

IDAHO 2026 Spring Chinook Salmon Seasons & Rules



Mainstem Clearwater River
Middle Fork Clearwater River
North Fork Clearwater River
South Fork Clearwater River
Lochsa River
Lower Salmon River
Little Salmon River
Snake River



Salmon in this brochure refer to anadromous (ocean run) Chinook Salmon of the species *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*.



Illustration by Joe Tomelleri

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Citizens **A**gainst **P**oaching
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Seasons

The following waters are open to fishing for Chinook Salmon during the periods listed. Waters not specifically designated below shall remain CLOSED to fishing for Chinook Salmon unless opened by Commission action. Areas will close to Chinook Salmon fishing at the end of fishing hours on August 10, 2026 or may close earlier by emergency order of the Director. **CHECK SEASONS AND LIMITS BEFORE FISHING AS THEY OFTEN CHANGE.**

The following areas are open 4 days per week; Thursday through Sunday, until further notice:

North Fork Clearwater River: From the mouth upstream to Dworshak Dam. (see North Fork Clearwater River Special Restrictions).

Mainstem Clearwater River: From the Cherrylane Bridge upstream to the South Fork Clearwater River (see Mainstem Clearwater Special Restrictions for closure areas).

Middle Fork Clearwater River: From the South Fork Clearwater River upstream to the confluence of the Lochsa and Selway rivers.

Lower Salmon River: From the Rice Creek Bridge upstream to Short's Creek. (see Lower Salmon River Special Restrictions).

Little Salmon River: From the mouth upstream to the US Highway 95 Bridge near Pollock Road, approximately 1.2 miles upstream from the mouth of Rapid River. (see Little Salmon River Special Restrictions).

The following areas open April 25, 2026 – 7 days per week until further notice:

South Fork Clearwater River: From its mouth upstream to the confluence of American and Red rivers (see South Fork Clearwater River Special Restrictions).

Lochsa River: From Lowell Bridge upstream to Twin Bridges immediately upstream from the confluence of Crooked Fork and Colt Killed creeks.

Snake River: From Dug Bar boat ramp to Hells Canyon Dam.

Fishing Hours

Fishing for Chinook Salmon is permitted only during the hours shown in the table below.

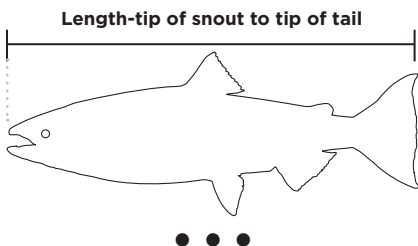
Dates	Pacific Daylight Time		Mountain Daylight Time	
	Begin	End	Begin	End
Apr. 25 – May 31	5:00AM	9:00PM	6:00AM	10:00PM
Jun. 1 – Aug. 10	4:30AM		5:30AM	

Daily, Possession, and Season Limits

NOTE: Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) may implement in-season changes to seasons or limits. For updated seasons and limits information consult a license vendor, an IDFG office, or the IDFG website: (idaho.gov/fish/chinook/rules). It is the responsibility of the angler to understand current seasons and limits.

Adult Chinook Salmon are 24 or more inches in length.

Jack Chinook Salmon are less than 24 inches in length.



Mainstem Clearwater, Middle Fork Clearwater, North Fork Clearwater, Lower Salmon and Little Salmon rivers:

- **Daily Bag Limit:** four (4) salmon per day, only one (1) may be an adult.
- **Possession Limit:** twelve (12) salmon of which no more than three (3) may be adults.
- **CHECK SEASONS AND LIMITS BEFORE FISHING AS THEY OFTEN CHANGE.**

South Fork Clearwater, Lochsa and Snake rivers:

- **Daily Bag Limit:** four (4) salmon per day, only two (2) may be adults.
- **Possession Limit:** twelve (12) salmon of which no more than six (6) may be adults.
- **CHECK SEASONS AND LIMITS BEFORE FISHING AS THEY OFTEN CHANGE.**

Season Limit (all waters): No person may take more than ten (10) adult Chinook Salmon statewide during 2026 salmon seasons occurring prior to August 10, 2026.

Anglers must cease daily fishing for all Chinook Salmon (including jacks) once they have retained their Daily Bag Limit, Possession Limit, or Season Limit of adults or otherwise meet their Daily Bag Limit or Possession Limit of adults and jacks, whichever comes first.

“Possession limit” shall apply to salmon while in the field or being transported to the final place of consumption or storage.

Anglers may not fish for Chinook Salmon in any river section while in possession of Chinook Salmon that match or exceed the bag or possession limits for that section.

Methods of Take



Barbless Hook
Up to 3 points
on one shank.

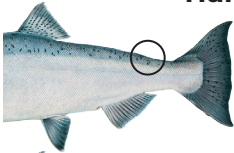


Single-Pointed Hook
One point on one shank

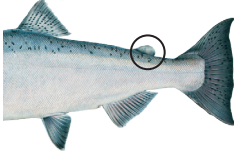
Barbless hook

- A** Only barbless hooks may be used when fishing for salmon. Bending the barb(s) down to the shank of a single, double, or treble hook will meet this requirement.

Harvest Rules



- A** Hatchery Chinook Salmon may be kept if the adipose fin has been clipped as evidenced by a healed scar.



- B** Chinook Salmon with an unclipped adipose fin **MUST** be released.

- C** No person shall have in the field or in transit a hatchery-produced adult anadromous Chinook Salmon that has been processed by removing the head and tail unless the following conditions are met:

1. the fish has been recorded on the taker's salmon permit;
2. the fish is processed and packaged with the skin naturally attached to the flesh including a portion with a healed, clipped, adipose fin scar; and
3. it must be packaged in a manner that the number of fish harvested can readily be determined. No person shall process salmon until they are ashore and done fishing for the day. No person shall transport processed salmon via boat. Jack salmon may not be processed while in the field or in transit. Any processed salmon count towards an angler's possession limit while in the field or in transit.

- D** All Chinook Salmon that are hooked, landed and reduced to possession must be killed immediately after landing and shall be counted in the limits of the person hooking the fish.

Releasing Fish

Any salmon that is landed but not reduced to possession must be released. Anglers should strive to minimize handling and stress on each fish caught and released.

Permit Validation

You can now validate your electronic salmon permit via electronic tagging (e-tagging) on your cell phone. For details go to: idfg.idaho.gov/licenses/e-tagging.

When an adult Chinook Salmon has been hooked, landed and reduced to possession, the angler hooking the fish must immediately:

- A** Validate their salmon permit electronically using the GoOutdoorsID Application (if using e-tagging).
OR
- B** Write in the space provided, the month and day the fish was harvested; and
- C** Look up the location code number from the list below or their salmon permit and write it in the space provided; and
- D** Indicate species and adipose clip status on the permit.

Note:

- When a Chinook Salmon is released unharmed, as in catch-and-release fishing, the angler is not required to make an entry on their permit.
- Anglers may retain jack salmon less than 24 inches in length as part of their bag and possession limit but they are not required to record them on their permit.

For example, a Chinook Salmon equal to or greater than 24 inches in length kept from the Little Salmon River on June 1 would be entered as:

FISH	MONTH DAY	RIVER LOCATION CODE	CHINOOK	COHO	ADIPOSE FIN CLIPPED?
1	06/01	20	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
2			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

RIVER LOCATION CODES

See Seasons section for full description of fishing boundaries. All of a river section may not be open for salmon fishing.

Snake River

Dug Bar boat ramp to Hells Canyon Dam02

Clearwater River

Downstream of Memorial Bridge3A
 Memorial Bridge to Cherrylane Bridge..... 3B
 Cherrylane Bridge to Orofino Bridge3C
 Clearwater River, above the Orofino Bridge04
 North Fork Clearwater River.....05
 Middle Fork Clearwater River06
 South Fork Clearwater River07
 Lochsa River.....08

Lower Salmon River

Rice Creek Bridge to Upper Twin Bridge.....10
 Upper Twin Bridge to Timezone Bridge 11A
 Timezone Bridge to Short's Creek 11B

Little Salmon River

Little Salmon River20

Other Relevant Statutes & Rules

The following acts are unlawful by statute or commission rule. Consult Title 36, Idaho Code, or the 2025-2027 Idaho Fishing Seasons and Rules for exact wording and complete listing.

It Is Unlawful:

- To fish within the posted upstream or downstream boundary of any fish weir or trap.
- To refuse to produce license or fish for inspection upon request by a conservation officer or other person authorized to enforce Idaho Fish and Game seasons and rules.
- To fail to stop and report at check stations established to inspect licenses and/or fish and game.
- To possess, transport or use as bait any live fish, leeches, frogs, salamanders, waterdogs, or shrimp, except that live crayfish may be used if caught on the body of water being fished.
- To catch any part of another person's bag limit, EXCEPT in the case of license-exempt persons fishing for salmon.
- To transport for another or accept as a gift any game fish, unless a statement signed by the taker accompanies the fish, showing the number and kinds, the date taken, the taker's name, address and fishing license number.
- To claim ownership to more wild game or fish taken within the state of Idaho than allowed by established possession limits.
- To ship any fish by commercial carrier unless the outside of the package is marked as to the number and kinds of fish and the package contains a written statement showing the taker's name, address and fishing license number.
- To use seines, dip nets, spears, snag hooks, or any other contrivances in taking any fish from the waters of the state EXCEPT as allowed by Commission regulation (Note: Tribal fisheries may use gear types other than those allowed in sport fisheries).
- To waste game fish.
- To sell fish without a permit.

Snagging

It is unlawful to take or attempt to take salmon by snagging. Snagging shall mean the taking or attempting to take a fish by use of a hook or lure in any manner or method other than enticing or attracting a fish to strike with, and become hooked in its mouth. A salmon that has been hooked anywhere other than its mouth or jaw must be released.

Licenses, Permits and Requirements

Resident Salmon Permit	\$15.25
Resident Price Locked Salmon Permit	\$12.75
Nonresident Salmon Permit (License required).....	\$28.25

License Required for Salmon Permit

To purchase a salmon permit, residents and nonresidents must also buy a fishing license which requires the Access/ Depredation fee. To check prices for the appropriate licenses and fees, contact a license vendor or visit idfg.idaho.gov/buy

- Any person age 14 and older must have a valid Fishing License and Salmon Permit in possession to fish for salmon, except Free Fishing Day, June 13, 2026.
- Any person age 14 and older who does not qualify as a resident must purchase a Nonresident Season Fishing License and Salmon Permit, a Nonresident Junior Fishing License and Salmon Permit, or a 3-Day Salmon\Steelhead License to fish for salmon.
- To qualify for resident status, a person must be domiciled in the state for at least six months.
- Children (including nonresidents) under the age of 14 may fish without a license and salmon permit provided they are accompanied by the holder of a valid permit and that any salmon 24 or more inches in length must be recorded on the permit holder's card and all salmon kept must be counted in the permit holder's legal bag, possession, and season limit.
- Resident children under the age of 14 may purchase their own salmon permit so that they may catch their own limit of salmon.
- Nonresident children under the age of 14 may purchase a Nonresident Junior Fishing License and a salmon permit so that they may harvest their own limit of salmon.
- Children (including nonresidents) under the age of 14 may purchase a two pole permit.
- Consult the 2025-2027 Fishing Seasons and Rules for other regulations relating to fishing, license costs and other Department information.

**CHECK SEASONS AND LIMITS
BEFORE FISHING AS THEY
OFTEN CHANGE.**

Special Restrictions

Lower Salmon and Little Salmon rivers: Fishing from any watercraft is prohibited within 30 yards of the west shoreline of the Salmon River from the Riggins City Park boat ramp upstream to a posted boundary approximately 50 yards upstream of the mouth of the Little Salmon River. Fishing from any watercraft is also prohibited in the Little Salmon River from the mouth upstream approximately 200 yards to a posted boundary.

Mainstem Clearwater River: Fishing from the shoreline along the perimeter of Dworshak National Fish Hatchery is prohibited. Fishing from any watercraft is prohibited in the Big Eddy hole near Lenore Rest Area at milepost 28 on US Highway 12 from the posted boundary near river mile 27.6 upstream to the posted boundary near river mile 28.0. Fishing is prohibited between posted boundaries 100 yards upstream and downstream from the Nez Perce Tribal Hatchery ladder (near Cherrylane Bridge) and extending into the river channel 50 yards.

North Fork Clearwater River: The mouth of the North Fork Clearwater River is defined as a straight line between the Clearwater Hatchery outlet culvert on the west side and the posted sign located on the Dworshak Hatchery fence near the tip of land on the east side. Fishing from the shoreline or wading along the perimeter of Dworshak Hatchery is prohibited. Fishing from any watercraft or wading is prohibited between the posted sign approximately 150 yards upstream from the mouth of the North Fork Clearwater River to the Ahsahka Highway 7 Bridge. When fishing from the Highway 7 Bridge, it is unlawful to take or attempt to take any fish downstream of the railroad bridge. Fishing from the railroad bridge is prohibited.

South Fork Clearwater River: Only single-pointed barbless hooks are allowed while fishing for salmon in the South Fork Clearwater River.

Tribal fisheries also occur in Idaho.

They are governed by Tribes and have different rules than Idaho sport fisheries. Please be respectful of these different fishing traditions.

IDFG adheres to all applicable state and federal laws and regulations related to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, gender, or handicap. If you feel you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility of IDFG, or if you desire further information, please write to: Idaho Department of Fish and Game, P.O. Box 25, Boise, ID 83707; or The Office of Human Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240.

Costs associated with this publication were provided from IDFG in accordance with section 60-202, Idaho Code.
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