

Meetings scheduled to discuss fishery management on 13 lakes with loons

Local News

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OLYMPIA – The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will hold two public meetings later this month to discuss proposed fishery-management alternatives on 13 Washington lakes where common loons nest.

The meetings are scheduled on:

July 27 – From 6-8 p.m., at the WDFW Eastern Regional Office, 2315 N. Discovery Place, in Spokane Valley.

July 29 – From 6-8 p.m. at the WDFW North Puget Sound Regional Office, 16018 Mill Creek Blvd., in Mill Creek.

During the meetings, WDFW staff will explain fishery-management alternatives developed with an 11-member ad hoc citizen advisory group. The alternatives are expected to include options ranging from status quo to prohibiting the use of small lead fishing tackle in recreational fisheries on lakes with loons, said John Whalen, regional fish program manager for WDFW.

Earlier this year, the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission requested that the department seek additional public input on the impacts of small lead fishing tackle on common loons, which could be harmed by ingesting small lead weights and jigs lost by anglers.

“After we receive input from the public at the two upcoming meetings, we plan to meet again with the advisory group and develop a final set of recommendations,” Whalen said.

WDFW fishery managers are scheduled to brief the commission — a nine-member citizen panel that sets policy for WDFW — on the final set of proposed fishery-management alternatives during the commission’s meeting in October. The public also will have an opportunity to provide comments on the alternatives during that commission meeting.

The lakes where loons breed include Ferry, Long and Swan lakes in Ferry County; Calligan and Hancock in King County; Bonaparte, Blue and Lost lakes in Okanogan County; Big Meadow, South Skookum and Yocum lakes in Pend Oreille County; Pierre Lake in Stevens County; and Hozomeen Lake in Whatcom County.