

**Proposal XXX – 5 AAC 06.368. Nushagak River Coho Salmon Management Plan.** Modify the Nushagak River Coho Salmon Management Plan to provide additional fishing opportunity when the department projects the sustainable escapement goal range of 60,000–120,000 coho salmon will be achieved, as follows:

5 AAC 06.368 is amended to read:

**5 AAC 06.368 Nushagak River Coho Salmon Management Plan.**

(a) The purpose of this management plan is to provide guidelines to ensure an adequate spawning escapement of coho salmon into the Nushagak River system. It is the intent of the Board of Fisheries (board) that Nushagak coho salmon be harvested by the fisheries that have historically harvested them. The plan in this section provides management guidelines to the department in an effort to preclude allocation conflicts between various users of this resource. The department shall manage coho 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 to achieve an inriver run goal of [70,000 - 130,000] XXXX coho salmon present in the Nushagak River upstream from the department sonar counter located near the village of Portage Creek by August 25. The inriver goal provides for

(1) the department's sustainable escapement goal of 60,000 - 120,000 coho salmon upstream from the sonar counter by August 25;

(2) a reasonable opportunity for subsistence harvest of coho salmon; and

(3) a daily bag and possession limit of five coho salmon, and a guideline harvest level of 2,000 fish in the sport fishery; the sport fishery guideline harvest level of 2,000 fish does not apply if the total inriver coho salmon return is projected to be greater than 120,000 fish by August 25; the department shall manage the sport fishery to ensure that the sustainable escapement goal of 60,000 - 120,000 coho salmon is achieved.

(c) If the total inriver coho salmon return in the Nushagak River is projected by the department to be less than [120,000] XXXX but at least [70,000] XXXX fish by August 25, the commissioner shall close, by emergency order, the directed coho salmon commercial fishery in the Nushagak District by [AUGUST 1] XXXX; and

(1) repealed 4/16/2016;

(2) the commissioner may restrict, by emergency order, the coho salmon sport fishery in the Nushagak River drainage upstream from the department sonar counter located near the village of Portage Creek so that the harvest does not exceed 2,000 coho salmon by one or more of the following:

(A) reduce the bag and possession limit;

- (B) prohibit the use of bait;
- (C) restrict fishing times and areas;
- (D) restrict terminal tackle to single-hook artificial lures; and
- (E) allow catch-and-release fishing only;

(3) it is the intent of the board that the lower the projected inriver coho salmon return is, the more restrictive that management measures will be in the sport and commercial fisheries under this section.

(d) If the total inriver coho salmon return in the Nushagak River is projected by the department to be less than [70,000] ~~XXXX~~ fish and the number of spawners is projected to be more than [60,000] ~~XXXX~~ fish on August 25, the commissioner shall

(1) close, by emergency order, the directed commercial fishery no later than [AUGUST 1] ~~XXXX~~;

(2) close, by emergency order, the coho salmon sport fishery in the Nushagak River drainage; and

(3) restrict the coho salmon subsistence fishery in the Nushagak River drainage by establishing periods by emergency order, during which

(A) coho salmon may be taken only from

- (i) 9:00 a.m. Monday to 9:00 a.m. Tuesday;
- (ii) 9:00 a.m. Wednesday to 9:00 a.m. Thursday; and
- (iii) 9:00 a.m. Friday to 9:00 a.m. Saturday; and

(B) set gillnets may not be more than 10 fathoms in length.

(e) If the number of coho salmon spawners in the Nushagak River is projected by the department to be less than 60,000 fish by August 25, the department shall close the subsistence, commercial, and sport fisheries.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** During the 2015 Bristol Bay board meeting, management triggers in the *Nushagak River Coho Salmon Management Plan* were modified to ranges based on the sustainable escapement goal of 60,000–120,000 coho salmon. The plan now restricts fishing opportunity under all scenarios, unless the department projects on August 1, that the coho salmon escapement will be above 120,000 fish on August 25. Reexamining the inseason management projection date of August 1 and inseason management

triggers may provide additional coho salmon fishing opportunity for Nushagak River subsistence, sport, and commercial fisherman.