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**Subject:** Fwd: WDFW News Release: WDFW to open some recreational fishing and hunting starting Tuesday, May 5  
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## **WDFW NEWS RELEASE**

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
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<http://wdfw.wa.gov/>

April 27, 2020

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### **WDFW to open some recreational fishing and hunting starting Tuesday, May 5**

OLYMPIA -- The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) announced today it will reopen some recreational fishing and hunting in a phased approach following the state's efforts to limit the spread of coronavirus. The department is asking hunters and anglers to enjoy these outdoor activities only if they can do so locally, while also practicing physical distancing. Many WDFW wildlife areas and boat ramps will reopen May 5 for day-use only recreation, as will some recreational fishing per 2019-2020 sport fishing rules.

All freshwater fisheries will open May 5, as will Puget Sound saltwater fisheries (Marine Areas 5-13), except for halibut, shrimp, and intertidal shellfish harvesting, which remain closed statewide. Coastal saltwater fishing and shellfish harvesting in marine areas 1-4, including coastal clam digs, will also remain closed in consultation with local health departments, who continue to be concerned regarding the potential health impact to their communities from outside visitors.

Local hunting for turkey and spring bear will open on May 5, and the spring bear season will be extended until June 30.

"We've had so many people doing their part to stay home, and we're seeing results. We're now at a point where we will soon be able to begin welcoming people back outdoors," said Kelly Susewind, WDFW director. "I'm asking people to take what they've learned these past few weeks and continue putting these measures into play as you fish, hunt, and enjoy your local wildlife area. We're happy to reopen these opportunities, and we need you to continue working with us to stay safe."

Visitors, anglers, and hunters should only venture out well-prepared. The public should expect limited access to restrooms as staff begin the process to reopen facilities at wildlife areas and water access sites. WDFW is also recommending that people bring their own handwashing materials, toilet paper, and masks or bandanas, and be prepared to change plans if sites appear congested.

WDFW hatchery staff have continued to stock lakes throughout the closure. Anglers are asked to practice appropriate physical distancing at a given location, and avoid crowding on banks, piers, or at boat ramps. The department will be unable to host any formal opening day events for lowland lakes this year.

Anglers should consult the Washington Sport Fishing Rules pamphlet at [wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/](http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/) or Fish Washington mobile app, as well as the emergency rule changes webpage at [fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/](http://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/), before heading out.

If sites become overcrowded or other COVID-19 related public safety concerns develop, the department may reclose areas to further protect public health and safe resource management.

The department is encouraging local county health departments to stay in contact with WDFW regional management regarding any concerns, and notes that the department may also act to close areas during localized future outbreaks to discourage travel or congestion-related spread of the virus.

Spring bear hunters who would normally travel outside their local areas to hunt may wait to see how travel guidance evolves, or seek a permit refund and reclaim their points if they are unable to hunt while meeting local hunting recommendations. Permit hunters are responsible for securing access, which may not be available for all or for the added season dates. Permit holders will be sent more detailed information that will also be posted on [WDFW's COVID-19 page](#), and they should contact the Wildlife Program Customer Service Desk at 360-902-2515 or [wildthing@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:wildthing@dfw.wa.gov) if they have additional questions.

WDFW regional offices, visitor centers, and hatcheries will remain closed to the public for now, but remain available by phone. Those who encounter WDFW staff while in the field should feel free to engage with WDFW employees, but remember to practice physical distancing and keep at least six feet away.

To help discourage travel, the department is suspending the sale of non-resident fishing licenses.

### Guidelines for #ResponsibleRecreation in the outdoors

#### Before you go

- **Check what's open.** While many state-managed land destinations are open for day-use, other local, tribal, and federal land may still be closed.
- **Opt for day trips close to home.** Overnight stays are not permitted.
- **Stay with immediate household members only.** Recreation with those outside of your household creates new avenues for virus transmission.
- **Come prepared.** Visitors may find reduced or limited restroom services as staff begin the process to reopen facilities at wildlife areas and water access sites. You are advised to bring your own soap, water, hand sanitizer, and toilet paper, as well as a mask or bandana to cover your nose and mouth.
- **Enjoy the outdoors when healthy.** If you have symptoms of fever, coughing, or shortness of breath, save your outdoor adventure for another day.

#### When you get there

- **Avoid crowds.** Be prepared to go somewhere else or come back another time if your destination looks crowded.
- **Practice physical distancing.** Keep six feet between you and those outside your immediate household. Launch one boat at a time to give others enough space to launch safely. Leave at least one parking space between your vehicle and the vehicle next to you. Trailer your boat in the same way.
- **Wash your hands often.** Keep up on personal hygiene and bring your own water, soap, and hand sanitizer with you.
- **Pack out what you pack in.** Take any garbage with you, including disposable gloves and masks.

For the latest updates on WDFW's coronavirus response and to check the status of your favorite destinations, visit [wdfw.wa.gov/about/covid-19-updates](http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/covid-19-updates). Find more guidelines for responsible recreation in this [WDFW blog](#).

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)). For more information, see [http://wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/reasonable\\_request.html](http://wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/reasonable_request.html).*

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