

# Idaho Fishing Seasons and Rules

2016-2018

3rd Edition 2018



Photo Boise River, courtesy Erik Cayo

**Free Fishing Day**

**June 9, 2018**

Craig Mountain



**Preserving and Sustaining Idaho's Wildlife Heritage**



Idaho Fish & Wildlife  
FOUNDATION

*For over 25 years, we've worked to preserve and sustain Idaho's wildlife heritage. Help us to leave a legacy for future generations, give a gift today!*

- Habitat Restoration
- Wildlife Conservation and Education
- Public Access

For more information visit [IFWF.org](http://IFWF.org) or call **(208) 334-2648**

**YOU CAN HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF NOXIOUS WEEDS IN IDAHO!**

1. Cleaning boats, trailers and watercraft after leaving a water body
2. Pumping the bilge of your boat before entering a water body
3. Cleaning boating and fishing gear from any plant material
4. Reporting infestations to your County Weed Superintendent



**CALL 1-844-WEEDSNO**

Pulling  Together  
Against Invasive Weeds

**[WWW.IDAHOWEEDAWARENESS.COM](http://WWW.IDAHOWEEDAWARENESS.COM)**

## DIRECTOR MOORE'S OPEN LETTER TO THE HUNTERS, ANGLERS AND TRAPPERS OF IDAHO



Last fall, a dream came true for me. I harvested a bull moose along the South Fork of the Snake River, and some of my closest friends were there. It meant a lot to me to share the experience with them, and to have their help cleaning, skinning and quartering the bull then hauling him back to camp.

Another favorite moment was stopping by my daughter and son-in-law's house on my way home and showing the skull and antlers to my grandsons Thatcher and Cameron (ages 5 and 2). Both of these little fellows are lifetime license holders, and I want to see all young Idahoans have the same hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities in the future that we enjoy today.

Last winter, the Idaho legislature and Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter did their part by approving the first resident fee increase in a dozen years as part of House Bill 230. From a fiscal perspective, the bill does three main things.

- Supports the Fish and Game Commission to use their discount authority so that Idahoans can exempt themselves from paying the higher fees by purchasing any annual license in 2017 and each subsequent year for at least the next five years ("Price Lock").
- It provides more resources (about \$3 million annually) for fish and wildlife management.
- Includes an access/depredation surcharge with the purchase of an annual resident or nonresident license. The annual fee provides new funding to improve sportsman's access, wildlife depredation prevention and depredation compensation.

Idaho Fish and Game last summer launched the first phase of an aggressive multi-year marketing campaign to inform Idahoans about the advantages of Price Lock. The success of Price Lock depends on how many Idahoans "lock-in" by purchasing an annual license in 2017, and by continuing to buy an annual license each year after.

Resident license fees for 2018 increased by about 20 percent for those who didn't buy an annual license in 2017. If the Price Lock concept works by more Idahoans purchasing annual licenses every year rather than intermittently, Fish and Game will have the resources to be effective for a longer time before the need arises for a future fee increase.

Those Idahoans who are "price locked" also pay lower 2017 prices for all tags and permits in addition to their annual license.

The Fish and Game Commission is also applying Price Lock to all 3-year resident licenses, meaning if you missed out on Price Lock by not purchasing an annual license in 2017, you can purchase a 3-year license in 2018 or during any of the following four years and get locked in at 2017 prices for licenses, tags & permits. Three year license purchasers will also see a one-third discount on their Access/Depredation fee.

Nothing like Price Lock has ever been tried by another fish and wildlife agency. The Idaho Legislature and the Fish and Game Commission will review Price Lock after at least five years to determine whether it should continue.

Here's how Fish and Game is using the Price Lock license revenue:

- Modernizing hatcheries and increasing fish production
- Conducting more population surveys to support game management decisions
- Spending more to improve and maintain public shooting ranges
- Improving Fish and Game's website and communication with sportsmen and women
- Increasing fish and wildlife predation management and noxious weed control

In recent years, Idaho hunters have enjoyed some of the best big game hunting in decades. Most of them recognize that by managing deer and elk at high levels, Idaho Fish and Game must respond effectively when those animals cause problems for private property owners.

The new access/depredation fee provides benefits both for sportsmen and for farmers and ranchers. The surcharge (\$5 for residents, \$10 for nonresidents) is paid prior to a person purchasing his or her first annual Idaho hunting or fishing license each year. The fee will provide an additional \$1 million each year sportsman's access and \$1 million annually for wildlife depredation compensation and prevention.

With the added resources from Price Lock and the Access/Depredation fee, Idaho Fish and Game is better equipped and positioned to increase fish and wildlife populations, to manage deer and elk impacts to private landowners, and to continue Idaho's hunting and fishing legacy for our kids and grandkids.

Thank you for supporting Idaho Fish and Game and wildlife conservation in Idaho. I wish you great hunting, fishing and trapping in 2018.

**Virgil Moore**, Director  
Idaho Department of Fish and Game



# Idaho Department of Fish and Game

## Idaho Wildlife Policy

*“All wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish, within the state of Idaho, is hereby declared to be the property of the state of Idaho. It shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed. It shall be only captured or taken at such times or places, under such conditions, or by such means, or in such manner, as will preserve, protect, and perpetuate such wildlife, and provide for the citizens of this state and, as by law permitted to others, continued supplies of such wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping.”*

— Idaho Code Section 36-103

### Idaho Fish and Game Commission

- Brad Corkill, Panhandle
- Daniel Blanco, Clearwater
- Blake Fischer, Southwest
- Greg Cameron, Magic Valley
- Lane Clezie, Southeast
- Derick Attebury, Upper Snake
- Jerry Meyers, Salmon

### Idaho Department of Fish and Game

600 S. Walnut St., P.O. Box 25  
Boise, ID 83707

**208-334-3700 • [idfg.idaho.gov](http://idfg.idaho.gov)**

- Virgil Moore, Director
- Sharon Kiefer, Deputy Director
- Ed Schriever, Deputy Director

### Regional Offices

- Panhandle Region..... 208-769-1414  
2885 W. Kathleen Ave., Coeur d’Alene ID 83815
- Clearwater Region ..... 208-799-5010  
3316 16th St., Lewiston ID 83501
- Southwest Region ..... 208-465-8465  
3101 S. Powerline Rd., Nampa ID 83686
- McCall Subregion..... 208-634-8137  
555 Deinhard Lane, McCall ID 83638
- Magic Valley Region ..... 208-324-4359  
324 S 417 E; Suite #1, Jerome ID 83338
- Southeast Region ..... 208-232-4703  
1345 Barton Rd., Pocatello ID 83204
- Upper Snake Region ..... 208-525-7290  
4279 Commerce Circle, Idaho Falls ID 83401
- Salmon Region..... 208-756-2271  
99 Highway 93 N., Salmon ID 83467

Idaho Fish and Game offices are open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday except state holidays. Offices in the Panhandle and Clearwater regions are in the Pacific Time Zone; all others are in the Mountain Time Zone.

## To Buy a License, Tag or Permit:

- In person, go to any Idaho Fish and Game office or license vendor.
- By credit card, within the United States call 1-800-554-8685. Outside the U.S., use the Internet or mail.
- From your computer or mobile device, go to **[idfg.idaho.gov](http://idfg.idaho.gov)**. A service fee is added for online and telephone transactions.
- Commercial licenses and tags, duplicate tags, documents that require proof of disability, lifetime licenses, and bear baiting permits may be purchased only at Fish and Game offices.

## To report wildlife crimes, call Citizens Against Poaching at 1-800-632-5999.

Emergency information can be relayed to Fish and Game personnel through any Idaho law enforcement agency.



## Other Information Numbers

- Rules booklets, nonresident license applications: 208-334-3700
- U. S. Forest Service:
  - Southern Idaho ..... **[www.fs.usda.gov/r4](http://www.fs.usda.gov/r4)**
  - Northern Idaho..... **[www.fs.usda.gov/r1](http://www.fs.usda.gov/r1)**
- Bureau of Land Management: ..... **[www.blm.gov/id](http://www.blm.gov/id)**
- Idaho Relay Service (TDD) .....1-800-377-3529

*Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) adheres to all applicable state and federal laws and regulations related to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, gender, disability or veteran’s status. 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Federal Assistance, Mailstop: MBSP-4020, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203, Telephone: (703) 358-2156. This publication will be made available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact IDFG for assistance.*

Information in this brochure summarizes rules and is an official proclamation of the Idaho Fish and Game Commission for the taking of wildlife and/or fish. The official rules are available at **<https://idfg.idaho.gov/rules>** or from the Office of Administrative Rules, Department of Administration, Statehouse Mail, Boise, ID 83720, and may be reviewed in some libraries. Maps are for general reference only.

**CONTENTS**

**How to Use This Booklet**.....6

**Proxy Statement**.....7

**Panhandle Region**..... 8 - 11

**Clearwater Region**..... 12 - 15

**Southwest Region**..... 16 - 20

**Magic Valley Region** ..... 21 - 25

    Silver Creek Fishing Guide.....26

**Southeast Region**..... 27 - 30

**Upper Snake Region**..... 31 - 34

    Henrys Fork (Snake River, North Fork) .....35

**Salmon Region**..... 36 - 38

**Steelhead and Salmon Rules**..... 39 - 44

    River Location Codes.....40

    Steelhead Seasons and Limits ..... 41 - 42

    Salmon and Steelhead Fishing in Boundary Waters .....43

    Permit Validation .....43

    Washington/Idaho Fishing Waters Boundaries .....43

    Threatened and Endangered Species.....44

**General Fishing Information**..... 45 - 59

    Trespass Law .....45

    Methods of Fishing and Equipment..... 46 - 47

    Fish Terms and Limits..... 47 - 48

    Boundary and Water Definitions.....48

    Tournament/ Fishing Contests .....48

    Transport, Release, and Possession of Fish ..... 48-49

    Salvage of Fish.....49

    Salmon and Steelhead Rules.....49

    Fishing in Boundary Waters .....49

    Releasing Fish .....49

    Taking Photographs .....50

    Reasons for Special Seasons, Size and Bag Limits.....50

    Navigability and Public Access.....51

    Sturgeon Fishing Rules.....52

    Fish Consumption and Advisory Information .....53

    Official List of Idaho Record Fish..... 54 - 55

    Fish Identification ..... 56 - 59

**Licenses, Tags and Permits** ..... 60 - 64

    To Buy a License, Tag or Permit .....60

    Hunter and Bowhunter Education .....60

    Refund Policy.....60

    Resident Disabled Licenses.....60

    Disabled Hunter/Companion .....61

    Resident Lifetime License Certificates .....61

    Residency Requirements .....61

    Hunting Passports.....61

    Idaho Resident Fees..... 62-63

    Nonresident Fees.....64

**WHAT'S NEW**

- Starting in 2018, the price of most resident licenses, tags and permits will increase unless you bought an annual 2017 license. If you did buy a license, you will pay 2017 prices. If you didn't, you can still pay 2017 prices with Price Lock by purchasing any 3-year license. For more information, please visit: <https://idfg.idaho.gov/pricelock>
- You can now possess 3-times the daily bag limit while in the field or in transit after the second day of the season
- Minimum bass length is now 14" in the Southeast Region except where noted
- There is no minimum bass length limit in the Upper Snake Region except where noted
- Includes Steelhead and Salmon Rules



# HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

1. Find the region where you plan to fish →
2. Find the regional fishing season dates →
3. Find your fish species and bag limit →
4. See if the water you want to fish is listed under Special Rule Waters →
5. Turn the page for details on Special Rule Waters

## CLEARWATER REGION

### General Fishing Season for the Clearwater Region

#### All Waters Open All Year

Except as modified in Clearwater Region Special Rule Waters on Pages 14-15. Fishing is not allowed within the posted upstream and downstream boundary of any fish weir or trap.

### Daily Bag Limits for the Clearwater Region

The following daily bag limits apply to all waters of the Clearwater Region except as modified in Clearwater Region Special Rule Waters on Pages 14-15. The possession limit is 3-times the daily bag limit after the second day of the season.

#### Bass (*largemouth and smallmouth*)

- Bass limit is 6, both species combined

#### Brook Trout

- Brook trout limit is 25

#### Bull Trout

- Bull trout limit is 0, catch-and-release
- No bull trout harvest is allowed

#### Kokanee

- Kokanee limit is 25

#### Salmon (*ocean-going*)

- Salmon seasons and limits are set annually by the Idaho Fish and Game Commission and rules are issued in a separate brochure
- Fishing for or targeting salmon is prohibited unless a salmon season is specifically opened for that water

#### Steelhead (*ocean-going*)

- Defined as rainbow trout longer than twenty (20) inches in length in the Snake River drainage below Hells Canyon Dam, the Salmon River drainage (excluding lakes), and the Clearwater River drainage (excluding that portion above Dworshak Dam, and lakes)
- Fishing for or targeting steelhead is prohibited unless a steelhead season is specifically opened for that water (see pages 39-43)

#### Sturgeon

- Sturgeon limit is 0, catch-and-release
- Sturgeon must not be removed from the water and must be released upon landing
- Barbless hooks and sliding sinkers are required, see Page 52 for details

#### Tiger Muskie

- Tiger Muskie limit is 2, none under 40 inches

#### Trout includes cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, and trout hybrids (e.g. tiger trout)

- In rivers and streams, trout limit is 2, all species combined
- In lakes, reservoirs, ditches and canals, trout limit is 6, all species combined

**Does not include bull trout and brook trout which are listed separately**

#### Whitefish

- Whitefish limit is 25

#### Protected Nongame Fish includes Pacific lamprey and sand roller

- May not be harvested or possessed

#### All Other Fish Species includes bullfrogs and crayfish

- No bag, size or possession limit

Check for potential fish consumption advisories. See Page 53.

### Special Rule Waters for the Clearwater Region (see Pages 14-15 for details)

Clearwater River	Elk Creek Reservoir	Snake River (Lewiston to Hells Canyon Dam)
Clearwater River, Middle Fork	Fish Lake (Cedars Area)	Spring Valley Reservoir
Clearwater River, North Fork	Kelly Creek and tributaries	Toho Lake
Clearwater River, South Fork	Lake Creek (Cedars Area)	Winchester Lake
Crooked Fork Creek (tributary to Lochsa River)	Lochsa River	
Deyo Reservoir	Mann Lake	
Dworshak Reservoir	Moose Creek Reservoir	
Elk Creek and tributaries (tributary to Dworshak Reservoir)	Salmon River	
	Salmon River tributaries	
	Selway River	

General Information and Definitions pertaining to rules can be found starting on Page 46.

## Who needs a license to fish in Idaho:

- Any person 14 years of age or older must have a valid license or permit to fish for fish, bullfrogs or crayfish in Idaho. No person shall fish without having the proper license on his or her person.
- Resident children under the age of 14 are not required to purchase a fishing license but can purchase a two-pole fishing permit. Resident children may possess their own daily bag limit.
- A resident child under 14 may purchase a salmon or steelhead permit without a license so that he or she may catch his or her own limit of steelhead or salmon.
- Nonresident children under 14 years of age must be accompanied by the holder of a valid fishing license and their fish must be included in the license holder's limit in order to fish without a license, or they may purchase a nonresident license and have their own limit.
- Any license, tag or permit which is defaced, altered or tampered with shall be invalid from the date and time of issuance. It is a violation to use or attempt to use any license, tag or permit that has been defaced, altered or tampered with by means of (but not limited to) erasures and type overs, or tears in the paper.
- Fishing on Indian reservations may require tribal licenses and adherence to tribal regulations.

## Información Importante

Este libro incluye información importante acerca de las leyes de pesca de Idaho. Usted puede ser multado o encarcelado si viola estas leyes. Por favor, encuentra alguien que lea inglés para explicar la información en este libro.



# FREE FISHING DAY!

**EVERYONE WELCOME!**  
(No license required)

- How-to clinics
- Tackle available
- Questions answered
- Skills development

**Saturday,  
June 9, 2018**

**For more information, contact the Fish and Game office nearest you.**

## PROXY STATEMENT *(To transport fish taken by another person)*

Angler's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 License No. \_\_\_\_\_ Tag No. \_\_\_\_\_ Permit No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of person transporting \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fish Species	Description & Number Taken	Water Caught	Date

GAME:

Species \_\_\_\_\_ How many \_\_\_\_\_

Species \_\_\_\_\_ How many \_\_\_\_\_