

Below are some of the upcoming proposed fishing regulation changes for 2007-08 which were extracted from the recent AZGF report. Also notice the October 3, 2006 meeting scheduled for the Mesa office.

Fishing regulation changes are proposed for 2007-08

PHOENIX - Removing the bag limits on northern pike statewide, liberalizing the striped bass limit on Lake Mead, and expanding the blue-ribbon regulations at Becker Lake to become year-around are some of the fishing regulation changes being proposed for 2007 and 2008 by the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Anglers will have ample opportunity to comment in person or in writing on the proposed changes. "Your comments on the proposals are welcomed and valued - we truly want to know what you think so that we can convey your opinion to the Game and Fish Commission," says Fisheries Chief Larry Riley.

Public meetings are set for:

* Sept. 26, Pinetop, 7 to 9 p.m., Arizona Game and Fish Department Pinetop Regional Office, 2878 E. White Mountain Blvd.

* Sept. 27, Kingman, 7 to 9 p.m., Arizona Game and Fish Department Kingman Regional Office, 5325 N. Stockton Hill Road.

* Sept. 28, Tucson, 7 to 9 p.m., Arizona Game and Fish Department Tucson Regional Office, 555 N. Greasewood Road.

* Sept. 29, Flagstaff, 7 to 9 p.m., Arizona Game and Fish Department Flagstaff Regional Office, 3500 S. Lake Mary Road.

* Oct. 2 , Phoenix 7 to 9 p.m., La Quinta Inn, 2510 W. Greenway Road

* Oct. 3, Mesa, 7 to 9 p.m., Arizona Game and Fish Department Mesa Regional Office, 7200 E. University.

Written comments can be provided to the Arizona Game and Fish Department, Commission Order 40, Fisheries Branch, 2221 W. Greenway Road, Phoenix, Arizona 85023-4399, or email your comments to fishaz@azgfd.gov.

The Game and Fish Commission will consider the 2007 fishing regulations during its Oct. 20-21 meeting in Phoenix.

The department proposes removing bag limits for northern pike at Upper Lake Mary and Stoneman Lake, which are the only two lakes in the state with limits on pike. This change would result in no limits on northern pike in Arizona. "Over the last several years, northern pike have been illegally introduced into four important trout lakes. This species can have significant impacts on existing sport fisheries, especially trout lakes, and will ultimately decrease angler use of these lakes," Riley says.

The department is also seeking to change the bag limits for strippers at Lake Mead from the current 20-fish limit to unlimited harvest of strippers under 20 inches, and 20 fish over 20 inches. That would bring the regulations in Mead inline with those already in place at Lake Mohave. Fishing pressure has continued to decline throughout the Lake Mead National Recreation Area according to creel surveys.

"Since 1998, striped bass numbers have increased and mean size has decreased from 16.5-inches to just slightly less than 13-inches. Our objectives are to increase mean size and relative weight of striped bass population at Lake Mead and to standardize and simplify bag limits within the Lake Mead National Recreation Area," Riley says.

Another proposal further develop a blue ribbon fishery at Becker Lake near Springerville by having special regulations year round, which would require artificial lure and fly only with barbless hooks, and a two-trout limit. "Trout condition and food studies indicate that Becker Lake should be able to consistently grow larger rainbow trout, but only if harvest is reduced. Anglers are generally satisfied and are currently catching trout in the 16-inch range," Riley says.

Other changes being considered include:

* Extending the closure of Fish Creek (including tributaries Double Cienega and Corduroy Creeks), upper East Fork Little Colorado River, and Hayground Creek to fishing for two years (Jan. 1, 2007 through Dec. 31, 2008) for Apache trout re-establishment and recovery .

* Extending the closure of Fossil Creek to fishing through Dec. 31, 2008 to help conserve and recover this unique fishery resource.

* Closing Conklin Creek for two years for Apache trout re-establishment and recovery, allowing replicate populations of these native trout to become established.

* Reducing the daily bag and possession limits at City Reservoir in Williams and Francis Short Pond to four trout (youth two), two bass 13 inch minimum size, four catfish, and five sunfish. That would bring these two waters in line with other intensively used small lakes, such as those in the urban fishing program.

* Reducing the daily bag and possession limits for catfish and bass at Stone Dam near Ask Fork to four catfish and two bass, bringing it in line with regulations on other small intensively used waters.