



# Idaho Fishing Seasons and Rules

2016 - 2018

First Edition 2016



Photo Boise River, courtesy Erik Cayo



**Free Fishing Day**

**Saturday, June 11, 2016 • June 10, 2017 • June 9, 2018**



## Director Moore's Open Letter to the Hunters, Anglers and Trappers of Idaho

Over 75 years ago, Fish and Game's Mission was created by the people of Idaho. Hunters, anglers, trappers and others who cared about wildlife wrote it and passed it by a citizens' initiative, approved by 76 percent of voters in 1938 - still the highest margin of victory for any such initiative in the history of our state.

### Fish and Game is proud of our Mission:

***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. IC 36-103(a)



For me personally, the Mission has been the single most important guide throughout my 37 years as a fishery and wildlife management professional in Idaho. It keeps me on track, reminding me who we are at Fish and Game and what we do for the public we serve and I refer to it regularly.

Fish and Game is a public trust management agency providing benefits to Idahoans with specific direction to preserve, protect, perpetuate, (i.e., conserve wildlife), and once that is done, our paramount role is to provide for continued supplies for hunting, fishing and trapping. Harvest of wildlife is implicit in our Mission.

Fish and Game funding in Idaho comes predominantly from hunter and angler user fees, with no state general tax funds. This approach has been a key and successful aspect of the North American Model of Wildlife Management, the most successful large scale approach to wildlife conservation ever taken in the world.

Idahoans hear a lot about threats to that heritage from anti-hunting and anti-trapping groups. In Idaho, I believe we are united to confront such threats as demonstrated in 2012 when the citizens of Idaho reaffirmed our Mission by overwhelmingly approving a constitutional amendment (75 percent of voters). The amendment preserves the public's right to hunt, fish and trap, and states these are the preferred methods of managing Idaho's wildlife populations.

In 1977, as a newly hired Idaho Fish and Game fisheries biologist, I witnessed the closure of Idaho's Chinook salmon fishing and I wondered if it was gone for good. Today, we are regularly opening seasons and catching Chinook on the Snake, Clearwater and Salmon Rivers, providing opportunity to thousands of anglers to experience that fishing heritage. Idaho hunters experienced one of the best deer seasons in years, thanks to recent mild winters and management that have helped populations grow, providing much opportunity. The new Elk Plan ([idfg.idaho.gov/conservation/plan/elk](http://idfg.idaho.gov/conservation/plan/elk)) provides zone-specific population objectives and strategies to deal with limiting factors including predation mortality by wolves and other predators. After four-and-a half successful hunting seasons, working together with Idaho hunters and trappers, we're getting our wolf population down to more manageable, but still sustainable levels, and our elk population is beginning to show signs of improvement in many zones.

Idaho Fish and Game has been front and center as part of Governor Otter's Sage-Grouse Task Force ([idfg.idaho.gov/conservation/sage-grouse](http://idfg.idaho.gov/conservation/sage-grouse)). Many volunteers, including hunters, are doing everything from participating in population surveys to helping us plant sagebrush. In addition to these on-the-ground efforts, hunters and falconers are helping support sage-grouse conservation through their purchases of licenses and tags. Despite that, a Southern Idaho newspaper recently claimed in print that sage-grouse hunting creates a "perception problem." I responded with an op-ed pointing out that sage-grouse seasons are set based on science, not perception and that we carefully monitor sage-grouse populations and allow hunting only where populations are strong and do not hesitate to close areas where populations or habitat are limiting. That's how we manage all game species, with sound science, and with opportunity for our hunters, anglers, and trappers always in mind.

Fifty three percent of Idahoans fished and 35 percent hunted in the last two years and our numbers are growing. We certified over 13,500 new hunters, bow hunters and trappers last fiscal year, a 14 percent increase over the previous year. And 3,900 ten and eleven year olds hunted their first deer or elk this year. We are also busy with our "Take Me Fishing" trailers, helping nearly 24,000 people over the last two years learn to fish. These are just a few examples of how Fish and Game, and a dedicated corps of volunteers are working to preserve, protect and perpetuate Idaho's wildlife and our hunting and fishing heritage.

Indeed, hunting, fishing, and trapping generate \$1.4 Billion per year for Idaho's economy, supports over 14,000 jobs, and is the second most popular outdoor activity in Idaho (behind camping) because we have such outstanding wildlife resources. Fish, game, and other species exist today thanks to your license dollars and the strong foundation for wildlife conservation and management outlined by our forefathers when they created and implemented the Fish and Game Mission. That is why we use it as a daily guide as Fish and Game strives to make Idaho a better place for fish, wildlife, hunters, anglers, and trappers, and all citizens who benefit from this incredible resource.

Looking ahead, I want to both thank you and reassure you that a top priority at Idaho Fish and Game will always be the hunter, angler, and trapper, and maintaining our wildlife heritage. Demands and issues facing our agency (i.e., endangered species, habitat loss, etc.) are much greater than they were when our Mission was created and the challenges will continue to grow, but nothing will ever be more important than making sure our fish and wildlife populations are healthy and available for hunters and anglers to use.



 Virgil Moore  
**Director**



# 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

- Mark Doerr - Chairman - Magic Valley
- Brad Corkill - Panhandle
- Daniel Blanco - Clearwater
- Blake Fischer - Southwest
- Lane Clezie - Southeast
- Derick Attebury - Upper Snake
- Will Naillon - 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)

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

## 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.

## 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

## 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. A service fee is added for telephone transactions.
- From your computer or mobile device, go to [idfg.idaho.gov](http://idfg.idaho.gov). A service fee is added for online 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.*

For more information on laws in this rule book, visit the Idaho Administrative Procedures Act at <http://adminrules.idaho.gov>.

*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.*

*Costs associated with this publication are available from IDFG in accordance with Section 60-202, Idaho Code.*

*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 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.*

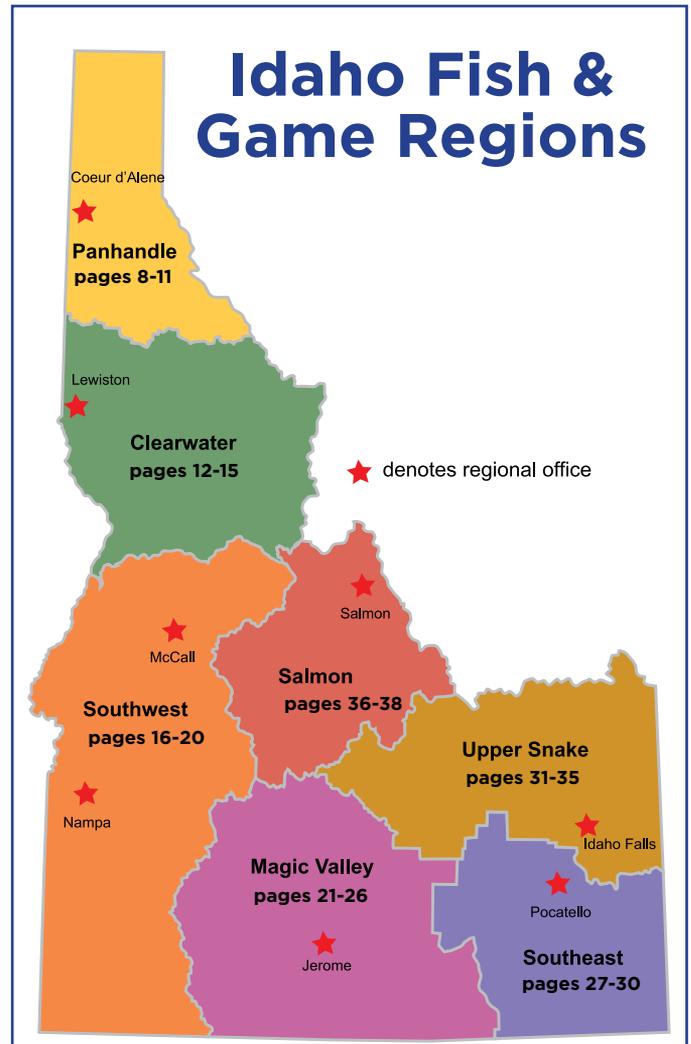
# Fishing Rules 2016 - 2018

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## NEW in this booklet

- 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 →

## Clearwater Region

2. Find the regional fishing season dates →

**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.**

3. Find your fish species and bag limit →

**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.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Bass</b> (largemouth and smallmouth)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bass limit is 6, both species combined</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Sturgeon</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sturgeon limit is 0, catch-and-release</li> <li>Sturgeon must not be removed from the water and must be released upon landing</li> <li>Barbless hooks and sliding sinkers are required, see Page 52 for details</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Brook Trout</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brook trout limit is 25</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Tiger Muskie</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tiger Muskie limit is 2, none under 40 inches</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Bull Trout</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bull trout limit is 0, catch-and-release</li> <li><b>No bull trout harvest is allowed</b></li> </ul>  | <p><b>Trout</b> includes cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, and trout hybrids (e.g. tiger trout)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In rivers and streams, trout limit is 2, all species combined</li> <li>In lakes, reservoirs, ditches and canals, trout limit is 6, all species combined</li> </ul> <p><b>Does not include bull trout and brook trout which are listed separately</b></p>     |
| <p><b>Kokanee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kokanee limit is 25</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Whitefish</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whitefish limit is 25</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Salmon</b> (ocean-going)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salmon seasons and limits are set annually by the Idaho Fish and Game Commission and rules are issued in a separate brochure</li> <li>Fishing for or targeting salmon is prohibited unless a salmon season is specifically opened for that water</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Protected Nongame Fish</b> includes Pacific lamprey and sand roller</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May not be harvested or possessed</li> </ul> <p><b>All Other Fish Species</b> includes bullfrogs and crayfish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No bag, size or possession limit</li> </ul> <p><i>Check for potential fish consumption advisories. See Page 53.</i></p> |
| <p><b>Steelhead</b> (ocean-going)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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)</li> <li>Fishing for or targeting steelhead is prohibited unless a steelhead season is specifically opened for that water (see pages 39-43)</li> </ul> |   |

4. See if the water you want to fish is listed under Special Rule Waters →

**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 | Tolo 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                |  |

5. Turn the page for details on Special Rule Waters

**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 11, 2016**  
**June 10, 2017 • 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 \_\_\_\_\_