Shumagins (June) for 26 years. In addition to the GHL, the two areas percentages were spread over four time segments to assure that fishing pressure was even more evenly distributed.

This method of fishing while designed to allow a fishery based on Bristol Bay sockeye health, was also beneficial to alleviating pressure on Chignik sockeye transiting migratory pathways in the Shumagins.

Proposed now is that the Shumagin catch would be regulated in such a way that it would approximate 18% of the combined June Unimak and Shumagin fishery catch. If during an opening, the daily reports show the total Shumagin sockeye catch to have exceeded 18%, the Shumagin fishery will close until the appropriate ratio is met and then it may be reopened. This assures the bulk of the sockeye catch focuses more heavily on Bristol Bay sockeye stocks which are presently quite healthy. If a time should arise when Bristol Bay should need protection, then the entire GHL (from 1975-2000) could be implemented and attached to the Bristol Bay forecast as it once was.

The intent is to protect migratory pathways used by Chignik sockeye by returning the interception harvest effort to historical levels and distribution.

What would happen if nothing is changed?

If nothing is done this expanded mixed stock fishery will continue to prosecute larger numbers of eastbound Fish on stocks that are having a difficult time maintaining escapements and or yields.

What are other solutions you considered? Why did you reject them?

Many other solutions have been considered however, the GHL and how it distributed catch is proven to be workable. Implementing a version of the previous system that was in effect for 20+

years and was based on historical catches is reasonable. Windows already implemented could remain in place and the expected result is that fishing pressure would move to the Unimak section (similar to the historical fishery) as closures in the Shumagins arise. Any west bound sockeye not caught in the Shumagins are expected to be available in the Unimak section.

This proposal could be expected to benefit the S. Pen sockeye escapement which has not been met in 2018, 2019, and 2020. Before the GHF was introduced in 1975, the S. Pen sockeye escapements also languished..

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