

5104-S

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senators Haugen, Swecker, Spanel and Fraser)

Brief Title: Allowing the fish and wildlife commission to adopt rules to protect the catch and release steelhead fishery.

SB 5104-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST OF PROPOSED 1ST SUBSTITUTE)

Finds that the practice of establishing exclusive catch and release recreational fisheries on steelhead trout by the fish and wildlife commission requires that the commission commit significant resources to assure that these fisheries are not subject to abuse by unknowing or uncaring anglers, and that the fish and wildlife commission adopt rules that maximize recreational opportunities without harming the steelhead resource.

Provides that the commission shall not authorize steelhead catch and release seasons or areas in cases where there is insufficient enforcement staffing to assure that there is a low mortality rate for catch and release steelhead fisheries.

Directs the commission to assess the threat to the steelhead trout resource posed by catch and release fisheries that occur on the spawning beds while spawning fish are present. The commission shall adopt rules that minimize the adverse effects of catch and release fisheries on spawning steelhead trout.

Requires a steelhead catch and release mortality study to be conducted by the department of fish and wildlife in order to assess the rates of steelhead mortality during a catch and release fishery. At least one aspect of the study shall assess the effects of warm stream conditions on the survival of released steelhead.