

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **August 12th – August 18th, 2005**

Fisheries Update: The **Buoy 10** fishery is clearly not underway but a few fish are being caught- and not just by gillnets. The fish that are being caught are quality fish. Older age classes of fish typically return earlier in the year as witnessed by some 30 plus pound Chinook. Upriver Brights are also dominating the run right now as **pro guide Jim Stevenson (503-580-4162)** witnessed when he got his bride, Melinda into 2 nice fish- 26# and 12#. Very few coho have made their way into the river.

Ocean fishing for coho is fair but anglers may have to search for them. The best action is taking place south of the **CR Buoy** and many guides are fishing in front of **Gearhart** and **Seaside** to get them. It can be a rough ride home if the afternoon NW wind kicks up. Ocean crabbing is a nice bonus but the season closes on 8/14. More Chinook are being seen in ocean catches and the limit remains 2 salmon- either fin-clipped coho or any Chinook above 24 inches.

Bottomfishing out of **Astoria** has slowed and the cabezon quota has been reached and therefore, it is illegal to retain them.

Crabbing in the **lower Columbia** remains poor for those anglers wanting to "double-dip" in the Buoy 10 fishery.

Sturgeon fishing in the **Columbia River estuary** remains open through 8/15 and action remains best above **Tongue Point**. The gillnet fishery continues to take its toll on keeper sized fish but shallow water is the best bet as deep nets typically don't fish shallow water. The best action remains on shrimp.

Summer steelhead fishing is still good in the gorge and sporadic at the mouth of the **Deschutes River**. Good numbers continue to cross but the "A" run fish are beginning to wane. Average weights for the "B" run fish should climb but there will be fewer opportunities. Over 2,000 fall Chinook have crossed Bonneville which is a good sign for our fall run- as if we had any reservations about that prediction.....

Oversize sturgeon is the only sturgeon action in the gorge and effective bait is becoming hard to come by. The fishery won't open up again for consumptive use until October 1st.

Nehalem Bay is producing some catches of Chinook but it has been a disappointment this season. Tides favor jetty herring trollers this weekend so meet those Chinook face to face at the jaws. Morning outgoing tides will produce the best results.

Summer steelheaders on the **Wilson** and **Nestucca Rivers** are finding challenging conditions but stealthy anglers are taking a few fish during the cloudy mornings. Miniscule offerings are a must and the heads of holes or broken surfaced waters are likely holds.

Deschutes anglers are seeing an improvement at the mouth and in the lower stretch for steelhead. **Wind and Drano Lake** have been productive recently.

South coast rivers have seen a few Fall chinook, but it's slow. One or two a day are coming over the gunwale in the lower Umpqua. Rogue Bay trollers far outnumber the available fish, but confidence is high that the run is just late this year.

The **Sandy** is suffering from glacial runoff which has put ground fishing efforts to a halt. With the Clackamas low, clear and warm, there's little to tempt anglers to fish here.

Santiam steelheading is fair to good high on the system but drift boaters are encouraged to try lower due to hazards in the river.

East Lake, Green Peter and Odell are fair to good for kokanee. **Paulina** is slow. The upper **McKenzie River** and **Leaburg Lake** were stocked this week.

[North Puget Sound](#)

The good news for anglers in the region is that the **coho** and **pink** salmon are on their way, and catch rates for those species should steadily improve through the month. The bad news is that the action for **chinook** salmon in the San Juan Islands -as well as the Elliott Bay and Tulalip Bay terminal area fisheries - remains slow, particularly in the two bay fisheries.

[South Sound/Olympic Peninsula](#)

Pro Guide Brad Shride of Onco Sportfishing & Guide Services, Inc, 206-463-9230 or 877-483-0047 Reports fishing in South Puget Sound area 11 & 13 has not changed much this past week. Morning bites are the norm here as with evening bites. There has been a little bit of a bite for the moochers on the slack incoming tide change at Pt. Dalco.

[Southwest Washington:](#)

Pro Guide Bob Barthlow tells TGF that he started his Drano Lake downrigger troll trips on Saturday 8/6, and did pretty well, boating 8 steelhead(released 4 nates) and 2 URB's(Up River Brite Fall Chinook) All the action came off Blue fox spinners and Fatfish fished off downriggers.

Bob says that this fishery will get nothing but better the next month as URB and "B" run steelhead numbers build.

[Eastern Washington:](#)

WDFW is reminding anglers that the Wenatchee and Entiat rivers and portions of Methow River are closed.

Pro Guide Jeff Knotts of JB's GUIDE SERVICE (509.547.7450) fished both the Big White Salmon riffle off the bank on did a little bobber fishing at the mouth. There should be fish here but they don't seem to be coming into the river in any great numbers. There have been a few good bites, but is generally slower than it should be. Perhaps after "spill" is over the fish will need to seek out cooler water and fishing will improve. Walleye are going pretty good all over the Columbia Basin. Boaters fishing worm harnesses Boardman to McNary are seeing some nice catches as well those fishing the mouth of Snake river up to Ice Harbor Dam. Jeff He will be working on Hanford Reach Salmon.

[North Central Washington:](#)

WDFW District Fish Biologist Jeff Korth of Moses Lake suggests **walleye** fishing at Potholes Reservoir and Moses Lake. "The action is a little slower in the summer, but there are a lot of fish for anglers willing to figure out how to catch them," Korth said. "Try trolling plugs and crank baits close to the bottom, late in the day and into the evening."

[South Central Washington:](#)

August is a good time to hit high lakes for **trout** says WDFW Fish Biologist Jim Cummins. "Bugs generally are not as plentiful now as earlier, and being near water at high elevations is a good way to beat the heat," he said. **Cutthroat, rainbow** and **eastern brook trout** can be caught in high lakes on a variety of flies and lures.

Soapbox Update: We are introducing the "Photos for Bloato's" program in an effort to document any mortalities of sturgeon in the recent gillnet fisheries. It is time to take a more proactive approach in the management of our sturgeon fisheries so we are asking anyone to take digital photos of any dead, sturgeon that you may see floating by your boat this week. As many digital cameras that are floating around in sport boats in the Buoy 10 fishery, it should be an easy task. No matter what the size and how many you see, please take a snap-shot of these fish and send it to breesawy@pacifier.com so we can bring this evidence forward and ask for mortality studies on how these fish do when released in the warm waters of the Columbia River. With the fisheries background that I have, I know that survival rates are low for released fish-particularly released gillnet fish in warmer water temperatures. The Columbia is around 70 degrees and we need to know how many sturgeon are being incidentally released DEAD from this gillnet fishery. With an average weight of nearly 36 pounds, gillnetters are netting and releasing (a bad combination) scores or more of sturgeon to retain the largest ones for sale. (I am afraid it only makes sense since they can only harvest 5 fish/week.)

The newly formed **NW Guides and Anglers Association** will be working diligently on this issue in this year's workplan. To learn more about this pro-active organization and the good it will do for our NW fisheries, please email Bob Rees at brees@pacifier.com for more details. Your VERY REASONABLE membership dues will be directed towards maximum benefit for your sport fishery resources.

Columbia River Fishing Report – With Buoy 10 being the "headline" fishery this time of year, it is anything but headline. Although we didn't expect awesome results this early in the fishery-particularly with a poor return of coho, even I had thought that action should have been better than it is. It's off to a slow start but there have been signs of hope as of late. Ironically, one of those signs is the success the gillnets have recently witnessed. Good numbers of quality Chinook were taken in the 12-hour 8/7 to 8/8 opener. Contacts report that only a few tule Chinook were in the mix- the bulk of the catch were quality, large upriver brights. The total number of retained Chinook in this second opener was almost 1,200 fish with an average weight of almost 21 pounds. Another 336 large keeper sturgeon were harvested with a 36 pound average. This is not uncommon for the early part of the season as the older age classes of fish are usually the first ones to return. The first gillnet opener netted commercial fishermen 414 Chinook and one coho. The average weight of the Chinook was 22 pounds! The average weight of the 340 sturgeon that the commercials landed was almost 36 pounds. An indication that they are culling through a lot of keepers to retain the largest ones. This likely doesn't bode well for survival rates for released keepers in the 70 degree water! **See the soapbox update of this newsletter to see what you can do!** The next opener will go from 7 p.m. on the 9th to 7 a.m. on the 10th. Fishing should be pretty good for the nets that eve! And the final opener is 7 pm to 7 am from the 11th to the 12th. From then on, the bulk of the commercial catch will be caught above zone 1 (Tongue Point).

Last minute update:

According to a release the morning of August 11th, the ODF&W & WDF&W have approved an additional round of gillnetting on August 14th to 15th from 7 PM to 7 AM and will meet on the 16th to consider more dates for the commercial nets because the "landed catch" is a higher percentage of bright chinook (58%) than expected (which figure was 48%).

So, how are the sporties doing? River anglers are not doing well but periods of sporadic activity have netted persistent anglers some quality fish. **Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** fished 3 rods on 8/5 using spinners and landed this quality 37 pound upriver bright. Note the spinner embedded in the corner of this fish's mouth- angler Doug Gentry is posing with his catch:



Another guide (Terry Mulkey) was reported to have landed 4 Chinook over the weekend. The sawdust pile in front of the mouth of the Skipanon was his best place for success although I heard he did get one near Buoy 11 close to low slack.

Boaters are scoring summer steelhead at the mouths of the Lewis and Cowlitz Rivers on the Washington side. This has been a fairly rewarding fishery and worth pursuing 'til the coho start up in full force.

Ocean anglers are getting out but finding mixed results. I have been opting out of my ocean trips due to unpredictable weather and ocean conditions but guides heading well south of the CR Buoy are finding limits of coho and a few Chinook after putting in several hours of fishing. Most of the fish are coho but a few Chinook are finding their way into several fish boxes. The anglers catching these fish are not targeting Chinook any differently that coho however. It seems that 200+ foot of water close to Seaside and Gearhart are responsible for the bulk of the catch. The ocean and bar have been treacherous during the recent minus tide series but seem to calm down during the late morning. According to the link at

http://seaboard.ndbc.noaa.gov//station_page.php?station=46029, the wind waves have finally began to subside making for more favorable conditions for anglers. The National Weather Service ocean forecast is calling for calming seas. It can be found here:

<http://seaboard.ndbc.noaa.gov/data/Forecasts/FZUS56.KPQR.html>. Recent history tells me that the forecast is a bit overblown for this area but it is best to err on the side of caution. Water temperature remains just below 53 degrees- more like it is supposed to! I went north looking for productive Chinook fishing like we had last year and never drew a strike. Hordes of baitfish were present but nary a Chinook. One guide commented that he noticed the near-shore Chinook fishery was poor when the current was running from north to south. Wouldn't you know it.....it was running from north to south! A gamble I may not take anymore since it is a long run just to find that out!

Ocean crabbing remains fair and only remains open through the 14th of August. One guide took 30 keepers south of the south jetty on 8/8 and he reported most of them were hard shelled! River crabbing in the lower Columbia remains poor.

Bottomfishing off of the sunken jetty (tip of the south jetty) has slowed significantly. Only a rare ling is being caught and remember that the rockfish limit has been reduced to 5 (but you can still have 2 ling cod too). There are minimum size restrictions for a few of the bottomfish so know your regulations before you venture out.

Sturgeon fishing remains hit-or-miss on the lower Columbia but keepers are coming from above and below Tongue Point. The most consistent fishing continues to be from the water above Tongue Point and the shallow water seems to be producing best in some areas as those areas can not be effectively fished with gillnets. I fished 6 rods on 8/7 coming up with only a single keeper. We caught a small handful of shakers as well and some other guides ended up with as many as 3 keepers for their boat-loads of customers. On 8/9, I spent several hours in pursuit of sturgeon near Marker 3 and came up with 2 keepers for 3 rods and about 10 shakers to boot. The bite has significantly changed to shrimp with only an occasional fish hitting anchovies. The best action remains on the flood tide as cooler water likely stimulates more aggressive biters. Most of the boats are congregating in the deeper water at Tongue Point although the extreme tide series required heavy lead to maintain the bottom. Fortunately, this won't be the case next week.

Tuna remain far offshore and really out of reach for the typical sport angler. Schools are rumored at 45 to 60 miles out and catch rates are poor.

Upriver, sturgeon fishing for keepers is closed and won't reopen until early October. Oversized fishing remains fair into the sanctuary but floater shad for bait (and that is the best) is hard to come by.

Some good action for steelheaders in the gorge- beach catches on the Oregon side near Beacon Rock were reported excellent on 8/7. Dam counts are running high with nearly 6,000 steelhead per day crossing the impoundment. The ratio of hatchery/wild is about 4:1. Dam counts at the Dalles Dam are hit or miss making the mouth of the Deschutes a crap shoot for plug trollers at the mouth. On 8/4, one guide boat fishing the mouth of the Deschutes reportedly had a double digit day while the next day, there weren't over 10 fish caught for the entire fleet! **Buzz Ramsey of Luhr Jensen** told me the "thermal block" of the mid-river causes slow passage upstream and many of those fish are seeking the cooler water of the Wind and Drano Lake. We are definitely in peak passage right now- it's just too bad that we don't have cooler water temperatures to take advantage of the high numbers of fish present!

Drano has been slow this season with action fair one day, very slow the next. Prawns are taking the majority of fish. Anglers are taking steelhead and catching some large chinook at Wind River fishing at Night using lighted lures. Dusk-to-dawn angling is legal in Washington State.

The Guide's Forecast – Buoy 10 is on the mind of many at this juncture as, well it should be. Most anglers will be relieved that they haven't missed much thus far. The one bonus of fishing this early in the season is that the fish are typically large this time of year. If you get lucky and find a pod of biters, you stand to have a good day with some quality fish. The problem in the upcoming week is that anglers will be faced with the bulk of their morning as an outgoing tide. Traditionally, (and I don't see this changing) only the first part of outgoing tide is productive for salmon fishing in the lower Columbia. The water temperature is still cool enough from the incoming tide to inspire fish to bite. By the time the bulk of the "ocean influenced" water is back out to sea, the water that has been influenced by so many miles of desert country has warmed to intolerable levels. Tides really start looking good closer to the middle part of next week (8/16 & 8/17) when low slack will take place early in the morning. This will allow anglers to take advantage of the low slack bite along with the entire incoming tide that will push both salmon and cool water into the angler's reach. For anglers that are fishing over the weekend, river fishing should not be all that impressive. You will be faced with an outgoing tide for most of the day however high slack and the first 2 hours of outgoing tide should produce some results. The bulk of the morning will be the second half of outgoing tide and that is the least productive over the course of the day. With the warmer water temperatures, I recommend using a mixture of both hardware and bait. Spinners in green or red/white were common winners in last year's

fishery and that shouldn't change for this year. Fresh herring are available at local bait shops although some guides use frozen herring exclusively. As we enter the early part of next week, anglers will want to take advantage of the low slack opportunities that will exist near the Buoy 10 deadline. Troll the last part of outgoing near Buoy 11 to 10 and hold there for the first 45 to 60 minutes of incoming tide. From there, blast upriver and fish in front of Hammond or at the bridge for flushing salmon. Hold into the incoming tide and keep your gear fishing deep.

For ocean anglers, this will be a big week and likely one of the best of the season. Chinook should begin to stage at the rivers mouth. Some anglers may recall what good Chinook fishing we had to the north of the north jetty last year. It seemed most of those fish were Tules however and at last observation, the current was running from north to south in that area- less than ideal conditions for a big Chinook take in that water. Chinook will also be staging to the SW of the mouth of the river as the big push of fish should begin early next week into the river. Coho fishing remains sporadic offshore but limits can still be taken here. There are not too many natives so ratios are tolerable and smaller Chinook are not so much an issue either. Jellyfish however are again a problem in some areas and may continue to be the bane of anglers as the season wears on. "Red-tide" has also been witnessed in the river already. We are not sure how this affects the bite. Water temperatures remain on the normal side for the mouth of the Columbia. Coincidentally, this puts tuna far offshore.

The estuary catch and keep sturgeon fishery will close after 8/15 as sport anglers make their way very close to the allotted quota. It won't reopen until the new year. Sturgeon fishing may make a nice alternative to river salmon fishing this weekend but keep in mind, the sturgeon fishing has been best during the same time period that salmon fishing will be best- on incoming tide. Shrimp remain the best bait in the upriver areas but anchovies may be the best bait in the crab infested waters below the bridge. Smelt is taking a toll on keepers as well in the lower estuary.

Leave your crab pots at home unless you are crabbing the ocean prior to the closure on the 15th of August. Retention of cabezon is now illegal as the sport quota for that species has been reached.

The best fishing going upriver is steelhead fishing using spinners from boats or spin-n-glos from the beach. The gorge fishery should continue to produce but numbers should begin to dwindle as the "A" run has peaked in the lower Columbia. The larger "B" run fish should begin to show and some anglers may get lucky with a early Chinook on a spinner or wobbler from Bonneville to Longview. 2,300 fall Chinook adults have already passed Bonneville Dam. To date, more steelhead than Chinook have passed Bonneville Dam- how pathetic is that?

The mouth of the Deschutes continues to produce sporadic results. One day it can be really consistent and show signs of busting loose but the next day, it is a bust!

Sturgeon interest in the upper river near Bonneville is waning. Oversize fish is the only game in town and aren't we all burned out on that already?

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – With single digits reported for chinook and steelhead counts at the Falls, it would be safe to call these runs a wrap for 2005.

Steelheaders must concentrate on resident fish now that numbers at Willamette Falls have fallen to insignificant levels and fresh fish are entering the Santiam infrequently. The population of fish is strong and prospects are good.

The McKenzie is in fine shape and continues to be stocked regularly.

The Guide's Forecast – Santiam anglers will do well to concentrate efforts higher on the system now. The Packsaddle and Minto Park stretches will be productive but caution is advised to anyone attempting a drift in that area. Boats will enjoy launching lower where the water is less hazardous. Fishermen's Bend would be a good spot to start for drift boaters. The Santiam remains in great shape with good water temps.

Fly fishing will be good on the McKenzie for long-rodders flinging caddis imitations. Dries will take fish all day long.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Slow is the word, often accompanied by the phrase "Dog Days of Summer" regarding the Clackamas River. The water is near 70 degrees, which is fine for bass, not so good for steelhead. The few remaining springers are not of any quality worth pursuing. Those to whom this river is convenient might find a summer steelie or two willing at first light. Try the tributary mouths for the best shot at one.

Ah, the Sandy in the summer. It's easily identifiable as a glacial stream with the warm weather contributing to the characteristic milky hue. The off-color condition which has put the skids to fishing here is unlikely to change while we're enjoying (enduring) the summer weather. Try elsewhere.

North Coast District Fishing Report – Reports from Rockaway Rich continue to grace our pages. Rich reports from Nehalem Bay, "I continue to hit the bay, fishing between the 101 bridge at Nehalem and Paradise Cove each a.m. with no fish to report... a few pictures go up on the board each day at the Wheeler marina but I don't know where the fish came from...its not from that area, must be from the jetty/jaws area. Each day I get to talk to the local experts "Sea Gull Al", "First Light Frank", "Uptown Wheeler - Walt Trandum", "happy Hour - Roy Ward"...and, like me, they have no fish to report." This fishery has been a bust for most of the season but a long time subscriber stopped by the fair booth today and reported to me that he had a friend (that was a good fisherman) consistently get about a fish/trip from the jaws to Nehalem. He is putting on some miles for those fish it is becoming clear.

Not many anglers taking advantage of the remaining open seasons for Chinook out of the ports of Garibaldi. That same gentleman who stopped by the fair booth on 8/10 also reported he had friends that were doing quite well on Chinook off of Nehalem and Manzanita in about 220 foot of water. He stated his friends were going down about 20 strips with plug cut herring and scoring well on Chinook. It was a rare day when the ocean conditions were favorable most of the day! It will be hard to focus on this fishery with the unpredictability of the ocean and the preparations going into the Buoy 10 fishery. My vote is for Buoy 10.

Marie Will of Tillamook Bait (503-842-5031) reports a successful trip out of Tillamook Bay by husband 'Captain Dennis' and crew over the last all depth halibut fishery August 5th and 6th. Limits were taken both days with three jumbo albacore in the mix on Saturday. They ventured 25 miles offshore to score and say only five other boats trying. The next all-depth halibut fishery will be August 19th through 21st with more dates available in September.

Summer steelheaders are finding challenging conditions during this low water period. Cloudy morning have helped some anglers but fish remain wary. Small baits and light lead will be key and anglers may want to employ bobbers and jigs to entice pool holding fish.

Sturgeon fishing is still happening along the lower Tillamook River but catches seem slower than in years past.

Crabbing out of Garibaldi and Netarts remains fair with big effort on the weekends.

The Guide's Forecast – The Nehalem River should improve for trollers fishing at the jaws. The holdover tides (weak tide exchange) should produce fair results for herring trollers on the outgoing tide. The first part of outgoing and the last half of it too should produce the best results. This means from about 7 am to 2 pm over the weekend for Nehalem Bay trollers. Ocean fishing for Chinook should remain steady unless the pod of fish off of Nehalem is bound for the Columbia River.

Crabbing should also be good on these holdover tides but keep in mind the ocean crabbing closes at the end of day on 8/14.

Central & South Coast Reports – The flurry of chinook action seen last week seems to have passed on the Siletz. It's been very slow recently with only one or two fish some days, six or seven the next. Double-digits are coming, though. If there's another early push of Fall chinook on the Siletz, the upcoming decent tidal series will be when it occurs. Mid-week will be the best shot at 'em.

Halibut limits were the rule out of Depoe Bay over the last all-depth fishery. Bottom fishing for rockfish and lings is rewarding as well although salmon fishing has been slow.

Tuna are available out of Depoe Bay and Newport but lately it's been a long trip to find the warmer water these fish prefer. In addition to unstable ocean conditions, boats have found cool water near shore requiring a journey of 35 miles or more to find deep blue, 60-degree seas.

Following the reduction of rockfish limits from 15 to eight and recently to five, an ODFW release on August 8th announced effective August 11th cabezon may not be retained as the "health of the stock is uncertain." This closure affects boat fishermen only; cabezon may still be taken fishing from shore. This due to the high mortality rate of deepwater fish released at the surface. It was reported here last week that Washington State had closed bottom fishing entirely outside the 30-fathom line. Expect more restrictions on bottomfish to follow.

Umpqua smallmouth fishing continues red hot and rocking on the Umpqua River. The scenic North Fork is providing decent fishing for summer steelhead. A few chinook and coho are being taken in the lower river between marker 19 and 22, but the operative word is few. It has been very slow.

Rogue Bay is attracting the attention of trollers hopeful for Fall chinook. The vast majority of them are disappointed, however, as there are far more fishermen than fish in the lower Rogue at this time. Last year, the Fall chinook run was well underway by now. The local newspaper ran the headline on August 7th, 2004, "Rogue River chock full of Chinook." This is it's considerably different. Beautiful and bountiful, the Rogue will deliver again this year ... eventually. Ocean chinook fishing which was great off the Southern Oregon coast at the closure in July, will re-open on August 14th.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Steelhead counts are climbing at Bonneville Dam from 3,500 a day last week to over 4,500 a day early this week. While the numbers at The Dalles average only 600 a day, anxious plug-pullers are lined up at the mouth of the Deschutes. Action has been fair to good and is improving as additional fish pass. Success has been reported by those fishing from the mouth upstream in the lower 10 miles or so. First and last light has been most productive.

Fly fishing is most rewarding early and late in the day on the Deschutes although redsides are falling to nymphs all day long. Caddis patterns are effective with dries taking fish in those productive hours when the shadows are long.

Subscriber, reliable contributor and good guy 'Dobe' reports: "Just got back this evening from a

two day fishing trip to Big Lava Lake with friends Bill Angel and Winston Arvey. Winston had fished the lake last week and reported that a frog pattern flatfish, #7, trolled down the middle of the lake was the hot ticket. Fish it right on the bottom as the deepest spot in the lake is about 30 feet. So that was the first thing we tried. As the day wore on, and no fish came to the net, we tried every thing in the tackle box. By dark, we had hooked only a few and " long distance release" took on a whole new meaning. This morning, Tuesday, we again hit the water early (5:30 am) and again tried everything we could think of and finally did land two nice 14 inch rainbows using the flatfish as suggested. However, we did see a fair amount of fish caught by trolling flies (green wooly bugers) and power bait fished right on the bottom,. John Garrison of Garrisons Guide Service from Sunriver had three boats loaded with people catching fish right and left. Rumor has it he mixes Velveeta cheese with tuna (?) Anyway, we had a great time as always and this was my first time at Big Lava Lake. There is a nice little store with an RV park and full hookups, a Forest Service campground and an excellent boat ramp. The lake covers about 300 acres and I am going to return and find the secret of catching fish there. Dobe P.S. Guide friend Howard Abshere told me last week that he caught a 11 lb plus rainbow out of Big Lava about three weeks ago by wind drifting a black wooly bugger fly."

Dobe also wrote last week but his Email arrived too late for publication. It's offered here as it is still relevant: "I took my daughter fishing at East Lake yesterday [08/02, Ed.] and to make a long story short, I hadn't fished East this year and was ill prepared for what was happening. Naturally, because I had left my downriggers home, the Kokes were hitting at 40' deep. Cow Bells with a wedding ring tipped with white corn was getting the job done. Also on the lake was a guide friend of mine, Howard Abshere, who was doing pretty good by wind drifting flies. He had three clients and reported 15 fish for a half day trip. Three Kokes and 12 Browns to 15 inches. "Also, would like to remind your readers that things are really dry here now. Please keep your campfires small, if they are allowed at all. It is a nervous time of year for all of us who live in the lodgepole/jackpine country."

Trout on the Willowa and Minam Rivers are susceptible now to large terrestrials, combining the extra enjoyment of fishing dries with some splashy, often aerial takes. Fly fishing has been excellent. Use nymphs in mid-day of the trout seem reluctant to rise for surface offerings.

Smallmouth bass fishing is excellent on the John Day but the river and flows are getting so low as to limit boat access in areas. Anglers thinking of a trip for smallies had best get in gear or go next year.

Northwest Bass & Panfish - The upper and lower Willamette is still producing smallmouth from rocky cover at current breaks.

Hagg Lake is kicking out a few bass, but evening time (after the splash-happy skiers, swimmers and jet-skiers have packed up) seems to be best. Always a tough nut to crack, with the water low and dropping, it ain't any easier. Yellow perch are cooperative but running small.

This is a great time of year to hit those little farm ponds **before** first light to experience some magic with largemouth bass on surface lures. A strike in the dark detectable only by sound, followed by a fight in near darkness is an exciting experience. Often these places look lifeless as soon as the sun is on the water. Readers may recall that a bass' eyes adjust to changing light levels more quickly than the critters upon which they feed, making this early morning transitional period highly productive.

Northwest Trout - On the stillwater scene, East Lake has been reliable on jigs for kokanee. in the 50-foot range. A few large brown trout have been taken on plugs early and late in the day. Green Peter is fair for kokes on the troll around the Island and jig fishermen are taking some

near the dam. Jigging at Odell has produced sporadic results. Kokanee fishing is very slow at Paulina.

It's tough to stock those State-raised rainbow trout in waters too warm to sustain them. Consequently, planting slows in mid-August. Only the upper McKenzie River and Leaburg Lake got a fresh fish injection this week.

Washington Fishing Report

North Puget Sound

The good news for anglers in the region is that the **coho** and **pink** salmon are on their way, and catch rates for those species should steadily improve through the month. The bad news is that the action for **chinook** salmon in the San Juan Islands -as well as the Elliott Bay and Tulalip Bay terminal area fisheries - remains slow, particularly in the two bay fisheries. While king catches improved somewhat during the Aug. 5-7 opener on Elliott Bay, the numbers are still lagging well below the five-year average, and fishery managers could close the season before the scheduled Aug. 22 end date. Check the WDFW website later this week for news of a possible early closure, at <http://wdfw.wa.gov> on the Internet.

On Aug. 5, fish-check crews stationed at the Armeni boat ramp counted 136 boats with 65 chinook onboard. On Aug. 6, samplers at the ramp tallied 163 boats with 73 chinook, and on Aug. 7 there were 139 boats checked with 55 chinook at the ramp. Patrick "Slim" Simpson, who heads WDFW's central Puget Sound sport fishing sampling program, said a few of the Elliott Bay chinook broke the 20-pound mark during the most recent opening. "We also counted a few coho and pink salmon in the catch, too, but the bulk of the catch was chinook," Simpson said. The Elliott Bay bubble fishery is open Friday through Monday each weekend with a two-fish daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon.

Chinook must be 22 inches to retain, and all chum salmon must be released immediately. Anglers in the Tulalip Bay terminal area have not fared any better than their counterparts on Elliott Bay. The Tulalip Bay bubble fishery is open Friday through noon on Monday until Sept. 27. Anglers in central Puget Sound are still finding plenty of resident coho salmon in the 2- to 4-pound range.

Productive gear has included spoons, imitation squid or small herring trolled behind a dodger, or flies fished up top early in the morning. The most productive locations have included Edmonds, Kingston and Jefferson Head. Salmon fishing in the San Juan Islands remains spotty, with a few chinook, coho and pink salmon hitting the landing nets in areas scattered throughout the region. A few **Cabezon** and **kelp greenling** are rounding out the action in the islands. The salmon daily limit in the San Juans is two salmon (no more than one chinook), plus two additional pink salmon. Chinook must be 22 inches to retain, and all chum salmon must be released immediately. Anglers in the Tulalip Bay terminal area have not fared any better than their counterparts on Elliott Bay. The Tulalip Bay bubble fishery is open Friday through noon on Monday until Sept. 27.

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inches. Crabbing remains open throughout the region on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule. Marine Area 7 North, which includes the San Juan Islands, opens Aug. 17. All areas will be open for the entire Labor Day weekend, and all are scheduled to close Sept. 30 for a catch assessment. Salmon-fishing opportunities start to move into the freshwater on Aug. 16 when seasons open on the lower Skagit, Snohomish and Skykomish rivers. There are already several thousand pink salmon rolling and jumping in the lower Snohomish River, said WDFW District Fish Biologist Chad Jackson. Pinks have also been seen at the Sunset Falls fish weir on the Sky. The Snohomish will open with a four-fish daily limit, minimum size 12 inches, and no more than a total of two fish may be coho and chum. All chinook must be released. The Skykomish opens on Aug. 16 from the mouth to the Lewis Street Bridge in Monroe with the same four-fish daily limit.

Jackson said most anglers in pursuit of pinks on the Skagit and the Skykomish will fish primarily with pink lead head jigs that range in weight from ¼ to ½ of an ounce. Fishing spoons with a lead dropper, or plunking a winged bobber and a prawn tail will also entice humpies to bite. Salmon fishing on the Skagit opens from the mouth upstream to the confluence with Gilligan Creek with a two-fish daily limit, minimum size of 12 inches. All chinook must be released. "The fishery in the lower Skagit typically starts out pretty slow, and gets going by the end of August," said Brett Barkdull, WDFW district fish biologist. "Right now the Skagit is 'low and dirty,'" Barkdull added - low from the lack of rain, and dirty from the glaciers that feed the Sauk and Suiattle rivers, which empty into the Skagit below Rockport. Fishery managers set the preseason forecasts for about 475,000 pink salmon and about 71,000 coho salmon to return to the Skagit system this year.

The ongoing salmon fishery on the lower Samish River has been slow. Look for additional salmon openers on area rivers Sept. 1. Lowland lakes can provide hot fishing action for warm water species, such as **crappie, bass, catfish** and **perch**, while **trout** anglers should target early morning and late evening hours, and expect to find the fish in deep waters. Along with a little solitude, there is a good chance of finding excellent trout fishing on many of the region's alpine lakes, including the high-elevation gems just north of Snoqualmie Pass. Hikers and backpackers who carry a fly rod or an ultralight spinning rod reel with them can usually get plenty of hook-ups with rainbow and cutthroat trout.

[South Sound/Olympic Peninsula](#)

Pro Guide Brad Shride of Onco Sportfishing & Guide Services, Inc, 206-463-9230 or 877-483-0047 Reports fishing in South Puget Sound area 11 & 13 has not changed much this past week. Morning bites are the norm here as with evening bites. There has been a little bit of a bite for the moochers on the slack incoming tide change at Pt. Dalco. Tides are a factor for putting fish in your boat as with getting on the water as early as you can. You need to be on the water and your gear in the water during the best times to fish, mornings, tide changes and evenings. Don't be shopping for a place to fish during these times.

Fish can be caught at the Clay Banks, the Slag Pile, Dalco, and the Gig Harbor beach. Three Tree Point, Robinson Pt, Pt Beals, and Dolphin Pt are producing fish for those that want to travel. The trollers seem to be doing the best in most places. The green Hot-Spot flasher and hoochie combo in glow white, purple haze, green spatterback, Coyote spoon and off course straight herring in the 40 feet to 90 feet range all will produce fish. Be sure to hit Pt Dalco area on the incoming tide and get there as it starts to turn and work this area until the bite is over. Moochers are doing okay here in the afternoons.

There was usually good action very early in the morning this week in the 40 to 70 foot range but as that sun got on the water we were looking a little deeper to find fish. Fish were in the 8 pound to 18 pound range. I saw a few fish in the 20 pound to 24 pound range and heard of fish to 28 pounds caught this week. You will have to work for your fish so be patient.

Tides are getting better this week in the morning. It seems he caught more Humpies this week than Silvers. Don't forget that two additional Humpies are allowed this year. The Humpies have small scales that fall off easily, big eyes, and oval shaped spots. Bleed, clean, and ice them as soon as you get them on board for best eating.

They put Silvers, Kings, and Humpies in the boat this week so all of them are around. He even heard of one or two chums caught. He was hitting Kings in the 75 foot to 90 foot range in the areas where they fished this week. Pay attention to your rod as he is still hooking fish by seeing a little tap, tap, tap on the downrigger rod and setting the hook myself. Soft biting fish are hard to detect so pay attention to your rod. He usually doesn't recommend this but set the hook once you get them off the downrigger. They have lost more fish this year from light hook sets??

Crab fishing has been producing some crab but you will need to look for them to get your limits. Just a note to everyone. Crab fishing is only allowed from Wednesday through Saturday and enforcement is out and writing tickets.

Give him a call at 206-463-9230 or at 877-483-0047 if you have any questions or would like to book a trip. He will be fishing the Buoy 10 on the Columbia River after this weekend and has a few spots left to fill and available for the Buoy 10 fishing on the Columbia.

Despite an influx of **chinook salmon** in some areas, salmon fishing off the Washington coast has been hit and miss in recent days, said Wendy Beeghley, a WDFW fish biologist who monitors the ocean fishery. Catch rates off Westport and Ilwaco picked up dramatically during the first few days of August, then settled back to about one salmon per angler by the end of the week, said Beeghley, noting that anglers aboard charter boats have done somewhat better than those aboard private boats. On the north coast, anglers have been averaging about one salmon for every two rods, with **pink salmon** making up more than half the catch off Neah Bay. "In general, anglers have been working pretty hard for their fish," Beeghley said. "One day they'll find them, and the next day those fish will have moved on." In the weeks ahead, many anglers will face the additional challenge of even *getting* to ocean fishing areas, given plans by the Washington Department of Transportation to close the Hood Canal Bridge for repairs on certain days. The first closure will begin at 10 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 11, and last until 5 a.m. Monday, Aug. 15. The second closure will begin at 10 a.m.

Sunday, Aug. 21, and end at 5 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 25. Like the warm water that slowed salmon fishing at the start of the season, **albacore tuna** appear to have moved farther offshore, reducing interest in that fishery among anglers with private boats. In addition, fishing for **bottomfish** and **lingcod** is now prohibited in most ocean waters deeper than 180 feet in an effort to reduce catches of canary rockfish. The closure includes all seaward waters of the 30-fathom depth contour in marine areas 2, 3 and 4, from the Westport area north to Neah Bay. For ocean anglers intent on catching a chinook salmon, Marine Area 2 (Westport) is probably the best bet, Beeghley said. Chinook, most ranging between 12 to 15 pounds with a few in the 40-pound range, made up nearly 85 percent of the catch in that area during the week ending Aug. 7, she said. Beeghley noted that some of those fish are already moving into Willapa Bay, a few weeks earlier than usual.

"That could bode well for this year's fishery in Willapa Bay," she said. In other areas, catches of hatchery **coho** - averaging eight to nine pounds - have outnumbered those of chinook salmon by three to one in Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco) and two to one in Marine Area 3 (LaPush). Like Neah Bay, pink salmon have made up the majority of the catch in the western Strait of Juan de Fuca (Marine Area 5), where WDFW checked 1,155 anglers with 1,155 salmon during the week ending Aug. 7. Of those fish, 985 were pink salmon, 22 were chinook and 10 were coho. In the eastern

Strait (Marine Area 6), WDFW checked 168 anglers with 14 pink salmon, 19 chinook and no coho. "The bulk of the coho usually arrive in September, but a lot of people are asking what happened to the chinook," said Laurie Peterson, WDFW fish biologist. "It could be poor ocean survival or it could be a timing issue due to ocean temperatures. We'll have a better idea in a few weeks." In any case, the selective fishery for marked chinook extending from the mouth of the Sekiu River to Ediz Hook will close today (Aug. 10) well short of the season quota, said Peterson, noting that as of Aug. 7 anglers had caught just over half of the 3,500 fish allowed. Meanwhile, pink salmon - along with some coho and chinook - have been pushing deeper into Puget Sound, increasing catch rates from Point No Point to Point Defiance. On Aug. 7, WDFW checked 16 anglers with five chinook at the Port Orchard boat ramp and 126 anglers with 14 chinook, three coho and four **chum salmon** at the Point Defiance ramp. Anglers have also been finding fish in rivers throughout the region, although low-water conditions often present a challenge. Salmon fishing is closed on the Hoh River due to poor returns, but fishing for hatchery **steelhead** has been picking up there and on the Quillayute River, said David Low, WDFW fish biologist. But the best bet on the Olympic Peninsula is probably the Sol Duc River, "which is packed with coho," Low said. "Everybody's talking about the early-run coho on the Sol Duc, which is also producing some **sockeye**," said Low, who reminds anglers to check regulations for releasing wild fish on all north coast rivers. Farther south, the Nisqually and Skokomish rivers have been producing a few chinook salmon but the glacier-fed Puyallup River has been running chocolate brown with no reports of angler success. While fishing has slowed in many lakes around the region, Pierce County anglers are picking up some nice **kokanee** in Alder Lake on Wedding Ring/worm combinations. In cooler weather, Offut Lake in Thurston County has been producing limits of rainbows, ranging from 12 to 20 inches. **Bass** fishing with jigs and worms has also been good in many of the smaller lakes in Mason County. Rather catch some **crab**? The recreational fishery remains open throughout Puget Sound on two basic schedules. 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), 9 (Admiralty Inlet) 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 12 (Hood Canal).

Southwest Washington:

Pro Guide Bob Barthlow tells TGF that he started his Drano Lake downrigger troll trips on Saturday 8/6, and did pretty well, boating 8 steelhead(released 4 nates) and 2 URB's(Up River Brite Fall Chinook) All the action came off Blue fox spinners and Fatfish fished off downriggers.

Bob says that this fishery will get nothing but better the next month as URB and "B" run steelhead numbers build.

Photos from Bob Barthlow:



While the waiting game continues for salmon, anglers have been reporting good fishing for summer **steelhead** and white **sturgeon** on stretches of the Columbia River and its tributaries. A survey team counted about 50 boats around Buoy 10 during a Saturday fly-over, but very few **salmon**, said Wendy Beeghley, a fish biologist who monitors the coastal fishery. "It's still pretty early, but salmon anglers should start seeing some action around the third week of August," Beeghley said. Some fall chinook have been showing up in the catch farther upriver, but hatchery steelhead are still drawing most of the attention right now, said Manuel Farinas, WDFW regional fish manager. "Summer steelhead runs usually peak in late July, but there are still a lot of fish around," Farinas said. One hotspot has been Drano Lake at the mouth of the Little White Salmon River, where boat anglers have been averaging 1.7 hatchery steelhead per rod. Bank anglers are also doing fairly well there, said Farinas, noting that anglers must release any unmarked steelhead they catch on the Columbia and its tributaries.

Steelhead were also reported rolling at the mouth of the Wind River, while anglers pulled some good-sized steelies from the White Salmon River and from the Cowlitz River near Blue Creek. Steelhead fishing remained slow on the mainstem Columbia below Bonneville Dam, where the catch averaged one fish for every nine rods - with a few fall chinook and **searun cutthroat trout** helping to sweeten the pot. No wonder that anglers fishing the lower Columbia River estuary showed more interest in the **sturgeon** fishery, which is scheduled to close for retention of sturgeon Aug. 16. During a fly-over Aug. 6, biologists counted 200 private boats and five charter boats fishing below the Wauna power lines, where sturgeon retention was extended after falling short of the harvest guideline. Since then, catch rates have been fairly high for boats based out of Chinook and Ilwaco, where charters have been averaging about three-quarters of a fish per rod and private boats have been averaging about a quarter of a fish per rod. That compares to about one-third of a fish per rod for boat anglers checked at the Deep River and Knappton ramps. "All in all, we're seeing a strong finish for the sturgeon-retention fishery," Farinas said. Although sturgeon fishing will continue below Bonneville on a catch-and-release basis, Farinas noted that fishing effort has dropped considerably between the Wauna power lines and Bonneville Dam since the retention fishery there ended Aug. 1. For anglers looking to catch some big trout, Farinas recommends the Swift Reservoir on the Lewis River. During the first week of August, WDFW planted the reservoir with 2,000 jumbo and broodstock rainbows, ranging from 1½ pounds to 12 pounds apiece. Bank anglers have also been catching some landlocked coho and chinook at Mayfield and Riffe lakes. Meanwhile, Swofford Pond near Mossyrock has been producing catches of **bluegill**, **perch** and **bass**. WDFW observers recently counted nine boats fishing for **walleye** between Camas and Bonneville Dam.

Eastern Washington:

WDFW is reminding anglers that the Wenatchee and Entiat rivers and portions of Methow River are closed.

Pro Guide Jeff Knotts of JB's GUIDE SERVICE (509.547.7450) fished both the Big White Salmon riffle off the bank on did a little bobber fishing at the mouth. There should be fish here but they don't seem to be coming into the river in any great numbers. There have been a few good bites, but is generally slower than it should be. Perhaps after "spill" is over the fish will need to seek out cooler water and fishing will improve. Walleye are going pretty good all over the Columbia Basin. Boaters fishing worm harnesses Boardman to McNary are seeing some nice catches as well those fishing the mouth of Snake river up to Ice Harbor Dam. Jeff He will be working on Hanford Reach Salmon.

The region's fishing holes that have substantial populations of warmwater species - including Spokane County's Chapman, Clear, Downs, Eloika, Liberty, Long, and Newman lakes - are producing bass, bluegill, crappie, perch, catfish, says WDFW Central District Fish Biologist Chris Donley of Spokane. Sprague Lake on the Lincoln County line, Rock Lake in Whitman County, and

Deer and Loon lakes in Stevens County, are also decent bets for fishing action, but the catching is pretty much confined to early morning and late evening hours when air and water temperatures moderate. "This is definitely warmwater fishing time," Donley said. "Trout and other salmonids that need cooler water are holed up now. If we get some cooler nights to lower the water temperatures, fishing should improve at many of the local lakes that have been slow during these dog days of summer." The season opener of the steelhead retention fishery is Sept. 1 on the Snake and Grand Ronde rivers in the south end of the region, but the big fish are expected to lay low until water temperatures drop.

North Central Washington:

WDFW District Fish Biologist Jeff Korth of Moses Lake suggests **walleye** fishing at Potholes Reservoir and Moses Lake. "The action is a little slower in the summer, but there are a lot of fish for anglers willing to figure out how to catch them," Korth said. "Try trolling plugs and crank baits close to the bottom, late in the day and into the evening." Korth says **kokanee** trout fishing is picking up at Banks Lake. "I've heard the average kokanee there is a fat 16 inches," he said. Portions of the upper Columbia River continue to produce summer-run **chinook salmon**, particularly near the confluence of the Okanogan and Columbia rivers, below Wells and Rocky Reach dams and near the confluence of the Columbia and Wenatchee rivers. Fish have been ranging from 15 to 25 pounds. The daily catch limit is six chinook, with no more than two adults of at least 24 inches in length. Coho and sockeye salmon must be released. 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 WDFW and the Colville Confederated Tribes.

South Central Washington:

August is a good time to hit high lakes for **trout** says WDFW Fish Biologist Jim Cummins. "Bugs generally are not as plentiful now as earlier, and being near water at high elevations is a good way to beat the heat," he said. **Cutthroat, rainbow** and **eastern brook trout** can be caught in high lakes on a variety of flies and lures. Cummins says rivers and streams can also provide good fishing for rainbow trout at lower elevation streams and cutthroat trout at higher elevation creeks. "Fish can be spooky in low flow conditions, but fly anglers can be successful using terrestrial imitations," Cummins said. Special rules apply to many rivers and streams, so be sure to check the fishing regulations before making that first cast. **Bass** and **catfish** are being caught on the Columbia and lower Yakima rivers during early morning and late evening hours.

Reader Email

We (Michael) heard this week from James R. Ruggles, chairman Yamhill County Parks Board, who wrote, "Mike, you may not remember, but about 1 to 1-1/2 years ago I talked to you regarding a launch fee the County Parks Board was trying to get established at this particular park. Only due to the financial drain this Park is to the County due to the renovation that has taken place. The launch fee has just been approved by the Commissioners but other issues are at odds. Anyway I thought it may be a story for you to 1) let boaters be aware of the fee and 2) why. Additionally, as the Parks Board it is our intent to add other improvements."

Thank you Mr. Ruggles. Consider it done.

Reader Colby G. wrote via the Contact Form at the TGF website: "I'm a paid subscriber, and new to the Portland area. I have 3 children, so much of my time is sent trying to get them hooked into a few fish. We've managed a 14 pound Sandy River Steelhead, a few stock rainbows, and several crabs from the Tillamook Jetty. We've had fun! I don't here about catfishing much. Is there nightfishing possibilities in the area? Thanks for the forum that you provide."

Thanks for writing, Colby! There are populations of catfish in most lakes that have bass and

panfish present as well as slower-moving rivers like the Tualatin and Yamhill. Hagg Lake has a good number of bullhead cats (arguably better on the table than channels) while channel catfish are established in the upper Willamette.

While evenings and after sunset the traditional time to fish cats, they'll take bait during the daylight hours as well. A nightcrawler scented with anise oil is effective for all species. Keep the bait right on the bottom to tempt them.

A night on the riverbank or lakeside with a youngster will be a life-long memory for both. I (Michael) still remember evenings spent with my Dad catching bullheads.

We'll write at greater length in the future about this specie since there's interest in it.

Christine Simon-Buell of Secret Island LLC (503-801-1138) recently moved their operation to Sitka, Alaska, and wrote this week to Bob, "The fishing has been awesome up here! It was slower last week with boats coming in with only a few Coho. But they are just starting the bulk of there run now into the Sitka area and trollers are coming in with them by the thousands. The pink and chum salmon runs have been steady and in good numbers and the sockeye are here and there depending on the different areas they come in from. I had my first taste of Sockeye the other day - YUM I think it has to be the best of Salmon. The halibut fishing is also good up here. You have to go in the ocean to get those of any significant size but I think the good edible ones are the smaller ones out of the sound anyway. No tuna up here- we do miss them. Tron stocked up with a bunch of cans before he left. Hopefully they last a while lol. Oh yeah the rockfish - you can't get away from them. Everyone throws them back. You can throw a line in anywhere and catch a rockfish. But they look so hearty and clean up here it's odd how you don't notice that factor until you see them in these waters. Anyway that's the scoop so far. If your readers are interested in this area I can write a bit now and then if ya want. Otherwise, I can just chat at you!"

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: drees@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: SailCat@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Coast Guard warns boaters to be prepared:

<http://www.dailyastorian.info/main.asp?SectionID=2&SubSectionID=395&ArticleID=26580&TM=15306.93>

Check yesterday's offshore water temp here; later information requires a subscription:

<http://www.terrafin.com/sstview/samples/freeoregon.htm>

Caution advised regarding Rogue River flow:

<http://www.mailtribune.com/archive/2005/0807/local/stories/12local.htm>

Weekly Quote – "I fish not because I regard fishing as being so terribly important but because I suspect that so many of the concerns of men are equally unimportant - and not nearly so much fun." - Robert Traver

GOOD LUCK!