

PROPOSAL 78 – 5 AAC 57.123. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area.

Align the closure start date for all the tributaries of the Upper Section of the Kenai River Drainage Area with the start dates proposed for the king salmon sanctuaries and the start dates proposed for the rainbow trout spawning closure. In addition, create the same fishing season in all the tributaries of the Upper Section of the Kenai River Drainage area, as follows:

5 AAC 57.123 is amended to read:

(1) Kenai Lake from the Sterling Highway Bridge at the outlet, upstream to ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately one-quarter mile upstream, is open to sport fishing only from **June 11 – April 30** [JUNE 11 – MAY 1];

...

(3) **repealed** / /2017 [IN ALL FLOWING WATERS OF THE KENAI LAKE DRAINAGE, THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR RAINBOW/STEELHEAD TROUT IS ONE FISH LESS THAN 16 INCHES IN LENGTH; RAINBOW/STEELHEAD TROUT 16 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH MAY NOT BE RETAINED; RAINBOW/STEELHEAD TROUT CAUGHT THAT ARE 16 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH MUST BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY AND RETURNED TO THE WATER UNHARMED];

...

(9) the following waters of the Upper Section of the Kenai River drainage are closed to sport fishing, as follows:

(A) from May 1 – June 10, all flowing waters of the Upper Section of the Kenai River drainage;

(B) from May 1 – June 10 and from September 15 – October 31, the Quartz Creek drainage upstream of the Sterling Highway Bridge, including Devils Creek, Johns Creek, Jerome Creek, Summit Creek, and Slate Creek, and the South Fork of the Snow River.

Note: Paragraphs (6) – (8) are repealed by this proposal.

[(6) CRESCENT CREEK DRAINAGE, AS FOLLOWS:

(A) OPEN TO SPORT FISHING FROM JUNE 11 – MAY 1;

(B) IN FLOWING WATERS, ONLY ONE UNBAITED, SINGLE-HOOK, ARTIFICIAL LURE MAY BE USED;

(C) IN CRESCENT LAKE, FROM JUNE 11 – MAY 1, THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR RAINBOW/STEELHEAD TROUT IS TWO FISH, OF WHICH ONLY ONE MAY BE 20 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH;

(D) FROM JUNE 11 – MAY 1, THE CRESCENT CREEK DRAINAGE, EXCEPT CRESCENT LAKE, IS OPEN TO SPORT FISHING FOR RAINBOW/STEELHEAD TROUT; THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR RAINBOW/STEELHEAD TROUT IS ONE FISH LESS THAN 16 INCHES IN LENGTH; RAINBOW/STEELHEAD TROUT 16 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH MAY NOT BE RETAINED; RAINBOW/STEELHEAD TROUT CAUGHT THAT ARE 16 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH MUST BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY, AND RETURNED TO THE WATER UNHARMED;

(E) THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR ARCTIC GRAYLING IS TWO FISH, WITH NO SIZE LIMIT;

(7) QUARTZ CREEK DRAINAGE, EXCLUDING CRESCENT CREEK, AS FOLLOWS:

(A) ONLY ONE UNBAITED, SINGLE-HOOK, ARTIFICIAL LURE MAY BE USED;

(B) CLOSED TO SPORT FISHING FOR SALMON;

(C) OPEN TO SPORT FISHING FOR FINFISH OTHER THAN SALMON, FROM ITS MOUTH TO THE UPSTREAM SIDE OF THE STERLING HIGHWAY BRIDGE, FROM JUNE 11 – MAY 1;

(D) FROM JUNE 11 – SEPTEMBER 14, AND FROM NOVEMBER 1 – MAY 1, UPSTREAM OF THE STERLING HIGHWAY BRIDGE, INCLUDING DEVILS CREEK, JOHNS CREEK, JEROME CREEK, SUMMIT CREEK, AND SLATE CREEK, IS OPEN TO SPORT FISHING FOR FINFISH OTHER THAN SALMON;

(E) THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR ARCTIC CHAR/DOLLY VARDEN IS ONE FISH LESS THAN 16 INCHES IN LENGTH; ARCTIC CHAR/DOLLY VARDEN 16 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH MAY NOT BE RETAINED; ARCTIC CHAR/DOLLY VARDEN CAUGHT THAT ARE 16 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH MUST BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY AND RETURNED TO THE WATER UNHARMED;

(F) THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR RAINBOW/STEELHEAD TROUT IS ONE FISH LESS THAN 16 INCHES IN LENGTH; RAINBOW/STEELHEAD TROUT 16 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH MAY NOT BE RETAINED; RAINBOW/STEELHEAD TROUT CAUGHT THAT ARE 16 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH MUST BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY AND RETURNED TO THE WATER UNHARMED;

(8) SNOW RIVER DRAINAGE, AS FOLLOWS:

(A) ONLY ONE UNBAITED, SINGLE-HOOK, ARTIFICIAL LURE MAY BE USED;

(B) CLOSED TO SPORT FISHING FOR SALMON;

(C) THE SOUTH FORK OF THE SNOW RIVER IS OPEN TO SPORT FISHING FOR FINFISH OTHER THAN SALMON FROM JUNE 11 – SEPTEMBER 14, AND FROM NOVEMBER 1 – MAY 1;

(D) THE REMAINDER OF THE SNOW RIVER DRAINAGE, NOT SPECIFIED IN (C) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, IS OPEN TO SPORT FISHING FOR FINFISH OTHER THAN SALMON FROM JUNE 11 – MAY 1;

(E) THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR ARCTIC CHAR/DOLLY VARDEN IS ONE FISH LESS THAN 16 INCHES IN LENGTH; ARCTIC CHAR/DOLLY VARDEN 16 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH MAY NOT BE RETAINED; ARCTIC CHAR/DOLLY VARDEN CAUGHT THAT ARE 16 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH MUST BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY AND RETURNED TO THE WATER UNHARMED;

(F) THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR RAINBOW/STEELHEAD TROUT IS ONE FISH LESS THAN 16 INCHES IN LENGTH; RAINBOW/STEELHEAD TROUT 16 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH MAY NOT BE RETAINED; RAINBOW/STEELHEAD TROUT CAUGHT THAT ARE 16 INCHES OR GREATER

IN LENGTH MUST BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY AND RETURNED TO THE WATER UNHARMED.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Alaska Department of Fish and Game submitted this suite of proposals to provide the board an opportunity to review Kenai River sport fishing regulations and consider changes to simplify and align regulations. Nearly all existing regulations that have dates which trigger general or special provisions to sport fish regulations reference the first, last or middle day of a month. The purpose is to create regulations 1) with consistent dates that encompass biological concerns, and 2) that are easily understood by the public. Regulations have been adopted in the Kenai River Drainage Area over the years for various fisheries based on biological as well as social issues. In many cases dates that start or discontinue regulations for one fishery do not align with regulations for another fishery in the same area. Over time this created regulations that are disjointed, overly complex, and not easily understood by the public. These proposals identify regulations that, taken as a whole, would align dates and waters to simplify regulations without impacting fishery management objectives. Aligning regulations for consistency will improve public communication, decrease regulatory complexity and increase public understanding of the sport fishing regulations in the Kenai River Drainage Area.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F16-138)
