

PROPOSAL 242

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 anglers from releasing coho salmon in the Little Susitna River 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 daily 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, from catch and release mortality, that is caused by the large number of salmon that are caught and released each year, resulting in high mortalities as verified in the ADF&G coho catch and release mortality studies. ADF&G reports show there is an average of well 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 becoming a spawner for producing future returns. Coho are extremely susceptible to catch and release mortality. 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-F23-037)
