

March 11,2023

RE: Record Copy comment on Nushagak King Salmon Management Plan

Dear Board of Fisheries Members

If the board goes forward with PC 356 or something similar you are taking away the ability of area biologist Tim Sands to manage the fishery. Putting 400,000 Sockeye up the Wood and/or Nushagak River and using June 28 as a start date is too late in the fishery. We will be facing a situation of 300,000 plus fish up the river and a weather forecast of strong SE winds. As the season gets later in June those are guaranteed 250,000 fish tides. Under that situation in the blink of an eye we have 800,000 fish up the river and the fleet will just be getting started. We need to move away from set numbers and dates and let Tim manage based on weather forecast, Port Moller information and his own personal knowledge and experience.

Now on top of a late start this plan will allow an extra 10% of escapement above the top end of the Wood River and an extra 15% escapement above the top end of the Nushagak. Based on the 2023 forecast that's an extra 801,000 fish up the Wood River and 1,042,500 fish up the Nushagak River. Using 5 pounds per fish and the \$1.47/lb I received in 2022 that's \$13,549,725 that the fleet misses out on. The majority of watershed residents fish the Nushagak and this is a lot of money to remove from an area that we hear about having a lot of economic difficulties at the Area T meetings.

I can't quote a scientific study, but it's been said that the Nushagak sonar is under counting King Salmon. Especially in these large sockeye years that have been happening recently. Until we confirm the proper King escapement count I don't see how we can make changes to the management plan.

In conclusion whatever King management plan is adopted it has to be on a year to year basis and reviewed every fall. We can't get locked into something that throws millions of dollars of Sockeye away if it doesn't actually make a difference to the King escapement count. And for the record, I don't think the catching fleet is the problem. In order to make it up the river the Kings have to make it back to the fishing district. Based on what I catch in my own net, the Kings aren't there to be caught. It's some kind of environmental conditions in the lakes and/or ocean, or perhaps even trawlers in the Bering Sea.

Thank you

Mikal Mathisen

27 year Bristol Bay drift fisherman