

PROPOSAL 163

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

Prohibit the intentional waste or destruction of subsistence-caught fish, as follows:

The intentional waste or destruction of any species of subsistence-caught fish is prohibited.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The waste of subsistence-caught fish in northwest Alaska.

(Note: The reason for the is request is that over the last decades, I've seen countless sheefish, Dolly Varden, northern pike, etc. fish caught and left on the ice near fishing holes, and along the trails-abandoned fresh, so to speak. See the example photos provided.

Separately, also, fish are dumped in the spring as weather warms and folks realize they don't want that heap of fish rotting in their yards or their freezer space used up on so many huge and unwanted fish- discarded still whole.

Separate from ice fishing, in June/July along the Kobuk it is also popular to go out boating and hook countless huge adult sheefish heading up to spawn, and upon arriving home to toss them on the shore under a blue tarp, where at times a lot remain until they turn into maggots.

This splendid fishery is important locally, and I think we all can agree should be treated in a manner that's respectable and sustainable.)

PROPOSED BY: Seth Kantner

(EF-F18-026)

PROPOSAL 164

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

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

5 AAC 01.010.

...

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

(EF-F18-029)
