

PROPOSAL 19

5 AAC 74.044. Minto Flats Northern Pike Management Plan.

Repeal the bag limit reduction and modify the open season for northern pike in Minto Flats, as follows:

(a) Northern pike stocks in the lakes and flowing waters of the Minto Flats support both subsistence and sport fisheries. The purpose of this management plan is to provide the department with guidance to achieve the goals of managing these stocks consistent with sustained yield principles, providing a reasonable opportunity for the priority subsistence fishery, and providing a sport fishing opportunity. The Minto Flats northern pike management plan for the subsistence fishery is set out in 5 AAC 01.244.

(b) The department shall manage the Minto Flats northern pike sport fishery as follows:

(1) the maximum exploitation rate of northern pike in the lakes and flowing waters of the Minto Flats by all users may not exceed 20 percent annually;

(2) the following provisions apply to the harvest of northern pike in the Minto Flats area sport fishery:

(A) the open fishing season is from **MAY 1** [JUNE 1] through October 14;

(B) the daily bag and possession limit is five fish per day, only one of which may be 30 inches or more in length; AND

[(C) IF THE SUBSISTENCE HADVEST REPORTS INDICATE 750 OR MORE NORTHERN PIKE HAVE BEEN HARVESTED FROM THE CHATANIKA RIVER DRAINAGE UPSTREAM OF THE CONFLUENCE OF THE CHATANIKA RIVER AND GOLDSTREAM CREEK DURING THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1 UNTIL THESE WATERS ARE FREE OF ICE, THE COMMISSIONER SHAL REDUCE, BY EMERGENCY ORDER, THE DAILY BAG LIMIT AND POSSESSION LIMIT TO TWO FISH PER DAY, ONLY ONE OF WHICH MAY BE 30 INCHES OR MORE IN LENGTH, IN THE LAKES AND ALL FLOWING WATERS OF THE MINTO FLATS AREA FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE CALENDAR YEAR; AND]

(C)[(D)] in the Chatanika River drainage upstream from the confluence of the Chatanika River and Goldstream Creek to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at the boundary of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area (approximately one mile downstream from the Murphy Dome Road), only single hooks may be used.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The existing sportfish management regulations for northern pike in the Tolovana drainage include:

Bag and possession Limit: 5 fish per day, only one over 30 inches. The bag and possession limit is reduced to 2 fish only one over 30 inches by emergency order when the Chatanika River subsistence winter permit fishery exceeds a harvest of 750 northern pike. .

Seasonal Restrictions: June 1 through October 15

While these regulations have played a role in maintaining pike populations, recent angler reports and biological assessments indicate potential issues, including overabundance of smaller pike, increased competition for food, and reduced trophy-sized fish availability.

Based on ecological assessments, angler feedback, and best practices in pike fishery management, we propose the following modifications to the sportfish management plan:

Eliminate the provision that the sportfish bag limit is reduced when subsistence harvest in the Chatanika over winter area exceeds 750 northern pike.

Change the open season dates for sportfishing to May1 through October 14

Implementing these changes is expected to:

Enhance sport fishing opportunities and satisfaction among anglers

Improve the overall health and size structure of the northern pike population.

Reduce competition among juvenile pike, leading to better growth rates.

Strengthen long-term sustainability of the fishery.

Not impact subsistence fishing which is open year round in Minto Flats, except in the Chatanika permit ice fishery which closes in that area when harvest exceeds 1,500 northern pike

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. The Fairbanks Fish & Game Advisory Committee met on April 9th, 2025 and voted unanimously to submit this proposal.

PROPOSED BY: Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee Jeff Lucas, Chair

(EF-F26-139)
