

Howard Delo
Fish and Wildlife Commission
Matanuska Susitna Borough
Public Testimony
2024 UCI Board of Fisheries Meeting

IV. Stocks of Concern – Howard Delo

- Good morning, Mr. Chair, and members of the Board. My name is Howard Delo and I'm a member of the Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission. My comments can be found in RC _____. I'd like to thank you for your service in the management of Alaskan fisheries.
- Stocks of Concern are fish chronically struggling to maintain population stability despite conservative management efforts.
- The Susitna River sockeye was designated as a Stock of Yield Concern in 2008. With the establishment of the Conservation Corridor in 2011, and subsequent regulations reinforcing the Corridor in 2014, the Susitna River sockeye population improved enough to be delisted as a Stock of Concern in 2020.
- Despite the improvement for Susitna sockeye, numerous king salmon populations throughout Upper Cook Inlet, because of early run timing and unrelated to the Conservation Corridor, continue to be listed as a Stock of Management Concern, and many have been there for more than a decade. The results are a continuously declining stock, limited catch-and-release fishing, and full-season closures for anglers. This begs the question: is careful conservation management doing enough? Is there more to be done?
- The graph on **page 20** of the Mat Su booklet It Takes Fish to Make Fish 2024 (PC138) shows the results of significant and continuing declines in king salmon returns to the Northern District resulting in limited harvest opportunities for anglers.
- 2023 was the fourth season since 2018 with no king salmon sport harvest in the Susitna.
- Drainage wide Susitna king salmon harvest declines in the fourth largest king salmon producer in Alaska indicate a larger concern.
- Susitna sockeye was a Stock of Yield Concern from 2008 to 2020, and never reached harvest levels as low as the kings currently have.
- The Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission respectfully requests listing all Susitna Drainage king salmon as Stock(s) of Yield Concern which would require adjustments to management plans.
- Thank you.