

REVISED PROPOSAL 11**5 AAC 06.361. Nushagak-Mulchatna River King Salmon Management Plan.**

Make amendments to the Nushagak-Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan, as follows:

1. Define specific management objectives for the Plan by adding the language below to, or following, section (a) of the Plan:

The department shall manage the Nushagak fisheries for the following management objectives:

1) Provide consistent sport fishing opportunity within and among seasons. This includes a level of inriver abundance as a given year's run timing allows, and a predictably open season.

2) Provide a directed commercial king salmon fishery when surplus is available.

3) Provide for an uninterrupted commercial sockeye salmon fishery (i.e., minimize disruptions to the sockeye salmon fishery).

4) Provide for reasonable opportunity for subsistence harvest of king salmon.

5) The subsistence fishery is the last fishery to be closed.

6) Achieve escapement goals for all species in the district.

7) Maintain a representation of age classes in the escapement similar to the run.

2. Manage large sockeye runs so that escapements fall in the upper portion of the escapement goal range, which would reduce incidental catch of king salmon, by adding new provisions to section (b) as follows:

(X) Consistent with 5 AAC 06.367 Nushagak District Commercial Set and Drift Gillnet Sockeye Salmon Fisheries Management and Allocation Plan, the department in an attempt to conserve king salmon shall manage for sockeye escapements in the Nushagak District to fall within the

(1) lower half of the escapement goal range when the Wood River sockeye salmon run is 7 million or less and/or the Nushagak sockeye salmon run is 2.5 million or less, or the

(2) upper half of the escapement goal range when the Wood River sockeye salmon run is greater than 7 million and/or the Nushagak sockeye salmon run is greater than 2.5 million based on the preseason forecast and in-season assessment of run size.

(X) On or after June 25, the department shall consider when evaluating total run of sockeye salmon to the Nushagak District all possible data sources including but not limited to: pre-season forecast, Port Moller test fishery indices and stock and age composition, total C+E to date, age composition of C&E and district test fishing.

3. Use a Nushagak District Test Fishery to assess relative abundance of sockeye and king salmon by adding the following new provision to (b):

(X) From June 1 through June 30 the department in an attempt to conserve king salmon shall, to the extent practicable, conduct a drift gillnet test fishery to assess the abundance of sockeye and king salmon prior to opening by emergency order a fishing period directed at sockeye salmon.

4. Provide a directed commercial fishery for king salmon when surplus clearly exists by modifying section (c) as follows:

(c) If the total inriver king salmon return in the Nushagak River is projected to exceed 95,000 fish, **(1)** the guideline harvest level described in (b)(1)(C) of this section does not apply[.], **and (X) the department will consider a directed commercial king salmon fishery.**

5. Avoid complete closures of the sport fishery when possible by modifying section (e) as follows:

(1) shall [close]**restrict to catch and release**, by emergency order, the sport fishery **for king salmon** in the Nushagak River [to the taking of salmon] and prohibit the use of bait for fishing for all species of fish until the end of the king salmon season specified in 5 AAC 67.020 and 5 AAC 67.022(g); and

6. Provide the department with flexibility to restrict but not close the subsistence fishery in low inriver run scenarios and standardize subsistence fishing schedule and area under a restricted scenario by modifying section (e) as follows:

(2) [shall]**may** establish, by emergency order, fishing periods during which [the time or area is reduced for the inriver king salmon subsistence fishery in the Nushagak River]**the subsistence fishery is restricted to 3 days per week in the Nushagak District; and the waters above the district including Dillingham beaches, Wood River up to Red Bluff, and the Nushagak River drainage.**

NEW PLAN**5 AAC 06.### (likely 391). Nushagak District King Salmon Stock of Concern Management Plan.**

- (a) The purpose of this management plan is to provide management tools and guidelines for the management of Nushagak District salmon fisheries, while Nushagak River king salmon are listed as a stock of management concern, that will result in the sustained yield of king salmon stocks large enough to meet sustainable escapement goals while allowing for harvest opportunity in the subsistence, sport, and commercial fisheries. It is envisioned that the Nushagak River king salmon stock of concern status and this plan would remain in effect until the king salmon escapement is within the escapement goal for three or more years.
- (b) While the Nushagak River king salmon are listed as a stock of management concern, it is the (board) intent that all Nushagak District salmon stocks are managed conservatively through June 28 to protect Nushagak River king salmon, consistent with the Policy for the Management of Sustainable Salmon Fisheries (5 AAC 39.222).
- (c) The department shall manage commercial fisheries in the Nushagak District as follows:
 - 1. To achieve an inriver goal of 95,000 king salmon in the Nushagak River consistent with the Nushagak King salmon management plan (5 AAC 06.361(b)(1));
 - 2. When the Wood River sockeye salmon forecast or inseason projection is less than 7 million the department shall manage for the current SEG of 700,000 to 1.8 million fish.
 - 3. When the Wood River sockeye salmon forecast or inseason assessment of run size is greater than 7 million the department shall manage to achieve a Wood River sockeye salmon OEG of 700,000 to an upper bound that is up to 10% of the Wood River total run size above the 1,800,000 upper bound of the SEG, based on the preseason forecast and inseason assessment of run size.
 - 4. When the Nushagak River sockeye salmon forecast or inseason projection is less than 2.5 million the department shall manage for the current SEG of 370,000 to 900,000 fish.
 - 5. When the Nushagak River sockeye salmon forecast or inseason assessment of run size is greater than 2.5 million the department shall manage to achieve a Nushagak River sockeye salmon OEG of 370,000 to an upper bound that is up to 15% of the Nushagak total run size above the 900,000 upper bound of the SEG, based on the preseason forecast and inseason assessment of run size.
- (d) Prior to 9:00 a.m. June 28, if the Nushagak king salmon inriver run size is projected to be less than 95,000 fish, the commissioner;
 - 1. Shall close by emergency order, the sockeye salmon commercial drift gillnet fishery in the Nushagak District, and the sockeye salmon commercial set net fishery in the Nushagak Section of the Nushagak District until:
 - i. The sockeye salmon sonar estimate in the Nushagak River is projected to exceed 6% of the Nushagak River sockeye salmon run based on the Nushagak River sockeye salmon preseason forecast and inseason assessment of run size; or
 - ii. The sockeye salmon count past the Wood River tower is projected to exceed 6% of the Wood River sockeye salmon run based on the Wood River sockeye salmon preseason forecast and inseason assessment of run size.
- (e) In the Nushagak River drainage, excluding the Wood River drainage,
 - 1. the annual limit for king salmon 20 inches or greater in length is four fish, of which only one fish may be 28 inches or greater in length.

2. If the total inriver king salmon return in the Nushagak River is projected to exceed 95,000 fish, the commissioner may increase the annual limit for king salmon to 4 king salmon 20 inches or longer (no restriction to one fish over 28 inches).
- (f) Subsistence fisheries will be managed in accordance with current regulations.

* The purpose of the Wood and Nushagak OEGs is to conserve king salmon by establishing a range of acceptable sockeye salmon escapements above the SEG, in years of high sockeye salmon abundance. This allows the department to restrict commercial fisheries at times they would otherwise be fishing to control sockeye salmon escapement.