

PROPOSAL 97

5 AAC 33.383. District 7: Anita Bay Terminal Harvest Area Salmon Management Plan.

Establish waters closed to commercial purse seine and drift gillnet gear but open to commercial troll gear in the Anita Bay Terminal Harvest Area when spring troll areas in District 6 and 8 are closed, as follows:

5 AAC 33.383. District 7: Anita Bay Terminal Harvest Area Salmon Management Plan.

(b) The commissioner shall open and close, by emergency order, fishing seasons and periods to manage the common property fisheries to harvest excess salmon returning to the Anita Bay Terminal Harvest Area. The Terminal Harvest Area will be opened and closed under this subsection to the harvest of salmon as follows: Closed waters within the THA include:

(1) June 1 through June 30, the waters of the Anita Bay THA North and East of a line from 56°12.90' N. latitude, 132°24.51' W. longitude to 56°12.75' N. latitude, 132°23.50' W. longitude will be closed to the harvest of salmon by commercial seine and drift gillnet gear;

(b) The closure to commercial seine and drift gillnet gear sited in (1) above will be removed as soon as the troll spring fishery areas of Steamer Point (106-30): and Chichagof Pass (108-10) are reopened.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Since the Stock of Concern conservation plans for the Unuk, Chilkat and King Salmon river have been instated, the trollers have lost several spring fishery areas for the purpose of harvesting Alaska hatchery fish. In addition to these plans, the Stikine and Taku river Chinook runs are in dire straits and these same plans protect these runs as well.

Consequently, the troll spring fishery areas surrounding Anita bay have been closed with no reopening of those areas in the foreseeable future. This means the trollers have lost the main contributor to their access to the SSRAA Chinook released in Anita Bay. The only area left is the Anita Bay terminal area itself.

In the past when proposals of this nature were submitted, the Board of Fisheries response was for the proposer to ask the hatchery association for a change before they would take action. In 2018, following that prodigal, a letter was sent to SSRAA asking for an exclusive zone in the Terminal Area of Anita Bay in which the trollers could fish without net interference. That request was granted to a small extent. In 2019 the same zone specified in this proposal was troll only from June 1, to June 12. It was appreciated and considered a step in the right direction. However, hatchery Chinook for the Anita Bay release site are just starting to show up on June 12 and peak about June 30th. So basically, the politics of the SSRAA board would only allow the trollers this exclusive zone when the fish were not there in force. It was a gift on paper, but in reality, far short of what it should have been.

Having attempted the past Board of Fisheries prodigal in these matters and been dissatisfied, the only recourse is to come to this Board for help and suggest they exercise:

5 AAC 33.364.

(a) If the value of the harvest of enhanced salmon stocks by a gear group listed in (a) of this section is outside of its allocation percentage for three consecutive years, the board will, in its discretion, adjust fisheries within special harvest areas to bring the gear group within its allocation percentage. With the SEAK Chinook runs in poor health and these spring fishery areas for trollers remaining closed, the allocation deficit of the trollers is only going to get worse. The Board of Fisheries needs to adopt proposals like this one to curb that decline.

PROPOSED BY: Steve Merritt

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