

PROPOSAL 255

5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

Create a personal use dip net fishery for salmon in the 20-Mile and Placer Rivers as follows:

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(i) salmon may be taken by dipnet in the 20-Mile River and the Placer River only as follows:

- 1. July 1-July 31: Open to dip netting only on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 6.a.m. to 11 p.m.**
- 2. between ADF&G regulatory markers within one mile upstream of the Seward Highway downstream, to drainages' terminus with Turnagain Arm at all tidal stages;**
- 3. Personal use fishing in 20-Mile River and Placer River may not be done from a boat or other floating device—although participants are allowed to wear a PFD;**
- 4. The annual limit, is as specified in 5 AAC 77.525, except that no king salmon may be retained, and any king salmon caught must be returned to the water and released immediately;**
- 5. A permit holder for this fishery shall report to the department as specified in the permit conditions.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Northern District Salmon Management Plan states: The department shall manage the chum, pink, and sockeye salmon stocks for commercial and inriver uses to provide an opportunity to harvest these salmon resources based on abundance. The department shall also manage the chum, pink, and sockeye salmon stocks to minimize the harvest of Northern District coho salmon, to provide sport and guided sport fishermen and other inriver users a reasonable opportunity to harvest these resources over the entire run, as measured by the frequency of inriver restrictions, or as specified in this section and other regulations.

Placer and 20-Mile Rivers are two of the largest salmon producing systems in Turnagain Arm, with highway access from Girdwood and Anchorage, and although there is a personal use dip net opportunity to harvest hooligan, there is no personal use salmon opportunity anywhere in Turnagain Arm or its tributary streams. It appears Turnagain Arm sockeye salmon stocks may be a more productive Northern Cook Inlet salmon stock, as Northern Cook Inlet set netters from the Eastern Subdistrict harvest more sockeye throughout the season compared to set netters in the larger General Subdistrict. In addition, during a portion of the season when the department regularly reduces nets in the Northern District (July 20-August 6) set netters in the Eastern Subdistrict, since 2016, have for the most part, been allowed to fish with twice as many nets compared to set netters in the General Subdistrict, demonstrating adequate numbers of harvestable surplus salmon to provide a personal use dip net fishery. Note: there are currently two subsistence locations and three personal use fishery locations allowed to harvest salmon from the General Subdistrict or its drainages, yet zero subsistence or personal use salmon harvest opportunities in the Turnagain / Eastern portion of Northern Cook Inlet.

To avoid catching king salmon and excessive numbers of coho salmon we are proposing a shorter personal use season on both ends, compared to the commercial season. Since the Seward Highway is busy during the summer and parking spaces are limited, we ask the Board to consider a conservative weekday and shore-based personal use fishery at these locations (no fishing from boats). We are proposing a 3-day per week fishery with 31 or more hours between individual fishing periods. The proposed fishing area is arbitrary (but considers ease of access) so the department or Board could make adjustments, if other options may be more beneficial. For simplicity and to avoid redundancy these two river locations were submitted as one proposal. If there are biological differences between the two rivers or other reasons the department or board would like to consider each river location as a separate regulation that would be fine as well.

PROPOSED BY: South Central Alaska Dipnetters Association

(HQ-F23-112)
