

PROPOSAL 225

5 AAC 61.118. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 4 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.

Open rainbow trout fishing in Unit 4 of the Susitna River drainage year-round with a bag limit of 5 fish, 10 in possession as follows:

Susitna River Drainage Unit 4

Rainbow/Steelhead Trout

In flowing waters

No closed season 5 per day 10 in possession

Canyon Creek

No closed season 5 per day 10 in possession

Lake Creek

No closed season 5 per day 10 in possession

Talachulitna River

No closed season 5 per day 10 in possession

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Increase the opportunity to harvest rainbow trout for food and reduce predation of rainbow trout on depressed salmon populations that provide far more economic and food value to subsistence, sport, personal use and commercial user groups. It has been over 30 years since rainbow trout regulations were changed to reduce the human harvest of rainbow trout in the two major king salmon streams to catch and release only and limited much of unit 4 of the Susitna River Drainage to a reduced open water season and a daily limit of 2 fish. In that time frame the king salmon harvest for both sport and commercial fishermen has been reduced to zero. Rainbow trout numbers are significantly higher than when I started guiding here in 1993. This is a reflection of a successful management goal of increasing rainbow trout populations. Rainbow populations are overly abundant and possibly negatively affecting the king salmon and other salmon species as a main predator of salmon and their eggs. If we continue to have these overly restrictive rainbow trout regulations we will continue to limit people's ability to catch significant numbers of trout to replace the lost harvest of King Salmon and we may be limiting the growth of salmon populations due to overwhelming in river predation of salmon by the inflated rainbow populations that we created.

I considered proposing that we treat rainbow trout predators like we treat Northern Pike predators in Unit 4, however I rejected this as too extreme for the people who will come to the board screaming and crying about this proposal. It will be a miracle enough, if this common sense proposal passes.

PROPOSED BY: David William McHoes

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