

PROPOSAL 166

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.

Expand time and area waters of the Kenai River are limited to only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure and redefine “artificial fly” as follows:

Section 5 AAC 57.121 - Special provisions and localized additions and exceptions to the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Lower Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area

...

(F) from May 1 - July 31, in the following waters only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial fly may be used:

...

- (iii) **that portion of the Kenai River from the lower Swan Sanctuary Markers at approximately river mile 47, downstream to ADF&G Marker located approximately 100 yards downstream of the Moose 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;]

For the purpose of this regulation the definition of an “artificial fly” is defined below;

Artificial Fly – means a fly which is constructed by common methods known as fly tying, including a dry fly, wet fly, and nymph, which is free of bait as defined below. Materials and chemicals designed and produced primarily to cause flies to float or sink may be used on artificial flies.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently sportfishing regulations allow for a myriad of fishing methods in the Lower Kenai River downstream of Skilak Lake. During this time of continued low abundance of Kenai River Chinook Salmon the increased popularity, and targeting of, resident species in June and July has been exponential. Many of the anglers participating in the resident species fishery execute the fishery in a manner that is not consistent with catch and release ethics, targeting and exploiting the Resident Species in active spawning areas with methods that disrupt spawning behavior. The backtrolling or casting of “plug” style lures elicits a response from both male and female spawning Rainbow Trout as they protect their respective redd from intruders. This results in anglers repeatedly removing spawning fish from spawning areas and does not promote natural, nor successful spawning activity.

If this regulation is not adopted and the exploitation of spawning Resident Species is allowed to continue the results could be catastrophic to the longevity of Kenai River Rainbow Trout.

Other considerations were:

- A) Prohibiting “backtrolling” style fishing methods. In this situation the definition of “backtrolling” is insufficient in that “the slowed downstream progress of a vessel” while fly fishing or float fishing is also common practice.

- B) Close the Kenai River from Skilak Lake (or the Lower Swan Signs at mile 47) to the Moose River confluence to all fishing from May 1 – July 1 in order to protect spawning Resident Species. This would create an additional burden and decreased opportunity for early run sockeye anglers, local riverfront property owners, guided and nonguided anglers.

PROPOSED BY: Josh Hayes

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