

PROPOSAL 224 - 5 AAC 60.122. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area. Restrict hours and dates open to fishing on Jim Creek, as follows:

Amend Jim Creek drainage fishing season as follows:

Daily limits are the same as shown under general season and limits on page 43, except that from **July 20 - December 31, fishing is only open from 5 a.m. until 10 p.m. daily, and from August 10 - December 31,** [THE SECOND SATURDAY IN AUGUST (AUGUST 13) THROUGH DECEMBER 31,] sport fishing for any species is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Inadequate escapement opportunity for salmon migrating up the Jim Creek system throughout the coho and sockeye salmon runs should be addressed. Even though the Board adopted regulations that closed two days to all fishing in the Jim Creek drainage later in August, the coho salmon spawning escapement goal was, once again, not attained in 2014. In 2015 the McRoberts Creek / Jim Creek goal was attained, but only after a sport fishing season closing emergency order was issued. Although sockeye salmon provide an important component of sport harvest, the Department has no established sockeye salmon spawning escapement goal.

The Jim Creek system is an extremely productive salmon producer, that provides a 7 - day per week sport salmon fishery until the August reduction to a 5-day per week fishery. Participation and harvests are amongst the highest in the Knik Arm Management Unit. In light of recent low spawning escapements of coho (and possibly sockeye) salmon, it appears a more precautionary management approach may be appropriate in order to ensure adequate spawning escapements of both coho and sockeye salmon. It would be advantageous to consider more precautionary management that also maintains the 7-day per week sport fishing opportunity during the earlier portion of the season.

Although a member of the public expressed his concerns of declining Jim Creek salmon returns to the Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee, neither he nor the advisory committee developed a proposal to submit before the submittal deadline. This proposal provides an opportunity for the public and the advisory committee to consider and develop an acceptable precautionary management option(s) that better ensures sustainability of highly valued Jim Creek salmon runs.

Reducing fishing hours would create a more orderly fishery, while providing a daily opportunity for salmon to migrate unmolested through the shallow Jim Creek flats. Perhaps better options may also be developed.

PROPOSED BY: Andy Couch

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