

PROPOSAL 71

5 AAC 74.010. Seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Tanana River Area.

Remove the size limit on lake trout for Fielding Lake, as follows:

5 AAC 74.010 (c)(9)(B)

Modify the special regulations, for Fielding Lake as follows:

Lake trout may be taken only from October 1 through August 31, with a bag and possession limit of one fish.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Since 2007 a 26-inch length limit was instituted for Fielding Lake, concurrent with a bait restriction. This was based on an allowable yield of 78 fish including a 10% hooking mortality.

When you look at the 5-year harvest average and include a 10% hooking mortality of the 5-year catch, the yield has been near the allowable threshold. Without a length limit allowable harvest increases to approximately 200 fish.

The current minimum 26-inch limit concentrates the fishing pressure on the oldest and largest fish which are also the most fecund or fertile, producing the most offspring. Foul hooked fish that are less than 26 inches must be released. If a fisherman is looking for a lake trout to eat, finding one under 26 inches will be more probable.

Length limits were removed for several lakes such as Paxson, Summit, Louise, Crosswind and Susitna. The 5-year averages for these lakes indicate that this did not result in a noticeable increase in harvest.

Removing the 26-inch limit would ensure that harvest/mortality do not exceed prescribed yield targets. Regulations would be simplified and prevent possible further restrictions such as catch and release only, denying fishing opportunity.

Other options considered:

Keeping current regulations intact: Several nearby lakes have gone to a 1 fish any size limit and stayed well within allowable yield limits. The existing regulations indicate that we have stayed near the current allowable yield – a concerning issue for maintaining a healthy population of large fish.

Catch and release only. While many fishermen have moved to catch and release, this would deny fishing opportunity and unnecessary.

Revising the regulation to allow harvest under a 28" limit. This is my personal preference (see my other proposal) This would allow the most fecund fish to survive, significantly increase the allowable harvest of the most commonly caught fish and ensure a healthy population of high quality fish.

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