

Board Generated Proposal X– 5 AAC 01.280 Subsistence fishing permit. Establish a permit system for regulating the king salmon subsistence fishery during times of low king salmon runs.

5 AAC 01.280 is amended to read:

5 AAC 01.280 Subsistence fishing permits.

[FISH MAY BE TAKEN FOR SUBSISTENCE PURPOSES WITHOUT A SUBSISTENCE FISHING PERMIT]

(a) Except as provided in this section, fish may be taken for subsistence purposes without a subsistence fishing permit.

(b) In times of king salmon conservation, the commissioner may, by emergency order, close the subsistence fishery and immediately reopen the fishery with the following provisions. In the Kuskokwim River drainage, king salmon may only be taken by a subsistence fishing permit.

(1) A king salmon community subsistence fishing permit may be issued to communities or groups of [NUMBER] or more individuals who demonstrate a communal subsistence pattern of use of king salmon as described in the applicable board finding;

(i) Season dates for community permits are [MONTH AND DAY] through [MONTH AND DAY].

(ii) Annual permit limits will be determined based on a percentage of annual forecasted surplus king salmon, the number of permit applications received, and the number of individuals attached to the permit.

(2) A king salmon household subsistence fishing permit may be issued;

(i) Season dates for household permits are [MONTH AND DAY] through [MONTH AND DAY].

(ii) Annual permit limits will be determined based on a percentage of annual forecasted surplus king salmon, the number of permit applications received, and the number of individuals per household. .

(3) The application period for community and household permits is [MONTH AND DAY] through [MONTH AND DAY] annually;

(4) Only one subsistence fishing permit will be issued to each household per year. Individual households are only eligible to be listed on either a community subsistence fishing permit or a household subsistence fishing permit;

(5) All species caught while fishing for king salmon must be retained;

(6) Permit must be in possession while fishing or transporting fish;

(7) All fish harvested must be recorded on the permit, in ink, before concealing the fish from plain view or transporting the fish from the fishing site; for the purposes of this paragraph, “fishing site” means the location where the fish is removed from the water and becomes part of the permit holder’s bag limit;

(8) Permits must be returned or harvest reported when fishing is completed or by the date specified on the permit;; Permits must be returned to the department no later than [Month and Day], or a permit for the following year may be denied as provided in 5 AAC 01.015 (c);

(9) This regulation expires [DATE].

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Since 2012, king salmon returns to the Kuskokwim River have been below historical averages and some of the lowest runs on record. These low returns have prompted restrictions to the Kuskokwim River subsistence salmon fishery. At the August 2015 Kuskokwim Subsistence Salmon Panel meeting (panel) in Bethel, the panel heard testimony from panel members in support of a limited permit system that would allow for the harvest of king salmon during times of shortage.