

PROPOSAL 186

5 AAC 21.353 Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan.

Reduce commercial salmon fishing opportunity with drift gillnet gear in the Central District of the Cook Inlet Area, as follows:

Please consider permanently reducing the amount of State owned Alaska managed commercial drift gillnet fishing allowed in the middle of Upper Cook inlet beyond the Expanded Kenai, Expanded Kasilof, and Anchor Point Sections, — Specifically when larger abundances of Kenai River sockeye allow additional days and hours of drift gillnet harvest— those added harvest opportunities should avoid the primary mixed stocks areas, and only occur closer to the rivers where the abundant stocks are bound, as follows:

(c) From July 9 through July 15,

(2) at run strengths greater than 2,300,000 sockeye to the Kenai River the commissioner may, by emergency order, open one additional 12-hour fishing period in the Expanded Kenai and Expanded Kasilof Section of the Upper Subdistrict [AND DRIFT GILLNET AREA 1];

(d). From July 16 through July 31.

(2) at run strengths of 2,300,000 - 4,600,000 sockeye salmon to the Kenai River,

(A) fishing during all [ONE] regular 12-hour fishing periods per week will be restricted to one or more of the following sections and areas:

(i). Expanded Kenai Section of the Upper Subdistrict;

(ii) Expanded Kasilof Section of the Upper Subdistrict;

(iii) Anchor Point Section of the Lower Subdistrict;

[(IV) DRIFT GILLNET AREA 1;]

(B) Additional fishing time under this subsection is allowed only in one or more of the following sections: Expanded Kenai, Expanded Kasilof, Anchor Point. [THE REMAINING WEEKLY 12-HOUR REGULAR FISHING PERIOD WILL BE RESTRICTED TO ONE OR MORE OF THE

FOLLOWING SECTIONS:

(I) EXPANDED KENAI SECTION;

(II) EXPANDED KASILOF SECTION;

(III) ANCHOR POINT SECTION;]

(3) at run strengths greater than 4,600,000 sockeye salmon to the Kenai River, all [ONE] regular 12-hour fishing periods per week will be restricted to the Expanded Kenai, Expanded Kasilof, and Anchor Point Sections;

(B) Additional fishing time under this subsection is allowed only in one or more of the following sections: Expanded Kenai, Expanded Kasilof, Anchor Point. [THE REMAINING WEEKLY 12-HOUR REGULAR FISHING PERIOD WILL BE RESTRICTED TO ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:

(I) EXPANDED KENAI SECTION;

(II) Expanded KASILOF SECTION;

(III) ANCHOR POINT SECTION;]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Since the federal EEZ drift gillnet fishery has started, allowing 200 fathoms of gillnet per drift permit holder, and the State of

Alaska has attempted to harvest a larger portion of the remaining harvestable surplus Kasilof and Kenai River sockeye salmon offshore in the drift gillnet fishery, there has been a resulting shortage of Northern bound coho salmon to meet spawning escapement needs and to provide reasonable harvest opportunities for subsistence, commercial, sport, and personal use needs in Northern Cook Inlet. Those shortages have resulted in consistent sport fishing restrictions and closures — in particular at Deshka River and Little Susitna River over the past three years — however even with these inriver restrictions and closures too many salmon had already been harvested and not enough remained to even come close to ADF&G established coho salmon SEGs at both rivers. Adaptive Management Changes need to be made. A more precautionary management approach as outlined in 5 AAC 39.222 is clearly required.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain.

PROPOSED BY: Andy Couch

(ACR-F26-005)

PROPOSAL 187

5 AAC 30.320. Fishing periods, 5 AAC 30.331. Gillnet specifications and operations, and 5 AAC 30.350. Closed waters.

Close the Tsiu River and all waters within one quarter mile of the Tsiu River and Kaliakh River confluence to commercial fishing for salmon, as follows:

Alaska Administrative Code Number 5 AAC:30 Yakutat Area

Close the Tsiu River and all waters within ¼ mile radius of the Tsiu River and Kaliakh River confluence to fishing with set gillnets by amending 5 AAC 30.350(12). Repeal management plan sections regarding fishing days in the Tsiu River [5 ACC 30.320(1)], set gillnet length in the Tsiu River [5 AAC30.331(a)(2)(C)] and waterway obstruction [5 ACC 30.331(b)] as they are no longer applicable.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? A storm surge in 2025 has altered the mouth of the Tsiu River so that it is now a tributary to the Kaliakh River. Previously, the Tsiu River mouth connected directly to the sea. In the Yakutat Area management plan, the Tsiu River was subject to specific regulations for the set gillnet fishery to protect spawning escapements. These included reduced number of fishing days, net length, obstruction of the waterway and closed waters. With the change in river mouth location, Tsiu River salmon are now subjected to increased exploitation rates. The Kaliakh is a much larger river with a larger run of coho. It is open for more time each week than the Tsiu. By placing setnets around and below the confluence Tsiu fish will be caught when the Tsiu is closed harming the run and sportfishery.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain.

PROPOSED BY: Dan Ernhart

(ACR-F26-008)
