

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **August 11th, – August 17th, 2006**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - Metro anglers anxiously await the arrival of fall Chinook to take advantage of anchor fishing from Portland to Longview. This fishery is still a few weeks away from getting underway but recent landings by the commercial fleet indicate the run is underway. The mouth of the Cowlitz will be the first point of interception where an occasional salmon is being taken along with scores of summer steelhead reports **pro guide Brandon McGavran (360-607-1327)**.

Anchor anglers in the gorge witnessed a surge in success when Bonneville Dam recently passed over 30,000 steelhead between August 2nd and the 7th. Small spinners work best in the faster flows of the gorge but you must be anchored in the right slot to consistently produce.

The lower Willamette at 72 degrees remains a warm water fishery. Chinook and summer steelhead have resumed crossing the Falls in low double digits but there's no angler interest or effort here. Catch-and-release sturgeon fishing is fair.

The Clackamas River is too low and clear to offer stellar fishing. Steelhead are present but hunkered down in these conditions. Steelheaders at the mouth of the Sandy have picked up a few fish and cooler weather has improved visibility on the river.

The McKenzie remains fishable, offering fair to good prospects for steelheaders. Fly anglers are hooking up occasionally.

Plenty of fish are available in the North Santiam and catch rates will improve as the season wears on. Utilize the middle and upper sections for the best prospects. There are plenty of fish available in the South Santiam though they remain challenging to catch.

Northwest – Ocean salmon anglers out of the mouth of the Columbia are still struggling to find limits for their boats but calming seas and run timing should begin to make this fishery more consistent. The ocean season is now open 7 days per week and anglers are allowed 2 Chinook per day versus the previous bag of 1. The CR Buoy seems to yield the best results. The coho being retained are large for this time of year.

The Buoy 10 fishery remains quiet for catch and effort but momentum should begin to build beginning this weekend. Some of the larger Chinook of the season are taken in the early season and over half a million Chinook are due back with the bulk returning before Labor Day. The bag limit in-river remains 2 salmon, of which 1 may be a Chinook. Warm water conditions will make spinners a Buoy 10 favorite again this year.

Crabbing in the lower Columbia is picking up slightly and a softer tide series this week may improve catches.

Fresh anchovies are available for anglers using herring jigs and they have proven themselves a favorite for catch and release anglers pursuing sturgeon in the estuary. One boat confirmed over 60 fish landed on fresh jigged anchovies above the Astoria/Megler Bridge on Monday.

Nehalem Bay anglers are still looking for consistent results in what should be peak season on the lower estuary. A few Chinook are being taken at the jaws and Wheeler and the bulk of the summer run is due this week.

On Tillamook Bay, crabbing is excellent but half of the keepers present are in a severe soft-shell state and the ratio is even higher in the ocean north of the bay entrance. Ocean crabbing closes after August 14th. The bay is now open to all Chinook. Fin-clipped coho may be retained in the bay and the Trask and Wilson Rivers to the Highway 101 Bridges and Burton Bridge on the Tillamook River.

Crabbing in Yaquina Bay is yielding good catches of Dungeness but most are too soft to keep.

Many halibut fishers returned to Depoe Bay and Yaquina with fish during the first opening of the summer season August 4th through 6th. They had to launch early and return by mid-morning to beat the wind, however. It was a rough, 50-mile boat ride for tuna off the central coast last weekend. Winds are forecasted to return by this weekend.

Pro guide Jim Stevenson (503-881-5289) reports, "hearing of a few fish in Siletz tidewater, either on the anchor with a Kwikfish or trolling plug cut herring."

Southwest – Trollers launching out of Winchester Bay scored broad-shouldered Chinook early this week. Fish were taken at the 80 foot level over 400 feet of water. Scores of boats trying the lower Umpqua were disappointed this weekend as the water below Highway 101 Bridge seems devoid of salmon. Hundreds of harbor seals are present, however. Smallmouth bass fishing is good upriver.

Steelheaders working the upper Rogue are frequently, albeit inadvertently, hooking a number of dark Chinook. Trollers on the lower river are taking a fair number of fresh Fall Chinook. Salmon are averaging 28 to 32 pounds although one taken last week on the lower Rogue topped the 48 pound mark.

Bottomfishing offshore and around jetties has been excellent for rockfish, slow for ling cod. With baitfish thick this year, lures are ineffective. Large herring have been catching the fish.

Tuna are 50 to 70 miles off the South coast. Boaters equipped to make such a trip have returned with scores of albacore from 20 to 35 pounds.

Eastern - With higher numbers of steelhead passing at the Dalles Dam, fishing is improving on the Deschutes below Macs Canyon. The fish however are not responding well to flies but side planed plugs, particularly metallic red colors are producing well.

Trout fishing on the lower river is quite good, particularly in the evening with caddis dries.

Badger Lake, Fall River, Shevlin Pond and Spring Creek are scheduled to be stocked with trout this week.

Southwest Washington - The lower Cowlitz continues to produce the best results for local steelheaders. The Lewis and North Fork of the Lewis are also options but most anglers will begin to focus on the lower Columbia in search of Upriver Bright Chinook in the coming weeks.

Although coho will begin to enter the lower Columbia, most are bound for Oregon tributaries and SW Washington won't see fishable numbers until October and November. These "B" run coho are forecasted to be significantly down from last years disappointing run.

Pro guide Jeff Knotts (509-366-4052) reports, "The opening week below McNary produced well for oversized sturgeon. However that bite will most likely wane as those fish disperse and go down river. Walleye fishing has been good for those pulling worm harnesses both below McNary and Boardman. The evening bite is starting to heat up for the power trollers who like to pull deep diving plugs such as

Hot-lips and should be good during this full moon phase.”

Soapbox Update – Volunteers are needed on September 9th to help at the Whiskey Creek Hatchery near Netarts to help at the 15th annual free fishing day for children with disabilities. A free barbecue will be served to about 400 kids and all helpers. Call 503-842-6519 or 503-812-1572 or Email jdovetillanglers@tillanet.com for information or directions.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Anglers are anxious for the fabled Buoy 10 fishery to get underway. Motivated fishers are in pursuit of early salmon, mostly Chinook trolling on the Washington side below the Astoria/Megler Bridge. Success rates are low and anglers fishing outside are even having a challenging time finding limits on most days. Ocean conditions have been favorable recently and anglers have been targeting fish near the CR Buoy and north of the river entrance near Buoy 1. Some days, the fish are present and limits come easy but most days, anglers have to work hard to achieve half a boat limit. One remarkable aspect to this fishery is the exceptional size most anglers are reporting for the coho they are catching. Chinook should start showing in larger numbers and if the current is right, anglers working the Washington shoreline in 15 to 30 feet of water should score good results. The bag limit in the ocean was recently increased to any 2 salmon- Chinook or coho but river anglers are still restricted to just 1 Chinook and 1 fin-clipped coho or 2 fin-clipped coho per day. The most recent gillnet fishery netted over 200 Chinook for the commercials. The fish are on their way!

The catch and release sturgeon fishery in the estuary, particularly near Tongue Point, continues to boot out impressive numbers of fish. Finding the concentration of fish is certainly key and we found them on Taylor Sands in a well defined slot. Once you find them, you can really work 'em over as our last trip netted over 60 fish for 7 rods. Bait is certainly key and we found that fresh jigged anchovies is by far, out-producing even sand shrimp! We have found large schools of anchovies present in the Washington channel (church hole) in 19 to 35 feet of water. Herring jigs with small red beads are taking the quality bait 3 to 6 fish at a time! It is quite fun for the customers to jig their own bait and the quality is unparalleled. Keep these fish cool and you will have the best baits available! I hope to try them on our fall salmon as well.

Crabbing in the estuary has picked up but not in monumental proportions. Guides soaking their pots are taking between 20 and 25 keepers for 4 pots on lower Desdemona Sands. Strong tides will bury pots so placement is important

Upriver, **pro guide Brandon McGavran (360-607-1327)** reports great action on summer steelhead and salmon are beginning to show in the catch. Brandon landed 7 fish on 8/9 of which he was able to harvest 5 of them. He also stated they lost a nice Chinook and boats fishing the deeper water off of the mouth of the Cowlitz are taking Chinook on a more regular basis now. Brandon commented that 40 to 50 boats per day are fishing the area and the weekends are a real madhouse. Brandon is using spinners in the faster flows and plugs in the slower flows.

Gorge anglers are also taking good numbers of summer steelhead where the few boats checked over the weekend showed favorable results. A strong surge of steelhead began crossing Bonneville Dam on August 2nd and results picked up river-wide. On average, 6,000 to 8,000 steelhead are passing Bonneville each day. Angler at the mouth of the Deschutes are more interested in The Dalles Dam counts which are averaging 800 to 1500 fish per day. Those fish are apparently getting held up somewhere between the impoundments. Undoubtedly, they have found an oasis in the boiling temperatures of the middle river. Small spinners are making up the bulk of the catch in this area.

Upriver sturgeon anglers are next to non-existent except for a few guides still working oversized sturgeon using floating shad for bait. Floaters are becoming harder to find and catch and keep sturgeon will resume on October 1st. Until then, effort will be very low.

The Guide's Forecast – I usually go out on a limb and predict the first day of Chinook carnage for the Buoy 10 fishery. Well, I won't be doing that this week 'cause it ain't gunna happen anytime soon. Stay tuned for next week. This week however, the larger 5 and a few 6 year old fish should begin to show in the catches. As with the spring run, the older adults return first and 30 to 40 pounders are more likely sooner rather than later. The problem is, poor tides will keep success rates low. Look for an early morning high slack where anglers can take advantage of the cooler ocean water. High tides that occur from sunlight to 10 am will produce the best results. Go here for accurate tides for the area you like to fish most on the lower Columbia: http://www.saltwatertides.com/dynamic_dir/oregonsites.html

Ocean fishing will remain the best option for anglers fishing near Astoria. For anglers wishing to target Chinook, work the water to the north of the north jetty. Use extra caution when crossing the bar at this location as Peacock Spit has claimed many lives. It is best to follow the green or red buoy line before turning north and always, always wear your life preservers when crossing the bar into the ocean (you should be wearing them in the ocean too!). Early morning anglers will take the easy fish close to the surface before working the water deeper, following the bait. The coho have been running large so larger baits will be effective.

For the few wishing to pursue sturgeon, buy herring jigs, jig up your own anchovies in the lower river and use these baits in your favorite sturgeon haunts. There should be ample numbers available below the bridge but we have found good numbers near Tongue Point. Use extreme caution handling these fish in the warmer waters this time of year and take photos of the floaters you see coming by. These are mortalities from the summer gillnet fishery.

Columbia River anglers at the mouth of the Cowlitz River will once again find favor with steelhead and salmon should start showing in slightly larger numbers this week. Small spinners will offer steelheaders additional opportunity for early fall Chinook but anglers wishing to target Chinook should sit in the deeper water. Steelheaders are working the 8 to 14 foot depth ranges.

Gorge anglers pursuing steelhead should find another productive week ahead. Location is always key in the gorge so it's important to get an early jump start and if you don't find immediate results when fish are moving the most, plan on re-locating to another slot. If this year's prediction is correct, about half of the run has passed Bonneville. That means, the other half is DUE!

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – The lower Willamette River remains in the lower 70s with the water holding at summer level lows.

Good numbers of steelhead are present on the middle and upper stretches of the Santiams. Getting them to strike remains challenging. Most reports are of only fair fishing.

The decent water level and clarity combined with good numbers of steelhead makes the McKenzie River a favorable destination. Fly fishers have been drawing strikes with Green Butt Skunk and streamer patterns.

The Guide's Forecast – Catch and release sturgeon fishing has been fair to good in Portland Harbor on the lower Willamette for mostly sub-legal-sized fish. In the recently-adopted 2007 regulations, it was revealed that wild (unmarked) coho may be retained next year in the upper Willamette as well as in sections of the Yamhill River, Molalla River, Santiam River, Tualatin River and Gales Creek.

Steelhead are numerous at Minto and Packsaddle Parks on the North Santiam where bank access is easy. Try tiny baits or lures very early or late in the day. Drifted crawfish tail has been effective recently.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – The Clackamas River is low, clear and warm.

Steelheading is very slow. Anglers fishing pre-dawn at the earliest the law allows have had an occasional hookup around McIver and below Rivermill Dam. Summer steelhead recycling is ongoing, but at about 700 so far this year, numbers are down.

Conditions at the Sandy River are unchanged since last week. Interest and effort is low as is the water which is in the upper 60-degree range. Steelhead hookups are rare. No fish are entering the hatchery facility at Cedar Creek because the water is too low to allow passage. If you go, try the below Marmot Dam at first light. Steelhead have been entering the trap at that location. Stay below the yellow rock.

North Coast District Fishing Report – Nehalem Bay anglers are still holding out hope for more consistent fishing. The most consistent fishing is taking place at Wheeler where anglers are finding an occasional fish on the latter half of incoming tide. Herring trollers are taking the lion's share of the catch but spinners are taking a few fish further upstream near Nehalem. The fishery at the jaws typically is well underway by now but the current minus tide series isn't the best sort of conditions when working down there. The seas were friendly enough to cross the bar and target Chinook in the salt but action was slow here early in the week as well. **Avid angler Paul Fournier** from the Tillamook County Sheriff's office had this to report, "I'm sure somebody caught a fish today on the Nehalem...but it wasn't me. I didn't see a single net fly today and I started at daybreak at the bridge. I went down to the jetty at tide change and saw some boats head out for halibut but don't know how they did. I heard of one boat catching 5 salmon, losing 2 (not a guide), and saw the pictures to prove it-two 35 pound fish. That was Sunday. I finally make it up there Tuesday and Wednesday and nothing. I will see what I see this weekend."

With ocean coho closed, traffic out of the Garibaldi Boat Basin hasn't been all that busy. Tuna trollers are working water 30 to 50 miles offshore for fair numbers of fish. The tuna have been running nice size but if a boat is catching 10 to 20 fish per day, they are doing well. The action should stay consistent into September and some boats are running northwest of the bay entrance to get into good schools of fish.

Crabbing in Tillamook Bay and the ocean has been awesome. We soaked 6 pots on Monday north of the north jetty out of Tillamook Bay using fresh tuna carcasses for bait. Of course this bait is hard to top but we easily took our 48 crab limit and threw back at least another 2 limits of crab. The vast majority however were soft-shelled but their enormous size makes up for the lack of meat in the shell. It seems the hard shelled crabs are a bit more common inside of the estuary.

With warm, low flows, summer steelhead are becoming increasingly difficult to catch. Anglers on the Nestucca and Wilson Rivers are taking a few however but early morning anglers, and those taking advantage of the 1 hour pre-dawn opportunity using glow in the dark equipment are accounting for a few fish.

The Guide's Forecast – The Nehalem Bay fishery should improve after the weekend when softer outgoing tides will allow bar fishermen to keep baits on the bottom and working for tide-riding Chinook. The jaws will produce the best catches after the weekend but Wheeler will likely remain the best bet over the weekend and the afternoon should prove the best when we draw closer to high tide. Herring will draw the most bites in both areas. Keep those baits on the bottom.

Ocean anglers out of Garibaldi may find an occasional Chinook in the area. Fish should start to stage near the bay entrances although later in the month should prove to be better. Fishing for fin-clipped coho is open inside of Tillamook Bay but with low returns predicted, action should be less than impressive.

Crabbing should remain great but the ocean closes to crabbing after August 14th. The upcoming softer tides should prove to be good for estuary crabbers. Netarts will likely produce good catches as well.

Overcast skies may aid steelheaders on the north coast. Early mornings will still prove to be the best time to intercept summer steel. Hardware will work best when the sun hits the water and try the pocket water using small baits in the early morning.

Central & South Coast Reports – Despite the numerous boats working tidewater on the Siletz, catches of early Fall Chinook are practically nonexistent. Steelheading from Moonshine Park upstream offers promise for the weekend.

Tuna fishing has been decent this week out of Depoe Bay although the warmer water has moved further offshore. Most are fishing less than the preferred 60-degree stuff and still getting a few at 30 to 40 miles off the central coast. Tuna have been caught by sport boats launching out of Coos Bay this week as warm water moved closer to port but upcoming conditions aren't encouraging.

It's unlikely anyone will get out across the bar this weekend on the central or South coast. Forecasts indicate high wind through into next week.

The next all-depth Pacific halibut opener will occur August 18th, 19th and 20th off the central Oregon coast between Cape Falcon and Humbug Mountain. Halibut may be taken inside the 40-fathom line seven days a week.

Razor clams may be taken on the central and South coast from Cape Perpetua near Yachats to the California border. Minus tides this Friday and Saturday should yield some catches but the tides moderate starting Sunday.

Steelheading is fair to good on the North Umpqua River. Steelhead have entered the fly-fishing-only stretch and long-rodgers are reporting multiple hookups. Smallmouth bass fishing is rewarding for anglers in the South Umpqua and on the mainstem above Scottsburg. Sturgeon fishing for oversize and the occasional keeper-sized fish remains fair to good below Reedsport. A few hatchery coho and chinook have been taken in Winchester Bay and this fishery is expected to improve in the next few weeks. Offshore Chinook angling is good with about every other fish topping the 30-pound mark. Bottomfishing for rockfish and cabezon is excellent although ling cod catches remain low.

Winchester Bay is the port from which to launch for offshore Chinook according to ODFW catch rates. From July 31st through August 6th, 147 Chinook were taken offshore when boats could get out. The total Chinook harvested for the year shows a remarkable advantage to a Reedsport launch. Nearly 2,900 Chinook have been bonked there while Charleston anglers harvested 837 and Yaquina Bay boats have brought in only 285.

As of August 5th, nearly 5,100 summer steelhead had been counted at Gold Ray Dam, a respectable number for this early in the run. Steelheading on the upper river has been good with water conditions and temperatures ideal. Fly rodgers have been having a ball with them although these willing metalheads have been smacking all manner of bait and lure. Steelheading is fair in the Grants Pass stretch. Although chinook fishing is closed above Gold Ray Dam, the Rogue will open for all Chinook, fin-clipped or not, from the dam downstream to Hog Creek on August 15th. The lower river and estuary have been open for all Chinook since August 1st. Trollers in the Rogue estuary report spotty fishing although the quality of the Chinook being landed is excellent. Spinner/anchovy rigs reign supreme as the lure of choice and have been effective in taking Chinook. With temperatures falling in the main river, Chinook have started moving upstream.

The reduction of flow from Lost Creek Lake at the headwaters of the Rogue will exceed the prediction by about 30 percent. As of August 4th, flows were reduced to 1,850 cubic feet per second rather than the 2,400 cfs forecast only a week ago. The combined effect of warm weather, a lack of precipitation

and accelerated evaporation is at cause for the action. Further reduction will occur in September and again in October. The ODFW assures anglers this will not affect anadromous runs or spawning.

In some of the best news to come in this week, an initial payment of \$28 million was made by the feds to Slayden Construction Group of Stayton to remove the Savage Rapids Dam on the Rogue. This move will serve to improve salmon passage in the river and will be completed by late 2009.

Central and Eastern Oregon – In an ODFW bulletin dated August 7th, it was announced that it will be legal to keep unclipped coho on the Deschutes next year. This decision was made because coho aren't native to the Deschutes so all of those fish which enter here are strays.

In addition, all catch restrictions on illegally-introduced smallmouth bass at Laurance Reservoir will be lifted in 2007 in hope of reducing the population which threatens bull trout recovery here.

Northwest Trout and Kokanee – Kokanee fishing has improved at Green Peter but it's still only fair. Trollers are faring better than jiggers.

Trout will be planted this week at Leaburg Lake and in the upper McKenzie River and section 5 of the Rogue River.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender report:

North Puget Sound

The hot spot in the region continues to be Lake Washington, where anglers can fish for **sockeye salmon** through Sunday, Aug. 13. State and tribal salmon co-managers recently updated the size of the Lake Washington sockeye run to about 466,000 salmon. That projected run, which includes expected returns through August, is well above the spawning escapement goal of 350,000 salmon, and provides a surplus of 57,000 sockeye each for tribal and non-tribal fisheries.

"This year's unexpectedly strong sockeye return has allowed us to provide anglers another fishing opportunity on Lake Washington while still remaining within our non-tribal share of fish," said Tim Flint, WDFW salmon resource manager.

Anglers caught about 28,700 sockeye during the first five days of fishing on Lake Washington this summer. Anglers averaged just above one sockeye per rod during the first two days of fishing, and slightly under one sockeye per rod during the last three days of fishing. "Overall, the catch rate continues to look good," Flint said.

Fishing will be allowed from one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset each day. The daily limit is two sockeye, measuring at least 15 inches. All other salmon must be immediately released unharmed. No fishing will be allowed within 100 yards of the floating bridges. Waters within 1,000 feet of the mouth of the Cedar River in Renton also will be closed to all fishing.

Anglers must carry a freshwater or combination fishing license and salmon catch record card. Any salmon that is not released must be immediately recorded on the catch record card. Under freshwater fishing rules, anglers may only fish with one rod and must stop fishing once they have reached their personal daily limit. More information on Lake Washington sockeye salmon can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/sockeye/counts.htm>.

On the saltwater, **chinook** and **coho** fishing continues to be good in Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton). Creel checks at the Armeni Boat ramp indicate 380 anglers hooked 148 chinook

and 33 coho on Aug. 4, while 456 anglers were checked with 72 chinook and 45 coho the following day. "Anglers fishing the Inner Elliot Bay fishery are really doing well, especially for chinook," said Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound recreational salmon manager for WDFW. "The catch per angler improved this past week, and this upcoming weekend (Aug. 12-13) is typically when we see the peak of the recreational harvest."

Anglers have through Aug. 20 to fish the Inner Elliot Bay fishery, which is open Friday through Sunday each week with a two-salmon daily limit. Chum salmon must be released. In Marine Area 10, anglers fishing outside of the Inner Elliott Bay fishery and the Sinclair Inlet fishery have a daily limit of two salmon, with no minimum size limit, and must release chinook and chum salmon.

The Tulalip Bay "bubble" salmon fishery remains slow. Checks at the Everett Ramp showed 66 anglers with only one chinook Aug. 3, and 193 anglers brought home six chinook the following day. The Tulalip bubble fishery is open each week from Friday through noon Monday and runs through Sept. 25. There is a two-salmon daily limit and anglers must release any chinook measuring less than 22 inches.

Another option for anglers is Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where the chinook catch has been steady all summer, Thiesfeld said. Anglers have a daily limit of two salmon, must release wild coho and chum, and can only keep one chinook. Beginning Aug. 16, the Bellingham Bay fishery opens with a daily limit of four salmon, of which only two can be chinook.

Marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) and 9 (Admiralty Inlet) also are open for salmon fishing.

Before heading out, anglers are encouraged to check out the regulations for each fishery in WDFW's *2006/2007 Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

Crab fishing remains open in marine areas 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10 and the southern and eastern portions of Marine Area 7 Wednesday through Saturday each week. The northern portion of Marine Area 7 opens Aug. 16. See WDFW's sport-crabbing website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>) for more information.

To participate in the fishery, all crabbers age 15 or older must obtain and carry a current Washington fishing license. In addition, all crab fishers - regardless of age - must obtain and carry a catch record card and a crab licensing endorsement to fish for crab in Puget Sound. The crab endorsement costs \$3 for crabbers age 15 and over, but is free to fishers under age 15.

The **coonstripe** and **pink shrimp** fishery also is open throughout the region, and shrimpers can drop a pot in marine areas 8-1, 8-2, the northern and central portions of area 7 and a portion of area 9. Details on the fishery are available on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crabreg/>. **Trout** at numerous lakes, rivers and streams also remain a possibility for anglers throughout the region. For more rules and details on the trout fishery and other freshwater fisheries, anglers should check WDFW's *2006/2007 Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Coastal salmon fishing expands to seven days a week Aug. 11 as anglers coastwide continue to reel in nice fish of above-average weight. Meanwhile, a new opportunity for catching coho opens up on the Quilcene River, as the steelhead fishing heats up on the Hoh.

Salmon fishing is still in full swing off the Pacific coast, where catch rates have been averaging just under one fish per angler, according to Wendy Beeghley, WDFW fish biologist. Many charters fishing out of Ilwaco (Marine Area 1) took their daily limits during the week of Aug. 7, reeling in two salmon

per angler. Private boats scored about one fish per angler, mostly coho. In Westport (Marine Area 2), the count was about half a fish per angler, and half were chinook. Both areas are open on a Sunday-through-Thursday schedule until Aug. 11, when they switch to seven days per week.

It was a good week in LaPush (Marine Area 3) where anglers averaged more than a fish per rod, Beegley said. But Neah Bay (Marine Area 4) dropped off to about half a fish per person. Coho predominated in both places. Those areas will be open Tuesday through Saturday until Aug. 11, when the fishery opens seven days per week.

Beegley said she continues to be impressed by the quality of the salmon coastwide. "The average for coho is in the 9-pound range and I've seen several in the teens," she said. "That's a size you generally expect to see in late August." And the chinook are huge, she said, noting that one came in at 45 pounds and a number have been in the 30-pound range.

Starting Aug. 11, when the coastal salmon fishing opens seven days a week, anglers will be able to keep up to two chinook as part of the two-fish daily limit. Minimum size for chinook is 24 inches and hatchery coho must be at least 16 inches to keep. Wild coho must be released. Salmon fishing is scheduled to continue through Sept. 17 in marine areas 2, 3 and 4, and through Sept. 30 in Marine Area 1.

"Angler participation has been down along the coast and salmon fishing has started slower than expected in some areas," said Phil Anderson, a WDFW special assistant. "For that reason, we can provide anglers some additional fishing opportunities without exceeding this year's recreational harvest quotas."

Coastwide, more than 6,000 anglers caught nearly 4,000 chinook and 14,900 coho through July 30, reaching 20.4 percent of the quota for coho and 12.8 percent of the guideline for chinook. Want a break from salmon? The Westport/Grayland Chamber of Commerce will host a **beach perch** fishing derby on Aug. 12. It starts at sunrise and ends at 4 p.m. in Westport. Entry fee is \$20 and the biggest perch weighed in will get 25 percent of the total entry fees. Other cash prizes will also be awarded.

Anglers continue to reel in high numbers of chinook in Marine Area 11 (Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge). At the Point Defiance Boathouse, WDFW checks counted one fish for every 1.6 rods on July 31 and one for every two rods on Aug. 6. Elsewhere, Solo Point anglers were hitting one chinook for about every three rods the weekend of Aug. 3-4. The fish have been good-sized as well. A Tacoma salmon derby winner pulled in a chinook weighing more than 32 pounds. The other five winners in the adult division all topped 20 pounds. Commencement Bay opens for salmon fishing on Aug. 12.

The salmon fishing in the Sekiu area is improving, according to Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "Sources tell me the some chinook are coming in there now," he said. He said the fishing in Marine Area 13 (South Puget Sound) is also still doing well.

Salmon fishing is also open in marine areas 10 (Bremerton), 12 (Hood Canal, south of Ayock Point only), and 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) on a daily basis, with a daily limit of two salmon. On Aug. 16, Quilcene Bay and a northern portion of Dabob Bay open for coho fishing. Fishing is open seven days a week through Oct. 15, with a daily limit of 4 coho; no minimum size.

Thiesfeld reminds anglers that chinook release is required in marine areas 5, 6, and 10, although marked, hatchery chinook may be retained west of Ediz Hook. Chinook also may be retained in Sinclair Inlet and the Inner Elliott Bay fishery when it is open.

Meanwhile, **steelhead** fishing on the Hoh River "is the best we've seen this time of year," according to David Low, WDFW fish biologist. Last week, 75 anglers reeled in 28 steelhead, along with four chinook and one coho. Also on the Peninsula, the Quilcene River opens for salmon fishing on Aug. 16 from Rodgers Street to the Highway 101 Bridge. This fishery is open seven days a week through Oct. 31. There's a daily limit of four coho only, with a minimum size of 12 inches. "Be careful of the summer chum in there," Low cautioned anglers, noting that all chum must be released. Only fish hooked inside the mouth may be kept.

Crab fishing is open seven days per week in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge) through Feb. 28. Most other areas of Puget Sound are open for crab fishing Wednesdays through Saturdays, including marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 12 (Hood Canal). In addition, these areas will be open the entire Labor Day weekend, Sept. 2-4, before closing for a catch assessment. Fishing will resume in areas where the catch quota has not been met, on dates to be announced by WDFW.

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five male Dungeness crab with a shell width measuring at least 6¼ inches, plus six red rock crab of either sex with a shell width of at least 5 inches. All undersized crab, female Dungeness crab and all softshell crab of either sex must be returned to the water. To participate in the fishery, all crab fishers age 15 or older must obtain and carry a current Washington fishing license. In addition, all crabbers - regardless of age - must obtain and carry a catch record card and a crab licensing endorsement to fish for crab in Puget Sound.

Those fishing in Hood Canal are also asked to report any Dungeness crab bearing a bright green tag on the underside of their shell. Sport or tribal fishers who catch a crab bearing the distinctive green tag are asked to call the department toll free at 866-859-8439 and report the tag number along with the date, location, and depth of capture. More information on crab fishing is available on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>.

Southwest Washington:

Catch rates for **summer steelhead** are climbing on the Columbia River and should stay on that trajectory through the middle of August, according to Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. By then, the Buoy 10 salmon fishery should kick into gear, he said.

"Salmon fishing at Buoy 10 is still slow, but the summer steelhead fishery is really picking up - both above and below Bonneville Dam," Hymer said. "If past years are any indication, the early run should peak sometime around the middle of August."

Creel checks conducted below Bonneville Dam found that boat anglers averaged one hatchery steelhead for every three rods during the first week of August. Bank anglers averaged one fish for every five rods. Most of the boat effort is centered at the mouth of the Cowlitz River, where 60 watercraft were counted Aug. 5.

Steelhead fishing was also good at Drano Lake, where 107 boat anglers landed 35 steelhead and released 21 others during the same week. Twelve boat anglers and 25 bank anglers landed eight fish and released three others on the White Salmon River while five boat anglers pulled two hatchery fish from the Klickitat River that week.

Hymer noted that rising catch rates for hatchery steelhead correspond to a major increase in the number of fish passing over Bonneville Dam in recent days. After lagging behind the 10-year average, daily fish counts jumped to more than 4,000 - then nearly 6,000 - helping to close the gap.

"The daily dam counts indicate that we're nearing the peak of the early run," Hymer said. Those fish,

ranging from 4-6 pounds are part of the so-called "A Run," bound for the upper Columbia and lower Snake rivers, he said. The "B Run," typically larger fish that return to the Salmon and Clearwater rivers in Idaho, arrives later and peaks in September.

As always, anglers must release any steelhead with an intact adipose fin. Night closures and non-buoyant lure restrictions are in effect on the Columbia mainstem from Bonneville Dam to The Dalles Dam; non-buoyant lure restrictions are also in place on the Wind, White Salmon and Klickitat rivers, as well as Drano Lake. For a river-by-river listing of other regulations, anglers should consult the *Fishing in Washington* rule pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

Hymer said anglers are still picking up a few summer chinook salmon in or near the Bonneville Pool tributaries. But as of Aug. 6, anglers had intercepted only a handful of fall chinook in the Buoy 10 fishery. Coho were also hard to find in the estuary, although a few had been tallied at Bonneville Dam. "Right now, the action is still out in the ocean," Hymer said. "But catch rates should start picking up soon at Buoy 10, which usually really fires up around the third week of August. Just 31 boats were counted at Buoy 10 last Saturday, but that should change quickly when the bite improves."

Sturgeon fisheries are still drawing a few anglers, although all areas of the Columbia River below McNary Dam are now catch-and-release. A good bet for trout is Mayfield Lake, which was planted with 2,222 half-pound rainbows July 1. Riffe Lake is producing a mixture of landlocked coho, steelhead, chinook salmon and cutthroat trout, while Swofford Pond remains good for bluegill and bass.

Eastern Washington:

Warm weather usually means good fishing for warm water fish species such as **yellow perch**. WDFW central district fish biologist Chris Donley of Spokane says perch are abundant and cooperative at many waters throughout the region. Downs Lake in southwest Spokane County is a good perch fishery, he noted. So is the Spokane River reservoir of Long Lake and Deer and Waitts lakes in Stevens County. "But fish deep for them at this time of year," Donley said. "They're not along the shorelines like they were during spring spawning. You have to jig for them to 25 feet or more."

Donley also recommends trout fishing during early morning hours or at night at virtually any **trout** water in the region. "Rainbows are really active now at night," he said. "Lake Roosevelt continues to produce them, and a lot of the smaller lakes up north and around Spokane are still a good bet." The upper Spokane River has nice rainbows, while the lower river has both rainbows and also browns. Donley reminds river anglers to mind the catch and gear restrictions listed in the fishing rules pamphlet. Nighttime fishing for **kokanee** at Loon Lake in Stevens County is very good, mostly for boat fishers trolling small baits with spinners or flashers.

The Pend Oreille River continues to produce good catches of large **northern pike**. The river is also a good bet for **largemouth bass**, especially from Lone to Box Canyon Dam, and **smallmouth bass** in the Metaline Falls area.

Fishing and hunting-license holders can catch something extra Aug. 20 at "Fish & Wildlife Night" at the Spokane Indians baseball game at Avista Stadium in Spokane. License holders get game ticket discounts that night, which also features fish casting and elk bugling contests on centerfield during the seventh-inning stretch and fish and wildlife displays and information booths throughout the evening. The game starts at 6:30 p.m. Discounted tickets can be purchased with presentation of a valid fishing license at the stadium's ticket office, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., or online at <http://www.spokaneindiansbaseball.com>.

North Central Washington:

Trout fishing on the Methow River in Okanogan County has started to pick up, reports WDFW district fish biologist Bob Jateff of Omak. "River water levels are dropping into good shape and fishing should

be good this month and next," he said. Jateff reminds anglers to check the regulations for the Methow and tributaries closely as some areas will be closing Aug. 15 to protect spawning spring chinook salmon.

Jateff says **chinook salmon** fishing in the Brewster/Bridgeport area on the Columbia River has been spotty. "But the fish being taken there have been large," he said, "20 pounds and more." Recent cooler temperatures in the Okanogan River have allowed some salmon to move upstream, he noted. "Some fish are as far up as the Similkameen," he said, "so I'd encourage anglers to give the upper fishing areas some effort."

Jateff also recommended that anglers be prepared for some smoky air conditions and possible road closures in Okanogan County as wildfires have been burning in the national forest around Winthrop for the past month. Check current conditions at the Okanogan National Forest website, <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/oka/>.

WDFW enforcement officers on patrol report good **yellow perch** and **bass** fishing on Patterson Lake in Okanogan County.

South Central Washington:

The fall **chinook salmon** fishery on the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River near the Tri-Cities opens August 16. WDFW fish biologist Paul Hoffarth says a strong return of fall chinook is expected this year. The daily catch limit is six salmon, retaining no more than two adults of 24 inches or more. All areas of the Hanford Reach are closed to angling for steelhead, hatchery or wild.

Hoffarth also noted **walleye** fishing has been good in most areas of the Columbia River from Boardman to McNary. "Fishing should improve below McNary as flows decline," he said.

Other southcentral region rivers and streams have great **trout** fishing now, too. said "There are excellent opportunities at some of the smaller rivers and streams for cutthroat, rainbow and occasional eastern brook trout," said Jim Cummins, a WDFW fish biologist. He recommends the Naches River, Rattlesnake Creek, Little Naches River, and Bumping River in Yakima County, and the upper reaches of Taneum Creek, Naneum Creek, Manastash Creek, and the Forks of the Teanaway in Kittitas County. "Many other small streams are good bets, too, especially for those who like to hike into rarely fished reaches."

Cummins noted most rivers and creeks have selective gear rules that prohibit bait. Most also have statewide daily catch limits of two trout with an 8-inch minimum size. Rattlesnake Creek and the Naches River from Tieton River to Rattlesnake Creek are catch-and-release only. Those sections of the Naches that are not catch-and-release have a two trout, 12-inch minimum size catch limit. Anglers should check the regulation pamphlet for all details.

Cummins noted that WDFW conducted an intensive creel census from 2002 through 2004 on two sections of the Naches River to compare fisheries in a catch-and-release reach and a reach where harvest is legal. "Anglers voluntarily released about 90 percent of the legal-sized trout they caught in the reach where fish could be legally harvested," he said. "We estimated that the highest harvest was 53 trout in a 10-mile reach of the river upstream of Rattlesnake Creek in 2003, and less in 2002 and 2004. We also found that most anglers fished with flies, fishing effort was light to moderate, fishing success was good for most anglers, and rainbow trout from nine to 11 inches were the most often caught fish."

Cummins reported the survey showed cutthroat trout of the same size made up about 30 percent of the catch, and although rare, a few rainbow and cutthroat up to 20 inches were caught. More than 10 percent of the trout caught and released from 2002-2004 were reported to be greater than 12 inches in length. The percentage of larger fish was much higher some years in some reaches, but there was no

consistent pattern. "We also learned that about 40 percent of the anglers who fish the Naches live outside of the region," he said, "which may be why many were not familiar with all of the fishing regulations."

Cummins said **bull trout**, which are protected and illegal to target in many waters in the region, are beginning to move upriver prior to moving into spawning tributaries. "Sometimes these fish are very visible, which seems to tempt some people to harass them," he said. "We ask that people please let them spawn and produce future generations of fish." Cummins also noted "recreational dams" often block upstream passage for bull trout. "Please do not build dams or other structures in streams," he asked. "It hurts the fish and it can bring a citation, since both intentional and unintentional attempts to catch, snag or harass these fish is illegal." Cummins said there have been recent reports of anglers illegally targeting bull trout at Bumping Reservoir. The North Fork of the Tieton River, between Rimrock Lake and Clear Lake, will close to all fishing August 15 to protect bull trout and spawning kokanee. Bumping and Rimrock may be most productive of the Yakima Basin reservoirs for **kokanee** fishing. Most kokanee caught have been in the 8-10 inch range. Although fishing is generally slow, Lake Cle Elum is the region's only opportunity to catch **lake trout**, also known as mackinaw.

"High lake trout fishing is also a good bet now," said Cummins. "There are lots of mosquitoes this year, but by the end of the month they should become less of a problem."

Reader Email

Regarding the question posed to readers last week regarding the location of Section 5 on the Rogue River which has been subject to frequent trout planting by the ODFW recently, an anonymous Email indicates it's the area around Prospect and Union Creek' Hope that helps the subscriber who stumped us with that question originally!

Got a story to tell or information to share? Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: drees@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: SailCat@SailCat.com

Random Links

Sent in recently by a reader: <http://www.afsarosenbloom.net/Fishing-video.html>

Check several locations around Tillamook Bay, even the lights on the Coast Guard tower with the jetty cam: <http://www.jettyview.com/barcam2.html>

Weekly Quote – "The fun comes, I think, as it does with just about any other act of skill, when you are properly challenged, when you are fascinated by what's difficult. I guess I fish not because it's easy but because it's not; I guess I fish because there's really no end to what you can learn, no reason to think that you'll exhaust the complexity of the sport in a lifetime." - Nick Lyons

GOOD LUCK!