

# STEELHEAD AND SALMON RULES AND INFORMATION

Anyone fishing for anadromous salmon and/or steelhead, except those expressly exempt, must have a valid fishing license and salmon and/or steelhead permit(s) on his/ her person. These license and permit requirements also apply when fishing for hatchery salmon or steelhead stocked by Idaho Fish and Game in the Boise River or Hells Canyon Reservoir.

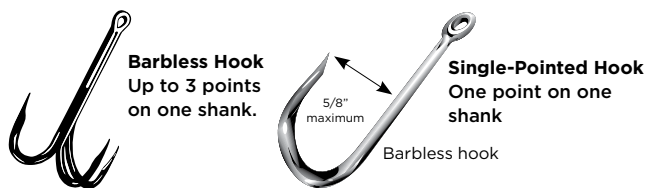
Any person who does not qualify as a resident (see Page 61) must purchase either a nonresident season fishing license and a full-season salmon and/or steelhead permit or a nonresident 3-day salmon/steelhead license/permit.

Children (including nonresident children) under the age of 14 are exempt from purchasing salmon and steelhead permits. They may fish without permits if they are accompanied by a valid permit holder, provided that any fish caught must be recorded on the permit holder's card and counted in the permit holder's legal bag, possession and season limit. A resident child under 14 may purchase permits without a license so that they may catch their own limit(s) of salmon and/or steelhead.

Any non-resident under the age of 18 may purchase a junior non-resident fishing license and appropriate permit so they may catch their own limit of salmon or steelhead.

## Methods of Take

- Any angler, who has attained the bag, possession, or season limit on those waters with salmon or steelhead limits, must cease fishing for salmon or steelhead including catch-and-release fishing.



- Only single-pointed barbless hooks are allowed when fishing for salmon or steelhead in the South Fork Clearwater River.
- No person shall kill or retain in possession any salmon or steelhead which has been hooked other than in the mouth or jaw. Any salmon or steelhead hooked other than in the mouth or jaw must be released. See snagging definition on Page 47.
- Salmon and steelhead may be taken with barbed hooks in the Boise River and the Snake River between Hells Canyon and Oxbow dams.
- Only barbless hooks with a maximum 5/8 inch gap between shank and point may be used when fishing for salmon or steelhead in the Salmon and Clearwater river drainages and the Snake River below Hells Canyon Dam. Bending the barb(s) down to the shank of a single, double, or treble hook will meet this requirement.

## Please Note

- Fishing for or targeting salmon or steelhead is prohibited unless a season is specifically opened for the species on that water.
- Steelhead with an intact adipose fin cannot be reduced to possession and must be released. Prior to September 1 each year Chinook salmon with an intact adipose fin cannot be reduced to possession and must be released.
- Anglers should refer to season proclamations to determine if Chinook and coho salmon with an intact adipose fin can be retained beginning September 1 each year.
- Any anadromous salmon or steelhead that is being reduced to possession must be killed immediately. Otherwise, the fish must be released upon landing.
- All fish that are hooked, landed, and reduced to possession shall be counted in the limit of the person hooking the fish. Daily and possession limits for adult Chinook salmon (24 or more inches in length) and jack salmon (less than 24 inches in length) may differ and unless specifically stipulated otherwise by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game Commission for a season or waters, jack salmon are not included in the season limit and need not be entered on the anglers' permit.
- No person shall have in the field or in transit any salmon or steelhead from which the head or tail has been removed unless: 1) the angler is ashore and done fishing for the day; 2) the salmon or steelhead is properly recorded on the anglers permit; and 3) the fish is processed or packaged with the skin naturally attached to the flesh including a portion with a healed, clipped adipose fin scar or the adipose fin. The fish must be processed or packaged in a manner that the number of fish harvested can be readily determined. Processed salmon and steelhead cannot be transported by boat.
- Steelhead harvest and angler participation are estimated by a telephone survey conducted within a few weeks after the season closes. You may be called and asked about your effort and success. Please save your permit until three months after the season has closed or until you are contacted by Idaho Fish and Game.

**Prepare to Release!**

Help ensure survival of released salmon and steelhead

- Use proper sized gear and keep fight time to a minimum
- Do not pull fish onto rock, sand, or dirt banks—instead, use a net or "tail" the fish
- Minimize time out of water
- Do not handle the fish by the gills
- If necessary, revive the fish by gently holding it in the water

**River Location Codes**

**Snake River**

- Snake River, downstream from Salmon River .....01
- Snake River, from Salmon River to Hells Canyon Dam.....02
- Snake River, Hells Canyon Dam to Oxbow Dam.....27

**Clearwater River**

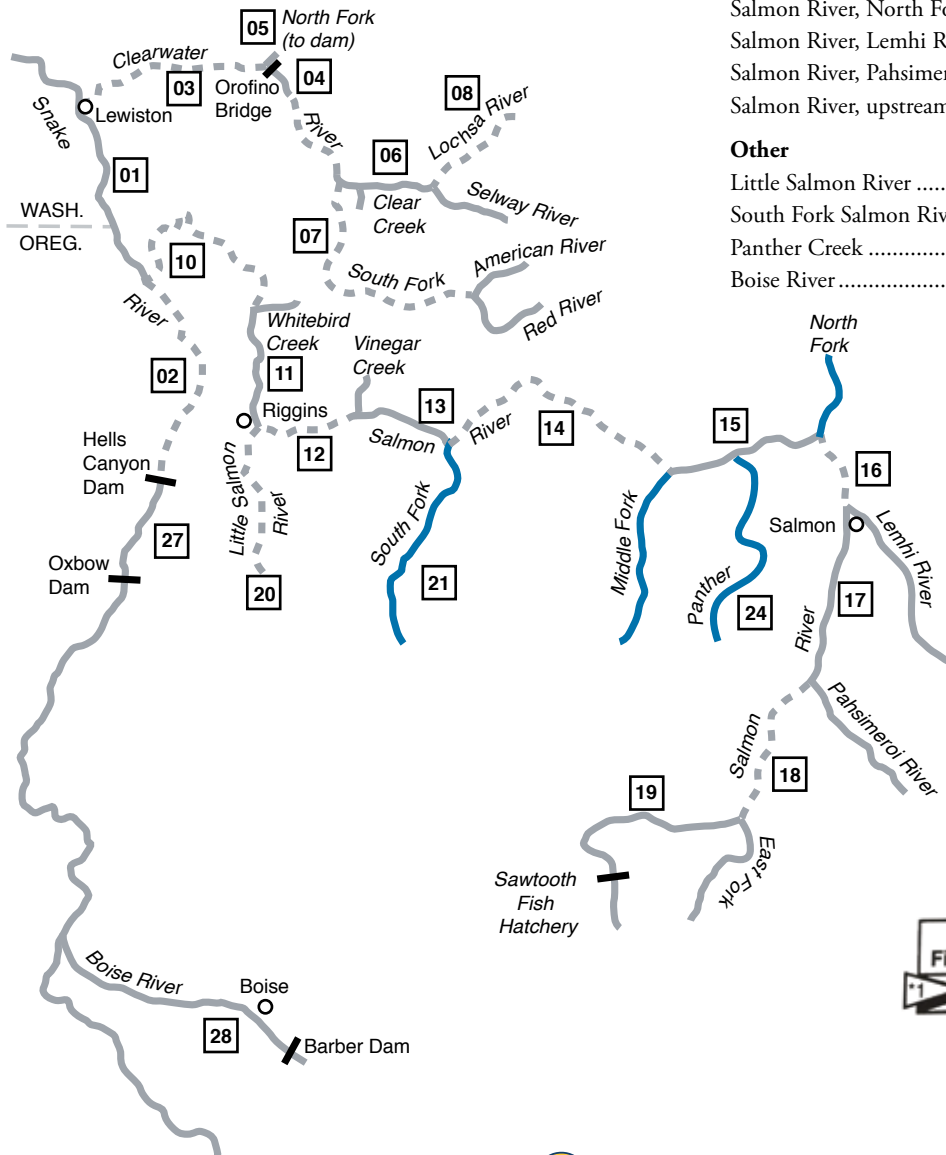
- Clearwater River, downstream from Orofino Bridge.....03
- Clearwater River, upstream from Orofino Bridge .....04
- North Fork Clearwater River .....05
- Middle Fork Clearwater River .....06
- South Fork Clearwater River .....07
- Lochsa River.....08

**Salmon River**

- Salmon River, downstream from Whitebird Creek .....10
- Salmon River, Whitebird Creek to Little Salmon.....11
- Salmon River, Little Salmon to Vinegar Creek.....12
- Salmon River, Vinegar Creek to South Fork .....13
- Salmon River, South Fork to Middle Fork.....14
- Salmon River, Middle Fork to North Fork .....15
- Salmon River, North Fork to Lemhi River.....16
- Salmon River, Lemhi River to Pahsimeroi River .....17
- Salmon River, Pahsimeroi River to East Fork.....18
- Salmon River, upstream from the East Fork.....19

**Other**

- Little Salmon River .....20
- South Fork Salmon River .....21
- Panther Creek .....24
- Boise River .....28



**Permit Validation**

When a steelhead or salmon has been hooked, landed and reduced to possession, the angler hooking the fish must immediately:

- Completely remove one numbered notch (\*) from the permit in correct season column;
- Look up the number code from the River Location Code list and write it in the space provided; and
- Enter the month and day the fish was harvested.

Fish/Bird	Month/Day	Location Code
*1	6/01	07

REMOVE NOTCH

Steelhead Seasons and Limits														
River Section	Spring Season 20 fish per season						Fall Season 20 fish per season							
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec		
<b>Clearwater River</b> from its mouth upstream to the Memorial Bridge of U.S. Highway 12 at Lewiston.	Jan 1 - Apr 30 3 per day, 9 in possession			Closed to steelhead fishing			Jul 1 - 31 Catch-and-Release	Aug 1 - Dec 31 2 per day, 6 in possession						
<b>Clearwater River: Mainstem and Middle Fork Clearwater River</b> from the Memorial Bridge of U.S. Highway 12 at Lewiston upstream to Clear Creek.	Jan 1 - Apr 30 3 per day, 9 in possession			Closed to steelhead fishing			Jul 1 - Oct 14 Catch-and-Release			Oct 15 - Dec 31 2 per day, 6 in possession				
Closures: Fishing is <b>prohibited</b> between posted boundaries about 100 yards upstream and downstream from the Nez Perce Tribal Hatchery Ladder and extending into the river channel about 50 yards. Fishing from the shoreline or wading along the perimeter of Dworshak National Fish Hatchery is <b>prohibited</b> . Fishing from motorized watercraft is <b>prohibited</b> from the Clearwater River Bridge at Orofino upstream to the confluence of the Selway and Lochsa rivers from Sep 1 - Apr 30.														
<b>North Fork Clearwater River</b> from its mouth upstream to Dworshak Dam.	Jan 1 - Apr 30 3 per day, 9 in possession			Closed to steelhead fishing						Sept 1 - Dec 31 2 per day, 6 in possession				
Closures: Fishing from the shoreline or wading along the perimeter of Dworshak National Fish Hatchery is <b>prohibited</b> . Fishing from any watercraft or wading is <b>prohibited</b> between the posted line about 150 yards upstream from the mouth of the North Fork Clearwater River and the Ahsahka Highway 7 Bridge. When fishing from the Ahsahka Highway 7 Bridge, it is illegal to take any fish downstream of the railroad bridge. Fishing from the railroad bridge is <b>prohibited</b> .														
<b>South Fork Clearwater River</b> from its mouth upstream to the confluence of American and Red rivers.	Jan 1 - Apr 30 3 per day, 9 in possession.			Closed to steelhead fishing			Jul 1 - Oct 14 Catch-and-Release.			Oct 15 - Dec 31 2 per day, 6 in possession.				
<b>Note:</b> Only single-pointed barbless hooks are allowed when fishing for steelhead or salmon														
<b>Salmon River</b> from its mouth upstream to the Lake Creek Bridge (about 6 miles upstream from the mouth of the Little Salmon River).	Jan 1 - Apr 30 3 per day, 9 in possession			Closed to steelhead fishing										
<b>Salmon River</b> from the Lake Creek Bridge to Long Tom Creek (3/4 mile upstream from the Middle Fork Salmon River).	Jan 1 - Mar 31 3 per day, 9 in possession			Closed to steelhead fishing						Aug 1 - Aug 31 Catch-and-Release				
<b>Salmon River</b> from Long Tom Creek (3/4 mile upstream from the Middle Fork Salmon River) to posted boundary 100 yards downstream of Sawtooth Hatchery.	Jan 1 - Apr 30 3 per day, 9 in possession			Closed to steelhead fishing										

**Salmon seasons and bag limits will be set annually  
by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game Commission.**

**NOTE: Seasons and bag limits may be changed by emergency Commission or Director action. Please consult our webpage, license vendors, or regional offices for changes to rules published in this document.**

Steelhead Seasons and Limits												
River Section	Spring Season 20 fish per season						Fall Season 20 fish per season					
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Little Salmon River</b> from its mouth upstream to the U.S. Highway 95 bridge near Smokey Boulder road.	Jan 1 - May 15 3 per day, 9 in possession				Closed to steelhead fishing		Aug 1 - Aug 31 Catch-and-Release		Sep 1 - Dec 31 3 per day, 9 in possession			
<b>Snake River</b> from the Washington State line at the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater Rivers upstream to Hells Canyon Dam.	Jan 1 - Apr 30 3 per day, 9 in possession				Closed to steelhead fishing		Aug 1 - Aug 31 Catch-and-Release		Sep 1 - Dec 31 3 per day, 9 in possession			
<b>Snake River</b> from Hells Canyon Dam to Oxbow Dam, and <b>Boise River</b> from its mouth upstream to Barber Dam.	Jan 1 - May 31 3 per day, 9 in possession				Not present		Aug 1 - Aug 31 Catch-and-Release		Sep 1 - Dec 31 3 per day, 9 in possession			
<p>Adult steelhead are only present in the Boise River and the Snake River above Hells Canyon Dam when stocked by Idaho Fish and Game. Check with regional offices to determine if steelhead have been released that year. A steelhead permit is required to fish for and keep steelhead (rainbow trout longer than 20 inches with a clipped adipose fin). Limits are 3 per day and 9 in possession when steelhead are present. Barbless hooks are not required.</p>												

When and Where you are expected to see Salmon and Steelhead in Idaho			
Sockeye Salmon	Spring & Summer Chinook Salmon	Fall Chinook/Coho Salmon	Steelhead
<i>July - September</i>	<i>April - September</i>	<i>August-December</i>	<i>July-May</i>
Snake River below Hells Canyon Dam	Snake River below Hells Canyon Dam	Snake River below Hells Canyon Dam	Snake River & Tributaries below Hells Canyon Dam
Salmon River	Salmon River & Tributaries	Clearwater River	Clearwater River & Tributaries
Alturas Lake and Creek Pettit Lake and Creek Redfish Lake and Creek	Clearwater River & Tributaries <small>(not listed but protected under state law)</small>	Lower Salmon River	Salmon River & Tributaries

## Salmon & Steelhead Fishing in Boundary Waters

The Snake River between Idaho, Oregon, or Washington: The holder of a valid Idaho fishing license and salmon or steelhead permit may fish for those species provided the season is open in the Snake River where it forms the boundary between the states of Idaho and Oregon or Washington, subject to the fish and game laws of Idaho, but may not fish from the shoreline, including wading, and may not fish in sloughs or tributaries on the Oregon or Washington side. Any Oregon or Washington license holder has the same rights and restrictions with reference to the Idaho side. Any angler who fishes on the Snake River or any other water forming an Idaho boundary is entitled to have in possession only the limit allowed by one license regardless of the number of licenses in possession.

### Permit Validation

See page 40 for example.

When an adult salmon (24 or more inches in length) or steelhead (20 or more inches in length) has been hooked, landed, and reduced to possession (must be killed immediately), the angler hooking the fish must immediately:

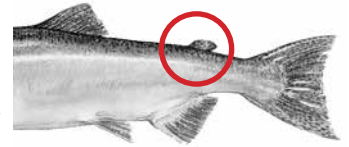
1. Completely remove one numbered notch from the permit.
2. Look up the number code from the River Location Code list and write it in the space provided.
3. Enter the month and day the fish was harvested.

However, when a salmon or steelhead is released rather than reduced to possession, the angler is not required to make an entry on the permit.

Unless otherwise stipulated by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game Commission. Jack Chinook salmon (less than 24 inches in length) are not included in an anglers season limit and need not be entered on their permit.

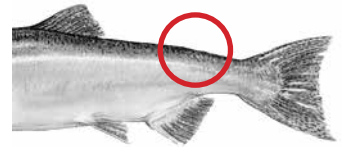
### Unclipped Adipose Fin

Steelhead with an unclipped adipose fin must be released. Prior to September 1 of each year, salmon with an unclipped adipose fin must be released. Between September 1 and December 31 each year, anglers should check Chinook and coho salmon season proclamations to determine if either of those species can be harvested with an intact adipose fin.

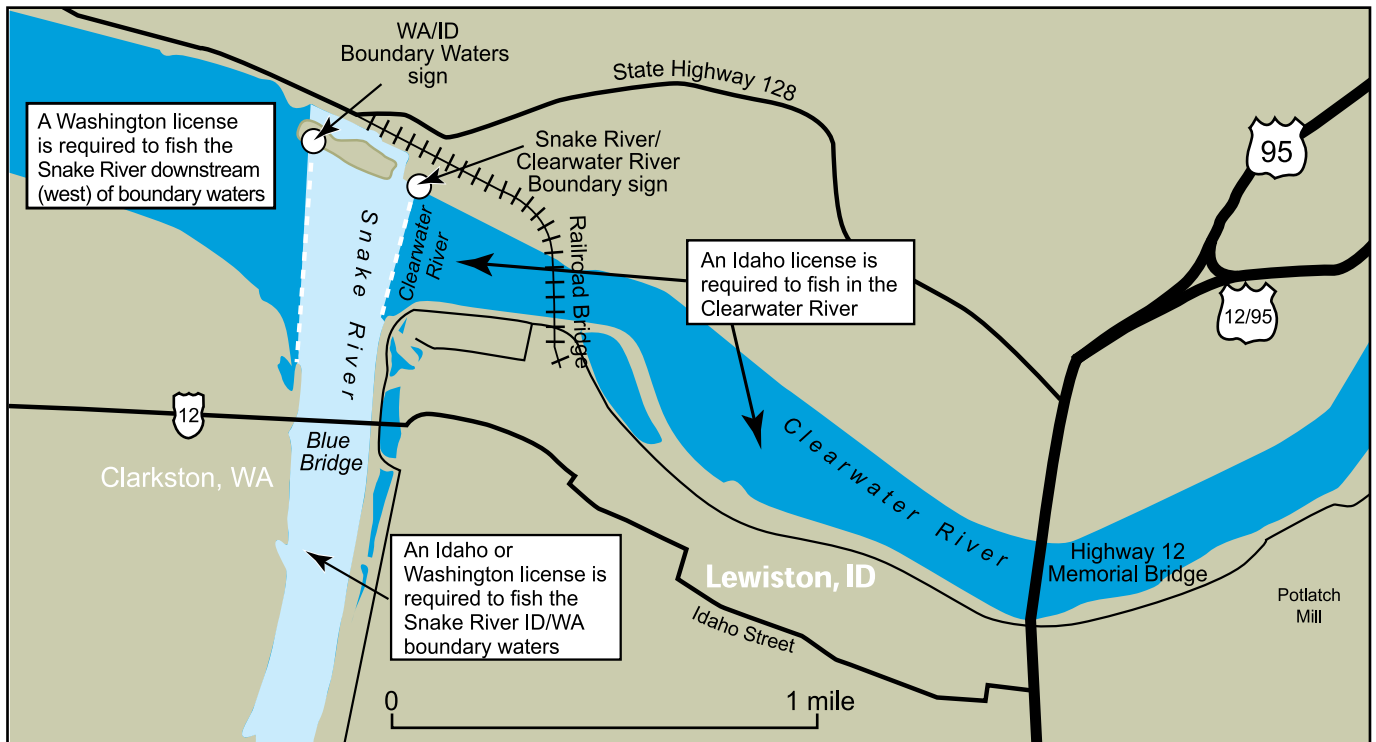


### Clipped Adipose Fin

Hatchery steelhead or salmon may be kept if the adipose fin has been clipped as evidenced by a healed scar.



## Washington/Idaho Fishing Waters Boundaries





## THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Several of Idaho's fish species have been listed or have been petitioned for listing under the 1973 federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Species are listed when population levels drop so low that they are at a high risk of extinction. Species listed under the ESA as either "Threatened" or "Endangered" are protected to reduce "take." While over-harvest has been a factor for some resident species, for the most part, these fish are in trouble because their habitat has been damaged or destroyed. Idaho Fish and Game encourages land and water management agencies to make decisions that will benefit fish and wildlife. However, the Idaho Fish and Game Commission's authority is restricted to either regulating harvest or stocking fish, so these are the only tools Idaho Fish and Game has to restore depleted populations or, in some cases, preserve future options.

### Anadromous Salmon and Steelhead

Nearly all of Idaho's naturally-produced anadromous (ocean-going) salmon and steelhead are listed as "Threatened" or "Endangered" under the ESA. Naturally produced spring/summer and fall Chinook salmon and steelhead are listed as "Threatened." Sockeye salmon produced in Alturas, Pettit, and Redfish lakes in the Stanley Basin are listed as "Endangered." They are protected to prevent further declines in abundance. Snake River coho salmon were declared extinct in the mid-1980s but coho salmon have since been reintroduced into the Clearwater River. Neither natural spring/summer Chinook salmon nor reintroduced coho salmon in the Clearwater drainage are listed under the federal ESA, but are protected by state law.

### Angler Be Aware!

Idaho steelhead harvest is restricted to only steelhead with a clipped adipose fin (ad-clipped) to help maximize harvest opportunity for hatchery produced fish without causing unacceptable loss of naturally produced steelhead. This approach, began in 1987, has allowed anglers to keep an annual average of 64,000 hatchery steelhead for the last 10 years. This approach is also used for hatchery Chinook salmon. Fin clipping allows anglers to differentiate between hatchery produced and wild salmon. This tool allows limited angling opportunity for hatchery Chinook salmon in Idaho while protecting naturally produced fish. Idaho has not had a fishery for wild Chinook salmon since 1978.

You may encounter "Threatened" and "Endangered" salmon and steelhead in Idaho's anadromous waters. Avoid fishing or boating in riffle areas where salmon and steelhead are seen or are likely to spawn. Carefully and quickly release any wild anadromous salmon or wild steelhead. Please help preserve "Threatened" and "Endangered" salmon and steelhead and also preserve your privilege to fish for other fish in waters used by federally protected anadromous salmon and steelhead.

### Know the Difference

Refer to the illustrations starting on page 56 to make sure you can distinguish between a small salmon (which may not be harvested) and a juvenile rainbow trout. Small sockeye salmon will be bright silver when found in the Salmon River in the spring or early summer and must be released immediately. Because of their similarity to resident rainbow trout, most streams with populations of wild, juvenile steelhead have special rules to protect them, such as catch-and-release rules in the Middle Fork of the Salmon River drainage.

## TAG! YOU'RE IT!



### Did you catch a tagged fish? Here is how to report it.

Website: [tag.idaho.gov](http://tag.idaho.gov) or call Fish Tag  
Hotline (toll free): 1-866-258-0338

### What to do when you catch a tagged fish:

#### Contact IDFG with this information:

- ◆ Tag number(s)
- ◆ Where the fish was caught
- ◆ Date caught
- ◆ Species
- ◆ Length of fish
- ◆ Did you keep or release the fish?