

Fishing Information for Cabin Owners

Hello cabin owners,

Your cabin on the Zigzag Ranger District is part of the Upper Sandy River Basin. The Sandy River and its tributaries provide vital spawning and rearing habitat for Chinook salmon, coho salmon, and steelhead. These populations of fish are all federally listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act due to declining populations caused largely by habitat destruction, dam construction, and overfishing. The Zigzag Ranger District and a coalition of federal, state, municipal, and non-profit partners have invested tens of millions of dollars in stream habitat restoration projects. As a result, the Sandy Basin supports some of the healthiest runs of wild salmon in the lower Columbia River Basin.

To protect spawning wild fish, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) does not allow fishing for salmon or steelhead in the upper Sandy Basin, which includes the mainstem of the Sandy River and all tributaries from the confluence with the Salmon River upstream. **This means that there is no legal salmon or steelhead fishing anywhere on the Zigzag Ranger District at any time of year.** You received this email because of multiple reports from members of the public and observations by Forest Service staff of illegal fishing at multiple locations throughout the district, including in the summer home tracts. This email serves as a reminder of current regulations, and a request for help in providing stewardship to this important resource.

What you can do:

- **Stay up to date with current fishing regulations:** There are plenty of legal fishing opportunities on the Zigzag Ranger District for other species, including rainbow trout, cutthroat trout, brook trout, brown trout, and mountain whitefish. There is also an excellent legal salmon and steelhead fishery in the lower half of the Sandy River Basin, from the confluence with the Salmon River downstream. Keep up to date with ODFW's latest regulations [here](#).
- **Spread the word:** People might unintentionally poach wild fish if they do not know the rules. Let your family, friends, and guests visiting our beautiful rivers know that salmon and steelhead should only be viewed, not caught.
- **If you see something, say something:** People targeting salmon or steelhead typically use much heavier rods and tackle than those targeting smaller trout and mountain whitefish. Do not approach someone you suspect is illegally fishing, unless you feel you can do so safely. Instead, contact OSP Fish and Wildlife Division:
 - 1-800-452-7888,
 - *OSP or *677 from a mobile phone, or
 - email: TIP@osp.oregon.gov between 8:00AM - 5:00PM, Monday – Friday
- **Let fish be:** Prime spawning season for salmon is in the fall and early winter, but there is spawning activity in the area rivers from September until as late as June. These spawning fish started their lives on Mt. Hood National Forest, swam all the way out to the ocean and in some cases traveled as far as the coast of Alaska, survived predators and fishing nets, and swam all the way back up the rapids of the Sandy River to reach their spawning grounds. They deserve a break. Do not disturb spawning fish as they complete this crucial final step of their lifecycle.

If you have any questions about the Zigzag Ranger District fish program, contact Greg Wanner, Supervisory Fish Biologist (greg.wanner@usda.gov) or Matt DeAngelo, District Fish Biologist (matthew.deangelo@usda.gov). If you have any questions about ODFW fishing regulations, you may contact Ben Walczak, ODFW North Willamette Watershed District Fish Biologist (Ben.Walczak@odfw.oregon.gov).

Thank you for helping us protect these special fish. Late August marks the first return of salmon for the season. Starting at the beginning of September, you can expect to see Chinook salmon at their spawning grounds. A great place to check out the action is at the FS Rd20 bridge crossing over Still Creek, where people congregate every year to watch female fish build their nests (called “redds”) while males attempt to out-compete one another. Remember to keep people and pets out of the water and to approach with caution to avoid spooking the fish.

Sincerely,
Mt. Hood National Forest Fish Biologists & Recreation Residence Permit Administrators
August, 2022