Fish and Wildlife Commission hears comments on sportfishing rule proposals

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : December 9, 2009 at 5:37 am

OLYMPIA - The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission took public comments on proposed 2010-2012 state sportfishing rules - and requested options for additional public-input processes on two proposals - during its Dec. 4-5 meeting in Olympia.

Dozens of people commented on several of the sportfishing rule proposals that would affect a variety of freshwater and saltwater sportfisheries in Washington.

The commission, a nine-member citizen panel that sets policy for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), is scheduled to take action on the proposals at its Feb. 4-6 meeting in Olympia.

During the December meeting, the commission directed WDFW Director Phil Anderson to develop alternatives for public processes on two proposals that have drawn considerable interest. Anderson is scheduled to present the proposals at the commission's January meeting in Olympia.

The two alternative processes would address a proposal that would ban the use of small lead fishing tackle at 13 lakes in Washington, and a proposal that would close fishing for bottomfish and halibut off the northwestern tip of the Olympic Peninsula.

Commissioners indicated that more public-input opportunities might be needed before a decision is reached on the two proposals.

The proposal prohibiting the use of lead weights weighing less than half an ounce or lead jigs measuring less than 1.5 inches is designed to protect loons from being poisoned by ingesting small lead fishing gear lost by anglers. The other proposal is intended to provide additional protection for bottomfish and halibut in an area extending 1.5 miles offshore and stretching about 4 miles from Cape Flattery east to Neah Bay.

Those, and more than 100 other sportfishing rule proposals, are available for review on WDFW's website at http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/rule_proposals .

Also during the December meeting, the commission took public comment on a proposal to offer hunters five additional multi-species raffle permits.

In other business, the commission approved land transactions in Skagit and Yakima counties, established a boundary on the Johnson/DeBay Slough Game Reserve, and appointed Michael Quimby of Olympia and Jerry Woods of Elk to its Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities.

The commission also was briefed on:

The history and current status of the Columbia River spring chinook fishery.
The status of the Puget Sound groundfish management plan.
The process for developing bag limit regulations for the 2011-13 recreational albacore tuna fishery.

The status of the white-tailed deer management plan.
Proposed regulations for the commercial sardine fishery.
Marine Protected Area Work Group activities.
The implementation of mineral prospecting rules adopted in 2008.
The history and current activities of the Commission's Advisory Committee for Persons with

Disabilities.

Collaborative efforts to clean up the WDFW-managed access site at American Lake in Pierce County.

Information about future commission meetings can be found on WDFW's website at http://wdfw.wa.gov/commission/meetings.html .