

Alaska Board of Fisheries Policy on the Establishment of Optimal Escapement Goals

The Alaska Board of Fisheries (board) adopted the Policy for Statewide Salmon Escapement Goals (5 AAC 39.223, EG policy) in 2001. This policy describes the collaborative rolls shared by the board and Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) in establishing escapement goals for salmon.

The EG policy states, in part, that the board shall:

(2) during its regulatory process, review a BEG, SEG, or SET determined by the department and, with the assistance of the department, determine the appropriateness of establishing an optimal escapement goal (OEG); the board will provide an explanation of the reasons for establishing an OEG and provide, to the extent practicable, and with the assistance of the department, an estimate of expected differences in yield of any salmon stock, relative to maximum sustained yield, resulting from implementation of an OEG.

Optimal escapement goal is defined in the Policy for the Management of Sustainable Salmon Fisheries (5 AAC 39.222, SSFP):

(25) "optimal escapement goal" or "(OEG)" means a specific management objective for salmon escapement that considers biological and allocative factors and may differ from the SEG or BEG; an OEG will be sustainable and may be expressed as a range with the lower bound above the level of SET, and will be adopted as a regulation by the board; the department will seek to maintain evenly distributed escapements within the bounds of the OEG;

The EG policy states the board will provide an explanation of the reasons for establishing an OEG. The board provides these reasons when deliberating proposals related to OEGs but does not consistently provide written descriptions of rationale for establishing OEGs. This lack of written findings occasionally creates ambiguity for the public and department regarding the management of salmon fisheries to meet OEGs. The board finds that written descriptions of the reasons for setting OEGs will alleviate this ambiguity, assist the department in implementing OEGs, and is in keeping with intent of the EG policy, therefore the board will draft written findings each time an OEG is adopted. It is the intent of the board that each OEG be reviewed in conjunction with the salmon escapement goal review during the annual board cycle.