

Eastside Fishing Report

Issaquah Press, May 27, 2009

by Dallas Cross

The Eastside, lowland lakes trout season opened on the last weekend in April and because of cool weather has seen fewer fishermen than in past years. This is good news because the lakes have been well stocked and with continuing plants should offer excellent fishing. Consequently, Rattlesnake, Pine and Beaver Lakes have had lower than usual fishing pressure. Those who did fish them had good success which should continue into the summer. Large triploid rainbow trout are still there to be caught. The limit is five trout and all caught with bait must be kept.

Lake Sammamish and Lake Washington are still good bets to catch trout if you have access to a boat. Be certain to release all kokanee unharmed as they are protected. kokanee look like trout but can be identified as having a greenish, blue to silver back with faint speckling, and silvery sides with no distinct spots.

During a recent fish tagging exercise in Lake Sammamish several cutthroat were caught with minnow-imitating lures trolled slowly from 15 to 25 feet deep. With the lake waters warming up bass fishing will improve and casting to shore structures such as docks is a good way to get their attention to your bait or lures.

The fishing for most Washington rivers and streams season opens on the first Saturday of June, a change from previous years when it was the first day in June. The late, June opening of the general fishing season is to take pressure off of spawning trout and to give young salt water fish a hook-free run to the ocean.

Nearby rivers that offer fishing opportunities on the first Saturday of June are: The Cedar River for steelhead from its mouth to Cedar Falls and for trout that must be released. Also the Snoqualmie river opens for steelhead and trout 14" and over with a limit of 2 trout.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has been changing its emphasis on providing fishing opportunities away from streams and rivers to lakes stocked from hatcheries. More and more rivers and streams are being managed to produce wild trout, coastal and westslope cutthroat trout, salmon and steelhead, and are not being stocked with hatchery fish.

The WDFW is using the theme of wild fish conservation and restoration to justify budget-driven cutbacks in state wide fish hatchery operations. This position was strongly opposed at a public hearing in Issaquah when the WDFW proposed to curtail operations at the nearby Tokul Creek Hatchery and make the Snoqualmie River a wild fish sanctuary. Questions still unanswered are whether the "wild stock" of trout and steelhead are indeed native, whether the remnant fish can still reproduce sufficiently to

restock the river systems, and more importantly, whether the loss of recreational fishing is justified.

If an adult wants to give a young person a quality fishing opportunity, Issaquah Creek, May Creek and Coal Creek are open June 6 to fishing for persons under the age of 15. Of course an adult can supervise but may not hold the fishing pole. There are cutthroat trout in these creeks awaiting worms, power bait and salmon eggs attached by line to fishing poles in young hands.

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