

Proposal 90 - Susitna SOC Repeal Submitted by UCIDA

- The original designation of the Susitna sockeye stock of concern in 2008 was based on faulty data. The 2006-2008 ADF&G escapement goal study revealed that the escapement counting methodology was grossly underestimating sockeye escapement into the Susitna River. From 1981 through 2008, escapement goals were being exceeded by an average of more than 100 percent, some years the goals were exceeded by 300-400 percent or more.
- The original designation of the Susitna sockeye stock of concern in 2008 was not supported by the Department (see RC 89).
- All of the latest research data has shown that the majority of all species run right up the middle of the Inlet. There are no spatial or temporal distinctions between any of the stocks.
- Drift fleet harvest rates on Susitna coho range between 16-28%. The overall commercial harvest rate on Susitna sockeye is 35-38%. These harvest rates are far below the optimal harvest rate for Maximum Sustainable Yield management.
- The main reason harvest rates are so low is the 20 mile wide by 50 mile long sanctuary north of the drift fishing area. This is a 1000 square miles between the main commercial fishing area and the Susitna River where only very limited set net harvest occurs.
- Prescriptive time and area restrictions prevent ADF&G from managing the drift fishery based upon abundance.
- Utilizing restricted areas is very inefficient. Drift catches of all stocks are drastically lower per unit of effort. It can take a week of restricted openings to equal one regular opening.
- Two regular openings per week equal 24 hours, which amount to only 14% of the total hours in a week.
- Northern Cook Inlet coho sport catches frequently exceed drift coho harvests (see RC 12).

