

Rainbow Trout (1 proposal)

PROPOSAL 21

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

Prohibit harvest of rainbow trout by nonresident anglers in a section of the Naknek river drainage, as follows:

Naknek River Drainage:

Rainbow Trout Limits:

Upstream from ADF&G markers located ½ mile above Rapids Camp to ADF&G markers at Trefon’s cabin at the outlet of Naknek Lake and to include Naknek Lake:

Closed to the harvest of rainbow trout year-round for non-residents

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The rainbow trout population on the Naknek River is undergoing excessive and unsustainable fishing effort. This is causing increased hook mortality and reduction of quality of experience. Hook mortality on catch and release rainbows has grown incrementally as a result of unsustainable commercial effort which is primarily non-resident based. This has resulted in a biological problem which needs to be addressed. The proposed regulatory changes are not arbitrary. They are based on historical knowledge of the Naknek River sport fishery by not only conservation-oriented guides, but also local residents who have had enough of loss of opportunity and abuse of the fishery resource.

Unlike other major rivers in the Bristol Bay region, the Naknek River is only 34 miles long from its mouth to Naknek Lake. Only ½ of this affords good fishing opportunity for salmon and freshwater species. The portion of the River as described under current regulation “upstream from the ADF&G regulatory markers located ½ mile upstream from Rapids Camp to ADF&G markers at Trefon’s Cabin at the outlet of Naknek Lake” has undergone a dramatic and unsustainable level of effort for both the quality of experience (all species) and biological health of Rainbow Trout stocks

What would happen if nothing is changed?

The health and future of our rainbow population would continue to be jeopardized, not allowing future generations of anglers the opportunity to catch and release beautiful, healthy and pristine rainbows that this watershed has always been known for. The economic viability for conservation-oriented guides will be eliminated.

What Other Solutions have you considered?

Time and area closures for guided, transported, boat and equipment rental commercial entities – i.e. limit days of operation I would also consider making a zero fish limit to both residents and non residents, though would prefer to see it limited to non residents, since the vast majority of effort is guided non residents.

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