

# Statewide Freshwater Rules

## Using Freshwater Rules

### 1 • • • • • Read:

The Statewide Freshwater Rules and Statewide Freshwater Species Rules. Determine seasons and general rules applying to the species for which you intend to fish. Remember to check for emergency rules, which can be found by calling the WDFW Fishing Hotline at (360) 902-2500, by contacting statewide customer service at (360) 902-2700, or by visiting the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov>.

### 2 • • • • • Choose:

The location you are going to fish and check that area for Special Rule listings. Special Rules are divided into six areas: Coastal Rivers, Puget Sound and Strait Rivers, Westside Rivers, Westside Lakes, Eastside Rivers, and Eastside Lakes. **RIVERS** lists rivers, streams, and beaver ponds. **LAKES** lists lakes, ponds, and reservoirs. For the purposes of this pamphlet, the COLUMBIA AND SNAKE RIVERS are rivers (not reservoirs), and any special rules that apply are listed in the Eastside Rivers section. See map below for additional information.

### 3 • • • • • If your area is listed in a Special Rules section:

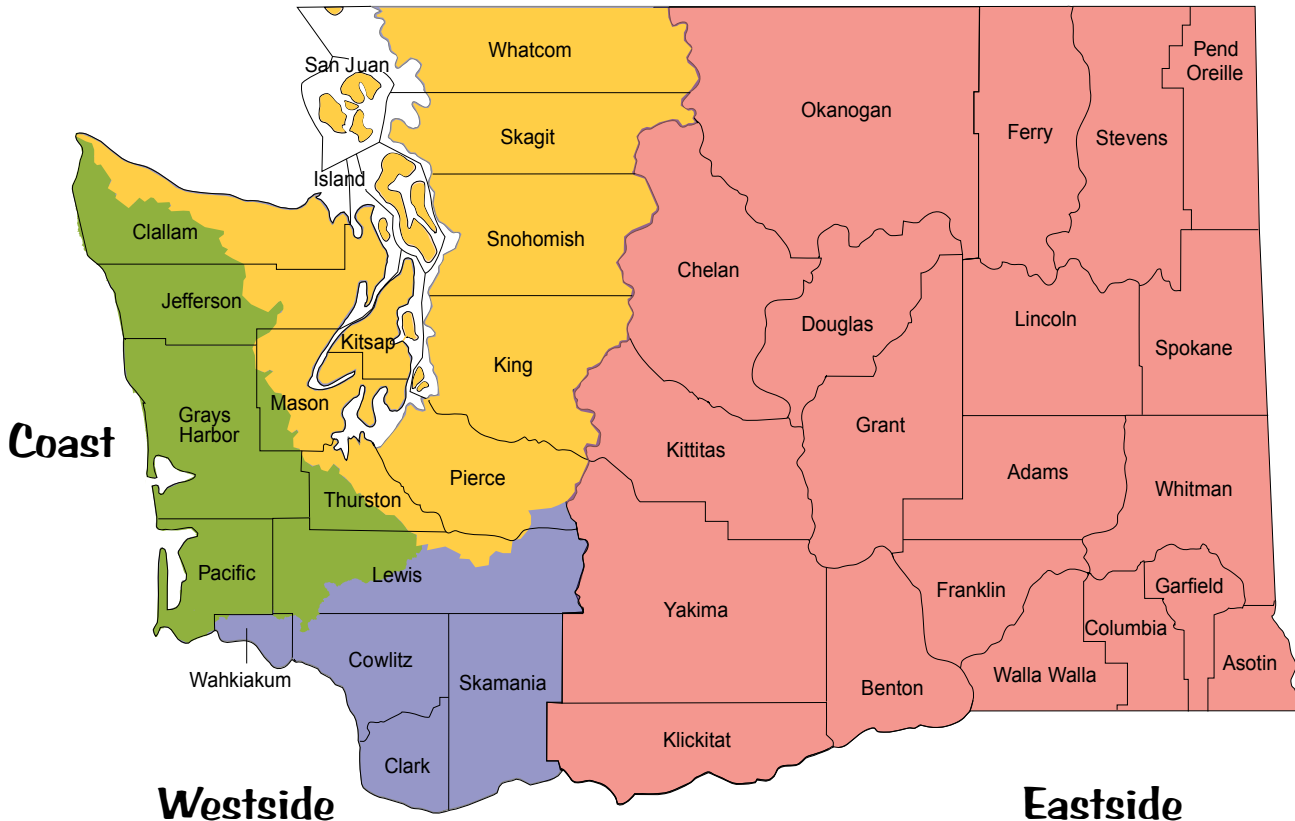
Read Special Rules Instructions on the bottom of page 16. If your area is NOT listed in the Special Rules for Westside Rivers, Eastside Rivers, Westside Lakes, and Eastside Lakes (**pages 52-95**), then all the Statewide Rules apply. In the Puget Sound, Strait, and Coastal Rivers sections **ALL** unlisted areas are **CLOSED**.

### 4 • • • • • The following terms are used frequently in the Special Rules:

*Catch-and-release, Chumming, Daily Limit, Fly Fishing Only, Juvenile Only, Landlocked Salmon Rules, Minimum Size (min. size), Maximum Size (max. size), Night Closure, Anti-Snagging Rule, Selective Gear Rules, Internal Combustion Motors Prohibited, Release wild STEELHEAD, Release wild CHINOOK, Release wild COHO, and Release wild CUTTHROAT. Definitions can be found on pages 10-11.*

Freshwater Rules

## Puget Sound and Strait of Juan de Fuca



# Statewide Freshwater Rules

The following rules and seasons apply unless listed otherwise in the Special Rules

## Areas/Seasons

For all Game Fish and SALMON, the Special Rules show **ALL** of the fishing opportunities for each freshwater area listed.

**Unlisted rivers, streams, and beaver ponds fall under statewide rules except the Puget Sound, Strait, and Coastal rivers (see below).**

**All freshwater areas are CLOSED to the harvest of any fish not classified as a Food Fish or Game Fish (see definitions page 10) except for NORTHERN PIKE.**

**Freshwater areas are open 24 hours per day when open.**

All FRESHWATER areas are **CLOSED** to fishing for SALMON, DOLLY VARDEN/BULL TROUT, LAMPREY, and GRASS CARP.

Fishing for COMMON CARP, SHAD, or FORAGE FISH is open only during open Game Fish or SALMON seasons.

**LAKES, PONDS, and RESERVOIRS** are open to fishing for Game Fish (except DOLLY VARDEN/BULL TROUT and GRASS CARP) **year-round**.

**RIVERS, STREAMS, and BEAVER PONDS** that drain into Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the coast are **CLOSED** to fishing unless listed as open. See page 21 for complete information. Beaver ponds located within or connected to streams listed as open to TROUT and Other Game Fish follow the same rules as the stream.

**RIVERS, STREAMS, and BEAVER PONDS** that do not drain into Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the coast are **OPEN** to fishing for Game Fish (except DOLLY VARDEN/BULL TROUT and GRASS CARP) the first Saturday in JUNE-OCTOBER 31.

## Tackle

Hook and line angling only. Barbed or barbless hooks may be used, and a hook may be single-point, double, or treble, but not more than one line with up to three hooks per angler may be used.

Single-point barbless hooks are required in areas designated as "fly fishing only" or "selective gear rules."

All fishing gear must be kept in immediate control and may not be left unattended while fishing. Rodholders may be used, but the rod must be easily removed without delay; rod may be left in holder while playing the fish.

A club or dipnet may be used to assist landing a legal fish taken by legal gear. A gaff hook may not be used.

It is unlawful to possess a fish taken from freshwater that was not hooked inside the mouth or on the head. The head is defined as any portion forward of the rear margin of the gill plate.

## Bait Rules

It is unlawful to chum, broadcast, feed, or distribute into freshwater any bait or other substance capable of attracting fish unless specifically authorized in Special Rules.

Where use of bait is prohibited, or where lures or flies are used voluntarily, Game Fish may be caught and released until the daily limit is retained. If any fish has swallowed the hook or is hooked in the gill, eye, or tongue, it should be kept if legal to do so.

It is unlawful to possess or use live aquatic animals as bait, except:

1. Live aquatic animals (other than fish) collected from the water being fished.
2. Live sand shrimp.
3. Live forage fish in the Columbia River downstream of the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line.

## Sturgeon

**GREEN STURGEON may not be retained.**

**Catch-and-release fishing ONLY** in the Columbia River from Bonneville Dam downstream, coastal, and Puget Sound waters including their tributaries.

**Annual WHITE STURGEON limit is 2 fish even if the angler holds both a Washington and Oregon license.**

Catch Record Cards are required statewide.

**WHITE STURGEON** Open only during open Game Fish or SALMON seasons.

Only one single-point barbless hook and bait is allowed when fishing for STURGEON.

In the field, eggs must be retained with intact carcass of fish from which they came. **Night closure in effect for all STURGEON (except Chehalis River).** Any STURGEON not to be retained must be released immediately. Oversized STURGEON cannot be removed totally or in part from the water.

In Columbia River waters forming the boundary between Washington and Oregon, STURGEON anglers may continue to fish (catch-and-release) after a daily or yearly limit has been retained.

**STURGEON** caught from lakes, rivers, or streams **without** catch record card codes should be entered on the catch card with code "900".

**Tagged STURGEON:** Do not remove tags from fish not of legal size or not to be retained, but record: tag number and color, date, location of catch, fish length, your name and address. If fish is retained, remove tag and send with above information to the address below.

**WDFW Region 5 Office (Vancouver)**  
2108 Grand Boulevard  
Vancouver, Washington 98661

## Special Rules Instructions

The Special Rules (pages 21-95) list freshwater areas where the Statewide Rules have been modified.

Unless otherwise listed in the Special Rules, you must follow the Statewide Rules.

For all Game Fish and salmon, the Special Rules show **ALL** of the fishing opportunities for each freshwater area listed.

The terms "**All Game Fish**" and "**Other Game Fish**" include the Game Fish species on the definitions pages, except DOLLY VARDEN/BULL TROUT and GRASS CARP.

The term **TROUT** includes: **STEELHEAD, BROWN, CUTTHROAT, TIGER, RAINBOW, LAKE, GOLDEN, and EASTERN BROOK TROUT; GRAYLING; KOKANEE; and LANDLOCKED ATLANTIC, COHO, AND CHINOOK SALMON.**

County references after lakes or streams are noted to make it easier to locate the waters listed, or to differentiate between two places with the same name. They do not mean that the rules apply only to the portion of water in that county.

In the Special Rules "motors prohibited" mean that fishing from a floating device equipped with a motor is prohibited. "Internal combustion motors prohibited" means that fishing from a floating device equipped with an internal combustion motor is prohibited. "Equipped with" means the motor is attached to the floating device, regardless of whether the motor is in the water.

In the Special Rules, all seasons for named lakes in Grant and Adams counties apply to inlet and outlet streams. In Grant, Adams, Okanogan, and Douglas counties, you may fish up to the base of all man-made dams or other obstructions (in listed and unlisted areas), except Zosel Dam.

Lakes with this icon have a public boat ramp.



Lakes with the below icon are excluded from the Two-Pole Endorsement.



Waters annotated with: **Col. R. Salmon/Steelhead Endorsement**, require a Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement when fishing for salmon or steelhead.

See: [http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/crss\\_endorsement](http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/crss_endorsement).

Waters annotated with: **Barbless hooks required for Salmon/Steelhead** require the use of barbless hooks when fishing for SALMON and STEELHEAD within the Columbia River and its tributaries.

# Statewide Freshwater Species Rules

## Game Fish **Possession Limit for Game Fish is 2 Daily Limits in any form.**

Game Fish

Freshwater Rules

| SPECIES  | ADDITIONAL RULES   |
|--|--|
| LARGEMOUTH BASS<br>(See DOH advisory, page 20)   | No min. size. Only LARGEMOUTH BASS less than 12" may be retained, except 1 over 17" may be retained. Daily limit 5. Bass may be caught, retained, and released alive from a livewell until a daily limit is in possession.   |
| SMALLMOUTH BASS<br>(See DOH advisory, page 20)   | No min. size. Only 1 SMALLMOUTH BASS over 14" may be retained. Daily limit 10. Bass may be caught, retained, and released alive from a livewell until a daily limit is in possession.  |
| TIGER MUSKELLUNGE (TIGER MUSKIE)   | Min. size 50". Daily limit 1.  |
| WALLEYE  | Min. size 16". Daily limit 5. Only 1 over 22" may be retained. WALLEYE may be caught, retained, and released alive from a livewell until daily limit is in possession.   |
| WHITEFISH  | No min. size. Daily limit 15.  |
| BURBOT (FRESHWATER LING)   | No min. size. Daily limit 5.   |
| CHANNEL CATFISH  | No min. size. Daily limit 5.   |
| CRAPPIE, NORTHERN PIKEMINNOW, PEAMOUTH CHUB, PERCH, SUCKERS, SUNFISH, CATFISH (except CHANNEL), BULLFROGS, ROCK BASS, STRIPED BASS | No min. size. No daily limit.  |
| GRASS CARP   | <b>CLOSED.</b>   |
| <b>TROUT:</b>  | <b>The combined daily limit for an angler that fishes in both rivers and lakes on the same day is 5 TROUT. In the combined daily limit, only 2 TROUT may be from rivers, except as provided for EASTERN BROOK TROUT.</b>   |
| BROWN TROUT<br>RAINBOW TROUT<br>GOLDEN TROUT<br>TIGER TROUT<br>GRAYLING  | <b>In rivers, streams, and beaver ponds:</b> Min. size 8". Daily limit 2. When fishing with bait, all TROUT (except STEELHEAD) equal to or greater than the minimum size are counted as part of the daily limit whether kept or released.<br><b>In lakes, ponds, and reservoirs:</b> No min. size. Daily limit 5. When fishing with bait, all TROUT (except STEELHEAD) equal to or greater than the minimum size are counted as part of the daily limit whether kept or released.  |
| EASTERN BROOK TROUT (EBT)  | <b>In rivers, streams, and beaver ponds:</b> No min. size. Daily limit 5. Anglers may keep up to 5 EASTERN BROOK TROUT, but no more than 5 TROUT total, and no more than 2 can be other TROUT species. <b>In lakes, ponds, and reservoirs:</b> Count as part of the 5 TROUT daily limit.   |
| STEELHEAD  | Min. size 20". Daily limit 2. No more than 2 STEELHEAD may be retained as part of TROUT combined daily limit. STEELHEAD may be caught and released until the daily limit is retained. No annual limit for hatchery STEELHEAD.<br><b>WILD STEELHEAD RETENTION RULES:</b> <b>ONE</b> wild STEELHEAD per license year may be retained from <b>ONE</b> of the following rivers: Bogachiel River, Calawah River, Clearwater River, Dickey River, Hoh River, Quillayute River, Quinault River, or Sol Duc River, as listed in the special rules. |
| DOLLY VARDEN/BULL TROUT  | When listed as open under the special rules, count as part of the TROUT combined daily limit.  |



Release of wild STEELHEAD and DOLLY VARDEN/BULL TROUT is required year-round, except where retention is specifically authorized in the Special Rules. In freshwater areas (see handling rules page 13) SALMON, STEELHEAD, and DOLLY VARDEN/BULL TROUT to be released may not be totally removed from the water.

## Food Fish

Food Fish

| SPECIES  | ADDITIONAL RULES/POSSESSION LIMIT   |
|--|---|
| COMMON CARP, SHAD  | No min. size. No daily limit. No possession limit. COMMON CARP (no license required) may also be taken by spear or bow-and-arrow.   |
| SALMON<br>(Anglers may not continue to fish for SALMON after the adult portion of the daily limit has been retained.)  | Possession limit - 2 daily limits in fresh form. An additional 40 pounds of SALMON may be possessed in frozen or processed form (see pages 10-11). ATLANTIC SALMON may be retained during any open TROUT or SALMON fishery. There is no size limit or daily limit for ATLANTIC SALMON.  |
| FORAGE FISH  | No min. size. Daily limit is 10 lbs. in the aggregate with HERRING, SARDINES, SANDLANCE, and ANCHOVIES. Possession limit - 1 daily limit in fresh form. Additional SMELT may be possessed in a frozen or processed form. All SMELT caught must be kept and count toward the daily limit. SMELT may not be retained unless authorized by emergency rule. <b>Statewide CLOSURE of EULACHON (Columbia River smelt).</b> EULACHON may not be retained unless authorized by emergency rule. <i>Check for announcements in late December.</i> |
| WHITE STURGEON<br>Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to Priest Rapids Dam including tributaries, and Snake River upstream to Lower Granite Dam including tributaries. | Min. size 38" fork length in waters downstream of The Dalles Dam, and min. size 43" fork length in waters upstream of The Dalles Dam. Max. size 54" fork length. Daily limit 1. Possession limit - 2 daily limits. Annual limit 2 STURGEON statewide per license year (April 1-March 31). Unless specifically noted in special rules, open only during open Game Fish or SALMON seasons. <b>Please note rules on page 16.</b>   |
| Columbia River from Bonneville Dam downstream, coastal, and Puget Sound waters including their tributaries.  | <b>Catch-and-release ONLY.</b> Open only during open Game Fish or SALMON seasons unless specifically noted in special rules. <b>Please note rules on page 16.</b>   |
| GREEN STURGEON   | <b>CLOSED.</b>  |

## Other

Other

| SPECIES   | ADDITIONAL RULES/POSSESSION LIMIT   |
|---|---|
| LAMPREY   | It is unlawful to take, fish for, or possess PACIFIC LAMPREY, WESTERN BROOK LAMPREY, or RIVER LAMPREY or to use any species of LAMPREY as fishing bait. |
| NORTHERN PIKE                                       | Statewide: No min. size. No daily limit. No possession limit. Must be dead before being removed from riparian area (immediate vicinity of water body).  |
| Other fish not classified as Game Fish or Food Fish | <b>CLOSED.</b> See definitions on page 10.  |

Unless otherwise listed under the Special Rules sections, you must follow the Statewide Freshwater Species Rules.

# Selected Washington Game Fish



**Largemouth Bass**

This bass is dark green on the back and sides, with a dark, horizontal band along its sides. The belly is white. The large jaw, when closed, extends behind the eye.



**Smallmouth Bass**

This bass is dark olive to brown on the back with a white belly. The sides are bronze and have dark vertical bands. The small jaw does not extend behind the eyes.



**Bluegill**

The bluegill is olive green to bluish with a blue and orange lower body. It has vertical bars on each side and solid black gill opercular lobes.



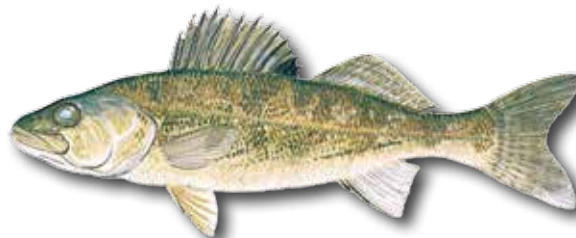
**Crappie**

The body is silvery with dark spots. The fins have dark bands. White crappie may have vertical bars on the sides.



**Yellow Perch**

This perch has a greenish to yellow body, a white belly, and vertical dark crossbars on each side. There are no prominent teeth.



**Walleye**

Coloration is black to brown on a whitish background. The lower portion of the tail fin is also whitish. It has a dark spot on the first dorsal fin, but no strong cross bars on the sides. The teeth are elongated.



**Bullhead**

The body is darkish-black to brown. Its head is not as flat as a channel catfish. The cat-like barbels on its mouth are brown or yellow. The skin has no scales. There are no spots on the side, and the tail is not forked.



**Channel Catfish**

The body goes from blackish to silvery to white on the sides. There may be some small irregular spots on the sides. Its skin lacks scales. It has cat-like black barbels on the mouth and jaw, a flat head, and forked tail.

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**Rainbow Trout**

Body color is variable and may be silvery in lakes and reservoirs. Numerous closely grouped spots on dorsal fin and tail. The maxillary (upper jaw bone) does not usually extend beyond the back of the eye.



**Steelhead (Female)**

Steelhead are ocean-run rainbow trout that run in both summer and winter seasons, returning after one to three years at sea.



**Coastal Cutthroat Trout**

Body color is variable. Numerous closely grouped spots on dorsal fin and tail. The maxillary (upper jaw bone) usually extends beyond the back of the eye. May have a red or orange slash on the underside of the jaw.



**Brown Trout**

This trout's back is brown or olive with large spots. Sides are light brown to yellowish with large dark spots surrounded by halos of blue-gray. The tail has few spots.



**Whitefish**

Coloration is light grayish-blue on the back with silvery sides and a dull, whitish belly. It has large scales, and a small mouth without teeth.



**Golden Trout**

Coloration is brilliant and distinct with a green back and gold-toned sides. There are a few spots below mid-point of the body, and white tips on the dorsal, anal, and pelvic fins. Parr marks show on the side of the body.



**Lake Trout (Mackinaw)**

Dark gray or gray green above, with a light gray to white belly. Colored spots are absent, fins have small white borders, and the tail is forked. It inhabits large, deep lakes.

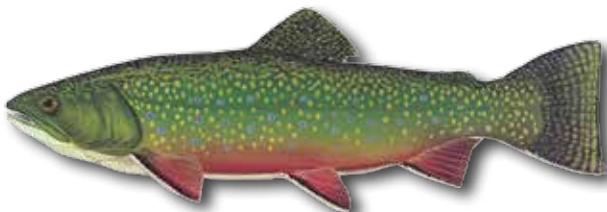


**Kokanee (Silver Trout)**

Its back is greenish blue to silver with faint speckling. The sides and belly are silvery with no distinct spotting. When kokanee spawn in fall, their sides turn red to scarlet. The inside of the mouth is white, not black as in some salmon.

Bull trout and Dolly Varden are native to Washington waters and are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Eastern brook trout are imported from other states and can negatively impact bull trout and Dolly Varden. All three species look very much alike and often live in the same waters. Eastern brook trout may be harvested in most waters, but Dolly Varden/bull trout harvest is limited to a few select waters (see Special Rules for details).

The dorsal fin is the key to telling them apart. If the dorsal fin has black spots or "worm tracks" it's a brook trout. If the dorsal fin is clear or olive colored with no distinct spots, it's a Dolly Varden/bull trout.



**Eastern Brook Trout**

Dark green or blue with white belly; its upper body and dorsal fin have wormlike markings. Its sides have yellow and pink spots with blue rings. The lower fins are white-tipped and the tail is square.



**Dolly Varden/Bull Trout**

This fish is olive green to brown above and on the sides with no wormlike markings. There are cream or crimson spots. The tail is slightly forked. Dolly Varden are only found in a few headwater streams in Western Washington. Bull trout are found in Eastern and Western Washington and may also be encountered in marine waters.

## Eat Fish, Be Smart, Choose Wisely

Eating fish twice a week as part of a healthy diet is recommended by the American Heart Association. Why? Because fish are nutritious, high in protein, low in saturated fat, and rich in omega-3 fatty acids - the building blocks for a healthy heart and brain. To balance the health benefits with risks from chemical contaminants in fish (like mercury, PCBs, and DDT), choose fish low in contaminants. For healthy fish choices [www.doh.wa.gov/fish](http://www.doh.wa.gov/fish) or toll free 877-485-7316.

## Healthy Tips to Reduce Contaminants



- Remove skin, organs, and fat before cooking.
  - Grill, broil, bake, or steam fish so fat drips off during cooking.
  - Do not use fat for sauce or gravy.
  - Eat a variety fish (within legal limits).
- Mercury is not reduced by preparing this way.

| FISH ADVISORIES  |  | CONSUMPTION ADVICE   |   |                                    |
|--|--|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <p>The following advice is for anyone concerned about contaminants in fish, but is especially important for women who are or might become pregnant, nursing mothers, and children – the developing fetus and child are most at-risk. If you eat the recommended amount stated for a specific waterbody, no other fish should be eaten that week or month. Meal size for an adult (160 lb.) is 8 ounces and a child (80 lb.) is 4 ounces uncooked fish.</p> |  |  |   |                                    |
| Body of Water  | Fish Species   | Women (Childbearing Age)   | Children  | Everyone Else                      |
| <b>Lakes and Rivers Statewide Mercury Advisory</b>   | Northern Pikeminnow  | DO NOT EAT   | DO NOT EAT  | No restrictions                    |
|  | Largemouth Bass  | 2 meals per month  | 2 meals per month   | No restrictions                    |
|  | Smallmouth Bass  | 2 meals per month  | 2 meals per month   | No restrictions                    |
| <b>Columbia River</b><br>• Bradford Island<br><br>• Middle Columbia River Ruckle Creek to McNary Dam<br><br>• Upper Columbia River (Lake Roosevelt)  | Bluegill, Carp, Catfish, Crappie, Sucker, Sturgeon, Walleye, Yellow Perch                  | All Groups: DO NOT EAT   |   |                                    |
|  | Bass, Bluegill, Carp, Catfish, Crappie, Sucker, Sturgeon, Walleye, Yellow Perch            | All Groups: 1 meal per week, or 4 meals per month (of any combination)                                 |   |                                    |
|  | Burbot, Longnose Sucker, Mountain Whitefish, Smallmouth Bass, Walleye<br>Largescale Sucker | 1 meal per week, or 4 meals per month (of any combination)<br>2 meals per month                        | 1 meal per week, or 4 meals per month (of any combination)<br>2 meals per month | No restrictions<br>1 meal per week |
| <b>Duwamish River (Lower)</b>  | Resident Fish, Shellfish, Crab   | All Groups: DO NOT EAT   |   |                                    |
| <b>Green Lake</b>  | Carp   | All Groups: 1 meal per month   |   |                                    |
| <b>Lake Chelan</b>   | Lake Trout   | All Groups: 1 meal per week  |   |                                    |
| <b>Lake Washington</b>   | Carp, Northern Pikeminnow  | All Groups: DO NOT EAT   |   |                                    |
|  | Cutthroat Trout  | All Groups: 1 meal per month   |   |                                    |
|  | Yellow Perch   | All Groups: 1 meal per week  |   |                                    |
| <b>Lake Whatcom</b>  | Smallmouth Bass  | DO NOT EAT   | DO NOT EAT  | No restrictions                    |
|  | Yellow Perch   | 1 meal per week  | 1 meal per week   | No restrictions                    |
| <b>Okanogan River</b><br>Malott Bridge to Brewster Bridge and Chief Joseph State Park on the Columbia River (Lake Pateros)   | Carp   | All Groups: 1 meal per month   |   |                                    |
| <b>Pend Oreille River</b><br>Newport to Canadian border  | Northern Pike (less than 24 inches)  | 2 meals per month  | 2 meals per month   | No restrictions                    |
|  | Northern Pike (more than 24 inches)  | DO NOT EAT   | DO NOT EAT  | No restrictions                    |
| <b>PUGET SOUND Marine Areas 6-13</b>   | Salmon, Flatfish, Rockfish, Crab   | See <a href="http://www.doh.wa.gov/fish">http://www.doh.wa.gov/fish</a> Click on Local Fish Advisories |   |                                    |
| <b>Spokane River</b><br>• Idaho Border to Upriver Dam<br>• Upriver Dam to Nine Mile Dam<br>• Long Lake (Lake Spokane)  | All Species  | All Groups: DO NOT EAT   |   |                                    |
|  | All Species *  | All Groups: 1 meal per month   |   |                                    |
|  | * <i>Exception: Largescale Sucker</i>  | All Groups: DO NOT EAT   |   |                                    |
|  | Largescale Sucker, Brown Trout<br>Mountain Whitefish                                       | All Groups: 1 meal per month<br>All Groups: 1 meal per week  |   |                                    |
| <b>Walla Walla River</b><br>• Lower - Dry Creek to Columbia River<br>• Lower and Upper River   | Carp   | All Groups: 1 meal per month   |   |                                    |
|  | Northern Pikeminnow  | DO NOT EAT   | DO NOT EAT  | 1 meal per month                   |
| <b>Wenatchee River</b><br>Icicle Creek to Columbia River   | Mountain Whitefish   | All Groups: DO NOT EAT   |   |                                    |
| <b>Yakima River</b><br>Prosser to Columbia River   | Carp   | All Groups: 1 meal per week  |   |                                    |