

[New recreational licensing fees will support fishing, hunting opportunities](#)

Local News

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OLYMPIA - Washington fishers and hunters will soon see several changes in recreational license fees, approved by the 2009 Legislature to help maintain state fishing and hunting opportunities. Those changes, which include a temporary surcharge on fishing and hunting licenses, will help offset a \$30 million cutback in state funding for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), said Joe Stohr, the department's deputy director. "While looking for ways to balance the budget, state lawmakers recognized that maintaining fishing and hunting opportunities costs money," Stohr said. "They also recognize that those activities are an important part of our state's economy."

In all, the new fees approved by the Legislature are expected to raise \$11 million for fish and wildlife management over the next two years, Stohr said. Those revenues will help WDFW meet key management responsibilities, such as monitoring fish and wildlife populations, collecting harvest data and enforcing fish and wildlife laws. Changes in license fees include:

Two-year surcharge: A temporary, 10 percent surcharge on sales of recreational licenses, permits, tags, stamps and raffle tickets. The surcharge takes effect July 26, and will be in place until June 30, 2011. Authorized by House Bill 1778, it is the first across-the-board recreational license fee increase in more than a decade.

Two-pole option: A new license option allowing anglers to use two fishing poles in specific waters for an additional, annual fee of \$20 (\$5 for resident seniors). The two-pole option, authorized by House Bill 1778, will generate revenue for hatchery fish production. The two-pole option will be available after state rules are adopted designating waters where two fishing poles will be allowed.

Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead endorsement pilot program: A new \$7.50 annual fee for adult anglers who fish the Columbia River and its tributaries for salmon and steelhead. Authorized by Senate Bill 5421, the fee will take effect next year and be in place through 2014. The Columbia River Recreational Salmon and Steelhead Pilot Program, which is exempt from the new two-year surcharge, will provide funding to maintain and improve salmon and steelhead fishing opportunities in the Columbia River. The funds will support fishery data collection and evaluation, as well as enforcement and related activities. WDFW is convening a citizen advisory board to help guide the pilot program.

Pheasant permits: A fee increase for western Washington pheasant hunting permits, beginning July 26. Adopted under House Bill 1778 to maintain pheasant production for westside release sites, the increase will raise permit fees to \$35 for youth, \$75 for resident adults and \$150 for non-resident adults. A separate small game license will no longer be required to hunt pheasants in Western Washington, but it will still be required to hunt other small game species such as waterfowl and quail. License requirements and permits for hunting pheasants in eastern Washington are not affected by this initiative. Stohr noted that none of the new fees are reflected in this year's fishing or big-game hunting pamphlets, which were printed before the Legislature took action. All of the licenses and permits will also be subject to existing dealers' fees and transaction fees, which help offset the cost of the permitting process. In addition to legislative initiatives, the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission approved a measure at its July 10-11 meeting in Olympia that authorizes license dealers to begin charging a 50-cent handling fee for each migratory-bird permit they issue. WDFW currently mails out those permits, but plans to move to point-of-sale distribution by license dealers starting Sept. 1. The new process is expected to save

WDFW \$20,000 per year in staff time and mailing costs, while also expediting the receipt of hunter reports used in managing the harvest of brant, snow geese and other migratory birds.