



[EDITOR'S BLOG](#)

[HEADLINES](#)

[BRAG BOARD](#)

[SHOW CASE](#)

[DESTINATIONS](#)

[BUSINESS DIRECTORY](#)

[SPORTSMAN SHOW SPOTLIGHT](#)

[SUBSCRIPTION](#)

[ADVERTISE](#)



EDITOR'S BLOG

## HOW JOHN GRUBENHOFF CAUGHT A 20-PLUS-POUND COLUMBIA RIVER WALLEYE

[MARCH 3, 2014](#) [ANDY WALGAMOTT](#) [17 COMMENTS](#)



[Tweet](#)

*UPDATE 3:30 PM 3-5-14 It's official—WDFW put out a press declaring John Grubenhoff's walleye the new Washington state record.*



JOHN GRUBENHOFF AND HIS WASHINGTON STATE RECORD WALLEYE. (WDFW)

Washington fishery folks are trying their best to get me to breathe through my nose and tamper my excitement about what could be a record-wrecking 20-plus-pound walleye — the paperwork needs to be signed off by the regional fisheries manager before things proceed further in Oly, I'm told — but this morning we're also learning more about who the lucky angler is and what he used to land that massive fish.

Here's our contributor Jeff Holmes' report!

*Pasco's John Grubenhoff became Washington's pending new state record holder for walleye this past Friday, Feb. 28, when he landed a 20.32-pounder near Tri-Cities, exceeding the state's previous record by 1.02 pounds.*

*The fish came from "22 feet of 37-degree water on a rocky, windswept shoreline," said Grubenhoff, who is a well-known tournament angler. He took advantage of lengthening daylight to fish an undisclosed hole by himself after getting off work in Finley, quickly landing a 5- and then a 14-pounder prior to getting bit by the record fish.*

*The prespawn female struck hard, and early in the fight Grubenhoff knew he had hooked a monstrous walleye, so he cut the motor to avoid losing it against the current.*

*The fish bit a J-13 Rapala in silver and black, trolled upstream at .8 to .9 mph behind a 2-ounce bottomwalker. Grubenhoff had actually switched to this tactic immediately after catching that 14-pounder!*

*After a lengthy fight, Grubenhoff was then barely able to corral the fish in his medium-sized net. When it hit the floor of his boat, he knew it would potentially challenge the record. Since he had no scale or measuring device on board, he knew he had to call his son — fast.*

*The fish pegged the scale his son brought to the dock at 20 pounds, so Grubenhoff quickly contacted Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife officials to meet him at an approved scale in Richland. WDFW certified the record fish at 20.32 pounds, just hours after it was caught.*



*Grubenhoff's catch confirms what many walleye anglers in the know have maintained for years, a fact tribal nets between McNary and Bonneville Dams have reportedly helped corroborate: There are walleye in the Columbia River that could challenge one of the toughest-to-beat world records.*

*(Editor's note: Angler Ed Iman infamously released what might have been [a 25-pounder in April 2007](#).)*

*That current world record of 25 pounds was caught from Tennessee's Old Hickory Reservoir in 1960, a fish once disqualified but since [reinstated by the International Game Fishing Association](#), which keeps such records. While we're almost 5 pounds away, the trend of big walleyes has been steady. For decades now, the Columbia in both Oregon and Washington has produced more fish over 15 pounds than anywhere in the world, and that trend continues.*

*For the April issue of Northwest Sportsman magazine, I invited Pasco's Matt Nesbit to interview Grubenhoff as a guest writer for my "In Their Own Words" feature. Nesbit is Grubenhoff's walleye protégé and a former interviewee in the magazine for his work as a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration sockeye salmon biologist working on restoring Redfish Lake in Idaho. He's also been on the cover with a freaky-big Blue Mountains bull elk.*

*Nesbit and Grubenhoff will talk about catching the record fish, how beginners can best learn to catch walleye, and how to target these tasty and toothy fish when they become active again next month after their April spawn.*

*For more on catching Columbia walleye, see my article in the March issue of Northwest Sportsman featuring guide and former state-record holder Kimo Gabriel's tips and more. We'll also be following up with Kimo in an upcoming article on catching eater-sized fish.*

---

SHARE THIS:



**Related**

[20-pound Washington Walleye?!?](#)

March 1, 2014

In "Editor's Blog"

[More Walleye Turn Up In Seattle Lakes](#)

July 6, 2015

In "Editor's Blog"

[Commission Scraps Limits On Columbia, Snake Bass, Walleye, It Appears](#)

March 1, 2013

In "Editor's Blog"

---

PREVIOUS POST

**[20-pound Washington Walleye?!?](#)**

---

NEXT POST

**[Western Washington Summer Salmon Forecasts Posted](#)**

---

**17 THOUGHTS ON “HOW JOHN GRUBENHOFF CAUGHT A 20-PLUS-POUND COLUMBIA RIVER WALLEYE”**



**marty**

MARCH 3, 2014 AT 9:50 AM

I think pre-spawn walleye should be off limits to records. The heavy comes from the eggs these girls are holding. Should have a length slot to keep these girls producing.

[REPLY](#)

---



**Andy Walgamott**

MARCH 3, 2014 AT 10:10 AM

It's natural for sportsmen to want to protect the breeding stock, whether they be does, cows, hens or, er, hens. But walleye are pretty darned fecund, sometimes too much so as we're seeing with stunting issues in Lake Roosevelt.

AW  
NWS

REPLY

---



**Brandon Whitelaw**

MARCH 3, 2014 AT 12:08 PM

I personally would like to see all slot and bag limits removed from walleye in the Columbia(or any other river that has salmon/steelhead smolt out-migration). Why they protect an illegally introduced invasive species doesn't make much sense in the first place.

REPLY

---



**Andy Walgamott**

MARCH 3, 2014 AT 12:35 PM

Brandon, there is already no size or daily limit for walleye on the Columbia River from the Washington-Oregon border 17 miles above McNary Dam up to the base of Chief Joseph Dam, or in the Snake River. The Columbia from 17 miles above McNary Dam to the mouth still has slot and daily limits because its regulations need to

mirror those of Oregon's. Here's more:

<http://nwsportsmanmag.com/headlines/new-wawalleye-bass-regs-go-into-effect-may-1-but-not-all-of-columbia-affected/>

Thanks.

AW  
NWS

REPLY

---



**Ty Sibley**

MARCH 4, 2014 AT 9:04 PM

Yeah, those nasty walleye are really destroying the Salmon fishery....

"It is a mind-boggling forecast, and the largest fall chinook return since at least 1938," said Joe Hymer, a state Fish and Wildlife biologist.

[http://seattletimes.com/html/othersports/2022910201\\_salmon15xml.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/othersports/2022910201_salmon15xml.html)

REPLY

---



**Kevin Bye**

MARCH 3, 2014 AT 12:14 PM

I get excited catching 'lil eaters. This walleye could probably be claimed as a dependent on his taxes. Nice fish and congratulations.

REPLY

---



**Dave Hedden**

MARCH 3, 2014 AT 5:37 PM

For all the people who are going to whine about him keeping that fish don't know John Grubenhoff or other real walleye fisherman. The fact is John has released more big fish over 10lbs than any of us could ever hope to catch. All serious walleye anglers here in the Northwest DO practice catch and release on the big females. John actually commented after he caught that fish that he didn't want to kill it. Unfortunately in Washington there is no other way to do it. It is illegal to transport live fish to get their weight certified. So please quit your negativity and be happy for him. He put in his time chasing it and he deserves it.

REPLY

---



**Mark Olson**

MARCH 4, 2014 AT 9:04 AM

John is the real deal. Expanding on what Dave said, he is a true sportsman in all aspects of the name. He has fished hard and long to achieve what only some of us can dream about. I realize that I along with countless other true walleye fisherman are beating a dead horse when it comes to trying to protect and conserve a fish that is despised by many in this area. But do realize this, the walleye is here to stay and I along with the guys that love this fish will keep doing whatever we need to do to protect this world class fishery. My hat's off to you John! Well done.

REPLY





**Anna Ford**

MARCH 4, 2014 AT 6:28 PM

Exciting. Great catch.

[□ REPLY](#)



**Johnnie Candle**

MARCH 5, 2014 AT 9:32 AM

Incredible fish! Great work John. I finally got to fish some of the great fisheries you guys have out west and I will be back. There is no where else in the USA to catch a fish like that. Again, incredible work John.

[□ REPLY](#)



[□](#) **Andy Walgamott**

MARCH 5, 2014 AT 12:36 PM

Judging by the IP addresses checking out our story on John's catch, I think it would be a fair assumption that a few more folks from the Upper Midwest and Canadian prairie provinces and Quebec will be signing up for guided trips on the Middle Columbia in the future.

AW

[□ REPLY](#)



**steve**

MARCH 7, 2014 AT 7:28 PM

Pre-spawn off limits — Walleye destroying Salmon—  
Really do some research before you take a hit

REPLY

---



**steve**

MARCH 7, 2014 AT 7:42 PM

Congrats.. Great Fish

REPLY

---



**Troy Dickerson**

MARCH 9, 2014 AT 2:39 PM

This was a great catch and well deserved for John. He has done more for walleye fishing than anyone I know. He has been catching and releasing walleye for more than just the fifteen years I've known him! Great job John. You made me go out today and nail a beauty!

REPLY

---



**Larry Haines**

MAY 13, 2014 AT 6:35 PM

Awesome fish! This is hitting websites across the country!!

found it posted on an Ohio site, full of Erie walleye guys, and even they are drooling over this big girl. Great catch!

REPLY

---



**Dan Lombardo**

AUGUST 19, 2016 AT 3:01 PM

Andy,

I read your article on the Record Walleye from 2014 caught on the Columbia River ... I have been a Bass Fisherman my whole life with the occasional Trout Foray, but I have been keen to try Walleye and there are none to speak of here in Maine ... If I wanted to make a trip to the Columbia, would you be able to offer recommendations of Reputable Guides and places to Lodge? Thanks.

REPLY

---



**Andy Walgamott**

AUGUST 19, 2016 AT 3:43 PM

Hey, Dan, I'll give you the names of a FEW of our wicked-good walleye guides in the best stretch of the Columbia. For starters, you could do worse than Washington's former state walleye record-holder and current local guide, Kimo Gabriel. There's also Willie Ross of Walleye Willie's, Bob Roberts of Columbia Basin Guide Service, Jason Schultz of Hells Canyon Guide Service and TJ Hester of Hester's Sportfishing. Hope that helps, and good luck to you! AW NWS

REPLY

## LEAVE A REPLY

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked \*

Comment

Name \*

Email \*

Website

Notify me of follow-up comments by email.

Notify me of new posts by email.

---

RECOMMENDED VIDEOS



---

**DESTINATIONS**

 **BILL MONROE**

Sea lions arrive early, in force at Willamette Falls *Bill Monroe | For The Oregonian/OregonLive*

Deer and elk salvage from highways due this year in Oregon *Bill Monroe | For The Oregonian/OregonLive*

Oregon's duck season has been a mix of panic and peaceful moments *Bill Monroe | For The Oregonian/OregonLive*

 **THE SEATTLE TIMES: REEL TIME FISHING NORTHWEST**

Reel Time Fishing reports have moved

Smelt dip-netting option still alive next month in Oregon's Sandy River

Guide Anton Jones keeps on trolling for good time trout action at Lake Chelan

**Copyright © 2018**

**Northwest Sportsman Magazine**