

Idaho Steelhead Seasons, Rules and Information

Steelhead are rainbow trout longer than 20 inches in length in the Snake River drainage below Hells Canyon Dam, the Salmon River drainage (excluding lakes and the Pahsimeroi and Lemhi rivers), and the Clearwater River drainage (excluding that portion above Dworshak Dam and lakes). Rainbow trout longer than 20 inches in length with the adipose fin clipped, as evidenced by a healed scar, are defined as steelhead in the Snake River from Hells Canyon Dam upstream to Oxbow Dam and in the Boise River from its mouth upstream to Barber Dam, during steelhead seasons.

Only steelhead with a clipped adipose fin (see Page 47), as evidenced by a healed scar, may be kept. These are hatchery fish that had their adipose fin removed as juveniles. All naturally produced steelhead with an intact adipose fin must be released because they are listed as “Threatened” under the Endangered Species Act (see Page 48). Some hatchery steelhead are not adipose fin clipped and must also be released.

Licenses – Steelhead Permits

Resident Fishing License	\$25.75
Nonresident Fishing License	\$98.25
Junior Resident License (14 – 17 years)	\$13.75
Junior Nonresident Fishing License	\$21.75
Resident Steelhead Permit (Full Season Fishing License Required)	\$12.75
Nonresident Steelhead Permit (Full Season Fishing License Required)	\$25.75
Nonresident Salmon or Steelhead 3-day License/Permit	\$37.50

(Prices are accurate for January 1, 2013 but are subject to change by Legislative action.)

Anyone fishing for steelhead, except those expressly exempt, must have a valid fishing license and steelhead permit on his/her person to fish for, reduce to possession, or catch-and-release steelhead.

Any person who does not qualify as a resident (see Page 65) must purchase either a nonresident season fishing license and a full-season steelhead permit or a nonresident 3-day salmon/steelhead license/permit.

Children (including nonresident children) under the age of 14 are exempt from purchasing 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 a permit without a license so that they may catch their own limit of steelhead.

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

When excess hatchery steelhead become available at fish hatcheries or trap facilities, they may be released in the

Snake River between Hells Canyon and Oxbow dams, and in the Boise River to provide additional fishing opportunity. A steelhead permit is required when fishing for hatchery steelhead stocked by Idaho Fish and Game in these waters.

Methods of Take

- Only single-pointed barbless hooks are allowed when fishing for steelhead in the South Fork Clearwater River.
- No person shall kill or retain in possession any steelhead which has been hooked other than in the mouth or jaw. Any steelhead hooked other than in the mouth or jaw must be released. See snagging definition on Page 51.
- Only barbless hooks with a maximum 5/8 inch gap between shank and point may be used when fishing for 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.
- Steelhead may be taken with barbed hooks in the Boise River and the Snake River between Hells Canyon and Oxbow dams.
- Any angler, who has attained the bag, possession, or season limit on those waters with steelhead limits, must cease fishing for steelhead including catch-and-release fishing.

Please Note

- Fishing for or targeting steelhead is prohibited unless a steelhead season is specifically opened for that water.
- Steelhead with a clipped adipose fin, as evidenced by a healed scar, must be killed immediately if being reduced to possession. Otherwise, the steelhead 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.
- Steelhead with an intact adipose fin cannot be reduced to possession and must be released.
- No person shall have in the field or in transit any steelhead from which the head or tail has been removed unless: 1) the angler is ashore and done fishing for the day; 2) the adult steelhead is properly recorded on the anglers steelhead 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. The fish must be processed or packaged in a manner that the number of fish harvested can be readily determined. Processed 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.

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

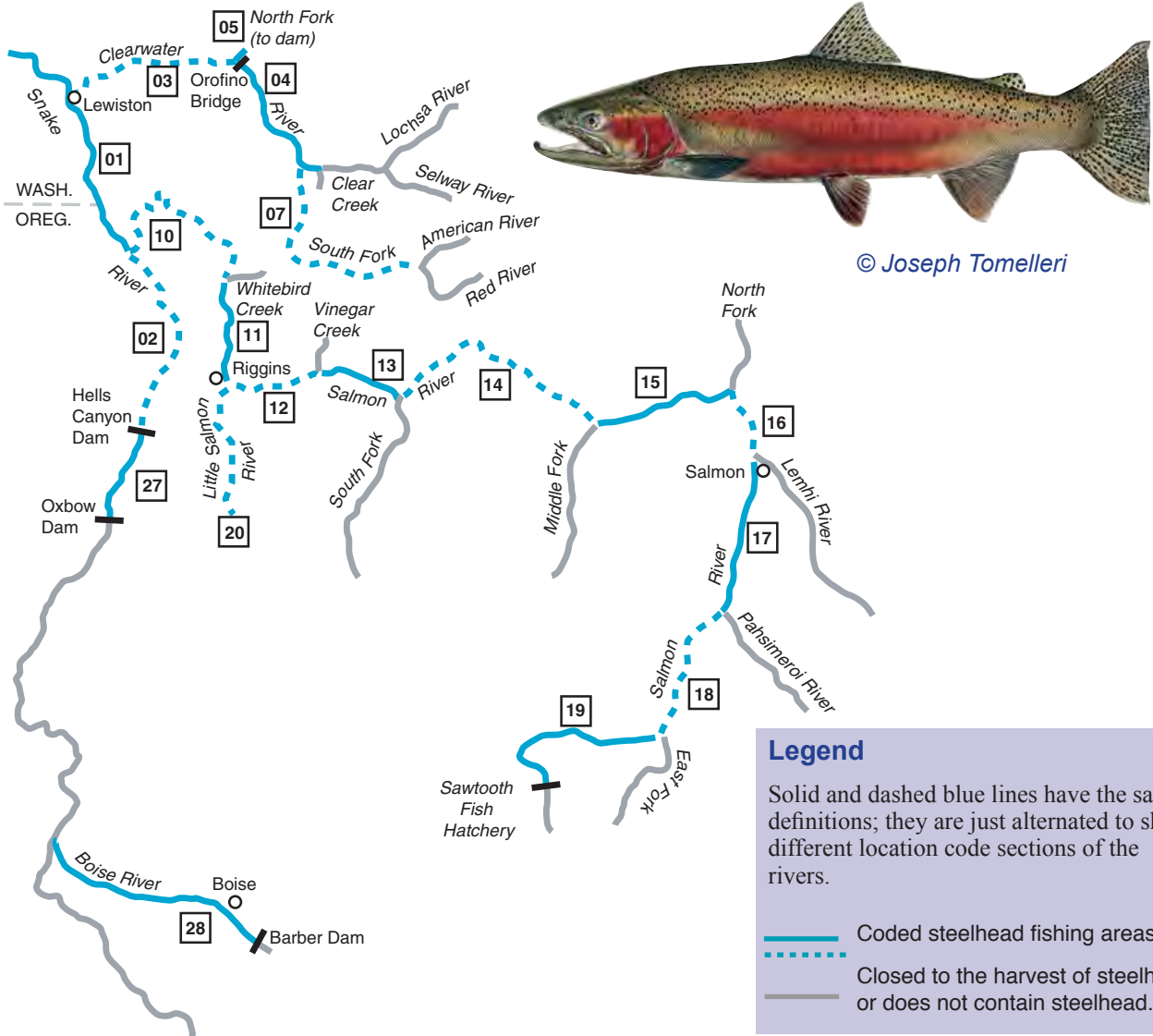
Clearwater River, downstream from Orofino Bridge.....	03
Clearwater River, upstream from Orofino Bridge.....	04
North Fork Clearwater River	05
South Fork Clearwater River	07

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
Boise River.....	28



Legend

Solid and dashed blue lines have the same definitions; they are just alternated to show different location code sections of the rivers.

- Coded steelhead fishing areas
- - - - - Closed to the harvest of steelhead or does not contain steelhead.

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
Clearwater River 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				
Clearwater River: Mainstem and Middle Fork Clearwater River 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 prohibited 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 prohibited . Fishing from motorized watercraft is prohibited from the Clearwater River Bridge at Orofino upstream to the confluence of the Selway and Lochsa rivers from Sep 1 - Apr 30. (Note: Fishing for steelhead is not allowed upstream of Clear Creek).												
North Fork Clearwater River from its mouth upstream to Dworshak Dam.	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 from the shoreline or wading along the perimeter of Dworshak National Fish Hatchery is prohibited . Fishing from any watercraft or wading is prohibited 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 prohibited .												
South Fork Clearwater River 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.		
Note: Only single-pointed barbless hooks are allowed when fishing for steelhead or salmon												
Salmon River 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			Aug 1 - Aug 31 Catch-and-Release	Sep 1 - Dec 31 3 per day, 9 in possession				
Salmon River 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									
Salmon River 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								

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
Little Salmon River 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			
Snake River 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								
Snake River from Hells Canyon Dam to Oxbow Dam, and Boise River from its mouth upstream to Barber Dam.	Jan 1 - May 31 3 per day, 9 in possession				Not present			Sep 1 - Dec 31 3 per day, 9 in possession				
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.												

When and Where You Can Expect to See Listed/Protected Salmon and Steelhead in Idaho

Sockeye	Spring & Summer Chinook	Fall Chinook	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 below Hells Canyon Dam
• Salmon River	• Salmon River & tributaries	• Clearwater River	• Clearwater River
• Redfish Lake and Creek		• Lower Salmon River	• Salmon River
• Alturas Lake and Creek			• Tributary streams to these rivers
• Pettit Lake and Creek			

Good Fishing Depends on Clean Water

Pollutants from fertilizers, septic systems, animal waste and sewage treatment plants cause fish kills and “dead zones” where no aquatic life can survive. Here’s what you can do to keep the water clean:

- Don’t over-fertilize and follow package instructions.
- Pick up pet waste and properly manage waste from livestock.

- Use rain barrels, rain gardens and permeable pavements.
- Encourage your community to invest in its wastewater infrastructure.

- Maintain septic systems.
- Supporting water quality protection supports great fishing! Learn more at: www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution/.

Steelhead Fishing in Boundary Waters

Snake River between Idaho, Oregon, or Washington: The holder of a valid Idaho fishing license and steelhead permit may fish for steelhead 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

When an adult steelhead 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 caught.

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

A proxy statement is required if a steelhead is reduced to your possession, then gifted to or transported by another individual or party. Please see Page 48.



Only barbless hooks with a maximum of 5/8 inch gap between the shank and point may be used when fishing for steelhead and salmon

Unclipped Adipose Fin

Wild or hatchery steelhead or salmon with an unclipped adipose fin **must** be released



Clipped Adipose Fin

Hatchery steelhead or salmon may be kept if the adipose fin has been clipped



Washington/Idaho Fishing Waters Boundaries

