

Sport Salmon (6 proposals)

PROPOSAL 99

5 AAC 65.022. Special provisions for bag, possession, and annual limits, and methods and means in the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Area.

Prohibit retention of king salmon and establish closed areas in the King Salmon River and Ridgerunner Creek, as follows:

5 AAC 65.022 b (3) In the King Salmon River, king salmon must be immediately released. Also King Salmon River is closed to king salmon fishing upstream of 56 degrees 06' 00" N., 160 degrees 27' 17" W.. In Ridgerunner Creek, a tributary of the Milky and Bear Rivers, king salmon must be immediately released. Ridgerunner Creek is closed to king salmon fishing upstream of 56 degrees 09' 35" N., 160 degrees 20' 55" W.

If adopted this would allow sport fishing to occur on these two systems in the areas that effort typically occurs yet allow fish to make it to the spawning grounds without constant effort on them as they swim upriver. It also makes the catch and release regulation similar to other areas nearby that also have much larger king salmon runs and will allow people to still fish for them now and in the future.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The sport fishing effort for king salmon on the King Salmon River and Ridgerunner Creek, which is a tributary of the Milky River and Bear River system near Port Moller, has increased dramatically and I have concern for the resource and would like to see protections on the two systems so that the future of kings salmon at these locations allows for sport fishing to occur and healthy runs in the future. I have a home nearby which I built in 2007 and the amount of effort from lodges has dramatically increased in recent years and the fish need to have some protection. These creeks are only 15-30' wide and the rivers are not very long in length and are more like creeks than rivers, and the fish are subject to harvest as they school and hold while slowly migrating upriver. Sport fishing effort typically occurs in the same areas and there are often 2-3 lodges with up to 8-15 people per day that target these fish daily. Other nearby rivers with much larger king salmon runs are catch and release yet these two systems are not catch release. These creeks have king salmon runs from only about 400-1,000 fish annually and need to be catch and release like other nearby systems. There should also be a closed area to king salmon fishing, which is the only species targeted during the months of June and July on these systems. This will allow sportfishermen to fish these systems yet still provide protection of the king salmon.

PROPOSED BY: J.W. Smith

(EF-F22-009)

PROPOSAL 100

5 AAC 65.022. Special provisions for bag, possession, and annual limits, and methods and means in the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Area.

Prohibit retention of king salmon in King Salmon and Milky Rivers and Ridgerunner Creek, as follows:

Limit King Salmon Fishing on the King Salmon River and the Milky River/Ridge Runner Creek to catch and release only

Maybe allow 1 Jack King at least 20" and under harvested per day.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I am a lodge owner on the Alaska Peninsula and am concerned about the fisheries for our future.

Trying to save the King Salmon River and Milky/Ridge Runner Creek from excessive King Salmon sport fishing.

PROPOSED BY: Alan & Tanjala Eischens (EF-F22-018)

PROPOSAL 101

5 AAC 65.022. Special provisions for bag, possession, and annual limits, and methods and means in the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Area.

Prohibit retention of king salmon in King Salmon River and Ridgerunner Creek, as follows:

(b) Have the King Salmon River and Ridgerunner Creek be catch and release sport fishing for king salmon.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I have been a long-time lodge owner in the area and have seen the sport fishing effort on the King Salmon River and Ridgerunner Creek increase over time and I think there should be catch and release sport fishing on these systems as the runs are small in size and the fish can't handle all of the pressure.

PROPOSED BY: Mel Gillis (EF-F22-026)

PROPOSAL 102

5 AAC 65.022. Special provisions for bag, possession, and annual limits, and methods and means in the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Area.

Prohibit retention of king salmon in King Salmon River and tributaries of Bear River, as follows:

(b) In the King Salmon River and Bear River tributaries, King Salmon may not be possessed or retained; a person may not remove a King Salmon from the water before releasing a fish.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? As King Salmon stocks have declined and increased sport fishing effort over the past decade, there is concern of long term sustainability of the King Salmon populations in King Salmon River and the tributaries in Bear River.

PROPOSED BY: Connor Murphy (EF-F22-025)

PROPOSAL 103

5 AAC 65.022. Special provisions for bag, possession, and annual limits, and methods and means in the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Area.

Reduce the bag and possession limit for coho and sockeye salmon in the salt waters and freshwater drainages of Cold Bay, as follows:

This proposal seeks to add a special provision to the bag and possession limit for coho salmon and sockeye salmon in the salt waters and freshwater drainages of Cold Bay. The new proposal would read 5 AAC 65.022 (f) In the salt waters and all freshwater drainages of Cold Bay, the bag and possession limit for salmon, other than king salmon, is five fish per day, five fish in possession, of which no more than two fish may be coho salmon and two fish may be sockeye salmon. If enacted, this regulation would be bracketed by similar special provisions for Unalaska Bay (5 AAC 65. 022 (e)) and Kodiak Island (64.022 (2) (a)).

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Historically, Mortensen’s Lagoon has been the main salmon fishing spot for sport and subsistence fishers. However, between 2018 and 2021 Mortensen’s has failed to reach its escapement goal for sockeye salmon and corresponding low catch rates have shifted fishing pressure to systems on the north side of Cold Bay (e.g. Kinzarof Lagoon and the outlet of Swan Creek). These north side systems are small, turbid, and difficult to survey to obtain an index of escapement leading to management concerns about the long-term sustainability of harvest in these systems. Additionally, under 5 AAC 01.425 (6) ADF&G closes subsistence fishing for salmon in the waters specified in 5 AAC 09.350 and 5 AAC 39.290 (e.g. Kinzarof Lagoon and within 500 yards of the Swan Creek outlet) during an open commercial salmon fishing period (which can overlap greatly with the prime subsistence fishing time in August). However, no regulations currently exist to exclude sport fishers from harvesting fish in these same areas which has led to conflict between user groups.

PROPOSED BY: Candace Nielsen (EF-F22-028)

PROPOSAL 104

5 AAC 65.051. Waters closed to sport fishing in the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Area.

Repeal the closed water provisions for salmon fishing in Swanson Lagoon within the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Area, as follows:

5 AAC 65.051(5) is repealed:

The following waters are closed to sport fishing in the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Island Area:

- (5) **Repealed.** [SWANSON LAGOON AND ITS TRIBUTARIES ARE CLOSED
 - (A) FROM JANUARY 1 THROUGH JULY 31, TO SPORT FISHING FOR SALMON;
 - (B) FROM AUGUST 1 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, TO SPORT FISHING FOR SOCKEYE SALMON.]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current regulations aimed at conserving Swanson Lagoon sockeye salmon are ineffective due to environmental conditions that annually impede salmon migration. In addition, there is very little, if any, sport fishing effort in this location that might affect sockeye salmon populations. The current regulations were instituted because of the Stock of Concern designation during the 2011 Board of Fisheries meeting. More recently, the Stock of Concern designation, sockeye salmon escapement goal, and corresponding commercial fisheries management measures in the Stock of Concern action plan were rescinded due to recognition that environmental conditions in this drainage preclude effective management of this stock. The Swanson Lagoon drainage is annually impaired by a berm that builds up at the mouth of the lagoon by local wind and wave action. The berm opens occasionally and allows fish passage; however, timing of the creation of a channel does not always coincide with timing of sockeye salmon migration. This occurs frequently enough to render regulations regarding the sport fishery ineffective in achievement of escapement goals when compared with naturally occurring phenomenon such as the sand berm at the mouth of the lagoon. Sport fishing harvest and effort estimates are unavailable through the Statewide Harvest Survey due to low response rates for this area and no reports of anglers fishing this area have been received by the department. This is likely due to the extremely remote location of this drainage. If these regulations are repealed, background bag and possession limits for the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Area will remain in place: these are a bag limit of five sockeye salmon and 10 in possession. Given the isolated nature of the drainage there would likely be little or even no harvest of Swanson Lagoon sockeye salmon if these regulations were repealed.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F22-049)
