

PROPOSAL 219

5 AAC 61.114. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Unit 2 of the Susitna River Drainage Area.

Close fishing for all species within the confluence of Unit 2 waters when sport fishing for king salmon is closed as follows:

My solution is to close ALL Fishing within a specified distance ($\frac{1}{4}$ mile or $\frac{1}{2}$ mile??), in both directions, of the confluence of all Unit-2 creeks and rivers any time that fishing for king salmon is closed. This closure would apply to the common 4 day closures in the regulation AND any time king salmon fishing is closed by emergency order.

I will defer the distance to be closed to ADF&G, however because some creeks like Willow Creek have multiple mouths and confluences I feel that half of a mile would be the best distance. As for what the new regulation would say??? not sure about this, but...

5 AAC 61.114 is amended to read:

Unless otherwise specified by an emergency order issued under AS 16.05.060, the following are localized additions and exceptions to the general seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means specified in 5 AAC 61.110 and 5 AAC 75 for Unit 2 of the Susitna River Drainage Area:

(1) from January 1 through July 13, [THE THIRD MONDAY IN JUNE, AND ON SATURDAY, SUNDAY, AND MONDAY FOR THE TWO CONSECUTIVE WEEKS STARTING ON THE SATURDAY FOLLOWING THE THIRD MONDAY IN JUNE] Unit 2 is open to sport fishing for all finfish species except for king salmon **anywhere except for one half mile above and below the confluence of any creek or river.** [INCLUDING KING SALMON] [EXCEPT] sport fishing for king salmon is open only from the third Monday in June, and on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday for two consecutive weeks starting on the Saturday following the third Monday in June;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?

My issue is that King salmon are still being targeted in Unit-2 of the Parks Highway during closures due to the Board approving proposal 222 at the 2020 Board Of Fish (BOF) meeting.

For many years the regulation closed all fishing after the third Monday in June with 3 day weekend openings over the following two weekends. At the 2020 BOF meeting proposal 222, submitted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), amended the regulation, so that during these closed periods fishing is permitted for rainbow trout and other resident species. The BOF approved this change.

I believe that the regulatory closures in late June and early July were in place to give spawning king salmon relief from fishing pressure. The kings got a few days off. I also believe that Proposal 222 was intended for fly fishing enthusiast who targeted rainbow trout and other resident species. However, there are some sport fishermen who take advantage of this "loophole" in the regulations to target king salmon with fly fishing gear. This situation occurs most commonly at the confluence of the Unit-2 creeks and the Susitna River which are easily accessible from the Parks Highway. Technically these fly fishermen are not in violation of the regulation, because they say they are

fishing for trout. When uneducated spawning king salmon are resting at the confluence of their creek they will strike the flies that are being presented.

As I write this proposal in April 2023, unit-2 of the Susitna drainage was closed to king salmon fishing by emergency order #23-3445 on March 2nd. So, this season the only way to catch a king salmon on a Unit-2 creek is to do so with fly fishing gear despite the fact that fishing for king salmon is closed. Most of the king salmon caught “incidentally while fishing for other species” will be caught near the confluence of Montana, Sheep, and Willow creeks.

PROPOSED BY: Daniel D Page

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