

FAQ's

What is the actual regulation being changed?

5 AAC 01.745. Subsistence bag and possession limits; annual limits.

This regulation establishes daily and annual bag possession limits for finfish species in all of southeast Alaska. This regulation specifically states these limits by area and species. The regulation proposed to be changed is specific to the Juneau Management Area in District 14 and more specifically in Neva Creek for sockeye salmon. The proposed change would increase the possession and annual harvest limit in Neva Creek for sockeye salmon harvested under a household subsistence salmon permit from 10 to 20 fish.

Why is this regulation being changed?

The Neva Lake sockeye salmon stock has been assessed since 2002 under a cooperative project led by the U.S. Forest Service with assistance from Hoonah Indian Association and the department. Weir counts are used to estimate escapement, and age, sex, and length sampling has occurred to analyze stock composition. The average estimated escapement over this period is approximately 5,000 fish with a range from 1,200 to 11,400 fish.

In 2002, the possession and annual household limit of sockeye salmon for Neva Creek on the Southeast Alaska Subsistence and Personal Use Salmon Fishing Permit was increased from 10 fish for the 1998-2001 period, to 25 fish. It was further increased to 40 fish in 2004, reduced to 30 fish in 2015, and further reduced to 10 fish in 2016 where it has remained through 2022.

The recent reductions were made in response to increasing fishing effort with the highest annual number of reported permits fished being 40 in 2015, combined with generally decreasing sockeye salmon escapement. The lowest observed estimated escapement of 1,200 fish also occurred in 2015.

Since 2016, sockeye salmon estimated escapement into Neva Lake has averaged approximately 4,100 fish with reported harvest and effort from state subsistence fishermen at some of the lowest levels since 1990 observed in this same period of

2016-2021. Escapement is approaching the long-term average for this system and current possession and annual limits offer little incentive to increase reported subsistence fishing effort from historically low levels. An increased possession and annual household limit of 20 sockeye salmon is appropriate and sustainable.

Why is this change not going through the Board of Fisheries Process for regulatory changes?

The Alaska Board of Fisheries has delegated the authority to the department to make necessary changes to bag, possession, and annual harvest limits for certain fish stocks in the subsistence and personal use fisheries in the southeastern Alaska area through an official finding as listed in **2016-281-FB**, which has been included in the AOPNS listed attachments and posted on the ADF&G website. One of the goals of this finding is to allow the department to increase or decrease harvest limits to ensure maximum sustained yield of these fish stocks while also providing a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses.

How can I tell what specifically is changing in the regulatory text?

The Department of Law's drafting standards are that any new language is **bolded and underlined** while deletions are [BRACKETED AND CAPITALIZED].