

**PROPOSAL 208 - 5 AAC 77.540. Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon Fishery Management Plan.** Allow 10 Dolly Varden/Arctic char per household in Cook Inlet Personal Use Fisheries, as follows:

10 Dolly Varden/Arctic Char allowed per household in Cook Inlet Personal Use Fisheries

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Allow Dolly Varden/Arctic Char to be retained while dipnetting on the Kasilof and Kenai Rivers.

Every year I dipnet the Kenai river multiple days and hundreds of hours whether for myself or taking others. Every year we incidentally catch on average 20-30 dolly varden/artic char incidentally. In my estimate due to the size of the fish and the mesh size of the dipnets these fish are sustaining mortality rates up to 90%. Excessive bleeding from the gills and/or the body entanglement damaging internal organs is the most common injuries. Thru my angler experience of handling thousands of fish I know when a fish is more likely or not to survive a release and it doesn't take a study to know that thousands of dolly varden/artic char are being incidentally killed in this fishery as well as in the commercial setnet fishery off the beach.

Every year I get the same questions on board. I would love to eat a dolly varden why can't I keep it? If the fish is just gonna die why should we release it? This is such a waste why are we not allowed to keep it again? If flounder are ok to keep why isn't a Dolly? I explain to them that it is currently not legal to keep a dipnetted dolly varden/artic char but if you really want one you could try with a rod and reel in this same spot and it would be legal.

Like in many commercial fisheries wasted bycatch is thrown overboard to die this is what is happening to dolly varden in this personal use fishery. We can due better than this and allow residents to utilize these fish for food instead of throwing them unnecessarily overboard to die. Currently there is no evidence that the stock is in endanger or sustainability is an issue. I feel like a high percentage of dipnetters like myself if a dolly varden/artic char is not severely injured will

voluntary release the fish back but if the fish appears to be bleeding/mortally wounded than will make the choice to keep the fish instead of wasting it overboard.

If nothing is done thousands of dying edible fish will continue to be wasted when they could have been put to good use by resident dipnetters as food. Additionally those dipnetters who morally and ethically decide to retain a mortally injured dolly varden/artic char illegally will continue to be cited by law enforcement.

Who will benefit: Alaska residents

Possible Negative impacts: An unknown additional number of dolly varden/artic char that were not mortally wounded that would have survived release will be harvested.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jon Madison

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