

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 22nd, – September 29th, 2006**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Portland area activity has come to an abrupt halt with the closing of the Columbia last week. Dam passage remains stable for Chinook but not the bump most were hoping for to enable sportanglers back into the river. Upriver fisheries closed well before peak opportunities existed.

Steelhead numbers are also starting to slow at Bonneville but The Dalles Dam is still reflecting good numbers where Deschutes River trollers are taking fish at the mouth in good numbers. The Columbia remains open to fin-clipped steelhead and coho.

Early catch and release statistics for Columbia River gorge sturgeon anglers indicate good numbers of keepers available for the October opener. This fishery will re-open on October 1st but anglers have to wait until the first Thursday to fish. Bank anglers will excel here.

Coho have started to move up the Willamette with recent rain showers lowering the temperature, increasing the flow and pushing counts into double digits for a total of 130 at the Falls as of September 14th.

Precipitation is putting salmon on the move but the bite remains sporadic. Good numbers of coho are in the Clackamas but the mouth has produced best with spinners or bobber and eggs catching most of the fish.

Sandy River anglers are taking a few coho in the lower river with fish entering after the rain. It's still low but the water has cleared. Upriver, only steelheaders are having any luck.

Steelheading on the North Santiam has improved with many of the fish being caught in the 10-pound class. The river level and flow has come up again.

Mt. Hood Pond, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake and Foster Reservoir are scheduled to be planted with trout.

Northwest – Effort is non-existent in the Buoy 10 fishery. Those that targeted coho did poorly over the weekend.

Tillamook anglers scored great results just prior to the weekend but fishing has slowed since. A few fish are being taken from the ocean to the upper bay. Tillamook and Trask River tidewater anglers are also picking up some nice Chinook. For the first time in 3 years, a noticeable component of the run is comprised of the larger 5-year old fish. Several fish over 30 pounds and some over 40 have been taken. Seaweed is still a problem for trollers. Coho are present in better numbers in the bay but are reluctant to bite.

The Nestucca and Salmon Rivers should be coming into their prime this week. Good incoming tides should stimulate action beginning this weekend.

Chinook fishing is still slow on the Siletz with trolled, plug-cut herring most effective over the weekend. About one in four boats are hooking up.

The Nehalem is producing sporadic results at best but seaweed is not as much an issue here as it is in Tillamook.

The Alsea has good numbers of fish but they are not responding well to bobber and bait. Trollers at the mouth are taking some fish on herring and spinners. Returns are expected to be large this year.

Crabbing is great in many north coast estuaries. There is still a mix of soft and hard shelled crabs but condition should improve as we move into the fall months.

Southwest – Fisheries managers have closed the all-depth Pacific halibut sport fishery off the Oregon central coast from Humbug Mountain to Cape Falcon after anglers met their quota. Anglers may continue to fish for Pacific halibut south of Humbug Mountain, but the nearshore waters inside 40 fathoms on the central coast are closed as of Thursday, Sept. 21.

Siuslaw Chinook anglers are pulling out a few in this spotty fishery.

Chinook are entering tidewater at the Coos and Coquille rivers and catch rates are improving.

Winchester Bay continues to dominate for offshore Chinook catches. A few coho have been taken in Umpqua tidewater. Smallmouth bass fishing remains worthwhile in the mainstem and South Umpqua.

On hot days last week, all the trollers in the Rogue estuary were hooking fish. Coho averaging 13 pounds are entering now and hatchery fish may be kept up to Hog Creek. Catches of Chinook and jacks were very good over the weekend at Gold Beach. The lower water levels have provided conditions for improved steelhead catches for fly-rodders in the upper river.

While a few Chinook have been taken in the Chetco estuary, this fishery will start to shine in October and November. Anglers have started bobber fishing for jacks here.

Good numbers of large rockfish are being reported from anglers launching out of Brookings.

Scheduled stocking of catchable-sized trout has wrapped up for the year.

Eastern - The best steelheading on the Deschutes remains below Shearers Falls. A mix of dries are taking fish on the middle Deschutes in the evenings but nymphs will take trout all day. The upper Deschutes will close for the season on October 1st.

Southwest Washington- As with many Oregon systems, salmon are clearly present but not willing to bite. Lewis and Cowlitz River anglers are awaiting a rain freshet but in the meantime, summer steelhead are still falling to sidedrifted baits.

The Klickitat fishery has also been challenging this season. Chinook are typically present in the lower reaches and steelhead up high. Success rates remain low however.

Numerous regulation changes take place beginning October 1st. Angling for chinook closes on many streams.

Soapbox Update – Inland fishermen and business owners, like gas station owner Bob Fately of Brewster, are educating their friends, neighbors, and leaders that we can have both a revitalized

salmon economy while keeping farms thriving and irrigated. They are trying to cut through the smokescreen created by people who pit farmers against fishermen, who fear positive changes to our rivers.

Click here to send our new Eastern Washington petition to your upriver friends and contacts.
<http://action.earthjustice.org/campaign/salmonletter/forward>

Since the delivery of your signatures to Governors Gregoire and Kulongoski and our Representatives last spring, we've seen a renewed sense of hope for fishable rivers, and we have been urged by many campaign supporters to extend our message to Eastern Washington. The Salmon Solutions campaign is currently running print and radio ads in Clarkston/Lewiston, Tri-Cities, and Walla Walla and those communities need your help!

Tell your friends: we can have both salmon and farms!

<http://action.earthjustice.org/campaign/salmonletter/forward>

Thanks for your continued support of fishable Columbia and Snake Rivers. With your help we will continue to work for improved conditions for both salmon and steelhead as well as for our farms and local economies.

Sincerely,

Buzz Ramsey, Recreational Fisherman and Business Owner

PS: Click here to listen our latest radio ad by Bob Fately of Brewster, WA!
<http://www.salmonsolutions.org/whoweare.html>

Columbia River Fishing Report – It's a simple week for this outdoor writer to report on the Columbia River fishing. Effort has dropped way off for salmonid anglers and the catch and keep sturgeon season will not get underway until the first Thursday in October.

Some anglers are still after steelhead in the water below Bonneville but guides working the area are highlighting the catch and release options for chinook. For coho opportunities, the mouth of the Sandy is producing some catches along with an occasional chinook while the mouth of the Cowlitz is producing both species along with some steelhead. Gorge anglers are taking a mix of steelhead and chinook with chinook dominating the catch.

A nice bump in Chinook numbers is currently taking place at Bonneville Dam. If we had this bump earlier, we may not be in a closed season right now. It's too early to say but managers may be looking at additional opportunity if this "bump" doesn't bottom out for another several days. Stay tuned on this issue. Anglers above Bonneville Dam deserve the first grab since they were denied so much of their season this year. Fish managers may make a decision based on this and prioritize the upstream anglers first if additional opportunity exists.

Meanwhile, anglers are nearing the re-opener of the consumptive sturgeon fishery above the Wauna Powerlines after October 1st. Although the fishery opens on 10/1, anglers will have to wait until the first Thursday – Friday to access keepers below Bonneville Dam. Guides that have recently conducted trips for catch and release fishing have found favorable results as has been the case in previous years. A mix of keeper, shaker and oversized fish are available.

The Guide's Forecast – Not much to predict this weekend as the only fishery currently viable is

the steelhead and coho fisheries. Steelhead counts have been on a slow decline at Bonneville with exception of the last few days where slight increases of both salmon and steelhead were witnessed. With water temperatures still high and steelhead motivated to find cooler waters in upstream tributaries, they are not all that eager to strike gear downstream. This will continue to be the trend until fall air and water temperatures drop, slowing migration and enticing more biters to sacrifice themselves. This is likely to happen closer to November. Meanwhile, the mouth of the Deschutes should provide the best opportunity for trollers working plugs with the Michael Jackson plug a consistent producer.

For anglers concentrating on coho, the mouths of the Sandy and Cowlitz should provide the best opportunity for anglers. Those casting smaller size 4 Vibrax spinners with orange or red bodies will draw the most strikes. Trolling in the area will also take an occasional coho although most fishing in the area state that there are a lot more jumping and rolling than biting right now!

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Fish counts at Willamette Falls are well into double digits with a total of 220 coho and over 410 Chinook at the Falls as of September 16th and daily counts are rising rapidly. A major contributor to fish movement is likely the improved water temperature which dropped four degrees in three days to 61 on September 20th.

Steelheading is winding down on the McKenzie following a good season.

It is estimated there are roughly 6,500 steelhead in the North Santiam, most of which are upriver.

The Guide's Forecast – Coho have been seen by the score in the lower Willamette near the mouth of the Clackamas. With easy access, the area is often crowded and fish are lost to tangled lines. If, that is, you can get one to bite. Coho are finicky that way. Catch-and-release fishing for sturgeon will remain slow in the coming week. Sturgeon retention will again be allowed starting in October on Thursdays through Saturdays.

Various locations on the North Santiam are hot on different days so bank fishermen should be prepared to remain on the move to find biters. Fishermen's Bend is a good place to start and steelheaders may not need to go anywhere else. The Fall foliage should give anglers an indication of lure color. Orange is historically effective at this time of year.

There are still a few summer steelhead lingering in the McKenzie River but the Santaim offers much better numbers.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Clackamas water temperature is down to 60 degrees at the hatchery. Despite the low, clear water, anglers are catching a few coho, mostly in the lower river although coho have been seen upriver and some have been caught at the mouth of Eagle Creek. Many of the popular bank fishing areas will jam with spinner flingers in the next couple of weeks.

The Sandy is also very low, having dropped further this week and periodically murky but the glacial appearance will dissipate as the weather cools. The main river is holding right around 60 degrees with Cedar Creek running in the high 40s.

Rain is needed to get the coho season off and running.

North Coast District Fishing Report – It's the time of the year where we can expect some hit and miss results for the Tillamook fishery. After such a great showing of fish in the middle of last week, the fishing tapered significantly by the weekend. I got after them on Monday but the fog kept me from seeing much action. We spent most of our day in the ocean, taking one nice 30 pound buck in the morning on a plug cut herring off of the north tip of the north jetty. The swell kept most of us fishing the north side as it is always good to use extra caution when visibility is low. Sporadic action remained for most of the week but Wednesday proved to be quite productive for anglers working the lower bay and ocean. **Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reported going 2 for 8 on the 20th with most of his action in the lower bay using herring. On the 21st, Chris reported excessive seaweed and the ocean closed which resulted in a poor day of fishing. Such is the volatility of the Tillamook fishery. We'll need some significant rain to blow out the seaweed and who knows when that will really happen.

Fishing in this district should become more consistent in the very near future. Nestucca tidewater anglers are beginning to show results with anglers working the boat ramp to Pacific City Bridge picking up several quality Chinook on the 20th. Boat ramp anglers are pitching bobbers and bait at the fish while PC Bridge casters are retrieving spinners. Anglers reported a mix of both fresh and colored fish in the catch.

The Salmon River near Lincoln City should also be a big hit for anglers this time of year. The fishery here is peaking and the upcoming tide series spells h-a-r-v-e-s-t this week. Tidewater is best where adult Chinook will be waiting for the first opportunity to migrate upstream when significant rains hit.

The Guide's Forecast – Stronger tides will favor fall Chinook fishers on the north coast this week. Whether you are trolling spinners or bait, bobber or still fishing, catches should improve on most river systems.

On Tillamook Bay, some of the lowest tide exchanges will hopefully curtail the seaweed issue where trollers in the lower bay should have access to returning adults. The weak tide exchange should have salmon moving in (against the tide) for most of the morning. In stronger tides, the salmon wait for the flows to slow before they make their way into the bay against the current. If you are fishing multiple rods, be sure to stagger baits in the lower 15 feet of the bottom as not all the biters are right on the bottom. For anglers fishing further up in the bay, a small tide exchange is not a favorable one. Although some of the seaweed issue should be alleviated, fish aren't as inspired to bite when stronger flows are running past their face. With heavier competition at the bay entrance, many of the biters will get culled out before they enter the upper bay. Adults should be stacking up in tidewater but like I mentioned before, the lack of exchange may wreak havoc on biters. I have been surprised more than once however that these tides can produce an occasional awesome bite. You are likely to see more rollers than biters but good bait will pay dividends and be sure to tip your eggs with sand shrimp. The tidewaters of the Trask and Tillamook will produce the best results for Tillamook area streams. Fin-clipped coho may be retained on the Trask and should be present in fair numbers.

Nestucca anglers will find much of the same with tidewater producing the best results. The most consistent results will come from Woods Bridge upstream but from the Pacific City Bridge to the mouth, flurries of spectacular fishing will likely be witnessed in the upcoming week.

The Salmon River will also produce good results this week with much of the bank effort taking place just upstream of the Highway 101 Bridge. Bobbers and eggs will be the bait of choice but everyone will be using them so don't hesitate to use something unique to offer a variety of choices.

Central & South Coast Reports – Add cabezon to the list along with red rockfish (china, vermillion and canary) which may no longer be kept as of midnight Friday, September 22nd as catches have exceeded guidelines. The good news is that it appears the prolific black rockfish along with ling cod will go the distance this year. Unlike most other fishes, cabbies have no swim bladder, which, according to the ODFW, means have "have an excellent survival rate when released." They're also easier to identify than the myriad reds. These tasty bottomfish ain't pretty.



While tuna fishing is commonly in full swing at this time of year, rough seas and warm water where albacore are likely to be found has been far offshore recently, making such a run impractical for most recreational boaters. Although warm water has once again moved closer to shore this week, rough conditions this weekend may prevent those so inclined to try for tuna regardless.

Only offshore waters South of Humbug Mountain remain open for all depth halibut Fridays through Sundays through September. The ocean off the central coast from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain closed September 20th, having exceeded the quota. This means only those launching from Gold Beach or Brookings will have a shot at deep water flatties. Halibut fishing inside the 40-fathom line closed September 21st.

Siletz anglers have seen an improvement in catch rates this week. It's not hot by any means, but more Chinook are being taken now than a week ago with many over 30 pounds.

Chinook fishing is also improving on the Yaquina, which, with great crabbing in the bay, has the makings of a seafood feast.

Bass & Panfish - Pro Guide Bill Kremers (541-754 6411) reports from Alsea tidewater, "The salmon showed up Sunday morning as Drift Creek Landing weighed in 32 fall chinook. Most of the fish were caught where Drift Creek flows into the bay. The fishing was also hot on Monday, and once again the hot bite was early in the day by Drift Creek and at the corner hole a half mile up river. Most of the salmon was being caught on herring and spinners. Once again the favorite lure is the Blue Fox - orange or chartreuse body. Good Day Fishing spinners will also work (Black Donut and the Red/White Donut with the pink hoochie skirt) and they are made with Owner hooks Launching a boat in this area can be a hassle, especially low tides. The ramp at Drift Creek is the only one usable at low tide, and then anglers have to park out on the highway."

Siuslaw Chinook fishers have seen a surge in Chinook catches as well this week. This seems to be a trend, but then, 'tis the season!

Steelheading is slow to fair in the mainstem but has been slow in the North Umpqua. Bass fishermen continue to slay the smallies in the mainstem and South Umpqua with fish hitting all manner of baits and lures. Crabbing is excellent in Winchester Bay where a few Chinook and fewer coho are being landed by trollers. About half the boats launching for ocean Chinook are returning with a fish.

Coos and Coquille anglers are reporting tidewater Chinook fishing is good and getting better.

Chinook fishing is commonly a hot-or-cold proposition with fall salmon turning on as if a cosmic switch was flipped, then turning off just as suddenly. So it is at the Rogue River estuary where catches are great - or not. One report indicated 40 fish over the gunwales in one hour on Monday, September 18th, although the 19th was slow. Jacks numbers are up, a harbinger of strong runs of adult fish in 2007 and 2008. Overall, Chinook fishing is fair to good up to Agness. The Grants Pass stretch offers a mix of Chinook and summer steelhead although fishing has only been fair. In the upper flies-only section of the river, steelheading is holding up well. Over 3,300 Fall Chinook and nearly 6,500 summer steelhead have crossed at Gold Ray Dam.

Chetco anglers are making good Chinook catches now.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Steelheaders are making consistent catches on the lower Deschutes. Fish have moved upriver above Maupin but the best catches are coming from below Shearer's Falls, As discussed in an earlier TGF, trout are well into their Fall feeding binge creating a fine fly fishery here. The middle Deschutes is also fishing well with trout keyed on Pale Morning Duns and midges.

Northwest Trout – The banks of Diamond Lake are littered with millions of invasive tui chub this week along with trout and anything else with gills following rotenone treatment. Cleanup is progressing this week following rotenone treatment. The lake will re-open in October for boating and will be stocked with trout in spring when it returns to 'Diamond' status.

Green Peter re-opened on September 17th following a fire closure. Kokanee fishing is improving with tight schools forming at this time of year.

In the Willamette Zone, Mt. Hood Pond, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake and Foster Reservoir are scheduled to be planted with trout.

Bass & Panfish - Pro Guide Bill Kremers (541-754 6411) reports, " ... went smallmouth bass fishing on the Columbia River just east of The Dalles. We caught several bass between two and four pounds by casting crankbaits and spinner along the banks on both the Oregon and Washington side. The bass are mostly feeding on crawdad. The best lure for me was a red crawdad crankbait."

Here's angler Joel Shangle with two Columbia River smallmouth.



Smallmouth bass fishing on the Columbia as well as the upper and lower Willamette is hot as bass go on their fall feeding spree.

Washington fishing reports:

Big-boat charters doing two-day trips 75 miles out of Westport are returning with tons (literally) of albacore. One such trip over last weekend brought its 15 passengers to port with 140 tuna. Sport fishermen have done also done well in recent weeks out of Westport.

Reader Email

Reader John S. wrote this week to TGF co-editor Michael Teague to ask, "Mike, Could you please provide me with an Internet address where I can get a daily open and closure report on the Columbia River fishery. As you know they change it so often and seems sometimes without notice that I can't keep up with them."

Michael replied, "Thanks for writing and for reading TGF. These links should provide the information you requested:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/mrp/>

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2006/>

Please write anytime if we can help.

Write to the TGF staff:

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Random Links

In a follow-up to the story posted in this space last week, "Manatee spotted off Washington coast," speculation arises that it may have been a critter similar in appearance, the elephant seal:
<http://www.chinookobserver.com/main.asp?SectionID=12&SubSectionID=30&ArticleID=15625&TM=66816.3>

Because you can't have too many knotty links, here's one that's animated:

<http://www.animatedknots.com/indexfishing.php?LogoImage=LogoGrog.jpg&Website=www.animatedknots.com>

GOOD LUCK!