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RC 032

RP

Testimony before B of F-Feb 8 2020 Bob Penney

I arrived in Anchorage via the Alcan on September 9, 1951-only about 25,000 people lived here then.

I used to drive down a gravel Seward Hiway on Friday evening for a weekend of fishing on Deep Creek and the Anchor River for king salmon.

During this time I served 3 years on the NPFMC. I was and always have been a strong commercial fishery supporter. That important business certainly has its place, but not in intercepting Kenai Kings.

I've seen a lot in 68 years of living here. One thing that deeply concerns me will follow.

I have lived on the Kenai for over 20 years and witnessed this traumatic change.

Unveil king mount

My discussion today is all about the Kenai Kings. They are the largest king salmon found anywhere in the world. My friend Phil Carr caught this 81 lb king at Eagle Rock in 2006. Have not seen another king near its size since then, and unless something is done may never see another one again.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

- 1-The kings have had a specie slowdown statewide
- 2-There has not been a proper harvest control put in place.

This Board and the State have total control of any kings that make it into the Kenai River. You can and do restrict sports harvest by 'no fishing', catch and release only, limit the days or hours one can even fish. You can turn our fishing on or off. To check progress, you have an excellent fish escapement counter by size and number.

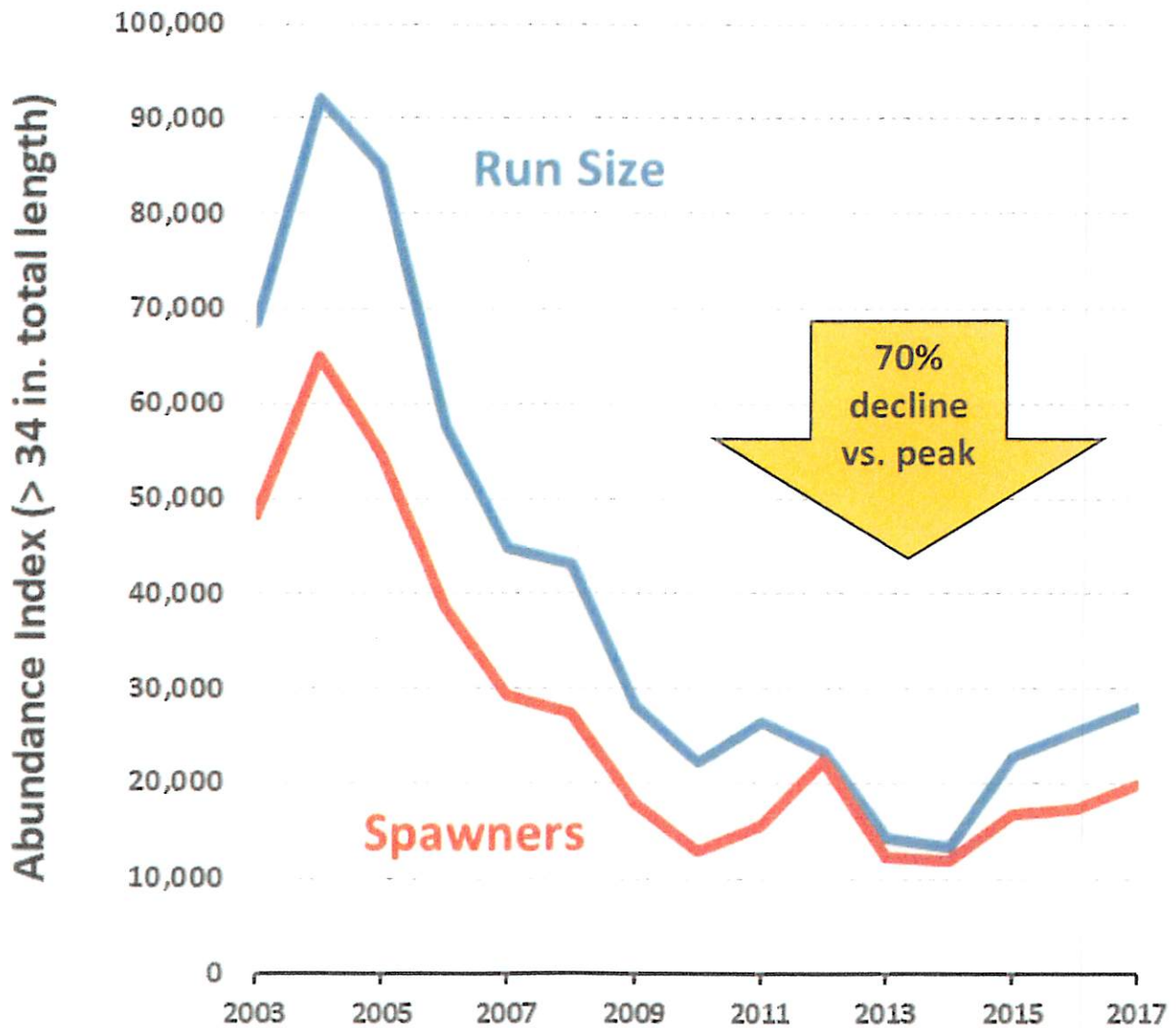
You have no such control of the eastside setnets that intercept these kings on their way to the river. Setnets by their nature kill anything swimming by. If they are in the water, they are killing. To help save the Kenai Kings, you can and must restrict their periods of fishing times, shorten net lengths and widths, reduce their 1 to 2 mile reach into the inlet to 3/4 a mile or such. Those 30 miles of set nets kill 40 to 60% of all the Kenai Kings each year.

This Board has the responsibility and duty of stopping this downward slide into a possible Kenai King salmon demise. It rests on your shoulders. Their in river return has dropped by over 70%!!

You have a pretty simple solution, "Put more Kings in the River!" Put those restrictions in place, you are the people that can do that. Suggest you adopt a 6 word phrase for the set nets, "Stop killing Kings or stop fishing!" That will put more kings in the river!

We sincerely thank you for the hundreds of hours you work to help us all. We applaud your hard work. and, please consider, "Stop killing Kings or stop fishing"! Thank you.

NUMBER OF JULY KENAI KING SALMON



Alaska Department of Fish & Game data

- In 2017, ADFG changed to a large king abundance index with a sustainable escapement goal range of 13,000-27,000.
- Big fish typically comprise about 84% of the total run.
- Long-term average run size is ~ 54,000 (45,000 big fish).