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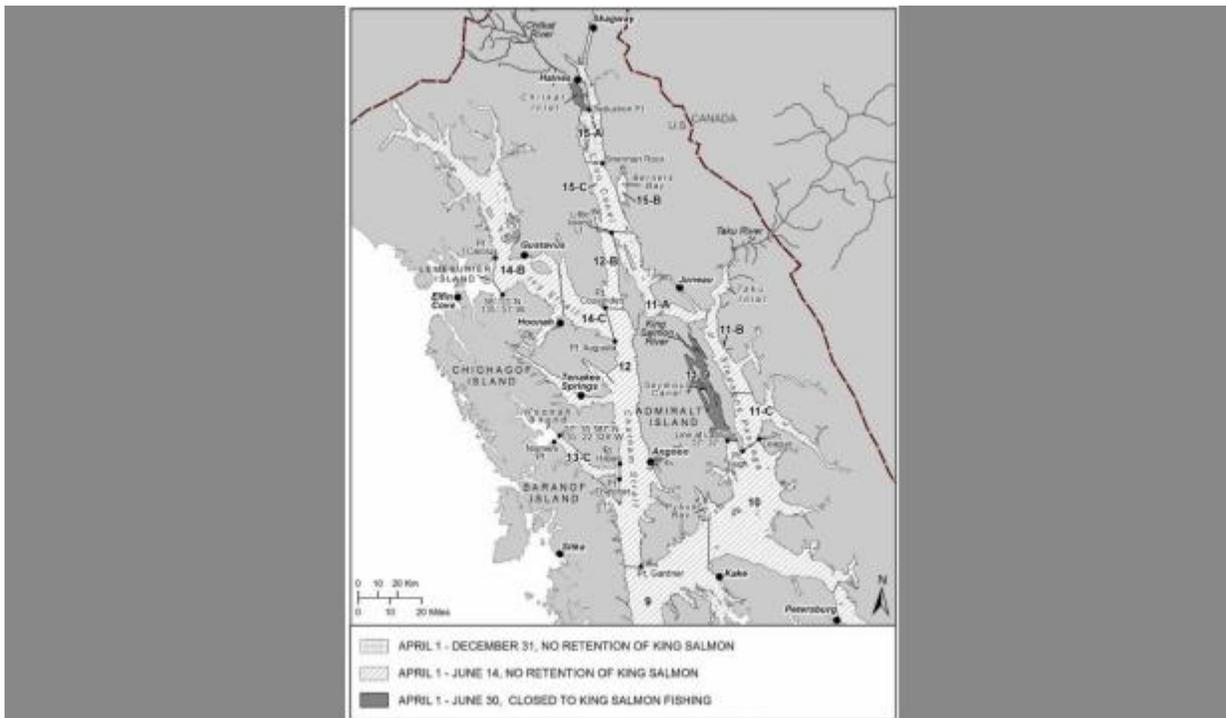
Posted March 30, 2018 07:31 am - Updated March 30, 2018 11:11 am

By KEVIN GULLUFSEN (/kevin-gullufsen-0)

Juneau Empire

King fishing cut: ADFG announces conservative Juneau fishing plan

Department expects a record-low 4,700 of adult Chinook will return to Taku River, docking early season anglers



A map of king salmon restrictions in Southeast. (Map courtesy ADFG)

It's not time yet for king salmon fishermen to dust off the downriggers and sharpen the hooks. According to Alaska Department of Fish and Game regulations announced Thursday, anglers will have to wait until June 15 to keep king salmon caught in the Juneau area.

Starting April 1, it'll be illegal to retain a king salmon in most Juneau area waters and fishermen are expected to release king salmon immediately. Those regulations will lift on June 15, when fishing regulations will go back to normal.

ADF&G's plan for Juneau follows conservation measures, Chinook "action plans," implemented across Southeast this year to protect record low-returns of wild king salmon

on several Southeast river systems.

"Essentially, the Southeast wild stocks have been in a period of low productivity and these restrictions are designed to reduce or eliminate harvest," sport fish biologist Daniel Teske told the Empire by phone Thursday.

About 4,700 adult king salmon are expected to return to spawn on the Taku River. That would be an all-time low, according to ADFG records. A majority of Southeast rivers are also experiencing low returns, ADFG's Thursday announcement states.

The Juneau area regulations are more conservative than the **action plan adopted at a Board of Fisheries meeting (<http://juneauempire.com/news/local/state/2018-01-23/fish-board-cuts-king-salmon-fishing>)** in January, Teske said. The board voted for a moratorium on king salmon retention starting April 15. ADFG's Juneau area plan bans anglers from keeping king salmon starting April 1.

It also expands past the action plan's geographical boundaries.

"We enacted all of the regulations that were in the action plan and we also implemented further restrictions that we thought we necessary," Teske said. "Basically, we expanded time and area," of the fishing closure.

Additional fishing opportunities may be offered in June, Teske added, if hatchery king salmon return in strong numbers. ADFG will know in early June whether or not that's the case. If so, they'll open a special harvest area for hatchery kings.

ADFG implemented similar restrictions (<http://juneauempire.com/local/news/2017-08-07/king-salmon-fishing-closed-all-southeast>) last year.

The restrictions are as follows:

Any king salmon caught must be released immediately from April 1 through June 14, 2018. This applied to the northern portion of District 9, District 10, Sections 11-A, 11-B, 11-C, District 12, southeast portion of Section 13-C, Sections 14-B and 14-C, and District 15 south of the latitude of Sherman Rock.

The waters of Seymour Canal near King Salmon River (Section 11-D) are closed to king salmon fishing from April 1 through June 30, 2018.

ADFG advises that anglers fishing north of the Juneau area should review the news release announcing sport fishery restrictions for the Haines/Skagway area and that anglers fishing south of the Juneau area should review the news releases announcing sport fishery restrictions for the Petersburg/Wrangell and Ketchikan areas.

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