

PROPOSAL 99

5 AAC 65.022. Special provisions for bag, possession, and annual limits, and methods and means in the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands Area.

Prohibit retention of king salmon and establish closed areas in the King Salmon River and Ridgerunner Creek, as follows:

5 AAC 65.022 b (3) In the King Salmon River, king salmon must be immediately released. Also King Salmon River is closed to king salmon fishing upstream of 56 degrees 06' 00" N., 160 degrees 27' 17" W.. In Ridgerunner Creek, a tributary of the Milky and Bear Rivers, king salmon must be immediately released. Ridgerunner Creek is closed to king salmon fishing upstream of 56 degrees 09' 35" N., 160 degrees 20' 55" W.

If adopted this would allow sport fishing to occur on these two systems in the areas that effort typically occurs yet allow fish to make it to the spawning grounds without constant effort on them as they swim upriver. It also makes the catch and release regulation similar to other areas nearby that also have much larger king salmon runs and will allow people to still fish for them now and in the future.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The sport fishing effort for king salmon on the King Salmon River and Ridgerunner Creek, which is a tributary of the Milky River and Bear River system near Port Moller, has increased dramatically and I have concern for the resource and would like to see protections on the two systems so that the future of kings salmon at these locations allows for sport fishing to occur and healthy runs in the future. I have a home nearby which I built in 2007 and the amount of effort from lodges has dramatically increased in recent years and the fish need to have some protection. These creeks are only 15-30' wide and the rivers are not very long in length and are more like creeks than rivers, and the fish are subject to harvest as they school and hold while slowly migrating upriver. Sport fishing effort typically occurs in the same areas and there are often 2-3 lodges with up to 8-15 people per day that target these fish daily. Other nearby rivers with much larger king salmon runs are catch and release yet these two systems are not catch release. These creeks have king salmon runs from only about 400-1,000 fish annually and need to be catch and release like other nearby systems. There should also be a closed area to king salmon fishing, which is the only species targeted during the months of June and July on these systems. This will allow sportfishermen to fish these systems yet still provide protection of the king salmon.

PROPOSED BY: J.W. Smith

(EF-F22-009)
