

PROPOSAL 89

5 AAC 21.360. Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan.

Amend the *Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan* to manage primarily for sport, personal use and guided sport anglers and increase the sustainable escapement goal range to 1,300,000-1,750,000 salmon, as follows:

5 AAC 21.360. Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan

(a) The department shall manage the Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon stocks primarily for **sport, personal use and guided sport fishermen** [COMMERCIAL USES] based on abundance. The department shall also manage the commercial fisheries to minimize the harvest of Northern District coho, late-run Kenai River king, and Kenai River coho salmon stocks to provide personal use, sport, and guided sport fishermen with a reasonable opportunity to harvest salmon resources.

(b) The Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon commercial, sport, and personal use fisheries shall be managed to (1) meet the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) **range of 1,300,000-1,750,000** [700,000- 1,200,000] late-run sockeye salmon; (2) achieve inriver goals as established by the board and measured at the Kenai River sonar counter located at river mile 19; and (3) distribute the escapement of sockeye salmon evenly within the (SEG) range, in proportion to the size of the run.

(c) Based on preseason forecasts and inseason evaluations of the total Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon return during the fishing season, the run will be managed as follows:

- (1) at run strengths of less than 2,300,000 sockeye salmon,
 - (A) the department shall manage for an inriver goal range of **1,300,000 – 1,750,000** [900,000 – 1,100,000] sockeye salmon past the sonar counter at river mile 19; and
 - (B) subject to the provisions of other management plans, the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery will fish regular weekly fishing periods, as specified in 5 AAC 21.320, through July 20, unless the department determines that the minimum inriver goal will not be met, at which time the fishery shall be closed or restricted as necessary; [THE COMMISSIONER MAY, BY EMERGENCY ORDER, ALLOW EXTRA FISHING PERIODS OF NO MORE THAN 24 HOURS PER WEEK, EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN 5 AAC 21.365;]
- (2) at run strengths of 2,300,000 - 4,600,000 sockeye salmon,
 - (A) the department shall manage for an inriver goal range of **1,300,000-1,750,000** [1,000,000 - 1,300,000] sockeye salmon past the sonar counter at river mile 19 **between July 1 and August 14;**
 - (B) subject to the provisions of other management plans, the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery will fish regular weekly fishing periods, as specified in 5 AAC 21.320, through July 20, or until the department makes a determination of run strength, whichever occurs first; if the department determines that the minimum inriver goal will not be met, the fishery shall be closed or restricted as necessary; the commissioner may, by emergency order, allow extra fishing periods of no more than **24** [51] hours per week, except as provided in 5 AAC 21.365; [AND
 - (C) THE UPPER SUBDISTRICT SET GILLNET FISHERY WILL BE CLOSED FOR ONE CONTINUOUS 36-HOUR PERIOD PER WEEK BEGINNING BETWEEN 7:00 P.M. THURSDAY AND 7:00 A.M. FRIDAY AND FOR ONE CONTINUOUS 24-HOUR PERIOD PER WEEK BEGINNING BETWEEN 7:00 P.M. MONDAY AND 7:00 A.M. WEDNESDAY;]
- (3) at run strengths greater than 4,600,000 sockeye salmon,

(A) the department shall manage for an inriver goal range of **1,300,000 - 1,750,000** [1,100,000 - 1,500,000] sockeye salmon past the sonar counter at river mile 19;

(B) subject to the provisions of other management plans, the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery will fish regular weekly fishing periods, as specified in 5 AAC 21.320, through July 20, or until the department makes a determination of run strength, whichever occurs first; if the department determines that the minimum inriver goal will not be met, the fishery shall be closed or restricted as necessary; the commissioner may, by emergency order, allow extra fishing periods of no more than **51** [84] hours per week, except as provided in 5 AAC 21.365; and

(C) the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fishery will be closed for one continuous 36-hour period per week, beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday **and for one continuous 24-hour period per week beginning between 7:00 a.m. Tuesday and ending 7:00 a.m. Wednesday.**

(d) The sonar count levels established in this section may be lowered by the board if noncommercial fishing, after consideration of mitigation efforts, results in a net loss of riparian habitat on the Kenai River. The department will, to the extent practicable, conduct habitat assessments on a schedule that conforms to the Board of Fisheries (board) triennial meeting cycle. If the assessments demonstrate a net loss of riparian habitat caused by noncommercial fishermen, the department is requested to report those findings to the board and submit proposals to the board for appropriate modification of the Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon inriver goal.

(e) Repealed 6/11/2005.

(f) Repealed 6/11/2005.

(g) Subject to the requirement of achieving the lower end of the sustainable escapement goal, the department shall provide for a personal use dip net fishery in the lower Kenai River as specified in 5 AAC 77.540.

(h) Subject to the requirement of achieving the lower end of the sustainable escapement goal, the department shall manage the sport fishery on the Kenai River, except that portion of the Kenai River from its confluence with the Russian River to an ADF&G regulatory marker located 1,800 yards downstream, as follows:

(1) fishing will occur seven days per week, 24 hours per day;

(2) the bag and possession limit for sockeye salmon is three per day, with six in possession, in the sport fishery, **the projected inriver run of sockeye salmon above the Kenai River sonar counter located at river mile 19 exceeds 1,750,000 fish** [UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT DETERMINES THAT THE ABUNDANCE OF LATE-RUN SOCKEYE SALMON EXCEEDS 2,300,000 FISH], at which time the commissioner may, by emergency order, increase the bag and possession limit as the commissioner determines to be appropriate; and

(3) if the projected inriver run of sockeye salmon above the Kenai River sonar counter located at river mile 19 is less than **1,300,000** [900,000] fish and the inriver sport fishery harvest is projected to result in an escapement below the lower end of the sustainable escapement goal, the commissioner may, by emergency order, decrease the bag and possession limit, as the commissioner determines to be appropriate, for sockeye salmon in the sport fishery above the Kenai River sonar counter located at river mile 19.

(i) For the purposes of this section, "week" means a calendar week, a period of time beginning at 12:00:01 a.m. Sunday and ending at 12:00 midnight the following Saturday.

(j) The commissioner may depart from the provisions of the management plan under this section as provided in 5 AAC 21.363(e).

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The current late run sockeye salmon management plan is failing to provide adequate opportunity for inriver users. The Kenai River is the primary source for salmon for south central Alaska, the state's most populated area by far. The economy of the Kenai River valley is also directly linked to salmon fishing opportunity and is being hard hit by the lack of opportunity. Inriver salmon contribute vastly more revenue to the state than commercially caught fish and the Kenai River can no longer support the demands of so many user groups. Priority exists for commercial fishermen to target sockeye salmon destined for a vast number of Cook Inlet rivers, many of which are not accessible by sport, guided sport, subsistence and personal use fishermen and none of which are so critically vital as a food source, a cultural identity and a way of life for so many Alaskans.

PROPOSED BY: Mike Adams

(HQ-F19-056)
