

PROPOSAL 123 – 5 AAC 21.354. Cook Inlet Pink Salmon Management Plan. Repeal and readopt the management plan to allow for the commercial harvest of surplus pink salmon in the Upper Subdistrict with set and drift gillnet gear, as follows:

[REPEAL 5AAC 21.354. THE COOK INLET PINK SALMON PLAN IN IT’S ENTIRITY]

Develop a new plan that is simple and more effective

5AAC 21.354. Cook Inlet Pink Salmon Management Plan. (a) The purpose of this management plan is to allow for the harvest of surplus pink salmon in the Upper Subdistrict for set gillnet and drift gillnet gear. The commercial fishery set and drift will fish their regular weekly fishing periods in August. If all other salmon species are healthy and making their escapement goals the commercial fisheries will fish extra fishing periods based on pink abundance.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Repeal and replace the current Cook Inlet Pink Salmon Management Plan

The current pink management plan is unrealistic and inefficient for harvesting millions of returning pink salmon. The current plan would only harvest a small fraction of the surplus. The mesh size restrictions also prevents sufficient harvest and efficiency. The Cook Inlet pinks are some of the largest pinks in the State. The fishermen should be allowed to decide which gear size will work best and the cost of gearing up. The current plan allows for over 96% of the surplus pinks to go unharvested. That is a lot of lost meals, jobs and money to the local economies and state treasury and for no reason except allocation. The current regulation is in violation of 5AAC 39.222. Policy for the management of sustainable salmon fisheries, State fisheries policy, Article 8 of the

Constitution and the Magnuson Stevens Act all of which require sustained yield and science based management which means harvesting the surplus. It is also not being good stewards of the resource to forgo pink harvest when all other salmon species are healthy and have or will meet their escapement goals.

PROPOSED BY: Central Peninsula Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F16-173)

PROPOSAL 124 – 5 AAC 21.354. Cook Inlet Pink Salmon Management Plan. Amend the *Cook Inlet Pink Salmon Management Plan* to remove or lower the daily harvest triggers, as follows:

I would like to see the 50,000 pink salmon triggers in the CIPSMP go away. This most likely won't happen. So I would like to see the triggers lowered to 25,000.

The regulation would read something like this:

CIPSMP (b), the daily harvest of pink salmon in the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery exceeds 25,000 [50,000] fish or the cumulative harvest..... The second pink salmon commercial fishing period will occur only if 25,000 [50,000] or more pink salmon and no more than 2,500 coho salmon are harvested in the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery during the first pink salmon commercial fishing period.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The issue here, is lack of harvest opportunity of pink salmon in the ESSN fishery. There are literally millions of pink salmon, heading to the Kenai River that are virtually unharvested. There is very little opportunity, in the ESSN fishery to target these pinks.

In the CIPSMP there are two 50,000 fish triggers that equate to one or at best two additional days to harvest these pinks. These triggers occur after August 6 on even years. Many fishermen in the ESSN fishery, and more so in the Kasilof section, quit fishing earlier than the regularly scheduled closing date. It is very hard for the remaining setnetters to hit the 50,000 pink trigger that opens the pink fishery for one more period.

The fishermen that do stay and fish for pinks, are curtailed from further fishing, due to lack of participation, and therefore not hitting the 50,000 trigger. The fishermen that do target pinks, even with a smaller price than other species, can make good money. This pink fishery is very important economically, especially when sockeye runs to the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers are fair to poor.

PROPOSED BY: Gary L. Hollier (EF-F16-016)

PROPOSAL 125 – 5 AAC 21.354. Cook Inlet Pink Salmon Management Plan. Remove mesh size restrictions on set and drift gillnet gear in the commercial pink salmon fishery, as follows:

5 AAC 21.354

(c) During a pink salmon commercial fishing period opened under this section, [A (1) SET GILLNET MAY NOT HAVE A MESH SIZE GREATER THAN FOUR AND THREE-QUARTERS INCHES; AND]

(2) [DRIFT GILLNET GEAR MAY NOT HAVE A MESH SIZE GREATER THAN FOUR AND THREE-QUARTERS INCHES, AND] Fishing with drift gillnet gear will only be opened in the areas defined in 5 AAC 21.200(b)(2)(B)

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Pink Salmon Management Plan currently in place allows for a maximum potential of two extra days of fishing time, late in August, every other year. This plan was implemented to attempt to address underutilized surpluses of pink salmon that sometimes occur. In reality this is relatively rare. Since it was implemented the pink salmon plan has been used on only two occasions. Participation was very low. A large contributing factor to this is the current requirement on mesh size that prohibits people from fishing their normal gear. Due to the rare occurrences and relatively low value of the potential opening, most fishermen are unable to justify building special gear. We would like to see this mesh size requirement removed in order that the fishery may be better utilized when the opportunity occurs.

This proposal seeks to remove the language requiring smaller gear be used for pink salmon openers, allowing gillnetters to use their standard gear which is limited to 6” or less by regulation.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai Peninsula Fishermen’s Association (HQ-F16-078)

PROPOSAL 126 – 5 AAC 21.354. Cook Inlet Pink Salmon Management Plan. Increase maximum mesh size for set gillnets to 5-inches and expand the fishing season to August 6–15 in the commercial pink salmon fishery, as follows:

- (c) (1) set gillnet may not have a mesh size greater than 5 [four and three quarters] inches and
- (b) Repeal and amend: to provide a Pink salmon fishery from August 6th through August 15th, 5 openings available per week during the commercial pink salmon fishery on even years.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Kenai River pink salmon harvest and limit on mesh size. Kenai pink salmon are on average larger than Southern District or Northern District pink salmon. The average weight size is .7 of pound larger than Northern District pink salmon stocks. The 4 and ¾ mesh size requirement impeded commercial harvest and quality of the salmon resource available.

The current Plan is unduly restrictive with only two fishing periods. Current regulations state at least 50,000 pink salmon harvest per opening and limited to 2500 coho; only a small percentage are Kenai bound coho. Less than one-half of one percent harvest on average annual Kenai coho runs per opening. So, within a two day commercial pink salmon fishery the set gillnet fishery is 1% of the Kenai Coho run and only 1% of the Kenai River pink salmon run. Pink salmon stocks are designated commercial stocks.

Nowhere in this state by Region does the Department or the Board restrict the harvest of pink salmon stocks per similar situated fisheries on abundant salmon resources in mixed stock salmon fisheries. Application of Fishery Management Plans (5 AAC 39.200) (a) provides for an equitable distribution of the available harvest. 1% is not “equitable” nor fairly distributed under the current pink Plan. Regulations “should be consistent with statutes.”

PROPOSED BY: Jeff Beaudoin

(HQ-F16-103)
