

Ashbrook



COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION

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November 14, 2012

Mr. Craig Burley
Fish Management Division Manager
WDFW Fish Program
600 Capitol Way N.
Olympia, WA 98501-1091

RE: 2013-2014 Sport Fishing Rule Proposals

Dear Mr. Burley:

The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) appreciates this opportunity to comment on Washington's sport fishing rule proposals for 2013-2014. With regard to the rule category Eastern Washington and Columbia Region Freshwater, we support and recommend adoption of "Option 1", which reads: "Remove size and daily limits for bass and walleye and daily limits for channel catfish in the Columbia River, Snake River and their tributaries." The adoption of this regulation will simplify angling regulations and allow fishers to catch and retain these salmon-eating predators.

Simplifying this regulation is supported by findings of the Independent Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB), as well as the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NPCC). In 2008, the ISAB reported that "state fisheries agencies in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho have simultaneously adopted management policies that in some cases seem aimed at perpetuating or even enhancing populations of these introduced predators."¹ In this report, the ISAB recommended that "state agencies to relax (or eliminate) fishing regulations that may be enhancing populations of non-native species (predators and competitors), especially those that directly or indirectly interact with juvenile and adult salmonids." In August 2012, the NPCC held a Science and Policy Exchange Workshop on predation, in which there was extensive discussion of the negative effects of non-native fishes predating on salmonids and impeding salmonid recovery in the Columbia Basin

Given the recent findings and concerns regarding predation on juvenile salmonids from non-native fishes, we support the department's decision to begin the process of actively managing for exotic predatory fishes in Washington's anadromous waters, while the region's co-managers continue their efforts to enhance and restore anadromous resources.

¹ See ISAB "Non-Native Species Impacts on Native Salmonids in the Columbia River Basin" 2008.