

WDFW Weekender: Summer fishing in full swing as hunters begin to take the field

Local News

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Summer fisheries are now in full swing, providing some of the best fishing opportunities of the year. Washingtonians are reeling in 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. Also this month, hunters will take to the field to hunt for black bear in the first big-game hunt of the season. Many others will also be out scouting hunting areas to prepare for deer, elk and cougar seasons beginning in September.

“This is a good time to locate game animals and get the lay of the land, particularly if you’re planning to hunt a new area,” said Dave Ware, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) game manager. “It’s also a time when hunters and non-hunters alike need to be aware of their surroundings and give each other some space.” WDFW land managers are urging everyone planning to spend time outdoors this month to take care not to spark a wildfire. **A Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) burn ban is in effect through Sept. 30 on all forest lands under its jurisdiction (including WDFW lands).** For more information, see http://www.dnr.wa.gov/RecreationEduca...013_07_30_burnban_nr.aspx.

In sheer numbers, pink salmon will dominate the catch by Puget Sound anglers over the next month. Nearly 6 million pink salmon are expected to return to the Sound this year, many of them during the next few weeks. The smallest of the five Pacific salmon species, pink salmon run three to 12 pounds and return to Washington’s waters in odd-numbered years. In most marine areas of Puget Sound, anglers are allowed to catch and keep two pink salmon in addition to daily limits for other species. “A bumper crop of pink salmon always generates a huge response from anglers,” said John Long, WDFW statewide salmon manager. “You can catch them from a boat, you can catch them from the shore and you can catch them throughout most of Puget Sound. It’s a great fishery for kids and whole families.” Another big draw is the Buoy 10 chinook salmon season, which runs Aug. 1 through Sept. 1 at the mouth of the Columbia River. A big run of 678,000 fall chinook is expected to return to the river this year, with expectations that anglers will catch about 20,000 of them during the month — most of them between Buoy 10 near the mouth of the river and Rocky Point, 16 miles upstream. The daily limit for the Buoy 10 fishery is two salmon, two hatchery steelhead, or one of each. But through Sept. 1, only one of those salmon may be a chinook (marked or unmarked). For steelhead and coho, only fish marked with a missing adipose fin and a healed scar may be retained. “Buoy 10 is a very popular fishery, drawing tens of thousands of anglers every year,” said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. “Fishing tends to start out slow, then accelerates quickly through the month of August.”

Rather catch shellfish? Crab fishing is open throughout the month in most areas of Puget Sound, the exception being Sub-Area 7 North which opens for crabbing Aug. 15. In all open areas, crab fishing is allowed Thursday through Monday each week. The daily catch limit is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6¼ inches. See the WDFW Fishing in Washington rule pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/> for more information on these and other fisheries open around the state. For hunting seasons, see the Big Game Hunting pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/>. For a region-by-region description of fishing, hunting and

wildlife viewing available in August, see the **Weekender Regional Reports** posted on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/weekender/>. These reports are updated throughout the month to provide up-to-date information about recreational opportunities around the state.