

PROPOSAL 69

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

Restrict the sport fishing season for Arctic grayling in the lower Chena River, as follows:

(3) in the Chena River and its tributaries, including Chena Slough (Badger Slough),

(C) Sport Fishing for arctic grayling, in the Chena River and its tributaries, including Chena Slough (Badger Slough), downstream from an ADF&G regulatory marker located 300 feet downstream from the Chena River flood control structure, is closed from April 1 through May 15.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? With the increased population growth in the Fairbanks and North Pole areas stemming from the military expansions of Fort Wainwright and Eielson Air Force Base, there has been increase and pronounced early-season sportfishing pressure on Arctic Grayling in the lower Chena River and its tributaries, including Chena Slough (Badger Slough). This is, in large part, due to these being the first and only ice-free waters in the regions during this time of year.

Over the past 25 years of fishing these waters, I have notice more anglers using treble hooks (although illegal), and increasingly poor landing and releasing technique with arctic grayling. This has resulted in my witnessing scores of injured, mangled and dead arctic grayling while fishing on the lower Chena River and its tributaries, including Chena Slough (Badger Slough) during late-April and early-May each year. Very often, my UAF sportfishing classes have been witness to these conditions as well.

Although these waters are regulated as Catch-and-Release for arctic grayling, if a limited closure is not instituted during the time the arctic grayling are preparing to spawn, and until other Interior waters are ice-free, this population will be at high risk for future sustainability.

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