

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **November 18th – November 24th, 2005**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Coastal streams are fishing so prepare yourself by getting all the professional knowledge you can from The Guide's Forecast complete series of Technical reports. You can simply log onto: <http://www.theguidesforecast.com/techrpt.shtml> and order the reports that have the most application for you. Tech reports 8, 9, 11, 12 and 18 all serve the North Coast angler that likes to bank fish or driftboat fish for salmon and steelhead.

Willamette Valley/Metro- With salmon season on the mainstem on the way out, sturgeon fishing is the best option for metro anglers. **Pro guide Kevin Newell (360-430-2521)** reports taking some quality sized keepers during the catch and release days. Smelt and shrimp were producing the best results and he found the faster flow towards the deadline was best. Tanner Creek was not putting out the numbers of sturgeon it was a week ago but oversized fish are still present in the area.

Sturgeon fishing is very slow on the lower Willamette but will show gradual improvement as the temperature difference between the Willamette and the cooler Columbia widens. Bank fishers are hopeful in the stretch around Meldrum Bar with steelhead expected to show shortly.

The Clackamas has turned muddy with the sunny weather and is seeing very little pressure with coastal rivers offering a far better chance for action.

The Sandy River remains closed to chinook and coho angling. Summer steelheading is over. Expect winter steelhead to be delivered around Christmas. Until then, seek another location for piscatorial pleasure. Respectable numbers of coho did return to the Cedar Creek Hatchery this year. This is hopefully a sign of good things to come.

Mid Columbia/Deschutes River - The steelhead fishery in the John Day Pool and John Day Arm is entering its peak. Boats fishing the area recorded catches of two fish per boat and one fish for every three bank anglers. The wild to hatchery fish ratio remains very close to 50/50.

North Coast - After an excellent week of Chinook fishing, the action should slow down. On Tuesday however, great catches of fresh Chinook were witnessed in the Ghost Hole and the lower Wilson River. Herring are still the bait of choice for later returning Chinook in the bay while tidewater anglers are splitting the catch between plugs and backbounced eggs. As the river levels drop, river action will switch to bay action but the tidewater bobber bite may take off in the Kilchis and Wilson. Chum salmon have entered the Kilchis and Miami in high numbers but this target fishery closed on November 15th.

The Trask is still putting out good catches but it won't hold the same numbers of late returning Chinook that neighboring systems have.

Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808) reports, "The Nestucca is in beautiful shape. Fish are spread through the entire river and have been responding well to all different kinds of gear. We have been doing well on Kwikfish, yes! I have been pulling plugs. And we have been doing well on bobbers and bait, jigs, and drift gear."

On all North Coast streams, as flows drop, fresher fish will be found in the lower sections of

these rivers. Female Chinook will begin to lose their quality despite the fact they are nickel bright.

Crabbing was only fair on the lower Columbia with the recent fresh water intrusion but should pick up as river systems flush. Clamming was great on the early part of the minus tide series as the surf subsided. Success will likely drop over the weekend.

Mid-Coast - Yaquina Bay was still producing limits of crab to some following the heavy rain that many feared would push Dungeness out to the ocean. Waldport has slowed.

Chinook fishing on the Alsea was fair prior to the rains, but the freshet drew the fish upstream above deadline. Try elsewhere.

The recent tide series and rain freshet drew ample numbers of wild coho into Tahkenitch and Siltcoos Lakes. Trollers will take quality fish using plugs close to tributary mouths. Regulations are complicated for this fishery- even with a limit of one adult wild coho, so check before you fish.

South Coast - North Umpqua anglers continue to score good catches of summer steelhead in the flies-only stretch of the North Umpqua.

The Sixes produced some bright chinook late last week and into the weekend. Anglers using anchovy or cured salmon eggs fared the best. Without rain, this fishery will taper off quickly until the next freshet. It's currently low and clear.

South Coast Rivers are on the drop. The Coquille fishery is on its way out while the Elk and Sixes Rivers are about to enter their prime. Although fish were present on the sister rivers late last week, the bulk of the fish return the second half of November and the first week of December. Much more action is scheduled to come. The Chetco produced some good results over the weekend but the dry spell should keep action in check until the next rain.

The Rogue River fishery is done for salmon and south coast anglers are anxiously awaiting winter steelhead. This run is due to queue by early December.

Eastern Oregon - Oregon's tire chain law went into effect on Tuesday, November 15th. On mountain pass roads, chains must be carried even when it's not required to put them on. Driver's caught chainless are subject to a fine.

Only a few lakes remain viable options to fish for trout and action should be decent as fish begin to prepare for low food availability through the winter months.

Trout fishing- Green Peter has been producing trout and a few keeper kokanee for trollers recently.

That's about it for the regular stocking this year anywhere this year, but watch this space for winter plants of trophy trout, broodstock and excess steelhead during the winter months in valley lakes and ponds.

SW Washington- Good numbers of coho are still being caught by boat and bank anglers at Scanewa Lake above Cowlitz Falls Dam. Some summer steelhead and coho are being recycled back downstream for anglers to have another chance at them. Eleven winter steelhead have showed at the Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery so far.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Steelhead excitement is picking up in the John Day Pool. It deserves some headlines because this is a quality fishery and a simple one to master. A mix of boats are splitting time between the John Day River itself and the mainstem Columbia, just upstream of the John Day Dam. Trollers working the mainstem are finding good success with plugs. Use the standard colors to match your conditions. Solid colors with white or green in low light conditions- like early morning or cloudy conditions, and metallic colors on sunny days. Zig-zagging can often pay dividends when trolling plugs in this large body of water as plugs will fish different depths on the turn. For anglers working the mainstem John Day, low flows can make river navigation hazardous so pay attention to your surroundings. Low flows are also conducive to bobber and bait or jig presentations. Cool weather persists in this fishery so be prepared to keep warm. Proper boat set up is critical for anglers to really enjoy this type of fishing and may be the reason for low effort. The best checks of the season came this week with boat anglers catching about 2 fish/vessel. The wild to hatchery ratio of steelhead is averaging 50/50.

Sturgeon anglers in the gorge continue to produce favorable results. Although pressure is lighter, (likely due to hunting seasons and foul weather) success is still running high. Down from previous weeks, the checks still indicate a keeper about every other boat but shaker action remains high. There are a few oversized fish available too. **Pro guide Kevin Newell (360-430-2521)** reports taking some quality sized keepers during the catch and release days. Smelt and shrimp were producing the best results and he found the faster flows towards the deadline was best. Tanner Creek was not putting out the numbers of sturgeon it was a week ago but oversized fish are still present in the area. Bank anglers are maintaining about a keeper for every third rod on Bradford and Ives Island. It remains the best prospect for bank anglers in the Portland/Metro area. Good action persists below Beacon Rock but keepers are harder to find downstream. And further downstream, the Portland to Longview stretch is still putting out about a keeper for every 11 boats. Action will likely remain mediocre at best until the smelt arrive later into the winter months.

Clamming was good on the last minus tide series and the calm surf had a lot to do with success. The next minus tide series won't happen until the end of the month.

The Guide's Forecast – Look for the steelhead fishing to get even better as we near the peak of the run for John Day anglers. Keep in mind that the weather is forecasted to be stable, which will aid in success but be prepared for very cold weather. Stick with plugs in the mainstem Columbia and if you fish the John Day River, approach fish with care and use stealthy tactics. Drift bobbers and bait or jigs (white/red or purple) for best results. Many of the fish in the area right now are the larger "B" run of fish so beef up your line to 12 pound test on your trolling rods. Lighter for bobbers in the John Day.

Sturgeon anglers may continue to see a slowdown in the gorge fishery. As water temperatures drop, so should the bite. There may be a trend of sturgeon moving closer to the Willamette River as those temperatures are typically warmer this time of year. Shrimp may be a better bait for sturgeon in downriver fisheries but remains hard to find. Smelt and shrimp will produce nicely in the gorge fishery.

Crabbing should improve on the lower Columbia as the last rain freshet makes its way out of the system. The river just outside of Hammond should produce limits to those willing to work for them. Frozen shad has been a good bait.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Sturgeon fishing is very slow on the lower Willamette. This situation will improve as we move into the winter season.

Bank fishers are anticipating the annual winter steelhead. Numbers are still very low, but before the end of the month there will be fish on the bank. Here's the story and numbers courtesy **avid angler Ken Johnson** and the ODFW:

"The Willamette River has had its flows decrease steadily then bounce up to a new high so far this fall. Monday's flows were at 33,200 cfs, and the water temperature was 48°. But even with the higher flows, the visibility has improved to 2.8'. Fish counts at Willamette Falls were 58 winter steelhead, and 1,304 Coho through November 10th. Summer steelhead counts, which officially end on October 31 st, showed a final number of 14,063. The winter steelhead counting began November 1 st. This is a slow time on the Willamette for angling until winter steelhead show up in greater numbers. It shouldn't be long before the first winter fish is caught somewhere in the Oregon City/Gladstone area."

For more information on the Meldrum Bar area and the upcoming Winter steelhead fishery, see **Reader Email**, below.

The Guide's Forecast – The sturgeon fishing will show gradual improvement as the difference in water temperature between the Willamette and the cooler Columbia widens. While the occasional keeper has been gleaned from the many "shorts" from Oregon City down to St Johns and into Multnomah Channel, nailing one that'll measure has been a challenge.

Bank fishers are hopeful in the stretch from Meldrum Bar to the mouth of the Clackamas River and for good reason; the winter steelhead will be showing en masse very soon. We'll detail bank techniques for metalheads shortly.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Clackamas waters turned muddy as sunny daytime weather caused freezing levels to rise - it was 12,000 feet on Thursday, November 17th - resulting in additional runoff. There is very little pressure here with coastal rivers offering a far better chance for action.

The Sandy River remains closed to chinook and coho angling. Summer steelheading is over. Expect winter steelhead to be delivered around Christmas. Until then, seek another location for piscatorial pleasure. Respectable numbers of coho did return to the Cedar Creek Hatchery this year which anglers hope is a positive sign for future runs. Look for winter steelhead to start up in December.

North Coast District Fishing Report – The fishing has surprisingly held up on the north coast. This is despite the fact that water conditions have been so favorable for such a long period of time. Driftboat guides were still taking near limits of Chinook for their customers at mid-week. I fished the lower Wilson River on 11/15 and 11/16, taking 4 chrome fish by 1:00 p.m. on the 15th for 2 customers and 2 twenty pound hens for 4 customers on the 16th. There were certainly more fish present in the lower Wilson on the 15th as rollers were witnessed on more occasions. Surprisingly, driftboaters scored great results on the Kilchis by Monday even though the river was still a bit high. It fished well on Tuesday too but that's when the Wilson kicked in as well. Fresher fish came on this rain freshet as colored fish had made their way upstream on last weeks high water. Plugs worked well for us but many guides took good numbers of chromers on backbounced baits. When it slowed by Wednesday, the best action in the tidewater section was at first light and the first part of the outgoing tide in the afternoon. The Trask from Loren's Drift to Hwy. 101 also produced good results on 11/16 but with a fraction of the traffic. The price one pays however is a great chance for darker fish as these fish generally enter the system earlier

than Wilson and Kilchis fish.

Meanwhile, good reports were coming from the Ghost Hole and Bay City by mid-week. On Tuesday, 11/15, reports of almost a fish/boat being caught were surprising many anglers given the fact the bulk of the run ran up the river last week. The good tide series and recent rise in river levels must have stimulated another batch of fish into the system. A few fish were taken on spinners at Bay City and even the upper bay at Memaloose but most fish were taken on herring.

Kilchis chum were hard to entice as high water made it challenging to target them and when the flows did subside, the season closed (11/15). Targeting chum salmon is now illegal although there seem to be a lot around!

The Nestucca also produced great results early in the week with lower drifts producing brighter fish. The water from First Bridge to Cloverdale has great holding water for Chinook and river conditions really couldn't get any better. **Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)** reports, "The Nestucca is in beautiful shape. Fish are spread through the entire river and have been responding well to all different kinds of gear. We have been doing well on Kwikfish, yes! I have been pulling plugs. And we have been doing well on bobbers and bait, jigs, and drift gear. We are also getting a few side drifting. We are seeing some dark fish and bright fish mixed. Odds are, if you find one, there will be another that is chrome. We are seeing fresh fish in just about every hole on the river, but the lower end when they first hit is the place to be."

The Nehalem River, from top to bottom is done for the season.

Clatsop beaches were productive for razor clammers once the ocean settled down. The weekend was tough. Those who caught the late-day tide on Monday, November 14th, however, were treated to calm winds, mellow seas, moderate seasonal temperatures and limits of large bivalves.

The Guide's Forecast – Well, I hope that everyone got that driftboat itching out of the way for some time- cause it looks like you'll have those boats packed away for another little while! Dry weather in the forecast is going to force anglers to look at the estuary for another round of herring trolling as river flows drop. The waning of the big tide series will also keep Chinook from entering into the river mouths although flows will remain high enough to trap some Chinook in tidewater sections. This may start a decent bobber bite in the lower Wilson and Kilchis Rivers.

Bay crabbing should pick up again making for a nice combination trip. Sturgeon also began to make a show this time of year on Tillamook Bay. We began taking keepers in the West Channel using mud shrimp or sand shrimp for bait. It may be a good alternative if salmon fishing seems slow. The last half of outgoing tide produced the best in 2004. The ocean is now closed to all salmon fishing.

River fishermen can still drift the Wilson, Trask and Nestucca Rivers but count on coming across some dark fish that won't make good tablefare. Backbounced baits will take Chinook in their traditional deep, slow, boily water and keep in mind that faster flows will usually harbor brighter fish.

The next series of minus tides occurs at the end of November. Typical for this time of year, it'll be after sunset. Bundle up, grab a buddy or gather the family together for extra hands to wield lanterns and grab clams if wind and wave allow and go those tasty razors.

Central & South Coast Reports – It's over for Fall chinook on the Siletz, where winter steelheaders are keeping a watchful - and hopeful - eye on the river for the first sign of that

seasonal event. It's usually December before many consider this beautiful and productive coastal stream for winter fish, but anglers are optimists. Target hatchery fish early in the season, which will mean December through January and well into February. Later into the run the fish will be primarily natives. The early Fall chinook run at this location peaked in September and held up even as it wound down in October. Nary a single November photo has been posted at Coyote Rock, a pretty fair barometer of the chinook fishing conditions.

Yaquina Bay continues to produce good catches of crab despite the heavy rain that many feared would push Dungeness out to the ocean.

Waldport has slowed for crabbing but remains worthwhile. The last downpour wrapped up the chinook fishing for the year on the Alsea as fish have high-tailed it to spawn above deadline.

The recent tide series and rain freshet drew ample numbers of wild coho into Tahkenitch and Siltcoos Lakes. Trollers will take quality fish using plugs or spinners around the tributaries. Regulations are complicated for this fishery so consult the synopsis before venturing out. Anglers may keep one adult wild coho per angler per day.

The curtain has fallen for the Fall chinook run on the Siuslaw.

Winter steelhead have shown and anglers are landing them on the mainstem of the Umpqua River. The fishing is only fair at this time but will improve as the season progresses. The occasional coho is also being taken in this stretch, but better coho fishing is available up the North Fork around Idleyld Park. Anglers continue to score decent catches of summer steelhead in the flies-only stretch of the North Umpqua as most every long-rodder is landing at least one. Chinook fishing in the lower river and bay is resulting in the straggler or two as the season wraps up. Winchester Bay has produced excellent catches for crabbers this week. With the next heavy rain to roil the lower river, expect to see sturgeon in the Umpqua report.

South Coast Rivers are on the drop. The Coquille fishery is on its way out while the Elk and Sixes Rivers are about to enter their prime. Although the Sixes produced some bright chinook late last week and into the weekend for anglers using anchovy or cured salmon eggs, without rain in the forecast, this fishery will taper off quickly until the next freshet. It's currently low and clear. Although fish were present on the Elk and Sixes rivers late last week, the bulk of the fish are yet to return. Given precipitation to provide sufficient flow, this run will shine in the second half of November and the first week of December. The Chetco produced some good results over the weekend but the dry spell should keep action in check until the next rain.

The Rogue River is done for salmon and anglers here are anxiously awaiting winter steelhead as are most on the South coast. This run is due to queue by early December. Upper river anglers are finding sporadic action with the tail-end of the summer steelhead run.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Eastside rivers which offer fine opportunities to fly fishers include the Imnaha where sunny days are encouraging the Blue-Winged Olive hatch. The Owyhee is fishing well for steelhead while the Grande Ronde has offered some outstanding steelheading over the past few days and should continue to do so.

Only a few lakes remain viable options to fish for trout and many have shut down for the year. Action should be decent as fish begin to prepare for low food availability through the winter months. Green Peter has been producing trout and a few keeper kokanee for trollers recently.

Among waters closed for the season: Hosmer East and Big Lava Lakes, Crane Prairie Reservoir

and the Upper Deschutes River.

Although mentioned in the Fisheries Forecast, it's worth noting here: Oregon's tire chain law went into effect on Tuesday, November 15th. On mountain pass roads, chains must be carried even when it's not required to put them on. Driver's caught chainless are subject to a fine.

Steelheading has slowed on the Deschutes but remains worthwhile. After these summer fish have been in the river for a while, they become sluggish, hence slower to take a lure. The areas adjacent to Warm Springs which closed to trout on November 1st remain open to steelhead fishing. Trout fishing is good for fly fishers with Blue-Winged-Olive and Caddis patterns effective.

Washington Fishing Report:

North Puget Sound: For North Sound anglers it's all about **chum** and **blackmouth**. Anglers have a chance to catch chum salmon in the Green, Nooksack, Skagit and Skykomish rivers, as the peak of the chum season nears. A lack of rain, however, could limit fishing opportunities. "Watch those stream gauges," said Steve Thiesfeld, a WDFW biologist. "Those rivers could drop down and that would keep fish from moving in. If that's the case, I'd recommend going blackmouth fishing instead."

Puget Sound blackmouth fishing, however, continues to be slow. The one bright spot was Nov. 13 when a creel check showed 43 anglers hauled in five blackmouth at Seattle's Armeni boat ramp - not bad compared to other areas. Elsewhere, two anglers accounted for two chinook at the Everett boat ramp on Nov. 8 and one chinook was checked at the Shilshole Ramp on Nov. 13. Low angler effort is one of the reasons for the small blackmouth catch numbers in North Sound, said Thiesfeld. "Another reason could be the high cost of fuel," he said.

Fuel prices didn't keep anglers from participating in Everett Bayside Marine's salmon derby a couple of weeks ago. One hundred and eleven derby tickets were sold and 31 fish were weighed. Dan Welty's 13-pound blackmouth took first prize and earned him \$2,000. Bob Coolbaugh finished second with a 10-pound, 1-ounce fish, and Todd Silverwood finished third at 9 pounds, 12 ounces.

In the past, a two-week closure would interrupt salmon fishing in Area 10 at the beginning of December. This year, however, there is no closure and anglers will have a chance to hook salmon straight through December until the end of January, said Thiesfeld. "We changed it so we wouldn't have a closure in the middle of the season," he said.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula: Anglers will continue to focus on salmon for the next couple weeks before turning their attention to winter steelhead. **Chum salmon** fishing peaks around Thanksgiving, although plenty of the fish have already made their way into South Sound streams. Anglers fish estuaries and inlets, trying to head off chum en route to the lower reaches of small streams. While not the most highly-prized salmon, chum entice anglers through their sheer numbers, their size - which averages 10 to 15 pounds - and their spunk. Anglers often smoke the meat or release the fish. While chum can be found in virtually every small stream, the most popular places to fish include the mouth of Kennedy Creek on Totten Inlet (where 23 anglers were checked with nine fish on Nov. 9 and 10) and near the Hoodspport Hatchery on Hood Canal (where 58 shore anglers recently landed 87 chum).

Fishing at Hoodspport should be good until Thanksgiving, then drop off rapidly, said Mark Cylwik, WDFW fish hatchery specialist at Hoodspport. "We have another couple weeks, before the fish

heads downhill," he said. Kennedy Creek closes to salmon fishing on Nov. 30 from the mouth to the Highway 101 bridge. Other productive chum-fishing areas are outside Chico Creek in Dyes Inlet near Silverdale and in front of McClane Creek near Olympia. By the time those areas start tailing off, chum should be flooding the Nisqually River, said Steve Theisfeld, WDFW biologist. Minter Creek in Pierce County also offers a chum fishery through the end of the year from the mouth to the fishing boundary markers about 50 feet downstream of the hatchery rack. The limit is four chum per day.

Chum are also being caught in the Skokomish, Puyallup and Aberdeen-area rivers, but **coho** are still the top prize. Most of the salmon have moved up the Chehalis River system, where angler effort has shifted upstream and into the tributaries, said WDFW biologist Rick Ereth, who recommends trying the Chehalis around Porter and Oakville or the Wynoochee and Satsop rivers. The chum in those rivers are striped but fresh; the chinook, which must be released, are dark but big; and the coho are bright chrome, Ereth said. Fish close to the bank around root wads, he suggested, and stay out of the main flow. "We're supposed to get about 10 days of decent weather," said Ereth. "If there's a time when it's going to get good, this is the time." The Dungeness River might be another good bet for coho. It's open until Dec. 31. The daily limit is four.

Anglers have already pulled a few early-arriving **winter steelhead** out of area rivers, but don't count on "limiting out" on steelhead just yet, said Ereth, noting that the runs don't show up in earnest until after Thanksgiving. December is the big month for hatchery steelhead on the North Olympic Peninsula, including the Quillayute River system and Hoh River, said Mike Gross, WDFW biologist. The daily limit is two fish. Wild steelhead can be retained on several north coast rivers, but anglers should check the regulations for each area. On rivers where wild-steelhead retention is allowed, anglers can keep just one wild fish per license year (April 1-March 31) and are then ineligible to retain wild steelhead caught in any other river. Steelhead average 8 to 11 pounds, but can run as high as 25 pounds. There'll be some wild ones mixed in, but the bulk of the wild run generally doesn't arrive until spring.

Rather be out on the bay? **Blackmouth salmon** fishing remains open in all Puget Sound waters except the San Juan Islands. The daily limit is two salmon with no more than one chinook except in Hood Canal, where the limit is four salmon and no more than one king. The strait and Admiralty Inlet will close Nov. 30. Tacoma/Vashon Island, South Sound and Hood Canal seasons extend until the end of the year. The limit in Bremerton/Seattle drops from two to one salmon on Dec. 1, but the season continues until Jan. 31.

It's not too early to begin making plans for the next razor clam dig, tentatively scheduled Dec. 30-Jan. 1 on evening tides at Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks and Kalaloch beaches. A fourth evening of digging is planned Monday, Jan. 2, at Twin Harbors and Mocrocks. Final approval for all digs is contingent upon marine toxin tests that show the clams are safe to eat. The test results will be announced approximately one week before the proposed opening.

Southwest Washington: While some anglers are biding their time until winter steelhead fishing revs up in early December, others are still out chasing **salmon** and sturgeon around the region - sometimes with good results. At Lake Scanewa, creel checkers tallied 42 boat anglers with 48 wild coho and 10 chinook jacks Nov. 9. One angler fishing the Cowlitz River near Barrier Dam two days earlier spoke of an "awesome day" of salmon fishing in a message posted on the [Gamefishin.com](http://www.Gamefishin.com) website. "We hooked into some nice size late-run kings, silvers and early winter-run steelhead," he wrote. "Most kings were copper color and 20-plus (pounds). They were in there thick as pinks are on the Puyallup." Other options for late-season coho fishing include the Elochoman River, which opened for hatchery coho retention Nov. 11, and the Kalama and

Washougal rivers, which reopened for hatchery coho last month. Anglers are required to release wild, unmarked coho on rivers throughout the region.

One reason for the glowing reports from the Cowlitz is that Tacoma Power employees have been recycling thousands of salmon collected at the Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery back into the river. During the week ending Nov. 13, they released 1,410 hatchery coho at the Lake Scanewa day use site above Cowlitz Falls Dam, 260 adult coho and 43 jacks at the Franklin Bridge in Packwood and 127 adult coho into the Cispus River above the mouth of Yellowjacket Creek. Tacoma Power crews also recycled 81 adult coho at the Interstate 5 boat launch, 407 summer steelhead at the Olequa boat launch and 612 adult coho into the Tilton River at Gust Backstrom Park in Morton.

Meanwhile, die-hard anglers continue to reel in sturgeon just below Bonneville Dam. A recent creel check found that 59 bank anglers fishing in the area had caught 11 legal-sized fish and released 14 sub-legals. While those catch rates pale compared to those on Oct. 1 when 404 bank anglers were counted with 151 legal fish, the fishery is still producing a legal-sized sturgeon for every five rods. Sturgeon retention continues from the Wauna Powerlines to Bonneville Dam on Thursday, Friday and Saturday each week. Sturgeon must be at least 42 inches and no more than 60 inches long to retain. Sturgeon anglers interested in next year's fishery in the John Day Reservoir might want to attend a public meeting scheduled 6-8 p.m. Nov. 17 in Umatilla. The meeting, which will be held in the theater of McNary Dam, 82790 Devore Road, will focus on a proposal to close the catch-and-release season for "oversize" sturgeon immediately downstream of McNary Dam from May through July.

When it comes to steelhead, anglers are eying both ends of the region. On the mid-Columbia above John Day Dam, creel checkers recently counted 47 boats with 22 hatchery steelhead aboard. "Those are *summer* steelhead," said Manuel Fariñas, WDFW regional fish manager. "The *winter* steelhead are just starting to arrive in the lower river." Through late December or early January, the number of winter steelhead moving into the lower Columbia will continue to grow, providing great fishing for hatchery fish on such tributaries as the Cowlitz, Washougal and Kalama rivers, he said. Last December, anglers caught nearly 3,000 hatchery steelhead in the Cowlitz River system alone, Fariñas said. "We are expecting another good run of hatchery steelhead this year," he said, adding that anglers must release any wild steelhead they catch anywhere in the region.

Eastern Washington: Low and clear water conditions in the Snake River drainage have resulted in good **steelhead** action for some anglers. Boat fishing above the interstate bridge on the mid-Snake near Clarkston produced an average of one steelhead for every 4.5 hours of effort among 112 anglers checked. Snake River tributaries saw similar action, although WDFW fish biologist Joe Bumgarner notes that angler sample size has been small. Among three anglers checked on the Touchet River on Nov. 13, it took an average of 4.3 hours of effort to catch a steelhead. The Tucannon River saw an average of 5.5 hours of effort per steelhead caught among 13 anglers checked over the three-day weekend (Nov. 11-13). For catch averages and other information about other tributaries and stretches of the Snake, see [Snake River Steelhead Creel](http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/snake/index.htm) (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/snake/index.htm>) on WDFW's website.

Big **rainbow trout** continue to respond to trolling by boat fishers on Lake Roosevelt, from the town of Hunters in southwest Stevens County down through the main reservoir. WDFW enforcement sergeant Dan Rahn reported that a check station conducted in the Creston area in Lincoln County over the Nov. 11-13 weekend included several contacts with fishermen coming from the Hunters area with trout over 18 inches. "Every boat had at least three fish," Rahn said, "and there were with a few limits of five trout, too."

WDFW central district fish biologist Chris Donley says Whitman County's Rock Lake continues to produce nice rainbows and **brown trout**. Trout anglers should plan to hit the district's two winter-only lakes when they open Dec. 1, he said, because it will be "back to the good old days at both Hog Canyon and Fourth of July." Hog Canyon is a 53-acre lake a few miles southeast of the Interstate 90 Fishtrap exit in southwest Spokane County. Donley says it will provide great fishing for rainbows that average 12 to 14 inches, with many larger ones available. Fourth of July is a 110-acre lake two miles south of Sprague on the Adams-Lincoln county line that again has lots of even bigger rainbows. "The toughest thing about these two fisheries is that only two trout can be over 14 inches in the five-trout daily catch limit," Donley said. "At Fourth of July, in particular, that often means you only go home with two fish."

North Central Washington: WDFW district fish biologist Bob Jateff of Omak reports that **steelhead** fishing has slowed down a bit on both the Methow and Okanogan Rivers during the first part of November. "Catch rates have averaged just one fish for every 10 to 12 hours of fishing," he said. Jateff reminds steelheaders that fish with an adipose fin present must be released, and that only two adipose-fin-clipped steelhead can be kept per day. Check WDFW's [fishing regulation changes](#) for all gear restrictions on both of these rivers. The Similkameen River will open to steelhead fishing on Nov. 15 under selective gear rules. Jateff also noted there are still a number of lakes in the Okanogan that are still fishable in November. "Davis Lake in the Methow area, Sidley Lake in the Oroville area, and Bonaparte Lake near Tonasket are three that are still producing **rainbow trout**," he said. "Rufous Woods Reservoir by Chief Joseph Dam is also good during the late fall and winter months for **triploid rainbows** up to five pounds."

South Central Washington: Columbia River **steelhead** fishing, in the stretch from Highway 395 bridge at Pasco to the Old Hanford townsite wooden powerline towers, continues slow and steady. WDFW fish biologist Paul Hoffarth of Pasco reports interviewing 133 anglers with 32 steelhead through Nov. 13 in the Ringold area. "Anglers averaged 13 pole hours per steelhead," he noted. "The boat anglers have been doing much better than the shore anglers in recent weeks. Weekday boat anglers averaged six hours per steelhead, compared to bank anglers' 17 hours per steelhead. Weekend boat anglers averaged 13 hours per steelhead, compared to 34 hours per fish for weekend bank anglers."

WDFW fish biologist Eric Anderson of Yakima reports that some year-round trout fishing lakes in Kittitas County just received some excess hatchery **rainbow trout** broodstock. These fish are about five to 10 pounds each and may readily bite any variety of baits or lures. North Fio Rito Lake, about three miles southeast of Ellensburg alongside Interstate 82, received 106 of the near five-pound trout and 24 of the 10-pounders. Mattoon Lake at Ellensburg, received 106 of the near-five-pounders and 25 of the 10-pounders. Both lakes provide easy bank fishing.

Northwest Trout - While there will be no more planting of waters in the Northwest or Willamette Zones, every winter the ODFW procures excess and broodstock steelhead to plant in lakes and ponds. This historically occurs around Christmas and New Years. We'll give you a 'heads up' as far ahead of time as the information is available.

Reader Email

Subscriber and regular contributor Kap'n Ken Johnson wrote on Wednesday, November 16th regarding the bank fishing outlook on the lower Willamette, "Went fishing today.....Key word: "Fishing!" The weather is absolutely beautiful, as we all look outside and don't need me to interpret! The Willamette is clearing and quite fishable plus dropping a bit each dry day. I tested the water and it is officially COLD! I'm guessing the water is about 45-48 degrees.

"Visibility at the bank appeared to be about 2-2.5 feet +/- which does not seem to affect the fishing but later, about 2 weeks, in to the season. It is Steelhead water for sure, but it helps to have fish in the water. I fished fairly close to shore, about 18' out, at Meldrum Bar just upriver from the boat ramp. There were about 5-6 other fishermen down river from the boat ramp but no one was screaming and hollering "Fish On!" After about 4 hours of heavy fishing, and about 1.5 hours of....errrrr, uhhhhhhh...napping, I thought I had extended my time limit and proceeded to leave the beach. As I was pulling my gear from the Willamette, thee Willamette Fire Department in their slick 20+ something Dual Engine Motion Marine Bright Red Rescue boat began training procedures right upriver and out from Meldrum Bar. I would have inquired as to the actual water temperature and shrink factorage, but they were too busy rescuing each other...It is only a matter of a few short days before you'll hear of fish on the bank at Meldrum Bar and other hot spots in and around the Gladstone area. It was EXACTLY this time of year, two years ago, that I was lucky enough to snag, errrr, uhhh, professionally hook 3 Steelines in 4 days of fishing while only putting in 1/2 hour-45 minutes of total fishing time each day just before it got too dark...I was using my top secret, can't tell you, Pink Polka-Dot and White "Cheater" with a single hook and a piece of yarn about 1' off of the bottom...And only on a single set up too! A lot of the guys down here use doubles and even triples to catch their fish. And, they do catch their fish!!! Sliders are cool too! Look out for a crowd to start gathering in a week, or so.

"Right now, the fishin's great...The catchin' is just a bit too slow "

Joe C. wrote via the submission form at the TGF website asking, "Which gage reading do you feel provides the most accurate estimate of what's going on at Cedar Creek on the Sandy?"

Pro guide Bob Rees responded, "The best site is probably here:

<http://www.nwrfc.noaa.gov/river/station/flowplot/flowplot.cgi?SNDO3> we may be updating our web links from our homepage to reflect the river forecast centers web sites to various rivers instead of the current one we use which is USGS. The NWRFC often times gives a forecast on how the river should be shaping up in the near future. And as you know, we are all about the **forecast!**

"Thanks and good luck fishing"

Subscriber "MT" wrote to ask, "I have fished the John Day River from the mouth up to the deadline in the past. However the recent report made me wonder if I was really lucky in the past or if this was just a word of caution.

[Quoting from an earlier edition of TGF, Ed.] ""If you plan on negotiating the John Day River itself in a jet sled, you should know what you are doing. It isn't so much that it is a technical river but none-the-less, there are navigation hazards so don't go blind into this situation.""

Ever vigilant, Bob Rees replied, "I made that statement. I have only run the river one time and for novices, it pays to go with someone that has done it. I recommend going more than once with an experienced skipper before taking my own craft up there- but I recommend that with any body of water. The statement was more one of caution and if you have experience running the John Day at various flows, luck no longer plays a role in your navigation skills!

"Thanks for your comments and thanks for being a subscriber!"

This week, an old buddy who moved East wrote to Michael, "This is one big steelhead! 36 inches x 7 inches. I don't think they come any bigger! ... caught it on the Oregon/ Washington border

mile post 1 , in Washington. Used an aero black weighted jig with a small bait shrimp."



Have a question or suggestion? Want to share your fishing experience?

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: drees@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: SailCat@SailCat.com

Random Links

Siletz Winter steelheading information from ESPN:

http://espn.go.com/outdoors/fishing/s/f_map_OR_Siletz_River_steelies.html

Knot Guide from Cabela's. A reference worth saving:

<http://www.cabelas.com/information/cabelasfieldguides/KnotLibraryFishingKnots.html>

Weekly Quote –

"Fishing, if I a fisher, may protest

Of pleasures is the sweet'st, of sports the best,

Of exercises the most excellent,

Of Receptions the most innocent.

But now the sport is marred, and wot ye why?

Fishes decrease, and fishers multiply." - Reverend Thomas Bastard, 1498

GOOD LUCK!