

PROPOSAL 163 - 5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan.
Prohibit bait on runs less than 22,000 and eliminate 12-hour fishing period restriction, as follows:

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...

(c) In the sport fishery,

(1) if the sustainable escapement goal is projected to be exceeded, the commissioner may, by emergency order, **open the fishery to the use of bait, and** extend the sport fishing season up to seven days during the first week of August;

...

(e) From July 1 through July 31, if the projected inriver run of late-run king salmon is less than 22,500 fish, in order to achieve the sustainable escapement goal and provide reasonable harvest opportunity, the commissioner may, by emergency order, establish fishing seasons as follows:

(1) in the Kenai River sport fishery,

[(A) THE USE OF BAIT IS PROHIBITED; OR]

~~(A)~~[(B)] the [USE OF BAIT AND] retention of king salmon **is** [ARE] prohibited, and only one unbaited, barbless, single-hook, artificial lure, as described in 5 AAC 57.121(1)(J), may be used when sport fishing for king salmon;

(2) [IN THE KENAI RIVER PERSONAL USE FISHERY, IF THE USE OF BAIT OR RETENTION OF KING SALMON IS PROHIBITED IN THE KENAI RIVER SPORT FISHERY UNDER (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION,] the retention of king salmon is prohibited in the personal use fishery;

(3) in the Upper Subdistrict set gillnet commercial fishery, notwithstanding the provisions of 5 AAC 21.360(c)(1)(B), (2)(B), and (3)(B), based on the abundance of sockeye salmon returning to the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers,

(A) if the **retention of king salmon** [USE OF BAIT] is prohibited in the Kenai River sport fishery under (1)(A) of this subsection, commercial fishing periods are open for no more than 36 hours per week, with a 36-hour continuous closure per week beginning between 7:00 p.m. Thursday and 7:00 a.m. Friday, during which the number of set gillnets operated may also be restricted to either

(i) three set gillnets that are each not more than 35 fathoms in length and 29 meshes in depth or two set gillnets that are each not more than 35 fathoms in length and 45 meshes in depth; set gillnets used that are not more than 29 meshes in depth must be identified at the end of the gillnet with an attached blue buoy that is not less than nine and one-half inches in diameter; or

(ii) two set gillnets that are each not more than 35 fathoms in length and 29 meshes in depth or one set gillnet that is not more than 35 fathoms in length and 45 meshes in depth; set gillnets used that are not more than 29 meshes in depth must be identified at the end of the gillnet with an attached blue buoy that is not less than nine and one-half inches in diameter; or

[(B) IF THE USE OF BAIT AND THE RETENTION OF KING SALMON ARE PROHIBITED IN THE KENAI RIVER SPORT FISHERY UNDER (L)(B) OF THIS SUBSECTION, COMMERCIAL FISHING PERIODS ARE OPEN FOR NO MORE THAN 12 HOURS PER WEEK, WITH A 36-HOUR CONTINUOUS CLOSURE PER WEEK BEGINNING BETWEEN 7:00 P.M. THURSDAY AND 7:00 A.M. FRIDAY.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently, the Kenai Late Run King plan allows for the use of bait in the inriver sport fishery anytime the inriver run of King Salmon is above 22,500, or the midpoint of the escapement goal. Any time bait is not allowed, severe restrictions are placed on other fisheries out of interest for parity. This proposal seeks to establish no bait as the “normal” setting for the inriver fishery, allowing for bait to be used as a liberalization when runs are expected to exceed escapement. It also seeks to eliminate the 12 hour restrictions placed on the setnet fishery, as 12 hours is not practical for managing escapements into 2 rivers over 80 miles of beach.

We feel this change will help ensure adequate passage of Kenai Late Run Kings into the Kenai River, and will make Kenai Late Run Sport regulations consistent with Kenai Early Run sport regulations by allowing the use of bait when escapements are projected to be exceeded. It will also help to ensure adequate opportunity in the sport, personal use, and commercial fisheries while giving ADFG the flexibility to make yield tradeoff decisions in our mixed-stock fisheries.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai Peninsula Fishermen’s Association

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