

PROPOSAL 63

5 AAC 01.244. Minto Flats Northern Pike Management Plan.

Expand waters closed to subsistence harvest of northern pike in the Chatanika River drainage downstream of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area boundary, adopt a maximum size limit, and reduce the bag limit, as follows:

We would like to see the board reinstate the 3-mile closure that you put in place during the last in-cycle meeting. We would like to see the board instate a bag limit of 5, of which only one can be over 30". We would also like to see no catch and release, but we realize that this might be difficult if there was a size restriction.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Minto Nenana AC is concerned that the northern pike that overwinter in the Chatanika do not have enough protection from overfishing through the ice. We believe that the large female spawners cannot take this pressure. We are concerned that the few individuals that utilize this fishery could jeopardize the health of the population that others also depend on.

PROPOSED BY: Minto Nenana Fish and Game Advisory Committee (EF-F18-056)

PROPOSAL 64

5 AAC 01.244. Minto Flats Northern Pike Management Plan.

Expand waters closed to subsistence harvest of northern pike in the Chatanika River drainage downstream of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area boundary, adopt a maximum size limit, and reduce the bag limit, as follows:

Set the ice fishing closure area at two miles and all fish over 30" are returned unharmed with a bag limit of 5 fish. This is not more restrictive than sport fish limits because this is just one small area of the subsistence fishery - the rest of the area is open year round with no limits on size or take.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In the overwintering area of the Chatanika River, the existing 1 mile restriction is not acceptable as this area is a critical overwintering spot for female Northern Pike that are capable of spawning. This is a state subsistence fishery area and not a traditional use area. This area has only been subsistence since the mid 90's.

PROPOSED BY: Evan Wheeler

(EF-F18-077)

PROPOSAL 65

5 AAC 01.244. Minto Flats Northern Pike Management Plan.

Expand waters closed to subsistence harvest of northern pike in the Chatanika River drainage downstream of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area boundary, adopt a maximum size limit, and reduce the bag limit, as follows:

Increase the closure to the first two miles upstream of the Chatanika/Goldstream confluence, with a seasonal bag and possession limit of the first ten fish caught with only two of those over 30". This will don't adversely affect the subsistence fishery since this will adversely affect the Chatanika River Harvest Area - the rest of the Chatanika upstream 10 miles, 28 miles downstream, Goldstream Creek, Minto Flats, and the Tatalina and Tolovana Rivers are still open to subsistence fishing year-round.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Alaska Board of Fisheries recently changed the regulations from a 3 mile closure in the Chatanika River Harvest Area to a 1 mile closure due to an ACR initiated by the Fairbanks Advisory Committee. This is causing an excessive number of the large spawning fertile females in this area to be harvested.

PROPOSED BY: John Morack

(EF-F18-079)

PROPOSAL 66

5 AAC 01.244. Minto Flats Northern Pike Management Plan.

Expand waters closed to subsistence harvest of northern pike in the Chatanika River drainage downstream of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area boundary, as follows:

In order to save approximately 50% of these spawner females, the closed area needs to be extended back to three miles. This still leaves 9 miles upstream, 28 miles downstream, all of Goldstream Creek and almost all of Minto Flats, including the Tolovana and Tatalina Rivers, open to subsistence fishing year round. There is no limitation on the number of fish taken, or their size, in these other areas.

If adopted, the new regulations would include 3 miles instead of 1 mile: 5 AAC 01.244(b)(2)(F) (modified by ACR01) "in the Chatanika River drainage, from the confluence of the Chatanika River and Goldstream Creek to an ADF&G regulatory marker approximately three river miles upstream of the confluence, subsistence fishing through the ice is closed;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Large (over 30"), mature, female spawner pike that concentrate in an overwintering area in the Chatanika River upstream from the confluence of Goldstream Creek and the Chatanika River (known as the Chatanika River Harvest Area) are being overharvested. It is very important to maintain these large fish. The 2017-2018 regulations closed the first three miles to fishing through the ice in order to save approximately 50% of these spawner females, but that closure was reduced by ACR01 to one mile, where almost no fish overwinter per the last study conducted by Fish and Game.

PROPOSED BY: Marvin Hassebroek

(EF-F18-074)

PROPOSAL 67

5 AAC 01.244. Minto Flats Northern Pike Management Plan.

Expand waters closed to subsistence harvest of northern pike in the Chatanika River drainage downstream of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area boundary, as follows:

In order to protect, restore, and promote the long term health of the pike fishery and habitat, and to prevent overfishing and rebuild the stock, several years of 3 mile protection will be required; therefore I propose that we reinstate the three mile restriction.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Board of Fisheries just reduced the new three mile closure in the overwintering area of the Chatanika River Harvest Area adopted in 2017 to one mile. Fish and Game records reflect that there are almost no pike that overwinter in that first mile, and they estimate that approximately 50% of those local fish are upstream between miles 1 and 3. The majority of the fish that are caught through the ice are the large pre-spawning egg-bearing females that need to be protected. It takes 15 to 20 years to grow a 40" pike, and all pike over 30" are female. It seems prudent to return the three mile restriction so that 50% of the stock of large females are protected. It will take several more years for the beneficial effects of the closure to be observed in the affected population. A reasonable opportunity for subsistence fishing is available year-round in the rest of the Tolovana River drainage- this is only a three mile protected overwintering area for the Minto Lakes drainage.

PROPOSED BY: James Dieringer

(EF-F18-084)

PROPOSAL 68

5 AAC 01.244. Minto Flats Northern Pike Management Plan.

Open the Chatanika River drainage downstream of the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area boundary to subsistence fishing through the ice for northern pike, as follows:

Open all of the Chatanika SHA for subsistence ice fishing. Close the fishery when the ADFG quota for pike has been met. The daily bag limit of 10 northern pike per day, with 20 in possession should remain the same.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? A portion of the Chatanika River is closed to subsistence ice fishing for pike in the Chatanika SHA. The closed portion is from the confluence of the Chatanika River and Goldstream Creek to the regulatory marker about one mile upstream on the Chatanika River. This diminishes the fishable area and ability to harvest pike for subsistence use.

PROPOSED BY: Dan Moody

(EF-F18-025)

PROPOSAL 69

5 AAC 01.244. Minto Flats Northern Pike Management Plan.

Reduce the northern pike harvest trigger in the Chatanika River drainage from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game marker to the Fairbanks Nonsubsistence Area boundary, as follows:

Decrease the emergency closure in 5 AAC 01.244(b)(2)(G)(ii) from 1,500 to the number that will maintain an exploitation rate for fish larger than 30" below 10% of the existing population of these large fish.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The emergency closure limit is unreasonably high for this small fishery for Northern Pike in the Chatanika River Harvest Area. Records show that the majority of the harvest in the winter from this area is large, egg-bearing female pike who spawn in the spring. All pike over 30" are female. Because of this, the number of these large 30"+ female pike are in decline. These large pike are extremely important to the fishery. This is not overly restrictive on the subsistence fishery because, outside this small Chatanika River Harvest Area, subsistence users can fish year round through the ice and in the summer with gillnets, and there are no limits.

PROPOSED BY: Denis and Andree Porchet

(EF-F18-078)
