

Columbia River night fishing rules - salmon, steelhead and sturgeon

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Outline

- ▶ Review of Columbia River statewide night fisheries (current permanent rules)
 - ▶ Salmon, steelhead and sturgeon
- ▶ Rationale for changes
- ▶ Next steps

Current Permanent Regulations for Lower Columbia River (OR joint waters and WA tributaries)

Species	Area	WA night closure?	OR concurrency issues?	Notes
Salmon/ Steelhead	mouth to McNary	No	Yes	OR closed to all species at night
Salmon/ Steelhead	McNary to WA/OR border	No	Yes	OR open for salmon/steelhead at night only
Salmon/ Steelhead	Cowlitz, Lewis and Kalama rivers	Partial	N/A	Only very lowest reached are open at night.
Salmon/ Steelhead	Drano, Wind, Big White Salmon and Klickitat rivers	Partial	N/A	Closed in Klickitat River at night and spring for Drano and the lower Wind River
Sturgeon	Columbia River and tributaries	Yes	No	OR closed to all species at night

Current Permanent Regulations for Upper Columbia River

Species	Area	WA night closure?	Concurrency issues?	Notes
Salmon/ Steelhead	WA/OR border to Priest Rapids	No	N/A	Closed waters in spring
Salmon	Yakima River	Yes	N/A	
Salmon	Priest Rapids to Chief Joseph and tributaries	No	N/A	Closed at night in Wenatchee, Icicle and Entiat rivers
Steelhead	Priest Rapids to Chief Joseph and tributaries	Yes	N/A	When opened by e-rule
Sturgeon	Columbia River and tributaries	Yes	N/A	

Current Permanent Regulations for Snake River (OR/ID joint waters and WA tributaries)

Species	Area	WA night closure?	ID concurrency issues?	Notes
Spring Chinook	Snake River	Yes	N/A	
Spring Chinook	Snake River tributaries	Yes	N/A	
Fall Chinook/ Steelhead	Snake River	No	Partial	ID open at night
Fall Chinook/ Steelhead	Snake River tributaries	No	N/A	
Sturgeon	Snake River and tributaries	Yes	Yes	ID allows night fishing

Rationale for changes

- ▶ Necessary for in-season management when creel survey data are basis for decisions
 - ▶ Combination of low run sizes and small allowable ESA impacts creates need for increased precision
 - ▶ Lack of resources to sample at night to account for catch and impacts in-season
- ▶ Rule simplification – concurrency with Oregon (Columbia River mouth to OR/WA border)
 - ▶ First phase occurred within WA over the past few years
 - ▶ Second phase is taking a closer look at salmon regulations and jointly managed waters
 - ▶ Oregon is closed at night for all species, except for salmon/steelhead above McNary Dam

Rationale for changes

▶ Pros

- ▶ Increased precision for in-season management
- ▶ Improve concurrence with Oregon
- ▶ Enforcement effectiveness increases
- ▶ Rules simplified
- ▶ Potentially fewer in-season changes
 - ▶ Past two summer steelhead seasons, night fishing closures have occurred due to low steelhead runs

▶ Cons

- ▶ Several fisheries are popular (primarily steelhead)
 - ▶ Columbia River from McNary to Priest Rapids Dam, Drano
- ▶ More diverse opportunities provided

Next steps

- ▶ North of Falcon (salmon season setting process)
 - ▶ Public process from March-April with numerous meetings throughout the state
 - ▶ Delegated authority for changes to the Director
 - ▶ Potential rule modification: night fishing closures for salmon/steelhead in the Columbia River jointly managed waters (mouth to OR/WA border above McNary Dam) and lower reaches of specific tributaries (i.e., Drano and lower Wind River)

- ▶ Discuss options with Idaho to improve concurrency