

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **November 3rd, – November 9th, 2006**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- The stretch from Beacon Rock to Bonneville Dam closed to salmon fishing on November 1st to protect spawning broodstock. Coho fishing from the lower gorge to Troutdale remains fair however.

Sturgeon anglers remain motivated in the Columbia River Gorge. Action will remain steady with good success coming from both boat and bank anglers. Catch and release days (Sunday – Wednesday) produce the best results and keeper sized fish are averaging smaller as the season progresses.

The John Day Pool and river are beginning to produce good catches of late run summer steelhead. Plug trollers are taking fish in the Columbia while bobber and jig or bait anglers are doing well in the river. The lower 5 miles is producing the best catches.

Over 5,700 coho have been counted at Willamette Falls as of October 28th with summer steelhead and fall chinook wrapped up for the year. Although this fishery has yet to be developed, coho respond to spinners best in fresh water. Keeper sturgeon were taken near the Falls over the weekend.

Eagle Creek is still full of dark coho and will remain open for several more weeks. The Sandy and Clackamas Rivers are now closed to coho fishing.

Mehema and Minto Park have been good for summer steelhead recently in the high, stable flows of the North Santiam. It remains to be seen how precipitation will affect fishing. Summer steelhead count at Foster Dam on the South Santiam has topped 6,100 but recycling has ceased.

Walling Pond and Walter Wirth Lake are scheduled to be stocked with legal and larger trout.

Northwest – The best bite of the year was witnessed in Tillamook Bay on Tuesday. Several boats took limits of chinook with Bay City and the Ghost Hole producing good catches on the second half of incoming tide. The best bite of the week has been the second half of outgoing tide along the inside of the north jetty. Guide Dan Dieter of Netarts landed 5 chinook at once in the heavy north winds witnessed on Sunday. Doubles have been common.

Upper Tillamook Bay is beginning to slow but tidewater action on the lower Wilson is beginning to pick up. Forecasted precipitation is likely to raise river levels, bringing salmon into the reach of driftboaters. The Wilson will likely have the freshest chinook but the Kilchis, Trask and Nestucca Rivers should also produce excellent catches if levels come up enough.

Weather is forecasted to be a bit rough for the North Coast Rendezvous on Thursday and Friday. Catches should be good however.

There's less pressure on the lower Siletz recently but fewer Chinook are being taken as well. Daily tallies are in the single digits.

Upper Yaquina Bay was fairly productive for Chinook anglers last weekend. Several were landed from the mid-teens to mid-20s. Limits of crab are possible although action has slowed.

Alsea crabbers are struggling with weeds in an attempt to sort out small crabs for keepers. Bobber tossers working tidewater near Cozy Cove have had a fresh shot of chinook earlier in the week. Action should begin to taper in the coming week.

Clam diggers found disappointment on the last tide series along Clatsop Beaches. The next one begins on Friday but high surf may again curb success.

Crabbing remains excellent in the lower Columbia but extreme tides will limit the productive soak time through the weekend.

Southwest – Anglers on the mainstem Umpqua report slow Chinook fishing. Steelheading has been slow to fair in the North Umpqua. Spinners have been effective in taking Chinook and coho in the lower river and Winchester Bay although it's been hit or miss fishing.

The Siuslaw has slowed for Chinook although pressure remains fairly high.

Chinook fishing is slow to fair on the lower Coos and Coquille rivers.

Angers hope that plugs and bait will be effective on the upper Rogue near Medford now that the flies-only restriction has been lifted. Half-pounders are present along with adult summer steelhead averaging around five pounds. It's been slow going for steelheaders in the Grants Pass stretch with mostly wild fish present. Action has fallen off in the bay for Chinook, coho and steelhead. Rain may turn it around.

Fall Chinook fishing has slowed in the Chetco although fish are running large. A few 50-pounders have been reported with bobber and bait most effective.

Eastern - Although the steelhead run started late on the Deschutes, fishing remains fair if anglers can endure the chill. Mornings and evenings are best as the season winds down. Fly fishing for reddsides is fair.

In the last scheduled trout stocking of the year, Taylor Lake and the South Fork of the Crooked River will be planted this week.

Southwest Washington- Although a variety of salmon and steelhead are still being taken on SW Washington streams, coho remain the main target with several streams tracking ahead of last years run. The Cowlitz, Kalama and Washougal Rivers are the best prospects for coho with anglers averaging around .5 fish per rod on these streams.

Statistics indicate we are about half way through the late run of coho on these streams.

The three fish bag limit for steelhead on the Cowlitz and Lewis Rivers was rescinded on October 31st.

Soapbox Update – As the Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association begins to focus on its top priorities, the Association is asking the general sportangler what they think the most important priorities to restoring sportfisheries are to them.

Please take a moment and log onto: www.nsiafishing.org and download the sportfishing survey to let us know your concerns. It will help shape our Associations future and priority list. **THIS IS YOUR BIG CHANCE!**

Columbia River Fishing Report – With salmon on the way out, sturgeon will once again become the main focus for Columbia River sportfishers. **Pro guide Dan Ponciano (360-607-8511)**

reports that success is consistent. Although most anglers are choosing the faster water above Beacon Rock, Dan stated that anglers can get into good action from Cape Horn to Horsetail Falls. Smelt is the key bait of course and bank and boat anglers alike are scoring results. Boat anglers in the gorge tallied nearly 1.5 keepers per boat over the weekend while 408 bank rods landed 88 legal fish along with 5 oversized fish and 69 shakers. Although some quality keepers are still available, the average size keeper has fallen to below 48 inches. The Willamette, particularly near the mouth is beginning to pick up in activity.

Boats fishing for salmon in the Troutdale area are still picking up a few coho and a rare chinook. This action should remain fair in the coming week even though most late run coho are destined for lower Columbia Washington tributaries.

Although sportanglers in the John Day Pool experienced a bit of a lull in steelhead success, action has still been fair. Weekend reports showed nine adipose fin-clipped steelhead and one chinook jack kept for 43 bank rods; and 11 adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus six unclipped steelhead released for 49 boats.

Crabbing in the lower Columbia remains excellent but extreme tides into the weekend will offer crabbers a shorter window of opportunity to harvest. The morning incoming tide should produce fabulously however.

The Guide's Forecast – Although sturgeon action should remain fair in the coming weeks, keepers will be harder to come by. Try smelt from Horsetail Falls upstream to the deadline although with much of the pressure upstream, success can be rewarding with a lot less people around if you choose the lower gorge. Catch and release days remain the most productive. There are some signs that the lower Willamette is showing signs of an early season but effort remains too low to get an accurate indication.

The Troutdale salmon craze should continue for those casting spinners and trolling plugs. Although hatchery coho numbers are likely to fade with the upcoming precipitation, a mix of wild and some hatchery fish should still be available.

The John Day Pool should begin to show signs of significant improvement in the coming weeks. Plug trollers willing to endure the monotony of dragging gear behind their boats for hours could be rewarded with large "B" run Idaho bound steelhead. There are some quality fish yet to come and November is the hot month for action.

Lower Columbia crabbers will continue to find reward well into the month. Target high slack this week in the late morning using fresh bait like salmon carcasses if you can get them. Limits should be easy in the coming weeks.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – As the coho run winds down, Fall Chinook and summer steelhead are nearly wrapped up in the Willamette with fish well into the tributaries. The lower Willamette closed for coho retention on Wednesday this week. All the runs this year have been strong compared to 2005 and 2004 counts. The upper Willamette to the Highway 20 Bridge in Albany and many of the tribs are open for hatchery and wild coho. For a list of tributaries where coho may be kept, go here:

*<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2006/october/009.asp>

Sturgeon fishing has been fair to good on Thursday through Saturday when retention is allowed. Several keepers have been taken in the Oregon City area recently.

While the North Santiam is predicted to remain stable in the coming week, with rain falling it would

be wise to check the level prior to making a trip. There are plenty of steelhead in the upper system, but they can be finicky. Over 6,100 summer steelhead have entered the Foster Dam trap on the South Santiam and while recycling has ceased, good numbers remain in the system.

The McKenzie River closed above Blue River on November 1st.

The Guide's Forecast – Rain will only help the keeper sturgeon fishery on the lower Willamette, particularly if the water becomes muddy, a condition which usually boosts the sturgeon bite.

Try high on the system for summer steelhead on the Santiams. While Mehama and Minto Park have produced fish recently, these fish will move both upstream and down until they settle on a place to spawn in January to February.

Rainfall should energize the steelhead fishery below Leaburg Dam on the McKenzie. Trout fishing and summer steelheading will remain worthwhile until the next hard freeze or torrential rain.

Until the rivers flush, expect leaves in the water to present a problem, frequently fouling terminal tackle.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – It's difficult to predict what will occur with the Clackamas River without knowing how much rain will fall. With the Clack closed for coho and winter steelhead yet to show, perhaps this is a good one to back-burner 'til the third week in November or so. Another consideration is that November is historically the wettest month of the year and the Clackamas doesn't fish well if the water level exceeds 12.5 at Estacada.

The Sandy River closed as of November 1st for both coho and Chinook so anglers are left to target summer steelhead while there are still bright ones available. It follows that many steelheaders are anxious for winter steelhead to enter. Sufficient rainfall may bring a few in early but it'll be late November before there will be even a possibility of a winter steelhead fishery.

North Coast District Fishing Report – This has been the week we have all been waiting for. Tillamook action for chinook exploded this week. Most of us were focused on the last half of outgoing tide along the inside of the north jetty in the afternoon- it was paying big dividends. But then, we found some productive fishing on the last half of incoming tide along the highway 101 shoreline by mid-week when the Ghost Hole and Bay City lit up- and lit up big. Couple the two great bites over the course of the day and some guide boats went home with limits this week. The best day of the season was on the 31st of October. Even though we took home 6 fish for 4 customers, there were several guide boats that had 8 or 10 fish that day. Much to my surprise, the bite slowed on the afternoon of the 1st when fish were clearly staging (according to my Lowrance fish finder) but not biting all that well. The storm front had just moved on shore but we lucked into one final hen before calling it quits at 4:00. I felt the bay was full of ocean fresh salmon waiting for the upcoming rain freshet.

The bite seems to be back and forth on what has been working best. Overall, herring has produced the best results but on the 31st, spinners were working quite well for **pro guide Bob Toman** fishing with **John Posey of Lamiglas**. The group put the hurt of the chinook at Bay City and then the Ghost Hole. They landed 9 fish of which 7 were hens indicating that this is the beginning of the Wilson/Kilchis run with bucks to follow. On the 31st, spinners seemed to be working best at Bay City so with that in mind, I started the day using spinners on the 1st. Wouldn't you know, our first three bites came on the 2 herring rods I was using in the bow? Our 4 spinner rods at the back of the boat never got bit! Needless to say, we fished herring for the rest of the day. **Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos** however got 4 quick morning fish on spinners just a short distance away.

The fish were clearly headed towards the Wilson and Kilchis Rivers as the upper bay has been fishing poorly. On 10/31, we chased the bite up-bay to Ray's Place piling and Cap Johnson's only to get a single opportunity. The lower Wilson has to be choked with staging chinook awaiting the rain that is about to start. Although I haven't heard much in the way of bobber fishing success on the lower Wilson, action is likely to be very good with the amount of fish moving through in recent days. The river downstream of hwy 101 is likely to be producing the best results for those using a combination of eggs and shrimp. The lower in tidewater, the fresher and more fish that will be available.

Although the ocean remains open, it only began to lay down on the 31st. The best action has been in the bay however where fish are concentrated in higher numbers. The ocean forecast is not looking good- it's time for a bay focus.

Crabbing in Tillamook is showing signs of improvement. Although we had favorable tides to work with, the crabbing in the extreme lower end of the estuary was picking up for quality sized keepers. We crabbed along the south jetty on the inside (losing 2 pots- did somebody run those over?) getting 17 nice keepers for 3 pots with just a few hour soak time. Lyster's Corner was also a productive spot but with the pressure the crab fishery has received this fall, it's not easy taking limits.

Most of the other north coast river systems have lots of fish present but they've been waiting for a reason to run upstream. Therefore, most of the fish in range are a bit colored up and not the best tablefare. Hopefully, with the upcoming rains, fresh fish will be on the move and the darker fish will make their way upstream to spawn. More on the forecast.....NOW!

The Guide's Forecast – The North Coast Rendezvous begins on Thursday so literally, every guide and their mother will be out in force! It's hard to say how the action will be with the weather system moving in but one thing is for sure, there will be fish present! Anglers will want to take advantage of the morning incoming tide with Wilson and Kilchis fish likely to take up residence on the east side of the bay. The upper end of the Ghost Hole has drawn the most activity lately and Bay City has been very productive too. Herring will be the best bet but anglers choosing to use spinners may be able to offer some fish a great alternative. Traditionally, the white/chartreuse colors are a great bet in the darker days we see this time of year. This year shouldn't be much different but the red/white blades have been a consistent producer as well. Although fishing the bottom of the bay is always the best bet, you may want to mix it up as the flood tide will disperse fish throughout the water column. Make a pass going with the tide with your gear off the bottom once in a while. It often times pays dividends. Bay fishers should stick with the lower bay (Ghost Hole/Bay City) but there may be a few fish still destined for the Trask and Tillamook Rivers. Don't bank on any big results however. The jaws may still be a fair option on the last part of outgoing tide which over the weekend, extends until sunset. Be aware that the evening tides are now in a minus series and won't produce for as long as a softer tide series.

Lower Wilson River anglers should prep themselves for hot action ahead. If the river doesn't come up too high (it's only forecasted to come up just over a foot), bobber fishers may rule the roost- particularly if leafy material clogs the gear of backrollers and backbouncers.

Depending on how much water the north coast receives, all river systems from the Necanicum to the Nestucca could fill with chinook. Forecasts call for extended periods of light rain which may not draw many fresh fish into the systems. If we get the precipitation as predicted, the lower stretches of these river systems should produce the best results. Also, the Nehalem could be a good bet as it may get just enough water to draw in fresh fish without sending them too high, too fast and out of reach to most driftboaters. If any of these larger river systems come up the 1 foot or better that they are predicted to do, driftboating will be well underway on the Trask, Wilson, Kilchis, Nehalem

and Nestucca Rivers. Be cautious of handling dark fish- as a friend of mine states, "put a dark boot in the smoker, you come out with a smoked boot"- Chris Knutsen. For those that don't know, the term "boot" refers to a dark salmon.

Tides are getting more extreme this week so crabbing will become a bigger challenge. Productive crabbing times will shrink to the high and low slack periods.

Razor clamming on the Clatsop Beaches would likely be good if the surf wasn't forecasted to come up again. Late afternoon on Friday and Saturday should produce the best results. Be cautious of high surf however!

Central & South Coast Reports – Many South coast streams and bays closed for trout fishing on November 1st. Be sure to check the regulations.

Offshore salmon fishing closed on the 1st of November

Siletz River Chinook fishing has been slow and spotty, but the crowds have thinned out which makes spending a day on the river a more pleasant experience. We'll have to see the effect of however much rain we get has on this ocean tributary. Crabbing in Siletz Bay has been good for numbers but even this late in the season at least half of the crab remain too soft to keep. Incidentally, the back shell is unreliable as the means of determining a softshell. Pinch the leg just behind the claw to determine if the crab should be kept. Any sponginess means the crab will hold very little meat and what there is will likely be watery and of poor table quality.

Top of tidewater was where to be on Thursday, November 2nd, as boats took anywhere from a couple of chinook to boat limits. North trollers and bobber anglers got into fish in the Cozy Cove area. The river is rising rapidly so Chinook will definitely be on the move. It will be a crapshoot until the effects of heavier-than-expected rainfall is determined. There were fewer Dungeness limits taken on the Alsea over the last week with seaweed thick in the bay.

Crabbing also slowed at Yaquina Bay while Chinook angling was fair to good over the weekend.

Chinook, coho and steelhead anglers on the mainstem Umpqua are reporting slow fishing. The North Umpqua is producing only a few steelhead and coho. While the smallmouth bass fishery continues to wind down above Scottsburg with cooler water temperatures, catches remain fair to good.

Trollers in Coos tidewater are faring pretty well although the run is winding down here. Chinook fishing on the Coquille has been slow.

Rain will get the Chinook fishery underway on the volatile Elk and Sixes rivers.

The Rogue River above the Shady Cove boat ramp to Cole River Hatchery, previously restricted to flies only, allowed the use of bait and hardware as of November 1st. Also, the stretch between Foster Creek and Whiskey Creek is now open to the use of bait. So far, this has made little impact in catches, but the precipitation in the forecast for the foreseeable future should improve prospects here. Adult steelhead will be entering this stretch in decent number. Half-pounders, despite the nickname, have been running one to three pounds. Catches are expected to improve in the Agness area along with coho prospects by the weekend. Fresh Fall Chinook are anticipated in the estuary, revitalizing the troll fishery there.

Fishing conditions on the low, clear Chetco River are expected to improve dramatically as rainfall improves water flow and color.

Following rotenone treatment of Diamond Lake in September, recent tests by ODFW indicate the water has "non-detectable levels" of the chemical. A release dated October 31st noted ironically that the illegally-introduced tui chub which forced treatment of the lake was first discovered on Halloween in 1992. Diamond Lake will be re-stocked with trout and offer chub-free angling starting in spring, 2007.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Deschutes steelheaders are witnessing the winding down of one of the best summer steelhead seasons in memory. While some angles continue to hoolup with a couple in a day, others are getting skunked. Fishing deep will be the best technique as the season wears on. Steelhead are scattered in the lower 100 miles of river. While morning and evening hours have been most productive, it's possible to entice strikes all day with cloud cover.

Northwest Trout – Green Peter has been fishing well on the troll for rainbows and the occasional landlocked Chinook salmon. Walling Pond and Walter Wirth Lake have been stocked with legal (eight-to-10-inch) and larger (12-inch) rainbow trout.

Northwest Bass & Panfish – Largemouth bass fishing in temperate coastal lakes is good now as these fish are into their Fall feeding binge to bulk up for the cold winter months. These fish are aggressive, so faster-moving crankbaits and spinnerbaits may be used. Action for yellow perch is good now.

Yellow perch are also being caught in decent numbers at Henry Hagg Lake.

While the kokanee fishing is over at Green Peter, the bass fishing has been quite good recently. With water levels low, only the Thistle Creek ramp remains useable.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report:

North Puget Sound: As the **coho** season winds down, **chum salmon** are starting to show up in the region's rivers. Anglers fishing the Snohomish, Skykomish and Stillaguamish rivers are doing well when it comes to chum, said Chad Jackson, WDFW fish biologist. "I've even heard some reports of chum weighing more than 20 pounds," Jackson said.

Some coho are still being caught in those rivers, but the fish are beginning to turn dark, said Jackson. Chum fishing, however, should continue to improve in the coming weeks, peaking toward the end of November. Anglers fishing the Snohomish River and portions of the Skykomish and Stillaguamish rivers have a daily limit of two salmon measuring at least 12 inches but must release **chinook** and **pink** salmon.

Elsewhere, anglers will soon have an opportunity to catch lunker **trout** in Beaver Lake near Issaquah, thanks to the release of about 3,000 hatchery rainbows that average approximately three pounds each. The release is scheduled for the week of Nov. 13. Beaver Lake, which is one of several westside lowland lakes open to fishing year-round, is best fished by small boat, although anglers can also be successful fishing from shore, said Jackson. The daily bag limit is five fish, and bait anglers must keep the first five trout they catch.

On the saltwater, four marine areas of Puget Sound will reopen to recreational **crab** fishing starting today (Nov. 1). Marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), and 12 (Hood Canal) will reopen for sport crabbing seven days a week through Jan. 2.

The crab season has continued uninterrupted in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu), and 13 (south Puget Sound) since those areas opened June 18. Fishing in those areas will remain open

seven days a week through Jan. 2, unless the catch quotas for those areas are reached before then. Marine areas 7S (San Juan Islands), 7E (Anacortes to Bellingham), 7N (Bellingham to Pt. Roberts), 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) and 11 (Tacoma-Vashon Island) will remain closed for the season.

Blackmouth fishing continues to be slow, although recent creel checks in the region did show a few bright spots. Two anglers at the Washington Park ramp were checked with two chinook Oct. 23, while eight anglers checked two chinook at the Bellingham ramp Oct. 28.

Anglers participating in the selective blackmouth fishery in marine areas 8-1 and 8-2 can keep up to two hatchery chinook per day, so long as the fish measure at least 22 inches in length. Wild chinook salmon, which have an intact adipose fin, cannot be brought aboard the boat.

In marine areas 9 and 10 anglers can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit in each area. Anglers in Marine Area 7 also have a two-salmon daily limit but must release chinook. Anglers should check WDFW's *2006/2007 Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for more information on those and other fisheries in the region.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula: Shellfish takes center stage in November as more areas of Puget Sound open for sport crabbing, and clam diggers get the go-ahead for a second fall clam dig on coastal beaches. Anglers can catch a mixture of chum and coho salmon in area waters.

Recreational **crab** fishing will reopen today (Nov. 1) in four marine areas of Puget Sound, including marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 12 (Hood Canal), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) and 9 (Admiralty Inlet). Crab fishing in those area will be open seven days a week through Jan. 2. Also open seven days per week are marine areas 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south Puget Sound), where fishing has continued uninterrupted since those areas opened June 18.

Marine Area 11 (Tacoma) will remain closed for the season along with several other areas in Puget Sound where area catch quotas were reached during the summer season.

In addition, **razor clam** diggers can look forward to the second opening of the fall season, which gets under way Friday, Nov. 3, on evening tides at three of Washington's ocean beaches. Long Beach, Twin Harbors and Mocrocks will be open Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 3-5 now that marine toxin tests have confirmed the clams are safe to eat. A fourth evening of digging is also scheduled Monday, Nov. 6 at Twin Harbors only. No digging will be allowed before noon any of those days.

Two beaches - Copalis Beach and Kalaloch Beach - will remain closed to clam digging in November. The beach at Copalis will be closed due to the low number of clams in the total allowable catch, said Dan Ayres, WDFW coastal shellfish manager. Kalaloch Beach, located within Olympic National Park, will also be closed to digging because park rangers will be busy monitoring the elk-hunting season. WDFW and Olympic National Park have both tentatively scheduled more digs Dec. 2-3. Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks and Kalaloch beaches would open to razor clam digging pending the results of a new series of marine toxin tests. Copalis Beach will again be closed to clam digging. One beach, Twin Harbors, would be open one additional day, Dec. 4.

Another opening is also scheduled over the New Year's holiday, with evening digs tentatively scheduled Dec. 31 at all five ocean beaches - including Copalis - and continuing Jan. 1 at Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks and Kalaloch. Again, Twin Harbors would also remain open for an additional evening dig, Jan. 2.

Under WDFW rules, harvesters may take no more than 15 razor clams and must keep the first 15 taken, regardless of size or condition. Each digger's limit must be kept in a separate container. Meanwhile, fisheries managers are forecasting a strong, healthy run of fall chum salmon, according to Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. An estimated 600,000 chum are expected to return to South Puget Sound, he said. Hal Michael, WDFW regional fish biologist, said he watched anglers reel in good numbers of chum from Kennedy Creek on his recent visit there. Johns Creek in Mason County is also a good bet, he said. "They're arriving in all the usual places, and a little earlier than usual," he said.

WDFW staff and the Hoodspout Hatchery report that schools of chum are gathering out in front of that facility, where the chum fishery has been open since Oct. 16. Starting today (Nov. 1), anglers can also target hatchery chum in several other areas, including the Dosewallips River and Duckabush River in Jefferson County, and Minter Creek in Pierce/Kitsap Counties.

Coho fishing has also been productive in some areas. On Hood Canal, anglers checked at the Tahuya Ramp averaged about one coho per angler for the week of Oct. 16-22. Anglers checked at the Fuller Bridge boat launch near the mouth of the Satsop River brought in one-third to one-half a fish per person during the same period, according to Wendy Beeghley, WDFW fish biologist.

Southwest Washington: The first **winter steelhead** of the season have begun to arrive at the Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery, but most area anglers have more immediate concerns. Catch rates for late-run **hatchery coho** are still averaging half a fish per rod in the Bonneville Pool and several Columbia River tributaries, while anglers continue to catch good numbers of legal-size **sturgeon** from Bonneville Dam downriver to the Wauna power lines. In addition, **sea-run hatchery cutthroat** are making a strong early showing in the Cowlitz River below Blue Creek.

"Area anglers have quite a few options to choose from right now - from sturgeon to sea-run cutthroat," said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. "It's always great to see winter steelhead start showing up, but that fishery doesn't really get going until around Thanksgiving." Hymer noted that 11 winter **steelhead** had returned to Cowlitz River hatcheries as of Oct. 29, the earliest showing statewide. Consistent with the shift to winter-run management, the catch limit for hatchery steelhead reverts to two legal-size hatchery steelhead per day - down from three fish under the previous rule - on both the Cowlitz and Lewis rivers as of today (Nov. 1).

But while anglers are still catching a few summer-run steelhead here and there, late-run **hatchery coho** have been providing most of the action on the lower Columbia River and its tributaries. During the week ending Oct. 29, one boat angler in two took home a hatchery silver from the Cowlitz and Lewis rivers as well as Lake Scanewa and the Bonneville Pool. Bank anglers fishing on the Cowlitz caught 27 adult coho, 13 hatchery steelhead and seven adult **chinook salmon**, according to creel checks conducted by WDFW that week. On the Kalama River, 29 bank anglers checked seven hatchery coho and released five others.

"The chinook salmon are getting pretty dark, but there are still some nice, bright hatchery coho coming into the fishery," said Hymer, who reminds anglers that they can keep up to four adult hatchery coho per day on the Cowlitz.

Also helping to boost the catch on the Cowlitz River, Tacoma Power employees transported 620 coho adults to the Lake Scanewa Day Use Site and released another 274 coho adults at Franklin Bridge in Packwood during the week ending Oct. 29. Employees of Tacoma Power and WDFW also released 4,225 coho adults into Riffe Lake at Mossyrock Park, 966 coho adults at the Barrier Dam boat launch and 85 coho adults into Mayfield Lake at the Ike Kinswa Park boat launch.

Hymer noted that the fishery for **sea-run cutthroat trout** is also shaping up nicely on the Cowlitz, where 1,726 cutts had returned to the trout hatchery through Oct. 25. That compares to a return of 459 fish by the same time last year and 5,500 for the entire 2005 season.

"Sea-run cutthroat are aggressive, hard-fighting fish," Hymer said. "They'll take flies, bait, lures - practically anything you throw at them. Fishing should be good from Blue Creek near the trout hatchery on downriver." The catch limit for cutthroat is five per day on the Cowlitz River, where the fish generally range from 12 to 20 inches.

Trout anglers should also be aware that WDFW planted 647 one-pound cutthroat in Riffe Lake and 1,120 **browns** averaging two-thirds of a pound in Swofford Pond on Oct. 24.

Meanwhile, **sturgeon** anglers are continuing to reel in good numbers of legal-size fish in the ongoing fishery between Bonneville Dam and the Wauna power lines near Cathlamet. Creel checks during the week ending Oct. 29 found that boat anglers fishing from Woodland upstream were averaging one legal-size fish for every 4.4 rods, while bank anglers fishing just below the dam took home one legal-size fish for every 7.2 rods.

"The fishery has been running hot and cold, but is generally holding up pretty well," Hymer said. "Last Thursday (Oct. 26), anglers aboard 20 boats caught 38 legal-size fish and released four others. That's two legal-size fish per boat! We can't promise everybody a day like that, but it's still pretty encouraging."

Anglers fishing from the Wauna power lines to Bonneville Dam may only retain sturgeon Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. "Keepers" must be at least 42 inches long but no more than 60 inches. **Eastern Washington:** Snake River **steelhead** fishing is picking up steam, as evidenced by the latest Snake River steelhead creel survey report <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/snake/index.htm>. Unfortunately, some steelheaders are reportedly keeping wild fish, which is illegal, said WDFW fish biologist Glen Mendel. As stated on page 28 of the Fishing in Washington pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>), anglers must release wild steelhead trout year-round, except where retention is specifically authorized under Special Rules. No such authorization is included in the rules for the Columbia or Snake rivers or other eastside rivers listed in the Special Rules section, Mendel said. The only waterways where some wild steelhead can be harvested are all in western Washington and are listed under the Statewide Freshwater Species Rules on page 29 of the rules pamphlet.

In the reference to Snake River steelhead, the rule states that no more than three trout 20 inches and over may be retained. By definition, a sea-run rainbow trout 20 inches or more is a steelhead. In the Columbia River the limit is two hatchery steelhead per day under the trout rule. The Snake River rule also states that barbless hooks are required when fishing for steelhead - a requirement designed to protect any wild steelhead that are caught and released.

Wild Snake River steelhead are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Hatchery-marked steelhead, as defined in the rules pamphlet on page 23, are those with a clipped adipose or ventral fin and a healed scar at the location of the clipped fin.

Sections of some tributaries in the Snake River basin - Grand Ronde, Touchet, Tucannon, Walla Walla - are closed to trout fishing Oct. 31 but remain open to hatchery steelhead fishing Nov. 1 through April 15. Check the pamphlet for section details.

Although many fishing lakes in the region are now closed, some waters with public access sites are still open, said WDFW regional access manager Scott Young. Waitts Lake, four miles west of Valley along Highway 395 in Stevens County, is open through February and produces nice **rainbow** and

brown trout. Eloika Lake, seven miles north of Chattaroy off Highway 2 in Spokane County, is open year-round and has decent **largemouth bass, perch** and **crappie** fishing now. Silver Lake, a mile east of the town of Medical Lake in southwest Spokane County, is open year-round with a little bit of everything, including **tiger trout** and **tiger muskies**.

Rock Lake, a mile north of Ewan in Whitman County, is open year-round and is now providing good action on brown trout. And of course there's always year-round Sprague Lake, the eastside's largest natural waterway spanning the Lincoln-Adams county line along Interstate 90. The targets there are **walleye** and rainbows.

Sections of some rivers in the region also remain open year-round for fishing with various access points. The Pend Oreille River, which has net-pen-reared rainbow trout - plus some brown trout, crappie, perch and bass - is open year-round. WDFW maintains a primitive access site near Ruby Creek, on the Pend Oreille about 15 miles south of Ione. The uppermost portion of the Spokane River, from Upriver Dam to the Idaho border, is catch-and-release only through March 15; the rest of the river is open year-round, but anglers should check the rules pamphlet for catch limits and other regulations.

The **whitefish** season opens today (Nov. 1) on the Kettle River in Ferry and Stevens counties. Fishing gear is restricted to one single point hook, maximum hook size 3/16 inch point to shank (hook size 14). Catch limit is 15 whitefish.

North Central Washington: WDFW district fish biologist Bob Jateff of Omak reports **steelhead** fishing has been "pretty good" on the mainstem Columbia River from Wells Dam to 400 feet below Chief Joseph Dam. Recent WDFW enforcement patrols on Lake Pateros - the portion of the Columbia River upstream of Wells Dam - confirmed that claim, finding that a quarter of the boats had fish on board.

Jateff reminds steelheaders that standard gear rules and a night closure are in effect for the lake, and the bag limit is two adipose-fin-clipped hatchery steelhead per day. All steelhead with an intact adipose fin - and those bearing an anchor tag - may not be removed from the water and must be immediately released unharmed. Jateff also notes that both the Okanogan and Methow rivers are now closed to steelhead fishing. On the other hand, the Upper Columbia River opened for steelheading Oct. 21 from the Rocky Reach Dam north of Wenatchee to 400 feet below the Chief Joseph Dam near Bridgeport. The season there is scheduled to run through March 31 unless impacts to wild steelhead require an earlier closure.

Jateff also reports good catch-and-release fishing for **rainbow trout** at Rat Lake, near Brewster. "Fishing there is excellent for rainbows up to 15 inches," said Jateff, noting that the rules there switch to catch-and-keep fishing Dec. 1 with a daily limit of five fish and standard gear rules. In the Columbia Basin, several trout lakes remain open through November under selective gear rules, including Dry Falls, Dusty, Lenice, Merry and Nunnally in Grant County.

Some year-round waters in the region are a good bet at this time, from Banks Lake on the Columbia River with everything from **bass** to **whitefish**, to Sprague Lake on the Adams-Lincoln county line with trout and **walleye**.

South Central Washington: The salmon fishing season on the Yakima River and the upper portion of the Hanford Reach closed Oct. 22 to protect spawning. The closed section stretches from the old Hanford townsite wooden powerline towers to Vernita Bridge and on up to Priest Rapids Dam. But the lower Hanford Reach - from the power lines downstream to the Highway 395 bridge at Pasco - remains open through Dec. 31. WDFW fish biologist Paul Hoffarth reports the upper reach's final week of fishing resulted in about 15 percent fewer **fall chinook** harvested than last year at this

time, and the total angler effort and catch on the Yakima was considerably lower than last season. "But chinook counts through McNary Dam are roughly one-third lower than last year," he said. John Easterbrooks, WDFW regional fish program manager, said there are still some nice **coho salmon** returning to the Yakima or upper Columbia River through the lower Hanford Reach section that remains open to fishing through the end of the year. "The fall chinook are falling off now because it's the tail end of the run," he said, "but anglers are shifting to the **steelhead** whose numbers are just beginning to build." Easterbrooks noted that the fishing season for steelhead in the lower section runs through March 31. "The target is the Ringold hatchery steelhead, produced for this fishery," he said. "Only hatchery-marked - adipose-fin clipped - steelhead can be retained; all wild steelhead must be released unharmed.

Reader Email

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

Ocean dead zone off Oregon dissipating:

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20061031/ap_on_sc/dead_zone

PNW Fly Tyers Rendezvous Saturday, November 4th:

http://www.nwflyfishers.org./index_files/Page475.html

Catamaran identified as experimental watercraft:

<http://www.chinookobserver.com/main.asp?SectionID=12&SubSectionID=30&ArticleID=16048&TM=31297.75>



Weekly Quote – Piscator non solum piscatur – "There is more to fishing than catching fish." - Unknown author

GOOD LUCK!