

WDFW Region 6 - District 17N Grays Harbor 2025 Public Fishery Suggestion Summary as of 3/25/2025

2/12/2025

The WDFW should abandon the concept of daily limits when there is an "opening" for salmon species. This system favors anglers who have unlimited time off. It forces all anglers to fish in a compressed time period without regard to the weather or the fact that many anglers have jobs that do not provide the necessary flexibility to fish during the openings. This leads to some anglers getting a daily limit over a number of days while others cannot fish. Of course, then the overall is reached sooner. Instead, the WDFW should implement an allotment system where each license holder is allowed X# of Chinook and X# of Coho per season. The areas can still be opened and closed to manage the species. This is in line with the procedure for other species, for example elk. This would allow anglers to decide when the angler wants to fish taking into weather and personal factors - such as employment days off. Later in the season based upon the available fish left in a quota, the WDFW could open up areas to "bonus" fish for each license holder. I realize that this will require more effort from WDFW but opening up fishing on short notice in an area and during a weekday is really unfair to many anglers

2/27/2025

Please allow bait for fishing the Grays Harbor rivers in December for salmon. Wild steelhead encounters are statistically insignificant and salmon fishing during those months is more fun and productive with bait.

3/5/2025

When there is such a large number of fish(chum) forecasted, does the Department ever consider a "bonus limit" such as has often been done for Pink salmon in Puget Sound?

3/12/2025 WB/GH Fisheries Discussion Meeting 1

WB/GH Commercial

- After Oct. 1st run one live box chamber on boats instead of two
 - Is this a viable request?

GH Rec

- Upper basin Porter upriver to Centralia coho retention in Nov & Dec (like last year)
 - One wild coho and one hatchery coho
 - Go to one hatchery coho only after end of Nov.

WB/GH Commercial

- With fleet reductions; Where are we at in the process?
 - Mike S – GH, updated model with current year's information
 - Rates going down due to lower effort levels

GH Rec

- Extend recreational season as much as possible
 - One wild coho Oct/Nov
 - Potential Dec. fishery

GH Rec

- Are the GH Chinook intercepted by AK have similar percentage as last few years?
 - Is it 50%?
 - Is the agency doing anything to address that?
 - Chinook issue backs up recreational fishers into 6-week window and does not work well
 - Mike S – Yes, it is.

- It has come up more on the council floor than in the past.
 - It is getting more voice, can not speak to the full extent of the agencies work
 - Have heard more from the upper level than in the past

Queets Rec

- Last several years the recreational fishery cut off end Sept
 - What's the trajectory of the rebuild?
 - Do you see Oct. retention opportunity in the future?
 - Mike S – Last year able to do traditional Sept to Nov fishery (Salmon & Clearwater Rivers, park manages Queets)
 - Will have to see if this is possible this season as forecast is down
 - Coho numbers are a little tight this season, like GH
 - Starting point is Sept. to Nov. for Salmon & Clearwater Rivers

GH Rec

- Did we make escapement on all three salmon species last year?
- Give up bag limit rather than give up time fishing
- Jack fishery should be able to keep an adult coho if encountered
 - Unless concerned it will attract too many people
- MSF on coho in Dec. for Skookumchuck & Bingham hatchery fish
 - MS – Have not finished Chinook and coho escapements
 - Chum and coho well exceeded escapement
 - Spring Chinook made escapement goal

GH Rec

- Chehalis coho fishery
 - Full season preferred over a larger bag limit
 - From south Elma bridge upriver, 2 fish limit with only 1 being wild Oct. & Nov.
 - Or reduce total limit to 1 wild per day above south Elma in Oct. & Nov.
 - Preferred over 2 hatchery, mostly wild fish during this time
 - From Thanksgiving to Christmas drop wild retention and switch to 1 or 2 hatchery retention

GH Rec

- Jack Fishery
 - Keep an adult hatchery coho if encountered
 - Make it one hatchery adult during jack fishery
- Harbor Marine fishery
 - Hatchery king caught should be kept
- Coho Fishery
 - Access hatchery coho when passing through
 - Late Nov. through Dec.
 - Make MSF
 - Maintain area and time
 - Good for the sports fisherman

GH Rec

- Hatchery Chinook Retention
 - Affect chance of making the escapement goal
 - Stray hatchery Chinook spawning included in escapement
 - Mike S – This is correct, wild escapement plus estimate of natural spawning hatchery origin fish

- It is the same with the coho side which includes wild and stray hatchery fish spawning

GH Rec

- Marine Fishery
 - Participation Grays Harbor is pretty small, 40 to 45 boats on a nice Saturday
 - Chance to encounter hatchery Chinook is a low probability
 - Model hatchery Chinook retention
 - See what the impact would be - 1 out of 15 fish would be a hatchery fish

3/12/2025

I fished Skookumchuck river for 4 weeks to include the last day, Feb 28th. According to reports, the following week, nearly 700 were reported. I am a 100% disabled Vet, and appreciate the closeness to my home the Skook provides. In times past, when such a scenario presented itself, an emergency rule was allowed that opened fishing back up for a week on the skook. I was told the closure was to help protect Wild runs. And I question this decision when wild runs have been double the returns of the past. Is it really a major issue to open or back up? I've never been graced with landing this amazing creature. And I fished for 4 weeks! And only had 1 on the hook for a brief moment because we're not allowed barbs! I am utterly heart broken at this seemingly mismanagement from my perspective. Please, grant a week more of fishing so I can try to get one, please?

Quotas should be significantly reduced using a data-driven approach instead of a political approach to promote a healthy fishery. WA State and Tribal fishing rights are decimating the fishery.

3/13/2025

- Season length is more important than larger bag limit.
- Concerned with adult Chinook impacts during jack fisheries
 - Need to really look at the jack fishery, but if adult Chinook returns continue to be an issue, look at closing this fishery.
 - Implement fishing with floats only or no bait to reduce adult Chinook impacts
- Don't open the lower Chehalis mainstem until Oct 1.
- 2 fish bag as long as impacts allow as long as open through Dec.
- 2 fish bag, only 1 wild Coho if impacts needed to fish through Dec.

3/14/2025

Thanks Mike and too clarify 2 fish one of which wild as last resort but if impacts available 2 fish non mark select through November like this last year

I think that is not as important though as addressing the chinook issue

To correct you I think we need to take a good hard look at savings on chinook in august and September

If need be push season to a October 1 start to allow chinook passage but more importantly the use of bait specifically eggs accompanied with a bobber is the issue in my eyes

I really think we need to have hard conversations around and have a realistic look at the situation of having a low water situation that time of year, warm water temps and king salmon that we cannot harvest in the system and we still continue to prosecute a jack fishery with the use of bait.

Questions that I think of :

How popular is the fishery?

Is it a sustainable fishery considering our chronic king salmon runs coming in under forecast?

Is keeping a Jack fishery in Aug/September worth the impacts of adult chinook?

If we keep a jack fishery can we move boundary lines around to better monitor and enforce the fishery to get a better idea of how many kings are being encountered?

It is in my opinion that at the rate we are going if we need to find savings and our make season changes or bag limits changes or regulation changes I would highly recommend making those changes on the early part of the season (Aug/sept)

I have zero scientific data to support my findings but I can 100 percent tell you chehalis basin king salmon are extremely "bitey" fish when a offering is presented under a bobber and the risk of the fish swallowing the bait is extremely high in these conditions

So to finalized and sum up my opinion on possible season changes or dates my suggestion would be no fishing on the chehalis mainstem until September 25-October 1- November 31 whatever the state and comanagers are comfortable with for a opening date open from the harbor to the mouth of skookumchuck river 2 fish non mark select or 2 fish one of which may be wild again whatever impacts allow

December 1 through December 31 I believe we could allow 2 hatchery coho but 1 salmon seemed to work fine this last season also

3/19/2025

Makes sense to have almost all rivers be closed for over half the year, reduce daily limits instead of increasing them and allow catch and release fisheries. Tons of money lost in revenue when you have thousands of people not participating in an activity.

3/25/2025

Spring Chinook fishery status for 2025, Chehalis Fall Chinook retention status for 2025; it would be nice to keep one F. Chinook a year. Would like to have a 2 coho retention fishery for 2025 season, not worth it going on the water for a one coho retention.