

Cook Inlet – Areawide Sport Fisheries (2 proposals)

PROPOSAL 232

5 AAC 56.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai Peninsula Area; 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area; 5 AAC 58.030. Methods, means, and general provisions – Finfish; 5 AAC 59.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Anchorage Bowl Drainages Area; 5 AAC 60.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area; 5 AAC 61.110. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Susitna River Drainage Area; and 62.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the West Cook Inlet Area.

Allow Alaska residents to sport fish additional gear and take multiple limits in Upper Cook Inlet as follows:

Alaska Residents who purchase an additional fishing license may fish with additional gear (as if there was an additional individual fishing) and harvest multiple bag, possession, and annual limits in the Upper Cook Inlet Area. An additional King Salmon Stamp would be required if utilizing additional gear or limit for King Salmon with the second license.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Upper Cook Inlet area has seen a decrease in sport fishing opportunity, as well as funding for the Sport Fish Division of Fish and Game, as seen in the reduced operating budget for in-season salmon counting and abundance measurements. These were relatively steady declines, but were drastically accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, this issue also compounds itself, as the reduced funding for management leads to reduced fishing opportunity, which in turn leads to fewer fishing licenses purchased, and ultimately further reduced funding for management.

There is precedent for my proposed solution in the Upper Cook Inlet Commercial Fisheries, where permit holders with multiple permits can fish with stacked gear and harvest more fish. Additionally, Oregon and California both allow for a second rod permit even though they have much larger populations.

Please consider this a Sport Fishery restructuring proposal for revitalization and funding.

PROPOSED BY: Paul Warta (EF-F23-119)

PROPOSAL 233

5 AAC 75.XXX. New.

Establish sport fishing derby approval process as follows:

Derbies will be approved after a biological stock assessment. Approval by the Dept. of Commerce will come after stocks are determined to be robust.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Derbies – no stock assessments.

PROPOSED BY: John McCombs

(HQ-F23-069)
