

5 AAC 06.361. NUSHAGAK-MULCHATNA CHINOOK SALMON MANAGEMENT PLAN.

(a) The purpose of this management plan is to ensure biological spawning escapement requirements of chinook salmon into the Nushagak-Mulchatna river systems. It is the intent of the Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) that Nushagak-Mulchatna chinook salmon be harvested in the fisheries that have historically harvested them. This management plan provides guidelines to the department in an effort to preclude allocation conflicts between the various users of this resource. The department shall manage Nushagak-Mulchatna chinook salmon stocks in a conservative manner consistent with sustained yield principles and the subsistence priority.

(b) The department shall manage the commercial fishery in the Nushagak District as follows:

(1) to achieve an inriver goal of 75,000 chinook salmon present in the Nushagak River upstream from the department sonar counter; the inriver goal provides for

- (A) a biological escapement requirement of 65,000 fish;
- (B) reasonable opportunity for subsistence harvest of chinook salmon; and
- (C) a chinook salmon sport fishery guideline harvest level of 5,000 fish;

(2) in order to maintain a natural representation of age classes in the escapement, the department shall attempt to schedule commercial openings to provide pulses of fish into the river that have not been subject to harvest by commercial gear.

(c) If the total inriver chinook salmon return in the Nushagak River is projected to exceed 75,000 fish, the guideline harvest level described in (b)(1)(C) of this section does not apply.

(d) If the spawning escapement of chinook salmon in the Nushagak River is projected to be more than 40,000 and the projected inriver return is less than 75,000 fish, the commissioner

(1) shall close, by emergency order, the directed chinook salmon commercial fishery in the Nushagak District; during a closure under this paragraph, the use of a commercial gillnet with webbing larger than five and one-half inches in another commercial salmon fishery is prohibited; and

(2) if the projected inriver return of chinook salmon in the Nushagak River is less than 55,000 fish, and to ensure that projected spawning escapement does not fall below 40,000 fish, shall establish, by emergency order, fishing periods to restrict the chinook salmon sport fishery in the Nushagak River during which any, or a combination, of the following restrictions may be applied:

- (A) reduction of bag and possession limits to one fish;
- (B) a seasonal limit of up to four fish;
- (C) prohibition of the use of bait;
- (D) reductions in the time or area for fishing;
- (E) a closure of the chinook salmon sport fishery.

(e) If the spawning escapement of chinook salmon in the Nushagak River is projected to be less than 40,000 fish, the commissioner

(1) shall close, by emergency order, the sockeye salmon commercial fishery in the Nushagak District until the projected sockeye salmon escapement into the Wood River exceeds 100,000 fish;

(2) shall close, by emergency order, the sport fishery in the Nushagak River to the taking of chinook salmon; and

(3) shall establish, by emergency order, fishing periods during which the time or area is reduced for the inriver chinook salmon subsistence fishery in the Nushagak River.