

**PROPOSAL 92 – 5 AAC 21.353. Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan.** Restrict commercial drift gillnet fishery to the Expanded Corridor and Drift Gillnet Area 1 from August 1–15, as follows:

Amend the Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan as follows:

(e) from August 1 - 15, [THERE ARE NO MANDATORY AREA RESTRICTIONS TO REGULAR PERIODS,]

**(1) fishing during both regular 12 hour periods per week will be restricted to one or more of the following sections: (A) Expanded Kenai Section; (B) Expanded Kasilof Section; (C) Anchor Point Section; (D) Drift Gillnet Area 1,** except that if the Upper Subdistrict set gill net fishery is closed under 5 AAC 21.310(b)(2)(C)(iii), or the department determines that less than one percent of the season’s total drift gill net sockeye salmon harvest has been taken per fishing period for two consecutive fishing periods in the drift gill net fishery, regular fishing periods will be restricted to Drift Gillnet Areas 3 and 4. In this subsection, “fishing period” means a time period open to commercial fishing as measured by a 24-hour calendar day from 12:01 a.m. until 11:59 p.m.

**(2) additional fishing time under this subsection is allowed only in one or more of the following sections; (A) Expanded Kenai Section; (B) Expanded Kasilof Section; (C) Anchor Point Section.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** While changes to the drift management plan adopted by the Board in 2014 have proven more effective in increasing escapements of Northern District drainage salmon stocks during July and providing more reasonable harvest opportunities for Northern District user groups during July, management during 2015 proved the plan inadequate in continuing those benefits throughout August. As currently configured the plan allows unnecessary drift gillnet fishing in Drift Gillnet Area 2 during the first half of August, which jeopardizes both attainment of Northern District drainage salmon escapement needs and reasonable salmon harvest opportunities for Northern District and Northern District drainage user groups. As proven many times the drift fleet can harvest plenty of surplus Kenai River sockeye without corking off Northern District bound sockeye and coho salmon in Area 2. Therefore, to address Northern conservation concerns and to allow more reasonable Northern harvest opportunity for other user groups, this proposal seeks to amend the drift management plan in a manner that still maintains drift gill netters an extremely liberal opportunity to harvest surplus sockeye salmon during times of July and August abundance. Note: under this proposal even if the drift fishery was restricted under the 1% rule, the department could still allow the fleet to fish 7 days per week (5 days per week in the Expanded Kenai, Expanded Kasilof, and Anchor Point Sections and 2 days per week in Drift Gillet Area 3 and 4 during a portion of the season when sockeye salmon abundance is in decline and coho harvests makes up an increasing portion of the drift catch).

Considering restrictions on other user groups during the August 1 - 31 timeframe, this proposal, if adopted, should increase the likelihood of attaining Northern District escapement needs, provide more reasonable harvest opportunity for Northern and other user groups, while retaining significant drift gillnet harvest opportunity during August. In short, such changes would better align the plan provisions with it’s stated purpose:

“The purpose of this management plan is to ensure adequate escapement of salmon into the Northern District drainages and to provide management guidelines to the department. The department shall manage the commercial drift gill net fishery to minimize the harvest of Northern District and Kenai River coho salmon in order to provide sport and guided sport fishermen a reasonable opportunity to harvest these salmon stocks over the entire run, as measured by the frequency of inriver restrictions.”

**PROPOSED BY:** Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F16-055)  
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