

# REEL LIFE



25 COVER STORY

## THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Cover Photo by Mike Cary

FREE

10

Catfishing in Washington

Spring Chinook Time

18

29

Trout on a Fly: Elemental Telepathy

Paid for  
Pikeminnow

31

## Not just a **base layer**

GHUnders LITE.  
Take your Performance  
to the next level.  
Made with Moisture  
Transfer Technology  
that keeps your skin dry.  
Made in the NW.



[ghunders.com](http://ghunders.com)





Washington Department of  
**FISH & WILDLIFE**

STAY CONNECTED

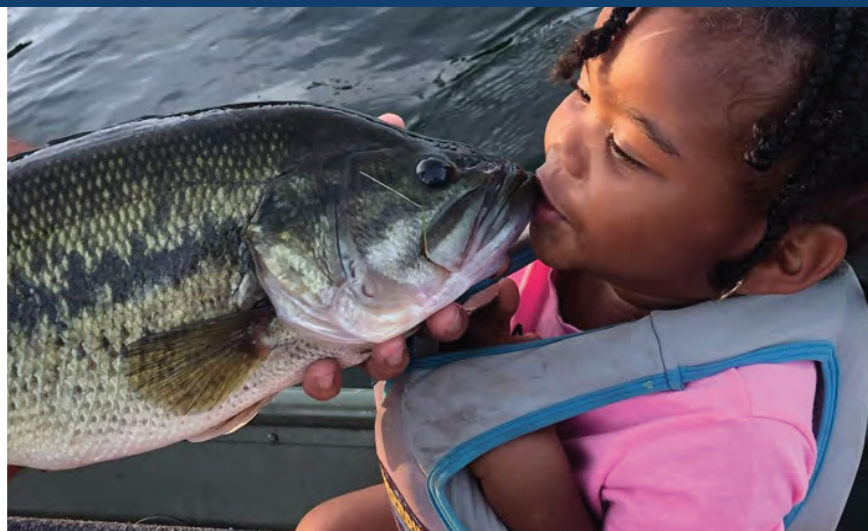


# Life Outdoors

**LIFE**  
OUTDOORS



**Spring into the  
outdoors this March**



Visit the Life Outdoors website at [wdfw.wa.gov/life-outdoors](http://wdfw.wa.gov/life-outdoors) for informative blog posts, the Weekender Report of monthly recreational opportunities in your area, and links to state and federal lands to explore.

# EDITOR'S CORNER:

Winter is in the rear view mirror and spring is almost here. It's a transition month in the Pacific Northwest. As such, we have a potpourri of angling goodness this month. There are still locations where ice-fishing is to be had, but tread with caution and make sure you have the appropriate safety gear. Want to make some money fishing? Check out Hannah Pennebaker's article on Pike Minnow while John Kruse shares the lowdown on Pike (as in toothy pike) bounties on Long Lake. Of course, trout anglers have low lake openers to look forward to. Check out [nwfishing.net](http://nwfishing.net) and search our extensive article base for previous stories on this favorite yearly opener. While you're at it, sign up for our free digital version of NW Reel Life, sent straight to your In Box.

See you on the water!

Mike Carey - [mikec@nwfishing.net](mailto:mikec@nwfishing.net) @Michael Carey Northwest Fishing 



**FOLLOW US:**

[www.northwestfishing.net/](http://www.northwestfishing.net/)

@northwestfishingtv

## CONTENTS



**8** 2023 Big Horn Show  
[Marie Neumiller](#)

**10** Catfishing in Washington  
[Johsh DeBruler](#)

**12** Icefishing a School Bus Away  
[Matt Carey](#)

**15** Get on the Water Now!  
[Randy Castello](#)



**18** Spring Chinook Time  
[Jason Brooks](#)

**22** The Outdoors Roundup  
[John Kruse](#)

**25** The Trip of a Lifetime  
[Mike Carey](#)



**29** Trout on a Fly: Elemental Telepathy  
[Gary Lewis](#)

**31** Paid for Pikeminnow  
[Hannah Pennebaker](#)

**33** How to Catch Bass in the Winter  
[Rick Lawrence](#)



# THE **GET OUTDOORS** PACKAGE



## What's in the Get Outdoors Package?

- Freshwater license
- Saltwater license
- Shellfish & seaweed license
- Two-pole endorsement
- Puget Sound Dungeness crab endorsement
- Deer license & tag\*
- Elk license & tag\*
- Cougar license & tag
- Bear license & tag
- Small game license
- Migratory bird authorization\*\*
- Migratory bird permit
- Turkey tag 1
- Turkey tag 2
- Vehicle access pass

**ALL FOR \$236.18!**

**What's the catch?**

**You just need to get outdoors. #GO**

**Visit [mywdfw.com](http://mywdfw.com) to purchase**

\*Deer and Elk tags require a weapon type selection and may be obtained at the time of purchase or at a later date.

\*\*Sea Duck, Brant, Band Tailed Pigeon, Snow Goose, and SW Canada Goose Harvest Report Cards will not be available until April. A fifty cent dealer fee will be charged per report card.



CATCH ALL THE  
NEW FRESH LISTINGS



TUNE IN AND SET YOUR DVR!  
**NWFISHING.NET**

# NORTHWEST REEL LIFE

*A Digital Anglers LLC & Northwest Fishing Publication*

## EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Mike Carey

## PUBLISHER

Rob Holman

## COPY EDITOR

Hannah Pennebaker

## CONTRIBUTORS

Jason Brooks  
Randy Castello  
Hillary Holman  
John Kruse  
Paul Lewis  
Hannah Pennebaker  
Gary Lewis  
Mike Carey  
Josh DeBruler  
Rick Lawrence

## TEAM NWFR (NWFR TV)

Robby Sy  
Hillary Holman  
Paul Hamilton  
Luke Hatfield  
Barry Dubnow  
Hannah Pennebaker  
Randy Castello  
Matt Carey  
Chris Decker

## ARTICLE SUBMISSION INQUIRIES

[mikec@nwfishing.net](mailto:mikec@nwfishing.net)

## COVER PHOTO

Mike Carey

---

PUBLISHED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
COHO MEDIA GROUP

## CREATIVE DIRECTOR/ LEAD GRAPHICS

Jason Olsen

## LAYOUT & DESIGN

Jason Olsen, Isidro Rojas, Sarah Holman

## ADVERTISING

[cameron@cohomediagroup.com](mailto:cameron@cohomediagroup.com)

## ACCOUNTING

Natalie Ackerman

## PROJECT MANAGER

Hillary Holman



Northwest Fishing  
12904 E. Nora Ave Suite B  
Spokane Valley WA 99216



SCAN ME

**NEVER MISS AN ISSUE!**

*Subscribe to receive our free digital magazine.*

# COME CHECK OUT OUR NEW FISHING DEPARTMENT FEATURING PRODUCTS FROM THESE TOP BRANDS



Lamiglas



THE  
**FISHING HOLE**  
AND SPORTS SHOP



2424 N DIVISION ST,  
SPOKANE, WA 99207  
(509) 444-8005



SHOP NOW



1330 N. ARGONNE RD  
SPOKANE VALLEY, WA 99212  
(509) 868-0607

we got the fun stuff!



# 2023 BIG HORN SHOW

MARCH 16-19 SPOKANE COUNTY FAIR & EXPO CENTER

by Marie Neumiller

The Inland Northwest Wildlife Council Presents the 61<sup>st</sup> Big Horn Outdoor Adventure Show March 16-19 at the Spokane County Fair and Expo Center.

Get hooked on the outdoors at this year's event, sponsored by Lithia Spokane, Ziggy's, Great Resort Vacations, and more. We are bringing you four adventurous days filled with outdoor recreation vendors, cooking presentations, family activities, and everything you need to start your next adventure.

The event will run four days with a special theme each day, and three after hours, 21+, VIP events.

**Hero Thursday**, sponsored by WA Army National Guard, will feature special ticket prices for our service members. Thursday evening, we will be hosting a VIP dinner auction, catered by Longhorn BBQ, which will raise funds for the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council. Along with a special presentation and fundraiser for First Hunt Foundation's "connecting heroes & hunters program", a program aimed at giving veterans and first responders a renewed sense of purpose.

Join us Friday March 17th for **Campfire Karaoke!** Sponsored by COHO Media this night will bring music, giveaways, and our sportsman's lounge beer garden.

Saturday March 18th is your opportunity to learn about preparing great dishes from your outdoor adventures. Show off your grilling skills at our SCA Steak cookoff and dutch oven competition. Saturday's VIP after hours event will deliver great food from local chefs at our mini CRAVE date night featuring music by Jesse Quandt, and dancing led by Lite Feet line dancers. Bring your special someone to the Big Horn Show for a

**8 | NWFISHING.net** memorable **Date Night!**

Sunday March 19th will be our annual **Family Day**, with a special family discount package and activities for the whole family. Fun activities include Les Schwab's fishing world, Idaho Central Credit Union's kid's adventure pass, SCOPE's Operation Family ID program, SCRAPS pet adoption drive, silver mine and more. These family features will be available throughout the show, with special prizes on Sunday.

## SEMINARS

Each year the Big Horn Show brings seminars and special guest presentations to help you build your outdoor knowledge and give you new skills. This year we have another great lineup, including presentations like:

- Dog Training with Quicksilver Kennels
- Large Carnivores of Washington with WDFW
- Hunting public lands for waterfowl by Shelby Ross
- The Big Horn Show has activities for all ages, including our young explorers:
- Fishing Pond
- Silver Mine
- Kid's Adventure Pass

And so many more!

## SPECIAL NOTES

The Inland Northwest Wildlife Council is a volunteer led wildlife conservation non-profit based in Spokane WA. The Big Horn Show is our annual fundraiser with proceeds from the event supporting our wildlife conservation projects year-round. Local projects include disabled access to outdoor recreation, wildlife recovery, habitat improvement, CWD testing support, mentorship, hunter's education, Spokane Kid's Fishing Day, bat boxes, outdoor education, and more. We appreciate your support!

Get Hooked On  
The Outdoors



MARCH  
16-19

AT THE  
SPOKANE COUNTY  
FAIR & EXPO CENTER



**CAMPFIRE KARAOKE**

**FRIDAY 6PM**

PRIZES, ACTIVITIES, & MORE!

**FAMILY DAY**

**ALL DAY SUNDAY**

KIDS 13 & UNDER FREE

FOR MORE  
INFO VISIT:

**BIGHORNSHOW.COM**

**OVER 300**

**OUTFITTERS, GUIDES,  
& SPORTING PRODUCTS!**

**THURSDAY 12-8**

**FRIDAY 12-8**

**SATURDAY 10-8**

**SUNDAY 10-4**

**SCAN HERE  
FOR TICKETS**





# CATFISHING IN WASHINGTON



BY JOSH DEBRULER



WATCH NOW:  
CATFISH

It was November 6th of 1902 at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, where the great explorer, Meriwether Lewis, recorded in his journal that a prominent fisherman within their expedition had brought in a Goliath of a catfish that measured over 4 ft long and weighed in at 128 lbs. Whether this accounting is of historical fact, or just generally accepted as American lore, the fact remains that Catfish get BIG. The record size catfish for the same river that Lewis and Clark's men were dropping their lines in is currently a 104 lb. blue catfish, and though we won't likely see those types of numbers coming out of our Pacific Northwest waterways anytime soon, we certainly do see some formidable sized cats here in Washington State. In 2019 a 15 year old boy hauled a 37 lb. state-record channel catfish out of Lake Terrell in northwest Washington, beating the previous record by 1.5 lbs.

If you're looking to hook into a big catfish here in

Washington State, chances are you'll be fishing for channel catfish. Channel catfish are native to much of North America, but they didn't make their debut here in Washington till 1892, when a load of them were dropped off in Skagit county's clear lake. From that point forward, these fish were distributed throughout Washington State for both recreational angling opportunities, and more recently, for management of problematic forage fish. And though they can be found throughout the state, most anglers familiar with the fishery would agree, your best bet for harvesting some of these fish would be to head to the Columbia river to fish it and its tributaries that head north from the Bonneville Dam, and meander up and across the eastern portions of the state.

Rivers like the Columbia, Yakima, Snake, and Walla Walla, all provide reasonably suitable habitat for these fish to spawn and maintain self sustaining populations. Conversely, lowland lakes that are stocked with channel cats, will only

provide anglers with fishing opportunities that reflect both the frequency of the WDFW stocking programs and the pressure the lake receives from anglers. Channel catfish are not known to reproduce in most Washington lakes.

## WHERE TO FISH

### EASTERN WASHINGTON

LAKE UMATILLA	LAKE WALLULA	ROSES LAKE
LOWER YAKIMA RIVER	LOWER WALLA WALLA	
LYONS FERRY STATE PARK	LAKE SACAJAWEA	

### WESTERN WASHINGTON

GREEN LAKE	CLEAR LAKE	SILVER LAKE
LAKE TERRACE	SWAFFORD POND	LAKE ST. CLAIRE



## WHEN TO FISH

Fishing is most productive when catfish are spawning. This typically peaks around June and you can expect the bite to taper off as we

move into fall. The spawning season also causes catfish to move out of the larger Columbia river and into its tributaries where the shallow waters provide better spawning grounds. Take advantage of this time to target catfish in these smaller waters, and if you can fish the confluences of the Columbia and said tributaries at this time, a bottleneck opportunity occurs, and this is where the fishing can become excellent.

### HOW TO FISH THEM

Being that most techniques are fairly straight forward, fishing for channel catfish should be suitable for anglers of all different experience levels. You'll likely find that the most challenging part will be getting on top of the fish in the first place. If you are fishing at night, you'll find catfish feeding in the shallow waters near the shore, and though night fishing is excellent for channel cats, it's also not a very suitable time for the typical angler. For this reason, many anglers fish throughout the day, and do so successfully. During the day, you'll find most of your channel catfish in deeper waters beneath the column of warm water known as the thermocline. Typically, 15-20 ft down will get you past the thermocline and into the cooler waters.

Since these fish are bottom feeders, the goal should be to get your bait at the bottom where it can be detected by the catfish's keen sense of smell. There's a wide variety of baits you can use. Many anglers opt for chicken livers, oily cut baits, earthworms, chicken skins, hot dogs, shrimp, corn, or dough balls made specifically for catfish. These fish don't seem to be extremely particular about their food as long as it's in front of them.

As far as rigging goes: a slip sinker rig is both simple and productive. From your main line, add your preferred slip sinker, a stop bead, barrel swivel, about 5-20" of leader, and a 2/0 to 3/0 hook. You can get the hook suspended a bit off the bottom by adding a poly ball or foam peg float a few inches back from the hook if desired (note this becomes ineffective if a substantial amount of current is present). A slip bobber rig is also a popular and effective method to get your bait suspended off the bottom while being able to detect bites visually. Just add a stop knot to your mainline, then a bead, a slip bobber, slide sinker, barrel swivel, and 10-20 inches of leader before your hook.

There are plenty of other methods available for catching channel cats, but these should be all you need to get started.



**HOME OF THE  
WEDDING RING®  
& SMILE BLADE®**



**Fishing's best  
kept secret**

**Shop online at  
[www.mackslure.com](http://www.mackslure.com)**



It's human nature to think that we need to go to great lengths to find happiness, joy, fulfillment or satisfaction. It makes sense at first glance – the more time invested, the higher the payoff. In reality, we can find value in a lot of things that are right in front of us. A quick jaunt, a stone's throw away, right around the corner.

Maybe the same can be said for fishing.

In my day job, I work as a principal for an alternative high school. Much of my day is dedicated to helping these kids realize the opportunities they have in front of them

and how to access those people who can offer help when needed. To my students, a career, graduation, just getting to Friday, are all unknown hurdles in their lives. Imposing forces that take away from the goal of just getting through the day. With the multitude of stressors on their minds, recreation and leisure are often a fading thought. One of these recent lessons presented itself with a school fishing trip to the Helena Regulating Reservoir not too far from town, maybe 20 minutes. When I go fishing personally, I'll opt to fish at

Holter Lake, about an hour's drive or Pishkun Reservoir, nearly two hours away, when I feel the need to fish. Coming into the day, I had low expectations. I'm not using my own gear. I'll need to supervise these kids and keep everybody engaged. It's just down the road, not much adventure there. I'll probably get called back to the building for something. We went, as a school, on this same fishing field trip last year – with no success. Not a bite. Windy conditions. On the metaphorical pendulum that is fishing, that outing swung strongly towards the forgettable side. Furthermore, this fishing "trip" isn't anything like those days where we need to wake up at 4am to drive to the dock at first light or prepare a few different set ups if we decide to target different fish. How could I possibly have the same level of excitement and anticipation as a fishing trip out with my buddies?

The afternoon started off unassuming. The folks from Montana Fish and Wildlife talked to our students and staff about some general ice fishing information. How to bait a hook. How to open the fishing bail. How to know if you have a bite. Trivial information you and I take for granted. To kids who have never gone fishing, this information was captivating. One student even asked to come closer to see the line drop to the ground when

the instructor opened the bale demonstrating how the bait would fall through the water. The seemingly innocuous presentation had captivated at least one of my students. We made our way on the ice and walked for a good 15 minutes. Many of the kids, and the guy in charge of supervising everyone, didn't have the appropriate footwear. This made the icy trek all the more cautious. The freeze was still in full effect, and our guide for the day reported the ice was about 18 inches thick. More than enough to comfortably fish without danger. After a few hundred yards we had made our way to our fishing holes. A previous school was there in the morning, with no luck of course, and the gear was ready for immediate

fishing. We were given primarily Swedish Pimple jigs with a maggot as our bait for the afternoon. Kids and teachers wandering around finding what they'd hope to be their lucky spot. Remember how I mentioned last year's conditions? Well, now picture a complete 180\* (you couldn't really expect to not get a lesson from a guy in education, right?). The sun shining with a few clouds painted across the skyline. A calm breeze that was never overbearing, but enough to remind you that you are outside during a Montana winter. Mid to high 30-degree weather, necessitating a jacket or sweatshirt, but no need for snowpants or a full facemask gaiter. My Reel Obsession Sport Fishing sweater

and Montana Grizzly hat combination was the perfect balance of "drip" (swagger or style to those of you not up to date on the newest slang) and functionality. In a similar fashion to the weather, our fishing experience was nothing like last year's. Within 5 minutes two different kids are pulling up perch.

No state records, but a fun experience. Kids goading each other to kiss the fish, being caught off guard by the fish slime and calling over their friends and teachers. Some kids catching multiple fish, one girl catching 3 in our outing. After seeing such a lively bite, I figured why not, I'm here anyway, I might as well wet a line.

# Ross Outdoor Adventures

Central Washington's Premier Guide Service

**BOOK ONLINE**

[rossoutdooradventures.com](http://rossoutdooradventures.com)



A silver and blue jig with a maggot ended up being my lure of choice. More so because it was the only one open at the time. Engaged kids, minimum screwing around, it was a winning combination. I dropped the lure beneath the ice, hit the bottom, reeled up a few feet and started jigging around 18 feet of water. A few other members of Fish and Wildlife were with us, and I struck up a conversation about anything and everything you'd expect – what set ups have been working well, other lakes or reservoirs in the area, that kind of thing. Caught off guard, my rod tip gets absolutely slammed. My FWP counterpart exclaiming "That ain't no perch! You've got a koke on there!"

**"That ain't no perch!  
You've got a koke on there!"**



As I'm reeling, he asks if I saw the fish on the fish finder. Sheepishly, I told him I wasn't really paying attention and I was looking at everyone else catching fish. As I pull the fish out of the water, I see a solid 16 inch kokanee come out of the hole. This is a great fish and certainly not what I was expecting coming into the day. I ask for a picture and release my catch back into the reservoir for someone else to find. I realized in that moment that even the mundane or trivial, we can find great joy and satisfaction. Are weeklong fishing adventures great? Of course. Can adventure and happiness be a school bus ride away?

Without a doubt.

## TROUT, KOKANEE + WALLEYE

# ULTIMATE TROLLING RODS

**THE NORTHWEST OUTDOORSMEN**

**MADE IN USA**

**HS7102 – 7'10" 8-17 lb., 1/4-5/8 oz.**

This HS rod is designed as a bottom bouncer rod for 1/2 oz. up to 3 oz. bottom walkers. The top 2/3 of the rod is light action to indicate bottom structure and detect those extremely light bites. This is also a fantastic rod for fishing sockeye off a down rigger or UL finesse fishing for chinook using suspended bait.

**MADE IN USA**

**K862 – 8'6" 4-10 lb., 1/8-3/16 oz.**

This two-pieced, carbon fiber rod is designed to be fished off a downrigger or flatlined for Kokanee & Trout. 8 1/2' long allows it to create the perfect bend for a downrigger rod for fishing Kokanee & Trout. This is the ultimate trolling rod for Kokanee & Trout.

**AVAILABLE ONLY AT HARRODOUTDOORS.COM**

**SHOP ONLINE**

# GET ON THE WATER NOW!



BY RANDY CASTELLO

With football season recently behind us, baseball opening day is months away and they're just dropping the checkered flag at either our local or at sanctioned tracks nationwide, how are we supposed to burn off our nervous energy? Assuming that you have already completed your winter maintenance regiment for your boat and gear, made all the lures that you and your neighbors can use in the foreseeable future, and read every issue of NW Reel Life for the third time, it's time to go fishing.

The decision to wet a line is always the easy part, sorting through seasonal closures and winter accessibility can be a challenge. As with any PNW fishery, double check the regulations and Emergency Changes before you head out to participate in the many solid fishing opportunities available this time of the year. The following are a few ideas to get you started, and may your fish box need frequent cleaning.

## LAKES

**Lake Washington** is an urban gem. Cutthroat trout, kokanee, perch, and various warm water fish are available year-round. There is great trailer boat access as well as a number of fishing piers. During the winter months it is primarily a cutthroat, kokanee, and smallmouth show but there are also large schools of perch available along deeper drop-offs. The primary winter cutthroat and kokanee fishery is at the south end of Mercer Island. But if you are willing to go on the hunt, there are other areas that hold fish; some real trophies. Make sure to quickly release any chinook that take interest in your offerings.

**Lake Merwin** is a local go-to for winter kokanee. If you are traveling to get there, make sure you check the wind forecast before you head out the door. The lake can get very windy and choppy, make sure that you have all your safety gear in order. When fishing Lake Merwin during the winter, try to troll at 1.0 MPH, and the smaller your presentation, the better. You will see multiple schools of fish on your electronics, but not all will be in a playful mood. When you do find a snappy lot, mark it on your electronics or take a visual bearing and keep after it.

**Lake Cavanaugh** and **Lake Samish** both host a winter kokanee fishery.

**MARCH 2023 | 15**

They are kind of fickle during the winter and the bite may be during a brief afternoon hatch. We have limited at either lake during the winter but that's not the norm. Persistence is the name of the game. Troll 1.0-1.3 MPH. Small micro hoochies, flies, and spinners seem to have the edge. In addition to your secret corn recipe, a small tidbit of nightcrawler, worm, or a live maggot will greatly enhance your allure. You may even want to add them to your hooks, it will drive the kokanee wild!

**Lake Roosevelt;** as the weather permits, if you're looking for lunker kokanee, Roosevelt is the place to be. Although I don't like hauling the boat over the pass in the winter anymore, I love fishing Lake Roosevelt, so with the right weather forecast we may head that direction. I'm sure kokanee are available throughout the lake, but we usually fish out of Spring Canyon. We tend to focus on the dam area but we also fish the lower 5 or 6 miles. I typically start at 10-40' with a 60' setback, but may fish deeper as required. Because there is the potential to hook a 3+ pounder, I typically up my leader to 20-pound fluorocarbon.

Winter road conditions are still a possibility. I addressed this in a previous article but it's worthy of a mention. Again, pay attention to winter boating safety/etiquette. If the road conditions are questionable, carry chains for both your tow vehicle and for at least 1 axle on the trailer. Bring a couple sand bags and shovel. A liberal application of sand can be a lifesaver.

At the ramp, assess the situation before you back down a long, icy ramp. Take the time to chain up your tow vehicle if required. The area between the top of the ramp and the water could be icy. If you lose traction, don't panic, it is likely that once your tires hit the water, you'll regain traction. Just keep your cool, you don't want to jackknife ½ way down the ramp. It would put a damper on your plans. Once the trailer is wet, you may have to let the rig sit in the water for a bit to thaw

before the boat will float free.

No kokanee shuffle or celebratory dancing while onboard or at the dock, you don't want to slip and end up sharing the lake with your aquatic rival. The fish won't bite when they're laughing their tails off.

Finally, and as a courtesy; at the end of your time on the lake load your boat and slowly pull out of the water just enough to clear the water. Stop and let the rig drain or drip-dry, this will minimize ice buildup on the lower 1/3 of the ramp.

In addition to winter lake opportunities, a trip on the salt can be very productive. Both Marine Area 10 and 13 should be open. MA 10 is scheduled to be open February 1, 2023 through March 31st, but check the WDFW Emergency Regulations for early closures or seasonal schedule adjustments. MA 13 is open year-round, but again, check the WDFW Emergency Regulations before you leave the driveway. When open for winter chinook, MA 10 is one of the most consistent salmon fisheries in the state. The minimum size limit is 22" and the fish need to be clipped. 4-10# fish are common, with possibility of a trophy fish any time you hook up all makes for a very exciting fishery. I believe that pound for pound, blackmouth are one of the hardest fighting fish in the PNW. Although many fish are caught mooching cut plug herring or jigging, the fishery is primarily a downrigger show. You want to be fishing right on the bottom. Often you will notice that your fish is all scraped up and find gravel in the fish's belly when you clean them. Flies or small spoons paired with 11" flashers, plugs and helmeted anchovies all catch fish.

We fished the MA 10 opener this year. My boatmates and I had agreed to make it a C & R day. We hadn't fished salmon in the salt since September, and didn't want to go 3 and out in the first hour. We had a stellar trip. From the moment we went gear down, we had fish on. We had to wade through a lot of 20-22" fish and cycled through probably 10 or 12 legal fish before keeping one.

I pulled the hook on the big fish of the day and the estimated 10 pounder swam off before we were able to slide the net under it. I took full responsibility for the lost fish and had to wear the "farmer" overalls. We had already decided to finish the pass and pull the plug for the ride back to Everett. The meter showed a cloud of bait with a few salmon holding just off the bottom. 1, 2, 3, BAM! The port downrigger goes off, and we are on a very solid fish. Hoping to hook the second meter mark, I decided to keep the boat at speed and put the screws to the fish. It was up on top but way off to the side when it got sideways to the flasher, and it swam off. We rarely lose a fish, and I got too big for my farmer britches.

Although we had plugs and an assortment of both trolling flies and spoons on board, we started with Skinny-G spoons and never looked back. We did determine that the lighted flashers had an edge over our regular flashers. We fished the bottom in 80-120' of water and tried to stay on the down current

face of any underwater structure, or along underwater points. It was an incredible day of fishing and an excellent option for a winter fishery.

There are a number of winter steelhead opportunities in the PNW. Many coastal streams are open and occasionally Puget Sound rivers open under WDFW Emergency Rules. I considered breaking the February, April steelhead fisheries down, but I think that that is a whole different article and best written by a coastal steelhead expert. The point in mentioning winter steelhead is that when many of our fisheries are closed, we have a steelhead fishery available. A theme here; again, as with any PNW fishery, double check the regulations and Emergency Changes before you head out.

Fishing withdrawals, cold sweats, and general heebie-jeebies? There don't have to be, with a little research you have multiple options to treat your fishless disorder. Whether you're a freshwater, salt angler, or bankie, there are many opportunities to soothe what ails you.

## NOW BOOKING FALL SALMON STEELHEAD

REEL TIME FISHING  
IDAHO, OREGON  
& WASHINGTON  
FISHING OUTFITTER



ENTER TO WIN A FISHING TRIP  
SEE DETAILS HERE! SCAN TO WIN  
A FISHING TRIP FOR 2!



REELTIMEFISHING.COM

YJ Guide Service  
HUNTING AND FISHING TRIPS

WE OFFER TRIPS ON  
LAKE ROOSEVELT  
COLUMBIA RIVER  
LONG LAKE  
& SNAKE RIVER  
CHANNEL CATS  
WALLEYE  
BURBOT

**NOW  
BOOKING!**

VISIT [YJGUIDESERVICE.COM](http://YJGUIDESERVICE.COM)



# Spring Chinook Time

By Jason Brooks



One of the most sought after and tasty salmon in all of the Pacific Northwest is the spring chinook. This run of salmon draws thousands of anglers who will first head to the Columbia, as well as a few coastal rivers for a chance to catch a “springer”. The fish start to arrive in January and will run until May, with the height of the runs occurring in April. Once the fish make their way up the Columbia to the many tributaries, the anglers will spread out to focus on terminal fisheries. Run estimates and seasons yet to be set will determine where you can go to catch a spring chinook.

Looking at the projected runs, the Columbia total run is expected to be 307,800 wild and hatchery combined. This is good news as it is well over last year’s projected run of 197,000 fish and even over the actual return from last year of 274,495. This means anglers should have fisheries in the lower Columbia area as

well as the Vancouver-Portland fishery between I-5 and I-205 in early spring.

The Kalama fishery is near the Port of Kalama on the Columbia River, where there is good boat access with a protected harbor and multi-lane boat launch. Run straight across the channel, and you are at the fishery. Some anglers will use a small boat to cross and then beach fish off Sand Island by plunking a Spin-n-Glo with a gob of cured salmon eggs. Other bank plunking options are wobblers on a dropper, or a banana plug such as a MagLip or K15 Kwikfish, both with a herring or sardine wrap.

The boat angler has two options here depending on the tide. Most will troll using a triangle flasher, such as the Mack’s Lure UV Triangle Scent Flash or a Yakima Bait Company Big Al’s Fish Flash, then a long leader from 36 to 48 inches, with a 6-bead chain swivel in the

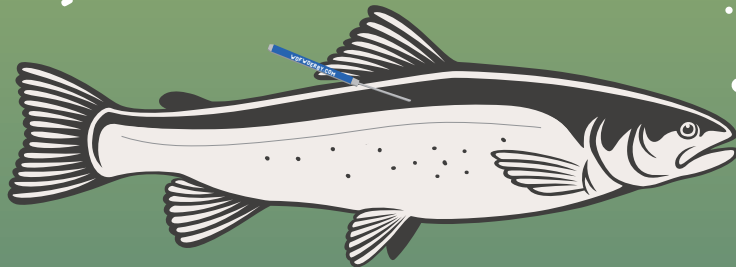
middle, to a plug cut herring. When it comes to bait, the most productive herring are dyed with Bad Azz bait dye in either chartreuse or blue, or brined with Brine-n-Brite, which also comes in chartreuse and blue. Single point barbless hooks must be used, but to increase the chance at a hook-up, set back the farthest hook and downsize it to a size 4 Gamakatsu Big River. These hooks are strong even in the small size 4- which tends to grab onto the chinook’s face or jaw when they swipe at the bait- and will increase your hook to landing ratio.

The second option is to anchor up during the outgoing tide and let out the plugs and wobblers. This is known as “sitting on the hook”, and boats will form lines, often using wing dams to tie up to and to help break up the strong outflowing current. My first time fishing this part of the river was fishing on anchor with a friend in his boat.



# GO FISHING & WIN PRIZES!

FISH FOR TAGGED



## RAINBOW TROUT

LOOK FOR THE BLUE TAG!

APRIL 22 → OCTOBER 31



**100+** STOCKED  
LAKES STATEWIDE



**HUNDREDS OF PRIZES**  
TOTALING OVER \$39,000



**MORE THAN 70**  
PARTICIPATING  
BUSINESSES

**ANYONE WITH A VALID 2023 WA FISHING LICENSE IS ELIGIBLE.  
KIDS 14 AND UNDER ARE FREE!**



**#WATROUTDERBY**

VISIT **WDFWDERBY.COM** FOR MORE INFORMATION



# “It’s springer time!”



We sat in the protected covered cabin and played card games until a rod started to bounce, running out into the rain and reeling in the fish. Then we let out the line, making sure it landed in a travel lane (which are often shallow depressions in the sandy bottom), and then resumed the card game again. It might not sound like much of a fishing experience, but this is springer fishing, and it is all about putting the best-eating salmon in the freezer.

The Cowlitz is the second largest lower Columbia tributary, only to be surpassed by the Willamette. With a predicted return of 9,000 springers to the Cowlitz, we can hope there will be a fishery that often coincides with the late returning winter steelhead. The “Cow” is one of the few rivers where anglers can catch a double bag of good eating fish in the same day. Depending on where you go on the Cowlitz will dictate

how you fish. In the lower river, anglers often pull plugs or use bait divers and baits such as cured salmon eggs or prawns. The prawns will have sat a few days in Pro-Cure’s Shrimp and Prawn Cure in magenta or red, and some anglers will use both baits at the same time, making a “cocktail” of sorts. Further upriver, anglers will float fish gobs of eggs or even plunk them. The Cowlitz offers both bank and boat access and is within a few hours’ drive of several cities, which means it gets crowded, but it can be a great place to catch fish. If you are looking for a lower Columbia powerhouse, then look at the Willamette. Anglers will start in early spring, hoping to be one of the first to catch one of the 71,000 projected spring chinook expected back this year. That is nearly 20,000 more than projected last year (51,200) and almost 16,000 more than the 55,391 that returned. The early springtime anglers will target the Multnomah channel which starts at St. Helen’s,

Oregon, right across from Ridgefield, Washington. This can be protected waters, often calm and out of the wind, unlike the mainstem Columbia in spring. I was fishing here several years ago with Buzz Ramsey, and as we crossed the Columbia, I noted that the wind was starting to kick up. After fishing the day in the Multnomah channel, we started back towards Ridgefield, where we had launched from. Making the corner around the island, we were met with gale force winds and whitecaps, and later learned that a boat capsized on the Columbia that day, costing two people their lives. Be sure to check the wind forecast if you plan to cross the Columbia to fish the Multnomah channel, otherwise, drive around to the Oregon side and launch from there. An Oregon fishing license is needed to fish in the Multnomah channel, as this is considered Oregon waters and is part of the Willamette River and not the Columbia.

Further upriver and above the Bonneville Dam, anglers start to target terminal fisheries.

The first being the Wind River, which will have both a run of Wind River bound fish as well as fish stopping to rest near the deadline of the Wind River outlet, as marked by large white buoys in the Columbia. The Wind River is expected to get back 4,400 fish, which is only 200 fish more than last year's projection of 4,200, but last year the run exceeded the estimate by over 2,000 fish, with an actual return of 6,530. Here, trolling plugs such as MagLips, Kwikfish, and even going "old school" with an orange Mag Wart by Storm is commonplace. In the late 90's and early 2000's, about everyone flat lined the hot orange Mag Wart and then started fishing them on droppers to keep from tangling with other boats. This still works, but also anglers will be trolling triangle flashers and Brad's Super Baits and Super Cut Plugs often in the Hot Lava color and stuffed with tuna.

Drano Lake is the most popular spring chinook terminal fishery in the entire Columbia system. Here hundreds of boats will try to choke into the "toilet bowl", which is the entrance to the impoundment at the highway 14 bridge. Be aware of the deadline and do not cross it as you will get cited and be sure to be courteous.

Here, boats will slow down and make a turn, trolling in a counterclockwise direction. Do not try to go against the current of boats, as it will only lead to a mess. Here, anglers primarily slowly troll prawn spinners with a triangle flasher. Again, the Pro-Cure cured prawns are effective, with magenta being the most popular color. For prawn spinners, you can use the tried-and-true Eric's Prawn Rig by Lugh Jensen with the "backdraft" color, a combination of orange, chartreuse, and green with green beads. Macks Lure also has a prawn rig which uses their Smile Blade, a Mylar blade that works at extremely low speeds which are needed at Drano. Again, the most popular color is green and chartreuse, with a magenta cured prawn.

For anglers hoping to get some spring chinook further upriver, then 2023 might be your year. The Snake River and Idaho bound fish are estimated to be 85,900, which means there could be a season, but do not expect any announcements until in-run estimates are updated with fish counted at the dams. Icicle River anglers up near Wenatchee, some 500 river miles from the ocean, also have some great news, along with Yakima River anglers, as 41,400 spring chinook are expected in the "Upriver Columbia" run. Seasons on both rivers are not usually announced until dam counts show there

are enough fish above the mid-Columbia pools. If this estimate is like the others and last years, all of which came in above projections, then spring chinook anglers in the upper Columbia and even into Idaho will hopefully have a season.

With springers already showing up and passing over Bonneville dam, with one climbing the fish ladder on January 2nd, it looks to be a momentous year. The best eating fish are on their way here, and anglers will have plenty of places to go. Let us hope the winds do not kick up too much and we can all get along in Drano's toilet bowl. Start curing up the prawns and soaking the herring, it is springer time!

**MOON'S**  
Guide Service LLC

**KING SALMON**

**SOCKEYE SALMON**

**CHINOOK**

**KOKANEE**

**& WALLEYE**

**COME JOIN US ON A  
GUIDED TRIP IN  
EASTERN WASHINGTON**  
BOOK NOW AT [MOONSGUIDESERVICE.COM](http://MOONSGUIDESERVICE.COM)

OR CONTACT US AT  
**509.860.2539**  
MOON'S GUIDE SERVICE  
2335 VEEDOL DR, E WENATCHEE  
WA 98802

# OUTDOORS ROUNDUP



**John Kruse**  
northwesternoutdoors.com and  
americaoutdoorsradio.com



## SOMETHING FISHY FOR DINNER

TJ's Bar and Grill in Kettle Falls is in hot water after serving seafood they should not have been selling to their patrons. According to Captain Brad Rhoden with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, during the summer of 2019 the owner of the restaurant, Terry Baxter, went on a recreational fishing trip near Bamfield, British Columbia. Baxter then brought the Chinook and coho salmon, as well as the halibut he caught, back home, and proceeded to serve these fish to customers at his restaurant.

Captain Rhoden states, "By law, a business selling fish to a consumer, such as a restaurant, is required to state the species of the salmon and whether the fish was farmed or wild caught. The Legislature created these laws so consumers can be confident the fish they are about to eat is what it says."

As for selling recreationally caught fish in a restaurant, Captain Rhoden explained, "Washington law does not allow the edible portions of wild animals, game birds and game fish to be sold. Food fish such as salmon and halibut can be commercially sold in Washington as long as the fish were lawfully harvested during on open season/area by commercially licensed fishers. So, no recreationally caught fish can be sold, bartered or traded lawfully in Washington."

The multi-year investigation by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife was prosecuted by the Washington State Attorney General's Public Lands and Conservation Division last summer. On January 17th, Baxter's business plead guilty to the crime of First-Degree Unlawful Fish Catch in Stevens County Superior Court. He received no jail time but will have to pay a \$10,000 fine.

## STATE PARKS HIRING PARK AIDES

Looking for a fulfilling, seasonal job working in a great outdoors location? If so, apply for a job as a park aide with Washington State Parks. They are hiring 305 seasonal workers to work from April through September at their parks throughout the state.

Duties include everything from registering campers to cleaning campgrounds and maintaining facilities and trails. Aides may also be helping out with interpretive and educational programs at parks around the state. You may be assigned to one specific park, or rotate your daily duties amongst several parks in close proximity to one another.

My son David worked as a park aide for two years in college, and really enjoyed his time during the summer months at Lincoln Rock and Daroga State Parks in North Central Washington. However, this isn't just a job for college students trying to make money during the summer.

**Come be part of  
something AMAZING!**



**YOUTH OUTDOORS UNLIMITED (Y.O.U.) IS A WASHINGTON BASED  
NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO TAKE YOUTH DIAGNOSED  
WITH LIFE THREATENING ILLNESSES AND/OR PHYSICAL DISABILITIES  
ON THE HUNTING OR FISHING ADVENTURE OF THEIR DREAMS!**

**Y.O.U. Spokane Auction - Mirabeau Park Hotel &  
Convention Center  
Saturday April 8, 2023  
Doors Open at 4:30pm  
Tickets: [Charityauction.bid/YOUSpokane2023](https://charityauction.bid/YOUSpokane2023)**

**Fantastic Food, Raffle Games, Live Auction, Presentations of Kid's  
Adventures – all to benefit some amazing youth!**

**For more information on being a corporate sponsor, attending the  
event or donating items, please contact:**

**Cherne Haskell: 509-993-1341 or [youspokane@gmail.com](mailto:youspokane@gmail.com)**

**Patty Willoughby: 509-939-2793 or [PattyW@youthoutdoors.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:PattyW@youthoutdoors.onmicrosoft.com)**

**Cindy Carpenter: 509-431-1604 or [you@youthoutdoorsu.org](mailto:you@youthoutdoorsu.org)**



## CATCH THE LATEST FRESH LISTINGS!

**ROOT**  
SPORTS

PORTLAND'S  
**THE CW**



**FOX 13+**

**KTVB 7**

**FOX 41**

**FOX 34**

**FOX 28**

**FOX 26**

**FOX**  
**13**



CATCH US ONLINE  
NWFISHING.NET



It's also a great opportunity for retired or semi-retired individuals who enjoy meeting people and spending time outdoors in the beautiful settings our state parks are set in.

Park aides earn anywhere from \$16.61 to \$19.09, depending on qualifications and experience. Senior Park Aides (with previous experience) earn more. You can fill out an application at [www.governmentjobs.com](http://www.governmentjobs.com). Simply type in "Park Aide" in the search bar, along with "Washington" for the location, and you'll see what's available

### FISHING REPORTS

#### COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE

Autumn Lawyer at Gorge Outfitters Supply in Rufus says they are doing pretty well catching walleye below John Day Dam. Most of the walleye have been caught using spinner worm harnesses tipped with nightcrawlers. A bright orange and black combo-colored spinner worm harness is the hot ticket. Several large walleye (up to ten pounds) have been caught in the last week.

Autumn says sturgeon fishing was also pretty good last week. Catch and keep sturgeon fishing remains open (for now) in both The Dalles and John Day pools. Be sure to check the WDFW and ODFW websites before going out, to make sure harvest quotas have not been met.

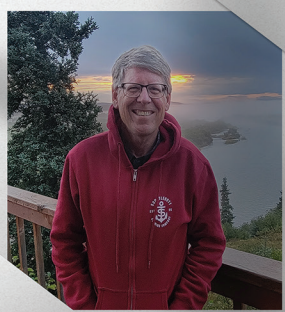
#### RUFUS WOODS RESERVOIR

Austin Moser with Austin's Northwest Adventures has been catching triploid rainbow trout near the net pens at Rufus Woods Reservoir over the last several weeks. Austin says they have been catching limits of these hefty rainbow trout, averaging 4 to 8 pounds and going all the way up to 15 pounds in size. Moser's clients have been jigging 3/8-ounce Maxi jigs made by Yakima Bait Company. While many anglers use bright colors, Moser has found natural colors such as black, brown and olive work best.

Bank anglers are having success as well, though it can be hit and miss. Most anglers fishing from shore are using Powerbait to catch their trout. It is worth noting that there is a \$20 access fee to use the park near the net pens and also a \$10 launch fee. Shore anglers also need to have a Colville Tribal fishing permit. To book a trip go to [www.austinsnorthwestadventures.com](http://www.austinsnorthwestadventures.com). If you want to find out more about fishing or camping at Lake Rufus Woods Park, which is operated by the Colville Tribe, go to [www.colvilletribes.com/lake-rufus-woods](http://www.colvilletribes.com/lake-rufus-woods).

# The Trip of a Lifetime

By Mike Caney



Over the loud throb of the single engine, our bush plane made its steady, if slow, journey over the Alaskan tundra. Several hundred feet below, the landscape was sparse and untouched by human hands. Between the marshes and brushy hillsides, I could see game trails crisscrossing the tundra. Straining to see an elk or moose, or maybe some bear, I imagined being dropped into this wilderness which looked so barren from above.

Suddenly, a river came into view ahead, long and meandering, cutting a path through the wild Alaska landscape. Rising up from the wilderness was our destination, Alaska Trophy Adventures Lodge. Our pilot lined us up with the dirt runaway and the land rushed ever closer. Wheels touching, bouncing the plane back and forth, our pilot throttled back and taxied the plane from the end of the runway back to the lodge.

"Welcome to Alaska!" We were greeted by Wayne McGee, the owner of ATA, and his son Tyler. Surveying the land before me, I took in the rustic lodge and various buildings, tents, and at the river's edge, a lineup of fishing boats tied up to a dock, seemingly ready and begging to be taken for a ride down the wild and free river.

The Alagnak River, a designated scenic river, and ATA Lodge lie within the Katmai National Park. The Lodge itself is on 160 acres of prime river frontage in an iconic section of the Alagnak River known as the upper braids, and can only be reached by plane. Our group included me, Rob and Hillary Holman, and Mack's Lure's Britton Ransford. We had been waiting a long time for this adventure, as the previous year's trip was canceled due to Covid. But the masks were off now, and Alaska was once again welcoming guests to enjoy this vast wilderness.

The Alagnak is a wild river, flowing steadily from inland through vast woods and tundra, finally emptying into Bristol Bay. Hosting five species of salmon and several species of trout, the river is a teeming habitat untouched by human hands.

Anglers travel around the world to experience its beauty and incredible fishing, not to mention the amazing wildlife which includes moose and an impressive display of bears, which were our constant (if distant) companions for our six day stay.

Settling into our quarters, we took in the vast view from our chalet looking back toward the lodge and guest cabins. Below, I noticed a couple anglers working the waters along the shoreline. I wasted no time donning my waders and gear and walking down the short trail to the water's edge. For the next hour I brushed off the cobwebs on my fly-casting skills and worked some productive seams in front of the lodge dock.

I watched as fellow anglers landed several pinks, but it was not yet my time to hook into my first Alagnak salmon.

With the dinner bell ringing, we headed back to the lodge for a warm welcome from Wayne and the crew. Introductions around the dining room revealed this week's group of twenty or so anglers, having come from around America and even from Germany and Ireland. Truly an international clientele. Our dinner was elegant and delicious, the main course a fine pork chop as moist and flavorful as any I'd ever had. After dessert, Wayne greeted the group and provided a view of the coming week's adventures. Introducing everyone from the guides to the lodge staff, the feeling of a close family was obvious. Topping off the evening with a glass of fine wine, we returned satiated to our chalet. The morning would come soon enough, and it was time to light a fire, play some cribbage, and get a good night's sleep for the coming day's fishing adventure.

The advertisement features a dark background with a subtle pattern of fish scales. On the left, a man in a grey hoodie and a baseball cap holds a large rainbow trout. In the center, a man in a grey jacket and a baseball cap holds two large silver salmon. On the right, a man in a yellow jacket and a baseball cap holds several large silver salmon. The text "YOUR PREMIERE PNW FISHING GUIDE SERVICE" is written in large, white, bold letters at the top. Below it, "Austin's Northwest Adventures" is written in a smaller, white, cursive font. At the bottom, the text "Now Booking Trophy Kokanee, Triploids, and Rainbow Trout for December, January, and February!" is written in white, bold letters. Below that, "Call 509-669-3557 to book" is written in white, bold letters, and "www.austinsnorthwestadventures.com" is written in white, bold letters. A red fish logo is on the left side of the top text.

**YOUR PREMIERE PNW FISHING GUIDE SERVICE**

*Austin's Northwest Adventures*

**Austin Moser,  
Professional Guide  
and Instructor**

**Now Booking Trophy Kokanee, Triploids, and Rainbow Trout for December, January, and February!**

**Call 509-669-3557 to book**

**www.austinsnorthwestadventures.com**



Fly fishing for salmon and trout is what the ATA experience is all about.

While fishing the river does not exclude hardware (and we did have great success one day twitching Mack's Lure jigs) the appeal of fishing the Alagnak River is without a doubt fly fishing. The lodge has all the quality gear that you would expect, but many anglers choose to bring their own favorite rods and reels. I brought a rod and reel of my own, which I soon discovered from our guide, Tyler, was not set up quite right for the large streamer flies we would be using. After a few adjustments my set up allowed me to cast much better, and by the end of the trip I was making my casts longer and straighter than I could ever have imagined. The guides at ATA are pros and excellent fly casting instructors as well. Hillary, new to casting flies, by the end of the trip was excited by how much she had learned. Don't think that if you have no fly-casting experience this adventure isn't for you. Indeed, many of our fish were caught close to shore and didn't require long distance or accuracy. The river is bountiful and there is no lack of willing finned friends waiting to tug your line.

"Fish on!" My streamer came to a dead stop as I was stripping line in, and the head shake of a powerful fish caused my rod to strain and bend over in a solid arch. The fish broke the surface in front of me, a chrome-bright coho fresh from the ocean. Taking strong, line peeling runs, the fish began to tire and I eased her into Tyler's waiting net. After

admiring her chrome colors and fresh sea lice, she was sufficiently revived and darted off on her mission. Anglers do bring fish back from the Alagnak, but Wayne and the guides encourage only keeping the bucks and releasing the hens to procreate. It's a policy that the anglers that come to ATA are in agreement with as the Alaska experience we are here for is not bringing home coolers full of fish, but rather days full of memories. The Alaska wilderness experience is what ATA is all about.

Each day we fished we got to try a different species to target. One day it would be salmon, working the numerous seams and back eddies for coho, chums, and pinks, the next day taking the long, scenic forty mile run to tide water to battle chrome coho, another day bead fishing for artic grayling, char, and leopard rainbow trout. The rainbows grow large from the abundance of feed and follow the spawning salmon, feasting on eggs. Earlier in the season, anglers can target powerful chinook salmon and massive runs of sockeye that thrill with acrobatic leaps, challenging even the most experienced angler.

The ATA lodge is situated deep in bear country. Every day we saw large brown bears walking the shoreline, feeding on the salmon. Mother bears and cubs were a common sight. Wayne informed us that in twenty-five years of service they have not had a bear incident.

The guides have a strong understanding and respect for bears and safety is always the number one priority.

I never had much worry about the bears. It was awesome to look down on sandy shorelines and see the large tracks of these majestic creatures interspersed with anglers' footsteps.

For a change of pace one day, Britton and I decided to do a hike in with our guide Tyler to a local lake that holds northern pike. Having never caught a pike on a fly I was very excited! We ran about thirty minutes by river, secured the boat, and began our one-mile hike to the lake. The Alaska tundra is a unique habitat, with open fields interspersed by woods and tall brush. Periodically calling out "here bear", we were sure to make plenty of noise to alert any bear in the area of our presence. The tundra is soft and giving, much like walking on a mat of foam. Our every step we would sink six inches into the turf, making the one-mile hike feel like three. It was a workout which I enjoyed, although

when we reached the lake, I was very grateful for the break! Sad to say, on this day the pike were not cooperating, although I did get a small one and had a nice strike from a larger fish. It's an adventure I'd definitely try again!

As most things do, our Dream Adventure came to an end much too quickly. The last evening, we shared our group meal with new friends and recapped the week that was. The smiles and laughter around the room were a clear indication of what a magical place we had the good fortune to enjoy. We shared our highlights from the week and the common bonds the week's group of anglers experienced. In the morning we boarded our bush plane for the quick flight back to King Salmon, then Anchorage, and then home. Watching the lodge recede in the distance, I sensed we all left a part of ourselves back in Alaska, but took a piece home with us as well.

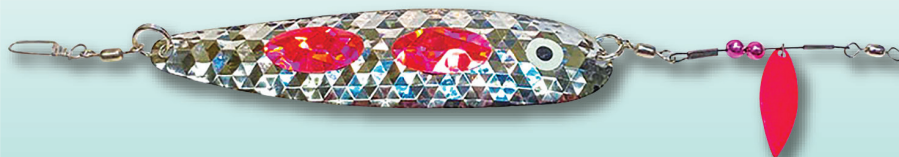
For your trip of a lifetime, learn more Alaska Trophy Adventures at <https://www.atalodge.com> or call 1-877-801-2289.

**Celebrating Our 18th Year**  
Updated website with new products



The very finest attracting dodgers and matching lures for

## **KOKANEE — TROUT LANDLOCKED SALMON**



Ultralight tackle for your success includes 3 styles of attracting dodgers  
Matching lures: **NEW** Kokanee Krill, Beaded Spinners, Super Squids, Spin Bugs  
Only the finest fluorescent ("UV") materials used. Tandem Gamakatsu hooks.

**FISH WITH GARY TACKLE CO.**

La Pine, Oregon

**www.fishwithgary.com 541.536.1002**

**Home of Kokanee University**

Since 1969



**Mack's**  
Lure

## **GEAR UP FOR WALLEYESZN**

WITH THE SMILE BLADE



"EVERY WALLEYE ANGLER'S  
**FAVORITE SPINNER BLADE**"



Get 10% OFF  
w/ code: REEL10  
Only at MacksLure.com





After 26 rainbows brought to hand and released, I reeled up the loose coils at my feet and clipped the Muddler Minnow off the line. Rain had been steady for the last hour and, soaked, I looked forward to climbing back in the Mustang and turning up the heater.

Upstream from a two-lane bridge, the river cut a channel through rock leaving a pool deeper than a man's head. In the winter, an angler might catch a steelhead here; in the spring it was chinook, but the river offered a trout fishery too.

Today's lipstick was a Muddler Minnow tied on a No. 8 long-shank hook, unweighted, with a turkey feather for the dorsal.

With no one else for company, it was easy to start at the top of the run, shake out a bit of line and stack-mend to get the fly to work

into the seam this side of the riffle.

Lengthening the line, making micro-mends, the diminutive sculpin imitation presented to the trout below, and rainbows streaked up from the bottom to follow the Muddler across its arcs. And the longer the arc, the more likely the trout would grab.

After several trout I was startled to realize I did not feel a single bite. Instead, at best, it was a movement of the line, a two-inch indication, not even a tick that I responded to. Now and then a trout would give itself away with a flash below the surface. Trout after trout bit. Almost every cast they grabbed, but I only counted them when I could fight them all the way to the bank.

As time passed, I stepped downstream, roll-cast the same length of line each

time and teased trout out from beneath the shadow of the bridge. When, properly soaked from the rain, I saw another angler headed toward me. He cast a glance toward the fly I had just removed from my line.

"Take this," I said. "It's working." And before I walked up to the bridge, I pointed out where I supposed the trout were lying in the tea-colored water.

But I couldn't leave. I had to watch from the bridge to see what the trout were doing. Taking care to not cast my shadow over the fish, I leant both elbows on the rail and watched the angler work out line and swing the Muddler across.

A trout streaked up from the middle of the water column, followed a couple of feet and then closed its mouth over the

deer hair streamer. There was no reaction from the fisherman. He let the fly continue to swing while the trout moved with the Muddler then opened its mouth and spit it out.

Surprised, I said nothing and continued to watch. In twenty casts, ten trout grabbed and the guy did not a single time sense the bite. I could not stand it. I walked back down.

He was ready to change flies. "You're getting bit on almost every cast," I said. He didn't believe me but he consented

to cast again. When the fish bit, I called the strike. And he caught a fish. And I left him to it.

What was the difference, I wondered then, and I still wonder today when I fish alongside someone who clearly catches more fish than me. If the fly is the same and the presentation is the same, why does one angler catch fish and another does not? How many fish bite and we do not know it?

Line control and sensitivity is hard to teach and even harder to learn.

Let's call it electricity, an impulse in a conductor. Cast out a dead thing; the conductor swings out in the void. And then, out of the void comes a live thing and closes the circuit. For a moment, the line tingles and energy pulses from the muscles of the trout on the other end. In tune with the lightning rod that is the graphite in your hand, you sense it. Exchange of energy. Reaction making contact.

Let the fish take a bit of line, lift the rod or turn the tip toward the bank. Let the trout hook itself. It's electric.



#### GARY LEWIS BIO

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



**FOR A SIGNED COPY OF FISHING MOUNT HOOD COUNTRY, SEND \$29.99, INCLUDES SHIPPING TO:**  
Gary Lewis Outdoors  
PO Box 1364, Bend, OR 97709  
**Contact Gary Lewis at**  
[garylewisoutdoors.com](http://garylewisoutdoors.com)



# COME DO IDAHO THE RIGHT WAY!



**SCAN TO  
BOOK YOUR  
ADVENTURE  
TODAY!**



**KILLGORE  
ADVENTURES**

**13309 HWY 95 White Bird, ID 83554  
208.839.2255 • KillgoreAdventures.com**



# PAID

## for Pikeminnow

### The Sport Reward Fishery



by Hannah Pennebaker  
@hannahNWF  
on Facebook & Instagram

What's better than fishing? Getting paid to go fishing! Every year, WDFW pays anglers for every northern pikeminnow they catch. Why? These fish eat millions of baby salmon and steelhead every year. The goal of the program, called the Pikeminnow Sport-Reward Program, is to reduce the average size of the fish and remove the larger, older fish that eat the most salmon and steelhead. With this program, not only can you get paid to catch these fish, but you can also help out salmon and steelhead! This program takes place on the Snake River and Columbia River every year, from about May to September. According to WDFW,

"In 2022, rewards begin at \$6 each for the first 25 Northern Pikeminnow caught during the season. Anglers are paid \$8 for each fish they

catch from 26-200, and \$10 for every fish caught over 200 cumulatively. Anglers are also paid \$500 for each specially tagged Northern Pikeminnow!"

Every pikeminnow 9 inches or longer is eligible for the program. Dedicated pikeminnow anglers can make thousands of dollars every year, and feel good about helping salmon and steelhead out. WDFW says that anglers "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!" Not bad, and don't forget that it's all for a good cause: each pikeminnow can eat up to 15 salmon/steelhead smolts in a day. Interested in trying out the fishery? Let's go over how the program

works, and how you can get involved.

The Pikeminnow Sport-Reward Program is designed to be as easy and straightforward as possible. There are stations set up near the Columbia and Snake Rivers where you can turn in your catch for the day. You must register at the station before you fish, and a valid fishing license is required. Registration forms are available 24/7 at each station. If the station is unmanned when you arrive, you can pick up your form from their night box. Fish must be returned to the registered station during its hours of operation in order to qualify for a reward. Frozen fish are not allowed, they must be live or fresh. Any fish 9 inches or above will qualify. You may register for the next day when you return your fish for the day. If you return fish to the station without registering


in advance, you won't be able to get your reward. Rewards aren't issued at the station, instead, you'll get a voucher. You'll get reward vouchers every time you turn in eligible fish, and you can mail them to WDFW for a reward, issued in the form of a check. Remember, WDFW must receive your vouchers by November 15th of every year. If you're lucky enough to get a specially tagged fish worth \$500, the station will give you an envelope to mail the tag to. The first time you receive a voucher, you need to include an IRS W-9 form when you mail the voucher out to receive payment.

Interested in trying out the fishery? Thankfully, it can be very productive, and there is a lot of information out there to help get you started. Shore anglers can do just as well as boaters. Every week, WDFW posts catch numbers collected at each station, and catch reports dating back to 2014 are available on their website. You can figure out where anglers are having good success and try fishing in those areas. Pikeminnow can be caught from shore or boat. You can use bait, artificial plastics, or lures. Diving crankbaits work well, and you can troll them or cast them out. Pikeminnow tend to congregate near the bottom of the river. Drift fishing can be very effective! Many seasoned pikeminnow fishermen drift tubes or grubs on a ¼ oz jighead.

Bring a variety of different colors; pikeminnow can be surprisingly picky! Use just enough weight to tick the bottom and not drag on it, or you will likely snag up and lose your lure. If plunking is your bag, you're in luck. Many anglers have had success plunking worms, chicken liver, and shrimp. Just make sure to use enough weight to stay on the bottom. Small spinners and other bass lures can also work well. If you're on a boat, you can "back bounce" your bait by lifting up your rod, letting out some line, and repeating once your weight hits the bottom. Just make sure to keep your line as tight as possible, as pikeminnow have surprisingly light bites. Like most fish, pikeminnow tend to hang out around structure. They also like faster currents, so avoid frogwater. They tend to school up, so if you don't catch one within 10 or 15 minutes, move and/or change bait/lures.

The Pikeminnow Sport-Reward Program has been a huge success, and is still going strong every year. According to WDFW, "over the past ten years (2011-20), the top 20 anglers caught an average of 3,353 fish per angler. 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". This is a great way to help salmon and steelhead, and make money doing it! As a bonus, pikeminnow are scrappy fighters and are great fun to catch on light tackle. Remember to register at the monitoring station before fishing, and have fun out there! If you're looking for more information about the Pikeminnow Sport-Reward Program, WDFW holds free fishing clinics during the season, and they often have a booth at sports shows where you can learn more. You can check out their website for a free, one-time \$10 coupon to turn in with your first pikeminnow! Good luck out there!



**COLUMBIA RIVER**

FULLY GUIDED SALMON  
AND STURGEON TRIPS ON THE  
COLUMBIA RIVER & TRIBUTARIES 2023

**NOW BOOKING**  
WINTER SALMON, STURGEON, AND STEELHEAD

 **MITCHELL SPORTFISHING**

509.489.5945  
@ MITCHELL\_SPORTFISHING  
MITCHELLSPORTFISHING.COM



# HOW TO CATCH BASS IN THE WINTER

(IN 8 SIMPLE STEPS)

By Rick Lawrence

Let's talk about winter bass fishing. Whether you choose to fish out of a boat in open water, or venture out on a frozen lake to drill a hole in the ice, you can catch bass in the winter. This time of year can be challenging for bass anglers, but with the right techniques you can master it. Here are the top 8 most important steps to follow when fishing for bass in the winter.

## **1. CHOOSE THE RIGHT LURE TYPE**

The first thing you'll need to think about is grabbing the correct lure for the season. You can't use the same strategy you use when the water is warm, no matter what way you look at it. Winter fishing techniques require finesse, but they also require a bit of preparation. Fast-moving lures and excessively noisy ones won't work when the water

temperatures drop. You're going to want to use bottom feeders and slower moving lures like jigging raps, flutter spoons, or, if you are fishing open water, suspending jerkbaits, if you work them slowly, with long pauses.

Stay away from lipped and lipless crankbaits, spinnerbaits, and other fast-moving lures during the winter months. Even switching from lures to live bait when legal is sometimes the key to landing winter bass.

Always choose the most natural color you can, and try to imitate the fish's color in the water you're fishing.

## **2. SLOW IT DOWN**

You need to slow down your presentation when the water temperatures drop. Winter largemouth bass fishing requires you to think like a fish. The water is cold, their

metabolism is slow, and they're not feeding much, so they will never chase a fast-moving bait halfway across the pond. It won't work.

You need to drop something right in front of their face, make the bass think it's almost dead, and move it slowly and erratically, so they think they've got an easy meal on their hand. Once you do that, you'll have no problem retrieving them because they won't put up much of a fight. In less than 40-degree water, you're in for a challenge. At that temperature, the bass are incredibly inactive, and their metabolism is super slow, so they're not feeding much, and they're preserving all their energy by taking on the simplest of meals.

For you to have success fishing during this time, you need to throw your

lure right in their face and present it slowly enough for them to get it.

The 40-to-50-degree temperature range is prime fishing in the north, so expect to find bass in this temperature range most frequently during early and late winter months. Bass in this temperature will slow down quite a bit, but they'll still have feeding periods each day, and this is when you need to capitalize by using the right lures and offering a slow but calculated presentation.

### 3. SIZE IT DOWN

In addition to presenting more slowly, you'll also want to present a smaller lure. Small bait fish imitations can trigger strikes, or you can go with a small nedhead jig or

spoon with some red on it. The bottom line is, your strategy needs to stay in line with the conditions. If it's cold and the water temperature is near freezing, use a small ned, or the smallest swimbait you have, nose hooked on a drop-shot jig. Doing so will present less of a threat to the bass, and they'll think they stumbled upon an easy opportunity for a meal.

### 4. GO NEUTRAL

Color is also an important factor in the winter. If you can find baitfish in the water, see what color they are, and mimic them. If not, go neutral whenever possible.

### 5. KNOW WHERE TO LOOK

The best tip someone ever told me is to use a good fish finder and search the area for fish before you try fishing

for them. Water clarity is also a huge factor in the winter. If the water is murky, the baitfish will run deeper. If you have clear water, the baitfish will come closer to shore and into the weed lines. Look for green weeds, rocky drop-offs, submerged islands, or any structure that might be a good spot bass would use, then scout the area for fish with your electronics.

### 6. TIME IT RIGHT

As previously mentioned, you need to change your mindset when it comes to fishing in the winter. When the water temperatures are warm, we know that the best times to fish for bass is first thing in the morning and right at dusk.

When you're fishing in the winter, you'll want to fish the middle of the day because

## PREMIERE TRIPS THROUGHOUT THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST



TAKE A GUIDED SALMON, WALLEYE AND  
STURGEON TOUR WITH US

BOOK YOUR  
ADVENTURE TODAY!  
509.492.8852



 MUNDEN'S RISING SON ADVENTURES

 RISINGSONADVENTURES@GMAIL.COM

 MUNDENSRISINGSONADVENTURES

[RISINGSONADVENTURES.WIX.COM/FISHING](https://RISINGSONADVENTURES.WIX.COM/FISHING)

this is when the water will be the warmest. Once the sun has hit the water for a while, the baitfish will start to move around, and this is when you stand the best chance of catching more bass.

## 7. DON'T FORGET THE BASICS

One of the most important winter bass fishing tactics to learn revolves around understanding structure and baitfish. You can sometimes find bass without any structure around if there are baitfish there, and sometimes you can find bass on structure without any baitfish, but you will never find them where neither are present. You need to understand these two points and why they're critical for winter fishing. Baitfish will sometimes hug the shore



near creeks because this is where the most oxygen is, and the temperature tends to be a bit warmer. As we all should know, bass follow the baitfish, so this is where you're likely to find more bass. Offshore green weed lines can also hold bait fish and provide bass with ambush points to catch an easy meal, making them prime spots as well.

## 8. BRING THE RIGHT GEAR

While this isn't a direct tip per se, I wanted to talk briefly about safety and gear. Depending on your location, fishing in the winter can be dangerous because of frigid temperatures and dangerously cold water.

You need to make sure you have enough layers to keep yourself warm, and plenty of backup gear in case you fall in or get wet. Wear multiple layers with socks, ice fishing boots, and fingerless gloves so you can maintain full movement of your fingers. If you're on the ice, make sure you have all the proper safety gear you need in case you should fall through the ice, and don't ever fish on the ice alone.



The Northwest's Premier Outfitter offering guided fishing trips in Idaho, Washington and Oregon.



# Jones Sport Fishing

## GUIDE SERVICE SPRING SPECIAL

**SPRING WALLEYE** <sup>\$700</sup>  
COLUMBIA RIVER

OR

**SPRING SALMON** <sup>\$800</sup>  
WIND RIVER  
DRANO  
MCNARY

FISH  INTIMIDATORS

**BOOK NOW AT**  
**FISHTHECOLUMBIA.COM**



CONTACT US

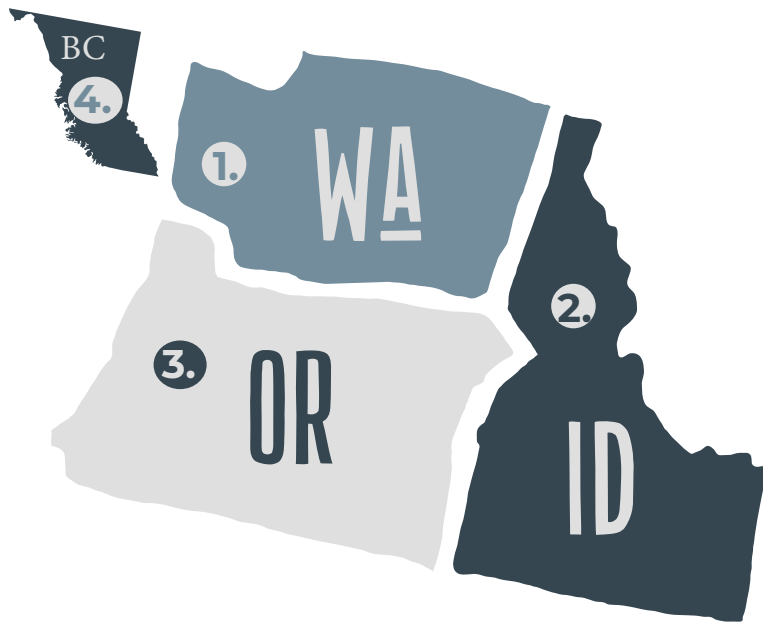
(509) 750-6809

📞 Fish Intimidators

Fishintimidators@gmail.com

\*Prices rate 4-6 anglers. Some conditions apply. Call for details.

# 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  
● ● ●

2. **Killgore Adventures**  
1-888-957-6875  
killgoreadventures.com  
Hells Canyon  
●

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**  
(509) 750-6809  
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**  
(208) 790-2128  
reeltimefishing.com  
Columbia, Snake, Clearwater Rivers  
● ● ● ●
2. **Rising Son GS**  
(509) 492-8852  
risingsonadventures.wixsite.  
com/fishing  
Columbia River & Central WA  
● ● ● ●
1. **Ross Outdoor Adventures**  
(509) 750-7763  
rossoutdooradventures.com  
Potholes Reservoir, Moses Lake, Banks  
LAke  
● ● ●
1. **SJM Guide Service**  
(509) 435-6486  
sjmguideservice.com  
Columbia River & Lake Roosevelt  
● ● ● ● ● ●
2. **Snake Dancer Excursions**  
Hell's Canyon Fishing Adventures  
● ● ●
1. **YJ Guide Service**  
(509) 999-0717  
yjguideservice.com  
Lake Roosevelt, Palouse River,  
Columbia River  
● ● ● ● ● ● ●



Hell Razor™

**SWARM**

*Switchblade Flasher System*

**SALMON • TROUT • KOKANEE**

Build yours today at  
**wigglefin.com**



## Outdoor Gear

### Ghunders Performance Base Layers

(360) 612-0506  
ghunders.com

### Work Sharp Tools

(800) 597-6170  
worksharptools.com

### The General Store Spokane

(509) 444-8005  
generalstorespokane.com

## Marine Gear

### Precision Propeller

(509) 489-7765  
precisionpropco.com

### IFish Solutions

(509) 954-3883  
ifishsolutions.com

### Fish Fighter

(208) 580-1905  
fishfighterproducts.com

## Fishing Tackle

### Fish With Gary Tackle Co.

(541) 536-1002  
fishwithgary.com

### Mack's Lure

(509) 667 9202  
mackslure.com

### Mauk's Fishing Stuff

(509) 689-3164  
fishingtacklecovers.com

### Old Goat Lures

oldgoatlures.com

### Superfly Flies

(208) 610-9280  
superflyflies.com

### Wigglefin Tackle

(208) 388-8539  
wigglefin.com

### Lure Safe

(509) 499-0605  
luresafe.com  
luresafe@gmail.com

## Other

### Scuttlebutt

(425) 252-2829  
scuttlebuttbrewing.com

### Tanners Fresh Fish Processing

(866) 209-4882  
tannersfish.com

### Skip Rock Distillers

(360) 862-0272  
skiprockdistillers.com

### Hillary Holman Inland Empire REMAX

(509) 655-9470  
HillaryHolman.com

Email today for directory  
advertising information.

[cameron@nwfishing.net](mailto:cameron@nwfishing.net)



*Reel Obsession*  
SPORT FISHING  
ZEBALLOS, BC   
www.reelobsession.ca 1-888-855-7335



**WEST  
VANCOUVER ISLAND'S  
PREMIER FISHING  
LODGE  
DESTINATION**

WORLD CLASS BC SALMON,  
HALIBUT, ALBACORE TUNA,  
LINGCOD AND BOTTOM FISH

*Reel Obsession*  
SPORT FISHING

**LUXURIOUS WATERFRONT  
ACCOMMODATIONS AND LOCALLY  
SOURCED CUISINE SERVED UP BY  
OUR ACCREDITED CHEF**

- 1ST CLASS EXPERIENCE
- 3 AND 4 DAY INCLUSIVE LODGE AND CHARTER FISHING PACKAGES
- FISH THE BC SALMON HIGHWAY



**Located in Zeballos, BC**

Reelobsession.ca | Phone: 1-888-855-7335

AS SEEN ON  
NW FISHING TV

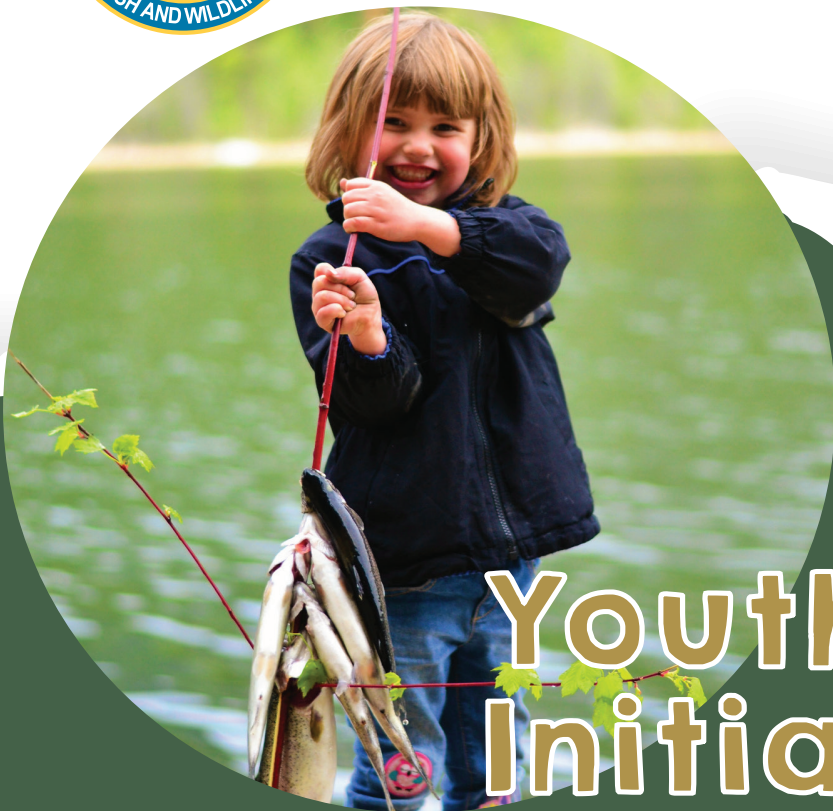


# Disabled Veterans Fund

100% OF DONATIONS HELP  
OFFSET THE COSTS OF DISABLED  
VETERANS' HUNTING & FISHING  
LICENSES



## Donate today!



100% OF DONATIONS HELP  
SUPPORT YOUTH EDUCATION  
PROGRAMS THROUGH HUNTING  
& FISHING OPPORTUNITIES

## Youth Outdoor Initiative Fund

**FISH FIGHTER**  
Products

**THE WORLD'S BEST SONAR MOUNT  
NOW AVAILABLE**



# QRS UNIVERSAL LIVE SONAR TRANSDUCER MOUNT



*In Stock Now - Visit our website for more information*

**BUY ONLINE TO GET 10% OFF. USE PROMO CODE: NWFISH12**  
**EXPIRES APRIL 30, 2023**

***FISHFIGHTERPRODUCTS.COM***

**DROP US A LINE: 208-580-1904**  
**MOUNTAIN HOME, IDAHO 83647**



DOC0998