

PROPOSAL 154 - 5 AAC 57.120. General provisions for seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Kenai River Drainage Area. Expand the waters of the Kenai River closed to fishing for king salmon, as follows:

Move the finish line for chinook salmon sport fishing from the outlet of Skilak Lake (river mile 50) down to the lower boundary of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge (river mile 45.5).

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(a) Unless otherwise specified in 5 AAC 57.121 - 5 AAC 57.123 or by an emergency order issued under AS 16.05.060, the following are the general seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means that apply to sport fishing for finfish in the Kenai River Drainage Area:

- (1) salmon may be landed only with the aid of a landing net or by hand;
- (2) king salmon 20 inches or greater in length, as follows:

A) may be taken only from January 1 - July 31, in the Kenai River from its mouth upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at **the lower boundary of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge at river mile 45.5** [THE OUTLET OF SKILAK LAKE], with a bag and possession limit of one fish, as follows:

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Middle Kenai River from the outlet of Skilak Lake downstream to the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge boundary is a known spawning area for both early and late-run chinook salmon on the Kenai River. The early-run chinook using this area to spawn are a small, biologically unique, and sensitive species group. The chinook salmon species in the Kenai River are facing a critical juncture in vitality and viability. Since Kenai River king salmon are experiencing a period of low productivity and, since 2009, below average run strength, a conservation effort to protect these fish on their spawning grounds is warranted.

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