

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **November 17<sup>th</sup>, – November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Columbia River Gorge sturgeon fishing remains the signature option for anglers in the Portland area. Catches remained best for boat anglers, averaging 1 keeper per boat over the weekend. Bank anglers were faring well in the higher flows reports **pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411)** with a keeper coming from every 5<sup>th</sup> rod surveyed. Troutdale boats are still taking some keeper sturgeon but the best action will remain in the gorge through the rest of the year. Sublegal sturgeon action is fair in the Portland to Longview stretch but keepers are hard to find.

Steelhead action remains consistent in the John Day Pool with boat anglers recording nearly half a fish per boat. Bank anglers also fared well with half a fish per rod. This fishery should be entering its peak over the next 14 days.

The storm front last week caused the Willamette flow to increase by a whopping 34,000 cfs overnight. It crested to over 62,000 cfs on November 8<sup>th</sup>. While it's still over 56,000 cfs at the Falls, debris has washed out so the lower Willamette should be safe for boaters. Sturgeon fishing will improve when the temperature of the Willamette is higher than that of the Columbia. Water temps dropped below 50 degrees at the Falls this week.

Valley rivers were on the rise once again this week. The Clackamas closed to coho although Eagle Creek remains open. Coho and Chinook fishing closed on the Sandy November 1st. Both rivers have a few summer steelhead present but conditions this week are unlikely to be fishable.

North Santiam anglers will find a swift, angry river this week. The South Santiam is no better. The smaller, flashy coastal systems between fronts are a much better option.

The McKenzie is high and off-color, offering little hope of a late-season summer steelhead below Leaburg Dam.

If the rivers are out of shape, catch up on your reading. The 2007 Oregon Fishing Regulations are available everywhere licenses are sold.

No trout stocking took place in Oregon this week.

**Northwest –** Very few river systems on the north coast have been recovered enough to fish this week. The Kilchis River has been one exception where driftboaters scored excellent results in between rain storms. Sunday produced good catches along with Tuesday with most fish being found in the shallower tail-outs of the higher flows and turbid water reports **pro guide Jim Nicol (503-550-3166)**. The Kilchis and other area rivers are forecasted to muddy once again on the mid-week deluge.

The Necanicum River near Seaside showed hope of a fall salmon option but saturated riverbanks coupled with high winds have made navigation hazardous. A downed tree where the river nears Highway 101 claimed one boat on Tuesday. Fortunately, no one was injured but lifejackets are strongly recommended on all waterways this time of year.

Surprisingly, Tillamook Bay produced excellent catches for the very few boats fishing last Saturday.

One boat with 2 anglers took 3 chinook while other boats reported multiple opportunities in water with less than 6 inches of visibility. Herring trolled on the bottom took the fish from Bay City to the Ghost Hole. Tillamook Bay may be the best option prior to the rivers clearing.

If river forecasts hold, smaller streams like the Kilchis could fish by the weekend. Larger rivers like the Wilson and Trask offer the best late season opportunities for bright chinook but it may be Sunday or Monday before they become productive. There have been chum salmon present in the Kilchis River but the target fishery closed on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

The Nestucca may be another late weekend option with fresh fish available from 1<sup>st</sup> Bridge and down. Anglers may come across an early steelhead on the Nestucca, Kilchis or Wilson Rivers. Only fin-clipped steelhead may be retained and anglers will still have to pay attention for wild coho that will be present.

Sturgeon typically make a showing in Tillamook Bay this time of year. With the fresh water influx, crabs won't be the nuisance they usually are for lower estuary anglers. Shrimp will work the best with the South Channel being the best option.

Crabbers really only have Netarts Bay as an option in the Tillamook district. Crabbing on the lower Columbia however should remain good despite all the precipitation. Early afternoon tides will offer a holiday bounty early next week and motivated shellfishers can dig razor clams along Clatsop Beaches on the evening tides if the surf subsides.

The Siletz is running muddy and won't fish by the weekend.

**Southwest** – Waters of the North Umpqua increased from 5.5 feet to 7.5 feet on Tuesday, November 14th. It's unlikely to fish by the weekend.

Volatile rivers can be hot during breaks in the precipitation. So it is on the Elk where anglers have been scoring bright Chinook when the water is dropping and clearing in dry periods since the storm. Look for a level of five feet or less.

The Rogue River has been on the rise over the last week as the water temperature drops - not a positive combination for anglers. The upper river holds the most hope for a hookup with a late-season summer steelhead.

If the forecast for rain to taper off late in the week is accurate, Chetco anglers may get into Chinook. Fish it if the flows drop below 4,000 cfs. It doesn't fish well if the water level is rising.

**Eastern** - Flows on the Deschutes are up and anglers can expect higher levels and a greater volume of water for the remainder of the season between rain and the cessation of irrigation. Steelhead fishing is spotty and the river is closed to trout angling.

The Grande Ronde, usually a November favorite, is just starting to show signs of promise. Action should pick up later in the month.

**Southwest Washington-** Even in the higher flows, the Cowlitz and Lewis Rivers are producing fair numbers of coho. Anglers are targeting places like Barrier Dam and near hatchery intakes are taking the bulk of the fish.

Winter steelhead may show soon on the Cowlitz River. Given the larger than anticipated return of late run coho, steelhead may make a better show this year than in years past. The Cowlitz steelhead

average large for early run fish.

**Soapbox Update** - From the ODFW:

For Immediate Release Wednesday, Nov. 15, 2006

**2007 Oregon sport fishing regulations out ahead of schedule**

SALEM, Ore.—Oregon anglers can pick up a copy of the 2007 Oregon Sport Fishing Regulations from license agents today.

Anglers are highly encouraged to carefully review the 2007 regulation because many important rule changes occurred during the 2006 fishing season. The new rules are highlighted in blue and appear throughout the regulation.

Major changes for 2007 include changing crayfish harvest regulations to prohibit angling for crayfish with hook and line.

The spring chinook control zone area in the near shore ocean off Tillamook Bay has been redefined from a triangle to a rectangle. The area covers from the jetty tips seaward to the 15 fathom line offshore from Pyramid Rock to Twin Rocks. There are no changes in season or bag restrictions from previous years

Other changes are stated below by zone:

**Northwest Zone**

Trout fishing opportunities have opened on Deadwood Creek, Indian Creek, Lobster creek in the Central Coast District from May 26 to Sept. 30. The bag limit is two trout over eight inches per day using artificial flies and lures only.

**Willamette Zone**

From Aug. 1 to Oct. 31, unmarked coho salmon may be kept on the mainstem of the Willamette River above the falls, to include sections of the Tualatin (and its tributary Gales Creek), Yamhill, Molalla, and Santiam Rivers.

**Central Zone**

- From Aug. 1 to Oct. 31, unmarked coho salmon may be kept on the Deschutes River from the mouth to Pelton Regulating Dam.
- Protective bass regulations in Laurance Reservoir were removed to allow retention of smallmouth bass caught in the reservoir.

No significant changes were adopted in the Southwest, Northeast, Southeast, Snake River, Columbia River, and Marine zones.

In addition to the new rules, several changes were made to improve the overall quality of the regulation, to include moving advertisements to the end of the regulation and "freshening up" the content for readers.

"We received a lot of good feedback from the public and incorporated many of their suggestions into the 2007 regulation," said Rhine Messmer, Recreational Fisheries Program Manager. "Our focus was threefold: improve the readability, make it easier to understand, and include more information on angling opportunities in Oregon."

A new section titled, "Looking for Somewhere to Go Fishing" directs anglers to an ODFW web site feature called, "Easy Angling Oregon" that will offer information on fishing opportunities and angling techniques at several of Oregon's more productive fishing spots. The "Easy Angling Oregon" locations featured have been selected because they can provide rewarding angling experiences for the beginning angler and families.

The sport fishing regulations, which is published annually, can be accessed at:  
[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources...tions\\_2007.pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources...tions_2007.pdf)

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission is the rulemaking body responsible for approving all state angling regulations.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Sturgeon anglers are still doing well in the Columbia River Gorge. Smelt remains the key ingredient and the recent higher flows have benefited bank anglers. **Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411)** reports from a trip on the 10<sup>th</sup>, "We got one keeper (51 inches), tons of shakers and 2 oversize. The fish checker said the bank fishing was red hot as the high muddy water moved the sturgeon against the banks. I believe he said he talked to 74 bank anglers and they had 38 keepers."

Troutdale sturgeon anglers are also taking a few keepers but the best action remains in the gorge and the closer to the deadline, the more likely you are to catch a keeper. Boaters working the Portland to Longview stretch are finding a rare keeper but the shaker action is good enough to keep people interested.

Steelheading in the John Day area continue to show signs of improvement in that fishery. Weekly checking showed seven adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept plus four wild steelhead released for 23 bank rods; and 19 adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept plus eight wild steelhead released for 53 boats.

Crabbers in the lower Columbia continue to do well for large, keeper crab. The river downstream of Hammond and even just upstream near the condos are good options!

**The Guide's Forecast** – Sturgeon fishing should remain fair through the rest of this month. Keep in mind that on every retention opener, more quality keepers are finding their way home. The best day is obviously going to be on Thursdays after fish have had a 4 day break. This late in the season, you'll have to innovate and tip your baits with another flavor. Try squid or shrimp along with your smelt. The lower Willamette and Kelly Point Park is beginning to show signs of improvement.

Steelheaders in the John Day area should continue to see their fishery improve. Trollers working plugs should score fair results just upstream of the dam. There is a lot of room here and not many boats fishing so those covering more water quicker will take more fish. Don't be afraid to troll fast if your plugs can handle it. Also, the new K11 extreme Kwikfish may be a great option as they are deep divers when flatlined.

Although tides are a bit extreme, they will be at their fullest force in the evening hours. A mid-morning soak in the lower Columbia should pay dividends and the crab are firm and large. Use lower Desdemona on an outgoing tide but target the last half of incoming for best results.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – The lower Willamette remains high and muddy but that's not a negative condition for sturgeon fishing. Now that hazards, which included large, whole trees at times, have washed out into the Big River, boaters may navigate in

relative safety.

A combination of rain and flood control upstream is keeping the North and South Santiams very high and running fast.

Off Topic: The new Oregon Sport Fishing Regulations booklet for 2007 has been published and is available at your local sporting goods retailer. Having for years required a written form for transfer of game or roe to another person, this year a Transfer Slip is included. Good job, ODFW.

**The Guide's Forecast** – When the waters of the lower Willamette warm from the current high 40s to a temperature higher than that of the Columbia, the sturgeon bite will turn on.

The Santiams will remain too swollen to offer any fishing options for weeks to come. The handful of winter steelhead entering now are 100% unmarked but will offer sport to catch-and-release anglers when the rivers and the numbers become fishable.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – Anglers on the Sandy will find the storm has made some major changes in the structure and channels. In one case, a former bank is now an island. While it won't fish for a while, it may be worth an exploratory trip following a couple of dry days. Coming soon: winter steelhead. Over 16,000 coho have entered the hatchery facility on Eagle Creek with more on the way although the vast majority are now dark.

Although the level of the Clackamas has dropped from the last deluge, it remains off-color. The water will rise again with rain this week. High, swift, roiled water in the Clackamas River won't be tempting anglers for a while, anglers are waiting for the winter steelhead run to start up here as well. While a Thanksgiving Day steelhead outing is traditional in many families, with all the other runs late this year, December is likely to be more productive.

**North Coast District Fishing Report** – Things are starting to finally get back to a bit of normalcy here on the north coast. We may even be in the midst of a botched forecast right now! The thought of the rivers clearing before the weekend? How about it! The stories of the record 500 year flood here in Tillamook are still coming in. The anglers (and non-anglers) at the Wilson River RV Park got hit hard. One subscriber Wink Weber wrote us telling us how his boat was saved. Wink writes: "On Monday I lost my 33 ft. RV and most of its contents, thanks to guide Dave Johnson I still have my sled. After it was snagged by Joe Salinas of the Tillamook Fire Dept. Dave noticed the keys were in it so he jumped aboard and fired the motor, cut loose the trailer and drove the damned thing back up the Wilson to the park since it had drifted almost to Windy Gap with the trailer attached. Guess they will allow an exception on jets above 101 in this case! All this while I was blissfully hunting elk in the Blues. Thanks to Dave, while a little the worse for wear, I still have the boat.....THANKS DAVE!"

Although I didn't hear of any fish swimming through the Safeway Parking lot, no doubt, they were everywhere throughout downtown Tillamook. There's enough silt left over for your favorite warm water species to spawn in. In last week's newsletter, I got a bit cocky and stated "by the time you read this on Friday morning, I'll likely have a couple of chromers in my box on the lower Kilchis River". Well, we did get into some fish and had some good opportunities but we only ended up taking one nice 18 pounder for 4 rods fishing. It's the curse of the Kwikfish all over again. Lots of takes but few hook-ups. We did use eggs as well but they didn't draw many strikes. We had to quit a bit early that day because heavy rains started to swell the river once again. Sunday's performance was better however, the fish really seemed to be there. Most of our opportunities came in the morning with first lights upstream movement. We drew many strikes- mostly on Kwikfish, landing 1 chinook and 2 chum salmon. We had to wait a good stint of time before drawing more strikes but

they finally came and the bulk of the late morning/early afternoon strikes were chinook. We ended the day landing 4 chinook, breaking another off, 2 chum and 2 nice cutthroat trout. We harvested 3 out of the 4 chinook that we landed, releasing a dark buck. I was fishing the lower Kilchis downstream of the 101 boat ramp. There is only a small stretch of river to fish in that stretch before it peters out into shallow gravel flats before entering the bay. The river is quite narrow there and the possibility of losing fish in the overhanging brush is high. We drew several of our bites on black with red butt or black with glow butt Kwikfish. Again, they were difficult to hook given the fact I was fishing in about 3 or 4 foot of water where the plugs are diving into the gravel with the hooks on the underbelly of the plug. Our egg bites drew a better strike to land ratio as 2 of our 4 chinook came on eggs and we were fishing 2 of our 6 rods with eggs.

The Kilchis has definitely been the "go-to" river. **Pro guide Jim Nicol (503-550-3166)** gave us this report, "I put in at the Park this morning on the Kilchis R. and starting drifting about 7 am. I had two clients Pete Trudeau and Ted Westling. We put the first Nook in the box at the second elbow hole in the upper end. The fish fell victim to some DBLE RED HOT Pro cure eggs with a shrimp tail. The second fish was caught in front of Jennie's home. in the bottom of the run on a K-15 Kwikfish Chartreuse nose with a Sardine Wrap. We went down around the corner at the loggers road hole and took 2 more on K-15 Kwikfish "Double Trouble" and lost one with the same Kwikfish. We proceeded to move down river below the Logger Bridge and Hooked 3 more and landed to one on eggs and one on Chartreuse nose K-15 with wrap. We were done 1:15 pm. The river was clearing quickly as the day went on, with about 2.5 ft a visibility. We ended up hooking 9 fish and landing 6. Seven of the nine fish were hooked in the lower section of the hole."

Great report Jim! Thanks! The Kilchis was again fishing on the 15<sup>th</sup> and as of right now, the major weather system that was supposed to dump another load of rain on us is looking like it is heading north. As of this writing, we may only get an inch of rain and the rivers, particularly the Kilchis, may stay fishable through the weekend. We may even drop into low and clear conditions before too long!

Flyfishers were out in force on the 15<sup>th</sup> as it is the last day to target chum salmon on these coastal streams. The Miami was packed with anglers and with the numbers of people present, action was likely good. Even though it was open for chum salmon, it was strictly a catch and release fishery. It's too early to say how the return is going to be.

Much to my surprise, Tillamook Bay fishing has held up well this week. Although it wasn't consistent, a guide friend of mine fished himself and one friend last Saturday going 3 for 3 in water with less than 6 inches of visibility. They were dragging herring on the bottom of the bay from the Ghost Hold to Bay City. Some theorize that the water on the bottom of the bay was running clear on the incoming tide but these guys were catching them on the outgoing tide!? One neighbor of mine fished the same day hooking 7 fish but only landing 1. There were 3 boats fishing yesterday in the bay and 2 boats got nothing but one boat landed 4 in the Ghost Hole. There are plenty of fish yet to come!

Although sturgeon conditions are becoming favorable, I have not noticed anyone fishing. The weather on the bay has not been all that friendly but it looks like a good week ahead so anglers may venture out and hopefully we'll have reports by next week.

Although too much fresh water for crabbing in most coastal estuaries, Netarts Bay remains a good option on the incoming tide.

**The Guide's Forecast** – So much hinges on the current weather system sitting overhead right now. It looks as if the bulk of the rain will move north, not effecting north Oregon Coast streams. If that is the case, fishing on all north coast streams should be excellent from now through the

weekend! This is the clearing period we have been waiting for!

The Kilchis is running green now and fishing excellent! The entire stretch from Kilchis Park downstream is producing catches of chum and chinook. As the river drops, fish will begin to hold in their more traditional haunts- that is, deeper runs and pools. But for now, they are in the steelhead water and well distributed throughout the system.

The Wilson will be the best option by the weekend- if the river doesn't rise as much as it is predicted to. As it drops, keep in mind that you don't need more than a foot of visibility to catch fish here. Like the Kilchis, fish will be present in all makes and models of the river so fish every likely spot until the river drops and they fall into the obvious chinook water. Kwikfish will be the easiest way to harvest these fish but with a weekend crowd, you'll have to get more innovative as folks downstream will be using the same gear as you. With as much high water as we've had over the last week, there should be fresh fish well distributed throughout the watershed. Bank anglers have their best access upstream and boaters along with bank anglers will need to sort through some darker fish. Remember, a "boot" put into the smoker still comes out a smoked "boot". Anglers versed in the art of backbouncing will be drawn to the deeper pools and traditional chinook water but keep in mind that these fish will be in the water where they don't have to burn so many calories. If you are bouncing in water that requires more than 5 or 6 ounces of lead in these flows, you aren't fishing the best water- choose the slower flows at these stages until the water drops and clears!

The Trask will also offer some good opportunity for boaters from Cedar Creek downstream. Bank anglers can feel confident about fishing upstream of Cedar Creek as fresh fish should be there albeit, in smaller numbers. Keep in mind that Trask and Tillamook River fish are earlier arrivals and it may be more challenging to find more quality fish here. Darker bucks may sometimes cut orange but even a dusky hen will cut white- and they are the seed of our future so think conservatively!

The Nehalem will not be an option but the North Fork Nehalem may fish for chinook. This is another stream that gets earlier fish so darkies will be the rule. The Necanicum River will fish good even before the weekend but there is a tree across a narrow section of the river as it nears Highway 101. It claimed a boat on Tuesday. Use caution and if you have to cut trees, try and do so without compromising their ability to recruit into the river system for use as fish habitat. BE SAFE! WEAR YOUR LIFEJACKETS!

The Nestucca should fish by the weekend and bright fish should be available from 1<sup>st</sup> Bridge to Cloverdale. The farther downstream you fish, the more likely you are to run into bright fish. It should be a great week on this and most north coast streams!

Clammers will have some tides to work with by Sunday evening. If the surf stays calm, Clatsop Beaches should be good for diggers from Seaside to Fort Stevens Park through Tuesday. You can combo up with a crabbing trip on the lower Columbia too! The crabbing has been good!

**Central & South Coast Reports** – The NOAA river forecast for the Siletz indicates it will crest at about 10 feet in the early morning hours on November 16th. This is close to the 'Action Stage' but short of the 12 foot 'Flood Stage'. It's supposed to drop rapidly to 3.2 or so by this coming Saturday, November 18th.

North Umpqua offers slow fishing for summer steelhead and fair but improving prospects for coho. The north Umpqua will remain open for coho through December 31st. Chinook and hatchery coho catches have been very slow in the mainstem and in the estuary.

ODFW biologists believe that the heavy rains over the last week or so have sent Chinook upstream

on the Coos and Coquille rivers, essentially wrapping up the Fall season on those systems. It remains legal to keep hatchery coho up to mile 115 on the Coquille River through the end of the year. Winter steelhead are due any time.

The Elk River has kicked out decent catches of Chinook during lulls in the precipitation as the water level was receding. Look for a level of four to 5.5 feet. For daily updates on the conditions and water level, call the Elk River Hatchery at 541-332-7025 for a recorded report.

Rogue steelheaders are hopeful for winter action on the lower river Thanksgiving weekend. Decent numbers of coho and summer steelhead are in the Grants Pass stretch although fishing was spotty prior to this week's downpour. The water level was coming down on Wednesday this week before the storm front moved onshore in the middle river. If precipitation moderates later in the week, fishing will resume. Catches of summer steelhead on the upper Rogue are expected to be good following the rain this week. With coho numbers improving in the upper river, catch rates are expected to follow suit.

The rain is supposed to moderate late in the week, but the Chetco, high and muddy at mid-week, will probably not recover to its fishable 4,000 cfs. or less and it doesn't fish well if the water level is rising. Last week when the Chetco was high, several anglers experienced very good Chinook fishing on the Smith River when the Chetco was out of shape. It's a short trip from one to the other although California regulations and license requirements must be met.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – The Lower Deschutes is closed to trout fishing on lands adjacent to the Warm Springs Reservation. While it will remain open for the rest of the year for steelhead, it's hit-or-miss fishing from here on out.

**Northwest Trout** – This weekend will be the last chance to fish Henry Hagg Lake this year. It will re-open the first weekend in March next year.

No Oregon waters will be planted with hatchery trout this week.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

#### **From the WDF&W Weekender Report:**

##### **North Puget Sound**

The **chum salmon** return to many area rivers was nearing its peak when recent heavy rains swelled the region's waters. Once river levels get back to normal, the fish might not be as abundant, but anglers should still have a decent chance to hook a chum. "When we finally get a break in the weather and the rivers have a chance to drop back into shape, anglers should find some chum and even some coho salmon," said Tim Flint, WDFW salmon resource manager. "Although, with these recent heavy rains, it's tough to say when that will be."

Saltwater fisheries are an option for anglers waiting for river conditions to improve. Effort has been light, but stalwart anglers that braved the recent rain and wind did find some salmon in Puget Sound. One bright spot was Nov. 8, when three anglers were checked at the Everett Ramp with four **chinook**.

Anglers participating in the selective **blackmouth** fishery in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) 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 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) anglers can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit in each area. Anglers in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) also have a two-salmon daily limit but must release chinook.

Seven marine areas of Puget Sound also are open to recreational crabbing. Marine areas 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu), 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 9, 10, 12 (Hood Canal) and 13 (south Puget Sound) are open seven days a week through Jan. 2 unless 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, 8-2 and 11 (Tacoma-Vashon Island) will remain closed to sport crabbing for the season. Back on the freshwater, about 3,000 hatchery rainbows - averaging approximately three pounds each - are scheduled to be released into Beaver Lake near Issaquah the third week in November. 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 Chad Jackson, WDFW fish biologist. The daily bag limit is five fish, and bait anglers must keep the first five trout they catch.

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**

In a sure sign that the dog days of summer have given way to the dog days of fall, thousands of **chum salmon** are now moving into fisheries throughout the region. "We've got schools of chum out front and they're being caught," says the phone message (360-877-5222) at the Hoodspout Hatchery on Hood Canal. That's something of an understatement. A creel check conducted Nov. 11 counted 84 bank anglers with 170 chum salmon taken in the "hatchery zone," where the daily limit is four salmon (with a maximum of two chinook) per rod. "That's pretty good fishing by any measure," said Hal Michael, a WDFW fish biologist.

While high water in mid-November temporarily stalled chum fishing in area rivers, Michael said catch rates should pick up quickly once those rivers drop back into shape. "We're just approaching the middle of the run in most rivers," he said, adding that recent updates indicate many runs are exceeding pre-season forecasts. "There will still be a lot of opportunities to catch chum salmon in the weeks ahead," said Larry Phillips, another WDFW fish biologist. Most chum salmon caught in area waters range from six to 15 pounds, he said.

Both biologists pointed to Kennedy, Perry, McLane, Johns, Schneider and Skookum creeks in the South Sound area as good bets for chum fishing, once water levels drop. Other areas now open to chum salmon fishing include the Dosewallips River and Duckabush River in Jefferson County, and Minter Creek in Pierce and Kitsap counties.

Michael recommended that bank anglers fishing the estuaries near the mouths of those creeks and rivers start casting just before high tide for best results.

Anglers are also advised to check the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for boundaries, catch limits and other regulations for each area. In doing so, anglers targeting chum salmon should also check the regulations for other fish species before they cast a line, Michael said. "There are still a fair number of late-running coho in many of these waters," he said. "Also a lot of 'egg predators' such as **char** and **sea-run**

**cutthroat.** You may be fishing for chum salmon, but it's important to know the rules for these other species before you get one on your line."

Anglers should also start watching for **winter steelhead**, said Mike Gross, a WDFW fish biologist for the Olympic Peninsula. Although heavy rains render most area rivers "unfishable" in early November, Gross expects to see early steelhead in the catch once the rivers fall back into shape. "The steelhead fishery on the Olympic Peninsula traditionally gets under way around Thanksgiving, but all this water could bring early-run steelhead in sooner," Gross said. He noted that WDFW will release a pre-season forecast for steelhead returns in early December and that the department will start conducting creel surveys soon on many area rivers. All anglers planning to fish for steelhead should check the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet for regulations applicable to specific rivers before they go.

Rather catch crustaceans? Recreational **crab** fishing reopened Nov. 1 for the fall season 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.

Clam diggers should note that the next **razor-clam** opening is tentatively scheduled Dec. 2-3 at Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks and Kalaloch beaches if marine toxin tests show the clams at those beaches are still safe to eat. Twin Harbors would be open one additional day, Dec. 4. Copalis Beach will again remain closed to digging those days due to the low number of clams in the total allowable catch. Clam digging will be restricted to the hours between noon and midnight each day. In addition, WDFW has tentatively scheduled a dig over the New Year's holiday, pending the results of upcoming marine toxins tests. If those results are favorable, evening digs will be held Dec. 31 at all five ocean beaches - including Copalis - and continuing Jan. 1 at four beaches: Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks and Kalaloch. One beach, Twin Harbors, would also remain open for an evening dig Jan. 2.

Again, digging will be restricted to the hours between noon and midnight each day.

### **Southwest Washington:**

Snake River **steelhead** fishing appears to be improving in all upstream stretches of the mainstem and in most tributaries, according to the latest steelhead creel survey conducted by WDFW fish biologists and their colleagues in Idaho and Oregon. The best catch-rate was on the Tucannon River where anglers averaged less than six hours of fishing per steelhead. Steelheaders checked on the Walla Walla River averaged less than seven hours of effort per fish. On the Snake mainstem, the stretch from Little Goose dam to Lower Granite dam saw an average of just over seven hours of fishing per steelhead. On the Lower Grande Ronde River, from Bogans to the Oregon border, the average catch rate was less than 10 hours per steelhead. See

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/snake/index.htm> for all the details from the latest creel survey.

Glen Mendel, WDFW district fish biologist, reminds Snake River steelheaders that the season, which runs through mid-April, is only for retention of hatchery fish - those fish with a clipped adipose or ventral fin and a healed scar at the location of the clipped fin. All wild steelhead, which are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, must be released unharmed. Barbless hooks are required when fishing for steelhead to protect wild steelhead that are caught and released.

Mendel also reminds anglers that sections of some tributaries in the Snake River basin - Grand Ronde, Touchet, Tucannon, Walla Walla - are closed to **trout** fishing but remain open to hatchery steelhead fishing through April 15. Check the fishing rules pamphlet for section details.

Recent WDFW enforcement patrols of Lake Roosevelt indicate angler numbers and harvest of the reservoir's net-pen-reared **rainbow trout** were low. But that was likely due to recent rainy, windy weather that kept the trout from biting and the anglers at home, said WDFW Fish Biologist Heather Woller. As more wintry conditions settle in and water temperatures drop, Lake Roosevelt fishing will improve. "Our best catch rates are usually recorded in December and January when anglers have to brave freezing weather," she said.

Opening Dec. 1, are the region's four winter-only **rainbow trout** lakes - Fourth-of-July on the Lincoln-Adams county line, Hog Canyon in southwest Spokane County, and Hatch and Williams lakes in Stevens County. Chris Donley, WDFW central district fish biologist, said he will have more data on what anglers can expect at Fourth of July and Hog Canyon later this month after pre-season sampling. But he indicated that last season's good fishing at those lakes might not be repeated due to infestations of baitfish like fathead minnows.

#### **North Central Washington:**

Upper Columbia River hatchery **steelhead** fishing has been good, said Bob Jateff, WDFW district fish biologist. "Steelheaders above Wells Dam have had catch rates of one fish for every seven or eight hours of effort," he said. "Boat and shore anglers are doing the best around the docks at Pateros, drifting jigs tipped with whole shrimp." Jateff said hatchery steelhead are averaging six to eight pounds, with some fish up to 12 pounds. Recent flooding on the Methow River slowed participation and possibly success rates in the Wells pool area, but fishing should pick up again as conditions moderate.

The steelhead fishery is currently open from Rocky Reach Dam upstream to 400 feet below Chief Joseph Dam. Only adipose-fin-clipped, hatchery-origin steelhead can be retained, and the daily limit is two fish. Statewide gear rules apply and a night closure is in effect. All steelhead with an intact adipose fin and steelhead with an anchor (floy) tag must be immediately released unharmed without removing it completely from the water.

Jateff reminds angler that both the Okanogan and Methow rivers are closed to fishing for all gamefish at this time.

Rat Lake near Brewster and Big and Little Green lakes near Omak are still open for catch-and-release **trout** fishing until Dec. 1. "Then all three lakes will switch to a catch-and-keep season," Jateff said. "Rat Lake fishing should be excellent for rainbows ranging from 11 to 14 inches."

Potholes Reservoir is producing large **rainbow trout** for bank anglers and **largemouth bass** for boat anglers, who can now reach the sand dunes area because of high water levels. When Columbia Basin irrigation canals are shut down in early November, the reservoir water level rises and the year-round fishery improves.

#### **South Central Washington:**

The Columbia River **steelhead** fishery in the Ringold area (from Hwy. 395 Bridge at Pasco to Old Hanford townsite wooden powerline towers) has been productive. According to the latest weekly creel report, the estimated 139 steelhead caught this month exceeds last year's catch for the entire month of November. WDFW Fish Biologist Paul Hoffarth said the current catch rate may even be larger than 2004, a banner year for Ringold steelhead. "Boat and bank anglers also continue to pick up an occasional **chinook salmon**," he said. The number of boats in the Ringold area has declined with the closure last month of the salmon season above the wooden powerline towers, Hoffarth said. The Ringold bank fishery continues to be popular. For the week of Nov. 6-12, bank anglers averaged one steelhead for every six hours fished. Boat anglers averaged one steelhead for every 14 hours fished.

The Ringold bank fishery is defined in the fishing rules pamphlet as the water of the Columbia River adjacent to Ringold Hatchery from WDFW markers one-quarter mile downstream of the Ringold wasteway outlet to WDFW markers one-half mile upstream of Spring Creek. Only the hatchery side of the river is open for bank fishing.

Hoffarth reminds steelheaders that as of Nov. 1, all hatchery steelhead with just clipped adipose fins may be retained, up to the daily catch limit of two. Last month only hatchery steelhead with both adipose fin and ventral fin clips could be retained.

### **Reader Email**

Got a question, story to tell or information to share? Shoot us an Email!

Write to the TGF staff:

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### **Random Links**

Because you can't have too many knot website bookmarked, and hey, this one's animated:  
<http://www.animatedknots.com/indexfishing.php?LogoImage=LogoGrog.jpg&Website=www.animatedknots.com>

Posted previously, here's Sherry Lyster's Bar Cam where you can watch the storms from the comfort of your home:

<http://www.jettyview.com/barcam2.html> (Win XP users may have to click on the video area to watch).

**Weekly Quote** – "FARMED SALMON: DYED FOR YOU" - Riverkeeper on ifish.net

**GOOD LUCK!**