

KYLE SPENCER
Austin Texas

Alaska Department of Fish & Game
ATTN: Boards Support Section
PO Box 115526
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526
Fax: (907) 465-6094

RE: Proposal # 239 -5 AAC 67.002(g)(6)

I SUPPORT THE SINGLE HOOK PORTION OF THIS PROPOSAL.

I STRONGLY OPPOSE THE NO-BAIT PORTION OF THIS PROPOSAL

Board Members,

So that you know who I am, I began as a sport fishing guide on the Nushagak River almost 10 years ago. I have caught and released thousands of Nushagak Chinook Salmon with my clients, and spent months living on the banks of the lower river. I know the river, and have worked with men who have spent their adult lives guiding for Kings 6 weeks every summer. Sometimes the fishing is good, sometimes it is very tough. On the tough days, you have to have bait to be successful. Tough days can be defined by high water, murky water, commercial sockeye openers that hold back the kings and maim and damage and kill the kings with the net gear, or days when the fish just aren't entering the river with the tides in significant numbers. Assuming that escapement goals are being met or exceeded, it would be ridiculous for the healthiest king salmon run in the world, which receives minimal sportfishing pressure, to be restricted from the use of bait. If you universally take away the use of bait on the Nushagak (where the run is massive and one of the healthiest in the world), and don't install the same regulation to the Kenai and Cook Inlet (where the run is COLLAPSING), then there is no logic, reason or consistency in the fisheries management for King Salmon in Alaska, and frankly you will have failed in your position as stewards. I STRONGLY OPPOSE THE NO BAIT PORTION OF THE PROPOSAL.

I SUPPORT THE SINGLE HOOK PORTION OF THE PROPOSAL. Treble hooks are bad news. They cause serious unnecessary damage to fish. Treble hooks get poor hooksets and rip up the fish. Multiple treble hooks on kwikfish, wiggle warts and other diving plugs typically maim and injure the salmon even further. Trebles are dangerous. This is avoidable. Single barbed hooks do not result in this type of damage, even if you have two on a plug or run a cheater rig with tandem singles. Single hooks stick in the corner of the mouth and allow for quick releases. Treble hooks often foul-hook salmon which causes longer fights.

I support the Single Hook only proposal for the Nushagak River, but I REJECT THE NO BAIT PORTION OF THE PROPOSAL..

I strongly oppose the no-bait provision of the proposal. Bait is essential to angler success. How do you expect amateur anglers from Dillingham to catch their kings on the 2 days out of the year they get to fish,

if you take away bait? What if the water is high and cloudy? What value do additional kings beyond the necessary escapement contribute to the economy or the people of Alaska? The stated position of our resource management is to strive for maximum renewable utilization of the resource. Elimination of the use of bait would dramatically hinder the ability to catch and harvest a king for these individuals who depend on the harvest to feed their families, and it will kill the Bristol Bay sportfishing industry. Do you want to be responsible for causing that? The ADF&G already has the power to restrict bait if the run isn't doing well. There is absolutely no reason to have a blanket no bait rule; unless the goal is to not utilize the kings for any economic value generation. Is that the goal? Please reject the proposal to institute a no-bait fishing regulation on the Nushagak King Salmon sportfishery.

Thank you.



Kyle Spencer