

WSR 22-02-052
EMERGENCY RULES
DEPARTMENT OF
FISH AND WILDLIFE

[Order 22-01—Filed January 3, 2022, 5:05 p.m., effective January 4, 2022]

Effective Date of Rule: January 4, 2022.

Purpose: The purpose of this emergency rule is to close steelhead fishing in portions of the Snake River from the mouth to Lower Granite Dam, as well as the Touchet, Tucannon, and Walla Walla rivers. This rule will also reduce the steelhead daily limit to one fish and require anglers stop fishing after their steelhead daily limit has been retained in the Snake River upstream of Lower Granite Dam and the Grand [Grande] Ronde River.

Citation of Rules Affected by this Order: Amending WAC 220-312-030.

Statutory Authority for Adoption: RCW 77.04.012, 77.04.020, 77.12.045, and 77.12.047.

Under RCW 34.05.350 the agency for good cause finds that immediate adoption, amendment, or repeal of a rule is necessary for the preservation of the public health, safety, or general welfare, and that observing the time requirements of notice and opportunity to comment upon adoption of a permanent rule would be contrary to the public interest.

Reasons for this Finding: These measures are consistent with the discussions and actions taken from North of Falcon preseason setting process due to a low forecast. The 2021 Columbia River preseason forecasted return for upriver steelhead was 89,200. Steelhead passage at Bonneville Dam remains the lowest count on record. The Washington department of fish and wildlife has coordinated with comanagers, due to the low overall return, it is necessary to close the Snake River downstream of Lower Granite Dam, and the Touchet, Tucannon, and Walla [Walla] rivers to all steelhead fishing. Current estimates of natural and hatchery origin fish returning to the Upper Snake River and Grande Ronde [River] are sufficient to allow for limited recreational fisheries to continue with reduced daily limits.

There is insufficient time to adopt permanent rules.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Comply with Federal Statute: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Federal Rules or Standards: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Recently Enacted State Statutes: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted at the Request of a Nongovernmental Entity: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted on the Agency's own Initiative: New 1, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Clarify, Streamline, or Reform Agency Procedures: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted using Negotiated Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Pilot Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Other Alternative Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Date Adopted: January 3, 2022.

Kelly Susewind
Director

NEW SECTION

WAC 220-312-05000G Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules—Eastside. Effective immediately, until further notice, the following provisions of WAC 220-312-050 regarding steelhead seasons for the Snake River and its tributaries, the Grande Ronde, Touchet, Tucannon, and Walla Walla rivers shall be as described below. All other provisions of WAC 220-312-050 not addressed herein, or otherwise amended by emergency rule, remain in effect:

(1) Grande Ronde River (Asotin County): Effective January 4 through April 15, 2022:

From the mouth to the Washington/Oregon border: Steelhead:

(a) Daily limit is 1 hatchery steelhead.

(b) Anglers may not continue to fish after the steelhead daily limit has been retained.

(2) Snake River (Franklin/Walla Walla Counties): Effective January 4 through March 31, 2022:

(a) From the Burbank to Pasco railroad bridge at Snake River mile 1.25 to the Lower Granite Dam: Steelhead: Closed to fishing for or retaining.

(b) From the Lower Granite Dam to the Idaho/Oregon Border: Steelhead:

(i) Daily limit is 1 hatchery steelhead.

(ii) Anglers may not continue to fish after the steelhead daily limit has been retained.

(3) Touchet River (Walla Walla County): Effective January 4 through April 15, 2022:

From the mouth to the confluence of the North and South Forks: Steelhead: Closed to fishing for or retaining.

(4) Tucannon River (Columbia/Garfield Counties): Effective January 4 through April 15, 2022:

From the mouth to the Tucannon Hatchery Road Bridge: Steelhead: Closed to fishing for or retaining.

(5) Walla Walla River (Walla Walla County): Effective January 4 through April 15, 2022:

From the mouth to the Washington/Oregon border: Steelhead: Closed to fishing for or retaining.

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