

Sport Fisheries (9 proposals)

Bag and annual limits (5 proposals)

PROPOSAL 176

5 AAC 75.XXX. New sectionRegulatory Language here.

Allow anglers fishing from the same vessel to pool bag and possession limits , as follows:

Proposed Amendment to 5 AAC 75.0XX – Saltwater Vessel Bag Limit

(a) Saltwater Vessel Bag Limit. In salt waters and onboard any vessel (Including those which meets the registration requirements of 5 AAC 75.07), any species of finfish, including halibut, may be taken by individuals which hold a valid Alaska sport fishing license or are otherwise exempt from licensing requirements in individual bag and season limits under 5 AAC 47 - 5 AAC 74, and may be taken as a part of a bag limit which is cumulative for all individuals onboard the vessel who hold an Alaska sport fishing license or are otherwise exempt from licensing requirements.

- (1) For purposes of this section, no individual may retain any finfish for which they have retained their seasonal limit under 5 AAC 47 – 5 AAC 74.
- (2) For purposes of this section, no individual may possess finfish greater than the number allowed for the water on which they are fishing.
- (3) For purposes of this section, on any vessel which meets the registration requirements of 5 AAC 75.07, any finfish harvested under 5 AAC 47 – 5 AAC 74 by crew must be labeled or identified as crew fish.
- (4) For purposes of this section, on any vessel which meets the registration requirements of 5 AAC 75.07, crew are prohibited from giving all or part of their individual limit of finfish harvested under 5 AAC 47 – 5 AAC 74 to any passenger during or after a trip.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Cumulative bag limits for all licensed or otherwise exempt individuals on board vessels fishing in salt waters. Cumulative bag limits will reduce release mortality on all species, reduce fuel consumption, and increase food security of Alaska residents and nonresidents fishing off of saltwater vessels. Further, cumulative bag limits will simplify enforcement while having no effect on regulations for recording of catch and discard.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. Yes. South East Alaska Guide's Organization (SEAGO), and local saltwater anglers in Homer, Alaska.

PROPOSED BY: Brian Ritchie, Homer Charter Association (EF-F26-160)

PROPOSAL 177

5 AAC 75.XXX. New Section.

Allow anglers fishing from the same vessel to pool bag and possession limits, as follows:

Proposed Amendment to 5 AAC 75.0XX – Marine Fishing Vessel Bag Limit

- (a)** As a group, individuals fishing on marine waters holding a valid Alaska sport fishing license or otherwise exempt from licensing requirements may **take*** the total legal limit of fish equal to the cumulative daily bag or possession limit for all licensed or exempt individuals present.

**(Alaska Statute 16.05.940(35)- "taking, pursuing, hunting, fishing, trapping, or in any manner disturbing, capturing, or killing or attempting to take, pursue, hunt, fish, trap, or in any manner capture or kill fish or game."*

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current Alaska sport fishing regulations restrict daily bag limits to individual anglers. This presents challenges to groups that are required to manage their catches separately, regardless of ability, age, or circumstance. Where sportfishing in Alaska serves both as a food source and recreation and is often done in groups with differing skills, physical capabilities, and recreational fishing goals, anglers should be allowed to pool their daily bag and possession limits.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain.

PROPOSED BY: Southeast Alaska Guides Organization (EF-F26-167)

PROPOSAL 178

5 AAC 75.995. Definitions.

Modify the definition of bag limit, as follows:

(4)"bag limit" means the maximum legal take of fish per person per day, in the area in which the person is fishing, even if part or all of the fish are immediately preserved; a fish when landed and not immediately released becomes a part of the bag limit of **any person taking part in the catch** [THE PERSON ORIGINALLY HOOKING IT];

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current regulations make it hard to assist anglers who need it. For example, if I take a rod out of the rod holder and pass it to someone, or crank the handle to set the hook before another angler takes over- the fish becomes part of my bag limit. If I already have a limit of that species, the fish must be released regardless of whether the angler who fought it has a limit, thus causing higher release mortality- especially with King salmon and Demersal rock fish. I believe that under the current regulation many fisherman are unintentionally breaking the law.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. I have discussed this with numerous sport fisherman and charter captains as well as the local Advisory Committee.

PROPOSED BY: Lucas Bastian (EF-F26-059)

PROPOSAL 179

5 AAC 75.XXX. New Section.

Establish a statewide annual limit for king salmon of 10 fish, as follows:

Establish a Statewide annual limit of 10 Chinook Salmon larger than 20 inches. All retained Chinook salmon greater than 20 inches must be recorded immediately.

This regulation shall not be interpreted to increase any regional or local bag, possession, or annual limit, but rather to limit anglers taking more than 10 chinook salmon by combining regional limits or by fishing in areas without an annual limit.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The state of Alaska is experiencing significant chinook salmon declines. Currently, most of the state has been closed to king salmon fishing in-river, either by emergency order or regulation change. Ocean fisheries, such as the winter king salmon fishery in Homer, remain as the few holdouts for chinook sport fisheries, but they also need to take a more conservative approach than they currently do.

I am proposing a statewide restriction that does not target one specific area, with the recognition that this is a coastwide issue. Additionally, the proposed limit is still far more liberal than any in-river sport fishery I am aware of. This is to account for the combined factors of mixed stock fisheries and lower chance of spawning for ocean stocks.

In my discussions with ADF&G biologists, a primary drawback for a statewide limit was affecting allocations in the Southeast regions that are part of the Pacific Salmon Treaty. Although I think it is more fair for the limit to apply to the whole state, if the board views the inclusion of Southeast Alaska as a significant drawback, I would welcome an amendment to include only those state waters not covered under the Pacific Salmon Treaty.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. This proposal has been discussed extensively with Department staff from the Douglas, Juneau, Homer, and Anchorage offices, and has been modified to better reflect those management areas, while preserving the intent of the proposal.

PROPOSED BY: Paul Warta

(EF-F26-079)
