

## Petition to the Alaska Board of Fisheries

I am petitioning the Alaska Board of Fisheries to take immediate action via Board Generated Proposal at the 2014 Upper Cook Inlet Board meeting to readopt the Early-run and Late-run escapement goals that were originally in place in 1988. This action is an emergency and is necessary because we now find that the goals that the department established last year are scientifically indefensible, the DIDSON numbers are questionable, age composition is wrong and are placing the sustained yield of these stocks in jeopardy. Certainly as KRSA has stated the lower end of the Early-run (Tributary spawners) escapement goal should take precedence over exceeding the Late-run (Mainstem spawners) escapement goal.

In 1988 the Kenai early-run Chinook escapement goal was set at 5,000 to 9,000 early-run and 15,000 to 22,000 late-run Chinook salmon. A demarcation date of July 1 was established in regulation because the department pointed to a lull in escapement at this time which they felt signaled a change in stocks and felt that the number of early-run fish (tributary spawners) arriving after July 1 would be offset by the number of late-run (mainstem spawners) arriving before July 1. We now find that this is not even close to being accurate and actions need to be taken immediately to protect the tributary spawners which are being wiped out with the current management plans. In the McKinley report dated December 2013 on page 14 the following quote "**Both of these results point to the same conclusion: so-called *Early-run mainstem spawners* are simply the beginning of the late-run mainstem spawning stock.**" spells out the problem in no uncertain terms. The department is aware of the problem and is looking the other way so they do not have to take the action which is biologically called for, closing the river to prevent the overharvest of early-run tributary fish. When the results from this new genetic analysis is done the escapement of tributary fish will be much lower, well below the escapement goal and the escapement of late-run fish will be higher. In the change from target strength to DIDSON the early-run escapement ranges up to 518 percent lower now than before the change (Table 1). In the late-run (Table2) the new escapements range from 27,000 fewer to 44,000 fish more with the DIDSON counter. Ironically 17 of the 25 years for which we have data the new escapement is HIGHER than with target strength. The reason for changing from Target Strength was supposedly because of sockeye pollution, yet when the bulk of the sockeye return in the late-run evidently the Target Strength counter was under counting? The loss of the tributary stocks is being masked by the larger return of mainstem spawners arriving early which the department seems content ignoring. The department has recently published these genetic stock identification results and should now be instructed to go back and redo the early and late-run run reconstruction and escapement goals to make them scientifically defensible as required by regulation. Anything less will endanger not only the sustained yield of these stocks but quite possibly the sustainability of many of the tributary stocks as well. Slikok Creek Chinook already may be extinct. Until this analysis is complete the most reasonable course of action would be to readopt the original goals which were established on mark/recapture estimates divided by the average return per spawner to establish the goal. Then instruct the department to use the Genetic Stock Identification results to measure the total escapement of tributary (early-run) and mainstem spawners (late-run). Had the department released these reports prior to the proposal

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deadline this crisis could have been handled with a proposal instead of as a petition. In either case this stock is in serious decline in need of immediate attention!

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Table 1. Kenai River early-run king escapement estimates from run reconstruction.

Year	Total Escapement Target Str.	Total Escapement DIDSON	Change in Escapement	Percent Change Escapement	ADF&G M/R Estimate	DIDSON PMR	TS PMR
1986	18,682	11,670	7,012	60%	27,080	0.43	0.69
1987	11,780	7,774	4,006	52%	25,643	0.30	0.46
1988	5,331	4,295	1,036	24%	25,074	0.17	0.21
1989	9,449	3,734	5,715	153%	23,253	0.16	0.41
1990	8,583	7,637	946	12%			
1991	8,842	8,500	342	4%			
1992	7,610	9,444	-1,834	-19%			
1993	10,041	2,766	7,275	263%			
1994	9,947	4,691	5,256	112%			
1995	11,310	2,359	8,951	379%			
1996	16,595	2,687	13,908	518%			
1997	8,185	4,371	3,814	87%			
1998	11,679	10,480	1,199	11%			
1999	17,276	5,103	12,173	239%			
2000	10,476	8,764	1,712	20%			
2001	14,073	11,400	2,673	23%			
2002	6,185	9,866	-3,681	-37%			
2003	10,097	16,960	-6,863	-40%			
2004	11,854	19,850	-7,996	-40%			
2005	16,387	16,650	-263	-2%			
2006	18,428	13,270	5,158	39%			
2007	12,504	9,856	2,648	27%	13,010	0.76	0.96
2008	11,732	6,570	5,162	79%	8,636	0.76	1.36
2009	9,771	6,163	3,608	59%	10,580	0.58	0.92
2010	11,824	6,393	5,431	85%	8,347	0.77	1.42
2011		8,448			9,267	0.91	
2012		5,044			6,513	0.77	
2013		2,048					
Average	11,546	8,450	3,096	84%	15,740	0.54	0.80

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Table 2. Kenai River Late-run king escapement estimates from run reconstruction.

Year	Total Escapement Target Str.	Total Escapement DIDSON	Change in Escapement	Percent Change Escapement	ADF&G M/R Estimate	DIDSON PMR	TS PMR
1986	47,375	51,410	-4,035	-8%	57,563	0.89	0.82
1987	34,900	47,390	-12,490	-26%	65,024	0.73	0.54
1988	32,137	40,470	-8,333	-21%	110,864	0.37	0.29
1989	19,256	25,320	-6,064	-24%	57,279	0.44	0.34
1990	26,508	25,140	1,368	5%			
1991	26,695	29,130	-2,435	-8%			
1992	22,524	33,400	-10,876	-33%			
1993	33,738	31,770	1,968	6%			
1994	35,065	28,100	6,965	25%			
1995	31,255	29,590	1,665	6%			
1996	30,907	28,530	2,377	8%	39,356		
1997	26,297	23,830	2,467	10%	39,080		
1998	26,768	36,550	-9,782	-27%			
1999	34,962	29,600	5,362	18%			
2000	29,627	30,620	-993	-3%			
2001	17,947	37,080	-19,133	-52%			
2002	30,464	45,120	-14,656	-32%			
2003	23,736	67,300	-43,564	-65%			
2004	40,198	63,950	-23,752	-37%			
2005	26,046	58,590	-32,544	-56%			
2006	24,423	48,140	-23,717	-49%			
2007	32,618	34,490	-1,872	-5%	39,600	0.87	0.82
2008	24,144	32,920	-8,776	-27%	52,530	0.63	0.46
2009	17,158	22,320	-5,162	-23%	45,480	0.49	0.38
2010	43,358	16,320	27,038	166%	18,830	0.87	2.30
2011		20,290			31,110	0.65	
2012		28,440					
2013		15,500					
Average	29,524	35,047	-7,159	-10%	50,611	0.66	0.74