

## **WDFW Labor Day Weekend News**

### **Local News**

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - The sun is setting earlier and there's a chill in the morning air - signs of the coming change of season. Fall is in the air, and hunters are heading out for the first major hunting seasons of the year.

Archery hunts for deer got under way around the state Sept. 1, when hunting seasons also opened for forest grouse, mourning dove and cottontail and snowshoe hare. Other seasons set to open this month include an archery hunt for elk, a black powder hunt for deer, and a turkey hunt in some areas of eastern Washington.

A youth-only hunt for ducks, geese, pheasant and other game birds runs Sept. 24-25 statewide. To participate, hunters must be 15 years old or younger and be accompanied by an adult at least 18 years old who is not hunting.

"Waterfowl populations are at record levels, but all that rain last spring took a toll on upland game birds," said Dave Ware, statewide game manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Hunting seasons for deer and elk look promising in most areas."

So do this month's fishing prospects. On the Columbia River, thousands of hefty fall chinook salmon are pushing upstream into tributaries below and above Bonneville Dam. Farther north, coho salmon are moving east through the Strait of Juan de Fuca in increasing numbers.

"After Labor Day we usually see a big push of ocean coho move into Puget Sound," said Steve Thiesfeld, a WDFW fish biologist. "We should see more and more of those ocean fish make their way into the Sound as the month progresses."

Regardless of where they're bound, hunters and fishers should be aware of two changes affecting license fees and permits approved this year by the state Legislature:

**License fees:** Starting Sept. 1, the base price of most Washington hunting and fishing licenses increased for the first time in more than a decade. The new fees will help meet rising costs and address a shortfall in revenue for managing hunting, fishing and the fish and wildlife species that make those activities possible. New prices are posted at [http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/license\\_fees.html](http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/license_fees.html).

**Discover Pass:** A Discover Pass is now generally required for vehicle access to state parks, campgrounds, boat launches and wildlife areas - although some exceptions apply. An annual pass costs \$35 and a one-day pass available for \$11.50 when purchased online, by phone, or from retail license vendors. However, holders of most annual fishing and hunting licenses do not need the new pass to use WDFW lands and water-access sites. Some lands managed by the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are also exempt. For more information, see WDFW's website at

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/discoverpass/> .

Meanwhile, crab fishing in most areas of Puget Sound is set to close Sept. 5, and WDFW is reminding crabbers that summer catch record cards are due to WDFW by Oct. 1 - whether or not they actually caught crab this year. Completed cards can be submitted by mail or online at <http://bit.ly/WkXeA> from Sept. 5 through Oct. 1.

For more information about fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing available this month, see the regional reports posted on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/weekender/> . These reports are updated throughout the month to provide current information about recreational opportunities around the state.