

## **PROPOSAL 215**

### **5 AAC XX.XXX. New section.**

Create a *Susitna and Yentna Rivers King Salmon Fishery Management Plan*, as follows:

#### **5 AAC 61.XXX Susitna and Yentna Rivers King Salmon Management Plan.**

**(a) The purpose of this management plan is to ensure an adequate escapement of king salmon into the rivers and streams of the Susitna and Yentna river drainages, to provide management guidelines and tools to the department and to provide predictability in management. The intent of the board is that the department will consider the management options listed in this plan prior to considering any other available options for managing the fishery.**

**(b) The department shall initiate management of the sport fisheries for king salmon in the Eastside Susitna management area (Unit 2 of the Susitna River) based on the preseason forecast for the Deshka River and other available abundance indices.**

**(1) If the pre-season forecast for the Deshka River projects the run to be below the sustainable escapement goal or if other available abundance indices indicate a high probability of runs below the escapement goal for other systems within the Eastside Susitna management area, the commissioner may, by emergency order,**

**(A) Close the sport fishery to the taking of king salmon; or**

**(B) Prohibit the retention of king salmon;**

**(2) If the pre-season forecast for the Deshka River projects the run to be within the sustainable escapement goal or if other available abundance indices indicate a high probability of inriver runs within established escapement goal for other systems within the Eastside Susitna management area, the commissioner may, by emergency order,**

**(A) Prohibit the retention of king salmon;**

**(B) Establish a maximum size limit of 28 inches as measured from tip of snout to tip of tail;**

**(C) Reduce the annual limit;**

**(D) Close one or more weekends of fishing;**

**(E) Start the fishery as described in 5 AAC 61.110 - 5 AAC 61.123;**

**(3) If, based on assessment based on available abundance indices, the inseason projection of escapement at any location within the Eastside Susitna management area is below the sustainable escapement goal, the commissioner may close, by emergency order, the sport fishery to the taking of king salmon;**

**(4) If the inseason escapement projection based on available abundance indices at any location within the Eastside Susitna management area is assessed to be within the sustainable escapement goal the commissioner may, by emergency order,**

**(A) Conduct the season as described in 5 AAC 61.110 - 5 AAC 61.123;**

**(B) Modify the maximum size limit allowed for retention.**

**(5) If the inseason escapement projection based on available abundance indices at any location within the Eastside Susitna management area is assessed to be greater than the sustainable escapement goal the commissioner may, by emergency order,**

**(A) Increase hours to 24 hours per day;**

**(B) Add a 3-day weekend of fishing;**

**(c) The department shall initiate management of the sport fisheries for king salmon in the Talkeetna River management area (Unit S of the Susitna River) based on the preseason forecast for the Deshka River and other available abundance indices.**

**(6) If the pre-season forecast for the Deshka River projects the run to be below the sustainable escapement goal or if other available abundance indices indicate a high probability of runs below the escapement goal ranges for other systems within the Talkeetna River management area, the commissioner may, by emergency order,**

**(A) Close the sport fishery to the taking of king salmon; or**

**(B) Prohibit the retention of king salmon;**

**(7) If the pre-season forecast for the Deshka River projects the run to be within or above the sustainable escapement goal, or if other available abundance indices indicate a high probability of inriver runs within established escapement goal ranges for other systems within the Talkeetna River management area, the commissioner may, by emergency order,**

**(A) Prohibit the retention of king salmon;**

**(B) Establish a maximum size limit of 28 inches as measured from tip of snout to tip of tail;**

**(C) Reduce the annual limit;**

**(D) Restrict fishing to Saturdays - Mondays;**

**(E) Start the fishery as described in 5 AAC 61.110 - 5 AAC 61.123;**

**(8) If, based on assessment of available abundance indices, the inseason projection of escapement at any location within the Talkeetna River management area is below the sustainable escapement goal, the commissioner may close, by emergency order, the sport fishery to the taking of king salmon;**

**(9) If the in-season escapement projection based on available abundance indices at any location within the Talkeetna River management area is accessed to be within the sustainable escapement goal the commissioner may, by emergency order,**

**(A) Conduct the season as described in 5 AAC 61.110 - 5 AAC 61.123;**

**(B) Modify the maximum size limit allowed for retention.**

**(C) Increase hours to 24 hours per day;**

**(D) Allow use of bait;**

**(10) If the inseason escapement projection based on available abundance indices at any location within the Talkeetna River management area is accessed to be greater than the sustainable escapement goal the commissioner may, by emergency order,**

**(A) Increase hours to 24 hours per day;**

**(B) Allow use of bait;**

**(d) The department shall initiate management of the sport fisheries for king salmon in the Yentna River management area (unit 4 of the Susitna River) based on the preseason forecast for the Deshka River and other available abundance indices.**

**(11) If the pre-season forecast for the Deshka River projects the run to be below the sustainable escapement goal or if other available abundance indices indicate a high probability of runs below the escapement goal ranges for other systems within the Yentna River management area, the commissioner may, by emergency order,**

**(A) Close the sport fishery to the taking of king salmon; or**

**(B) Prohibit the retention of king salmon;**

**(12) If the pre-season forecast for the Deshka River projects the run to be within or above the sustainable escapement goal or if other available abundance indices indicate a high probability of inriver runs within or above established escapement goal ranges for systems within the Yentna River management area, the commissioner may, by emergency order,**

**(A) Prohibit the retention of king salmon;**

**(B) Establish a maximum size limit of 28 inches as measured from tip of snout to tip of tail;**

**(C) Reduce the annual limit;**

**(D) Restrict days harvest is allowed to Fridays - Mondays;**

**(E) Start the fishery as described in 5 AAC 61.110 - 5 AAC 61.123;**

**(13) If, based on assessment of available abundance indices, the inseason projection of escapement at any location within the Yentna River management area is below the sustainable escapement goal, the commissioner may close, by emergency order, the sport fishery to the taking of king salmon;**

**(14) If the inseason escapement projection based on available abundance indices at any location within the Yentna River management area is accessed to be within the sustainable escapement goal the commissioner may, by emergency order,**

**(A) Conduct the season as described in 5 AAC 61.110 - 5 AAC 61.123;**

**(B) Modify the maximum size limit allowed for retention.**

**(15) If the inseason escapement projection based on available abundance indices at any location within the Yentna River management area is accessed to be greater than the sustainable escapement goal the commissioner may, by emergency order,**

**(A) Increase hours to 24 hours per day;**

**(B) Allow use of bait;**

**(e) At any such time that the retention of king salmon is prohibited or a maximum size limit is established the use of multiple-hooks is prohibited.**

**(a) Nothing in this management plan is to be construed as diminishing or affecting the commissioner's authority to modify bag, possession, and annual limits and methods and means by emergency order under 5 AAC 75.003.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Adopt a *Susitna and Yentna Rivers King Salmon Fishery Management Plan*. With the downturn in Susitna/Yentna River king salmon production, from 2013-2018 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has increasingly been managing this sport king salmon fishery by preseason and inseason emergency orders. In 2019 for the first time in over 40 years the Susitna and Yentna River drainage king salmon fishery was entirely closed by preseason emergency order. This management plan proposal is an attempt to document actions currently used in management by the Department, showing when specific actions may occur, and also an attempt to provide an additional tool (the use of a size restriction in the management of the sport fishery). With such a plan sport users will have the opportunity to examine specific management actions the Department has taken or may likely take in the future when managing this resource. In addition, with a plan in regulation, fishermen and other users will have the opportunity to propose changes or tools to use in future Susitna/Yentna River drainage king salmon management.

**PROPOSED BY:** Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission/Mike Wood (HQ-F19-049)  
\*\*\*\*\*