



Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Board of Fisheries

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ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES
EMERGENCY MEETING – TOGIAK AREA FISHERMENT PETITION
Teleconference
July 24, 2015

MEETING SUMMARY

Board Members Present

Tom Kluberton, Chair

Fritz Johnson

Orville Huntington

Reed Morisky

Robert Mumford

Board Members Absent

John Jensen, Vice-Chair

Sue Jeffrey

The Board of Fisheries (Board) met by teleconference at 2:00pm on July 24, 2015, to consider the Togiak Area Fishermen (as signed) petition seeking to amend regulations regarding registration requirements for commercial salmon fishing in the Togiak District in the Bristol Bay Area.

At the teleconference board members heard from staff regarding in-season Bristol Bay salmon runs and their impact on the Togiak District. The board found the Togiak District sockeye salmon returns are historically later and in lower numbers than other Bristol Bay sockeye salmon stocks, and about 90% of the participants in the Togiak District fishery are local area residents. Because of these unique characteristics, the 2009 Alaska Board of Fisheries adopted a regulation (5 AAC 06.370(k)(2)) whereby permit holders initially registered to fish for salmon in other districts of the Bristol Bay Area may not fish for salmon in the Togiak District from 9:00a.m. June 1 to 9:00 a.m. July 27. Concomitantly, permit holders initially registered in the Togiak District may not fish for salmon in other Bristol Bay districts from 9:00 a.m. June 1 to 9:00 a.m. July 27. Typically around 50 permit holders initially register in the Togiak District and 10 to 15 additional permit holders from other districts begin fishing there after July 27.

The 2015 Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run is one of the latest on record and to date only about one third of the Togiak District sockeye salmon run has entered the district. Under normal run timing approximately 75% of the run would have passed by July 27, thereby offering little incentive for outside permit holders to enter the fishery, however late run-timing in 2015 indicates that the bulk of the Togiak District sockeye salmon run has yet to materialize and a greater-than-normal number of outside permit holders are likely to enter the district to harvest these late-returning sockeye



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salmon. The entrance of a greater-than-normal number of outside permit holders into the Togiak District fishery beginning 9:00 a.m. July 27 could severely inhibit opportunity for the 52 permit holders initially registered in the Togiak District to harvest late-returning sockeye salmon in that district as the board intended when it adopted this regulation.

In other districts of the Bristol Bay Area the salmon runs have mostly passed the fisheries, and permit holders registered in these districts have had opportunity to harvest salmon while permit holders registered in the Togiak District have been excluded. Allowing permit holders initially registered in these other districts to prematurely enter the Togiak District fishery also threatens to make it more difficult for the department to manage this fishery.

To ensure fishing opportunity intended for permit holders initially registered for the Togiak District fishery, the board found unanimously that an emergency existed and that it was essential to extend the control date for entrance into the Togiak District fishery from 9:00 a.m. July 27, 2015 to 9:00 a.m. August 5, 2015. This extension to 9:00 a.m. August 5, 2015 aligns with the late run timing that the Togiak District sockeye salmon stock is experiencing.

The board established listening sites in Juneau, Anchorage, Dillingham, Togiak, and Twin Hills, and streamed the meeting live over the internet.