

**PROPOSAL 166**

**5 AAC 75.020. Sport fishing gear.**

Require rockfish to be released at depth, as follows:

**[x] Beginning January 1, 2020, a person sport fishing from a vessel when releasing a species of rockfish shall immediately use a deep water release mechanism to return the fish to the depth it was hooked or to a depth of at least 100 feet. In this subsection, “deep water release mechanism” means a device designed to return a rockfish to the depth of capture, or to a specified depth.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The Seward Fish and Game Advisory Committee has always been proactive in response to protection of our valuable fish and game resources.

Catch data shows an increase in sport harvest of rockfish between 1996 and 2016. The catch varies by port and some areas catch more of pelagic than nonpelagic and vice versa. Valdez & Whittier catch more yellow eye while Homer, Kodiak and Seward catch more black and dusky. We anticipate the harvest of rockfish to increase with the corresponding decline in harvest from the sport halibut fishery.

Rockfish morphology and physiology make effective release of rockfish difficult. Catch data shows the preferred method of release for pelagic rockfish is the surf method. The DRM is more widely used in the non-pelagic fishery. The DRM is already being utilized by the charter and private fleets as a preferred release method for yelloweye.

Two day cage studies in PWS found that >84% of dark, dusky, silvergray, copper, quillback, and yelloweye can survive after recompression back down to depth. Making the DRM mandatory statewide would reduce rockfish mortality during an era of increased harvest pressure.

**PROPOSED BY:** Seward Fish and Game Advisory Committee

(EF-F18-075)

\*\*\*\*\*

**PROPOSAL 167**

**5 AAC 75.024. Gear for fly-fishing-only waters.**

Allow the use of two artificial flies, as follows:

Change the regulation for “Gear for fly-fishing only regulations” as follows: ... “with not more than **two** [ONE] unweighted, single-hook fly with gap between point and shank of 3/8 inch or less; and” ... add the following as the third bullet: **Note that this definition supersedes all other regulations related to specific waters by allowing the use of two artificial flies Statewide but not the use of two artificial lures.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Statewide regulations at “gear for fly-fishing-only waters” (e.g. page 7 of the Southcentral regulations) do not allow for the commonly accepted practice of using two flies in tandem i.e. two wet flies/nymphs or the “hopper-dropper” combination. Other places in the Southcentral regulations (p. 65 Anchor River; p. 66 Deep Creek; p. 51 Kenai River; p. 57 Kenai River) or the Bristol Bay regulations, (p. 20 Brooks River; p. 18 Iliamna Lake region), for example, also only allow for the use of a single artificial fly.

We propose that Statewide regulations and other regulations specific to individual waters be changed to allow for the use of two artificial flies.

If the regulation is not changed sport anglers will not have the opportunity to fish with two flies, and common practice which has been employed in the rest of the world since fly-fishing was invented. People may be concerned that this proposal will increase the ability to snag fish, but by retaining the 3/8 inch or less hook size limitation, this should be avoided.

**PROPOSED BY:** Phil Brna and Mike Brown

(HQ-F18-004)

\*\*\*\*\*