

# Lively, critical fish and game meet on for Bethel

JUNEAU—Proposed changes in the State's fish and game regulatory system are likely to draw a great deal of spirited testimony from the public when the Alaska Boards of Game and Fisheries meet for a joint ses-

sion in Bethel Feb. 27-March 2. Also up for discussion are proposed criteria for determining eligibility for subsistence fishing and hunting, another especially important issue to the residents of Alaska's rural areas.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game officials will present several alternatives for the revision of the present regulatory system, which some people say is not responsive enough to local input. The Department

is the lead agency in the development of a proposal by the Hammond Administration for a better system.

At this point, according to Ronald O. Skoog, commissioner of Fish and Game, the State is

simply asking for the public's suggestions and comments.

"We have made no decisions at this time, nor are we favoring any one proposal over another. We are only trying to determine the general feeling of Alaska's citizens, so we have some firm data with which to approach both the Alaska Legislature and Congress," he said.

At present, bills affecting the State's regulatory system have been introduced in the State Legislature and in both Houses of Congress.

Providing for continued subsistence hunting and fishing as the highest priority resource use in Alaska is a closely related issue, said Skoog. He added, "Whatever the State or Congress does could have a profound effect on subsistence hunting and fishing in Alaska. A big part of our job lies in making sure that subsistence uses are provided for adequately in any new regulatory system adopted."

Written comments will be accepted by the Boards in Bethel, in addition to oral testimony. Translators will be present to ensure that the Boards are able to receive comments from all participants.

The Bethel session is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m., Feb. 27 at the Kuskokwim Valley Native Association Building in Bethel.