



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

## Department of Public Safety

DIVISION OF ALASKA WILDLIFE TROOPERS  
Office of the Director

5700 East Tudor Road  
Anchorage, Alaska 99507-1225  
Main: 907.269.5509  
Fax: 907.269.5616

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Chairman Jensen  
Alaska Board of Fish  
P.O. Box 115526  
Juneau Ak, 99811-5526

Dear Chairman Jensen:

The following comments give a brief description of the positions that the Department of Public Safety, Division of Alaska Wildlife Troopers have on some of the proposals that are up for consideration at the January 2018 regulations meeting in Sitka.

In general, when the board considers changes, especially when those changes involve seasons, bag limits and areas, the Alaska Wildlife Troopers request that every effort possible be made to align the season dates and bag limits with adjacent districts and sections. This is mainly for the benefit of the public but also helps greatly with enforceability of regulations over wide areas. When the board considers proposals having to do with allocation or biological concerns, AWT is generally neutral in position.

AWT recognizes that regulations are developed by the Alaska Boards of Fish and Game through the public process to support management plans. Further, all management plans rely upon public compliance with regulations to achieve success. Enforcement is a crucial element needed to ensure long-term compliance with regulations by the public. We ask that the board recognize that the division has limited resources and man power and any new regulation scheme or area restrictions may place an additional burden on AWT.

Comments on specific proposals are included on the pages that follow.

Thank you for you for your consideration,

Captain Scott Quist  
Southern Region Commander &  
Board of Fish Liaison  
Alaska Wildlife Troopers

## **PROPOSAL 59**

If accepted this proposal would close sport fishing for Dungeness crab between Cape Suckling and Cape Fairweather. AWT is neutral on the proposal. However, if the board adopts the proposal AWT requests that the closure line at Cape Fairweather be more clearly defined. The proposal suggests “a line running **southwest** from the western most tip of Cape Fairweather at 58 47.89’ N. Lat. and 137 56.68’ W long.”. The term “southwest” is too broad and could be interpreted as anything from 181 degrees to 269 degrees on a compass. The line could be better defined by either following a line of longitude, such as the line at Cape Suckling, or by adding an end-point to the line with a latitude and longitude waypoint or even a specific magnetic compass heading.

## **PROPOSAL 60**

This proposal seeks to establish an ecotourism Dungeness crab fishery in Sitka Sound and to allow commercial Dungeness crab fishermen to “reregister” and “deregister” from the commercial crab fishery. AWT is opposed to this proposal. If enacted this proposal would likely add complexity to regulations and to enforcement efforts.

Current regulations prohibit commercial Dungeness crab fishing in Sitka Sound, this proposal would open eco-tour fishing in the Sound, this would increase workload for AWT and could potentially increase the possibility of unlawful retention of Dungeness crab.

Using current regulations, a commercial crab fisherman who is also an ecotour guide can have clients purchase a seven-day commercial crew license for \$30.00 which would allow them to participate in the commercial fishery.

## **PROPOSAL 77**

This proposal seeks to repeal redundant sections of 5AAC 47.035 and to eliminate methods and means for taking abalone because the abalone fishery is closed. AWT supports this proposal.

## **PROPOSAL 128**

This proposal seeks to reduce the bag and possession limit of pelagic rockfish in the Sitka Area west of Baranof and Chichagof Islands. If accepted the Board should consider defining the phrase “waters west of Baranof and Chichagof Islands”. As it is written sport fisherman will have a difficult time determining what waters are “west” of the islands, especially in inside waters where the islands surround most of the water. In addition, a well-defined line would need to be established in the passage between Baranof and Chichagof Islands to delineate bag and possession limit areas.

### **PROPOSAL 159**

This proposal seeks to prohibit the use of all aircraft used to locate salmon or direct commercial fishing operations during open commercial salmon fishing periods in Southeastern Alaska Area.

AWT supports this proposal. This proposal would promote safety by reducing conflict between spotter aircraft and aircraft used for enforcement and it would make enforcement more effective because aircraft would not be used to detect the presence of AWT.

The board should consider language used in Bristol Bay salmon regulations: 5AAC 06.379 states, "A person may not use or employ an aircraft to locate salmon for the commercial taking of salmon or to direct commercial fishing operations in the Bristol Bay Area one hour before, during and one hour after a commercial salmon fishing period."

### **PROPOSAL 160**

This proposal seeks to clarify closed waters boundaries near the mouths of several streams in Terminal Harvest Areas (THAs). AWT supports the effort to clarify regulations. Currently all or most of the streams mentioned in the proposal are closed within 500 yards of the fresh water of a salmon stream based on statewide regulation 5AAC 39.290. Per Fish and Game, the intent is to liberalize legal waters areas inside the THAs and they have been doing so by emergency orders in some instances. By listing specific streams in regulations that are exempt from 5AAC 39.290 will reduce confusion in the fishing community and enhance enforcement efforts.

### **PROPOSAL 164**

This proposal seeks to update commercial salmon fishery closed waters descriptions at the mouth of the Situk River.

Over the past several years Alaska Department of Fish and Game has generated several proposals to change regulatory markers to latitude and longitude waypoints in different areas around the State. AWT has consistently supported the move away from physical markers because waypoints are much more defensible in court and less open to interpretation. And waypoints are not subject to the limitations of a physical signs such as damage, loss or reduced visibility.

AWT supports this proposal but would ask the board to consider identifying the new boundary with waypoints rather than regulatory markers.

### **PROPOSAL 175**

This proposal seeks to implement a possession restriction for vessels participating in the enhanced chum salmon troll fishery. AWT supports this proposal, a possession limit will make bag limit enforcement more successful.

### **PROPOSAL 184**

This proposal seeks to expand the season during which manually operated down riggers may be used in conjunction with fishing rods. AWT is opposed to the proposal. The lines between commercial hand troll and sport fisheries are blurry and difficult to differentiate, even under current regulations. By allowing commercial hand trollers to use down riggers during the summer season, when fishing effort is high, there would be no difference in gear between sport and commercial fisheries further blurring the line. Even under current regulations there is a significant concern that sport caught fish are being sold as commercial caught. Commercial hand trollers are restricted by time and area where sport fish regulations are much more liberal.

Regardless of whether the board accepts this proposal or not, AWT requests that the board consider requiring some type of clearly visible marking delineating commercial troll and sport fishing when a vessel is engaged in commercial troll fishing. As it is enforcement and fishery managers have a very difficult time determining which fishery a vessel is participating in.