

- 1. Change the statewide possession limit to twice the daily bag limit. This possession limit will apply to all statewide and special regulation seasons.**

**Rationale:** Currently the daily bag and possession limits are the same as the daily limit for all statewide and special regulation seasons unless otherwise specified. The primary need for the proposed change is that the current regulation hinders the ability of an angler to continue to fish on subsequent days in many locales where bag limits are easily met. The department has received numerous questions and concerns over the years regarding the current possession limit being the same as the daily bag. The angling public has voiced a need to allow higher possessions, which could allow them to fish more days after a successful fishing day of catching their daily bag. The proposed change would ensure our anglers can fish for at least two days before they need to consume some or all of their fish to legally go fishing for that species again. The Department further hopes to see higher angler use in Arizona as a result of this proposal.

- 2. Reduce the crappie daily bag limit from unlimited to 15 per day at Bartlett Lake and Roosevelt Lake.**

**Rationale:** Currently these two reservoirs are managed under the statewide regulations of unlimited daily bag limit for crappie. These water bodies experience large annual water level fluctuations depending on winter precipitation and water/power supply needs. Crappie reproductive success can be poor in years when reservoir levels change rapidly during the spawning period. Crappie recruitment studies in fluctuating reservoirs have indicated the strongest year class abundance in years with high, sustained water levels throughout the winter and spring months. These studies suggest that lower bag limits may be beneficial to maintaining crappie populations. Recent creel surveys at both Roosevelt and Bartlett lakes noted that more than 60 percent of the crappie caught were harvested. Additionally, over the past decade, angling pressure for crappie has increased significantly and angling techniques and technology have evolved so that skilled anglers can harvest large numbers of crappie 12 months of the year. Reducing the bag limit may reduce harvest and protect spawning-age fish, especially during years when weak-year classes reach spawning age.

- 3. Establish special regulations for daily bag limits at all newly designated Community Fishing Waters.**

**Rationale:** The department is committed to increasing opportunities for close and convenient fishing recreation to urban residents. The popular Urban Fishing Program will be expanded and rebranded in 2014 to become the Community Fishing Program. It is the department's desire to customize the management and stocking of fish into new Community Fishing waters to meet the unique needs of the individual communities across the state. Fifteen waters have been identified for the first phase of this expansion effort. Each of these waters already has special regulations that includes reduced bag limits for trout (four) and catfish (four) — the primary species to be stocked. These changes would

standardize the bag limit regulations at these 15 additional waters to conform with the Urban Fishing Program regulations currently in place. By making bag limits more consistent at all 36 proposed Community Fishing Program waters, angler confusion would be reduced and the amount and quality of fishing opportunity would increase substantially.

<b>Waters more than 3 acres</b>	<b>Proposed Bag Limit</b>
Tempe Town Lake (Tempe)	4 trout
Pioneer Lake (Peoria – NEW)	4 catfish
Copper Sky Lake (Maricopa – NEW)	2 bass (13-inch minimum)
Fortuna and Redondo Lakes (Yuma)	10 sunfish
	1 white amur (30-inch minimum)
<b>Waters under 3 acres</b>	<b>Proposed Bag Limit</b>
Discovery and McQueen Ponds (Gilbert)	2 trout
Bonsall Pond (Glendale)	2 catfish
Granada and Roadrunner Ponds (Phoenix)	1 bass (13-inch minimum)
Eldorado and McKellips Ponds (Scottsdale)	5 sunfish
Pacana Pond (Maricopa)	1 white amur (30-inch minimum)
Council Park Pond (Somerton)	
Yuma West Wetlands Pond (Yuma)	

**4. Make all catch-and-release trout waters artificial fly and lure only, single barbless hooks.**

**Rationale:** Currently there are three combinations of catch-and-release artificial fly and lure-only regulations for trout in Arizona: 1) any hook, 2) barbless hooks (includes treble), and 3) single barbless hooks. This leads to confusion as to what we are requiring our anglers to use. This proposal would add single barbless hooks to the current catch-and-release artificial fly and lure regulation at Ackre Lake, Burro Creek, Canyon Creek (from OW Bridge to Fort Apache Indian Reservation), Thompson Creek, Silver Creek (Oct. 1-March 30), and West Fork Black River (upstream of Hayground confluence). It would also add East Verde River (from Pumphouse to its source) as an additional catch and release, artificial fly and lure only, single barbless hook, trout water to the state. This proposed change would not have a detectable impact on the current gear used at the locations listed above, with the exceptions of Silver Creek and the East Verde River (from Pumphouse to its source) -- the gear used in these small waters already is primarily that of fly fishing. This change would establish one catch-and-release artificial fly and lure special regulation for trout throughout most of the state, and reduce confusion for anglers fishing catch-and-release waters.

**5. Simplify artificial fly and lure regulations at waters with reduced trout harvest to “artificial fly and lure only, two trout daily bag limit.”**

**Rationale:** This change is to simplify the reduced bag, artificial fly and lure-only special regulations on selected limited harvest trout waters to make it easier for anglers to understand what gear types are allowed and for bag limits to be consistent from one water to another. Simplifying the artificial fly and lure-only regulations would allow the use of

single or treble barbed hooks at three existing artificial fly and lure waters. The general approach is to simplify regulations for reduced harvest, artificial fly and lure, trout waters statewide. The proposed regulation change would remove the barbless hooks requirement at Carnero Lake and remove the 12-inch minimum trout requirement at Lee Valley Lake. This regulation would change the current regulations at Chevelon Canyon Lake by removing the 10-14 inch protected slot limit, removing the immediate kill restriction, and reducing the daily bag limit from six to two trout. The proposal would simplify and standardize artificial gear restrictions for reduced trout harvest waters and minimize angler confusion.

**6. Create special regulations for bass at Goldwater Lake of one bass, minimum size of 13 inches in total length.**

**Rationale:** The current limit for bass at Goldwater Lake (Prescott area) is six fish daily. In spring 2008 fish surveys, largemouth bass numbers were extremely low in Goldwater Lake, which is dominated by a population of stunted green sunfish and crayfish. Largemouth bass were subsequently stocked in 2009 to help reduce the number of small sunfish and the large population of crayfish which had stripped the lake of aquatic vegetation. Subsequent fish surveys in 2008 only caught four adult and 89 juvenile bass; in 2009 surveys found three adult and zero juveniles; in 2012 no bass were found. Depletion of the bass suggest that the stocked fish were either harvested by anglers or died before they could be caught. The loss of bass from the lake has resulted in the inability to control green sunfish and crayfish populations, or to provide fishing opportunities for anglers that favor them. The cost to stock bass continues to increase and the ability to support regular stockings of bass at effective numbers is limited. This change should support maintenance of a warm water fishery, allow green sunfish to grow larger and decrease the number of crayfish, allowing vegetation to grow and improve fish habitat.

**7. Allow bow and arrow fishing for catfish at Roosevelt, Apache, Canyon and Saguaro lakes.**

**Rationale:** In early 2013 the Game and Fish Rules for lawful methods of taking aquatic wildlife (R12-4-313) were revised to allow catfish to be taken by the use of bow and arrow only in areas designated by commission order. Currently, carp, mullet, buffalofish, tilapia, and suckers are allowed to be taken statewide by bow and arrow. Regulations prohibit the use of bow and arrow (or spear, spear gun, crossbow, gig) methods within 200 yards of a boat dock or designated swimming area. The harvest of catfish with bow and arrow at select waters would allow for additional opportunity for the people who participate in this legal method of fishing to take a desirable game fish. Sixteen other states currently allow the taking of catfish with use of bow and arrow. The number of sportsmen and sportswomen who participate in this sport is expected to be low in comparison with traditional methods of fishing (i.e., hook and line) and the department's fish managers do not expect the level of pursuit and harvest of catfish by bow and arrow to be high enough to adversely impact catfish populations at these four reservoirs.

**8. Allow spear and spear gun fishing for striped bass in the Colorado River and associated backwaters from Headgate Rock Dam (upstream of Parker) on the Colorado River to the Southern International Boundary with Mexico.**

**Rationale:** Spear and spear gun fishing for striped bass is currently allowed on Lake Pleasant, Lake Powell, Lake Mead and Lake Mohave including the Colorado River from Hoover Dam downstream to Cottonwood Landing. Also allowed in all state waters is the use of spear, spear gun, bow and arrow, crossbow, gig and snagging methods for the taking of carp, mullet, tilapia, goldfish or shad — species that are found in the Colorado River below Cottonwood Landing. The department received a request from the public to extend the allowable spear and spear gun fishing of striped bass in the Colorado River from Headgate Rock Dam to the Southern International Boundary with Mexico. State law (rule) prohibits use of spear and spear gun fishing within 200 yards of any boat ramp or designated swimming area. This proposal would increase opportunity for sportsmen and sportswomen participating in spear and spear gun fishing to take striped bass.

**9. Reduce the general statewide daily bag and possession limits for white amur (grass carp) from unlimited to one white amur, minimum size of 30 inches in total length.**

**Rationale:** The white amur (grass carp) is a highly effective biological tool used to control aquatic vegetation and algae. When stocked and maintained at proper densities, white amur can replace the need to use machinery or chemicals for weed control. White amur are expensive to stock and maintain; therefore to achieve proper weed control, the densities of white amur must be known. Consequently, angler harvest must be minimized. The proposed change for white amur would not affect the current catch-and-release special regulations for Salt River Project canals and the canals in Yuma County. Currently, the 21 waters in the Urban Fishing Program have special regulations for white amur: one white amur daily limit at a minimum of 30 inches. This regulation has been in effect since 1993 and has been well received by the parks and recreation departments and anglers. The current regulation allows for the unlimited harvest of white amur from waters not in the Urban Fishing Program, Salt River Project canals, or Canals in Yuma County. Consequently, other public fishing waters that have white amur are susceptible to heavy harvest rates by anglers. Pond owners would face high costs to replace the harvested fish, as well as the increased costs and environmental concerns of using chemicals to address weed problems.

**10. Reduce the statewide roundtail chub daily bag limit from one fish to catch-and-release only.**

**Rationale:** Current regulations identify a one fish daily and possession bag limit for roundtail chub statewide. However, a catch-and-release-only special regulation exists for roundtail and headwater chub in Fossil Creek. Roundtail chub are a unique native fish with good sport fishing qualities. They will bite on bait and lures and are strong fighters. But the roundtail chub is a poor food fish with many bones and muddy tasting flesh. Actual angler harvest of roundtail chub is extremely limited. Roundtail chub numbers are declining in

Arizona and are at risk of being listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The catch-and-release designation would heighten awareness for conservation for this species and also would promote a need to properly and carefully release these special fish unharmed.

**11. Consolidate regulations on the Colorado River from the I-40 Bridge to the Southern International Boundary including Lake Havasu, Martinez Lake, Mittry Lake and associated backwaters.**

**Rationale:** Special regulations are currently designated for multiple reaches along the Colorado River downstream of the I-40 crossing whereby the following bag limits would be in effect -- 10 trout, six bass (minimum size 13 inches), 10 catfish in any combination, and 25 crappie. This proposal is intended to consolidate and simplify the regulations to reduce public confusion.