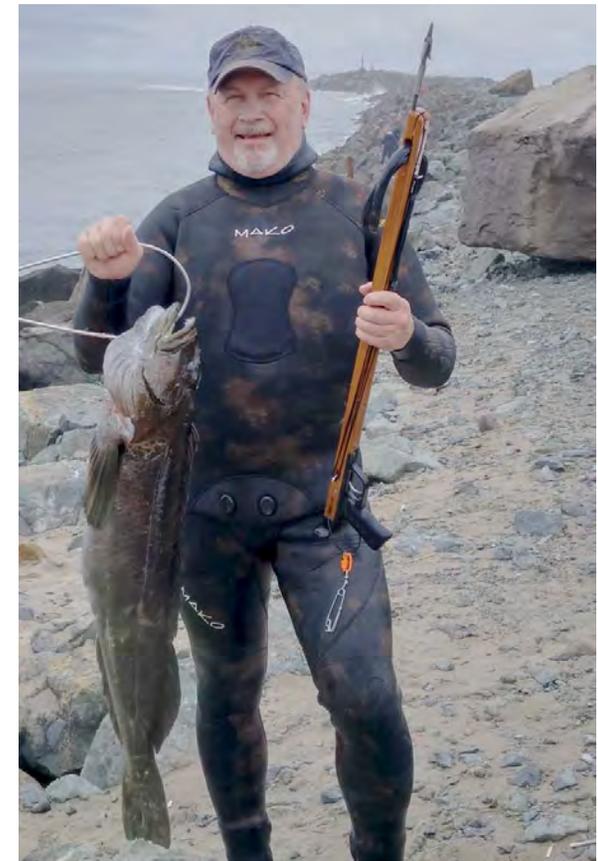


Freshwater Spearfishing Proposal

June, 2017 Commission Meeting

- **Who is asking?**
 - **Oregon Spearfishing Association**
 - ~400 in Oregon, mostly 'free-divers' (breath-hold diving)
 - Spokesperson - Leigh Anderson



Long History of Responsible Oregon Spearfishing: 1960's Photos at Oregon Coast



Spearfishing Rules Situation Today

- Underwater spearfishing is an allowed method for marine/saltwater zones: Ling cod, Rockfish, Cabezon, Kelp Greenling, Albacore...
- Currently not an allowed method for any freshwater game fish.
- Why? No particular reason known.
 - Well - we've never asked for it! Being organized to advocate for our sport is a new thing!
 - Other states fully support freshwater spearfishing. (Utah is a highly supportive example state DFW).

What are Oregon Spearfishers Asking For?

- We ask ODFW and the Commission to please add a permitted freshwater fishing method of:
 - underwater spearfishing (example definition in appendix)
- But only for:
 - Flowing-waters , No-limits zones,
for Walleye and Shad
(Effectively, this would cover the Columbia and Willamette)
- For 2018 rules

Opportunity & Conservation, A Win-Win

- Consistent with expanded **Opportunity and Conservation** in ODFW's mission.
- ODFW's salmon-predation researchers have proven that **Walleye** are a significant juvenile salmonid predator. (See Appendix).
- The proposed 'no-limits', 'flowing waters' zones for walleye are located exactly in critical juvenile salmon habitat. Spearfishers can help save endangered salmonids in no-limits zones by harvesting where Walleye are so abundant.
- **Shad** are plentiful in the millions; sharing the bounty with spearfishers is sensible and fair.

Caught in the Act!



Salmon predation researchers electrically-stunned this walleye while eating a juvenile salmon!

- ODFW biologists' surveys of stomach contents confirm significant Walleye salmonid predation (salmon, steelhead, trout)
- Walleye are primarily fish-eaters

Potential Angler Objections?

Potential Objection	Response
<p>Anglers should not have to share with other sporting recreational fishers that don't use hook & line.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal opportunity is a fair principle, even and especially for smaller fisher groups • Our license fees help pay for ODFW's mission and conservation projects too. • Denying us the right to fish with our method would be like saying bowhunters can't hunt deer because their method is less popular. • We're only asking for a few crumbs from anglers' bountiful table: just two species of no-limits fish only in flowing waters. • Other states (eg Utah) have proven for decades that anglers and spearfishers can successfully share freshwater game fish
<p>Spearfishers can't catch-&-release</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • True, but should voracious and plentiful juvenile-salmon predators be released back into <u>prime juvenile salmon habitat</u> - by <u>anyone</u>?! • The 'No-limits' areas exist precisely because walleye are so plentiful, and they eat many thousands of endangered salmon. • Anglers can accidentally catch and stress adult salmon while fishing for other species, even if released. Spearfishing has no accidental by-catch.
<p>Spearfishers are a pretty small group so a salmon predation reduction benefit isn't a big deal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every salmon predator we remove saves perhaps dozens to hundreds of baby salmon over that predator's lifetime • If anglers think we're such a small and insignificant group of sport fishers, why object to sharing?
<p>Will they shoot a bunch of fish just for fun? It must be easy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We've been responsible food gatherers in salt water for over 50 years. Fresh water ethics will be the same. We harvest only what we and our families can eat. There's a strong culture of sustainable fishing ethics in our community. • Stalking wary fish underwater while holding your breath is not easy or quick. It takes rigorous physical training, discipline, and lots of patience and time. • Spearfishing is the ONLY fishing method that is selective; we ID what we harvest first..

Thanks for Listening

- Please approve this proposal for freshwater spearfishing – for opportunity and salmon conservation.
- We welcome your feedback and suggestions
- Please let us know if there are any questions, or follow-up we can help with.
- mrleighanderson@gmail.com, 503-484-7056

Appendix: Walleye - Salmon Predation Research Excerpts, Columbia River System

- “Juvenile Pacific salmon were encountered frequently in gut content samples of walleye in The Dalles ($p\hat{p} = 0.35$) and John Day ($p\hat{p} = 0.44$) reservoirs.”
- “...consistent with past studies conducted throughout the Columbia River in which juvenile salmon were identified as an important component of walleye diets (Poe et al. 1991; Vigg et al. 1991; Zimmerman 1999). This is further substantiated in work conducted by Takata et al. (2007) and Gardner et al. (2013) who found, in The Dalles and John Day reservoirs specifically, juvenile salmon were consumed commonly by walleye.”
- “Given evidence (e.g., diet composition, population dynamics, etc.) provided by others in different areas and over varying periods, it seems plausible that relatively small shifts in population structure could result in an increased predatory impact of walleye in the lower Columbia River system.”

Appendix: Definitions, Notes

- Sample Definition - **Underwater spearfishing** means “fishing by a person swimming, snorkeling, or diving and using a mechanical device held in the hand, which uses a rubber band, spring, pneumatic power, or other device to propel a pointed shaft to take fish from under the surface of the water.” From 2017 Utah Fishing Guidebook Rules
- Note: All spearfishers rig their spearguns with a 200-400 lb mono line from the speargun to the spear-shaft, to ensure retention of speared fish.
- Note: The range of Pacific NW style spearguns is ~5-10 feet. i.e. we see exactly what we’re shooting by stalking up close (no easy thing!). No positive ID, no shoot. If visibility is inadequate; we don’t hunt.
- Note: We can be volunteer underwater observers for ODFW biologists. For example - While hunting carp, we’ve observed schools of salmon predators hovering around the mouth of salmon spawning tributaries where they join the Columbia. We can also contribute reports and photos of stomach contents, if desired.