



***Cordova District Fishermen United
2021 Board of Fisheries
Prince William Sound Meeting***

Record Copy: CDFU Gillnet Division

The intent of our proposal is to reduce sport-caught coho mortality on coho spawners during years of extreme low abundance. If the commercial fishery is closed for 14 consecutive days, it typically is a sign that there is little-to-no harvestable surplus and restrictions are necessary beyond the commercial fishery. After hearing public testimony from other users, and meeting with sport fishermen in attendance at the meeting, we agreed to amend our proposal to remove the more restrictive 7 day trigger entirely, remove the language regarding catch and release prohibition, and maintain the no bait restriction and reduce the bag limit.

There is precedent set for these specific restrictions based on the actions taken late in the 2019 season. Our proposal would put these measures in place automatically upon a 14 day closure and both conserve additional spawners as well as share the conservation burden and maintain parity between user groups. The general management strategy for commercial coho is 1-2 periods per week, so a 14 day closure would be a reduction of 4 consecutive fishing periods.

We believe the bait restriction is the most important component of this proposal as it both reduces some catch and release associated mortality, as well as reduces the overall catch, resulting in a higher rate of conservation in years of extremely low abundance, such as 2019.

5 AAC 55.023. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Prince William Sound Area. Establish restrictions in the Copper River Delta coho salmon sport fishery based on the number of days the commercial fishery is closed, as follows: Adopt a trigger to share the burden of conservation between commercial and sport users in the Copper River Delta.

Amend the proposal to read:

New regulatory language to be added under 5 AAC 55.023:

(XX) In the Copper River Delta, if the Copper River gillnet fishery is closed for fourteen consecutive days, then the bag limit will be reduced to one coho and fishing with bait will be prohibited.