



STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
 McKie Campbell , Commissioner



Division of Commercial Fisheries 43961 Kalifornsky Beach Rd., Suite B Soldotna, Alaska 99669 262-9368	Division of Sport Fisheries 43961 Kalifornsky Beach Rd., Suite B Soldotna, Alaska 99669 262-9368	Division of Sport Fisheries 1800, Glenn Hwy., Suite 4 Palmer, AK 99645 746-6300
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

KENAI RIVER LATE-RUN SOCKEYE SALMON MANAGEMENT PLAN (5 AAC 21.360)

The Kenai River late-run sockeye salmon run is managed primarily for commercial fishing. This fishery is based on abundance as described in the management sections below. This fishery is also managed to minimize the harvest of Northern District coho, late-run Kenai River king, and Kenai River coho salmon stocks in order to provide personal use, sport, and guided sport fishermen with a reasonable opportunity to harvest salmon resources. However, the commercial fishery in late July will be managed to achieve the sockeye salmon in-river goal. In the Kenai River, sockeye salmon passage is monitored by sonar in the mainstem of the Kenai River at river mile 19.

Outlook

The projection for the 2006 run of late run sockeye returning to the Kenai River is 1.8 million fish. With this run size, the department will begin managing the commercial fishery for a run size of less than 2 million. The department will reanalyze the run strength around July 22. Management strategy may change depending on this outcome.

Commercial Fishing Management

Set Gillnet Fishing

At the 2005 BOF meeting, the regulations were passed that tie the commercial fishing time and inriver run goals to the Kenai River sockeye salmon run size.

With runs of less than **less than 2 million**, the department shall manage for an inriver goal range of 650,000 – 850,000 sockeye salmon and may allow no more than 24 hours of additional set gillnet fishing time beyond the two normal fishing periods. When the Kenai and East Forelands Sections are not open and the Kasilof River sockeye salmon OEG of 300,000 may be exceeded, the department may allow additional fishing time within ½ mile of shore in the Kasilof Section in order to harvest the surplus of Kasilof River sockeye.

If the forecast is for a run **between 2 and 4 million** sockeye salmon, the department shall manage for an inriver goal range of 750,000 – 950,000 and may provide up to an additional 51 hours of set gillnet fishing time per week may be added to two 12-hour regular periods.

If the run is **more than 4 million** fish, the department shall manage for an inriver goal range of 850,000 – 1,100,000 sockeye salmon and may provide an additional 84 hours of set gillnet fishing time per week may be added to two 12-hour regular periods.

Drift Gillnet Fishing

Two weekly 12 hour fishing periods per week are scheduled, with the fishing season opening the third Monday in June or June 19, whichever is later.

From **July 9 through July 15**, fishing during the two regular fishing periods are restricted to the Kenai and Kasilof Sections and Drift Gillnet Area 1. At run strengths greater than 2,000,000 sockeye salmon to the Kenai River, an additional 12-hour fishing period in the Kenai and Kasilof Sections of the Upper Subdistrict and Drift Gillnet Area 1 may be allowed.

From **July 16 through July 31**, at run strengths of less than 2,000,000 sockeye salmon to the Kenai River, fishing during the two regular 12-hour fishing periods is restricted to the Kenai and Kasilof Sections of the Upper Subdistrict and Drift Gillnet Area 1. At run strengths of 2,000,000 to 4,000,000 sockeye salmon to the Kenai River, fishing during the two regular 12-hour fishing periods is restricted to the Kenai and Kasilof Sections of the Upper Subdistrict and Drift Gillnet Areas 1 and 2. At run strengths greater than 4,000,000 sockeye salmon to the Kenai River, there will be no mandatory restrictions during regular fishing periods.

From **August 11 until closed** by emergency order, Drift Gillnet Areas 3 and 4 are open for fishing during regular fishing periods.

Sport Fishing Management Strategies

Mainstem recreational fisheries for late-run sockeye salmon are managed under provisions of the Kenai River Late-Run Sockeye Salmon Management Plan (5 AAC 21.360). Kenai River sockeye escapement is estimated by subtracting final upriver harvest estimates from final sonar counts. Final estimates are generally available 12 months after the season ends. Preliminary escapement estimates are generated by subtracting historical average upriver harvests from final sonar counts. Preliminary inseason escapement estimates are available before the end of the season.

The 2006 in-river goal is 650,000 – 850,000 sockeye salmon past the sonar counter at river mile 19 based upon a run of less than 2 million. The OEG range is 500,000 – 1,000,000 sockeye salmon. If it is determined in mid to late July that the Kenai River escapement is projected to be less than needed to attain the lower end of the OEG, sport fishery restrictions would be implemented to assure that the 500,000 sockeye salmon OEG goal is achieved. Restrictive management actions in the recreational fisheries have typically been enacted in concert with commercial actions and are designed to provide for additional conservation of Kenai River sockeye salmon stocks. Restrictive management actions in the recreational fishery could include reduction in bag and possession limits, restrictions by time and area, or closure. In the mainstem of the Kenai River, the daily bag and possession limit for sockeye salmon is 3 fish. If the department determines the total return projection for Kenai River sockeye salmon exceeds 2 million fish and achieving the lower end of the OEG is assured, liberalizations may occur and the bag limit may increase to 6 fish.