

Oregon anglers face some major changes in ODF&W regulations

Following is a summary of changes of greatest interest to local anglers. All changes are effective as of Jan. 1, 1997.

Statewide Changes

Barbed or barbless hooks are now angler choice except for Columbia R. sturgeon (to keep regulations consistent with Washington) and probably ocean salmon (still to be determined). Although there was a great deal of angler support for barbless hook regulations, review of many studies did not indicate any conservation savings. There is no question that barbless hooks are easier to remove; but this ease did not make the difference between life and death to the fish. The critical thing was where the hook was in the fish. Use of bait definitely results in deep hooking and associated mortality even if the hook is not removed. The Fish and Wildlife Commission debated

Some major changes in angling regulations have resulted from a review that was started in 1995 by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The process started with three goals: Simplifying the regulations; providing maximum angling opportunity and conserving wild fish populations. Meeting all of the goals is an impossibility, according to district fish biologists Walt Weber and Joe Sheahan; as it turned out, considerable compromise was required, especially of the simplification goal.

A major simplification was the elimination of the Master Code Key, which used codes to describe bag limits and seasons and required cross referencing between two places in the regulation booklet. Some confusing hook regulations were also eliminated, with the dropping of barbless requirements being a major change.

the bait ban issue at length but felt that catch and release coastal trout regulation would result in reduced angler use and also that this additional step was too much change over a short time span.

General trout bag limits in standing water bodies (lakes, ponds, etc.) were reduced from 10 to 5.

The annual bag limit for salmon and steelhead was reduced from 40 fish/year to 20/year. Nehalem, Tillamook Bay tributaries and the Nestucca R. are more restrictive.

Regional Changes

Catch and release angling will be required for trout in streams, tidewaters and bays in the Northwest and Southwest Zones. This drastic change is in response to very low levels of sea-run cutthroat populations observed in recent years. This was a heavily debated issue and represents considerable compromise between regulation sim-

plicity, conservation and angling opportunity.

The winter trout season has been eliminated to protect sea-run cutthroat adults and remove a loophole that allowed anglers to continue angling after catching a limit of adult winter steelhead. By definition, a steelhead is a rainbow that is 20 inches or better. This will define a fin-clipped hatchery steelhead jack under 20 inches as a trout and will require their release.

Sturgeon daily bag limit is reduced to one fish per day, 42 inch minimum, 60 inch maximum with annual bag of 10 staying the same. Barbless hooks are required in the

Columbia River, but not elsewhere.

Local Changes

The Gnat Creek winter steelhead deadline has been moved upstream from the Highway 30 bridge to a barrier falls approx. 1/4 mile above the highway.

The Nehalem River below Hiway 26 near Elsie will be open to steelhead all year. This should provide some April catch and release angling on late run winter steelhead that are destined primarily for the Salmonberry R.

Razor clam bag limit is reduced from 24 to 15 and summer closure is now July 15 to Sept. 30. The reopening date had been Sept. 1.

BAMA speaker will discuss residential development

Arbor Village, a 74-acre residential development in Banks will be the topic of discussion at the Jan. 2 meeting of the Banks Area Merchants Association (BAMA).

Wally Reamers, of West Hills Development Co., will give an update on progress of the development. There will be time for questions, also.

The 7:00 a.m. breakfast meeting will be at the Brown Derby.

Fire departments concerned about winter fire hazards

This is one of a series of articles prepared by the Columbia County Office of Emergency Management

Now that winter weather is upon us, Rural Fire Protection Districts throughout the area urge increased awareness of several key items to avert fires in the cold days ahead. It is advised that extra caution be exercised with alternate heating sources such as fireplaces, wood stoves, and portable heaters. These devices continue to be the leading causes of winter fires in our area. This past winter season saw numerous calls involving chimney fires, wood stove fires, electric heaters and liquid fueled heaters.

Anyone who has questions about their heating units or fire safety in general, should call the fire district in their area (Remember, call 9-1-1 only for emergencies.). The phone numbers are as follows:

- Vernonia RFPD - 429-8252
- Mist-Birkenfeld RFPD - 755-2710
- Tri-City RFPD - 324-6262

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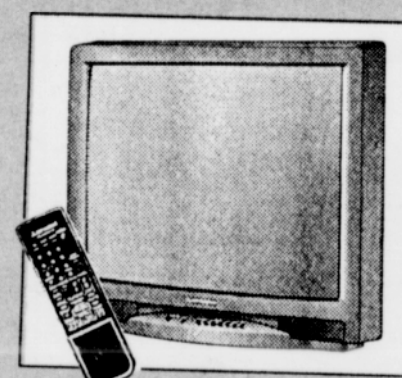
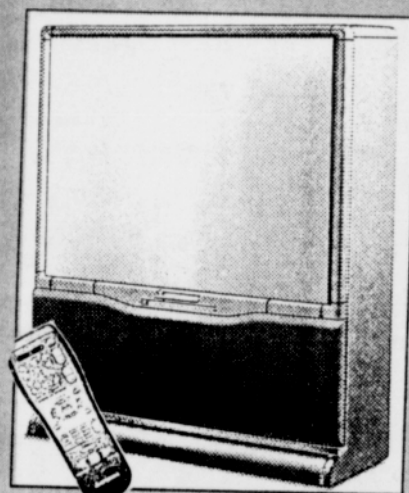
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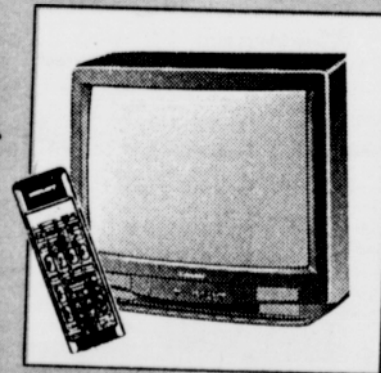
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