

PROPOSAL 165

5 AAC 57.121. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area.

Allow sport fishing in the Kenai River with only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure from January – July as follows:

Repeal:

[(1) SPORT FISHING GEAR RESTRICTIONS:

(A) FROM JANUARY 1 - JUNE 30, IN THE KENAI RIVER, AND FROM JULY 1 - JULY 31, IN THE KENAI RIVER FROM AN ADF&G REGULATORY MARKER LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 300 YARDS DOWNSTREAM FROM THE MOUTH OF SLIKOK CREEK UPSTREAM TO AN ADF&G REGULATORY MARKER LOCATED AT THE OUTLET OF SKILAK LAKE, ONLY ONE UNBAITED, SINGLE-HOOK, ARTIFICIAL LURE MAY BE USED;

(B) FROM JULY 1 - JULY 31, IN THE KENAI RIVER FROM ITS MOUTH UPSTREAM TO AN ADF&G REGULATORY MARKER LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 300 YARDS DOWNSTREAM FROM THE MOUTH OF SLIKOK CREEK, ONLY ONE SINGLE HOOK MAY BE USED;

(C) FROM SEPTEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 31, IN THE KENAI RIVER FROM THE MOUTH OF THE UPPER KILLEY RIVER UPSTREAM TO AN ADF&G REGULATORY MARKER LOCATED AT THE OUTLET OF SKILAK LAKE, ONLY ONE UNBAITED, SINGLE-HOOK, ARTIFICIAL LURE MAY BE USED;

(D) FROM DECEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 31, IN THE KENAI RIVER FROM ITS MOUTH UPSTREAM TO AN ADF&G REGULATORY MARKER LOCATED AT THE OUTLET OF SKILAK LAKE, ONLY UNBAITED, ARTIFICIAL LURES MAY BE USED;

(E) FROM MAY 1 - JULY 31, IN THE PORTION OF THE KENAI RIVER FROM ADF&G REGULATORY MARKERS LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 100 YARDS DOWNSTREAM OF THE MOUTH OF THE MOOSE RIVER, UPSTREAM TO ADF&G REGULATORY MARKERS LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 100 YARDS UPSTREAM OF THE MOUTH OF THE MOOSE RIVER, AND THE MOOSE RIVER FROM ITS CONFLUENCE WITH THE KENAI RIVER UPSTREAM TO THE UPSTREAM EDGE OF THE STERLING HIGHWAY BRIDGE, ONLY ONE UNBAITED, SINGLE-HOOK, ARTIFICIAL FLY MAY BE USED;

(F) FROM MAY 1 - JULY 31, IN THE FOLLOWING WATERS ONLY ONE UNBAITED, SINGLE-HOOK, ARTIFICIAL FLY MAY BE USED:

(I) THAT PORTION OF THE KENAI RIVER FROM AN ADF&G REGULATORY MARKER LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 300 YARDS DOWNSTREAM FROM THE MOUTH OF SLIKOK CREEK, UPSTREAM TO AN ADF&G REGULATORY MARKER LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 300 YARDS UPSTREAM FROM THE MOUTH OF SLIKOK CREEK;

(II) THAT PORTION OF THE KENAI RIVER FROM AN ADF&G REGULATORY MARKER LOCATED APPROXIMATELY ONE MILE DOWNSTREAM FROM THE MOUTH OF FUNNY RIVER, UPSTREAM TO AN ADF&G REGULATORY MARKER LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 200 YARDS UPSTREAM FROM THE MOUTH OF THE FUNNY RIVER;

(G) FROM MAY 1 - JULY 31, THAT PORTION OF THE KENAI RIVER FROM AN ADF&G REGULATORY MARKER LOCATED APPROXIMATELY THREE-QUARTERS OF A MILE DOWNSTREAM FROM THE MOUTH OF THE LOWER KILLEY RIVER, UPSTREAM TO AN ADF&G REGULATORY MARKER LOCATED APPROXIMATELY ONE MILE UPSTREAM FROM THE MOUTH OF THE LOWER KILLEY RIVER, ONLY ONE UNBAITED, SINGLE-HOOK, ARTIFICIAL FLY MAY BE USED;

(H) REPEALED 5/18/2014;

(I) REPEALED 6/8/2017;

(J) REPEALED 6/8/2017;

(K) FROM NOVEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 31 IN THE KENAI RIVER FROM BINGS LANDING UPSTREAM TO THE MOUTH OF THE UPPER KILLEY RIVER, ONLY ONE UNBAITED, SINGLE-HOOK, ARTIFICIAL LURE MAY BE USED;

(L) IN ALL TRIBUTARIES OF THE LOWER SECTION, ONLY ONE UNBAITED, SINGLE-HOOK, ARTIFICIAL LURE, WITH A GAP BETWEEN THE POINT AND SHANK OF THREE-EIGHTHS INCH OR LESS, MAY BE USED;]

Replace with:

In flowing waters of the Kenai River from it's mouth to Bings Landing only one unbaited single hook artificial lure may be used from January 1 to July 31, except by emergency order.

In flowing waters of the Kenai River from Bings Landing, upstream to Skilak Lake only one unbaited single hook artificial lure may be used year round. except two artificial flies may be used provided the combined hook gap is less than 1/2 inch.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Regulations on the Lower Kenai River are unnecessarily complicated and thus are often misinterpreted or ignored. I propose making them easy to understand, simple and the best for the resource and anglers.

Recently the entire Kenai River has been closed to the use of bait due to poor king salmon returns, my proposal closes fishing for king salmon with bait entirely except by emergency order. It would allow limited fishing for coho salmon with bait in a bulk of the lower river.

The "middle river" section, which has the most resident fish (rainbow trout and dolly varden), would be closed to bait entirely, to protect resident species. This proposal would close a very small chunk of water to bait fishing when it otherwise would be open, however this is warranted because

of the very poor catch and release mortality of trophy rainbow trout and dolly varden caught on bait, the river above Bings Landing has the highest concentration of these fish and their protection coupled with the fact that bait is completely unnecessary to successfully target coho salmon should be considered.

“Fly fishing only” portions of the lower river would be eliminated. These are often areas where sockeye salmon are targeted specifically. Flies with small hook gaps being the most productive gear for successfully targeting sockeye, and therefore they will be used anyway. While the original intent of the regulation was to limit snagging of sockeye, snagging fish is easier with fly fishing only gear than any single hook lure, so this is not accomplished anyway.

By allowing small trout fishing hooks to be used in tandem the middle Kenai River will become in line with every other western state. The hook gap restriction would be such that only very small flies may be used when fishing with two hooks, virtually eliminating the practice all but a very small subset of fly fishermen who prefer to use insect imitations.

Alternatives:

-The status quo will continue to make it's very easy for otherwise law abiding anglers to break the law.

-Making the entire river one single hook artificial lure, would cause harm to those who like to fish bait for coho salmon.

PROPOSED BY: Patrick P McCormick

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