

Free Fishing Weekend - proposed rule change

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Current Free Fishing Weekend rule

- Establishes Free Fishing Weekend as the weekend following the first Monday in June.
- Allows fishing without a fishing license regardless of age or residency.
- Allows use of WDFW lands without a vehicle use permit.
- Waives requirement for two-pole endorsement for fishing with two-poles in two-pole waters.
- Maintains requirement for a valid catch record card to possess species which require a CRC.



Free Fishing Weekend

- rational for rule change

- Free Fishing weekend has led to impactful spikes in harvest and elevated conservation concerns for certain species.
- Difficulties with enforcement and compliance.
- Increased impact to beach habitats and associated uplands.
- Increased burden and challenges for land-owners/managers (e.g. State Parks) and neighboring land-owners resulting from parking overcrowding, trash, and trespass.
- Proposed changes will aid in achieving conservation objectives, accountability for harvest, and will reduce the impact on seasons.



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WAC 220-220-230 Free fishing weekend. The Saturday and Sunday following the first Monday in June is declared to be free fishing weekend in Washington. On this weekend a fishing license is not required for any person, regardless of age or residency, to fish for or possess fish (~~and shellfish and a fish and wildlife lands vehicle use permit is not required to utilize department parking facilities except that it is unlawful to fish for or possess any species for which a catch record is required without a valid catch record card in possession.~~) for which a catch record card is not required. On free fishing weekend, anglers may fish with two poles in all lakes where it is legal to do so without purchasing a two-pole endorsement (~~. During free fishing weekend~~), and a fish and wildlife lands vehicle access pass is not required to use department parking facilities. Only the license, endorsements, and permit provided for in this section are affected, and all other rules (~~including the catch record card requirement~~) remain in effect.

Free fishing weekend does not apply to fish that require a catch record card or shellfish, and any licensure requirements otherwise provided for by rule continue to apply to those species.



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- Limit the waiver of licensure requirements for free fishing weekend to fish that do not require a catch record card.
- Remove shellfish from waiver of licensure requirements for free fishing weekend.
- Clarifies waiver of the requirement for a vehicle access pass on free fishing weekend.



Rule-making Process

- CR101 – filed January 18, 2022
- CR102 – filed March 22, 2022
- Public comment (closes June 28, 2022);
 - Only one comment in opposition has been received to date.
 - Commenter states that “it is extremely difficult for people to learn what the rules are.” and goes on to say that “when it is FREE, please let it really be Free. Free of new rules, fines, citations, this limits that limits, new guidelines and regulations.”
- Decision on proposed rule – July 15, 2022



Questions?

