Skokomish River opens for salmon fishing Aug. 1

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

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Olympia, WA - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) enforcement officers will be increasing resource-protection patrols on the Skokomish River, where recreational salmon fishing opens Aug. 1 under several new regulations.

“Anglers should read the regulation pamphlet carefully before heading out to fish the Skokomish River, because there are several changes this year and our officers will be strictly enforcing all the rules,” said Mike Cenci, WDFW’s deputy chief of enforcement.

The daily bag limit has been increased this year from one to two salmon for anglers fishing from the mouth of the river to the Highway 101 Bridge through Sept. 30. However, a new rule in effect this year requires anglers to carefully release any wild chinook salmon they catch. As in previous years, anglers must release chum salmon through Oct. 15.

The recreational fishery was converted to a mark-selective fishery for hatchery chinook salmon – which are marked with a missing adipose fin – to help meet conservation goals for wild chinook salmon returning to the Skokomish River, said Thom Johnson, district fish biologist for WDFW.

Another change this year is that recreational fishing will be closed from the Highway 106 Bridge upstream to the Highway 101 Bridge on six Mondays to avoid potential gear conflicts with treaty tribal fishers, said Johnson. Those closures are scheduled for Aug. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 and Sept. 13. Recreational fishing downstream of the Highway 106 Bridge will remain open seven days a week through the fishing season.

Anglers fishing the Skokomish River also will be required to release any salmon not hooked inside the mouth and retain the first two legal salmon they catch. In addition, single-point barbless hooks are required and a night closure and anti-snagging rule will be in effect.

Anglers are expected to not only follow the fishing regulations, but also to properly dispose of trash and human waste, said Johnson.

Last year, WDFW warned Skokomish River anglers that the fishing season could be closed after an accumulation of trash and human waste created potential health and water quality problems. A cooperative clean-up effort by WDFW employees, anglers and Hunter Farms – a private landowner – helped to avert a closure by increasing the number of portable toilets and trash receptacles in the area and removing human waste and trash from the banks of the river.

Before the fishery opens this year, WDFW will increase the number of dumpsters and portable toilets along the river, and post signs asking anglers for their assistance in keeping the area clean.

“Our goal is to conduct an orderly and sustainable fishery on the Skokomish River,” said Johnson. “That can only happen if anglers follow the rules and do their part to keep the river clean and safe.”

Fishing regulations on the Skokomish River can be found in the 2010/2011 sportfishing rules pamphlet on WDFW’s website at http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations.