

PROPOSAL 112

5 AAC 07.365. Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan.

Allow subsistence fishing with dipnet gear during times of king or coho salmon conservation, as follows:

Dipnetting will be an allowable year round fishery method on the Kuskokwim River, even in times of an Emergency Order.

5 AAC 07.365(c)(2)

...

(A) the commissioner shall close, by emergency order, the commercial, sport, and subsistence king salmon fisheries, and after June 11, to the extent practicable, the commissioner shall open, by emergency order, at least one fishing period per week for a directed subsistence king salmon fishery, **the commissioner shall keep open, even during an emergency order, dipnetting as an allowable method,** to provide harvest opportunity on surplus king salmon in excess of escapement needs;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Dipnetters of the Kuskokwim River are requesting to keep dipnetting an open fishery year round in the regulation book. They specifically would like to emphasize that dipnetting will be allowed even during an Emergency Order (EO).

Dipnetting is not dangerous to any fishery. Therefore, not dangerous or harmful to Chinook Salmon. Dipnetters will be able to catch other species of salmon, while still conserving for Chinook to let go any accidental caught Chinook go, unharmed.

Allowing for a open ended dipnetting harvest method, even during an EO to close the fishery, will validate the opportunity for harvest. While still allowing conservation implementation to continue in preservation of rebuilding Chinook Salmon abundance.

This is an ineffective method for catching large quantities of salmon at once, provides opportunity for fresh salmon other than Chinook Salmon to be caught. Families of the Kuskokwim River, where dipnetting is effective, would have the opportunity to catch freshly caught salmon for dinner, some drying, and storing.

This method would greatly help out the Kuskokwim River communities. Even though dipnetting is not a custom traditional practice of the Kuskokwim River. Families can learn to use this method of fishing effectively. This method has been practiced by a few folks from the Bethel area and have reported to improving their skills at catching salmon. It takes practice, patience, and planning.

Many dipnetters reported were targeting whitefish and reds, letting go chums when they caught enough. One dipnetter reported that they were also trying to target silver (Coho) salmon and found dipnetting effective was also effective way of harvesting Coho.

The request is to also have dipnets open as a fishing method even during gillnet only restrictions on Coho season. Dipnetters wanted to emphasize that if they are needing more chums during the silver salmon run, they would have the opportunity to target chums and not Coho. This would allow for specific salmon target of a species than swamping a gillnet with unnecessary amounts of Coho. Therefore, families would still be able to catch Chum for dryfish. Chum is preferred salmon for dryfish during the rainy season, because they dry faster than other salmon species.

Due to the Chinook Salmon conservation restrictions, subsistence harvesters had to change their methods of gathering, processing, and harvesting of subsistence caught salmon. They were forced into these changes by Emergency Orders, Special Actions Requests, and Federal Management take over. Over the past 8 years of method change. It is time to change regulations that best work to the benefit of the people and the resource.

Dipnetting helps control how much salmon you need and what kind of fish you want to keep.

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