



BestFishingInAmerica.com

Follow us on

[Home](#)
[Best of Oregon](#)
[Oregon Map](#)
[About Us](#)

Shop New
Yamaha Sport
Boats

[Share](#) |

Best Fishing in Oregon Winter Steelhead on the South-Central Coast: Coos, Coquille and Umpqua Rivers

Southwestern Oregon's rivers are known for excellent fishing for winter steelhead, a rainbow trout that fattens in the ocean like a salmon before returning to rivers from late fall through winter to spawn.

The following rivers (listed north to south) are the best spots in Douglas and Coos counties in the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Southwest Zone. For rivers at the southern end of this zone, see [Best Winter Steelhead Fishing on Oregon's South Coast](#). Also, for a look at some of the lesser-known and smaller winter steelhead fisheries in the zone, including some with wild fish harvest, try: [Small Winter Steelhead Streams in Southwest Oregon](#).

Umpqua River

The Umpqua has plenty of fishing options – from huge salmon, [sturgeon](#) and striped bass to feisty [smallmouth bass](#) and shad. It also has tons of steelhead that run almost every month of the year.

The mainstem can produce huge catches, as in 2006-07 when nearly 4,200 fish were harvested. The previous few seasons saw retention above 2,300, according to ODFW catch records, but then fishing was pretty tough for a few years.

It should be noted that while the Umpqua has a hatchery run of winter steelhead available for harvest, the bulk of the run is made up of wild fish (with an intact adipose fin) that must be released unharmed. These wild fish can run extremely large and offer one of Oregon's great angling thrills, but not dinner.

The season gets under way in December below Elkton. Peak fishing usually occurs later in winter, often in February or March, when fish can be found anywhere in



Photo courtesy of [Big K Ranch's Guide Service](#)



You might also like these articles:

- [Best Winter Steelhead Fishing on the Rogue and Southern Oregon Coast](#)
- [Best Fishing in Oregon's Southwest Zone \(Umpqua and Coos Bay Area\)](#)
- [Best Fishing in Oregon's Southwest Zone \(Rogue and South Coast Rivers\)](#)
- [Best Summer Steelhead Fishing on the Oregon Coast](#)

the mainstem.

Guide Todd Harrington of The Big K Ranch said timing your trips isn't hard: "The easiest way to know if the Umpqua is in shape for winter steelheading is if all the other rivers are running low and clear, the Umpqua will be in prime shape; if the other rivers are in prime shape, the Umpqua will be too high."

Family Camp, Sawyer's Rapids, Scotts Creek and Bunch Bar are among places with bank access.

The South Umpqua can be quite good for hatchery winter steelhead and should come into shape ahead of the main river. In better years, anglers keep more than 1,000 fin-clipped steelhead from this river that runs near Roseburg. Templin Beach Park, Myrtle Creek Bridge, Stanton County Park and Seven Feathers Casino are places to find bank fishing. Boat launches are located at Templeton Beach in Roseburg, Douglas County Fairgrounds and Happy Valley, along with more unimproved launches elsewhere.

Most other tributaries have wild winter steelhead that must be released, along with the occasional hatchery stray. The North Umpqua has a very nice wild run of winter fish and also is an excellent choice for fin-clipped hatchery [summer steelhead](#).

Coos and Millicoma Rivers

The Coos River system, the major river that feed into Coos Bay, Oregon's largest coastal estuary, offers some very good winter steelhead fishing.

The best fishing for fin-clipped hatchery steelhead on this system is found on the South Coos River and on the Millicoma River.

On the South Coos, most marked steelhead will be caught in the first five river miles above tidewater (tide heads near the log yard), because hatchery smolts are acclimated to the river near the Fivemile Hole at Milepost 5 on South Coos River Road. Above Milepost 6 on the South Coos, most steelhead will have intact adipose fins and must be released, but there is some good catch-and-release angling upstream, with much smaller crowds.

The Millicoma River joins with the South Coos River just east of the bay, and it further divides into two main forks at Allegany. Both forks can have very good winter fishing for steelhead.

The West Fork Millicoma can be particularly good from

public access at the Oregon Department of Forestry's Millicoma Interpretive Center about nine miles up from Allegany. Smolts are acclimated in ponds at the MIC, so adult fish return in good numbers to this area. There also is good access for a few miles upriver from the MIC.

On the East Fork Millicoma, Coos County's Nesika Park has public access to some excellent fishing spots.

Coquille River

The Coquille River enters the Pacific Ocean at Bandon. The main river and especially its tributaries produce well over 2,000 winter steelhead some seasons.

The South Fork is the top producer because it continues to get the most hatchery smolts (70,000 at last report) and has plenty of angler access, both for bank and boat anglers. It joins the North Fork just downstream from Myrtle Point.

Some of the highest catches are near hatchery smolt acclimation sites at Beaver and Woodward creeks, and steelhead often return to the vicinity of their release, according to ODFW. Definitely stick below Powers for hatchery fish, but catch-and-release fishing for mostly wild fish (and much less fishing pressure) is an option in the upper river.

The North Fork is the other big hatchery winter steelhead producer on the Coquille system, and it is expected to improve with an increase in hatchery steelhead smolt releases to 40,000 per year. Your best bet for good bank fishing is on a few miles of public access is at La Verne County Park, where hatchery smolts are acclimated and tend to return as adults.

Historically, hatchery steelhead also had been planted in the East Fork, but those plantings have ended here and largely shifted to the North Fork. The last decent run of hatchery steelhead is expected on this fork in the winter of 2016-17. After that, most steelhead in the East Fork will be part of this stream's strong wild run, which at this writing is under consideration for future harvest opportunity but not yet approved, district fish biologist Mike Gray said in fall 2016. Watch ODFW regulations for changes. This river has a lot of private property along it, but there is good access and productive water at Frona County Park, where hatchery steelhead had previously been acclimated before release, Gray said.

The Middle Fork Coquille, which enters the South Fork just upstream from Myrtle Point, is not stocked with hatchery winter steelhead. It also has a wild run of these

fish, but current rules only allow harvest of the rare fin-clipped steelhead that might stray here. Access to the Middle Fork is limited due to private property.

Also on this website, more articles about steelhead fishing around Oregon:

- [Best Winter Steelhead Rivers on Oregon's North Coast](#)
- [Best Winter Steelhead Rivers on Oregon's Central Coast](#)
- [Best Small Streams in Northwest Oregon for Winter Steelhead](#)
- [Best Winter Steelhead Fishing in the Rogue River and South Coast](#)
- [Best Small Streams in Southwest Oregon for Winter Steelhead](#)
- [Best Winter Steelhead Fishing Near Portland](#)
- [Best Summer Steelhead Fishing Rivers on the Oregon Coast](#)

Return to [Oregon Steelhead Fishing](#) page

One source for this article was the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's [Winter Steelhead Guide](#). For current regulations, consult ODFW's annual regulations booklet or [website](#)

Start Download (Free)

Download Maps Online Pro Now! mapsonlinepro.com

Copyright Best Fishing LLC