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Submitted by Catherine Cassidy

Upper Cook Inlet Salmon Harvest and Abundance

Board members and participants at this meeting have repeatedly brought up the concept of increasing populations in Cook Inlet and accomodating increasing future demand for sport and personal-use fish.

This concept is fatally flawed.

It is not physically feasible for sport and personal-users to harvest much more than they are at the present time – it is naturally limited by geography and the temporary availability of the salmon resource.

The current level of sport and personal-use fishing is already causing significant damage to salmon habitat. To sustain in-river habitat for salmon populations within Cook Inlet, sportfishing opportunity is going to have to be increasingly restricted. (For example, refer to RC 206 - powerboats causing illegal levels of turbidity.)

The apparent salmon shortages in the Mat-Su Basin are the direct result of in-river problems, (pike, ATV damage to spawning beds, beaver dams, urbanization, habitat damage by sportfishing activities) and the ignored need for hatchery production.

ADF&G Data 2003-2012

The average poundage of salmon harvested was around 7,370,000 pounds per year by sport and personal-use fishermen and around 24,450,000 pounds per year by commercial fishermen.

