

BPA NEWS

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BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION
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Northern pikeminnow season extended, rewards increased **Anglers can make more money catching fish and saving salmon**

PORTLAND, Ore. – State and federal agencies are extending the season for the Northern Pikeminnow Sport Reward Program on the Columbia and Snake rivers until Oct. 11. They are also boosting the per-fish reward amounts for the remainder of the 2020 season.

Effective Sept. 19, the reward for all eligible northern pikeminnow will increase from the \$5 to \$8 range, to \$10 per fish - regardless of how many northern pikeminnow an angler catches. The reward for verified specially-tagged northern pikeminnow will also temporarily increase from \$500 to \$1,000 per fish.

The program's goal is to encourage more anglers to participate by harvesting predator-sized northern pikeminnow this fall, which will help protect more young salmon and steelhead from predation next spring.

“Large northern pikeminnow are responsible for eating a majority of the young salmon and steelhead who fall victim to predators,” says Eric McOmie, a BPA program manager. “Reducing the number of large pikeminnow can really help young salmon survive.”

For 30 years the Bonneville Power Administration has funded the Northern Pikeminnow Sport Reward Program, paying anglers to remove northern pikeminnow from the Columbia and Snake rivers and protecting endangered juvenile salmon and steelhead. The program's goal is not to eliminate native northern pikeminnow but reduce the average size and number of the predatory fish.

The 11-day extension offsets the delay at the start of the season in May due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It also appears the pandemic may have discouraged some anglers from participating



in the sport-reward fishery, as the number of anglers is down 28% from this time last year. Currently, the 2020 harvest of northern pikeminnow is on track to be the lowest on record.

According to recent data, anglers are catching more northern pikeminnow now than any other time of the season, but fewer people are participating in the program. Average harvest for the past 29 years is approximately 174,000 fish. Last year, anglers removed approximately 146,000 northern pikeminnow from the Columbia and Snake rivers. So far this year, that number is just over 88,000.

Nearly anyone can make money fishing for northern pikeminnow, and biologists say late summer and early fall can be one of the best times of the year to catch the salmon eaters. In 2019, the program paid out nearly \$1.2 million to northern pikeminnow anglers, with the top fisherman making more than \$53,000.

For more details on the season extension and reward increases, go to www.pikeminnow.org.

About BPA

The Bonneville Power Administration, headquartered in Portland, Oregon, is a nonprofit federal power marketer that sells wholesale, carbon-free hydropower from 31 federal dams in the Columbia River Basin. It also markets the output of the region's only nuclear plant. BPA delivers this power to more than 140 Northwest electric utilities, serving millions of consumers and businesses in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, western Montana and parts of California, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming. BPA also owns and operates more than 15,000 circuit miles of high-voltage power lines and 261 substations, and provides transmission service to more than 300 customers. In all, BPA provides nearly a third of the power generated in the Northwest. To mitigate the impacts of the federal dams, BPA implements a fish and wildlife program that includes working with its partners to make the federal dams safer for fish passage. It also pursues cost-effective energy savings and operational solutions that help maintain safe, affordable, reliable electric power for the Northwest. www.bpa.gov