

PROPOSAL 180

5 AAC 21.310. Fishing seasons.

Allow regular weekly fishing periods after August 15 in the Upper Subdistrict sockeye salmon set gillnet fishery based on abundance, as follows:

5 AAC 21.310(a)(2)(C)(i) and (ii) will be amended to read:

- (i) Kasilof Section: from June 25 through August 15, unless closed earlier by emergency order under (iii) of this subparagraph; however if the department estimates that 50,000 sockeye salmon are in the Kasilof River before June 25, but on or after June 20, the commissioner may immediately, by emergency order, open the fishery; from August 11 through August 15, the fishery is open for regular periods only; **the fishery may be extended beyond August 15 for regular periods only, if the Kasilof River sockeye salmon BEG has been exceeded and sockeye salmon escapement is still being enumerated by the department; subparagraph (iii) does not apply to fishing time beyond August 15;**
- (ii) Kenai and East Forelands Sections: from July 8 through August 15, unless closed earlier by emergency order under (iii) of this subparagraph; from August 11 through August 15, the fishery is open for regular periods only; on or after July 8, when the Kasilof Section is open to commercial fishing with set gillnets and the Kenai and East Forelands Sections are closed to commercial fishing with set gillnets, commercial fishing with set gillnets may be allowed within 600 feet of the mean high tide mark in that portion of the Kenai Section north of the latitude of the Blanchard Line at 60° 27.10' N. lat., and south of the latitude of the ADF&G regulatory marker located south of the Kenai River mouth at 60° 30.49' N. lat.; **the fishery may be extended beyond August 15 for regular periods only, if the Kenai River sockeye salmon inriver goal has been exceeded and sockeye salmon passage is still being enumerated by the department; subparagraph (iii) does not apply to fishing time beyond August 15;**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In the preamble to the Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 21.360), it states that the department shall manage the Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon stocks primarily for commercial uses based on abundance. The Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 21.365) states that it is the intent of the Board of Fisheries that Kasilof River salmon be harvested in the fisheries that have historically harvested them, including the methods, means, times, and locations of those fisheries. Both of these plans provide provisions for ADF&G to follow to meet these mandates. However, per 5 AAC 21.310, the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet (ESSN) fishery closes on or before August 15, even if sockeye salmon escapement objectives have been exceeded. In the past 10 years (2009-2018), both the inriver goal in the Kenai River and the BEG in the Kasilof River were exceeded in 8 out of 10 years. This proposal seeks to allow additional fishing time for the ESSN fishery past the August 15 “hard” closing date in years when sockeye salmon escapement objectives in the Kenai and Kasilof rivers have been exceeded in order to meet board intent for harvesting these stocks.

I propose that in years where the upper end of the sockeye salmon inriver goal has been exceeded (for the appropriate management tier) in the Kenai River or when the BEG has been exceeded in

the Kasilof River that the ESSN fishery will remain open for regular Monday and Thursday 12-hour fishing periods after August 15 until the Kenai or Kasilof river sockeye salmon sonar projects cease enumeration activities. Specifically, this is what I propose. If the Kenai River sockeye salmon inriver goal has been exceeded, the Kenai and East Foreland sections set gillnet fishery will remain open for regular 12-hour Monday/Thursday fishing periods beyond August 15 until the Kenai River sockeye salmon sonar project ceases enumeration. If the Kasilof River sockeye salmon BEG has been exceeded, the Kasilof Section set gillnet fishery will remain open for regular 12-hour Monday/Thursday fishing periods beyond August 15 until the Kasilof River sockeye salmon sonar project ceases enumeration. If sonar enumeration ceases in either river prior to August 15, then there will be no extension to the fishing season, even if escapement objectives have been exceeded.

PROPOSED BY: Chris Every

(HQ-F19-019)
