

Southeast Sport Salmon and Trout

PROPOSAL 138

5 AAC 47.021. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the salt waters of the Southeast Alaska Area

Prohibit snagging in the Mendenhall Wildlife Refuge, as follows:

Solution: Within the boundaries of the Mendenhall Wildlife Refuge, snagging is prohibited. Fish caught elsewhere than the mouth (snagged) must be released immediately. The use non tradition gear including lead weighted and/or lead wrapped treble hooks is prohibited. Regional freshwater regulations apply, except bait is legal year-round.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Problem: A portion of the chinook and silver salmon returning to the McCauley fish hatchery enter the Gastineau Channel/Mendenhall Refuge from the northeast end and use the high tide cycle to cross the Refuge to return to the hatchery. During the low tide cycle, the waters within the Mendenhall Wildlife Refuge drain and flow like a stream or river. During the low portion of the tide, the salmon tend to concentrate in pools just the same as if they are in a stream or river. This creates a superb shore-based sport angling opportunity for people using traditional sport fishing and flyfishing gear. Anglers using non-traditional methods (snagging) often disrespect and interfere with anglers using traditional means creating an unpleasant and unsporting fishing atmosphere.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. I brought it up to the Juneau Advisory Committee for discussion and endorsement which passed for endorsement. I've submitted a refined version which I will bring up at the fall committee meeting.

PROPOSED BY: Michael Cole (HQ-F24-111)

PROPOSAL 139

5 AAC 47.021. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the salt waters of the Southeast Alaska Area.

Prohibit snagging within Don D. Statter harbor, as follows:

For the safety of our patrons, I ask that the board consider prohibiting snagging on and around CBJ Docks and Harbors property within Statter Harbor. Please see proposal below:

5 AAC 47.021. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the salt waters of the Southeast Alaska Area.

- (d) In the Juneau vicinity: in the waters that are adjacent to the Juneau City and Borough road system to a distance one-quarter mile offshore:
 - (1) rainbow and cutthroat trout, in combination, must be no less than 14 inches and no greater than 22 inches in length;
 - (2) the bag and possession limit for Dolly Varden is two fish;
 - (3) in the waters of Auke Bay, east of a line from Waydelich (Wadleigh) Creek to an ADF&G regulatory marker located approximately one-quarter mile south of the mouth of Auke Creek,

- (A) sport fishing for sockeye salmon is closed;
- (B) Dolly Varden may be taken only from June 1 - March 31;
- (C) snagging or attempting to snag is prohibited within a 200-yard radius seaward of ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately 200 feet downstream of the Auke Creek weir; a fish hooked anywhere other than the mouth must be released immediately back into the water;
- (D) snagging or attempting to snag is prohibited on the docks, launch ramps, shoreline property, and on the water within Don D. Statter Harbor;**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current regulations allow snagging in Auke Bay except for a small area around Auke Creek. In 2021 Juneau Docks and Harbors extended the Statter Harbor floats to accommodate whale watching vessels and tourism in Auke Bay into an area commonly used by locals for snagging King salmon in a terminal fishery. Fisherman casting heavy snagging hooks from the shore towards the docks has created a safety concern for CBJ Harbors, patrons, vessels, and the 220,000 tourists who used the area in 2023. There have been several incidents where a vessel or person has been hit by a snagging hook since the construction of these docks. We have posted "no snagging" signs in the area, but the practice continues because we have no way to enforce the rule. We in no way want to prohibit fishing in general in the area, just the method of snagging.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. I did not

PROPOSED BY: CBJ Docks and Harbors (EF-F24-007)

PROPOSAL 140

5 AAC 47.XXX. New section

Sport fishing may only be conducted with a single barbless circle hook between April 1 and June 14, as follows:

Sport Fishing : For ALL areas outside hatchery THA zones - 1 (one) Circle-Barbless-Hook per line, between April 1st through June 14th.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? To immediately STOP the use of traditional "open-tip", "straight-shank", or "J" style hooks for ALL Sport Fishing between the dates of April 1st through June 14th. Instead, the use of 1 (one) "Circle-Barbless-hook" per line should be required between April 1st through June 14th for insuring the CRUCIAL survival of our Chinook Stocks of Concern. The damaging, unsafe, detrimental, and injurious, effects to Chinook Salmon in ALL "Catch and Release" practices of Sport Fishing continues to devastate Chinook within our Stocks of Concern. This new law will greatly reduce the HIGH accidental death numbers amongst Southeast Transboundary Chinook Stocks of Concern. This new law will NOT stop Catch and Release "Photo Op" Sport Fishing, it will only EHANCE the SAFTEY of Catch and Release Sport Fishing practices in ALL Southeast Transboundary areas between April 1st through June 14th.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. Yes. This proposal was discussed amongst resident sport fishers

in Ketchikan, AK. It has been agreed that this proposal will greatly help solve the accidental death brought upon our Transboundary Chinook Stocks, particularly during the "Clover Pass" catch and release fishery in Ketchikan, Alaska.

PROPOSED BY: Cody Cowan (EF-F24-056)

PROPOSAL 141

5 AAC 47.XXX. New section.

Prohibit the use of bait in sport fisheries between April 1 through June 14, as follows:

Sport Fishing: Baited hooks are NOT permitted outside hatchery THA Zones between April 1st through June 14th.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The use of "baited" hooks should Not be permitted for Salmon targeted Sport Fishing between the dates of April 1st through June 14th. The use of baited hooks during ALL catch and release Sport Fisheries cause catastrophic harm to Chinook. Salmon "swallow" baited hooks deeper, causing severe damage to their organs, greatly lessening their chance for survival. In order to help achieve the best survival rate for ALL Stocks of Concern, we must STOP the use of baited hooks during ALL catch and release Sport Fisheries "outside of hatchery THA zones" between April 1st through June 14th.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. Yes. This proposal was discussed and agreed on by resident sport fishers in Ketchikan, Alaska.

PROPOSED BY: Cody Cowan (EF-F24-057)

PROPOSAL 142

5 AAC 47.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the fresh waters of the Southeast Alaska Area.

Open Ketchikan Creek to sport fishing year-round and establish bag and possession limits for king salmon, as follows:

5 AAC 47.023(i)(6) is amended to read:

...

- (6) in Ketchikan Creek, excluding City Park Ponds,
 - (A) only unbaited, single-hook, artificial lures may be used;
 - (B) sport fishing is allowed **year round** [ONLY FROM SEPTEMBER 15 - MAY 31];
 - (C) the bag and possession limit for salmon, other than king salmon,
 - (i) 16 inches or greater in length, is two fish in combination;
 - (ii) less than 16 inches in length, is 10 fish in combination;
 - (D) repealed 7/1/2015;
 - (E) **the bag and possession limit for king salmon is,**
 - (i) two fish any size;**

(ii) a king salmon taken by a nonresident will not count toward the nonresident annual limit as established by 5 AAC 47.055;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? A seasonal sport fishing closure from June – September has been in regulation since 1986 to allow for broodstock collection that previously occurred at Deer Mountain Hatchery (DMH). In 2013, the Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association (SSRAA) assumed ownership of the hatchery. King salmon are produced at DMH, though broodstock collection for SSRAA’s king salmon program occurs at Whitman Lake Hatchery. This regulation change would eliminate the need for the department to issue an annual emergency order to open the creek to sport fishing and set limits for king salmon.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F24-176)

PROPOSAL 143

5 AAC 47.022. General provisions for seasons and bag, possession, annual, and size limits for the fresh waters of the Southeast Alaska Area.

Increase the bag and possession limit for trout in Southeast Alaska, as follows:

Change the general provisions for seasons and bag possession, annual and size limits for the fresh waters of the Southeast Alaska area.

Rainbow and cutthroat trout, in combination, bag and possession limit of 4 fish; no annual limit. Must be no less than 11 inches and no greater than 22 inches in length.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The cutthroat trout/rainbow trout (trout) of Prince of Wales Island (PoW) are not targeted species. There are many lightly fished/unfished watersheds on PoW that hold large numbers of these species and in some drainages, they are causing significant predation to the Sockeye salmon, specifically the Klawock lake drainage. The farmed salmon net pens located in the Klawock Lake attract hungry trout daily when the uneaten fish pellets fall through the net and are eaten by the trout. These large aggressive trout impact the Sockeye and other salmon that spawn in the tributaries and cause significant predation to the salmon eggs, fry and smolt. Many locals have discussed the need to liberalize the bag/size limits not just in the Klawock River/Lake drainage but island wide.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. Yes. This proposal was developed in the Klawock AC.

PROPOSED BY: Klawock AC (EF-F24-059)

PROPOSAL 144

5 AAC 47.022 General provisions for seasons and bag, possession, annual, and size limits for the fresh waters of the Southeast Alaska Area.

Increase harvest opportunity for trout in Southeast Alaska, as follows:

Change the general provisions for seasons and bag, possession, annual and size limits for the fresh waters of the Southeast Alaska area.

Rainbow and cutthroat trout, in combination, bag and possession limit of 4 fish; no annual limit. Must be no less than 11 inches and no greater than 22 inches in length. Min of 11" & Max of 22". **What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The cutthroat trout/rainbow trout (trout) of Prince of Wales Is.(PoW) are not targeted species. There are many lightly fished/unfished watersheds on PoW that hold large numbers of these species and in some drainages, they are causing significant predation to different salmon species. Many locals have discussed the need to liberalize the bag/size limits on PoW and Southeast Alaska wide.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. Yes. The Klawock AC.

PROPOSED BY: Klawock AC (EF-F24-089)

PROPOSAL 145

5 AAC 47.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the fresh waters of the Southeast Alaska Area.

Increase harvest opportunity for trout in Klawock Lake drainage, as follows:

Create a special use freshwater regulation for the Klawock Lake drainage on Prince of Wales Island.

Klawock Lake:

Only unbaited, artificial lures or flies may be used year round. The use of bait is prohibited. Rainbow and cutthroat trout, in combination, bag and possession limit of 4 fish; no annual limit. Must be more than 11 inches and no greater than 22 inches in length.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The cutthroat trout/rainbow trout (trout) of Prince of Wales Island (PoW) are not targeted species. There are many lightly fished/unfished watersheds on PoW that hold large numbers of these species and in some drainages, they are causing significant predation to the Sockeye salmon, specifically the Klawock Lake drainage. The farmed salmon net pens located in the Klawock Lake attract hungry trout daily when the uneaten fish pellets fall through the net and are eaten by the trout. The trout also ram the net and knock the coho fry out of the net and eat them. These large aggressive trout impact the Sockeye and other salmon that spawn in the tributaries and cause significant predation to the salmon eggs and juvenile salmon. Many locals have discussed the need to liberalize the bag/size limits in the Klawock Lake drainage for food security reasons as well as reducing the predation on the coveted Sockeye salmon.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. Yes. The Klawock AC.

PROPOSED BY: Klawock AC (EF-F24-088)

PROPOSAL 146

5 AAC 47.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the fresh waters of the Southeast Alaska Area.

Increase the bag and possession limit for rainbow and cutthroat trout in 108 Creek drainage, as follows:

Change the current special use freshwater regulation for 108 Creek drainage on Prince of Wales Island.

108 Creek Drainage-Including Twin Island Lake and Cavern Lake.

Only unbaited, artificial lures or flies may be used year round. The use of bait is prohibited. Steelhead: catch and release fishing only, all steelhead caught must be released immediately. Rainbow and cutthroat trout, in combination, bag and possession limit of 4 fish; no annual limit. Must be less than 11 inches and no greater than 22 inches in length.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This proposal would include the entire 108 Creek system including Twin Island Lake and Cavern Lake at the headwaters. Cutthroat trout/rainbow trout (trout) are present year round and abundant in this drainage. They are smaller fish, mostly under 15 inches in length. Increasing the harvest level in this lightly used fishery would be beneficial to locals and other anglers. Trout fishing is a great way to introduce young/new anglers to fishing and is a good opportunity for families to get out and spend time outdoors. Increasing the bag limit helps food security, offsets the rising cost of fuel/groceries and is easier to justify spending the day fishing.

Currently, there is a freshwater special regulation for the 108 Creek steelhead run. This would add a line for trout and its new bag limit. It would also clarify/include the Twin Island and Cavern Lakes into the system since 107 Creek runs through those lakes.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. Yes. The residents of Whale Pass in conjunction with the East PoW AC developed this proposal.

PROPOSED BY: East POW AC

(EF-F24-032)

PROPOSAL 147

5 AAC 47.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the fresh waters of the Southeast Alaska Area.

Increase the bag and possession limit for rainbow and cutthroat trout and prohibit the use of bait in Neck Lake, as follows:

Create a special use freshwater regulation for the Neck Lake drainage on Prince of Wales Island. Only unbaited, artificial lures or flies may be used year round. The use of bait is prohibited. Rainbow and cutthroat trout, in combination, bag and possession limit of 4 fish; no annual limit. Must be less than 11 inches and no greater than 22 inches in length.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This proposal would include the entire Neck Lake system and its tributaries on Prince of Wales Island. Cutthroat trout/rainbow trout (trout) are present year round and abundant in this drainage. They are smaller fish, mostly under 15 inches in length. Increasing the harvest level in this lightly used fishery would be beneficial to locals and other anglers. Trout fishing is a great way to introduce young/new anglers to fishing and is a good opportunity for families to get out and spend time outdoors. Increasing the

bag limit helps food security, offsets the rising cost of fuel/groceries and is easier to justify spending the day fishing.

This would create a new special use freshwater regulation since it currently falls under the general freshwater regs.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. Yes. The residents of Whale Pass in conjunction with the East PoW AC developed this proposal.

PROPOSED BY: East POW AC (EF-F24-033)

PROPOSAL 148

5 AAC 47.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the fresh waters of the Southeast Alaska Area.

Modify Eagle Lake cutthroat trout bag and possession and size limit, as follows:

5 AAC 47.023(h)(6) is amended to read:

...

(h) In the Petersburg/Wrangell vicinity:

(6) **repealed** / / [IN EAGLE LAKE,

(A) ONLY UNBAITED, ARTIFICIAL LURES MAY BE USED;

(B) THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMIT FOR CUTTHROAT TROUT IS ONE FISH, WHICH MUST BE 25 INCHES OR GREATER IN LENGTH];

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Eagle Lake is currently identified as a trophy lake for cutthroat trout and has a bag and possession limit of one fish, which must be 25 inches or greater in length. In 2023, the department assessed the cutthroat trout population in Eagle Lake and found an abundant population although after sampling more than 1,100 individual fish, no cutthroat over 25 inches was found. The current regulations are unnecessarily conservative and additional harvest opportunity could be provided. By rescinding this special provision, the regional bag and possession limit of two fish (rainbow and cutthroat trout in combination) and 11 inch minimum and 22 inch maximum size limit will now apply in Eagle Lake. These management provisions are consistent with 5 AAC 75.220 *Statewide management standards for wild trout*.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F24-178)

PROPOSAL 149

5 AAC 47.023. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the fresh waters of the Southeast Alaska Area

Prohibit the use of bait and establish a catch-and-release fishery with single barbless hooks in Petersen Creek, as follows:

Year-round catch and release, single-barbless hook, artificial lure regulations for trout on Petersen Creek will help protect genetic diversity necessary to rebuild steelhead stocks in this popular road system fishery.

We considered catch and release regulations for rainbow trout alone, but this adds a layer of regulatory complexity, and requires anglers to be able to quickly differentiate between cutthroat and rainbow trout.

We also considered total catch and release regulations for Petersen Creek, as coho fishing has also been closed by emergency order in recent years, but the dolly varden and pink salmon numbers do not warrant a move to such a move.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The popular Juneau road-system steelhead fishery on Petersen Creek has been closed by Emergency Order each season since 2019. As an ADFG index stream, we have reliable data on run size; recent snorkel surveys have shown that run sizes are depressed below long-term averages. As the April 1, 2024 Emergency Order (No. 1-SH-E-06-24) notes:

"overall production of steelhead in Peterson Creek has declined in recent years. For the last 9 years (2015–2023), snorkel survey index counts conducted each spring have been below the 1997–2014 average of 28 fish (equivalent to 116 fish), when steelhead abundance in the creek appeared to be relatively stable. In 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 the snorkel survey counts were 6, 3, 11, 24, 18, and 27 fish, respectively. Continued low escapements require this closure to conserve the Peterson Creek steelhead stock."

There are only a handful of opportunities for steelhead anglers on the Juneau Road system, so revitalizing this run is of high importance. Studies across the range of steelhead and rainbow trout have shown contribution of resident rainbows to steelhead population genetics (McPhee et al). State agencies across the Pacific Northwest have begun to reconcile the management strategy of rainbow trout to reflect the importance of resident rainbow trout in steelhead recovery (Marshall, NMFS). Limiting the Peterson Creek fishery to year-round catch and release, single barbless hook and an artificial lure regulations will provide recreational opportunity with minimal impact on the resident rainbow population which could be critical for the continued recovery of its steelhead component. In other words, conservative regulations will ensure that rainbow trout populations remain robust to bolster steelhead production, while also protecting smolt and rearing juvenile steelhead.

References:

NMFS (National Marine Fisheries Service). 2019. ESA Recovery Plan for the Puget Sound Steelhead Distinct Population Segment (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*). National Marine Fisheries Service. Seattle, WA.

Marshall, A.R., Small, M., Foley, S., 2006. Genetic relationships among anadromous and resident *Oncorhynchus mykiss* in Cedar River, Washington: Implications for steelhead recovery planning, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia, WA. Final report to Cedar River Anadromous Fish Committee and Seattle Public Utilities.

McPhee, M.V., Utter, F., Stanford, J.A., Kuzishchin, K.V., Savvaitova, K.A., Pavlov, D.S., Allendorf, F.W. 2007. Population structure and partial anadromy in *Oncorhynchus mykiss* from Kamchatka: relevance for conservation strategies around the Pacific Rim. *Ecology of Freshwater Fish* 16, 539-547.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. This proposal was approved and vetted by the Juneau Douglas Advisory Committee at our April 8, 2024 meeting.

PROPOSED BY: Juneau Douglas Advisory Committee

(EF-F24-110)
