

REEL LIFE



8

Dropshot Basics,
Tips and Tricks

Gunkholing With
Your Fishing Boat 101

20

27

Summer Cowlitz
Steelhead

Trout Fishing on
Lake Simtustus

36

"Z" Sturgeon fishing at Hells Canyon
Photo by Cameron Holman

COVER STORY

HELLS CANYON ADVENTURE

38

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EDITOR'S CORNER:

We've had a slow start to spring here in the Pacific Northwest. But fear not, the nice weather will be arriving, and we'll all be basking in 70s and sunshine soon! Fishing will be in full swing. It's not too late to start thinking and planning on some fishing destinations for you and your family to enjoy. In this issue Randy Castello dives into "gunk-holing" with smaller boats, while Jason Brooks shares how to plan family fishing vacations so everyone in the family is happy. There's lot's more great fishing info from our writers, including a tutorial on crawfishing from Josh DeBruler. The NWF Team just returned from a Hell's Canyon Adventure with some veterans and Kilgore's Adventures. Hell's Canyon is green and blooming as you can see from our awesome cover shot. Yet another wonderful destination and one that should be on your Bucket List. Have a great June Everyone!- Mike

Mike Carey - mikec@nwfishing.net @mikecareynwfr



CONTENTS

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08

Dropshot basics, tips and tricks

Rick Lawrence

16

5 Trout Trolling Tactics

Paul Lewis

32

CrawDaddin' in the Northwest

Josh DeBruler

10

Mr C's Smokin Co

Hillary Holman

20

Gunkholing With Your Fishing Boat 101

Randy Castello

36

Trout Fishing on Lake Simtustus

Gary Lewis

12

Family Fishing Vacations

By Jason Brooks

27

Summer Cowlitz Steelhead

Hannah Pennebaker

38

Hells Canyon Adventure

Mike Carey

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"Z" Sturgeon fishing at
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Photo credit Cameron Holman

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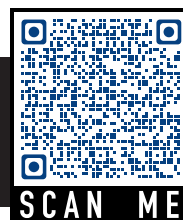
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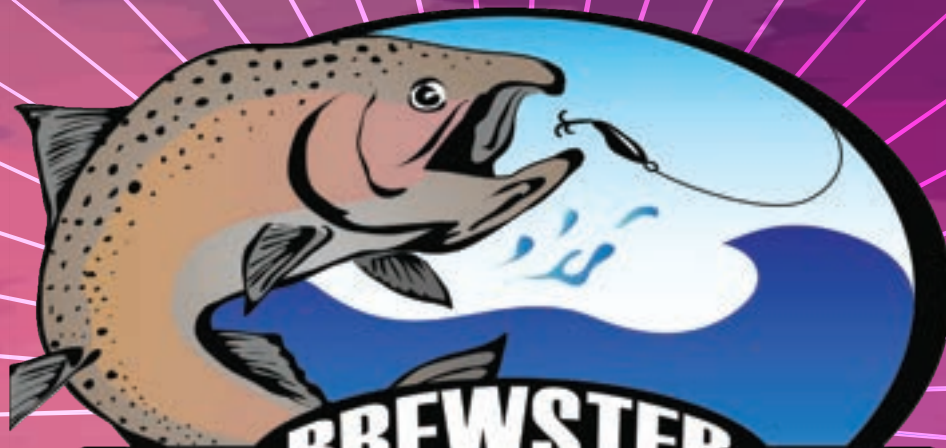
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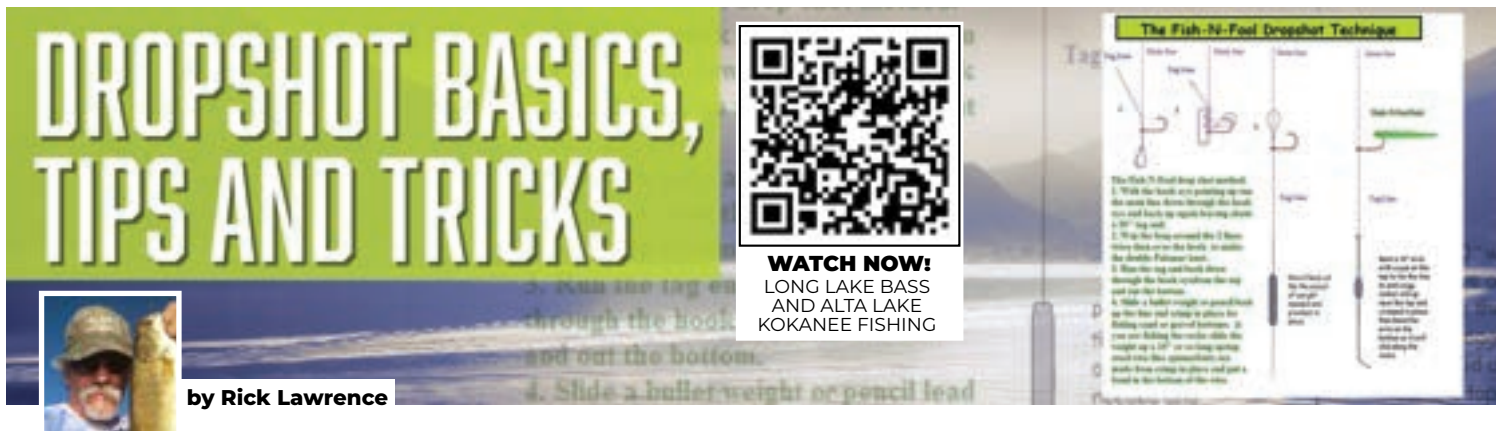
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The basics of dropshotting are suspending your lure off the bottom with a line down to a weight below the hook. The only things that remain constant in dropshotting are the type of hooks and weights- lures widely vary. My basic setup is a 6 ½ ft med. power spinning rod spooled with 20# braid, running down to 3 to 6 ft. of 6 to 20 lb. fluorocarbon leader. I like to tie on a Gammy #2 finesse or # 1/0 EWG hook with either a Palomar knot or my signature Fish-N-Fool Knot, which I invented about 30+ years ago. Run your line back down through the hook eye so the hook will stand out, and add a weight of some kind from 4 in. up to 3 ft. below the hook. The conditions and type of fish you are after governs your type of weight and how far up the line the hook should be.

Ninety-five percent of the time that I'm dropshotting, I'm after smallmouth bass in rivers. Most of the time that means I'm fishing in moving water, so my basic setup is 6 to 12 lb. fluoro with a Gammy finesse hook tied on. If there is any wood to snag on, I use an EWG hook so that the bait can be Tex-posed to help avoid the snags. With both setups, I use some type of sinker that will slide through the rocks easily. I like to use hollow core pencil lead as it is both cheap and easy to use. Just cut off the amount of weight you need and slide it up the line until you get the distance you want your lure from the bottom, and pinch the lead in place.

Pictured in the diagram is my setup I use most of the time. I like the walleye bottom bouncer without the arm on it for fishing really rocky bottoms in current, (AKA My Drag the Dropshot) as they will slide along the rocks better than anything else.

MY 5 BEST TIPS ARE THESE

1. Match the hatch:

This just means to try and use lures that resemble the size and type of forage the fish are feeding on. If you catch a nice fish that spits up a 2" perch minnow, you've found the hatch, so to speak.

2. Start small:

In general, dropshotting is a finesse technique, so smaller and more natural baits will usually catch more fish.

3. Work it:

One common thing I see is that a lot of guys barely move the lure when dropshotting. One of my best techniques is to lift the bait up off the bottom, from 1 foot to 4 foot, and let it fall again. This is a major trigger for smallies, as they love to hit a bait on the fall. About every 5 to 15 seconds, I will do the lift and fall. Sometimes this is deadly, and at other times they don't seem to care if the bait moves much.

4. It's not just a vertical presentation lure:

Although dropshotting is more effective when the lure is straight under the boat, it can be very good when fished at range as well. Many times it is not practical to be right on top of the fish, and making short casts is a great way to pick out fish that you might not have been able to catch otherwise. Another of my favorite ways to fish is what I call "Drag the Dropshot". If I have a moving current that's not too fast, I just put on a fairly heavy weight and let out just enough line to keep the weight in contact with the bottom. Most of the time I will put this rod in a rod holder while I fish a crankbait or a jerkbait on another rod, as you can fish 2 poles here

in Idaho. This can double the number of fish you put in the boat.

5. Be creative:

One thing that I do a lot is think outside the box, so I'm inventing new lures or techniques all the time. One that I have been using more often is a drop/Ned rig. Instead of using just a weight on your dropshot, try a somewhat heavy Ned rig on the end. I also use a tube at times- equally as effective. If you are allowed more hooks, tie on a second dropshot hook and use a different style of bait. This can really help you key in on what baits they like that day.

I'll leave you with this thought: if you've been fortunate enough to watch bass feeding in clear water, you will undoubtedly know just how long they can take to commit to taking a bait. Like all species, the amount of times they inspect your bait without us knowing would astonish most anglers. The beauty of dropshotting is that it allows the angler to work a lure on the spot for as long as he or she wants to! I tend to fish fairly clear waters without a lot of depth, and these are perfect for observing the behavior of bass. I have watched many times as a smallie has emerged behind my lure, only to hang back and wait to make their next move. By working the lure continuously in the area and imparting a realistic action, more often than not, they will have a go at the bait.

With this in mind, just think how many times bass will inspect your lure without taking a bite! Next time you're fishing a known hotspot, remember this and make sure that you cover that spot thoroughly; oftentimes your patience will be rewarded!



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By: Hillary Holman
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For those following the Salmon up the Columbia River up to the Snake, you may find your stock of jerky running low right about now. Your cache of trade show goods has run dry. I found a rare gem on the backroads of SW Washington, near Walla Walla, that can help you!

How I found It:

Rob and I were driving HWY 12 East, exhausted from Springer fishing Portland and The Dalles. We were on our way to Dworshak Reservoir for smallmouth bass fishing. Getting into Tri-Cities, we were low on steam. We took HWY 12 and drove through Walla Walla, Dixie and Waitsburg trying to save time. In May, this is one of the most beautiful drives in the NW. The fields are a luscious green. The onion and wheat fields shine in the spring sun as the mist hugs the highway turns. Dixie and Waitsburg welcomed us with their tidy yards and beautiful small-town living. There is so much history down there. Through Dixie and past the Lyons Ferry Turn off, we went straight on Hwy 12. Don't blink an eye or you'll miss it. We turned around after seeing a hand painted sign on the side of the road. We needed bodily fuel.

Pulling in, we were greeted personally by Mr. C.. The smell of sweet smoked meat put a big smile on my face. Mr. C. began to take Rob and I on the most enjoyable adventure in smoked meats and cheeses. Walking into his warehouse, we were struck by the smell of his smoke, wall to wall fishing photos, and a shop that was sparkling clean. Rob stood in front of the cooler talking smoke and flavors with the boss while I gazed about. In a bakery display case, full of beautiful rocks and stones... sat a "Best Of" award. "What is that?" I asked. He lifted the glass case lid and picked up his award, hugging it to his chest. With a smile that radiated he said, "Well... I should probably show you this. My wife says I ought to show more people." Trophy in hand he pointed to a crumpled up news - paper article that hung on the wall. "That's me right there," with one of those high falootin' beers they gave me that night. He held his award up high and I snapped a shot.

I'll tell you what:

We bought about one of everything in the cooler plus honey. We continued on our way to Lewiston, to Lenore Lodge, where we met up with the rest of our posse for more fishing. We spent 3 days with Reel Time eating Mr. C's smoked meats and cheeses on the Clearwater and Dworshak. When no store is in sight, it was great to have Mr. C. along for the ride. He is a true master of his craft.

You definitely make my "Best Of "list Mr. C!

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Family Fishing Vacations



By Jason Brooks

Family vacation is often thought of as going to

a place such as Disneyland or some far off tropical island, but it can also involve taking a camping trip or a travelling to a town that offers a variety of activities. I grew up in Lake Chelan, one of the most popular destinations in Washington State. What is interesting is that most of the families I met while growing up there only took to the lake to go swimming, water skiing, or some other activity. The largest lake in Washington, with a variety of

fish species, and yet most families didn't go fishing. Again, this is more to do with the "traditional"

idea of a family vacation-involving things like mini-golf, playing at the beach, and sitting by a campfire.

Fishing is a fun family activity and yet it isn't something that is often thought of for a vacation. Not only does it bring kids and parents together, but it can also be multi-generational, with grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins all joining in. Of course, there are some family members that might not like the idea of fishing as a reason to go on vacation, but fishing doesn't have to be the only reason why you go to the lake, river, or ocean. Here are some ideas on making the most of a family fishing

vacation. First, realize that not everyone might want to go fishing.

Knowing this will help with planning the trip and tailoring it to the needs of the vacation. If the idea is to add a day on the water chasing fish and then spend the rest of the week doing other activities, then be sure to pick a destination that offers those other activities. Lake Chelan, my hometown, offers so many other things to do that it might be hard to find the time to actually fish. This is when you can plan a day for those that don't want to fish to do the activity they want to do, such as go shopping or sit at the beach, while the other members of the family go fishing. This will keep everyone happy, but if the goal is to keep the family together then be sure to plan a shorter trip. A



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LAKE CHELAN
MACKINAW TROUT
WITH MACK'S LURE

half day on the water slowly trolling along for the fish to bite is better than trying to entertain everyone for an entire day and having family and friends feel like they wasted a day of vacation.

Set a time limit and stick to it. If you have a few family members that don't want to go fishing, then agree to a "end time" such as noon or lunchtime, and then call it a day of fishing and go do something else. If the fish are biting, then there is a good chance that everyone will want to stay on the water longer, but if the fish aren't biting, then pack it up and go do another fun family activity. This way, you are more likely to have the non-angling members agree to try it again on another vacation.

Pick a species that is easy and fun to catch. If steelhead are your target, then you better be sure to be on a river at the height of the return, otherwise you are more likely to have a casting practice session instead of catching fish, and this will lead to family members not wanting to try fishing again. Instead, go out and do some trout fishing at a well-stocked lake, or try some panfish- something that everyone will have a chance at catching.

Hire a guide. You might be a pro at fishing and don't need a guide, but by hiring a guide you can sit back and let them do the work. This is a vacation and that means relaxing. Guides will have the right gear and will get you on the fish. The local water might have a good lake trout fishery, and this means bringing downriggers, rods, reels, lures- and knowing the location of the fish. Maybe it is a salmon trip, and again it comes down to technique and location. The idea here is not to figure out how to catch fish for yourself, but to have fun and let the guide explain how to catch the fish. You will spend more time fishing, and you don't have to clean the boat afterwards.

So, your family likes the idea of fishing as part of the vacation. There is no issue with a non-angler, and not having to convince anyone to wake up early and go fishing is a vacation. Now is the time to plan that destination trip. Look at several guides and lodges- again, this is a vacation. Timing is everything when it comes to fishing, and just because the salmon might be running where

you live doesn't mean they are running where you are going. Alaska is a prime example: chinook fishing starts in May, by July it is time for sockeye, and coho and chum dominate August. However, in Washington, chums run in November and December.

If you are looking for a true destination fishery with a lodge and guides, then look at Canada and Alaska. Be sure to call the different lodges and see what is included. Some include food and beverages while others don't, or only offer partial drinks and charge for alcohol. Be realistic on what you plan on bringing home. A halibut and a few chinook can take up your entire allotment of fish to bring back, and this is not just for the lodge, but for the airlines- if you plan on flying. Prepare to pay extra for hauling back your catch,



or just plan on bringing back the allowable weight, and know that the fish you eat at the lodge is what is left over.

Destination fisheries are more about the experiences than the freezer being full. Whales breaching next to the boat and bald eagles screaming along the shoreline make for an adventure. Having a candlelit dinner while watching a midnight sunset after a day of reeling in salmon are the things you can experience at a lodge in Alaska. If you have never been to a fishing lodge, then go there with an open mind. You can catch fish back home, but this is a fishing experience.

If the family fishing vacation is more of a “do it yourself” adventure where you want to fill the freezer and do a lot of fishing on your own boat, then look to the many port towns that offer the fish you desire. There are plenty of fishing towns along the coast where you can go out and catch bottom fish one day and salmon the next. Some offer calm waters for kayaking if you choose to skip a day of fishing, and some have campgrounds to sit around the fire and tell fishing stories.

No boat, no problem. You can hire guide or even go on a charter where your entire family and friends can go along and catch fish. A bottom fishing trip is a perfect way to spend the day while on vacation, and will often provide enough fish for several fish fries. There are also several places you can go where no boat is needed, and yet have a family vacation involving fishing. When I was just six years old, my father took my brother and I to Yellowstone National Park. We took our fishing rods and floated flies behind clear bobbers, catching trout just about everywhere we went. In between the normal tourist stops at Old Faithful, Yellowstone Falls, and other attractions, we

would hike along the many streams and rivers and go fishing. It is the fishing that I remember most about that trip, and that was where I began to learn how to fly fish.

Just a few weeks ago I was talking with our youngest son, who is a sophomore in high school. He was asking about a trip he wanted to do before going off to college in a few years, and the idea was to do a fly fishing tour of the Pacific Northwest. He wants to start off by fishing some of the more famous trout creeks in eastern Washington, make our way to Idaho’s Clark Fork, and then continue into Montana, the Bitterroot Valley, and the Rocky Mountains. Eventually, he wants to head to Yellowstone, where he has heard the stories of my youth and our family fishing vacations.

Planning a family vacation that involves fishing can be something as simple as a morning on the water with a local guide, to a full-service Alaskan lodge experience. If you already know how to fish and have a boat, then maybe it is time to create memories and fill the freezer during the height of a run. You can fish Buoy 10 or make a road trip to a National Park. Either way, making plans and taking the family fishing will create memories of a lifetime.



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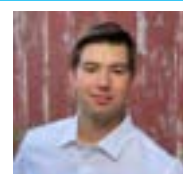
5 TROUT TROLLING TACTICS

TO CATCH MORE FISH

Summer is arriving- that means trout which have enjoyed the ability to roam the shallow waters of the lakes they call home will be pushing off and congregating in deeper and colder waters, which stay in the mid-60's or cooler. Trolling is the preferred method in lakes this time of year, but aside from using our regular trolling tactics, how else can we increase our chances of putting fish in the boat? Between lures, speeds, and lake-specifics, there is a plethora of things that turn a slow or average day into a great one. This article will cover 5 key elements of putting more fish in your boat.



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LAKE ROESIGER
KOKANEE AND
RAINBOW TROUT
FISHING



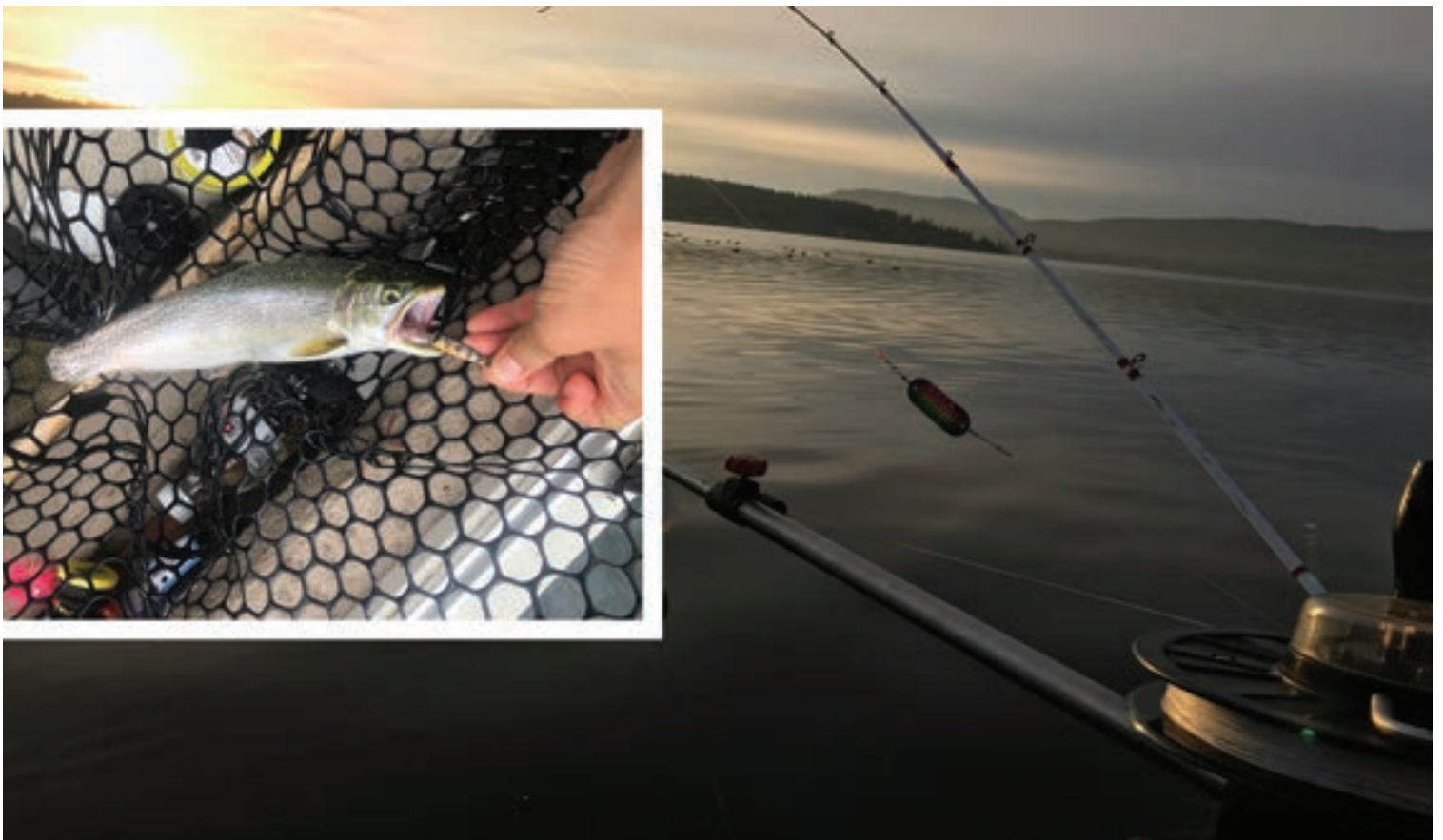
By Paul Lewis

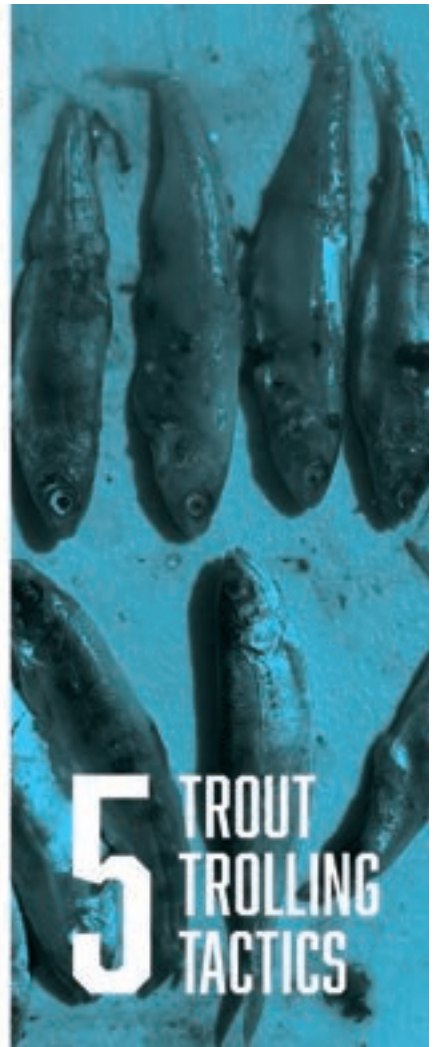
5: LAKE CONTOUR

Every lake has different topography, which can be a crucial part of locating fish. Often, when trolling for trout, we forget about structure relation, which affects trout for a number of reasons, namely bait relation. Fish follow bait, so when a contour which is great for bait holding arises, it will be a key place to troll. Many of our lakes in the summertime have shallow areas with drop-offs near them. Since trout live in colder water, they will live in the cooler waters on the deep ends of drop-offs, while baitfish will congregate on the shallower side. Even a 3 or 4-foot drop-off is one to focus in on, but spots where there are drop offs of 6, 8, or 12 feet are the best, as there will be cooler water on one side and nice bait holding on the other. Using chart plotting technology is the most beneficial, but if you're not equipped with that, using regular sonar and trolling perpendicular to the shoreline or searching for lake maps on Google are good alternatives. As water temperatures rise, look for deeper drop-offs in at least 30 feet of water. In early summer, you can still find good drop-offs tight into the shore while the fish are still moving out.

4: LAKE INHABITANTS

We all know about matching the hatch, but what is the best bait to key in on? This will depend on depth and the main food sources of a particular lake at a certain time. Lots of smaller lakes are host to an abundance of warmwater species such as perch and sunfish, which will be key targets for trout. In larger lakes, there will be stickleback, chub, and shiner species- all of which hold deeper and offer great schooling food sources for trout to relate to. Using appropriately colored and sized lures in these spots will lead to more success. In larger lakes with tributaries, focusing on smolt returning to the main lake is a fantastic tactic to locate fish. These tributaries could have returning salmon smolt, kokanee fry, a host of sucker species, and more.





3: WATER TEMPERATURE AND WHERE TO FISH

Like all cold-blooded species, trout become more active when water temperatures are warmer (although temperatures above the high 60's will create issues for them, so depth is paramount in the summer). Warmer waters lead to more movement and faster metabolism—thus the need to eat more. Trout will not be afraid of erratic or large baits. Lots of winter fishing requires more finesse, but trout need to meet the demands of their metabolism and will be feeding more heavily. In turn, since the lake temperatures above the thermocline will be changing significantly with sun, trout will feed heavily at certain times of day and then go deep as the sun warms the water above the thermocline. The same occurs at dusk, as the water begins to cool again. Because of this, early morning and late evening trolls are great times to fish higher in the water column, then as the sun warms, moving deeper and running baits deeper will help to stay on fish.

2: TROLLING SPEEDS

In the summer we can troll faster due to trout having higher metabolisms. Spoons, spinners, plugs, and swimbaits all fish well in general, but speed can be the difference between action and nothing. Understanding the bait that you are trolling is a key part of trolling speeds. Spinners and swimbaits put off a lot of action when trolling slower (1.3-2 MPH), whereas

spoons and plugs/crankbaits do very well at faster speeds (2-3 MPH). The lure to choose comes down to several factors including the hatch, time of day, how much water you are looking to cover (a new lake may be ideal to cover and learn the water, whereas a known lake may have favorite spots), and most importantly, confidence. Fishermen often underestimate how much confidence has to do with lure selection, but trolling baits that you know will put off the action you are looking for makes all the difference.

1: VARIETY – THE SPICE OF LIFE

When trout fishing, every day can be different. Shoot, every hour can be different! Switching locations, gear, scents, depths, speeds, and contouring can make all the difference to unlocking fish. As a rule of thumb, if a bite dies off or you are marking fish in a certain area, switching gear every 30-45 minutes until you figure out the bite will keep fish on your line. Even if a lure has been hot for a few hours but then dies back off, switch it up for a while and then go back to it later. Having a lot of lures isn't necessary, but a couple different selections of spoons, spinners, and plugs give plenty of variety for the day.

Hopefully these tips help you to put some delicious summer trout in your boat. With warm water and outside temperatures, taking good care of fish becomes extremely important. Always bring a cooler with ice, bleed the fish out, and get them on the cold as quick as possible. This will keep the meat firm and perfect for the table.

Tight lines!



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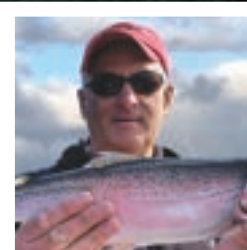
The advertisement features a man in a blue shirt and cap smiling while holding a large, silvery salmon. In the background, a boat's outboard motor with the number '115' is visible. To the left of the fish, several fishing lures are displayed, including a yellow crankbait and a spinner. A QR code is located in the upper right corner of the image area.

GUNKHOLING

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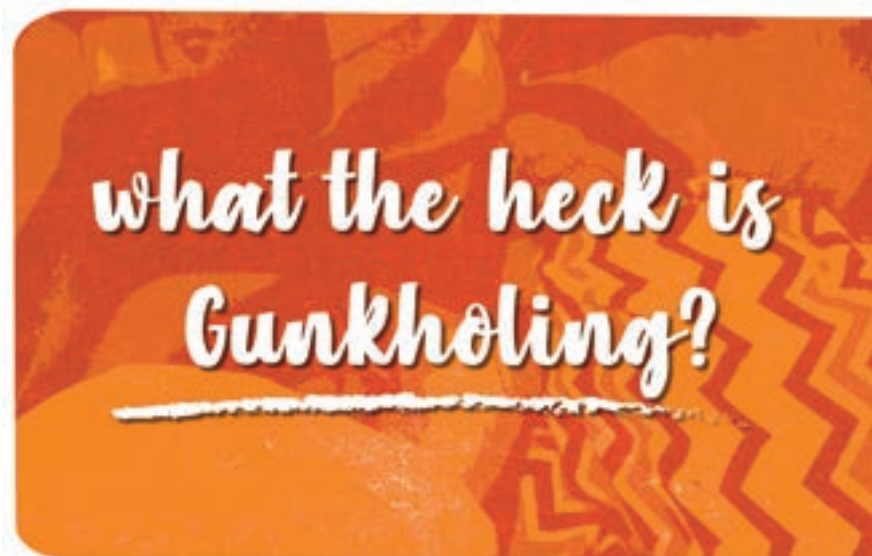
By Randy Castello

“Gunkholing”, what the heck is gunkholing? Around the world, the term gunkholing is used to generally describe cruising or working in shallow protected waters. In the Pacific Northwest, gunkholers are looking for isolated bays and inlets away from busy marinas and anchorages to enjoy a little Zen time. The San Juans and south Puget Sound are favorite gunkholing destinations, but with a little research and imagination, there are many places to explore around the PNW. Here in the northwest, there are a number of well-respected gunkholing books and guides. Although great reads, they typically leave out the little guy. This article is for the adventurer that doesn’t have a sink, washer and drier, oven/range top or microwave, enclosed head/shower and satellite TV onboard. By the end of the article, you, the reader, will either think that I am crazy, or start planning your next three-day weekend. Whether you are on the fence regarding my sanity or not, what is your goal? Is it a relaxing afternoon in a secluded cove with a simple meal, or an overnight experience where the sound of the water lapping against the boat lulls you to sleep? You need to assess just how capable your boat is and what your limitations are. With proper planning, a 16-24’ fishing boat can support your overnight fantasy. Most of our PNW fishing boats can be used for short weekends on the water, so it’s time to start planning. You will need to consider sleeping accommodations, meals, personal needs, and safe anchoring.

About 102 years ago when I was in my mid to late teens, I used to take an old 16’ wood boat with a 10 horse, pull-start Johnson outboard from Mukilteo to Point No Point for the weekend. I had cut a sheet of plywood to fit the bow contour and it sat across the mid-seats. It had U-bolts strategically placed to secure my trusty Boy Scout tent. My parents would drop me off at Mukilteo, and I would

motor across to PNP, fish for the day, and then anchor in Skunk Bay for the night. Once my trusty Danforth had set, I’d set up the tent and enjoy a night or two on the water. I didn’t know it at the time but this was my introduction to gunkholing. In hindsight it was probably not a smart plan, and there is no way I would have let my kids do that. With proper planning gunkholing, can be a very safe yet rewarding activity.

To kick off your planning, go stand alongside your boat and decide how to sleep on it. Many boats these days have bench seats that will convert to a single bunk with room for someone on the floor. Need more room? Consider a folding platform to accommodate 2 sleeping bags and self-inflating pads. This year I’m exploring the possibility of fabricating an extension platform for our existing bench-bunk. My vision is that the platform that will allow us and maybe even the grandkids to sleep fore and aft across the



width of the boat, then stow for fishing. It may be a removable piece that will sit on the top of the seat posts, effectively extending the bench-bunk forward an additional 2 feet or so. Every boat will be different, and you may find out that your old backpacking tent has a new lease on life.



It is likely that after a good night's sleep you'll wake up famished. No worries, you've got this. You'll want to plan your meals and meal preparation ahead of time though. Everyone has different tastes and culinary expertise. A small ice chest or insulated fish box can accommodate an entire weekend's worth of cold, make as required meals, or pre-prepped fixings for a few gourmet gunkhol'n meals. For whatever reason, on our boat we tend to go overboard with our culinary endeavors. Your meals don't need to be complicated but they do need to be planned out. Are you going to do hot or cold meals? Cold meals are eazy-peazy; BMM, or bread, mayo, and meat. A loaf of bread can last the weekend. Add some fruit, chips, and a box of wine- you have the makings for a few nice meals. If you want to try hot food, I strongly recommend purchasing a Magma Marine Kettle 3, Combination Stove/Gas Grill. They



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are purpose built for marine use, very efficient, and will last a lifetime. They can be used as a stove or as a grill and have many mounting options, including ones that will interface with your existing rod holders. A new one is pretty spendy, so check out craigslist or eBay and find a gently used one at a steep discount. I actually prefer the older models because you can use the lid as a windbreak by propping it up on the windward side of the grill. The other 2 essentials are something you can boil water in, and a folding wire toaster. Not a necessity- but a small wok shaped pan is very useful and can really expand your culinary endeavors.

Because our Magma can be used as a burner or as a grill, when we gunkhole, most of our meals are prepped in bags that are either frozen, or fresh on ice. One example would be a scrambled omelet: place precooked asparagus, some shredded gruyere, and a pinch of the Dungeness crab you caught the trip before in a bag. Season to taste, add a cracked egg or two, seal the bag and gently shake it a few times to mix/scramble. Add the bag to a pot of boiling water and cook until the egg sets, then remove the bag from the water and set aside. Fill a couple mugs with the remaining hot water and add a tea or coffee bag. While your tea or coffee seeps, dig out your folding toaster and spark up the grill again to make a couple slices of toast. When the toast is done, add your omelet and shazam! A gourmet breakfast sandwich and hot beverage awaits. It takes just a few minutes, has no clean up, and is quite tasty. It is amazing how many fun meals you can make using just a grill (or wok pan) and boiling water.

Marinated chicken, beef, fish, hot dogs, sausages, and vegetables all work

great on the grill. We shy away from burgers because of all the grease and associated clean up. With a little pre-trip prep work; fried rice, scrambled eggs, simple stir-fries, and chowders are all excellent, minimal clean up meals. Also consider buddy boating; you can raft up together during the day with each boat being responsible for part of the different meals, while enjoying the fellowship and inevitable high jinks. If you do decide to enjoy the gunkholing experience with another boat or two, make sure that you anchor separately for the night.

A couple notes; I considered suggesting that you bring a cutting board but we are fisher people- somewhere on your boat there is a cutting board. If you're concerned about the fish scales and gunk on it, boil a pot of water, slowly pour the hot water over the cutting board, and then rinse it off. It may still look funny but it should be sanitary. If you are going to cook onboard, use a grill/stove

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With all that good food, it is likely at some point nature will come calling. On a small fishing boat there are some options for overnight personal needs. For a few dollars, you can get a 5-gallon pail and a potty lid. Spring for a pack of potty pail liners such as the Reliance Double Doodie waste bags with bio-gel. if you have a place to stow it, a small portable toilet is also a great option.

Your first step will be deciding where you want to go, so do your homework. Here in the PNW we have a gift in that there are endless options for gunkholing. After you've decided what your boat's limitations are, break out a chart and look for a spot that is within those limitations. Consider range, draft, the wind forecast, and the tides. Don't limit your adventure to just salt water locations. One of our favorite gunkholing locations is Baker Lake. The scenery is spectacular and there are a number of coves that will get you out of the persistent afternoon breezes.

In deciding where to anchor, consider the tidal effect on the area. Make sure low tide isn't going to leave you high and dry, and that you will be able to motor in and out of

the cove on all tides. Make sure there will be enough room to swing on the anchor. Study a weather app to determine how the overnight breeze will affect your anchorage. It is no fun to reset your anchor in the middle of the night while wearing just your undies and a watch cap.

A key element of gunkholing will be your ability to safely anchor for the night. While I could dedicate an article to safe anchoring, here are the basics. Choose your ground tackle (anchor, chain and rope) wisely. You'll need an appropriately sized and type of anchor for your boat. As applicable to gunkholing, on my boat we carry 2 complete anchor setups. One is a smaller "lunch hook", chain and line that is always onboard, and the other is a second overnight package. The overnight anchor setup is heavier, with longer chain and rope.

When amassing your anchor setup, assure that you have enough rope to allow for a minimum scope ratio of 7-1. Basically, if you're planning to anchor in 20' of water, you will need a minimum of 140' of rope. Your anchor set up should include a minimum of 5 or 6' of chain between the anchor and the anchor line. This will help protect the anchor line from abrasion and encourage the anchor to reset when the wind or current change direction. Our overnight anchor has 20' of

chain, and for the most part we feel pretty confident that we will wake up in the same cove that we went to sleep in.

The anchoring process is pretty basic. Slowly motor into your chosen slice of paradise and put the boat into neutral. After you come to a stop, take a moment and figure out what direction your boat is drifting. Once you are confident that you're clear from any hazards and other boats, slowly motor up wind or current, then put the motor in neutral. Deploy your ground tackle in a controlled manner with the necessary scope, and finally gently power back in reverse to set the anchor. It is a good idea to test your anchor's holding power with about $\frac{1}{2}$ the rode deployed. Then, if all is good, feed out enough line to assure the minimum scope, then tie it off. All in all, safe anchoring is pretty simple.

Although it sounds simple, there are a few safety considerations. Always wear a PFD while deploying or retrieving your anchor.

Before you deploy the anchor, make sure the bitter end is securely tied to a bow cleat. That said, always anchor from a bow cleat and never a spring line or a stern cleat. Regarding the bow cleat, make sure that it is secure with appropriate reinforcing (don't ask how I know that, but the incident was on a 60' commercial rockfish boat). Finally, make sure your boat has a 360-degree anchor light and that you can leave it on all night. If your electrical system is not up to the task, you can get a battery powered anchor light and fix it where it can be seen from all directions. Initially a lot to think about, but after a gunkholing adventure or two you will be a master at it. Do your planning and plan safety into your adventure. Whether or not your gunkholing adventure is tied to a fishing trip, there is nothing more relaxing than a night or two on the water. In fact, with our limited fishing opportunities these days, gunkholing is a great way to extend your time on the water.



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SUMMER COWLITZ STEELHEAD

YOUR SUMMER STEELHEAD DESTINATION!



by Hannah Pennebaker
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I'll never forget the pure adrenaline and rush of seeing that bobber go down. As I frantically set the hook and checked my drag, the fish began to thrash and soar out of the water. I had been standing in the water, casting, and watching my bobber for the tiniest hint of movement for over seven hours. About fifty other anglers had come and gone, but only one of them had caught a fish so far.

Hope seemed slim, but I didn't give up. The thought of catching my first steelhead kept me going. It was all worth it once I had that fish on the line. 10 minutes later, my arms were shaking, but I couldn't stop staring at that beautiful steelhead in the net. It's a true accomplishment for any angler to catch a steelhead, and an unforgettable experience. The Cowlitz River is famous for its incredible runs of summer steelhead. A tributary of the Columbia River, it runs about 100 miles throughout Southern Washington.

Beginning in June, the river floods with summer steelhead, and the run lasts until about August. There is a strong run of



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hatchery fish, which means you have a good chance of catching dinner for the evening! Let's delve more into why the Cowlitz River is one of the best destinations around for summer steelhead fishing.

The Cowlitz River is one of the state's top summer steelhead producers, but thanks to a WDFW approved program run by Tacoma Power, you have an even better chance of catching a keeper steelhead. At the Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery, Tacoma Power (with WDFW's approval) tags about 150 fish a week, trucks them downriver, and releases them. This helps give fishermen a second chance at catching these intelligent, tricky fish. 500-800 fish are typically "recycled" every year. If you catch one of these recycled fish, make sure to call the number on the tag and report your catch. Taking a little time to do this helps WDFW know how successful the program is, and they will also tell you how long the fish was and how much it weighed when it was captured at the hatchery. I can

thank this program for helping me catch my first ever steelhead! If you look closely at my photo of the summer steelhead pictured in this article, you can see the pink tag sticking out of the top of the fish.

Adding to the list of what makes the Cowlitz River such a great summer steelhead destination, it has plenty of public access for boaters. There are at least 8 boat launches dotting the river- Barrier Dam, Blue Creek, Coal Creek, and Toledo are the most popular. Jet boats and drift boats are both welcome at the Cowlitz. There are shuttle services available for drift boat anglers launching at Barrier Dam and drifting to the Blue Creek boat launch. Kayak and pontoon anglers also have good success at the Cowlitz River. If you have a jet boat, back trolling bait or plugs is a good choice. Drift boat anglers can pick their drift and cast bait at holes along the river, or anchor up and keep working one spot. Sand shrimp, salmon egg clusters, and coon shrimp are all great baits. Small Mag Lips and Kwikfish are consistent producers while back trolling. It's a good idea to check the weather

and river flow before heading out. River levels greatly fluctuate depending on snow melt and rain. Steelhead are smart, wary creatures, especially when the river is low and clear. Pick your offering accordingly!

Luckily for shore anglers, the Cowlitz River is one of the most easily accessible rivers in the area. There are plenty of areas along the river where you can park, walk down to the river, and cast a line. There is a handicapped access ramp at the trout hatchery as well. Blue Creek is the most famous hole in the river, but it can get crowded when the fish are in. Many guides and shore anglers alike flock to this area. Don't be afraid to get away from the crowds and try new spots. Waders are a huge plus! You can wade to different spots and cover more ground to find the fish. I recommend looking at maps and satellite images to plan your adventure. It can be a hugely rewarding experience to find a spot well away from the crowds and catch your limit.

Boat anglers and shore anglers alike often use the bobber and jig method to catch fish on the Cowlitz. 1/8 to 1/4 oz jigs are the most common choice, paired with 3/8 to 1 oz rated bobbers. Color choice will vary depending on water conditions. Choose bright jigs in colored water, and more natural looking jigs in clear water. You'll want to put a small amount of weight below your bobber to help it stay upright. Split shot or inline weights work great! As previously discussed, steelhead are wary and have good eyesight. I recommend fluorocarbon leaders and clear bobbers to help hide your gear. You can tip your jig with bait to increase your chances of success. Coon shrimp tails, sand

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shrimp, and salmon eggs will make your jig even more enticing to a hungry steelhead. One of the most important factors in fishing bobber and jigs effectively is depth. You'll want to use a bobber stopper to help adjust your depth. Find out where the bottom is (your bobber will be tilted upstream) and adjust your bobber stopper about 6-12 inches above it. Look for water that flows at about walking pace and cast about 45 degrees upstream. Let your bobber float all the way down, while lifting your rod tip and picking your line up and off the water. It's a good idea to minimize slack in your line, so you can set your hook quickly when the bobber goes down. Bobber and jigs consistently produce fish, and it's a thrill to see your bobber go down!

It's never a bad idea to go on a guided trip for your first time on the river. There are many reputable guides that fish the Cowlitz for summer steelhead. Most guides are willing to answer questions, and they will work hard to put you on the fish. Guides will also clean and fillet your fish, if you'd like. Rivers change on a daily basis, and not everyone has the time or patience to learn the ins and outs. It may be worth it to invest in a guide's knowledge and experience, especially if the river is quite the drive for you.

Whether you choose to fish from a boat or on shore, make sure to put the Cowlitz River on your list of summer destinations this year. Thanks to the thriving fish hatchery and recycled fish program, chances are good that you'll come home with a steelhead in your ice chest. Cowlitz summer steelhead are willing biters, and they put up great fights. They also taste amazing on the smoker or grill. Rules and regulations can change daily, like river conditions, so make sure to plan your trip out well in advance. Good luck and have fun!

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CRAWDADDIN' IN THE NORTHWEST



BY JOSH DEBRULER



Some of my fondest memories from my childhood bring me back to the early 90's, when my brothers, cousins, and I would seek refuge from the hot August sun by wading in the cool, trickling waters of the Dechuetes River, which ran behind my mother's old house in rural East Olympia. Here, we would make our first feeble attempts at learning to swim, we'd pick ripe and juicy blackberries from the river's banks-where the vines would creep down from the bush, and we'd hang just inches from the water. It was here that I would have my first experience harvesting wildlife to bring home and cook- namely, crayfish.

I think that today I owe much of my love and propensity for catching and cooking fish and wild game to those experiences that I had way back then, in that little river behind our house. Though my days of snorkeling in 3' deep water and snatching little mud-bugs by their backs till I'm blue in the lips may be a bit behind me, my love for the flavor of crayfish and for the environments that they are found in certainly is not.

Before we get too far into the how's and where's of catching crayfish, let's establish a bit of the "why" aspect. For me personally, diversifying my range of knowledge surrounding the collecting and harvesting

of wild foods is not only gratifying in a self-sustainability sense, but it also gives me additional reasons for venturing out into our natural landscapes; oftentimes placing me in streams, rivers, and lakes that I otherwise wouldn't likely have pursued. Aside from the phenomenal flavor of their meat, which we will circle back to later, there's also an interesting ecological benefit to crawdaddin' in the Northwest. In Washington, we have one native crayfish, and that's the signal crayfish. We also have a handful of other non-natives (refer to WDFW website for identification) that have been introduced through various mechanisms, with the three main culprits being aquaculture practices, anglers using live crayfish as bait, and grade school classrooms goodheartedly, yet naively, releasing them into our waters. Crayfish are ecosystem engineers, and this means that they can create or alter ecosystems through their own natural behaviors. For example, crayfish like to feed on different aquatic plants.

Once these plants are removed, competing algae will begin to thrive. Eventually, bodies of water that were once clear and healthy, with various forms of plant life, end up having increased turbidity and decreased plant diversity. Aside from these bigger picture effects that cascade down from something as seemingly benign as a ferocious appetite

for aquatic plants, non-native crayfish also outcompete native crayfish. They eat fish eggs, and they put a lot of pressure on frogs and other amphibians, eventually leading to more problematic effects on biodiversity. The food webs these non-native invertebrates effect when left unchecked are vast and can ultimately affect the quality of different fisheries, so it's important to keep these species in check through various methods of removal. Luckily for us, one of these methods is recreational harvesting. There are no limits on nonnative crayfish in my home state of Washington, so Washingtonians can have at the invasives to their heart's content. For our native signal crayfish, as of May of 2022, harvesters can collect up to 10 lbs. per day.

If you've yet to partake in a Louisiana style crawfish boil or have never boiled these critters in a small pot balancing over a fire next to the river, as my brothers and I did back in our days, so heavily clad in Huck Fin reverie- then, my friend, you are in for a treat. Crawfish resemble tiny lobsters, and, as fortune would have it, they also taste a bit like lobster (a contentious debate amongst the serious crawfish enthusiasts). The flavor of the meat is savory and a bit salty, like a combination of lobster, crab, and shrimp. You can eat them in a similar fashion as you would eat crab; cracking the claws and pulling the meat out with a crab fork. The tails yield a nice chunk of meat as well, and they are what many consider to be the crux of the crayfish experience. However, if you were to ask someone from the South what their favorite part of this little crustacean is, there's good chance they'll depict a ghastly story of sucking the yellowish brains or "crawdad

butter" directly out of the critter's head. The yellow substance which they are referring to is not, in fact, brains, but actually a gland called the hepatopancreas. Sure, yellow gooey glands from the head of a mudbug might not sound appealing, but what if I was to tell you that this hepatopancreas is actually a digestive gland that is responsible for moving digestive fluids, particularly those heavy with toxins, out of the crawfish's digestive tract? If this hasn't got your mouth watering, well, I don't blame you. But imagine this yellow goo as a rich, buttery concentration, with all the crayfish's most savory flavors, and the sharp heat and toasty bite of the spices and herbs often associated

with a crawfish boil (cayenne, paprika, black pepper, garlic, thyme, oregano, etc.) all coming together to congregate in a burst of flavor. Now you might be looking at a delicacy worth tapping into!

So, it's established that crayfish are tasty, and there could be a positive ecological impact by

harvesting non-natives, but how and where do we find them? Thankfully, in the Pacific Northwest, crayfish can be found in just about any of freshwater location. They're so prevalent in our waterways that, to me, it's truly a mystery as to why they are not celebrated with even a fraction of the enthusiasm that the folks down south seem to express towards these culinary delights. Most rivers, brooks, lakes, ponds, and sloughs hold at least some crawfish. For a head start, try Lake Washington, Lake Samammish, Pine Lake, or Lake Chelan. The Columbia River, Snohomish River, and the sloughs connected to them are also popular amongst crawdad harvesters. You can likely drive less than an



hour in any direction from home and find a body of water that holds crayfish. Look for underwater structures where crayfish can find protection from larger predators. Shallow lakes with rocky bottoms or rock piles, rivers with submerged logs, and areas of water that have a good amount of vegetation all create good crayfish habitat.

You can catch crayfish by hand quite easily. Of course, this is suited for hot temperatures when cooling down in the water might be just as rewarding as collecting some of these mud bugs. Typically, this involves no more than moving rocks in a shallow river or stream to expose a crayfish, then pinching it on its back- being careful to keep your hands and fingers outside the range of its small, yet unforgiving claws. You can also catch crayfish on a string, like how blue crab are caught. Simply fix your bait to the end of the line, throw it in the water, and retrieve once the crayfish has attached itself. Use a dip-net or bucket to scoop the crayfish just before it reaches the surface. These methods certainly hit the mark when it comes to providing fun for an adventurous family, but if a real dinner is what you're after, then you'll be much better off using a trap. There are all sorts of different traps available for these crustaceans, and it's likely that you already have one in your garage and just haven't realized it. Shrimp pots, minnow traps, and even homemade mesh cylinder traps with funneled ends have all been known to get the job done. Essentially, you just need a set up that allows crawdads to get in, but will not allow them to get out.

Most local sporting good shops will carry traps ranging anywhere from 10-100 dollars. For bait, any carcass

of a fish that is local to your area should do. You can also use chicken, hot dogs, or cans of cat/dog food. For lakes, scout out a good spot and soak traps overnight, being sure to attach a line and buoy for next morning retrieval. If trapping in a river, soak traps and tie your line to a nearby rock or tree. It's always a good idea to camouflage your line if you are going to leave it overnight, as this can help avoid unwanted attention from other river-goers.

May is generally when the season kicks off here in Washington, but wait for the weather to warm up, as this is when the crayfish become more active (my empty trap in the photo is testament to this). Get creative, have fun, grab the corn on the cob, potatoes, and spices, and have yourself a Louisiana style crawfish boil! Don't be hesitant about sucking the guts out of the heads; it's where the flavor lives!

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TROUT FISHING ON LAKE SIMTUSTUS

ONE OF CENTRAL OREGON'S MOST RELIABLE SPRING AND SUMMER FISHERIES

By Gary Lewis



One casting rod was armed with a flasher, trailed by a Wedding Ring spinner, and the other had a small, pink hoochie on a 10-inch leader. We like to fish one conventional tackle rod along with fly rod (Dad and I each have two-rod licenses). Our fly rods were 5-weights with sink tips.

On the fly rod, Dad's favorite setup is a No. 8 rubber-legged beadhead olive (or white) leech with 18 inches of fluorocarbon knotted to the bend of the hook, trailing a beadhead Flashback Prince Nymph.

I like to start with a small, white/pink Mack's Lure Smile Blade Fly. A casting rod and a fly rod were our primary tools, but I also kept a spinning rod close at hand. This time, I had a Trout Wizard spinnerbait on it.

Lake Simtustus, located seven miles west of Madras, is a deep, cold, and narrow ribbon of water formed by Pelton Dam, backing up to Round Butte Dam below Lake Billy Chinook. It is on the Deschutes River, in Central Oregon. Lake Billy Chinook is far and away more popular than Simtustus, and that's a good thing. The reservoir was named after a Warm Springs warrior who served as an Army scout in the Paiute wars of the 1860's, and lived on the Warm Springs Reservation until his death in 1926.

36 | NWFRTV.com

To fish Simtustus, an angler must not only have an Oregon fishing license, but also a Warm Springs Reservation tribal fishing permit. Every year it costs me an extra \$50 to fish Simtustus, and that keeps all but a few regulars away.

For our first trip of the year on the first day of May, we had our friend Jon Guenther with us. We launched at nine in the morning - Dad with his hand on the 40-horse Merc - idling out of the no-wake zone.

My dad fishes Simtustus up to a dozen times each year in his black Smokercraft and we even fish it from the bank sometimes. But we have our favorite trolling area and patterns. We headed up the lake and switched over to the bow-mounted trolling motor. Dad put out both rods while I trolled a fly. Close to shore, trolling upstream we got bit fast, but it was hard to get the hooks set.

Running the motor with the remote control, I crossed the channel and took the boat up the right bank, and then we turned and trolled back downstream. There, we hooked and landed our first fish. The trout was about 13 inches, healthy and athletic. Strikes were hard, but it was difficult to hook them and the fish were not coming fast. I pointed the bow back upstream into the

Narrows, where the near vertical canyon walls come together. Spring rainfall had fed the waterfalls, and numerous cascades were streaming from seams in the sheer rock.

As we came up to a spot where three waterfalls splashed in, I traded the fly rod for the spinner and aimed a cast beneath the lower waterfall. I pulled the black Trout Wizard spinner along the ledge. Boom! I had my first fish in the boat.

After that, it was the white/pink Smile Blade Fly that the fish seemed to want. The trout averaged 13 inches. Dad switched rods and caught his second fish on a pink hoochie and then after that, the fish came fast. We hunted for them along the banks, zig-zag trolling, watching the electronics, and steering for the splashes. Today, they seemed to want the hoochie tipped with corn. There were bigger fish on the screens, and we contemplated what we might have to do to target the really big fish we knew were there.

Lake Simtustus is one of those places a trout angler could be surprised by what is on the other end of the line. Rainbows, browns, bull

trout, smallmouth bass, and pikeminnow can grow large in this lake. And while Simtustus is best fished from a boat, a bank angler that knows how to read the water can catch fish too.

VITAL STATISTICS

A tribal permit is required to fish Lake Simtustus. These are reasonably priced and can be purchased online for the day or the entire season. Fishing is open year-round. The trout limit is 5 per day, with an 8-inch minimum length, but only 1 of those can measure over 20 inches.

Portland General Electric maintains a hatchery upstream. Instead of the normal hatchery rainbow strain, PGE raises and releases a summer steelhead variety - 25,000 fish each season. If the fish wash downriver, they are free to fulfill their destinies as ocean-going rainbows. Trout tend to spread throughout the reservoir. The best bet is to troll the edges of the banks on either side, but rainbows can be teased up in the middle of the channel too. Steer for the splashes.



GARY LEWIS BIO

Gary Lewis is an award-winning author, TV host, speaker and photographer. Recent books include Fishing Central Oregon, 6th Edition, Fishing Mount Hood Country and Bob Nosler Born Ballistic. Gary has hunted and fished in eight countries on three continents and in the islands of the South Pacific. Born and raised in the Northwest, he has been walking forest trails and running rivers for as long as he can remember. Lewis is twice past president of the Northwest Outdoor Writers Association and a recipient of NOWA's Enos Bradner Award.



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Climbing ever higher I reached the Lolo Pass, retracing the route of Lewis and Clark, marveling at the beauty of the wood-covered peaks. As quickly as I hit the pass, I began a long, 99-mile descent, the road following the Lochsa River as it grew ever bigger and faster, dotted by whitewater rafters rowing through impressive whitewater rapids. As I finally reached the bottom the river spread out and slowed down. I was getting close to my destination, the town of Riggins – a whitewater and fishing gateway to Idaho’s Snake River. Joining up with Rob and Hillary Holman, and their daughter Cameron, and Paul Hamilton, AKA “The Bait Boy”, we would be heading out for an epic trip in the morning with Kilgore Adventures to explore and fish this historic region of Central Idaho.

When people talk about whitewater action and fishing in Idaho, the Snake River, known as Hell’s Canyon, is what most people think of. The Snake River cuts the deepest canyon in the United States, deeper than the Grand Canyon. Multiple class 3-4 rapids to challenge rafters and jetboater alike. The waters hold a plethora of fish species, including rainbow,

cutthroat, bull and steelhead trout, chinook salmon, smallmouth bass, mountain whitefish, and our planned quarry, massive sturgeon. I’d caught a sturgeon on the Snake River a few years ago and was eager to have another chance to see these powerful fish on the end of a rod.

With excited anticipation we met at our vacation rental and set plans for the coming day. We would be getting up early to meet with owner Kurt Kilgore of Kilgore’s Adventures and hit the water. Kurt has over 25 years of experience on the rivers of Idaho and was named Idaho Guide of the Month in 2017. His company runs two jet boats on the Snake River as well as ATV and helicopter tours.

The morning came bright and early with the sound of rain outside coming to an end just in time for our drive to Kilgore’s staging area. The town of Riggins lies right along the time zone change between Mountain and Pacific Time, making an interesting 5:30am debate over what time we should be leaving. One thing was for sure – the coffee stand opening at 6 am in the middle of this remote

town was a deciding factor for us Pacific Northwest coffee addicts!

Driving the pass from Kilgore's store over to Pittsburg Landing, my legs became just a bit rubbery as we climbed higher and higher. Switchbacks and sheer drop-offs not withstanding, the view was beyond awesome. Watching Kurt tow his giant jet boat up the hill made me glad it wasn't me behind the wheel. The pass is not for the faint of heart and requires a strong tow vehicle with good tire tread to keep steady on the gravel road. We made it safely to the landing as a collection of Snake River jet boats idled, picking up anglers and site-searers for a trip of a lifetime.

The Snake River is home to some massive white sturgeon, with a state record of 119.5 inches, just shy of ten feet. Kurt was hoping to get us on a ten-footer during this trip. While rare, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game say they are out there and have

caught them during sampling studies. They estimate a fish this size could be anywhere from 70-100 years old! One note on safe catch and release of these fish – Kilgore's, Snake River Dancer Excursions, and other outfitters are skilled at safely catching and releasing these amazing fish. Idaho Department of Fish and Game have specific gear rules to protect these fish. They include barbless only hooks, minimum of 50 pound mono recommended (no braid as it can cut into the flesh of these fish), and a sliding swivel device going to a lighter gauge line on the drop weight to prevent "ghost gear" in the river. Fish are to remain in the water with no ropes applied around the tail, head, or body. These rules seem to be working as Kurt related the catch and release fishery is vibrant (and year-round).

Joining us in our boat were "Z" and Ken, members of the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council. One of the missions of the council is to protect, create, and enhance the fish and



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wildlife habitat and environment. Another mission they have which we learned more about is their Disabled Access Committee, in which they work with private companies and government agencies to remove barriers and provide land access to hunters and anglers throughout the Pacific Northwest. It's a worthy cause that we can all get behind. For more information check out the INWC website or call Ken McNaughton at 509-533-9135.

The outfitters on the Snake River can accommodate wheelchair access, and the large jet boats are safe and comfortable for those with disabilities, making this an ideal outdoor adventure for the wheelchair-bound. Sturgeon fishing is a bit of a waiting game and a bit of "run and gun", searching the various holes from the landing all the way up to the Hell's Canyon dam. Going through those rapids Kurt and other outfitters demonstrate a skill level operating these 26-30 foot jet boats that is unsurpassed. We ran several class 3-5 rapids, fishing various holes along the way. The bite was tough on this trip due to a recent storm coming through. Each stop we made we also fished for trout and smallmouth bass which are plentiful and a lot of fun while waiting for the big sturgeon to bite. If the rapid running

and scenery aren't enough for you, the non-stop bass action will have you – hooked. These fish run 10-16 inches and are easy to catch, perfect for keeping the younger anglers entertained until the big fish comes along.

Our boat hooked and caught a couple nice sturgeon on this trip. "Bait Boy" Paul got on his first sturgeon, a nice six footer that gave him a real workout. Paul was quite excited with his first sturgeon and had a blast bringing it in for photos and a safe release. Later in the day, Z got into a beauty that was also in the 6-7 foot range. Catching this fish from his wheelchair, I was reminded that it's not "dis"-abilities, is "abilities" that are what is important. I thought back to the many clients I have seen while working as a home health nurse. What a fun and amazing experience to be able to get someone who is wheelchair bound on an adventure to Hell's Canyon to catch a giant sturgeon! The term "bucket list" can be over-used I think, but in this case Hell's Canyon easily makes the list!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HELLS CANYON FISHING CONTACT KILGORE'S ADVENTURES AT 208-839-2255 OR SNAKE DANCER EXCURSIONS AT 509-758-8927

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FIVE WAYS TO CATCH TROUT

1. TROLL 'EM UP

Trolling for trout allows you to cover a lot of water to find schools of fish in your favorite lake. Many anglers use some sort of reflective flasher, and then tie on a fly or lure on a leader behind it. I prefer a Mack's Flash Lite troll with mylar blades, as opposed to the heavier Cow Bell or Pop Gear troll flashers. Popular offerings behind the flashers include Mack's Wedding Ring spinners, light weight Dick Nite spoons, and trolling flies.

2. CAST A SPINNER

Spinners like Worden Rooster Tails, Mack's Promise Keepers and the tried-and-true Mepps Aglia are overlooked but effective offerings for trout, whether cast from the shore or a boat. Try chrome blades if the water is colored, or if it's a cloudy day. If the sun is shining on the water, try a spinner with a brass, black, or copper blade.

3. TOSS A SPOON

Like spinners, spoons are deadly on trout. Eppinger Dardevle, Acme Kastmaster, and Luhr Jensen Krocodile spoons are three of my favorites. They are all weighted in a way that allows you to cast them further than a spinner or fly.



4. USE BAIT

Various colors of Berkley PowerBait, marshmallows, and Power Eggs work well. Natural baits such as salmon eggs and night crawlers are also good options. You can try different combinations of bait to increase your success. For example, marshmallows and night crawlers make a deadly combination. If you are fishing off the bottom, use a sliding egg weight on your main line, above a swivel. Tie on two to four feet of leader below the swivel, and then attach your baitholder hook to the other end. If there are weeds on the bottom of the lake, consider using a slip bobber to suspend your bait offering above them.

5. TIE ON A FLY

Fly fishing enthusiasts can do as well as bait anglers (if not better) by matching the hatch. You can fish below the surface with streamers or nymphs. If you see trout rising to the surface, tie on a dry fly. No matter what you use, you'll do best by matching the insect hatch going on above or below the water at the time you are fishing.

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The America the Beautiful Pass allows you to enter National Parks, U.S. Forest Service Recreation Areas, National Wildlife Refuges, Bureau of Land Management properties, and other federal lands requiring an entry fee. It's available as a lifetime pass for Seniors over 62 for \$80 and now, thanks to a National Defense Authorization Act signed into law by President Biden in December of 2021, this lifetime pass is now available for free to military veterans and Gold Star family members. This includes veterans who served in the National Guard or Army Reserve. Ideally, you would pick up this pass for free today at National Forest or BLM district and headquarters offices around our state. Unfortunately, they are not yet printed or available. In the meantime, you should ask for an annual America the Beautiful Military Pass which you can now get as a veteran at no charge. This pass is good for one year. By next year, you should be able to get the actual veteran's lifetime pass. Because of lingering covid pandemic issues, many of these offices are only open by appointment only, so call ahead and make sure they have the military passes in stock and are aware of this program before you make the drive. When you arrive to pick up this pass in person, you will need to present one of the following forms of identification:

1) Department of Defense Identification Card

2) Veteran Health Identification Card

3) Veteran ID Card

4) Veterans' designation on a state-issued U.S. driver's license or identification card

Another option is to pay \$10 and get the pass online. You can do so at <https://store.usgs.gov/MilitaryPass>. Simply click on the "Determine Eligibility" tab, put that pass in your shopping cart, create an account, upload a photo of your ID card, and order it.

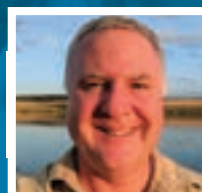
Then, explore our federal public lands for the rest of your life, no entry or parking fees required, though you do still have to pay for overnight stays.



PALOUSE COUNTRY CATFISH

Channel catfish are not highly sought after in the Pacific Northwest, but they should be. As anyone from the South or Midwest will tell you, they get big, fight well, and taste great! Spring is prime time to fish for them on the Lower Palouse River, near the confluence of the Snake River at Lyons Ferry.

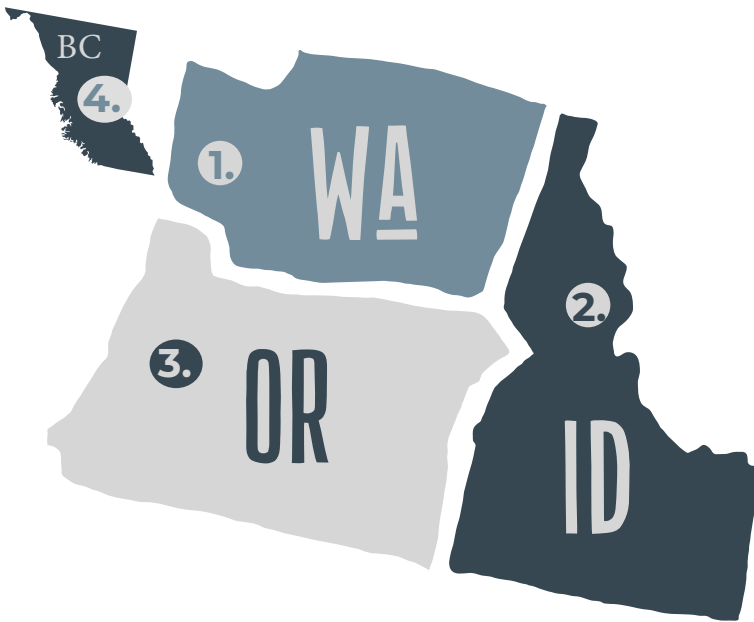
Craig Dowdy, owner of YJ Guide Service, takes clients out onto the river every spring for Channel Cats. Dowdy says the catfish come into this area from mid-April through May. The catfish average 4 to 5 pounds, and a really big one can weigh in at 25 pounds. How can you catch one of these tasty, hard fighting fish? Dowdy says no scent is needed, just fresh bait. A good bait to start with is fresh cut rainbow trout. Boat anglers do best in this area, but aspiring shore anglers can venture out along the jetty trail at Lyons Ferry State Park. If you are looking for a place to launch your boat, you can do so at Lyons Ferry State Park or at the Lyons Ferry KOA. The Lyons Ferry KOA is right across the Snake River, and there is a campsite nearby. If you are looking for a guided catfishing trip, go to www.yjguideservice.com.



John Kruse

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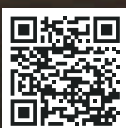
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Life Outdoors

The Weekender Report

Salmon fishing and many other outdoor options thrive in June

The gates swing open to many of Washington's most popular summer fishing opportunities that include pursuing salmon off the coast, Columbia River and Puget Sound, and be sure to introduce someone to the excitement of fishing during June's Free Fishing Weekend!

Coastal salmon fishing:

More than 1.2 million coho and nearly 500,000 fall Chinook should provide quality fishing in the ocean this summer. La Push (MA3) and Neah Bay (MA 4) are open daily for salmon retention beginning June 18; Ilwaco (MA 1) on June 25; and Westport (MA 2) on July 2. All areas open through Sept. 30 or until quotas are achieved.

Puget Sound salmon fishing:

South-central Puget Sound (MA 11) opens June 1 for hatchery Chinook and closes once the quota is achieved. Central Puget Sound (MA 10) opens June 16 for coho only; the Tulalip Terminal Fishery is open Fridays to Mondays only for Chinook; and southern Puget Sound (MA 13) and many docks and piers are open year-round for salmon. Before going check the WDFW webpage for emergency rule changes.

Free Fishing Weekend:

Anglers interested in fishing can join the fun on June 11-12. During those two days, no license is required to fish or gather shellfish in any waters open to fishing in Washington. A valid Catch Record Card is required for salmon, steelhead, halibut, and sturgeon. In addition, people do not need a Vehicle Access Pass or Discover Pass to park their vehicle at any public lands or water access areas managed by WDFW, DNR, or Washington State Parks in recognition of National Get Outdoors Day (June 11) and Free Fishing Day (June 12).

Puget Sound Dungeness crab:

WDFW shellfish managers are working to finalize this summer's crab fisheries and hope to announce information soon. For details, go to the WDFW webpage.

Shad in Columbia River:

Another banner shad return is expected and look for the run to peak this month. In 2021, 5.8-million shad returned compared to the 10-year average of 3.7-million shad. Look for shad below Bonneville Dam, and from Washougal to Kalama.

Trout in statewide lakes:

Millions of trout have been stocked in hundreds of lakes to boost prospects. High elevation or alpine trout lakes will be accessible as deep winter snow melts; check with the U.S. Forest Service or other local land managers for conditions. The WDFW Trout Derby is open through Oct. 31. For details, go to the WDFW webpage.

Eastern Washington fishing:

Look for decent catch-and-release trout fishing on Yakima River between Easton and Roza Dam. Many other rivers and creeks also open for game fish though waters will likely run high into June given late spring snowfall. Banks Lake is good for whitefish, trout and kokanee. Lake Roosevelt has rainbow trout, kokanee, walleye, and smallmouth bass. Sprague Lake is ideal for rainbow trout and largemouth bass.

Feeding wildlife:

Many well-meaning Washington residents in urban and suburban areas enjoy feeding deer in their yards. Although some people see this type of feeding as helping these animals, it can hurt them and potentially cause illness and death for the animal.



WDFW Weekender Report | [Click through for region specific opportunities](#)



AIS BOAT CHECK STATIONS

A new invasive species boat check station opens in June in Clarkston at 1420 W. Port Drive. All vessels registered outside Washington state must have a valid AIS Prevention Permit. Boaters entering Washington waters from outside the state should take steps to prevent the spread of AIS by adopting a "clean before you go" practice. Find out about free watercraft inspections: wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/invasive/prevention/inspection-request-form

WATCH NOW

Leque Island, located between Stanwood and Camano Island, was once entirely tidal marsh. In the late 1800s, early settlers built dikes to convert the area to farmland. Beginning in 2013, WDFW undertook restoration with Ducks Unlimited with the goal of restoring habitat for Chinook and other species. During the summer of 2019 the project was completed, returning the diked island back to the tides. Scan QR CODE to watch video.



To the Tides: Restoration at Leque Island

JUNE NOTICES

BE FIRE SAFE

A friendly reminder to **"Be Fire Safe"** and help prevent wildfires this summer as temperatures rise and grass and brush become drier and can ignite easier. Make sure campfires are dead out and keep a bucket of water and shovel handy. Ensure there is no vegetation leaning over your fire pit area and that needles, grass, and brush are far enough away not to ignite. Be careful where you park as the hot exhaust system from your vehicle can ignite vegetation if it comes into contact with a hot muffler or exhaust pipe. Park in a clear area. State land managers ask that visitors to any wildlife area check local fire danger information and take precautions to avoid igniting a wildfire:

fortress.wa.gov/dnr/protection/firedanger/

www.dnr.wa.gov/WildfirePrevention

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Important Dates

- **June 1** – Hatchery Chinook fishing opens on section of Skagit and Cascade rivers
- **June 1-July 31** – Hatchery Chinook and steelhead fishing open on Skykomish River
- **June 10** – WDFW Commission meeting
- **June 16** – Sockeye fishing opens on section of Skagit River
- **June 18** – Fish Expo at Thurston County Fairgrounds in Olympia
- **June 23-25** – WDFW Commission meeting

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