

FISHING FORECAST

REGULATION UPDATE

Effective Sept. 1 through Oct. 31, 2019; the daily bag limit is one hatchery steelhead in the following areas:

- The Grande Ronde River upstream to Meadow Creek
- The Imnaha River downstream of Big Sheep Creek
- The Wallowa River from the mouth upstream to Trout Creek
- Big Sheep Creek downstream of Little Sheep Creek
- The Wenaha River downstream of Crooked Creek.

GRANDE RONDE RIVER

The Grande Ronde has reached base flows and fishing for trout is probably slow with warmer water. The lower river fishes very well for bass during the summer months. Try fishing between the state line with Washington and the town of Troy.

IMNAHA RIVER

The upper Imnaha fishes well for trout and whitefish during the summer months.

The lower river often fishes well for bass during the summer months as they move in from the Snake River.

JOHN DAY RIVER

Smallmouth bass fishing is beginning to pick up. River flows are low but still doable for smaller inflatables.

M McNARY PONDS

The ponds have a good population of warmwater species and provide good bank access. The ponds are also open to non-motorized boats.

TWIN PONDS

Twin Ponds have been stocked twice and fishing should be good.

WALLOWA COUNTY PONDS

Wallowa County ponds on the forest and in the valley have been stocked this year and fishing should be good.

Kinney Lake is fishing well for stocked and holdover trout up to 16 inches.

WALLOWA LAKE

Kokanee fishing is picking up for anglers. While most are finding moderate catch rates, the quality of fish is very good with kokanee to four pounds. Trout fishing has been good for holdover and recently stocked fish.

WALLOWA RIVER

Trout fishing on the Wallowa River is currently good with fish to 20 inches being reported. Dry flies during the last few hours of daylight have been effective.

Source: ODFW

Follower of the fir

■ The Douglas-fir is a common — and sometimes uncommonly massive — sight in N.E Oregon's mountains

A sucker for the views and the vibe of knife ridges, I often find myself trudging long miles along mountain

and canyon divides. I also often find myself against my better judgment bushwhacking straight down canyon sidewalls, executing a kind of controlled fall that is probably not doing my knees any good — but what the hell.

In both cases out here in the Blue/Wallowa/Hells Canyon country, my company on these backbone ridgelines and steep slopes is (besides that one same raven that seems to keep an eye on me out there, in every backcountry I go) colossal old Douglas-firs. Blackish bark spangled with wolf lichen; eccentric canopies made by burly boughs and dead prongs. Pistol-butted on sharp grades, sometimes with great boulders leaning against the swollen bases; warped and weatherbeaten on the wind-scoured crests.

Douglas-firs — easily among the most widely distributed trees in the American West, and the most commercially significant — exhibit what technically you'd call a broad "ecological amplitude": the ability to flourish across a wide range of environments. You can find Douglas-firs growing happily in riverside forests, scattered in mid-elevation montane settings, and up in dry, stony subalpine heights past 7,000 feet. It's a bit of a jack-of-all-trades sort of conifer.

Our Douglas-fir is the Interior or Rocky Mountain variety, found from southern British Columbia to central

Mexico; from the Cascades westward lies the dominion of the Coast Douglas-fir, renowned as among the very biggest and tallest trees in the world and for its all-around ubiquity, from city parks and suburban cul-de-sacs to pastureland and wilderness basins. There are Coast Douglas-firs in the temperate rainforests of the west side standing nearly 330 feet tall, and evidence suggests historical specimens may have breached 400 feet: putting them neck-and-neck (crown-and-crown) with coast redwoods—currently the loftiest trees known—and the skyscraping Australian eucalypts called mountain-ashes as the tallest of all trees, pushing the plant kingdom's limits of vertical development and hydraulics.

Those giant rainforest Douglas-firs are mind-boggling to behold up close; meanwhile, the importance of this species in the timber industry on both sides of the Cascades (and — thanks to plantings — all over the world) goes without saying. Less celebrated, I reckon, is the sheer toughness of those often misshapen Doug-fir veterans studding our Intermountain canyons and ridges.

Common as Douglas-firs are scattered in our mixed-conifer woods above the low ponderosa zone, they hold real sway over major swaths of canyon-side, ridge-brow and ridgetop, where they



THE LAY OF THE LAND

ETHAN SHAW



Photo by Ethan Shaw

A Douglas-fir in the eastern Wallowa Mountains has the tangle of branches common to very old specimens.

beat out most competitors with superior drought-, fire-, wind-, cold- and soil-creep-resistance. In many of these settings, ponderosa is well-represented, too, given an edge thanks to fire. Douglas-fir seedlings and saplings are vulnerable to flame; older trees, with their immensely thick bark, are very resilient in the face of wildfire, and many big specimens bear charcoal tattoos bequeathed in long-ago blazes.

Speaking of bark, it's one of the relatively few distinguishing physical characteristics between the Coast and Interior races of Douglas-fir.

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Photo by Ethan Shaw

An impressively big and tall Douglas-fir in the southern Wallowas.



Photo by Ethan Shaw

Old Douglas-fir trees along a ridgeline in the northern Blue Mountains.

