

Kuskokwim-Goodnews Area Sport Fisheries (2 proposals)

PROPOSAL 13

5 AAC. 71.010 Seasons and bag, possession, annual and size limits for the Kuskokwim-Goodnews Area.

Amend sport fishing season for king salmon in the upper Kuskokwim River, as follows:

5 AAC 71.010(b)(1) is amended to read:

...

(1) king salmon 20 inches or greater in length: the bag and possession limit is three fish, of which only two fish may be 28 inches or greater in length; **king salmon may be taken only from May 1 through July 25;**

5 AAC. 71.010(c)(1)(A) is amended to read:

...

(A)repealed / / [KING SALMON MAY BE TAKEN ONLY FROM MAY 1 THROUGH JULY 25];

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This addresses an inconsistency in sport fishing regulations (i.e. open seasons) for king salmon between the upper and lower portions of the Kuskokwim River. In the portion of the Kuskokwim River drainage upstream of the Holitna River, there is currently no seasonal closure in regulation for the king salmon sport fishery. However, downstream of the Holitna River (including the Kuskokwim Bay Drainages) there is a sport fishing season for king salmon that is only open May 1 – July 25 to protect spawning salmon. This seeks to align the entire Kuskokwim-Goodnews Area with an open season of May 1 through July 25.

This would simplify the general regulations for sport fishing for king salmon in the Kuskokwim-Goodnews Area, as well as eliminate harvest of spawning king salmon in the upper Kuskokwim River drainage. The issue of inconsistent open seasons for king salmon during times of conservation have been addressed by emergency orders closing the entire Kuskokwim River drainage to sport fishing for king salmon.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F26-015)

PROPOSAL 14

5 AAC 71.010. Seasons and bag, possession annual, and size limits for the Kuskokwim-Goodnews Area.

Repeal bag and possession limits for sheefish in the Kanektok, Goodnews, and Arolik Rivers, as follows:

5 AAC 71.010 (c)(7)(E) is amended to read:

...

(E) **repealed** / / [THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR SHEEFISH IS TWO FISH, NO SIZE LIMIT];

5 AAC 71.010 (c)(8)(D) is amended to read:

...

(D) **repealed** / / [SHEEFISH IS TWO FISH, NO SIZE LIMIT];

5 AAC 71.010 (c)(9)(C) is amended to read:

...

(C) **repealed** / / [SHEEFISH IS TWO FISH, NO SIZE LIMIT];

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Kanektok, Arolik, and Goodnews Rivers drain into Kuskokwim Bay 30 – 80 miles south of the Kuskokwim River mouth and are not believed to support populations of sheefish. These river systems support sport fisheries (guided and unguided) that target rainbow trout, king, coho, and sockeye salmon, Arctic grayling, and Dolly Varden. Neither subsistence fishers nor sport anglers have reported catching sheefish in these rivers. This stands in contrast to the Kuskokwim River where sheefish are found and harvested throughout the drainage.

There is a special regulation in place for the Kanektok, Arolik, and Goodnews Rivers that limits anglers to two sheefish, no size limit, which incorrectly implies that sheefish are present in these systems and creates unnecessary regulatory complexity. Removal of these bag limits would simplify the regulations for these drainages and remove any expectation for anglers hoping to catch a sheefish in these drainages.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F26-014)
