

PROPOSAL 59

5 AAC 67.022 Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means in the Bristol Bay Area.

Close waters to king salmon sport fishing in a section of the Naknek River drainage, as follows:

I would suggest a full closure for all king salmon fishing at the following locations/times:

Close the Naknek River to all king fishing from “Painter Bob’s Cabin” upstream to the ADF&G marker at “Trefon’s Cabin” near the mouth of Naknek Lake at all times.

Close the area of the Naknek main channel within ¼ mile of the projected mouth of Big Creek to king fishing after July 15. Even buoys (similar to King Salmon Creek) may not suffice. I believe Kings actively spawn in the Naknek River itself in the area between Crystal Creek Lodge and the outlet of the “Slide” or “Bluff” hole. I witnessed people back bouncing with spin and glows at this location in mid to late July and pulling red kings out by the dozens, while traditional back-trolling with wiggle warts or quick fish was much less effective. That tells me many kings are preparing to spawn there in the Naknek and not moving up stream from that location.

Continue the closure of the area adjacent to King Salmon Creek via buoys.

Ensure the area in and adjacent to Paul’s Creek is closed.

Obviously king salmon fishing should be closed within all tributaries to the Naknek River.

In these closed areas, king salmon may not be targeted at all, and if they are accidentally hooked while targeting other species, they must NOT be removed from the water and shall be released immediately.

I’d recommend decreasing the Naknek specific king salmon bag limit to 2 kings annually, at least for Alaska non-residents.

Although it would be difficult to enforce, a limit to ‘rods in the water’ per day per lodge would help the pressure, as well.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I have been guiding/fishing on the Naknek since 2001. I realize this is a relatively short time, but over that time, I’ve noticed a significant increase in sport fishing pressure on every level. Regarding the king salmon species, I’ve seen the number of large fish decrease and the runs become more volatile over the years. The longest tenured local fishermen who respect the fishery the most tend to stick to the traditional locations and techniques, but more and more people are pursuing the kings closer to their spawning areas and the addition of more and more inexperienced guides/lodges and do-it-yourself outfitters has exacerbated this situation. I believe commercial fishing is the main threat to the future of our king run, but commercial fishing coupled with irresponsible and excessive sport fishing is a nail in their coffin. Assuming this board does not deal with the commercial side, I believe the addition

of sport fishing regulations to control the location, harvest and volume of sport fishing “rods in the water” would help delay the further decline of the fishery.

IF NOTHING IS DONE WE WILL CONTINUE TO SEE A DECLINE IN OUR OVERALL KING SALMON RETURNS. Like the Kenai, Susitna and many other Alaskan rivers, the Naknek River will cease to be a premier destination for sport fishermen. Local subsistence users who depend on king salmon for an important food source may also suffer.

PROPOSED BY: Dan Kirsch

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