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Now Playing: Fishing derbys abound this weekend

By JIM HUCKABAY outdoors columnist
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This weekend

Free fishing weekend is here. Fish only open waters and follow all regulations. Plenty of freshly-planted trout. See <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg3/index.htm>.

Kiwanis kids Free Fishing Derby, at Fiorito Lake, tomorrow, 10 a.m. to noon for age 14 and younger. Lots of prizes and fun. Information from Dale DeFoor at 929-0449.

Field and Stream Club will be at North Fiorito all that weekend with kid training and gear.

Tomorrow is also the 20th Annual Easton Kids Fishing Derby (14 and younger) sponsored by Cle Elum Ranger District and Cascade Field and Stream. Registration will be at Lavender Lake, exit 74. Prizes in age groups for largest fish. Activities at five stations will get kids into a free raffle for more prizes. Information at 509-852-1100.

At North Fiorito, both days of Free Fishing Weekend, members of the Kittitas County Field and Stream Club will be surveying users about future changes to camping and day use restrictions.

Kiwanis Pond (formerly the first Hanson Pond across Interstate 90 from Cle Elum, south of Exit 84) is open for kids and disabled fishers only. Well-stocked and great fishing.

Potholes is producing everything. Perch, rainbows, smallmouth bass, and yellow bullhead off the Mar Don Dock with night crawlers. Trolling sand dunes (wedding ring and night crawler) is getting walleye and rainbows. Nice walleye reported on trolled Rapalas in Crab Creek.

River fishing

Yakima River spring hatchery Chinook is open from Interstate 182 bridge in Richland to 400 feet downstream of Horn Rapids (Wanawish) Dam and from Interstate 82 bridge at Union Gap upstream to the BN Railroad bridge about 500 feet downstream from Roza Dam. It also has opened on the reach through the Yakama Reservation (you'll need a tribal fishing permit). Two hatchery salmon (12 inches or more) allowed daily. Release wild salmon immediately. One, single point, barbless hook with a hook gap from point to shank of 3/4 inch. Information from Yakima fish pros Eric Anderson, 509-457-9301, or John Easterbrooks at 509-457-9330.

Icicle River springers are on, too. 400 feet up from the mouth to 500 feet below the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery. Two fish daily. Info: Travis Maitland at 509-662-0452.

Yakima trout have been on good bites periodically, but high water is a problem. Current river conditions, and the latest on regional spring creeks, from Red's Fly Shop. 929-1802 and www.redsflyshop.com or David Child at 509-607-1396.

On the big water

Many ocean choices. Ilwaco and Westport are prime; check local chambers of commerce, 800-451-2542 or 800-345-6223. On the web, <http://www.funbeach.com> or www.westportcam.com. Information on all available fishing at www.oceansportfishingcharters.com.

Coming

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation banquet is July 14. This is a great chance to become part of the grass-roots organization which helped make possible the Central Cascades land exchanges and our Naneum Ridge State Forest. More information from Bill Wilson (962-8448) or Linda Brenden at 925-4842. Food and raffle tickets at Sure Shot in Kittitas.

Chukar Run is on for August 11. Check out www.kittitasfieldandstream.org for details.

Wild watch

Deer and elk are in the in Upper County woods. In the hour or so before dark you could see a couple dozen deer and brand-new fawns nursing. Cle Elum Lake and campground area, French Cabin Creek road or Taneum Canyon over to Cle Elum are good bets.

Avoid attracting wild animals to your camp. Store food in vehicles or hang it out of reach. Never feed wildlife of any kind; getting them used to human food is not a good thing.

WildWatchCams are active. With eagles, bats, owls, martins and other critters. Check them out at www.wdfw.wa.gov/wildwatch/eaglecam/index.html.

Head uphill. Yellows, blues, purples, whites and pinks are still all over Table Mountain and up Manastash. Take the camera.

More play in the outback each weekend. Check out www.cleelumtrails.com for information on trails.

Summer really is coming. Kids need fishing, water, hiking, soil (and dirt), wildlife, smelling flowers and insect examination to find their places in the rhythm of nature. You can help ensure their future by getting them out. The elderly or housebound need fresh air and sunshine, too, so take them along.

JLH

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