

Greetings,

My name is Zack Larsen, I am here with my brother Jordan Larsen as the original authors of proposal 256. We strongly support proposal 256 and would like to thank the board for accepting it out of cycle.

We would like to commend the board for prioritizing king conservation on a river that is NOT yet a stock of concern by passing proposal 29 at the Bristol Bay meeting last December. While the passing of that proposal certainly has put in place measures to proactively conserve King salmon, it has also severely impeded the ability of sport anglers to reasonably and successfully target other abundant species of pacific salmon. We have worked incredibly hard to develop a fishery for Sockeye that does not include flossing or lining, but relies on sockeye to bite willingly. After 8 years of hard work building this unique fishery, it was effectively eliminated with the passing of proposal 29 last winter, as it relied heavily on small flies, lures, and jigs tipped or wrapped with a small piece of shrimp. Without the bait, our catch rates were drastically reduced, and the old standby of flossing was implemented again as the only viable option to target these fish

Proposal 256 would accomplish two things; first and foremost it would maintain the safeguards for Togiak king salmon put in place by the board last December, and also would allow for increased sport fishing opportunity on species that are abundant with the legal use of non-roe bait. When we singled out “roe” in this proposal, we intentionally did so to show the board that we are genuinely in support of proactive King salmon conservation, even if it means giving up the single most useful method in targeting King Salmon, which in our opinion is cured salmon roe. We are proposing something that we feel would compliment the proactive policy the board has adopted for King Conservation on the Togiak, while allowing for the reasonable and successful targeting of sockeye, and remaining more conservative than other rivers in Bristol Bay, such as the Nushagak, where ALL forms of BAIT and ADULT KING retention are still allowed, despite being labeled a stock of concern by ADFG

ADFG has given their comment on proposal 256 and we do not support their proposed modification. If their modification was adopted it would not rectify the unforeseen effect on our fishery for sockeye, chums, pinks or coho. As best we can determine, their modification would still prohibit any use of bait until August 1st in the lower river, and September 1st above Gechiak Creek, well after peak timing for Sockeye, Pinks, and Chums. The main concern from both ADF&G and Alaska Wildlife Troopers, is enforceability and potential regulatory headaches surrounding the definition of the term “roe” or “fish eggs”. Instead of impeding anglers’ ability to target other species, why not prohibit the bait that is hands down the most detrimental to King salmon specifically, and allow the use of other bait for species besides king salmon?

A working definition “roe” or “fish eggs” is as follows:
Any natural fish egg or eggs, originating from the gut cavity of a female fish of any species, whether in single form, or adhered together by the skein or any natural or synthetic material, cured or uncured, dyed or natural in color