

# Bristol Bay 48-hour transfer will improve escapement

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The Board of Fisheries and Advisory Committee members agreed to a mop up commercial salmon fishery in the Naknek River and a mandatory 48-hour transfer changeover period between districts. Fishermen fishing in the Kvichak Bay bound for the Naknek and Kvichak Rivers last year were allowed up to 24 hours for district transfers. The two issues in the Kvichak/Naknek district are situated in Alaska's largest commercial fisheries.

Enforcement officers and advisory committee members from Bristol Bay said the 48-hour transfer period would strengthen the possibilities of enforcement of all fisheries in the Kvichak/Naknek district.

The Board of Fisheries last November listened to the testimonies of traditional fisherman who urged bringing back the mandatory 48-hour transfer time, while some commercial and traditional fisherman asked that the 24-hour transfer period be protected. Many traditional Bristol Bay fisherman asked that it be moved to 48 hours because the 24-hour period

contributed to the overharvest of salmon stocks bound for the Kvichak River.

Stosh Anderson, Naknek/Kvichak Advisory said, "during the 24-hour transfer period fishermen were able to harvest salmon up until the transfer to other districts."

During the 1986 January meeting the board accepted the proposal to require a minimum of 48 hours with no fishing.

Prior to the 1984 season commercial fisherman were required to wait 48 hours with no fishing before district transfers. Then a new regulation came along from the Board of Fisheries which applied to mostly drift fisherman to wait only 24 hours. During that 24-hour period fisherman were allowed to fish in the district which they transferred over from.

A public outcry from traditional Bristol Bay fisherman asked to forego the regulation because of the reallocation of salmon stocks amongst drift and set net commercial fisherman. Fisherman accustomed to yielding seasons experienced some decrease of salmon take while other commercial fisherman were allocated more fish by frequent transfers than those traditionally fishing the district.

The most excited among them were the Kvichak Bay fisherman that did not experience a high take of in-river fishing. They experienced low escapement levels while the Naknek River experienced an overescapement of 800,000 salmon during the season.

The Kvichak River fell short of their target escapement because of the interception of Kvichak stocks in the Naknek district. There also was some interception of the Kvichak stock in the Egigik District during the 1985 season.

Robert Heyano, Nushagak Advisory said, "traditionally the salmon will peak at different times or hours of the day. The 24-hour transfer period contributed to the lower escapement levels because of frequent transfers and now the move back to the 48-hour waiting period with no fishing, will have a more successful rate (of future returns)."

The decision to have a mop up of salmon will be determined on the three criteria set at the meetings. The objective is to harvest excess fish in the Naknek River. The mop up will be opened to both drift and set net fisherman in the Naknek River. The three criteria outlined for an opening of the

in river fishery are;

One Kvichak is in trouble of reaching its escapement goals, two there is a high or substantial interception levels of Kvichak fish in the Naknek section, and three the Naknek River escapement reaches 1.2 million fish then the management will be allowed to open the proposed fishery set at the Board meeting.

The board of fish didn't want to create a new fishery therefore an "in-river" fishery was determined as the best method to mop up salmon stocks. There are boundaries and criteria in that fishery available from the Department of Fish and Game proposal 183A.

The advisory Committee outlined the problems they have seen since the 1984 decision to have a 24-hour transfer period. The transfer period represents an understanding that the interception would not decrease numbers of salmon that are to enter both the Kvichak and Naknek Rivers.

Also a plan to mop up salmon stock was addressed successfully. The rational to have a fishery is to catch Naknek fish and not Kvichak fish. The Naknek River experienced an 800,000 over escapement. If the Department of Fish and Game finds that Kvichak fish are caught in any other district they'll have the authority to protect Kvichak stocks.