

## CITIZEN-PROPOSED ISSUE PAPER

Date: 11.02.2010

**ISSUE:** Bowfishing Salmon during Snagging Season

**DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):**

Snagging for salmon during a specially allotted season is currently an accepted form of fishing in Colorado. Salmon naturally die off after their spawning cycle is complete, and rather than waste this valuable and consumable resource, the Colorado Division of Wildlife has permitted the use of snagging. The regulations specify the season as running from September 1<sup>st</sup> through the end of November. This corresponds with the natural die off that mature and bred salmon have every year.

Snagging for salmon involves the use of heavier fishing line and reels, and the use of treble hooks: large, three-pronged hooks, which are essentially dragged through the water in an attempt to hook onto a fish.

This method is an effective way to capture schooling salmon, but is not effective as far as accuracy of where the fish is hooked, and does not prevent snagging of any other fish species which may be in the same general area.

Bowfishing equipment consists of an arrow shot into the water from a boat or from the shoreline at a downward angle that is attached by a guideline to the bow. Bowfishing bows typical have lower draw weights than a traditional hunting bow (<40lbs) In general, shots are taken at less than 25 yards with the vast majority under 10 yards.

Additionally, bowfishing is only effective if the archer can see his/her target. Consequently, if one were to bowfish for salmon, there would be a significantly smaller chance of shooting a fish other than a salmon. The same cannot be said for snagging, where the treble hook is generally not visible to the angler.

**WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN THIS ISSUE? HAVE YOU COMMUNICATED WITH ANY OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES? WHAT INPUT HAVE YOU RECEIVED?**

Parties who may be interested in having the snagging season expanded to include bowfishing equipment are:

- Any fishing license holder who uses archery equipment for fishing in the state

- Any fishing license holder who currently snags for salmon at designated water bodies
- Any fishing license holder who is currently unaware of salmon fishing and new opportunities to pursue this game fish
- CDOW service personnel and field officers who are responsible for decision making and legal enforcement of all activities within the salmon snagging locations

The Colorado Bowfishing Association (of which I am a founder and member) has conducted several bowfishing tournaments throughout the state (for carp) and several of our participants have stated that bowfishing would be more accurate than snagging for a game fish. Additionally, many participants would adamantly participate in salmon fishing if bowfishing equipment were made a legal method of take, during the allotted salmon snagging season.

Additionally we feel the sport of bowfishing would increase in popularity throughout the state if more avenues and game species were included in the bowfishing regulations. More opportunities to participate in the outdoors is great for both the Colorado Division of Wildlife and all the citizens of the state.

**ALTERNATIVES: PLEASE INDICATE THE PROBABLE OUTCOME IF THIS PETITION IS ACCEPTED, AS WELL AS THE IMPACT OF ALTERNATIVES TO THIS PETITION:**

If this petition is accepted it may lead to an increased participation level of fishing for salmon. Individuals will now be able to use both bowfishing equipment as well as traditional snagging (treble hook / reel) equipment to try to harvest salmon.

With more people having more means to harvest these fish, there is greater potential for license sales and general awareness. It also means that fewer salmon are potentially "wasted" during their die off; rather they are caught and consumed by anglers.

The alternative of no change to the regulations will result in effectively no change to the harvest and participation numbers of current anglers.

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| <b>PETITION PROPOSED BY:</b>        | Michael Peceny |
| <b>PETITION WRITTEN BY:</b>         | Michael Peceny |
| <b>DATE SENT TO THE COMMISSION:</b> |                |