



PRESS RELEASE

for immediate release March 29, 2018

CONTACT: Charles O. Swanton
Deputy Commissioner
Juneau, (907) 465-4115

Restrictions Coming in 2018 to Southeast Alaska Chinook Fisheries

(Juneau) — Chinook (king) salmon fisheries in Southeast Alaska are facing restrictions in 2018 as fisheries managers work to increase escapement and rebuild stocks affected by several years of poor marine survival. The restrictions – to be shared by commercial, sport, personal-use, and subsistence fisheries – are needed as forecasts project record-low Chinook returns for regional and transboundary drainages.

“Southeast Alaska and transboundary-river Chinook stocks are experiencing a period of very low productivity,” said Deputy Commissioner Charlie Swanton. “Escapement objectives are not being met, so we’re calling for an all-out conservation effort on behalf of Alaskans and our Canadian neighbors alike.”

Planning for 2018’s Chinook conservative management actions began at the Alaska Board of Fisheries meeting in Sitka in January. With input from stakeholders, the board considered and approved action plans for three stocks of concern: Chilkat River, King Salmon River, and Unuk River stocks. While other Southeast Alaska and transboundary river Chinook salmon stocks are not officially designated stocks of concern, given recent run data and the outlook for record low runs in 2018, additional conservative management actions are being implemented to protect all of these stocks.

Commercial restrictions include the recent closure of the winter troll fishery on March 15, while the May-June spring troll fishery will open only in select terminal harvest areas and a few defined areas on the outside coast to target hatchery Chinook and conserve wild stocks.

Throughout Southeast’s inside waters, the sport fishery will be restricted to non-retention of Chinook salmon. If surplus hatchery Chinook salmon are present, an opportunity to harvest those fish will be provided in designated terminal harvest areas and announced at a later date.

In personal use and subsistence fisheries, area-specific actions detailed in the board's action plans will be applied along with measures to protect transboundary Taku and Stikine Chinook salmon stocks.

As a result of meetings between Alaska and Canada Pacific Salmon Commissioners, Canada has agreed to share the Chinook conservation burden. Reductions in Canada could include time, area, bag limit, and gear restrictions to sport and commercial fisheries. An allowable catch reduction and nonretention are also being considered.

The department will issue details about Southeast Alaska's restrictions and closures early next week. Fisheries stakeholders are encouraged to check regulations announcements, news releases, and emergency orders at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=newsreleases.main>.

To view the Southeast Alaska Chinook salmon action plans, visit the following links:

- Chilkat River and King Salmon River King Salmon Stock Status and Action Plan, 2018:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/FedAidPDFs/RIR.1J.2018.05.pdf>
- Unuk River King Salmon Stock Status and Action Plan, 2018:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/FedAidPDFs/RIR.1J.2018.04.pdf>

###