

**PROPOSAL 263 - 5 AAC 21.331. Gillnet specifications and operations.** Reduce the length of drift gillnet gear, as follows:

Shorter (half-size) nets for entire fishing, limited days to dipnetting, one tide a day only, more fees from out of state residents, and prohibit motors on the Kenai.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** This one is for Cook Inlet, where I do have chances to fish as crewmen in the August. My proposal in long battle with different fish parties, is to all drift fleet half of net only. So set net, one net per permit only. It is worth of trying. We all will make, perhaps a little less in pay, but more salmon will escape.

**PROPOSED BY:** Pavel R. Vitek (HQ-F14-064)  
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**PROPOSAL 264 - 5 AAC 06.331. Gillnet specifications and operations.** Modify length of drift and set gillnets based on preseason sockeye salmon forecast, as follows:

Having Fish and Game boats to patrol set net sites and cite violators. Also, Department of Natural Resources to inspect legality of each site. There is not supposed to be any spare sites, as some people have. I would like to propose to install chips on each lease, that way helicopters can find illegal sets. Chip to outside 50 fathom buoys.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** I set net in Kwichak District. Every spring, forecast for escapement goals are announced. Last year only 16,000,000 fish. My proposal is, ones is below certain amount of fish, then all of drift and setnet fleet should be allowed only half nets to fish. They may not like it, but 75 fathoms of drift, 25 fathoms of set for permit only. But this emergency order will help escapement goals earlier and as result will be more fish for most of us. It takes only short time to restock longer gear. Longer nets not necessary catch more fish. It is worth trying.

**PROPOSED BY:** Pavel R. Vitek (HQ-F14-065)  
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**PROPOSAL 265 - 5 AAC 75.XXX. Use of earthworms as bait.** Ban the use of live earthworms as bait in freshwater sport fishing, as follows:

Proposed language under statewide sport fishing regulations, freshwater sport fishing:

"Freshwater sport fishing: (1) Fish may not be taken in fresh water by means of

...

(e) live bait, including earthworms."

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Freshwater sport fishing regulations should explicitly prohibit the use of live earthworms as bait to prevent the spread of invasive earthworms that can damage Alaska's natural systems. Earthworms sold for and used as fishing bait in Alaska are not native here, but have now become established at some boat

launches in Alaska, apparently from their use as live bait and subsequent dumping of live earthworms or earthworm-containing media onto the ground. These earthworms have been documented to be detrimental to native plants and wildlife in other parts of northern North America and may cause similar harm here in Alaska.

Further reading:

<http://greatlakeswormwatch.org/>

<http://worms.biology.ualberta.ca/>

[http://arctos.database.museum/mediaUploads/mbowser/Saltmarsh\\_DM\\_2012.pdf](http://arctos.database.museum/mediaUploads/mbowser/Saltmarsh_DM_2012.pdf)

The statewide regulations may not be under review in this meeting, but I want to at least draw attention to this issue.

**PROPOSED BY:** Matt Bowser (EF-C14-35)

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**PROPOSAL 266 - 5 AAC 39.645. Shellfish onboard observer program.** Modify procedure for assigning observer coverage in king and Tanner crab fisheries, as follows:

That if a vessel was chosen for an observer one year that vessel would be excluded the following year but can be put on the reserve list.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The random selection of observers for king & Tanner pot fishery in the Bering Sea, because it's uneven.

**PROPOSED BY:** David Harris F/V Arctic Mariner (EF-C14-62)

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**PROPOSAL 267 - 5 AAC 75.023. Freshwater sport fishing.** Repeal exception for use of footgear with felt soles while sport fishing in fresh water, as follows:

Repeal: 5 AAC 75.022(d):

(d) Beginning January 1, 2012, the use of footgear with absorbent felt or other fiber material on the soles is prohibited while sport fishing in fresh water.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Board of Fisheries ban on wearing felt soles while fishing, making wading and rafting while fishing unsafe and dangerous for people. Anyone who has spent much time in the field—or worse, had unexpected “swims”—knows how dangerous our cold waters are and how quickly one could lose their life. Even a quick dunk can be unforgiving and have dire consequences. The difference between wearing felt and wearing rubber or caulked boots is like night and day. Unfortunately, there are no alternatives, regardless of what you are told. If you are personally unaware of this fact, then you have little experience wading rivers or streams in Alaska and need to better educate yourself on the issue. Safety wise, it is the same as driving without a seat belt, or running a chainsaw without a pair of chaps. Sure you may get by without them, but do you want to get into an accident without your seat belt on? In essence, that's what the Board of Fisheries (and the Board

of Game) ban does. Your ban states loud and clear that our safety—our lives life, and that of our children's and loved ones—is unimportant to you.

While your attempt to thwart the spread of invasive plants and animals is noteworthy, your lack of adequate analysis of the scientific data on this subject is both troubling and reckless. People will die--drown and perish while fishing, due to our cold water temperatures because of your decision. It's as simple as that. Can felt soles transport invasive plants and animals?

Unfortunately, yes they can. But please look at the research—which is extremely limited at best. This small amount of research, much which has not been peer reviewed, has indicated that felt soles can spread such invasives as Didymo (rock snot), possibly whirling disease, and **one** New Zealand mudsnail was proven to be transported by a felt boot. One! Research has **also** proven that these invasives can be carried and transported to other waters on shoe laces, socks, inside the wading boots themselves, on the wading material itself and even on rubber wading boots. Furthermore, research has also proven invasives can be transported from one water body to another by boat trailers and through bilge water of boats and float planes traveling to and from different water bodies. Even Darwin wrote many years ago, about migrating waterfowl transporting plants and animals from one water body to another, both internally and externally. Why not ban all of these vectors then? Your ban on felt soles is as sensible as an open season on waterfowl, float planes and boats. Perhaps you should just ban people all together. Please—research the information yourself, not just the data and information you have been spoon fed by environmental alarmists.

Your mandate is to manage fish—not people. Seasons, catch limits, methods of fishing, fishing areas etc. —not wardrobes, and definitely not personal safety equipment. Your ban is an inherent attack on our personal freedoms to travel afield as we see fit. And your ban is making law abiding citizens break the law. Our safety and that of our children is more important than any of the perceived benefits you believe are achieved by this ban---especially when there are so many other vectors which you have not addressed. The last time I looked, this country is a free one, with “inalienable rights” of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, (which for many of us is the pursuit of fish and game!). When did we give up the right to decide what we should wear and not wear while in the field? What legal authority gives you the right to ban articles of clothing and make our travels less safe and even dangerous? Every time we allow another entity to take away our rights, we lose more of our personal freedoms and your taking of our right to travel afield as we see fit is an abuse of your power. None of us want to see invasive plants and animals overtake our waters and lands, but your ban on felt soles is baseless, unwarranted, poorly thought out, and most of all reckless. The next drowning of an Alaskan fisherman, possibly a young fisherman, may well be because of your poorly thought out decision to ban felt soles. Their blood may well be on your hands because of your decision. If you're okay with that and that doesn't bother you, you need to rethink your service to the people of Alaska.

A better and more proactive approach would be to educate people on invasives and how to prevent spreading them instead of “outlawing” personal protective equipment. Use ADF&G's internal education program to educate people on how to treat their felt soles, waders, bilge water etc. before and after being in Alaskan waters. According to ADF&G personnel, their concern is not so much with Alaskans spreading invasives as it is with tourists bringing them into the state.

Why punish Alaskans then? Why not educate and target the tourists when they come into the State? Some effort has been done in this regard but it could be more, and your "ban" should be removed.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jake Sprankle

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