

Knik Arm Drainage Area (4 proposals)

PROPOSAL 225

5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area.

Limit retention of king salmon in the Eklutna Tailrace to hatchery fish, as follows:

All waters within a 1/2 mile radius of its confluence with the Knik River, and to an ADF&G marker located 2 miles downstream of the confluence:

Add a new section as follows:

From the above mentioned ADF&G marker to the Knik River confluence with Knik Arm: same methods, means, and bag limit, however, the only king salmon allowed to be retained in these waters are hatchery fish with a healed adipose fin-clip scar.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? With the Eklutna Tailrace/Knik River enhanced king salmon fishery being the primary freshwater location in Northern Cook Inlet Management Area where sport anglers were allowed to harvest king salmon during the 2018 season, and by emergency order at the start of the 2019 season, — the only freshwater location where sport anglers could harvest king salmon in the Northern Cook Inlet Management Area, this is an extremely small location for everyone who would like to catch a king salmon to fish. The entire Tailrace measures about 1/4 mile long and the shallow braided Knik River side-channel below the Tailrace only provides 3 decent anchoring locations with deep enough water to hold king salmon as they migrate upstream between where the Marker should be located and the Tailrace.

During the 2018 season the ADF&G marker, discussed in the regulation booklet, never seemed to be put in place. I fished this area at least 6 times for king salmon in 2018 and never saw the marker — even though I knew and looked, where it had been located years ago.

To accommodate the amount of use this area receives — especially when many other Northern Cook Inlet Management Area king salmon fisheries are closed to sport harvest by emergency order — I suggest increasing the size of the fishing area — but limiting harvest of king salmon in the additional area to hatchery fin-clipped king salmon. All hatchery king salmon releases in this area should be fin-clipped and wire tagged similar to this practice used elsewhere in Upper Cook Inlet. This would provide a much larger fishing area for anglers to spread out in, while also providing for a biologically sustainable fishery, similar but more restrictive, than the Kasilof River/Crooked Creek king salmon fishery.

If adopted this proposal would allow very limited harvest beyond the present area for the first few years, as few of the hatchery king salmon released in previous years, at this location, were fin-clipped. It would also remain to be seen how successful anglers could be at catching king salmon in the deeper and more glacially turbid mainstream Knik River.

PROPOSED BY: Andrew Couch

(HQ-F19-094)

PROPOSAL 226

5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area.

Require retention of coho salmon caught in the Little Susitna River sport fishery, as follows:

The Little Susitna River coho fishery, below the weir, is restricted to catch and keep, up to the daily bag limit. Coho salmon shall not be released no matter where they are hooked. When the bag limit is caught the angler cannot continue to fish in the Little Susitna River for the remainder of the day. No snagging is allowed.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Reduce the waste of salmon that is caused by the large number of salmon that are caught and released as documented from the high mortalities in the catch and release salmon fisheries. ADF&G reports show there is an average of over 650,000 salmon caught and released in the Cook Inlet sports fishery every year. Catch and release results in hundreds of thousands of salmon wasted each year from either becoming a valuable food source or a spawner for producing future returns. Coho are extremely susceptible. The 1993 ADF&G report on the "Mortality of coho salmon caught and released using sport tackle in the Little Susitna, Alaska-ADF&G (Doug Vincent-Lang, Marianna Alexandersdottir and Doug McBride) documented a 69% mortality on coho salmon in the lower (10 to 15 miles) of fresh water systems when using bait. This lower section is where the majority of catch and release occurs. This lower section of fresh water systems is the highest for mortality because of the stress caused by hook and release when salmon are the most susceptible because of chemical changes the body is undergoing to acclimate to fresh water. This stress and lactic acid build up is being compounded with the trend of warmer water temperatures. The Little Susitna coho fishery is overcrowded and not sustainable.

PROPOSED BY: Central Peninsula Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F19-096)

PROPOSAL 227

5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area.

Open additional days in the sport fishery in the Fish Creek drainage, as follows:

- (5) in the Fish Creek drainage,
- (A) the waters from ADF&G regulatory markers located at its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located one-quarter mile upstream from the Knik-Goose Bay Road are open to sport fishing **the first two Saturdays and Sundays in July, and from August 1 - December 31, although fishing on the first Saturday and Sunday in August will remain open only to youths under 16 years of age.** [BEGINNING THE SECOND SATURDAY IN AUGUST THROUGH DECEMBER 31 ON SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS] from 5:00 am-10 p.m., except that sport fishing for king salmon is closed;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Please allow more sportfishing for salmon in the small section of Fish Creek that is open to salmon fishing. A harvestable surplus occurs at this location, even though escapement numbers remain lower in nearby streams.

Additional fishing days could be added to better utilize harvestable surplus coho and sockeye salmon.

PROPOSED BY: Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee (HQ-F19-043)

PROPOSAL 228

5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area.

Prohibit fishing while wading in Fish Creek, as follows:

(5)

(a)(5)(new) In Fish Creek, fishing while wading is prohibited downstream from a department marker located approximately 0.1 mi below the Knik-Goose Bay Road from 2.5 hours before high tide through the time of high tide, according to the NOAA Anchorage Tide Tables for Anchorage.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Fish Creek is open to sport fishing on weekends during the coho salmon run. Sport fishing is allowed starting on the second Saturday in August through the end of December. However, fishing usually terminates when the run stops in September. Coho salmon are sight feeders.

Nearly all of the sport fishers fishing for coho salmon in Fish Creek during this time use lures as terminal tackle. There is very little to no use of bait in this stream. I have been fishing this stream since 1984. Recently, the number of fishers fishing this weekend fishery has increased dramatically. A very few of these fishers wade in the stream to catch the incoming tide and the migrating coho salmon. Normally, there is only one or two fisher who wade in the stream during the incoming tide. Nearly all of the fishers are fishing from the bank. Fishing while wading within the intertidal area of Fish Creek dislodges so much glacial flour (mud) that it causes great turbidity downstream of the wading fisher. This turbidity is so great that it takes away the fishing opportunity from the fishers on the bank. Because of the extreme turbidity caused by the fisher wading in this stream within the intertidal zone, the coho salmon cannot see and therefore hit the lures. The opportunity to catch coho salmon is markedly reduced by this turbidity, nearly to zero.

I would like the Board to prohibit fishing while wading in Fish Creek for two and a half hours before high tide through the time of high tide. These two and a half hours would allow more catching opportunity for the vast majority of the fishers who fish from the bank. Wading above the intertidal zone does not cloud the water. Therefore, I suggest that the Board prohibit fishing while wading in Fish Creek downstream of a department marker set at approximately 0.1 mile below the Knik-Goose Bay Road, or below the road culvert for the period 2.5 hours before high tide through high tide, according to the NOAA Tide Tables for Anchorage.

PROPOSED BY: Gene Sandone (HQ-F19-129)
