

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 12

NORTHWEST

JULY, 2022

REEL LIFE



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REEL OBSESSION HARD CORE SALMON DERBY

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SITKA SELF GUIDED ADVENTURE

PHOTO BY HILLARY HOLMAN

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EDITOR'S CORNER:

Hello Anglers! Welcome to summer and all the opportunities it provides anglers in the Pacific Northwest. It's shaping up to be a good summer of fishing, as soon as the rain spigots are turned off in Puget Sound! Resident coho are on the table, and the sockeye will be making their way up the Columbia and to Baker Lake and Lake Wenatchee. As of now, those seasons are not yet set, however, a catchable forecast of 29,000 sockeye to Baker is cause for hope. Lake Wenatchee is forecast for 19,000, not enough to open the lake, however, the Columbia run is forecasted as strong so that may change (we've seen it happen before). Walleye on the Columbia River remains good. Now is the time to search out those lesser hit reservoirs and do some exploring (hint – Scooteney, Billy Clapp). How about some spiny ray action? Check out Hannah Pennebaker's article on this over-looked option. Get out there and enjoy our beautiful PNW summer!

Mike Carey - mikec@nwfishing.net @mikecareynwfr

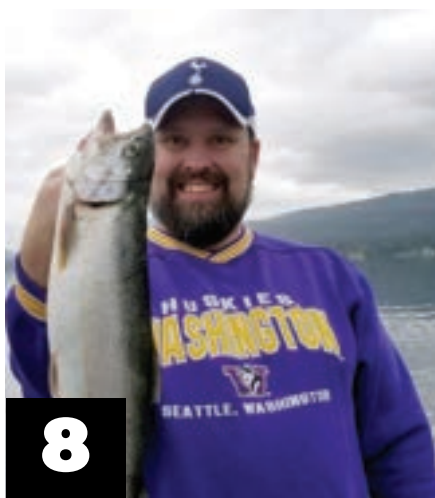


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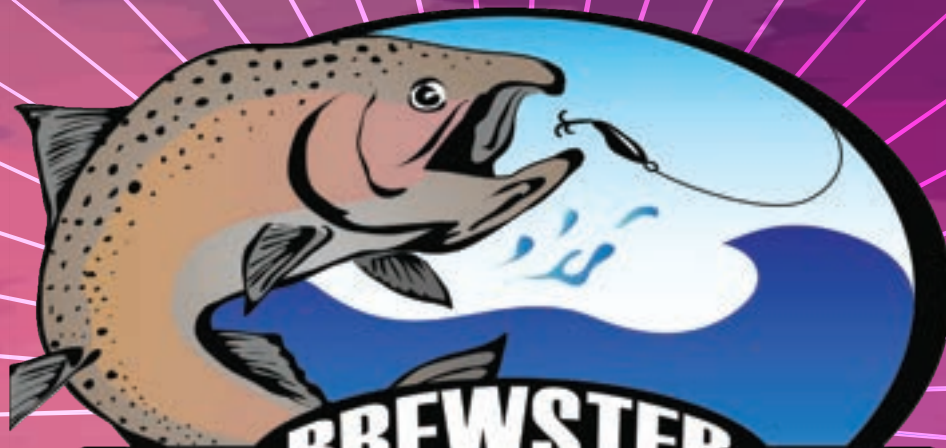
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5 TROUT TROLLING TACTICS TO CATCH MORE FISH

PART 2

Summertime is upon us! Yes, it is time to dress in tee-shirts! For many anglers, summer is the season we most look forward to, as warmwater species are at their most active and willing to bite. As many anglers focus on bass, panfish, walleye, and saltwater opportunities, it is easy to forget that trout fishing can still be incredibly productive. In the heat, cold-water species such as trout move into deeper water and reside below the thermocline in lakes. This is where the water is a more consistent, cool temperature and does not swing into higher temps like the water at the surface does as it bakes in the sun. As someone who loves to troll but can't always go salmon fishing on any given afternoon, I frequent many trout lakes during the week to get a few peaceful hours on the water. There are literally thousands of ways to troll for trout, making it hard to pick just five to highlight in this article, but for the summer, I stick to these tactics most of the time:

5 CRANKBAITS

Diving crankbaits such as Rapalas, Flicker Shads, and Minnows are fantastic options for summer trout, especially in the early morning. Before the heat of the day hits the water, trout will rise up in the water column, making lures that give off a lot of sound and mimic an injured baitfish a great choice. Trout will be aggressive early in the morning, making this option which allows for faster trolling speeds a favorite on new lakes (especially shallow lakes where the trout can't hide deep) where covering water to find fish is important. Later in the day, you can run cranks off downriggers or add weight to the line to aid in diving ability.

4 "POP-GEAR"

Ask any old-school trout angler how they troll for trout, and pop-gear such as the Ford-Fender or the Jack-Lloyd will almost certainly come up. Pop-gear puts a ton of flash into the water and imparts some action onto lures, which has made it a standby for decades. Anything can be fished behind pop-gear, from spoons to spinners, but one of the most common ways pop-gear is trolled includes a simple worm on a hook behind the gear. Majorly old-school, but majorly effective. Pop-gear has one major downside, which is that it has lots of drag when trolled. Making sure to have a stiffer rod with enough backbone to handle the gear is

paramount. When possible, I try to avoid pop-gear for this reason, but it is always on my boat. Some days, the pop-gear is all the fish want.

3 STRAIGHT SPOONS

We often troll spoons behind gear, but in the summer, trolling bigger spoons "naked" is majorly effective. When the fish are willing to bite straight spoons, there is nothing better. Spoons have no drag, they flash and wiggle hard, and when fish bite, there is no other resistance being trolled through the water. Spoons are versatile and with fish hanging in warm water, having something that trolls effectively at faster speeds is crucial. Warm water speeds up fish metabolism, making them willing to chase baits hard. When no re-baiting is required, trolling doesn't get easier! Some to try are the God's Tooth, Needlefish, and Krokodile spoons. For sinking spoons, Little-Cleo's and Kastmasters are great options.

2 THE SLIDER SPOON

When fishing spoons, another way to increase your catch is by adding a sliding spoon onto the line. This is a tactic I often use, however, it is only effective off of the downrigger. Luckily, when fishing in the summer, the downriggers are often in play! When trolling, the line to the downrigger clip creates a bow as forward motion creates drag. Slider spoon setups are a 6-7-foot leader tied to a snap-swivel with a spoon on the end.



Simply hook the snap swivel onto the line and toss the spoon into the water. The spoon and swivel will slide down the line into the bow created by the motion, effectively adding a second lure halfway up from the main presentation. Sliders make 2 rods fishing allow for 4 presentations, effectively doubling the hookup percentage. Sliders work especially well when fish are spread thru the column. If there are fish from 25-50 feet down on sonar, you can cover the most water by running the main gear at 50 feet with a slider on one presentation fishing at the bottom of the marks, and then running another one fishing at the top of the marks.

1 DODGER AND SPINNER

When talking about confidence baits, there is nothing that comes to mind

faster than the dodger and spinner. Trolled slow, trolled semi-fast- this presentation is my number one go-to for most of the year. At least one of my rods will start with this almost every outing, as a small dodger such as a RMT 5.5 or an old-fashioned Dick Nite 4/0 dodger paired with a spinner is hard to beat. If fishing is slow, toss a chunk of nightcrawler on the back of the spinner. When it comes to versatility, this presentation is hard to beat. There is no major drag through the water, yet there is flash, there is action imparted onto the lure- and that is all the fish need! Spinners I like are Reli-Lures Diamond Flash Spinners, Mack's Wedding Rings, or even some personalized ones, as they are easy to tie up! Grab some beads and get creative!

Hopefully these tactics help add fish in your boat this summer. Trolling for trout does not have to end in the spring- even on the hottest days the fish are there and can be tricked into a dinner invitation!

Tight Lines!



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REEL OBSESSION HARD CORE SALMON DERBY



By Mike Carey



The BC ferry cut an effortless wake as we traveled from the terminal at Tsawwassen to Duke Point on Vancouver Island. Gray marine overcast slowly gave way to partly sunny skies while we relaxed on the comfortable Canadian ferry for the two-hour crossing. The excitement in our group was tempered by a long drive, but the final stretch of gravel logging road hinted at the amazing experience soon to come. With the closing of the border due to Covid, Americans lost the opportunity to fish Canadian waters. Fortunately, this year the border between the US and Canada reopened and anglers again can travel north for some of the prime fishing that can be found in Canada. It was with great excitement that we were invited by Adrian

and Angie O'Connor of Reel Obsession Sport Fishing to spend a few days at their lodge. Reel Obsession was hosting the second annual Zeballos Salmon Derby, to benefit the Zeballos school system and local salmon enhancement. As it was Father's Day weekend, having my son Matt along on my fourth trip to Zeballos was very special indeed. Joining Matt and I were NWF members Paul Hamilton and David Lockhart.

Adrian told me the chinook salmon fishery is doing well, with good numbers of fish and no reduced seasons, an exception to what many Pacific Northwest anglers are experiencing. "The fish are running around fifteen to thirty pounds – the days of forty plus fish appear to be a thing of the past." But with healthy numbers and good

prospects on the horizon now is a great time to head over to Vancouver Island, and more specifically, fish the waters offshore of Zeballos.

At six AM Angie's blast of the airhorn signaled the start of the weekend derby, as fifty anglers raced off for the twenty-five-minute run out to the salmon grounds. It's a relaxing journey through Esperanza Inlet, flanked on either side by towering hills of forested land. Other than the occasional clear cut it

looks much as it did a hundred years ago. On our boat Adrian went over the gear for our group, half of whom had never used single action reels. Relatively rare in the States, in Canada they are standard gear, and in my opinion, once you use one you won't want to go back to your level wind reel. The excitement of playing a wild

chinook one on one cannot be compared as the angler has no advantage of gear multipliers – one turn of the reel equals one reel retrieve, vs. a level wind that retrieves at a 5-1 ratio (one turn of the reel retrieves 5x the line). It makes a huge difference in the battle and gives the fish a fighting chance. Trust me,

when a chinook decides to run on a single action reel you have to be ever aware of knuckle-busting runs! We were trolling with two downriggers, flashers, herring, and spoon, Adrian's preferred setup. Depth started shallow and went deeper as the day progressed. Trolling speed – 2.5mph. Location – Fairer and Pit Rocks. This is shallow water trolling – 50 feet deep, up against the rocky kelp covered shoreline. The waves crashed and threw spray



into the air, our boat yards from potential disaster. But we had no concerns as Adrian has fished these waters for years and knew each rock and underwater hazard intimately. "Having a plan is essential and keeping safety in mind is number one", he stated. All the Reel Obsession boats

are equipped with the latest gear and motors replaced periodically.

It didn't take long before the port rod went off and Matthew set the hook to a hard fighting chinook. Single action reel screaming, he did a great job playing the fish back to the boat as Adrian slid the net under a nice 14 pound fish. Matt was grinning ear to ear and on the Derby board! Soon after, David hooked up and battled a cookie cutter fish that gave him

several nice runs before surrendering to the net. The action continued steady, but a cadre of "shakers" made Adrian decide it was time to move to a new location. By shakers, we are talking Puget Sound keepers. But 22-23" fish were not what we wanted to limit our day on, so many fish were safely released back to grow bigger for another day.

Moving on to Pit Rock we continued our trolling pattern. Matt quickly hooked up with a hatchery coho. "The coho are showing early this year, that's a bonus fish for you Matt" Adrian commented as he scooped the fish into the boat. The action slowed down so Adrian decided it was time to move to a new location



farther up the island. Fishing in 120 feet of water Adrian would bounce the downrigger ball off the bottom and bring it up a few feet. It proved to be deadly effective as the port rod exploded with another nice chinook that Paul skillfully played. Chrome bright, the fish put up several nice runs and finally surrendered to the net.

As mentioned, in addition to the derby weekend, it was also Father's Day weekend. There were several groups of fathers and sons enjoying the beauty of Zeballos and amenities of the Lodge. My son, Matt scored several firsts this weekend, including his first halibut and lingcod. Getting to spend a three-day weekend with him in Zeballos was an incredible father-son experience. Fishing brings families together and father-son trips are something to be cherished. Matt's first comment when we arrived at the Reel Obsession Lodge was "sign me up for next year". For a dad, those are words that will stay with me a lifetime!

We limited out the boat with a nice mix of 10-14 pound chinook, nothing that would keep us in the running for the Derby, but really, it didn't matter. It's all about the

memories and we had a lifetime in our three days stay.

Our final evening was the Derby winner's presentation. The evening's festivities took place with a sunny backdrop of the bay and tree-covered hills at the Lodge deck. Taking first place was Jamie Wetheroll with a 22.4 pound chinook. In addition to the three placing anglers the event featured mystery weight and random drawing prizes as well as silent auctions. The event was full of laughter and fun for all involved. Great prizes and a worthy cause – and the participants had an amazing weekend of fishing and shared memories and good food together. Angie, Adrian and the Reel Obsession crew put on a great event. First Place prize was \$1000 cash and a 3-day 3 night all-inclusive stay at Reel Obsession Sport Fishing Lodge. In addition to second and third place, there were mystery weight drawings and silent auctions for a lot of cool gear!

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IT'S TOPWATER TIME BABY!



by Rick Lawrence

There is probably nothing more exhilarating in fishing than having a big pike or bass blow up on a topwater lure.

Some of my favorite all time catches have been on top water lures, so I live all spring for this- counting the days and watching the water temperature to get to that magical time when fish are looking up to take a lure on the surface. But trust me, it's not for the faint of heart! The first and most important thing in getting fish to hit topwater baits in the later spring is water temperature. Most of the time I don't get too excited until the water hits that magic 62 degrees or so mark when I know bass will hit topwater baits. Although 62 is a good starting place on water temperatures, in some conditions I have caught bass in water temperatures as low as about 54 degrees if conditions are right. Most of the time that I have gotten a bite on topwater was in somewhat colder water is when the main water body was colder and fish had moved shallow to find the warmest water available. A great time to break out topwater baits is if the main lake or river is in the low 50's but you find a back cove that's 3 feet deep or less, and the water temperatures are 5 to 10 degrees warmer than the rest of the lake. The other thing that is somewhat important is what time of day it is. Generally speaking, topwater baits work best in the lower light conditions like early morning or at dusk, but cloudy and rainy days can provide great topwater conditions as well, as long as the water temperatures don't drop significantly.

There are 4 main types of topwater lures: poppers, buzzers, walk the dog lures, and floating plastic baits. I will start with my favorite bait for smallies: a popper. I don't think you can throw a better bait for smallmouth on a summer morning or evening than a popper. My popper of choice is the Rebel Pop-R, however, Strike-King makes a bait similar to the Pop-R, but just a little bigger. This is a very easy lure to fish- just cast it out and make short, hard pops

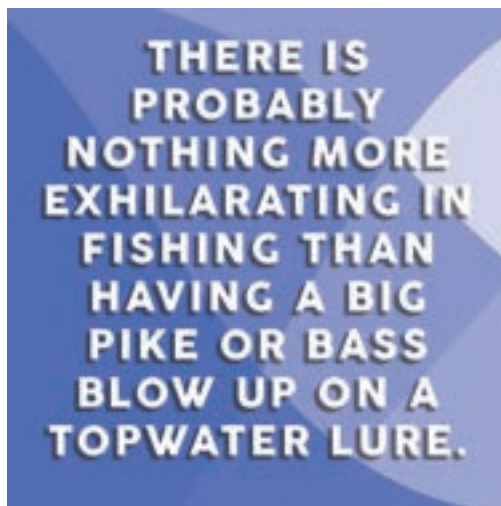


with your rod tip all the way back to the boat, with some long and short pauses in between the pops. My second favorite lures for topwater are buzzers. A true buzzbait is an inline bait is made up of a thin wire or titanium shaft, a skirted hook, and metal or plastic blades. It is these blades that provide lift to the lure, and allow it to sputter and gurgle along the surface of the water. Although the wake and sound this lure produces ultimately triggers the hit, it is the skirted hook that fish key in on and strike. Due to this upturned hook design, the buzzbait is generally weedless when fished under most conditions. Because of this benefit, throwing these lures into the thick jungle of snags and weeds that Mr. Ditch Pickle calls home is advisable and expected. Some of my favorite areas to toss a buzzbait are across open flats, adjacent to and through lily pad beds, stump fields, laydowns, dock areas, and, of course, shoreline structure. Seeing a big bass explode on topwater buzz baits is sure to get any angler's heart pounding. One trick to remember when tossing buzzbaits is to start your retrieve the moment your lure hits the water, and maintain a steady cadence in order to keep your lure buoyant and on the surface of the water.

Although not a true buzzer,

I will include Whopper Plopper's in this category. This type of bait is a great search bait, as you (for the most part) have to keep it moving- so you can cover a lot of water with this group of baits. I like to throw this type of bait near cover but not into it: next to docks, weed beds, sunken logs, brush, or under trees (if you can cast it in there).

Next are the Walk-The-Dog baits. These are your Zara Spook type baits as well as about a million other brands.



Some work better than others, but all will catch fish if the conditions are right. For me, this is a more open water type of bait, such as when I'm fishing the main river channel for smallies on a late summer evening, or fishing a submerged weed bed for Large Marge on a foggy summer morning. The key to fishing this type of bait is getting the cadence down to make the bait work side to side properly.

Last are the floating plastic

baits such as hollow body frogs and buzz frogs. My favorite in this group is the Zoom Horney Toads. This is a bait you can throw into heavy cover but still use as a search bait to cover a lot of water. Although it doesn't actually float with a hook in it, it's not hard to keep it buzzing on the surface and fish will blow-up on this thing- so you better get a good grip on that rod. I know a lot of guys like the hollow body frogs, but I have never had good luck hooking fish with this type of bait, so I opt for other baits I can fish the same way. One bait I love is a floating mouse bait I invented. "Mighty Mouse", as I call it, has produced some MONSTER bass for me over the years. I always hoped to be able to market this bait along with some of my other creations, but never was able to do it. It is a soft plastic over a hard body, so they are fairly difficult and time consuming to make. You can see it in one of my photos here. My last tip and most important one is, DO NOT set the hook when you see a fish hits your topwater bait. Wait for it to take the bait underwater and turn with it. This is usually a "1001" count or "1 Mississippi". Whatever you need to do to slow down your hook set about a second will help you put a lot more fish in the boat.

NORTHERN PIKEMINNOW

★★★★ BOUNTIES ★★★★★



BY JOHN KRUSE

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The Northern Pikeminnow Sport Reward Fishery Program is designed to manage the numbers of native pikeminnow in the Northwest.

The fish feed heavily on migrating salmon and steelhead smolt. Removing a certain percentage of these fish from the Columbia and Snake Rivers means more smolt survive their journey downstream to the ocean.

Anglers are paid for each pikeminnow, nine-inches or longer, that is turned into a manned registration station. This year anglers are getting a significant raise. The first 25 fish turned in are worth \$6 each. After that pikeminnow are worth \$8 each (previously the top rate) until you catch 200. Any fish caught after that during the pikeminnow season, which runs from May 1st through September 30th, are worth \$10 each. In addition to this, tagged pikeminnow are worth \$500 each.

I spent the morning of May 20th fishing for pikeminnow below the Dalles Dam near Dallesport and came across Steven Bennett. Steven is a retiree from Longview who has fished for pikeminnow the last few years for both fun and money. He told me in 2019 he made \$10,000 and last year, which was a slow year for everyone, he only made \$8,000. Bennett told me things had been going well for him near the Dalles this year though.

Bennett arrived in the area on May 1st and had been fishing for pikeminnow a few hours each day since then. I asked him how many pikeminnow he had turned in so far. Bennett replied that he had turned in 700 fish, and that morning while I was fishing with him, he caught another ten. Doing the math, I realized Bennett had made over \$6500 in 20 days of fishing. This is all the more remarkable because Bennett does all of his fishing from shore. Most serious pikeminnow anglers who fish for money do

so from a boat, but Bennett showed me you can do quite well fishing from the bank.

As for how he caught them? Bennett was kind enough to show me his set up: a sliding two-ounce sinker and corky placed above a swivel. He then had about three feet of leader tied from the swivel to the hook. His bait of choice was Mormon crickets, but when they are not available, he uses nightcrawlers. Bennett casts far, lets the rig sink to the bottom, and waits until he gets a bite from a pikeminnow which, on average, measure 10 to 12 inches long. If you want to find out more about catching pikeminnow and making

money in the process, go to www.pikeminnow.org

FISHING FOR FUN

My pikeminnow fishing didn't go as well as Steve's, simply because I didn't have the same set-up he did. However, I sure did have fun catching multiple smallmouth bass weighing up to two pounds from shore- something several anglers were also doing along the shore in the Dalles Marina across the river. On top of this, I was lucky enough to spend a morning in a boat with Wild West Bass Trail angler Bo Fletcher. The fishing wasn't fast and furious, but we did catch about 15 to 20 bass in three hours, many of them weighing between one and

two pounds. Whether you take them home to eat (there are no limits for smallmouth bass) or release them to grow bigger like Bo and I did, the prolific numbers of smallmouth bass in the Columbia make for a fun day of fishing! If you are looking for more information about fishing or places to stay in the Columbia River Gorge, check out www.exploredalles.com

Editor's Note: Here is more information from WDFW on the pikeminnow program:

You can help save salmon and get paid to do it by going fishing! The Northern Pikeminnow Sport-Reward Fishery Program, funded



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by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), administered by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, and implemented by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is in effect annually on the Columbia and Snake rivers from approximately May through September. Specific dates, times and station locations will be announced and regularly updated on the Pikeminnow website. Anglers are paid for each Northern Pikeminnow that they catch (from within program boundaries) that is 9 inches or larger in total length, and the more you

catch, the higher the reward. In 2022, rewards begin at \$6 each for the first 25 Northern Pikeminnow caught during

for every fish caught over 200 cumulatively. Anglers are also paid \$500 for each specially tagged Northern Pikeminnow!



the season. Anglers are paid \$8 for each fish they catch from 26-200, and \$10

The Pikeminnow Program is in effect on the mainstem Columbia River from the mouth to Priest Rapids Dam (upstream of the Washington's Tri-Cities) and on the Snake River from the mouth to Hell's Canyon Dam. Northern Pikeminnow are a native species that eats millions of juvenile salmon and steelhead each year in the Columbia and Snake River systems. The goal of the Pikeminnow Program is not to eradicate Northern Pikeminnow, but rather to

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reduce their average size by removing 10 to 20 percent of the larger fish from their population. Reducing the number of larger Northern Pikeminnow and thus shrinking the average-sized fish in the population can greatly help juvenile salmon and steelhead make it to sea, since smaller sized Northern Pikeminnow eat fewer smolts than larger fish.

Over the past ten years (2011-20), the top 20 anglers caught an average of 3,353 fish per angler and averaged reward payments of \$27,836 each for the five-month season. The highest-paid angler in 2020 caught 5,579 fish and earned \$48,501, while the all-time record harvest is 14,109 Northern Pikeminnow worth \$119,341! BPA funds the Northern Pikeminnow Sport-Reward Fishery to partially mitigate for the impact of the Federal Columbia River Hydroelectric System on salmon and steelhead. Results indicate that the Pikeminnow Program has been successful, with over 5.2 million predatory Northern Pikeminnow removed to date by

anglers participating in the Sport-Reward Fishery, and a decrease of predation on juvenile salmonids of up to 40 percent from pre-program levels. For full information on the Pikeminnow Program, including Rules and Regulation, season dates, station times and how-to catch them information.



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BAKER LAKE SOCKEYE WELL...MAYBE!



By Randy Castello



Baker Lake sockeye 2022? Well maybe; the preseason forecast is for 27,081 sockeye which is considered to be neutral over a 10-year average.

I can't say whether or not there will be a sports fishery or how it would be structured this year. We won't know whether or not WDFW and the Co-Managers will authorize a sports fishery before the first or second week in July. The process is pretty complicated but is heavily based on in-season run assessments, down river harvest and assuring that 1,500 natural spawning fish will be available after a potential sports harvest. Because the fishery is a bit up in the air, I'm offering a basic familiarization with the fishery. Things like launching your boat, key fishing locations, general gear and techniques, and care of your catch. We'll start with the launches. There are 5 launch ramps on Baker Lake. They are as follows.

PSE Baker Lake (Kulshan) Launch

The boat ramp has a moderate grade. Concrete blocks have been placed along the side of the ramp for protection from erosion. No designated disabled parking. The parking lot slopes slightly. Nearby, Kulshan Campground offers campsites, a RV dump station and both restrooms and porta potties. Overnight parking is discouraged within the boat ramp parking area but is available just down the hill from the ramp. Kulshan is typically my go to launch ramp.

Horseshoe Cove Campground

The boat ramp has a gentle grade. Launching and load occur on both sides of the gravel and sand bar. The surface is uneven from wave erosion and vehicle use. No designated disabled parking. Horseshoe Cove Campground also offers campsites, drinking water, picnic area, group camp area, and vault toilets. Overnight parking is available. 4-wheel drive is advisable.

Panorama Point Campground

The boat ramp has a gentle to moderate grade, lots of parking and a vault toilet. The Panorama Point Campground is separate from the launch. Depending on lake level the asphalt ramp approach stops short of the shoreline. Additionally, a drop off has been created by wave action and the gravel is becoming rutted from parking lot run-off. With the uncertain ramp conditions, 4-wheel drive is advisable.

Swift Creek Campground

The Swift Creek launch is paved or concrete and is usable at all lake levels. There is a tall bulkhead wall on one side with a short log boom on the other side of the ramp. There is also a small marina adjacent to the ramp. The marina has limited non-reservable short term tie up but no services or fuel. Swift Creek Campground offers campsites, drinking

water, picnic shelters, a group camp area, and vault toilets. Overnight parking is available. I advise that you have a capable mate at this ramp. If solo, there are no provision to tie up your boat right at the ramp. Solo, you'll have to deal with your boat after launching and you'll be holding up traffic. Unless you're offering free coffee and doughnuts, generally not a good thing at 2:30 in the morning when there is a long line of headlights staring at you... Having somebody run the boat while you go park is a solid community-based plan.

Shannon Creek Campground

The boat ramp has a gentle to moderate grade. Ruts are developing around the ramp due to the run off from the parking lot drainage. Waves have been creating some erosion along the shoreline. No designated disabled parking. Shannon Creek Campground also offers campsites, drinking water, picnic sites and a vault toilet. This varies year to year, but they may be limiting launch access to campers registered at Shannon Creek Campground. 4-wheel drive is advisable and this is the best launch for hand launch boats and inflatables.

Maybe a few final words regarding the launches, campgrounds and safety. Once you turn onto Baker

Lake Road there will be no services, fuel, food, or camping supplies available. Make sure your pre-trip planning includes extra fuel, ice, propane or whatever you'll need for your trip. At camp there will be mosquitos. Not a few pesky mosquitos but a large squadron of blood thirsty flying vampires, I think they even have radar, night vision and landing lights...

Although fish can be caught anytime during the day, the Baker Lake sockeye fishery is best early mornings. I'm talking pre-dawn before the sun rises over the mountains. That said, use extra caution driving to and from the lake. Baker Lake Road is curvy and there are a number of significant dips that could bottom out your trailer. It will be dark on the way up and you'll be tired heading home. While on the lake and running in the dark, hold off on the throttle and post a lookout. Until the lake level stabilizes later in the year there will be flotsam almost everywhere and especially at the far end of the lake.

Ok, now your boat is floating, what direction should you head? There are four ways to answer the question; 1) Head to where everybody else is fishing, 2) Locate the fish with your electronics, 3) Fish where I fished and 4) Use a combination of the first three suggestions. Fish the Flotilla is always

a good plan for fishing unfamiliar waters. Just be courteous, stand off until you understand the trolling pattern and be aware the proximity of your boat to a hooked fish. These are strong surface fighting fish and are very unpredictable. Don't be surprised if you find a log or boat between you and an airborne sockeye!

Understanding how to use your electronics will benefit any fishery. Fishing for sockeye is no exception; the fish will clearly be visible on your electronics. We've had numerous instances where we metered fish at a given depth, then adjusted the depth our gear was running at resulting in single and double hook-ups. Regarding locations; I have no problem sharing the general locations I've caught sockeye at Baker Lake. The area by the dam, Maple Grove, Silver Creek, Noisy Creek, the flats along the old river channel up at the far end of the lake and run along the Baker Lake



Road west of Shannon Creek. These are high percentage areas but these fish move around and not every school you locate will be snappy.

We have limited the boat in water as shallow as 20' in an area we don't usually fish. We have also finished our limits out of the crowd in the middle of the lake. The lesson is; go on the hunt if the popular areas are not producing. In generalizing the where to fish question look for water 120-170 feet deep up against a hard ledge or drop-off. Finding fish is less of a problem than finding the depth they are biting at. Sockeye are very depth sensitive; a school may show on the meter ranging from 30-70 feet but only the fish at exactly 28', 34' or some other to be discovered depth will attack your offerings.

Over the years my Baker Lake approach has changed a bit. We started fishing a spread of gear that included a single red 3/0 hook dodger combo, a single red 3/0 hook with hot pink mini squid dodger combo and single red 3/0 hook with pink smiley blade dodger combo all tipped with shrimp. We caught a lot of fish with this approach but our offerings have evolved. Now we hit the lake with multiple gear

concepts. Typically, a "0" size 50/50, chrome or pearl dodger is the backbone of the setup. We still catch fish on single red, black or blue hooks but our fishiest gear includes small spinner blades, Smiley Blades or Wiggle Hoochie inserts. Thinking outside of the box has advantages also. Sometimes the fish just don't want the standard gear. We have had success using the kokanee size Brads Cut Plug lures, Coho Killers with an extra bend in them, kokanee/sockeye flies and have even caught sockeye on Brads Wee Warts. Start with the basics, a "0" dodger and a bare 3/0 red hook and then be prepared to make changes until you are consistently catching fish.

Downriggers are the way to go but dropper rigs rack up many of the fish caught at Baker Lake. When running downriggers beware, the lake is uncharted and there are many stumps, old structures and who knows what else to snag you downrigger ball on. If using downriggers

be alert and be prepared to part company with your downrigger ball (does your pre-trip planning include an extra downrigger ball?). Especially if fishing out of a shallow freeboard skiff when the weather is up. A 10-pound hunk of lead is not worth losing your boat or giving your boat mate unwelcome swim lessons. Try to maintain your trolling speed at .8-1.2 MPH and we have found that 5-10' setbacks from your downrigger clip are all that are required.

I wish you luck and an enjoyable trip to Baker Lake. Please be respectful of the opportunity to fish Baker System sockeye. This fishery is closely monitored and there will be multiple game wardens, WDFW and Sheriff Department personnel conducting on the water checks. If there is wide spread abuse, they will close the fishery. Be courteous, know the regulations, limits and gently release any dolly varden that find your offerings irresistible.



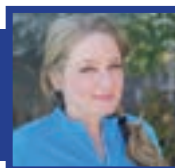
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CAN YOU RUN YOUR BOAT?

Do you want to fish on your own in Alaska? With travel restrictions lifting, now may be the time. Fish Baranof in Sitka, Alaska is a great solution for those who want to fish Alaskan waters at their own pace. Joel Martin, at Fish Baranof provides the boats and your starting gear for self guided adventures out of Sitka, Alaska. Joel and his team are more than willing to share some local knowledge of where to find fish, depending on the conditions of the day. Sitka is known to be an anglers paradise with great halibut, bottomfish, and salmon fishing opportunities. Be sure to check current Alaska Sportfishing regulations when you plan your trip. Recently, Austin Moser - a fishing maniac - was on vacation in Sitka and invited Rob Holman and myself on a self-guided trip with Fish Baranof.

5:30 AM

At Fish Baranof in Sitka, safety is the top priority of the morning briefing. Based right off the Sitka dock, Joel met us at 5:30am in his tackle shop to evaluate the best fishing spots, species and tackle to use based on the wind weather and tides. He went over maps, charts, weather reports and safety precautions to inform adventurers of the conditions for the day. He set the channel for the radios for all of us to work the water as a fleet. He outfitted us with a first class Hewescraft with downriggers, and gear from his tackle shop. Now was the time for us to stock up on any jigs, lures, bait, rods, scent, weights, or downrigger balls, that we needed. At the tackle shop, you check out all your gear on a clip board, and what you don't come home with, you pay for. Rob and I bought a downrigger ball on day 2.

6:00 AM

The fishing parties headed out together in line, situated in their shiny new Hewescraft as a Fleet. Once we left the safety of the harbor, some boats went their own way and some stuck together. Call names that I dare not say, began to fly over the radio as we left the harbor. The fleet was

bonded before boats began to break off the line. Austin Moser led the charge as we headed out toward Baranof Island. With the Volcano in the background and the area spotted with small coastal islands and pinnacles, it is no wonder this is a fisherman's paradise. There are hidden coves and narrow straights. It truly is a choose your own adventure here. We had a few boats stick with us and utilized our radios. Working together, we got into the fish. Other boats radioed their finds.

11:00 AM

With Austin captaining our boat, we have our limit of halibut, and a nice keeper ling cod. There is a slot for ling cod, with each out of state angler only allowed to retain one per year from Sitka. We decide to look for more lings and bottomfish like the healthy populations of black rock fish and other species like vermillion.

2:30 PM

It was time to gauge how long our trip back to the dock accounting for the current wind and tide. Be prepared to be back at the dock by 4:00 pm.

4:00 PM

We got to the dock around 4:30, a little late...The gas dock closes at 5 and there are plenty of boats needing fuel at the end of the day.

5:00 PM

We were greeted by one of the dock hands to tie off and offload. They began scrubbing and inventorying the boats. They leave the boats in tip-top shape for the next mornings adventure. We took our haul to the dock and sprawled it out in all its glory for some photos. Austin began to filet, Baranof has knives available, so no need to bring those. I brought the bins up the gangway to the processing shed. There Rob took the bins and began to vacuum seal with the bags and machine provided by Fish Baranof for customers. We brought the sealed bags to our own designated freezer within the Fish Baranof facility.

We fished 2 days with Austin. We caught up with the Baranys from the General Store Spokane who happened to be up their vacationing. We caught a haul of halibut, salmon, rockfish and ling cod. We walked around town and took to the local shops and restaurants. There's some very good restaurants in town with a lively feel in te evenings. We even caught up with old friends from Gig Harbor. All in all, it was a great trip!

"Joel has been running this for 5 years and has brought it to first class. His brand-new boats, tackle and top-notch equipment has kept me coming back year after year," Austin Moser said.

Thanks Austin, for putting Fish Baranof on our radar.

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UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF DON LEWIS, 4-YEAR-OLD JOHNNY WEST MADE STRIDES AS A FLY ANGLER, PUTTING SEVERAL CRAPPIE IN THE BOAT. PHOTO BY GARY LEWIS



By
Gary Lewis

We figured it out early. If we were going to turn the grandchildren into lifelong fishermen,

we needed to make sure they had success almost every time we fished.

We tell them we don't get fish every trip. But we make sure they catch fish at least 19 times out of 20 tries (last year we took the kids on 23 trips).

Crappie are good for our numbers.

"Lay the fly on the water. Strip line out. That's right. Now shake the rod tip. Now we're fly-fishing."

These kids – the 4-year-old grandson and the 6-year-old granddaughter – can cast a fly as well as any kid, but they don't need to. Not in a canoe, not in a boat. When our craft catches a bit of wind and we began to drift, they can work out the line, get the fly to where the fish are, and keep it there.

And when they're not casting, they're not hooking their grandpa.

At Prineville Reservoir a person can catch rainbows, bass, and catfish, but the crappie stack like cordwood across the flats.

Crappie are not easy to find in the high desert. Only a few local reservoirs hold these fish and most anglers chase the trout or

bass. But one of my favorite fly rod targets is the crappie, and it was time to expose the kids to this most sporting of the spiny-rays. When we put the boat in the water, there was a chop at the surface and fish on the depthfinder at 40 feet. But when fish are schooled like that, the feeders are higher in the water column.

We set the indicators at eight feet. The local intel said the fish wanted red and white and pink and white, and we found the patterns in our boxes and knotted them on.

With the wind out of the northwest we would drift at a pretty good clip until the breeze died at sunset.

My wife Merrilee was in charge of Little Smokey, armed with her 2-weight custom rod, and the boy Johnny elected to stay at the back of the boat where he could help run the Mercury with my dad.

Over the years, I've noticed Prineville Reservoir fish are less oriented to structure than crappie in other lakes. Where we find them in summer, they are spread across a large flat, bounded by cliffs on the south shore.

We let the breeze blow us past a rocky point and as soon as we were in open water, Johnny's indicator jabbed underwater.

When the crappie began to put its saucer-

sized flanks into the battle, the boy arched the rod and grabbed the reel handle. His grandma netted the fish for him and the first crappie went into the box.

INTERGENERATIONAL RIVALRY

My dad and granddaughter battled to see who could land the most fish. When the float twitched, the six-year-old learned to set the hook fast.

Of course, I had my own numbers to put up. When the indicator went under, I set the hook and pulled the fly out of the crappie's paper mouth.

A gust of wind caught the line and I snagged my granddaughter in the arm of her new sweater. She didn't tell me I needed to be more careful until the second time I hooked her.

CRAPPIE CHAOS

Crappie eat all sorts of things from copepods to chironimidae, but they are programmed to chase small fish. Any time crappie are on the menu, tie on a heavy fly imitative of a small baitfish. Use small silvery minnow imitations, chartreuse Woolly Buggers, little gold chubs with thin black fins and white leeches and red and white and pink and white. But most importantly, crappie flies should be heavy, with tungsten bead heads. If they are tied in the balance style or on jig hooks, so much the better. We target crappie at a specific depth and a heavy fly gets down where the feeders are, as fast as it can get there.

For a strike indicator, I opt for a plastic Thingamabobber which loops on the

line and can slide up and down. A nine-foot leader (when paired with a nine-foot rod) is a good choice because the float can be set at the top of the leader's butt section. When anchored up, flip the float downwind and let the rig drift on the riffled water. With the up and down motion of the wavelets - that little bounce - the marabou tail on the fly dances, giving life to the fly. Casting is a consideration, but if the wind is blowing, the float can be put out upwind and the line stays taut. With the wind at 5 to 10 mph, drifting with the wind is a blast. Everyone in the boat knows there is a big school of crappie out there and the wind is going to blow the boat through them. Get the flies at the right depth and it's going to be crappie chaos.

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SUMMER SOCKEYE!



By Jason Brooks

There is nothing better on the barbecue than a fresh fillet of sockeye salmon during sundown on a summer's day. Luckily for Washington anglers, July means sockeye season. Run predictions are nearing 198,700 Columbia River fish and over 27,000 Baker River bound fish. The WDFW already had an opening on June 16th for the Skagit River (which leads to Baker Lake) with the projected run being forecasted with enough fish for a season. Keep in mind that each of these returns are a "main run" and there are tributary runs that will dictate seasons. For the Baker River returning sockeye, it looks like there will be season at Baker Lake once the fish make it to the fish trap and are moved into the lake. The Columbia is a bit different.

Columbia River sockeye are a make-up of several different runs, with some being endangered while others being destined for foreign waters. This fishery can be a bit complex, as anglers have figured out how to catch sockeye in the lower river, which can impact the few hundred fish heading for Idaho. Be sure to check regulations before heading to a sand bar and plunking a small spin-n-glow tipped with a prawn. This is a standard rig for summer steelhead, but anglers started catching sockeye on the

same rigging. This led to them targeting the fish when the season was open and it became a "new" fishery.

Most anglers head to the dams along the Columbia and fish below the tailraces and fish ladders. As the fish stack up, they concentrate in these parts of the river and make it possible to be caught. Not too long ago you could go below a dam and be one of but a few boats. Now when the sockeye run is on just about everybody shows up. Don't be surprised to find yourself in a jet sled and fishing next to a Bayliner.

The most popular fisheries for Columbia River sockeye are just above the confluence of the Wenatchee River all the way up to the Brewster Pool. This is because there can be closures below this point until there are enough fish heading up the Wenatchee to the lake on the other end. Lake Wenatchee bound fish have been struggling but some years there are enough fish to open the lake. If 2022 is one of those years, then be ready to get there early. With one public boat launch at the state park, this fishery is extremely popular and busy. Anglers will arrive here several hours before the sun comes up, and as the daylight starts to illuminate the tall mountains towering above the lake, the winds often kick up. This is a high mountain lake and can turn quickly. Be ready to anchor

up and ride out the storms, as the line to take out of the lake can take hours.

Rocky Reach dam has become very popular in recent years. This is because it is close to the main central Washington city of Wenatchee and a day's drive from northern Puget Sound. With spring runoff already past, the dam rarely needs to spill extra water. But if a rainstorm occurs then be ready for some of the gates to open, creating strong currents. Here anglers mostly fish the west side of the river, hugging the shoreline to the deadline and then moving out to the middle and heading to the bottom of the line to troll back up into

the fish again. Some anglers will head across the river and fish the eastern side, but that shoreline is gradual and full of brush and trees. It is not as defined, and the fish aren't as concentrated.



Above Rocky Reach, anglers are found fishing right outside of the deadline in the calm waters. Here the sockeye will mill around and rest after just migrating up the fish ladder. For those without a boat you can park along the roadway and hike down to a bulkhead or along the rocky shoreline and cast a line. The bank bound angler often drifts a coonstripe shrimp under a slip float. If you need

specific gear or to restock on bait, be sure to stop by Hooked On Toys in Wenatchee and talk to the staff behind the fishing counter.



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Further upriver is Wells Dam. This is a well-known destination and is a great place to fish for both sockeye and chinook. A new boat launch and parking area was installed a few years ago and is a bit downstream but it is out of the main current and easier to launch from than the old launch right at the dam. Head across the river to fish the Douglas County side where more fish tend to stack up, as well as the deadline right at the dam. On the Chelan County side, the deadline is a bit downstream, so you won't be at the base of the fish ladder, and fish are still spread out. This is where I learned to salmon fish—not for sockeye, but for kings. As a young kid I would spend the cool evenings skipping rocks and playing in the water as my dad stood on the riverbank casting gold spoons. This still works for chinook. For sockeye, the water is a bit fast to bank fish, so anglers that have boats do much better here. Be ready for the current to fluctuate, and if you venture towards the middle of the river, keep an eye on the depth as the tailrace can move the large rocks, and if the water drops you can find yourself in very shallow water in the middle of the river.

The main draw for summer sockeye is the famed Brewster Pool. With 175,700 fish destined for the Okanogan River and into Canada there should be more than enough fish for a season this July. These are a truly



unique strain of fish as they venture up the Columbia River over 500 miles from the Pacific Ocean and will be heading a few hundred more miles north. Some of the fish will stop and spawn in Lake Osoyoos, the water that shares the U.S. and Canada border, while others will continue on up to Kamloops and even beyond. Studies have shown that these fish will spawn in a multitude of lakes and rivers along the way. There are essentially two different strains, or runs, of fish, as some sockeye will spawn along a gravel shoreline of a cold-water lake, while other sockeye will spawn in rivers or streams. They are a unique salmon, for sure, and this is common with many runs of sockeye including those in Bristol Bay as well as the Lake Wenatchee run, with some fish spawning in Lake Wenatchee, and others heading up the White River and Little Wenatchee River. But the Okanogan bound fish are heading to multiple lakes and rivers.

First the fish need to head up the warm Okanogan River, which is a lazy flow of water down out of the foothills and through the town of Omak that then winds its way to the Columbia, just below Chief Joseph dam. The confluence is a big, deep lake of sorts with hardly any current. The fish tend to head to the old river channel that was there before Wells Dam was built. This channel runs along the Okanogan County side, just below a steep sandy bank with an orchard on top. Here the river stays in the shadows until the sun is high, which helps in catching mid-morning sockeye. Expect the fish to stay in the cooler Columbia for several weeks, but if a summer rain storm hits then the fish will be gone. All they are waiting for is a dip in water temperature in the very hot Okanogan River so they can migrate up into Lake Osoyoos and cool off once again.

Regardless if you are fishing the Brewster Pool, Baker Lake, or Lake Wenatchee, most of the techniques are the same. The main difference is bait: it is prohibited in Lake Wenatchee (be sure to check the regulations

for where you plan to fish). To catch sockeye there are a few hard rules to follow. The first is speed, and that means lack of speed. When fishing for sockeye those that can troll between .7 and 1 mile per hour will do well. On windy days this can be hard to do, so be sure to bring along a drift sock to help slow the boat down. Another hard and fast rule is to use short leaders. I have a hard time with this one as I often start with a leader that is 15-inches thinking this is short enough, when it is almost twice as long as it should be. A good rule of thumb is to use 9-inches of stout leader, like 20-pound monofilament. This will cause the lure to whip around, and that action is needed to entice the sockeye to bite. The last rule is color, with most anglers using red or pink, and others using orange, but always have at least one red lure with red hooks out.

When Lake Washington had a fishery, anglers did well using bare red hooks behind a dodger. Though gear has changed a bit

over the years, red hooks are still standard. A simple lure is two tandem red size 2 Big River sickle style hooks from Gamakatsu with a couple of small red beads and a red or pink sparkle Smile Blade from Mack's Lure. Tip the hooks with a cured and dyed red coonstripe shrimp with a 9-inch leader behind a Mack's Lure Double D 8-inch or 5.8 inch dodger, and troll very slow. You don't need downriggers, but they do help with depth control. If you prefer to leave them at home, a 2 to 3-ounce mooching weight that's 48 to 56-inches in front of the dodger to allow it to swing works well. A long-handled net is a plus as these are feisty fish once they near the boat and are known to throw the hook. Fish shallow and keep an eye on the depth finder for schools of fish.

Be sure to check the regulations for seasons and emergency closures. Summer sockeye season is here, and it is time to fire up the barbecue!

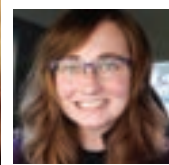



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SUMMER PANFISHING BASICS



by **Hannah Pennebaker**
@hannahNWF
on Facebook & Instagram

As the weather starts to heat up and our waters begin to warm, the panfish bite has gotten better and better! So named because they fit perfectly in a frying pan, most panfish weigh less than a pound and measure less than twelve inches in length. These fish include rock bass, bluegill, crappie, pumpkinseed, and yellow perch. In Washington State, there is no bag or size limit on most of these fish- although some lakes with quality crappie populations do impose a size and/or bag limit to protect the population, so always check your regs before heading out. Panfishing is one of the most easily accessible fisheries here in the Pacific Northwest. Tackle is cheap and the fish are plentiful. In the summer months, they hang around close to shore, and thus can be readily caught from by both boat and shore anglers. They are eager biters and fight surprisingly well for their size, particularly on light tackle. Most lakes in the Northwest have at least one type of pan-

fish. Read on to find out how you can bring home some tasty panfish for your frying pan!

Tackle

As most panfish don't get larger than twelve inches, it's a good idea to use either ultralight or light tackle. This serves two functions: it allows you to cast weights as light as 1/64 ounces if needed, and it makes the fight more fun! If the fish are shy or tight lipped that day, scaling down the size of your presentation can make all the difference. Size 1000 to 2000 reels work well, and will hold plenty of line for catching panfish. Pair your reel with an ultralight or light action rod, and you're set! I'd recommend spooling up with 2 to 8-pound test for your line. Light line will allow you to cast out your light weights further. You can use soft plastics or bait to catch panfish. I'd recommend having both options in your tackle box. There are some days when the fish can't resist a nightcrawler or mealworm, but on other days, they'll ea-

gerly chase down a jig. The classic, tried and true way to catch panfish is by using a bobber and worm. Bobbers easily allow you to change the depth of your presentation, and watching for that bobber to go down is one of the best ways to spend a summer afternoon. First off, tie your hook to about 1 or 2 feet of leader (the lighter, the better). You can use size 6, 8, 10, or 12 hooks for panfish, since they have small mouths. Tie your leader to a small swivel, and crimp 1 or 2 split shot right above it. The added weight will help make sure your bobber stays vertical. Then, attach your bobber. You can either use a sliding bobber with bobber stops or a fixed bobber. It's up to your personal preference. Either method will allow you to change the depth of your presentation quite easily. For bait, you can use a chunk of nightcrawler, mealworm, or grub. Once your bobber goes down, it's fish on!

If you'd like to go the soft plastic route, it's a good idea

to have a variety of colors and sizes in your tackle box. Panfish jigs come in a huge variation of shapes and sizes, from tubes and curly tails to crawfish and shrimp imitations. What the fish will bite on can vary from day to day, and lake to lake. I usually use a 1/16 oz jig head, but you can use anywhere from 1/4 oz to 1/64 oz. Choose your soft plastic, and carefully thread it on your jig head. It's as simple as that! Here's a tip: if the lake is extremely weedy, you can attach a bobber above your jig to ensure it can't get tangled up on the bottom.

Technique

The key to catching most panfish is to stay shallow and target structure. These fish are prey for hungry trout, bass, and walleye, and they know it. If you have a fish finder, you can use it to find submerged logs, rocks, and weed beds. Docks are also a great place to find panfish hiding by. Polarized sunglasses can also help you locate structure. Panfish tend to congregate in schools of other like-sized fish. If you're catching 5-inch fish, try changing locations. You may just find a school of bigger ones!

Casting out jigs will allow you to cover more water if you're not sure where the fish are, but nothing beats a bobber when you're on a thick school of fish. Whichever technique you use, make sure to target structure, and don't be afraid to keep moving and try new locations. Cast your jig out by a dock or weed bed, and

slowly reel in until you feel a bite. Two pole endorsements can come in handy when pan fishing. You can cast your bobber out, put it in a rod holder, and throw out a jig while you wait for the bobber to go down.

Species Specifics

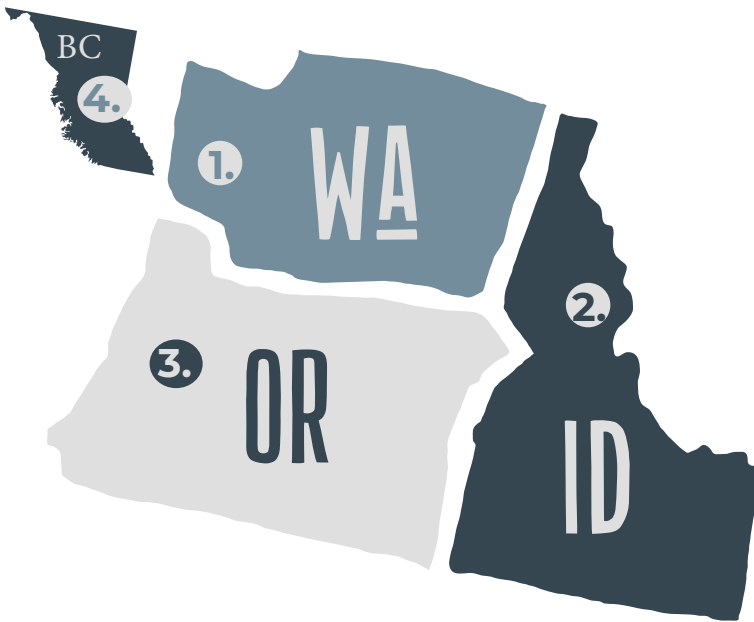
Although fishermen tend to lump panfish together, each species has its own preferences and characteristics. Crappie tend to lurk near submerged trees. Although you can catch them on bobbers and bait, I prefer to cast out jigs for them. They bite jigs ferociously, and fight all the way to the boat. Rock bass are only found in a handful of lakes around the Pacific Northwest, namely Lake Washington, Spanaway Lake, and Green Lake. They are not actually related to bass, and are in the sunfish family. They are aggressive and bite readily on worms and jigs. Bluegill are probably the most common panfish in the Pacific Northwest. Several lakes in the state boast trophy bluegill populations. Resembling tropical fish, pumpkinseed are usually no larger than your hand, but they are one of the most beautiful fish around. They love small chunks of worm! Yellow perch are one of the best eating panfish. Often found near the edges of weed beds, these fish congregate in massive schools. Nightcrawler chunks work well, but yellow perch are carnivorous and will bite pieces of other perch, or even eyes! A word of caution about



all panfish- they tend to have small spines concealed in their fins, so be careful when handling them.

Panfish are all plentiful, eager biters that taste delicious on the dinner table. Kids, beginners, and seasoned fishermen alike can all take delight in reeling in dozens of these scrappy fish. They bite all day long, so you can feel free to sleep in on your day off and hit the lake in the afternoon. It's a good idea to check WDFW's website to see what kind of panfish live in your local lake- you might be surprised! Whether you target scrappy bluegill or voracious yellow perch, go out and have a blast!

DIRECTORY



FISH KEY

- SALMON
- TROUT
- WALLEYE
- KOKANEE
- STEELHEAD
- STURGEON
- BASS
- CATFISH
- BURBOT
- MACKINAW
- HALIBUT

Destinations

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(800) 416-2736
mardonresort.com
Potholes Reservoir

1. **Liars Cove**
(509) 826-1288
liarscoveresort.com
Lake Conconully

1. **Coulee Playland**
(509) 633-2671
couleeplayland.com
Banks Lake

Guides & Charters

1. **Austin's Northwest Adventures**
(509) 668-0298
austinsnorthwestadventures.com
From Buoy 10 to Lake Roosevelt

1. **Chrome Inc.**
(425) 591-5108
chromeinc.org
Southeast Washington and the Olympic Peninsula

1. **D&H Guide Service**
(509) 759-0098
wasalmonfishing.com
Cowlitz and Columbia River Gorge

1. **Darrell & Dads Family Guide Service**
(509) 687-0709
darrellanddads.com
Lake Chelan

2. **Double M Outdoors**
(503) 956-5489
doublemoutdoors.com
Columbia River: Buoy 10 to McNary Dam

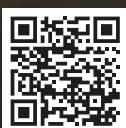
1. **Fast Action Guide Service**
(425) 753-5772
fastactionfishingseattle.com
Western Washington

1. **Jones Sportfishing**
(208) 861-0654
jonessportfishing.com
Columbia, Snake, Clearwater Rivers, Southern Idaho

1. **Fish Intimidators**
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Columbia River
1. **Mitchell Sportfishing**
(509) 480-5945
mitchellsportfishing.com
1. **Moons Guide Service**
(509) 860-6497
moonsguideservice.com
Columbia River, Banks Lake, Moses Lake
4. **Reel Obsession**
(888) 855-7335
reelobsession.ca
BC Fishing Lodge
1. **Reel Time Fishing**
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reeltimefishing.com
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rossoutdooradventures.com
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superflyflies.com

Wigglefin Tackle

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wigglefin.com

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scuttlebuttbrewing.com

Tanners Fresh Fish Processing

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tannersfish.com

Skip Rock Distillers

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skiprockdistillers.com

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Life Outdoors

The Weekender Report

Summer fishing seasons are now in full swing, requiring anglers to make some tough decisions about how to spend their time on the water. Here are some prime locations across the state to boost your chances of success! For information on all fisheries and activities, go to the WDFW website.

Summer crab fishing:

The recreational Puget Sound crab fishing season begins July 1 in several inner-marine waterways of Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, San Juan Islands, and northern Hood Canal.

Salmon fishing in marine areas:

Central Puget Sound (MA 10) is open daily for coho only through July 13 and for hatchery Chinook starting July 14. The Strait of Juan de Fuca (MAs 5 and 6) open for hatchery Chinook and/or coho on July 1. The San Juan Islands (MA 7) opens for hatchery Chinook July 14-16. Northern Puget Sound (MA 9) opens for hatchery Chinook July 14-16 and July 21-23. South-central Puget Sound (MA 11) is open Wednesdays through Saturdays only beginning July 1. Hood Canal south of Ayock Point (MA 12) opens July 1 for coho and hatchery Chinook. Other options include the Tulalip Terminal Fishery open Fridays to Mondays only; and southern Puget Sound (MA 13) as well as many docks and piers. On the coast, Ilwaco (MA 1), La Push (MA 3) and Neah Bay (MA 4) are open daily for Chinook and hatchery coho; and Westport (MA 2) opens on July 2. Areas could close early if quotas or guidelines are achieved.

Fishing in statewide rivers and streams:

Top prospects for July include Chinook and steelhead on the Skykomish, sockeye on the middle Skagit and in Baker Lake, Chinook on upper Skagit and Cascade, summer steelhead on Humptulips, Wynoochee and Calawah, and Willapa, Kalama, and Cowlitz for Chinook. Cutthroat and rainbow trout action will improve as runoff subsides on the Cedar, Naches, Yakima, and many small streams around the state.

Fishing east of Cascades fishing:

Banks Lake, Moses Lake, and Potholes Reservoir are decent for smallmouth and largemouth bass and walleye. The Potholes and Banks are good for black crappie. The Seep Lakes south of Potholes are good for rainbow trout. Try Lake Chelan for kokanee, lake trout and Chinook, and shore anglers do well for cutthroat trout and smallmouth bass in Manson/Chelan areas. Try for kokanee on Rimrock Reservoir, and Keechelus and Kachess reservoirs. Portions of Upper Columbia like Chelan Falls/Entiat area open for hatchery Chinook and/or sockeye on July 1.

Trout fishing in statewide lakes:

Unseasonably cooler weather this past spring should keep planted trout active in some lowland lakes. The WDFW Trout Derby continues through Oct. 31. Visit the WDFW trout stocking webpage. For helpful tips see our WDFW trout fishing blog post.

Sign up for in-person hunter education:

On June 1, WDFW increased the minimum age to take that course from 9 to eighteen. Students under eighteen can complete the online course, but they must attend a field skills evaluation before they can become certified. We recognize that this change may take some time to get used to, and we are committed to offering as many in-person courses as we can. Sign up for in-person hunter education today.



WDFW Weekender Report | Click through for region specific opportunities



Join the WDFW team:

If you'd enjoy preserving, protecting, and perpetuating our state's fish, wildlife, and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities, then check out current job openings or sign up for job alerts. From budget manager to community outreach and education specialist, environmental planners to electricians, fiscal technicians to wildlife biologists, a career with WDFW makes a difference. Join the WDFW team: wdfw.wa.gov/about/jobs.

WATCH NOW

Selective fisheries for hatchery-produced salmon and catch-and-release fisheries are increasingly important to providing recreational fishing opportunities around Washington. To



ensure these salmon fisheries are successful long-term, it is vital that anglers do their part to comply with all regulations, especially how to properly release unmarked, sublegal (undersized) and out-of-season fish to improve their survival. Scan QR CODE to watch.



Anglers' guide to releasing salmon properly

JULY NOTICES

DON'T BE A LITTERBUG

When everyone does their part, we can keep Washington beautiful and litter free. Cleanup efforts are costly, and it negatively impacts the environment, wildlife, and public safety. Make sure to have a container for collecting trash; bring a bag to pack out what you packed in; hold onto trash until you reach a waste receptacle; and safely secure your cargo on the road. When we all look out for each other, it makes a big difference! For details, visit the Washington Department of Ecology website.

HABITAT AT HOME

As we transition into summer, access to food, water, shelter, and space will be important for Washington's mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and insects throughout the state. Native plants are especially important as they help increase biodiversity in your neighborhood or community. To learn more about creating habitat for wildlife near your home, check out our Habitat at Home webpage: wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/living/backyard#create-habitat.

WILD WASHINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Just because summer has arrived doesn't mean learning has to stop! Summer break is a great time to engage your learners in outdoor, scientific inquiry. Summer is also a great time to spot one of 600 native bee species and other pollinators. Using tools like the Naturalist Washington Native Bee Project: www.inaturalist.org/projects/washington-native-bee-society. To find more pollinator education resources, check out our family education resources: wdfw.wa.gov/get-involved/educational-resources/pollinators.

Important Dates

- **July 9** – Merwin Special Kids Day fishing event at Merwin Fish Hatchery
- **July 9** – Fishtival! Fly fishing event at Vanderyacht Park, Ferndale
- **July 15** – Fish and Wildlife Commission Web Conference

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