

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **August 24th, – August 30th, 2006**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - Metro salmon anglers are anxiously awaiting the arrival of fishable numbers of Chinook to the area. With water temperatures so warm, high numbers of fish must be present before respectable catches are witnessed. With Buoy 10 fishing so slow, anglers will be waiting at least another week before catches improve.

Anglers fishing the mouth of the Cowlitz are still faring well for summer steelhead. Although Chinook catches have gradually improved in deeper water, this fishery is still a few weeks away from peaking.

Gorge steelheaders are finding challenging conditions and numbers passing Bonneville has slightly decreased. Warm water has most fish on the move and seeking cooler tributaries upriver.

Water temperature at Willamette Falls was 71 degrees as of August 18th with salmon and steelhead counts dwindling.

Steelheaders have taken a few fish near McIver Park on the Clackamas River.

There's virtually no angling effort on the Sandy River as it has been non-productive. Cedar Creek remains too low for fish passage to the hatchery.

An estimated 6,500 steelhead have entered the North Santiam River. These fish are concentrated upstream above Stayton, as the lower river has become too warm to hold fish. Summer steelhead and spring Chinook continue to enter the trap on the South Santiam where recycling downstream is ongoing.

Faraday Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, Clear Lake, Leaburg Lake, and upper McKenzie River are scheduled to be stocked with trout.

Northwest – The Buoy 10 fishery, one of the regions most predictable, is stumping salmon fishers. Good numbers of Chinook and coho have yet to show and tides are dictating a late afternoon bite. Historically, this week is the peak for this fishery and the bulk of the run is overdue. Spinners are accounting for the majority of catch as large schools of anchovies are making it hard to compete using fresh baits. Size 6 and 7 brass with red spinners are producing consistent results fished

anywhere from 18 to 35 feet below the surface.

Even more discouraging is poor ocean catches of Chinook and coho. Calm waters allowed even small recreational boats to fish from Tillamook Head to Long Beach early this week. Fish have been scarce but a 47-pound Chinook was weighed in over the weekend and coho have been running exceptionally large.

Some guides have been taking advantage of decent catch and release sturgeon opportunities in the estuary with the water above the Astoria/Megler Bridge producing the best results using fresh jigged anchovies.

Crabbing has improved in the lower Columbia but limits are still not common. The ocean crabbing closed last week.

Garibaldi crabbers are doing good in Tillamook Bay and tuna anglers were scoring 30 to 50 fish per boat- it's a 50-mile trek to productive tuna fishing however.

Nehalem Bay salmon anglers have yet to witness consistent results but a fair bite was reported at the jaws early in the week. Wheeler trollers will witness fish taken every day although numbers are low. Spinners will become more effective as fall approaches.

The ocean laid down and winds eased Sunday afternoon. On Monday this week, boats took scores of albacore out of Depoe Bay.

Limits of hard Dungeness have been easy to cull from softshells in Yaquina Bay. Mild tides favor this activity in the coming week.

Southwest – Winchester Bay was once again the top port last week for offshore Chinook catches. Over half of the cumulative total for the year has come from this location. Ocean catches have slowed in the past few days, however. A few have been taken in the bay and lower Umpqua. The North Umpqua may be fished only with unweighted flies and steelheading is fair to good. Smallmouth bass fishing is good on the mainstem and South Umpqua.

The troll fishery in the Rogue River estuary has improved. Chinook over 30 pounds are being taken daily along with jacks averaging seven to eight pounds. Early coho have been caught in the bay recently.

Since the ban on wild Chinook retention was lifted August 15th, anglers have been taking springers in the middle stretch. Dam passage has topped 11,000. Summer steelhead counts at Gold Ray Dam approached 5,600 as of August 15th. Steelheading is fair to good on the Grants Pass stretch and very good on the upper Rogue. Section 5 will be planted with trout again this week.

Bottomfishing out of Brookings remains excellent for anglers using sardines or herring rather than lures with baitfish thick offshore. The warmer tuna water has been 60 to 70 miles out. Surfperch fishing has picked up from a slump a week ago.

Eastern - Dam counts at The Dalles and John Day facilities should have Central and Eastern Oregon steelheaders excited. Fish will seek cooler tributaries like the Deschutes where trollers will have the best access to them.

Steelheading in the Grande Ronde is only fair but will improve in September. It's a little better in the Deschutes below Mack's Canyon but the water is still a little high. Fly angling for trout has been good with nymphs.

Trout will be planted in Badger Lake, Fall River, Shevlin Pond and Spring Creek.

Southwest Washington- Cowlitz River boat anglers averaged a fish for every rod downstream of the Kelso Bridge last week. Fall Chinook are also present in the lower Cowlitz and Kalama Rivers.

Drano Lake anglers were faring well for steelhead with nearly 70% of the catch of hatchery origin. Some Chinook are also being taken.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Buoy 10 anglers are wondering if all of the Columbia River runs are going to be late this year. This fishery is one of the most predictable and consistent in the region. With conditions similar this year as in the past, one has to wonder if indeed they really are going to show this season. The few fish that are being caught now are during brief periods of the tide and almost don't qualify for what most people expect a legitimate "bite" to be in this fishery. Chinook are still making up the bulk of the catch but coho numbers are still impressive given the poor prediction for the year. Effort is certainly down but most anglers know we are coming into the peak of the season and have been saving their vacation for just this event.

Spinners are responsible for the bulk of the catch and it seems the smaller number 6 and 7 blades are drawing the most bites. I have been running the larger size 8 spinner blades- the size I did quite well with last year and like most guides, have been met with mediocre results. The best bites have been coming on the high slack and the first part of outgoing tide. Although this is nothing new, clearly absent is an incoming tide bite that we usually see on the Oregon and Washington sides about half-way into it. Also, low slack near Buoy 10 can be quite consistent. This is not the case this week. On 8/21, I started my day leaving the Hammond Boat Basin and trolling downstream on the outgoing tide. Drawing close to Buoy 21, we hooked and landed a nice Chinook about 18 pounds in 28 feet of water. The fish took a plug-cut herring near the bottom about 1½ hours before low slack. We then

headed out to Buoy 10 where we caught the first part of incoming tide and we were inundated with anchovies. Some of the best action of the day was breaking out the anchovy jigs and jigging up some bait for an ocean excursion. We caught as many as we needed and headed west to the CR Buoy in hopes of hotter salmon action. Spending about 2½ hours trolling for salmon, we ended up with one undersized Chinook and one undersized coho along with 6 Spanish mackerel. We saw very little action from other boats working the area. We re-entered the river in hopes of catching the top of the tide bite at the bridge only to find very little going on. We landed another small Chinook that we released and a wild coho, calling it a day with just that one keeper Chinook. Most boats reported similar results.

Ocean fishing has been inconsistent all week but boats traveling south to Tillamook Head have been met with some success. Both Chinook and large coho are being taken with some regularity in this area but anglers in smaller boats don't want to be stuck too far south when the afternoon NW wind goes to blowin'. The fresh herring remain large so anglers are purchasing anchovies for bait and taking nice coho regularly with them. I fished one day hugging the Washington shore just north of the north jetty taking one hatchery coho and a nice Chinook. We were surrounded by feeding porpoise and the crab pots are a bit challenging to avoid. This area was not producing consistent Chinook catches like it had in the past however.

Anglers interested in more than just a few bites for salmon have been targeting sturgeon near Tongue Point. Fresh jigged anchovies is by far the best bait available so bring your herring jigs as a fun alternative to buying bait. Taylor Sands has been producing but the fish are always on the move so it has been hard to locate them with any consistency. Effort remains low and likely will remain that way as the river fills with biting salmon soon.

Crabbers are working the water near Buoy 20 and taking on average about 2 – 4 keepers per pot. Fresh tuna or salmon carcasses will take the most crab and as competition increases, so should the quality and quantity of your bait.

A determination was made Wednesday, August 23rd, that sufficient quota was remaining to open the all-depth halibut fishery off the Columbia River (Friday through Sunday) August 25th, 26th and 27 and again on September 1st, 2nd and 3rd. While no bottomfish may be onboard with halibut, combo runs are sometimes made for 'buts and albacore tuna. After a successful foray, anglers really know they've been fishing.

An 86-pound halibut was taken at the Columbia River Buoy by a troller dragging a herring. This is an unusual year. For a related story, see **Random Links**.

The Guide's Forecast – These fish are DUE! Although we don't have much to work with as early morning anglers will be greeted with the last half of outgoing tide, run timing suggests that fishing should significantly improve this week on the lower Columbia. Target Chinook by using bigger baits (fresh herring are still large at

the bait stores) and large spinners. I am going to be starting later in the morning and fishing later into the evening this week until we get an early morning high tide in the middle of next week. Target the tide riding Chinook first at Buoy 11 at low slack and work your way upstream hitting Buoy 20, Buoy 22, the sawdust pile and upstream until you reach the bridge and downtown Astoria at high slack. Early evening will be a good time to do a downstream troll on the Oregon or Washington side. The water above the Astoria Bridge on the Washington side should begin to produce some results as well. The shallow humps have not been overly productive but that could change any day. Spinners in sizes 6 to 8 will be the best and green tipped rainbows, the standard red/white and brass/red-tipped have been producing the best results.

Ocean anglers won't be too impressed with conditions. Action is scheduled to pick up out there as well but rough weather could keep anglers from running west in hopes of striking silver. The weather forecast is as follows:

FRI N WIND 15 TO 20 KT...RISING TO 20 TO 25 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 5 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

FRI NIGHT N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

SAT N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

SUN N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

Anglers may opt to head north out of the river entrance as fishing has been fair in that direction and a SW return to port is much more comfortable than a bow into the NW swell and wind in the afternoon- and it's likely you'll be fishing into the afternoon if you plan on taking any good numbers of fish. Seaside Cove will not be a strong option for smaller boats.

Upriver, anglers will be waiting at least another week before action picks up at the mouth of the Cowlitz and Kalama Rivers. Those targeting salmon will want to pick the deeper water off of the mouths of these tributaries in 30 to 40 feet. Anglers will also have some good opportunity when the fish finally show along the sides of the main shipping channels. Be sure to watch for shipping traffic however and technically, it's illegal to anchor in the shipping channel. Meanwhile, steelhead should provide anglers with enough excitement to justify a trip to this area.

Gorge anglers will have to struggle to find consistent steelhead fishing. Small spinners will take fish in the swifter flows but may not be motivated to bite until they find cooler water at the upriver tributary mouths. The mouth of the Deschutes should begin to pick up in activity. Trolled plugs, particularly darker colors seem to draw the most bites.

Oversized sturgeon remains an option but few are taking advantage of it. Floater shad are getting harder to find so bait will be an issue.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Numbers of Chinook and steelhead crossing at Willamette Falls increased slightly August 17th through the 21st but have again fallen to single digits in the 70-plus-degree water. Counts of spring Chinook have wrapped up for the year and the official total of 36,851 fell far short of the 46,500 forecast and pales next to the 2005 total of 61,000.

Summer steelhead and even spring Chinook numbers have increased at the counting facility at Foster Dam. Nearly 5,900 summers and 3,400 springers have been counted at the South Santiam facility. The entire Santiam system is at summer level lows.

The Guide's Forecast – The summer steelhead and spring Chinook season on the lower Willamette is history. A warm water and catch-and-release sturgeon fishery continues so the ODFW is warning boaters to proceed with caution on this stretch of the as the water is extremely low and hazards are abundant,

The North Santiam from Maupin upstream will be most productive as hot weather has warmed the lower river and has steelies charging through to reach cooler habitat. Keep baits and lures small and start early in the day.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – The water level of the Clackamas River is down marginally over last week, although fluctuations may occur periodically due to the construction project at Rivermill Dam and operations at the hydroelectric facility. McIver Park seems to be the only place anyone is fishing. Warm water has shut down what little remained of the springer fishery. It'll be a zoo with the hot weather forecast this weekend as swimmers and rafters seek relief from the 90-plus-degree temperatures.

Sandy River water levels have been fluctuating and the milky color as a result of its glacial origins comes and goes. Fishing has been fairly lousy here. Fret not; the coho are coming. Let's hope there are enough of them to create a worthwhile fishery.

North Coast District Fishing Report – Nehalem Bay anglers are still struggling to find consistent results. Wheeler is getting the bulk of the effort but most anglers that are serious about salmon fishing will be looking to the Columbia for the best results. This could leave Nehalem open for some decent opportunity this week.

Tillamook crabbers are doing best near the inside of the south jetty and crab harbor. Lyster's corner is also producing some decent catches and the majority of

the keepers are hard shelled. Netarts is also producing some results but weekend minus tides could bury crab pots if folks aren't careful.

Although too early for ocean and bay salmon, anglers out of Garibaldi are targeting tuna and scoring good numbers 40 to 50 miles out. The fishing should stay steady for albacore well into September.

The Guide's Forecast – Nehalem Bay will likely continue to produce sporadic results and with the softer tides approaching after the weekend, anglers fishing herring at the jaws will likely see the best catches. Hopefully, the fall run doesn't follow suit with the summer run.

Crabbing will be a good option for weekenders visiting Tillamook and Netarts estuaries. Use quality bait if you expect good catches because there will certainly be lots of folks trying.

Tuna fishing should remain excellent for those willing to brave bigger seas. You'll be needing to look for schools of fish in the 61 to 63 degree water.

North coast steelheaders will still be met with challenging conditions but early morning risers should target biters in the pocket water of the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Small baits or bobbers and jigs will take wary fish in lower light conditions.

Central & South Coast Reports – Chinook fishing in Siletz tidewater slowed over the last week only to pick up again early this week. Summer steelhead are scattered in the river from Moonshine Park upstream.

Crabbers are reporting mostly limits from Bays and estuaries but some of the Dungeness are still soft from the molting process which takes place each year. Throw back crabs that aren't rock hard or seem light in weight for their size as there won't be much meat in these. The ocean remains closed for crabbing through November 30th.

The next opening for all-depth halibut will be September 1st through the 3rd.

Warmer water that tuna prefer has been as close as 20 miles out of port mid week. Conditions this weekend will make for a very rough ride.

The best fishing on the Umpqua currently is for smallmouth bass where catches of 100 a day are not unusual. All manner of baits and lures are catching fish. The mainstem and North Umpqua are only fair for summer steelhead, best for anglers hitting the river at dawn. Sturgeon fishing slows in August but this year continues to deliver oversized and a few keepers below Reedsport with fish falling recently for trolled, plug-cut herring. Chinook action slowed offshore out of Winchester Bay over

the weekend but picked up again Tuesday this week.

Trollers are taking a few Chinook in tidewater on the Coos and Coquille rivers, but these fisheries are just starting up and will improve in the coming weeks.

Fall Chinook fishing has shifted into high gear at Rogue Bay. Trollers using Rogue River rigs, an anchovy with a sounner preceding it, are taking better than 100 a day. Chinook over 30 pounds are being taken daily along with jacks averaging seven to eight pounds. Early coho have also been caught in the bay recently with many of these fish over 10 pounds. Bait, lures and flies are taking good numbers of summer steelhead in the upper river. Fall Chinook are as high as the Grants Pass stretch and are being caught along with fresh steelhead. Anywhere downstream of the Applegate River holds promise for anglers. Chinook, coho, adult steelhead and 'half-pounders' are entering and moving upstream in en masse now.

At A little over 25 inches in length and 24 inches in girth, 12-year-old Central Point resident Colby Pearson's largemouth bass would have topped 12 1/2 pounds and become the new Oregon State record. Would have, that is, had he not chosen instead to release it back into Hyatt Lake. Story and photo here:

<http://www.mailtribune.com/archive/2006/0824/sport/stories/megabass-freecol.htm>

The ocean will re-open for Chinook September 1st through 6th from Humbug Mountain to the California border. With over 50% of the offshore quota remaining, the ocean along this stretch of coastline will also open to coho on the same dates.

A \$5000 grand prize is up for grabs at the 4th annual Slammin' Salmon Derby at Brookings over Labor Day weekend. All participants get a free Barbecue dinner afterwards About 800 anglers will compete in the event, the proceeds from which benefit various programs and projects. Register at the event or online at **<http://www.slamnsalmon.com/>**.

Offshore bottomfishing is producing easy limits out of the port of Brookings, but with Yelloweye, Canary and Vermillion rockfish off limits it may be best to return all the red fish to the ocean.

Central and Eastern Oregon – The lower Deschutes has dropped into decent shape and is fishing fairly well for trout. As with most rivers in summertime, the best chance for a hookup is early and late in the day. The water level is fine now with good clarity. The middle river is not fishing well as the water is too warm. Although the number of steelhead coming upriver is down due to high water temperatures in the Columbia, steelhead are scattered in the Deschutes up to Maupin.

With hot weather the middle portion of the Deschutes has slowed for anglers. If you do manage to catch a fish, take your time to fully revive it as warm water causes additional stress on them.

Northwest Trout – Green Peter is fair to good on the troll for kokanee. An algae bloom has fishing on the skids at Paulina. Kokanee fishing is fair at Odell. Faraday Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, Clear Lake, Leaburg Lake, West Salish Pond and upper McKenzie River have been stocked with trout this week.

Reader Email

A long-time acquaintance, enthusiastic fishermen and officer in the Chehalem Valley Chapter of the Northwest Steelheaders wrote, "Mike- Need to pick your brain a bit-

"a. when Charlie Metzker died did he will Rainbow Lake to the kids of Yamhill Co?

"b. if he did will the lake to the kids how did Yamhill Co/ Parks get control of it?

"c. are you aware of the ODF&W no putting fish into rainbow rule-they are basically psychotic about this-goes for the park board people too.

"Any other bits of information you have about rainbow lake I would appreciate. It interests me very much that one of the only places to take a kid fishing in the county is basically closed.

"Considering how much milfoil was in the lake I kind of wish I had stocked it with Amur River Grass carp rather than triploid Kamloops rainbows last Tues for about 90 kids from Newberg-and we only caught about 10-12 because the whole surface area of the lake had green crap on it."

To which Michael replied, "Hi, Carl- Thank you for writing.

"The "green crap" you describe is worse this year due to unusually hot, dry conditions although this is pretty late in Oregon to hope for decent conditions in any low-lying lake in the Willamette Valley. Rainbow Lake is small and shallow, a combination conducive to milfoil and algae growth.

"Briefly, Rainbow Lake was willed "to the youth of Yamhill County in perpetuity" by Charles Metzger who owned the property which served as a home for troubled young men decades ago. It is available to groups from youth organizations (such as Boy Scouts) by contacting the Sheriff's Department. I'm aware only of a once-a-year planting prior to the Jay-Cee's trout derby. During that event it is open to public so that local children can visit, picnic and catch a few fish. The event is inevitably held too early each year. When I was involved in the tackle shop in McMinnville, my partner and I tried to convince the Jay Cees to move it forward on

the calendar but they were adamant about holding the event on the traditional "Opening Day." As you're probably aware, rivers and streams would open for trout fishing around the third week in April. It's usually raining.

"This information is from the recent past and things might have changed a little, but this is the situation to the best of my knowledge.

"Incidentally, Sheridan Pond and Huddleston Pond in Willamina offer trout fishing early in the year. Both are close to home for you. This late in the year, your best bet would be Henry Hagg Lake which offers fair trout fishing and has a good population of bluegills, yellow perch, bass and catfish.

"I hope this answers some of your questions. Please write again if I can ever be of help."

Readers - Trey Carskaden will speak at the next meeting of the Chehalem Vallet Steelheaders which starts at 7 PM on the 12th of September at the Senior Center in Newberg. They're a nice bunch of people and the public is welcome to attend.

Write to the TGF staff:

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Doug Rees: drees@TheGuidesForecast.com

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Random Links

"The Million Dollar Lure is crafted in just over 3 pounds of glimmering gold and platinum, then encrusted with 100 carats of diamonds and rubies (4,753 stones to be exact). This extraordinary Big Game Lure is over 12 inches in length." Go figure: http://www.macdaddysfishinglures.com/million_dollar_lure.shtml

Halibut in Nehalem Bay:

http://www.statesmanjournal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060816/OUTDOOR_S/608160340&SearchID=73254634789467

Weekly Quote – "Of course, now I am too old to be much of a fisherman, and now of course I usually fish the big waters alone, although some friends think I shouldn't. Like many fly fishermen in western Montana where the summer days are almost Arctic in length, I often do not start fishing until the cool of the evening. Then in the Arctic half-light of the canyon, all existence fades to a being with my soul and memories and the sounds of the Big Blackfoot River and a four-count rhythm and the hope that a fish will rise." - Norman McLean – [A River Runs Through It](#)

GOOD LUCK!