

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

Provisional Policy #78-39-FB

Management of Public and Private Hatchery Returns

It is the policy of ADF&G to base the management of hatchery returns of salmon on a harvest plan approved by the Commissioner, ADF&G. A basic harvest management plan will be developed, to the extent that existing knowledge allows, before a private nonprofit hatchery permit is issued or a potential F.R.E.D. site is approved by the Commissioner. The basic plan will be developed between the area management biologists, the applicant or F.R.E.D. project leader, and the regional planning team as a part of the application review process requested by the Commissioner and to determine the proposed hatchery's compatibility with the finalized or preliminary "comprehensive regional plan" required under AS 16.10.375. As such, the basic management plan will ultimately be part of the "regional comprehensive plan" subject to the Commissioner's approval as well as part of the conditions appended to a hatchery permit.

Beginning with the first expected returns and on an annual basis thereafter, the basic harvest plan will be added to, modified, and refined into an annual harvest management plan as may be required to allow for annual run variables and/or refined management information enabling more precise management practices. The annual harvest management plan will include regulations adopted by the Board of Fisheries, emergency order possibilities that may be enacted by the Commissioner, annual harvest needs of the hatchery operators to recover operating expenses, and other considerations relating to harvest as follows:

1. Probable management strategy for common property fisheries through which hatchery returns may pass.
2. Special hatchery harvest area boundaries which will take into account the following considerations, contingent upon separation of hatchery stocks from indigenous or migrating wild stocks:
 - a. Space for a natural schooling/milling area
 - b. Space and water depth for operating commercial gear
 - c. Space to harvest incoming salmon while they are of comparable quality to salmon harvested by commercial fisheries in the area.
3. Justifications and recommendations for a special closed-water area for a hatchery to protect its milling brood stock.
4. Consideration of the time span when harvest of hatchery returns within the special harvest area may be allowed by emergency order as influenced by times when present hatchery returns are expected and wild stocks would be absent.
5. Strategy for harvesting salmon within the special harvest area while they are of comparable quality to salmon harvested by commercial fisheries in the area, and special strategies that will be used to avoid the interception of wild stocks or the taking of non-target species present in the special harvest hatchery area.

6. How any harvest of salmon (whether by the common property fishery or by hatchery operator) within the special hatchery harvest area will be managed so that the hatchery will obtain necessary brood stock.
7. Details describing how the harvest of fish needed to pay hatchery costs will be carried out including description of the gear to be used and arrangement of sale of fish.
8. An explanation of how the proposed management plan of the hatchery production will benefit the common property fisheries including sport, subsistence, and commercial fishermen while reasonably providing for financial and brood stock requirements of the hatchery.
9. A proposed hatchery financial plan for reasonable operating cost and salmon enhancement activities permitted by AS 16.10.400-450.
10. An explanation of how the production and harvest management plan complements comprehensive salmon enhancement and rehabilitation planning for the region.

This plan will be drafted by the Sport and Commercial Fisheries area management biologists in close consultation with the permit holder or F.R.E.D. project leader and the regional planning team.

The first step in the development of the annual harvest plan will be a report prepared by the permit holder or F.R.E.D. project leader and submitted to all regional planning team members by September 1 of the year preceding the harvest. This report will summarize the hatchery manager's input on points 2 through 10. Other information needed in development of the annual harvest plan (i.e., regulations adopted by the Board, area forecasts for wild stocks, etc.) will be distributed to planning team members as it becomes available. As such the plan will be developed in increments over the year preceding the harvest. An initial draft of the annual harvest plan will be made available to all planning team members on or before April 30 of each year. The Commissioner, ADF&G, will ultimately approve or modify the plan as in the best public interest.

Regulatory proposals pertaining to the special harvest area will be initially developed in conjunction with the basic management plan and will be submitted for Board of Fisheries adoption the year before the first returns to the hatchery are expected. Subsequent changes in the hatchery regulations initially adopted by the Board will be open to modifications at each fall Board meeting. If the proposed regulatory changes are controversial, regional planning team members will attempt to resolve the controversy(s) to whatever extent possible prior to the proposal deadline. Any regulatory proposals not prepared through the planning team but prepared individually by ADF&G staff, regional associations, or independent private nonprofit permit holders that modify the existing hatchery regulations will be submitted to all regional planning team members and the permit holders at least two weeks prior to the proposal deadline for the fall Board of Fisheries meeting.

The gear types allowed to fish in a special harvest area for either common property or the hatchery's harvest will be established by the Board of Fisheries

under the chapter sections dealing with individual hatcheries. The Department will base its proposals for gear type on whether or not the gear would negatively impact any wild fish species present in the special harvest area at the time of hatchery return harvesting. The Department will not endorse gear types for hatchery harvesting that would be inefficient or waste hatchery returns that would otherwise have been harvested.

A numerical range of salmon returns needed by a private nonprofit hatchery to cover the year's financial requirements and brood stock may be set annually by the Board of Fisheries for each private hatchery, contingent upon the Board's receiving a thorough explanation of and justification for the financial requirements and brood stock substantiated and supported by the Departments of Commerce and Fish and Game. Such limits will refer to harvest of hatchery surpluses in the special harvest area by hatchery operator if such surpluses are available. The operator will be given preference for harvest of its returns in this area, up to limits described, provided the harvest does not infringe on the best public interest as determined by the Commissioner. The Department will attempt to insure that sport or subsistence fisheries on fish other than the hatchery returns will not be interfered with during the hatchery's harvest.

Management of hatchery returns in mixed stock fisheries will be based on exploitability of the wild stocks. Harvestable surpluses of hatchery stocks will not be harvested by the common property fisheries if such harvest would impact satisfactory escapements of wild stocks.