

PROPOSAL 137 – 5 AAC 74.010. Seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means for the Tanana River Area. Allow the use of bait during the winter fishery on Fielding Lake, as follows:

5 AAC 74.010(d)(7)(B) is amended to:

Modify the special regulations concerning bait, for Fielding Lake as follows:

The use of set lines is prohibited April 16-October 31: Only one unbaited, single hook, artificial lure may be used November 1-April 15: Only one single hook, artificial lure, bait may be used.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Since approximately 2007 there has been a no bait restriction at Fielding Lake which has severe implications for those who enjoy ice fishing. The no bait restriction was implemented because harvests were exceeding an 80 fish a year recommended quota. A recent 2010-2011 stock assessment reached the conclusion that the 1999 estimate of mature lake trout was biased low. In addition harvest estimates since 2007 have been under half the target quota. Same years, far lower.

I believe there is room for compromise to allow a limited winter season that allows bait, similar to nearby lakes at Summit and Paxson. A regulation allowing bait, but still prohibiting set lines from November 1 to April 15, will allow a reasonable opportunity to fish for lake trout as well as burbot and, I believe, still keep the lake trout fishery under the recommended harvest quota.

If nothing changes, those who enjoy ice fishing at Fielding Lake will have no opportunity to catch burbot and extremely limited success fishing for lake trout.

Other options considered:

- Keeping current regulations intact. My belief is this unreasonably limits fair opportunity.
- Changing size limit and harvest to one fish any size. My experience fishing since the minimum 26 inch rule went into effect, is the number and size of mature lake trout has increased. I wish to keep this as is.
- Catch and release only. This would be acceptable to me, but I feel is unwarranted given the current sustained fish population.
- Further shortening a proposed winter bait regulation, say from January 1 to March 31. I would be open to this if it would be more palatable, but honestly feel it is not needed.
- Adding a "one tended line" restriction. Studies indicate this greatly increases the odds that jigging is the preferred fishing method which will reduce mortality. This should be added and is in fact mentioned in the lake trout management plan as a possible alternative.

PROPOSED BY: Ethan Birkholz

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