

Regulations changing for state fisheries

JUNEAU — Several changes in commercial and subsistence fishing regulations and policy were made at a recent meeting of the Board of Fisheries.

According to James W. Brooks, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the regulations will become effective in early March.

Improved escapement of salmon into the Northern district of Cook Inlet and establishment of a subdistrict on the east side of the Inlet for use by both drift and set gill nets was the objective of a Board directive to the department staff, and a management policy for Resurrection Bay commercial and sport fisheries was adopted. Other Board decisions created subdistricts in lower Cook Inlet and retained existing opening dates and emergency order closures for the Northern and Central gill net districts.

Kelp harvesting was limited to hand cutting, and a weekly fishing period was established for the Copper River subsistence fishery in action affecting the Prince William Sound area.

A 28" minimum size limit for commercial troll-caught and sport-caught king salmon was adopted for the Southeastern-Yakutat area. Salmon net regulations were retained essentially as they were last year, but several limitations were placed on the sac roe herring fishery. Herring taken in pounds may be used only for bait, and

any future expansion of the herring fishery will be for food and bait under the new board policy.

A proposal to terminate subsistence roe sales in the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim area was rejected by the Board.

No significant changes were made in Bristol Bay regulations. Discussions and decisions were mainly to clarify existing regulations.

A management plan designed to limit catch of migrant salmon during June and rehabilitate the later runs of local stocks was adopted for the Alaska peninsula.

Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim

Under the subsistence salmon roe regulations, the Board adopted more restrictive reporting requirements. Other new subsistence fishing regulations were adopted to specify legal gear and subsistence permit conditions and to modify open and closed times and areas throughout the region. One of the new subsistence regulations adopted by the Board was a two-day weekly closure in all Yukon

subdistricts whenever a commercial season closure exceeds five days. In other subsistence action the Board prohibited the use of drift gill net gear in subdistricts 4, 5, and 6 of the Yukon and closed section 6-C to subsistence fishing after the closure of the commercial salmon season. In Kuskokwim subdistricts 1, 4, and 5, the Board provided for a six-hour closure for all subsistence fishing following each weekly commercial fishing period.

The boundary between the Yukon and Kuskokwim districts was moved south to the westernmost point of the Naskonat Peninsula. This change places Scammon Bay and Hooper Bay in the Yukon district.

In the Yukon commercial salmon fishery, an opening date of June 10 was established for subdistricts 1, 2, and 3, and fishing time was cut from 3 to 2½ days per week between June 10 and July 10 in subdistricts 1 and 2.

In the Kuskokwim commercial salmon fishery, weekly fishing periods in subdistrict 1 will be announced by emergency order between June 1 and June 25, and a separate quota of 2,000 coho and 2,000 red and chum salmon was established for subdistrict 2. The implementation of gill net depth restrictions was delayed one year to January 1, 1978.

Kodiak

July 10 was adopted as the opening date for the Kodiak salmon fishery, and three sections were established in the Afognak district.

Cook Inlet

Subdistricts were established in the Southern, Outer, Kami-shak, and Eastern districts to improve salmon management in these areas, and a management policy providing for the commercial harvest of pink salmon while maximizing protection of coho stocks was adopted for Resurrection Bay.

In keeping with its policy on subsistence fishing, the Board closed the Southern, Eastern and Outer districts to all subsistence salmon fishing.

The Board adopted a guideline harvest level for herring during March 1 to June 30 to allow greater management flexibility during this period.

Prince William Sound

June 12 was retained as the opening date for the Bering River district, and an opening date of July 12 was set for the Eshamy district and the general purse seine districts.

Weekly fishing periods from 8 p.m. Friday to 8 p.m. Sunday and from 8 p.m. Tuesday to 8 p.m. Thursday were established for subsistence fishing on the Copper River.

Harvest of Kelp in the herring spawn on kelp fishery was restricted to hand cutting at least 4 inches above the stipe (stem) to allow the plants to regenerate.

Yakutat

In addition to adopting a 28" minimum size for troll-caught salmon, the Board clarified a past regulation that emergency order closures do not apply to trolling unless specified in the order.

Southeastern Alaska

Changes in commercial trolling regulations include adoption of a 28" minimum size for king salmon and an August 15 opening date for section 1-C and closure of part of section 1-F. In the salmon gill net regulations, the weekly gill net periods in district 1 will open on Sunday instead of Monday, and the one

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Fish ...

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day per week early June gill net fishery in section 15-C was eliminated.

In the bottom fish fishery, district 13 was removed from the sablefish season and quota restrictions which apply to the other northern districts in Southeastern. A strictly-controlled permit system was adopted to allow the use of sunken gill nets in the bottomfish fishery.

In the herring bait fishery, section 1-E and Freshwater Bay were removed from the sac roe fishery and returned to the bait fishery. Restrictions were placed on herring pounds to limit their use to bait only, and Scow Bay was added to locations where herring pounds are permitted.

In the sac roe fishery, section 15-C was added to the herring gill net area. The board voted to prohibit commercially licensed herring vessels from taking herring for personal use in sac roe fishing areas between March 15 and June 15.

Pybus Bay, Gambier, Bay, and a portion of section 1-E were closed to commercial harvest of herring.

Under the subsistence regulations, the Board closed the Taku River drainage to subsistence salmon fishing and prohibited the use of gill nets for subsistence salmon fishing in districts 1, 2, 3 and 4.