

**PROPOSAL 250**

**5 AAC 59.122. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area.**

Modify the closure date for the Ship Creek king salmon fishery as follows:

5 AAC 55.122(a)(14)(A) is amended to read:

(14) in the Ship Creek drainage,

(A) the waters from its mouth upstream to a cable 100 feet downstream of the Chugach Power Plant dam are open to sport fishing for all finfish species, [EXCEPT THAT SPORT FISHING FOR KING SALMON IS OPEN ONLY] from January 1 – **December 31**[JULY13];

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Currently, the Ship Creek king salmon fishery closes by regulation after July 13. During the 2017 and 2021 seasons, the king salmon closure date was lifted and bag limits were increased to allow harvest on surplus fish. In these two years it was anticipated that the William Jack Hernandez Sport Fish Hatchery had enough fish enter the raceways to meet the broodstock goals, and inseason stream surveys identified additional fish in the creek above the fishery. It was determined that harvest of king salmon after July 13, during the coho salmon fishery, would not have an impact on meeting stream or hatchery goals. In both of these years the broodstock goals were met.

The July 14 closure date was implemented by the Alaska Board of Fisheries in 1990 and while it can protect fish when there are wild spawning and hatchery needs, the department has emergency order authority to implement regulatory changes to the sport fishery when determined necessary, in advance of the July 14 king salmon season closure. King salmon closures have been implemented in three of the last ten years (2013, 2014, and 2018), prior to the July 14 closure and the season remained closed. There is no biological concern with leaving the king salmon season open year- round and this regulatory change does not impact how the department currently manages the Ship Creek king salmon fishery however, this regulatory change will reduce the need to put out an emergency order during years where surveys indicate additional harvest opportunity in the fishery after July 13. Current regulations require any king salmon caught from July 14 – December 31 to be released unless an emergency order has been issued. The department does not wish to change fishing hours or bag limits or the overall king salmon annual limit in Cook Inlet waters. The creek could continue to be open to fishing at night, effective July 14. the issue statement here.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F23-023)

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