

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 6

NORTHWEST

NOV-DEC, 2021

REEL LIFE



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EDITOR'S CORNER:

Late Fall spells transition time in the Pacific Northwest as we move ever closer toward winter. The bite of cooler air and rain fronts passing through are more frequent. Saltwater angling sees coho fishing done, and the river fish are turning. Those in the know can still find some good fish though... Meanwhile, anglers have terminal chum fisheries to enjoy – up and down Hood canal, and, of course – Hoodsport. Chums are one of the toughest Pacific NW salmon they are in many anglers' sights. And let's not forget - Cast and Blast time is here! Ducks, pheasant, geese, turkey, they all make perfect morning hunts, and then go pursue some walleye on the Potholes perhaps? Check out my article on Cast and Blast adventures and come up with your own adventures. The key to this Transition Time is to dress for the weather, be it rain, wind, or shine; those Indian Summer Days are in the rear view mirror. This issue is an expanded edition covering both November and December. See you in January!

Mike Carey - mike@northwestfishingreports.com @mikecareynwfr



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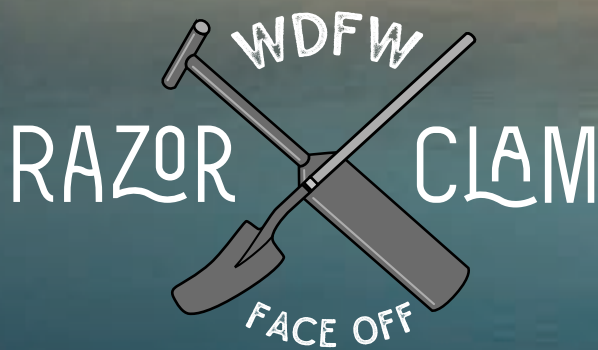
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Razor clam season is here!



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HOT REPORTS FROM NORTHWESTFISHINGREPORTS.COM

By: Mike Carey

Our NWFR readers that post reports had a nice mix of places to go fishing this past month. While some of these spots are no longer producing, it's good to keep them in the back of your mind for next year (which is an excellent reason to use the NWFR web site as a research tool by the way). Here is this month's fishing reports that "caught" our eye:



Scan for Reports



Josh got a nice limit of chunky rainbows on American Lake

Lake Goodwin

JoshH is a regular reporter and his orange kayak is a familiar sight on the website. In this report Josh shares a great day of trout fishing – he has this fishery dialed in! Catching limits of chunky bows he had good success with Wooly Buggers and Doc Spratley flies. Be sure to watch his cool video as well!



Salmonbarry should change his name to "The Fish Whisperer"

Salmonbarry

Salmonbarry always seems to get the fish... and this one was a dandy! Lake Washington can be a tough coho fishery but Barry got a real nice coho. A 3" Brads cut plug stuffed with cured herring and an 8" blinking flasher did the trick. While you're reading this report be sure to check out some of the other Lake Washington reports to dial in this fishery.



A nice catch of great eating surf perch!

Westport Surf

Westport surf perch are a year-round fishery and this report from j Maxwell shows that they are out there to be caught! Fall/Winter surf fishing provides for some relaxing seclusion as the summer crowds are gone and the beaches are wide open. Just be sure to layer up and be careful in the surf.



Walleyemark1 with some nice burbot from Porcupine Bay

Lake Roosevelt Walleye

(and burbot!) – another fishery that produces in the late fall and winter is Lake Roosevelt for walleye and – burbot! Longtime NWFR contributor Walleyemark1 posted this report, catching 25 walleye and 3 burbot. That sounds like a fun day of fishing to me!



Chrome bright Lake Sammamish cutts make a great winter fishery

Sammamish Cutthroat

Here's a fishery that will only get better as we head into winter – Sammamish cutthroat. Vwfisher57 reports decent action, including a bonus crappie of all things! We have a video posted on our YouTube page fishing a few years back with guide Paul Lewis.



Beautiful hold-over rainbows at Park Lake to end the season

Park Lake

This is another report to store away for next year. NWFR member uplandsandpiper wrote a report and embedded a video of trout fishing on Park Lake in Washington's Grant County. Beautiful fish and another excellent destination to keep in mind for next year. Berkley jointed Flicker Shads were the top producer for these hold-overs.



That's it for this year. Stay warm out there and we hope you'll share your fishing stories with your fellow anglers on NorthwestFishingReports.com!

-Mike Carey
@mikecareynwfr

CAST AND BLAST



Beautiful Montana fields.



Mike Carey

"He's getting birdy!"

Matthew and I watched as his orange Brittany, Murphy, started wagging his tail at double speed, searching the cattails with unswerving attention. Moments later we watched as his body froze, pointing toward a bird that we couldn't see. The pheasant, unnerved by a forty-pound Brittany staring him down, decided to take flight and make an escape.

"Rooster rooster!" called out Matthew as we saw the distinct tail feathers of a nice rooster behind the rapidly flying bird. Being closer I drew my over-under 12 gauge and took the shot. Feathers flying, the bird flew for another twenty yards and crashed to earth. Murphy broke his point and pulled the downed bird out of the brush, bringing him back to our waiting arms. Fall is upon us and with that comes my favorite activity – cast and blast adventures. Cast and Blast combines my favorite fall

activities - fishing and hunting. My definition of "Cast and Blast" is a trip that combines both hunting and fishing in one day/trip. It can be ducks, pheasant, turkey, chukar – heck, I guess someday I may even expand it to include deer!

I was first introduced to the Cast and Blast experience a few years ago when Shelby Ross of Ross Outdoor adventures invited me and Rob Holman to join him for a day of shooting and fishing on the Potholes

Pishkun Reservoir Cast and Blast | NWFRTV#77



Scan to Watch



The author with Montana pheasants and Murphy.

Reservoir. On that day we got up before sunrise as Shelby navigated us across from the MarDon resort boat launch to his favorite spot of on the dunes at the Potholes Reservoir. There are few guys I would trust to motor out in the pitch black darkness of pre-dawn, and Shelby is one of them.

After we placed the decoys, we awaited with anticipation the coming sunrise and arrival of that day's incoming ducks. Soon enough daylight revealed our decoys floating serenely on the calm water. Shelby started duck calls and it wasn't long before our first ducks descended toward our blind. On cue Shelby called out "Take em!" and the hunters shotguns erupted, disturbing the quiet morning. In short order the group's labs were wadding out to retrieve the first birds of the day. A morning of duck hunting, including an amazing

mid-morning snack of duck poppers (duck, green peppers, and cream cheese grilled over hot coals) was what memories are made of. But wait – there's more! After a productive morning of shooting lots of ducks, we picked up the decoys and moved on to "phase two", walleye fishing on the Potholes Reservoir. The walleye fishing in the fall is consistent and steady and by the end of the day we had a nice live cooler full of keeper walleye, with a couple 26" plus walleye released back to preserve the fishery. Good times,

good eating and great memories of a fall day well spent with friends old and new.

Since that first Cast and Blast Adventure, I've had the good fortune of many adventures come fall season.

Another memorable adventure combined chinook salmon fishing and chukar hunting on the Snake River with Snake Dancer Excursions. Owners Gabe and Julie Cassell run an amazing Cast and Blast adventure in the fall, taking advantage of excellent fishing for salmon, bass, and sturgeon with what is truly a hunter's supreme challenge – chukar. Chukar, for those not familiar with this bird, live along the Snake River, moving up and down the steep hills



Cast and Blast means dogs are part of the fun!

and cliffs of the Snake River valley. They are the ultimate test of endurance for a hunter. Gabe has an amazing knowledge of the river and chukar habits, and well before we saw any birds he knew where they were and when to drop us off. From there it was up to the hunters to work their way up the steep hillsides, dogs in the lead, in search of these tasty birds. Once flushed, we had shots at fast moving birds that challenged our shooting skills. With a bit of luck (skill?) I managed to get my

first chukar! I'll be honest, this hunt was tough and not for the novice. That said, what amazing scenery and the fishing – crazy good! We hooked multiple chinook salmon to twenty pounds. If you hunt and fish, this is a trip you should add to your bucket list! So what do you need to participate in a Cast and Blast adventure? In addition to hunting and fishing licenses, you need your own shotgun and shells. Fishing gear is provided by the



***Shelby Ross and Rob Holman
on Potholes Reservoir***

guide outfits. You'll also need whatever hunting education classes are required in your state so be sure to check the regulations for your area. In addition to Ross Outdoor Adventures and Snake Dancer Excursions, there are other guides that are open to doing these Cast and Blast adventures. You may even be able to talk your favorite guide into setting up an adventure in your area. When in doubt – ask. You may be surprised at the number of guides that are willing to design your own Cast and Blast adventure.

Meanwhile back in Montana Matt and I continued our morning hunt, slowly filling up our vests with tasty wild Montana pheasant. At the end of the morning's hunt we headed over to Nilan Reservoir and spent the rest of the day catching beautiful native rainbow and brown trout on the fly. The trout grow big and feisty in Montana and we had a "blast" catching as many fish as wanted, keeping a couple for a nice trout dinner.

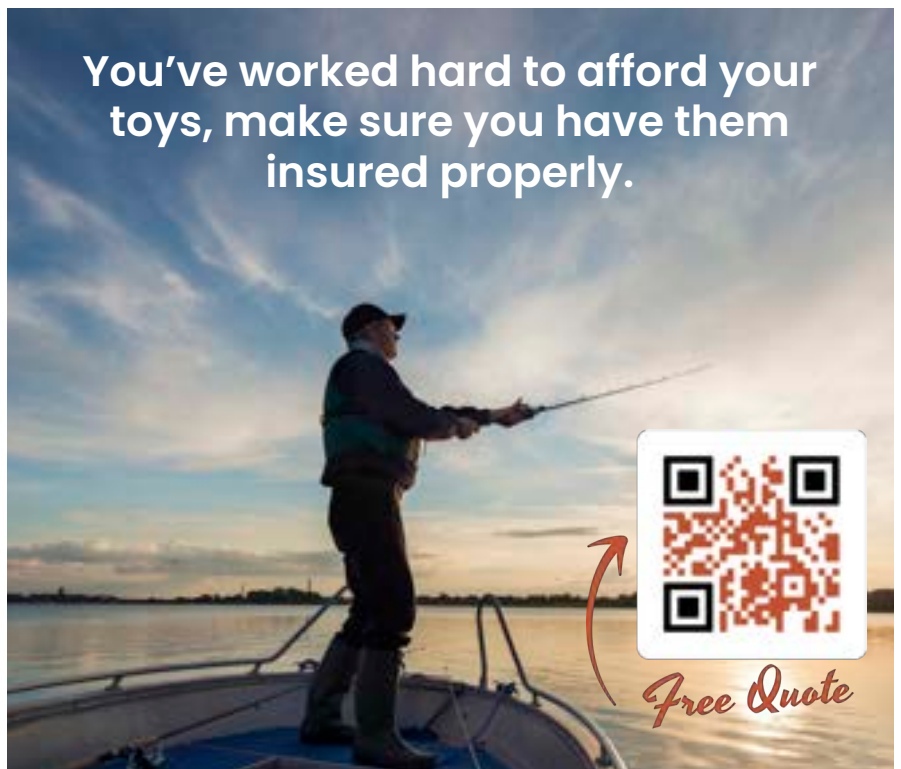
Cast and Blast adventures are a great way of scratching your fishing and hunting bug. They require a bit of planning and flexibility, but once you get into the mindset of combining these two outdoor activities you'll soon be enjoying the best of both worlds!

Born out of an interest in the local food movement and the love of a great drink.



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Winter Blackmouth Options



Winter Blackmouth Fishing - Extended Cut

Two quality Eastern Bank blackmouth.



by Randy Castello

As our summer coho fishery winds down many of us are considering putting the salmon gear away and winterizing the boat. If so, you may want to hold off a bit. Break out a wool hat and thermals, it's almost blackmouth season! Blackmouth season, what's a blackmouth?

Blackmouth are chinook salmon that have decided not to migrate to the usual feeding grounds in the North Pacific. Instead, they tend to remain in Puget Sound and the Straights to feed on local schools of herring, candlefish and other forage fish. Although there are natural production

blackmouth, our winter blackmouth fishery is a hatchery fish show.

Back in the 1960s WDFW decided to duplicate the natural tendency of a small percentage of chinook to remain in Puget Sound and create a year-round sports fishery. The WDFW established a team lead by Frank Shaw and got to work. It was determined that if you held the usual hatchery release at 3 months for an additional year, or 18 months total the chinook would forage locally.

The original releases were made in Capital Lake in Olympia. The program moved to net pens by Squaxin Island but the WDFW determined that the salt reared fish tended to migrate. The program was shifted to a number of local hatcheries.

Most of the hatchery fish are clipped but there are certain releases where the co-manager agreements do not allow the fish to be clipped. Our winter blackmouth fishery is a hatchery fish only show and just around the corner. Going back to my mid-teens our winter blackmouth fishery has always been one of my very favorite fisheries. Over the years we have seen a reduction in opportunity; most recently Marine Area 7, 8-1, 8-2 and MA 9 being closed to meet Federal and co-manager escapement goals. That said don't fret and gas up the boat, there

are still a number of areas that will host a blackmouth fishery.

MA 5 will be open 3/1/2022-4/30/2022 with a 2 fish limit and a 22" minimum size. The quota is 1,504 fish.

MA 10 will be open 1/1/2022-3/31/2022 with a 2 fish limit and a 22" minimum size. The quota is 836 fish.

MA 11 will be open 11/1/2021-12/31/2021 with a 2 fish limit and a 22" minimum size. The quota is 288 fish.

MA 13 will be open 10/1/2021-5/14/2021 with a 2 fish limit and a 22" minimum size with no quota.

MA 6, 7, 8-1, 8-2, 9 and both North/South MA 12 will be closed for the 2021/2022 winter blackmouth fishery.

The above information was extracted for the 2021 North of Falcon data and may be subject to additional closures. Consult the WDFW App. or website for the current regulations and emergency closures.

With the limited blackmouth opportunity for the 2021-2022 season it is likely that the open areas will be busy. I had considered going through each area in detail but that may further congest the fishery. Instead, I'll try to breakdown each area in to some general areas to start your adventure.

Before that though; think points, banks and flats.



Deal closed, this blackmouth is on the deck

Look for areas where the currents will collect bait. Keep a constant eye on your fishfinder and look for schools of bait. Although forage fish populations change from year-to-year, candle fish and herring are the primary forage fish for Puget Sound blackmouth. That said, because of a general crash in the Puget Sound herring populations candlefish are currently the major blackmouth food source.

Candlefish show as a cloud of bait right on the bottom. Find candle fish and you significantly improve your odds, find arches and candlefish and it will be hammer time! Candlefish

spawn in the gravel and are rarely found above that. I have caught many blackmouth where their gill plates and bellies were all scraped up. I have even cleaned fish and found gravel in their stomachs. So, where does one target gravel filled salmon? Marine area 5 or basically the Sekiu/Pillar Point area has a few notable blackmouth areas to target. The Caves, Clallam Bay and then Slip Point to Pillar Point can all be awesome blackmouth fisheries. All can be very exposed to winter weather so know your limitations. Help is a longways off if you get in trouble so always error on the cautious side.

Marine area 10 is the Seattle/Bremerton area and includes a number of well known, semi-protected blackmouth fisheries. Kingston, Jeff Head, West Point, Elliot Bay, Alki Point, Point Monroe, Skiff Point, Manchester and different banks or points around Blake Island consistently produce blackmouth. Look at the weather, choose a launch and learn a learn a given area to feed your addiction.

Marine area 11 or the Tacoma area is one of the best small boat blackmouth fisheries on Puget Sound. The Slag Pile, Owens Beach, Clay Banks are all easily accessible from the Point Defiance launch. With the proper boat for the conditions



A nice catch of winter blackmouth.

Dalco Point, the Beach just north of Gig Harbor, Browns Point and Dash Point all offer solid blackmouth fishing. Marine Area 13 is an interesting fishery. It is the area south of The Tacoma Narrows bridge. The whole area is fairly protected from winter weather but the better fishing areas are a bit of a run from any of the all-tide metropolitan ramps. With that said MA 13 is kind of a local's fishery, smaller boats launching into open water from a number of unimproved county ramps. A number of areas stand out including Point Fosdick, various areas around Fox Island, Lyle Point, Oro Bay and Johnson Point all hold fishable numbers of blackmouth.

Blackmouth fishing is a planning and patience game. Chose a ramp, select a handful or areas you want to fish and understand how the tide will impact them. Independent from the tide often the best fishing will be at first light. From there follow your plan, if you make a pass on your initial stop and there are no signs of life move on to plan B and C as required... I know that I mentioned patience but if you're not seeing bait on the meter move on. Typically boat limits will be hard to come by, but put a couple nice blackmouth on ice and you've a good day.

My general blackmouth drill includes trolling with the downriggers or motor mooching cut plug herring. If dogfish are in the area, skip the cut plug plan and stick to trolling. Run 11" flashers ahead of spoons, trolling flies or hoochies.

Spice up the trolling flies and hoochies with salted herring strips. Target schools of bait along the bottom in 90-140' of water while keeping your gear within 5' of the bottom. I troll 2.5-about 3.5 mph for blackmouth and all my blackmouth leaders are tied on 42" of 30# fluorocarbon.

This should get you started in your quest to extend your local salmon fishing opportunities while you freeze your keister off (In thinking about that, maybe I haven't put in enough time...). The when, where and how are baselined but I suggest choosing an area and learning it. Become the local expert! Please remember that



A screenshot from Rocky Point, note the school of bait and chinook.

our winter weather can be unpredictable. Make sure your boat is seaworthy, full of fuel, fuel conditioner and you are dressed for the weather. A little upfront planning will help to assure that you and your crew have a safe and productive blackmouth adventure.

EARLY WINTER STEELHEAD IN SOLITUDE



**Olympic Peninsula
Winter Steelhead**

***Steelhead hold in
different water than coho.***



by Jason Brooks

Solitude is often revered as one reason anglers pursue winter steelhead. Not too long ago you could fish the banks of a river, or float down one, and only see a handful of anglers. It was like a "secret club" where only a few knew what it was like to stand in the frigid waters and cast to a far seam only to feel the tug of a bite and the rod arc while setting the hook. A winter steelhead angler was a bit of an oddity as they enjoyed ice forming on the rod guides, wool gloves

and hats, and those special moments when a large steelhead fought hard. But in the recent years with metal boats having propane heaters, small jet sleds and even hybrid jet-drift boats, pontoon rafts, and GPS mapping systems allowing bank anglers to find secret holes and public gravel bars the winter run steelhead season is more popular than ever. Solitude is even rarer than the elusive 19-pound steelhead.

Early bound fish might be your best bet to get away from the crowds that

are still salmon fishing or chasing big game in the woods. Towards the end of November steelhead will be flooding back into coastal streams with some early run fish already in the systems around Halloween and summer steelhead slowly making their way back downstream. It is a good time to grab the steelhead rod, some cured roe and a few pre-tied leaders to catch these early fish.

Start by realizing that a few hook-ups would be a good

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day and use this time to explore the rivers before the main runs arrive. Most of the fish will be lingering summer run steelhead but a few winter fish that are known to be larger and more aggressive will be had. It is also a good time to bank fish as most boat anglers will be targeting late returning coho in the deep holes and backwater sloughs. A hike along the riverbank to fish seams and boulder gardens will yield steelhead as well as keep you away from other anglers to find that solitude we all seek.

Drift fishing happens to be one of the favorite ways for bank anglers to catch steelhead. Maybe it is the



Cured and dyed shrimp can be deadly.

reminiscing of years gone by where it was the top technique in all of the rivers, or it could be because it lends to the bank angler well. Those that use boats often bobberdog or boondog as they can float long stretches of river and have no need to reel up. Bank bound anglers need to concentrate on smaller areas and pockets which means casting, drifting, reeling, and repeating. This repetition doesn't always mean casting into the same spot as you should work the water, either up to down or close to far, or in reverse, but if you cover all the water where a steelhead might be then it will lead to more fish caught. This is one benefit the bank angler has because as the boats drift lazily along if they are not in the slot where the steelhead are holding then they are simply wasting their time. Bank anglers can cover all the water in front of them and then cover it again as fish move up the river.

Years ago, we were fishing a coastal river and my buddy was trying to tell us where he had hooked fish the day before. It was along a cut-bank where steelhead were holding near an underwater gravel bar and using it as a current break. My son, who was ten at the time and not the best caster, cast his line on the wrong side of the gravel bar, or so we thought but a few second later the line came taunt, and the fish jumped out of the water. Steelhead

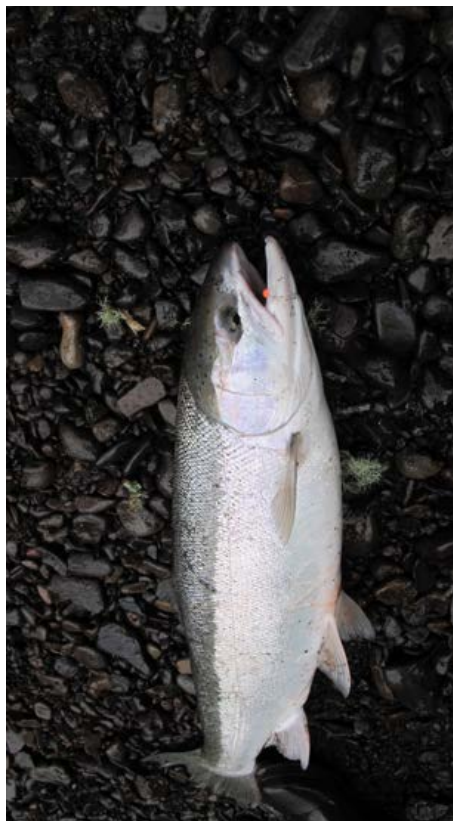
are where you find them and sometimes that does not mean where you think they are. The bank angler can fish diverse types of water and cover productive ground as well as just stay in one spot that holds fish. Boulder gardens are a good example, such as the ones up the Skykomish River. It seems early steelhead are caught here often in November and locals will get to the river early to find "their rock" to stand on and stand there all day.

Do not overlook smaller streams such as the Skookumchuck River, a tributary to the Chehalis River, which sees a late run of coho as well as a robust run of winter steelhead. There are several other streams along the coast as well to explore, with some going up into the Olympic National Park where bank angling really shines. But back to the Skookumchuck where you will find ample bank access including some hike-in spots that will allow you to get away from anglers. Here floating jigs is another fantastic way to find steelhead and not lose gear. It's a simple way to fish, with a handful of jigs, a float, and your rod in hand.

When it comes to baits most anglers use cured salmon roe, with subtle colors such as orange and pink and even a natural cured egg using nothing more than sugar and borax. But don't overlook a few other baits, especially chunks of prawn which can be drift fished or put

onto the jig to add some enticement. Curing the prawn chunks overnight in Pro-Cure's Shrimp and Prawn Cure in orange or pink will not only add bite stimulants and color but also toughen up the shrimp so it will not come off the hook. It is also a great cure for coonstripe shrimp, a favorite for steelhead anglers that fish then behind bait divers and a lure such as Mack's Smile Blade Shrimp Rigs which has pre-snellled hooks with a treble trailer and a smile blade that gives it extra attraction. Another way to fish shrimp and prawns is to split them and then wrap them on plugs or even put a coonstrip shrimp tail or a prawn piece on one of the hooks of a plug. Shrimp are a natural food source and since steelhead feed while migrating to and from the spawning grounds they can't resist them.

Early winter steelhead are not plentiful but they are aggressive fish and easily caught once you find them. Being a sea-run rainbow trout also means they like trout food. Don't overlook nightcrawlers as a bait source. If the water conditions are high or have low visibility then a spin-n-glow plunked with a nightcrawler is a good way to spend an afternoon. As the worm washes out you will notice it turns opaque to a white and even light pink. This is why rubber pink worms work so well after a heavy rain. Worms



***This is what it's
all about!***

will wash into the rivers and trout, especially steelhead, will gorge on them. If you are fishing in a river that has bait restrictions it is hard to beat a rubber pink worm.

Winter steelhead can be larger than their summer cousins, but the early fish are known as "A" runs and tend to be small compared to late winter fish. The famed Cowlitz River did away with the early A run plantings years ago, though some fish still come back. Thanksgiving was a traditional weekend kick-off of winter steelhead fishing back when they still planted these fish. More and more rivers are going to an "in basin" broodstock program using native

origin or wild steelhead to supplement hatchery rearing. This means larger and robust fish and later run timing. It will take a bit to get used to, but early steelhead fishing is not dead, just don't expect a lot of fish like in years past. Then again this can lead to less anglers on the water and allow you to find some solitude. If this is the only reason why you should give early winter steelhead a try, then at least it is a good reason to hit the river. Sometimes catching a fish is only a byproduct of why we go fishing. Grab your rod and lace up the boots, it is time to wander and find a steelhead or two.

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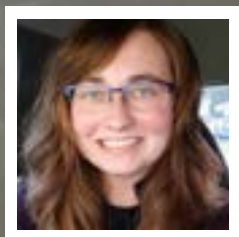
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South Puget Sound Flounder Fishing

Razor Clams: A Washington State Treasure



by Hannah Pennebaker

*The author geared up for
comfort while digging.*

November is always a bittersweet month for us Northwesterners. Most salmon runs have begun to taper off, and we've started to winterize our boats in preparation for the looming snow and ice in the forecast. However, there is one thing to look forward to this month: razor clamming! There are a limited number of razor clams digs every year on the Washington coast, typically taking place in the fall and winter months. These aren't your typical steamer clams. These large clams average around 6 inches and are incredibly meaty and delicious. If you've never had razor clam chowder or razor clam fritters, you're in for a treat! In addition, WDFW has increased the limit from 15 clams to 20 clams this year. Now is the perfect time to give razor clam digging a try.

First, you'll need some basic gear to get started. The good thing about razor clam gear is that once you buy it, you'll usually have it for many more digs to come. You'll need a sturdy shovel or a clam gun. Aluminum clam guns are on the spendier side, but they are much lighter and cut through the sand easier than their steel counterparts. Plus, they don't rust in saltwater environments! Some diggers prefer shovels. I'd recommend trying both and seeing what you prefer. You'll also want to have a net or bag to put your clams in



Clam digs are a family and friend fun time.

while you're digging. You won't want to run back and forth to your car, or set them in a pile on the beach (they can and will dig back down, or get stolen by a seagull). Expect your feet and legs to get splashed by the surf rushing in and out, so wear rubber boots or waders. I wear waders and fasten my net to my belt so I have easy access. Most sporting goods stores in the area also sell clam counters, or you can make your own. Clam counters are a set of beads on a string; simply pull a bead down every time you get a clam and then look at the counter if you lose track. It's easy to do when you're caught up in the fun of spotting clams!

Speaking of spotting clams, how do you know where to start looking for them? Unlike manila or steamer clams, razor clams use their "foot", or digger, to dig down in the sand. They stick their siphon up and into the surf so they can filter feed. During low tide, they are exposed. Walk close to the surf and look for small volcanoes in the sand. Seasoned razor clammers call these "shows". Once you've spotted one, place your clam gun over it. Angle your gun slightly towards the ocean, and bury your gun as far as it will go. Put your finger over the hole in the bottom of the handle, and pull the sand up and out. You'll find the clam in the sand you just pulled out. If you hear a crunching sound while you're digging, stop and try a different angle. Most of the time, you'll get the clam within the first 2 pulls. They won't dig much further than a foot down.

While razor clams are the main attraction, there are plenty of other beach activities you can partake in while you're there. You can bring a PVC hand pump and dig sand shrimp, which make great bait for a variety of different species of fish year round. Sand shrimp shows look very similar to razor clams', so you may accidentally dig up one or two. In general, you'll find them higher up on the beach. One of my favorite things to do is pump up a bucket of sand shrimp and then cure them

up to use for next salmon season. Or, you can put them to use immediately and go fishing for surf perch! Once you've dug your 20 clam limit, bring out your surf perch poles, wade out into the surf, and cast out some sand shrimp on a bottomfish rig. The sweet, delicate meat of surf perch pairs well with razor clam chowder! Beach combing can be a fun activity for kids too young or too worn out to dig. You can find sand dollars, crab shells, and other keepsakes out on the beach. There's something for everyone when you go out razor clamming!

One of the most important things you can do before going out razor clamming is to make sure you have a plan for keeping them alive until you get them home. Like crabs, clams release toxins into their bodies when they die, potentially poisoning all that meat you worked so hard to get. You need to keep them cold, moist, and alive during the long drive home. I usually bring a towel, a cooler, and a bag of ice. Dunk the towel in saltwater, place it on the ice, and then put your clams on the towel. Never keep your clams in a bucket of water on the trip home; you run the risk of the clams using up all the dissolved oxygen and dying. Ice keeps the clams cold, and the towel keeps them moist. Once you get the clams home, you can keep them in the cooler until the next day, or put them in the fridge with the towel.



Cleaning and preparing the razor clams is the next step! Get a pot of water boiling on the stove, and prepare an ice water bath. Once the water is boiling, dunk a few razor clams and wait for them to pop open. Immediately take them out and submerge them in the ice bath, separating the meat from the shell. Razor clam meat is delicate

and cooks quickly, so it's imperative to cool it down right away. Once you've got a bowl of razor clam meat, it's time to clean them. There are many videos on how to do this; I find it easier to have a visual aid. Now your clams are ready for clam chowder, fritters, or seafood linguini!

As with any fishery, there are some rules we must follow to ensure the resource sticks around for future generations. You are required to keep the first 20 clams you dig, regardless of size or condition. If you dig up a small clam, it's illegal to put it back, even if you bury and cover it back up. The same rules apply to crushed clams. Most importantly, check

your rules and regulations before heading out. Clam digs are restricted by time, date, and beach. This is because razor clams have the chance of carrying high levels of domoic acid, and WDFW must test them first, to ensure they are safe for consumption. Check before digging!

Now you're ready to go out and dig some razor clams of your own. With the increased 20 clam limit, this is a great year to try razor clamming, or get back into it if it's been a while since you've gone. There's nothing better than a fresh, steaming bowl of razor clam chowder on a cold November day. Hope to see you out there on the next razor clam dig!



wigglesfin.com



Shake-n-Bake Salmon Nuggets



by Jason Brooks

Salmon are one of the best eating fish and for good reason. But if you are tired of baked and barbecued fillets, or just don't have the time to cook salmon steaks then try this easy and quick recipe for seasoned salmon nuggets. They can be eaten as an appetizer, a main dish or even used as a salad topping the next day when cold. This is sure to be your new favorite dish.

INGREDIENTS

1 pound of salmon fillet, de-skinned and cut into 1-inch cubes (cut out any bones as well)

1 seasoning packet of Shake-n-Bake

2 Tablespoons of coconut oil

DIRECTIONS

1. Place the cubed salmon and the seasoning mix into the plastic bag that comes with the Shake-n-Bake and mix it, coating all of the salmon.

2. Heat the coconut oil in a frying pan until it is hot enough to fry the fish. Then fry the salmon pieces until done, about 3 to 4 minutes. Remove the salmon pieces to a place with a paper towel to drain any excess oil and serve.

3. Any left overs are great cold and can be used for a salad topping or mix with mayonnaise and dill pickle relish for a quick salmon salad mix.



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Bank on Hybrid Bass at Ana Reservoir

Insight from the state record hybrid bass angler.

Chad Meadows with an Ana Reservoir hybrid bass that weighed 15.2 pounds. Due to constant water temperature, Ana Reservoir does not freeze over and is a popular destination in the winter months. Photo courtesy Chad Meadows.



by Gary Lewis

Gary Lewis is twice a past president of the Northwest Outdoor Writers Association and a recipient of NOWA's Enos Bradner and Legacy awards.
garylewisoutdoors.com - Instagram: **[@garylewisoutdoors](https://www.instagram.com/garylewisoutdoors)**

There's only one place in Oregon where you can catch a hybrid bass, that sterile cross between a white bass and a striper. Hybrid bass are stocked in Ana Reservoir to control the invasive tui chub and provide the raw materials for fish and chips.

"It should be good," Chad Meadows said. "The moon is going away and the fish will be feeding ahead of the darker night."

Ninety-nine miles from my front door in Bend, Oregon, the drive usually takes a bit less than two hours, and the mercury was headed to a balmy 60 degrees on a January afternoon.

Brimming with confidence, Brooke Snavelly, Tim Wehde and I climbed into the Ford and drove down toward the town of Summer Lake and made that left turn onto Carlon where Ana Reservoir came into view.



Chad Meadows and his cousin Dakota Toombs were there ahead of us, their baits already wet.

As we pulled on boots, my mom and dad showed up. And friend Troy Boyd would join us later. Several people in our party had two-rod licenses, so there would be a lot of bait in the water. That's what it takes. Or so they say.

Hybrid bass have proved elusive for me. This was not my first quest for hybrids or wipers or whatever we decide to call them that day. I'm still in the dues-paying stage. It's not that I don't know where to fish. I do. And I know when to fish. And I know what bait to use. And who to fish with.

Chad Meadows holds the state record for hybrid bass. That biggest Ana wiper weighed 19 pounds, 12 ounces, caught on a kid's trout rod on a December day in 2014.

Ana Reservoir is stocked regularly with rainbow trout. Hybrid bass are stocked as fingerlings every other year. Averaging 20 feet in depth, it is fed by cold and hot springs that keep the lake constant in temperature. Since the bass do not expend energy spawning they are long-lived, and they can get big in the food-rich water. Five-pound fish are common and it is not unusual to catch bass of 10 pounds or more. Those big ones Ana anglers call windshield wipers.

On light fluorocarbon lines, we offered our baits to the big bass. Slip sinkers would allow the fish to pick up the baits without feeling the weight. Our temptations were the usual whole shrimp, poultry livers and other goodies.

Meadows, after decades of plying Ana's waters likes to use 24 inches of fluorocarbon leader terminated with an egg loop knot on a 1/0 bait hook. To switch things up he uses a rainbow pattern Rapala. Like the one he caught the state record on. And Meadows is not above a little superstition. He still fishes on each trip with the rod he caught that biggest bass on - his little boy's trout combo spinning rod and reel complete with green and red and blue lights that whirl like a UFO going up

into the starry desert sky.

We soaked our baits as the sun slid behind Winter Rim and thought of soldier/explorer/politician John C. Fremont and his men slogging down those slopes to the shores of Summer Lake on a December day back in 1843.

The bass stole our baits with the skill of a Washington D.C. politico or a New York pickpocket. Time after time, the fish picked up the bait then spit it out. Sometimes the line would pull out fast and I'd set the hook. Into nothing. That's how it goes.

Meadows, Toombs, Snively and Boyd had all seen the fishing at its finest, but wipers are fickle. Sometimes the bite just turns on. You want to be there when it happens. I want to be there when it happens.

At dark, Meadows, Snively, Boyd and Wehde stalked the shoreline casting Rapalas. Meadows hooked one and battled it in. We didn't weigh it, but it's safe to say it was 1/19th the size of his trophy fish. He let it go to prowl the channels and put on a few pounds before someone gets him again.

I guess I've told you where to fish and how to fish. But there's more. You want to fish when the bite is on. Watch for a waning moon, ahead of a falling barometer. Build a fire and drown your bait. It should be good.



Chad Meadows with the state record hybrid bass. This fish tipped the scales at 19 pounds, 12 ounces. It measured 31-1/2 inches long and had a girth of 25 inches.

Photo courtesy Chad Meadows



GARY LEWIS BIO

Gary Lewis is an award-winning author, TV host, speaker and photographer. He 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.

How to Weigh a Fish for the Record Book

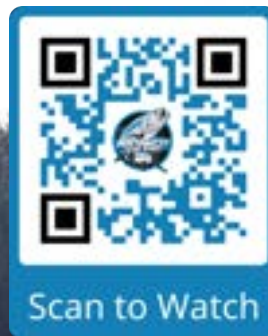
If you think the fish you just landed is a candidate for the record books, you need to act fast. Follow these steps:

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- 2.** Weigh the fish on a certified scale (grocery store) as soon as possible.
- 3.** Obtain signatures and contact information of scale operators and witnesses.
- 4.** Take side-view photos of fish.
- 5.** Take fish to a Department of Fish and Wildlife office for verification.
- 6.** Fill out state record application and have witnesses endorse it.

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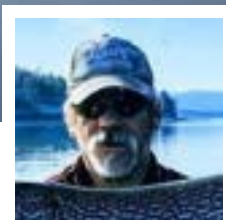
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*Smallmouth Bass
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LATE FALL BASS STRATEGIES

You'll be glad you gave jerk baits a try!



by Rick Lawrence

As the water cools in the fall, bass get the urge to put the feed bag on. In the lakes and rivers of the inland N.W. where I spend most of my time, this means Smallmouth's are going to be looking up and feeding on a variety of baitfish. In the late fall, with the clear cold water (below 60 degrees) and upward-looking Smallmouth bass only means one thing. Its jerkbait time baby, as this creates the perfect scenario to load the boat with suspending jerkbaits.

Smallmouths are very visual feeders and in clear water they can see a jerkbait moving above from a long ways off. I like to cast up to shore and bring my bait from shallow to deeper water. I feel the most aggressive fish are either right on the current breaks or actively feeding on the flat. Those are the ones I want to catch first on the jerkbait as will be the most

active. I will also throw a dropshot rig or a ned rig to catch some of the less aggressive fish. I mainly only fish for Smallies this late in the fall as they are stacked up on the current breaks in the river and are tons of fun to catch.

Water clarity is very important for jerkbait fishing; the clearer the water, the better. Water usually clears up as it cools anyway, but you really want to avoid dark-water



Two nice bass caught on jerk baits.

environments with this presentation.

Another thing that's important to keep in mind is that the colder the water temperatures are, the longer you should pause the jerkbait on your retrieve. If water temperatures are in the high 30's, you might need to wait 10+ seconds with only slight pop in-between, before a fish is willing to commit to striking your bait. If temperatures are up in the 50's, you may only need to wait a couple seconds with 2 or 3 hard twitches to get them to trigger. Experimentation is key, but keep this in mind as a general rule of

thumb, and only move the bait with the rod tip and never the reel. I reel and twitch the bait at the same time, but I only use the reel to take up the slack. When you are twitching the bait you have to start and end with a slack line. This is how you make the bait dart erratically and when the bait pauses the bass see that as the act of a wounded dying minnow triggering the strike. I test every jerkbait I fish no matter if it is a high-end bait or a cheap China knock off. Ninety nine out of one hundred baits will not perfectly suspend and can be tweaked a little to make it better.

Most jerkbaits will float

up slowly and can be fixed by adding either one size larger hook or suspend strips. This is true of Megabass, Rapala or Luckycraft and you would think for the cost of some of these jerkbaits they would be perfect right out of the box. Most of the time thus is not the case and you have to add a little weight to get a perfectly suspending bait. Make sure when you're testing a bait that has weight transfer steel balls that roll inside it that they are forward when testing it for balance. I use the Storm suspend strips a lot. These are thin strips of zinc with a self sticking back that you can use to easily tune your baits. You can find them online and most major sporting goods shops. They come in packs of 70 strips about 1" long by ¼" wide for around 8 bucks. I try to tune my baits in the water temp I plan to fish at because when the air inside of a bait gets colder it tends to lose buoyancy. So you might start with a bait that will suspend perfectly and after a few minutes in the water it will sink slowly.

So try to make sure that bait suspends as close as possible to dead flat and not floating up or sinking down. If your bait floats slowly nose up, I add a bit of weight to the bottom of the nose of the bait. If it floats tail up add a little under the tail. About the only way to fix baits that sink, is to add smaller hooks and split rings if you can get away with it. If not I sometimes save those baits for when I

need to fish a little deeper. Although that's not ideal, as I would still rather fish a deep diving truly suspending bait over one that slowly sinks.

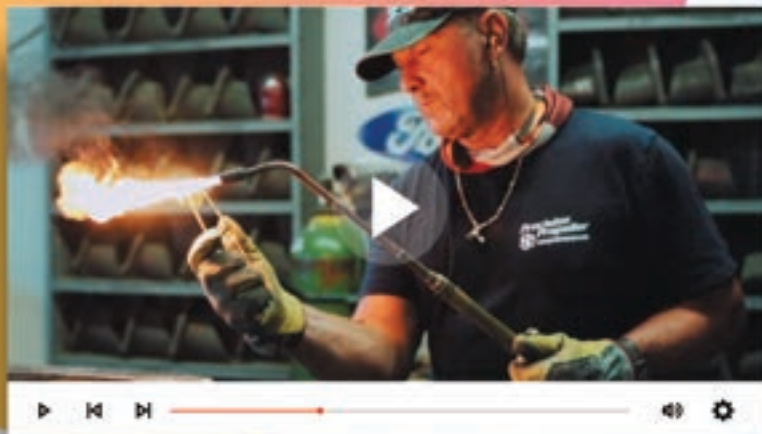
There are a lot of great jerkbaits on the market, but here are a few of my favorites. A Strike king KDV 300, Megabass Vision 110 and 110 plus 1, Rapala X rap and Shadow rap, and the Lucky Craft Pointers. I like to use only natural and transparent colors for these clear water conditions.

So get out there and find a good current break in about 10 to 15 feet of water and if you throw a properly suspending jerkbait you will be able to load your boat too.



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Fall Bass and Fall Out at State Parks



by John Kruse

This is the time of year when many anglers winterize their boats and put them away until spring but they are missing out on some great fall bass fishing.

I had the opportunity to chat with Ed Chin, a well-known Pacific Northwest tournament angler and the owner of All About Adventure Excursions (www.aaaexcursions.com), for an interview that aired last week on Northwestern Outdoors Radio.

Some of Chin's favorite waters to fish for fall bass include the Columbia River from Portland to the Tri-Cities as well as Banks Lake, Potholes Reservoir and Lake Roosevelt. Chin says these bass are, "Moving out of their traditional summer areas, moving up into the shallows...There putting that fall time, winter time feedbag on so they're going to be aggressive." Chin will use what he calls search baits like spinnerbaits or lipless Rat-L-Trap style crankbaits or a medium to deep-diving crankbait to find these aggressive fish, which often school up together during the autumn months. Once the reaction bite dies off for the aggressive fish, Chin will often turn to soft plastics to tempt more reluctant fish in these schools to bite. Chin likes to use a drop shot rig, fishing the

plastic about 16-inches off the bottom. Chin reminds anglers the fish will be deep part of the day and shallow during other times so don't just fish one depth this time of year. Chin also suggests moving on to new places when the bite in any particular spot dies off after using this searching hard bait/finessing soft bait tactic. Good fall fishing should be available for bass anglers through mid-November as long as the weather cooperates.

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS DIRECTOR OUT:


Meanwhile, in our state capitol, State Parks Director Peter Mayer stepped down on October 6th. A press release from Washington State Parks stated, "Mayer's decision to resign is based on the best interest of his family and he steps down as director to pursue other

opportunities closer to his new home. “ This explanation is as fishy as Ed Chin’s bass. Mayer’s home in Issaquah isn’t exactly a world away from Olympia, let alone out of state, or even east of the Cascades and he only started his job as the director in March. Furthermore, Mayer’s decision comes in the wake of three special meetings that took place on September 22nd, October 4th and October 6th where the State Parks Commission immediately went into executive session.

The purpose of these meetings, according to published agendas, “Is for the Commission to receive and evaluate complaints brought against a public officer or employee, and to determine and/or set the proper course of action in light of the complaints.” In the latter meetings the agenda also addressed the potential need to put the employee in question on administrative leave and whether an interim officer should be put in the employee’s place to fulfill their duties.” All of the meetings immediately went into Executive Session and there is no public record of what transpired except for Mayer’s sudden resignation the same day the October 6th meeting took place. When asked what the nature of the complaint was and if Mayer was the subject of the complaint, Washington State Parks Communications Manager Amanda McCarthy stated, “Mr. Mayer voluntarily resigned” and “Since the meeting was related to an ongoing personnel matter, I do not have any additional details to provide at this time.” The bottom line? Something happened to force Mayer out, but nobody at Washington State Parks is saying why right now. I have put in a Public Disclosure Request in an effort to find out more details.



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HOODSPORT CHUMS

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Mike Carey
@mikecareynwfr



Hoodsport Hatchery Chum Salmon

For salmon anglers in the Pacific Northwest, November heralds the final transition from targeting open saltwater to focusing on tidewaters and rivers.

Yes, there are some saltwater opportunities (for example, blackmouth, when open), but the vast majority of anglers have put away their boats and are pursuing salmon in the rivers. That said, there are some prime opportunities to target and catch salmon out of your fishing boats, so don't button them up just yet!

One of my favorite fisheries out of my boat in November has to be the Hoodsport chum fishery. The fight of a 10-15 pound chum ranks up there as one of the hardest fighting salmon you can catch. Taking on a chum with steelhead gear will give you all the battle you could ask for as these brutes slash and pull with every ounce of energy they have. One look at their fighting canine teeth and you'll know this is a fish that is serious, very serious, about its reproducing goal.

All up and down Hood Canal you'll find chum as they work their way toward their spawning grounds. The state hatchery at Hoodsport and three miles south of there at Potlatch (a smaller, Native American hatchery) are the destination for

many of these chum as they work their way down Hood Canal.

I have caught fish in both locations, and each spot has reason to recommend it. Potlatch, being smaller, has limited shore angling and parking, which is roadside only. That said, there are also fewer anglers there. Hoodsport, meanwhile, is the Fishing Mecca that chum anglers are drawn to. Fishing right out in front of the hatchery and watching hundreds of fish jockey for position as the tide sweeps them into the small feeder creek leading to the hatchery is truly a sight to behold. Of course, along with the fish comes combat fishing in all its glory. As the tide

comes in and fishing space decreases getting to know your neighbor takes on a whole new meaning.

If you're a fortunate one you'll be fishing out of a boat – or some type of floating device. The waters around Hoodsport are open and the wind can come up and blow hard, plus fast running tides can make it a challenge to get an anchor to set. Be sure to bring an anchor with some bite, and terminal chain so you'll stick in the rocky bottom. I've seen anglers fishing out of all manner of floating devices on calm days, including single person pontoons and float tubes. Be sure to have your life jackets on and just don't venture too far off shore. If you are feeling anxious that's your inner voice telling you a fish isn't worth your life – pay attention to it!

For boaters, the launch is two miles south of Hoodsport at the Skokomish Park at Potlatch. The launch has two concrete lanes which are in varying state of repair (read that as back down with caution!). There is ample parking, and a restroom. Once launched it's a quick run to either terminal hatchery, faster to the small Potlatch facility.

When you arrive, survey the already anchor boats, taking into account the amount of anchor line you'll need to get a solid grip on the bottom, as well as the shore anglers. Anchoring



Yes, Hoodsport is combat fishing, for both shore anglers and boaters.

too close to the shore bound anglers will earn you a steady rain of lures and weights at your boat. Stay outside their casting zone - you'll have plenty of water to work over and opportunities to catch fish the shore anglers don't have.

As to the type of gear you should bring... you're going to enjoy a variety of methods to catch these Hoodsport chum. Like chum everywhere, chartreuse and green are always great colors to choose. Pink or cerise is also good color choices. For rod/reel setups I use my steelhead gear, both spinning reels and casting will get the job done. I like an 8 ½ foot medium action rod. Line should be strong enough to turn these big brutes so as to avoid massive tangle ups with your fellow anglers. I like 18-20 pound test. Chums are not leader shy in my

experience so keep things hefty.

What technique you use is up to you but here are a few tried and true methods:

Floats and jigs , or floats and corkies with yarn can be deadly. A ¼ or 3/8-ounce pink, black or purple marabou jig fished under a float is deadly. Tipped with a piece of shrimp meat or coon shrimp tail is even better. The yarn is a nice trick as it helps by getting caught up in the chums teeth, allow you to drive the hook home. Other bait you can put under a float includes the ever popular anchovy or herring, whole or plug cut.

Think of the tide as the river current. Set your depth for the lure so it's running a foot or so off the bottom. Vary the depth if you aren't getting bites. These fish



Chums come equipped with some big canines.

will hit suspended jigs. Cast “upstream”, i.e. up into the tide, and let your gear drift down with the tide to the end of the “drift”. If the coast is clear, free spool your line, keeping the float straight up and down to extend the drift. When the float goes under set the hook and be ready to do battle!

Twitching jigs – ditch the float and cast the jig on its own. Another effective technique, but be prepared for a lot of foul-hooked chum. Dragging a chum in by the tail is not fun, nor is it sporting to be snagging fish. If you find yourself foul hooking too many fish move on to a different method...

Casting spinners. Again, it's a solid technique to try if the action is slow. I personally would remove

the treble hook and use a single si-wash hook. A number 3 or 4 blade fished with a slow retrieve is just the ticket.

Corkie, yarn, and slinky. I personally have caught a lot of fish using this method and seldom snag fish. Again, think of the tide as a river. Cast out and let your gear drift. You'll know you have a bite because your rod will be about ripped out of your hands. I use a 3-4 foot leader length.

Regarding the above technique, I'm sure I'm going to get comments about flossing – I personally think it's a bunch of malarkey. Why do I say that? Because I remember a day years ago fishing Hoodsport when the chum were in thick, jumping all around us, swimming by in schools of 10-20 fish. I had my corkie/yarn/slinky set up

going, casting, retrieving, and not getting a bump for a good hour. Suddenly, the bite magically turned on and my gear started getting bit. In came fish after fish, hooked in the jaw. Explain to me how one can have a steady procession of fish go by with mouths open for a good hour and not “floss” one fish, then suddenly start catching one jaw hooked fish after another? And trust me when I say this, those hook-ups were solid strikes, not to be mistaken with a snagging sensation. Anyway, the flossing debate is one we anglers love to engage in every year and likely will do so as long as we fish corkies.

The fly fishermen do quite well at Hoodsport as well, fishing sinking tips and flies of various styles and colors. I'm not a fly guy but it sure does look like fun. Maybe my next trip I'll give it a try.

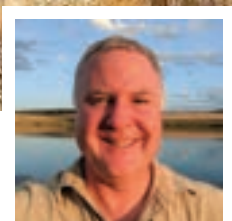
Before you set out, be sure to check the Hoodsport netting line at 360-877-5222. Typically the nets go in on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but this is not set in stone. There's nothing worse than driving a hundred miles only to find nets spread in every direction. So save yourself that aggravation before you set out.

Fishing for hard fighting chum is a blast. Get in on the action this November!

Editor's Note – this article was first published in November 2019.

HUNTING AND FISHING ROUNDUP

Rob Endsley, host of The Outdoor Line on ESPN 710 in Seattle, tagged out opening weekend on this massive Okanogan County buck – Courtesy Rob Endsley



by John Kruse

COLUMBIA GORGE COHO

Brandi Jo Moore At Gorge Outfitters Supply says the coho salmon fishing is really good on the Columbia River at the mouth of the Klickitat. In Moore's words, "There are lots of anglers there and lots of salmon being caught." At the mouth of the Deschutes Moore says, "It's slower, there are less anglers, but it's still producing." As far as how anglers are catching these coho salmon Moore

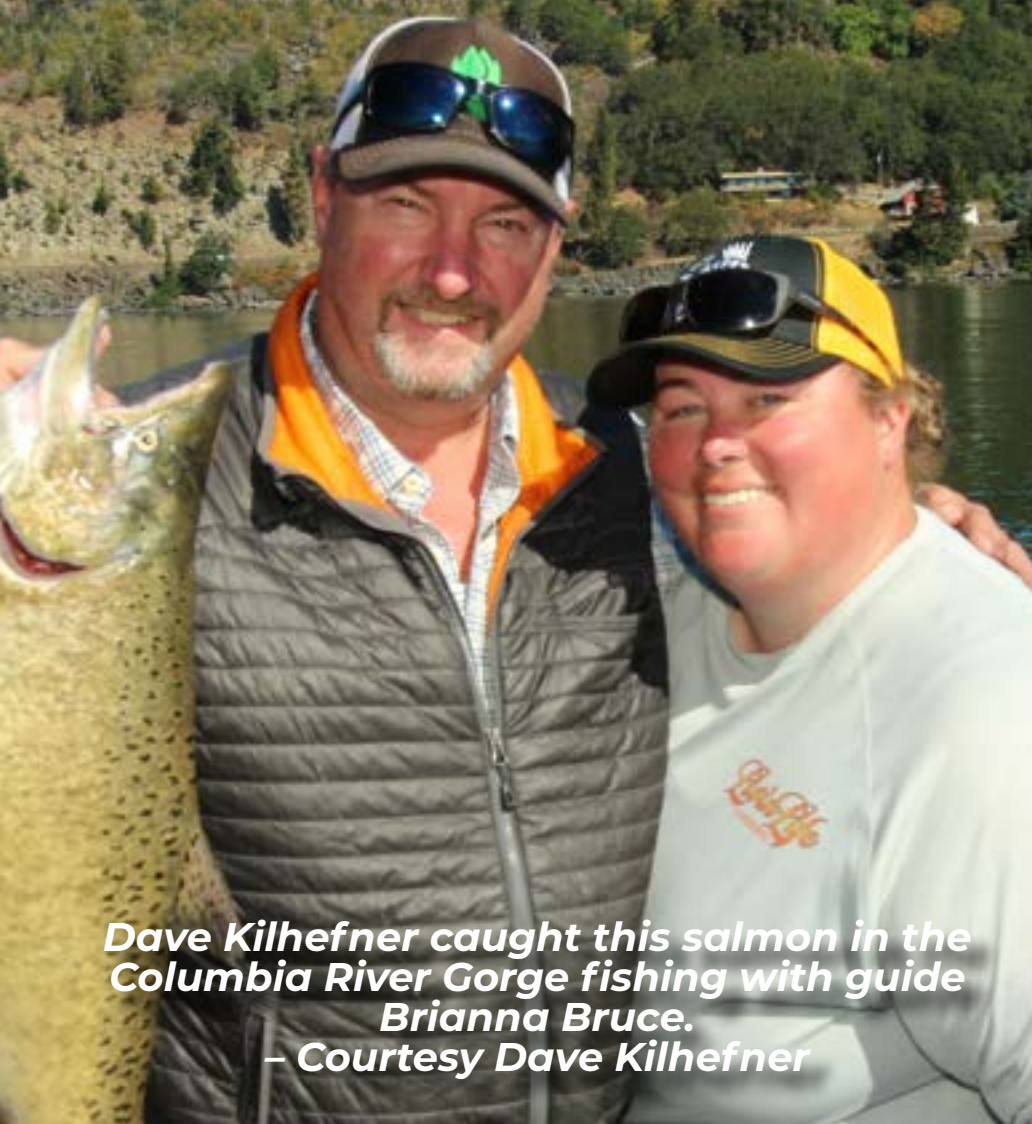
suggests casting Blue Fox spinners or trolling Brads Wiggles. Moore said they are also still catching Chinook salmon at the mouth of the Klickitat River as well and hover fishing with salmon eggs remains an effective way to catch the Kings.

Another species to go after in the Columbia River Gorge is walleye. Moore says, "The walleye fishing is starting to pick up and the hot and heavy fishing for trophies should take off in about a month." Try trolling a Bandit plug, jigging or

fishing a spinner-worm harnesses deep for success right now on the Columbia River between Rufus and Boardman. You'll find all of these lures and more for walleye and salmon at Gorge Outfitters Supply in Rufus.

TROUT DERBY FINALE

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's annual trout derby ends after Halloween.



***Dave Kilhefner caught this salmon in the Columbia River Gorge fishing with guide Brianna Bruce.
– Courtesy Dave Kilhefner***

This year 100 lakes were stocked with tagged fish and if you catch one and report it, you'll be eligible for a nice prize. Over 70 businesses provided prizes this year valued at \$38,000. So why are we bringing up this derby so late? Because more than half of these tagged fish have not yet been caught and this is a great time to fish for trout as they put on the proverbial feedbag before winter. You can find a stocked lake near you and more details about this program at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/contests/trout-derby>.

OPENING WEEKEND HUNTING RESULTS

Staci Lehman, the Public Affairs Officer for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in Eastern Washington, said some 300 hunters came through staffed check stations in Northeast Washington during the opening weekend, the vast majority of them deer hunters. There were about 50 harvested deer brought in and samples were taken from white-tailed deer to see if any of them test positive for Chronic Wasting Disease. There were no check stations in the Winthrop

area this year but there are plans to have it open next October.

Captain Mike Sprecher said the opening weekend for deer hunters was "fairly typical" but hunter numbers were down a little. Unfortunately, WDFW Enforcement Officers did find several hunters doing things they shouldn't be doing to include trespassing on private lands, spotlighting deer at night and taking some non-legal animals.

As for duck hunting, Lehman was able to forward me information from three WDFW regulated access waterfowl hunting areas in the Desert Wildlife Area within Grant County. Hunter numbers were down this year, partially due to the drought and a lack of water. A total of 54 hunters were checked with 115 ducks for an average harvest of 2.1 ducks per hunter. In comparison, 3.1 ducks were taken on average by hunters in the same area last year during the opening weekend of waterfowl season. Lehman encourages hunters to stop by check stations, even if they aren't successful. The staff members at these stations want to know what you are seeing in the field and answer any questions you have. If you do harvest a deer, biologists can help you figure out the age of your buck and if it's your first deer ever, they'll even give you a certificate commemorating that milestone event!



NW Good Eats: Duck Poppers

Rob Holman, Bob Loomis of Mack's Lure, Duane Inglin of Fish Hunt Northwest, and Dakota Poorman on a cast and blast adventure



by Hillary Holman
[@thereelgal](#) [#nwgoodeats](#)

The harvest season is upon us, and ducks are in the air! This time of year Rob heads out, with his posse, for a weekend getaway full of comradery, casting and blasting to Potholes Reservoir to meet up with local guide Shelby Ross, owner of Ross Outdoor Adventures and the Potholes Duck Taxi. In the Holman house we look to this local legend to recreate his Duck Poppers. Shelby has been guiding

on Potholes Reservoir since 1996 and offers this tasty treat to those who book a guided duck hunt with the Potholes Duck Taxi. For those of you who are not familiar with this local legend, Shelby is a blond, bearded, stout man that operates guided waterfowl and fishing trips on the Potholes Reservoir and throughout Eastern Washington. You may have seen him on NWFR TV in our Cast and Blast

Adventures. Shelby's Duck Poppers are legendary and recreating them is a standard practice for those who have experienced his field version of this tasty morsel.

The Legend: Shelby Ross, Potholes Duck Taxi

Where: Potholes Reservoir Eastern Washington

The Target: Duck

Season: October through January (107 day season, the longest in the country)

What's Cooking: Duck Poppers

The Duck Taxi has been around since the 50's & the Duck Poppers recipe evolution started back when the Meseburg brothers, Dave & Mike owned the Duck Taxi. The recipe began in the late 1970's when Dave & Mike forgot their lunch and used a 5 gallon charcoal heater bucket in the blind to cook up a duck breast skewered on a willow branch. The beginning of the Duck Popper evolution took off from there. Other hunters began adding a piece of bacon here, an apple there, onion, sausage, really whatever was in reach. From that moment on, the Duck Taxi duck kabobs became a staple in the blind on guided trips with the Duck Taxi.

Shelby began his guiding career with the Meseburgs in 1996 on the Potholes Reservoir, however it wasn't until about 5 years later that Shelby stumbled upon a recipe that would make the skewer of deliciousness what it is today.

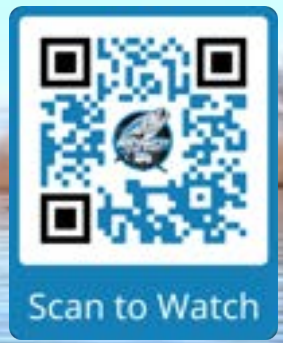
Shelby tells the story of when he was watching a TV show, showcasing dove hunting in Argentina. The show included a demonstration of their poppers and Shelby took notes. The recipe used halved or quartered jalapenos, filled with cream cheese, dove breast laid atop, then was wrapped with bacon, skewered & grilled. This was the beginning of something great! Shelby took this idea to the field and began using this technique with

marinated duck breast in place of the dove, skewered with a willow branch and grilled on the charcoal bucket of days old. Shelby took ownership of the Duck Taxi in 2016, now known as the Potholes Duck Taxi, and has been using his recipe in the field to carry on the Meseburg tradition. Can it be that easy to recreate this legendary tasty morsel? Can wrapping a halved jalapeno with with bacon and adding duck and cream cheese be that good? Shelby put his own spin on the original Argentina recipe that takes this recipe to the next level, giving it its legendary status.

The Field

The Potholes Duck Taxi provides guided & non-guided trips during the 107 day waterfowl season





Walleye and Waterfowl on the Potholes Reservoir NWFRTV#78



here in Washington. The Pacific Flyway, that includes Washington state, is known far and wide for having the longest season in the nation on waterfowl. Hunters come from all around the country to experience waterfowl hunting with the Potholes Duck Taxi.

What to Bring

You will need to purchase your Washington State small game hunting license, your migratory bird endorsement & your federal duck stamp; remember to sign your license and federal duck stamp as required. In addition, bring your own shot gun and #2 steel shotshells. Dress in camo or tan & drab colors and dress in layers. The

boat ride can be chilly & some days are warm by noon. Being able to remove layers is better than not having enough. Insulated rubber boots or waders are recommended.

What to Expect

The afternoon before your hunt, you'll be notified via phone call of the departure time from the MarDon Resort dock, this is typically 1 to 1 ½ hours prior to legal shooting light. Legal shooting light changes every Monday and is classified as ½ hour before official sunrise. Whether you are on a non-guided trip or guided trip, you can expect a few things from the Potholes Duck Taxi. The Potholes Duck Taxi delivers you a brushed and

pre-scouted blind. Kayaks are provided for those on non-guided hunts to retrieve their harvest. Non-guided hunters do their own "calling", retrieving, eats and jokes! On a guided trip, you will be provided a guide who will do the calling for you (and likely will provide several jokes), a dog for retrieval, and the legendary Duck Poppers. Hunts generally conclude mid-afternoon. For those on an October Cast and Blast Adventure, this is where your fishing experience begins. There is an intermission back at the Mardon Resort at this time for you to change clothing and recharge for your afternoon of fishing.

Duck Poppers Recipe

***Makes approximately 32 poppers**

By Tanys Ross



The duck poppers were breakfast and it was rejuvenating. Like when you go on a long hike and bring along some salami. Yumm!



- Cameron Holman

Ingredients

4 large duck breasts;
1" cubed, 8 cubes per breast

8 skewers; each skewer will hold 4 poppers, any more is too many & they won't cook evenly

8 large jalapenos; each large jalapeno makes 4 poppers (small makes 2) buy accordingly

1 cream cheese brick; approximately 1 TBL scoop for each popper

16 strips of thin sliced bacon, halved to make 32 smaller strips

1 bottle Sesame Ginger Teriyaki marinade

Seasoning of choice, may use salt & pepper

Prep

1. Pre-soak your duck for 1 to 2 days ahead of time in a bowl of water in the fridge. Change water 3 to 4 times each day as this removes the excess blood and influences the flavor. Drain, then set aside to marinate

2. Prepare your marinade; use what you like. Shelby uses Sesame Ginger Teriyaki. Put your duck in the marinade and let it sit overnight or as long as you can allow. Shelby will often freeze the duck in the marinade for a later time in Ziplock baggies or freezer-safe containers, which will also minimize freezer burn.

3. Cut off ends of the jalapenos and cut into halves. Scrape away all of the seeds, then quarter the halves. For smaller jalapenos, do not quarter, just use the half.

4. Scoop approximately 1 Tablespoon of cream cheese onto the center of the jalapeno

5. Add 1" cube of marinated duck breast

6. Wrap in the halved strip of bacon; Shelby uses Honey Maple bacon and insists that whatever kind of bacon you like, it **MUST** be thin sliced. The cooking time for the thin bacon is optimal for rare to medium rare duck.

7. Skewer each popper onto the skewer with no more than 4 poppers per skewer

8. Season the outside of the bacon with preferred seasoning; Shelby likes to use Alpine Touch's Prairie Fire

Shelby uses a charcoal grill made out of a 5 gallon metal bucket with charcoal grate half way up and a grill grate on the top. He keeps a spray bottle close by to control the temperature of the fire and so the bacon does not burn. When at home, Shelby uses a Traeger. He flips the poppers halfway through to obtain the required grill marks for flavor and presentation.

**The Potholes Duck Taxi/
Ross Outdoor Adventures**
(509)750-7763
ducktaxi.com



Washington Department of
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GIFT GUIDE



by Hillary Holman
@thereelgal #nwgoodeats

7 Holiday Gift Ideas for your Angler

1.



Mack's Lure WEDDING RING®

Give a little *BLING* with the Mack's Lure Wedding Ring®! This Spinner has been a favorite for over 50 years. Available in 22 fish-catching options for everything from salmon to panfish, this tackle-box staple is sure to help you catch more fish.

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2.



Wiggle Fin SWARM Flasher System Large

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3.



GHUnders Finger-less Gloves

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4.

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5.

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6.

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Keep your Lures Safe with this vinyl mesh series mega sleeve with 9 pockets 5 1/2 wide x 14" high, flasher and lure open pocket sleeve. This roll-up style with handles and a strap is durable and will last for years. Free shipping for purchases \$50 and over.

Coupon Code: USA, Good for 10% off your total purchase good through Black Friday \$39.99 Available at **Luresafe.com**
@luresafetacklecovers

7.

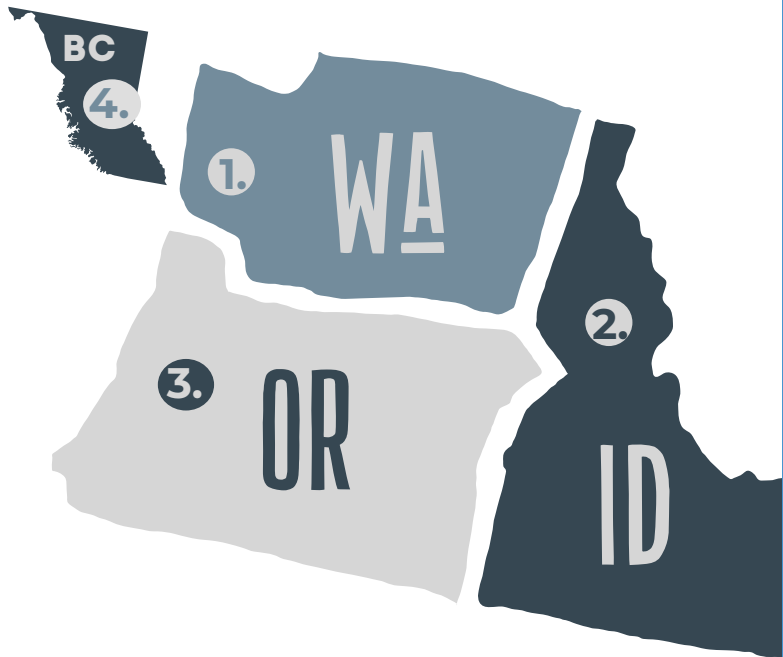
Sportfishing Guided Trip

What better gift to give than a Professional Sportfishing Guided trip with a local expert. Check out the Guide directory in this issue of NW Reel Life to find a guide near you. Contact individual guide for pricing.

NorthwestFishingReports.com



DIRECTORY



FISH KEY

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


Destinations


1. **Mardon Resort**
(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**
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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**
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reelobsession.ca
BC Fishing Lodge

1. **Reel Time Fishing**
(208) 790-2128
reeltimefishing.com
Columbia, Snake, Clearwater Rivers

1. **Rising Son GS**
(509) 492-8852
risingsonadventures.wixsite.
com/fishing
Columbia River & Central WA

1. **Ross Outdoor Adventures**
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rossoutdooradventures.com
Potholes Reservoir, Moses Lake,
Banks Lake

1. **SJM Guide Service**
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sjmguideservice.com
Columbia River & Lake Roosevelt

2. **Snake Dancer Excursions**
Hell's Canyon Fishing Adventures

1. **Steel Dreams Guide Service**
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lipripperlures.com

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mackslure.com

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fishingtacklecovers.com

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oldgoatlures.com

Superfly Flies
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superflyflies.com

Wigglefin Tackle
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wigglefin.com

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scuttlebuttbrewing.com
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(866) 209-4882
tannersfish.com

Skip Rock Distillers
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skiprockdistillers.com

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Life Outdoors

The Weekender Report

There's more than one way to put a turkey on your table for Thanksgiving. Rather than head to the grocery store, hunters plan to get their birds during the hunting season for wild turkey already underway in eastern Washington.

While turkey hunting is a great way to get out this November, there are many other outdoor activities to consider with the family. Early winter is a great time to be thankful for Washington game, fish, or wildlife viewing outdoor adventures.

Trout

Late fall is a great time for trout fishing as WDFW continues its year-round stocking of lakes throughout Washington. That includes the annual Black Friday fishing event, when anglers are encouraged to hit their local waters on the day after Thanksgiving. Visit WDFW's website to see what lakes are still being stocked near you.

Razor clams

Razor clam digs are expected to continue through the end of the year, with 17 digs tentatively scheduled in November and another 20 in December. The temporarily increased limit of 20 clams should remain in effect throughout 2021.

Crab

Winter crabbing remains open seven days a week for Dungeness, red rock, and Tanner crab in select Puget Sound marine areas throughout November and December. Be sure to pick up a winter crab catch record card before hitting the water.

Steelhead

Fisheries for hatchery steelhead are drawing anglers to rivers on both sides of the Cascades. Much of the Columbia River also opens for winter steelhead beginning Nov. 1 and runs through the end of the year.

Squid fishing

It's a great time to jig for squid at select piers along Puget Sound. Visit our squid fishing webpage for tips on how to fish for squid and tasty recipes.



WDFW Weekender Report

Click through for region specific opportunities



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Kelly Susewind
WDFW Director



"If we wish to protect our hunting and fishing heritage, we need to act now to address climate change and pursue needed habitat conservation and restoration for future generations of fish, wildlife AND people. Hunters, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts alike wish to continue the deep connections we have to the natural world and the experiences it provides us."

WDFW Director Kelly Susewind's Full Message



WATCH NOW



An estuary is where freshwater from a river or stream meets saltwater of the ocean. At first glance, an estuary can seem like a simple place with water, land, and mud. But when you look closer, you'll see there is a lot more going on.



Estuaries. More than meets the eye.

Important Dates

- Nov. 2 – Southwest Region, Director Digital Open House
- Nov. 3 – "This Land is Part of Us" Virtual Film Screening with Conservation Northwest
- Nov. 4 – North Puget Sound Region, Director Digital Open House
- Nov. 11 – Discover Pass Free Day
- Nov. 11 – WDFW Offices closed for Veterans' Day
- Nov. 11-20 – Educators for Environment, Equity, and Economy (E3) 2021 Virtual Conference
- Nov. 19 – Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting
- Nov. 25-26 – WDFW Offices closed for Thanksgiving and Native American Heritage Day
- Nov. 26 – Discover Pass Free Day
- Nov. 30 – North Central Region, Director Digital Open House
- Dec. 2-4 – Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting
- Dec. 7 – South Central Region, Director Digital Open House
- Dec. 14 – Coastal Region, Director Digital Open House
- Dec. 16 – Eastern Region, Director Digital Open House
- Dec. 24 – WDFW Offices closed for Holiday (observed)
- Dec. 31 – WDFW Offices closed for New Year's Day (observed)

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