

**Proposal Title: Treble Hooks in the Lakes of the Skeena Region**

**Proponent: Sam Moroski – Non-Affiliated, Resident Angler - SFAC-2008-01**

**Proposed Regulation Change:**

Discontinue the use of treble hooks for freshwater angling in Region 6.

**Summary of issue(s) proposal is to address:**

- To reduce hooking, handling mortality and tissue damage
- To reduce handling time and associated air exposure
- To better facilitate trophy fisheries via higher survival of released fish

**Regulatory/ Policy Impediments: *(list & provide details)***

There are no regulatory/policy impediments.

**Existing Regulation & Justification Summary: *(may include biological comments)***

Anglers may use barbed-treble hooks to fish BC lakes; single barbless hooks are required both in BC streams in addition to tidal salmon fisheries. Single barbless hook regulations were imposed to reduce mortality and improve fish survival in catch and release fisheries.

**Management Considerations: *(summarize relevant: stock status, life history information, exploitation levels/limits, information or observations from other geographic locations or jurisdictions & relevant examples / references from the literature, social issues)***

Several investigations have reported that single hooks tend to produce less injury than treble hooks due to one or more of the following mechanisms: reduction in hooking mortality; reduction in handling mortality; reduction in tissue damage; reduction in handling time and associated air exposure. Some examples are listed below:

DuBois RB, Margenau TL, Stewart RS, Cunningham PK, Rasmussen PW (1994) Hooking mortality of Northern Pike angled through ice. North Am J Fisheries Manage 14:769-775

Gjernes T, Kronlund AR, Mulligan TJ (1993) Mortality of chinook and coho salmon in their first year of ocean life following catch and release by anglers. North Am J Fisheries Manage 13:524-539

Muoneke MI, Childress WM (1994) Hooking mortality: a review for recreational fisheries. Rev Fisheries Sci 2:123-156

Pelletier C, Hanson KC, Cooke SJ (2007) Do catch-and-release guidelines from state and provincial fisheries agencies in North America conform to scientifically based best practices? Environ Manage 39:760-773

Schisler GJ, Bergersen EP (1996) Postrelease hooking mortality of rainbow trout caught on scented artificial baits. North Am J Fisheries Manage 16:570-578

**Available Options:** *(where appropriate, incorporate biological information above that supports an alternative approach to achieve the same outcome more effectively)*

Single hook regulations for specific lakes or lakes in a particular geographic area could be considered but regulation simplification is best achieved through a single hook, region-wide regulation.

**Summary of SFAC Issues and Concerns:**

The committee generally supported the proposal as presented. Overall, six supported the proposal, one felt that barbless hooks should be required on all BC waters but was "OK with treble hooks in lakes", while one was neutral. Written comments were not received from all committee members.

**Regional Manager Decision:**

This proposal seeks to increase trout and char survival in Skeena Region lake fisheries and is a step towards regulations simplification.

There is support for this proposal in the scientific literature.

There was committee support for this proposal; written submissions revealed that a single committee member requested barbless hooks be specified and was okay with treble hook use in lake fisheries.

Recommend forwarding to Fish & Wildlife Director for advertisement in the 2009/10 Freshwater Fishing Regulations Synopsis to determine the level of support among anglers.

**Signed by:**



December 1, 2008

Regional Manager

Date

**Proposal Title: Upper Lakelse River Angling/Wading Closure**

**Proponent: Brian Patrick – Skeena Tackle Vendors - SFAC-2008-02**

**Proposed Regulation Change:**

No fishing in the Lakelse River upstream of the CN railway bridge from March 1 – May 31 or, at a minimum, no wading in gravel beds.

**Summary of issue(s) proposal is to address:**

- Prevent the disruption of spawning steelhead by angling
- Prevent the destruction of steelhead eggs by wading

**Regulatory/ Policy Impediments: *(list & provide details)***

There are no regulatory/policy impediments.

**Existing Regulation & Justification Summary: *(may include biological comments)***

- cutthroat trout release above CNR bridge, Mar. 1 – May 31
- fly fishing only between Lakelse Lake and CNR bridge, Mar. 1 – May 31
- bait ban; no power boats
- Class II water Sept 1 – Apr 30; Steelhead Stamp mandatory Dec 1 – April 30
- single barbless hook
- wild steelhead catch and release

**Management Considerations: *(summarize relevant: stock status, life history information, exploitation levels/limits, information or observations from other geographic locations or jurisdictions & relevant examples / references from the literature, social issues)***

There is currently no information to suggest that the Lakelse steelhead fishery is impacting spawning steelhead, that wading anglers are impacting steelhead egg survival or that the steelhead population is at risk.

Verbal submissions from Terrace anglers that frequently participate in this fishery do not support the claims of the proponent and expressed that anglers do not target steelhead.

**Available Options: *(where appropriate, incorporate biological information above that supports an alternative approach to achieve the same outcome more effectively):***

Angler feedback will be encouraged to learn if any significant changes in

steelhead abundance/angler catch or angler impacts are noted.

**Summary of SFAC Issues and Concerns:**

Committee members were generally not in favor of this proposal. Three registered votes against the proposal while two had no opinion and did not feel the proposal was addressing a significant issue. One member was in favor of the proposal if indeed there was a conservation issue. Written comments were not received from all committee members.

**Regional Manager Decision:**

There was no consensus among committee members.

There is currently no information to suggest that the Lakelse steelhead fishery is impacting spawning steelhead, that wading anglers are impacting steelhead egg survival or that the steelhead population is at risk.

This section of the Lakelse River is currently managed conservatively: fly fishing only; catch and release; single, barbless hook.

Do not recommend forwarding to Fish & Wildlife Director for implementation.

**Signed by:**

*T. Bell*

December 1, 2008

Regional Manager

Date

**Proposal Title: Wild BC Steelhead – No Bait**

**Proponent: Brian Patrick – Skeena Tackle Vendors - SFAC-2008-03**

<p><b>Proposed Regulation Change:</b></p> <p>No angling with bait in British Columbia.</p>
<p><b>Summary of issue(s) proposal is to address:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To stop/reduce the incidental kill of wild steelhead in catch and release fisheries</li></ul>
<p><b>Regulatory/ Policy Impediments: <i>(list &amp; provide details)</i></b></p> <p>There are no regulatory/policy impediments.</p>
<p><b>Existing Regulation &amp; Justification Summary: <i>(may include biological comments)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wild steelhead release</li><li>• Angling with bait is currently prohibited in most Skeena watershed summer steelhead streams</li></ul>
<p><b>Management Considerations: <i>(summarize relevant: stock status, life history information, exploitation levels/limits, information or observations from other geographic locations or jurisdictions &amp; relevant examples / references from the literature, social issues)</i></b></p> <p>A province wide bait ban was proposed by Fisheries headquarters staff in the 2005/06 Freshwater Fishing Regulations Synopsis for the 2006/07 angling season. There was significant public/angler opposition to this proposal and it was not implemented.</p> <p>Fishery managers currently aim to minimize the incidental mortality of fresh water fish species through stream specific bait bans – particularly where there are concerns for summer steelhead and/or trout/char.</p>
<p><b>Available Options: <i>(where appropriate, incorporate biological information above that supports an alternative approach to achieve the same outcome more effectively)</i></b></p> <p>If information becomes available that suggests Skeena summer steelhead abundance is declining precipitously, all options would be considered, potentially including further bait restrictions.</p>
<p><b>Summary of SFAC Issues and Concerns:</b></p> <p>There was no consensus amongst committee members and the committee did</p>

not recommend that the proposal be forwarded to the Regional Manager. Four voted against the proposal, two voted in favor while 2 were undecided. Written comments were not received from all committee members. Members opposed to the proposal most often cited the conservative regulations currently in place to protect wild fish in the Skeena Region. Those in favor agreed with the proponent's contention that if steelhead populations were imperiled to the extent that catch and release regulations should be implemented, the use of bait would impose a further, unnecessary mortality due to hooking/catch mortality.

**Regional Manager Decision:**

There was no consensus among committee members.

There is currently no information to suggest that Skeena steelhead abundance is declining that would warrant further restrictive measures than those already imposed on the recreational fishery.

Do not recommend forwarding to Fish & Wildlife Director for implementation.

**Signed by:**



December 1, 2008

Regional Manager

Date

**Proposal Title: Two Rods/Lines Ice Fishing**

**Proponent: Eckard Mendel – Bulkley Valley Rod and Gun - SFAC-2008-04**

**Proposed Regulation Change:**

Allow the use of two rods/or lines per person while ice fishing on Region 6 lakes

**Summary of issue(s) proposal is to address:**

- To encourage more winter fishing activity on Region 6 lakes – most of the frequented lakes are currently stocked
- To simplify lake fishing regulations – at present anglers can use two rods per person while angling from a boat in summer – some ice fishers drag boats on the ice in winter to allow them to angle with two rods

**Regulatory/ Policy Impediments: *(list & provide details)***

There are no regulatory/policy impediments.

**Existing Regulation & Justification Summary: *(may include biological comments)***

- A person may ice fish with one line and one lure
- A person who is alone in a boat on a lake may angle with two lines

**Management Considerations: *(summarize relevant: stock status, life history information, exploitation levels/limits, information or observations from other geographic locations or jurisdictions & relevant examples / references from the literature, social issues)***

This proposed regulation change does not involve a change in catch or possession limit. From a management perspective this proposal would simplify the current regulations and would not impose additional mortality on fish populations.

**Available Options: *(where appropriate, incorporate biological information above that supports an alternative approach to achieve the same outcome more effectively)***

Maintenance of the status quo allows anglers to fish two rods, should they choose to use a belly boat or raft on the ice.

**Summary of SFAC Issues and Concerns:**

The committee recommended that the proposal be forwarded to the Regional Manager. One committee member voted against the proposal and six were in favor. Written comments were not received from all committee members.

**Regional Manager Decision:**

There was committee support for this proposal.

This proposal helps to simplify the Freshwater Fishing Regulations Synopsis.

It is recommended that this proposal be forwarded to the Fish and Wildlife Director.

**Signed by:**



December 1, 2008


Regional Manager

Date



**Proposal Title: Upper Zymoetz River Angling Opening**

**Proponent: Gordon Wolfe – Steelhead Society of BC - SFAC-2008-05**

<b>Proposed Regulation Change:</b>  Open the upper 3 km of the Zymoetz River from McDonell Lake downstream to the Forestry Bridge	
<b>Summary of issue(s) proposal is to address:</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To create an additional angling opportunity</li></ul>	
<b>Regulatory/ Policy Impediments: <i>(list &amp; provide details)</i></b>  There are no regulatory/policy impediments.	
<b>Existing Regulation &amp; Justification Summary: <i>(may include biological comments)</i></b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Closed all year from McDonell Lake downstream 3 km to signs</li></ul>	
<b>Management Considerations: <i>(summarize relevant: stock status, life history information, exploitation levels/limits, information or observations from other geographic locations or jurisdictions &amp; relevant examples / references from the literature, social issues)</i></b>	
<b>Available Options: <i>(where appropriate, incorporate biological information above that supports an alternative approach to achieve the same outcome more effectively)</i></b>	
<b>Summary of SFAC Issues and Concerns:</b>	
<b>Regional Manager Decision:</b>  This proposal was withdrawn by the proponent who requested that it be forwarded to the Quality Waters Zymoetz working group for their consideration. Quality Waters Biologist Paddy Hirshfield was presented with a written notification of this request on July 22, 2008.	
<b>Signed by:</b>  	
December 1, 2008	
Regional Manager	Date

**Proposal Title: Morice River Bait Fishery**

**Proponent: Gordon Wolfe – Steelhead Society of BC - SFAC-2008-06**

**Proposed Regulation Change:**

Allow the use of bait to capture chinook salmon from June 16<sup>th</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup> in the Morice River, downstream of the Gosnell Creek confluence **or** only that portion of the Morice River downstream of Lamprey Creek

**Summary of issue(s) proposal is to address:**

- To provide an opportunity for anglers to use bait in the Morice River
- To allow anglers to harvest more Morice River chinook

**Regulatory/ Policy Impediments: *(list & provide details)***

There are no regulatory/policy impediments.

**Existing Regulation & Justification Summary: *(may include biological comments)***

- No fishing from signs near outlet of Morice Lake to Gosnell Creek, Jan 1 – Sept 30
- No fishing from Gosnell Creek to Lamprey Creek, Jan 1 – Aug 31
- Bait Ban (all parts)
- Flyfishing only from Gosnell Creek to Lamprey Creek, Sept 1 – Sept 30
- No angling from boats, Aug 15 – Dec 31 (all parts)
  
- Bulkley River – Bait ban Aug 1 – Dec 31

**Management Considerations: *(summarize relevant: stock status, life history information, exploitation levels/limits, information or observations from other geographic locations or jurisdictions & relevant examples / references from the literature, social issues)***

The existing regulation originated with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to protect chinook that had successfully migrated into the upper watershed. The province benefited from and maintained the “no angling” regulation to protect blue listed bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) that stage in the upper Morice, as per the MSC thesis work of Melinda Bahr (UNBC, March 2002). Department management biologists are in favor of further investigations into the impacts of bait fisheries for chinook, and in particular, bait fisheries prosecuted from boats, prior to supporting the current proposal (Ivan Winther, pers. comm.).

**Available Options:** *(where appropriate, incorporate biological information above that supports an alternative approach to achieve the same outcome more effectively)*

There has not been new biological information to support a change from the status quo.

**Summary of SFAC Issues and Concerns:**

The committee recommended that the proposal be forwarded to the Regional Manager. Written submissions were divided. Those opposed to the proposal cited the need for a refuge area and support for the Precautionary Approach. Written submissions were not received from all committee members.

**Regional Manager Decision:**

Although the committee generally recommended forwarding this proposal to the Regional Manager, committee did not reach consensus.

Federal biologists have concerns about the impacts of the proposed fishery on chinook salmon as do provincial biologists for resident trout and char in the Morice River.

Do not recommend forwarding to Fish & Wildlife Director for implementation.

**Signed by:**



December 1, 2008

Regional Manager

Date

**Proposal Title: Resident Angler Priority**

**Proponent: Mike Langedger – Kitimat River Rod and Gun - SFAC-2008-07**

<p><b>Proposed Regulation Change:</b></p> <p>Establish a publicly acceptable criterion to direct decision makers in considering/applying resident angler priority over non-residents or angling guides when restrictions are deemed necessary.</p>
<p><b>Summary of issue(s) proposal is to address:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To provide clear direction for decision makers as to how to apply resident priority and opportunity for residents over non-residents.</li></ul>
<p><b>Regulatory/ Policy Impediments: <i>(list &amp; provide details)</i></b></p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Existing Regulation &amp; Justification Summary: <i>(may include biological comments)</i></b></p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Management Considerations: <i>(summarize relevant: stock status, life history information, exploitation levels/limits, information or observations from other geographic locations or jurisdictions &amp; relevant examples / references from the literature, social issues)</i></b></p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Available Options: <i>(where appropriate, incorporate biological information above that supports an alternative approach to achieve the same outcome more effectively)</i></b></p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Summary of SFAC Issues and Concerns:</b></p> <p>The committee recommended that the proposal be forwarded to the Regional Manager.</p> <p>Written submissions from committee members conveyed that this proposal was outside of the scope of the SFAC process and was provincial and not regional responsibility. Written submissions were not received from all committee members.</p>

**Regional Manager Decision:**

This is not an angling regulation proposal. Resident angler priority is written and interpreted through existing provincial policy (examples: Quality Waters Strategy and Ministry Policy Manual) and is provincial in scope.

This proposal was forwarded to provincial Policy Advisor Mr. Miles Stratholt and Skeena Region Quality Waters Biologist, Paddy Hirshfield, on July 22, 2008. Mr. Stratholt confirmed the presence of such policy and added: The provincial policy also indicates that additional measures be taken *when restrictions are deemed appropriate*.

Do not recommend forwarding to Fish & Wildlife Director for implementation.

**Signed by:**



December 1, 2008

Regional Manager

Date

**Proposal Title: Junior Angler Licencing**

**Proponent: Mike Langedger – Kitimat River Rod and Gun - SFAC-2008-08**

<p><b>Proposed Regulation Change:</b></p> <p>Increase the minimum age requiring an angling license from 16 to 20 years of age.</p>
<p><b>Summary of issue(s) proposal is to address:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To increase participation the participation of and number of new anglers</li></ul>
<p><b>Regulatory/ Policy Impediments: <i>(list &amp; provide details)</i></b></p> <p>There are no regulatory/policy impediments.</p>
<p><b>Existing Regulation &amp; Justification Summary: <i>(may include biological comments)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you are 16 years of age or older you require basic freshwater fishing angling license to fish non-tidal waters in British Columbia</li></ul>
<p><b>Management Considerations: <i>(summarize relevant: stock status, life history information, exploitation levels/limits, information or observations from other geographic locations or jurisdictions &amp; relevant examples / references from the literature, social issues)</i></b></p> <p>This proposal is beyond the scope of this regional regulations committee.</p>
<p><b>Available Options: <i>(where appropriate, incorporate biological information above that supports an alternative approach to achieve the same outcome more effectively)</i></b></p> <p>Adopting this proposal would likely contribute to an increase in angler activity, a provincial objective. However, implementing the proposal would likely cause a significant revenue loss for the ministry during a financially uncertain period.</p>
<p><b>Summary of SFAC Issues and Concerns:</b></p> <p>The committee was generally in favor of the proposal. Written submissions tallied 3 for and 2 against. Those opposed were concerned about the negative effect on revenue to be used for management purposes and cited the relatively low cost of an angling license in comparison to other activities.</p>

Miles Stratholt, provincial Policy Advisor, commented that the ministry has been looking at a new licensing structure but loss of revenue was a concern at this time.

**Regional Manager Decision:**

This proposal is beyond the scope of the Skeena Fisheries Advisory Committee and is provincial in nature.

Although the committee generally recommended forwarding this proposal to the Regional Manager, committee did not reach consensus.

This proposal was forwarded to provincial Policy Advisor Mr. Miles Stratholt on July 22, 2008.

Do not recommend forwarding to Fish & Wildlife Director for implementation.

**Signed by:**




December 1, 2008

Regional Manager

Date

**Proposal Title: Non-Resident Aliens Guided Only**

**Proponent: Mike Langedger – Kitimat River Rod and Gun - SFAC-2008-09**

<b>Proposed Regulation Change:</b>  Mandatory that all non-resident alien anglers be guided	
<b>Summary of issue(s) proposal is to address:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To aid in fish conservation and sustainability</li><li>• To address crowding/quality experience issues</li><li>• To address illegal guiding issues</li><li>• To reflect MOE resident angler priority policy</li></ul>	
<b>Regulatory/ Policy Impediments: <i>(list &amp; provide details)</i></b>  There are no regulatory/policy impediments.	
<b>Existing Regulation &amp; Justification Summary: <i>(may include biological comments)</i></b> N/A	
<b>Management Considerations: <i>(summarize relevant: stock status, life history information, exploitation levels/limits, information or observations from other geographic locations or jurisdictions &amp; relevant examples / references from the literature, social issues)</i></b> N/A	
<b>Available Options: <i>(where appropriate, incorporate biological information above that supports an alternative approach to achieve the same outcome more effectively)</i></b> N/A	
<b>Summary of SFAC Issues and Concerns:</b>  The committee deemed this to be a Quality Waters initiative and did not recommend this proposal be forwarded to the Regional Manager.	
<b>Regional Manager Decision:</b> This proposal was forwarded to the Skeena Region Quality Waters Biologist, Paddy Hirshfield, on July 22, 2008.  Do not recommend forwarding to Fish & Wildlife Director for implementation.	
<b>Signed by:</b>  	
December 1, 2008	
Regional Manager	Date



**Proposal Title: Tlell River Cutthroat Retention**

**Proponent: Rick McDiarmid–Non-Affiliated Resident Angler - SFAC-2008-10**

**Proposed Regulation Change:**

Allow the retention of 2 cutthroat trout per day in the Tlell River

**Summary of issue(s) proposal is to address:**

- To provide increased opportunity for engaging new anglers
- To provide local anglers with a retention fishery
- To allow the retention of badly hooked cutthroat trout (that have a high rate of incidental mortality)
- To increase public awareness of fishing and the impacts of people on the environment

**Regulatory/ Policy Impediments: *(list & provide details)***

There are no regulatory/policy impediments.

**Existing Regulation & Justification Summary: *(may include biological comments)***

- Cutthroat trout release
- Class II water Sept 1 – Apr 30
- Steelhead stamp mandatory Dec 1 – Apr 30

**Management Considerations: *(summarize relevant: stock status, life history information, exploitation levels/limits, information or observations from other geographic locations or jurisdictions & relevant examples / references from the literature, social issues)***

More conservative angling regulations (total catch and release) for cutthroat trout were implemented in the Tlell River in April of 1996 as a result of concerns for listed cutthroat trout.

Coastal cutthroat trout have been classified as Blue-listed in British Columbia by the Province's BC Conservation Data Centre because they are considered to be "vulnerable" and "of special concern" as a result of the risks of local population extirpations. Several populations, particularly those on the East coast of Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland, near Vancouver, are in serious decline. Many runs are already extinct. Their dependence on small streams for spawning and rearing makes them especially vulnerable, as small streams are

easily altered or destroyed and their protection is often overlooked in planning residential, agricultural, and industrial developments or during forest harvesting. More recently, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) examined 11 of BC's cutthroat trout and indicated that cumulative development pressures and anthropogenic manipulations of aquatic ecosystems have left many populations at risk of local extirpation, and concluded that a more thorough assessment at the level of individual populations is required (Costello and Rubidge 2004). Accordingly, a provincial strategy was developed in 1996-2000 (Anon 1996), with the goal "to conserve and restore wild cutthroat populations and their supporting habitat through effective management strategies" by (1) developing a thorough understanding of cutthroat trout ecology; (2) developing water-specific management strategies to conserve native stocks; (3) protecting and managing cutthroat habitat, including its rehabilitation where degraded; and (4) educating and involving the public in cutthroat trout conservation and restoration efforts. Fifty-seven corresponding activities are recommended as a provincial action plan. The purpose of the strategy is to improve cutthroat trout management to avoid additional extirpations that could lead to a threatened (or Red) designation or listing under the Species at Risk Act (SARA) of Canada, resulting in costly recovery plans as necessitated elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest.

Cutthroat trout stock status information is lacking for the Tlell River watershed. Provincial fisheries managers take a precautionary approach in data poor situations.

Anonymous. 1996. A strategic plan for the conservation and management of cutthroat trout in British Columbia. Province of BC Ministry of Environment Fisheries Program. 12p.

Costello, A.B. and E. Rubidge. 2004. COSEWIC status report on cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki* spp.) prepared for the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. 77p.

**Available Options:** *(where appropriate, incorporate biological information above that supports an alternative approach to achieve the same outcome more effectively)*

Providing a cutthroat trout retention fishery at this time would be based on the contention of anglers in favor of the proposal that cutthroat trout stocks are robust enough to support such a fishery. A scientific investigation examining Tlell River cutthroat trout stock status is required and has been recommended.

**Summary of SFAC Issues and Concerns:**

The committee recommended that the proposal be forwarded to the Regional

Manager. Written submissions conveyed that one committee member voted to maintain a Precautionary Approach if stock status was uncertain; four were in favor. Written comments were not received from all committee members.

**Regional Manager Decision:**

There was committee support for this proposal although consensus was not achieved.

In the absence of an assessment of Tlell River cutthroat trout stock status information, returning to a cutthroat trout retention fishery is not recommended at this time given widespread concerns for cutthroat trout conservation in British Columbia.

Do not recommend forwarding to Fish & Wildlife Director for implementation.

**Signed by:**



December 1, 2008

Regional Manager

Date