

# The West Seattle Sportsman

## Big Game Dinner February 7th, 2003 American Legion Hall

### Upcoming Events

The following are events and outings we will be planning over the next year in addition to our regular meetings. More information will be available as we get closer to each event. We had a great time at all of last year's outings and I am sure next year's will be even better so plan to attend.

- January: Crayfish / Bass Fishing
- February: Big Game Dinner
- March: To be announced
- April: To be announced
- May: Shrimp Fishing
- June: Clam Bake, Fresh Water Fishing Derby
- July: Shoot n Toot, Kids Fishing Derby
- August: Salmon Bake, Smelt Fishing Outing
- September: Fish Fry / Crab Fishing Outing
- October: Deer Hunting Outing
- November: Pheasant / Quail Hunting Outing
- December: Christmas Party

### January Meeting

The next meeting of the West Seattle Sportsmen's Club will be held at the Rifle Range on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003. We hope to have a guest speaker as well as new member Darrell Kirk to talk to us about bass fishing in the Seattle area. We will also be planning a bass fishing and crayfish outing.

### Big Game Dinner

This year's Big Game Dinner is scheduled for February 7<sup>th</sup> at the American Legion Hall. The cost will be \$15 for adults, children under 14 are free. You will receive a ticket for dinner for each paid adult. Please turn in your ticket as you get your dinner. There will be a drawing for a door prize from the tickets collected.

So far we have the following menu planned:

- Deer Roast
- Ribs
- Venison Meatloaf
- Deer Stew over Polenta
- Pheasant Sausage with Potatoes
- Halibut
- Mashed Potatoes and Gravy
- Rolls, Salad
- Appetizers: Fried Squid, Frog Legs, Smoked Salmon, Venison Summer Sausage, Smelt, and whatever else might crawl our way by then.

### Raffle

Raffle tickets will be sold at the Big Game Dinner at a cost of \$1.00 per ticket or 6 for \$5.00, so bring lots of cash. Prizes will include crab pots, crayfish pots, gourmet food baskets, Fred Hutchinson's honey (the stuff bees make, that is) and ? If you have anything you would like to donate for the raffle, please let us know. Call Jerry Mascio at (206) 954-1250.

### Dues

Dues for 2003 have been increased to \$25. Please pay your dues as soon as possible.

### Newsletter by email

We would like to offer the newsletter via e-mail for those of you that wish to receive it that way. Please let us know by e-mailing Richard George at the following address: richard.f.george@boeing.com, or tinwoodman@seanet.com

### MEETINGS FIRST WEDNESDAY 7:15

Roger Dahl Rifle Range  
West Seattle Stadium

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## Fish and wildlife recreation provides economic stimulus

OLYMPIA—Fish- and wildlife-associated recreation provides a major economic stimulus for Washington, recently generating nearly \$2.2 billion in annual spending across the state. That's the focus of *Adding It Up*, a recently-completed report by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) now available on the agency's website at [http://www.wa.gov/wdfw/pubaffrs/adding\\_it\\_up.htm](http://www.wa.gov/wdfw/pubaffrs/adding_it_up.htm)

The 16-page publication features dozens of business owners, civic leaders and other citizens who describe how their communities profit from spending by fishers, hunters and wildlife-viewers.

"The economic significance of fish and wildlife-associated recreation to local communities is huge," said WDFW Director Jeff Koenings. "We sometimes fail to make the connection between healthy, sustainable fish and wildlife populations and the vitality of local economies around the state. This report, and the people featured in it, are a clear reminder of that vital connection."

WDFW's report comes on the heels of a nation-wide U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) survey which detailed participation by people over the age of 16 in fish- and wildlife-related recreation.

Data for the USFWS survey was collected in two phases by the U.S. Census Bureau, with sample sizes designed to provide statistically reliable results at the state level. Major findings of the survey include:

- Fishers, hunters and wildlife viewers spent a combined total of over \$2.18 billion annually in Washington state in 2001.
- Washington ranks first in the Northwest, and eighth in the nation, in spending by sport fishers, which totaled nearly \$854 million in 2001.
- Washington ranks first in the Northwest, and seventh nationally, in spending by wildlife-watchers, with participants spending a total of nearly \$980 million in 2001.
- Hunters spent nearly \$350 million pursuing their sport in Washington in 2001.
- Nearly 2.5 million people, both residents and non-residents, participated in wildlife-watching activities in Washington in 2001, while 227,000 people hunted here and 659,000 sport anglers fished here.

"It's important to note that we have been able to maintain—and in some cases expand—these recreational opportunities even while protecting fish and wildlife as required by the Endangered Species Act," Koenings said. "Meeting these dual objectives would not have been possible without the department's scientific and technical expertise in sound resource stewardship."

## Show Calendar

- Jan. 17-26** **Seattle Boat Show**  
Seahawks Stadium and Exhibition Center
- Jan. 17-26** **Lake Union Boats Afloat Show**  
Chandlers Cove, South Lake Union
- Jan. 22-26** **Washington Sportsmen's Show**  
Western Washington Fairgrounds  
Puyallup, Washington

## Columbia River smelt season to open

**Actions:** Columbia River and tributary smelt fishery opens January 1, 2003.

**Effective Date:** January 1, 2003 through March 31, 2003. Mainstem Columbia is open 7 days/week and 24 hours per day.

Washington tributaries are open 7 days/week during the hours of 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

**Species affected:** Smelt

**Location:** Columbia River and tributaries below Bonneville Dam.

**Reason for action:** The smelt fishery regulations are consistent with Level 3 fisheries in the "Washington and Oregon Eulachon Management Plan" for the Columbia River. Improved ocean conditions are expected to benefit smelt returns, and abundance in 2003 is expected to be strong.

**Other information:** No license is required. Daily limit is 10 pounds per person (about 1/3 of a 5-gallon bucket). Please remember to respect private property.

**Information contact:** Region 5 office. (360) 696-6211 and press \*1010 for regulations current fishing reports. Fishers must have a current Washington fishing license. Check the WDFW "Fishing in Washington" rules pamphlet for details on fishing seasons and regulations. Fishing regulations are subject to change. Check the WDFW Fishing hotline for the latest rule information at (360) 902-2500, press 2 for recreational rules. For the Shellfish Rule Change hotline call (360)796-3215 or toll free 1-866-880-5431.

DOH Shellfish Red Tide Hotline

1-800-562-5632

## It's A Cutthroat Commute Across Seattle's Lake Washington

By John L. Beath

Most anglers think they must travel to some faraway locale where trout and trees grow as large as the cost to pursue them, but they don't. In the Seattle area thousands of hurried commuters daily cross Lake Washington, within a few hundred yards of one of America's best kept secret fisheries for trophy-sized, multi-pound monster cutthroat trout – many of which outweigh the current 6 pound state record fish.

Both floating bridges, I-90 and Highway 520 connect coffee'd commuters to their jobs while unknowingly revealing where to catch these 2 to 8 pound, heavy-bodied brutes. But few of the region's residents know what silently prowls beneath and to the side of these massive, snake-like concrete floating bridges. And fewer yet know the secrets of how to connect their line with Mr. Cutthroat Trout. If they did know Seattle's sea-run secrets, commuters might "cutt" their work schedule to take advantage of the fun, alongside the bridge in the slow lane, trolling the east west span of the bridges. And when the slow lane fails to produce it's only a matter of trying the placid waters of the East Channel between Mercer Island and Newport or in front of Microsoft Billionaire Bill Gates' mansion.

Anywhere on the east side of the lake where the water is at least 40 feet deep could produce a trophy says Curt Welsh, from Special Moments Guide Service. Welsh says each year he's surprised at the interest in this fishery but he still doesn't see many boats pursuing these fish.

"My clients and I caught over 500 cutts' in Lake Washington last year. The biggest cutthroat I caught and released measured 31 inches and weighed 8 pounds," Welsh proudly said.

The fishery is so addictive Welsh fishes the lake year round, with or without clients aboard, and still can't believe the lack of fishing pressure considering how many big trout he catches. Most of Welsh's guests are locals trying to learn the fishery, but more anglers are coming from all over America because they heard through word of mouth how big the cutthroat grow. Welsh does encourage anglers to keep some fish, but emphasizes catch and release and the importance of sustaining the fishery. Of the 500 fish caught last year 300 were released. The average sized fish measured an unbelievable 23 to 27 inches and weighed 4 ½ to 5 pounds.

Local biologists and University of Washington, School of Fisheries Masters Program student Gretchen Nowak, openly admits not much is known about Lake Washington cutthroat. Last summer Nowak began studying the lake's cutt' population because of concerns for the lake's dwindling sockeye salmon.

"Anecdotal evidence indicates that the Lake Washington cut-

throat population is increasing," Nowak said. "People are concerned because cutthroat trout are a main predator on sockeye fry."

The experts still aren't sure if these fish are anadromous like salmon or adfluvial, which means they leave the stream and stay in the lake instead of going to sea before migrating back to their natal waters. Anglers don't seem to care where they're going to or coming from, as long as they continue traveling the lake's underwater highway the year 'round.

Last summer Nowak enlisted Welsh's help to catch several cutthroat for her ongoing cutthroat study. "The methods Curt used were great, they worked for us during our study all summer long."

Some of the fish caught were fitted with tracking transmitters to enable Nowak to track the fish's telemetry to determine where they spend most of their time and why. Nowak says it appears that the cutthroat are mirroring the lake's temperature thermocline and staying just below the fish's preferred 50 degree water. Summertime surface temperatures rise to 68 - 73 degrees which pushes the fish to average depths ranging from 45 to 60 feet deep. One fish, however, did take the transmitter all the way to 197 feet deep.

"The biggest thing to watch for is on your fishfinder," advises Welsh. "As the water temp rises the fish go down. I keep my gear 10 feet under the thermocline."

If the cutthroat aren't biting there's a chance to hook into rainbow trout ranging in size from 12 to 20 inches. Bank anglers rarely, if ever catch cutthroat but they catch the bulk of the lake's rainbow trout. For years the lake was planted with 250 to 300,000 sub-legal rainbow. Budget cuts within the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife ended these large plants last year, but the lake still has catchable numbers of 12 to 18 inch rainbows. Welsh says when Lake Washington quits producing respectable catches of cutthroat trout anglers need only trailer their boats a few miles away to Lake Sammamish State Park, where the same techniques used on Lake Washington work just as well directly in front of the park.

With trophy fishing like this it makes it super easy to talk the entire family into heading to Seattle, where everyone will enjoy the Space Needle, waterfront, Public Market and of course, commuting in the slow – always wet lane – waiting for an appointment with Mr. Cutthroat – one of Seattle's finest fishing appointments.

### Technique

During winter and early spring Welsh uses 12 pound lead core, color-coded line spooled on level wind reels attached to medium action steelhead rods. Each color on the line is 30 feet, making it easy to keep track of line payed out. Since these fish have a taste for the lake's abundant longfin smelt and not-so-many sockeye smelt, Welsh uses a selection of spoons that mimic the small, darting fish or gang troll blades

in front of a Wedding Ring rig tipped with a nightcrawler. Welsh says not all spoons are created equal. For instance, his favorite Luhr Jensen Needlefish spoon comes in two frog finishes – one that catches lots of fish and one that has never caught any. The winner has yellow dots with black centers while the loser has a red center dot.

In addition to Needlefish spoons, Coyote spoons, in either the 3.5 inch or 4 inch also work well. While he's tried using flasher and dodgers of all sizes in front of the spoons, his best luck is achieved by attaching 40 feet of 10 pound Fireline directly to the leadcore line. Prior to the thermocline descending, which could be anytime from May to June, Welsh plays out 4 to 7 colors of leadcore line and trolls anywhere from dead slow to 4 miles per hour. He says varying the speed is important because you never know what mood or depth they will bite at.

"I've caught everything using this method, even sockeye," admitted Welsh.

As soon as the thermocline sends the fish in search of the cool depths, Welsh abandons the leadcore in favor of downriggers. He still varies speeds and uses the same rods and reels as well as his favorite spoons or gang troll gear but defines his trolling depth to just below the thermocline, which usually stays between the 40 to 65 mark. Instead of leadcore on his reels he uses straight 10 or 12 pound mono and sends out 100 feet of line before attaching his line to the downrigger.

### Best Spoon Colors

Frog, perch and a brass body with a red head.

### Best Hot Spots

"The fish could be anywhere on the east side of the lake," Welsh says. "But the two bridges are great places to try. But remember to stay at least 100 yards away from the bridge. It's the law and you'll lose your downrigger balls on the cable if you don't."

If you ask the cutthroat regulars which side or the bridges to fish, the majority agree the rough side is best, which changes with the wind. When the rough side gets to uncomfortable anglers can try the East Channel near Kelsey Creek, Mercer Slough or fish in front of Juanita Bay, depending again on wind direction.

## A CHRISTMAS GIFT

by **Richard Dale Sides**

Twas the week before Christmas and all through the house, not a creature had been stirring, cause there's no money in the house. I already had my mind made up that it was going to be pretty bare under the old Christmas tree this year. It was 1962, I was only ten, and we were living in some pretty tough times. Without any kind of warning, the plant had laid my dad off, along with fifty other workers about three months ago. He had only been able to pick up a couple of small odd jobs since he had been laid off. Even though I was only ten, it didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that without work and money, that food was going to be more of a priority than Christmas.

Even though times were bad, there were still a few good things that came out of it. I was able to spend more time with my dad doing things like hunting. My dad owned a Browning 12ga. double barrel shotgun. He was so proud of it, that at times I thought he loved that old gun more than he did me. Just the last time we went hunting my uncle Fred offered him eight hundred dollars for it. Dad said he would never sell it for money, that it gives him too much pleasure. He had promised me that, on the Christmas I turned ten, he would buy me a brand new .22 rifle. Now with things the way they were this year, well I just didn't know.

But what to my wondering eyes should appear, but under that tree were gifts every where. He had to have either robbed the bank or the armored car! As my dad handed me my gift, I could tell by the shape of the box, that it was the gun I had wanted. Just like I had envisioned to do when I opened the box, I rushed over to the gun rack to place my new gun beside his. We had been robbed, my dad's pride and joy was gone. I turned to scream DAD!!! But he placed his hand over my mouth and placed his finger to his lips, as to say shush. Dad, your gun I ask? He hesitated, then whispered. I sold it to your Uncle Fred. But dad, you said you would never sell your gun! No son, I said, I could never sell it for money, for it gave me too much pleasure. Just look over at your mother's face now! You see son, it's still giving me pleasure. Just another kind.

The End





West Seattle Sportsman's Club  
P.O. Box 16258  
Seattle, WA 98116



First Class Mail