

*Anchorage Area Sport and Personal Use Fisheries (6 proposals)*

**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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**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.

...

- (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)  
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**PROPOSAL 252**

**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 56.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai Peninsula Area.**

Increase the bag and possession for salmon, other than king salmon, 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.**

...

**(18) In all freshwater drainages open to salmon fishing entering Turnagain Arm south of Bird Creek and continuing along the arm shoreline and Kenai Peninsula shoreline to the Northern District boundary,**

**(A) the bag and possession limit for salmon other than king salmon, 16 inches or more in length, is three fish.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** From our recollection in 2000 most coho salmon bag and possession limits throughout the Knik Arm, Anchorage Bowl, and Turnagain Arm were reduced from 3 fish daily and in possession to 2 fish daily and in possession as a paired restrictions conservation package where the Northern District set net fishery was restricted to fishing one net per permit holder from July 20 — August 10 under an Upper Cook Inlet Coho Salmon Conservation Plan.

Since that time the set net fishery has been liberalized by allowing Northern District permit holders with more than one permit to fish additional gear (permit stacking). The dates for fishing with restricted nets has been shortened by the board to July 20 – August 6. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has often allowed Northern District set netters in the Eastern Subdistrict to use twice as many nets as set netters in the General Subdistrict during the July 20 — August 6 period, by emergency order.

Since the Northern District Salmon Management Plan directs the fishery to be managed to provide reasonable harvest opportunity for both commercial and inriver users throughout the entire season, and in light of the above listed harvest liberalizations for Eastern District set gill netters harvesting primarily Turnagain Arm salmon stocks, we request that the coho salmon bag and possession limit for Turnagain Arm salmon stocks in drainages south of Bird Creek and continuing along the Turnagain Arm and Cook Inlet shoreline all the way to the Northern District boundary once again be increased to 3 salmon (all of which may be coho salmon). If the department has data justifying an increased level of harvest opportunity for Turnagain Arm salmon stocks, then per the management plan, it only seems fair that sport anglers should also share in this increased salmon harvest opportunity.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Sportfishing Association (EF-F23-124)

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**PROPOSAL 253**

**5 AAC 59.185. Special management areas for rainbow trout in the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area.**

Allow anglers to use two artificial flies in tandem in a portion of Campbell Creek as follows:

5 AAC 59.185. Special management areas for rainbow trout in the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area.

(a) unless otherwise specified in 5 AAC 59.120 and 5 AAC 59.122 or by an emergency order issued under AS 16.05.060, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used in the special management areas for rainbow trout described in (b) of this section **except that two artificial flies may be used in tandem.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Alaska is the only western state that prohibits anglers from fishing two flies in tandem for trout. It is a common practice throughout the world and is even allowed in competitive fly fishing where up to three flies can be used. There is no biological reason to limit the very small number of people who fish Campbell Creek above the forks the additional opportunity to fish two flies.

Alternatives: Allow to two flies if their combined hook gap is a certain size, this was deemed unnecessarily restrictive and hard to enforce

**PROPOSED BY:** Patrick McCormick (EF-F23-081)  
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### **PROPOSAL 254**

**5 AAC 59.185. Special management areas for rainbow trout in the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area.**

Add a portion of Chester Creek to the Anchorage Bowl Drainages special management areas for trout as follows:

5 AAC 59.185. Special management areas for rainbow trout in the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area.

(a) unless otherwise specified in 5 AAC 59.120 and 5 AAC 59.122 or by an emergency order issued under AS 16.05.060, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used in the special management areas for rainbow trout described in (b) of this section

(b) rainbow trout catch-and-release special management areas are those waters managed to maintain historical size and age distributions. the rainbow trout catch-and-release special management area in the Anchorage bowl drainages area is in that portion of Campbell Creek upstream from the forks at piper street **and Chester Creek and it's tributaries, except APU/University Lake and the portion downstream of University Lake to Elmore.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Anchorage is blessed to have a very good wild trout fishery in the heart of the city, by correctly managing Chester Creek trophy trout will continue to be quietly produced in Anchorage. Chester Creek has more and better trout fishing opportunities than Campbell Creek, indeed the only rainbow trout of any size regularly encountered above the forks of Campbell Creek are either very small (2-6 inches) or catchable hatchery fish, whereas the entire Chester Creek drainage hosts rainbow trout of a variety of sizes, and very few hatchery fish are encountered. The APU/University Lake is the site of stocking, and by not including that portion as a special management area residents will continue to have a reasonable opportunity to harvest rainbow trout.

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**PROPOSAL 255**

**5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan.**

Create a personal use dip net fishery for salmon in the 20-Mile and Placer Rivers as follows:

5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

...

**(i) salmon may be taken by dipnet in the 20-Mile River and the Placer River only as follows:**

- 1. July 1-July 31: Open to dip netting only on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 6.a.m. to 11 p.m.**
- 2. between ADF&G regulatory markers within one mile upstream of the Seward Highway downstream, to drainages' terminus with Turnagain Arm at all tidal stages;**
- 3. Personal use fishing in 20-Mile River and Placer River may not be done from a boat or other floating device—although participants are allowed to wear a PFD;**
- 4. The annual limit, is as specified in 5 AAC 77.525, except that no king salmon may be retained, and any king salmon caught must be returned to the water and released immediately;**
- 5. A permit holder for this fishery shall report to the department as specified in the permit conditions.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Northern District Salmon Management Plan states: The department shall manage the chum, pink, and sockeye salmon stocks for commercial and inriver uses to provide an opportunity to harvest these salmon resources based on abundance. The department shall also manage the chum, pink, and sockeye salmon stocks to minimize the harvest of Northern District coho salmon, to provide sport and guided sport fishermen and other inriver users a reasonable opportunity to harvest these resources over the entire run, as measured by the frequency of inriver restrictions, or as specified in this section and other regulations.

Placer and 20-Mile Rivers are two of the largest salmon producing systems in Turnagain Arm, with highway access from Girdwood and Anchorage, and although there is a personal use dip net opportunity to harvest hooligan, there is no personal use salmon opportunity anywhere in Turnagain Arm or its tributary streams. It appears Turnagain Arm sockeye salmon stocks may be a more productive Northern Cook Inlet salmon stock, as Northern Cook Inlet set netters from the Eastern Subdistrict harvest more sockeye throughout the season compared to set netters in the larger General Subdistrict. In addition, during a portion of the season when the department regularly reduces nets in the Northern District (July 20-August 6) set netters in the Eastern Subdistrict, since 2016, have for the most part, been allowed to fish with twice as many nets compared to set netters in the General Subdistrict, demonstrating adequate numbers of harvestable surplus salmon to provide a personal use dip net fishery. Note: there are currently two subsistence locations and three personal use fishery locations allowed to harvest salmon from the General

Subdistrict or its drainages, yet zero subsistence or personal use salmon harvest opportunities in the Turnagain / Eastern portion of Northern Cook Inlet.

To avoid catching king salmon and excessive numbers of coho salmon we are proposing a shorter personal use season on both ends, compared to the commercial season. Since the Seward Highway is busy during the summer and parking spaces are limited, we ask the Board to consider a conservative weekday and shore-based personal use fishery at these locations (no fishing from boats). We are proposing a 3-day per week fishery with 31 or more hours between individual fishing periods. The proposed fishing area is arbitrary (but considers ease of access) so the department or Board could make adjustments, if other options may be more beneficial. For simplicity and to avoid redundancy these two river locations were submitted as one proposal. If there are biological differences between the two rivers or other reasons the department or board would like to consider each river location as a separate regulation that would be fine as well.

**PROPOSED BY:** South Central Alaska Dipnetters Association

(HQ-F23-112)

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