

PROPOSAL 231 - 5 AAC 61.XXX. Susitna River King Salmon Management Plan. Create a Susitna River King Salmon Management Plan, as follows:

Develop a Susitna River King Salmon Recovery Plan as follows:

(a) The purpose of this plan is to ensure adequate king salmon spawning escapements into mainstream Susitna River drainage tributary streams upstream of Unit 1 and provide management guidelines for the department. The department shall manage Susitna River king salmon sport harvest as follows:

(b) From May 1 - May 31 the department may allow sport king salmon harvest In all waters of Unit 2 open to king salmon fishing, that did not fail to attain king salmon escapement within the appropriate goal range the previous year.

(c) From May 1 - June 15 the department may allow sport king salmon harvest in all waters of Unit 5 open to king salmon fishing, that did not fail to attain king salmon escapement within the appropriate goal range the previous year.

(d) From May 1 - June 20 the department may allow sport king salmon harvest in all waters of Unit 3 and Unit 6 open to king salmon fishing, that did not fail to attain king salmon escapement within the appropriate goal range the previous year.

(e) each following year that the appropriate king salmon escapement goal(s) are attained for waters in that particular Unit and / or Unit(s) further upstream, the department may incrementally add up to another week of harvest opportunity until the full season of harvest opportunity is restored or an escapement goal is not attained.

(f) after failing to attain a specific king salmon escapement goal range, the department may reduce up to a week of harvest time for that specific water and / or a portion of downstream waters the following year.

(g) the department may identify and use other king salmon abundance indices it deems appropriate.

(h) The Commissioner may depart from the provisions of the recovery plan under this section as provided in 5AAC 21.363

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? All Unit 2, Unit 3, Unit 5, and Unit 6 waters of the Susitna River drainage, sport king salmon harvest has been closed for a period of 4 -5 years. Even though most waters are open to catch and release king salmon fishing, and even though some Unit 2 streams have been attaining escapement goals, the department has not developed any plan on when or how to determine if king salmon stocks have recovered enough to once again allow some harvest. This proposal seeks to develop conservative options in which sport king salmon harvest may once again be allowed. The proposed starting seasons under (b), (c), and (d) when king salmon harvest might be allowed are all scheduled early enough in the season that only limited king salmon harvests would likely occur in each management unit. The public, user groups, advisory committees, and department are all welcome to weigh in with suggestions and options that might be agreeable.

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