

Robert Heyano

Miscellaneous Business Item #

RC 81

Recommend that the BOF consider generating a Board Generated Proposal (BGP) at the BB meeting to be heard during the Statewide meeting in Anchorage, March 19-24, 2019.

Situation: During the prosecution of the 2018 Nushagak Salmon season it became clear to ADFG that the Nushagak River Coho Salmon Management Plan contained a management trigger that did not align with the BOF original intent. Since the proposal deadline had passed an ACR was submitted on time to the BOF, however since the topic was a BB issue and the regular scheduled meeting was in cycle the ACR was denied. This still left the issue unresolved since there is not a proposal addressing the issue.

Issue: In 2015 ADFG recommended a change to the Coho escapement goal from a point goal to a SEG range (60,000-120,000). The upper limit on the new range was used as the in-season trigger to either close or allow for opportunity in the Coho fishery (5AAC 06.368 (c)). This change is more restrictive than using the old point goal of 100,000, and, technically, permits fishing only if the range is expected to be exceeded. The management goal should be to fall within an escapement goal range and not beyond it, otherwise the range is meaningless. As a result, the change in 2015 precludes fishing opportunity in a year of normal and fishable abundance. While adjusting the regulation, it would be worthwhile examine and possibly adjust the August 1 trigger. Currently, ADFG is to project the total Coho run on August 1, which historically is the first quartile point (25%) in a year of average run timing. In recent years the run timing has been skewed later which means ADFG is being asked to project the total run with less than 25% of the run accounted for by August 1. If the annual escapement is projected to be less than 120,000 (i.e., by August 25) the commercial fishery must close, and the in-river sport and subsistence fisheries would likely be restricted. The August 1 trigger is unnecessarily constraining given a sometimes-low portion of the return to the district by that date, and the time remaining to meet an escapement goal should more escapement be needed.

Solution: Amend 06.368, Nushagak River Coho Salmon Management Plan, to allow for additional opportunity when the department determines in-season that the sustainable *escapement goal* range of 60,000-120,000 will be met.