

From: Public Affairs (DFW)  
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Subject: WDFW seeks public comment on liberalizing limits for bass, walleye, and channel catfish, and updates to game fish rules

NEWS RELEASE

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
September 17, 2019  
Contact: Steve Caromile, 360-902-8315

WDFW seeks public comment on liberalizing limits for bass, walleye, and channel catfish, and updates to game fish rules

OLYMPIA – Earlier this year, the Washington Legislature passed Second Substitute House Bill 1579, which directed the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to “adopt rules to liberalize bag limits for bass, walleye, and channel catfish in all anadromous waters of the state in order to reduce the predation risk to salmon smolts.”

WDFW is now asking for public input on a proposal to eliminate harvest restrictions for bass, walleye, and channel catfish in certain waters statewide, as well as on proposed updates to freshwater game fish rules.

The language in HB1579 was passed in part to implement the Governor’s task force recommendations meant to increase abundance of Chinook salmon, benefiting the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whale population. It would affect lakes, streams, and other waters throughout Washington.

Meetings on these proposals will be held at the following locations:

Mill Creek: 6 to 8 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 24, at WDFW’s Mill Creek office, 16018 Mill Creek Blvd.  
Olympia: 5 to 7 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 26, at the Natural Resources Building, Room 175 A, 1111 Washington St. SE.

Ridgefield: 6 to 8 p.m., Monday, Sept. 30, at WDFW’s Ridgefield office, 5525 S 11th St.

Ephrata: 6 to 8 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 1, at the Grant County Public Works Department, public meeting room, 124 Enterprise St. SE.

Spokane: 6 to 8 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 2, at WDFW’s Spokane office, 2315 N. Discovery Pl., Spokane Valley.

To review and comment on the proposals, visit WDFW’s website at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/season-setting/>. The public can comment on the proposed rules at the meetings or online through Oct. 17.

The public is also invited to comment on several proposed updates and corrections to game fish rules around the state, including some that were previously updated during the rule simplification process in 2017.

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission also will hear testimony on these proposals during its Oct. 18-19 meeting in Olympia. For the specific day and time, visit the commission's website at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/commission>.

The commission, which sets policy for WDFW, is expected to take action on the proposals at its meeting in December. If the commission approves these changes, the rules will take effect in early 2020.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is the state agency tasked with preserving, protecting, and perpetuating fish, wildlife, and ecosystems, while providing sustainable fishing, hunting, and other recreation opportunities.

Persons with disabilities who need to receive this information in an alternative format or who need reasonable accommodations to participate in WDFW-sponsored public meetings or other activities may contact Dolores Noyes by phone (360-902-2349), TTY (360-902-2207), or email ([dolores.noyes@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:dolores.noyes@dfw.wa.gov)<<mailto:dolores.noyes@dfw.wa.gov>>). For more information, see [https://wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/reasonable\\_request.html](https://wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/reasonable_request.html).