

# Changes in Northcoast fishing regulations, both good and bad

Oregon's coastal and lower Columbia River streams open for trout fishing on Saturday, May 24. That is part of the good news. The bad news is that for the first time ever this fishery is limited to catch and release only.

This drastic regulation change is in response to a very significant drop in sea-run cutthroat populations throughout the Pacific Northwest. This species is listed as a State Sensitive Species, is Federally listed as an Endangered Species in the Umpqua River basin and all populations are presently subject to a Federal Status Review to determine whether they too will be listed. This review is scheduled to be completed by January 1, 1998.

Coastal cutthroat trout have developed a complicated array of life history patterns but it is the anadromous, or sea-run, form that has shown the steepest decline. This is primarily related to the recent, prolonged and apparently continuing period of warm ocean conditions, according to biologists Walt Weber and Joe Sheahan of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Other contributing factors include a decline in freshwater spawning and rearing habitat and sport fishery harvest. Stocking of hatchery cutthroat trout as well as salmon and steelhead may be a contributing factor

also. The sport fishery targets both returning adults and presmolts, which spend two to four years in freshwater before migrating to the sea at a size of seven to 11 inches.

Current angling regulations hopefully will protect both adult and presmolt fish, allow the opportunity to fish for both sea-run and resident forms (which are indistinguishable) and still maintain a simple trout fishing regulation. The

current regulation is definitely a compromise between conservation, fishing opportunity and simplicity. Anglers can choose between barbed or barbless hooks and the use of bait or artificial lures. We encourage not using bait as there is a high mortality (around 50%) of bait-caught trout even if carefully released.

The other bit of good news is that local lakes will again

be stocked with legal sized (8 inches-plus) rainbow trout the week prior to May 24. Coffenburg, Sunset, Vernonia, Trojan Recreation and Lost Lakes will be stocked. Anglers may keep five trout per day/10 in possession when fishing in lakes. Boat anglers will do well trolling a small Flatfish or spoon such as a Triple Teezer. Bank anglers can cast small spinners or fish bait under a bobber.

Beside trout, many of the lakes and sloughs in Clatsop and Columbia Counties provide good angling for bass, catfish and panfish. Some of the better areas for these fish

are Cullaby, Sunset, Vernonia, Smith, West Lakes and sloughs in the Brownsmead, Westport and Clatsop Plains areas. Recent warm weather should have these fish active and hungry.

## More Ike Says

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change in attitude among some of our local timber land managers, concerning salmon problems.

I have been closely following litigation in the high courts on the issue of the right to sue for economic damages caused by the Endangered Species Act. So far I have agreed with their decisions. I know that sounds kind of shocking, but I feel people need to understand exactly what has been ruled. The U.S. Supreme Court said that if you are damaged economically because of the E.S.A, you can sue to recover damages **if the rules to protect the species listed went beyond what was necessary to recover the species.** This is the part that has been missing in most of the newspaper articles. I believe everybody should have the

right to sue, if they are forced to participate in any action that goes beyond the scope of the law. That's why I find it kind of a paradox, that the timber industry was a main petitioner for this ruling. Yet, they were also the same people that supported the Salvage Rider that prohibited legal challenges.

Our State Supreme Court ruled recently that Boise Cascade can sue the State for economic damages because they had to set aside a tract of land due to a pair of nesting Spotted Owls. This will be the test case here in Oregon. Personally I don't think they have a case. First they will have to prove that the State instituted rules that went beyond the scope of what it will take to recover the owls. In fact, the State standard is far less than the Federal standard of protection and I find it

hard to believe that a Judge may consider himself more knowledgeable than the panel of wildlife scientists that formulated the recovery plan. Also, can Boise Cascade claim actual economic damage? Look at the price of export logs before the listing of the Spotted Owl and compare that to prices in the last few years. Clearly, the listing of the Spotted Owl put money in the pockets of private timber owners. Export prices have gained about 100-percent because of the listing. What's better is that the Japanese are paying this bill, not us, except for the increase in price for domestic lumber. Now Boise Cascade wants us to pay the bill again. I think if a company benefits economically from a listing, then that should offset the damages. This will be an interesting case, with much potential to

affect our lives.

Now I know some of you loggers feel that I'm beating up on you, but I'm not. I believe that logging and a healthy environment can co-exist. I have found that most loggers care about the environment far more than the average Joe. I do feel, though, that the big corporations play on loggers' fears of unemployment to turn loggers against other environmentalists. Next time the corporation asks you to protest, ask them for your cut of the pie that they have been receiving the last ten years or so. Just tell them "Money talks and \*&# walks."

**Isaak Walton League** meetings are on the third Thursday of each month, 7:00 p.m. The public is welcome. For meeting location, call 429-7193.

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