

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 9<sup>th</sup> – September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005**

**Fisheries Update:**

**Oregon Report**

**Salmon** fishing remains spotty at Nehalem Bay. **Fall chinook** have started entering Tillamook Bay with anglers finding action occasionally with spinners on the upper bay. A few **chinook** have been taken in Nestucca and Salmon River tidewater.

**Crabbing** has been good at Tillamook and Netarts Bays.

**Halibut** fishing out of Garibaldi, Depoe Bay and Newport during the weekend all-depth opener was good to anglers. All-depth halibut is open for the summer season every Friday, Saturday and Sunday until the quota fills.

**Tuna** are being taken at 30 to 30 miles offshore out of Depoe Bay.

The ODFW reports more than 50 percent success rates for most charters fishing out of Southern Oregon ports.

Siuslaw, Coquille and Coos Rivers have all been productive at times. Anglers are finding **chinook** out of Reedsport both offshore and in Winchester Bay. They're catching a few up into the Umpqua now.

Rogue Bay anglers continue to hook chinook but sea lions are getting most of the fish, a problem shared at Winchester Bay.

Columbia **salmon** fishermen are doing best in the middle river at the mouths of tributaries and in the Portland to Longview stretch. It's slow at Buoy 10 and despite good number of fish, very slow at Bonneville. Fishing wibblers on anchor seems to be the ticket.

While a few **salmon** have been taken at the mouth of the Sandy, the river remains milky and fishing is slow. The Clackamas is slower. Steelheaders who determine holding patterns on the North Santiam have the best chance of catching a fish. The North Santiam flow will increase by 1/3 on September 25th. This is not a bad thing.

Tens of thousands of chinook have been counted at Bonneville and The Dalles Dams giving plug-pullers at the mouth of the Deschutes something to look forward to. **Steelheading** on the Deschutes has improved over the last week.

**Smallmouth and largemouth bass** in the Willamette Valley are due to start their Fall feeding binges. All it'll take is for the water temps to lower a bit. Shorter daylight hours signal the change of seasons to these critters.

Lake Simtustus is putting out decent catches of **rainbow trout**. **Kokanee** fishing has been poor lately. Kokanee action has been fair to good at Paulina where trout fishing has slowed.

This week, waters planted with State-raised **rainbows** include Cape Mears, Estacada, Small Fry and Faraday Lakes as well as North Fork Reservoir.

## Washington Report

### North Puget Sound:

The transition from **pink** salmon to **coho** salmon is well under way in the saltwater sport fishery. While 2- to 4-pound pinks are still hitting anglers' gear, increasing numbers of ocean-going coho are nudging the humpies out of the spotlight in many areas, including marine waters inside Whidbey Island (marine areas 8-1 and 8-2), Admiralty Inlet (Marine Area 9) and central Puget Sound (Marine Area 10). "The bulk of the coho we're seeing at the boat ramps are averaging around six pounds apiece, but we have seen a few individual fish up to 13 pounds," said Patrick "Slim" Simpson, the head of WDFW's sport fish sampling program for Puget Sound. Simpson said anglers have been reporting good coho action off Meadow Point, near Edmonds and off Mukilteo.

### South Sound/Olympic Peninsula:

Anglers fishing off the Washington coast continue to reel in large numbers of **chinook salmon** as the ocean salmon fishery enters the home stretch. Although **coho** catches have not met expectations, anglers had caught 87 percent of the chinook guideline for the Washington coast by Sept. 4. In Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco), where the catch had already exceeded the chinook guideline for that area, WDFW issued an emergency rule requiring anglers to release any chinook they catch as of Sept. 9. "Our goal is to try to extend the ocean salmon fishery as long as we can," said Pat Pattillo, intergovernmental salmon policy coordinator. "The chinook fishery out of Ilwaco has been one of the best we've seen in years." Barring any further actions, the salmon fishery out of Ilwaco is scheduled to run through Sept. 30.

### Southwest Washington:

An update from **Pro Guide Brad Shride (877-483-0047)** - Fishing at Buoy 10 this past week was good with some limits and a good mix of URB **Kings** and Hatchery and Native **Silvers**, (Coho) for those that traveled outside the Columbia River Bar. More Tules were caught this week as well. We got into some very big Hatchery Coho this past week. It was about a 50/50 mix on Hatchery and the Wild Coho. You have to release the Native Coho. We were traveling as far South as 10 miles from the CR Buoy to find fish. Bait of choice for us was Anchovies behind a diver, shortened Bungie, Fish Flash and a 5 foot 40 # leader with 4/0 and 5/0 Gamakatsu hooks.

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### Eastern Washington:

From **Pro Guide Pat Long of Snake River Guide Service (509-751-0410)**

**Steelhead** fishing on the Snake River has started to pick up with the rising numbers of fish crossing over Lower Granite Dam this past week. Most of the fish are being caught in the area just below the confluence of the Clearwater River then upstream into the Lower Clearwater itself. Water temps on the main stem Snake remain around 70 degrees so most of the arriving fish

bound for the Snake's upriver regions are holding in the cooler water around Lewiston and Clarkston. This situation will change as we get some cool weather, until then the fishing hot spot will remain in this area.

### **North Central Washington:**

Bob Jateff, WDFW's district fish biologist in Omak, reminds anglers of the early closure to all fishing of the Chewuch River from the mouth to Eight Mile Creek, and the Twisp River from the mouth to War Creek. These sections of the Chewuch and Twisp were open for catch-and-release fishing and scheduled to close Sept. 30, but they were closed Sept. 6 to protect fish. Extremely low water, coupled with high summer temperatures, concentrated fish into areas where they are susceptible to repeated catch and release fishing, Jateff said.

### **South Central Washington:**

The Yakima River opened for **salmon** fishing Sept. 1 from the Columbia River to Sunnyside (Parker) Dam. Creel checks are yet to come, and the fishery remains open through Oct. 22. Paul Hoffarth, WDFW fisheries biologist, reminds anglers that a Yakama Nation fishing permit is required for fishing in all areas upstream of the Highway 223 bridge at Granger. Check the 2005-06 fishing pamphlet's "Special Rules" section for the Yakima River for additional details and restrictions. Hoffarth said a strong **fall chinook** return is anticipated this year in the Hanford Reach area of the Columbia River, which has been open since the middle of last month and remains available for salmon fishing through Oct. 22.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – And so it begins. Jaw-dropping numbers are coming in from counters at Bonneville Dam as the chinook are on the move. On September 1st, over 12,000 crossed and every day since, between 13,000 and 23,000 have been tallied. Fish counters at The Dalles Dam are seeing about 10,000 a day. Deschutes anglers rejoice.

Despite the numerous chinook cavorting below Bonneville Dam, the bite has been off. Nothing has been working consistently up that high. The Portland to Longview stretch is an entirely different story.

The Buoy 10 fishery has slowed although many would say it never really took off. With over 1,300 boats jetting out on Saturday alone, the salmon may just be spooked biteless, but more likely they're just on their way upriver. Fish checkers at Ilwaco are seeing only single digits in a day. Above the bridge on the incoming has offered some opportunities but the most successful lower river trips have been across the bar when the wind and wave action allows. Offshore action has been good for coho several miles south of the Columbia River Buoy.

Buoy 10 action was as good as it's been this year late last week with catch rates declining each day over the weekend according to fish checkers. On Monday, September 5th, over 400 boats took 67 chinook and 80 coho. While those statistics aren't dazzling, it is interesting to note that coho outnumbered chinook - this is the first time this season that has occurred.

With tuna moving within the 30 mile mark, some offshore trollers have been hopeful for a hookup but the better opportunities are further South.

Friday's the last day to cross the bar in search of salmon, though. Offshore salmon fishing will close out of the Columbia River (Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon) on September 9th according to an ODFW release dated September 7th. Buoy 10 will likely be next on the list for closure, but the fishery will continue to wind down regardless.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Historically, chinook counts at Bonneville Dam peak about this time of year. To put the recent numbers in perspective for 2005, the last 30 days (though September 6th) 50,000 chinook have passed Bonny. It's definitely not over, but these are the top numbers we'll see this year.

For chinook in the Columbia, think Portland to Longview stretch. The Kalama or Cowlitz River mouths. The crowds at the I-205 Bridge are there for a reason.

The upriver bright chinook bite is on with wobblers fished on anchor causing the demise of many a fish. Any color is been good as long as it's silver and blue. Fish Alvins, Clancies or Brad's on a 60-inch leaders and droppers to match in about 50 feet of water. According to [How Fish See Colors](#) by ophthalmologist Ted Takasaki, blue is about the only color which can be distinguished at 50 foot depths.

If the action holds up, this strategy will not allow for napping. Chinook have also been taken on Kwikfish and spinners. Move to find the lanes of travel if the rods aren't getting action. Tuna fishing out of Astoria and Warrenton will remain a crapshoot and with fish moving in closer out of Depoe Bay, the latter would be a better starting point.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – With the Willamette closed for sturgeon for the remainder of 2005 and nothing much happening on the salmon or steelhead front, there's not much to interest anglers on the Willamette except for the bass fishing.

Various techniques have produced summer steelhead on the North Santiam.

Trout and steelhead fishing on the McKenzie River remains slow.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Check the Bass and Panfish section below for Willamette info.

Stay persistent on the North Santiam for steelhead action. The important thing this time of year is to establish a pattern. Make note of where a fish is hooked and how it was holding. Chances are the next one will be in a similar location. Water flows will be raised from the current 1,000 cfs to 1,500 cfs on September 15th at Niagara. This should only serve to improve fishing. Try above Mill City for best results on this river. It's been a tough nut to crack this year.

The Upper and Lower McKenzie River was stocked last week. Recorded fishing information is available at 541-896-3294. Fly anglers will do best with terrestrial patterns and caddis imitations. McKenzie River Shuttle Service is available at 541-896-0526.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – Anglers fishing the mouth of the Sandy River have hooked into oversized sturgeon a few times recently. This might be a species to target for catch and release for those days when we just can't buy a salmon bite. Scores of boats were seen at this location over the weekend although only a handful managed to land chinook.

The Sandy River proper remains at the mercy of the warm weather. The Glacial origin of the river is evident and it remains murky. While steelhead and a few coho are present in the Clackamas, it's drawing very little angler interest.

Clackamas levels remains very low and the water is clear. It's a good place to avoid the crowds, though, especially for folks who aren't interested in catching fish. But I s'pose those folks don't read TGF.

**North Coast District Fishing Report** – Nehalem Bay has had good days and bad days without rhyme or reason. The best chance at action will come at first light and/or the turn of the tide. The Necanicum has provided fair to good fishing for Fall chinook over the last week.

Last year at this time, anglers were catching chinook in the Trask River thanks to early rain. With the dry weather this year, the Fall chinook fishing is just starting up in Tillamook Bay with a few taken on trolled spinners in the upper bay. Mild fides over the coming weekend will favor crabbing, however. When the two coincide would be the best time to be on the water. A decent tidal series to boost fishing prospects won't occur in mid-month.

Halibut fishing over the weekend all-depth opener was very good out of Garibaldi with many fish in the 40 to 50-pound range getting a boat ride back to port.

Crabbing has been fair at Tillamook Bay, excellent in Netarts Bay.

A few Fall chinook have been taken at Pacific City and near the tricky mouth of the Nestucca but it's really a little early to target this fishery with optimism. Chinook and coho are being taken in modest numbers on the Salmon River.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Nehalem anglers may find some bobber-fishing opportunities at the top of tidewater as the fish start moving up. Additional numbers of Fall chinook sill improve in Nehalem an Tillamook Bays through September. It's unlikely that the Trask fishery will take off any time prior to the next decent sets of tides or a good, flushing rain.

All-depth halibut will remain open for the summer season every Friday through Sunday between Cape Falcon near Manzanita, and Humbug Mountain near Port Orford until the quota is met.

If the rain showers forecast for the weekend amount to anything, it could jump-start the Fall chinook season on the Nestucca and Salmon Rivers. Otherwise, the next big push will be mid-month with a strong tidal exchange. That's about the time to get serious about these fisheries anyway.

Crabbing will be very good in the coming week with plenty of males available and Dungeness in good condition.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Offshore salmon fishing is good all along the South coast with the ODFW reporting better than 50 percent success rates for most charters.

Fall chinook continue to be caught in the lower Siletz and seasonal pressure was on the fish over the Labor Day weekend. Saturday was fair with the action slowing on Sunday. Monday, Labor Day 2005, was the yesterday you should have been here. The Siletz River caught fire with many Kwifishers off the water mid-morning having limited out on large, chrome salmon.

Halibut fishing has been rewarding out of Newport for flatties running 30 to 50 pounds. Offshore chinook salmon fishing picked up over the weekend with many trollers scoring limits. Boats are taking good numbers of coho, too, with these fast-growing fish in the 10-pound-range now. As always, fish shallow for silvers, deeper for chinook. The better fishing has been over 170 to 200 feet of water.

As the coho put on weight, the chance of mistaking a big native far a chinook increases. The ODFW offers this test to be sure: "The lower jaw of a chinook at the base of the teeth is black

while on coho the lower jaw at the base of the teeth is a band of white sandwiched between a dark outer band and a dark band inside of the teeth."

Depoe Bay fishermen have found warmer water and tuna offshore recently inside 30 miles and occasionally within 20. If the fish won't take trolled lures, try casting swimbaits to them.

Offshore bottom fishing is as near a sure thing for a limit as fishing gets, particularly since the daily bag for rockfish was reduced to five. About half the fishermen trying are adding a ling cod to their take.

For those troubled with seasickness, a drug called Meclizine may be the answer. It's getting rave reviews from anglers who have tried it, even those for whom nothing worked previously. It's a non-drowsy formulation available without prescription but you'll have to ask the pharmacist for it as it's not stocked on the shelf.

Yaquina Bay has been kicking out limits of big, hard-shelled Dungeness on 'most every type of bait.

A report on the bar conditions, restrictions, and weather outlook is available for Yaquina Bay by tuning 1610 on your AM dial. It's short-range, though, but can be heard within about a 10-mile radius of the Newport Coast Guard station where it originates.

Alsea River anglers are scoring fair to good numbers of chinook. Fish are being taken near Silver Bend, Canal Creek and Kozy Kove. Trolling and bobber fishing have both been effective at times.

Coquille River trollers are taking good numbers of chinook, and Coos Bay has been fairly productive. One angler, trolling herring just below the Highway 101 Bridge on the Coos, got quite a surprise over the weekend. After a deep battle with what he thought was a husky chinook, he landed a 40 pound halibut. While not unheard-of (a few were taken last year in September at that location), it is certainly unusual.

Below, angler Tom H. displays a perfect Fall chinook from the Coquille. He and his son, Travis landed two for three chances on Saturday, September 3rd and two for two on Sunday. Photo courtesy Larry Moore of Fish-Works (<http://www.fish-works.com/>)



There's plenty of pressure on the Siuslaw River which has offered fair to good fishing below

Cushman. The numbers and action are improving weekly.

Brian Flick of Eugene won the top prize of \$500 in the recent Gardiner-Reedsport-Winchester Bay STEP Salmon Derby. The 250 contestants entered an impressive 299 chinook. Everyone was looking for that elusive 50-pounder like the one taken in the 2004 derby, but it was not to be this year.

Scores of chinook are falling to trollers fishing over 150 to 200 feet of water at 35 to 50 foot depths out of Winchester Bay with fish averaging 18 to 20 pounds. Most of the action inside the bay has occurred between markers 22 and 28 with the majority of boats landing a chinook or two. Seals remain highly competitive for hooked salmon. The Umpqua River above Sawyers Rapids is producing chinook now.

Anglers may expect to see some additional flow on the North Umpqua as the ODFW, which normally releases water from Diamond Lake every October, began the release early. As part of the eight feet that will be drawn down for the Diamond Lake Restoration Project, this increased flow will continue through April of 2006. Most years, the ODFW releases only two feet of Diamond Lake water to increase spring chinook spawning habitat in the North Umpqua River.

Rogue Bay anglers are getting lots of hookups but landing only a small percentage of 'em - sea lions get the majority of the chinook. It's artificial flies only from Gold Ray Dam to the Hatchery Hole on the Rogue as of September 1st to protect spawning salmon which might be tempted by bait. Any type of tackle may be used but no weights are allowed - only floats for additional weight when using something other than fly-fishing rods and reels. On December 1st, bait will gain be allowed above the Shady Cove boat ramp.

Salmon fishing out of Brookings is dead slow. The offshore salmon season closes South of Humbug Mountain on September 11th.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Lake Simtustus is putting out decent catches of rainbows averaging 12 inches and every so often much larger. Kokanee fishing has been poor lately. Kokanee action has been fair to good at Paulina where trout fishing has slowed. Brown trout are available here and best pursued at first and last light.

With the warm waters of the John Day flowing at a mere 60 cfs, the fishing for smallies has slowed. Many of the John Day tributaries have dried up completely. Early and late in the day offer the best opportunities. A few channel catfish have been taken.

Smallmouth bass fishing is fair at Browlee Reservoir, famous for its large, challenging crappie. Best catches are invariably made at night using lanterns to attract baitfish and ultimately the fish that eat them. Channel catfishing is good on fresh fish baits or anise-scented nightcrawlers. Channels will often hit lures and are partial to small spinnerbaits. Crawdad-colored Beetle Spins will take a variety of fish here including yellow perch, smallies, crappie and catfish.

Trout fishing is fair to good on the Deschutes for fly anglers with caddis dries effective mornings and evening and nymph patterns of the same insect all day long. Steelhead fishing has picked up from Macks Canyon up to Pine Tree. Plug pullers at the mouth are anxious for some of the tens of thousand of chinook which have been counted at Bonneville and The Dalles to show up in this area.

**Northwest Bass & Panfish** - The smallmouth fishery hasn't turned on yet as it does seasonally on the upper Willamette. When the nights get cool. showers lower the water temp a bit and the

shorter daylight hours signal the approach of winter, smallies will start a Fall feeding binge. Largemouth in lakes and sloughs exhibit the same behavior. Smallmouth fishing is good below the Falls and into Multnomah Channel.

With water temperatures just above 70 degrees, Hagg Lake producing good numbers of smallies and largemouth, a very few of which are good sized.

**Northwest Trout** – This week, waters planted with State-raised rainbows include Cape Mears, Estacada, Small Fry and Faraday Lakes as well as North Fork Reservoir. Hagg Lake will be stocked with 8,000 trout on September 26th. This will be the last planting at Hagg this year as it closes every year on the weekend before Thanksgiving to re-open the first weekend in March. Stocking of the larger "trophy" trout will take place in mid-September in several of the coastal lakes including Lost, Cape Meares and Town Lakes.

### **Washington Fishing Report:** **North Puget Sound:**

The transition from **pink** salmon to **coho** salmon is well under way in the saltwater sport fishery. While 2- to 4-pound pinks are still hitting anglers' gear, increasing numbers of ocean-going coho are nudging the humpies out of the spotlight in many areas, including marine waters inside Whidbey Island (marine areas 8-1 and 8-2), Admiralty Inlet (Marine Area 9) and central Puget Sound (Marine Area 10). "The bulk of the coho we're seeing at the boat ramps are averaging around six pounds apiece, but we have seen a few individual fish up to 13 pounds," said Patrick "Slim" Simpson, the head of WDFW's sport fish sampling program for Puget Sound. Simpson said anglers have been reporting good coho action off Meadow Point, near Edmonds and off Mukilteo.

WDFW Fisheries Biologist Steve Foley recently boated a few coho in central Puget Sound using fresh cut-plug herring. "There's a lot of bait in the water," Foley said, adding that one coho had five whole herring in its gut. "The guys who like to troll hardware – whether it's spoons or a hootchie – will catch fish out there, too," Foley said. "Troll fast and cover a lot of water." Look for coho catches to improve through September and into October.

Anglers who want to target pink salmon in the saltwater should focus their attention in terminal areas, such as waters off Everett and Mukilteo, where the thickest concentrations of pink salmon are likely to be found. Inner Elliott Bay could also have some schools of pink salmon as the fish stage before entering the Duwamish waterway. Try trolling small pink lures behind a flasher in the top 50 feet of the water column. Keep an eye out for fish on the surface and cast lures directly to them. Salmon anglers in the San Juan Islands (Marine Area 7) continue to scratch up a few **chinook**, a handful of pinks and a smattering of coho. All areas have a two-fish daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon.

Anglers fishing in the San Juans can retain one chinook per day (22-inch minimum). Chinook fishing remains slow in the Tulalip Bay terminal "bubble." The terminal area fishery is open Friday through noon Monday each week until Sept. 27 with a daily limit of two salmon. Chinook must be at least 22 inches in length to retain. Check the "Fishing in Washington" sport fishing rules pamphlet for additional regulation information before hitting the water.

Most of the region's **crab** fisheries closed after Labor Day. Marine Area 7 East (Anacortes - Bellingham) and Marine Area 7 North (Lummi Island - Blaine) remain open to crabbing on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule. The final harvest numbers for the summer months won't be known until late September. In areas where allocation remains for the recreational fishery, additional openings will be announced in October.

Anglers are definitely still in the pink on a handful of the region's rivers, most notably the Snohomish River where an estimated 975,000 "humpies" are expected to return to spawn this year. Chad Jackson, WDFW district fish biologist for the Snohomish and Stillaguamish rivers, said "tens of thousands" of pinks are in the lower Snohomish, and anglers there are having great luck landing them with pink jigs and other small pink lures.

The Snohomish has a four-fish daily limit, of which two may be coho or chum salmon, and all chinook must be released. Anglers on the Snohomish are catching a few early-returning coho salmon. "I don't think we'll really see any big numbers of coho in the river until the end of the month," Jackson said. The Duwamish-Green River has been another hot spot for pink fishing since opening Sept. 1. The river is open from the First Avenue South Bridge upstream to the Tukwila International Boulevard/Pacific Highway South Bridge with a six-fish daily limit, only three of which may be adult fish, and all chinook must be released. The next upstream section of the Duwamish – from the Tukwila International Boulevard/Pacific Highway South Bridge upstream to the Interstate 5 Bridge – opens to fishing Sept. 16 under the same regulations as the lower stretch of river.

Anglers targeting pink salmon on the Skagit River are beginning to have some luck plunking winged bobbers tipped with sand shrimp. Brett Barkdull, WDFW's district fish biologist for the Skagit, said extremely low flows and poor visibility continue to hamper angler success. The coho, meanwhile haven't begun entering the Skagit. "It seems like just about every run is a little late this year," Barkdull said. The Skagit is open to salmon fishing from the mouth upstream to the mouth of Gilligan Creek with a two-fish daily limit, 12-inch minimum length and all chinook must be released. A long stretch of the Skagit – from the mouth of Gilligan Creek upstream to the mouth of the Cascade River – opens to salmon fishing Sept. 16 under the same daily bag limit and size restrictions. Chinook fishing on the Samish River remains slow.

The northern portion of Lake Washington opens Sept. 16 to coho fishing. Anglers will be able to take two coho per day (minimum size 12 inches) from waters north of the Highway 520 Bridge and east of the Montlake Bridge. Fishing for warm water species remains good on lakes Washington, Sammamish and other big lakes in the region. Expect cooler temperatures to inject a little life back into **trout** fisheries on other lakes.

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

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Salmon fisheries out of Westport, LaPush and Neah Bay are currently scheduled to close Sept. 18, although Pattillo recommends that anglers check the WDFW Fishing Hotline (360-902-2500) or the department's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/>) for any updates. For the week ending Sept. 4, anglers fishing out of Westport averaged one chinook apiece and 1.4 salmon overall. One angler fishing for **albacore** 40 miles off the coast also caught a **striped marlin**, the third such catch ever recorded off of Washington. After being bled, the marlin weighed 134 pounds.

The area off LaPush had the second-highest catch rates for the week, giving up 1.3 salmon per

angler, the majority of them coho. Some were having luck chasing albacore 25 miles off the coast. Anglers fishing out of Ilwaco averaged .85 fish per rod, nearly three-fourths of them coho. Neah Bay gave up just a half a fish per rod, also more coho than chinook. Scott Barbour, WDFW fish biologist, said Willapa Bay anglers have been catching one fish for every three rods, the majority of them chinook. A coho-only fishery will open in Grays Harbor on Sept. 16. As in ocean waters, coho have been slow to enter the fishery in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, where they are usually thick at this time of year.

Creel checks taken over Labor Day weekend showed 1,180 anglers with 287 coho and 246 **pink salmon**. "It's fair to say the coho haven't shown up yet in the Strait," said Steve Thesfield, a WDFW biologist. "It's continuing the trend we've seen all year where fish are not being caught in the numbers we expected them to be, whether its spring chinook in the Columbia or coho in the Strait." Anglers are, however, finding coho in northern Hood Canal. Creel checks at the Salsbury County Park ramp in North Kitsap showed 77 anglers with 55 silvers. Another 20 checked at the Quilcene Bay ramp had caught 22 coho. South Sound may be as good a place as any right now for saltwater fishing, said Larry Phillips, a WDFW biologist.

Chinook are being caught outside the Puyallup and Nisqually rivers and Chambers Creek, and in Boston Harbor. Phillips said about 21,000 chinook are available to anglers in the Nisqually this year. They average 15 to 25 pounds and should peak the second and third weeks of September. "This is an opportunity to see what a good run of salmon looks like," Phillips said. Fishing is excellent in the Puyallup for chinook, coho and pink salmon, said Hal Michael, another WDFW fish biologist.

Below is a photo from Pro Guide ELI RICO (425.417.0394) at Lake Sammamish where the fishery is producing limits.



### **Southwest Washington:**

An update from **Pro Guide Brad Shride (877-483-0047)** - Fishing at Buoy 10 this past week was good with some limits and a good mix of URB Kings and Hatchery and Native Silvers, (Coho) for those that traveled outside the Columbia River Bar. More Tules were caught this week as well. We got into some very big Hatchery Coho this past week. It was about a 50/50 mix on Hatchery and the Wild Coho. You have to release the Native Coho. We were traveling as far South as 10 miles from the CR Buoy to find fish. Bait of choice for us was Anchovies behind a diver, shortened Bungie, Fish Flash and a 5 foot 40 # leader with 4/0 and 5/0 Gamakatsu hooks.

We fished any where from 4 pulls out to about 15 pulls on our reels. We caught two very nice kings on our gear out only 3 pulls on the reel. We could see our Fish Flash rotating beside the boat when we nailed the two Kings. It was just a bit spotty at times but not too bad for those of you that put in your time on the water. We had to look for fish when we weren't getting strikes in one spot. We looked for tidal rips, birds and other guys catching fish.

It was a little different in the River this past week and a bit harder to put fish in the boat. Some of the boats were scoring on a mix of Hatchery Coho and Kings as they put in their time on the river. Fishing above and below the Astoria Bridge, in the Church hole, around #3 Marker on the Washington side going into Ilwaco, and near Hammond was the key to putting fish in the boat here. we worked the 20' to 25' water with 14 to 18 pulls depending on the depth. I trolled a Delta Diver, a shortened snubber, and a Fish Flash in Green, Prism, or Chartreuse, 5 feet of 40# leader with a chain swivel and a cut plug brined herring in the river. I also use scent and color on everything and change my gear as often as every 15 to 20 minutes most of the time. I also trolled the same set-up with a Spoon on 1 or 2 rods. The spoon accounted for about 30% to 40% of my fish on most days inside the river.

I saw some very nice Kings and Silvers hit the docks this past week. One boat I talked to had a 38 pound King on board from the outside on Sunday. We picked up some very nice Silvers, (Coho) around 15 to 18 pounds on the outside this past week also. The Silvers should start moving into the river this week in better numbers and you will be able to target these Coho out in front of Chinook, WA, at the Buoy 10 deadline and in some of those other places that hold silvers on the tides. The area in front of Hammond and Warrenton on the Oregon side might be a good bet this next week for a mix of Kings and Coho. Follow the Flood into this area as the fish move up river.

For those of you that are willing, able and daring to cross the Columbia River Bar out into the ocean you will find fish without too much problems as long as you look for them. Most fish are coming from the CR Buoy and South as far as 12 miles. There was a good mix of Kings and Coho and you will have to weed through the Native Coho to get your fish.

Brad will be targeting fish further up the Columbia River through September and is booking trips now for Steelhead on the Snake River out of Heller Bar at the mouth of the Grande Rhonde River.

Below is fishing guide Brad Shride with a Large Silver fishing on September 3rd. They released a few Silvers and lost a couple this day. Fishing out in the ocean about 8 miles South of the CR Buoy in the area of the Columbia River. Again they trolled Delta Divers, short bungies, Fish Flash in green, Plaid, or Chartreuse and a 5 foot 40# leader with a chain swivel and anchovies. He added scent to the bait to entice Kings and Coho.



And Brad with a nice 23 pound King caught in the river just outside of the #3 Marker as you go into Ilwaco. They were trolling Delta Divers, short bungies, a Fish Flash in Chartreuse and a 5 foot 40# leader with a chain swivel and a green label brined cut plug herring.



Below is a photo from Pro Guide ELI RICO (425.417.0394) from last weekend on the Columbia - below Bonneville.



For anglers thinking about fishing at Buoy 10 on the Columbia River, the numbers tell the story. During the week ending Sept. 4, catch samplers checked 218 **chinook salmon** at Buoy 10, compared to 1,278 the week before. Catch rates for those weeks dropped from one chinook for every three rods to one chinook for every 6.25 rods.

Meanwhile, catch rates for coho escalated quickly during each of those weeks. "The focus at Buoy 10 is definitely moving away from chinook toward hatchery coho," said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. "Anglers are still picking up some nice chinook, but those fish are really a bonus once the coho move in." Through August, anglers landed 7,800 chinook and 3,900 hatchery coho at the Buoy 10 fishery, which extends upstream to the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line.

While the fall chinook fishery got a slow start, Hymer said the coho are arriving right on schedule. "If recent catch rates on the coast are any indication, we should have a good fishery for hatchery coho at Buoy 10 this year," said Hymer, noting that all wild, unmarked coho must be released. "And the coho that arrive early tend to be big – often weighing in the teens. I know of one 16-pounder – dressed weight – caught there last week ." Although angler participation in the

Buoy 10 fishery dropped by two-thirds since the end of August, that's not the case farther upriver.

From Rocky Point to Bonneville Dam, an aerial survey crew counted nearly 1,900 boatloads of anglers fishing for salmon – a big increase from the previous week and from the 1,500 boats counted last year during the same period. Most of those anglers were still fishing for chinook, with boat anglers averaging one adult chinook for every three rods and bank anglers averaging one fish for every 7.5 rods, according to WDFW catch reports.

Boat catches were spread evenly from Vancouver downstream, while bank anglers had the highest success rates near Kalama and Longview. "Does the 'party boat' rule apply in the lower Columbia?" a caller asked in a recent question to WDFW. Only down river from the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line, responds Evan Jacoby, WDFW rules and legal services advisor. Under the "party boat" rule, anglers who have caught their daily limit can allow those in their boat without limits to fish their gear wherever saltwater fishing licenses are valid, he said.

On the lower Columbia, that applies as far upstream as the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line. According to fish counts by the Army Corps. of Engineers, a total of 135,800 adult fall chinook had passed Bonneville Dam through Sept. 5. That beats the 10-year average of 134,000, but well below the number projected for this year, said Hymer, noting that the Technical Advisory Committee will meet Sept. 9 to discuss the fall chinook run status. Above Bonneville, anglers are still catching some hatchery **summer steelhead** at Drano Lake and in the Wind River, but most are focusing on catching fall chinook, Hymer said. He reminds anglers that all wild, unmarked coho must now be released on the Wind and White Salmon rivers.

During the first week of September, Tacoma Power employees recycled 189 chinook and 263 summer steelhead, releasing them on the Cowlitz River, the Cispus River and at the Massey Bar and Olequa boat launch. Twenty fall chinook adults were also released into Mayfield Lake at the Ike Kinswa State Park boat launch.

In addition, WDFW planted 2,500 half-pound **rainbow trout** into Mineral Lake. "The fishing should be very good there through the end of the month," said Manual Farinas, WDFW regional fish manager. He noted that the department is reserving another 500 half-pounders for the Kalama Derby on Sept. 10. Did someone say "**catfish**"? Lyndon Lewis from Vancouver caught a 13.7-pound channel catfish in Round Lake using a "wart" type lure in late August. The same lake in Clark County produced a 33.8 pound monster earlier last month.

### **Eastern Washington:**

From **Pro Guide Pat Long of Snake River Guide Service (509-751-0410)**

Steelhead fishing on the Snake River has started to pick up with the rising numbers of fish crossing over Lower Granite Dam this past week. Most of the fish are being caught in the area just below the confluence of the Clearwater River then upstream into the Lower Clearwater itself. Water temps on the main stem Snake remain around 70 degrees so most of the arriving fish bound for the Snake's upriver regions are holding in the cooler water around Lewiston and Clarkston. This situation will change as we get some cool weather, until then the fishing hot spot will remain in this area.

Pulling plugs and bobber and shrimp are the most common methods of angling for these fish. Bait fishers have been having better success than the pluggers.

Anglers fishing the upper Clearwater River should probably concentrate on the area below Cherry

Lane to Lewiston. This portion will hold the highest concentration of fish. Remember the Clearwater River from the Memorial Bridge in Lewiston, upriver is catch and release only until October 15th.

Fly fishers are finding the conditions and water flows excellent, and all the popular runs are seeing a lot of activity.

Bass fishing continues to be consistently good along the rocky shore areas of Snake from the Asotin area down river. Top water bite is good for that first hour then tubes seem to be the go to bait. This is another fishery that will do nothing but get better when we finally see some drop in water temperatures.

Sturgeon fishing is somewhat slower now than it was earlier in the summer. Work the deeper holes and keep your baits fresh.

Snake River **steelheading** is just getting started and fishing is a little slow in most areas of the drainage, according to WDFW fish biologist Joe Bumgarner, who coordinates creel checks. The best fishing rates checked since the harvest season opened Sept. 1 have been in the Tucannon River, a tributary of the Snake, where anglers averaged about four hours of fishing for every steelhead caught.

The Tucannon is running low and clear, while other tributaries and mainstem stretches have low flows, limited visibility and algae growth. Fishing has been significantly slower on the Walla Walla River, while the best steelhead catch rate measured on the mainstem Snake River was about six and a half hours per fish in waters from the Little Goose to Lower Granite dams. Glen Mendel, WDFW fish biologist, asks anglers to help spread the word that "recreational" rock dams on small rivers and streams throughout the Snake River watershed are illegal and can severely harm future fish populations.

Mendel and his spawning survey crews recently found several new rock and log dams on waterways in the southeast district, most on public property associated with camping or stream access areas. "These dams block fish passage for spawning **chinook salmon** and **bull trout** and other fish movements, and they are even more harmful during this drought year when stream flows are lower than normal," Mendel said.

Dams are currently blocking fish passage in the Kooskooskie area of Mill Creek, the Tucannon River between Cummings Creek and the Tucannon Fish Hatchery, the north fork of the Touchet River between Spangler Creek and Bluewood, Corral Creek below Ski Bluewood, and Lewis Creek. Such dams are illegal because they pose threats to fish and downstream water rights, Mendel said, and those responsible for creating them are liable for prosecution. Incidents of dam building on streams can be reported to local WDFW enforcement officers through the Washington State Patrol, or the regional office in Spokane, at (509) 892-1001.

### **North Central Washington:**

Bob Jateff, WDFW's district fish biologist in Omak, reminds anglers of the early closure to all fishing of the Chewuch River from the mouth to Eight Mile Creek, and the Twisp River from the mouth to War Creek. These sections of the Chewuch and Twisp were open for catch-and-release fishing and scheduled to close Sept. 30, but they were closed Sept. 6 to protect fish. Extremely low water, coupled with high summer temperatures, concentrated fish into areas where they are susceptible to repeated catch and release fishing, Jateff said.

Creel surveys indicate that anglers were primarily catching small trout in size classes that may

overlap with juvenile sea-run fish. Unintentional fishing effort on juvenile steelhead is undesirable because of the endangered status of upper Columbia River steelhead. The lack of larger trout preferred by anglers and the predominance of smaller fish in recent catches warrants closure of the fishery, Jateff said. The closure will reduce conservation concerns given the current drought conditions and will help ensure a stable fishery in the future. Jateff noted that the Methow River remains open through the end of the month for catch-and-release fishing with selective gear only from the Weeman Bridge to Gold Creek

"**Trout** fishing has been good on the Methow for rainbows up to 12 inches and cutthroat to 15 inches," he said. **Summer chinook** fishing on the upper Columbia River continues until Oct. 15. An additional area is open on the Okanogan and Similkameen Rivers until Sept. 30 with a non-buoyant lure restriction and night closure in effect for the area above the Highway 97 bridge just upstream from the mouth on the Okanogan River. Snagging fish is prohibited.

"Davis, Cougar and Campbell Lakes in the Methow Valley all had good openers for the standard gear fishery which began Sept. 1 and runs until March 31," Jateff said. "Davis was the hottest with limits of 11- to 12-inch rainbows being taken within one to two hours of fishing. Both Cougar and Campbell were slower, but the rainbows in each of those lakes were larger with some 16- to 18-inch fish caught." Jateff said that as the weather cools down, fishing in Big Twin Lake should improve as the fish become more accessible with cooler surface water temperatures. Other lakes in the Okanogan, including the Conconullys, should respond well as the fish are actively feeding prior to winter.

### **South Central Washington:**

The Yakima River opened for **salmon** fishing Sept. 1 from the Columbia River to Sunnyside (Parker) Dam. Creel checks are yet to come, and the fishery remains open through Oct. 22. Paul Hoffarth, WDFW fisheries biologist, reminds anglers that a Yakama Nation fishing permit is required for fishing in all areas upstream of the Highway 223 bridge at Granger. Check the 2005-06 fishing pamphlet's "Special Rules" section for the Yakima River for additional details and restrictions. Hoffarth said a strong **fall chinook** return is anticipated this year in the Hanford Reach area of the Columbia River, which has been open since the middle of last month and remains available for salmon fishing through Oct. 22.

### **Reader Email**

Subscriber Ray G. wrote with this, "My question is: what is the best shore based place to catch flounder in Northern Oregon? I have heard that Astoria, out by the sandy bottomed parks is good and that they catch some from the new breakwall in town. However, I have never heard anything specific, nor have I heard what baits are best etc. If you have any info about where, when, and what to use, I'd sure appreciate it! Thanks, and tight lines!!!"

To which **pro guide Bob Rees** responded, "Sorry for a late response. Biz has been busy! Flounder fishing in Oregon is an underutilized sportfishery. The species themselves (Starry Flounder) are a bit unpredictable. I have heard that folks used to target them in small estuaries like the Necanicum on the North Coast but I am sure they exist to some extent in many estuaries. The problem is, there will be so much competition for your bait that it will be hard to be successful for them. Anchovies or shrimp take these fish on occasion in the lower Columbia but bank access is limited there. We found them in big numbers off of the Maritime Museum on the east side of Astoria in the deep water. Sand Lake near Pacific City, the Nestucca estuary, Netarts and the Salmon River estuary are also options that may pay dividends for you."

"Wherever you fish, good luck and thanks for being a subscriber to TGF!"

Write to the TGF staff:

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### **Random Links**

Historical fish counts on the Columbia River:

**<https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/op/fishdata/docs/afpr2004.pdf>**

Salmon Derby at Hanford Reach offers prizes for early entrants and proceeds go to charity:

**<http://www.kc3307.org/?page=44&parent=2>**

Marlin, 7 1/2 feet long, caught by tuna angler out of Westport, Washington:

**[http://www.gamefishin.com/gfboard/forum\\_posts.asp?TID=9451&PN=1](http://www.gamefishin.com/gfboard/forum_posts.asp?TID=9451&PN=1)**

**Weekly Quote** – "I know the human being and fish can coexist peacefully." - George W Bush,  
Sept. 29, 2000

**GOOD LUCK!**