On-Time Public Comment List

Upper Cook Inlet | February 23–March 8, 2017

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Submitted By
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Submitted On
2/9/2017 5:07:11 AM
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Chairman Jensen and Members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

I am Rod Arno, writing to you as Executive Director of the Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC). Conservation of publicly owned fish and game resources are AOC's first purpose. After sustianed yield of fish stocks and game populations are assured AOC works to maintain access to Alaska hunting and fishing opportunities for all Alaskans, and also seeks to provide reasonable fish and game harvest opportunities for all Alaskans.

As other individuals or groups may have already told you, over the recent 10 year period from 2006 -- 2015, Commercial Permit holders have harvested roughly 3/4 of all Upper Cook Inlet salmon leaving about 1/4 of the harvest for the combined personal use, sport, and subsistence user groups. Your task during the 2017 Upper Cook Inlet Fisheries is not necessarily to decide who gets to harvest the largest share of the salmon resource, but rather how to sustain the resource first -- and next how to allocate the resource and the burden of conservation in such a manner as to maximize human benefit derived from the resource.

These are long standing issues before each new Board, and past boards' have planned and written extensively on the subject. Therefore I would like to refer Board Members to a 1977 Board Finding which identified the value of managing king salmon and coho salmon primarily for recreational (now sport and guided sport) use. From finding 77-27-FB I present the following long-term planning conclusions:

3. Of the salmon stocks in Cook Inlet, the king and silver salmon are the target species for the recreational angler, while the chum, pink, and red salmon are the predominant commercial fishery.

it is not the Board's intent to establish exclusive uses of salmon stocks; rather its purpose is to define the primary beneficial use of the stock while permitting secondary uses of the stock to the extent it is consistent with the requirements of the primary user group.

From final point 2. Stocks which normally move in Cook Inlet after June 30 shall be managed primarily as a non recreational resource until after August 15, however existing recreational target fish shall only be harvested incidental to the non-recreational use;

Moving forward 40 years, It is easy to identify efforts at following directives from Finding 77-27-FB, and in particular, as it relates to Kenai Peninsula sport fisheries. Moving North in Upper Cook Inlet, however, attempts at following the recreational directive to harvest king and silver salmon only incidentally in commercial fisheries targeting sockeye, pink, and chum salmon seems to have mixed results at best. It is with this thought in mind that AOC would like to provide more information concerning a suite of proposals it submitted and continues to support. Concerning Proposals 93, 212, 203:

Proposal 93 seeks to align management actions within the Central District Drift Fishery Management Plan more closely with the plan's purpose: "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 gillnet 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 number of inseason restrictions."

Current provisions within the plan allow both regular weekly periods to be fished area-wide during the first two weeks of August. This is the time of the season when sockeye salmon abundance is declining and the proportion of silver salmon harvest is climbing. Northern coho sport fisheries at Jim Creek and Little Susitna River also have a history, over the past 8 years, of sport fishery restrictions, closures, and missed escapement goals. It should also be noted that area-wide drift gillnetting only increases the chance of over harvesting Stock of Concern Susitna River sockeye salmon as well. Therefore it makes more sense, better follows the longtime directives for Upper Cook Inlet salmon fisheries, and more closely follows the management plan purpose to harvest any August abundance of Kenai or Kasilof River sockeye salmon in a more stock selective manner. During regular 12-hour periods harvestable surplus sockeye salmon may be harvested within the Expanded Kenai and Kasilof Sections and in Area 1 south of Kalgan Island, thereby increasing the chance of attaining Northern salmon escapement goals, and allowing Northern user groups a more reasonable opportunity to harvest Upper Cook Inlet salmon. All additional time drift fishing (focused on harvesting Kenai sockeye salmon) should occur in the Expanded Kenai, Kasilof, and Anchor point sections.

In response to Alaskans consistently expressing concerns that too many sockeye salmon could be allowed to escape up the Kenai River, AOC has submitted and supports Proposal 203 which would allow the Commissioner to extend the Kenai River personal use dip net

fishery through August 10, and increase the personal use bag limit when the Kenai River sockeye salmon escapement can be projected to exceed 1.2 million fish. This would allow an even more selective harvest of Kenai River bound salmon, and have the added benefit of spreading additional harvest opportunity to a much larger group of Alaskan residents. Whenever there is an emergency level abundance of sockeye salmon, every Alaskan should have a reasonable opportunity to participate in the expanded harvest opportunity. Note: According to a department staff member a projected escapement exceeding 1.2 million Kenai River is something that has occurred every year for the past 10 years, so this is a tool that definitely should be added to the department list of selective harvest options.

Proposal 212 would close the Northern District commercial set net fishery after the regular August 15 period. This would better align the Northern District commercial fishery with a purpose of the management plan (to minimize the harvest of coho salmon bound for the Northern District of Upper Cook Inlet) and also provide better alignment with the long term directive from Board Finding 77-27-BF: that recreational (sport and guided sport) target fish shall only be harvested incidental to the non recreational use. The abundance of non recreational (commercial) target species is in free fall decline after August 15. According to department data in the past decade the Northern District set net fishery has harvested 5 times as many coho salmon after August 15 than the total harvest of all other salmon species combined for the same time period. Such high harvest proportion of coho salmon would seem to be focusing harvest on coho rather than catching them in an incidental manner. Therefore, closing the Northern District fishery on August 15th, after the regular period, would bring the fishery more inline with the management purpose, and long- term management directive in a way which minimizes downward impact on harvest of commercial species.

Through 77 -27- BF and other findings past boards have long recognized the value of silver (coho) salmon to the sport fishery. If the current board is concerned about negative impact a August 15 season closure date could have on Northern District set net harvest, remember that any change in overall Northern District set net salmon harvest could likely be positive, rather than negative, if the Board were to also adopt Proposals 93 and 203 and pass more salmon north through the Conservation Corridor. A higher proportion of increased August salmon harvest before the 15th would likely consist of commercial target stocks. This can be easily observed by looking at the positive change in Northern District set net harvest that has already occurred over the past 3 years, as a result of using the Conservation Corridor during July.

In hopes of helping the Board maximize benefit from Cook Inlet salmon fisheries for a maximum number of Alaskans,

Rod Arno, Executive Director
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"Working for Alaska's Salmon Future Today"

February 9, 2017

Glenn Haight, Executive Director
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Attention: Board of Fisheries Comments for Upper Cook Inlet Finfish Meeting

The Alaska Salmon Alliance, is an Alaska-based corporation with offices in Kenai and Anchorage, certified by the the IRS as a 501(c)6, not-for-profit entity in February of 2012. ASA is part of the growing movement of individuals and organizations that support the culture of salmon in Alaska and advocate for research and education to improve science-based salmon management for the benefit of Alaskan communities and all user groups. (Additional information on the Southcentral Alaska commercial fisheries economic impact, see attachment)

The ASA wishes to note that it intends to work on issues and collaborate with members of the public to the extent practicable, and with members of the Board of Fisheries during the course of the Upper Cook Inlet meeting.

Below are some general areas of particular concern to ASA and our membership.

ASA does not support prescriptive management measures. Prescriptive management measures do not allow for annual variations in run strength and timing and inhibit local ADFG management expertise in the application of Emergency Order authority to implement adaptive management measures to optimize harvests for all sectors. Prescriptive measures include the mandatory use of corridors, windows, paired restrictions, 1% rules or changing escapement goals for different run sizes.

ASA does support scientific and sustainable fishery management measures and sustainable escapement goals (SEG). The ADF&G has determined that salmon escapements in excess of an SEG are not sustainable. ASA does not support any proposals that will allow the late run sockeye escapement into the Kenai River to exceed the current SEG of 700,000 – 1.2 million.

Paired restrictions: ASA supports the repeal of paired restrictions, noted in our support for proposals 168,169,171,172,176,177. At the last BOF meeting the board adopted a new concept called "paired restrictions." The result was rules that unfairly burden commercial set net and drift net fishers in Cook Inlet and limit or restrict management decisions for no benefit. The effect is that if the inriver sport fishery that targets King salmon can't prosecute that fishery without any limitation, the ESSN fishery is severely restricted. This is not an equitable way of balancing restrictions or contributions for conservation.

Further, "paired restrictions' undermine flexible in season management because it restricts the managers ability to open and close the fishery in times of abundance. This arbitrary imposition of restrictions of opportunity/time on ESSN results in immeasurable benefit to achieving king salmon escapement goals.

Finally, ASA thinks it is critical for the Board to remember the BOF's mixed stock management policy. In particular the purpose and principles adopted by unanimous consent of the board:

> (1) The policy should provide that all users of salmon resources should share in actions taken to conserve the resource <u>in a manner which is, ideally, fair and proportional to respective harvest of the stock in question</u>.

Our organization believes this principle was abandoned at the last board meeting and should be the basis of the boards consideration of the any discussion regarding "conservation" in the rationale of proposals before the board in your upcoming meetings.

Large fish King goal : The department has been remiss in distribution of information to support this change, so providing a well-informed position is very difficult. The board needs to carefully assess the implication of the proposed new "large fish" goal because it reflects a substantial increase in the current escapement goal that will predictably result in additional restrictions of opportunity for the commercial fishing harvesters.

1% rule: ASA supports repeal of the 1% rule for drifters and setnetters, and supports proposals 94, 97, 137.

Changes to gear and net size: The ASA opposes changes in gear and mesh size as proposed in 141, but ASA also supports 174 that proposes to remove provisions that restrict the number and/or depth of commercial set gillnets in the Upper Subdistrict.

The "science" related to change of net or mesh size is anecdotal at best and disingenuous at worst. There is no credible science or data to suggest changing net sizes across the commercial fish fleet will result in benefits by any measure. At present, commercial fishers adopt net and mesh sizes to best meet operational needs restricted by a maximum limit established in regulation. To arbitrarily impose restrictions on all fishers for no benefit is more punitive than beneficial from a management perspective. Further, the cost of changing gear (if it is even available at this late stage) should not be trivialized. It is important to remember the size of nets also influences the type and style of running lines, buoys, and associated rigging necessary to fish in the ESSN. The cost imposed on fishers

who only fish several days a year to advance an objective with no scientific or management basis should be sufficient alone to abandon consideration of any changes to nets or gear in CI.

Importance of listening to Advisory Committees:
The Advisory Committee process and input is critical to the success of your board meeting. In most instances, AC's spend considerable time and effort to carefully review and debate each proposal before the board. Their recommendations are often the product of spirited debate, collaboration and compromise among various user groups. The AC process often provides a considered voice of the public who rarely can take the time to attend a BOF meeting and they should not be overshadowed by BOF 'regulars" who suggest they represent the view of a particular group or interest.

The reconstituted Anchorage Advisory Committee is an example of a fairly balanced group of individuals that are representative of thousands of diverse stakeholders involved in commercial, sport, personal use and subsistence fisheries.

Allowing partial deliveries by the ESSN fleet during an opening (No proposal number) but worthy of comment. 5 AAC 39.130 (d) ().

Definition of the problem: The ESSN fishery is complex and varied. It includes harvesters who work off shore as well as those who fish on beaches whose access is heavily influenced by extreme fluctuations of Cook Inlet tides. A strict interpretation of regulations, in particular interpretation of the term "time of delivery," requires a permit holder to deliver fish and wait for the "fish ticket" to be "closed out." This can often take hours resulting in the permit holder not being on the site while gear continues to fish.. If a fisher delivers fish, receives written acknowledgment of delivery from a buyer and returns to their fish site both the fisher and buyer can be subject to criminal and civil penalties. This system does not accommodate advances in technology or practice. Further it results in the department having to manage 5 to 6 times more fish tickets over the course of a fish opening that if only one fish ticket were used at the end of the opening. The fish transporter option does not fully address this problem due to the complexities of implementation and historical delivery methods of fishers and processors in the ESSN.

Recommended solution: The board should adopt regulations that allow for fishers and buyers to agree to a method of delivery that accommodates their respective business practice but also ensure ADF&G will continue to get timely and accurate harvest and delivery data. ASA looks forward to working with the ADF&G, DPS and the board to adopt a regulatory change that meets our common objective.

Sincerely,

Paul Dale, President
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Testimony of Arni Thomson, Alaska Salmon Alliance
to the Alaska Board of Fisheries
Soldotna, Alaska
October 18, 2016

The Alaska Salmon Alliance, is an Alaska-based corporation with offices in Kenai and Anchorage, certified by the the IRS as a 501(c)6, not-for-profit entity in February of 2012. ASA is part of the growing movement of individuals and organizations that support the culture of salmon in Alaska and advocate for research and education to improve science-based salmon management for the benefit of Alaskan communities and all user groups.

Background on the Alaska Salmon Alliance involvement in Alaska fisheries:
The ASA Board of Directors represent Kenai Peninsula-based seafood processors: Inlet Fish Producers; Icicle Seafoods; Pacific Star Seafoods; Snug Harbor Seafoods and Fishhawk. In addition, ASA represents Cook Inlet drift boat permit operators and numerous setnet fishing families that operate primarily in Cook Inlet salmon fisheries. ASA processors are major buyers in Prince William Sound and they also operate in Bristol Bay and the Kodiak area, buying not only salmon, but halibut, black cod and Pacific cod.

The McDowell Report, The Economic Impact of the Seafood Industry in Southcentral Alaska:
Although Southcentral Alaska is well-known for its world class recreational fishing, it is also hosts a vibrant commercial fishing and seafood industry. I have provided you today with copies of the Executive Summary, June 2015, an ASA contracted in-depth baseline analysis entitled, "The Economic Impact of the Seafood Industry in Southcentral Alaska." The report is based on state and federal databases. The report, and the executive summary are available on our website at www.aksalmonalliance.org.

The McDowell report provides an overall summary of the Southcentral Seafood Industry and then breaks it out into baseline community economic profiles for Anchorage and the MatSu Borough, Kenai and Soldotna, Homer, Seward, Cordova and Valdez.
The industry directly employed 10,840 people in Southcentral Alaska, including 7,660 regional residents, in 2013. Including multiplier effects, the seafood industry created an estimated 8,130 (FTE) jobs and $411 million in annual labor income. Commercial seafood generated $1.2 billion in total economic output in Southcentral Alaska in 2013. This includes $685 million in first wholesale value of seafood products and $501 million in value added through secondary impacts.

A total of 5,729 commercial fishermen live in Southcentral Alaska and participate in fisheries throughout the State. This is nearly a third (32 percent) of all Alaska resident commercial fishermen. Its 2,168 active permit holders, each of which are a small business, grossed $308 million in 2013, accounting for 38 percent of all Alaska resident commercial income. The Anchorage/Mat-Su sector had 2,880 FTE jobs in the seafood industry with labor income of $148 million and surprisingly, the City of Wasilla residents had commercial fishing revenue of $20 million.

The Southcentral seafood processing sector employed an estimated 4,590 workers in 2013 and paid out $61 million in wages. The workforce included 1,410 resident workers who earned $20.3 million. The region contains 36 processing plants, including the new state-of-the-art Silver Bay Seafoods salmon plant that began operations in Valdez in the spring of 2016.

ASA also wishes to point out the intersection of Southcentral Alaska as a major driver in the Washington State and Puget Sound seafood and maritime industry. This is graphically illustrated in a companion study the McDowell Group also completed in 2015 : “Ties that Bind The Enduring Economic Impact of Alaska on the Puget Sound Region.” The report was jointly sponsored by Washington and Alaskan-based companies operating in Alaska. One of the largest employers is seafood at 23,900 jobs, 21 percent of the total Alaska related jobs. Alaska-related economic activity in Puget Sound falls into two categories: export-related and natural resource-related. The report is available on the Seattle Chamber of Commerce website.

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10/7/2016 7:00:46 AM
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Limit all commercial openings during the second run of red salmon into the Kenai River to 12 hours in any 24 hour period.

Rationale: The 1,300 commercial permit owners are not the only user group for the resource. Multiple back to back to back emergency openings allows commercial nets to scour all fish from the river, negatively impacting the ability of all other user groups to catch fish. Limitiing commercial openings (scheduled and emergency) will allow all users equal access to the resource.

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Modify 5 AAC 21.360 so that the second run of red salmon into the Kenai River is managed for equal access by all user groups.

Current verbiage: (a) The department shall manage the Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon stocks primarily for commercial uses based on abundance. The department shall also manage the commercial fisheries to minimize the harvest of Northern District coho, late-run Kenai River king, and Kenai River coho salmon stocks to provide personal use, sport, and guided sport fishermen with a reasonable opportunity to harvest salmon resources.

Proposed verbiage: (a) The department shall manage the Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon stocks to ensure equal access to the resource by all user groups based on abundance.

Rationale: Commercial fishing is not the only nor the primary user of the resource. The needs of 1,300 commercial permit owners should not outweigh the interests of 100,000 - 200,000 other users in upper Cook Inlet.

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Change the way emergency commercial openings for late run sockeys in the Kenai River are proposed and approved.

Problem: Emergency openings currently are approved by either the ADF&G Kenai Commercial Fishing office or the Commissioner himself (or herself). This negatively impacts the availability of late run reds to other user groups on the Kenai. It also negatively impacts the availibility of weaker salmon runs (coho, chum, pink and king) in Upper Cook Inlet.

Suggested solution: As all users are impacted, all users should have an equal voice. Any emergency opening should be approved by a majority vote of commercial and sport fish offices in ADF&G Kenai, Anchorage and MatSu offices. A tie vote means the emergency opening is not approved. The Commissioner will no longer have the ability to approve or direct an emergency commercial opening.

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Change escapement goals for the second run of red salmon up the Kenai River to a minimum of 2 million fish. Remove all upper goals (overescapement).

Rationale: New sonar counts about 40-42% more fish than the old system did. This means that when ADF&G manages to current escapement numbers, putting 40-42% fewer second run red salmon in the river. This has negatively impacted runs in the upper river such as the Russian, Hidden Creek, QQuartz Creek.

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~~Proposal 211

Opposed

Comment:

Contrary to this proposal, it would make more sense to close/restrict the Susitna River sport fishery if the Northern District set net fishery is closed by emergency order, as harvest information is provided to the set net fishery before salmon escapement into the river. It should also be noted that this proposal seeks to completely close the set net fishery if the sport fishery is even restricted. The Northern District set net fishery is affected by restrictions based on observable data, and to propose that the entire fishery is closed completely if the sport fishery is even slightly restricted is absurd and unfair.

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~~Proposal 209

Opposed

Comment:

The proposal sites 5 AAC 21.366 “The department shall manage the Northern District king salmon stocks primarily for sport and guided sport uses in order to provide sport and guided sport fishermen with a reasonable opportunity to harvest these salmon over the entire run as measured by the frequency of inriver restrictions.” The department declaring a priority management for sport/guided uses does not indicate that exclusive access is warranted. In 2015, the most current year available for harvest numbers, sport users harvested 5627 king salmon in the drainages of the Northern District, while commercial users harvested only 1923 king salmon. From 2011 – 2015, sport users harvested 24,504 king salmon in the Northern District, during which time commercial users of Northern District harvested 8,068. This shows that reasonable opportunity and priority for sport/guided uses is already more than sufficiently allowed under current regulation.

The current regulations state that “…the harvest of the upper Cook Inlet salmon will be governed by specific and comprehensive management plans adopted by the board for salmon stocks and species, on a Cook Inlet basin wide basis, for different areas, and drainages and for different types of fisheries; in adopting the specific management plans described in (2) of this subsection the board will consider…the need to allocate the harvestable surplus among commercial, sport, guided sport and personal use fisheries” (5 AAC 21.363.2)

The current regulations allow for the maximum of 48 total hours of commercial fishing before June 24 in the Northern District King Salmon Management Plan. Emergency orders in recent years have closed and restricted fishing periods to be significantly less. This allows ample time for king escapement, with a bare minimum of 6.5 days of a week without any commercial fishing harvest. In recent years, most weeks during the Northern District Directed King Fishery have only observed 6 or 12 hours of commercial fishing (if any at all).

I view the well being of our salmon stocks as extremely important. I would like to encourage the Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee to seek ideas and proposals that would not exclude entire user groups from our shared salmon resource.

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~~Proposal 212

Opposed

Comment:

Commercial fishermen's livelihoods are directly affected by both the strength of the run, as well as the duration of the commercial fishing season. In 2012, low numbers of king and coho salmon created a situation in which emergency orders closed commercial fishing and thus shortened the season significantly. The effects of this reduced season were devastating enough on commercial set netters of the Northern District for the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission to declare the season a disaster. ADF&G closing commercial fishing periods during this and other seasons, although disappointing, was still recognized as a well warranted, as the decision was based on scientific data, and was carried out with the best interest of the future of our collective salmon resource in mind.

I would like to remind the Alaska Outdoor Council that coho are not a bycatch of the Northern District commercial salmon fishery, but a staple component of our livelihood. I do not feel that the Alaska Outdoor Council is in any position to determine commercial priority of salmon species, and certainly not in a position to declare that "A season that runs through August 15 provides plenty of opportunity to harvest Northern District salmon stocks…" Management should be based on scientific data, in which all user groups are allowed access to salmon surplus when it occurs.

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Chairman Jensen and Board of Fisheries Members,

My name is Andy Couch, I am a sportfishing business owner, and member of several groups working to increase Northern Cook Inlet salmon escapements to escapement goal range levels, and secondarily seeking to provide Northern Cook Inlet user groups more reasonable opportunities to harvest the abundance of Upper Cook Inlet salmon. The following are my personal thoughts.

Northern Cook Inlet Salmon Stock Status

Before any decisions are made concerning the plethora of fishery proposal before the board for the 2017 Upper Cook Inlet meeting, I believe it is critical to acknowledge the stock status of Northern Cook Inlet salmon:

King Salmon: Of the 17 king salmon stocks for which the Department of Fish and Game has established escapement goals the Board has already designated 5 as stocks of management concern (Alexander Creek, Goose Creek, Chuitna River, Theodore Creek, Lewis River). The Board has alreeady designated 2 additional king salmon stocks (Sheep Creek and Willow Creek) as stocks of yield concern. After a period of 4 years with no legal in-Unit sport harvest, and the department's acknowledgement that it anticipates zero legal in-Unit sport harvest during the 2017 season, 5 additional king salmon stocks (Little Willow Creek, Montana Creek, Clear Creek, Prarie Creek, and Chulitna River) clearly meet criteria for designation as stock of yield concern as defnied in 5 AAC 39.222 Policy for the managment of sustainable salmon fisheries. Note: the policy clearly defines "yield," as meaning - "number or weight of salmon harvested in a particular year or season from a stock." The yeild concern stock status of these 5 addtional king salmon stocks should be publicly recognized, acknowledged, and designated. Ignoring the facts will not make them go away -- nor does it improve management to attain escapement goal and once again provide yield for the board designated primary user of these stocks. With designation, 13 of 17 Northern District king salmon stocks with escapement goals would now be listed as stocks of concern.

Sockeye Salmon: The board designated Susitna sockeye salmon as a stock of yield concern in 2008 and adopted the departments action plan of primarily continuing with established fishing regulations, as the department studied the issue. In 2009 the department reduced Susitna sockeye salmon escapement goal numbers, out of regular board cycle, when it switched from evaluation based on the Yentna River sonar to a set of 3 weir-based escapement goals at Judd Lake, Chelatna Lake, and Larsen Lake. The minimum sockeye salmon escapement number measured on the Yentna River decreased from 100,000 sockeye salmon to 45,000 sockeye salmon as measured from the combined escapement range thresholds for Judd and Chelatna Lakes. Since establishment of the lower Susitna sockeye escapement standards in 2009, escapements of Susitna River sockeye salmon has continued to decline as measured by the combined Judd, Chelatna, Larsen Lake goals have only been met one time, in the same year, since being established. At the 2017 Board of Fisheries worksession in Soldotna, the department acknowleged its intention to again reduce all Susitna River and Northern District sockeye salmon escapement goals. Such a change would likely not only facilitated the continued decline of Northern District sockeye salmon salmon, but could also accelerate recent declines of co-mingled specific Northern District coho salmon stocks.

Coho Salmon: As the Matnauska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee representative duiring the board's October worksession, I presented department sport fishery harvest data that indicated the Jim Creek / McRoberts Creek coho salmon stock may now meet the criteria for stock of yield concern.

Since thatr worksession I obtained additional department generated sport fishery harvest data that indicated Little Susitna River coho salmon may now also fit the criteria for stock of yield concern. This data showed that 4 of the most recent 5 years on record of Little Susitna River sport fishery coho salmon harvest were the lowest for the past 20-year period. In addition, the 5th year of sport harvest was below the 20 year average for that same 5 year (2011 - 2015) period.

Stock of Concern Conclusions:

All 3 Northern District salmon species monitored with ADF&G established spawning escapment goals likley qualify for some form of stock of concern designation.

2 salmon monitored Northern salmon species (king and sockeye) already have some stock of concern designation, but now may meet criteria for additonal designations.

Only 3 Upper Cook Inlet coho stocks are monitored with escapement goals. All of those ccoho salmon goals are located in Knik Arm

drainages. 2 of those 3 coho stocks have a history, over the past 8 years, of sport fishery restrictions, closures, missed escapement goals and declining sport harvet. Jim Creek / McRoberts Creek coho and Little Susitna River coho now likely quality for stock of yield concern designation as measured by recent sport harvests from 2011 - 2015 compared to harvest from those same fisheries pervious to 2011.

Stock of Concern -- Action

Looking at my copy of the Upper Cook Inlet road map, I see no area where stock of concern issues will be considered. I hope stocks of concern has not been dropped from consideration.

Northern Salmon Escapements Discussion / Action

I see where discussion of the Kenai River sockeye salmon goal and the Kenai River king salmon goal will take place, but see no discussion or place for action listed for Susitna sockeye goals, Fish Creek sockeye goal, Deshka coho goal.

After acknowledging Northern District stock of concern issues, I suggest considering long-term board plannig for Upper Cook Inlet salmon fisheries, and then specific proposals, which follow the direction of the long-term planning and may offer some solutions to current stock of concern issues.

History and Board Findings

Since the board of fisheries was first established Upper Cook Inlet king salmon have always been a species of limited numbers and subject to downturns in abuncance. There is a past history of Northern king salmon fishery closures to allow the stocks to rebuild to where they could once again sustain limited targetted harvests. Back in 1977 through board finding 77-27-BF the board recognized the value of managing "the king salmon and silver salmon as the target species for the recreational anglers (sport fishery)."

In addition the board found: "it is not the Board's intent to establish exclusve uses of salmon stocks: rather its purpose is to define the primary beneficial use of the stock, while permitting secondary uses of the stock to the extent it is consistent with the requirement of the primary user group."

"Stocks which normally move in Cook Inlet to spawning areas prior to June 30, shall be managed primarily as a non commercial resource."

"Stocks which normally move in Cook inlet after June 30, shall be managed primarily as non recreational until after August 15: however existing recreational target fish shall only be harvested incidental to the nonrecreational use;"

By 1978 Northern king salmon stocks had improved to where the first Nothern King Salmon Management Plan was adopted creating a targeted harvest fishery exlusively for the sport fishery. In 1980 some Northern king salmon sport fishery regulations were liberalized to allow the harvest of 2 king salmon per day only one of which can exceed 28 inches in length, and additonal waters were open to king salmon fishing and harvest at Deshka River (to the forks), Alexander Creek, and Lake Creek. See Board finding 78-42-FB.

It was not until 1985 that a limited Northen District commercial set net fishery targeting king salmon was established. In Baord Finding 85-113-FB the board established clear expectations for the commercial fishery:

"Because there appear to be avaialbe chinook surpluse for harvest, it is the Board of Fisheries intiention to open the Northern District Commercial set net fishery. This is considered to be a very limited June chinook fishery, and strict time and gear limitations have been imposed.

It is not the Board of Fisheries intent to circumvent the Upper Cook Inlet Salmon Plan. The management plan provides priority for sport fishing during the month of June. If there is no harvestable chinook population identified beyond the sport fishery requirements, the Northen District commercial set net fishery will be closed."

32 years after the board established a Northen District commercial chinook fishery to harvest chinook salmon surplusses (beyond the sport fishery requirements) Northern king salmon (chinook) abundance has declined to the point that the Department of Fish and Game has issued pre-season emergency orders for the past 4 years restricting sport king salmon fishing and harvest on all 17 of the Northern king salmon stocks monitored by established escapement goals. Yet, the Northern Distrcit commercial set net fishery continues to harvest a growing share of what little harvestable surplus king salmon remain.

Repeal Northern District King Salmon Managment Plan

To aid the attainment of Northern Cook Inlet king salmon escapement goals and to best maintain a limited Northern Cook Inlet king salmon harvest opportunity in which a maximum number of Alaskans and visitors may participate, **I support Proposal 209**. This proposal if adopted would repeal the Northern District King Salmon Managment Plan, which provides an earlier May / June exemption to the standard Northern District commercial season start date of June 25 listed in 5 AAC 21.310 Fishing Seasons. It should be noted that the stated purpose of the Northern District King Salmon Management Plan is now obsolete: "The purpose of this manaement plan is to ensure an adequate escapement fo king slamon into the northern Distrit drainages and to provide management guidelines to the department. The departement shall manage the Northen District king salmon stocks primarily for sport and guided sport uses in order to provide sport and guided sport fishermen with a reasonable opportunity to harvest these salmon over the entire run as meassured by the frequency of inriver restrictions." There has been no harvestable surplus of king salmon beyond sport fishery needs as indicated by 4

years of department generated emergency sport fishing restrictions, and in many cases, sport fishery May 1 - July 13 harvest closures. Such a repeal of this particular management plan would also be inline with the long-term management directive mentioned earlier from Board Finding 77-27-FB: "however, existing recreational target fish shall only be harvested incidental to the non recreational use:"

Providing an opportunity for targeted commercial king salmon harvest when there was an abundance of king salmon beyond what the sport fishery could harvest makes some sense. While providing that same commercial opportunity at a time when king salmon escapement number are indequate and entire sport fisheries are closed to all harvest does not. The number of provisions already included in this management plan shows the extreme difficulty in attempting to have paired restrictions for sport and commercial fisheries at times when stock abundance is so low. Allowing the fishery to start on the standard date of June 25 as listed in the commercial regularion booklet would still allow some incidnetal commercial harvest of king salmon inline with 77-27 FB.

Economic contributions of the king salmon sport fishery are significant, and this year the legislature increased both license and king salmon stamp fees. Most Alaska resident anglers purchasing an annual license and king salmon stamp are now required to pay $39. Most nonresident anglers, however, must pay a minimum of $40 (one-day license and one-day stamp) for an opportunity to fish for king salmon in Alaska. Money generated from license and king salmon stamp sales also bring additional federal match moneys back to Alaska. King and coho salmon managment are largely paid for by sport fishing exenditures.

In Northern Cook Inlet waters nearly half of the summer's salmon sport fishing season is focused on king salmon, as there are extremely few other salmon available inriver before mid-July. Because of their wilingness to bite a variety of baits and lures, and because of there availability in more Northern Cook Inlet fishing locations, coho salmon on most years provide even more harvest opportunity.

Deshka RIver King Salmon Managment Plan

With the shortage of king salmon returning to Northern Cook Inlet, sport fishing seasons have been increaasingly managed by preseason and inseason emergency orders the past 4 years. Management in this fashion has provide some sport fishing opportunity throughout the sport fishing seasons, but lacks the predictability of consistent regulatoins. It is difficult for guides to plan and sell fishing trips without knowledge of what the regulations will be. For example it is already February 9, 2017 and no preseason king salmon forecast or regualtions have been put forward by the department. In an effort to provide more regulation stability and identifiy a point at which a king salmon season will start with the standard regulations printed in the book I wholeheartedly support the concept of **Proposal 230** which would create a Deshka River King Salmon Management Plan. After 4 years of emergency management the department has been unwilling to share with the public when the Deshka River king salmon fishery might start the season with standard in-the-book regulations. The ADF&G manager supplied the fact that every time the department's preseason outlook had called for a return of 21,000 or more king salmon the mimimum Deshka River king salmon escapement has been attained. Therefore, it seems logical that the department may only need to issue restrictive emergency king salmon regulations when the department's outlook calls for less than 21,000 fish. The proposed plan then sets out in preferential order some restrictions that may be used. Having the list of restricitons in regulation makes it possible for a member of the public to make a regulation proposal if they would like to see a change -- otherwise, it is difficult for the public to make such a proposal addressing an emergency restricion that may no longer be in effect. Finally this plan recognizes the limited number of potentially good harvest days on the Deshka River. King salmon catching opportunities are often better earlier in the season, because the Deshka is a small slow moving river that drops and warms to the point that king salmon become lethargic and often don't bite well later in the season. For that reason the proposal makes clear that the department may return the fishery the following day -- if adequate numbers of fish have passed the weir. There would need to be no 3-day waiting period of lost harvest opportunity before the emergency order became effective. The department's vague oppostion to this proposal, and unwillingness to specify an appropriate time to start a season with standard in-the-book regulations only further emphsizes the sport fishing public's need for such a regulation. Nothing in this proposal would restrict the department from making emergency changes, but it would better define the public's and department's expectations of how one of the most heavily particpated king fishing in the Northen Cook Inlet would be managed. If any deficientcies were found the plan could always be updated in the future. If the department has no specific suggestions of how to make the plan better, I would encourage the board to put long established managment practices (4 straight years of preseason emergency orders) into regulation. See Board finding 99--191--FB which deals with a different plan, but the same issue, from page 3: "The Upper Cook Inlet Mamagement Plan ws first adopted in 1978. It's predecessor was contained in a management policy, but this practice failed to meet the requirement that long estbalished managment practices should be adopted as reglutaions."

Susitna River King Salmon Management Plan

I submitted and continue to support the concept of Proposal 231, which would create a Susitna River King Salmon Management Plan for Units 2, 3, 5, and 6. These are the management units that have been entirely closed to all sport king salmon harvest for the past 4 seasons. With zero legal sport king salmon harvest for 4 years and ADF&G's acknowledgement of zero anticipated legal king salmon harvest for 2017 all streams with established king salmon escapement goals in these units should qualify for yield stock of concern. If designated as such, actions plans would be required to be written. Why not write a management plan, which informs the public of what to expect from these fisheries, rather than simply hiding an action plan in a place where the public will hardly ever see it? Considering the extremely low biological gain from starting emergency king salmon restritions in these units May 1, I believe benefit from the limited king salmon resource could be better maximized by allowing standard king salmon regulations through at least May 31, at extremely low biological cost. At one time ADF&G started emergency king salmon regulations in these units on May 15 -- but then switched to the more restrictive emergency regulation date of May 1. When I asked why the date was changed, the answer I recieved was that it better aligned with a king salmon regulation on the Kenai River. If it is board intent to maximize benefit from the resource, then there absolutely needs to be a better standard for sellecting restriction starting dates than going with a random date (for conformity) from not only out of the management unit -- but in this case -- entirely out of the managmenet area. I've requested harvest and catch data from ADF&G (to be submitted later) which I believe should show allowing standard regulations before June 1 would cause no long term biological harm. As in the previous proposal, and as recognized by 99-191-FB, there is a requirement that long established management practices should be

adopted into regulation.

Little Susitna River Weir Sanctuary Area

I support ADF&G's Proposal 233 to increase the sanctuary area closed to salmon fishing below the Little Susitna River weir, but wholeheartedly recommend amending the proposal (at least during king slamon sesaon) to make the sanctuary area 3400 feet downstream of the weir / all the way to campsite #7. While the expanded sancuary area all the way to campsite #7 closes off some additional water to fishing -- it also creates miles of better fishing abover the weir when the salmon migrate sooner. The expanded sanctuary area has been used multiple years in the past and in my mind is a better solution. The problem is that upstream migration of king salmon is retarded by the weir. More than any other species, king salmon seems to stage below the weir, delaying their upstream migration by several days or even weeks. I believe this delayed migration is partially caused by boating and fishing activity in the area directly below the proposed sanctuary, and then boating traffic through the sanctuary area up to the weir. It is a common practice for anglers to boat up to the weir and ask how many salmon have passed recently. If no or few salmon have passed, many boat loads of anglers come back downstream through the sanctuary. The downstream boat traffic can then herd salmon out of the sanctuary and back into water open to fishing, where more fish get caught or harvested. Many anglers have learned that one of the consistently best concentrations of king salmon in the river occurs in or direclty below the sanctuary area. Even if these fish are not caught they get continual harassment that further delays passage through the weir. When the river is under emergency restrictions retarded fish passage through the weir maximizes the number of restricted and closed to harvest days. This of course minimize use of the resource, and therefore minimizes benefit. Because of poor returns of both king and coho salmon and many days of restricted or closed to harvest fishing on the river use has dropped accordingly. With this drop in use ADF&G is proposing incresed user fees to cover costs associated with the Little Susitna Public Use Facilty Campgrouond and Boat launch. If nothing is done to alleviate the number of restricted regulation or closed to harvest fishing days, increase user fees will only likely further drive down use. It should be noted that Little Susitna River has been one of the most popular boating destinations for king salmon and silver salmon anglers in the entire Northern Management Area.

Closed Waters -- within one mile of Little Susitna River confluence with Knik Arm

I support **Proposal 216** which would close waters within one statute mile of Litlte Susitna River to commercial fishing consistent with closed waters around many other Upper Cook Inlet stream confluences. The fundamental question is whether Little Susitna River salmon stocks should have equal protection with most other Upper Cook Inlet salmon stocks when staging in the stream mouth confluence area? If equitable commercial exploitation to most other salmon stocks is reasonable, then Proposal 216 is the best one of this group to support.

Supporting Consistent Northern Salmon Escapement Goals --

I encourage board member to review Nothern sockeye salmon and coho salmon escapements both before and after the Department last decreased the Susitna River sockeye salmon escapement goals in 2009. I would encourage you to also review Northern salmon harvests during that same period. I am confident you will come to the same conclusions I have -- lowering the Sustina sockeye goal only led to lower salmon harvests by Northern users and lower escapements of both Northern Coho stocks and Susitna Sockeye stocks. Fortunately at the 2014 Board of Fisheries meeting action was take to start changing some of those trends. That same mistake (lowering goals) should not be made a second time. Therefore -- if needed -- I request the Board adopt optimum escapement goals that would, at least, maintain Northern Stocks at their current management objetive levels.

I apprecaite your reading some of thoughts, but will have to sign off before expressing thoughts on all the proposals and concepts that interest me -- or even just all of the ones I support.

Thank you for your efforts to improve Upper Cook Inlet salmon management in manner that allows the maximum number of users a reasonable opportunity to particpate in the harvest,

Andrew N. Couch

From: Andy Couch
To: Haight, Glenn E (DFG)
Subject: Comment to Upper Cook Inlet BOF-- Agenda Change Request -- Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan
Date: Friday, August 19, 2016 3:05:58 PM

AGENDA CHANGE REQUEST FORM

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

The Board of Fisheries (board) will accept requests to change its schedule under certain guidelines set forth in 5 AAC 39.999. The board will accept these agenda change requests (ACRs) only:

1) for a fishery conservation purpose or reason; or

2) to correct an error in regulation; or

3) to correct an effect on a fishery that was unforeseen when a regulation was adopted.

The board will not accept an ACR that is predominantly allocative in nature in the absence of new compelling information, as determined by the board [5 AAC 39.999 (a) (2)].

Please answer all questions to the best of your ability.

1)CITE THE REGULATION THAT WILL BE CHANGED IF THIS ACR IS HEARD. If possible, enter the series of letters and numbers that identify the regulation to be changed. If it will be a new section, enter "5 AAC NEW".

Alaska Administrative Code Number 5 AAC: 21.353 Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan

2)WHAT IS THE PROBLEM YOU WOULD LIKE THE BOARD TO ADDRESS? STATE IN

DETAIL THE NATURE OF THE CURRENT PROBLEM. Address only one issue. State the

problem clearly and concisely. The board will reject multiple or confusing issues.

Although the purpose of the plan is clearly identified (a) 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 gillnet fishery to minimize the harvest of Northern District and Kenai River coho salmon in order 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.

Section (e) states: From August 1 through August 15, there are no mandatory area restrictions to regular fishing periods, except that if the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery is closed under 5 AAC 21.310(b)(2)(iii), or if the department determines that less than one percent of the season's total drift gillnet sockeye salmon harvest has been taken per fishing period for two consecutive fishing periods in the drift gillnet 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 cedar day form 12:01 a.m. until 11:59 p.m.

The problem is: The Commercial Fish Division developed a totally different definition of two consecutive fishing periods. In both 2015 and 2016 the department did not count all drift periods as part of the two consecutive fishing periods. In particular during the 2016 fishing period — the drift fleet caught less than 1% of its season sockeye total on August 4, August 6, August 7, and August 8. This was a full 4 periods rather than 2 periods as called for in the management plan.

3)WHAT SOLUTION DO YOU PREFER? Or, if the board adopted your solution, what would the

new or amended regulation say?

I request the Board please clarify under section (e) of the management plan that two consecutive fishing periods, infant, does include all fishing periods — even restricted area periods.

4)STATEINDETAILHOWTHISACRMEETSTHECRITERIASTATEDABOVE. Ifoneormore of the three criteria set forth above is not applicable, state that it is not.

a) for a fishery conservation purpose or reason:

As stated in the preamble to the management plan the purpose of the plan, "is to ensure adequate escapement of salmon into the Northern District drainages . . . ." When the department allowed additional drift fishing beyond what the plan specified in 2015 there was a shortage of coho salmon escapement to the Jim Creek drainage and the sport season had to be closed by emergency order in a successful effort to meet the minimum escapement level. When the department allowed excessive drift gillnet fishing beyond specifications of the plan during the 2016 season the sport fish division had to close bait fishing for salmon in the Little Susitna River drainage starting on the scheduled starting date of August 6. As of August 19, 2016 it remains uncertain if the Little Susitna River coho salmon goal will be attained during the 2016 season. Also in 2016 the department once again had to close the Jim Creek sport salmon fishery (for all salmon species) this time starting on August 20 in an effort to meet minimum coho salmon spawning escapement goal needs. In addition during 2016 the department closed by emergency order a portion of the Northern District set net fishery in an effort to meet minimum Little Susitna River coho salmon escapement after the extra drift fishing opportunities.

b) to correct an error in regulation:

The plan needs to be clarified further to protect Northern District salmon escapements and reasonable fishing opportunity of Northern Cook inlet user groups.

c) to correct an effect on a fishery that was unforeseen when a regulation was adopted:

No one could foreseen that this plan would be interpreted by the department in such a manner as to increase drift fishery exploration of Northern bound coho stocks during the month of August — thereby increasing the likelihood of failing to attain escapement goal minimum levels.

5)WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THIS PROBLEM IS NOT SOLVED PRIOR TO THE REGULAR

CYCLE?

Although this is an agenda change request —by taking it up at this time, the Board will have the opportunity to consider it at the regular February 2017 Upper Cook Inlet meeting. If not taken up, and if other Board actions are not taken, the management plan may continued to be interpreted in such a manner as to go against the stated purpose of the plan for another 3 years before it may once again be addressed.

6)STATE WHY YOUR ACR IS NOT PREDOMINANTLY ALLOCATIVE.

The management plan already allocates this fishery. Clarifying intent or stipulations of the

plan gives the department better direction as how to achieve objectives identified in the plan.

7) IF THIS REQUEST IS ALLOCATIVE, STATE THE NEW INFORMATION THAT COMPELS

THE BOARD TO CONSIDER AN ALLOCATIVE PROPOSAL OUTSIDE OF THE REGULAR

CYCLE.

See all information written above.

8)STATE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE FISHERY THAT IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS ACR (e.g.,

commercial fisherman, subsistence user, sport angler, etc.)

I am a Northern Cook Inlet sport fishing guide and sport fisherman.

9)STATE WHETHER THIS ACR HAS BEEN CONSIDERED BEFORE, EITHER AS A PROPOSAL

OR AS AN ACR, AND IF SO, DURING WHICH BOARD OF FISHERIES MEETING.

I know of no other ACR addressing this issue. The management plan was adopted by the board at the 2014 Upper Cook Inlet Board of Fisheries Meeting.

Submitted by:
NAME Andrew Couch

Individual or Group

PO Box 155

Address

907-746-2199

Home Phone

Palmer, AK
City, State

907-746-2199

Work Phone

99645
Zip

fishing@fish4salmon.com

Email

SIGNATURE: Andrew N. Couch DATE: 8-19-2016

Submitted By
Ben Allen
Submitted On
2/9/2017 2:01:24 PM
Affiliation
Millers Riverboat Service

Phone
9078926872
Email
fish@millersriverboat.com
Address
4150 East Wickersham Way
Wasilla, Alaska 99654

I am Ben Allen- Matsu Valley Resident, Seasonal Fishing Guide, and high school ski coach. I own and operate Millers Riverboat Service, where I provide guided sportfishing services for salmon, throughout the Susitna Valley. I primarily operate out of the **Deshka Landing** and **Little Susitna River Boat Public Use Facility**. The strength of salmon returns to the Northern District are extremely important to my family, our community, visitors and the amazing river ecosystems, that exist in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley. I firmly believe Alaskans, rightfully deserve to see a new management approach, with new regulations set in place, that **provide maximum benefit for all Alaskans**. New regulations need to be set to ensure the long term sustainability and perpetuity of the precious salmon returns to the Northern District.

I support the following proposals.

213, 214, 215, 216- Is it appropriate to have a set net fishery for both King and Coho Salmon at the mouth of the Little Susitna River, given the highly restrictive King salmon sport fishery and failed Coho escapements? The public is choosing not to participate in the Little Susitna sport fishery, due to the significantly reduced reasonable opportunity to catch and harvest King and Coho Salmon. Alaska State Parks has proposed an increase in user fees at the Little Susitna Public Use Facility, to compensate for lack of participation. Historically the Little Susitna River has been one of the most important sport fisheries in the Susitna Valley. Without stronger Coho returns in 2014 and 2015- Little Su Coho would most likely be a stock of concern. The King Salmon sport fishery area has been restricted- (marker moved down from original weir marker at top of Indian hole) to protect staging Kings. Additionally the King salmon sport fishery has been restricted to catch and release 4 days a week in 2015 and 3 days a week in 2016. Also single hooks and seasonal limits have been implemented under Emergency Order Restrictions. The Little Susitna River Coho and King Salmon fisheries are currently highly unpredictable fisheries.

211- Zero harvest opportunity of Chinook Salmon has existed in units 2, 3, 5 & 6, since 2012, and has been highly restricted under Emergency Order since 2009. The argument that the Northern District Commercial fleet's impact is insignificant, is rendered useless, considering no harvest opportunity exists in over half of the Susitna Valley's most popular Chinook sport fisheries. While I am not oppossed to catch and release; to accept it as the new norm due to lower returns while at the same time a 2nd in line priority user group is allowed to harvest Kings, I find highly unnacceptable. I am not oppossed to commercial harvest, but if King returns are too weak to allow harvest-- conservation measures in the commercial fishery are neccessary. It is unnacceptable that in the Susitna Valley, the **ONLY** opportunity to harvest road accessible wild King Salmon is at the Little Susitna River and only on some days. According to the Department, returns are so weak, harvest of hatchery raised Kings is prohibited in Unit 2, while at the same time Kings are being harvested in the Northern district commercial fishery.

Please refer to the following memorandum established at the Board of Fisheries in 1985.

Alaska Board of Fisheries Policy Regarding Cook Inlet Northern District June Chinook Fishery Because there appear to be available chinook surpluses for harvest, it is the Board of Fisheries intention to open the Cook Inlet Northern District commercial set net fishery . This is considered to be a very limited June chinook fishery, and strict time and gear limitations have been imposed . It is not the Board's intention to circumvent the Upper Cook Inlet Salmon Plan . That management plan provides priority to sport fishing during the month of June . If there is no harvestable chinook population identified beyond the sport fishery requirements, the Northern District commercial set net fishery will be closed . 85-113-FB Ron Jolin Chairman Alaska Board of Fisheries Date

230- A specific management plan is necessary for the Deshka River King Salmon sportfishery. The Deshka River King Salmon fishery is the premier Chinook boat accessible sport fishery in the Susitna drainage. The Deshka River King Salmon fishery, has been primarily managed under Emergency order restriction since 2008. Currently regulations in this sport fishery are highly unpredictable. As of 2/9/17, those in the sporfishery industry do not know what the projection of Chinook fishery is for 2017 and what the regulations will be. Not knowing what the regulations will be, makes it difficult to plan trips.

233-

I oppose the following proposals.

226- I believe it is important to offer opportunity, especially when it has lower impacts on the fishery. Although I'd much rather harvest Chinook; I have participated in the catch and release fishery implemented by emergency order.

Submitted By
Birch Yuknis
Submitted On
2/9/2017 12:34:03 PM
Affiliation
Lifelong Alaskan

Board of Fisheries,

Thank you for taking the time to read my comments. I will attempt to be brief and get my point across.

Prop 213, 214, 215, 216 all have a common theme. I agree with all four and feel commercial fishing within one mile of the mouth of the Little Su does need to be closed at certain times to help with the dwindling King run on the Little Su. The Little Su is an important sport fishing river that needs to return to historic King numbers.

Prop 217 While well written I do not support. The author has lots of valuable information included in his proposal. The problem is that 88% of the Eastern Distric sockeye that he catches in his nets(from his chart) are bound for other Susitna Valley, Knik Valley or Turnigan streams most of which have dwindling sockeye and coho runs. I do support the Mat-Su AC's amendment to this proposal which allows for both Sport and Commercial fishermen to share the burden of conservation.

Prop 232 I usually like to agree with Fish and Game proposals but here I do NOT. Lowering the bar to 35,000 fish from 50,000 fish just to fit better with F&G's lower SEG is wrong. I do not want the SEG lowered either. This is an important fisherey for resdidents and needs to be maintained rather than be allowed to dwindle.

Again Thank You for your time,

Birch Yuknis

Submitted By
Brian and Lisa Gabriel
Submitted On
2/9/2017 10:22:52 PM
Affiliation
Private Land Owners

Phone
(907)252-9524
Email
gabriel1@alaska.net
Address
2305 Watergate Way
Kenai, Alaska 99611

Dear Chairman Jensen and Members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries,

We are in OPPOSITION of PROPOSAL 201 as written.

We purchased our riverfront property in VIP Subdivision in 1994 and have since built our house and resided here since 2004. We are opposed to proposal 201 as written for the following reasons:

1. As responsible private land owners of property downstream of the Warren Ames Bridge, we made a substantial investment in a raised, light penetrating walkway that provides access to the Kenai River in front of our house. We, and many of our neighbors, are taking steps to protect the vegetation that stabilizes the bases of our bluffs and protects our uplands.

2. As a private land owner, we exercise our right to access the dipnet fishery, as we have for 23 years from our private property. We and our family, would like to continue to use our private property to dipnet.

3. Historically, when sensitive river habitat has been closed to bank angling, private properties have been excluded.

4. Our children, elderly parents and grandchildren have come to depend on the safe access that our private property offers them to harvest their fish from the dipnet fishery.

5. This proposal devalues our private property by closing our access to the dipnet fishery.

6. This proposal displaces our family by closing access to the common use resource which we have traditionally accessed from our own private property.

7. This proposal does not preclude us from doing any other activity at the river adjacent to our home other than dipnetting.

In summary, we agree that there is a need to take action to protect the sensitive habitat immediately downstream from the Warren Ames Bridge and to address the safety issue of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists on Bridge Access road related to the increased use in this area during the dipnet season.

We would like to suggest an amendment to proposal 201 to limit the closed area from the Warren Ames Bridge to the downstream boundary of the Kenai River Special Management Area which will exclude private properties.

By adopting this amended proposal, you will have, in essence, addressed the concerns of ADF&G as outlined in the proposal while preserving the traditional access right of private land owners to this common use resource.

Thank you for your consideration.

Brian and Lisa Gabriel

To: Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Boards Support Section
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526

From; Brian West
1000 Oceanview Dr
Anchorage, Alaska 99515

I am providing comments on the following

Alaska Board of Fisheries 2016/2017 Proposed changes in Lower Cook Inlet Finfish, Kodiak Finfish, Upper Cook inlet Finfish and Statewide King and Tanner Crab; and Supplemental Issues

Comments

Upper Cook Inlet Finfish

Proposal 34. Against. The proposers argument is that since a lot of people break a rule it should be repealed. There is no logic in this. I take exception to his claim that 100% of private anglers party fish. I do not, nor do the people that I know. The proposer also indicates that it is too difficult to keep track of the fish he has caught. Again, this is no reason to change the rule. This proposal is basically a request to increase bag limits. Until such a time as the Fish and Game can justify increasing bag limits I suggest the proposer learn to count or at least take notes.

Proposal 144. Support if modified. The proposal is unclear. It states that the next legal bag limit must be kept. This will not solve the problem identified unless the bag limit is one fish. If the bag limit is three fish the person can just keep releasing fish and will not reach the bag limit. The proposal should be changed to read that "when proxy fishing, once a bag limit is taken the next legal fish must be retained."

Proposal 151. Support. A barbless hook is nothing more than a way to reduce the numbers of fish landed. If you have to hook and fight six fish to land one how is that good for the fishery?

Statewide

Proposal 267. Against. The estimated abundance level of 200,000 crab is to low to sustain the resource. This number is half of the long term average abundance level. However, the statistics used include numbers when the stocks were low or depressed due to overfishing. Using these lower numbers skews the abundance level down. The department has not had a good record for management of crab stocks in Southcentral. Viable fisheries for King, Tanner and Dungeness crab all existed, but, were destroyed by overfishing. The King crab fishery in Kachemak Bay is a prime example. The fishery was closed in the 70's reopened after a few years and then crashed forcing it to be closed once again. And it still has not recovered.

Proposal 268. Against. Same comments as for proposal 267.

Proposal 269. Against. The proposer indicates that the fish and Game does not have data from the area. How can a fishery be contemplated when no data exist as to the abundance of the resource?

Proposal 270. Against.

February 9, 2017

Mr. Glenn Haight, Executive Director
Alaska Board of Fisheries
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Re: Board of Fisheries Comment for Upper Cook Inlet Finfish Meeting

In an opinion piece published in the Peninsula Clarion on February 7th, Mr. Karl Johnstone made his opinion about commercial salmon fishing very clear – he doesn't like it one bit. His opinion and strong prejudice against commercial fishing were always very evident during his years as a member, and then as the Chairman, of the Alaska Board of Fisheries. During Mr. Johnstone's time on the Board, the viability of the commercial salmon fishing industry in Cook Inlet was systematically undermined while the interests of the guided sport fishing industry were actively promoted.

Mr. Johnstone's opinion piece was full of the same type of propaganda that he and others have been pushing for years: there is not enough salmon in Cook Inlet for all users; Cook Inlet salmon can't compete with farmed salmon, sportfisheries are so much more valuable than commercial fisheries; etc, etc. These arguments do not stand up to reality.

Wild Alaska salmon have a solid market niche and Cook Inlet sockeye is a very premium, sought-after product in America. The worst economic lie that he and his cohorts have been promoting is that the sport industry and personal use fisheries could actually grow large enough to replace the value of the commercial industry to our state. It can't happen. There is no way that the available, renewable, surplus salmon in Cook Inlet could be harvested without commercial fishing; even if you lined every inch of every beach with personal use dipnets or setnets. In-river fishing capacity is already maxed-out. For each of the past six years the Kenai River has had over-escapements. All of the dipnetters and anglers in the river could not harvest the (average annual) half a million excess sockeye that swam through.

When properly managed, Cook Inlet is the 4th largest commercial salmon fishery in the state. With good management, there are enough salmon in Cook Inlet for everyone. And we need the economic benefit for all the users, especially now. There are millions of unharvested salmon every year in Cook Inlet that commercial fishers are prevented from catching – they are wasted.

It is time for the Board of Fisheries to repeal the myriad of arbitrary, unscientific and obstructive restrictions on commercial fishing that have made it impossible for ADF&G to manage the fishery properly and deprived the industry and local and state governments of the value of proper harvests. I support proposals 89, 90, 94, 117 and 129.

Catherine Cassidy
PO Box 599
Kasilof, AK
cark1@att.net

Submitted By
Charles W. DuCharme
Submitted On
2/8/2017 6:18:59 PM
Affiliation
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In the best interest of the bank habitat preservation within the Kenai River Dipnet area, I recommend rafts and small vessels still be allowed to put in the river under the Ames Bridge. Then the area between the No Name Creek and the Warren Ames Bridge cannot have dipnetting from shore; also no boats drifting while dragging dipnets in this portion of the river. Only anchored vessels may place a drift net in the water in this zone. This would allow smaller vessels to stay away from big boat activity (dangerous) while yet making dip netting affordable to lower income people whom need the fish most of all. This would would increase safety for smaller vessels and protect the bank habitat in this area. I would suggest this could be a win-win senario. Thank you for seeking a smart compromising idea and considering my suggestion.

Charles W. DuCharme

Submitted By
Charles W. DuCharme
Submitted On
2/8/2017 6:42:29 PM
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Modified my initial Idea to address wakes and size motors:

In the best interest of the bank habitat preservation within the Kenai River Dipnet area, I recommend rafts and small vessels still be allowed to put in the river under the Ames Bridge. Then the area between the No Name Creek and the Warren Ames Bridge cannot have dipnetting from shore; "also no wakes or motors over 40HP" and no boats drifting while dragging dipnets in this portion of the river. Only anchored vessels may place a drift net in the water in this zone. This would allow smaller vessels to stay away from big boat activity (dangerous) while yet making dip netting affordable to lower income people whom need the fish most of all. This would increase safety for smaller vessels and protect the bank habitat in this area. I suggest this could be a win-win scenario. Thank you for seeking a smart compromising ideas and considering my suggestion.

P.S. This idea could could be modified to allow smaller vessels/motors to only drift dip netting in this zone between No Name Creek and Ames Bridge.

Charles W. DuCharme

"Village with a Past, City with a Future"

210 Fidalgo Avenue, Kenai, Alaska 99611-7794
Telephone: 907-283-7535 / FAX: 907-283-3014

All-America City
1992 | 2011

January 31, 2017

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Boards Support Section
1255 W. 8th Street
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Alaska Board of Fisheries Members:

The City of Kenai respectfully submits the following comments for your consideration on the listed Board Proposals:

Proposal 201 – This proposal closes the shore based Personal Use Salmon Fishery on the Kenai River from the Warren Ames Bridge to the Mouth of the river. While this closure will not negatively impact the operations or finances of the City of Kenai, it is highly impactful to residents of the City of Kenai in the proposed closure area who regularly dip net from their private property. The City of Kenai requests that this proposal be amended by moving the downstream closure boundary to the western boundary of Section 16 of Township 5N, Range 11W as depicted below. If the City's proposed amendment is adopted, Proposal 201 will still accomplish its primary objectives of protecting the sensitive vegetated tide land area on the north and south shores of the river in the area immediately below Warren Ames Bridge and eliminating overcrowding issues at the Kenai Flats Day Use Area.

Proposal 203 – This proposal would allow the Commissioner to extend the Personal Use Salmon Fishery through August 10 if sockeye escapement numbers are projected to exceed 1,200,000. If adopted, this proposal would have potential negative impacts to the finances of the City of Kenai and hinder the City's ability to provide continuing serivces in support of the fishery. If the Commissioner was given this authority, it increases the potential of the fishery being re-opened after an earlier closure. When the fishery is prematurely closed by emergency order, the City of Kenai reduces staffing levels and dismantles all of the infrastructure it put in place to support the fishery, including dumpsters, porta potties, pay shacks, and IT infrastructure. If the fishery were re-opened, the City would have to reinstitute our support of the fishery, incurring signifciant costs. Additionally, it is likely that participation during the first ten days of August would be lower, resulting in lower revenues to the City from participant fees without a commensurate reduction in costs. The City of Kenai is opposed to the passage of this proposal.

Proposal 204 – This proposal would extend the Personal Use Salmon Fishery upstream of Warren Ames Bridge to Cunningham Park. This will increase impacts to City residents who own property along this stretch of the river to include trespassing, noise, and boat wake. It will also create crowding and facility capacity issues at the City-owned Cunningham Park, since fishery participants will be able to traverse to that location by boat at any time without having to cut the fish tails and mark their permits first. Additionally, because of substrate differences, the riverbank in the area between Warren Ames Bridge and Cunningham Park may be more susceptible to erosion than the area below Warren Ames Bridge. The width of the Kenai River in this area slowly narrows as boaters move upstream which will certainly result in greater congestion with additional boat traffic, heightening safety concerns. Because of the increased traffic and use of Cunningham Park, this proposal will expand the City's fee area and cost of operating the fishery. The City strongly opposes this proposal.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments and can provide additional information or clarity on the City of Kenai's concerns if requested.

Sincerely,

Brian Gabriel, Sr.
Mayor

Paul Ostrander
City Manager

Submitted By
Constance Markis
Submitted On
2/8/2017 8:27:47 PM
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For the past three years, Alaskans who rely on dipnetting sockeye salmon from the Kenai River have been blocked from fishing after July 31st, which denies them a fair chance at catching their limit of fish. The sockeye salmon runs have been arriving later in the season, which results in a substantial part of the Kenai River run entering the river after the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has closed the dipnet fishery. At the same time, commercial fishermen have been allowed to take advantage of continued strong returns well into August. The sockeye runs into the Kenai River are coming in later and while the commercial fishing industry is important, it is wrong to block individual Alaskans from dipnet fishing while commercial fishing is extended to August when the runs are strong.

Lets protect the Kenai River sockeye and silver runs while still allowing dipnet fishing to remain open into August. Of course, any extension should end if it endangers the fall silver salmon run, which is the current rule for commercial sockeye fishing.

It seems only fair that the department should allow the same opportunity to the more than 600,000 Alaskans that do not own commercial fishing vessels or permits as they do to commercial fishers. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Constance (Connie) Markis

Submitted By
Dale Miller
Submitted On
2/8/2017 9:34:14 AM
Affiliation

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As the Board is aware, due, in my opinion, to the changes in climate, the sockeye salmon run into the Kenai River seems to be returning at a later date than it did just a few years ago. Where the largest runs could be counted on to come through in mid July, it appears they are arriving in the largest numbers after the July 31 dipnet closing.

The Board has extended the Commercial Fishery opportunities, when it does not impact the silver salmon or sockeye salon escapement goals, and I feel the Board should allow the same opportunity for the personal use fisher.

Penalizing one user group in favor of another is contrary, I would hope, to the goals of the Board, and quite possibly the Statutes of the State of Alaska. At the very least, it should be cause for concern if it isn't.

In considering an amendment to proposals 202 and 203, it is my hope that the Board can find a way to allow personal use dipnetting to be extended in the same manner as commercial fishing with the same goal of adequate escapement, and should be able to close personal use dipnetting, just like they do commercial fishing, when there is concern that the escapement goals will not be met.

In closing, I urge the Board to adopt a policy that allows for equal access to the fish when the Board feels it can extend the season while not negatively impacting the resource. There is no justifiable reason to show preference for the commercial fisheries over personal use.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my comments.

Sincerely,

Dale Miller

Submitted By
Dan Norman
Submitted On
2/6/2017 9:28:47 PM
Affiliation

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Kenai, Alaska 99611

Board Members,

Unfortunately I am unable to attend this board due to a work conflict, but I still wanted to provide some input on a couple issues that are important to me. I have had the great privilege in participating in the fisheries of Cook Inlet as a recreational user, commercial guide, a set net and drift fisherman. I am an Active Duty Soldier, but this fishery continues to draw my family and friends, from around the world, together during the fishing season. The first thing we need to realize is that this fishery is a valuable resource to all Alaskans. Each group has a right to harvest, but to undermine one user group is flat out wrong. Unfortunately the commercial users have a limited voice due to the limited entry laws. So it is unrealistic and unfair to see the large numbers of recreational users and commercial sport guides as a more valuable user group because they have a larger demographic.

I would like to see is a gradual return to the historic fishing periods. I believe that there is a very strong case for the North K-Beach section to fish whenever the Kasilof section is fishing as stated in Proposal 136. There is plenty of data to show that this section of beach catches a significant number of Kasilof bound fish. Additionally, there is evidence that a large number of salmon enter the mouth of the river from the North. The Kasilof River continues to go over the top end of the escapement goal. This additional harvest opportunity would be a way to harvest sockeye while minimizing king catch by using beach nets only and also only using shallow gear (29 meshes). This coincides with the second proposal I support which is Proposal 112. My wife and I both carry dual permits and this proposal would allow us to fish a total of four nets in the KRSHA. Some language that I think needs attention is the language restricting the amount of gear on board while participating in the KRSHA. Currently I can only have 3 nets on board, but if proposal 112 is passed then I would like to be allowed to carry and fish all 4 nets in the KRSHA. I also would like to see the Kasilof section fish with a maximum web size of 4 ¾ inches. The data shows that the Kasilof section is harvesting approx. 37% of a 2 ocean fish. These fish are typically a little smaller than a 3 ocean fish. But what we see from the fish that make it into the river is that the escapement is comprised of approx. 67% 2 ocean fish. The Kasilof section purposely uses bigger gear to harvest Kenai Bound fish and allowing Kasilof Fish to swim through the nets. The consequences of this are that the river is over-escaped. They catch 68% of the kings on the ESSN and do so by wearing a cloak that they are a separate fishery. If they are a separate fishery then they will be managed to be such and target the fish that comprise 67% of the escapement by using smaller mesh size webbing.

By reining in the Kasilof section and making it a more efficient Kasilof fish selective harvester, then there is a savings in Kenai and Kasilof Kings for the Fleet and allow a greater number of Kings to both rivers. By allowing the North K-Beach section to harvest Kasilof bound fish then there is a savings in Kings as well as beach nets as a very efficient harvester of sockeye while having a smaller percentage of king harvest vs the rest of the fleet.

Another proposal I would like to see passed is proposal 140. This proposal would incentivize the use of shallow nets by adding length to the nets. This added length is still a reduction in total surface area of the net, and the net will more efficiently harvest sockeye salmon while reducing king harvest. I have fished shallow nets for several years and there is a king savings, where I fish, between a 29 mesh net and a 45 mesh net.

On the topic of Kings, I believe a restructure of the Kenai River King Salmon Management Plan is morally just. The language is intended to be punitive to the set net industry in August. The way the plan is written now, it allows a liberated fishery in July, which allows for all users to harvest salmon. Suddenly in August the goal posts move and the liberalized fishery comes back to close the set net fishery in order to benefit the sport user. So the management plan is written with the intended consequence of a win-lose for the commercial fleet and a win – win for the sport industry. We need a consistent goal for the users and the managers to follow. We should be managing the exact same way in July as we manage in August. Anything else is just asinine. Additionally, I believe that the use of a “big King goal” is punitive to the set net fleet. While the set nets do catch kings, there is a disproportionate catch of small jacks. The needs to be a way for the set net fleet to report a small king vs a big king. I am reluctant to agree with this management plan, but I do believe there is a serious jack problem in the Kenai River. The catch of jacks, both sport and commercial, should be a non-issue when it comes to management plans and harvest.

Lastly, I support Proposal 124. There is not a lot of money in the pink fishery, but in the age when we have been sliced and restricted every bit helps to pay the bills. The pink fishery allows for a harvest of a fish that has little to no sport benefit to the river. In fact, I would argue that the sport users would like to see fewer pinks in the river.

I thank you for your time and I appreciate you reading my comments. I wish I could attend this board, as this is the future I wish to pass down to my children and allow them to fish these waters that I have fished for the past 30 years.

Sincerely,

Dan Norman

Support:

112, 124, 136, 140, 165

Oppose:

103, 100, 101, 205

2/9/2017

Darren Platt
darrenplatt@yahoo.com
F/V Agnes Sabine, owner-operator

ATTN: Board Support

To the Alaska Board of Fisheries

I'm writing to address the public sentiments concerning salmon harvests in the Kodiak management area(KMA). I understand that this is not part of the agenda for the Upper Cook Inlet(UCI) board meeting; however, after the publication of the genetic stock assessments of KMA harvests, Kodiak management appears to have become a central focus of a few advocacy groups and therefore warrants balanced input for the public record.

Salmon harvests in the KMA are not "new and expanding"

Kodiak is the oldest mixed stock fishery in the state, with a legacy dating back over a hundred years. Canneries on the Karluk spit processed fish harvested up and down the west side of the Kodiak archipelago as well as fish caught in a wide range along the Peninsula of Alaska. No aspect of this fishery is "New or Expanding" nor have harvest patterns noticeably changed for decades. Tagging studies conducted in the past have revealed the presence of Cook Inlet sockeye as a component of KMA harvest - a fact known to fishery managers and fishermen for many years. Although the recent genetic stock assessments provide a new quantification of those harvests, the report provides no new information - just a novel presentation of old knowledge. To the thousands of individuals whose livelihoods depend on responsible and stable management in the KMA it would cause great confusion and consternation for there to be a sudden and rash change to the management plan based on information that has been readily available for many years.

Kodiak is not Managed for the Targeting of Cook Inlet Stocks

There appears to be a misconception amongst some members of the public that KMA management is somehow currently designed to target Cook Inlet stocks. To be clear, Kodiak is a mixed stock fishery with multi-species management that only focuses on escapement based targeting of local stocks along with a small but economically critical allocation of Chignik stocks. Cook Inlet bound sockeye are inevitably caught incidentally to local harvest. According to the genetic report, with only one exception that occurred during a very anomalous and brief harvest event, Cook Inlet sockeye rarely comprise even a simple majority of the sockeye harvested in any of the sampled Kodiak districts. When additionally accounting for harvests of local pink, chum, and silver salmon which were caught along with Cook Inlet bound and local sockeye, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of salmon harvested in every surveyed area of the KMA are local stocks. Ultimately, the integration of Cook Inlet bound sockeye with Kodiak stocks in the KMA is as unpredictable as it is unavoidable. Although some vocal groups advocating for the curtailment of Kodiak harvests may lament this fact, it is incumbent on our fishery managers to make their decisions

based on true characteristics of salmon, which do not conveniently segregate themselves from local stocks while passing through Kodiak waters.

Science is in the Details, not the Headlines

It is the board's responsibility to give precedence to scientific conclusions over public hysteria. Although I agree that it is the role of the board to openly and transparently respond to *any* issue or concern raised by the public, it is equally important for those responses to be calculated based on the best available science. During the most recent meeting in Kodiak, board member Payton cited the necessity of relying on and trusting state scientists' recommendations when casting his vote against the emergency opening of a Bering Sea Bairdi season, despite the strong public push in favor of allowing limited crab harvests. The public should expect - and deserves - the same adherence to scientific principles when considering salmon management in the Kodiak area. Not only does the genetic report clearly state that these studies are riddled with flaws and uncertainties, leading to high margins of error, but more importantly, the scientists who presented the report have unequivocally declared that the study *cannot* be used to make inferences about harvests in other areas or at other times nor can the information be used to predict future harvests. Additionally, it is very clear from the data, and was openly acknowledged by both the Board of Fish and the ADF&G scientists that there is very high inter-annual variability to the data, verifying the long held knowledge by Kodiak fishermen that the arrival of Cook Inlet stocks in the KMA is extremely unpredictable. Any attempt to alter Kodiak fishing patterns based on the hope of limiting harvest of Cook Inlet stocks would be ineffective, unscientific, and would primarily produce the outcome of simply hindering the responsible management of local Kodiak stocks.

The details and conclusions of the genetic stock assessments have been neglected and ignored by individuals and institutions who would prefer to cripple the Kodiak fleet in speculation that such efforts will benefit them while inflicting a disproportionate cost to the Kodiak community. While the public has no obligation to adhere to scientific principles in their requests to the board, the same standard does not apply to the board, who ought to consider the recommendations of the Department of Fish and Game and make decisions rooted in science and law.

The Actual Numbers

Although some public expressions appear to indicate that KMA harvests of Cook Inlet bound fish are the determining factor to run strength within the UCI area, a quick analysis of data clearly proves otherwise. The 2016 genetic stock assessments speculate a KMA harvest of approximately 386,000 UCI bound sockeye, a number which is dwarfed by the 3.1 million fish harvested commercially in Upper Cook Inlet and 5.1 million fish that returned to the area. When also accounting for mixed stock harvests in Lower Cook Inlet, Chignik and Area M, Kodiak harvests likely account for less than 5% of the total UCI sockeye returns. Additionally, according to the 2016 annual management report for UCI, 2 of the 5 monitored sockeye systems suffered over-escapement, 2 were within escapement goals and 1 "fell just short of escapement objectives." It is difficult to reconcile the depiction of an escapement crisis in UCI with the fact that multiple systems have been consistently experiencing over-escapement, with no prevailing under-escapement problems within the monitored systems, all while still affording the commercial harvest of millions of fish within the UCI area.

If UCI is in fact suffering from escapement and personal harvest shortages, as some members of the public indicate, then it would be far more effective to address those problems in the UCI area itself, where the vast majority of these fish are harvested and where management decisions can more accurately and effectively produce the desired outcomes. Limiting harvest in the KMA with the intention of optimizing returns to UCI would be highly ineffective at achieving the desired goal and would primarily result in hampering the ability of the Kodiak fleet to harvest local stocks, which clearly comprise the majority of harvests in the area. The board is bound by article VIII of the Alaskan

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constitution to manage fisheries based on the sustained yield principle along with ensuring the maximum benefit of the Alaskan people, a standard which cannot be met while drastically limiting harvests in the KMA when less impactful and more focused adjustments on management in the UCI area would better accomplish the same goal without producing as collateral damage the lost harvest and ineffective management in the KMA, the impacts and volume of which would by far exceed the benefit conveyed by the few additional sockeye that may reach the UCI area as a result.

North Shelikof Straight Sockeye Management Plan

After the anomalous and unrepeated sockeye harvest in 1988 of what was perceived to be a "non-traditional harvest pattern" of UCI salmon, the state of Alaska hastily adopted the North Shelikof Straight Sockeye Management plan, a burden that the Kodiak fleet has had to bear ever since. This plan already limits Kodiak harvest activities in a way that is arguably burdensome beyond the proportion to which UCI salmon are typically harvested in Kodiak. Additionally, since the plan is based on a set harvest allocation within the KMA, the burden of conservation due to this plan is greatest on years of highest sockeye abundance which leads to rapid closures of the seaward zones, requiring the KMA seine fleet to forsake harvest volumes that are disproportionately large in comparison to the conservation benefits. In addition to curtailing the harvest of Cook Inlet stocks, this management plan severely limits the Kodiak fleet's ability to harvest local stocks in the North Shelikof Straight. Closures designed to protect UCI stocks are triggered even by harvest of North Shelikof sockeye streams including Thorsheim, Long Lagoon, Foul Bay, Malina Creek, Swikshak, Kaflia and Kuliak, as well as fish traveling to other systems within the KMA including Karluk, Ayakulik and Spiridon bay, to mention a few.

It is my fear that the emotional public reaction to the genetic stock survey will once again trigger the implementation of a poorly conceived management plan designed largely to satisfy a restive and vocal subgroup of Alaskans without regard to the actual outcomes achieved through the changes. This would further place the Kodiak fleet under an onerous management policy that delivers no net benefit to the state and likely results in overall loss of harvest and significant damage to Kodiak's already downtrodden fishery dependent communities. For these reasons, I implore the board *not* attempt to re-address the KMA during the Cook Inlet board meeting nor to declare an out-of-cycle emergency meeting designed to address a crisis that does not exist in a fishery that hasn't changed in decades. Instead, if the public desires, it may be prudent to form a workgroup comprised of Kodiak fishermen, ADF&G department staff, UCI stake holders and Board of Fishery members in order to further the discussion and provide a balanced dialogue so that matters concerning the KMA are better understood and management decisions can be rooted in science, reality and legal code rather stemming from a one-sided public frenzy that resulted from a flawed and superficial interpretation of the recent genetic report.

Sincerely,
Darren Platt

darrenplatt@yahoo.com

David Hillstrand

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Homer, Alaska 99603

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Board of Fisheries Members; Regarding Upper Cook Inlet

I would like to review with you Laws, Regulations, and Supreme Court Rulings that apply to Allocating issues, Limitation of Harvest abilities between different users, Harvest Limits, History of Limited Entry and its qualifications, Conservation, Common Use, and financial benefits to all residents of Alaska and the USA, with the importance of the Chairs position and how it should be tied to the Area Biologist recommendations.

It is vital and important for you as Board Members to bring stability to the Area, by education and adhering to the Law and our Constitution you will bring calm to the conservation of our fisheries and people of The State of Alaska.

1. Please read the following Laws and Regulations and Supreme Court Rulings. I will let you look them up to save space and paper.
   a. 5 AAC 77.001 (b)
   b. Pullen V. Ulmer
   c. Lieutenant Governor of the State of Alaska V. Alaska Fisheries Conservation Alliance, Inc.
   d. Escapements and Returns from ADFG for the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers. History of the Area returns from the 1880 to date.
   e. Call the Local Area Biologist and talk with them in each area before you travel there. (907) 262-9368
   f. Limited Entry, qualifications, optimum number in each fishery, Alaska Resident held compared to out of State residents.
   g. Alaska Constitution and Common use, how it applies now to our Fisheries, Oil industry, and Mining
   h. Economic Study of the loss of income from lack of harvests from over escapements.
2. Currently the BOF has allocated excessive fish to the Upper Cook Inlet Rivers with area and time restrictions. It has gotten to the point that these Actions are causing diminished returns and loss of economic value to the State of Alaska and its 700,000 plus residents. The loss of revenue to the State and Local communities needs to stop. Recent studies have shown losses in the millions; which in our current Fiscal dilemma hurts the State and its people.

3. Continued legislative petitions from an Alaska Senator and passed Law suits trying to eliminate Set Netters; are continued pressures to put more fish in the river, this is leading to stress. Even

with over escapements in the last 5 years, they still want more, without the ability to harvest all of the excess. With warming waters stress from over escapement may escalate Lake Survival; and we are starting to see this with Grayling and Silver salmon.

5 AAC 77.001 (b) of the personal use regulations

a. (b) It is the intent of the board that the taking of fish under 5 AAC 77 will be allowed when that taking does not jeopardize the sustained yield of a resource and either does not negatively impact an existing resource use or is in the broad public interest.
b. All three are happening and you need to address it.
    1. **Jeopardize the sustained yield of a resource**.
        a. Over escapements is one of the main reasons for diminished returns, especially with warming oceans.
    2. **Negatively impact an existing resource use.**
        a. Economic losses have happened in the loss of revenue to the communities and the State of Alaska, as well as over escapements.
        b. There are existing users; commercial fishers. The personal use fisheries should take place before July 1st and after August 1st on the Kenai Peninsula and with the Pink salmon that are not harvested as they should be.
    3. **Is in the broad public interest. Read Supreme Court Opinion**
        a. Lieutenant Governor of the State of Alaska V. Alaska Fisheries Conservation Alliance Inc.
        b. Opinion states that Commercial fishing permits are of greater value to the State of Alaska and in the broad public interest.
        c. Personal use and Sport fishing which is sport snagging in the Sockeye fishery which is illegal cannot harvest all of the fish that return.
        d. Remember this is an urban area not a Rural Subsistence area.

Pullen V, Ulmer

a. A case that tried to eliminate Commercial fishing, and give priority to Sport, Personal use and Subsistence fishing. The Opinion requires that room be given to the public that participates in Commercial fishing.

Lieutenant Governor of the State of Alaska V. Alaska Fisheries Conservation Alliance, Inc.

a. 63 64

Permits, which are limited in number, hold significant value, and may be bought and sold.[65] and unlike noncommercial hunting and fishing licenses, these set net permits carry over from year to year. This makes commercial set netters a far more cohesive, recognizable, and permanent group than individuals who hunt wolves

using same-day aerial techniques or snares, or who hunt bears using baiting or feeding methods. The latter individuals must generally apply for permits and licenses annually,[66] and those who wish to participate in more heavily regulated hunts have no guarantee that they will be

e. It is in the Publics Board interest to favor with preferential treatment those that participate in the fisheries through Commercial fishing.

f. The Supreme Court gave direction to the public on the value to the State for Commercial fishing Limited Entry Permits.

Alaska Constitution and Common use, how it applies now to our Fisheries, Oil industry, Mining and Land.

a. I can understand the public thinking that every fish, animal and mineral are every individual's entitlement. So let's take this argument and apply it to the resources.
b. Fish on the Kenai River we have a run of say 4.2 million for 2017 with 1.2 for escapement leaving 3 million for harvest divided by 740,272 residents equals 4 Sockeye Salmon per person. The harvest limits of 25 per head of household cannot apply to every resident in South Central. You will have to apply reduced limits to each stream during July 1st to August 1st.
c. We have Southeast Alaska, PWS, Cook Inlet, Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, Bristol Bay, Kuskokwim and Yukon River. Where every river has an abundance of salmon over the escapement levels required to bring back an SEG. Common use if applied fairly would require everyone to travel and get their appropriate amount of fish and every species from each river. It's a want of Sockeye salmon not a need for food. This attitude has created hatred for the public that participates in the Commercial fisheries. This needs to STOP!
d. Limited Entry for the fisheries which are a limited resource has replaced Common use is our constitution. Limited Entry is how the public participates in common use. It encourages conservation and the ability to manage for the maximum benefit to all Alaska Residents. With a Tax for the communities and the State. While still leaving a reasonable room for Sport and Personal use. Unless you as board members stop and think this through harm will be caused to the resource and the Public. Limited Entry does not give exclusive rights to fish. Permits can be purchased by the public for all of the areas of Alaska, it is just limited.

e. The Oil Industry where we have leased out our resources, we have given up our individual common use and replaced it with us all sharing in taxes from the lease and from a Permanent Fund Dividend, we cannot go to Fairbanks and tap into the Aleyeska Pipe line for personal use oil consumption while we have the leases; you would be arrested.

f. Mining the state gives leases and claims with a Tax for the public as a trade for common use is the public's ability to apply for a claim. Those claims once given are theirs to work, if we were to go and personal use on those claims we would be arrested.

Limited Entry, qualifications, optimum number in each fishery, Alaska Resident held compared to out of State residents.

a. Limited entry was put in place to bring stability and to not cause economic hardship to the fishers, and for the Area Biologists to have the ability to control the harvest and max out the MSY in our Alaska Constitution.

b. The qualifications are in line with a Tier 11 system for Game. ***What are the point systems based upon?***

The basic criteria used to evaluate hardship
Are: (1) Economic dependence upon the fishery,
Which may include percentage of income from
The fishery and investment in a vessel and gear,
And (2) Past participation in the fishery, which
may include the number of years and
Consistency of participation.

c. The optimum number keeps permits available to the public, I am against one person fishing two permits, and limiting the public's ability to purchase permits and participate. I am for two permits on one boat to help the younger people to enter the fisheries and save up for a vessel.

d. Alaska Residency Especially on the Kenai Peninsula. Out of the Drift fleet of over 500 permits; 80% 411 permits are held by Alaskan's with most of them local to the area. Out of the Set Net permits of over 700; 83% or 600 plus are Alaskan residents and most of them local to the area and community. We do not have record of the residents who are Alaska Native; I have at least 5 friends that are Alaska Native that fish in UCI. There are no data as to how many are Alaska Native. My wife is also Alaska Native and a permit holder, our Children are Alaska Native and fish with us, and will eventually hold the permits and fish. Only Western Alaska has a greater level of participation.

e. Creating stability will add value to the Permits, and Vessels and give income for vessel repair, and upgrading lifesaving equipment; such as Life Rafts which have an exemption from the USCG. Financial restraints for income have led to these

compromises of safety and equipment care. It will also help in the Aging of the Fleet for our children and youth getting involved in the fisheries.

f. Displacement of commercial fishers from the UCI fisheries with residents from the major cities because of their so called right needs to be corrected with law and order. That thinking is the same as what has displaced Alaska Natives from preference to game, fish and land. Let that preference to Commercial Fishing Permits be removed if you restore an Alaska Native preference to fish and game, and open up another homestead act for all Alaska Natives.

Call the Local Area Biologist and talk with them in each area before you travel there. (907) 262-9368

I encourage you to call the Local area biologists as you travel the state.
One issue that should be addressed is the range of escapements; which should vary from 700,000 to 1,200,000 in a cycle. Your current suggestions for small escapements on small runs and large escapements on large runs are disrupting to biological diversity and river and lake management. If you have large runs like we have been having you put large escapements in the river which now have been in excess of 6 years in a row. Please stop this and follow the recommendations of the Area Biologists.

I would like to challenge all future Chair leaders on the BOF to exclude their vote on political and personal voting and defer it to the Local Area Biologists. If the Area Manager for the State stays out of allocation issues so should the Chair. The BOF is political appointed and the fisheries needs to stay managed on science. The Chair will set the attitude and professional standard that needs to be set by seeking the advice from the local area.

Conservation Theory requires for everything to line up and to be in order and follow law. Please read the laws that are in place.

I will miss the opening for testimony at the upcoming BOF meetings for Upper Cook Inlet but will be there when you deliberate. I look forward to talking with you also. I have communicated with Israel Payton and appreciate Robert Ruffners email address being available. I specifically enjoyed Israel's visit to the Kenai Peninsula and talking with all user groups. He asked me for my perspective on what is happening.

I hope I have given you my views on the Law and History and practicality and what is best for all of our residence.

David Hillstrand

From: Haight, Glenn E (DFG)
To: Haight, Glenn E (DFG)
Subject: FW: Upper Cook Inlet Proposals
Date: Monday, November 21, 2016 4:23:46 PM

Donald Johnson

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#87--- **Amend Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan to maximize commercial harvest of sockeye salmon, as follows:** The Central District Drift Gillnet Plan desires to maximize the killing and selling of fish attempting to migrate up Cook Inlet. The plan should desire to maximize adequate escapement of salmon into our freshwater rivers and streams. Maximizing a commercial harvest is not the correct way to write a fisheries management plan. This plan should be changed to maximize freshwater escapement of salmon. Directing management to **(*minimize the commercial harvest of Northern District and Kenai River Coho while providing sport reasonable opportunity*)** is a backwards and crazy way to attempt to manage fish. It would be like trying to control crime by encouraging police to hit everyone they meet up side the head while minimizing the number of people they send to the hospital! It is not reasonable to direct management to minimize the harvest of any fish that swim along-side each other when using commercial gill nets. With gillnets you cannot maximize the commercial harvest of fish swimming beside sport fish allocated Kenai River Coho, and still providing anglers a reasonable opportunity to harvest. The current Central District Plan is an exercise in "**double talk**" because it desires to catch all the salmon while allowing all the salmon to also escape! I say the BOF should amend the plan to get the commercial drift net fleet off all the stocks that the plan looks to offer a reasonable opportunity to sport fishermen. This plan is looking to do the impossible by trying to do fisheries brain surgery with a fisheries baseball bat. **I reject proposal 87 because the current plan should be thrown out and a new one created which actually stands a chance of minimizing the accidental killing of kings and silvers.**

#88--- **Remove restrictions to the commercial drift gillnet fishery, so that the fishery would occur during two inlet-wide fishing periods based on test fishery and escapement data.**

I reject proposal 88 because we have no way of knowing the king salmon impact from this kind of an expanded drift gillnet fisheries.

#89--- **Repeal and readopt Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan with the amended plan removing mandatory time and area restrictions**

from July 1–August 15.

I reject proposal 89 because it would increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#90--- **Remove restrictions on the commercial drift gillnet fishery from July 1–31 and manage the drift gillnet fishery based on in season salmon abundance**

I reject proposal 90 because it would increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#91--- **Remove area restrictions imposed on the commercial drift gillnet fishery during July 9–15 and 16– 31 time period.**

I reject proposal 89 because it would increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#92--- **Restrict commercial drift gillnet fishery to the Expanded Corridor and Drift Gillnet Area 1 from August 1–15.**

I feel it is important to get as many Coho Salmon to the rivers of Upper Cook Inlet as possible.

I support proposal 92 because it would allow more coho salmon to reach their native rivers and streams.

#93--- **Amend preamble of management plan and restrict commercial drift gillnet fishery to the Expanded Corridor and Drift Gillnet Area 1 from August 1-15.**

While I do support getting more Coho Salmon to the northern district streams, I do not support it at the determent of returning Coho to the Kenai and Kasilof rivers.

I REJECT PROPOSAL 93.

#94--- **Remove the one-percent rule, as referenced to both the set and drift gillnet fisheries, from the Drift Gillnet Management Plan.**

I feel the 1% rule has worked very well in getting Kenai River returning King Salmon into the river and should not be changed.

I REJECT PROPOSAL 94.

#95--- **Restrict commercial drift gillnet fishery to the Expanded Corridors and Drift Gillnet Area 1 from August 1–15.**

The Kenai and Kasilof coho and king stocks are depleted enough, there is no reason to allow the drift fleet to depleted them even more.

I REJECT PROPOSAL 95

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#96--- **Allow commercial fishing with drift gillnets in all waters of the Central District, except the Kenai and Kasilof Sections, from August 16 until closed by emergency order.**

I REJECT 96 and the only way I would support it is IF the increased amount of drift gillnet time were subtracted from the set gillnet time in the Central District.

#97--- **Repeal the drift and set gillnet one-percent rules that apply to from**

August 1–15.

I reject and disagree with proposal 97 because it is completely illogical attempting to abandon the gillnet 1% rule from Aug. 1-15. This kind of change would only insure that what remains of our Kenai & Kasilof silver stocks would be devastated while comm. fish chases after every last remaining sockeye salmon.

#98--- **Reduce sport fishery bag limit for Coho salmon on the west side of Cook Inlet and close drift gillnet fishing in Areas 3 and 4 for remainder of season if Coho salmon sport fishing is restricted or closed in the Little Susitna River.**

I support proposal 98 attempting to close down comm. fishing when sport fishing is closed down in the Little Susitna.

#99--- **Amend management plan to remove all restrictions and manage the commercial set gillnet fishery to harvest surplus Kasilof River sockeye salmon.**

This proposal would devastate the numbers of returning Kenai and Kasilof King Salmon and is not viable.

I do not support proposal 99 because it would only serve to increase the accidental killing of even more Kenai and Kasilof King Salmon when our kings are already extremly depleted.

#100--- **Open the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Kasilof Section as early as June 20 if the department estimates 50,000 sockeye salmon will be in the Kasilof River before June 25.**

I reject proposal 100 because it would increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#101--- **Allow commercial fishing with set gillnets within 600 feet of shore in the Kasilof Section, with fishing time occurring 600 feet or less offshore not subject to the hourly restrictions in the Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan.**

I reject proposal 101 because it would increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#102--- **Amend management plan to allow commercial fishing with set gillnet gear in the Kasilof Section within one-half mile of shore and eliminate the provision allowing commercial fishing with set gillnet gear only within 600 feet of shore in the Kasilof Section.**

This proposal is much like the previous one, #101. **Increasing the fishing area for set gillnets from 600 to one-half mile off shore would kill a great many more king salmon. I reject proposal 102 because it would increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.**

#103--- **Add a 24-hour no fishing window on Tuesday in the Kasilof Section through July 7 and adopt mandatory no fishing windows in the Kasilof River Special Harvest Area after July 7.**

This proposal would aid in returning numbers of King Salmon to the Kasilof and Kenai Rivers. That would be a good thing.

I support proposal 103 because it would increase the number of king salmon being able to reach their native rivers and streams.

#104--- **Reduce the closed fishing period or "window" and increase additional fishing time with set gillnet gear in the Kasilof Section prior to July 9.**

I reject proposal 104 because it would increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#105--- **Allow commercial fishing with set gillnet gear in the North Kalifonsky Beach statistical area (NKB - stat area 244-32) when the upper end of the Kasilof sockeye salmon escapement goal range is projected to be exceeded.**

This proposal would increase Comm Fish Set Net opportunity to the determent of Kenai River King Salmon numbers entering the Kenai River.

I reject proposal 105 because it would increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#106--- **Replace the optimum escapement goal with the sustainable escapement goal for Kasilof River sockeye salmon.**

I reject proposal 106 because it would reduce Kasilof sockeye escapement goal. The Kasilof sockeye escapement should be increased NOT decreased. The Kasilof sockeye escapement goal should be increased UNLESS an increase results in additional comm. sockeye fishing time off the Kasilof River.

#107--- **Replace the optimum escapement goal with a sustainable escapement goal for Kasilof River sockeye salmon.**

Same as #106.**I reject proposal 107 because it would reduce Kasilof sockeye escapement goal. The Kasilof sockeye escapement should be increased NOT decreased. The Kasilof sockeye escapement goal should be increased UNLESS an increase results in additional comm. sockeye fishing time off the Kasilof River.**

#108--- **Replace the optimum escapement goal with the current biological escapement goal for Kasilof River sockeye salmon.**

Again this is the same as #106. **I reject proposal 108 because it would reduce Kasilof sockeye escapement goal. The Kasilof sockeye escapement should be increased NOT decreased. The Kasilof sockeye escapement goal should be increased UNLESS an increase results in additional comm. sockeye fishing time off the Kasilof River.**

#109--- **Provide clarification on the use of gear in the Kasilof River Special Harvest Area (KRSHA) for individuals who hold two Cook Inlet set gillnet Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) limited entry permits.**

This proposal sounds reasonable.

I SUPPORT PROPOSAL 109

#110--- **Allow a Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission limited entry permit holder to commercial fish in the Kasilof River Special Harvest Area with one gillnet per limited entry permit held.**

I SUPPORT PROPOSAL 110

#111--- **Allow a Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission limited entry permit holder to commercial fish in the Kasilof River Special Harvest Area with one set gillnet per limited entry permit held.**

I SUPPORT PROPOSAL 111

#112--- **Allow holders of two Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission set gillnet limited entry permits to fish two set gillnets in the Kasilof River Special Harvest Area.**

I reject proposal 112 because the use of two gillnets fishing the Kasilof Special Harvest Area increases the accidental commercial killing of even more king salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#113--- **Remove restrictions on the amount of drift or set gillnet gear a vessel may have on board within the Kasilof River Special Harvest Area.**

I reject proposal 113 allowing vessels to carry extra nets onboard because it only encourages the illegal use of excess gear in the water. Excess gear only increases the accidental commercial killing of even more king salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#114--- **Require all nets, buoys, ropes and anchoring devices to be removed from the Kasilof River Special Harvest Area when this area is closed to commercial fishing.**

I agree with proposal 114 because it would help reduce the mass of garbage fishing gear in our public waters and also help increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#115--- **Define the boundary that separates set gillnet from drift gillnet gear in the Kasilof River Special Harvest Area (KRSHA), and define the outside boundaries of the KRSHA.**

I support proposal 115 because it would help reduce conflicts between gear types. Gear conflicts only work to increase the waste of fish.

#116--- **Review the optimum escapement goal (OEG) and in river goals for Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon.**

I reject proposal 116 because removing the in river escapement goals from the Upper Cook Inlet Salmon Management Plans may simplify things but it would also further assist our ADF&G in forgetting that they are managing to get fish into rivers and streams, not just Cook Inlet. Removing in river goals would only help increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king and silver salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers. These escapement goals are meaningless when the ADF&G counts Kenai pink salmon as if they are Kenai sockeye salmon. The ADF&G needs "get honest" and confirm their sonar counts with their fish wheel and stop pretending that pink salmon are sockeye salmon.

#117--- **Amend the Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan to**

remove the optimum escapement goal for Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon.

I reject117 because our ADF&G may be mis-counting our salmon on the Kenai River, but dumping the late run sockeye plan optimum goal would just make that problem worse.

#118--- **Remove the optimum escapement goal for Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon and add the guided sport fishery to the list of fisheries managed under the plan.**

I reject 118 because our ADF&G may be mis-counting our salmon on the Kenai River, but dumping the late run sockeye plan optimum goal would just make that problem worse.

#119--- **Amend management plan to achieve in river goal range of 850,000–1,050,000 late-run sockeye salmon at run strengths less than 2.3 million sockeye salmon and 950,000–1,150,000 late-run sockeye salmon at run strengths greater than 2.3 million sockeye salmon.**

All this proposal does is muddy up the current management escapement goal.

I reject 119 because it only attempts to confuse our current sockeye escapement on the Kenai River.

#120--- **Decrease the in river goal ranges for late-run Kenai River sockeye salmon by 100,000 fish and limit the bag and possession of sockeye salmon to three per day and three in possession in the Kenai River sport fishery.**

I reject 120 because it is just attempting to reallocate sockeye from sport fish to commercial fish.

#121--- **Repeal and readopt management plan to remove the optimum escapement goal, mandatory restrictions and closed fishing periods or "windows", and specify that management will be based on the abundance of late-run Kenai River sockeye salmon.**

I reject proposal 121 because the removal of optimum goals and closed comm. fishing periods would increases the accidental commercial killing of even more king salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#122--- **Remove mandatory closed fishing periods or "windows" from the Upper Sub district commercial set gillnet fishery.**

Both of these proposals are basically the same and are greed driven by Comm Fish Set Netters. We need Escapement Goals to ensure the survival of our salmon species and we need Comm Fish closure "windows" to ensure that Kenai River bound King Salmon make it into the river. Only common sense!

I reject proposal 122 because the removal of optimum goals and closed comm. fishing periods would increases the accidental commercial killing of even more king salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#123--- **Repeal and readopt the management plan to allow for the commercial harvest of surplus pink salmon in the Upper Sub district with set and drift gillnet gear.**

I reject proposal 123 because increasing the comm. catch of pinks would increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king and silver salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#124--- **Amend the Cook Inlet Pink Salmon Management Plan to remove or lower the daily harvest triggers.**

I reject proposal 124 because the removal of the lower triggers would increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king and silver salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#125--- **Remove mesh size restrictions on set and drift gillnet gear in the commercial pink salmon fishery.**

I reject proposal 125 because the removal of the mesh size restriction would increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king and silver salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#126--- **Remove mesh size restrictions on set and drift gillnet gear in the commercial pink salmon fishery.**

I reject proposal 126 because the removal of the mesh size restriction would increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king and silver salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#127--- **Remove in river goals from the list of escapement goals in the Upper Cook Inlet Salmon Management Plan and realign in river and escapement goals in the Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan.**

I reject proposal 127 because removing the in river escapement goals from the Upper Cook Inlet Salmon Management Plans may simplify things but it would also further assist our ADF&G in forgetting that they are managing to get fish into rivers and streams, not just Cook Inlet. Removing in river goals would only help increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king and silver salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#128--- **Amend plan to prioritize the need to harvest all surplus salmon stocks and to maximize economic yield and the overall benefits from salmon stocks managed under the plan.**

I reject proposal 128 because maximizing the kill of Cook Inlet salmon also maximizes the accidental commercial killing of even more king and silver salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#129--- **Amend plan to prioritize the need to harvest all surplus salmon stocks and to maximize economic yield and the overall benefits from salmon stocks managed under the plan.**

I reject proposal 129 because it is a reallogacation of fish from sport fish to commercial fish. It also increases the killing of Cook Inlet salmon while maximizing the accidental commercial killing of even more king and silver salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#130--- **Amend Upper Cook Inlet Salmon Management Plan so that fishery**

restrictions on fully allocated stocks of concern are shared among all user groups in proportion to the respective user group harvest of that stock.

I support 130 if it places the fisheries restrictions and enforcement where most of the fish are caught.

#131--- **Define commercial fishing statistical areas in the Upper Sub district set gillnet fishery.**

#132--- **Move the southwestern-most point of the Expanded Kasilof Section 1.2 nm west so it aligns with the northwestern-most point of the Expanded Anchor Point Section.**

#133--- **Allow a single person holding two Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission Cook Inlet drift gillnet limited entry permits to operate 200 fathoms of drift gillnet gear.**

I reject proposal 131-133 because they all work to increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king and silver salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#134--- **Remove restrictions in the Upper Sub district commercial set gillnet fishery and allow for regular weekly fishing periods through July 20 with additional fishing periods based on in season abundance.**

I reject proposal 134 because it works to increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king and silver salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#135--- **Redefine sections and manage the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Upper Sub district with three sections with staggered opening dates.**

This proposal will lead to confusion and much extra effort by all involved.

I reject proposal 135 because it makes commercial fishing even more difficult to enforce therefore increasing the accidental commercial killing of even more king and silver salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#136--- **Allow commercial fishing with set gillnets in the North Kalifonsky Beach (NKB), statistical area 244-32, within 660 feet of shore with shallow nets only, when the Kasilof Section is open, on or after July 8.**

I reject proposal 136 because attempts to increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king and silver salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#137--- **Remove "one-percent rule", where the commercial set gillnet fishery will close after July 31, if less than one percent of the season's total sockeye is harvested in two consecutive fishing periods.**

#138--- **Remove the one-percent rule that applies to the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Upper Sub district after July 31 so that the set gillnet fishery will close August 15 and be managed using regular fishing periods from August 11 through August 15.**

#139--- **Repeal the one-percent rule, as it applies to the Upper Sub district set gillnet fishery so that the set gillnet fishery will close August 15.**

I reject proposal 137-139 because the 1% is the only thing preventing the ADF&G and commercial fishing from accidentally killing all of our kings and silvers.

#140--- **Allow a set gillnet to be up to 45 fathoms in length and a Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission limited entry permit holder to operate up to 135 fathoms of set gillnet gear when commercial fishing with set gillnets 29 meshes or less in depth.**

I reject proposal 140 because increased mesh depth will only increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king and silver salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#141--- **Limit the depth of all set gillnet gear in Upper Subdistrict of the Central District to no more than 29 meshes deep.**

I support proposal 141 because it might save a few of our kings from being accidentally commercial killed.

#142--- **Close waters within one statute mile of the terminus of Kustatan, Drift, and Big rivers, and Bachatna Creek; as measured from mean lower low water, to commercial fishing.**

I support proposal 142 because it might save a few of our kings from being accidentally commercial killed.

#143--- **Increase the amount of smelt that may be taken in the Cook Inlet commercial smelt fishery from 100 tons to 200 tons annually.**

I reject proposal 143 because the increased killing of our smelt will only help reduce the prey available for our king and silver salmon which are already starving to death because of excess commercial fishing.

#144--- **Require that when proxy fishing in Upper Cook Inlet, once a bag limit is taken the next legal bag limit must be retained.**

I SUPPORT PROPOSAL 144

#145--- **Allow only barbless hooks in Upper Cook Inlet flowing waters closed to salmon fishing.**

I SUPPORT PROPOSAL 145

#146--- **Require the use of circle hooks when fishing for sockeye salmon.**

I reject proposal 146 because it is crazy and prevent all sportfish from catching sockeye salmon.

#147--- **Start the Kenai River early-run king salmon fishery as an unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure, no retention fishery.**

#150--- **Start the Kenai River king salmon sport fisheries as unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure, no retention.**

I reject proposal 147-150 because locking the early run king fishery into these restrictions would tie the ADF&G's hands when king runs rebound.

#148--- **Rewrite the Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-run King Salmon Management Plan to redefine early-run stocks and establish age- and sex-based escapement goal.**

I reject proposal 148 because managing river escapements for sex and age is an attempt to micro-manage minor freshwater issues while ignoring major saltwater issues.

#149--- **Revise Kenai River and Kasilof River Early-run King Salmon Management Plan.**

I support 149 because if these plans are revised along with an effort to revise our saltwater management plans, which happen to be starving our salmon to death.

#151--- **Repeal barbless hook provisions in Lower Kenai River.**

I support 151 because excessive freshwater regulation has resulted when our salmon resource problems are in the saltwater.

#152--- **Expand the dates to prohibit back trolling and tie to prohibition of bait.**

I reject152 because excessive freshwater regulation has resulted when our salmon resource problems are in the saltwater.

#153--- **. Prohibit fishing for king salmon from markers 300 yards below Slikok Creek upstream to Skilak Lake.**

I reject153 because excessive freshwater regulation has resulted when our salmon resource problems are in the saltwater.

#154--- **Expand the waters of the Kenai River closed to fishing for king salmon.**

#155--- **Expand the waters of the Kenai River closed to fishing for king salmon.**

I reject 154-155 because excessive freshwater regulation has resulted when our salmon resource problems are in the saltwater.

#156--- **Replace slot limit for Kenai River king salmon with maximum size limit to prohibit retention of king salmon greater than 42 inches in length.**

Current slot limit regulations work great. Have not been able to fish for King Salmon in the Kenai River for 3yrs in May and 2 1/2yrs in June so it is redundant.

I reject 156 because excessive freshwater regulation has resulted when our salmon resource problems are in the saltwater.

#157--- **Modify the annual limit of king salmon from the Kenai River to two fish, only one taken prior to July 1.**

I reject 157 because excessive freshwater regulation has resulted when our salmon resource problems are in the saltwater.

#158--- **Modify the annual limit of two king salmon for the Kenai River to include only one large fish.**

#166--- **Modify season dates and area for Kenai River late-run king salmon management. July 8 – July 31: 1 per day, 1 in possession**

I reject 154-155 because excessive freshwater regulation has resulted when our salmon resource problems are in the saltwater.

#159--- **Extend the time that the slot limit for Kenai River king salmon is in**

effect.

I reject159 because excessive freshwater regulation has resulted when our salmon resource problems are in the saltwater.

#160--- **Prohibit the use of bait in the late-run Kenai river king salmon fishery until escapement goals have been met.**

#163--- **Prohibit bait on runs less than 22,000 and eliminate 12-hour fishing period restriction.**

I reject160-163 because excessive freshwater regulation has resulted when our salmon resource problems are in the saltwater.

#161--- **Start the Kenai River king salmon sport fisheries as unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure, no retention.**

According to current management plan, this would also close the Comm Fish Set Nets.

I reject proposal 161 because locking the early run king fsihery into these restrictions would tie the ADF&G's hands when king runs rebound.

#162--- **Establish an Optimum Escapement Goal (OEG) of 15,000 – 40,000.**

I support 162 because we should be increasing king goals not reducing them.

#164--- **Repeals and readopts the Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan.**

#165--- **Decrease the trigger for management actions on Kenai River late-run king salmon from 22,500 to 16,500.**

I reject 164-165 because reducing the triggers would only further tie the ADF&G's hands when king runs rebound.

#167--- **Close the Kenai River personal use fishery when the late-run king salmon sport fishery is closed.**

I reject 167 because personal use has a higher priority than sport fish use.

#168--- **Remove restrictions to the Kenai River sport and personal use fisheries and the Upper Sub district commercial set gillnet fishery in July and August.**

#169--- **Remove restrictions to the Kenai River sport and personal use fisheries and the Upper Sub district commercial set gillnet fishery in July and August**

I reject168- 169 because they are excessively vage and therefore meaningless. Remove what restrictions?

#170--- **Reconsider “paired” restrictions to the Kenai River sport and personal use fisheries and the Upper Sub district commercial set gillnet fishery.**

#171--- **Remove the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Kasilof Section from “paired” restrictions in the Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan.**

#172--- **Remove “paired” restrictions in the Kenai River sport and personal use fisheries and the Upper Sub district commercial set gillnet fishery.**

#173--- **Decrease the projected in river run goal of late-run king salmon to 19,000 fish and remove the Upper Sub district commercial set gillnet fishery**

from "paired" restrictions.

#174--- **Remove provisions (e)(3)(A)(i) and (ii) that restrict the number and/or depth of commercial set gillnets fished by a Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission limited entry permit holder in the Upper Sub district if the use of bait is prohibited in the Kenai River sport fishery.**

#175--- **Clarify the length and depth of set gillnets that may be used in the Upper Sub district commercial salmon fishery, if the use of bait is prohibited in the Kenai River sport fishery.**

#176--- **Allow commercial set gillnet fishing periods in the Kenai and Kasilof sections to be managed separately, with regard to "paired" restrictions, if the use of bait is prohibited in the Kenai River sport fishery.**

#177--- **Allow commercial fishing periods in the Kasilof and Kenai/East Forelands sections to be opened separately, with regard to "paired" restrictions, if the use of bait is prohibited in the Kenai River sport fishery.**

I reject proposal 170-181 because they attempt to increase the accidental commercial killing of even more king and silver salmon from the Kenai & Kasilof Rivers.

#180--- **Establish two Kenai River riparian habitat areas equal to approximately nine-tenths of a mile that will be closed to fishing from shore within 10 feet of the waterline from July 1 – August 15.**

I reject 180 because excessive freshwater regulation has already resulted when our salmon resource problems are in the saltwater.

#182--- **Prohibit all guiding from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., as follows: Local residents and unguided non-guided anglers would then have a fair chance to access the sockeye salmon fishery before 6:00 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m.**

#185---**Modify language referencing fishing from guide boats on the Kenai River to include all guided fishing.**

I reject 182 because excessive freshwater regulation has already resulted when our salmon resource problems are in the saltwater.

#183--- **Allow guided anglers to fish from a guide boat on the Kenai River on Mondays in August.**

At that time of year there are still many tourists in Alaska and on the Kenai Peninsula. They bring much needed money to our cities and communities, why not let them fish on Mondays in August too?

#184--- **Relax guiding restrictions when king salmon fishing is closed by emergency order.**

I support 183-184 because excessive freshwater regulation has already resulted when our salmon resource problems are in the saltwater.

#186--- **Only barbless hooks allowed in the Kenai River upstream of the Lower Killey River.**

I support 186.

#187--- **Allow only barbless, unbaited, single-hook gear on the Kenai River from January 1 – August 1.**

#188--- **Allow only one single-hook or one single-hook lure.**

I DO NOT support 187-188 because excessive freshwater regulation has already resulted when our salmon resource problems are in the saltwater.

#189--- **Allow fishing from shore after harvesting a bag limit of Coho salmon.**

#190--- **Expand the waters open to fishing after harvesting a bag limit of Coho salmon in the lower Kenai River.**

#191--- **Kenai River Coho salmon bag limit from two fish to three.**

I support 189-191 because excessive freshwater regulation has resulted when our salmon resource problems are in the saltwater.

#192--- **Shorten the Kenai River Coho season by closing October 31.**

Having read all four of these proposals I feel that I agree with them and that they would not place to great a harvest issue upon these fish.

I reject 192 because excessive freshwater regulation has resulted when our salmon resource problems are in the saltwater.

#193--- **Create an archery fishery for sockeye salmon in a section of the Russian River.**

I reject 193 because there isn't a compelling reason for the change.

#194--- **Create a size limit for lake trout in Hidden Lake, as follows: In Hidden Lake, the bag and possession limit for lake trout is one fish under 16 inches of length. I reject 194 because there isn't a compelling reason for the change**

#195--- **Remove the commissioner's emergency order authority to extend the Kenai River personal use fishery hour.**

#196--- **Prohibit dip nets from being attached to a vessel, as follows: Dip nets operated from a boat may not in any way be physically attached to the boat. They must be operated by hand.**

#197--- **Prohibit dip netting from a vessel that is not anchored in the Kenai and Kasilof river personal use fisheries, as follows:**

In the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers boats carrying personal use dip netters must be anchored.

#198--- **Prohibit webbing in personal use dip nets that exceeds 2.5 inch stretched measure.**

#199--- **Prohibit dip netting on the Kasilof River from a vessel with a motor on board greater than 10 horsepower.**

I DO NOT support 195-199 because they attempt to reallocate fish from sport fish to the commercial fishing use.

#200--- **Amend the number of king salmon that may be retained in the Upper Cook Inlet personal use fishery to 10 king salmon under 20 inches.**

I DO NOT SUPPORT 200. I reject 200 because it is a reallocation of fish while ignoring the reason for the smaller king salmon. Our king salmon are starving at sea and this proposal attempt to sweep these starving king under-the-rug.

#201--- **Amend the area open to dip netting from shore in the Kenai River personal use dip net fishery.**

I support 201

#202--- **Extend the Cook Inlet personal use dip net fisheries to the 2nd Sunday of August.**

#203--- **Extend season and liberalize the bag limit in the Kenai River personal use fishery when the sonar estimate is projected to exceed 1.2 million sockeye salmon.**

#204--- **Extend the boundary of the Kenai River personal use dip net boat fishery upstream to Cunningham Park.**

I support 202-204

#205--- **Allow shore-based personal use dip netting in the Kenai River upstream to Skilak Lake.**

I reject 205 because it will result in a reallocation of fisheries.

#206--- **Create an area upstream of the Kenai River personal use fishery where recording and fin clip requirements are waived for fish that have not been off loaded. I support 206**

#207--- **Amend the boundary description language for the area open to dip netting in the Kasilof River personal use salmon fishery.**

I SUPPORT PROPOSAL 207.

#208--- **Allow 10 Dolly Varden/Arctic char per household in Cook Inlet Personal Use Fisheries.**

I DO NOT AGREE WITH OR SUPPORT PROPOSAL 208.

Thank you for reviewing my testimony regarding these Upper Cook Inlet Proposals.

Donald Johnson

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To the Members of the Board of Fish (2017),

The enclosed leaflet, King Salmon In The Kenai - Numbers to Consider, is a consolidation of ADF&G numbers from annual reports and research papers.

These numbers tell the story of how after 3 eight year cycles, we have an almost complete collapse of the early king run and appear to be moving rapidly that way with the late run too.

To arrive at these dismal numbers we have *ignored* the following:

1. CARRYING CAPACITY
   471,274 angler days were fished in the Kenai & Russian Rivers in 2013.
   137,963 of those angler days were below the bridge.
   The Kenai Watershed Forum recorded at peak, 700 outboard motor boats were operating simultaneously below Skilak Lake (2008-2010).
   90% of early run was caught in 1988.

2. FISHING IN SPAWNING GROUNDS
   The Kenai River is one of the very few rivers where this is allowed to happen.

3. THE REAL RESULTS OF HOOK & RELEASE
   The ADF&G studies show that 5-10% of chinook caught and released die within the first 5 days, 16-18% out-migrated, but only 40% spawned. And it get worse.
   Fish entering the river are on an energy budget, are no longer feeding, and spend an average of 32 days making the metabolic changes necessary for spawning. They use 57% more energy in fresh water than they do for ocean migration. They are completely exhausted each time they are dragged to the boat.
   Of the 40% that spawned, were they able to dig nests deep enough? What is the survival rate of the spawn?

4. FISHERY INDUCED GENETIC SELECTION (Trophy Fishing)
   The results are:
   1. The returning fish are smaller in size as we see with the loss of 6 & 7 ocean fish.
   2. The returning fish are younger, hence the increase in number of 1 & 2 ocean fish (Jacks).

   All of these have occurred.

I will be spending my two minutes before the Board talking about Hook & Release. If the opportunity arises I would be glad to spend whatever time available on any of the other numbers.

Thanks for giving these numbers some consideration.

Erik Barnes

Erik Barnes

Exposure and stress. Motoring over and past spawning grounds and concentrated fishing pressure at "fishing holes" causes stress.

Long staging times averaging 33 days (up to 67)[49 50] in the Kenai River mainstem adds exposure to Kenai River mainstem and tributary-spawning Kings.

From 2008-2010, the Kenai Watershed Forum recorded at peak more than 700 outboard motor boats running the Kenai River below Skilak Lake simultaneously.[51]

EAST SIDE SETNET EFFECT

Early-run. The Kenai-East Forelands section (Kenai River area and north) of Eastside Setnetters has not fished the early-run at all in 30 years (1985).[52] Their season doesn't start until July 8 at the earliest.[53]

On years when Kasilof sockeye are running abundantly and early, the Kasilof section of the Eastside Setnet area sometimes will have fishing opportunity during last ten days of June.[54] ADF&G describes their catch of returning early-run Kings as "insignificant."[55]

Genetic stock identification of Kenai tributary-bound Kings harvested by all Eastside Setnetters combined averaged .004 over the entire 2010-2013 seasons.[56]

Eastside Setnetters objectively are neither the cause or nor a contributing factor to the decline of the early-run King fishery.

On any year, the only significant harvests of the early-run Kenai Kings are by in-river sportfishmen.

Late-run. In 2013, all of the East Side Setnetters' late-run King harvest contributed .5% (½ percent) to the value of their sockeye salmon fishing harvest.[57]

Of the total King harvest by Eastside Setnet fishermen, 31.3% were bound for river systems other than the Kenai River according to a four-year genetic stock identification study.[58 59]

According to an ADF&G genetic stock identification study, in 2013, Eastside Setnetters' catch of late-run Kenai Kings 5-years-old and older (large enough to be counted by the Didson counter in-river[60]) was 3.5% of the total run.[61]

The Eastside Setnetter's catch of jack 3- and 4-year-old Kings was 6.9% of the total late-run.[62]

The sportfish daily limit on jack Kings less than 20 inches long (3 year-olds) is 10 per day.[63]

Adding 3.5% + 6.9%, Eastside Setnetters caught 10.4% of the late-run Kenai Kings in 2013.

All v1.7 citations including relevant excerpts and links: https://goo.gl/nm0V6N

KING SALMON IN THE KENAI
Numbers to Consider

LATE RUN KINGS	1987	2013
In-river run strength	63,550[1]	17,015[2]
Average size	34 lb[3]	15 lbs[4]
Escapement	50,327[5]	15,395[6]
Jacks: (3 & 4 yr-olds)	9%[7]	66%[8]
Males % of total run	49%[9]	88%* [10]

* Setnet index

Late-run Kings arrive to the Kenai River after June 30.[11]

There were 471,274 angler days fished in the Kenai and Russian Rivers in 2013.[12] The Kenai River downstream of the Soldotna Bridge (river mile 21) is the most heavily fished part of the Kenai River by an order of magnitude.[13]

More late-run Kings spawn below the Soldotna Bridge than in any other section.[14]

EARLY RUN KINGS	1987	2013
In-river run strength	25,643[15]	2,038[16]
Escapement	12,362[17]	2,033* [18]

*Did not make the minimum optimum escapement goal of 5,300.[19]

ADF&G early run Kenai Kings are counted from May 15 to June 30.[20]

On average mainstem and tributary spawners mill in-river for 33 days, with a range up to 67 days.[21, 22]

The Bendock catch-and-release mortality study estimated 70% of early-run Kings were available to in-river, sportfish harvest in July.[23]

A 2010-2013 tagging study showed that as late as July 31, more than 30% of tagged fish detected in open-to-fishing waters above Slikok Creek on the Kenai River were early-run, mainstem spawners.[24]

Over 90% of the early-run King return to the Kenai River was caught by sportfishermen in 1988. 5,946 (73% of escapement) of those were caught-and-released.[25]

PRODUCTIVITY

Each run is composed of Kings of mixed parent (brood) years from 2 to 8 years earlier.

Jacks may be defined as young, sexually mature 3 or 4 year-old males that return to spawn earlier than the females of their brood year.[26] In a 1984 study, 4-year-old early-run Kenai Kings were 27 inches in length and smaller, averaging 22 inches in total length.[27]

Kings have narrow-sense (strongly inherited) heredity traits including 1) age-at-maturity and 2) size-at-age.[28]

Older, larger female Kings are more productive and may produce more than 4 times more eggs than smaller, younger Kings,[29 30] *e.g.*, 4,200 versus 17,200 eggs.[29]

In 1988, ADF&G estimated an early-run return of 57 8 year-old Kenai Kings, 2,279 7 year-olds, and 15,077 6 year-olds.[31]

The nest of a large female King may be as deep as 2.5 feet and larger than 150 square feet.[32]

Because age-at-maturity is strongly inherited, in general, young jacks return more jacks.[33] Larger, older Kings at maturity beget larger, older Kings at maturity.[34 35]

Changing fish population structure to younger, smaller fish can lead to decreased reproductive potential, lower reproductive rates, loss of yield, increased variability in abundance, and fishery collapse.[36]

The energy budget required for metabolic changes necessary for living in fresh water, migration, and spawning for Kings is visibly observable in changes in color and teeth during this phase.

CONTRIBUTING CAUSES OF DECLINE

Overfishing and targeting the largest, most productive trophy Kings. Targeting large Kings is a key to "fisheries induced genetic selection" for younger, smaller, less productive returns.[37]

ADF&G Sportfish Division continues to sponsor a trophy (more than 55 inches total length), catch-and-keep King fishing contest [38] even when other conservation measures are being taken, *e.g.*, July 2013.[39]

ADF&G Sportfish Division endorses a hook-and-release policy" (42-55 inches) that invites more hook-and-release mortality even on years like 2013 when early-run minimum threshholds had not been reached.[38 39]

The slot limit policy combined with the trophy fishing contest encourages hook-and-keep retention of all the Kenai River's largest, most productive Kings (more than 55 inches long).

Hook-and-release 5-day mortality. In 1989, ADF&G estimated average **5-day** mortality for once-caught-and-released Kings at 10.6%.[40]

Although an average of 10.6% of the hooked-and-released Kings died within 5 days in the 1989 study, only 40% of Kings caught, tagged, and released actually spawned.[41]

Over three years of continued study, the 1989-91 average early-run caught-and-release 5-day mortality was measured at 7.6%.[42]

ADF&G currently assumes a 6.4% catch-and release mortality rate, averaging only the 1990-91 studies.[43]

Out-migration. In 1989, in addition to 10.6% 5-day mortality, another 16% out-migrated the Kenai River after catch-and-release, returning to the ocean where they were caught or otherwise disappeared.[44]

A late-run 2010 tagging study resulted in 18% "drop-outs" or Kings that out-migrated the Kenai River after handling.[45]

Effective hook-and-release mortality. Adding out-migration following catch-and-release to 5-day mortality amounts to a 1989 "effective mortality" of only once-caught-and-released Kings of up to 27%.

Add twice-hooked-and-released mortality to "effective mortality." In the 1989 study, 57% of Kings twice-caught-and-released did not survive to spawn.[46]

According to ADF&G, in the related 1990 tagging study, Kings twice-caught-and-released had half the survival rate and three times the river exodus, out-migration rate.[47]

Disproportionate fishing pressure. In 2013, ADF&G observed that because the Kenai River downstream of the Soldotna Bridge is the most heavily utilized mainstem spawning area in both historical and recent ADF&G data, closures upstream of Slikok Creek have not conserved mainstem spawning Kings in proportion to abundance.[48]

REFERENCES
FOR
KING SALMON IN THE KENAI
Numbers to Consider v6

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* Setnet index

Table 8.–Late-run Kenai River Chinook salmon population data, 1986–2013

Year	Deep Creek Marine Harvest[a]	Eastside Setnet Harvest[b]	Drift Gillnet Harvest[b]	Comm & PU[c]	Kenaitze Educational	Sub[d]	PU Dipnet[e]	Sport Harvest Below Sonar[f,g]	Inriver Run Estimated by Sonar[h]	Sport Harvest Above Sonar[f,g]	Catch-and-Release Mortality[i]	Spawning Escapement	Total Run	Harvest Rate
1986	378	13,619	1,100	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	62,740	9,872	316	52,552	77,837	0.325
1987	731	14,536	2,731	ND	ND	ND	235	ND	63,550	13,100	123	50,327	81,783	0.385
1988	892	8,834	1,336	ND	ND	ND	0	ND	61,760	19,695	176	41,889	72,816	0.425
1989	821	7,498	0	ND	ND	22	0	ND	36,370	9,691	88	26,591	44,711	0.405
1990	963	2,843	373	91	ND	13	ND	ND	34,200	6,897	69	27,234	38,483	0.292
1991	1,023	3,361	145	130	ND	288	ND	ND	38,940	7,903	16	31,021	43,887	0.293
1992	1,269	7,363	326	50	ND	402	0	ND	42,290	7,556	234	34,500	51,700	0.333
1993	1,700	9,672	451	81	ND	27	0	ND	50,210	17,775	478	31,957	62,142	0.486
1994	1,121	10,700	276	9	1	392	ND	ND	47,440	17,837	572	29,031	59,939	0.516
1995	1,241	8,291	314	25	3	ND	712	ND	44,770	12,609	472	31,689	55,355	0.428
1996	1,223	7,944	219	31	1	ND	295	ND	42,790	8,112	337	34,341	52,503	0.346
1997	1,759	7,780	293	30	20	ND	364	ND	41,120	12,755	570	27,795	51,367	0.459
1998	1,070	3,495	199	35	2	ND	254	ND	47,110	7,515	595	39,000	52,165	0.252
1999	602	6,501	345	59	4	ND	488	1,170	43,670	12,425	682	30,563	52,839	0.422
2000	631	2,531	162	27	6	ND	410	831	47,440	14,391	499	32,550	52,038	0.374
2001	552	4,128	371	80	8	ND	638	1,336	53,610	15,144	825	37,641	60,724	0.380
2002	256	6,511	249	15	6	ND	606	1,929	56,800	10,678	665	45,457	66,372	0.315
2003	120	10,174	744	53	11	ND	1,016	823	85,110	16,120	1,803	67,187	98,052	0.315
2004	996	14,897	916	218	10	ND	792	2,386	79,690	14,988	1,019	63,683	99,905	0.363
2005	624	15,183	1,103	639	11	ND	997	2,287	77,440	15,927	1,267	60,246	98,284	0.387
2006	563	6,840	631	61	11	ND	1,034	3,322	62,270	12,490	830	48,950	74,732	0.345
2007	478	8,445	547	38	6	0	1,509	1,750	47,370	9,690	670	37,010	60,143	0.385
2008	310	5,203	392	23	16	0	1,362	1,011	42,840	10,128	370	32,342	51,156	0.368
2009	154	3,839	515	64	4	0	1,189	1,132	29,940	7,904	626	21,410	36,837	0.419
2010	335	4,567	323	32	21	0	865	445	23,250	6,762	264	16,224	29,839	0.456
2011	528	5,596	356	88	5	0	1,243	458	27,090	6,894	479	19,717	35,363	0.442
2012	30	484	115	41	0	0	40	2	27,910	101	95	27,714	28,622	0.032
2013[j]	not avail.	2,256	267	117	8	0	11	37	17,015	1,541	79	15,395	19,711	0.219
Avg. (1986-2002)	955	7,389	523	51	6	191	308	1,317	47,930	11,997	395	35,538	57,451	0.379
Avg. (2003-2013)	414	7,044	537	125	9	9	914	1,241	47,266	9,322	682	37,262	57,513	0.339
Avg. (1986-2013)	754	7,253	528	85	8	88	586	1,261	47,669	10,946	508	36,215	57,475	0.363

-continued-

[1] Begich, R. "2010-2012 Annual Management Report and Recreational Fisheries Overview...," 2014. Fishery Management Report No. 13-51, pg 100 (run strengths)

Table 8.–Page 2 of 2.

Source: Statewide Harvest Surveys from Mills 1987–1994, Howe et al. 1995, 1996, 2001a-d, Walker et al. 2003; Jennings et al. 2004, 2006a-b, 2007, 2009a-b, 2010a-b, 2011, In Prep; Romberg et al, In prep; Hammarstrom and Timmons 2001b; Brannian and Fox 1996, Ruesch and Fox 1996; Reimer and Sigurdsson 2004, Dunker and Lafferty 2007, Dunker, K.J. 2010. K. J. Dunker, Sport Fish Biologist, ADF&G, Anchorage, personal communication; Shields and Dupuis 2013b, P. Shields, Commercial Fish Biologist, ADF&G, Soldotna, personal communication; Fleischman and McKinley 2013, FMS 13-02; Tim McKinley personal communication; Robert Begich personal communication.

Note: ND = no data available.

[a] From Fleischman and McKinley 2013, FMS 13-02.

[b] Eastside set net and drift gillnet commercial harvest data using genetic stock allocation from Fleischman and McKinley 2013, Tony Eskelin personal communication.

[c] Eastside set net and drift gillnet personal use data using genetic stock allocation from Fleischman and McKinley 2013, Tony Eskelin personal communication.

[d] Total includes fish harvested from Cohoe, Salamatof, and Kalifornsky Beaches, and the Kenai River.

[e] 1986–1994 from SWHS. 1995 (Ruesch and Fox 1996); 1996–2012 are estimates from returned permits.

[f] Some harvest is below sonar and not counted against escapement.

[g] Sport harvest includes Creel survey estimates for the area from Cook Inlet to the Soldotna Bridge and estimates from the SWHS for Soldotna Bridge to outlet of Skilak Lake.

[h] Inriver sonar estimate estimated using a run reconstruction model from Fleischman and McKinley 2013, FMS 13-02 for 1986-2012 at river mile 8.6 sonar site.
2013 sonar estimate estimated based on recommendations based on Fleischman and McKinley 2013, FMS No. 13-02.

[i] Harvest estimate does not include Kasilof River terminal fishery which occurred 2005–2008

[j] 2013 estimates are preliminary until biometrically reviewed and published.

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-continued-

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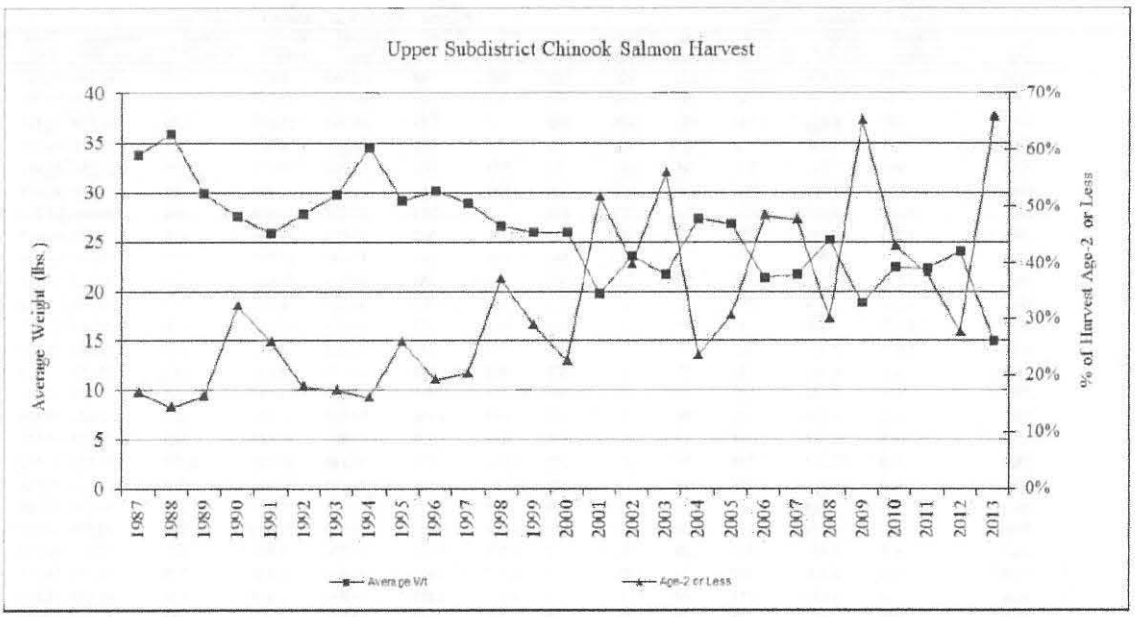

Figure 10.–Chinook salmon average weight (all fish) and percentage of the harvest comprised of ocean-age-2 or less fish in the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet commercial fishery, 1987–2013.

[3] Shields, P. "Upper Cook Inlet Commercial Fisheries Annual Management Report," 2013. Fishery Management Report 13-49, pg 66 (weights)

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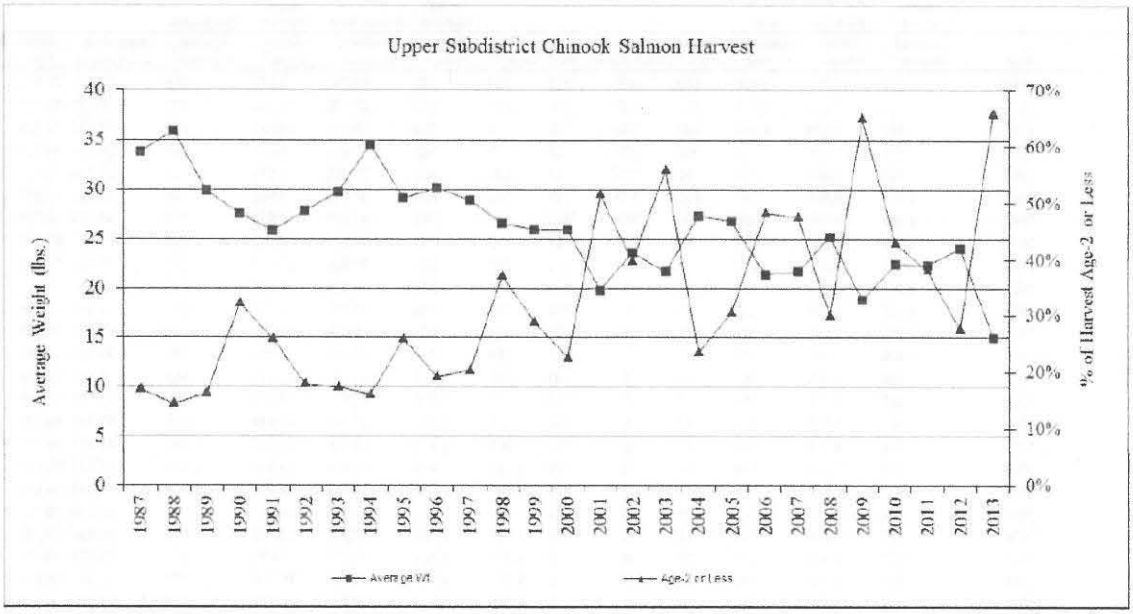

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1989	821	7,498	0	ND	ND	22	0	ND	36,370	9,691	88	26,591	44,711	0.405
1990	963	2,843	373	91	ND	13	ND	ND	34,200	6,897	69	27,234	38,483	0.292
1991	1,023	3,361	145	130	ND	288	ND	ND	38,940	7,903	16	31,021	43,887	0.293
1992	1,269	7,363	326	50	ND	402	0	ND	42,290	7,556	234	34,500	51,700	0.333
1993	1,700	9,672	451	81	ND	27	0	ND	50,210	17,775	478	31,957	62,142	0.486
1994	1,121	10,700	276	9	1	392	ND	ND	47,440	17,837	572	29,031	59,939	0.516
1995	1,241	8,291	314	25	3	ND	712	ND	44,770	12,609	472	31,689	55,355	0.428
1996	1,223	7,944	219	31	1	ND	295	ND	42,790	8,112	337	34,341	52,503	0.346
1997	1,759	7,780	293	30	20	ND	364	ND	41,120	12,755	570	27,795	51,367	0.459
1998	1,070	3,495	199	35	2	ND	254	ND	47,110	7,515	595	39,000	52,165	0.252
1999	602	6,501	345	59	4	ND	488	1,170	43,670	12,425	682	30,563	52,839	0.422
2000	631	2,531	162	27	6	ND	410	831	47,440	14,391	499	32,550	52,038	0.374
2001	552	4,128	371	80	8	ND	638	1,336	53,610	15,144	825	37,641	60,724	0.380
2002	256	6,511	249	15	6	ND	606	1,929	56,800	10,678	665	45,457	66,372	0.315
2003	120	10,174	744	53	11	ND	1,016	823	85,110	16,120	1,803	67,187	98,052	0.315
2004	996	14,897	916	218	10	ND	792	2,386	79,690	14,988	1,019	63,683	99,905	0.363
2005	624	15,183	1,103	639	11	ND	997	2,287	77,440	15,927	1,267	60,246	98,284	0.387
2006	563	6,840	631	61	11	ND	1,034	3,322	62,270	12,490	830	48,950	74,732	0.345
2007	478	8,445	547	38	6	0	1,509	1,750	47,370	9,690	670	37,010	60,143	0.385
2008	310	5,203	392	23	15	0	1,362	1,011	42,840	10,128	370	32,342	51,156	0.368
2009	154	3,839	515	64	4	0	1,189	1,132	29,940	7,904	626	21,410	36,837	0.419
2010	335	4,567	323	32	21	0	865	445	23,250	6,762	264	16,224	29,839	0.456
2011	528	5,596	356	88	5	0	1,243	458	27,090	6,894	479	19,717	35,363	0.442
2012	30	484	115	41	0	0	40	2	27,910	101	95	27,714	28,622	0.032
2013[j]	not avail.	2,256	267	117	8	0	11	37	17,015	1,541	79	15,395	19,711	0.219
Avg. (1986-2002)	955	7,389	523	51	6	191	308	1,317	47,930	11,997	395	35,538	57,451	0.379
Avg. (2003-2013)	414	7,044	537	125	9	0	914	1,241	47,266	9,322	682	37,262	57,513	0.339
Avg. (1986-2013)	754	7,253	528	85	8	88	586	1,261	47,669	10,946	508	36,215	57,475	0.363

-continued-

[5] Begich, R. "2010-2012 Annual Management Report and Recreational Fisheries Overview...," 2014. Fishery Management Report No. 13-51, pg 100 (run strengths)

LATE RUN KINGS	1987	2013
In-river run strength	63,550	17,015
Average size	34 36 lb	15 lbs
Escapement	50,327	15,395[6]
Jacks: (3 & 4 yr-olds)	9%	66%
Males % of run	49%	88% *

* Setnet index

Table 8.–Late-run Kenai River Chinook salmon population data, 1986–2013.

Year	Deep Creek Marine Harvest[a]	Eastside Setnet Harvest[b]	Drift Gillnet Harvest[b]	Comm & PU[c]	Kenaitze Educational	Sub[d]	PU Dipnet[e]	Sport Harvest Below Sonar[e,g]	Inriver Run Estimated by Sonar[h]	Sport Harvest Above Sonar[e,g]	Catch-and-Release Mortality[f]	Spawning Escapement	Total Run	Harvest Rate
1986	378	13,619	1,100	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	62,740	9,872	316	52,552	77,837	0.325
1987	731	14,536	2,731	ND	ND	ND	235	ND	63,550	13,100	123	50,327	81,783	0.385
1988	892	8,834	1,330	ND	ND	ND	0	ND	61,760	19,695	176	41,889	72,816	0.425
1989	821	7,498	0	ND	ND	22	0	ND	36,370	9,691	88	26,591	44,711	0.405
1990	963	2,843	373	91	ND	13	ND	ND	34,200	6,897	69	27,234	38,483	0.292
1991	1,023	3,361	145	130	ND	288	ND	ND	38,940	7,903	16	31,021	43,887	0.293
1992	1,269	7,363	326	50	ND	402	0	ND	42,290	7,556	234	34,500	51,700	0.333
1993	1,700	9,672	451	81	ND	27	0	ND	50,210	17,775	478	31,957	62,142	0.486
1994	1,121	10,700	276	9	1	392	ND	ND	47,440	17,837	572	29,031	59,939	0.516
1995	1,241	8,291	314	25	3	ND	712	ND	44,770	12,609	472	31,689	55,355	0.428
1996	1,223	7,944	219	31	1	ND	295	ND	42,790	8,112	337	34,341	52,503	0.346
1997	1,759	7,780	293	30	20	ND	364	ND	41,120	12,755	570	27,795	51,367	0.459
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2009	154	3,839	515	64	4	0	1,189	1,132	29,940	7,904	626	21,410	36,837	0.419
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Avg. (1986-2013)	754	7,253	528	85	8	88	586	1,261	47,669	10,946	508	36,215	57,475	0.363

-continued-

[6] Begich, R. "2010-2012 Annual Management Report and Recreational Fisheries Overview...," 2014. Fishery Management Report No. 13-51, pg 100 (run strengths)

LATE RUN KINGS	1987	2013
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Escapement	50,327	15,395
Jacks: (3 & 4 yr-olds)	9%[7]	66%
Males % of run	49%	88% *

* Setnet index

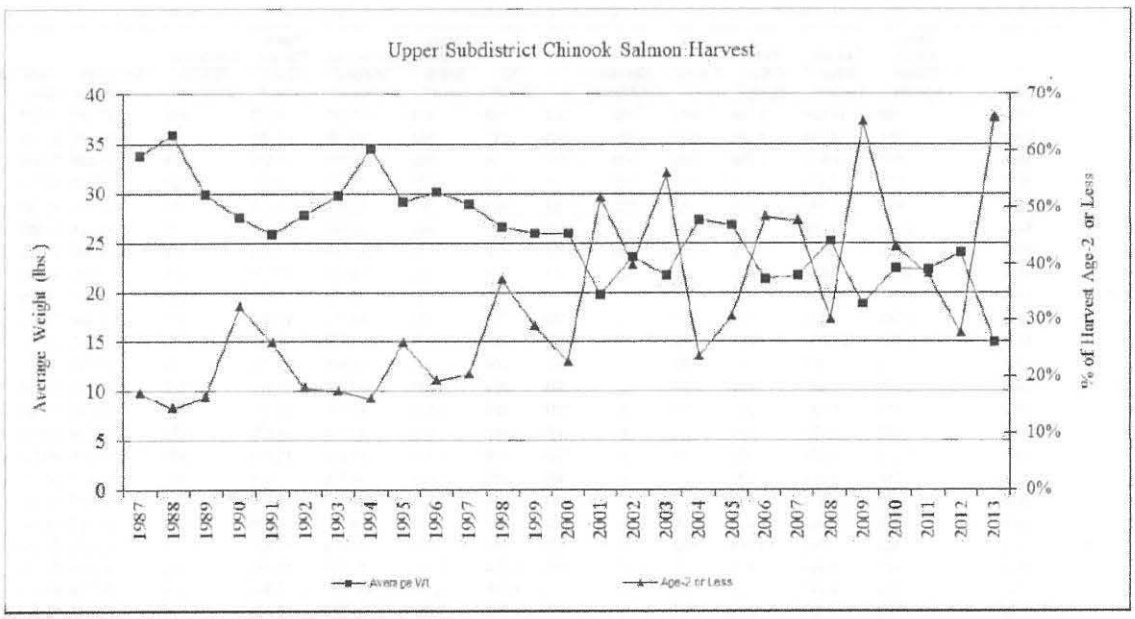

Figure 10.–Chinook salmon average weight (all fish) and percentage of the harvest comprised of ocean-age-2 or less fish in the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet commercial fishery, 1987–2013.

[7] Shields, P. "Upper Cook Inlet Commercial Fisheries Annual Management Report," 2013. Fishery Management Report 13-49, pg 66 (weights, jacks)

LATE RUN KINGS	1987	2013
In-river run strength	63,550	17,015
Average size	34 36 lb	15 lbs
Escapement	50,327	15,395
Jacks: (3 & 4 yr-olds)	9%	66%[8]
Males % of run	49%	88% *

* Setnet index

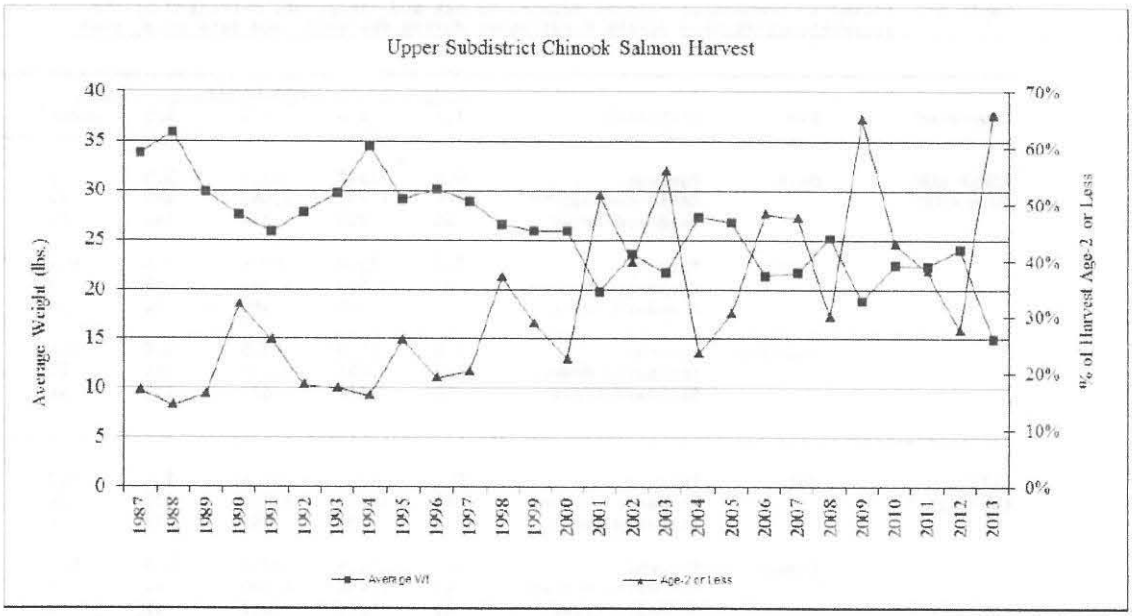

Figure 10.–Chinook salmon average weight (all fish) and percentage of the harvest comprised of ocean-age-2 or less fish in the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet commercial fishery, 1987–2013.

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[8] Shields, P. "Upper Cook Inlet Commercial Fisheries Annual Management Report," 2013. Fishery Management Report 13-49, pg 66 (weights)

LATE RUN KINGS	1987	2013
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Males % of run	49%[9]	88% *

* Setnet index

Table 11. Estimated numbers of chinook salmon, by sex and age group, harvested by the recreational fishery in the Kenai River during the early and late runs, 1987.

Component	Sex	Statistic	Age Group 1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	Other[1]	Total
EARLY RUN (n = 493)[2]	Male	Percent	0.8	13.2	22.9	3.5	0.2	40.6
		Estimated Number	106	1,753	3,041	465	27	5,392
		Standard Error	54	233	321	114	27	
	Female	Percent	0.2	15.8	40.6	2.4	0.4	59.4
		Estimated Number	27	2,098	5,392	319	53	7,889
		Standard Error	27	258	460	94	38	
	Combined	Percent	1.0	29.0	63.5	5.9	0.6	100.0
		Estimated Number	133	3,851	8,433	784	80	13,281[3]
		Standard Error	60	371	623	150	46	
LATE RUN (n = 429)[2]	Male	Percent	0.5	11.2	35.4	1.4	0.2	48.7
		Estimated Number	61	1,371	4,332	171	24	5,959
		Standard Error	42	205	392	70	26	
	Female	Percent	0.5	11.9	38.4	0.5	0.0	51.3
		Estimated Number	61	1,456	4,700	61	0	6,278
		Standard Error	42	212	412	42	0	
	Combined	Percent	1.0	23.1	73.8	1.9	0.2	100.0
		Estimated Number	122	2,827	9,032	232	24	12,237[3]
		Standard Error	59	306	624	82	26	

[1] Age groups 1.1 and 2.4 combined.
[2] n = sample size.
[3] From Hammarstrom (1988).

[9] Conrad, R.H., "Abundance Estimate of the Escapement of Chinook Salmon into the Kenai River, Alaska, by Analysis of Tagging Data, 1987." Fishery Data Series No. 67, pg. 33 (Male %)

LATE RUN KINGS	1987	2013
In-river run strength	63,550	17,015
Average size	~~34~~ 36 lbs*	15 lbs*
Escapement	50,327	15,395
Jacks: (3 & 4 yr-olds)	9%	66%*
Males % of run	49%	88%* [10]

* Setnet index

The composition by age was 22.7% age-1.1, 43.4% age-1.2, 15.2% age-1.3, and 18.6% age-1.4 fish. Sex composition was 12.5% females and 87.5% males. The mean length of all samples was 658 mm (Table 14). Standard errors for ASL composition are listed in Table 14.

[10] Eskelin, T., "Mixed Stock Analysis and Age, Sex, and Length Composition of Chinook Salmon in the Eastside Set Gillnet Fishery in Upper Cook Inlet, Alaska, 2010-2013," 2013. Fishery Data Series No. 13-63 pg. 33 (Male %)

Late-run Kings arrive to the Kenai River after June 30.[11]

pg 7: Fishing starts in mid-May
Chinook salmon return to Kenai River in two distinct runs, early and late. The early run usually has "fishable" numbers by mid-May and it peaks in mid-June. The majority of the stocks have passed through the fishery by late June. Late-run fish are present in July and early August.

pg 11:
The early-run Kenai River Chinook salmon fishery ends by regulation on June 30.

[11] Begich, R. "2010-2012 Annual Management Report and Recreational Fisheries Overview...," 2014. Fishery Management Report No. 13-51, pg 7, 11 (Late run definition)

There were 471,274 angler days fished in the Kenai and Russian Rivers in 2013. 137,963 of those angler days were below the Soldotna Bridge. [12]

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Alaska Sport Fishing Survey

Survey Area PF Estimates

Study Year: 2013

(PF) Kenai Peninsula freshwater sport fish harvest and effort estimates by fisheries and species, 2013.

Area Fished	Responses Used	Anglers	Days Fished	KS	SS	LS	RS	PS	CS	LT	DV	SH	RT	GR	WE	NP	BB	BM	Other
FRESHWATER																			
Anchor River	87	2,714	11,173	67	912	0	0	66	0	0	2,175	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Deep Creek	43	1,161	2,003	120	359	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ninilchik River	22	632	1,232	103	220	0	43	0	0	0	104	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kasilof River - nonguided bank fishing	225	7,441	14,151	272	1,836	0	6,930	32	0	0	353	40	29	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kasilof River - nonguided boat fishing	60	2,170	3,610	409	508	0	1,347	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	193
Kasilof River - guided bank fishing	44	1,295	1,650	44	0	0	1,606	16	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kasilof River - guided boat fishing	230	7,070	8,019	1,110	1,693	0	2,298	35	0	0	51	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	42
Kenai River - Cook Inlet to Soldotna Bridge - nonguided	975	35,838	118,894	661	17,483	0	119,628	1,060	139	0	966	0	404	0	0	23	0	10,345	382
Kenai River - Soldotna Bridge to Moose River - nonguided	965	34,415	130,181	0	11,061	0	182,323	1,508	0	0	1,355	0	418	0	7	0	0	12,189	18
Kenai River - Moose River to Skilak Outlet nonguided	408	15,295	56,063	0	3,542	0	57,609	265	0	0	359	0	540	0	0	0	0	2,648	0
Kenai River - Skilak Inlet to Kenai Lake - nonguided	480	11,194	51,818	0	1,765	0	32,130	96	8	0	310	0	344	0	0	0	0	0	64
Kenai River - reach not specified - nonguided	54	968	2,267	0	169	0	4,302	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kenai River - Cook Inlet to Soldotna Bridge - guided	394	12,572	19,069	744	6,348	0	10,795	109	0	0	109	0	60	0	0	0	0	0	43
Kenai River - Soldotna Bridge to Moose River - guided	264	9,464	14,720	0	3,949	0	17,526	16	0	0	202	0	43	0	0	0	0	0	18
Kenai River - Moose River to Skilak Outlet guided	184	5,767	7,885	0	3,359	0	5,483	32	0	0	54	0	60	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kenai River - Skilak Inlet to Kenai Lake - guided	243	7,686	10,396	0	1,213	0	3,935	26	0	0	182	0	102	0	14	0	0	0	0
Kenai River - reach not specified - guided	7	230	300	0	125	0	237	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Quartz Creek	58	2,068	3,262	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	177	0	51	0	0	0	0	0	0
Resurrection Creek drainage	42	1,513	2,157	0	63	0	14	972	89	0	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Russian River	727	24,250	59,682	0	1,262	0	47,308	48	0	0	196	0	275	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swanson River	25	849	1,916	0	615	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	116	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other streams	40	1,170	3,223	0	775	0	34	157	146	43	347	0	233	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crescent Lake	22	716	1,213	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	505	653	0	0	0	0	0
Hidden Lake	20	668	1,746	0	113	0	86	0	0	197	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	0
Johnson Lake	19	1,101	2,223	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	532	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kenai Lake	25	876	2,964	0	0	0	0	0	0	639	16	0	231	0	0	0	0	0	0
Skilak Lake	19	701	2,060	0	197	0	735	32	0	343	35	0	345	0	0	0	0	0	0
Summit Lake	20	1,101	2,706	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	166	0	723	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kenai Peninsula stocked lakes	48	2,029	5,233	0	0	591	0	0	0	0	64	0	2,096	173	0	0	0	0	0
Other lakes	87	2,884	5,307	0	77	0	321	0	0	236	113	0	1,366	351	0	428	0	0	0
Freshwater Total	5,821	140,690	547,120	3,570	60,784	591	497,786	4,498	383	1,458	7,549	47	8,570	1,177	21	451	0	26,175	730

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[12] ADF&G website, "Kenai Peninsula freshwater sport fish harvest and effort estimates by fisheries and species, 2013." http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/sportfishingsurvey/index.cfm?ADFG=area.results

The Kenai River downstream of the Soldotna Bridge (River Mile 21) is the most heavily fished part of the Kenai River by an order of magnitude.[13]

Reimer ROP.SF.2A.2013.14, pg 9,

Soldotna Bridge. The Kenai River fishery is characterized by a large number of guided anglers and a large number of non-resident anglers (both guided and non-guided). Many of these anglers are passive participants in the decision of when and where to fish. Chinook salmon angling effort downstream of the Soldotna Bridge exceeds Chinook salmon angling effort upstream of the Soldotna Bridge by up to an order of magnitude (Table 3).

Table 3.–Ratio of Kenai River Chinook salmon upstream of the Soldotna Bridge to total harvest, Statewide Harvest Survey and Guide Logbook program.

		Cook Inlet to Soldotna Bridge		Soldotna Bridge to Skilak Lake		Total		upstream
Year	Run	est.	SE	est.	SE	est.	SE	/ total
SWHS (guided harvest only)								
2006	Early	2,365	262	893	161	3,258	307	0.27
2007	Early	1,701	192	505	152	2,206	245	0.23
2008	Early	1,574	171	452	100	2,026	198	0.22
2009	Early	491	110	262	66	753	128	0.35
2010	Early	425	84	356	76	781	113	0.46
2011	Early	928	144	368	94	1,296	172	0.28
2006	Late	4,706	366	1,295	165	6,001	401	0.22
2007	Late	5,029	416	1,091	160	6,120	446	0.18
2008	Late	4,449	331	772	111	5,221	349	0.15
2009	Late	2,914	254	784	142	3,698	291	0.21
2010	Late	2,993	287	837	141	3,830	320	0.22
2011	Late	3,758	360	514	122	4,272	380	0.12
Guide Logbook data								
2006	Early	2,053		383		2,436		0.16
2007	Early	1,504		360		1,864		0.19
2008	Early	1,645		231		1,876		0.12
2009	Early	500		61		561		0.11
2010	Early	503		228		731		0.31
2011	Early	503		25		528		0.05
2006	Late	5,978		168		6,146		0.03
2007	Late	5,001		239		5,240		0.05
2008	Late	4,693		310		5,003		0.06
2009	Late	3,108		285		3,393		0.08
2010	Late	2,177		566		2,743		0.21
2011	Late	3,076		16		3,092		0.01

pg 8:

During 2011, low water precluded boat access to the Kenai River upstream of the Soldotna Bridge until mid-June. Harvest sampling staff were amongst the first to access the area, by jet boat, and were sampling before propellor-driven fishing boats had accessed the area. Staff sampled only 4 fish over 11 days prior to the trophy fishing restriction that began on June 29 and continued through the end of the season. Trophy fishing (catch and release for fish between 20 inches and 55 inches total length) virtually eliminated angling harvest and effort upstream of the Soldotna Bridge because harvest opportunity remained available downstream and anglers focused their effort in that area. Boats that remained had little opportunity for legal harvest because there are very few Chinook salmon less than 20, or greater than 55, inches total length in the Kenai River drainage.[6]

Given these observations, it is probable that very few Chinook salmon were harvested upstream of the Soldotna Bridge in 2011, especially during the late run. However, SWHS estimates for 2011 were 521 (se=111) for the early run and 894 (se=161) for the late run, which is far more harvest than is feasible under the circumstances described above. SWHS staff were unable to discern anything unusual in the individual responses they received. We hypothesize that some lower river anglers misreport their geographic location causing a positive bias in the Chinook salmon harvest estimate upstream of the Soldotna Bridge. We suspect that this bias may extend to years other than just 2011.

[13] Reimer, A., "Kenai River Chinook Salmon Abundance and Migratory Timing," 2013. Regional Operational Plan SF.2A.2013.14 pg 9 (order of magnitude)

More late-run Kings spawn below the Soldotna Bridge than in any other section.[14]

Reimer, RIR.2A.2013.06 pg 55:

just below Slikok Creek (RM 18.5). Because the Kenai River downstream of the Soldotna Bridge (RM 21) is the most heavily utilized mainstem spawning area in both historic and recent data (Table 2 and Tables 11–12), closures upstream of Slikok Creek have little conservation value for the largest spawning aggregate, and will fail to conserve mainstem spawning Chinook salmon in proportion to abundance. This situation is illustrated for 2012 and 2013 in Figure 20. During both seasons, conservation measures enacted downstream of Slikok Creek would more effectively conserve mainstem spawning Chinook salmon that spawn in all sections of the Kenai River drainage. Conservation measures enacted downstream of Slikok Creek are also applicable to more Chinook salmon because most use of the area upstream of Slikok Creek by fish we monitored did not occur until after the fishery closed (July 31) in both years (Figure 20).

[14] Reimer, A., "Migratory Timing and Distribution of Kenai River Chinook Salmon, 2010-2013, a Report to the Alaska Board of Fisheries 2014," 2013. Regional Information Report No. 2A13-06 pg 55 (proportion to abundance)

EARLY RUN KINGS	1987	2013
In-river run strength	25,643[15]	2,038
Escapement	12,362	2,033*

In-river run strength (25,643) = Kings Retained (13,281) + Estimated Escapement (12,362)

Table 1. Estimated escapements and numbers of chinook salmon that were caught, released, and retained in the Kenai River recreational fishery during 1986 through 1990.

Year	Run Component	Numbers of Chinook Salmon Caught	Retained	Released	Percent Released	Estimated Escapement[a]
1986	Early	12,117	7,561	4,556	38	19,519
	Late	15,331	9,004	6,327	41	48,559
	Both	27,448	16,565	10,883	40	68,078
1987	Early	19,119	13,281	5,838	31	12,362
	Late	16,701	12,237	4,464	27	52,787
	Both	35,820	25,518	10,302	29	65,149
1988	Early	18,693	12,747	5,946	32	8,133
	Late	23,238	17,512	5,726	25	34,496
	Both	41,931	30,259	11,672	28	42,629
1989	Early	9,901	7,256	2,645	27	10,736
	Late	12,210	9,127	3,083	25	19,908
	Both	22,111	16,383	5,728	26	30,644
1990	Early[b]	4,973	1,735	3,238	65	8,656
	Late[b]	8,637	6,247	2,390	28	25,770
	Both	13,610	7,982	5,628	41	34,426
All	Early	64,803	42,580	22,223	34	59,406
	Late	76,117	54,127	21,990	29	181,520
	Both	140,920	96,707	44,213	31	240,926

[a] Inriver return minus the sport harvest.

[b] Release of catch mandatory for all or part of run.

[15] Bendock, T., "Hook-and-Release Mortality in the Kenai River Chinook Salmon Recreational Fishery," 1991. FDS 91-39 pg 4 (1987 early-run strength, escapement);

EARLY RUN KINGS	1987	2013
In-river run strength	25,643	2,038[16]
Escapement	12,362	2,033

Table 7.–Early-run Kenai River Chinook salmon population data, 1986–2013.

Year	Cook Inlet Marine Harvest	Misc. Marine	Kenaitze Educational[a]	Inriver Run[b]	Sport Harvest Above Sonar[c]	Catch-and-Release Mortality	Spawning Escapement	Total Run	Harvest Rate
1989	193	0	73	12,290	8,394	149	3,747	12,556	0.702
1990	235	0	40	9,842	1,807	378	7,657	10,117	0.243
1991	241	0	2	10,620	1,945	152	8,523	10,863	0.215
1992	300	0	73	11,930	2,241	236	9,453	12,303	0.232
1993	407	0	118	12,490	9,342	286	2,862	13,015	0.780
1994	343	0	56	13,160	8,171	285	4,704	13,559	0.653
1995	412	0	37	12,890	10,217	357	2,316	13,339	0.826
1996	235	0	104	9,764	6,623	287	2,854	10,103	0.718
1997	282	0	122	11,140	6,429	349	4,362	11,544	0.622
1998	289	0	131	11,930	1,170	254	10,506	12,350	0.149
1999	245	0	114	13,480	8,129	261	5,090	13,839	0.632
2000	239	0	124	10,790	1,818	185	8,787	11,153	0.212
2001	184	0	198	14,020	2,399	205	11,416	14,402	0.207
2002	168	0	48	10,860	899	78	9,883	11,076	0.108
2003	202	0	126	20,450	2,839	389	17,222	20,778	0.171
2004	194	0	72	23,460	3,386	257	19,817	23,726	0.165
2005	187	341	76	20,810	3,810	253	16,747	21,414	0.218
2006	252	0	65	18,180	4,693	205	13,282	18,497	0.282
2007	201	41	16	13,630	3,493	220	9,917	13,888	0.286
2008	107	102	40	10,210	3,500	123	6,587	10,459	0.370
2009	71	16	49	7,741	1,466	97	6,178	7,877	0.216
2010	88	48	32	7,830	1,337	90	6,403	7,998	0.199
2011	110	0	42	9,895	1,337	92	8,466	10,047	0.157
2012	89	0	19	5,387	316	10	5,061	5,495	0.079
2013[d]	not avail.	0	11	2,038	0	5	2,033	2,049	0.008
Avg. (1986-2002)	254	0	89	13,344	6,265	256	6,824	13,671	0.479
Avg. (2003-2013)	150	50	50	12,694	2,380	158	10,156	12,930	0.196
Avg. (1986-2013)	215	20	72	13,089	4,739	218	8,133	13,380	0.368

Source: Statewide Harvest Surveys from Mills 1987-1994, Howe et al. 1995, 1996, 2001a-d, Walker et al. 2003, Jennings et al. 2004, 2006a-b, 2007, 2009a-b, 2010a-b, 2011, In Prep, Romberg et al. In prep; Alexandersdottir and Marsh 1990; Nelson et al. 1999; Hammarstrom and Timmons 2001a, Reimer et al. 2002, Reimer, A. 2003, 2004a-b, 2007; Eskelin, A. 2007, 2009, 2010, Perschbacher 2012a-d, J. Perschbacher, Sport Fish Biologist, ADF&G, Soldotna, personal communication; McKinley and Fleischman 2013; 1994-2012 Educational data supplied by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe; Tim McKinley personal communication.

Note: ND = no data available.

[a] Prior to 1994, there was no educational fishery, this was considered a subsistence fishery.

[b] Inriver sonar estimate from 1986 to 2012 estimated using a run reconstruction model from McKinley and Fleischman 2013, FMS 13-03.

[c] Includes creel survey estimates for the area from Cook Inlet to the Soldotna Bridge and estimates from the SWHS from the Soldotna Bridge to the outlet of Kenai Lake.

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[16] Begich, R., "2010-2012 Annual Management Report and 2013 Recreational Fisheries Overview for Northern Kenai Peninsula: Fisheries under Consideration by the Alaska Board of Fisheries, 2014." pg 99 (2013 early-run strength, escapement)

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[18] Begich, R., "2010-2012 Annual Management Report and 2013 Recreational Fisheries Overview for Northern Kenai Peninsula: Fisheries under Consideration by the Alaska Board of Fisheries, 2014." pg 99 (2013 early-run strength, escapement)

*Did not make the minimum escapement goal of 5,300.[19]
pg 10:

Inseason Management Approach

The primary objective of inseason management is to achieve a spawning escapement within the OEG range of 5,300 to 9,000 early-run Chinook salmon. Achievement of this escapement

[19] Begich, R., "2010-2012 Annual Management Report and 2013 Recreational Fisheries Overview for Northern Kenai Peninsula: Fisheries under Consideration by the Alaska Board of Fisheries, 2014." pg 10 (minimum escapement);

ADF&G early-run Kenai Kings are counted from May 15 to June 30.[20]

Eskelin, pg 8:

> ESSN commercial harvests are reported for 7 statistical areas: Nimilchik Beach (244-22), Cohoe Beach (244-22), South K-Beach (244-31), North K-Beach (244-32), Salamatof Beach (244-41), East Forelands (244-42), and Kasilof River special harvest area (KRSHA) (244-25) (Figure 2). The Kasilof Section is composed of Nimilchik Beach, Cohoe Beach, and South K-Beach. The Kenai Section is composed of North K-Beach and Salamatof Beach. The East Forelands statistical area is its own section, but was grouped with the Kenai Section in this study. KRSHA is not commonly opened for fishing but has been opened at times to concentrate harvest of Kasilof River sockeye salmon while minimizing harvest of other stocks. The Kasilof Section opens the first Monday or Thursday on or after 25 June but can open as early as 20 June if ADF&G estimates that 50,000 sockeye salmon are in the Kasilof River before 25 June (Alaska Administrative Code 5 AAC 21.310 b. 2.C.[i]). The Kenai and East Forelands sections do not open until the first Monday or Thursday on or after 8 July.

[20] Eskelin, T., "Mixed Stock Analysis and Age, Sex, and Length Composition of Chinook Salmon in the Eastside Set Gillnet Fishery in Upper Cook Inlet, Alaska, 2010-2013," 2013. Fishery Data Series No. 13.63 pg 8 (Kasilof opening)