

Department of Fish & Wildlife

Reduction in daily trout bag limit asked

The fisheries staff at the Department of Fish and Wildlife will be recommending a reduction in the statewide general stream trout bag

limit from ten per day to five when next year's angling regulations are considered. Staff biologist Jim Griggs says there has been no change in the general bag limit now in

effect on most state waters since before 1950. During that same period sales of angling licenses have increased fourfold—from about 200,000 in 1951 to 800,000 in 1976. In those

streams where the Department has done population studies, relatively few older age-class fish are being found, indicating excessive harvest. During the time angling pressure has grown, Griggs adds, quality of stream habi-

at for fish production has improved on very few streams. In most it has declined over the years.

Particularly on those streams to be managed for wild trout a ten-fish bag limit can't be biologically justified, Griggs says, though a larger bag limit might still be retained on some streams where trout are managed with annual plants of fingerling trout.

The reduced bag limit will not be proposed for most standing-water bodies such as lakes and reservoirs except on those where a specific biological need for a reduced catch exists.

The differential bag limit may be one way to shift some angling pressure from streams to standing water bodies which can often support much heavier angling pressure and harvest. If angling pressure on streams is

reduced, Griggs says, the Department may, on those streams managed with catchable-sized trout, be able to stock fewer trout at a time, but on more frequent occasions.

A five-fish bag limit is already in effect on some state waters, notably those in southeastern Oregon. Realistically, Griggs says, a reduction in bag limit will not impact most anglers because most anglers don't often catch the legal limit. It has often been said that 10 percent of the anglers catch 90 percent of the fish. The percentages may not be perfectly accurate but the concept is true and this is the segment of the angling public that would be mainly affected.

A public meeting is scheduled in Department headquarters, 506 SW Mill Street in Portland, on July 11 at 7:30 p.m. where the bag limit reduction will be further

discussed and public comment asked.

Also at that meeting the Fish Division staff will review ten more streams or parts of streams being evaluated under the state's wild fish policy. The staff will have management recommendations for each within the context of the policy which was adopted last year.

There are three options under the policy. First, management of wild fish only must be given first and highest consideration. Next, if there are reasons why optimum fish populations cannot be maintained under natural productions alone, the staff may recommend the use of some hatchery fish in addition to wild stocks. In this option, efforts must still be made to preserve the integrity of wild stocks. A final option is to manage for hatchery fish only.

Management abstracts upon which future plans will be based are being prepared for the following streams; the Little Deschutes River upstream from Gilchrist Pond, Crooked River from Prineville to Prineville city limits, North Fork of the Middle Fork Willamette River, Elk Creek (Clatsop County near Cannon Beach), Neskowin Creek, Yachats River, Siuslaw River, Middle Creek (tributary of the North Fork Coquille River), Winchuck River and Drift Creek (Alesia Bay tributary).

Management proposals for the ten stream sections under discussion for this year will be considered for adoption by the Fish and Wildlife Commission in an August 1 public meeting beginning at 2 p.m. in Department headquarters in Portland. The public is welcome to attend that meeting as well as the discussion meeting on July 11.

Highway, school funding and nurse practitioner bills near end

By Rep. Bill Bellamy

As the 1979 Oregon Legislature winds down, many bills are being considered on the House floor. In the past week several bills of special interest to District 55 cleared the legislature.

The House approved HB 2681 which limits the number of state employees to 1.6 percent of the state's population after January 1, 1980.

The Legislature made a commitment to Oregonians to limit the growth of state government. This measure is a long-range approach to keep that promise.

In past years, the growth of state government has far outpaced the 1.6 percent figure. Presently, Oregon taxpayers employ nearly 40 thousand state employees or 1.603 percent of the state population.

Legislators felt cutbacks in government employment would disrupt the delivery of necessary services. If you will recall, in California during the peak of the tax revolt, politicians began threatening the public with massive layoffs and firings of government employees who deliver vital fire, police and health services. Oregon legislators believe California's response was a knee-jerk, threaten-the-public reaction that was both irresponsible and impractical. Instead, the Oregon House of Representatives agreed to this long-term method of sensibility limiting future growth in state government. The bill now goes to the Senate for approval.

SJR 7 also moved into the spotlight this week. The bill will channel all highway revenues into road construction and maintenance. Presently, more than \$60 million of the gas and weight-mile tax revenues is spent every two years on the state police, park, recreational, scenic and historic uses, and their publicizing. That money should be spent to upgrade our roads.

This bill will not levy new taxes, but rather will shift the funding from one tax source to another. The bill will go before the Oregon voters for approval in 1980.

State funding of Oregon public schools was decided this week as both the House and the Senate approved SB 5509. The \$803 million dollar appropriation bill will pay an average of 42 percent of local school operating costs over the next biennium.

It seems that for the first time the legislature put a limit on the amount of basic school support it will give a school district.

The bill also sets a base \$1,949 per student which it will contribute state basic school support. That base will not be allowed to exceed 9 percent per pupil in the future. Portions of district budget that exceed that will not be eligible for state school support.

The rights of nurse practitioners would be expanded under HB 2806. At the present time, nurse practitioners may only prescribe drugs in rural areas. HB 2806 will grant prescription-writing privilege

to nurse practitioners in all areas of the state, with the exception of hospitals which may determine their own hospital pharmacy policy. The bill establishes an advisory council to develop rules and regulations governing nurse practitioners' jurisdiction in writing prescriptions.

Rural areas of the state will have a strong voice on the council. One of the two physicians must practice in a rural area, and one of the two nurse practitioners must represent a rural area. Finally, rural areas of the state are getting the equal representation we seek.

As noted earlier, the session is nearing final flood stage. Now is when bills become buried in the final close down. If there are bills of special interest to you, please contact me with your concerns. I am working hard for the passage of beneficial legislation for District 55.

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