

Prince William Sound and Upper Copper and Upper Susitna Rivers Sport (13 proposals)

Prince William Sound (7 proposals)

PROPOSAL 82

5 AAC 55.005. Description of the Prince William Sound Area.

Modify the Prince William Sound management area marine waters into two units, as follows:

5 AAC 55.005 Description of the Prince William Sound Area. The Prince William Sound Area consists of all waters of the Gulf of Alaska and its drainages, west of the longitude of Cape Suckling (144° W. long.), and east of the longitude of Cape Fairfield (148° 50.25' W. long.), excluding the Copper River drainage upstream of a line crossing the Copper River between the south bank of the confluence of Haley Creek and the south bank of the confluence of Canyon Creek in Wood Canyon.

- (a) **Inside PWS waters defined as: all waters north of a line drawn from Cape Puget to the southwest tip of Montague Island at Cape Clear; a line drawn from the Northeast tip of Montague Island at Zaikof to the southwest tip of Hinchinbrook Island at Cape Hinchinbrook; and the southeast tip of Hinchinbrook Island at Point Bentinck to Point Whitshed.**
- (b) **Outside PWS waters defined as: all waters south of the lines drawn and identified for inside PWS waters.**

I am open to exactly where these lines should be drawn. These area definitions can be better defined by the Department based on the specific locations they use to define inside and outside waters in their assessment work.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? 5 AAC 55.005 Currently reads “*The Prince William Sound Area consists of all waters of the Gulf of Alaska and its drainages, west of the longitude of Cape Suckling (144° W. long.), and east of the longitude of Cape Fairfield (148° 50.25' W. long.), excluding the Copper River drainage upstream of a line crossing the Copper River between the south bank of the confluence of Haley Creek and the south bank of the confluence of Canyon Creek in Wood Canyon.*”

The area is so vast that regulatory and management requirements are ineffective for tangible management. Prince William Sound should have regulatory defined Inside waters and Outside waters. The state has already utilized inside and outside delineation for rockfish observations/study. My thoughts are to utilize the following description to coincide with the rockfish observation/study boundaries. This will allow more effective management of PWS inside waters and relaxed management of PWS outside waters. In other words, I believe it to be necessary to further regulate PWS inside rockfish regulations however PWS outside waters have far less effort and populations are stronger outside therefore bag and possession limits could be higher without causing further damage to the inside waters. I believe rockfish surveys and data conducted by ADFG reflect this.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. Consulted ADFG for information.

PROPOSED BY: Raymond Nix

(HQ-F24-084)

PROPOSAL 83

5 AAC 55.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Prince William Sound Area.

Allow a resident sport angler to use two rods when fishing for salmon, as follows:”)

A resident sport fish angler may use two rods when fishing for salmon, a person using two rods under this regulation may only retain salmon. The bag limits stay the same.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In Southeast Alaska it is permissible for resident anglers to use two rods to troll for salmon. I would like to propose the same regulations for Prince William Sound and eventually the other marine areas in South Central Alaska. The reason why this is important is that it increases efficiency, saves fuel and potentially increases food security for resident anglers fishing alone.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. I developed this proposal on my own because I am retiring and I know from my 30 years experience fishing in Southcentral Alaska that trolling with one rod is not very effective, which was fine when fuel was priced low, but high fuel prices make going fishing prohibitively expensive. This action will not result in additional harvest of Salmon but may reduce the cost of going out and catching a salmon for dinner. There should be no additional cost to this regulation and I cant think of anyone that would be harmed by this except the fuel dock might sell a few gallons less fuel.

PROPOSED BY: Andy Mezirow

(EF-F24-034)

PROPOSAL 84

5 AAC 55.022. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Prince William Sound Area.

Prohibit charter operators and crew from retaining king salmon and rockfish while clients are on board the vessel, as follows:

Mirror Southeast and Kodiak Alaska sport regulations as well as the federal halibut regulation by prohibiting charter captain and crew from retaining sport caught king salmon or rockfish.

5 AAC 55.022.

(2) king salmon: may be taken from January 1 - December 31, as follows:

(A) in fresh waters, as follows:

(i) king salmon 20 inches or greater in length; bag limit of two fish; possession limit of four fish;

(ii) king salmon less than 20 inches in length; bag and possession limit of 10 fish;

(B) in the salt waters; bag limit of two fish; possession limit of four fish; no size limit;

(i)Charter operators and crew members may not retain king salmon while clients are on board the vessel.

(9) rockfish:

(A) may be taken from January 1 - December 31; bag limit of four fish; possession limit of eight fish, of which only one per day and in possession may be nonpelagic rockfish; no size limit;

(i)Charter operators and crew members may not retain rockfish while clients are on board the vessel.

(B) repealed 3/29/2018;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Sport harvest of saltwater king salmon and rockfish is ever increasing according to ADFG's sport fish harvest and effort estimates for North Gulf Coast/Prince William Sound. In 2022 the sport harvest of rockfish was 99,569 Fish and the saltwater sport harvest of king salmon was 7,113 fish. In 2012 the sport harvest of rockfish was 68,337 Fish and saltwater sport harvest of king salmon was 3,044 fish. This 45% increase in rockfish harvest and 130% increase in king salmon harvest in 10 years demands attention by the board. A portion of this increased harvest is the result of the ever-growing charter fleet. Currently the charter fleet captains, and crew are allowed to retain their own limit of sport caught rockfish and king salmon every trip they go on. Regulations forbidding charter captains and crew from retaining rockfish and king salmon have been put in place by this board in Southeast Alaska, Kodiak and on a federal level for halibut in the halibut fishery.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. This Proposal was discussed and submitted by the Copper River/Prince William Sound Advisory Committee.

PROPOSED BY: Copper River/PWS Advisory Committee (HQ-F24-070)

PROPOSAL 85

55.022 General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Prince William Sound Area.

Modify the bag and possession limit for coho salmon, as follows:

5 AAC 55.022 (a) (3)

3) salmon, other than king salmon: may be taken from January 1 - December 31; bag limit of six fish; possession limit of 12 fish, of which only three fish per day and six [THREE] in possession may be coho salmon; no size limit

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The current regulations in place read as follows in section 3 of the code:

(3) salmon, other than king salmon: may be taken from January 1 - December 31; bag limit of six fish; possession limit of 12 fish, of which only three fish per day and in possession may be coho salmon; no size limit;

I believe the possession limit should be increased because the coho that are harvested by sport are predominantly terminal (hatchery) fish. Additionally, a high percentage of our clientele base is resident fishermen that are harvesting for their winter supply of salmon and book multiple day trips to capitalize on 2-day possession limits. Current regulations require a return to port which is in excess of 70 miles typically. Our company did approximately 120 days' worth of overnight or remote lodge stays last season as these types of trips are the most financially viable for Alaskans. A single day possession limit seems to make these trips almost punitive because there is not a return to port.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. Consulted ADFG Staff for information.

PROPOSED BY: Raymond Nix (HQ-F24-085)

PROPOSAL 86

5 AAC 55.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for Prince William Sound.

Modify the sport fishing area and season dates in Ibeck Creek, as follows:

On September 21st the Sport Harvest of Coho Salmon will be prohibited above a point 1.5 miles above the Copper River Highway.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? We would like to protect spawning Coho Salmon on Ibeck Creek on the Copper River Flats in late September after they have entered their spawning grounds.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. This proposal was discussed and submitted by the Copper River/Prince William Sound Advisory Committee.

PROPOSED BY: Copper River/PWS Advisory Committee (HQ-F24-071)

PROPOSAL 87

5 AAC 55.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Prince William Sound Area.

Modify the sport fishing area and season in a Copper River Delta system, as follows:

On September 21st the Sport Harvest of Coho Salmon will be prohibited above a point 1 mile above the confluence with Alaganik Slough.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? We would like to close 18 Mile system on the Copper River Delta at a point 1 mile north of the confluence with Alaganik Slough on September 21st. This would protect spawning Coho Salmon from removal and catch and release mortality. There would still be sport fishing opportunity below this closure.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. This proposal was discussed and submitted by the Copper River/Prince William Sound Advisory Committee

PROPOSED BY: Copper River/PWS Advisory Committee (HQ-F24-072)

PROPOSAL 88

5 AAC 55.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Prince William Sounds Area.

Modify coho salmon fishery bag limits and methods and means if the commercial fishery is closed, as follows:

New regulatory language to be added under 5 AAC 55.023 (XX) **In the Copper River Delta, in years with low run entry combined with low aerial survey counts and after seven consecutive days of commercial fishing closures, then the bag limits will be reduced to 2 fish and fishing with bait will be prohibited. If the commercial fishery is closed for 14 consecutive days combined with low aerial survey counts, then the bag limit will be reduced to one coho and catch and release will be prohibited.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Establish restrictions in the Copper River Delta coho salmon sport fishery based on the number of consecutive days the commercial fishery is closed.

Establish restrictions in the Copper River Delta coho salmon sport fishery based on the shared burden of conservation and the increased use and ease of access in the sport fishery. In 2018 we failed to achieve the SEG for the Copper River Delta due to delayed sport fishing restrictions.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. This Proposal was discussed and developed by the Copper River/Prince William Sound Advisory Committee.

PROPOSED BY: Copper River/PWS Advisory Committee (HQ-F24-035)

Upper Copper and Upper Susitna River (6 proposals)

PROPOSAL 89

5 AAC 52.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Upper Copper River and Upper Susitna River Area.

Increase the bag and possession limit for burbot in Lake Louise, as follows:

5 AAC 52.023(13)(C) is amended to read:

(C) the bag and possession limit for burbot is **two** [ONE] fish, with no size limit;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Historically, Lake Louise burbot were overfished when both set lines and liberal bag limits were allowed prior to 1988. The lake has been closed or restricted to a bag limit of one burbot since 1991 to allow the population to recover. A 2023 population survey of Lake Louise burbot indicated the population has increased