

Commission to Hold Public Hearing on Sportfishing Rules

Local News

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OLYMPIA - The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission will take public comment on proposed changes to the state's sportfishing rules during a public meeting next week in Olympia. [...]The commission will convene at 8:30 a.m. Feb. 8-9 in Room 172 of the Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington St. S.E.

WDFW is recommending that nearly 70 proposed sportfishing rules move forward for public comment, including proposals that would: Allow a two-pole endorsement on 50 additional lakes throughout the state. Remove internal combustion motors prohibition on small streams in our area. Statewide fishing closure for sixgill, sevengill and thresher sharks. Evaluate two pole fishing on "quality waters" statewide - including Damon, Promised Land, Shye, Vance Creek #2, and the Wynoochee Reservoir. Modify rules for white sturgeon in Washington's waters. Possible options include changes in areas and/or seasons; allowing only catch and release fishing; modifying size limits; reducing the annual limit; and restricting terminal gear. The commission will also hold a public hearing on proposed changes to clam and oyster seasons at public beaches in Puget Sound. The proposed changes, based on annual species surveys and expected sportfishing effort, include longer seasons on three public beaches, shorter seasons on eight beaches, closing Point Defiance and opening a portion of another.

The commission, a nine-member citizen panel appointed by the governor to set policy for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), will convene at 8:30 a.m. both days in Room 172 of the Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington St. S.E. A complete agenda for the meeting is available on the commission's webpage at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/commission/meetings/2013/>. WDFW is recommending that nearly 70 proposed sportfishing rules move forward for public comment, including proposals that would: Allow the use of two fishing poles, with the purchase of a two-pole endorsement, on 50 additional lakes throughout the state. Remove the daily catch limit for channel catfish and the daily catch and size limits for bass and walleye in portions of the Columbia and Snake rivers and their tributaries to assist recovery efforts for salmon and steelhead. A second option under that proposal would also remove existing daily limits for those fish, but restrict anglers to three bass larger than 15 inches in length and one walleye larger than 24 inches in length. The proposed changes are designed to increase the harvest of abundant bass, walleye and channel catfish, which prey on juvenile salmon and steelhead that are listed for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act. Prohibit the retention of cabezon measuring less than 18 inches in length in marine areas 4-11 and 13 to provide additional protection for the species. The minimum size limit would allow the fish to mature and spawn before they can be legally harvested. Increase catch limits for walleye on Lake Roosevelt and the Spokane Arm of Lake Roosevelt, where there is an overabundance of the species. The proposed change is designed to allow a variety of other fish species to grow in numbers by reducing the walleye population through an increase in recreational fishing opportunities. Modify rules for white sturgeon in Washington's waters. Possible options include changes in areas and/or seasons; allowing only catch and release fishing; modifying size limits; reducing the annual limit; and restricting terminal gear. To review the proposed rules, as well as the comments already received, visit WDFW's website at

http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/rule_proposals/ . Printed copies of the proposals are available by contacting WDFW's Fish Program at (360) 902-2672. The website includes information on proposed rules that WDFW fishery managers recommend move forward for further review and public comment, as well as information on proposals not recommended for further consideration. In other business, the commission will consider for approval the purchase of nearly 25 acres along the Wenatchee River in Chelan County for public fishing and boating access. The commission also will hold a public hearing on proposed changes to clam and oyster seasons at public beaches in Puget Sound. The proposed changes, based on annual species surveys and expected sportfishing effort, include longer seasons on three public beaches, shorter seasons on eight beaches, closing one beach and opening a portion of another. Details of the proposed modifications are available online at http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/regulations/2012/wsr_12-24-069.pdf .