

**PROPOSAL 96 – 5 AAC 21.353. Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan.**  
Allow commercial fishing with drift gillnets in all waters of the Central District, except the Kenai and Kasilof Sections, from August 16 until closed by emergency order, as follows:

5 AAC 21.353 Central District Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan

(f) From August 16 until closed by emergency order, [DRIFT GILLNET AREAS 3 AND 4 ARE OPEN FOR FISHING DURING REGULAR FISHING PERIODS.], drift gillnetting will be open in all waters of the Central District, except in the Kenai and Kasilof sections, from 7:00 a.m. Monday until 7:00 p.m. Monday, and from 7:00 a.m. Thursday until 7:00 p.m. Thursday.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Upper Cook Inlet Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 21.363 (a) (1)) states that the harvest of UCI salmon should be allowed in order to maximize the benefits of these resources. The current Central District drift gillnet management plan is too restrictive and does not allow ADF&G the tools it needs in order to harvest surplus Kenai and Kasilof river sockeye salmon stocks. An overly restrictive drift gillnet management plan can therefore result in over escapement of these stocks, which it has in two out of two years for both Kenai and Kasilof river sockeye salmon since the plan was modified in 2014. As ADF&G has shown in previous reports to the board, escapements above goals, and especially consecutive years of escapements above goals, results in an immediate yield loss to all harvesters in the year of the over-escapement, and it also poses unwarranted risks to these stocks through lower yields in the future.

In the current drift gillnet management plan, drifters are restricted to Drift Areas 3 & 4 on or before August 16. There is no significant reason to move the drift gillnet fleet out of the middle of the Central District after August 15. In previous reports to the board, ADF&G has shown that drifters are a very minor harvester of Kenai and Kasilof river coho salmon. That said, in order to provide additional protection to these stocks, this proposal seeks to allow drifting in the Central District, except for the Kenai and Kasilof Sections, for regular 12-hour fishing periods only after August 15. This would allow for additional harvest of Kenai and Kasilof sockeye salmon stocks while not posing threats to east-side coho salmon stocks or to northern bound coho salmon stocks, which are largely done with their migration through the Central District by this time of year. It would provide those drifters who wish to fish later in the season with additional economic opportunities, and it could help ADF&G with the issue of continued over-escapement of sockeye salmon in both the Kenai and Kasilof rivers.

**PROPOSED BY:** David Hillstrand

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