

PROPOSAL 164

5 AAC 01.010. Methods, means, and general provisions.

Prohibit the intentional waste or destruction of sheefish, as follows:

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...

The intentional waste or destruction of inconnu (sheefish) is prohibited.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? People catching inconnu (sheefish) and abandoning them piled on the ice near where they were caught or letting them go to waste after bringing them back to town – leaving in the sun, warm weather, flies, to spoil. This is offensive to local customs and violates Iñupiaq values, besides being wanton waste of a valuable resource that feeds a lot of people in the region and throughout the State. While these incidents are not common, when they occur there is no regulation for enforcement purposes to address this.

Other solutions are to include all subsistence fish species. This was rejected because it would get complicated when you start dealing with baitfish and other small fishes (saffron cod) that are used for a variety of purposes, including as plant fertilizer, and other uses where waste is not so easily defined. In addition, waste of other fish besides sheefish, at least in the Kotzebue Sound region, is rare. This issue is unique because sheefish are large and at times are easily caught in quantities right near Kotzebue with little investment of effort, equipment, or cost. The effort comes in transporting them from the fishing grounds and putting them away properly and at times some people catch more than they are prepared, or willing, to process. Sheefish are a high value subsistence species and worthy of conservation regulations, at a minimum to prohibit intentional waste. Use of sheefish for dog food and as crab bait (both of which are traditional uses) should continue to be allowed and not be considered waste.

PROPOSED BY: Kotzebue Fish and Game Advisory Committee

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