

Proposed Kenai River Late-run King Salmon Stock of Concern Action Plan
Submitted by: Kenai River Professional Guide Association

This is a rebuilding plan that favors recovery before opportunity.

This plan replaces existing plan Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan [5 AAC 21.359] until such time as the stock is delisted.

This action plan is built on the framework of the current king management plan to ensure this action plan is comprehensive.

Action Plan Elements

- (a) The purpose of this plan is to provide tools and guidelines to the department for the management of the Upper Cook Inlet salmon fisheries, while Kenai River Late-run River King Salmon are listed as a stock of management concern, that will result in sustained yield of King salmon stocks large enough to meet optimal escapement goals while allowing for harvest opportunity in the personal use, sport and commercial fisheries.
- (1) the provisions of this plan are in effect until such time as the stock of management concern designation is removed by the Board of Fisheries. It is the intent of the Board that the designation will remain in place until the lower bound of the optical escapement goal is met or exceeded in three consecutive or is met in four out of size consecutive years, **with one year to exceed 18,400 (SMSY).**
 - (2) the provisions of this management plan are in effect from June 20 through August 15th, ***unless the Kenai River Early Run Management Plan has been restricted, this plan will not begin until July 1st.***
- (b) The department shall manage the late run Kenai River King salmon to achieve an optimal escapement goal of 15,000 – 30,000 King Salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer as described in this section. Achieving **escapement across the entire range of the goal** shall take priority over not exceeding the upper ends of the escapement and in river goal ranges from Kenai and Kasilof River sockeye salmon.
- (c) In the sport fishery, from July 1 through July 31
- (1) use of bait is prohibited in the Kenai River downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake;
 - (2) a person may not use more than one single hook in the Kenai River downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake;
 - (3) that portion of the Kenai River downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake is open to unguided sport fishing

from a nonmotorized vessel on Mondays; for purpose of the paragraph, a non-mortized vessel is one that does not have a motor on board.

- (d) If the projected late-run king salmon escapement is less than 15,000 King salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer, the department shall
- (1) Close the sport fisheries in the Kenai River and in the salt waters of Cook Inlet north of the latitude of Bluff Point to the take of king salmon;
 - (2) Close the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Upper Subdistrict of the Central District,
 - (3) Prohibit the use of bait and multiple hooks in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to the ADF&G marker at the outlet of Skilak Lake, August 1 through 15. Anglers may use only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure in these waters. "Single-hook" means a fishhook with only one point.
- (e) In order to achieve optimal escapement goal and provide reasonable harvest opportunity, the commissioner may, by emergency order, establish fishing seasons as follows:
- (1) In the Kenai River sport fishery,
 - (A) **When an escapement goal of 16,500 is projected, the department may liberalize in-river king salmon fishing to catch and release.**
 - (B) Retention of king salmon 34 inches or greater in length is prohibited **when an escapement of 18,400 is expected to be achieved after all exploitation.**
 - (C) Retention of king salmon is prohibited;
 - (2) In the Kenai River personal use fisheries, retention of king salmon is prohibited; A Kasilof River personal use set gillnet may not exceed 10 fathoms in length, four- and three-quarter inches in mesh size, and 15 meshes in depth.
 - (3) In the Upper subdistrict set gillnet commercial fishery, notwithstanding the provision of 5 AAC 21.359, 5 AAC 21.365 and 5 AAC 21.360(c)(1)(B), and (3)(B), based on the abundance of sockeye salmon returning to the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers,
 - (A) Fishing in the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet commercial fishing shall occur in a manner that avoids fishing around low slack and is more likely to keep nets off the bottom. No more than 8 hours of fishing may occur on any day. Need appropriate regulatory language.
 - (B) **Net size to include length, aggregate length and depth for each CFEC permit holder shall be established at the discretion of the commissioner.**
 - (C) Commercial fishing periods are open for no more than 32 hours per week, with a 48-hour continuous closure per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday. The operation of setnets by a CFEC permit holder may be restricted to not more than three set gillnets **and shall be the discretion of the commissioner.**
 - (D) If retention of king salmon greater than 34 inches in length is prohibited as defined in 5 AAC 75.995(a) **and escapement is projected to exceed 18,400;** in the Kenai River sport fishery under (1)(B) of this subsection, commercial

fishing periods are open for no more than 24 hours per week, with a 48-hour continuous closure per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday; the operation of setnets by CFEC permit holder shall be restricted to not more than two set gillnets;

- (E) If retention of king salmon prohibited in the Kenai River sport fishery under (1)(C) of this subsection, commercial fishing periods are open for no more than 16 hours per week, with a 48-hour continuous closure per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday; the operation of setnets by CFEC permit holder shall be restricted to not more than one set gillnet;
 - (F) If preseason restrictions are issued for the late-run Kenai River King salmon sport fishery, then all Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fisheries are restricted;
 - (G) Beginning August 1, Upper Subdistrict set gillnet commercial fishing periods are open for no more than 8 hours per week;
- (4) In the Upper Subdistrict drift gillnet commercial fishery, no fishing may occur within two miles from the Kenai Peninsula shoreline ***or in areas that have higher incidental catch of King Salmon (as determined by the department).***
- (f) The Kasilof River Special Harvest Area identified in 5 AAC 21.365(f) Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan shall remain closed for the duration of this plan.
 - (g) The department will, to the extent practicable, conduct habitat assessments on a schedule that conforms to the board of Fisheries (board) triennial meeting cycle. The department is requested to report those findings to the board and submit proposals to the board for appropriate modification of this plan.
 - (h) The department will, to the extent practicable, conduct assessments of additional regions and areas with potentially high interception rates of Kenai River bound king salmon.***
 - (i) The department will, to the extent practicable, conduct assessments of natural predation both in river and in the marine environment. This includes but is not limited to, marine mammals, birds, and predatory fish.***