

Submitted by Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association

February 29, 2024

This is proposed language for the action plan incorporating the majority of components from the language in RC 146 and RC 148. Previously submitted are KPFA's comments on RC 146, which combined the concepts of RC's 90 and 96 and attempted to meld them together. This language is intended to be somewhat closer to usable than RC 146, while maintaining the intent of the melded KPFA and KRSA plans; and using much of the language from RC 148. Our expectation is that this could be used as starting language and amended if small changes are needed.

Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon stock of concern action plan:**5 AAC 21.XXX. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon stock of concern management plan**

(a) The purpose of this management plan is to provide management tools and guidelines to the department for the management of Upper Cook Inlet salmon fisheries, while Kenai River late-run king salmon are listed as a stock of management concern, that will result in the sustained yield of king salmon stocks large enough to meet optimal escapement goals, while allowing for harvest opportunity in the subsistence, personal use, sport, and commercial sockeye salmon fisheries. The provisions in this plan will be in effect between June 20 — August 15 and until the stock of management concern designation is removed by the Board of Fisheries. It is the intent of the board that the designation will be in effect until the lower bound of the optimal escapement goal is met or exceeded for three consecutive years, or is met in four out of six consecutive years and is expected to be met in future years.

(b) The department shall manage the late run of 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. If preseason restrictions are issued for the late-run Kenai River king salmon sport fishery, then all Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fisheries are restricted;

(c) In the Kenai River sport fishery, from July 1 — July 31

(1) the use of bait is prohibited in the Kenai River downstream from an ADFG regulatory marker located at the outlet of Skilak Lake.

(2) only one unbaited single hook artificial lure may be used 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 purposes of this paragraph, a "nonmotorized" 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 large king salmon, the department shall 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 taking of king salmon;

(e) In order to achieve the 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) retention of king salmon 34 inches or greater in length as defined in 5 AAC 75.995(a) is prohibited; or

(B) 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 and four and three quarter inches in mesh size, and 29 meshes in depth.

(f) Between 13,500-15,000 the Upper Subdistrict commercial fishery shall be managed with a very limited fishery as follows:

(1) In the Kasilof Section from June 20 – June 30, if the Kenai River late-run preseason forecast of king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer is within 13,500 – 15,000 then the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery:

(A) shall open for three eight hour periods that shall be targeted at centering on high tide to avoid fishing low tide slack and the two hours on either side of it;

(B) shall be restricted to one net per permit, not more than 35 fathoms in length and 29 meshes in depth;

(C) shall report all king salmon retained on an ADFG fish ticket;

(D) shall release all live, viable king salmon;

(E) fishery openings shall be based around tides based upon Seldovia District Tide Tables by section as follows: Ninilchik River Mouth to Kasilof River Mouth plus 3 hours from Seldovia District low tide (Stat Areas 244-21, 24422), Kasilof River Mouth to Kenai River Mouth plus 4 hours from Seldovia District low tide (Stat Areas 244-31);

(F) shall close for one continuous 48-hour period per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday

(2) The Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery shall be closed from July 1 – July 14;

(3) In the Kasilof, Kenai and East Forelands Sections from July 15 – July 27 if the Kenai River late-run preseason forecast, or after July 22 the in season projection, of king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer is within 13,500 – 15,000 then the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery:

(A) shall open for four eight hour periods that shall be targeted at centering on high tide to avoid fishing low tide slack and the two hours on either side of it;

(B) shall be restricted to one net per permit, not more than 35 fathoms in length and 29 meshes in depth;

(C) shall report all king salmon retained on an ADFG fish ticket;

(D) shall release all live, viable king salmon;

(E) fishery openings shall be based around tides based upon Seldovia District Tide Tables by section as follows: Ninilchik River Mouth to Kasilof River Mouth plus 3 hours from Seldovia

District low tide (Stat Areas 244-21, 24422), Kasilof River Mouth to Kenai River Mouth plus 4 hours from Seldovia District low tide (Stat Areas 244-31, 244-32), Kenai River Mouth to Boulder Point plus 5 hours from Seldovia District Low tide (Stat Areas 244-41, 244-42);

(F) shall close for one continuous 48-hour period per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday

(4) In the Kasilof, Kenai, and East Foreland Sections from July 28 – Aug 15, if the Kenai River late-run in season projection of king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer is within 13,500 – 15,000 then the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery:

(A) may open for a maximum of two eight hour periods that shall be targeted at centering on high tide to avoid fishing low tide slack and the two hours on either side of it;

(B) shall be restricted to one net per permit, not more than 35 fathoms in length and 29 meshes in depth;

(C) shall report all king salmon retained on an ADFG fish ticket;

(D) shall release all live, viable king salmon;

(E) fishery openings shall be based around tides based upon Seldovia District Tide Tables by section as follows: Ninilchik River Mouth to Kasilof River Mouth plus 3 hours from Seldovia District low tide (Stat Areas 244-21, 24422), Kasilof River Mouth to Kenai River Mouth plus 4 hours from Seldovia District low tide (Stat Areas 244-31, 244-32), Kenai River Mouth to Boulder Point plus 5 hours from Seldovia District Low tide (Stat Areas 244-41, 244-42);

(F) shall close for one continuous 48-hour period per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday

(g) Above 15,000 fish but while the river is closed to fishing for king salmon, the Upper Subdistrict commercial fishery shall be managed as follows:

(1) In the Kasilof, Kenai, and East Foreland Sections from June 20 – Aug 15, if the Kenai River late-run pre-season forecast, or in season projection after July 22, of king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer is above 15,000, but the river is closed to king fishing then the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery:

(A) shall open for two eight hour periods per week, during the general regulatory seasons for each section and area, that shall be targeted at centering on high tide to avoid fishing low tide slack and the two hours on either side of it;

(B) shall be restricted to one net per permit, not more than 35 fathoms in length and 29 meshes in depth;

(C) shall report all king salmon retained on an ADFG fish ticket;

(D) shall release all live, viable king salmon;

(E) fishery openings shall be based around tides based upon Seldovia District Tide Tables by section as follows: Ninilchik River Mouth to Kasilof River Mouth plus 3 hours from Seldovia

District low tide (Stat Areas 244-21, 24422), Kasilof River Mouth to Kenai River Mouth plus 4 hours from Seldovia District low tide (Stat Areas 244-31, 244-32), Kenai River Mouth to Boulder Point plus 5 hours from Seldovia District Low tide (Stat Areas 244-41, 244-42);

(F) shall close for one continuous 48-hour period per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday.

(h) In addition to other provisions in this section:

(1) fishing openings in the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery that is targeted on the 8 hours centered on high tide are designed to have rolling starting times to start at 1.5-2 hrs after low tide slack.

(2) fishery openings shall be based around tides using Seldovia District Tide Tables by section as follows: Ninilchik River Mouth to Kasilof River Mouth plus 3 hours from Seldovia District low tide (Stat Areas 244-21, 24422), Kasilof River Mouth to Kenai River Mouth plus 4 hours from Seldovia District low tide (Stat Areas 244-31, 244-32), Kenai River Mouth to Boulder Point plus 5 hours from Seldovia District Low tide (Stat Areas 244-41, 244-42)

(3) fishery openings shall be rounded to the nearest half hour for start time,

(4) The Kasilof River Special Harvest Area identified in 5 AAC 21.365(f) shall remain closed for the duration of this plan.

(i) Above 15,000 fish when the river is opened to opportunity as provided in (e)(1)(a or b) of this section the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery will be paired with the inriver fishery as follows:

(1) If retention of king salmon greater than 34 inches in length are prohibited in the Kenai River sport fishery under (e)(1)(a) of this section then the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery:

(A) shall open for up to three eight hour periods per week that shall be targeted at centering on high tide to avoid fishing low tide slack and the two hours on either side of it;

(B) shall be restricted to two nets per permit, not more than 35 fathoms in length and 29 meshes in depth;

(C) shall report all king salmon retained on an ADFG fish ticket;

(D) shall release all live, viable king salmon;

(E) fishery openings shall be based around tides based upon Seldovia District Tide Tables by section as follows: Ninilchik River Mouth to Kasilof River Mouth plus 3 hours from Seldovia District low tide (Stat Areas 244-21, 24422), Kasilof River Mouth to Kenai River Mouth plus 4 hours from Seldovia District low tide (Stat Areas 244-31, 244-32), Kenai River Mouth to Boulder Point plus 5 hours from Seldovia District Low tide (Stat Areas 244-41, 244-42);

(F) shall close for one continuous 48-hour period per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday.

(2) If retention of king salmon is prohibited under (e)(1)(b) of this section then the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery:

(A) shall open for two eight hour periods per week that shall be targeted at centering on high tide to avoid fishing low tide slack and the two hours on either side of it;

(B) shall be restricted to one net per permit, not more than 35 fathoms in length and 29 meshes in depth;

(C) shall report all king salmon retained on an ADFG fish ticket;

(D) shall release all live, viable king salmon;

(E) fishery openings shall be based around tides based upon Seldovia District Tide Tables by section as follows: Ninilchik River Mouth to Kasilof River Mouth plus 3 hours from Seldovia District low tide (Stat Areas 244-21, 244-22), Kasilof River Mouth to Kenai River Mouth plus 4 hours from Seldovia District low tide (Stat Areas 244-31, 244-32), Kenai River Mouth to Boulder Point plus 5 hours from Seldovia District Low tide (Stat Areas 244-41, 244-42);

(F) shall close for one continuous 48-hour period per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday.

(k) The department will, to the extent practicable, conduct habitat assessments on a schedule that conforms to the Board of Fisheries 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.