

Where and When to see Salmon in Pierce County

Seven species of salmonids begin and end their life in the streams, creeks and rivers of Pierce County. Catching one can be exciting, but you don't need to purchase a fishing license to experience the thrill of viewing this majestic fish. Chinook, Coho, Chum, Pink, Sockeye and Steelhead are viewable in our streams at various times of the year.

Salmonid species can be viewed in Pierce County streams year round. The best time to view is September thru January after heavy rains. Precisely when salmon will be viewable in our streams varies by species, watershed and water levels. You might not always see fish on your first effort because of all the variables. Try several spots along the stream. If you are unsuccessful come back in a week and your luck might be better.

Species	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Chinook							W	X	X	X	X	
Coho	X	X					W	W	X	X	X	X
Chum	X								W	W	X	X
Pink							W	X	X	X		
Sockeye	X					W	W	W	W	X	X	X
Steelhead	X	X	X	X	X		W	W	W	W	W	X

X – Spawning

W – Adults in Stream

What follows is a listing of a few favorite viewing sites of the staff at Pierce County Water Programs. When parking on the side of the road pull completely off the road and watch for traffic when walking on the shoulder.

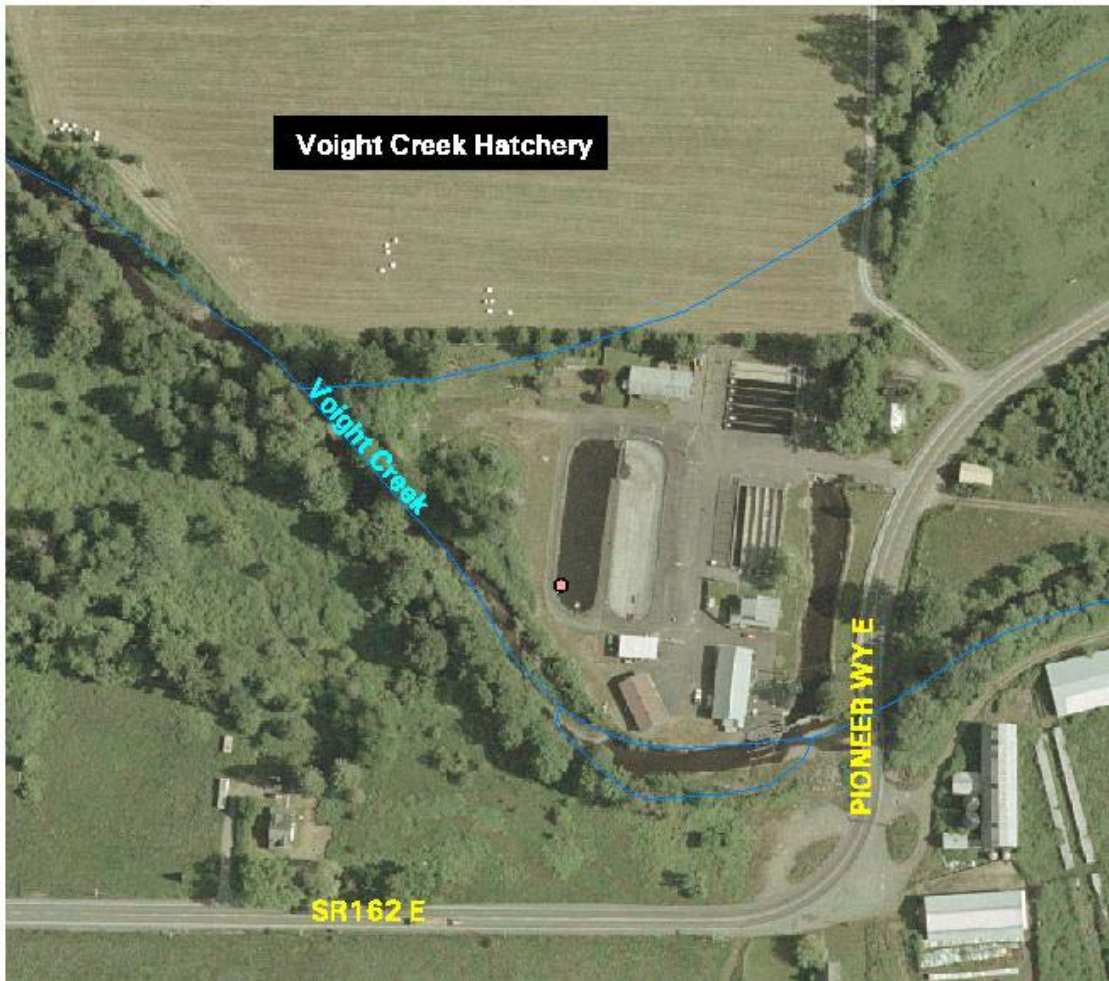
When viewing salmon take care not to disturb or harass the fish. Salmon are a precious resource and spawning salmon are our assurance that they will return to Pierce County waters for generations to come. Binoculars are a great way to get closer to the action without disturbing the fish. Don't approach so close that you cause them to head for cover. Don't throw objects in the water. Keep children and pets under control and don't allow them to go in the water. Stepping on a salmon nest (called a redd) can destroy the thousands of eggs that are buried in gravel beds in the stream.

1. Voights Creek Hatchery

Species: Chum, Chinook, Coho, Steelhead and Pinks. Because of a unique genetic characteristic Pinks return only on odd numbered years.

When: Fish can be viewed anytime from September thru January. The largest returns are in September.

How to get there: The hatchery is located at 19112 Pioneer Way E., in Orting. Follow SR -162 one mile past Orting. The hatchery is on your left just past the intersection of Orville Rd. and Pioneer Way E. Fish may be seen from your vehicle.

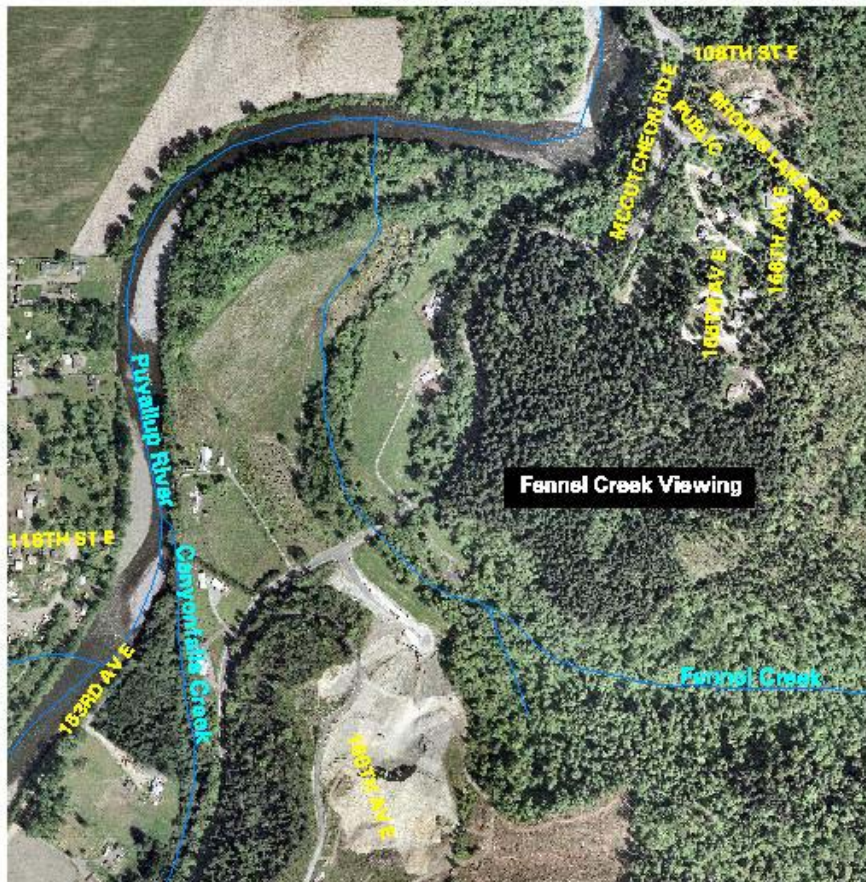


2. Fennel Creek

Species: Chum salmon.

When: Anytime between September thru January. Best in late September.

How to get there: From SR 162/ Pioneer Way, head west on 128th St. East. Fennel Creek is about one mile past the 128th St. Bridge. Parking is on the side of the road.



3. South Prairie Creek

Species: Chinook and Pink Salmon

When: Anytime between September thru January. Best in late September.

How to get there: There are two great spots for viewing salmon on South Prairie Creek. Head West on SR162 to the Town of South Prairie. On the east side of town the fire station has a nice rest area where you can relax in the shade and watch salmon battle their way upstream. Up the road about 1.5 miles take the Lower Burnett Road to the bridge at the intersection of Fettig Road and Lower Burnett. Parking is on the side of the road.



4. Donkey Creek

Species: Chum and Steelhead Salmon

When: September thru January

How to get there: Take the Pioneer Way Exit off of Hwy 16 to Harborview Drive. Follow Harborview Drive around the end of the Bay.



5. Crescent Creek

Species: Steelhead, Chinook, Coho, and Chum Salmon

When: September thru January

How to get there: Take the Pioneer Way Exit off of Hwy 16 to Harborview Drive. Follow Harborview Drive around the end of the Bay. Take a right 96th St. N. Parking is at the Gig Harbor City Park.



6. Minter Creek

Species: Steelhead, Chinook, Coho, and Chum Salmon

When: September thru January

How to get there: Take the 118th Ave south to Creviston Drive. Turn Right on Creviston to the Minter Creek crossing. Parking is on the side of the road. The Hatchery is located just west of the bridge at 12710 124th Ave.Ct.



7. Rocky Creek

Species: Steelhead, Chinook, Coho, and Chum Salmon

When: September thru January

How to get there: Follow SR302 towards Mason County. Park in the pullout on the south side of the road just past the crossing with the creek across from the intersection with Rocky Creek Rd.



8. Chambers Creek

Species: Chinook, Coho, Chum and Pink salmon.

When: Fish can be viewed anytime from September thru January. The largest returns are in September.

How to get there: From Bridgeport follow Chambers Creek Road west towards Steilacoom. A pullout on the right side of road just past the bridge allows viewing opportunities from your vehicle.



9. Canyon Falls Creek

Species: Chum salmon.

When: Anytime between September thru January. Best in late September.

How to get there: From SR 162/ Pioneer Way, head west on 128th St. East. Canyon Falls Creek is about 0.5 miles past the 128th St. Bridge. Parking is on the side of the road.



10. Clarks Creek

Species: Chum Salmon.

When: Clarks Creek offers the opportunity to view spawning salmon in a natural setting in an easily accessible park. The park is open year round, but adult salmon are generally present in varying numbers from late September through January, with Chum salmon primarily in December.

How to get there: Take Hwy 512 to Puyallup. Exit at Meridian St. exit, and turn south. Turn right at 14th St. SW.



Good Luck! Share your experiences, stories or photos with us at Pierce County Water Programs by e-mailing us at pcwater@co.pierce.wa.us.