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## Mid-season conditions improve for northern squawfish anglers

*BPA offers cash for fish*

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### Bonneville Power Administration

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**PORTLAND, Ore. — Northern squawfish anglers who turned in their catches last weekend at registration stations located between Portland and The Dalles are proof that the conditions along the Columbia River and its tributaries have improved dramatically since the sport-reward fishery season began in May. The Columbia River is finally subsiding from the spring runoff, so it's time to grab a fishing pole and catch northern squawfish for fun and profit.**

Anyone with a valid fishing license can reel in three bucks for each fish over 11 inches. Anglers who catch between 100-400 fish earn \$4 per fish. After that, each fish is worth five dollars. Specially tagged squawfish used for study purposes are worth \$50 each and frequent prizes will be awarded for the longest squawfish at each of the 11 registration stations up and down the Columbia and Snake rivers.

In its seventh year, the popular northern squawfish sport-reward program, funded by the Bonneville Power Administration is managed by the Oregon and Washington fish and wildlife agencies and lower Columbia tribes. The Northern Squawfish Management Program is part of a comprehensive effort to protect and recover fish and wildlife affected by federal hydropower development. Northern squawfish are natural predators of young salmon and steelhead, devouring millions of smolts each year. Researchers believe reducing the number of squawfish is one of the best ways to reduce predation mortality.

“Keeping a check on the balance between the number of squawfish and salmon is a major goal of the sport-reward fishery program,” said Eric Winther, biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. “The program is one of the more innovative things the region is doing to improve the environment for salmon.”

You don't have to be an expert angler to be successful in the fishery program. On her first fishing trip for the northern squawfish, eleven-year-old Tina from Cathlamet, Washington, did not expect to hit the jackpot. She had caught four keeper fish (over 11 inches), but one was special. As she brought it in, she noticed a funny yellow growth on its back. After landing and getting a better look, she discovered that

the “funny-looking thing” was actually a tag used to identify fish for research and worth \$50.

Research has shown that predation rates are notably higher below the Bonneville Dam along the Lower Columbia River. Quiet waters close to dams, islands, stream mouths, eddies, rows of pilings, ledges and bars are the best places to find the northern squawfish stalking their prey. Studies show that there are greater concentrations of northern squawfish in shallow water during low-light conditions.

Free seminars for those who want to know a little more about where, when and how to catch a northern squawfish are offered with expert angler Loel York at locations throughout the area.

For dates and locations of York’s free seminars, and for up-to-date catch totals and other project information, anglers can call the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Squawfish Hotline, 360-737-2091 in Vancouver or toll free, 800-858-9015.

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