

New regulations for winter steelhead angling in Rogue, South Coast areas

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In this area, a winter steelhead season (Dec. 1 – Apr. 30) is now established with the 2023 initial season being Jan. 1 – Apr. 30. During this season, a new validation is required to fish for steelhead. Anglers who want the opportunity to keep wild winter steelhead must also purchase a harvest tag.

Check myodfw.com for full details on the new regulations. Anglers can begin purchasing these products Jan. 1, 2023 through ODFW's Electronic Licensing System or a point-of-sale agent.

ODFW and public stakeholder teams developed these requirements during the Rogue-South Coast Multi-Species Conservation and Management Plan process. The new regulations have broad support from the stakeholders who represented anglers, conservationists, guides, and other local agencies.

The validation and harvest tags will give ODFW biologists more accurate angling and harvest data and help fund wild winter steelhead monitoring in the Rogue-South Coast area.

Wild Salmon Center's Tim Elder represented conservationists on both stakeholder teams.

"We [the stakeholders] recognized the need for more information on wild winter steelhead in the planning area and gave wide-ranging support for the validation and harvest tag," he said. "The new regulations will give ODFW information on where people are steelhead fishing and harvesting wild winter steelhead. The regulations will also financially support wild steelhead monitoring."

Leonard Krug of Oregon Anglers Alliance agrees. Krug represented the angling community on the South Coast stakeholder team.

"Dedicating steelhead validation and harvest tag monies will provide much needed and accurate data to further support sustainable harvest opportunities. All funding from validation and harvest tag sales will be specifically used for Rogue-South coast winter steelhead," Krug said. It's a win-win for the public, and especially for winter steelhead."

The new regulations also close a daily license loophole.

ODFW heard from anglers who said some people repeatedly bought daily paper licenses to harvest wild winter steelhead, potentially allowing them to exceed the three-fish annual bag limit.

The new regulations close this loophole because an individual ODFW Identification Number is needed to purchase the harvest tag and validation. Those purchases cannot be made through "guest checkout" which doesn't include an identification number.