

PROPOSAL 225

5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area.

Limit retention of king salmon in the Eklutna Tailrace to hatchery fish, as follows:

All waters within a 1/2 mile radius of its confluence with the Knik River, and to an ADF&G marker located 2 miles downstream of the confluence:

Add a new section as follows:

From the above mentioned ADF&G marker to the Knik River confluence with Knik Arm: same methods, means, and bag limit, however, the only king salmon allowed to be retained in these waters are hatchery fish with a healed adipose fin-clip scar.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? With the Eklutna Tailrace/Knik River enhanced king salmon fishery being the primary freshwater location in Northern Cook Inlet Management Area where sport anglers were allowed to harvest king salmon during the 2018 season, and by emergency order at the start of the 2019 season, — the only freshwater location where sport anglers could harvest king salmon in the Northern Cook Inlet Management Area, this is an extremely small location for everyone who would like to catch a king salmon to fish. The entire Tailrace measures about 1/4 mile long and the shallow braided Knik River side-channel below the Tailrace only provides 3 decent anchoring locations with deep enough water to hold king salmon as they migrate upstream between where the Marker should be located and the Tailrace.

During the 2018 season the ADF&G marker, discussed in the regulation booklet, never seemed to be put in place. I fished this area at least 6 times for king salmon in 2018 and never saw the marker — even though I knew and looked, where it had been located years ago.

To accommodate the amount of use this area receives — especially when many other Northern Cook Inlet Management Area king salmon fisheries are closed to sport harvest by emergency order — I suggest increasing the size of the fishing area — but limiting harvest of king salmon in the additional area to hatchery fin-clipped king salmon. All hatchery king salmon releases in this area should be fin-clipped and wire tagged similar to this practice used elsewhere in Upper Cook Inlet. This would provide a much larger fishing area for anglers to spread out in, while also providing for a biologically sustainable fishery, similar but more restrictive, than the Kasilof River/Crooked Creek king salmon fishery.

If adopted this proposal would allow very limited harvest beyond the present area for the first few years, as few of the hatchery king salmon released in previous years, at this location, were fin-clipped. It would also remain to be seen how successful anglers could be at catching king salmon in the deeper and more glacially turbid mainstream Knik River.

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