

**Meeting Date:** November 19, 2015

**Agenda Item No. 5.I**

**Agenda Item:** 2016-2018 Fishing Seasons and Rules

**Bureau Chief Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Prepared by:** Jeff Dillon/Dave Parrish

**Background:**

By statute, fishing seasons and bag limits are set through IDFG Commission action. Seasons and rules were last set by the Commission in November 2012 and implemented in January 2013. That marked the beginning of establishing fishing seasons and rules on a three-year cycle. The shift from a two-year cycle to a three-year cycle was in response to public support of simpler regulations and less frequent changes. The three-year cycle has been well-received by anglers. These proposed fishing seasons and limits for Idaho, including steelhead are for 2016-2018.

**Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:**

Idaho Code Sections 36-104(b) and 36-901. IDAPA 13.01.11.000

**Public Involvement Process:**

The public was invited to provide input through local scoping meetings, press releases sent to local and statewide print and video outlets, posting on social media outlets and public meetings/sporting group events. In addition, the Department collected feedback on potential rule changes through the Department website. A total of 6,629 individual question responses were received from the public through the website on 41 proposed regional and statewide changes.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff will provide a complete list of proposed fishing season and limit changes for 2016 – 2018.

Recommended Motion: Approve the 2016 – 2018 fishing seasons and rules as presented by staff.

**Justification:**

This action item allows IDFG to update and simplify fishing seasons and rules that have been in-place since January 2013. Our goal is to provide better customer service through simplification of rules and expanding angler opportunities.

# **ATTACHMENT A**

## **Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game Proposed Fishing Rule Changes for 2016 – 2018**

### Statewide:

- 1) The “possession limit” will be three times the daily bag limit after the second day of the season. Currently, the possession limit is equal to the bag limit.
- 2) Free Fishing Day will be on June 11, 2016; June 10, 2017; and June 9, 2018. These dates are the Saturday after the first full week in June and correspond with National outdoor recognition events.

### Panhandle Region:

- 1) Lake Pend Oreille - The Rainbow Trout daily bag limit will be reduced from 6 to 2; only 1 over 20”.
- 2) Clark Fork River and tributaries and Pack River and tributaries – No bait will be allowed during the existing catch-and-release season which is December 1 through the Friday before Memorial Day weekend.
- 3) Spirit Lake - The Kokanee daily bag limit will be raised from 15 to 25 fish.
- 4) Hayden Lake – Minimum length on largemouth bass that can be harvested will increase from 16” to 20”.

### Clearwater Region:

- 1) Mann Lake – Daily bag limit on bass will change from general (6) to 2 bass; none under 16”.
- 2) Deyo Reservoir– Daily bag limit on bass will change from general (6) to 2 bass; none under 16”.
- 3) Spring Valley Reservoir – Daily bag limit on bass will change from general (6) to 2 bass; none under 16”.
- 4) Dworshak Reservoir – From Grandad Bridge upstream to end-of-flat-water; bait will now be allowed, year-around.
- 5) Clearwater River, South Fork – Rainbow Trout limit will change from 6 adipose fin-clipped fish to a daily bag limit of 2 Rainbow Trout with or without an adipose fin.
- 6) Palouse River and tributaries – Daily bag limit for trout will be reduced from 6 to 2.
- 7) Clearwater River, North Fork – Steelhead season; eliminate the July 1 catch-and-release season and open a harvest season for Steelhead from September 1 through December 31.

#### Southwest Region:

- 1) Oxbow Reservoir – Eliminate the catch-and-release bass season. The daily bag limit of 2 bass; 12” – 16” slot-limit will apply year-around.
- 2) C. Ben Ross Reservoir - Eliminate the catch-and-release bass season. The daily bag limit of 2 bass; 12” – 16” slot-limit will apply year-around.
- 3) Payette Lake – Eliminate the Lake Trout daily bag limit of 1 fish, none over 30 inches. Include Lake Trout in the daily trout bag limit which is 6.
- 4) Payette River, North Fork – Insert a catch-and-release season for trout from Smiley Bridge to Payette Lake beginning on December 1 through the Friday before Memorial Day weekend.
- 5) Boise River – Eliminate the 14” minimum harvest restriction on Rainbow Trout from Loggers Creek to East Boise River footbridge. Change the daily trout bag limit from Diversion Dam to Glenwood Bridge to 2 trout.

#### Magic Valley:

- 1) Salmon Falls Creek Reservoir – Daily Walleye bag limit will change from 6 fish any size to 6 Walleye with only 1 over 20”.

#### Southeast Region:

- 1) Regionwide – Minimum size of bass that can be harvested under general rules increases from 12” to 14”.
- 2) Oneida Reservoir and the Bear River downstream of the dam – eliminate the 12” minimum on bass that can be harvested. Anglers will now be able to harvest 6 bass; any size.
- 3) American Falls Reservoir and Snake River from American Falls Reservoir upstream to Gem Lake Dam – Change from the daily bass bag limit of 6, none under 12” to 2 bass any size.
- 4) Bannock Reservoir (new water in Pocatello Wellness Complex) – new rule; daily bag limit is 2 fish; combination of any species.
- 5) Kokanee Creek (new water running into Bannock Reservoir) – Closed to fishing.

#### Upper Snake Region:

- 1) Regionwide – Remove the 12” minimum harvest rule for bass.
- 2) Regionwide – Increase the daily bag limit on Kokanee from 6 to 15.
- 3) Snake River from American Falls Reservoir to Gem Lake Dam – Daily bag limit for bass would be 2; any size.

- 4) Henrys Fork – Change the downstream section boundary from Del Rio Bridge to the South Fork Snake River. This would change the daily trout bag limit from 6 to 2 in this lower section. Also, eliminate the minimum 16” size restriction for trout within the entire reach.
- 5) Henrys Fork (Vernon Bridge to Ashton Dam) – Replace the winter “closed fishing” season with a “catch-and-release” season. Also, eliminate the 16” minimum size limit during the summer harvest season.
- 6) Henrys Fork (Highway 20 Bridge to Riverside Campground) – Eliminate the trout 16” minimum size limit.
- 7) Henrys Fork (Riverside Campground upstream to Harriman Park) – Change the “closed to fishing” season to a “catch-and-release” season for trout requiring barbless hooks and no use of bait. This will result in a year-around catch-and-release fishing season in this reach.
- 8) Warm River and tributaries – Clarify the boundary as the “bridge near Parker (Scheuller) cabin.” On all other sections of Warm River and tributaries it would be open to year-around harvest (rather than a winter catch-and-release season) with a 6 trout limit; no harvest of Cutthroat Trout.
- 9) Snake River from Osgood diversion upstream to the confluence of the Henrys Fork and South Fork Snake River – Trout limit would be reduced from 6 to 2; no harvest of Cutthroat Trout (previously anglers could keep 2 Cutthroat Trout).
- 10) South Fork Snake River tributaries – Allow harvest of any size Brown Trout (which will be included in the daily trout bag limit). Change the “closed to fishing” season to June 1 to June 30 (previous April 1 – June 30).
- 11) Teton River – Eliminate the winter catch-and-release season (open all year). Allow unlimited harvest of Rainbow Trout and trout hybrids (currently 6 trout limit) with no harvest of Cutthroat Trout.
- 12) Teton River tributaries - Eliminate the winter catch-and-release season (open to fishing July 1 to May 31); then close the tributaries June 1 through June 30. Allow unlimited harvest of Rainbow Trout and trout hybrids (currently 6 trout limit) with no harvest of Cutthroat.
- 13) Little Lost River and tributaries, Medicine Lodge Creek and Fall River – Eliminate the catch-and-release seasons and allow year-around fishing with a 2 trout limit; no harvest of Cutthroat Trout.
- 14) Becker Park Pond (Ryder Park Pond) – Current rule is 2 trout. It would change to 2 fish; any combination of species.

15) Jim Moore Pond, Horseshoe Lake and Teardrop Lake – Current rule is 6 trout. The daily trout bag limit would be reduced to 2 trout on all three waters.

16) Palisades Reservoir tributaries – Close all Palisades Reservoir tributaries to Kokanee harvest.

Salmon Region:

1) Wallace Lake – Reduce the daily bag limit for trout from 6 to 2.