

5 AAC 21.359. KENAI RIVER LATE-RUN KING SALMON MANAGEMENT PLAN.

(a) The purposes of this management plan are to ensure an adequate escapement of late-run king salmon into the Kenai River system and to provide management guidelines to the department. The department shall manage the late-run Kenai River king salmon stocks primarily for sport and guided sport uses in order to provide the sport and guided sport fishermen with a reasonable opportunity to harvest these salmon resources over the entire run, as measured by the frequency of inriver restrictions.

(b) The department shall manage the late run of Kenai River king salmon to achieve a sustainable escapement goal of 15,000 – 30,000 king salmon, as follow:

(1) in the sport fishery.

(A) if the sustainable escapement goal is projected to be exceed 28,000, the commissioner may, by emergency order, extend the sport fishing up to seven days during the first week of August.

(B) from July 1 through July 31, a person may not use more than one single hook in the Kenai River downstream from Skilak Lake:

(2) in the sport fishery, that portion of the Kenai River downstream from Skilak Lake is open to unguided sport fishing from a non-motorized vessel on Mondays in July; for purposes of this section a non-motorized vessel is one that does not have a motor on board;

(3) on July 21st, if the projected in-river return is 13,000 - 15,000 king salmon derived from the mid-point assessments of the in-river run, the department is directed to manage the sport and commercial fisheries to result in a minimum spawning escapement of 13,000 fish on July 31. King salmon enumerated from August 1 - August 10 should allow an additional 2,000 in escapement.

(A) if the projected inriver return of late-run king salmon is less than 20,000 fish and the inriver sport fishery harvest is projected to result in an escapement below 13,000 king salmon, the department may restrict the inriver sport fishery

(4) From July 21 through July 31; the department, through the commissioner's emergency order authority, may

(A) prohibit the use of bait in the sport fisheries in the Kenai River and in the salt waters of Cook Inlet North of the latitude of Bluff Point in the taking of king salmon. The non-retention of king salmon by catch and release fishing only can occur to reduce harvest, if necessary. In addition, the department may limit the personal use fishery on the retention of king salmon.

(B) close the commercial drift gillnet fishery in the Central District within one mile of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline north of the Kenai River and within on and one-half miles of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline south of the Kenai River.

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(C) if necessary, reduce emergency hours per week in regulation in the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Upper Subdistrict of the Central District from July 21 through July 31 from 51 hours to 36 hours per week at Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon run strengths under 5AAC 21.360 (c) (2), and from 84 hours to 62 hours per week under (c) (3). If implemented, times and area restrictions in 5AAC 21.360 and 5AAC 21 365 shall be suspended for the department's management of sockeye salmon stocks.

(D) from July 26th; if the department projects the 13,000 spawning escapement will not be met, the in-river sport fishery may close. If the commercial Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fisheries are similarly closed by emergency order, the set gillnet fishery can immediately reopen if the department projects sockeye salmon escapements above the mid-point of the Kasilof River sockeye salmon BEG goal or the Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon SEG in-river goal.

(E) if the department projects greater than 15,000 spawning escapement, the commercial Upper Subdistrict set gillnet fisheries shall be exempt from restrictions in this plan

(c) From July 21 through July 31;

(1) repealed;

(2) Note: under (b) (3) (A)

(3) repealed;

(4) [repealed]

(5) repealed.

(d) Repealed.

(e) consistent with the purposes of this management plan, and 5 AAC 21.360 if the projected inriver return of king salmon is less than 30,000 fish, the department may not reduce the closed waters at the mouth of the Kenai River described in 5 AAC 21.350 (b).

(f) The provisions of the Kasilof River Salmon Management Plan (5AAC 21.365) are exempt from the provisions of this section.

(g) 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 this plan.

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