

PROPOSAL 135

5 AAC 01.670. Lawful gear and gear specifications.

Modify lawful gear for subsistence salmon fishing in Yakutat Bay, as follows:

We propose that subsistence fishing in Yakutat Bay with a gillnet be conducted as follows; The permit holder must be on, or in control of his net, or it must be disabled, (tied up) so as not to be capable of harvesting fish in his absence during the months of April, May, June, and July. By doing so, the hope is to eliminate any Chinook be removed from the net by marine mammals.

We considered making this a district wide function for all fisheries, but decided it was only needed for what is primarily a fishery targeting Chinook, as this is the species that is jeopardy, and the main time it's a problem is during the months of April and May because there are not yet any other species of salmon around for predators accept for Chinook.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Currently, the chronically low numbers of Chinook returning to the Situk estuary require us to make every effort to allow for as many Chinook as possible to reach the spawning grounds. During the months of April, May, June, and July, there is a substantial subsistence fishery that takes place in Yakutat Bay. During the months of April and May, the primary target is Chinook salmon. We understand the need for rural citizens to eat, we would just like to trim as much waste as possible. This fishery is slow pace, so nets are left unattended for lengthy periods of time. This allows for seals and sea lions to harvest Chinook from the nets while the fisherman is absent. The solution we recommend is eliminating as much waste as is possible.

PROPOSED BY: Yakutat Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F17-040)

PROPOSAL 136

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.

Extend the area closed to sport fishing downstream and upstream of the Situk River weir during June and July, as follows:

(b)(6) We recommend that the current waters closed to sportfishing 100 yards above and below the weir across Situk River, be extended to 300 yards above and below the weir for the months of June and July to create a bigger safety area for the salmon waiting to pass through. Should the number of Adult Chinook counted through the weir reach minimum escapement goals during the months of June or July, the closed area would revert back to 100 yards above and below.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Situk River has been experiencing chronically low returns of Chinook salmon. 4 of the last 5 years have seen numbers of adults counted thru the weir fall below minimum escapement goals. Our intent is to identify any potential places in which conservation measures may help alleviate this.

It has come to our attention through numerous testimonies that the weir across the Situk River, causes a barrier which the salmon tend to stack up below. This winds up being a place that sport anglers like to frequent for this reason. By nature, everybody wants to fight the biggest fish in the river. Chinook have to be immediately released, but that doesn't help, if they are harmed. Accounts describe Adult Chinook with 4 or 5 lures hanging from it. We would like to create a bigger safety buffer zone.

The Situk is a long river, with many holes to fish in, this will not harm anyone's ability to recreate.

We were informed by Dept. staff that there has been tampering with the existing regulatory markers. It is our recommendation that fines should be increased, to include losing one's sport license for a length of time for violation of this code. There is much at stake here, and the regulatory markers must be respected.

PROPOSED BY: Yakutat Fish and Game Advisory Committee

(EF-F17-027)
