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MEMORANDUM

TO: Regional Advisory Council Members and Wildlife Board

FROM: Randy Oplinger, Sport Fisheries Program Coordinator, and
Craig Walker, Assistant Fisheries Chief, Sport Fisheries Program

DATE: August 18, 2022

SUBJECT: 2024-2025 Fishing Regulation Proposals and Changes to Admin. Rule R657-59

The UDWR is recommending changes to both the 2024 Utah Fishing Guidebook and Admin. Rule R657-59. The following changes are proposed:

2024 Fishing Guidebook (all page numbers reference the location of a proposed regulation change within the 2023 Utah Fishing Guidebook)

Statewide:

- ADD Utah chub to list of species that can be underwater spearfished at all waters open to angling, during their open seasons on page 15 of the current Guidebook
- MODIFY the definition of spearfishing on page 72 of the current Guidebook to say “Spearfishing (underwater) means fishing by a person swimming, snorkeling or SCUBA diving and using a mechanical device held in 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.” The only change is the addition of the word “SCUBA”.

Central Region:

- ADD “Jordan River, for northern pike only (Salt Lake and Utah Counties)” to the list of waters that can be underwater spearfished from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31 annually on page 15 of the current Guidebook
- ADD “Utah Lake, for northern pike and white bass only (Utah County)” to the list of waters that can be underwater spearfished from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31 annually on page 15 of the current Guidebook
- ADD “Utah Lake tributaries, including but not limited to the following tributaries, west of I-15: American Fork Creek, Beer Creek, Dry Creek, Hobble Creek, Spanish Fork River, Spring Creek and Spring Run Creek, for northern pike only (Utah County). Spearfishing is not permitted on the Provo River or Provo River Delta” to the list of waters that can be underwater spearfished from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31 annually on page 15 of the current Guidebook

- REMOVE “CLOSED to spearfishing” from Jordanelle Reservoir on page 32 of the current Guidebook

Southern Region:

- ADD “Quail Creek Reservoir”, for smallmouth bass only (Washington County)” to the list of waters that can be underwater spearfished from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31 annually on page 15 of the current Guidebook

Admin. Rule R657-59

The UDWR is proposing major revisions to Admin. Rule R657-59. The proposed changes to the rule are as follows:

- The UDWR is proposing to split the rule into five subsections R657-59a through R657-59e. These subsections would focus on private fish ponds (R657-59a), short-term fishing events (R657-59b), hobby aquaponics facilities (R657-59c), institutional aquaculture (R657-59d), and the stocking of privately purchased fish into natural lakes, reservoirs, and streams that flow through private property (R657-59e). Currently, the rule combines these five uses of privately purchased fish into a single rule. The proposed splitting of the rule into five subsections simplifies the rule by allowing the public to focus on the subsection that describes their intended use of fish. This makes the rule shorter and easier for the public to interpret. Note, no redline document is provided because the proposed splitting of the rule into five subparts makes redline changes difficult to interpret.
- The current rule allows sterile salmonid species to be stocked into screened, off-channel ponds, outside the Virgin River drainage without a certificate of registration (COR). The UDWR is proposing to broaden the list of species that can be stocked into screened, off-channel ponds without a COR to include sterile salmonids, tiger muskie, wiper, triploid bluegill, triploid black crappie, and triploid yellow perch.
- Stocking opportunities within the Virgin River drainage are currently limited. The UDWR is currently working with the Virgin River Recovery program to increase the number of species that are allowed in that drainage. The UDWR has not developed a specific species list yet but intends on proposing a specific species list by the September 21, 2023 Wildlife Board meeting.
- REMOVE the option of raising golden shiner in hobby aquaponics facilities without a COR (still have option of raising them if a COR is obtained).
- ADD the option of raising white sturgeon without a COR in hobby aquaponics facilities, provided the other criteria for raising fish without a COR, as specified in the rule are met.
- ADD the requirement that private fish producers provide their customers a letter issued by the DWR certifying that the fish that are purchased meet the triploid testing requirements described in the rule (no changes to the testing requirements are proposed).
- ADD language from Title 23A-5-3-305 that states that the illegal release of fish is a class A misdemeanor. This language is added to increase the enforceability of the rule.