

PROPOSAL 251

5 AAC 59.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area and 5 AAC 59.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area.

Modify the Eklutna River drainage salmon bag and possession limits as follows:

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

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- (5) in the Eklutna River drainage,
 - (A) the waters from its mouth upstream to the Glenn Highway are open to sport fishing for salmon, other than king, **coho and sockeye** salmon;
 - (B) from January 1 – September 31, the waters upstream of the Glenn Highway are open to sport fishing for salmon, other than king, **coho and sockeye** salmon;

5 AAC 59.120 General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area.

...

- (2) salmon, other than king, **coho and sockeye** salmon,
 - (A) the bag and possession limit for salmon, other than king, **coho and sockeye** salmon, 16 inches or greater in length, is 3 fish[, ONLY TWO PER DAY AND TWO IN POSSESSION MAY BE COHO SALMON];

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Native Village of Eklutna (NVE) proposes to temporarily curtail coho and sockeye sportfishing in the Eklutna River till populations can rebound to sustainable levels.

Eklutna River salmon have declined drastically within Eklutna tribal memory (documented by interviews), with 2 dams and sport fishing pressure. NVE systematically counted Eklutna River spawner salmon in 2002, 2003, 2021 and 2022. 2002-3 counts were performed at least every 3 weeks, while in 2021-22 counts were performed weekly. Maximum counts for coho were 131 in 2002 and 39 in 2003. More recent maximum coho counts were 8 in 2021 and 18 in 2022. Maximum counts for sockeye were 2 in 2002 and 21 in 2003, while no returning sockeye spawners were observed in 2021 or 2022.

We believe that these population numbers cannot support the current regulations, under which coho could completely disappear, as sockeye seem to have. NVE and others are engaged in multiple activities to restore the river salmon habitat and thriving populations. We are working with the utilities and agencies to replace the Eklutna Lake dam to restore flows to the river and fish passage between river and lake. We would like native runs to repopulate the system. We hope for abundant Eklutna drainage fisheries. The coho and sockeye fisheries should be restored when numbers increase sufficiently.

PROPOSED BY: Native Village of Eklutna

(HQ-F23-114)
