Olympic National Park may eventually be the means of saving a nucleus of all of our anadromous fishes on the Pacific Coast as present safeguards are entirely inadequate.

Arthur S. Einarsen, 1938, Oregon State College

Fish shown on cover:
steelhead trout
mountain whitefish
coastal cutthroat trout
Chinook salmon
bull trout
sockeye salmon

For More Information

If you have questions about information in this guide, please contact:

Fisheries Management Division
600 East Park Avenue
Port Angeles, WA 98362
360-565-3081 or 3075

Written by Sam Brenkman (Olympic National Park)
Designed by Carolyn Duckworth (Yellowstone National Park)

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Olympic National Park

Fish & Shellfish Regulations

Effective May 1–April 30 each year.

Please see locally posted regulation changes and visit the park's website for the most current regulations.

www.nps.gov/olym/fishing.htm

National Park Service

The Reason for Fishing Regulations

Protect Native Fish Populations
Provide Fishing Opportunities

Three primary objectives guide Olympic National Park's fisheries management program:

1. **Manage aquatic resources as an important park of the park ecosystem.**
2. **Preserve and restore native fishes and their habitats.**
3. **Provide recreational fishing opportunities for the enjoyment of park visitors, consistent with the first two objectives.**

Three types of regulations protect native fish populations:

1. **General (pages 6–7): Become familiar with the general regulations, which include information on seasons, licenses, legal gear, fish consumption advisories, closed waters, and size and possession limits.**
2. **Area Specific (pages 8–13): Become familiar with regulations for specific areas in the park.**
3. **Species Specific (pages 14–15): Become familiar with the different fish species commonly encountered in the park, their identification, and regulations specific to each species.**

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Help preserve Olympic fisheries for the future.

Olympic National Park has . . .

- 12 major watersheds and more than 4,000 miles of rivers and streams.
- 600 high lakes, two large lakes, and more than 70 miles of intertidal habitats along the Pacific Coast.
- Lake Ozette—the third largest natural lake in Washington State.
- 31 native freshwater species from 11 different families of fish.
- At least 70 unique populations of Pacific salmon, trout, and char.
- 5 non-native fish species: brook trout, yellow perch, largemouth bass, yellow bullhead, and American shad.
- As of 2008, 5 fish species on the federally threatened species list: bull trout, Puget Sound steelhead, Puget Sound Chinook salmon, Hood Canal summer chum salmon, and Ozette Lake sockeye salmon.

Geography

Olympic National Park is home to all salmon species native to the Pacific Northwest. Encompassing nearly one million acres of designated wilderness on the Olympic Peninsula of northwestern Washington, Olympic National Park is a designated World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve that contains one of the largest contiguous areas of relatively pristine habitat throughout the range of several west coast fish species. In fact, Olympic National Park supports some of the most extensive runs of wild salmon, trout, and char remaining in the Pacific Northwest.

On the west side of the park are major coastal watersheds that include the Bogachiel, Dickey, Hoh, Queets, Quinault, and Quillayute rivers. To the north are the Elwha, Gray Wolf, and Sol Duc rivers and to the east are the Dosewallips, Duckabush, Hamma Hamma, and North Fork Skokomish rivers. These rivers drain directly into the marine waters of the Pacific Ocean, Strait of Juan de Fuca, or Hood Canal/Puget Sound. In the park's rugged terrain that ranges in elevation from 8,000 feet to sea level are two large lakes—Lake Cresent, the crown jewel of the park, and Lake Ozette, the third largest natural lake in Washington State.

. . . great salmon threshed in the water all night long. . . . At every few yards was to be seen the remains of a fish where cougar, coon, otter, or eagle had made a meal.

Private Harry Fisher, along the Queets River during 1890 O'Neil Expedition

Ecology & Economy

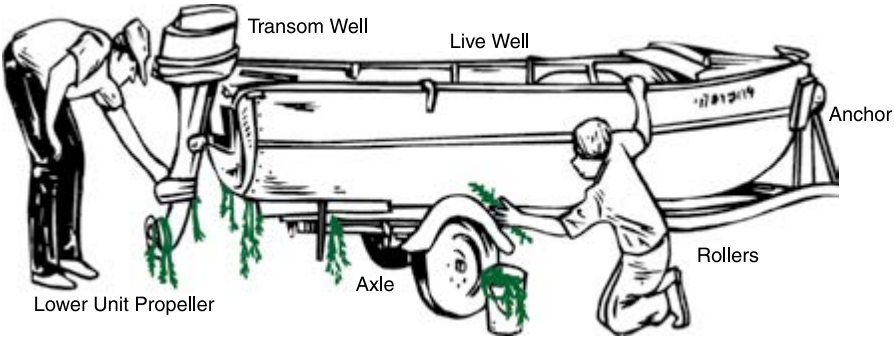
Olympic National Park's population of salmon species (salmonids) are critically important to the park's ecology. For example, they provide food for more than 130 species of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species. The carcasses of spawned salmon may also contribute 20 to 40 percent of the phosphorus, nitrogen, and carbon in freshwater systems.

Olympic National Park has exclusive jurisdiction over recreational fisheries in the park. Fisheries biologists work with the State of Washington and eight treaty tribes each year to establish harvest and gear regulations. Fishing in Olympic National Park emphasizes the quality of recreational fishing rather than providing fish for human consumption. Anglers, in return, have the opportunity to fish for wild, hatchery, and non-native fish in a natural setting.

Recreational fishing has long been a popular activity on the Olympic Peninsula, and now is a multimillion-dollar industry for local communities. Within Olympic National Park, virtually all of the waters support highly popular sport fisheries. This popularity is fostered by the park's proximity to the Seattle/Tacoma metropolitan area (100 miles away), where many of the rivers that still harbor salmonids are closed to fishing. The Seattle/Tacoma population has grown significantly over recent decades—about 20 percent from 1990 to 2000—a trend that is projected to continue. Because of this, fisheries managers expect recreational fishing to increase.

Salmon returning to Olympic National Park also are harvested outside of the park during most weeks of the year in economically important commercial and subsistence fisheries. Salmon have a significant role in the cultures of treaty tribes that surround the park: Elwha Klallam, Hoh, Jamestown S'Klallam, Makah, Queets, Quileute, Quinault, and Skokomish.

Black bear with chum salmon



PREVENT THE SPREAD OF AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Before you enter Olympic National Park and any time you move to another body of water within the park:

CLEAN YOUR BOAT

Mud, plants, and animals on watercraft, trailers or vehicles can cause the spread of invasive species such as milfoil, zebra mussels, and Quagga mussels. Invasive mussels cause millions of dollars of damage to boat and water systems by clogging pipes and engines. They also impact the native ecosystem and sport fisheries.

CLEAN YOUR GEAR

1. Remove ALL visible mud, plants, and fish from your boat, trailers, waders, boots, and nets.
2. DO NOT dump any water from other sources into Olympic National Park waters. Drain your boat hull and live well in a safe location away from all park surface waters.
3. NEVER empty bait or release fish into a body of water unless they came out of it.
4. CLEAN AND DRY EVERYTHING that comes in contact with water before entering a new body of water.

PRESERVE THESE SCENIC AND PROTECTED WATERWAYS

Lake Crescent

General Regulations

1 Fishing Season

All waters in Olympic National Park are closed to the removal of fish and shellfish (including freshwater crayfish and freshwater mussels) except as described on pages 8–12 (freshwater fish) and page 13 (marine fish & shellfish). All waters described on pages 8–12 are open to fishing from one hour before official sunrise to one hour after official sunset.

2 Fishing Licenses

a. A Washington State Recreational Fishing License is NOT required to fish in Olympic National Park EXCEPT when fishing in the Pacific Ocean from shore. No license is required to harvest surf smelt.

b. A Washington State catch record card is REQUIRED to fish for salmon or steelhead and they must be accounted for as if caught in State waters.

c. A Washington State Shellfish/Seaweed license is REQUIRED for harvest of shellfish from the Pacific Coastal Area. Harvest of seaweed, kelp, and unclassified species is prohibited *(see Marine Fish and Shellfish Regulations, page 13).*

d. Fishing guides must apply for commercial use authorization to conduct fishing trips in Olympic National Park. Please call 360-565-3007 for an application.

3 Legal Gear

a. Recreational fishing in freshwater areas of Olympic National Park is restricted to artificial lures with a single point barbless hook *(see pages 8–12).*

b. Anglers must only use a single rod, reel and line that are under immediate control.

c. Seines, traps, drugs, explosives, and nets (except to land a legally hooked fish or dip-net smelt) are prohibited.

d. Only knotless nets may be used to land fish.

4 Fish Consumption Advisory

Locations and Fish: PJ Lake (brook trout), Hoh Lake (brook trout), and Ozette Lake (largemouth bass, yellow perch).

Pollutant: Mercury. Some fish exceed the human consumption threshold for mercury.

The National Park Service recommends following the Washington Department of Health guidelines for safe consumption of recreationally caught fish, available at www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/oehas/fish/.

5 Boats & Rafts

Fishing from boats or other floating devices is permitted on the following rivers: Ozette, Queets below Tshletshy Creek, Hoh downstream from the launch site located ~½ mile from the park boundary near South Fork confluence, Hoh in the Pacific Coastal Area, Quinault below the North Shore Quinault River Bridge, Elwha below Glines Canyon Dam site, and Quillayute and Dickey rivers. Motorized craft are only allowed on the Quinault below the North Shore Quinault River Bridge, in the park's coastal portions of the Quillayute, Dickey, and Hoh rivers (in the Pacific Coastal Area), and in Lake Crescent and Lake Ozette.

HELP PROTECT NATIVE FISH ◆ REPORT VIOLATORS
Call 360-565-3000 or contact the nearest park ranger.

6 Waters Closed to Fishing

- The portion of Kalaloch Creek downstream from Highway 101 bridge and the area used for domestic water supply (as posted).
- Elwha River and its tributaries in Olympic National Park.
- Sol Duc River from 100 yards upstream to 250 yards downstream (or as posted) at the Salmon Cascades.

7 Bait

Bait is defined as any artificial or natural substance that attracts fish by scent and/or flavor. Most freshwater areas of Olympic National Park are managed as "Selective" or "Quality" fishing areas where bait is prohibited. Areas open to bait fishing are listed on pages 8–13.

Prohibited in all park waters:

- Possession of illegal bait.
- Using live or dead minnows, chub, or other freshwater bait fish.
- Attracting, collecting, or feeding fish by using fish eggs, roe, or food.
- Digging for bait.

8 Salmon Size & Possession Limits

- 12–inch minimum size limit. All fish retained larger than 12 inches count towards the daily catch limit.
- Daily possession limit: 2 daily limits in fresh form
- Hatchery steelhead and salmon may be caught and released until daily limit is retained.

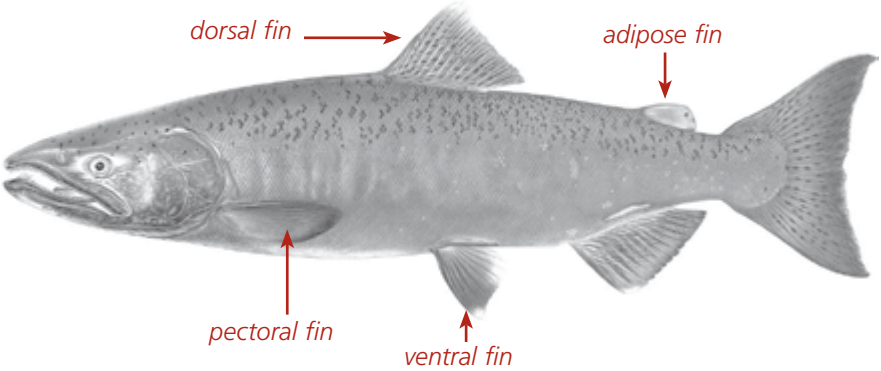
9 Identifying Hatchery Fish

Hatchery salmon and steelhead (except Queets River hatchery steelhead) are identified by a healed scar where the adipose or ventral fin was removed *(see below)*. Harvest is only allowed in areas and seasons listed on pages 8–12. Queets River Hatchery steelhead are identified by a dorsal fin height of less than 2⅛ inches.

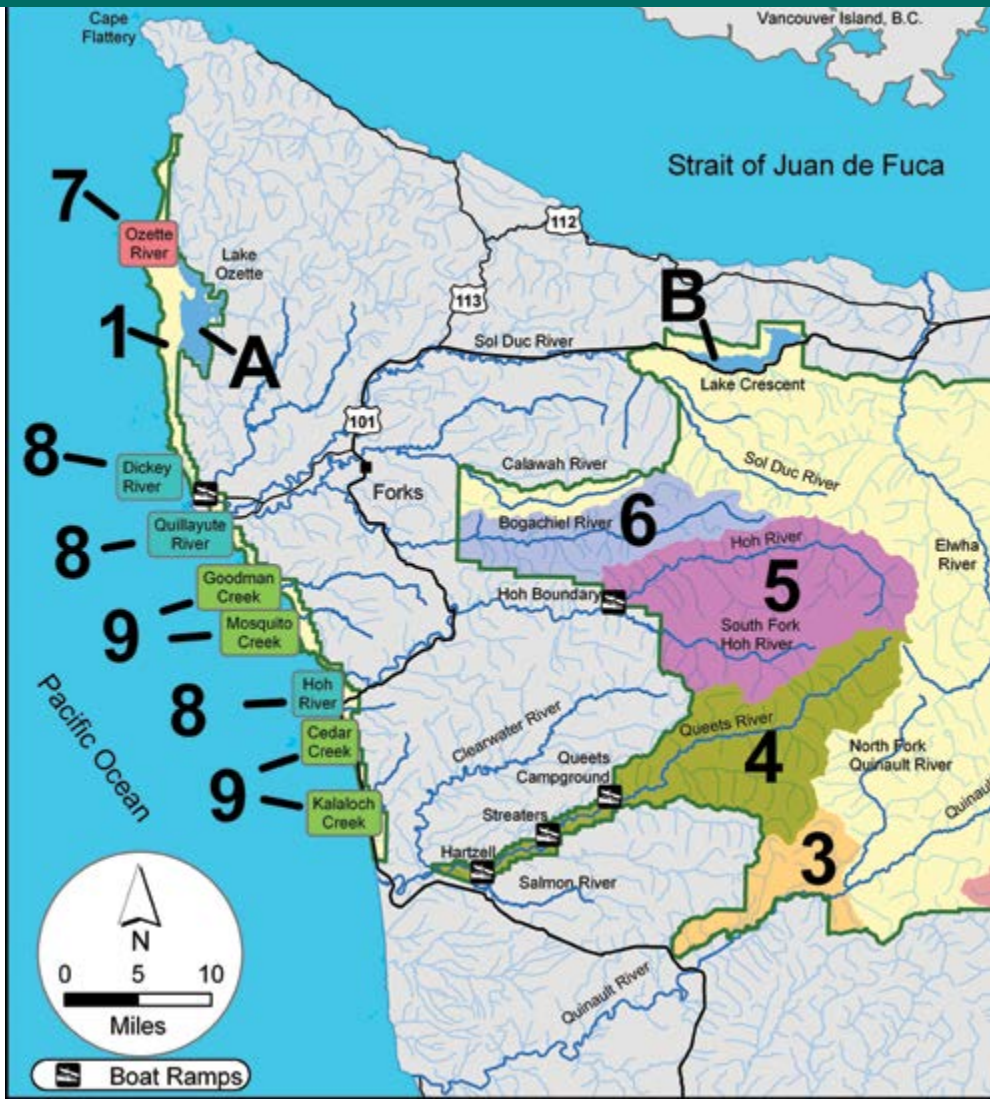
10 Catch & Release All Wild Fish

All wild steelhead (unmarked and identified by intact adipose fin) must be released in Olympic National Park. All other wild (unmarked) fish species must be released unless specifically allowed on pages 8–13.

Fishing for bull trout and Dolly Varden is prohibited in all park waters. They must be safely released if accidentally caught.



Drainages & Freshwater Fish Regulations



Park Boundary

Roads

River or Stream

6 Regulation Zone Number (map & chart)

Boat Ramp

Zone	Drainages (Areas)	Species	Season	Gear	Daily Limit
1	All beaver ponds, streams, and rivers not listed on this chart. Includes: Dosewallips, Duckabush, Graywolf, North Fork Sol Duc, Sol Duc, South Fork Calawah, Quinault (East Fork, North Fork, and mainstem above upper bridge). *Elwha River closed to fishing 2012-2017.*	All species	June 1–Oct. 31	Artificial lure with barbless single point hook	Catch & release Can retain 2 hatchery steelhead
2	Skokomish River, North Fork	All species	June 1–Sept. 15	Artificial lure with barbless single point hook	Catch & release
3	Quinault River, below upper bridge	All species	June 1–March 31	Artificial lure with barbless single point hook	Catch & release Can retain 2 hatchery steelhead
4	Queets River, mainstem, below Hartzell boat launch	Salmon	Sept. 1–Nov. 30	Bait, treble, and barbed hooks allowed	Release all wild Chinook Up to 2 salmon may be retained of which up to 2 may be adipose clipped Chinook
		Steelhead	June 1–Aug. 31	Artificial lure with barbless single point hook	Catch & release Can retain 2 adipose clipped hatchery steelhead
			Sept. 1–Nov. 14	Bait, treble, and barbed hooks allowed	Can retain 2 adipose clipped hatchery steelhead
			Nov. 15–Feb. 28	Bait, treble, and barbed hooks allowed	Can retain 2 total hatchery steelhead (adipose clipped, ventral clipped, or with dorsal fin height less than 2⅛ inches)
			Mar. 1–Apr. 15	Artificial lure with barbless single point hook	Can retain 2 adipose clipped hatchery steelhead
		All other species	June 1–Apr. 15	All season: Artificial lure with barbless single point hook Sept. 1–Feb. 28: Bait, treble, and barbed hooks allowed	Catch & release
	Queets River, mainstem, above Hartzell boat launch	All species	June 1–Apr. 15	Artificial lure with barbless single point hook	Catch & release Can retain 2 adipose clipped hatchery steelhead. From Nov. 15–Feb. 28, can retain 2 total hatchery steelhead (adipose clipped, ventral clipped, or with dorsal fin height less than 2⅛ inches).
	Salmon River	Salmon	Sept. 1–Nov. 30	Bait, treble, and barbed hooks allowed	Release wild Chinook Up to 3 salmon may be retained of which up to 2 may be adipose clipped Chinook
		Steelhead	June 1–Aug. 31	Artificial lure with barbless single point hook	Catch & release Can retain 2 adipose clipped hatchery steelhead
			Sept. 1–Nov. 14	Bait, treble, and barbed hooks allowed	Can retain 2 adipose clipped hatchery steelhead
			Nov. 15–Feb. 28	Bait, treble, and barbed hooks allowed	Can retain 2 total hatchery steelhead (adipose clipped, ventral clipped, or with dorsal fin height less than 2⅛ inches)
		All other species		All season: Artificial lure with barbless single point hook Sept. 1–Feb. 28: Bait, treble, and barbed hooks allowed	Catch & release

Chart continues on the next page

Zone	Drainages (Areas)	Species	Season	Gear	Daily Limit
5	Hoh River and South Fork Hoh River	All species	Nov. 1–April 15	Artificial lure with barbless single point hook Fly fishing ONLY ¼ mile below Hoh Campground to boat launch above South Fork Hoh confluence	Catch & release EXCEPT can retain 2 hatchery steelhead
6	Bogachiel	All species	June 1–April 15	Artificial lure with barbless single point hook	Catch & release Can retain 2 hatchery steelhead
7	Ozette River	All species	Aug. 1–Feb. 28	Artificial lure with barbless single point hook	Catch & release Can retain 2 hatchery steelhead
8	Pacific Coastal Area: Dickey, Hoh, and Quillayute rivers *For regulations in Pacific Coastal Area, please see the separately issued annual insert for Olympic National Park fishing regulations or visit www.nps.gov/olym/regs/fishregs.htm.*				
9	Cedar, Goodman, Kalaloch, and Mosquito creeks (Pacific Coastal Area)	All species	June 1–Feb. 28	Artificial lure with barbless single point hook	Catch & release Can retain 2 hatchery steelhead
A	Lake Ozette	All species	Last Saturday in April to Oct. 31	Artificial lure with barbless single point hook	Catch & release EXCEPT no daily, size, or possession limits for yellow perch, largemouth bass, pikeminnow, and bullhead *See Fish Consumption Advisory, page 6, item 4*
B	Lake Crescent	All species	June 1–Oct. 31	Artificial lure with barbless single point hook; 2 ounce weight restriction	Catch & release
	High elevation lakes (above 1,300 ft)	Rainbow and cutthroat trout	Last Saturday in April to Oct. 31	Bait, treble, and barbed hooks allowed	5 trout, no minimum size limit
		Eastern brook trout	Last Saturday in April to Oct. 31	Bait, treble, and barbed hooks allowed	No daily, size, or possession limits
	Irely Lake	All species	Last Saturday in April to Oct. 31	Artificial lure with barbless single point hook	Catch & release

Kalaloch Creek outlet

Mussels and barnacles

Fish Species	Minimum Size	Daily Limit	Season
Herring/Sardine/Sandlance/ Anchovy/Surf smelt	None	10 pounds all species combined	Year-round
Lingcod	24″	2 but no more than 15 bottom-fish total, regardless of species	April 16–Oct. 15
Rockfish	None	10 BUT release all yelloweye & canary rockfish No more than 15 bottomfish total, regardless of species	Year-round
Greenling	None	15 BUT no more than 15 bottom-fish total, regardless of species	Year-round
Cabezon	None	2 BUT no more than 15 bottom-fish total, regardless of species	Year-round
Surfperch	None	15 BUT no more than 15 bottom-fish total, regardless of species	Year-round
All other intertidal fish (unclassified)		CLOSED	

Shellfish Species	Minimum Size	Daily Limit	Season
Goose neck barnacles	None	10 pounds whole or 5 pounds stalks	Nov. 1–March 31
Horse clams	None	7 (must keep first 7)	Nov. 1–March 31
Littleneck/butter/manila clams/cockles	1½″	10 pounds in shell or 40 TOTAL clams	Nov. 1–March 31
Mussels	None	10 pounds in shell	Nov. 1–March 31
Razor clams	None	15 (must keep first 15)	To Be Announced
Dungeness crab	6″	6 males only BUT NO soft-shell crabs	Pots: Dec. 1–Sept. 15 Other gear: year–round
Red rock crab	5″	6 of either sex BUT NO soft-shell crabs	Pots: Dec 1.–Sept. 15 Other gear: year–round
Abalone, Geoducks, Octopus, Oysters, Sand shrimp, Scallops (all species), Sea cucumbers, Sea urchins (all species), Shrimp (all species), all other intertidal invertebrates (unclassified)		CLOSED	
No harvest of any fish or invertebrates for bait			

Identify Olympic's Native Fish

Cutthroat Trout—CT

- dark spots on light background
- only species with red slash on lower jaw

Distribution: parkwide

Regulation: catch & release only; see regulations for Pacific Coastal Area

Bull Trout—BT

- back and sides olive-green to brown with cream spots
- light spots on dark background
- clear dorsal fin

Distribution: parkwide except Bogachiel, Dosewallips, Duckabush, Ozette

Regulation: fishing prohibited

Steelhead Trout—ST

- no red slash on lower jaw
- reddish stripe often along the side

Distribution: parkwide except Dosewallips, Duckabush, Elwha, North Fork Skokomish

Regulation: catch & release only for all wild steelhead; can keep 2 hatchery steelhead

See page 7, item 9 for details about identifying hatchery steelhead.

Chinook Salmon—CH

- black gums around the teeth and lower jaw
- spots on both lobes of the tail

Distribution: parkwide except Dosewallips, Duckabush, Elwha

Regulation: catch & release only; see regulations for Pacific Coastal Area

Mountain Whitefish—MW

- small mouth oriented towards stream bottom
- no teeth
- large scales

Distribution: parkwide except Dosewallips, Duckabush, Elwha, Ozette

Regulation: catch & release only

Non-native Fish

Fisheries biologists at Olympic National Park are increasingly concerned about the effects of non-native fish on native fish communities. Mountain lakes had no fish until they were stocked between 1913 and 1975. At least 10 different fish species were planted via helicopter, airplane, horses, and by backpackers. More than 14.5 million fish were planted into Lake Crescent alone. Today, non-native brook trout and non-indigenous rainbow trout occur in 5 of 12 major watersheds in the park. These non-native fish significantly threaten native fish, particularly the federally threatened bull trout.

Olympic National Park's Fishery

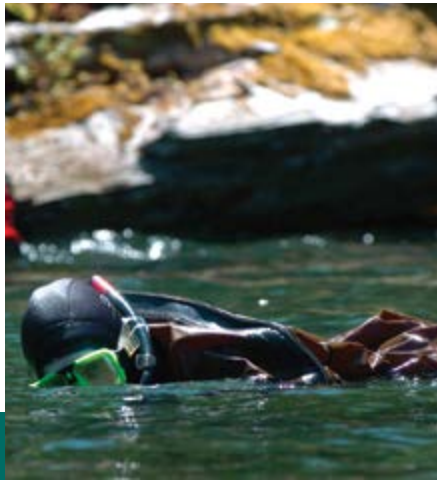
Management Challenges

Fishery managers in Olympic National Park face one consistent challenge: protecting and conserving native fish species while providing recreational fishing. This dual mission has led to a long history of apparently contradictory fisheries management activities:

Hatcheries: On the Olympic Peninsula, hatcheries release millions of hatchery salmonids each year to enhance recreational and commercial fisheries, often without regard to their impacts on native fish. Hatchery fish interbreed with wild fish, thus altering wild populations, reducing fitness, and reducing genetic variation among populations.

Harvest: Recreational, commercial, and subsistence fisheries influence the number of adult salmonids returning to Olympic National Park streams and rivers.

Hydroelectric dams: Dams on the North Fork Skokomish and Elwha rivers influence fish populations. Two dams on the Elwha are scheduled for removal to restore ecosystem processes and Pacific salmonids. Elwha dam removal is one of the largest restoration projects in the National Park Service.



Searching for salmon

Monitoring Fish Populations

Fisheries biologists at Olympic National Park monitor seasonal and annual trends in fish populations using these methods:

Redd surveys: Biologists walk along rivers and creeks counting salmon nests to determine the numbers of returning spawners.

Snorkel surveys: Two divers float downstream and count each fish species during the summer in eight rivers.

Angler interviews: Biologists interview anglers to estimate fishing effort and catch per hour for various fish species.

Radiotelemetry studies: Biologists implant radio transmitters into fish and track their migrations using fixed data stations, manual tracking, and aerial surveys.

Genetic research: Biologists collect and analyze fish fin tissues to determine uniqueness of populations and hybridization between hatchery and wild fish.

Fish pathology: National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists share data about parasites, viruses, and bacteria that threaten native fish species.

This monitoring allows fisheries managers to detect trends in high-priority species, non-native and hatchery fish, and federally-listed fish. They also use the data to improve harvest management, fishing regulations, non-native fish control, and habitat restoration.

Where can I see salmon and steelhead?

Sockeye salmon spawn in Big Creek, Quinault River in late November; look for them from the bridge crossing the stream.

Summer coho salmon ascend the Salmon Cascades in the Sol Duc River in September and October; look for them from the exhibit. In October and November, you can see them spawning around the Campground A loop and where the trail crosses Mink Lake Creek.

Winter steelhead ascend the Salmon Cascades on the Sol Duc River in April; look for them from the exhibit.

Cutthroat trout ascend Barnes Creek from Lake Crescent to spawn from February to May; look for their nests as you walk along Barnes Creek trail.

Do I need a State fishing license in Olympic National Park?

No, unless you are fishing the Pacific Ocean from shore.

Do I need to fill out a State catch record card?

Yes. All anglers, including children, are REQUIRED to fill out the Washington State catch record card if fishing for salmon or steelhead and they must be accounted for as if caught in state waters.

Do children need a license?

No, they do not need a fishing license to fish in Olympic National Park.

What are good places for children to fish?

- PJ Lake (steep hike): Be aware of the consumption advisory *(page 6, item 4)*
- Seven Lakes basin
- Lake Crescent shore
- Royal Lake (7-mile hike)
- Hoh River mouth

How can I help the park's fisheries?

- Learn to identify fish species.
- Keep all fish that you can confirm are hatchery-raised *(see page 7)*.
- Retain all brook trout.
- Release all wild fish, following the guidelines below.

Releasing a Hoh River wild steelhead

Handling & Releasing Fish

Please follow these guidelines when handling and releasing fish:

- Land the fish as quickly as possible to minimize the fish's fatigue.
- Leave the fish in the water while removing the hook. Do not drag the fish across land.
- Wet your hands and do not squeeze or hold the fish by the eyes or gills. Minimize time out of water for photos.
- If the fish is hooked deeply, cut the line and leave the hook in.
- Safely release fish in quiet water near point of capture.