

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 7th – October 13th, 2005**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Columbia River - The **sturgeon** opener in the gorge was not as good as one would think (after such a prolonged closure) but action was good for those versed in the area. Limits weren't easy but those that worked at it found some quality keepers in the water closer to the deadline. Shaker action wasn't all that impressive either but those fishing closer to Horsetail and Multnomah found fair results for fish that averaged less than legal. A few oversized fish remain in the catch. The Portland to Longview stretch produced minimal results.

Crabbing in the lower river continues to pick up as expected for this time of year. Limits are becoming more common as males begin the mating ritual in nearby waters. Crabbers soaking pots near Buoys 20 and 22 find the best results and a dampening tide series will allow for greater opportunity for longer soak times.

Mid Columbia/Deschutes River - The mouth of the Deschutes continues to produce best when there is little competition from Native American netting activity. **Steelhead** counts are beginning to pick up at the Dalles and John Day Dams indicating these fisheries should once again pick up. These are most likely fish that have been in a holding pattern for much of the summer in anticipation of cooler water temperatures. Trollers at the mouth of the Deschutes should continue to see good opportunities this week while John Day Pool anglers will have to wait a bit more for good results.

North Coast - Tillamook anglers have been a bit disappointed after the previous weeks results. **Chinook** are still very available and the bite seems to be picking up but the fishery went through several days of slow fishing when last weeks weather change was happening. The more intense tide exchange put the bite into the middle and upper bay early in the week but a weaker tide series during the mid-week may put it back at the jaws. The ocean has been closed with a big SW swell and the ocean forecast is not looking good for anglers wishing to go to the big pond. Spinners have been the ticket in the bay as seaweed plagues herring trollers- they have a hard time fishing weed free for any length of time. Coho were caught in good numbers on Monday but almost all of the fish were of wild origin.

The Trask and Wilson River both produced catches of **Chinook** on Sunday and Monday. Most effort took place on the Trask but the very few anglers working the lower Wilson reported good success in tidewater.

The Nestucca was also good to bobber anglers prior to the slight rise in river levels. A shot of fish went into Three Rivers but by the weekend, water levels will once again make it difficult to take fish above tidewater. The Salmon River is busy with anglers as well with most concentrating just above the Hwy. 101 Bridge. Action has been sporadic.

The Nehalem is producing 3 to 5 fish per day for seasoned professionals. Seaweed doesn't seem to be such a problem here but the bulk of the action is taking place at the jaws on trolled herring.

Mid-Coast - Bottom fishing has slowed slightly out of Depoe Bay and Newport with the seas cooling, but it's still well worth the trip. **Crabbing** has been very good for large, hard-shelled Dungeness at Yaquina Bay but the salmon fishing has fallen off with the last rains drawing chinook upstream.

The Siuslaw has been producing chinook reliably but not in great number. **Coho** are also present but few are of hatchery origin. Spinners seem to be more effective than bait. A few large fall chinook have been caught recently in the bay.

The lower Umpqua River is producing **chinook** from above Big Bend down into Winchester Bay. Bobber fishermen at Winchester Creek are taking chinook on both cured salmon eggs and anchovies. Crabbing has been good.

South Coast - No reports as yet on the Siltcoos **wild coho** fishery which started on October 1st, but this one should be producing for trollers dragging spinners. Tahkenitch also opened on that date.

Chinook fishing is fair to good in the lower Coos and Coquille Rivers for trollers dragging herring.

It's still slow going for **chinook** on the Rogue River and now that the fish are scattered it's slow throughout the system. Trollers in the bay are picking up a few. Summer **steelhead** fishing is good in the Grants Pass stretch as well as in the upper fly-fishing-only area. Where bait is allowed, anglers are targeting steelhead with salmon eggs where they're feeding below spawning chinook.

Crabbing is good in the estuaries at Charleston and Bandon. Crab quality should improve overall as fall approaches, with more solid meat in the legs.

Chinook salmon anglers are back on the ocean beginning Saturday for the annual "bubble" fishery off the Brookings coast.

Willamette Valley/Metro- Sturgeon fishers had one day on the lower Willamette and in Multnomah Channel following the re-opening October 1st. Reports indicate few keepers but we'll get another chance Thursdays through Saturdays the rest of the month.

The water visibility at the Sandy River has made fishing tough this week. It's as much as half a foot at Cedar Creek, less as one travels downstream. Give this one a few days to clear then hit it for coho.

Coho are present in good number in the Clackamas river although the aren't cooperating well with the spinner crowd. There are lots of fish showing between Barton and Carver. A few have been taken on cured salmon eggs.

McKenzie river levels have dropped nicely and **trout** fishing is in a seasonal upswing. Long-rodders rejoice. Steelhead are present as well

With coastal rivers producing **chinook** following the welcomed rainfall and given the swift flow of the river (about 2000 cfs at Niagara), few anglers are fishing the North Santiam. This river is stunning in the Fall, however, when foliage puts on the best show of the year.

Trout fishing- Waters stocked this week with State-raised rainbows include Mt Hood Pond and Dexter Reservoir. The venerable Henry Hagg Lake received 8,000 eight-to-10 inchers on Monday. Taylor Lake in the Deschutes watershed was also planted this week.

North Puget Sound- Typical fall weather, including rain and cooler temperatures, should improve fishing conditions in the region by bringing mint-bright, ocean-run coho **salmon** into the terminal marine areas. A 6-month-long selective hatchery winter blackmouth fishery is under way in marine areas 8-1 and 8-2, but the action so far has been slow. Saltwater-based anglers should expect to see a few **chum salmon** start to enter the catch statistics. Recreational crab fishing in the San

Juan Islands closed as scheduled on Sept. 30. River-based anglers can't catch a break. Drought conditions kept stream flows far below normal for most of the summer, which made the fish skittish and difficult to catch. The Reiter Ponds section of the Skykomish River will open Oct. 8 to fishing for all game fish, including hatchery **steelhead**. Although the frenzy of **pink** salmon-fishing activity has slowed on the lower Duwamish-Green River, anglers can now fish for salmon all the way up to the South 277th Bridge in Auburn.

Sound/Olympic Peninsula - With **salmon** fishing moving in from the coast to area bays and rivers, anglers have a wide range of new options to consider, including trading in their fishing rods for clam shovels. Lakes remain a little too warm to rouse **trout**, but anglers will have much better odds at three spots in Grays Harbor that recently received plants. **Coho** have been making their way up the Puyallup River system for a while, along with a couple hundred thousand **pink salmon** and some **chinook**. Although the fish appeared more intent on getting up the newly opened rivers than eating, they should settle in pools and start biting in the next week or two, said Rick Ereth, another WDFW biologist. Another option for salmon is Grays Harbor, which opened Sept. 16 and is beginning to heat up. Anglers have been landing about one **coho** per boat. Anglers wanting a final shot at ocean salmon can head to LaPush, where a "bubble" fishery continues through Oct. 9.
South

Southwest Washington - With chinook retention now closed on the Columbia River from the mouth to Highway 395 bridge in Pasco, anglers are finding other ways to fill their coolers. On opening day, fish checkers counted 404 bank anglers with 151 legal sturgeon fishing just downstream of Bonneville Dam. Anglers fishing for salmon in several lower Columbia tributaries have also been doing fairly well - particularly in the Cowlitz and Lewis rivers. The Cowlitz River has also been giving up some good-sized **sea-run cutthroat trout**, now returning to the Cowlitz Hatchery.

Eastern Washington - This from **Pro Guide Pat Long of Snake River Guide Service (509-751-0410)** The Snake and Clearwater rivers are beginning to kick out some good numbers of steelhead. Bass fishing on the Snake has been excellent this past week, some nice fish (3 to 5 lbs.) are cruising around and actively feeding. Snake River **steelhead** action is picking up, reports WDFW fish biologist Joe Bumgarner. "Cooler weather has brought more fish into the system," he said. Cooler weather throughout the region also seems to be encouraging **trout** to bite at the lakes that remain open through the end of the month or year-round.

North Central Washington- Thanks to large numbers of surplus adipose fin-clipped hatchery origin **steelhead**, portions of the upper Columbia, Okanogan and Methow rivers will open Oct. 8 to recreational fishing for adipose fin-clipped hatchery-origin steelhead. Meanwhile, Summer **chinook** fishing continues until Oct. 15 on the Columbia from Brewster to Bridgeport. "Over the first weekend of this month chinook fishing was good," said Bob Jateff, fish biologist.

South Central Washington- WDFW's most recent creel checks of **chinook salmon** and **steelhead** fishing on the Hanford Reach section of the Columbia River show participation and catch rates are up, although still slow. Cummins also reported that several Kittitas and Yakima county **trout** lakes were stocked with fall catchable-size fish at the end of September.

Columbia River Fishing Report – The sturgeon opener in the gorge was not as good as one would think (after such a prolonged closure) but action was good for those versed in the area. Limits weren't easy but those that worked at it found some quality keepers in the water closer to the deadline. Shaker action wasn't all that impressive either but those fishing closer to Horsetail and Multnomah found fair results for fish that averaged less than legal. Smelt was a top bait as is often the case this time of year. Many anglers can't exactly figure out why keepers tend to concentrate in this area at this time of year. Maybe sliced and diced salmon served over chilled greens- courtesy of

the Bonneville Power Administration? A few oversized fish remain in the catch. The Portland to Longview stretch produced minimal results.

A bit early for productive steelhead results in the John Day Pool but anglers are just a few short weeks away from some good opportunity here. Meanwhile, the action at the mouth of the Deschutes remains consistent and may stay that way depending on the Native American netting schedule. Check the ODFW website for more details. Trolled plugs (mainly hot shots) remain one of the best options but remember that the Chinook fishing is closed in this section of river. The White River, a Deschutes tributary of glacial origin, blew out with the last rain, causing a milky mess to the mouth. While it remains cloudy downstream from the White, it is clearing and should be fishable.

Crabbing in the lower river continues to pick up as expected for this time of year. Limits are becoming more common as males begin the mating ritual in nearby waters. Crabbers soaking pots near Buoys 20 and 22 find the best results and a dampening tide series will allow for greater opportunity for longer soak times.

The Guide's Forecast – As the sturgeon season progresses, competition will increase so anglers will need to find a way to stick out. Scent may play a big role in anglers looking for keepers so tip your baits with shrimp or squid for an added advantage. Bank anglers will continue to do well for the next several weeks as they often fish in the swifter flows of Bradford Island. Boaters need to pay attention to the deadline but keep in mind this is where the bulk of the keepers will be holed up. If it's action you want and don't care so much about taking one home, the Cape Horn to Horsetail stretch should provide ample opportunity.

Since steelhead fishing on the Deschutes below White River was not a possibility over the last week, it's fishable now. Steelhead are present clear to Warm Springs but numbers are best downstream from South Junction to the mouth. Fly anglers will find Green and October Caddis patterns effective and decent trout action available.

Daytime tides will begin to dwindle making for some good crabbing opportunities in the estuary. Fresh bait will score the best results but if the seals are present in any big numbers, turkey legs will be a valuable back up. Stay between Buoys 20 and 22 for the best results

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Sturgeon fishers had one day on the lower Willamette and in Multnomah Channel following the re-opening October 1st. Reports indicate slow going.

McKenzie river levels have dropped nicely and trout fishing is in a seasonal upswing. Long-rodgers rejoice. Steelhead are present as well

With coastal rivers producing chinook following the welcomed rainfall and given the swift flow of the river (about 2000 cfs at Niagara), few anglers are fishing the North Santiam. This river is stunning in the Fall, however, when foliage puts on the best show of the year.

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon hopefuls will get another shot at them Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays for the remainder of October. If the opener was any indication, though, it's looking grim.

While trout fishing on the McKenzie has only been fair, the October Caddises and Pale Morning Duns are in the air and result are expected to improve.

With the numbers of summer steelhead down this year and the North Santiam flows up, the best thing one could say about it is that it's a lovely place to experience solitude. There's no hatchery run of winter fish, so let's hope it'll bounce back next year. Summer steelheading has been off here for

three years.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Rain last week brought water levels up but the rivers went right back to former levels.

Coho are present in good number in the Clackamas river although they aren't cooperating well with the spinner crowd, and in coho season, that's traditionally the effective technique. It's quite a show from Barton to Carver as fish jump and roll. Drifting a small bait of cured salmon eggs along with a corky or yarn has been the demise of a few coho recently.

Eagle Creek was chock full o' Coho Monday the 3rd. By Wednesday, the 5th, most had run up to the hatchery. Those that remain, as with other locations recently, can be caught using a stealthy approach and carefully-presented, high-quality eggs. Drift 'em or float 'em.

Rain roiled the Sandy River to zero visibility but it's recovering and may even be fishable as this is read. The lower one goes on the system, the worse the visibility. Coho moved well with the additional flow but that was then. The levels have returned to low. Try feeding these fish of spinners aren't effective in the murk. Bobber 'n' eggs has worked well for some anglers.

The Cedar Creek regulars are out in full force. There are fish to be caught, but this place gets quite crowded and the scene can be a little rough sometimes. Think Salmon River or the Boat Ramp at Pacific City.

North Coast District Fishing Report – A stronger showing of Chinook in the upper and middle Tillamook Bay has anglers optimistic about this year's run. With the bar restricted, far fewer biters get harvested by the lower bay and ocean herring trollers. This allows for ample production in the upper bay. Also an issue is the plague of Tillamook Bay- seaweed! The bay remains choked with the stuff although some days are better than others. Often times, the peak part of the incoming or outgoing tide is the worst and it is difficult to find a place to fish. The larger tide exchanges create a real problem- especially for herring trollers. It is next to impossible to fish for any length of time without getting weeded up. Spinner anglers have a distinct advantage because they can whip their rod tips to rid themselves of the weedy plague. None-the-less, seaweed is a real issue on the quality of your trip. Fishing on 10/4 was pretty good for many boats in the corral (mid-bay) on Tillamook. Spinners dominated the scene and we took 1 Chinook on a brass/red-tip and another on a red/white. We also released a wild coho on a gold blade with red beads. The previous day, the greens were working better. Go figure....Herring trollers were able to get outside on 10/5 but the bar remains a hit-or-miss at this time as the ocean is running a bit unpredictable.

Nehalem Bay dropped off a bit but confident guides are still taking between 3 and 5 fish per day over there. Herring at the jaws remains the best option but some fish are beginning to be taken with some regularity on bobbers and bait above Nehalem. The weaker tide series coming up may change all that.

The Nestucca River has also been hit or miss as the weather pattern has anglers guessing which way to go. Many of the fish holding in tidewater have made their way upstream. The better tide series has many of the tidewater holding fish above Woods. The Salmon River is much the same with the exception there isn't much accessible water for "Joe-public" angler. Cars still line the 101 Bridge but action is less than impressive.

The rain freshet did raise the water level and put fish into the Trask mainstem as well as the Wilson. One angler reported landing a 22 pounder on his first cast with a spinner on the lower tidewater section of the Wilson. He lost another larger one a short while later. He also stated he was the only

soul on the Wilson that day. River levels raised enough to put dark fish upriver- we'll need a real "gully-washer" to get some fresh fish in the driftboat stretches.

Razor clamming season opened October 1st as the domoic acid levels are below a harmful level Oregon Department of Agriculture tests. Areas open for harvest include Clatsop county beaches from Tillamook Head to the Columbia River. About a half-million razors are taken from this area annually, probably fewer this year do to the extended closure. Many diggers scored limits at the opener on Saturday.

The Guide's Forecast – With no precipitation in sight, driftboaters can keep their vessels garaged for a while longer. This excites bay anglers as fish will continue to congregate until the next rain sends them upstream. A weaker tide series should keep most of the biters in the lower bay so herring will be a top option by the weekend. Also worth noting, the seaweed issue should subside somewhat with the waning tide series. None-the-less, anglers will have vegetation issues until waters cool and a bunch of water causes the weed to exit the bay. Spinner trollers and bobber fishermen in the upper bay and tidewater sections may be disappointed with weekend results. Spinners may make sense however in the lower bay around Bay City and the Ghost Hole. Wilson and Kilchis fish should begin to show in better numbers this week making the east side of the bay a bit more productive in the near future. The National Weather Service is calling for a big swell by the weekend but the ocean may be open prior to that. Look for the blinking yellow lights at the Coast Guard Station in Garibaldi or on the watch tower on the north jetty before proceeding. There will frequently be Coast Guard boats on watch at the bar if it is closed as well. Violations of bar restrictions could cost more than just a fine- your life is at stake!

Weaker tides should make herring trolling on Nehalem and Nestucca systems more productive. Don't look for big pushes of fresh fish very high in these systems over the weekend. The Salmon River is about done for the season.

Crabbing remains fair in most North Coast estuaries.

Limits of razor clams are possible on Clatsop beaches although minus tides won't occur again 'til mid-month and then after dark. Mahy razo fans fell it's worthwhile to pursue these critters by lamplight and while there are good numbers this year, they're on the smallish side. ODFW biologists say this is an indication of strong stocks for the future, but it's hard to get charged-up over 15 three-inch clams.

Central & South Coast Reports – With Fall coming on, most anglers thoughts are on salmon. Chinook and coho numbers are improving in coastal and inland waters.

This is the prime time to try the Siletz with good numbers of chinook entering. The performance of the river has been a roller coaster ride for most salmon anglers this year. It will fish well one day and be dead the next. Sometimes a couple of days will pass where few fish are taken then, as if come cosmic switch is flipped, the bite is on. If there's a secret to fishing the Siletz, it involves timing, not technique. Trolling hardware, soaking Kwikfish on anchor, dragging plug-cut herring and bobber 'n' bait will all take fish. Try to be on the water three days in a row might be the ticket. While there are never any guarantees in the chinook game, that kind of persistence is almost sure to out a chinook or two in the boat.

Bottom fishing has slowed slightly out of Depoe Bay and Newport with the seas cooling, but it's still well worth the trip. The problem lately hasn't been getting into fish, but getting out as rough as the seas have been recently. Catches are mostly rockfish at this time of year with few ling cod on the mix. This cold water situation also means some longer trips are often required by those properly skilled, equipped and fueled to make tuna runs. Unless there's a moderation in the predicted ocean conditions, however, tuna trips may be wrapped up for the year. Crabbing has been very good for large, hard-shelled Dungeness at Yaquina Bay but the salmon fishing has fallen off with the last

rains drawing chinook upstream.

Alsea tidewater fishing slowed considerably by mid-week. Guides Bob Rees and Chris Vertopoulos fished with pro guide Jim Wilson taking 5 Chinook for a half day of fishing. Jim reported however that double digit opportunities existed just a few days ago. The bulk of the fish have moved upriver but fresh fish were more prevalent in the tidewater section on Wednesday. Bobbers and eggs tipped with shrimp was the key for the early limit for fish ranging from 12 to 22 pounds.

While catches aren't great in number, the few chinook being landed in tidewater on the Siuslaw River have been dandies. Try trolling Alvins or jumbo-sized spinners here as chinook at this location have been hitting hardware better than bait. The lower Chetco out into the Bay has been fishing similarly.

The lower Umpqua River is producing chinook from above Big Bend down into Winchester Bay. Bobber fishermen have great access at Winchester Creek and are taking chinook on both cured salmon eggs and anchovies, the latter being a new twist to this writer. Add that to your arsenal alongside tuna balls. Insert obvious gag here. Crabbing has been good. Smallmouth bass action is holding up well considering the time of year but it'll slow as the water cools.

The wild coho fishery opened at Siltcoos and Tahkenitch Lakes on October 1st. While hopes were high for a decent opener at Siltcoos, it's been slow so far at both location. With more fish and a quota of 300, it has been a worthwhile experience in the two earlier seasons. Tahkenitch allows the harvest of 200 wild coho. Get the latest info from the Newport ODFW office by calling 541-867-4741.

Chinook fishing is fair to good in the lower Coos below Chandler Bridge and in the Coquille River Below Riverton for trollers dragging herring. Fin-clipped coho can be kept in Coos Bay and the lower Coos River up to the bridge. Plug-cut herring and spinners are taking chinook here.

It's still slow going for chinook on the Rogue River and now that the fish are scattered it's slow throughout the system. The majority of the chinook present are turning dark now and the Rogue is closed for them above Hog Creek. Trollers in the bay are picking up a few and anglers are seeing improving numbers of coho. Summer steelhead fishing is good in the Grants Pass stretch and even better in the upper fly-fishing-only area. Incidentally, this restriction is with regard to terminal tackle only. Any kind of tackle is allowed, as are floats, but any sort of weight or weighted lure is forbidden. Where bait is allowed, anglers are targeting steelhead with salmon eggs where they're feeding below spawning chinook. In the flies-only area, this technique is working with egg patterns. The recent rain had little effect on the level or flow of the Rogue.

Beaches opened Saturday, October 1st from the Rogue River to the Oregon/California border. While only 10% of Oregon's razors come from this stretch, clam diggers work the Gold Beach area near Brookings. For updates, call the shellfish hotline at 503-986-4728 or 1-800-448-2474.

Crabbing is good in the estuaries at Charleston and Bandon. Crab quality will improve overall as fall approaches with more males in the mix and more meat in the crab.

Chinook salmon anglers are back on in the ocean beginning Saturday for the annual "bubble" fishery off the Brookings coast. This season allows ocean anglers a brief window of opportunity for fall chinook. The open waters are from Twin Rocks to the north and the California border to the south will close on October 13th. This fishery allows anglers to take one chinook per day but no more than four per season. The Saturday opener was very rewarding for boaters with action tapering off this week.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Trout fishing on the Metolius has been fair for rainbows, better for

bull trout with October Caddis becoming a more prevalent. Nymphing would be a good way to start the day, switching to dries as the day warms and bugs appear. Fall and Crooked Rivers offer some decent trout fishing now.

Northwest Bass & Panfish - Bass fishing in the upper Willamette has slowed, even for smallies as the water temp dips into the mid-50-degree range. Anglers are seeing some action on Hagg Lake and will want to concentrate on larger waters now with temperatures falling. Small ponds will cool off first.

Northwest Trout - Waters stocked this week with State-raised rainbows include Mt Hood Pond and Dexter Reservoir. The venerable Henry Hagg Lake received 8,000 eight-to-10 inchers on Monday. Taylor Lake in the Deschutes watershed was also planted this week.

North Puget Sound:

Typical fall weather, including rain and cooler temperatures, should improve fishing conditions in the region by bringing mint-bright, ocean-run **coho** salmon into the terminal marine areas. Lately, it's been hit and miss, and anglers are still waiting for the 15- to-20-pound "hooknose" coho they've been hearing about, said Sue Kraemer, a WDFW fish checker. Some 108 coho were checked at the Everett ramp Oct. 1 and another 57 on Sunday, better than half a fish per boat. They averaged about 6 pounds, topping out at 12. There was no particular hot spot. "This is one of those fisheries that is good today and bad tomorrow," Kraemer said. "Like I tell the fishermen, you definitely won't catch anything if you don't go out."

A 6-month-long selective hatchery winter **blackmouth** fishery is under way in marine areas 8-1 and 8-2, but the action so far has been slow. The fishery, which began Oct. 1 and runs through the month of April, is patterned after the successful summer selective hatchery chinook fishery in the western Strait of Juan de Fuca. Anglers can retain up to two hatchery chinook per day, so long as the fish measure at least 22 inches in length. Wild chinook salmon, which have an intact adipose fin, cannot be brought aboard the boat. Only one blackmouth was checked during the Oct. 1-2 weekend, and it was just 24 inches long, Kraemer said. When they do show up, the place to be is at Racetrack, between Hat Island and Camano Head. Fishing has been slow in Marine Area 7, where anglers have a two-fish daily bag limit, one of which can be a chinook measuring at least 22 inches.

Saltwater-based anglers should expect to see a few **chum** salmon start to enter the catch statistics. Fall chum runs have been strong throughout much of Puget Sound in recent years, and the expected return this fall is no exception; more than 1.7 million chum are forecast to return to streams and hatcheries in Puget Sound and Hood Canal. Anglers who want to target chum in saltwater areas should try fishing a small herring or anchovy under a bobber. Chum will also hit artificial squid in bright green colors.

Recreational **crab** fishing in the San Juan Islands closed as scheduled on Sept. 30; shellfish managers are conducting a catch assessment to determine if enough crab remain for additional openings.

River-based anglers can't catch a break. Drought conditions kept stream flows far below normal for most of the summer, which made the fish skittish and difficult to catch. Sustained rains over the final few days of September made many of the region's rivers flow high and muddy - not ideal fishing conditions. Fishing should improve if the rivers continue to drop.

There is a four-fish daily limit on the Snohomish and Skykomish rivers; no more than a total of two may be coho and chum salmon. Release all chinook. Anglers on the Snohomish's other main tributary, the Snoqualmie River, can retain two salmon per day, but all chinook and pink salmon must be released. The Skagit River, which is another stream that has yo-yoed in and out of shape

recently, is open to salmon fishing from the mouth upstream to the confluence with the Cascade River. Anglers can keep two salmon measuring at least 12 inches in length per day. Release all chinook. "When things clear up, I expect there to be a lot of coho around," said Brett Barkdull, another WSDF biologist, said of the Skagit. "The time is right and the fish were showing up just before the rainstorm, so I expect the lower river to have a bunch of fish." There are a few chinook left, but they're not in good shape after reaching the upper river, and some chum should begin sprinkling in soon, but a large run isn't expected this year in the Skagit, Barkdull said.

The Reiter Ponds section of the Skykomish River will open Oct. 8 to fishing for all game fish, including hatchery steelhead. The affected area ranges from 1,500 feet upstream to 1,000 feet downstream of the Reiter Ponds Hatchery outlet.

Although the frenzy of pink salmon-fishing activity has slowed on the lower Duwamish-Green River, anglers can now fish for salmon all the way up to the South 277th Bridge in Auburn. Anglers on the Duwamish-Green River can retain up to six salmon per day, no more than three adults, and all chinook must be released. Salmon fishing on Lake Washington continues through October north of the 520 Bridge. Anglers can retain two coho per day, provided that the fish are at least 12 inches in length. The Lake Sammamish salmon fishery runs through November with a two-fish daily limit (minimum length 12 inches), and a requirement to release all sockeye. Lakes are still a little warm to bring out the trout, but conditions are right for yellow perch in Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish, said Larry Tsunoda, WDFW biologist. Fish in the shallows, less than 30 feet deep, at Juanita Bay, along the east shoreline and off Mercer Island. The two lakes also should be "fair to middlin'" for largemouth and smallmouth bass, Tsunoda said. Patience is the name of the game this time of year. "Go out in the boat, anchor somewhere, turn on the Seahawks game and just plunk," Tsunoda said.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula:

With **salmon** fishing moving in from the coast to area bays and rivers, anglers have a wide range of new options to consider, including trading in their fishing rods for clam shovels. The fall **razor-clam** season is tentatively scheduled to begin Oct. 15, provided that test results show the clams are safe to eat. If the tests prove favorable, WDFW will proceed with a three-day dig Oct. 15-17 on evening tides at Long Beach, Mocrocks, Copalis, Twin Harbors and Kalaloch. A fourth evening of digging is also scheduled Oct. 18 at Twin Harbors and Mocrocks, where last year's harvest fell short of the number of clams available. Subsequent digs tentatively planned in November and December will follow the same pattern. All five beaches are scheduled to open for evening digging Nov. 12-14 and Dec. 30-Jan. 1, with additional digging opportunities Nov. 15 and Jan. 2 at Twin Harbors and Mocrocks. WDFW will confirm each opening approximately one week before when final test results are available. Digging will be allowed between noon and midnight. Although fewer clams will be available for harvest coastwide than last season, WDFW Coastal Shellfish Manager Dan Ayres said the tides should provide a good year of digging. "We're especially pleased that we'll be able to offer folks the opportunity to dig their way into the New Year, with the low tide on New Year's Eve," he said. Anyone age 15 or older is required to have a valid license, which includes any 2005 annual shellfish/seaweed license purchased last spring. A razor-clam-only license is also available in annual and three-day versions.

Anglers wanting a final shot at ocean salmon can head to LaPush, where a "bubble" fishery continues through Oct. 9. The two-week late season targets **chinook** salmon and hatchery **coho** returning to the Quillayute River system. In the past, fishing has been restricted to the area just outside the mouth of the river, but this year's "bubble" is wider and has no western boundary. There's a two-fish limit, and both can be chinook. Opening day on Sept. 24 saw 74 anglers catch 15 chinook and 28 coho, said Scott Barbour, WDFW biologist. Be sure to check the forecast before setting out; the LaPush Last Chance Salmon Derby on Oct. 1-2 was canceled by bad weather.

Another option for salmon is Grays Harbor, which opened Sept. 16 and is beginning to heat up. Anglers have been landing about one coho per boat. The limit is two salmon. Chinook must be released, and regulations prohibit removing them entirely from the water except by anglers fishing from boats 30 feet or longer. Single-point barbless hooks are required. Willapa Bay, coming off perhaps its hottest month ever, continues to offer up a mix of chinook and coho. The daily limit is six. No more than two can be adults (24 inches for chinook; 20 inches for coho). Single-point barbless hooks are required. Good fishing in Grays Harbor bodes well for the Chehalis River, which flows into it. The Chehalis and several other westside rivers, including the Satsop, Wynoochee, Wishkah and Hoquiam, opened for salmon fishing Oct. 1. Grays Harbor, which includes the river from its mouth to the Highway 101 bridge, and the upper river from the Porter bridge to the Black River, offer a good combination outing for the small-boat angler. The river, besides being calm, accessible and scenic, should also hold some fish. "I'm guessing there should be some fish up there, and I guarantee you there will be some fishing effort up there," Barbour said. "Either Grays Harbor or the Chehalis would be the place to be the next couple weeks, and there will be a lot of people there. There always is." The limit on the rivers that opened Oct. 1 is six salmon, including no more than two adults. Adult chinook must be released. Fishing was slow on the Chehalis River on opening weekend, with about one fish being caught for every three anglers, "but the people who know what they're doing have been catching some nice silvers," bright 10- to 12-pounders, Barbour said. Bank anglers can get in on the action at Morrison Park in Aberdeen.

Although the fish appeared more intent on getting up the newly opened rivers than eating, they should settle in pools and start biting in the next week or two, said Rick Ereth, another WDFW biologist. The lower Satsop and the Chehalis upstream from the mouth of the Satsop should also be good bets, Ereth said. Pools of coho will be surging up the rivers from now to January, Ereth said, and they should be joined in about three weeks by some **chum** salmon.

Coho have been making their way up the Puyallup River system for a while, along with a couple hundred thousand **pink salmon** and some chinook. The Dungeness River has historically offered good coho fishing once the rain starts falling, said WDFW Biologist Steve Thiesfeld. So has the Skokomish River. Those wanting to avoid the crowds might try the smaller streams of the Kitsap Peninsula, such as the Tahuya and Dewatto rivers. "The coho appear to be coming back close to what we forecast, but the people fishing for them have had a rough go of it so far," Thiesfeld said. "The bright spot is there should be a lot of fish pushing up the rivers because of this rain." Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) will open to **blackmouth** fishing Oct. 16, two weeks earlier than last year. The fishery will run through the end of January, a couple weeks longer than the previous season.

Lakes remain a little too warm to rouse trout, but anglers will have much better odds at three spots in Grays Harbor that recently received plants. Lake Aberdeen received 1,080 rainbows on Sept. 27, Vance Creek Pond #1 got 945 and Vance Creek Pond 2 took another 1,625. The ponds are near Elma. The fish are 8 to 12 inches long. Lake Aberdeen is open until Oct. 31 and the ponds until Nov. 30. Only juveniles, seniors and disabled persons can fish at Pond #1. The daily limit is five fish.

Southwest Washington:

With chinook retention now closed on the Columbia River from the mouth to Highway 395 bridge in Pasco, anglers are finding other ways to fill their coolers. A good bet is the **sturgeon** fishery that opened Oct. 1 from the Wauna power line near Cathlamet to Bonneville Dam, said Brad James, WDFW fish biologist. "October is when we traditionally see the highest catch rates for sturgeon in the Columbia River gorge below Bonneville Dam, although fishing should be good through the end of the year," James said. The fishery is open Thursday, Friday and Saturday each week. Sturgeon must be at least 42 inches and no more than 60 inches long to retain.

On opening day, fish checkers counted 404 bank anglers with 151 legal sturgeon fishing just downstream of Bonneville Dam. Those anglers reported releasing 141 sub-legal fish and 32 oversized fish. The 103 boat anglers checked in that area averaged one legal sturgeon for every three rods and released 470 sub-legal fish and eight oversized fish. "Those are pretty good odds of catching a legal-sized fish," James said. Success was slower for sturgeon anglers fishing further downstream to the Longview area. Fish checkers counted 230 boat anglers with 19 legal sturgeon with another 445 sub-legal and one oversize sturgeon being released.

Anglers fishing for salmon in several lower Columbia tributaries have also been doing fairly well - particularly in the Cowlitz and Lewis rivers. During the week ending Oct. 2, fish checkers found 57 anglers on the Cowlitz with 22 **coho salmon**, four **chinook salmon** and two **steelhead**. On the Lewis River, 33 anglers had 24 coho and three chinook. On the Elochoman, 12 anglers split six coho among them. "A lot of the early-stock coho are now dark, but more bright, late-run coho are arriving every day," said Wolf Dammers, another WDFW biologist. He reminds anglers that coho fishing, including hatchery fish, will close Oct. 16 on the Kalama and Washougal rivers.

The Cowlitz River has also been giving up some good-sized **sea-run cutthroat trout**, now returning to the Cowlitz Hatchery. Fishing has been good from Castle Rock to the barrier dam below the hatchery, Dammers said. "Keepers" must be at least 12 inches and have a clipped adipose fin. "These trout make for great eating," said Dammers, noting that the fish generally range from 12 to 15 inches long. The cutthroat fishery on the Cowlitz is featured in the October edition of WDFW's "[Wild About Washington](http://wdfw.wa.gov/pubaffrs/wildwash/)" <http://wdfw.wa.gov/pubaffrs/wildwash/> show, which airs on local access and government cable TV channels (check your local listings). Video clips from that show are also posted on the department's website. Goose Lake near Carson is another good place to catch cutthroat right now, Dammers said. The lake was recently planted with 845 cutts, averaging 1.5 pounds each, with several thousand more to come, he said.

Eastern Washington:

This from **Pro Guide Pat Long of Snake River Guide Service (509-751-0410)** The Snake and Clearwater rivers are beginning to kick out some good numbers of steelhead. The Clearwater is still C&R on most of the river and is seeing minimal pressure, the river is fishing well from Lewiston to Orofino and with the recent rains and increased flows we will see a good flush of fish moving into the system in the next few days. The Snake is starting to come together in the upper areas around Heller Bar and upriver around the Salmon and Imnaha rivers. A few fish are being caught between Asotin and the Grande Ronde but the fish are still moving pretty fast through this stretch and will continue this pattern until the water temps drop a little more.

Bass fishing on the Snake has been excellent this past week, some nice fish (3 to 5 lbs.) are cruising around and actively feeding. Best results have been on plastics fished slow in 10 to 25 ft. of water along the rip-rap areas. This fishery won't hold up much longer as the temps are getting down into the low 60s and as it drops into the 50s the bass will start to lay up for the winter.

Snake River **steelhead** action is picking up, reports WDFW fish biologist Joe Bumgarner. "Cooler weather has brought more fish into the system," he said. "Recent dam counts of steelhead at Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose, and Lower Granite have increased to 2,000 to 4,000 fish per day. Rain will help get fish into the smaller tributaries. Expect the Tucannon and Walla Walla rivers to start producing more fish." The best rate of catch during the last creel survey was on the Snake mainstem above the interstate bridge, where boat anglers averaged just over three hours per fish caught. The Grand Ronde River saw an average of four hours per fish caught. Stretches of the Snake below Ice Harbor dam, and from Lower Monumental to Little Goose dams, yielded an average of less than six hours of effort per fish caught. Steelheaders on the Walla Walla River spent almost 14 hours of fishing per fish caught, and from Ice Harbor to Lower Monumental they averaged over 16 hours of effort per fish caught.

Cooler weather throughout the region also seems to be encouraging **trout** to bite at the lakes that remain open through the end of the month or year-round. One popular spot near Spokane with nice-sized rainbows and cutthroats is Amber Lake, southwest of Cheney, but anglers need to comply with the catch-and-release rule that went into effect there on the first of October. Check the fishing rules pamphlet carefully at this time of year to make sure the lake you're heading for is still open or for regulation changes. Year-round Lake Roosevelt continues to produce rainbows and **kokanee**.

North Central Washington:

Thanks to large numbers of surplus adipose fin-clipped hatchery origin **steelhead**, portions of the upper Columbia, Okanogan and Methow rivers will open Oct. 8 to recreational fishing for adipose fin-clipped hatchery-origin steelhead. The mainstem Columbia River will be open from Rocky Reach Dam to the Highway 17 bridge at Bridgeport. The Okanogan River will be open from the mouth upstream to one-quarter mile below the railroad trestle at Zosel Dam. The Methow River will be open from the mouth upstream to the second powerline crossing, and from the first Highway 153 Bridge north of Pateros to the confluence with the Chewuch River. The daily limit is two fish, 20-inch minimum size. Wild steelhead release rule is in effect. Selective gear rules will be in effect on the Okanogan and Methow rivers. Anglers are permitted to harvest hatchery origin steelhead with an adipose fin-clip and a healed scar in the location of the missing fin. Rules affecting other species in these areas are changed to be consistent with steelhead rule requirements. WDFW district explained that the harvest of these fish will not impact upper Columbia River wild steelhead recovery, and that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA-Fisheries) has approved the season. For additional information, anglers should check WDFW's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) or call the Fishing Hotline (360-902-2500).

Meanwhile, Summer **chinook** fishing continues until Oct. 15 on the Columbia from Brewster to Bridgeport. "Over the first weekend of this month chinook fishing was good," said Bob Jateff, fish biologist. "The largest fish taken weighed in at 28 pounds." Jateff also reported that Okanogan County's Big Green and Spectacle lakes are both open for **trout** fishing with no bag or size limits, to allow anglers to catch as much out before the lakes undergo rehabilitation treatments later this month. Big Green will be open through Oct. 9 and Spectacle will be open through Oct. 16. "Some of the lowland lakes in the district are still producing nice trout," he said. "Big Twin near Winthrop has been good for 15 to 17-inch rainbows. Jameson Lake in Douglas County opened for a fall season on Oct. 1. Fishing was good with the catch rate a bit low, but with the average size being higher than normal - 12 to 15 inches." WDFW fish biologist Matt Polacek reports that **yellow perch** fishing on Banks Lake has been great, with a catch rate of four fish per hour, and an average size of 10 inches. Fishing has been good in the bays in the mid to north end of the lake, he said.

South Central Washington:

WDFW's most recent creel checks of **chinook salmon** and **steelhead** fishing on the Hanford Reach section of the Columbia River show participation and catch rates are up, although still slow. Anglers averaged 17 hours of effort for every adult chinook caught. The Ringold and Vernita areas have been best. Low water levels make fishing difficult for most anglers, relayed WDFW fish biologist Jim Cummins, although the fish are in good shape for early October. The average size of Hanford Reach salmon or steelhead is 15 to 25 pounds.

Cummins also reported that several Kittitas and Yakima county **trout** lakes were stocked with fall catchable-size fish at the end of September. In Kittitas County, Easton Pond got 1,000, Fio Rito Lake North got 3,000, Fio Rito Lake South got 500, Kiwanis Pond got 200, Mattoon Lake got 1,700 and McCabe pond got 400. In Yakima County, Clear Lake got 3,050, Myron Lake got 500, Rotary lake got 1,500, Sarge Hubbard Pond got 300 and Tim's pond got 300.

Reader Email

This week, subscriber and regular contributor Calvin N. wrote to Bob Rees to ask, "I am a dad of a recently acquired steelhead fanatic who has just read a steelhead fishing book is dying to go steelheading. What are the best times, places, and baits to use. I have no experience with the steelhead fishery and want to catch fish do you have any advice that will help me on the river?"

To which Bob replied, "I suggest working small rivers like the Necanicum in Seaside. There is a lot of public access and there are plenty of fish to catch. A small river will help you learn how to read water for bigger rivers. Keep reading any literature that you get your hands on. We have great tech reports available from our home page at www.TheGuidesForecast.com and there is a lot of other great info out there.

"More important than anything, be persistent. It is a large learning curve but if you stick to it, you will succeed. It took me 2 years to land my first steelhead and now I catch them on about every trip!

"Good luck!"

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: drees@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: SailCat@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Bob Toman's video shows salmon taking the bait:

<http://www.katu.com/outdoor/story.asp?ID=80061>

Near-record tiger muskie caught in Lake Merwin, Washington (scroll down for story):

<http://www.washingtonlakes.com/ReportList.aspx?id=269>



Weekly Quote – "Fish die belly upward and rise to the surface. It's their way of falling." - Andre Gide

GOOD Luck!