



Supporting WDFW's commitment to ADA



This proposal would double the number of customers who qualify for discounted license fees.

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Reduced fees to fish and hunt under ADA

THE WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (WDFW) IS COMMITTED to providing all people with disabilities the opportunity to hunt, fish, and enjoy the great outdoors. More than 53,000 people actively participate in WDFW programs designed to meet the goals of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) each year.

These programs provide a wide range of accommodations, including as wheelchair-accessible boat ramps, hunting blinds and piers, ADA access to gated roads, and the option to use specialized hunting and fishing gear.

In addition, approximately 10,000 people also qualify for reduced-rate hunting and fishing licenses, although current state law restricts eligibility to those who are blind or visually impaired, have a developmental disability, or use a wheelchair on a permanent basis. For those who qualify, this amounts to savings of about 50 percent on a hunting license and 80 percent on a fishing license.

Yet, thousands of other Washingtonians with different types of disabilities are ineligible to receive these benefits. This is both unfair and inconsistent with federal ADA laws, which require equal and consistent treatment regardless of limitation.

Solution

To address this disparity, the department is proposing legislation to offer any customer with a permanent disability a 50 percent discount on the standard cost of a resident hunting or fishing license. This approach would double the number of customers who currently qualify for discounted license fees to nearly 25,000 people.

To keep this proposal as close to revenue-neutral as possible, those who have received the benefit in the past may have to pay more, but WDFW is offering new options for discounted fishing licenses to help customers control costs. So while combination licenses are currently the only type of fishing license available at a discount, this proposal would add such lower-price options as a freshwater or saltwater license.

The table below compares the proposed cost of selected types of licenses to those currently paid by customers receiving discounts.

Recent initiatives

The new reduced-fee proposal is just the latest of a number of ADA initiatives proposed by WDFW and adopted by the Legislature or the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission in recent years.

- 2014 – WDFW begins the Special Use Permit program to specifically accommodate each person’s needs on a case-by-case basis.
- 2018 – The Legislature removes the requirement that a physician certify a disability and allow Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners provide that certification.
- 2018 – The commission adopts a variety of reforms to the department’s ADA program, ranging from adding accommodations for trappers to a new appeals process that allows people with disability status to appeal a permit suspension to an administrative law judge.



Examples of proposed changes in license fees

(Prices include base license cost and associated fees)

License type	Resident user current fee	Disabled user current fee	Proposed fee	Increase/Decrease (\$)
Fishing Combination Annual	\$55.35	\$11.35	\$30.60	19.25
Freshwater	\$29.50	\$29.50	\$15.75	(13.75)
Saltwater	\$30.05	\$30.05	\$16.30	(13.75)
Shellfish & Seaweed	\$17.40	\$17.40	\$11.90	(5.50)
Razor Clam Annual	\$14.10	\$14.10	\$9.70	(4.40)
Deer, Elk, Bear, & Cougar	\$95.50	\$46.00	\$48.75	2.75
Deer	\$44.90	\$21.80	\$23.45	1.65
Elk	\$50.40	\$21.80	\$26.20	4.40
Small Game	\$40.50	\$18.50	\$21.25	2.75
Western WA Pheasant	\$84.50	\$40.50	\$43.25	2.75