

Sport Fishing Regulation Changes 2017-2018

Briefing and Public Hearing



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Presentation Outline

- Process
- Timeline and public involvement
- Proposals and public comments
- Public testimony

Process

- Three Year Schedule,
 - Columbia Basin 2014
 - Puget Sound and Coast freshwater 2015
 - Marine finfish, forage fish and shellfish 2016

Timeline and Public Involvement

- March 15-April 30 Accept Proposals
(email, press release, website)
- May-July Agency review of Proposals
- August-October Proposals posted to website for public comment
- August Regional public meetings (3)
- **November 4-5** **Public Hearing**
- December 9-10 Commission Action
- July 1, 2017 Rules take effect

Rule Change Proposals

- 66 submitted
 - 11 recommended for public hearing
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- Technical Changes
 - Shellfish (8)
 - Marine Finfish (2)

Technical/Clerical Change Proposals

- Nine technical changes submitted by Department staff;
- Changes do not effect or alter current regulations;
- Primary purpose is to clarify existing regulation language;
- No public comments were received for the technical changes;

Shellfish Proposals

Possession of another's food fish or shellfish limit

- This rule will provide the ability to track food fish and shellfish recreationally harvested and possessed by another while in the field or in transit.
- Public comments: Support (0), Opposed (3)
- Opposition:
 - ✓ Rule not needed and could lead to unintended and unnecessary violations
 - ✓ Rule is too confusing for the public

Shellfish Proposals

Define a unit of gear for crab, crawfish and shrimp

- Clarify definition of a unit of gear
- Addition of angling gear or a castable device
- Public comments: Support (2), Opposed (0)
- General Comment:
 - ✓ The number of pots that “trap” crab should still be limited to 2 pots per fisher, but two additional devices like rings should be allowed because the crab can freely move off the trap.

Shellfish Proposals

Require buoy of unattended shellfish gear to be marked with the first and last name and permanent mailing address of the person operating the gear

- Clarify definition the description and definition of who is legally allowed to operated and tend shellfish gear;
- Enhances the ability to enforces shellfish gear regulations;
- Public comments: Support (2), Opposed (4);
- Opposition;
 - ✓ concerns with disclosing address,
 - ✓ does not allow sharing pots,
 - ✓ should allow multiple names on a buoy

Shellfish Proposals

Tanner crab minimum size in Puget Sound

- Implement a 4 ½ inch minimum size limit for Tanner crabs retained during personal use crab fishery
- Protect Tanner crab in Puget Sound
- Allows the majority of females and over 50 % of the males to spawn prior to harvest
- Public comments: Support (2), Opposed (0)

Shellfish Proposals

Shrimp pot mesh size

- Allow 1/2 inch mesh size for shrimp pots inside 20 fathoms year round in Marine Areas 1-3 and Marine Area 4 west of the Bonilla-Tatoosh Line
- This proposal would allow opportunity to harvest coonstripe shrimp and require the release of spot shrimp.
- Public comments: Support (2), Opposed (0)

Shellfish Proposals

Allow squid harvest in Hood Canal

- Allow squid harvest year round, including Humboldt squid in Hood Canal.
- Public comments: Support (1), Opposed (1)
- Opposition:
 - ✓ Squid are important prey for salmon and should be protected

Shellfish Proposals

Restrict heating of oyster in the shell on the beach

- Restrict harvesters from cooking oysters in the shell and/or opening oysters through the addition of heat.
- Public comments: Support (1), Opposed (6)
- Opposition:
 - ✓ Should be allowed because no shortage of oysters;
 - ✓ Cooking in the shell reduces the risk of vibrio illness and this practice should be allowed
 - ✓ Rule change favors private beach owners;
 - ✓ Impacts from cooking oysters in the shell is negligible

Shellfish Proposals

Remove bonus limits for eastern softshell clams in Skagit Bay, and for cockles in Willapa Bay (1)

- Current populations no longer warrant continued bonus limit for cockles in Willapa Bay and for Eastern softshell clams in Skagit Bay
- Public comments: Support (1), Opposed (0)

Shellfish Proposal Questions

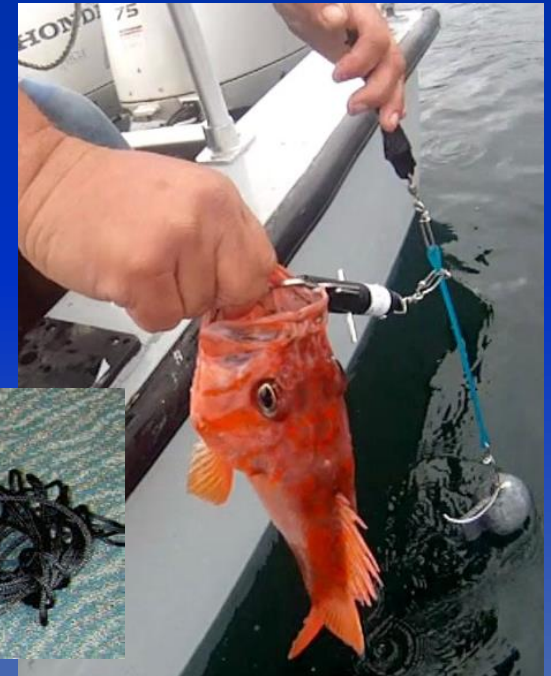
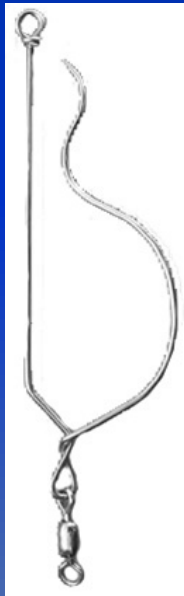
Marine Finfish Proposals



Marine Finfish Proposals

Require descending devices in Puget Sound for bottomfish and halibut

- Require a descending device be onboard the fishing vessel and rigged for deployment when fishing for bottomfish or halibut in waters east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh Line.



Marine Finfish Proposals

■ Pro (5):

- This is a good tool, and important for conservation, but requiring it constitutes another expense for the fisher.
- I will use the tool if required, but the “need” is really a side effect of historic commercial fisheries in Puget Sound, which I resent.
- I'm in favor of adopting this rule, so long as it remains okay to make your own descending device using inexpensive materials.

■ Con (1):

- I recommend that this proposal be suspended pending concurrent review and comments of NOAA's recently released draft Rockfish Recovery Plan in Puget sound.

Marine Finfish Proposals

- General (2):
 - As written, this proposal is too vague. What is meant by a descending device? It gives too much discretion to enforcement officers.
 - Charters call these floaters and don't send them down now they leave them up top for the birds. Why change something that is not enforced? This is a waste of time and money. Enhanced enforcement is the answer .



Marine Finfish Proposals

Classify Opah, Swordfish, Striped Marlin, and Dolphinfish as food fish

- Classify *Lampris guttatus* (opah), *Xiphias gladius* (swordfish), *Kajikia audax* (striped marlin), and *Coryphaena hippurus* (dolphinfish) as "food fish".
- Allowing a daily catch limit of two per angler, will allow for retention while not promoting a target fishery for the species.



Marine Finfish Proposals

- Pro (3, all):
 - I totally agree with the proposal. The ability to possess 2 fish will have no biological impact on these pelagic fish because so few will be caught. The important issue is to prevent a directed Commercial Fishery on these species.
 - Good policy.
 - I'm in favor of classifying Opah, Swordfish, Striped Marlin, and Dolphinfish as food fish so they can be retained if caught.

Not recommended for further consideration

Lingcod Fishery Proposals

Existing rules: May 1 –June 15 hook and line season min. size limit 26". Max. size limit 36". Daily limit 1.

Proposed changes: no retention May 23 - June 15. Or, institute annual punch card.

Existing season reflects precautionary management. Decreased CPUE in some areas is largely due to increased effort. Rules changes in 2010 still need time to be effective.

Marine Finfish Questions

Timeline

- **Nov. 4-5** **Briefing and Public Hearing**
- Dec. 9-10 Rule adoption
- July 1, 2017 Pamphlet —rules take effect

Public Testimony