

PROPOSAL 243

5 AAC 60.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area.

Create a bag and possession limit of 3 coho salmon in the Knik Arm Drainages as follows:

(2) salmon, other than king salmon,

(A) 16 inches or greater in length may be taken from January 1 — December 31; bag and possession limit is three fish, [OF WHICH NO MORE THAN TWO PER DAY AND TWO IN POSSESSION MAY BE COHO SALMON;]

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In 2000 the sport fishery general coho salmon bag and possession limits throughout Knik Arm drainages, was reduced from 3 fish daily and in possession to 2 fish daily and in possession as a paired restrictions conservation package where the Northern District set net fishery was restricted to one set gillnet per permit holder from July 20 — August 10 under an Upper Cook Inlet Coho Salmon Conservation Plan.

Since 2000 the Northern District commercial set net fishery has been liberalized by: 1. allowing Northern District permit holders with more than one permit to fish additional gear (permit stacking). 2. the dates for fishing with restricted nets has been decreased to July 20 - August 6. 3. a stipulation was added where set netters (who likely harvest significant numbers of Knik Arm coho salmon) in the General Subdistrict south of the Susitna River could be allowed to fish with two set gillnets after July 30 (during peak coho salmon abundance). — Words in parentheses added.

Whereas, the first sentence of the Northern District Salmon Management Plan states a purpose to minimize the harvest of coho salmon bound for the Northern District . . .,

Whereas, the second sentence states the department shall manage chum, pink, and sockeye salmon stocks for both commercial and inriver uses to provide an opportunity to harvest these salmon resources based on abundance.

Whereas, the third sentence further requires, the department shall manage the chum, pink, and sockeye stocks to minimize the harvest of Northern District coho salmon, to provide sport, guided sport, and other inriver users a reasonable opportunity to harvest these resources over the entire run. . . .,

Therefore, since commercial fisheries have been liberalized and their coho salmon harvest percentages have been allowed to expand over the past decade, there must be enough coho salmon to allow the Knik Arm sport fishery bag and possession limits, to at least return to the long-time level they were set at before 2000. If coho salmon abundance has indeed risen that much, then Alaska Sportfishing Association requests a return to the 3 salmon per day (all of which may be coho salmon) limits for Knik Arm drainages. Note: ADF&G has more coho salmon escapement goals in the Knik Arm drainage than in the entire remainder of Upper Cook Inlet, so coho salmon abundances may be monitored and inseason adjustments made for years with shortages or extra abundances of coho salmon.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Sportfishing Association (EF-F23-140)
