

The Guide's Forecast - volume 8 issue number 5

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **August 18th, – August 24th, 2006**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- It will be another week or better before metro anglers have decent opportunity for fall Chinook around the mouth of the Sandy River and in the Gorge. Meanwhile, motivated anglers are still in pursuit of summer steelhead and Gorge anglers scored excellent results over the weekend. Boat anglers averaged 2.5 steelhead per boat while bank casters averaged .73 fish per rod. A large percentage of these fish were wild and had to be released. Small spinners continue to be the ticket reports **pro guide Brandon McGavran (360-607-1327)** but the cooler weather has certainly heightened success rates. Dam counts at Bonneville continue to average greater than 5,000 fish per day. This should continue to fuel good catches.

Oversized sturgeon are still present in good numbers close to the deadline but few anglers are pursuing them states **pro guide Dan Ponciano (360-607-8511)**. The river remains closed to retention from Buoy 10 to McNary Dam.

Walleye anglers at Troutdale reported good catches over the weekend. Nearly 6 fish per boat were tallied.

The water temperature at Willamette Falls was 73 degrees on Monday, July 14th. Chinook and steelhead counts remained in the low double digits. Sturgeon is catch-and-release only on the lower river until October 1st.

Steelhead are being hooked occasionally on the Clackamas around McIver Park and while fishing has improved, it's slow to fair in the low, clear water.

Anglers who have tried the Sandy say they have been unable to draw a strike over the past week.

Carmen Reservoir and Salmon Creek are scheduled to be planted with trout this week.

Northwest – Salmon have begun to show in the Buoy 10 fishery and this will be the first good week of fishing reports **pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)**. With early morning incoming tides this week, catches will significantly improve. Chinook are much more responsive to offerings in the cooler, ocean-influenced waters of the lower Columbia. The higher the tide, the further upstream you can target salmon. There was a fair bite at first light at the Astoria/Megler Bridge on Tuesday. Spinners will once again produce good catches in the warmer water temperatures. The fresh herring that are available are exceptional in size.

Commercial catches indicate a fair number of coho are already in the river- a positive indication the return may be higher than anticipated. Like last year, ocean quotas were not met along the central Oregon Coast which should contribute to Columbia River catches. The coho have been running large, averaging nearly 11 pounds.

Ocean anglers were struggling for limits last week. Most boats were pleased to average a fish per rod. Conditions remained rough and many boats didn't even make it out early in the week. The ocean will remain open 7 days per week but most anglers will opt for the river where Chinook will be easier to target.

The Nehalem Bay summer Chinook run should be peaking now but poor catches remain the rule

here. Wheeler is producing some of the better catches and on calm days, anglers trolling near the buoy just offshore of Nehalem Bay are taking halibut using slow-trolled herring right on the bottom.

Albacore tuna were within 25 miles of shore over the weekend but have since moved out. Tuna catches are good when ocean conditions are favorable.

Tillamook and Netarts Bays remain fair for keeper crab.

A few anglers are hooking up with an early Fall Chinook on the lower Siletz, but it's slow fishing. Summer steelhead above tidewater is a better bet.

Crabbing is good for large Dungeness in Yaquina Bay. It's easy to sort a quality limit from the soft and undersized crab. The ocean closed to crabbing on August 15th.

Pro guide Bill Kremers (541 602 0881) confirms the good crabbing this week and adds that the bay is full of quality herring just the right size for Fall Chinook fishing.

Southwest – All-depth halibut anglers off the central coast get another shot at fish this week with August 18th, 19th and 20th open for the pursuit. Waters inside the 40-fathom line remain open for halibut seven days a week.

While offshore Chinook fishing remains best out of Winchester Bay, nearly four times as many coho were landed by anglers crossing the bar out of Newport. In the week ending August 6th, 57 coho and 147 Chinook were taken by 918 boats out of Windy Bay while 418 launching at Newport bonked 30 Chinook and 209 coho.

Bar conditions were dicey out of Winchester Bay over the weekend. Those who made it out early were rewarded with decent Chinook catches and good numbers of ocean crab. A few Chinook are being taken inside the bay around the buoys 19 and 20 with hookups reported out to 28.

Steelhead fishing is fair to good on the North Umpqua River. Smallmouth bass catches are very good although algae is becoming troublesome.

Chinook fishing and crabbing has been rewarding out of Florence.

Trolling for Chinook is spotty in the Rogue estuary. Section 5 of the Rogue River will be planted with trout.

Rock fishing remains excellent out of Brookings. Anglers switching from lures to anchovies and sardines took ling cod to 30 pounds last week. Baitfish may be jigged up in the bays now.

Eastern - Lower Deschutes trout fishing is good early and late in the day. Fly anglers are seeing trout feeding in the morning on spent caddis from the previous day's hatch. Nymphing is effective during the day. Steelheading is picking up for trollers working the mouth and river fishing has also picked up over the last 2 weeks.

Devils Lake in the Deschutes watershed will be stocked with hatchery rainbows this week.

Southwest Washington- The Cowlitz River remains the best summer steelhead fishery in SW Washington where boat anglers recently averaged a hatchery fish per rod. Steelhead are being recycled downstream to I-5 and Olequa Boat Ramps.

The Drano Lake and White Salmon River fisheries are producing good catches of steelhead with close to a 50:50 ratio of wild to hatchery fish present.

Soapbox Update – Sportfishing Fin Fest & Salmon Bake with David James Duncan, Buzz Ramsey & Jennie Lodgsdon. Sellwood Riverfront Park Tuesday, September 19, 2006 5:00-7:30. More information is available here: http://www.theguidesforecast.com/DJDPoster_8x11.pdf

Columbia River Fishing Report – As we enter into favorable tides and realistic run timing, Buoy 10 fishers will once again hail the Columbia as a mighty producer of salmon. With so much doom and gloom for national media about the crash of the Pacific Coast salmon, crowds will be down and not even Oregonians are all that hyped up about Astoria this year. The fish will be there however and it looks promising as we draw closer to the end of the month. Catches have already improved and the run just started going on Tuesday. Although still a little ways away from red-hot and rolling, decent catches of Chinook are happening from the Astoria/Megler Bridge downstream. Success at Buoy 10 is dictated by the tides. With the recent early morning high tides, fish will be present higher in the river system. The cooler, ocean influenced water will promote the best bite. That's why we see a tapering of the bite when the second half of outgoing tide occurs. There is too much warm water in the face of these fish and they are not willing to move so far for trolled baits.

Wednesday morning brought a bite up near the bridge on the Oregon side (the Washington side produced light catches as well) for those using spinners. **Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reported a fair bite at first light but as the tide slowed, so did the bite. Chris was 2 for 5 by noon on the 16th.

The ocean remained uncomfortable for those seeking coho. In previous years, this was a great time to pursue Chinook- particularly north of the river mouth along the lighthouse on the Washington shore. The current ground swell along with the predicted wind waves makes the ocean a not-so-friendly place to recreate. A band of cold water is registering near the mouth of the Columbia where 50 degree water just isn't conducive to a productive salmon bite. The ocean fishery has just been a bust this year- mostly due to rough ocean conditions.

Although most anglers will be opting for salmon in the Astoria area, sturgeon fishing remains excellent above the Astoria/Megler Bridge. Sturgeon are certainly present in the lower river but must be so gorged with bait that anglers in pursuit are not drawing strikes. We fished near Tongue Point on Sunday (8/13) and landed 54 sturgeon using fresh jigged anchovies for bait. At one point, we had 4 sturgeon on for 8 rods fishing! We landed numerous keeper sized fish and one green sturgeon. We were fishing in about 6 feet of water.

Further upriver, **pro guide Brandon McGavran (360-607-1327)** reported good action for steelhead at the mouth of the Cowlitz River. Brandon went 2 for 6 on the 15th using primarily spinners for the summer runs. He stated the wind certainly hampered his success as just a few days prior, the 11th; Brandon landed 8 fish and was able to keep 7 of them. Brandon stated there were a few more salmon showing up in the catches but salmon would not be a focus for another few weeks. The steelheading should go strong into September.

Further upriver, **pro guide Dan Ponciano (360-607-8511)** is bewildered why more people aren't fishing around him. He landed 6 oversized sturgeon on the 15th and had 2 on the 16th when I talked to him at noon. He stated there aren't a whole lot of floater shad coming by so oversized sturgeon baits are hard to come by. He was fishing 2 rods for oversized fish and 2 with a smelt for the smaller variety. Dan landed 3 keeper sized fish on the 16th as well but it won't open again for retention until October 1st. Dan also reported a handful of steelheaders in the area but with the warm water, most of the fish are blasting past the dam. Catch rates in the gorge were favorable over the weekend with nearly 2.5 fish per rod reported from the boat anglers. Bank anglers did well too with .73 fish per

rod reported from this area. There are many wild fish in the catch, nearly making up half of the creel. Small spinners are working best for these fish too.

Beach plunkers fared decent along the beaches of the lower Columbia but like in the gorge, water temperatures are not our friend. With temps in the mid-70's, steelhead are cruising ahead in search of cooler tributaries. Counts seemed to be stalled between Bonneville Dam and The Dalles so those fish are utilizing cooler tribs somewhere in between.

Crabbing in the estuary is picking up and it may be worth an anglers time to soak pots while pursuing salmon in Astoria. Don't count on limits however but some quality keepers are coming from the area. Nothing beats fresh filleted tuna or salmon carcasses.

The Guide's Forecast – Most of NW Oregon will be at Buoy 10 this week. Although I previously stated the crowds are likely to be down from previous years, it will be a busy place and fish will be caught in good numbers this week. It will be the best week of the season so far. I usually predict when the fish will come in force- it will be this week. I officially predict the fishery to bust wide open on August 21st this year. Now, fishing will be decent but an action packed day with low slack at day break will jumpstart the season right. Until then, look for the best action to take place in the upstream areas where anglers will be able to take advantage of the cooler, ocean influenced waters of an early morning incoming tide. By Monday however, anglers will be able to take advantage of a low slack at Buoy 10 and then follow the incoming Chinook (with the tide) upriver to the bridge on both sides of the river.

Spinners will be a big hit again this year given the warmer water conditions. Alvins will also work well and certainly herring will be a valuable tool to have in your toolbox. The fresh herring have been running large which will bode well for the Chinook in the river but anglers may want to consider smaller spinners or smaller frozen herring for the coho present- and there seems to already be coho present.

Drop the crab pots this weekend as favorable (incoming) tides are present and fresh bait should produce fair results.

Ocean anglers will not like the forecast:

THU

NW WIND 10 KT...BECOMING N 15 TO 20 KT IN THE AFTERNOON.
WIND WAVES 2 FT...BUILDING TO 4 FT IN THE AFTERNOON. NW SWELL
7 FT AT 8 SECONDS.

THU NIGHT

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT...EASING TO 10 TO 15 KT AFTER
MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 4 FT...SUBSIDING TO 2 FT AFTER MIDNIGHT.
NW SWELL 5 FT.

FRI

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT... BUILDING TO 4 FT
IN THE AFTERNOON. NW SWELL 6 FT.

FRI NIGHT

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL
6 FT.

SAT

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 7 FT.

SUN

NW WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 7 FT.

A big swell and wind waves to boot will likely keep most anglers at bay. The Astoria Tuna Classic is also in jeopardy- with the rough water forecast. Tuna are well within range of the mouth of the Columbia, it just depends on how much fun you want to have.

Upriver anglers will not have a screaming good week of fishing although steelhead will still be on tap. Tides will be improving so hopefully the wind will not be a factor when anchor fishing near the mouth of the Cowlitz. In the coming weeks, anglers will want to upsize their spinners to size 7. This will allow you to target the Chinook present but coho and steelhead will also take this size.

Red/white and chartreuse colored blades will work the best. Steelheaders at Bonneville will still take fish but being in the right "lane" can't be stressed enough.

Although sturgeon is still a great option, most anglers will be focused on salmon this week. Both the estuary and the gorge should produce good results if you can match the preferred baits- floater shad for oversized and fresh jigged anchovies for estuary dwellers.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – The tepid water of in the lower Willamette offers little to any but warmwater fishers and those looking to catch and release sturgeon.

Fish counts may once again be available in 2007 on the McKenzie River if funding can be arranged.

The upper North Santiam is in excellent condition with optimum water conditions. Last week, the steelhead bite finally turned on.

The Guide's Forecast – The ODFW is cautioning anglers to be especially vigilant on the lower Willamette as low water levels mean rocks and deadheads may damage outdrives. It's unlikely this situation will change for a while as there's no rainfall in sight.

Anglers on the McKenzie report fair fishing for trout and a few steelhead. Fly anglers have been well. All unclipped fish of any species must be returned unharmed.

The best bet by far for summer steelhead in the Willamette Valley is the North Santiam which finally turned on last week, providing many happy anglers with acrobatic hookups. Minto, Packsaddle, Fishermen's Bend down to Mehama are all producing fish. Hardware and fly tackle are equally effective. With the water in great shape, action would hold up through September. It's a little slower on the South Santiam although fish continue to enter. Fishing will continue into October. Foster Dam has counted 5,800 summer steelhead 3,150 spring Chinook with fish being trucked downstream to make the run again. The North Santiam trap is not working so no counts are available from there.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Conditions at the Clackamas River have remained nearly unchanged for about two weeks. The fact that steelheading has improved is just one of those cycles in the fishing game. Anglers are taking fish in the area of McIver Park. We're only weeks away from the start of the coho run here.

Fishing on the Sandy has not changed. There isn't any. Few are trying and nobody seems to be hooking anything. The spring chinook season is over and rain will help to rev up the steelheading.

Coho will start entering here soon, but the 65-degree water isn't very inviting.

North Coast District Fishing Report – Still weeks away from decent Chinook opportunity in the Tillamook district, the Nehalem is still getting undue recognition for a summer run of Chinook that has yet to materialize. Success continues to elude anglers but the Wheeler area is putting out some of the better catches. We fished on Saturday, August 12th and only drew one strike on a Kwikfish early in the morning. We anchored for a short while just upstream of Wheeler alongside the island but couldn't keep sardine fillets on the plugs because the sculpin were so bad. There were a few fish taken at Wheeler on the first part of incoming tide and very few taken along the jetty and into to ocean that day. Some boats were targeting halibut just off the buoy at the mouth of the Nehalem but only a rare one was caught. Slow trolled herring right on the bottom was the key to having a good opportunity.

Some are theorizing there may be coho in the south channel of Tillamook Bay. Although a bit early for good numbers to be present, this may make for a good opportunity for boats that lack ocean capability. Trolling small spinners will take coho into the last week of September and the run may be starting to build before making their way upstream into the Trask River. The bay and tidewater sections remain open up to the Hwy. 101 Bridges on the Trask and Wilson Rivers.

Summer steelheading continues to challenge river anglers on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Early morning pocket water fishing may yield some results but cloud covered days may bring some relief. Sea-run cutthroat trout should be present for the catch and release angler in you.

The Guide's Forecast – Don't bank on any great opportunities on the north Oregon Coast this week. Most anglers will be focused on the lower Columbia which will greatly increase your odds locally. The Nehalem will be the best bet (and it isn't all that great of a bet) but trolled herring at the jaws or up at Wheeler may yield some results. There is a fair amount of effort at the town of Nehalem as well but catches are sparse.

Hopefully, the seas will subside so anglers can get after the tuna that are just offshore. They were within 30 miles at mid-week last week but sufficient ocean mixing has moved them further offshore.

Central & South Coast Reports – Offshore conditions are predicted to be rough this weekend. A last-minute check with the Coast Guard is advised.

At Coyote Rock, the number of Fall Chinook pictures from August catches are increasing. Salmon start entering early - a 40-pounder is pictured from the third week of July.

Bottomfishing out of Depoe Bay and Newport is great when ocean conditions allow for safe crossing of the bar. Ling cod catches are down. Watch out for the red fish: Canary, Yelloweye and Vermillion rockfish may not be kept in an effort to stretch the season through the end of the year.

Pro guide Bill Kremers (541 602 0881) reports, "We did have a fun afternoon fishing for herring and crabbing at Yaquina Bay. Limits of crabs are the norm right now, but they are a little soft yet. The herring are thick in the bay right now with the best stop being by the green can (9A) near the Coast Guard Station. We caught herring throughout the entire incoming tide and the fishing just got better and better the closer it got to high tide. Pretty simple fishing, anchor somewhere around the can, put on a 3 oz weight, a herring rig, lower to the bottom and start jigging. The herring big and firm - perfect for fall chinook."

Sturgeon fishing is holding up below Reedsport in this mostly-oversized fishery. Catches of ocean crab were good prior to the closure on the 15th, but crabbing inside the bay is improving. Ocean

trollers are hitting fish over 340 to 440 feet of water in depths of 75 to 115 feet. Chinook are running from the high teens to over 30 pounds. Inside Winchester Bay and on the lower Umpqua, Chinook are being taken by trollers from Buoy 19 down to Buoy 28 with some regularity. A 41-pounder was landed in tidewater on Tuesday this week. A few coho have come out of Windy Bay as well. The North Umpqua and mainstem are providing some steelhead action and should continue to do so through October. The mainstem and South Umpqua are kicking out smallmouth bass reliably. The shad run has wrapped.

August 15th marked the end (for now) of the ban on wild Chinook retention downstream of Gold Ray Dam. The entire Rogue is now open to catch-and-keep, fin-clipped or not. The restriction was put in place to protect the dismal return of springers this year. A few Fall Chinook are as high in the system as Grants Pass. Fall Chinook fishing is still spotty for trollers in the estuary but with many of the fish over 30 pounds this year, many anglers feel it's worth putting in their time. Boats saw some decent action last week but it slowed over the weekend. Chinook are being taken in the lower river as high as Lobster Creek. An exceptional run of summer steelhead is keeping fishers busy on the upper Rogue. Water conditions and temperatures in the mid-50s are ideal. Over 5,200 steelies had been counted at Gold Ray as of August 10th. Limits are common on every type of tackle and lure although it'll be flies only above the Dam starting September 1st.

Chinook were taken inside Coos Bay over the weekend, another positive sign of the decent Fall run to come.

Bait is thick in South coast bays and estuaries which allows anglers to easily catch a supply of herring, anchovies and the occasional sardine on jigs. A decent supply of baitfish has become a necessity for success bottomfishing offshore since fish are snubbing lures with feed so abundant.

The use of bait over lures has accounted for a dramatic improvement in ling cod catch rates out of Brookings with several over the 20-pound-mark and a couple 30-pounders showing over the last week at cleaning stations. Bottomfish may be taken within a mile of port.

Coquille anglers are catching a few striped bass in the lower river, targeting them with bait or plugs late in the day and after dark. Chinook are being taken by trollers using plug-cut herring or spinners in the lower river. This fishery will start to shine in September.

Northwest Trout – Detroit Reservoir is producing fair to good catches of trout and kokanee. Lake Billy Chinook has been fair to good for kokanee on jigs. Carmen Reservoir and Salmon Creek in the Willamette Valley are scheduled to be planted with trout this week.

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 warmwater 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

Subscriber Calvin N. wrote this week, "Although neither of these photos is of a Northwest caught fish, I hope you'll run one or both anyway as it might be refreshing to see what's happening elsewhere in the US at this time of year. (BTW - Same kid as you ran a photo of in your newsletter last week, fishing on the Grande Ronde River. These photos taken 3000 miles east; we love to fish!)

"Shown here are my boys Simon N. (sitting) and Lucas N. holding a 10-lb bluefish caught in Wellfleet Harbor, Cape Cod, Massachusetts a couple of days ago. It is once a year that we travel to Cape Cod on vacation and we always look forward to the fantastic fishing - both the bluefish and striped bass are big and plentiful this year. We caught this bluefish (and many others) using a 2-oz blue and white popper in 20 feet of water off an 8-foot Zodiac. The bluefish strike is exciting, being preceded by one or several "boils" as the fish attacks the plug. The bluefish are strong, acrobatic and great fighters although rather oily and boney - largely a catch & release fishery. The bluefishing on the Cape reminds me of our home favorite, coho fishing at the CR Buoy. I was happy to have read your TGF report while on the Cape - we are excited to get out to the CR Buoy over the next couple weeks.



"Cape Cod offers great diversity of fish habitat. When we are not fishing for blue's and bass in the ocean, we often are prowling the beautiful freshwater ponds on Cape Cod for bass, pickerel, bluegill and sunfish. While the fishing is not as hot as on the bay, it is relaxing and the fish can be beautiful as evidenced by this pumpkinseed sunfish. Lucas N. caught this fish on a chartreuse plastic grub at the edge of the reeds of Great Pond in Wellfleet, Cape Cod, Massachusetts.



"Keep up the good work TGF!"

Thank you, Calvin and a special thanks for the photos!

Got a story to tell or information to share? We'd love to hear from you!

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: drees@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: SailCat@SailCat.com

Random Links

Clam and Oyster health advisory

<http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2006/NEW01430.html>

153-pound halibut landed out of Newport:

<http://www.newportnewstimes.com/articles/2006/08/09/news/news07.txt>

Detroit Lake info from Luhr Jensen

<http://www.luhrjensen.com/techreports/505DetroitLakeOregon.pdf>

Crossing the Bar Safely

http://www.marineews.com/boat_article_details.php?recordid=39&PHPSESSID=3a69461d84c4eed37ecd0348471cf716

Weekly Quote – "But fisherman, like other humans, have not established as one of their strong characteristics the ability to be rational. It's one of those things we talk a lot about but find hard to practice." - Dave McCracken

GOOD LUCK!