

Eastern Region webpage:

REGIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE OPPORTUNITIES

Spring 2014 Snake River Spring Chinook Salmon Fishing Options

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is preparing for a spring Chinook salmon fishery on the Snake River in late April and May. The 2014 run forecast is encouraging. A harvest allocation of 904 adipose-fin-clipped hatchery adult Chinook has been established for the Snake River, prior to the in-season run update. An additional 405 hatchery fish could be available for harvest by mid-May if the run comes in at the pre-season prediction level.

We received input on options developed for the Snake River fishery at public meetings just conducted (about 75 people attended our Clarkston meeting on March 26, and another 43 people attended our meeting in Kennewick on March 27.)

We want to provide additional opportunity for input on options developed for the 2014 Snake River fishery. We will take comments, addressed to TeamSpokane@dfw.wa.gov with a subject line of “Spring Chinook Snake River,” through 5 p.m. Friday, April 11, 2014, on three questions about these options below.

As currently proposed, fishing in three or four portions of the Snake River would begin as early as April 24 but no later than May 1, in alternate days of the week. Four areas are proposed for fisheries: (A) below Ice Harbor Dam (IHR); (B) below Little Goose Dam (LGO); (C) below Lower Granite Dam (LGR); and (D) Clarkston area (Clark). (The Clarkston area has been open the past four years and angling effort and catch there has been modest.)

Snake River location descriptions:

A) Snake River from the South Bound Highway 12 Bridge near Pasco upstream about 7 miles to the fishing restriction boundary below Ice Harbor Dam;

B) Snake River from Texas Rapids Boat Launch on the south shore up-river to the fishing restriction boundary below Little Goose Dam. This zone includes the area between the juvenile bypass return pipe and Little Goose Dam along the south shoreline of the facility (includes the walkway area locally known as “the Wall” in front of the juvenile collection facility);

C) Snake River from Ilia Boat Launch on the south shore in Garfield County shore (located approximately 4 miles below Lower Granite Dam) to the fishing restriction boundary below Lower Granite Dam.

D) Snake River from the western edge of the large power lines crossing the Snake River just upstream of West Evans Road on the south shore approximately 3.5 miles to the Washington state line (from the east levee of the Greenbelt boat launch in Clarkston northwest across the Snake River to the WA / ID boundary marker on the Whitman County shore).

Background:

The goals for these 2014 Snake River fisheries, based on past public input and federal requirements for WDFW to be able to conduct these fisheries, are:

1. Remain within the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) permit limitations and harvest allocations for the Snake River fisheries; and
2. Increase the length and predictability of the fisheries to enable anglers to plan their trips.

WDFW is recommending the fisheries be open in each zone only three days per week. The weekend days would be split among zones so that each zone only gets one weekend day per week. This is intended to provide fishing opportunities in the upper zones and it enables WDFW to provide more advance notice when the fisheries must close.

A reduced weekly fishing period had previously been suggested by several anglers to help extend the duration of the fishing season. Although having both days of the weekend open in each zone is desired by many anglers, that is when most of the angling effort and harvest occurs, and therefore that option would not likely meet the goal of extending the fishing season for more weeks.

WDFW has the option to make in-season changes to either allow a higher daily catch limit or more days of fishing, if it becomes apparent after several weeks of fishing that harvest and ESA impact allocations are not likely to be met.

We are taking comment, addressed to TeamSpokane@dfw.wa.gov with a subject line of "Spring Chinook Snake River," through 5 p.m. Friday, April 11, 2014, on these three questions about these options:

1. **Should the daily catch limit (in addition to four or five jacks per day) be one or two adult hatchery-marked chinook salmon (knowing that a two adult limit may reduce season duration)?**
2. **Should the Clarkston area (Clark), as described above under D, be open along with the other described river sections?**
3. **Should the days of the week for fishing be alternated by zone as described in the chart below, with green denoting open fishing days? (Note: During the 2013 season, Ice Harbor Dam (IHR) was open Friday/Saturday.)**

| | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun | Mon | Tue |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| IHR | | | | | | |
| LGO | | | | | | |
| LGR | | | | | | |
| Clark | | | | | | |