

**PROPOSAL 20**

**5 AAC 67.022. Special provisions for seasons, bag, possession, and size limits, and methods and means in the Bristol Bay Area.**

Prohibit the use of bait and barbed hooks in the Wood River Lakes system, as follows:

From the outlet of the Agulapak River into Lake Nerka north to Kulik Lake and its streams and tributaries only unbaited, single barbless/pinched barbed hook artificial lures Sept 1-June 7; only unbaited, single barbless/pinched barbed hook artificial flies June 8-Aug 31.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The issue I would like to address is the use of barbed hooks on the Agulapak River in Bristol Bay. This river is roughly 50 river miles from the closest town, Aleknagik. After my 4 years guiding on the Agulapak I have never seen people from town drive up and fish that river. They have either the Wood River and/or Agulawok River that are significantly closer to them. The Agulapak gets pressured through local fishing lodges, whom practice catch and release methods. They use oversized hooks that tend to harm fish by scaring their face. The large hooks have disproportionate sized barbs on them too which causes fish to die when the unhooking technique is poor. It will also cause the fish to bleed out if hooked deep in the mouth and on the bottom of the head. Since I have been guiding on that river the amount of scarred fish outnumber the 'clean' fish without scars of being caught before. If the regulation continues as it stands that number will only increase because the fishing lodges are getting busier. And it is also a shame people are paying \$7,000 to \$12,000 to catch fish that look like they belong in the Kenai with all of the scars. If guided properly, fish can be landed at the same rate using a barbless hook than a barbed hook.

I am recommending the board to consider making the upper Wood River draining, approximately everything north of the outlet of the Agulapak River to a barbless/pinched barb fishery. That would include Agulapak River, Lake Beverley, Peace River, Mikchalk Lake, Wind River, Kulik Lake, and all streams and tributaries. This will not cause the angler or business any more money because all they need to do is pinch the barb. The lodge that I work for already operates on a barbless standard. This change will increase survival rate of the fish in the drainage due to the ease and simplicity of removing the barbless hook from the fish.

**PROPOSED BY:** Jordy Perrego

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