

PROPOSAL A - 5 AAC 27.950. Waters closed to herring fishing in Bering Sea-Kotzebue Area. Amend this regulation as follows:

Repeal closed waters.

PROBLEM: According to the department, commercial fishing for herring has occurred in the Cape Romanzof District since 1980. The Cape Romanzof District includes all waters between the latitude of Dall Point and 62 degrees N. latitude. During the 1970s prior to any commercial harvests, waters east of Smith Point were closed to commercial fishing. Much of the area east of Smith Point is very shallow mud flats. In 1982, the waters outside of Kokechik Bay were closed to commercial herring fishing (5AAC 27.950 Waters Closed to Herring Fishing in the Bering Sea-Kotzebue Area (a)). A review of the Board of Fisheries December 1981 meeting indicated that this regulation proposal was related to allocation since most fishers outside Kokechik Bay were nonlocal, but there were also enforcement concerns due to poor communication and difficulty in monitoring harvests in outside waters.

There has been a reported subsistence herring harvest to the department of approximately 5-6 tons taken annually by the villages of Hooper Bay, Chevak, and Scammon Bay. Most of the subsistence harvest occurs after commercial fishing has ended on later arriving herring.

Commercial harvests peaked in 1986 with a high of 1,865 tons of herring and have declined to 80 tons harvested in 2003. The average over the history of the fishery is 752 tons with the most recent 5-year average of 475 tons. The fishery was closed to new participants beginning in 1988, with 101 limited entry permits issued. The number of fishers participating in the fishery has ranged from a high of 157 in 1987 to 21 in 2002 and only 11 in 2003. Communications and harvest monitoring are much improved since the early 1980s, because of VHF radios and satellite phones.

Department information shows the harvest and participation in this fishery has dramatically declined in recent years because of market conditions. The price of herring has declined substantially as well. As a result, the few fishers that are participating are having difficulty catching the allowable quota within the confines of Kokechik Bay. Because of the low numbers of fishers participating in the fishery, and the associated low harvest rates, the market for herring from Cape Romanzof has become tenuous at best. The single processor still buying herring in western Alaska may choose not to participate in the Cape Romanzof fishery because of low harvests.

In May 2003, the department conducted a test fishing experiment outside Kokechik Bay and located concentrations of herring with marketable quality sac-roe in Scammon Bay.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE? There may exist a biologically allowable harvest of herring.

WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT?

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER?

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Board of Fisheries (HQ-03-F-204)

PROPOSAL 255 (Previously ACR1) - 5 AAC 70.XXX. Stocked Waters Management Plan for the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Area; and 5 AAC 52.XXX. Stocked Waters Management Plan for the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Area. Amend these regulations to provide the following:

Consider a regional AYK Stocked Waters Management Plan which is intended to set bag, possession, size limits and seasons for the region’s stocked waters fisheries.

PROBLEM: The department has submitted proposal 107 for consideration at the January 2004 AYK Board of Fisheries meeting. This proposal requests that the board consider a regional AYK Stocked Waters Management Plan which is intended to set bag, possession, size limits and seasons for the regions’ stocked waters fisheries. The problem is that the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Management Area would be excluded from discussion, because these fisheries were covered during the 2002/2003 board cycle.

Since this management plan is regional in scope, the department requests that the Board of Fisheries allow the stocked waters fisheries within the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Management area to be included in discussions regarding proposal 107 at the January 2004 Board of Fisheries meeting.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE? If proposal 107 were adopted without the UCUSMA included, it would fragment the regional management plan. Acceptance of this proposal will allow the board to consider the entire region when addressing proposal 107.

WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? The proposed management plan this ACR addresses establishes management guidelines to provide for diverse fishing opportunities for Region III stocked lakes based on the biological characteristics of the lake and the desires of the anglers.

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER? These guidelines are intended to reduce and or diminish allocative situations.

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED? Submitting a proposal at the next Copper River/Prince William Sound board meeting in 2005 to address the regional management plan would result in a duplicative process that would delay implementation of this regional regulation in this management area for two years. Because this proposal addresses a proposed management plan for an entire region, all management areas within that region should be evaluated simultaneously.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-03-F-208)

PROPOSAL 256 (Previously ACR2) - 5 AAC 52.XXX. Arctic Grayling Management Plan for the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Area; and 5 AAC 70.XXX. Arctic Grayling Management Plan for the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Area. Amend these regulations as follows

Consider a regional AYK Arctic Grayling Management Plan which is intended to address bag, possession, and size limits for the region's Arctic grayling fisheries.

PROBLEM: The department has submitted proposal 109 for consideration at the January 2004 AYK Board of Fisheries meeting. This proposal requests that the board consider a regional AYK Arctic Grayling Management Plan which is intended to address bag, possession, and size limits for the regions' Arctic grayling fisheries. The problem is that the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Management Area would be excluded from discussion, because these fisheries were covered during the 2002/2003 board cycle.

Since this management plan is regional in scope, the department requests that the Board of Fisheries allow the grayling fisheries within the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Management area to be included in discussions regarding proposal 109 at the January 2004 Board of Fisheries meeting.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE? If proposal 109 were adopted without the UCUSMA included, it would fragment the regional management plan. Acceptance of this proposal will allow the board to consider the entire region when addressing this proposal.

WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED?

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? The proposed management plan this ACR addresses establishes management guidelines to provide for diverse fishing opportunities for Region III Arctic grayling fisheries based on criteria within proposal 109.

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER? These guidelines are intended to reduce and or diminish allocative situations.

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED? Submitting a proposal at the next Copper River/Prince William Sound board meeting in 2005 to address the regional management plan would result in a duplicative process that would delay implementation of this regional regulation in this management area for two years. Because this proposal addresses a proposed management plan for an entire region, all areas within that region should be evaluated simultaneously.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-03-F-209)
