

PROPOSAL 67

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

Modify the sport fishing gear, size restrictions and area open for king salmon in the Nushagak River drainage, as follows:

This proposed regulation would add language to an existing section of regulations within the Nushagak / Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan. Should this language be adopted, we think it ought to be added into regulation 5 AAC 67.022g. In addition, we think it would need to be incorporated into the Nushagak King Salmon Stock of Concern Plan. We also think the amended regulation would offer protection to spawning Kings in the Mulchatna River and its tributaries.

Language would be added to 5 AAC 67.022 to include the closure of King Salmon fishing in parts of the Mulchatna River and its tributaries until the end of the season or the lower end of the escapement goal is met. This all is meant to happen when the Department can no longer project that the King Salmon escapement will reach the lower end of the escapement goal which is currently 55,000 King Salmon.

Suggested regulation / action:

5 AAC 67.022g When the King Salmon escapement in the Nushagak River is projected to be less than 55,000 King Salmon the Commissioner shall [close] restrict by Emergency Order Nushagak and Lower Mulchatna river King Salmon sport fishing areas to

PROHIBIT:

A. The retention of Kings of any size.

B. The use of bait

C. In addition, the New Stuyahok River and the Mulchatna River and its tributaries upriver from the confluence the Old Man Creek including Old Man Creek itself will close to King Salmon fishing until the end of the season, or the lower end of the escapement goal is met.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Declining numbers of Chinook salmon returning to the Nushagak / Mulchatna Drainage and the amount of stress put on kings who have spent much of their energy migrating to the spawning areas.

Currently the Nushagak River is closed to the sport fishing of King Salmon above Harris Creek year around. This is to avoid the harvest of King Salmon and lower other associated stress being put on King Salmon stocks and their spawning areas. This, by anglers, who would otherwise be targeting Kings there. King Salmon spawning in the Middle and Upper Mulchatna River and its tributaries would also benefit from this type of protection.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. We developed the proposal ourselves. Suzie is the current Nushagak AC chairman. Tom was on the Nushagak AC from 2011 to 2024 and was one of the people appointed to the Nushagak Mulchatna King salmon committee.

PROPOSED BY: Susie Brito and Tom O'Connor

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