

# Minor Sportfishing Rule Change Proposals 2011-2012



*Washington  
Department of*  
**FISH and  
WILDLIFE**

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# Minor Sportfishing Rule Change Proposals

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This regulation cycle is intended to be a very minor one, only addressing immediate conservation concerns and housekeeping items, including adjustments to the stream strategy regulations that were adopted last year. As a result of the funding challenges facing our state, the Department made the decision to adopt rules on a 2-year cycle with no minor cycle in between. However due to immediate conservation concerns and housekeeping items, the Department needs to undertake a very minor regulation cycle for the development of the 2011-2012 rules pamphlet.

## Conservation Concerns

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### #1. Close fishing for Columbia River Smelt (Eulachon) Statewide

**Proposal:** Close fishing for Columbia River smelt (eulachon) in both fresh and salt water statewide.

**Explanation:** In 2010, the federal government declared that Columbia River smelt (also called eulachon) warranted protection as a Threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The major recreational fishery for Columbia River smelt has occurred in the Columbia River and its tributaries. Existing permanent regulations have closed this fishery. However, fisheries for these fish occur in other river systems. Closing these other river systems to fishing for Columbia River smelt is necessary to conserve this species. The intent of this proposal is to prohibit recreational fishing for Columbia River smelt statewide. No fishing for eulachon is known to occur in marine waters. This regulation would prohibit such a fishery from occurring in the future.

## Housekeeping Stream Strategy Adjustments

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The proposed changes in this section are adjustments to the stream strategy rules put in place during the last rule cycle to protect rearing juvenile salmon and steelhead in streams that drain into Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Most of them were oversights and are needed to implement the intent of the rules adopted by the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

### #2. Black River and Tributaries

**Proposal:** Open the Black River (Thurston County) and all tributaries West of I-5 including Waddell Creek, Mima Creek, Dempsey Creek, Beaver Creek, Salmon Creek, and Blooms Ditch to fishing for game fish, from the first Saturday in June through October 31, with selective gear rules and a 14" minimum size for trout.

**Explanation:** These waters were inadvertently closed during the stream strategy process and should be reopened to provide trout fishing opportunity in these streams.

### **#3. Lower Deschutes River**

**Proposal:** Change the game fish season on the lower Deschutes River from old U.S. Highway 99 Bridge near Tumwater to Henderson Boulevard Bridge near Pioneer Park to year-round and add selective gear rules.

**Explanation:** This section of the river should have the same season as the section of the river above the Henderson Boulevard Bridge. Selective gear rules, already in place in the upper river, should ease release of fish during this catch-and-release fishery.

### **#4. Minter Creek**

**Proposal:** Open Minter Creek upstream of the Department intake dam to fishing for game fish, from the first Saturday in June through October 31, with a minimum size of 14" for trout.

**Explanation:** This section of Minter Creek was inadvertently closed during the stream strategy process and should be reopened to provide fishing opportunity for sea-run cutthroat trout.

### **#5. Upper Nisqually River**

**Proposal:** Open the Nisqually River above Alder Lake and all Alder Lake tributaries (including the Little Nisqually River and Mineral Creek) to fishing for game fish, from the first Saturday in June through October 31, with selective gear rules and a minimum size of 14" for trout.

**Explanation:** These waters were inadvertently closed during the stream strategy process and should be reopened to provide trout fishing opportunity in these streams.

### **#6. Purdy Creek**

**Proposal:** Open Purdy Creek to fishing for game fish, from the first Saturday in June through July 31, with selective gear rules.

**Explanation:** Purdy Creek was inadvertently closed during the stream strategy process and should be reopened to provide trout fishing opportunity.

### **#7. South Fork Stillaguamish River**

**Proposal:** Open the South Fork Stillaguamish River from the Mountain Loop Highway upstream to fishing for game fish, from the first Saturday in June through November 30, with selective gear rules and fishing from a floating device equipped with a motor prohibited. The anti-snagging rule and night closure would be in effect from August 1 through November 30.

**Explanation:** This section of the river was inadvertently closed during the stream strategy process and should be reopened to provide fishing opportunity for summer steelhead.

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# Housekeeping

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## #8. Capital Lake

**Proposal:** Close fishing for gamefish in Capital Lake (Thurston County).

**Explanation:** Access to Capital Lake is closed to prohibit spread of the invasive New Zealand Mudsnail present in the lake. Mudsnails are easily transported on shoes, boots, and fishing gear to which they may attach themselves. The lake has already been closed to salmon angling.

## #9. Areas Where Columbia River Endorsement is Required

**Proposal:** Remove Riffe Lake from the list of areas where the Columbia River Endorsement is required to fish for salmon or steelhead. Add Gobar Creek (Kalama River tributary) to the list. Rule language was also clarified to limit the requirement for the endorsement to the anadromous zones of affected rivers.

**Explanation:** Riffe Lake is managed under landlocked salmon rules. Gobar Creek, a Kalama River tributary, has returning anadromous hatchery fish.

## #10. Two-Pole Endorsement

**Proposal:** Add Cougar Lake (Okanogan County) and the portion of Swift Reservoir from the markers approximately 3/8 of a mile below Eagle Cliff Bridge to the bridge to the list of lakes where the Two-Pole Endorsement is not valid.

**Explanation:** Cougar Lake is a catch-and-release fishery to which we are adding selective gear rules. This part of Swift Reservoir is a major holding area for bull trout, an ESA protected species.

## #11. Free Fishing Weekend

**Proposal:** Anglers are not required to purchase the Two-Pole Endorsement or Columbia River Endorsement to fish on Free Fishing Weekend.

**Explanation:** In keeping with the spirit of Free Fishing Weekend, this proposed rule change will make it clear that the Two-Pole Endorsement and Columbia River Endorsement are not required during Free Fishing Weekend.

## #12. Clover Creek Opening Date

**Proposal:** Change the opening date for Clover Creek (Pierce County) upstream of Steilacoom Lake, including all tributaries from July 2 to July 1.

**Explanation:** This proposal corrects a typographical error in the WAC.

### **#13. Chambers Creek**

**Proposal:** Remove double listing with conflicting language from the rules for Chambers Creek (Pierce County).

**Explanation:** In the past there was a separate listing in the WAC for Chambers Creek and Chambers Creek estuary. These two listings have been combined, so the estuary listing is no longer needed.

### **#14. Rocky Creek**

**Proposal:** Change the County reference for Rocky Creek from Mason County to Pierce/Kitsap County.

**Explanation:** This correction to the rules will help anglers to identify the Rocky Creek the rule is referring to.

### **#15. Columbia River Sturgeon Sanctuary Boundary**

**Proposal:** Change the lower boundary of the sturgeon sanctuary in the Columbia River below Priest Rapids Dam from the trolley cableway 2.5 miles below the dam to the boundary marker on the river bank 400 feet downstream from Priest Rapids Hatchery outlet channel (Jackson Creek).

**Explanation:** the trolley cableway has been removed and a new boundary marker is needed.

### **#16. Phillipa Creek Spelling**

**Proposal:** Change the spelling of Phillapa Creek (Snoqualmie River tributary) to Phillipa Creek.

**Explanation:** Corrects the spelling of the creek name in the rule.

### **#17. Daily Limit for Shiner Perch**

**Proposal:** Change the daily limit for shiner perch from 2 to 15 fish.

**Explanation:** Shiner perch are classified as other food fish. During the previous regulation cycle the daily limit for shiner perch was reduced to 2 fish. Shiner perch are primarily used as a baitfish. Population surveys indicate shiner perch are healthy and can support a daily limit of 15.