



Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited
PO Box 5148
Bellefonte, PA 16823

February 25, 2015

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
Attn: John Arway, Executive Director
1601 Elmerton Ave.
PO Box 67000
Harrisburg, PA 17106

Dear Mr. Arway,

The Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited is opposed to the proposed changes to Amendment to Section 65.6, Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only Areas (DHALO). After reviewing the list of streams under DHALO regulations, we noticed that 19 of the 58 sections contain wild trout populations.

We believe that DHALO regulations should be used primarily for waters that do not contain wild trout, and that DHALO waters containing low numbers of wild trout would be better managed through habitat improvement. We are concerned with the current proposed change to a minimum size limit-of 7 inches, which will have a direct impact on the wild trout population since most stocked trout are larger than 9 inches. And we are concerned that moving the harvest date up to the Saturday before Memorial Day could also have an impact on the wild trout populations as those trout have likely not yet sought refuge in colder water outside the DHALO sections of these streams.

Although PATU is primarily concerned with the impacts on wild trout as described above, we do understand that many of our members, as well as a majority of anglers in general, enjoy fishing these stream sections for their availability of hatchery trout due to catch & release practices on these streams during the non-harvest period. By moving to an earlier harvest date, PFBC is actually decreasing opportunity for the majority of anglers on these waters by allowing harvest during what could be considered the prime of the trout season. Consideration for the anglers who have been stewards of these waters and have volunteered countless hours to improve fishing in these waters through habitat improvement projects should also be taken into account.

And we would also urge the PFBC to further study the effects on hooking mortality from the use of bait, especially by inexperienced anglers, to ensure that fishing opportunities are not lost to artificial lure anglers due to unnecessary mortality, especially during the non-harvest period.

We urge the PA Fish and Boat Commission to reevaluate this proposal and the 19 stream sections containing wild trout.

Sincerely,

Brian Wagner

Brian Wagner
Council President

Ken Undercoffer

Ken Undercoffer
Co-Chair PATU Trout
Management Committee

Richard Soderberg

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Co-Chair PATU Trout
Management Committee

Cc: PFBC Commissioners