



Rum Runner Charters

"our 26th year"

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1/14/2017

To the Members of the Board,

My name Chris Conder, I have been an Alaska resident since I was 17. I earned my degree in Marine Biology at the University of Alaska. I was a member of the Juneau/ Douglas Advisory Committee for 15 years. I own and have run Rum Runner Charters for 26 years, it is my family's livelihood. I would like to discuss a couple of this year's proposals and the Sport King Salmon Management plan.

Proposal 125: Repeal of the mandatory retention for nonpelagic rockfish

In Favor

As a charter company fishing the inside water that does occasionally fish for nonpelagic Rockfish, it seems to be a waste of a resource to be forced to retain the smaller rockfish that are often too small to be of use. There are also occasions when fishing for Halibut and the like, rockfish are caught as a bycatch. The clients do not wish to retain these fish but under current regulations are forced to do so.

With the relatively new research on the high survivability of rockfish released with deep water release mechanisms, (that are now mandatory on all charter vessels involved in bottom fishing) removal of mandatory retention would reduce mortality and the taking of unwanted fish.

Proposal 126: Require all anglers to release nonpelagic rockfish at depth with a deep water release mechanism.

In Favor but modified

Currently only guided vessels are required to have deep water release mechanisms. The change I would suggest for this proposal would still require mandatory retention of nonpelagic rockfish for nonguided fisherman unless a deep water release is on board.

Deep water releases are available in most tackle stores in Southeast Alaska, but can also be easily made with the equipment most fishing boats have on board. I would recommend that in the new Fishing Regulation books for 2018, Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game illustrate a few of these.

Proposal 132: Amend sport king regulations in Districts 11, 12, 14 and 15 based on the Taku River King salmon preseason escapement estimate

Opposed

Very simply, I feel this proposal would tie Fish and Game's hands. It paints a large area with a big brush and does not allow for flexibility or management of smaller areas.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game Sport King Salmon Management Plan

For District 11 Option A, in Favor

This plan seems to have much thought and research behind it. I would like to urge the Board to examine each district in this plan, rather than choosing a one size fits all. Please remember Sport Fishing take a very small percentage of Kings compared to other user groups, yet brings in jobs and huge positive economic growth to local business and helps to fund Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game through Sport Fishing Licenses and tags.

I can only feel comfortable talking about District 11, Juneau's local waters, dealing mostly with Taku and hatchery fish. I support Management Plan Option "A", this is the same regulation that was imposed last year for District 11. This plan resulted in a total of just 34 Taku fish being caught, less than one tenth of one percent of the Taku fish caught by all user groups. Our local area Fish and Game Biologist, Dan Teske feels that Option A achieved its goals last year and would do the same for the 2018. Although this is still economically damaging it does achieve the conservation goals to help maintain this population.

In Juneau, we are fortunate to have our local hatchery DIPAC. DIPAC releases Kings especially for sport fishing and we have several Terminal Harvest areas. These terminal harvest areas (mostly small coves) have been affected by above mentioned conservation measures (closures and catch reductions) even though the percent chances of catching Taku River fish is extremely small. If the return to the hatchery is on track to meet its brood stock goals, I would ask you to direct the Dept. of Fish and Game to treat these areas as terminal fisheries and not bring them in with the wider conservation measure of stocks of concern, as this is a separate population. These terminal fish have nowhere to breed and die off, wasting the resource.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Capt. Chris Conder

Rum Runner Charters

2018 Board of Directors

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Vice President – Chris Conder

Secretary – Grantley Moore

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2018 Members at Large

Richard Yamada

Mike Bonfils

Terry White

To Members of the Board:

I'm here representing the Juneau Charter Boat Operators Association which represents 12 local charter fishing operators and 2 local sport fishing lodges. As you are aware areawide we are in a period of low King Salmon production...this is of great concern to all our members as fishing is how we make our living. We are acutely aware of the need for not only conservation but the need for creating a fully sustainable fishery in the Juneau area.

We are in support of the Sport King Salmon Management Plan Option "A" as we believe this action will adequately protect the returning King Salmon in our region. On January 10, 2018 we attended a Juneau Douglas Advisory Committee meeting at the University of Alaska Southeast in Juneau where ADF&G Area Biologist Daniel Teske stated that he believed that the actions that were taken last season, a King Salmon closure from April 15 to June 14, were successful in achieving the goal of allowing the greatest number of King Salmon to return to the Taku River. We agree with Mr. Teske on this matter. Option "A" mirrors the closure that occurred in 2017...although economically devastating to our industry and the region we believe this is the best option. Per Mr. Teske's statement further actions are not necessary at this time. We believe that Options "B & C" would be catastrophic to our community!

In addition, we do not support Proposal 132 setting hard limits and closures in our area based on low returns estimates. We believe that ADG&G should be allowed to use good judgment and be flexible to manage the resource considering all possible criteria. Including but not limited to abundance, user groups, and economic impact.

Also, we are in full support of Proposal 125 repealing mandatory retention requirements for nonpelagic rockfish. We believe that with the current deep-water releasing methods available and their proven viability make this requirement no longer necessary.

Sincerely,

Capt. J. Kevin Burchfield
President
JCBOA

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2018 Members at Large

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Alaska Department of Fish & Game

To Whom it May Concern:

Please allow me to introduce myself...I am Capt. Kevin Burchfield and I am the owner operator of Lost in Alaska Adventures here in Juneau...I am also the current President of the Juneau Charter Boat Operators Association which represents 12 local charter fishing operators and 2 local sport fishing lodges. As you are aware areawide we are in a period of low King Salmon production...this is of great concern to all our members as fishing is how we make our living. We are acutely aware of the need for not only conservation but the need for creating a fully sustainable fishery in the Juneau area. We are hopeful that your office will be considerate of more creative management methods aside from the total closure that occurred last year from April 15-June 14.

The above-mentioned closure was devastating to all our businesses. It was equally devastating to all the support businesses in our community for our industry...tackle supply shops, bait shops, fuel sellers, mechanic shops, fish processors, shipping companies, lodging providers, transportation providers, just to name a few. The members of the association lost about \$250,000 in bookings during this closure...this does not include the losses to the support businesses which were substantial considering they not only lost our business they also lost all the business from local anglers that were not allowed to fish. Altogether we estimate that the closure cost the Juneau economy more than \$500,000. We know that you are charged with maintaining the sustainability of the resource, but all the potential impacts must be considered.

We firmly believe that the same desired effect could be achieved using different, less business damaging methods. For instance:

Closing the area to King Salmon retention from April 15-June 14 would basically have the same effect since most local anglers would not fish if they could not retain.

Restrict the use of bait (herring) during this same time. This would greatly reduce the catch rate as well.

Require the use of barbless hooks during this same time. This would greatly reduce the landing rate.

Require that all King Salmon hooked be released in the water by either removing the hook or cutting the leader during this same time.

If some or even all of these methods were to be used, we believe our impact would be nominal at best! The effort would be reduced to just a handful of vessels each day during the closure and the economic impact would be greatly reduced.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. We all have to work together for the greater good!

Sincerely,

Capt. J. Kevin Burchfield
President
JCBOA