

[Buoy 10 Columbia salmon season highlights a great month of fishing](#)

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

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Anglers are reeling in chinook salmon off the coast, pulling up pots full of crab in Puget Sound, and casting for trout in alpine lakes on both sides of the Cascades. Summer fisheries are in full swing, and anglers can look forward to even more great fishing opportunities in the days ahead.

A prime example is the Buoy 10 salmon fishery, which opens Aug. 1 at the mouth of the Columbia River. A big run of 664,900 fall chinook is expected to return to the big river this year, and fishery managers predict that anglers will catch approximately 12,500 of them between Buoy 10 and Rocky Point, 16 miles upriver.

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“Buoy 10 is a very popular fishery, drawing tens of thousands of anglers every year,” said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

“Fishing tends to start out slow, then accelerates quickly and builds through the rest of August.”

Bank anglers planning to fish at Buoy 10 should be aware that access to much of the North Jetty will be closed, due to a major project being conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to reinforce beaches eroded by winter storms. “The North jetty provides the only real bank access to that fishery, so things could get a little crowded,” Hymer said.

The chinook fishery closes Aug. 31 at Buoy 10, but anglers can continue to keep hatchery-reared coho salmon in that area through the end of the year. Upriver from Rocky Point, fishing opportunities for both species continue late into the year on the mainstem Columbia River and many of its tributaries.

Rather crack some crab? Fisheries for Dungeness crab are open throughout August in most areas of Puget Sound — the exception being Marine Area 7-North near the Canadian border, which opens Aug. 11. Specific regulations for each area are described in WDFW’s *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet and on the department’s website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>).

Meanwhile, general hunting seasons for black bear open Aug. 1 in many areas of the state, and hunters are gearing up for early hunts for deer and elk in September. Also opening in September are hunting seasons for forest grouse, dove and Canada geese.

For more information about fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities coming up in the weeks ahead, see the regional reports below:

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Fishing: Anglers are reeling in chinook and coho in Puget Sound, where crabbing is still an option and two additional marine areas open for salmon Aug. 1. Meanwhile, anglers are having some success at Baker Lake, which recently opened for sockeye salmon.

For the first time, anglers are fishing for **sockeye salmon** in Baker Lake, where the fish are returning in significantly higher numbers this year. Anglers fishing Baker Lake can retain up to two adult sockeye salmon that exceed 18 inches in length from Baker Dam upstream to the mouth of the Baker River. All other salmon must be released, and no fishing is allowed between the dam and the log boom at the lower end of the lake.

“The fish are biting, it’s just a matter of finding them,” said Brett Barkdull, fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). “Most anglers have done well once they get over them, and hopefully that will continue into August.”

The sockeye salmon fishery at Baker Lake is open until further notice, said Barkdull, who reminds anglers to check for any rule changes at WDFW’s website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations>. Separate sockeye salmon fisheries on portions of the Skagit and Baker rivers run through July 31.

Elsewhere, anglers can still find some **steelhead** along the Reiter Ponds section of the Skykomish River. But most freshwater anglers are gearing up for Sept. 1, when the Stillaguamish, Snohomish, Skykomish and portions of the Skagit, Snoqualmie and Green (Duwamish) rivers open for salmon fishing.

Beginning Aug. 16, **Lake Sammamish** will also be an option for freshwater salmon anglers, who will have a daily limit of four salmon, and can retain up to two **chinook**. All sockeye must be released, and fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek.

On Puget Sound, anglers can fish for salmon in marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands), 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton). Those fishing Marine Area 7 can keep one chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild coho and chum starting Aug. 1.

Anglers fishing marine areas 9 and 10 can keep hatchery chinook — marked with a clipped adipose fin — as part of a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook. Those fishing Marine Area 9 also must release chum salmon, while anglers in Marine Area 10 are required to release chum beginning Aug. 1.

The chinook selective fisheries in marine areas 9 and 10 run through Aug. 31. Beginning Sept. 1, anglers in those two marine areas will be required to release all chinook and chum. Anglers are reminded that regulations vary for inner Elliott Bay, Sinclair Inlet and public fishing piers in those marine areas.

August brings other opportunities in the region to catch and keep salmon. Beginning Aug. 1, marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) open for salmon. Anglers fishing those two areas will have a daily limit of two salmon but must release chinook.

Meanwhile, the **crab** fishery is under way in Puget Sound. Dungeness and red rock crab seasons are:

- Marine areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (South Puget Sound) are open through Jan. 2, seven days a week.
- Marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10, 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 12 (Hood Canal) are open Wednesday through Saturday through Sept. 6, and open the entire Labor Day weekend.
- Marine areas 7 South and East are open through Sept. 30, Wednesday through Saturday, and the entire Labor Day weekend.
- Marine Area 7 North will open Aug. 11 on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule through Sept. 30, and open the entire Labor Day weekend.

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6¼ inches. Fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. See WDFW's sport-crabbing website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>) for more information.

Hunting: The general hunting season for **black bear** opens Aug. 1 in most of the region. Hunters are allowed two bear during the general season (Aug. 1-Nov. 15), but only one bear can be taken in eastern Washington. Check the *Big Game Hunting Seasons and Rules* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/game/hunter/hunter.htm>) for details.

On tap for next month are early archery seasons for **elk**, early archery and muzzleloader seasons for **deer**, and the general hunting season for **cougar** that gets under way with a statewide archery-only season followed by a muzzleloader hunt. Also opening in September are seasons for **forest grouse**, **mourning dove**, **band-tailed pigeon** and **Canada geese**.

Wildlife viewing: There's still time to see salmon at the **Ballard Locks**. Several hundred sockeye pass through the fish ladder viewing window daily, and chinook should start showing up in greater numbers throughout the month. The Ballard Locks are located in northwest Seattle where the Lake Washington Ship Canal enters Shilshole Bay and Puget Sound. For information, call the locks' Visitor Center in Seattle at (206) 783-7059.

Anyone watching wildlife or pursuing other outdoor activities should be aware that the Washington State Department of Natural Resources has instituted a **burn ban** on all state lands, including those owned or managed by WDFW. Exceptions include recreational fires in approved fire pits or self-contained stoves and barbeques using gas or propane. See <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/Pages/default.aspx> for more information.

[pagebreak:South Sound/Olympic Peninsula]

Fishing: Summer salmon fishing is in full swing along the coast, where anglers are hooking some bright chinook and nice-size coho. "Some days are better than others, but for the most part

fishing has been good for both **chinook** and **coho**," said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "In the coming weeks, I expect fishing to get even better as more salmon show up and the weather settles down."

Anglers fishing marine areas 1 (Ilwaco), 2 (Westport-Ocean Shores), 3 (LaPush) and 4 (Neah Bay) can keep up to two chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit, but must release any chinook measuring less than 24 inches and hatchery coho less than 16 inches. Wild coho must be released unharmed. All four ocean marine areas are open to salmon fishing seven days a week.

Salmon fishing is scheduled to continue through Sept. 18 in marine areas 3 and 4, through Sept. 19 in Marine Area 2 and through Sept. 30 in Marine Area 1. However, salmon fisheries in those areas could close early if catch quotas are reached. Milward reminds anglers to check for any rule changes at WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations>.

So far this year, angler effort has been lower than expected likely because of rough weather, Milward said. "Conditions should improve as we move into August, making it easier for anglers to get out on the water," he said.

In the Strait of Juan de Fuca, anglers are still having some success hooking chinook and the occasional coho in marine areas 5 (Sekiu) and 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), while salmon fisheries in marine areas 11 (Tacoma/Vashon), 12 (Hood Canal) and 13 (South Puget Sound) continue to be slow.

Because salmon fishing rules vary depending on the marine area, anglers should check the Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>) before heading out on the water.

Prefer shellfish? The **Dungeness crab** fishery is going strong in the Strait of Juan de Fuca and most areas of Puget Sound. Dungeness and red rock crab seasons are:

- Marine areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 are open through Jan. 2, seven days a week.
- Marine areas 6, 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10, 11 and 12 are open Wednesday through Saturday through Sept. 6, and open the entire Labor Day weekend.
- Marine areas 7 South and East are open through Sept. 30, Wednesday through Saturday, and the entire Labor Day weekend.
- Marine Area 7 North will open Aug. 11 on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule through Sept. 30, and open the entire Labor Day weekend.

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6¼ inches. Fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. See WDFW's sport-crabbing website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>) for more information.

Meanwhile, WDFW enforcement officers will be increasing resource-protection patrols on the **Skokomish River**, where recreational salmon fishing opens Aug. 1 under several new regulations.

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.

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. 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.

Hunting: The general hunting season for **black bear** opens Aug. 1 in most of the region. Hunters are allowed two bear during the general season (Aug. 1-Nov. 15), but only one bear can be taken in eastern Washington. Check the *Big Game Hunting Seasons and Rules* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/game/hunter/hunter.htm>) for details.

On tap for next month are early archery seasons for **elk**, early archery and muzzleloader seasons for **deer**, and the general hunting season for **cougar** that gets under way with a statewide archery-only season followed by a muzzleloader hunt. Also opening in September are seasons for **forest grouse**, **mourning dove**, **band-tailed pigeon** and **Canada geese**.

Wildlife viewing: Spectacular views, crisp air and blooming wild flowers are bringing thousands of visitors to Mount Rainier this summer. Hikers and wildlife viewers are taking to the many trails that start at the Sunrise Visitor Center on the eastern side of the mountain in search of views and alpine wildlife. A prize sighting is the **white-tailed ptarmigan**, which is a small grouse that makes it home in alpine habitat. Recent visitors on the Burroughs Mountain trail reported seeing five ptarmigan – one female and four chicks. The ptarmigan, which turns totally white in winter, is streaked brown and gray during the summer. Hikers also noted several **mountain bluebirds**, four **horned larks** and an **American kestrel**.

A popular attraction in late-August and September is the return of hatchery **chinook salmon** to the Deschutes River near Olympia as they begin their annual spawning run. Onlookers can watch thousands of fish gather below the Fifth Avenue Bridge in downtown Olympia before they enter Capitol Lake. From there, the fish will move up the river to spawn.

Just south of Olympia, Wolf Haven International will be hosting **Howl-Ins** each Saturday in August from 6-9 p.m. Howl-Ins include 15-minute sanctuary tours, environmentally friendly children’s activities, an eco-scavenger hunt, an interactive conservation table, Wolf-TV, family oriented entertainment, and a howling competition. For more information on the Howl-Ins, visit Wolf Haven’s website at <http://www.wolfhaven.org/>.

[pagebreak:Southwest Washington]

Fishing: For Columbia River anglers, this month provides a great opportunity for a triple play. Fishing seasons for fall chinook salmon and hatchery coho open Aug. 1, while summer steelhead are expected to continue providing good fishing well into September.

While the **fall chinook** season opens upriver to Priest Rapids Dam, most of this month's action takes place in the popular Buoy 10 fishery on the lower 16 miles of the river. A big run of 664,900 fall chinook is expected this year, setting the stage for some good fishing, said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"The fall chinook fishery is looking very promising this year," Hymer said. "Fishing tends to start slow, then accelerates quickly and builds through the rest of August."

So will the catch. Fishery managers estimate that anglers will catch 12,500 chinook salmon by Aug. 31, when the retention fishery for chinook closes in the Buoy 10 area. They also anticipate a catch of 12,000 coho in that area and another 17,000 chinook between Rocky Point and Bonneville Dam by the time those seasons come to a close.

Bank anglers planning to fish at Buoy 10 should be aware that access to much of the North Jetty will be closed, due to a major project being conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to reinforce beaches eroded by winter storms. "The North jetty provides the only real bank access to that fishery, so things could get a little crowded," Hymer said.

For the Buoy 10 fishery, the daily limit is two salmon, two **hatchery steelhead**, or one of each. However, anglers may retain only one chinook salmon (minimum size, 24 inches) per day as part of their daily limit. Only those steelhead and coho marked with a missing adipose fin and a healed scar may be retained. This requirement does not, however, apply to fall chinook, which may be retained whether marked or unmarked.

For more rules on the Buoy 10 area and other waters upriver, see WDFW's Fishing in Washington pamphlet, which is posted online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>

By mid-to-late August, the bulk of the chinook run historically begins to move upstream while increasing numbers of **coho** move into the Columbia River behind them. For anglers following the chinook upriver, Hymer recommends fishing deep, between 40 and 50 feet down. For a lure, he suggests a wobbler anchored with a heavy weight.

"Chinook go deep when water temperatures are high — as they are now — so that's a good place to find them," Hymer said. "At the same time, anglers should take care not to drop anchor in the shipping channel. That can lead to real trouble."

While 2010 is not expected to be a banner year for hatchery coho, those fish will help to round out anglers' daily limits at Buoy 10, Hymer said. WDFW currently expects about 290,000 coho to return this year, down significantly from last year's exceptionally large run of three-quarters of a million fish.

"While we will likely see fewer coho this year, those fish will still make a real contribution to the fishery," Hymer said. "They usually bite best at Buoy 10 on herring and spinners, and then later in the tributaries."

Meanwhile, plenty of **hatchery steelhead** are still available for harvest, Hymer said. In June, anglers caught more early-run summer steelhead than at any time since the 1970s, and those fish should keep biting hooks through mid-August. By then, the larger "B-run" steelhead —

many weighing in the teens – should start arriving to pick up the slack. This year’s return of “B-run” steelhead, most headed for hatcheries on the Clearwater and Salmon rivers, is expected to total about 100,000 fish, about double the size of last year’s run.

“The combination of three species – fall chinook, coho and steelhead – makes August a great time to fish the Columbia River,” Hymer said.

They’ll also liven up fishing in the tributaries, where anglers have been reeling in respectable numbers of hatchery steelhead for the past few months. As on the mainstem Columbia, the fall salmon season starts Aug. 1 on a number of area tributaries, although salmon fishing doesn’t really take off until September. Meanwhile, Drano Lake and the White Salmon River are good places to try for steelhead looking for cooler waters.

Like last year, anglers will again be able to retain up to six hatchery adult coho on all tributaries to the lower Columbia River with hatchery programs. Those rivers include the Cowlitz, Deep, Elochoman, Grays (including West Fork), Kalama, Klickitat, Lewis (including North Fork), Toutle (including Green and North Fork) and Washougal. Also like last year, hatchery fall chinook are the only kind of salmon anglers can retain on the Grays, Elochoman and Kalama rivers.

Some new rules will also be in effect, including a requirement that anglers release all unmarked chinook (adults and jacks) on the Cowlitz, Toutle, Green, Washougal, Wind and White Salmon rivers, plus Drano Lake. Last year, that requirement applied only to jack salmon on those rivers.

As always, WDFW strongly advises anglers to check the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet for new rules applicable to specific waters before leaving home.

Of course, salmon and steelhead aren’t the only fish available for harvest in August. **Walleye** fishing has been good in the Columbia River near Camas, as well as in The Dalles and John Day Pools. **Bass** fishing has also been heating up from Bonneville Dam to McNary Dam.

For **trout**, the high wilderness lakes around Mount Adams and Mount St. Helens offer unparalleled fishing experiences for those willing to brave the mosquitoes. Riffe Lake in Lewis County is still giving up some nice landlocked coho, while Mayfield Lake, Skate Creek and the Tilton River are still receiving regular plants of rainbows. Hatchery sea-run cutthroats should also provide some opportunity on the lower Cowlitz beginning in late August.

Hunting: The general hunting season for **black bear** opens Aug. 1 in coastal game management units and Aug. 14 in the South Cascades area. Hunters are allowed two bear during the general season. Check the *Big Game Hunting Seasons and Rules* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/game/hunter/hunter.htm>) for details.

Coming up in September are early archery seasons for **elk**, early archery and muzzleloader seasons for **deer**, and a general hunting season for **cougar** that gets under way with an archery-only season followed by a muzzleloader hunt. Also opening in September are seasons for **forest grouse**, **dove** and **Canada geese**.

Wildlife viewing: The summer sun may be shining high in the sky, but shorebirds can already feel a seasonal change. Tens of thousands of the them – **sandpipers**, **yellowlegs**, **dowitchers** and

other species — are already flocking to Washington's coastal areas en route from their Arctic breeding grounds to points south. Clouds of shorebirds, especially sandpipers, can now be seen from Ocean Shores to Ilwaco.

Unlike their spring migration, shorebirds' flight south is a disorderly affair. Adults often leave the Arctic before their chicks are fledged and join flocks departing at different times. They also travel at a more leisurely pace, stretching from July through October. This is also the time when most rare birds, such as off-course Asian shorebirds, show up on the coast.

Brian Calkins, manager of WDFW's Shillapoo Wildlife Area, didn't see many shorebirds during a recent walk along one of the water-control structures near the end of the

Erwin O. Reiger Highway. The "peeps" don't usually arrive until later, when the water level in the wetlands drops. He did, however, sight a variety of other birds, including **common snipe, pied-bill grebe, coots, American bittern, mourning dove** and **mallards** with broods of ducklings.

"All of those birds were on display during a 15-minute walk without binoculars," Calkins said. "I'm sure I could have seen a lot of other species if I'd had time to look."

Meanwhile, the chances of spotting a **white-tailed deer** in the Julia Butler Hansen Refuge recently improved, thanks to efforts by the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife (USDFW) to augment that population with white-tails from southwest Oregon. The agency transported eight animals in March and was able to locate six of them last month.

About 300 Columbia white-tailed deer, listed as "endangered" by the federal agency, currently live in the refuge. Another 300 to 400 live on private lands along the Columbia River.

Anyone watching wildlife or pursuing other activities outdoors should be aware that the Washington State Department of Natural Resources has instituted a **burn ban** on all state lands, including those owned or managed by WDFW. Exceptions include recreational fires in approved fire pits or self-contained stoves and barbecues using gas or propane. See <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/Pages/default.aspx> for more information.

[pagebreak:Eastern Washington]

Fishing: With water temperatures rising, the month of August is usually best for warmwater-species fishing throughout the region.

Chris Donley, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) district fish biologist, said mixed-species waters are a good bet. **Yellow perch, largemouth** and **smallmouth bass**, and **crappie** can usually be caught at Coffeepot Lake in Lincoln County, Downs and Chapman lakes in southwest Spokane County, Newman and Liberty lakes in eastern Spokane County, Eloika Lake in north Spokane County, and the Spokane River reservoir of Long Lake and Deer and Waitts lakes in Stevens County.

Fishing at **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** lakes near Spokane — like Amber, Badger, Clear, Fish, Williams, and West Medical lakes — is best early in the morning or at night, Donley says.

The lower Spokane River has nice rainbows and browns, but river anglers need to be aware of catch limits, gear restrictions, and other rules listed in the fishing pamphlet.

Catfish and **sturgeon** fishing is usually productive in the Snake River system in the southeast part of the region in August. Catfish are often landed in the backwaters and sloughs throughout the mainstem Snake, as well as in or near the mouths of tributaries like the Tucannon River.

Sturgeon fishers are reminded of the minimum 43-inch and maximum 54-inch tail fork length and the daily catch limit of one sturgeon. The Snake and its tributaries upstream of Lower Granite Dam are catch-and-release only for sturgeon. The section of the Snake just east of the Tri-Cities, from the mouth to Ice Harbor Dam, is also catch-and-release for sturgeon starting Aug. 1.

Fishing has slowed considerably for **rainbow trout** in the small man-made lakes off the Tucannon River on WDFW's Wooten Wildlife Area in Columbia County, said area manager Kari Dingman. With or without good fishing, lots of folks like to escape city heat with a weekend camping trip to the area. Dingman said hot and dry conditions, along with a recent wildfire, have resulted in a ban on campfires.

Dingman also reminds fishers and other recreationists that a U.S. Forest Service road, bridge and culvert over the Little Tucannon River are under re-construction for the first half of August, so state campgrounds Panjab North and South, along with the Sheep Creek and Meadow Creek trailheads, will be inaccessible during the project.

In the north end of the region, **kokanee** and **walleye** fishing continues to be good at Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir off Grand Coulee Dam. Kokanee fishing is also productive at Stevens County's Loon Lake during night time hours.

Some of the high elevation lakes on U.S. Forest Service property in the northeast district that are stocked with **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** may be good destinations for camping and fishing weekends. In Ferry County, try Davis, Ellen, Empire, Swan and Trout lakes. In Stevens County, try Gillette, Heritage, Sherry, Summit, and Thomas lakes. In Pend Oreille County, try Carl's, Cook's, Frater, Halfmoon, Leo, Mystic, Nile, No-Name, Petit, South and North Skookums, and Yokum lakes. More information on these mostly small fishing lakes can be found in WDFW's 2010 Fishing Prospects at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/prospects/index.htm>.

Anglers are reminded to be extra careful with anything that could start wildfires in the region's hot and dry conditions. Plans should include a check on campfire restrictions on public lands. See Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) fire information by county at <http://fortress.wa.gov/dnr/firedanger/BurnRisk.aspx>. Current wildfire conditions in Washington are available at <http://www.inciweb.org/state/49/>.

Hunting: The first hunting season in the region begins Aug. 1 for **black bear** in Lincoln and Whitman County Game Management Units (GMU) 133 Roosevelt, 136 Harrington, 139 Steptoe and 142 Almota (part of the "Columbia Basin" bear management unit). Black bear hunting opens Aug. 14 in Spokane County GMUs 124 Mount Spokane, 127 Mica Peak and 130 Cheney (or "Northeastern B" bear management unit).

Successful black bear hunters must submit a bear tooth to WDFW for age data collection. Tooth envelopes are available at the Eastern Region office, 2315 N. Discovery Place, Spokane Valley

(509-892-1001). All black bear hunters must report hunting activity, either over the phone at 1-877-945-3492 or online at https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov/wdfw/licenses_hunter_report.html. Successful bear hunters who report within 10 days of harvest are entered in a drawing for special hunting permits.

Wildlife viewing: Sometimes wildlife steps into your view without warning. WDFW Wildlife Biologist Woody Myers reminds drivers traveling through **deer, elk** and **moose** country to be observant of increased activity of whitetail and mule deer does and fawns, and elk and moose cows and calves, especially during morning and evening hours. "The young animals are old enough now to be a little bolder and more curious about things, so fawns and calves may stop in the middle of the road to look at you," he said.

Myers said fawns and calves are the normal prey of cougars. "Where there are abundant deer and elk, there is likely a cougar hunting in the vicinity," he said. Hikers, especially those on trails used regularly by wildlife, should be alert and aware of possible cougar encounters. Travel in groups that make enough noise to warn animals of your approach and keep children close by.

Black bears continue their summertime foraging, including raids on unsecured garbage cans, as well as picnic and camp sites where food is not properly stored. Myers reminds both backyard wildlife viewers and weekend recreationists to avoid drawing bears into close quarters by being careful with anything that bears might eat. "That includes a lot of things because bears are omnivores — they'll eat both plants and animals," he said. "Bears also have excellent noses and can smell those food sources from great distances."

Warm summer evenings are a good time to listen for wildlife, from **coyotes** howling to **owls** hooting and **poorwills** calling. Slowly shortening summer days increasingly provide views of bird groups. "Watch for gathering flocks of some songbird species, like **blackbirds** and **swallows**, which include this summer's offspring," Myers said. "Many of these young birds are now flying and will soon be concentrating at staging areas in anticipation of the coming fall migration."

WDFW Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Manager Juli Anderson said conditions are drying out fast in Lincoln County. Both Swanson lakes and many smaller pothole lakes and ponds are completely dry already, lowering chances of seeing waterfowl or other bird concentrations in the area, she said. Anderson notes a burn ban is now in effect for all of Lincoln County.

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Fishing: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) district fish biologist Bob Jateff of Twisp reports that **salmon** fishing in the mainstem Columbia River is picking up with the approach of August. "An increasing number of **sockeye salmon** are being caught right off the mouth of the Okanogan River," Jateff said. "Chinook salmon fishing has been slow, but should pick up as more fish pass Wells Dam."

Jateff reminds anglers the daily catch limit is six salmon, of which no more than three can be chinook, and only one chinook can be a wild, unmarked fish.

The action should also pick up on the Methow River and its tributaries, now that stream flows are finally dropping to fishable levels, he said, noting that those waters are catch-and-release only and that selective gear is required. He advises anglers to check the sportfishing rules pamphlet to be sure which areas are open to fishing.

"Smaller tributaries within the Methow system are good during the summer for anglers who

want to catch and keep **brook trout,**” Jateff said. “Eightmile, Falls, and Boulder creeks are all tributaries to the Chewuch River that hold brook trout. The daily limit on Falls and Eightmile Creeks is five fish, and on Boulder Creek it’s 10 fish. There is no minimum size for brook trout in these waters.”

Jateff says lake fishing throughout the Okanogan district generally slows down during the hotter months, except for waters at high elevation. “Alpine lake fishing action picks up as the trails become more accessible,” he said. “Most high country lakes either have reproducing populations of trout or are sustained by periodic fish plants. **Cutthroat trout** is the main species in a lot of these waters.”

Jateff noted that anglers who fish deep during the cooler parts of the day — very early or late — can catch some nice **rainbow trout** in the lower elevation waters, too. “Wannacut Lake near Oroville, for example, is a deep lake that seems to hold up well over the summer,” he said.

Anglers can find specific information about fishing waters throughout the region, county by county, in WDFW’s <