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Washington Department of
FISH & WILDLIFE

Some emergency rules remain in effect as fishing reopens across Washington

ARCHIVED NEWS RELEASE

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Fish Program customer service, 360-902-2700

OLYMPIA – With fishing scheduled to reopen under standard rules on May 5, following a statewide closure to help combat the spread of COVID-19, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) reminds anglers that a number of emergency rules remain in effect for state waters.

While freshwater fisheries and Puget Sound saltwater fisheries (with the exception of shrimp and halibut) reopen beginning May 5 under permanent rules, the harvest of clams, oysters, and mussels remains closed statewide, and all saltwater fisheries off Washington's Pacific coast also remain closed in consultation with local health authorities. This includes all fishing and shellfishing in marine areas 1-4.

At this time, charter and guide industries have not received approval from the Governor's Office to resume operations. WDFW is working closely with guides and charters who have submitted safety and operations plans to the Governor's Office for consideration.

In addition to these ongoing closures, some emergency fishing rules enacted before the statewide closure in late March will now go back into effect.

"We're eager to get everybody back out and recreating responsibly," said Kelly Cunningham, WDFW Fish Program director. "We appreciate everyone's patience during this closure and we're hopeful for continued progress in the fight against COVID-19 so that we can continue to provide safe management

of these resources. It's more important than ever that anglers know what's open and what's closed before they head out, not only in terms of whether fishing is open, but also the status of any facilities at their destination."

While many state lands are scheduled to reopen for day use on May 5, many public water access sites might still be closed, including local, federal, or tribal facilities. People should be prepared to make alternate plans if their intended destination remains closed or appears too congested. All camping on wildlife areas and access areas remains closed and anglers should come prepared to provide their own toilet paper and soap and water or hand sanitizer.

Anglers are also urged to recreate within their own communities and to follow physical distancing guidelines, keeping 6 feet between themselves and others and not traveling by car or boat with anyone outside of their immediate household.

"It's on all of us to follow these guidelines and help reduce the spread of COVID-19 without future closures," Cunningham said.

Rules in effect when fisheries reopen May 5 include:

1. Adult salmon daily limit reduced in Drano Lake.
2. Adult salmon daily limit reduced on the Klickitat River.
3. Adult salmon daily limit reduced on Wind River.
4. Hatchery steelhead season extended on Salmon Creek (Clark Co.).
5. Willapa Bay tributaries closed to all fishing.
6. Adult Chinook daily limit reduced on the Kalama River.



Photo by WDFW

 Recreational Fisheries Opening May 5th	 Fisheries Remaining Closed (for now)
Freshwater fisheries throughout the state - Anglers can fish for salmon and warmwater species available according to the 2019-2020 Sport Fishing Rules pamphlet Puget Sound (Marine Areas 5-13) - Anglers can fish for salmon, lingcod, flounder, surf perch and other bottomfish species available according to the 2019-2020 sportfishing rules (with the exception of halibut) - Anglers cannot harvest clams, oysters, mussels, or shrimp	- All coastal recreational saltwater fisheries and shellfish harvest opportunities (marine areas 1-4) - Halibut fisheries statewide - Shrimp fisheries statewide - Clam, mussel, and oyster harvest statewide *Anglers cannot access fisheries via fishing guide or charter – these businesses remain closed

Photo by WDFW

7. Chinook retention closed on the Cowlitz River, Cispus River, and Lake Scanewa.
8. Salmon season closed on the Lewis River.
9. Columbia River salmon and steelhead anglers must use barbless hooks from the WA/OR border downstream.
10. All fishing in the Chehalis Basin closed until the Saturday before Memorial Day. (Includes Chehalis, Elk, Johns, Hoquiam, Newaukum, Satsop, Skookumchuck, Wishkah, and Wynoochee rivers and their tributaries, and Cloquallum and Elk creeks and their tributaries.)
11. The Columbia River above and below Bonneville Dam is scheduled to open for spring Chinook fishing on May 5, 7, 9, and 13, and a portion of the lower river will open for sockeye beginning May 16.
12. Two sections of the Snake River will open for spring Chinook fishing on alternating days, four days per week, beginning May 5.

More information on these and other rules is available at <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/>. As always, anglers should also check the 2019-20 Washington Sport Fishing Rules pamphlet at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations> (<https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations>) before heading out, and download the Fish Washington mobile app for up-to-date regulations.

The new license year began April 1. Anglers must have a current license for any fishery in which they take part.

The lower Columbia River, which is co-managed by Washington and Oregon, has in-season rules determined by the Columbia River Compact, to ensure concurrent rules between the two states. Anyone interested in receiving updates on emergency rules or Columbia River fisheries can sign up for email notifications at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/lists> (<https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/lists>).

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is the state agency tasked with preserving, protecting, and perpetuating fish, wildlife, and ecosystems, while providing sustainable fishing, hunting, and other recreation opportunities.

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