

Submitted by Joseph Person

Kenai River Late-Run Chinook Goal

- It is my position that a reduction to no bait in the inriver chinook fishery is not a comparable or defensible “pairing” with a significant reduction in ESSN opportunity. That said if such a pairing is maintained the following points must be considered.
 - A hard “pairing” to no bait without a corresponding trigger point gives the sport fish management the ability to hold the entire ESSN fishery hostage.
 - A decision to go to no bait by sport fish managers early in the season as a “safety” measure will put the ESSN fishery under onerous restrictions with no actual conservation concern.
- Consequently it is of utmost important that the Board understand that unless they want to implement a plan that would have utterly ruined the ESSN fishery in **every single one of the last five years** the following will have to be considered when looking at a “no bait pairing”.
 - Option A: (preferred) ESSN fishery not “paired” with no bait in the river, instead “paired” with catch and release. NO TRIGGER POINT. Give both departments the opportunity to manage to escapement goals.
 - Option B: ESSN fishery “paired” with no bait in the river. A new trigger point in large fish currency of 15,000(my preference) – 18,000(KRSA preference) fish projected past the counter. (A SINGLE point somewhere in this range.) This has the potential to be more restrictive than current plan if one looks at large fish sonar counts in last 4 years.
- To summarize, we need either both or neither of the “pairing” and “trigger point”.

It must be emphasized that a transition to a 13,500-27,000 large fish goal represents a significantly harder goal to achieve than the old 15,000-30,000 goal and as a consequence has a much higher “buffer” built in to it. This means that there is significantly less concerns around a potential escapement around the low range of a goal. By any measure an extremely punishing chinook plan on the ESSN fishery is significantly less justifiable under the proposed new “large fish system” than it was at the 2014 meeting.

- The more restrictive the conditions for going into the plan, the more liberal the restrictions in the plan must be in order for the department to have the ability to manage for all goals and prosecute a fishery.
- It is absolutely imperative that when in “paired” restrictions we maintain regular openings in addition to a reduced amount of EO hours.