

ODFW Asks Anglers to Give Region's Steelhead a Helping Hand

Facing some of the lowest steelhead returns on record, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has already curtailed steelhead fishing seasons throughout the Columbia River basin by adopting rolling season closures, reduced bag limits, and a night angling closure for all species.

Additionally, ODFW is asking anglers to further help the region's steelhead by adopting ODFW's best handling practices when they're out on the water this summer.

"Positive voluntary efforts may reduce the necessity for future mandatory regulations," said Tucker Jones, ODFW's manager of Ocean Salmon and Columbia River fisheries. "If a person happens to intercept a wild steelhead, or any steelhead during a retention closure period for that matter, it is imperative that they do their utmost to ensure its survival by using best handling practices."

ODFW lists best handling practices on Page 13 of the 2017 Oregon Sport Fishing Regulations. These practices include:

- Use barbless hooks (even where not required)
- Use tackle strong enough to bring your fish in quickly
- Land fish as quickly and carefully as possible
- Avoid removing the fish from the water
- If taking a photo, cradle the fish at water level and quickly take the picture
- Remove hooks quickly and gently

while keeping the fish under water

- Use long-nosed pliers or hemostats to back out a hook

- If a fish is hooked deeply, cut the line near the hook

- Revive fish (point them into slow current or move them back and forth until gills are working.

- When possible, let the fish swim out of your hands

- Fish when it's cool out – likely early in the morning or late in the afternoon – fishing is better and stress on fish is less.

Upriver summer steelhead forecasts are very low this year at approximately 119,000, compared to 5- and 10-year average actual returns of 236,000 and 315,000, respectively. Wild upriver summer steelhead forecasts are low as well, with a forecast return of just 34,000 fish versus the 5- and 10-year average actual returns of 87,000 and 105,000, respectively. Snake River wild "B" steelhead returns are the most imperiled, with a forecast of just 1,100 fish.

With returns of steelhead so low, another strategy is to not target them and focus on other species, including warm water species such as bass, walleye, and pike minnow. These species are not only fun to catch but they also prey on juvenile steelhead and salmon.

For more fishing ideas and opportunities, please visit ODFW's online Fishing Resources Page <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/>.

OSU Day at the Columbia County Fair July 22, 2017

Come meet Benny the Beaver on the promenade from 3 to 6 pm on Saturday, July 22 with free photo opportunities and to learn more about the OSU Extension Service in your community. At 7 pm, Benny will be at the Rodeo Grand Entry – wear your OSU gear! For more information, contact woody.davis@oregonstate.edu or (503) 397-3462.

Public Invited to Comment on State Transportation Plan Draft

The public is invited to review and comment on the draft policies and strategies in the new Oregon Public Transportation Plan in an online open house at <http://optfeedback.org>. Input is being accepted through August 31. The policies and strategies are core elements of the plan; when finalized they will guide investments locally, regionally and statewide in services such as fixed-route bus lines, door-to-door buses, streetcars, light rail, transportation between communities and more. Share your input now to help improve these core elements of the plan! For an overview of the plan and process, see the project fact sheet at <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Planning/Documents/OPTP-July-2017-Fact-Sheet.pdf>.

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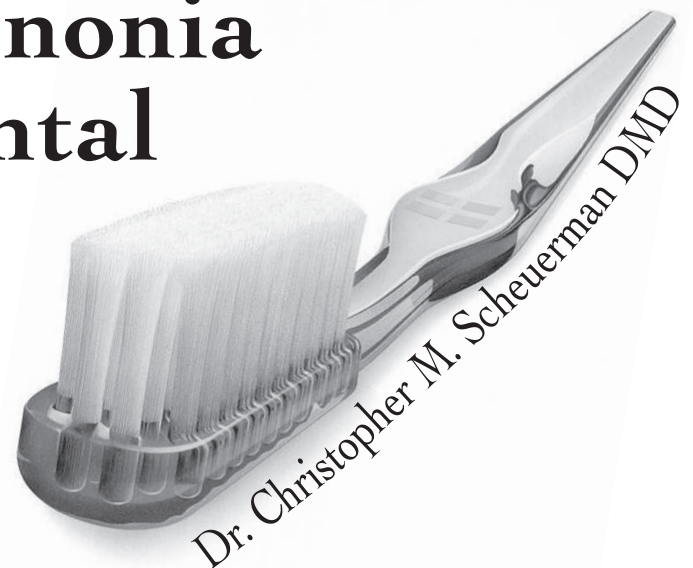


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