



## Mining for morels

U.S. Forest Service/Contributed Photo

Morel mushrooms in the Umatilla National Forest in 2017.



Dennis Dauble/Contributed Photo

A blonde and a black morel, both gathered off Skyline Road in the Blues at 5,800-foot elevation in late May 2020.

## Waiting for the fungi to appear



**TOM CLAYCOMB**  
BASE CAMP

If we can get a light shower and then it turns warm for a couple of days then it should be mushroom season, yippee!! The problem is, you think it's about to bust loose and then it gets cool. I don't know what to think and I don't think the poorly mushrooms do either.

In an effort to really lower your self worth, think about it this way. It's embarrassing enough to get outsmarted by a fish with a brain the size of a pea, how much more is it when you get outsmarted by an inanimate object — for instance, a mushroom!

As alluded to above, to kick off the mushroom season we need a light rain and then for the temp to get warm for a day or two. With this magic formula, it seems they can pop up overnight. Being a mushroom hunter is the most frustrating and at the same time rewarding outdoor activity there is.

I've been a mushroom hunter for 43 years. You'd think that I could write a knowledgeable article on the subject but some years I feel like a beginner. It drives me nuts to see some bozo write an article on finding morels. According to their article you just have to go out in the woods, look around old logs and then proceed to fill a pillow case. I read an article like that and want to brand "BOZO" on their forehead. They've obviously gone out one time with someone who knows what they're doing, found a mess and are instantly setting themselves up as the world's leading authority on mushroom hunting.

See, *Fungi*/Page B2

## Anglers can increase earnings by catching northern pikeminnows

Rewards offered starting May 1 for anglers

EO Media Group

PORTLAND — Anglers can earn more money by catching northern pikeminnows in the Columbia and Snake rivers this year.

The Northern Pike-minnow Sport Reward Fishery, which encourages people to catch and turn in the fish that eat millions of young salmon and steelhead each year, has boosted the bounty from \$5, \$6 or \$8 per pikeminnow 9 inches or longer, to \$6, \$8 and \$10. It's the first increase in the reward amounts since 2015. The sport reward season starts May 1 and continues through Sept. 30 in the lower Columbia River (mouth to Priest Rapids Dam) and the Snake River (mouth to Hells Canyon Dam).

Anglers will receive \$6 for each pikeminnow longer than 9 inches for the first 25 fish turned in, \$8 for each fish from 26 through 200, and anglers who catch at least 200 pikeminnows during the season will get \$10 for each additional fish.

Specially tagged northern pikeminnow released by state fish and wildlife biologists into the Columbia and Snake rivers are each worth \$200 to \$500.

In addition to increasing reward amounts, program managers are making it easier to participate. Online registration and an app are expected to debut early in the 2022 season.

"These tools will make it more convenient for people to participate, particularly those who don't live near a pikeminnow registration station," said Eric Winther, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Columbia River Predator Control Program project leader. "Currently, people have to drive to a station and fill out paperwork before heading out



Gary Lewis/Contributed Photo, File  
**Brian Davis with a morning's catch of pikeminnow.**

to fish. Registering online or through the app means they can go directly to the river, spend more time fishing and make one trip to the station to turn in their catch."

Eighteen full-time stations will operate during the five-month season, with two to four additional satellite stations opening later in the season. These satellite stations offer anglers additional pikeminnow harvest opportunities in areas with good fishing during short windows of time. Interested anglers are encouraged to get the latest information on the program website, [www.pikeminnow.org](http://www.pikeminnow.org), before heading out.

Since 1990, anglers paid through the program have removed nearly 5 million pikeminnow from the Columbia and Snake rivers. The program is funded by the Bonneville Power Administration and administered by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission in cooperation with the Washington and Oregon departments of fish and wildlife. It has reduced predation from pikeminnow on young salmon and steelhead by approximately 40% since it began.

Details on how to register for the program and applicable state fishing regulations are also available on the program website. Anglers will find resources on the site, including maps, how-to videos and free fishing clinics, to help boost their fishing game.

For more information visit the program website or call 1-800-858-9015.

## An author's Tax Day reward: A publisher



**LUKE OVGARD**  
CAUGHT OVGARD

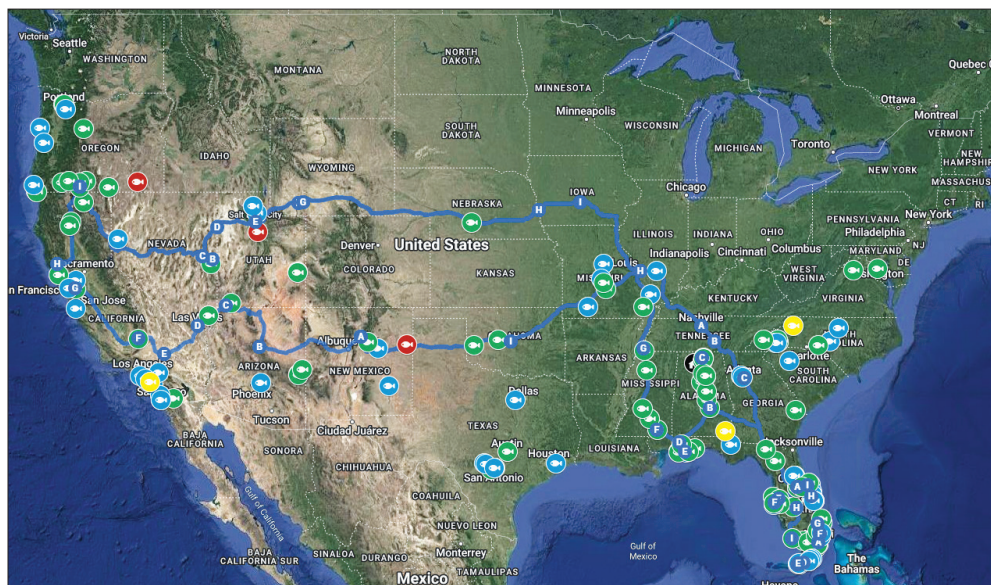
Few things are as gratifying as a tax refund. We all know it was our money to begin with, but there's something about going head-to-head with "The Man" and coming out on top that I look forward to every year. My taxes are usually done in February, so the April 15 deadline (April 18 this year) is meaningless to me — usually. Not this year, though. After almost a decade of paying my dues as a columnist, fighting writer's block, angry emails, loss of muse, encroaching deadlines and so much disappointment, I finally get my reward on Tax Day.

Almost nine years since I penned my first newspaper article, I'm pleased to announce that my first book, "Fishing Across America" has a publisher. Hold for tearful applause. I consider publishing this book the crowning achieve-

ment of my life, and it feels a lifetime away from when I first wrote about fishing in a spiral-bound notebook as a 13-year-old kid or even when I first started writing about sports and fishing for our local paper a decade after that.

Though my last keystroke was finished years ago, the publication process is far more brutal than the dating scene, and you can expect rejection after rejection while looking for a publisher. Mercifully, convos with two other outdoors writers who each took different paths to publication let me exhaust every opportunity before finding my publisher, Inkshares. Huge thanks to Matthew Miller ("Fishing Through the Apocalypse: An Angler's Adventures in the 21st Century") and Kris Millgate ("My Place Among Men") for talking me off the ledge.

Now, you can find that hilarious, heartwarming and weirdly captivating CaughtOvgard content you've come to love 600 to 1000 words at a time in just



The author's 2019 road trip was a long one, but it was one of the greatest adventures of his life. Now you can share that journey in his new book, "Fishing Across America."

a few more words centered around my 2019 summer road trip.

### The book's outline

Longtime readers know what to expect from me: harrowing tales in which I barely escape marginal decisions, epic adventures, loads of dad jokes and puns, digestible history, a wide array of fish in an even wider array

of habitats, food, travel tips, romantic failure and the gripping narrative that draws in so many readers who don't even fish. I can promise all of that and more in "Fishing Across America."

The trip that spawned this book almost didn't happen, but it panned out in the end as I traveled across the country for my cousin Austin Crawford's wed-

ding and saw him united to his wife, Darian. I had a fishing deferance as a representative for Fishbrain a few weeks later, so rather than fly twice, I decided to drive and fill the downtime with fishing.

It was the road trip of a lifetime that has spawned subsequent road trips every summer since. 46 days. 12,167.2 miles.

122 fishing stops.  
19 states.  
2019 fish.  
211 species.  
149 new species.

Read about the "Loneliest Road in America," a confrontation with poachers who nearly shoot me, wading up alligator-infested creeks, landing massive sharks and tiny minnows, fighting drunken tourists for real estate, barely surviving Disneyworld and so much more.

If you've enjoyed being CaughtOvgard all these years, please take a little bit of that tax refund and buy a copy of "Fishing Across America" today. Books are available for preorder today at [www.inkshares.com/books/fishing-across-america](http://www.inkshares.com/books/fishing-across-america).

■ Sign up for every single CaughtOvgard column at [www.caughtovgard.com](http://www.caughtovgard.com). Read more for free at [caughtovgard.com](http://caughtovgard.com), follow on Instagram and Fishbrain @ [lukeovgard](https://www.instagram.com/lukeovgard) or contact [lukeovgard@gmail.com](mailto:lukeovgard@gmail.com). Thank you for your continued support of local journalism.