

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES
PUBLIC TESTIMONY
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INTRODUCTION:

I have been a professional fishing guide on the Kenai River since 1978. In examining many of the numerous fishing proposals it would appear that the commercial gillnet fishermen want more access to more salmon; most of the sport fishing proposals are concerned with conservation measures for fishery stocks. You have a very difficult job attempting to please all the fishery user groups.

I have seen the "glory years" (the late 1970's into the 1980's); I experienced the systematic destruction of a world famous king and silver salmon fishery on the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers. I would like to see a return to healthy salmon runs for all the salmon species that inhabit the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers. Historically, humans have been very consistent in destroying wild salmon stocks because of their greed.

BODY:

PROPOSALS 85, 86 AND 87 I OPPOSE:

Central District drift gillnet fishermen want more access to "surplus" salmon stocks. But what is the surplus or over-escapement salmon numbers? ADF&G has informed me that they do not know what the maximum carrying capacity is for any salmon specie found in the Kenai or Kasilof Rivers. ADF&G has been managing for minimum escapement for decades, and their use of EO's for sockeyes has prevented adequate escapement for both king and silver salmon.

PROPOSALS 189, 191, AND 192 I SUPPORT:

These common sense measures should help promote a more healthy sport fishery.

PROPOSAL 141 I SUPPORT:

The Kintama Cook Inlet Chinook and Sockeye Salmon Migration Patterns Study of 2012 & 2013 concluded that king salmon travel much deeper into the water column than sockeye salmon. This shallower net proposal should minimize incidental king salmon catches, and yet allow the harvest of sockeye salmon.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

I believe there is a lack of healthy king and silver salmon stocks in the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers because of poor fisheries management. Continuous gillnet fishing periods due to "surplus" sockeye stocks have prevented adequate escapement numbers for king and silver stocks. I believe ADF&G should be relieved of managing this complicated fishery by bringing in a private fisheries management company. A private company could be made better accountable to Alaskans by terminating them if they do not restore our salmon to healthy levels.

Proposal No. 148 documents how ADF&G miscounted salmon on their sonar from 1986 to 2011. I can concur with the bogus king salmon escapement numbers that were maintained by ADF&G for decades. {Their sonar was counting overlapping sockeye air bladders as a king salmon's air bladder.} As a result of over estimating king salmon escapement, they allowed too many EO's, which severely harmed king and silver salmon escapement into the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers.

Kintama Research Services was brought in from British Columbia in 2012 and 2013 for the Cook Inlet Chinook and Sockeye Salmon Migration Patterns Study (costing over \$650,000 dollars). My interview with the study manager, David Welch, revealed that ADF&G required him to spend excessive funds for the study (about \$200,000 dollars extra). ADF&G didn't want to monitor the salmon that swam through the Eastside set net fishery! Did all that money translate into any data that would improve our salmon fishery? The study confirmed what we already knew: king salmon travel deeper in the water column than sockeye salmon. Will this expensive data lead to meaningful changes in the management of this fishery? We need the courage and resolve to fix our fisheries management failures.