



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Coastal Region • Region 6 • 48 Devonshire Road, Montesano, WA 98563-9618

Telephone: (360) 249-4628 • Fax: (360) 249-1229

June 2023

To Interested Parties:

This letter is to inform you of the commercial salmon fishery regulations for Willapa Bay during the 2023 season.

Please be aware not all commercial fishing areas are open during each opener and the area around North River (see summary of schedule for a specific description of closed area) in area 2T is CLOSED to commercial salmon fishing August 20 through September 30, 2023.

Retention of all sturgeon and all steelhead is strictly prohibited. Encounters of sturgeon with tags of any sort should be reported. **DO NOT REMOVE TAGS**; carefully obtain and submit information from tags to: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, 48 Devonshire Rd., Montesano, WA 98563.

During all commercial fishing for salmon in Willapa Bay:

Commercial fishers MUST:

- Have in their possession a WDFW-issued “Fish Friendly” certification card.
- Carry an on-board observer, when requested by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to do so.
- Report encounters of green sturgeon through the Quick Report system or to a dealer for reporting. Direct reporting by fishers shall include name of the fisher, vessel #, date, catch area, and number of green sturgeon encountered.
- Provide Notice of Intent to participate by contacting Quick Reporting by phone, fax, or email by 5:00 p.m. on August 11, 2023, for openings in Areas 2N, 2M, 2R, 2T, and 2U.

Wholesale dealers and fishers retailing their catch MUST:

- Report purchases of salmon including all “take home” to WDFW by 10:00 A.M. of the day following the commercial landing. The quick reporting requirement does not preclude the obligation of buyers to report catches on fish tickets. A copy of the “Statewide Quick Reporting Summary Sheet” can be downloaded on our website at: https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2019-03/quick_report_form_statewide.pdf.
 - Dealers should use the “buyer only” portion of the fish ticket to list the number of green sturgeon encountered with any landing and in the pounds/price columns label as ‘encountered’.
- The Port Code for the location of delivery is required on fish receiving tickets (See WAC 220-352-040, Required information for Washington state non-treaty fish receiving tickets).

The following regulations are subject to change based on in-season information. You are advised to verify schedules and regulations on the WDFW hotline at (360) 902-2500 or (360) 249-4628 before fishing. You may obtain a copy of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) for this fishery at [2023 North of Falcon- Coastal Commercial Fisheries | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#).

This letter and other relevant information regarding the Willapa Bay commercial fishery are available on the WDFW website at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/commercial/gillnet#information>.

For additional information or questions, please contact Barbara McClellan at (360) 470-3459.

Fall Salmon Fishery (openers occurring between August 20 and November 27, 2023):

Gear restrictions:

- Areas 2N, 2M, 2R, and 2T – Tangle net gear (maximum mesh size is 4 ¼ inches) August 20 through September 23, 2023, when area is scheduled open for commercial salmon fishing.
- Areas 2N, 2M, 2R, and 2T – Maximum mesh size is 6 1/2 inches September 24 through November 27, 2023, when area is scheduled open for commercial salmon fishing.
- Area 2U – Tangle net gear (maximum mesh size is 4 ¼ inches) September 16 through October 13, 2023.
- Area 2U - Maximum mesh size is 6 1/2 inches November 2 through November 27, 2023, when area is scheduled open for commercial salmon fishing.
- Notice of Intent to fish Willapa Bay is **REQUIRED** by 5 p.m. August 11, 2023.

Area restrictions:

- Area 2T, north of a line from Toke Point channel marker 3, easterly through Willapa Harbor channel marker 13 (green), then northeasterly to the power transmission pole located at 46°43.1907'N, 123°50.83134'W, is **CLOSED** to commercial salmon fishing September 16 through September 30, 2023.

Mark selective fishery and recovery box requirements:

From August 20 through November 27, 2023:

- Soak time is limited to 45 minutes during any individual set.
- ALL wild (unmarked) Chinook salmon and ALL steelhead are required to be released.
- Recovery boxes are **REQUIRED** on-board and **MUST** be operating when gear is being retrieved and when a wild (unmarked) Chinook salmon or steelhead are being held to recover.
- ALL wild (unmarked) Chinook salmon and ALL steelhead **MUST** be placed in an operating recovery box and remain until they are not lethargic and/or not bleeding; ALL unmarked Chinook and steelhead are required to be released.

Additionally, regional staff are looking to utilize a mass text system to provide the commercial gillnet fleet in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor notices via text of any in-season changes or adjustments.

If interested in participating in this system to receive updates to the commercial fishery in Willapa Bay or Grays Harbor, please email WillapaBay@dfw.wa.gov Or GraysHarbor@dfw.wa.gov and provide your name and cell phone number so you can be included.