

PROPOSAL 49 - 5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area.

Change the sport fishing season opening date for king salmon on the Klutina River from July 1 to June 1, as follows:

Extend the sport fishing season on the Klutina River waters to June 1 through August 10.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Klutina River in the Upper Copper River system has two runs of king salmon. The first run hits the Klutina River around June 1. The current season allows sport fishing of king salmon only from July 1 through August 10. This season deprives Alaskan sport fishermen any opportunity to catch a first run fish in June.

If nothing changes only the commercial fishing fleet will continue to be the only ones able to catch a first run king salmon bound for the Klutina River waters.

PROPOSED BY: Jim West

(EF-C14-068)

PROPOSAL 50 - 5 AAC 52.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area.

Prohibit use of barbed hooks, multiple hooks, and bait when fishing for king salmon in the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Area, as follows:

5 AAC 52.022 (a) (3) (D) only, unbaited, single, barbless hooks, artificial lures may be used

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Recreational anglers hook and release king salmon in the waters. King salmon are caught and released, which may cause harm to the king salmon. King salmon that are hooked and released will have permanent scars, and are damaged by barbed hooks.

Data for 2012 shows the number of fish caught and released for Gulkana River Drainages, which includes Upper Reach, Lower Reach, and unspecified was 565. Data for 2012 shows the number of fish caught and released for the Klutina River, Tonsina, Tazlina Upstream of Gulkana, Downstream of Klutina, and other waters was 1,410. Data does not specify what species were caught and released.

These numbers show how many days sport fisheries efforts were in some of the water bodies in Upper Copper / Upper Susitna Management Area (UCUSMA). In 2012, the average sport fishing effort (angler-days) in the UCUSMA by lakes and streams in the Gulkana River Drainage was 8,117, for the Upper Susitna Drainages for lakes and streams, the total angler days was 7,788 and for the Copper River Drainages, that includes Klutina the total angler days was 18,030, Tazlina angler days was 380, above Gulkana sport fishing effort was 894, below Klutina, total angler days was 628. Total number of angler days for these water bodies is 36,904 days of fishing effort.

With this many number of days of recreational anglers' effort to catch king salmon, sockeye or other species, the harm to king salmon being caught and released increases. As king salmon travel to spawning grounds, the mortality rate increases as more catch and release king salmon in water bodies occur.

A hook and release mortality in the Kenai River [for] Chinook Salmon Recreational Fishery Report, showed that "short term (1–5 day) hooking mortality for early run (125) and late run (120) Chinook, that were tagged using radio telemetry, was 8.8% and 5.9%; most mortality took place within 72-hours of release". The report also showed that "hooking location was a factor that significantly affected mortality, Chinook salmon hooked in the gills has a significantly reduced chance of surviving"..... Eight percent of the early run and five percent of the late run is a significant loss and shows that salmon that are hooked and released are harmed and perish as a result. The report also states that only a small amount of Chinooks were hooked in the gills, this still shows that harm is being done to Chinooks that are caught and released by fishermen.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) data indicates that 5,272 Chinooks were caught and released in the Upper Copper River in 2011. An eight percent mortality would indicate 422 king salmon were killed by catch and release in 2011. The entire sport fish harvest of Chinook in 2012 was only 459. ADF&G data indicate that 1,410 Chinook were caught and released in 2012. An eight percent mortality rate would indicate 113 Chinooks were killed by catch and release mortality in 2012. The harvest in 2012 the fishery was restricted because of conservation concerns. The 422 catch and release mortality in 2011 was almost the entire harvest in 2012. Catch and release mortality at any level is unacceptable when there is a conservation concern.

PROPOSED BY: Ahtna Tene Nene' Customary & Traditional Use Committee (HQ-F14-027)

PROPOSAL 51 - 5 AAC 52.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area. Prohibit use of barbed and multiple hooks for king salmon once an angler has taken a bag limit or annual limit of king salmon, as follows:

5 AAC 52.022(a)(x)General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area

(a)

...

(15) If an angler has reached the daily or annual limit for King Salmon; only single barbless hooks may be used. All other methods remain the same as anglers that have not reached their limit.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently king salmon fishermen are allowed to continue fishing with the same gear after they have reached their daily limit and annual limit. Once these limits have been reached, their fishing becomes catch and release fishing by definition. All catch and release fisheries should require single barbless hooks to minimize the harm to king salmon.

PROPOSED BY: Aaron Bloomquist

(EF-C14-067)

PROPOSAL 52 - 5 AAC 24.361. Copper River King Salmon Management Plan. Prohibit use of barbed and multiple hooks with or without bait if the sport fishery is restricted to catch-and-release, as follows:

5 AAC 24.361(c)(2)(C)(X) Copper River King Salmon Management Plan

(C) designate the fishery as a catch and release fishery only;

(x) if a catch and release fishery is designated; only single, barbless hooks may be used

(xx) if a catch and release fishery is designated; the use of bait may be retained or restricted

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The restrictions on sport fishing for king salmon in the Copper River Valley have been devastating to the very small communities that depend on this fishery for much of their annual income. The current management plan does not allow for the use of bait when fisheries are restricted to catch and release only. This effectively completely closes the fisheries on the glacial tributaries of the Copper. The water in these tributaries is very cloudy (much more so than the Kenai) and eliminating bait in the fishery decreases hook ups by over 95%. These rivers are also very fast and not conducive to "back trolling". We would like the commissioner to have the option to allow the use of bait in catch and release fisheries. In addition, all catch and release fisheries should require barbless hooks to minimize the harm to king salmon.

PROPOSED BY: Aaron Bloomquist

(EF-C14-066)

PROPOSAL 53 - 5 AAC 52.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area, and 5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area. Clarify that a single-hook artificial lure is an artificial lure with one single-hook or one fly as follows:

5 AAC 52.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area. (a)

...

(1) in all flowing waters, only **one** unbaited, single-hook, artificial **lure** [LURES] may be used;

(2) in all lakes, except Crosswind Lake, Lake Louise, Paxson Lake, Summit Lake, Susitna Lake, and Tyone Lake, bait and artificial lures may be used; in Crosswind Lake, Lake Louise, Paxson Lake, Summit Lake, Susitna Lake, and Tyone Lake, a hook and bait may be used only as follows:

(A) from April 16–October 31, only **one** unbaited, single-hook, artificial **lure** [LURES] may be used;

(B) from November 1–April 15, only single-hooks may be used; bait may be used;

5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area.

...

(9) in the Gulkana River drainage,

(A) from June 1–July 31, only **one** single-hook, artificial **fly** [FLIES], with a gap that does not exceed three-quarters inch between the point and shank, may be used in that portion of the Gulkana River downstream from the Richardson Highway Bridge to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately 500 yards downstream of the confluence with the Copper River; additional weight may only be used 18 inches or more ahead of the fly;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current regulations are unclear whether artificial lures with two single hooks or two artificial flies may be used when regulations state that only unbaited, single-hook, artificial lures may be used. Unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure regulations are in place to provide for sustained yield of rainbow trout, Arctic grayling, Dolly Varden, lake trout, or king salmon. Prefacing the language by the word “one” clarifies that only one artificial lure with one hook or only one artificial fly may be used. This would provide consistency in area regulations within the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River area.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F14-071)

PROPOSAL 54 - 5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area.

Increase the Arctic grayling bag and possession limit in the Gulkana River drainage, as follows:

5 AAC 52.023 (h) Fishing seasons and periods. In the Gulkana River Drainage, under

5 AAC 52.023 (h), **10** [5] per day, **10** [5] in possession. Only **5** [1] 14 inches or longer may be possessed as a part of the daily bag limit and possession limit. Only baited single hook may be used.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Increase possession, bag limit and size of Arctic grayling harvest in the Gulkana River Drainage (5 AAC 52.023(h)) and allow baited, single hook.

Fuel costs to drive to fishing areas are expensive in the Copper River Basin communities. Fuel cost is more than \$4.00 per gallon. In some Copper River Basin communities, it is more costly and expensive for those who have low and seasonal incomes. Harvesting only five grayling per day with regulatory restrictions causes hardship and it is discouraging to be allowed to harvest only 5 per day.

Using baited, single hook, to harvest Arctic grayling is better than using un-baited, single hook. Arctic grayling are attracted to baited, single hook. Using bait is a lot better to fish with than

unbaited, single hook and artificial lures. The success rate is higher when using bait to fish Arctic grayling.

If there is a decline in Arctic grayling populations, the department can take appropriate actions to limit size, possession and bag limit in the Gulkana River Drainages.

PROPOSED BY: Ahtna Tene Nene' Customary & Traditional Use Committee (HQ-F14-028)

PROPOSAL 55 - 5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area.

Amend special provisions for rainbow trout in Tebay River drainage, as follows:

(23) In the Tebay River drainage,

(A) in Summit Lake **and Bridge Creek**, the bag and possession limit for rainbow/steelhead trout is 10 fish, of which only one may be greater than 18 inches in length;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Bridge Creek is the outlet stream of Summit Lake (a remote, high alpine lake in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park) and the main spawning location for Summit Lake rainbow trout. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game conducted a large-scaled removal operation in 1999, 2004–2011, and 2013 to change this rainbow trout population from a stunted population with no fish larger than 16 inches to a stable population composed of multiple size classes ranging up to 24 inches or greater. To maintain the improved size structure of the rainbow trout population in Summit Lake, the Alaska Board of Fisheries adopted a 10-fish bag limit, of which only one may be greater than 18 inches in length, and removed the spawning closure for rainbow trout at the December 2011 meeting. Most of the sport fishing effort in this area occurs from the shore of Summit Lake near the outlet or within the first mile of Bridge Creek. Bridge Creek was not included in the 2011 regulations. This proposal would align the regulations in Bridge Creek and Summit Lake and provide the best management strategy to maintain the desired population structure.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F14-073)

PROPOSAL 56 - 5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area.

Update the Upper Copper/Upper Susitna Area stocked waters regulation, as follows:

(28) in stocked waters, the bag and possession limit for rainbow/steelhead trout, Arctic char/Dolly Varden, landlocked salmon, and Arctic grayling is 10 fish in combination, of which only one may be greater than 18 inches in length; for the purposes of this paragraph, "stocked waters" include Arizona Lake, Buffalo Lake, Connor Lake, Crater Lake, Dick Lake, DJ Lake, Gergie Lake, John Lake, Junction Lake, [KATHLEEN LAKE, LITTLE CRATER LAKE, LITTLE JUNCTION LAKE,] North Jans Lake, Old Road Lake, Peanut Lake, Pippin Lake, Round Lake, Ryan Lake, Sculpin Lake, Silver Lake, Strelna Lake, South Jans Lake,

Squirrel Creek Pit Lake, Tex Smith Lake, Three Mile Lake, Tolsona Lake, Tolsona Mountain Lake, **and** Two Mile Lake [AND VAN LAKE];

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In conjunction with each Alaska Board of Fisheries cycle, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game reviews stocked waters to ensure consistency between the *Statewide Stocking Plan for Recreational Fisheries*, the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area stocked waters regulations, and the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area Stocked Waters Management Plan (5 AAC 52.065). Stocked waters may be removed from the stocking plan, no longer stocked, and removed from corresponding regulations due to a loss of public access, poor fish growth or survival, or insufficient fishing effort. As new waters are identified and included in the stocking plan they are added to the regulations.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F14-074)

PROPOSAL 57 - 5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area. Amend methods and means for burbot in a portion of the Copper River drainage to reference statewide regulations, as follows:

(3) in the Copper River drainage, in that portion of the mainstem of the Copper River downstream from the confluence of the Copper River and the Slana River,

...

(B) [THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR BURBOT IS FIVE FISH]; burbot may be taken with more than one line and hook, **including a set line, as described in 5 AAC 75.033** [ONLY UNDER THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

(i) WITH SPORT FISHING GEAR, AS DEFINED IN 5 AAC 75.020, ICE FISHING GEAR, AS DEFINED IN 5 AAC 75.021, OR A SET LINE, AS DEFINED IN 5 AAC 75.995;

(ii) THE AGGREGATE NUMBER OF HOOKS MAY NOT EXCEED FIVE HOOKS;

(iii) ONLY SINGLE HOOKS WITH A GAP BETWEEN THE POINT AND SHANK THAT IS LARGER THAN THREE-FOURTHS INCH MAY BE USED;

(iv) IF USING A SET LINE, EACH HOOK MUST BE SET TO REST ON THE BOTTOM, AND EACH LINE MUST BE IDENTIFIED WITH THE ANGLER'S NAME AND ADDRESS ON A TAG OR LABEL ATTACHED TO THE SHOREWARD END OF THE LINE OR ABOVE THE ICE, UNATTENDED SET LINES ARE PROHIBITED AND MUST BE PHYSICALLY INSPECTED AT LEAST ONCE EVERY 24 HRS];

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current regulations for burbot set lines in a portion of the Copper River drainage mainstem are redundant with statewide regulations in 5 AAC 75.033. The proposed change would eliminate the duplication and simplify regulations.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F14-072)
