

**Meeting Date:** November 16, 2021

**Agenda Item No. 5a**

**Agenda Item:** 2022-2024 Fishing Seasons and Limits

**Bureau Chief Approval:** LH

**Prepared by:** Joe Kozfkay, State Fishery Manager

**Background:**

By statute, fishing seasons and bag limits are set through IDFG Commission action. Seasons and bag limits are established on a three-year cycle and were last set by the Commission in November 2018 and took effect in January 2019. These proposed fishing seasons and limits for Idaho are for 2022-2024. During March and April, 2021, the Department completed public scoping regarding potential changes to existing fishing seasons and limits. Staff then presented proposed season and limit changes for individual fisheries during the July 2021 Commission meeting. Staff recommendations were prepared based on input received this summer and fall specific to these proposed changes.

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

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

**Public Involvement Process:**

The Department undertook a comprehensive outreach campaign to initially scope potential changes to existing statewide fishing seasons and rules beginning in February 2021. This effort included press releases, emails invitations to anglers, social media posts, Regional virtual open houses with video presentations, and online comment surveys to collect input. Staff then presented proposed season and limit changes for individual fisheries during the July 2021 Commission meeting.

Resulting season and rule change proposals were vetted by the Commission in July and made available for public and agency review for 30 days, from early September to early October. Opportunity to provide comment on these proposed changes was announced with press releases, social media, and email invitations. Input was collected using open comment forms on the Department website. Additionally, we used randomized email surveys to gather additional input (with less bias) on the Clearwater/Snake River salmon and steelhead seasons, Henrys Lake, and Snake River (American Falls) proposals.

After reviewing public input on the proposed changes, we have developed staff recommendations for the Commission's consideration. **Appendix A** includes 1) proposed changes to seasons and limits, 2) rationale behind each, 3) public comment summary, and 4) staff recommendations for the Commission's consideration on each proposed change.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff will provide a list of proposed fishing season and limit changes for 2022 – 2024 (Appendix A).

Recommended Motion: Approve the 2022 – 2024 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 2019. Our goal is to provide better customer service by: (1) simplifying or clarifying fishing rules, (2) expanding angling opportunities, or (3) improving fishing quality.