

PROPOSAL 312 (formerly ACR 4)

5 AAC 21.382. Kenai River late-run king salmon stock of concern management plan.

Increase the season dates and weekly fishing periods for dip net gear under the *Kenai River laterun king salmon stock of concern management plan* (5AAC 21.382) as follows:

5 AAC 21.382.(g).(5)

(5) From June 20 through [July 31] **August 15;**

...

(B) openings [may] **will** occur outside of specified openings in this section based on abundance of sockeye salmon **from 7am-7pm seven days a week unless closed by emergency order.** [as announced by emergency order, for not more than three 12-hour periods per week];

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The dipnetting provisions for the Upper Subdistrict setnet fishery in “5 AAC 21.382. Kenai River late-run king salmon stock of concern management plan” were instituted very late in the meeting process after all opportunity for public involvement and comment were past. As a result it was a very, very rough framework with a lot of unknowns. After this summer and prosecution of this completely new and experimental fishery, we know quite a bit more about it and some adjustment is warranted. Dipnetting in the open inlet is clearly very low efficacy and extremely dependent on many variables. Tidal Currents, Weather, and fish densities produce a huge range of results from completely unfishable to possibly financially viable harvests. This fishery is inherently perfectly clean, is 100% targetable and has zero impact on any king salmon returns. However current levels of opportunity are insufficient to produce relevant sockeye harvests. Due to the low impact nature of this fishery I would like to see increased time and opportunity allowed in order for people to actually try to make it work.

First, there is no reason for the fishery to close on July 31. With mandated release of both king and coho salmon there is no conceivable reason for this fishery to close early. Our fishing season has gone to Aug 15th for a very long time and substantial amounts of sockeye are still on area beaches in August.

Second, I would like to see a lot more open time so that people could work their fishing around it. Much of the time there will not be densities of fish to justify fishing, and it is incredibly important to be able to fish whenever there are sufficient fish on each individual fisherperson’s site to make the dipnetting work. Dipnetting in the open inlet is completely unprecedented. This is not dipnetting in a river. We regularly have weather that is completely prohibitive to the gear type. Fishing in 5 foot seas, the dipnets come completely out of the water with every wave which basically reduces effectiveness to zero. This seems obvious, but I in fact tried fishing one rough day this summer to see if it was as bad as I expected. It was. It is extremely weather dependent. Expecting the department to give opening times that are situated around weather, fish densities, and other scheduling issues for individual fishermen is completely unfeasible. I would like to see dipnetting open from 7am-7pm every day from June 20th to Aug 15th. Expected harvests are still quite low, and current management issues basically guarantee an overabundance of sockeye. Dipnetting 7 days a week is almost certainly warranted by sockeye numbers in all recent years. In the extremely unlikely case where managers were concerned about sockeye harvest in the

dipnet fishery, they could easily close openers but this is so unlikely that I think it is entirely reasonable to have the default be scheduled fishing time. This would allow for planning and predictability for fishermen to work around other jobs and the fishing variables already mentioned and would relieve the pressure on the department to constantly make announcements. Particularly in the possible scenario where other gear types with higher catch potentials (beach seines etc) are being actively managed by the department having them juggle dipnet openings as well seems completely unnecessary.

PROPOSED BY: Joseph Person

(HQ-F24-ACR4)

PROPOSAL 313 (formerly ACR 8)

5 AAC 21.382. Kenai River late-run king salmon stock of concern management plan.

Add set beach seine nets as legal gear under the *Kenai River late-run king salmon stock of concern management plan* (5AAC 21.382).

Add set beach seine nets as an alternative gear type in the ESSN as follows:

5 AAC 21.382 (g)

(6) From June 20 through August 15:

(A) allow for the use of one set beach seine net as an alternative gear type for holders of a SO4H commercial set gillnet CFEC permit; for use with shore based setnet infrastructure.

(B) if set beach seine nets are operated when commercial fishing in the Upper Subdistrict of the Central District is open to SO4H permit holders for set gillnet gear, the CFEC permit holder operating the set beach seine net will not be allowed to fish gillnet gear for that CFEC permit.

(D) openings will be three days per week and may occur outside of specified openings in this section based on abundance of sockeye salmon, as announced by emergency order.

(E) fishing with a set beach seine net may occur only from shore; fishing from shore must occur at the location of a shore fishery tract identified in the recorded plat for that AS 38.05.082 lease or a City of Kenai issued lease; or historic beach staked gillnet locations, nothing in this subsection affects or changes the terms or conditions of an AS 38.05.02 or City of Kenai lease and its lessee.

(F) set beach seine nets may be up to 100 fathoms in length, 215 mesh deep including border and chaffing strips, up to 10 lb lead lines and maximum 3 ½ inch mesh size.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Upper Subdistrict Eastside set gillnet fishery (ESSN) has been completely closed for two consecutive years for king salmon conservation and because an economically viable live release gear type was not available. The closures have resulted in the loss of their historical allocation of sockeye salmon, surplus sockeye salmon above escapement goals in the Kenai and Kasilof rivers, and significant economic loss to the local community that was partially supported by the ESSN fishery. The Board of Fish (BOF) added dipnets as a gear type in 2024, while some beaches experienced success at times during the season this gear type alone is not enough to approach historical levels of harvest and economic stability.

PROPOSED BY: Brian G. Gabriel Sr. and Lisa Gabriel

(HQ-F24-ACR8)

PROPOSAL 314 (formerly ACR 11)

5 AAC 06.XXX. New Section.

Create a Kvichak River Special Harvest Area to allow harvest of Kvichak River sockeye salmon while conserving Naknek River sockeye salmon.

Create the Kvichak River Special Harvest Area from Graveyard upriver to the confluence of the Alagnak River. This management tool would provide an opportunity for fishermen while allowing sockeye passage into the Naknek River.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Naknek River had the lowest escapement for the date on July 12th 2024 (?) in 50 years. Fisherman had a previously scheduled opener cancelled. For conservation of the Naknek River, without completely shutting down the drift fleet, on years when the Kvichak River has robust forecast and escapement.

PROPOSED BY: Kyle Lints

(HQ-F24-ACR11)

PROPOSAL 315 (formerly ACR 14)

5 AAC 18.331 Gillnet specifications and operations.

Allow CFEC salmon set gillnet permit holders who form a joint venture in the Central Section of the Northwest Kodiak District to operate 25 fathoms additional set gillnet gear (5 AAC 18.331).

To update the regulation, the language in 5 AAC 18.331, section e, # 6 and # 7 would be changed to reflect the new allowed amount of gear for setnetters in the Central Section of the Northwest Kodiak District. This would read:

(6) no single set gillnet may be more than 150 fathoms in length; except that in the Central Section of the Northwest Kodiak District, no single set gillnet may be more than 175 fathoms in length;

(7) a joint venture may operate no more than three set gillnets, with no more than 300 fathoms of gillnet gear in the aggregate; except that in the Central Section of the Northwest Kodiak District, the aggregate length may be no more than 350 fathoms.

By updating the wording, the intent of the joint venture regulation, which is to allow two permit holders to work together to combine and fish their legally allowed gear, would be upheld.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In the January 2024 Kodiak BOF meeting, a last minute change to regulation was adopted by the Board of Fish to add 25 fathoms of net per permit for setnetters in the Central Section of the Northwest Kodiak District, changing the total net length from 150 fathoms to 175 fathoms per permit. However, the wording in the joint venture section of the regulations addressing Gillnet Specifications and Operations was not updated to reflect the additional 25 fathoms of gear allowed per setnet permit in the Central Section of the Northwest Kodiak District.

The current (historic) joint venture regulation allows only: “5 AAC 18.331 (e) (6) no single set gillnet may be more than 150 fathoms in length; and (7) a joint venture may operate no more than three set gillnets, with no more than 300 fathoms of gillnet gear in the aggregate.” It is not updated to allow 175 fathoms in length and 350 fathoms in aggregate in the Central Section of the Northwest Kodiak District.

By not updating the wording of the joint venture regulation to reflect the additional gear allowed setnetters in the Central Section of the Northwest Kodiak district, a problem was created where people who have joint ventures are unable to fish 50 fathoms of gear that all other permit holders in the Northwest Kodiak District have available to them. The joint venture regulations for Kodiak setnetters, adopted in 1985, were written to allow 2 permit holders to work together and combine gear without diminishing the length of the nets allowed. This allowed more flexibility for fishermen working together to configure their gear to optimize their unique sites. For example, joint venture participants could fish three (3) 100 fathom nets instead of being restricted to the more traditional split of 75 fathom nets.

If this is not corrected and stands as written in 1985, joint venture participants in the Central Section of the Northwest Kodiak District will be limited to 150 fathoms per net, not 175 fathoms

as granted by the Board of Fish in January, and will be limited to 300 fathoms in aggregate as opposed to the 350 fathoms.

PROPOSED BY: Northwest Setnetters Association, Adelia Myrick (HQ-F24-ACR14)
