

## Northwest Oregon and Washington's most complete and accurate fishing forecast

Forecasting for the fishing week of **August 5<sup>th</sup> – August 12<sup>th</sup> 2005**

**Fisheries Update:** Prepare yourself for the most popular fishery of the year with The Guide's Forecast tech report on Buoy 10 fishing. Tech report #4, titled ***Columbia River Estuary Salmon Fishing*** is a 10 page detailed report on how to make the most of your time in pursuit of these fish. Tides, weather and location are critical when deciding how to tackle this immense body of water and this tech report tells you how the professionals do it. Order yours today **before** the season gets underway. Go to: [http://www.theguidesforecast.com/techrpt\\_shtml](http://www.theguidesforecast.com/techrpt_shtml) and check out our other reports to help guide you into Oregon's treasures!

### **Oregon Fishing Report**

It seems incongruous to speak of catching Fall chinook in the first week of August, but one of the joys of living in the Pacific Northwest is that we can choose to fish for summer steelhead along with any of three different salmon runs.

The **Buoy 10** fishery opened August 1st without much action for early hopefuls. The **Columbia** is open for chinook, steelhead and jacks as well. Due to some confusion regarding the regulations, here is the word from the ODFW regarding the stretch from Tongue Point to Bonneville:

"This section of the Columbia River is open seven days per week ... The fall salmon season [opened] Monday, Aug. 1, 2005 with a daily limit of two adult salmon or adipose fin-clipped steelhead in combination, plus five jack salmon. No more than one chinook may be retained and all coho must be adipose fin-clipped."

Sturgeon fishing is spotty in the **estuary** but keepers are readily available to those applying the right tactics. Retention is closed in the gorge.

Steelheading is sporadic on the lower **Deschutes**. The river is now open to chinook fishing. Plug pullers are working the mouth as Dam counts increase. Fly fishing is good upriver.

**North coastal** streams are low and clear. A few steelhead are available to stealthy anglers. The Umpqua remains productive for smallmouth and the steelhead fishing is improving. The **Rogue River** is closed to chinook fishing above Gold Ray Dam. **Bay** fish is very slow. Steelheading is fair to good on the upper river.

The lower **Willamette and Clackamas Rivers** have little to offer anglers currently. Early birds have a chance at a summer run on the Sandy. The North Santiam is a good bet for steelhead.

**Odell** has been kicking out limits of kokanee 12 to 14 inches in length. Trolling is most effective

The ODFW planted **trout** this week at Breitenbush River, Clear Lake, North Fork Santiam River and Trail Bridge Reservoir. Trout stocking will resume in the Northwest (coastal) Zone in the third week of August.

### **Washington Fishing Report**

Come Aug. 1, salmon anglers can choose from a bevy of new fishing options, ranging from the popular Buoy 10 fishery at the mouth of the Columbia River to "Humpty Hollow" in northern **Puget Sound**.

Hundreds of boats are expected to converge in the **lower Columbia** on opening day of the Buoy 10 fishery, which runs upriver to the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line. Hundreds more are expected to ply the waters of marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass/Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Saratoga Passage/Port Gardner - except Port Susan) and 9 (Admiralty Inlet), where anglers can keep two pink salmon in addition to the standard two-fish bag limit.

But a good case can also be made for the ongoing **ocean** salmon fishery, where catch rates are picking up and anglers can fish seven days a week starting July 29 in three out of four marine areas.

"The ocean fishery has definitely improved now that the warm water has moved farther offshore," said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "In Ilwaco, anglers are now averaging nearly two fish per rod."

Because the number of anglers and the catch rates were lower than expected during the first few weeks of fishing, WDFW opened marine areas 1 (**Ilwaco**), 2 (**Westport**) and 3 (**LaPush**) to fishing seven days a week. In addition, anglers can include two - rather than one - chinook salmon in their two-fish daily bag limit. Fishing in Marine Area 4 (**Neah Bay**), where anglers have already caught nearly half of the area coho quota, will remain on a five-day, Tuesday-through-Saturday schedule.

In **Eastern Washington**, more than 200 boats a day have been congregating at the confluence of the Okanogan and Columbia rivers, where anglers have been reeling in chinook salmon ranging from 15 to 25 pounds. Approximately one out of three boats has been returning with fish.

Rich Pettit, a fish biologist working out of WDFW's Vancouver office, recommends a different option entirely.

"Sturgeon fishing is good in the lower **Columbia River** right now," said Pettit, noting that catch rates have been ranging from half a fish to three quarters of a fish from **Ilwaco to Knappton**. Two options that won't be available this year are fishing for sockeye salmon in either **Lake Washington or Lake Wenatchee**. WDFW has ruled out sockeye fisheries on both lakes because fish returns have not met escapement needs.

**Crabbing**, meanwhile, remains open throughout Puget Sound. Three marine areas - 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south Puget Sound) - are open seven days per week. Eight areas are open for crabbing on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, including Marine Area 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 7 (San Juan Islands, except the northern area around Point Roberts), 8-1 (Deception Pass to East Point), 8-2 (East Point to Possession Point), 9 (Admiralty Inlet) 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 12 (Hood Canal).

**Pro Guide Pat Long (509-751-0410)** tells us that the **Snake** and **Clearwater** areas are holding about the same as the past couple of weeks - steelheading is slow on the Clearwater in both the C&R and the keep sections. Counts are improving slightly and show some promise for a better fishery soon.

**Pro Guide Pete Grace (888.688.4386)** has been fishing for sturgeon above **Beacon Rock** and doing well. Steelhead fishing on the **Lewis** is picking up and is OK at the mouth of the river. He's looking forward to Buoy 10!

**Pro Guide Bob Barthlow (509.697.7125)** just walked in the door from his final 7 days on the **Cowlitz** river for Summer steelhead.

He fished hard, side drifting and backtrolling from Blue Creek to Toledo and did very well, boating 51 Summer runs in 7 trips, hitting fish in almost every hole. He seemed to have the luck as most boats around us were not having much action.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Word from the Buoy 10 opener on August 1st is: slow. No fish had been counted as of mid-afternoon on opening day. Anglers may remember that this opener used to occur in mid-August and was often a hot fishery from the get-go, but then it closed earlier as well. The action picked up slightly on Tuesday, August 2nd, but mid-August should be worthwhile as offshore catches are finally improving.

The stretch from Buoy 10 to the bridge has received very little attention as demonstrated this week by the lack of boat traffic. This is also reflective of the lack of action for salmon fishers.

Subscriber Rick D. reports, "Fished 8 south of the CR the past 3 days and had limits in an hour. Back to Hammond by 8:30. (6am launch). Used fresh plug cut herring. Any where from 10 to 33 pulls. 1 chinook in 3 days. Maybe just fate, but didn't run into too many natives either (unlike last year)."

Anchor fishermen upstream in the Columbia are taking some summer chinook along with the steelhead which are available in good number, particularly along Government Island. The percentage of wild fish over hatchery remains higher in the gorge. Weeds have become a problem requiring frequent cleaning of lines.

The last Columbia River Treaty Commercial Net Fishery July 25th and 26th yielded an estimated 345 Chinook and 68 steelhead for a YTD total of 3,852 Chinook, 728 sockeye and 414 steelhead. The gill nets go in again overnight on August 4th, 7th, 9th, and 11th. These overnight net fisheries operate until 7 A. M. the following day.

Sturgeon continue to be taken in the estuary with sand shrimp and anchovies about equally effective according to reports this week. While there have been some good-sized keepers landed this week, the number of undersized fish seems to have increased. Retention of sturgeon in the gorge has closed.

Once again this week the best results for sturgeon came from above Tongue Point in water 40 to 50 feet deep.

Boaters launching out of the Columbia to ply the Big Pond southwest of the CR Buoy are catching a mix of coho and chinook. Many of the coho are wild and must be released but there are decent numbers of fin-clipped specimens available to offshore trollers. Tuna are being taken but good fishing is often 40 miles out.

Crabbing and bottom-fishing remain poor out of Astoria.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Spinners will remain effective for anchor fishermen and will take both chinook and metalheads. Expect the problem with weed growth to become more troublesome as the season progresses. Sturgeon anglers will also fight weeds even in the estuary section of the Columbia.

Reports from Northern California would indicate the salmon are running late, a good sign for Oregon offshore fishermen who have been wondering where the coho went. Combined with the

reports over last weekend of improving offshore coho numbers gives Buoy 10 hopeful reason for optimism. Look for the river coho fishery to blossom in two weeks.

In the coming week, trolling the ocean will be a good bet if the wind moderates. Forecasts have seemed optimistic as hot weather inland seems to invariably stir the offshore breeze creating rough bar conditions. Chinook taken this week have been on the smallish side but coho are running a fair to good percentage of hatchery fish. Expect to miss many as the bite seems tentative.

If crossing the bar is not an option, troll with divers and plug-cut green label herring. The incoming tide will generally be more productive. There is a much better chance of nailing a chinook than a coho in the river now, so it's wise to rig at least one rod with a spinner. If that turns out to be the hot rod, switch 'em all.

Crabbing remains very slow but it may be worthwhile to drop pots south of the south jetty in 30 to 40 feet of water when conditions allow safe crossing for salmon in the ocean.

Sturgeon anglers who have been successful at taking fish are following the simple rule: Don't fish where the fish aren't. Use your depth finder to locate fish before dropping lines, otherwise it's likely you'll be in barren water. Even an area that's producing is likely to slow after a few fish are taken. Don't hesitate to weigh anchor and look for another pod of fish. Sturgeon will school to size so stay on the move to locate the larger fish. Concentrate efforts with fresh sand shrimp or anchovies in the 40-to-50 foot depths as that's likely to be most productive. While both baits work well, anchovies will be more durable in these deeper waters where bait-stealers are abundant. Be prepared to check lines frequently 'cause that green gunk will be a problem. The estuary is scheduled to remain open to sturgeon retention through August 15th. It'll get a little more challenging as the days pass but there are keepers to be had and the estuary offers the best chance for them.

The sanctuary opened August 1st for catch-and-release of oversized fish. This remains a fairly reliable fishery for those using floater or frozen shad for bait. Be sure to use heavy tackle in order to get these breeders to the boat and released with minimum stress on the fish. The gorge is now closed to retention of sturgeon; catch and release is allowed during the closure.

Tides won't be of much help to sturgeon, steelhead or salmon fishermen until the next decent series during the third week in August.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – The water in the lower Willamette is truly bathwater with temperatures pushing ever closer to the 80-degree-mark at the Falls.

North Santiam anglers are finding great water conditions as summer steelhead begin to demonstrate predictable behavior. This river may return to it's glory after a couple of lackluster years.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Steelheading on the North Santiam will be good and improving with fish well-dispersed and available in very good numbers from Mehama to Packsaddle Park.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – It's an interim period for the Clackamas River. The last of the decent springers are historically taken in July while the coho run doesn't get going 'til September. First light may grant a summer steelhead to a lucky anglers but there are better places to try for them. The Sandy River, for instance, where summer steelhead are being taken occasionally in that magic morning hour.

**North Coast District Fishing Report** – It's been a tough week for ocean anglers on the North coast as either strong winds or thick fog have hampered offshore efforts. Conditions moderated this week allowing for mixed results.

The Nehalem summer chinook fishery has been very slow so far, but should improve in the next few weeks. Offshore trolling has been fair. Crabbing outside the jaws has been rewarding but the Dungeness are not in the best condition currently with large crabs yielding far less meat than when they're prime.

Subscriber Rich R. reports, "I continue to burn up the gasoline, as I troll the area Wheeler to the Karhs dock each a.m. at first light.... no fish, to speak of. None in my boat. 30 Boats this a.m. (Sunday 31st) No fish. When local pro's such as "First Light" Frank and "Sea Gull" Al.. don't get fish... there are no fish ! However First Light Frank caught a 29# buck the other day and one day last week, Sea Gull Al caught his 2-fish limit. Last week was slow, at best. 25th 1 fish caught from some 15 boats . 26th 3 fish, 27th 9 fish, 28th 3 fish, 29th 2 fish, 30th no fish, 31st no fish....these are early morning reports... 5:30 a.m. - 8:30 A.M. Another local Wheeler "expert", Roy Ward "Happy Hour" did manage to get one last week while another local expert, Walt Trandum was shut out also. I saw 3 guide boats there this a.m...but no fish put in their boats. I don't know about the area at the jaws or inside between the jaws and the Jetty fishery , I am only fishing Wheeler area... I did mark more fish this a.m. than I have marked in awhile but no "biters"...

"P.S. I think I have figured out why Sea Gull Al is always one of the leaders in catching fish at Wheeler...that Gull that rides on his bow, tells him where the "biters" are.!"

Salmon trollers out of Garibaldi are took better numbers of coho over the weekend with fish running very shallow. Unfortunately, the coho fishing closed on July 31st from just south of Tillamook Head (Cape Falcon) to just south of Port Orford (Humbug Mountain). Chinook will remain open 'til Halloween.

Hardy tuna anglers launching out of Garibaldi are finding fish but it's been a run of 50 miles or better to find them.

Late summer steelhead are still being taken occasionally in the Nestucca and Wilson Rivers. The best shot is first light as these coastal streams are very low and gin clear.

**Pro Guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)** reports, "King season is now closed on the Nestucca. Steelhead are plentiful, with a bunch of fresh ones on the lower river. We were doing well on jigs and small drifted baits. My season has come to a close, and we have been preparing for the up and coming Fall fishery. Occasionally we venture out to do some walks, and have found a fish or two each trip. Crabbing has been excellent in the lower bay. We are seeing some beautiful ocean crabs, and many have been much larger than the entire gauge".

The Salmon, Tillamook, Trask and Wilson rivers opened for fin-clipped coho on August 1st.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Fall chinook have been taken in fair numbers over the last week from the lower Siletz. More than a dozen pictures are on display at Coyote Rock of catches from the mid-teens to 30 pounds.

Trollers out of Depoe Bay and Newport have had a tough time with the salmon recently which often results in a change of venue for bottomfish. This scenario has occurred with sufficient

frequency to warrant the reduction in rockfish limits from 10 to five per day. At least it remains open; Washington State is shutting down bottom-fishing completely outside the 30-fathom line (180 feet) on August 5th.

When trollers have been able to get out, the chinook fishing has been fair to good out of Winchester Bay, but boats have often had to run 10 miles or further to find them. Ironically, a 41-pounder was taken in the lower Umpqua above Gardiner on Saturday, July 30th. Smallmouth bass fishing remains hot on the mainstem. Summer steelheading is picking up on the North Umpqua.

Those Fall chinook out of Rogue Bay are big and beautiful, but there just aren't many of them available, yet. Saturday 90 fishermen took only four fish. This week about 20% of the boats trying actually got one over the gunwale. The spring chinook fishery is closed above Gold Ray Dam. Summer steelheading on the upper river can be rewarding now with fish taking a wide variety of baits and lures.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Steelheading has been slow on the Deschutes but good catches on the Columbia and promising counts at the Dams have anglers lining up to pull plugs at the mouth. The lower Deschutes re-opened for chinook angling on August 1st for a limit of two adults and five jacks per day due to the strong late-season showing in the Columbia. Fly fishing has been quite rewarding with caddis imitations early and late in the day. Nymphing during the daylight hours has been effective.

**Northwest Bass & Panfish** - Hagg Lake has some decent bass fishing available for those who get there before the swimmers and water skiers. Optionally, there's a pretty good late-day bite for those who outlast the splash-happy non-anglers into the evening hours.

**Northwest Trout** – Odell has been kicking out limits of kokanee 12 to 14 inches in length. Wedding ring spinners tipped with anise-scented shoepeg corn has worked well recently. Jig fishermen are taking a few at Puline but it has been very slow going. The ODFW planted trout this week at Breitenbush River, Clear Lake, North Fork Santiam River and Trail Bridge Reservoir. Trout stocking will resume in the Northwest (coastal) Zone in the third week of August.

## **Washington Fishing Report**

### **North Puget Sound**

Salmon fishing in marine waters should pick up in August when the every-other-year surge of **pink** salmon begins pushing toward the terminal areas. The smallest of the six Pacific salmon species, pink salmon are expected to return this summer in big numbers to the Skagit, Snohomish and Green rivers. A smattering of pinks is already being caught in Puget Sound, according to WDFW sport fishing samplers, but the best marine areas to fish for pinks all open to salmon fishing on Aug. 1, including marine areas 8-1, 8-2 and 9.

WDFW Fisheries Biologist Chad Jackson said pink salmon fishing in marine waters should be good from early August through September. Good bets for pink action include the extreme southern portion of Marine Area 8-2, including the "Shipwreck" and "Humpy Hollow" areas, and farther north in Marine Area 8-2 near the Mukilteo ferry terminal. The northern portion of Marine Area 10 and Elliott Bay can also produce pinks. The best terminal gear to use is anything in hot pink, including small spoons or an artificial squid.

Fish the gear 12 to 24 inches behind a small flasher and troll slowly. Concentrate on fishing the top 60 feet of the water column, starting out with the gear around 25 to 30 feet deep, then go

deeper as the day progresses. Treat pink salmon with a little TLC, and they'll provide high-quality table fare. Bleed and clean the fish as soon as possible, give it a good rinsing, then throw it in the fish box and keep it cold. Pinks are great grilled, baked or lightly smoked.

Anglers are reminded that the Port Susan portion of Marine Area 8-2 is closed to salmon fishing in August, and closed to pink salmon retention through September. The closed area includes all waters north of a line from Camano Head to the boundary marker approximately 1.4 miles northwest of Hermosa Point, which is also the northern boundary of the Tulalip Bay "bubble" fishery.

Beginning Aug. 1, marine areas 8-1, 8-2 and 9 all have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon. The handling rule is in effect, and anglers must release chinook in all areas, plus chum in Marine Area 9. Anglers looking for **chinook** salmon in the Tulalip Bay and Elliott Bay bubbles are having a hard time finding many kings, said Patrick "Slim" Simpson, who heads WDFW's sport fish sampling program in central Puget Sound.

"The big tide series we had last weekend (July 23-24) can really hurt fishing success. Elliott Bay was producing about one quarter a fish per boat, which isn't exactly great, but at least it's showing signs of life," Simpson said. WDFW Fisheries Biologist Steve Foley said counts of chinook at the Ballard Locks are beginning to increase, which could be good news for anglers in Elliott Bay. "Generally, when we see the chinook counts go up at the locks, we see a corresponding increase in the number of chinook heading up the Duwamish," Foley said.

The Elliott Bay bubble is open Friday through Monday each week. The fishery closes at noon on Aug. 22. Check pages 116-117 of the "[Fishing in Washington](#)" rules pamphlet for bubble boundary details. Elsewhere in Marine Area 10, anglers have been boating plenty of 2- to 4-pound resident **coho** salmon.

"The coho are starting to get bigger in central Puget Sound," Foley said. Silvers have been found off Point Monroe, Jefferson Head and in Elliott Bay. Try trolling green spoons, a green or white artificial squid or a small cut-plug herring fished behind a flasher. Give the bait a liberal basting of shrimp scent and start fishing the gear in the top 40 feet of water early in the morning. Drop the gear deeper as the day progresses. Outside the Elliott Bay bubble, anglers in Marine Area 10 have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon. All chinook must be released, and all chum salmon must be released beginning Aug. 1.

A note to boat-less anglers in the Edmonds area: Seawall construction at the Port of Edmonds this summer will occasionally limit access to the popular fishing pier. The pier will be closed to public access Mondays through Thursdays of each week from 6:45 a.m. to 6 p.m. The pier is scheduled to be open Fridays through Sundays. Contact the Port of Edmonds for more information at (425) 774-0549. Fishing for hatchery chinook on a portion of the Skykomish River ends July 31, which is also the last day of **sockeye** fishing at the confluence of the Skagit and Baker rivers. Both fisheries have been slow. Low numbers of returning summer-run **steelhead** and low flows on the Skykomish River have combined to create very slow fishing on the Sky.

Due to another poor return of summer-run steelhead, the scheduled Aug. 1 opening of fishing in the Reiter Ponds portion of the Skykomish River will not happen. Jackson said that through the third week of July just 150 steelhead had made it back to the hatchery at Reiter Ponds, which is 200 fish short of the minimum number needed for spawning. "We're hoping to get some rain in that watershed so the fish will move up the river and into the hatchery," Jackson said. "But right now, the water is low and warm, so the fish just aren't moving." Many alpine lakes hold hungry **trout** that can readily be caught on small flies, while lowland lakes trout fishing should be

confined to the early morning and late evening hours when temperatures have cooled. **Bass, crappie, catfish and perch** fishing in area lakes can all be productive in August.

### **South Sound/Olympic Peninsula**

Ocean anglers thinking about weighing anchor for other **salmon** fisheries might want to think again. True, the Buoy 10 fishery on the lower Columbia River opens Aug. 1 (see Southwest Washington report), as does Marine Area 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and the Puyallup and Skokomish rivers. But starting July 29, marine areas 1-3 (Ilwaco to Cape Alava) will be open seven days per week. In addition, anglers will be allowed to keep two, rather than one, chinook salmon in their two-salmon daily limit. Only Marine Area 4 (Neah Bay), where anglers have already caught nearly half of the area coho quota, will stay on a five-day, Tuesday-through-Saturday schedule.

"Like last year, we are liberalizing the regulations to reflect the pace of the fishery," said Doug Milward, WDFW ocean salmon manager. "Catch rates over the past few weeks indicate we can open the fishery south of Cape Alava seven days a week without serious risk of an early closure." That could present a golden opportunity for anglers in the weeks ahead, Milward said. Although strong winds and high water temperatures hampered fishing during the first few weeks of fishing, coastwide catch rates are now approaching one salmon per rod.

"Fishing has improved a lot in the past week or two, and we expect to see catch rates continue to rise in the days ahead," Milward said. Of the four ocean areas, Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco) had the highest catch rate for the week ending July 24, when anglers aboard charter boats averaged 1.8 salmon per rod and those fishing from their own craft averaged 1.3 fish apiece. Coho made up the bulk of the catch.

Marine Area 4 (Neah Bay) had the second-highest overall catch rate, giving up more than one fish per rod - again, mostly coho. Catch rates in Marine Area 2 (Westport) fell short of one fish per rod, but chinook averaging 10 to 12 pounds outnumbered coho in the catch by more than two to one. The same was true in Marine Area 3 (LaPush). An increasing number of salmon are also beginning to push down the Strait of Juan de Fuca, boosting catch rates from Sekiu to Port Townsend and beyond.

"More and more chinook are being brought in, a few silvers are starting to show up and the pinks are seemingly everywhere," states the website of one Sekiu resort. In a creel check conducted there July 23, WDFW counted 32 chinook, 38 coho and 97 pink salmon among 274 anglers. That same day, 35 anglers brought in 11 chinook salmon at Ediz Hook. Anglers will get a crack at the ones that got away in Marine Area 9 (Admiralty Inlet) when salmon fishing opens there Aug. 1.

Popular fishing spots there include Point No Point, Possession Point, Bush Point and Double Bluff. The daily limit is two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon. The handling rule is in effect, and anglers are required to release any chinook or chum salmon they catch. In Hood Canal, where the salmon fishery has been under way south of Ayock Point since July 1, nearly 10,000 pink salmon have already returned to the Hoodsport hatchery, said Mark Cylwick, WDFW hatchery specialist. "We're about midway through the run," he said. "We've seen a lot of people fishing in front of the hatchery in the past few weeks, but it's a little slow right now. We can see the fish out there, but they're kind of spooky in this dry weather. Some rain would really help." That, of course, applies to any number of waters around the region - including the Puyallup River, which opens for salmon fishing Aug. 1 from the 11th Street Bridge to the Carbon River. The Skokomish River also opens that day from the mouth to the U.S. 101 bridge. Stream flows there have been well below normal, just as they are on other rivers from the Wynoochee to the Hoh. Anglers have been catching some hatchery steelhead in the Wynoochee River, but fishing in the Hoh and Quillayute rivers has been slow for weeks, said Bill Freymond, WDFW regional salmon manager.

"It could be due to low flows or something else, but some rain sure wouldn't hurt." Meanwhile, recreational **crab** fishing remains open on two basic schedules throughout Puget Sound. Three marine areas - 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south Puget Sound) - are open seven days per week. Eight areas are open for crabbing on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, including Marine Area 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 7 (San Juan Islands, except the northern area around Point Roberts), 8-1 (Deception Pass to East Point), 8-2 (East Point to Possession Point), 9 (Admiralty Inlet) 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 12 (Hood Canal).

#### **Southwest Washington:**

New salmon fisheries open Aug. 1 at Buoy 10 and several tributaries to the Columbia River, but **sturgeon** fishing in the lower mainstem could be the best bet for anglers during the next two weeks, said Rich Pettit, WDFW fish biologist. "Most of the new fishing areas won't really take off for a few weeks, but sturgeon fishing is good in the lower river right now," Pettit said. Charter boat anglers checked at the ports of Chinook and Ilwaco have been averaging 0.75 white sturgeon apiece; 0.25 for private boaters.

Catch rates for boat anglers checked at the Deep River and Knappton ramps are running around half a legal-sized sturgeon per rod, counting fish released. "We're seeing quite a few sub-legals, but anglers are still catching some nice fish below the Megler-Astoria Bridge and from Interstate 205 to Bonneville Dam." Pettit reminds anglers that the catch-and-keep fishery for sturgeon has been extended through Aug. 15 in the Columbia River estuary downstream of the Wauna power line crossing near Cathlamet, but will switch to catch-and release Aug. 1 from the power line to Bonneville Dam.

In June, anglers made 28,400 trips to fish for sturgeon in the Columbia River estuary, the greatest number recorded by WDFW since 1977. They caught and kept 8,341 legal white sturgeon that month, compared to 10,400 fishing in June of 2004. Good fishing for **hatchery steelhead** is also drawing an increasing number of anglers to several areas of the lower Columbia and its tributaries. At Drano Lake, anglers aboard 48 boats averaged one hatchery steelhead apiece July 23 while those fishing the Cowlitz River between Blue Creek and Mission Bar caught one fish for every two rods. Rather be first in line at Buoy 10? The popular fishery, which opens Aug. 1 up to the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line, always draws a crowd for **chinook** and hatchery **coho**. The daily limit through Sept. 30 will be two salmon, with a maximum of one chinook. The minimum size for chinook is 24 inches and 16 inches for coho.

All sockeye, chum and wild coho must be released. "Chinook salmon tend to show up first, followed by coho, but the Buoy 10 fishery usually doesn't hit its stride until mid-August," Pettit said. The same is true for the Washougal and Wind rivers, which also open Aug. 1, said Pettit, noting that fishing regulations also change that day for several areas of the Columbia River and its tributaries. "Most of those changes are keyed to the upcoming fall chinook fishery," Pettit said.

"Anglers planning to fish for salmon during the next few weeks should check the [Fishing in Washington](#) rule book to make sure they're up to date on the regulations." While fishing for spring chinook is winding down, anglers on the Cowlitz River are getting another chance at several hundred of them. During the last week of July, employees from WDFW and Tacoma Power released more than 300 spring chinook adults recovered from the Cowlitz salmon hatchery into the river - 150 of them at Lake Scanewa above Cowlitz Falls Dam. They also recycled 160 steelhead adults at the Massey Bar boat launch.

Lakes planted with legal-size **rainbow trout** during the past month include Council Lake (4,000), Takhiakh Lake (4,000) and Ollalie Lake. The **shad** fishery is essentially through, but not before setting records for both angler trips and fish caught. According to WDFW records, anglers made 21,200 trips and retained 164,300 shad on the mainstem Columbia River below Bonneville Dam

this year. The previous records were 21,000 angler trips in 1992 and 148,100 fish caught and kept in 2002.

**Pro Guide Bob Barthlow (509.697.7125)** just walked in the door from his final 7 days on the Cowlitz river for Summer steelhead.

He fished hard, side drifting and backtrolling from Blue Creek to Toledo and did very well, boating 51 Summer runs in 7 trips, hitting fish in almost every hole. He seemed to have the luck as most boats around us were not having much action.

He now starts downrigger troll Steelhead/URB combo trips at Drano in the CR gorge and is looking forward to a great season.

**Bob** sent these photos to TGF:



The first photo, Denney Rutherford got this weeks big fish honors with a 37" Buck @ 17# and the other is Ted and his group on a successful day with Bob.

**Pro Guide Pete Grace (888.688.4386)** has been fishing for sturgeon above Beacon Rock and doing well. Steelhead fishing on the Lewis is picking up and is OK at the mouth of the river. He's looking forward to Buoy 10!

### [Eastern Washington:](#)

Summertime heat is driving anglers higher and fish deeper. The north end of the region includes many small, deep lakes at higher elevation with somewhat cooler air temperatures that make for more comfortable fishing. "But you still need to fish very early in the day or late in the evening," said WDFW district fish biologist Curt Vail of Colville. "The water is still warm and fish hide in deep, shaded water during the heat of the day. They're more actively feeding at night and into the early hours of morning."

Vail noted that at this time of year some of the best fishing is at night when the skies are clear and there's a full moon, which will next be around Aug. 5. "Trout often feed all night in those conditions because they can see better," Vail said. Meadow Lake in Stevens County, at about 4,300 feet above sea level, is a good bet. Anglers were recently reeling in 12- to 16-inch **rainbow trout** there. Davis Lake in Ferry County and Yocum Lake in Pend Oreille County are both producing nice **cutthroat trout**. Summit Lake in Stevens County has nice rainbows and Elbow Lake just to the west has **eastern brook trout**.

For catch-and-release fishing, Vail says it's hard to beat Starvation Lake near the Little Pend Oreille Wildlife Refuge, southeast of Colville. A recent fishing derby at Starvation reported rainbows up to a pound and a half and 17 ½ inches long. Vail noted that in addition to being catch-and-release only, Starvation has selective gear regulations which includes no motorized boats. Also on refuge, Bayley Lake is another option for catch-and-release fishing. The lake is open to flyfishing only. Vail said the water level is dropping at Bayley, but the lake had been putting out nice rainbows earlier. Although not at high elevation, Waitts Lake in southern Stevens County is a good spot to catch rainbows and **brown trout** in the evening.

Fishing holes in the north district to probably avoid at this point include McDowell Lake on the refuge and Curlew Lake near Republic in Ferry County. McDowell is overrun with milfoil and an algae bloom, Vail explained. And Curlew Lake's fish-rearing net pen had location problems last summer and young trout had to be released too early. That means there's not a good crop of catchable size trout in the lake this summer, Vail explained. The Curlew Lake Association is now coordinating new net pens in better locations so hopefully fishing will improve in the future.

**Pro Guide Pat Long (509-751-0410)** tells us that the Snake and Clearwater areas are holding about the same as the past couple of weeks - steelheading is slow on the Clearwater in both the C&R and the keep sections. Counts are improving slightly and show some promise for a better fishery soon. The Snake is still producing well on bass and sturgeon fishing. At this time the reservoir area right around Lewiston and Clarkston is doing extremely well for smallies- fish the rip rap shores at first light with top water gear and move into deeper areas as the sun gets up, going to plastics or deep running cranks. There are good numbers of 3 to 4 lb. fish in these areas and lots of little guys.

#### [North Central Washington:](#)

Anglers won't be fishing for **sockeye salmon** in Lake Wenatchee this summer. With just 11,000 Lake Wenatchee-bound sockeye counted at Tumwater Dam on the Wenatchee River as of July 24, the run is not strong enough to allow a fishery on the lake. Last summer's nearly five-week season was only the second fishery since 1993. Portions of the upper Columbia River that opened to summer **chinook salmon** fishing on July 16 continue to produce fish, however. WDFW District Fish Biologist Art Viola reports that the highest fishing effort is concentrated at the confluence of the Okanogan and Columbia rivers. Viola said WDFW creel survey technicians counted 225 boats fishing in that area on opening morning, with approximately one in three boats returning with fish ranging from 15 to 25 pounds. Viola said many anglers are also fishing below Wells and Rocky Reach dams and near the confluence of the Columbia and Wenatchee rivers. Chinook catch rates vary by location and day as anglers continue pursuing schools of fish as they migrate upriver. Most recently, 20 to 100 boats per day have been fishing near the mouth of the Wenatchee River and below Wells Dam.

Catch rates have been higher in the mornings for those fishing near the mouth of the Wenatchee, and higher in the evening for those fishing below Wells Dam. The daily catch limit is six chinook, with no more than two adults of at least 24 inches in length. Release coho and sockeye salmon. Look for information signs at water access points on some river stretches about cash rewards for returns of tagged fish. The fish are part of a cooperative research study between the Colville Confederated Tribes and WDFW. The Methow River catch-and-release fishery for resident **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** continues through September. WDFW enforcement officers remind anglers that the Methow season is strictly catch-and-release with selective gear only. Check the regulation pamphlet and watch for waters closed to fishing, which are in place to help protect endangered steelhead, spring chinook, and bull trout juveniles. WDFW's Sinlahekin Wildlife Area in northern Okanogan County has seven **trout** fishing waters that may be good spots to beat the heat in coming weeks, including Conner, Forde, Blue, Fish, and Doheny lakes. July and August are great months for **bass** fishing in the Columbia Basin,

especially at Potholes Reservoir. And there are still plenty of **walleye** to go around, especially at Moses Lake.

### **South Central Washington:**

WDFW District Fish Biologist Eric Anderson says the best fishing bet right now, especially in the heat, are the small streams or high mountain lakes for **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout**. "Fishing is especially good at this time of year because the water levels in the streams have dropped and water clarity is good," he said. Some of the most popular streams in Yakima County are Rattlesnake Creek and Little Naches River, including some of the forks and tributaries.

In Kittitas County try Naneum, Taneum, Swauk, Manastash and the Teanaway. A good hike-in fishing experience for **eastern brook trout** can be found on upper Indian Creek, a tributary of Rimrock Lake. There is no daily catch limit for eastern brookies on the creek because the fish can move downriver and can hybridize with ESA-listed bull trout. Approximately four miles of lower Indian Creek is closed to all fishing. Another opportunity for eastern brook trout is in the upper reaches of the Yakima River, where there is also no catch limit for the non-native fish. One of the best techniques is fishing a dry fly, such as a size 12 elk hair caddis. Anderson noted that anglers should familiarize themselves with catch-and-release regulations and other catch limit and gear restrictions.

"Anglers must release any bull trout, steelhead or salmon that they may catch while fishing for the other trout species," he said. Many high mountain lakes in Kittitas and Yakima counties are now accessible. Most named lakes have populations of cutthroat, rainbow or eastern brook trout. Lakes that are most difficult to reach typically have the best fishing, but there are plenty of lakes with good fishing for those who want to go for day trips of 10 miles round trip or less.

An ultra-light spinning rod and reel combination and a few spinners is often all that's needed. Anderson said small spinners can be effective for lures, while various midge, mayfly, damselfly and stonefly patterns can be effective for flyfishing. Anderson encourages people to catch and release, but if fish are harvested and carried out of the high country when the weather is warm, anglers will need to carry ice to keep them edible. Bug repellent is a necessity in most areas now, and hike-in anglers should also be prepared for weather changes in the high country. "[Trout Fishing in Washington's High Lakes](#)" is a publication useful to both beginners and veterans, and is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/outreach/fishing/highlake.htm>.

### **Inbox**

Last week in the Fisheries Forecast we has stated the limit from Tongue Point to Bonny was six jacks. It should have been five and there is often misunderstanding regarding the regulations.

Subscriber 'RS' wrote to say, "I believe your catch info from Rocky Point upstream is incorrect. Should read six Salmon of which only two can be adults and of those two, only one may be a Chinook."

We understand the wording is often ambiguous, but here it is right from the ODFW: "This section of the Columbia River is open seven days per week ... The fall salmon season [opened] Monday, Aug. 1, 2005 with a daily limit of two adult salmon or adipose fin-clipped steelhead in combination, plus five jack salmon. No more than one chinook may be retained and all coho must be adipose fin-clipped."

### **Write to the TGF staff:**

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Doug Rees: [drees@TheGuidesForecast.com](mailto:drees@TheGuidesForecast.com)

Michael Teague: OregonFishing@charter.net

**Random Links**

'Strange things' along Pacific Coast waters - Warmer ocean and fewer birds, fish and plankton worry researchers \*<http://msnbc.msn.com/id/8796487/>

**Weekly Quote** – "Sleeping we image what awake we wish; Dogs dream of bones, and fishermen of fish." - Theocritus

**GOOD LUCK!**