

Oregon postpones 2018 sport abalone season

SALEM — ODFW is calling a time-out on abalone season, postponing the 2018 recreational season that was set to open Monday, Jan. 1, until further review and Commission consideration in March.

The decision follows California's closure of its 2018 abalone season due to concerns over the health of the population.

Abalone stocks in California have fallen below target levels as abalone face ongoing environmental conditions that have reduced their food

sources. Since California Fish and Wildlife closed its season on Dec. 7, ODFW has seen a dramatic spike in inquiries about the Oregon fishery, which is dwarfed by the California fishery.

Oregon issues about 300 abalone permits per year, while California issues 25,000 or more.

Southern Oregon is on the northern edge of red abalone range and the state's fishery is managed conservatively to protect the health of Oregon's relatively small population.

"California's closure could lead to a large fishing effort shift to Oregon, which would cause a spike in harvest under the current rules. Yet we suspect that Oregon's abalone population has declined from historic levels," says Scott Groth, ODFW shellfish biologist for the south coast. "This emergency action postpones the fishery so we can hold off on issuing 2018 abalone permits until we've had a chance to do a more thorough review of the situation."

ODFW staff plan to evaluate the

fishery (including potential impacts from California's closure), solicit public input, and present suggestions, including possible rule changes, to the Fish and Wildlife Commission at their March 16 meeting in Salem.

Annual regulations require recreational abalone harvesters to purchase an Oregon shellfish license and obtain a free annual abalone/scallop permit from ODFW.

ODFW will continue to issue permits for scallops after Jan. 1.

Abalone are highly prized and the

fishery creates a high demand, primarily among divers. While seven species exist on the West Coast, five of these have some listing status under the Endangered Species Act.

Red abalone are the only species still fished in the contiguous United States, and southern Oregon and northern California are the only areas where recreational harvest has occurred in recent years.

Commercial harvest is not allowed in either state.

Vikings

from 1B

turning up the heat and going on a 6-0 run fueled by rebounding from Brandt, a jumper from senior John Rollin and some work off the glass from junior Dylan Wynn.

The Cardinals tied the game at 17-17 with a 3-pointer, and the tug of war continued. Freethrow shooting from Brandt

and Rollin put the Viks ahead 27-24 with 2:34 remaining in the half.

However, foul trouble for Siuslaw put Corbett in the bonus, which the Cardinals utilized to move ahead 32-27 with 33 seconds left.

Senior Kyle King had the final say before the half, nabbing a steal and scoring on the fastbreak to keep Siuslaw within 3 points, 29-32, entering the break.

Coming into the third period, scoring from Rollin and Hickson tied things at 32-32. The game was tied three more times in the quarter until freethrow shooting from King put the Viks ahead 36-35. Less than 30 seconds later, a 3-pointer from Wynn gave the Viks a slim 4-point edge, which the Cardinals chipped away at with a charity shot.

With 11 seconds on the clock, Wynn struck again, on a feed from Brandt, for a

41-37 lead heading into the fourth period.

From there, the Viks never trailed, slowly building on their lead with shooting from King, Hickson, Rollin and Brandt down the stretch — with the final basket coming on a steal from King lobbed to Rollin to end it at 61-44.

King led scoring with 15 points. Hickson and Wynn had 11 points each, including three 3-pointers for Wynn.

Brandt had 9 points and Rollin scored 8 points for Siuslaw.

Jan 5 and 6, the Viks will be at the Crossover Tournament at Hidden Valley High School before hosting Junction City Jan. 9, beginning at 7 p.m.

On Jan. 12, Siuslaw will open the Far West League at home against Marshfield.

Tipoff will be at 7:30 p.m.

Fishing

from 1B

Crooked River, which has rebounded in 2017.

Winter steelhead water watch

This time of year, water conditions for winter steelhead fishing can vacillate between too low and clear, and too high and muddy.

Successful anglers will:

1) adjust their gear and tackle for current conditions, and/or

2) be ready to hit the water when water conditions improve — usually once water levels start to drop after a good rain.

Check out the zone reports for your best bets.

SIUSLAW RIVER: Steelhead, Chinook

A few winter steelhead are starting to be caught in the lower river.

Fall Chinook fishing has been slowing down, but a few fish are still available. Anglers are reminded that there is no wild coho salmon retention in 2017.

NORTH COAST LAKES:

Trout stocking is complete for the year. Cape Meares, Town, Coffenburg, Lost and Sunset lakes were stocked with "trout" rainbow trout in late September.

Cedar Creek Hatchery has stocked over 160 surplus summer steelhead in Town Lake near Pacific City so far this fall.

These fish get fairly active in the lake and offer a unique fishing experience. Once in the lake they are considered "trout" and do not require a Combined Angling Tag.

Anglers are reminded, however, that only one trout per day over 20-inches may be retained, and these fish will all be in that size range.

MID COAST LAKES:

Olalla Reservoir has been stocked with about 100 surplus summer steelhead this season. These fish get fairly active in the lake and offer a unique fishing experience.

Once in the lake they are considered "trout" and do not require a Combined Angling Tag.

Anglers are reminded, however, that only one trout per day over 20 inches may be retained, and these fish will all be in that size range.

Mid coast lakes been stocked with trout throughout the spring. Trout stocking has ended for the year but there still should be fish around to catch.

ALSEA RIVER: Steelhead, Chinook

Fall Chinook fishing is slow to fair. Anglers are reminded that there is no wild coho salmon retention in 2017.

A few winter steelhead are starting to be caught in the lower river.

SALMON RIVER: Steelhead, Chinook

The Salmon River opened

(River Mile 21.9).

The first winter steelhead was reported on the Wilson, but it's still early and fishing is slow. Drift fishing baits or bobber fishing with jigs, beads, or bait are all good techniques.

YAQUINA RIVER:

Steelhead, Chinook

The Big Elk opened Dec 1 for wild and hatchery steelhead. Wild winter steelhead can be retained on the Big Elk. Daily and annual bag limit on wild winter steelhead are 1 per day and 3 per year.

Fall Chinook fishing has been slowing down, but a few fish are still available.

Anglers are reminded that there is no wild coho salmon retention in 2017.

PACIFIC HALIBUT

All 2017 sport halibut fisheries have concluded.

Allocations for 2018 will be announced in late January 2018.

For more information, see the sport halibut webpage.

SHORE AND ESTUARY FISHING

Shore and estuary anglers may fish for surfperch, flatfish species like starry flounder and

sanddabs, and baitfish (herring, for example).

Due to inseason regulation changes, anglers may NOT catch or retain lingcod, any species of rockfish, cabezon, greenling, or other bottomfish species except for flatfish species like sanddab and starry flounder.

Surfperch fishing is not impacted by this closure, and remains open.

Public piers provide opportunities to catch surfperch and baitfish and to drop crab pots (but check first for crab health safety closures).

Learn about surfperch fishing.

When fishing from shore or inside estuaries and bays, it is important to check the tide.

Many fish that swim into estuaries and bays, including salmon, surfperch, and Pacific herring, tend to come in with the tide.

Catch of these species is more likely to occur closer to slack tide.

Additionally, the accessibility of some areas can be completely dependent on the tide. Do not allow the incoming tide

to become a safety hazard.

WARMWATER FISHING — South Coast

The south coast area extends along the Oregon coast from Yachats south to the Oregon-California border. The area offers some of the most productive and scenic warmwater fishing in the state with excellent fishing for bass and panfish available in large watersheds along the coast.

Mercer Lake, Siltoos Lake, and Tahkenitch Lake.

Tennmile Lakes located north of Coos Bay is renowned for its crappie and trophy bass fisheries, and the site of bass tournaments. Anglers should also try one of the many smaller lakes scattered along Highway 101 and throughout the coastal dunes area, or Triangle Lake closer to the Willamette Valley.


The warmwater fish available in the south coast area include: Largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, bullheads, black crappie, bluegill, pumpkinseed, yellow perch, green sunfish, warmouth and channel catfish.

North and South Tennmile Lake provide some of the

finest warmwater fishing on the Oregon coast. Located on the east side of Hwy 101 midway between Reedsport and Coos Bay, the combined lakes offer nearly 2,000 acres of water and miles of shoreline to fish for largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie and brown bullhead catfish.

Much of the property around Tennmile is privately owned and the lakes are best fished by boat, but a fishing dock at Tennmile Lake County Park in the small community of Lakeside is wheelchair accessible and a great spot for kids. There also is a campground and boat launch at the County Park. Spinreel Campground (US Forest Service) on the west side of Hwy 101 offers camping for those wanting an extended stay.

The shoreline of North and South Tennmile is varied as a number of streams flow from the coastal foothills and into the lakes creating several large arms and many smaller bays and inlets dotted with pilings, docks and boat houses.



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