

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 27th – August 2nd, 2007**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Spring Chinook and summer steelhead counts at Willamette rose to double digits as the water temperatures fell to below the mid-70s, but these runs are about over in this stretch of the river. The upper and lower Willamette is providing decent fishing for smallmouth bass, however. The lower Willamette and Multnomah Channel are open for sturgeon retention Thursdays through Sundays until July 31st but it's been spotty with keeper-sized fish rare.

Mainstem Columbia steelheaders are reporting the best action in the Bonneville area. Despite the fact that twice as many hatchery fish are passing Bonneville than wild, the bulk of the catch is made up of native steelhead. These fish must be released unharmed.

Walleye action in the lower Columbia is proving to be worthwhile for anglers with most fish averaging 4 to 7 pounds.

Steelheading has been fair in the North Santiam from Mehama to Fishermen's Bend, but catch rates are better in the South Santiam where about 380 summers were recycled Monday of this week.

The crowds below Leaburg Dam on the McKenzie have been catching a few steelhead. Recycling from the hatchery is also taking place here.

The Clackamas River has slowed for steelhead although a few are being hooked early mornings at Dog Creek.

The better steelheading on the Sandy has been below Cedar Creek but it has also been slow. Glacial runoff and removal work at Marmot have combined to roil the water.

On the schedule to be planted with hatchery trout this week are Breitenbush River, Carmen Reservoir, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie above Leaburg Lake and Quartzville Creek.

Northwest – The famed Buoy 10 fishery is scheduled to open on August 1st but catches are expected to be poor and effort light. Chinook may not be retained until August 22nd from Buoy 10 to the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line.

Recent winds have kept most ocean boats in port. Previously, ocean salmon anglers were taking limits of hatchery coho near the mouth of the Columbia River. Boats fishing the traditional depths greater than 200 feet were not drawing strikes- 150 to 180 foot depths were drawing the best action. Good numbers of albacore are beginning to show offshore of the Columbia.

Tuna were reported closer inshore out of Garibaldi with rumors of 7 to 13 miles producing over the weekend. Very few people are pursuing salmon out of Garibaldi and action remains poor for hatchery fish.

Motivated anglers showed up in force when a couple of chinook were reported from the Wheeler area of Nehalem Bay. Although the summer run should begin to show signs of improvement, chinook numbers coast wide are less than impressive. Anglers shouldn't count on great fishing

until at least next month.

Weekend precipitation improved steelhead conditions on the north coast but rivers will quickly drop back into summer low levels rapidly. Sea-run cutthroat trout should also be more accessible to bank anglers but regulations remain in place on most north coast streams requiring catch and release only.

Tuna were caught 20 to 30 miles to the northwest out of Depoe Bay on Tuesday this week. Salmon have been close to port with coho limits common.

Southwest – About 36% of the coho quota has been taken offshore from Cape Falcon to the California border with Winchester Bay emerging as the most productive port where coho limits were taken over the weekend and earlier this week. Chinook catches remain a rarity. Umpqua River anglers found smallmouth bass action slowing but still worthwhile. A few small Chinook have been taken in the lower river. Boaters accessing a rough ocean on Saturday, July 21st encountered warm water and mackerel. Most of the coho that were hooked were wild, requiring release. Catch rates of hatchery coho improved this week with anglers returning to port with limits. Ocean crabbing is also producing limits.

Although still reported as slow, trollers are seeing a gradual improvement in chinook angling in the Rogue River estuary as the fall season gets underway. A surprising number of surf perch are being hooked on anchovy/spinner rigs.

If ocean conditions cooperate, the prime time to go out for albacore will be July 28th through August 3rd. Historically, fishing is best a few days prior to and again following a full moon.

Albacore have been accessible to anglers out of Brookings as boaters found tuna over the weekend. Last week, several flat ocean days allowed for more consecutive tuna runs than any time in the history of this sports fishery. Albacore were within 10 miles of port on one of those days. The downside is that tuna tackle and lures have been difficult to find in the heat of this fishing frenzy. Bottom fishing has been excellent with a greater number of larger lingcod showing up in catches. Anglers casting from the jetty are taking rockfish to five pounds.

Section 5 of the Rogue River is scheduled to be stocked again this week.

Eastern – A few steelhead have entered the lower Deschutes but not enough to satisfy anglers. Pressure has been unusually high on the Deschutes so far this season. Insect activity is low, with caddis remaining the primary pattern.

Central Oregon anglers are focusing on kokanee and brown trout. Although catches are down this season, kokanee on Lake Billy Chinook are larger than average. Odell Lake is producing good catches but Crescent Lake is only fair. Brown trout are ranging between 3 and 6 pounds out of East Lake and Wickiup Reservoir.

Carlton Mill Pond Devils Lake, Fall River, Shevlin Pond, Spring Creek and Three Creeks Lake are scheduled to be planted with trout.

SW Washington – Steelhead catches are building on Drano Lake and the White Salmon River. With passage at Bonneville continuing to improve, catches in these popular fisheries should also escalate.

Catches on the Cowlitz and Lewis Rivers also improved with the recent weather change. The mouths of these rivers are the best bet for anglers as these cooler tributaries are often resting

places for upper Columbia bound steelhead.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Effort remains low for all species out of the Columbia River. Starting with salmon, the fishing had been consistent prior to the building winds that have kept most ocean going craft in port. Surprisingly, some of the best salmon fishing has taken place closer to the river entrance than in years past. One charter boat skipper reported good fishing for hatchery coho between buoy's 2SJ and 4- that is also what I experienced on 7/23. Although we only had a short time to fish before one of my guests began hinting at seasickness, we took 2 hatchery coho in no time as we neared Buoy 4. That's in only about 60 foot of water! One fish took an anchovy while the other bit a red label herring trolled at 24 feet on the new ABU Garcia line counter 6500 reel. These reels are going to become a real asset this salmon season! Since the 23rd, the winds have picked up and very few folks are bucking it to head out for salmon.

On the tuna front out of Astoria, they have finally showed in good numbers. Tuna have been reported within 15 miles from the Columbia River entrance but not too many boats have pursued them yet. This makes accurate reporting inconsistent but reports of good fishing anywhere from 13 to 30 miles offshore are becoming more common. Commercial boats are gearing up for a productive month.

Catch and release sturgeon fishing has been a bit more challenging lately. Warmer water temperatures, weak tides and wind has made fishing conditions tough. For the weaker tides, I tend to target the deeper water. I started out near Tongue Point on 7/24 on a tide so weak, I didn't know what direction it was going. We bounced around to a few spots, not coming up with anything all that encouraging. We finally moved out to the very expansive Taylor Sands where we started to get more action. We ended the day only landing about a dozen fish but most were of quality size giving the anglers a great fight! No oversize fish but several around the 47-inch mark.

The bottom line is, there aren't many people motivated to cross the Columbia River bar when there are so many other options available out of southern ports right now. Effort is light making catches pretty good when you can get out after them.

There is a few boats going after crab in the river near Buoy 20 and 22. Although I didn't get confirmed reports on how they did, I can't imagine that it was overly productive. Tides were right however for a decent take if you had good bait to work with.

Upriver, steelhead numbers are really beginning to build at Bonneville Dam. Catches have improved this week as well but that was coming off of a great minus tide series. Boats in the Bonneville area were taking good numbers but as always, the bite was localized making it hard for most novice anglers to see any consistent action. Steelhead anglers downriver (Clatskanie to Astoria) did fairly well with bank anglers getting nearly a fish for every other rod (both wild and hatchery) and boaters landing better than a fish per boat. More recently, beach plunkers haven't had great tides to work with so catches have slowed.

Sturgeon fishing in the gorge and upriver of Wauna will close on August 1st despite the fact the fishery is not performing to preseason expectations. The fishing continued to drop off and the few people pursuing oversized fish were still getting fair numbers but floater shad continues to be hard to come by.

Pro Guide Brandon Glass (503) 260-8285 has been fishing Walleye on the lower Columbia and in the last week it has picked up for most people. He had heard of a 14 pounder and most around 4-7 pounds. Trolling and jigging is most affective. The Steelhead below Bonnville has been good and I have also been catching those with most being native in the past few days.

The Guide's Forecast – Most folks are looking west in search of tuna or salmon out of the mouth of the Columbia. Starting with the weather forecast, proceed at your own risk:

FRI NW WIND 5 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 5 FT. PATCHY FOG IN THE MORNING.

FRI NIGHT NW WIND 5 TO 10 KT WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.
SAT SW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 5 FT. CHANCE OF DRIZZLE.

SAT NIGHT SW WIND 10 KT WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. NW SWELL 5 FT.
CHANCE OF DRIZZLE.

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

MON N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 6 FT.

Friday and Saturday look like good option for ocean going recreational craft. Keep in mind however that we will be experiencing another minus tide in the morning so be cautious and err on the side of safety. If you are going to try for salmon, don't start out too far. Start in 60 to 100 foot of water and work your way SW of the Columbia River entrance. It's simple fishing but keep in mind quality bait has been hard to come by. Anchovies are most readily available but larger fresh herring are non-existent. I used vac packed red label on my last salmon foray.

Tuna chasers should also not overshoot their quarry. Pay attention to water temperatures and where the commercial fishermen are trolling. The fish are moving around a lot but don't think you can't catch fish 8 to 12 miles offshore.

Lower river steelhead plunkers won't have good tides to work with until the middle of next week. For these anglers, prime season is upon us so target these cookie cutter fish near the shoreline using flame colored spin-n-glos to draw strikes. Scent can play a huge role in your success and look for Berkley's new Gulp! spray on scents coming soon to boost your catch. Boaters in the gorge are seeing consistent numbers pass Bonneville making this fishery a good choice if you know the travel lanes of these fish. Also, Drano Lake and the Wind River fisheries should only improve from here on out.

Catch and keep sturgeon anglers only have the weekend left to try for a keeper from Wauna upstream to Bonneville. The best river section will be downstream of Portland and even that is not all that good of an option. It'll re-open on October 1st.

Crabbing will remain best in the ocean when you can get out but river crabbing should be picking up too. Quality bait like fresh tuna carcasses will rule! Many ocean crab are still hard-shelled.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Water temperature at Willamette Falls has been holding at 72 degrees. Rain showers last week had very little effect on the flows.

The South Santiam is getting a good return of steelhead this year and catch rates are starting to reflect it.

The McKenzie is offering a fine mix of native and hatchery trout above Leaburg Dam. Easy access offers many opportunities to fly casters.

The Guide's Forecast – The lower Willamette holds little promise except to bass fishers.

Nothing is happening with springers this late and there's little interest and no reported catches of steelhead with fish having moved into the tributaries. Sturgeon fishing is been slow, even for shakers and nothing is happening that would give any indication this situation will turn around anytime soon.

Mehama to Fishermen's Bend is the stretch to try for summer steelhead on the North Santiam but catches are few. The south Santiam offers a slightly better chance of a hookup. Steelheading below Leaburg has been slow but will be improving in coming weeks.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Many more summer steelhead are being seen on the Clackamas that are being hooked. The summers present are in nice condition but the few spring Chinook that are around have started to color up. The best shot at hooking one will be at first light.

The Sandy River is really not worth the trip as fishing is poor and glacial runoff and removal work at Marmot Dam have combined to roil the water.

North Coast Fishing Report – Another week of sub-par salmon fishing offshore with the bulk of Garibaldi's anglers still talking tuna. Tuna were reported as close as 7 miles from the Tillamook Bay entrance at mid-week. Temperatures again have hatchery coho scurrying for somewhere anglers can't consistently find them. Well equipped boats are heading due west 12 to 28 miles offshore for consistent albacore fishing. Most boats are taking between 20 and 40 fish.

The rise in river levels over the weekend motivated die-hard steelheaders to fish on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. The weather was a welcome reprieve from the hot weather that caused such challenging conditions on the few north coast streams that support hatchery summer steelhead. Rivers only had only risen slightly however and are forecasted to drop back down to low levels again in no time flat. At least the cooling of the river system was a savior for fish destined for disaster in the warm summer months. This trend may have saved numerous wild spring Chinook to propagate another brood.

Those people you spot netting from an aluminum jet boat in Tillamook Bay are the Good Guys. The ODFW will be conducting a study of fish movement over the summer.

The Guide's Forecast – Saltwater anglers may want to look to Friday and Saturday as viable options for offshore opportunity. Both salmon and tuna will be high on the priority list and hatchery coho are due to make a stronger appearance this week. Historically, coho will migrate from south to north ending up just off of the mouth of the Columbia prior to their river migration in mid-August. This should make trolling just out of Garibaldi more productive this week. As the weekend progresses, winds are forecasted to increase so be prepared for windy afternoons or in some cases, the wind may be present from the get-go.

River casters should still have ample opportunity for steelhead this week on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. With river levels dropping back down to summer lows, anglers will have to be stealthy again in their tactics. The heads of holes and the occasional broken surfaced riffle should hold a steelhead but anglers will still have to work hard for consistent results. Small baits will produce the best. Cutthroat trout are also a good option but must be released unharmed north of the Salmon River.

Central & South Coast Reports – The Siletz has been slow to fair for steelhead with numbers

down this year. The better fishing is higher on the river, above Moonshine Park but the gated road upstream is only accessible on weekends. A few Chinook have been taken on the lower river by anglers fishing Kwikfish on anchor during the outgoing tide.

To say it's a banner year for tuna would be no exaggeration. As a matter of fact, it has never been better. More albacore have been taken so far this season than during any previous year on record. According to the ODFW, if the action continues, catches in 2007 could be twice that of the next best year.

Tuna were taken to 40 pounds 20 to 30 miles to the northwest out of Depoe Bay on Tuesday this week. It remains to be seen how winds this week have effected the distance boats will have to travel to find albacore. At least it looks as if the ocean is going to lay down a little but know the limitations of your skipper and the watercraft. Coho fishermen have made good catches nearshore. Coho fishing has been good just a few miles out of port with most anglers taking a fish or two but only about 20% of anglers have been able to land Chinook.

Coho fishing out of Newport has been good this week with mostly reports of limits of fish. Growth is fast for coho with some of the fish taken this week topping 10 pounds. Hookups have been coming in 20 to 25 feet of water over 150 to 250 feet of water. The majority of coho being hooked are hatchery fish now.

The summer all-depth halibut season will be open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday starting August 3rd.

Steelheading on the North Umpqua is fair in the stretch where bait and hardware is allowed, fair to good in the flies-only section. The ODFW is considering two petitions, one from an organization of professional fishing guides, the other from the Steamboaters, requesting that wild steelhead be returned to catch-and-release here. Currently, one native steelhead may be kept per day up to five per year.

It was a five-minute run out of Winchester Bay Monday this week to coho limits in 120 feet of 60-degree water Monday this week. Coho are abundant and willing this year, making it possible to fill tags and return to port before noon. A tuna run out of Winchester bay this weekend is likely to be 30 miles or more.

Ling cod over 20 pounds are amongst rockfish catches off the southwest coast now. Improved numbers recently are encouraging bottom fishers.

Trollers are seeing a gradual improvement in Chinook angling in the Rogue River estuary as this season gets underway. A surprising number of surf perch are being hooked on anchovy/spinner rigs. The morning minus tide series starting Friday this week holds promise for bay trollers hoping for an early fall Chinook. Section 5 of the Rogue River is scheduled to be stocked again this week.

The Chetco River has been providing outstanding angling for sea-run cutthroat trout and there's plenty of access here for bank anglers.

The occasional yellowtail has been in albacore catches coming into the port of Brookings. While ocean crabbing has been good, catches inside the bay and even off the public pier have been decent.

Pro Guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944) fished down on the Rogue at Gold Beach over the weekend. Chinook fishing is slow right now. There was a little bit of good fish activity earlier in

the month, but right now, things are slow. Pressure is still light on the river, I fished with about 25 other boats on Friday.

If you can get outside, fishing for silvers in the ocean out of Florence and Winchester Bay is good. Jeff limited out pretty quickly the last few trips.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Like the Fall River, The Metolius is spring-fed with water temperature that rarely reaches the mid-50s even on the hottest days. It's a challenging stretch of water requiring stealth and practiced technique for success. Golden Stones are currently the primary insect to emulate.

Caddis dries early and late in the day and nymphs when the sun is high will be de rigueur on the lower Deschutes for a while.

Department of Human Services Environmental Toxicology Program issued an alert regarding blue-green algae at Odell. This toxic growth can affect fish and wildlife and even sicken people who allow skin contact.

Pro guide Rick Arnold (541 480-1570) says that kokanee and brown trout are the main fare in Central Oregon right now.

Billy Chinook is producing bigger kokanee than usual but numbers are down. Look for the bull trout to pick back up in Sept. Call me to book a trip...it can be killer before they go up to spawn.

Some nice browns coming out of East and Wickiup. Rick and his grandson caught 7 browns on Sat. evening at East. They ran from 3-8.75 LB. It is a depth control game right now. Kokanee are at 15-25 feet depending in time of day.

Good numbers of kokanee out of Odell with slower action at Crescent but bigger fish. Macks are biting if you get down to them.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report July 25th – August 7th, 2007

North Puget Sound

For the first time since the mid-90's, anglers can catch and keep **chinook salmon** during the summer fishing in central Puget Sound. Mark-selective fisheries for hatchery chinook recently got under way in marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) and anglers got off to a strong start.

"The catch rates were outstanding during the first few days of the fishery, especially in Marine Area 9, where we saw an average of one fish for every two anglers," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "Once the weekend rolled around, the catch slowed a bit. But it's still good fishing."

The chinook mark-selective fisheries run through Aug. 15, or until the quota is reached, said Thiesfeld, who urged anglers to check WDFW's Fishing Hotline (360-902-2500) and the *Fishing in Washington* rules webpage (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for more information.

"We're monitoring the catch daily, and if we continue at this rate the mark-selective fisheries in

marine areas 9 and 10 should last through the end of July," Thiesfeld said. "But I've been encouraging anglers to get out on the water while they still have the opportunity."

Anglers in marine areas 9 and 10 are allowed to keep **hatchery chinook** - marked with a clipped adipose fin - as part of a two salmon daily limit, plus two additional **pink salmon**. Anglers must release wild chinook and are required to use single-point barbless hooks.

Thiesfeld reminds anglers that regulations vary for inner Elliott Bay, Sinclair Inlet and public fishing piers in marine areas 9 and 10. Check the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> for more information.

When releasing salmon, anglers should keep the fish in the water and avoid using a net, Thiesfeld said. If a net is needed, use a rubber net or a soft knotless nylon or cotton net. Thiesfeld also suggests that anglers:

- Look for the adipose fin while playing the fish, and use polarized sunglasses to reduce glare.
- Avoid the use of light tackle and play the fish quickly to reduce exhausting the fish.
- Modify tackle to reduce potential injury to the fish. For example, use circle hooks when mooching and only one hook on hoochies and bucktails.
- Use a dehooker to remove the hook.
- Cut the leader if the fish has swallowed the hook.
- Avoid touching or handling the fish, especially around the eyes and gills.
- Support the entire length of the fish if it must be lifted out of the water. Do not lift the fish by the tail or jaw.
- Gently place the fish back in the water.

Anglers can find information on selective fishing and selective fishing techniques, as well as streaming video on how to properly release salmon, on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/selective/techniques/>.

Elsewhere, Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) is open, while salmon fisheries in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) get under way Aug. 1. Once those two fisheries open, anglers in marine areas 8-1 and 8-2 must release all chinook. Those in marine area 8-1 also must release all pink salmon.

Meanwhile, the **crab** fishery is going strong in marine areas 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10, and the southern and eastern portion of 7. Fisheries in those areas are open on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, plus the entire Labor Day weekend. See WDFW's sport-crabbing website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>) for more information.

The **coonstripe** and **pink shrimp** fisheries also are open in the region, and shrimpers can drop a pot in marine areas 8-1, 8-2, 9 and the northern and central portion of Marine Area 7. For more information on the shrimp fisheries check WDFW's website at <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/shrimpreg/shrimpindex.shtml>.

In the rivers, the Reiter Ponds section of the Skykomish opened early this year for **steelhead**. That section of the river (1,500 feet upstream to 1,000 feet downstream of the Reiter Ponds Hatchery outlet) opened July 21 after the hatchery collected enough steelhead broodstock to meet egg-take goals.

However, salmon opportunities on the Skykomish, as well as the Skagit and Baker, are winding down. The chinook fishery on the Skykomish and sockeye fisheries on the Skagit and Baker come to a close at the end of the day July 31.

Farther south, a sockeye fishery this summer on Lake Washington looks "very unlikely," said Kyle Adicks, another WDFW biologist. As of July 17, about 50,500 sockeye salmon had been counted at the Ballard Locks, where the fish make their way into Lake Washington from Puget Sound. That tally is well below the necessary spawning escapement goal of 350,000 salmon, which must be reached before state and tribal co-managers can consider opening a sockeye fishery in the lake.

"We've already passed the peak of the run," Adicks said. "So with numbers this low it doesn't look like there will be a sockeye fishery in Lake Washington this year."

Before heading out, anglers should check the rules and regulations for all freshwater and saltwater fisheries in WDFW's *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet

(<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Despite recent stormy weather, the salmon season is gaining momentum from Ilwaco to southern Puget Sound where anglers are finding **chinook, coho** and an abundance of **pink salmon**. On area rivers, cooler temperatures and an influx of fresh water are proving beneficial for anglers pursuing **summer chinook, steelhead** and **cutthroat trout**.

Salmon fishing at Ilwaco and Westport (marine areas 1 and 2) yielded fair results for anglers over the July 21 weekend said Wendy Beeghley, WDFW fish biologist. "Even though we had one day of bad weather, the catch was about 1.4 fish per rod in both areas," said Beeghley. "In Ilwaco, people were mainly catching coho, while the catch at Westport was about one-third chinook." The coho are in the six-pound range and the chinook are averaging 18 pounds, she said.

On the north coast (marine areas 3 and 4) anglers were also catching a majority of coho. While the effort was low at La Push, people fishing at Neah Bay were averaging about 1.2 fish per rod.

"Hopefully, the weather will be better in upcoming days and bring out more fishers," Beeghley said. "If the weather cooperates there could be some fantastic fishing. Saturday looks good so far and we're hoping for some high success rates."

Ilwaco is open daily for salmon fishing; Westport is open Sundays through Thursdays; and La Push and Neah Bay are open Tuesdays through Saturdays. Coastal salmon fishing rules will remain as specified in the *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>), or until quotas are met.

On the Strait of Juan de Fuca, anglers are taking advantage of the biennial return of pink salmon - an estimated three million of them. Recent creel reports from Sekiu in Marine Area 5 show fishers catching at least one pink apiece.

"The pink salmon have definitely moved in and are also showing up in Hood Canal," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. As for chinook and coho, the catch rate along the strait has been about one fish for every two rods. "Fishing has been fair so far," said Thiesfeld. "Coho are showing up in Marine Area 6 where they were rare last year. Hopefully they'll increase throughout the season."

Marine Areas 5 and 6 (Sekiu/Pillar Point and eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) are open daily with a two-fish daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon. Anglers must release wild coho and wild chinook. Handling rules are in effect and single-point barbless hooks are required.

Meanwhile, fishing near Point Defiance and Narrows Marina in Marine Area 11 has picked up a bit, with anglers catching more chinook so far than coho and averaging about one fish for every two rods. With better weather anticipated, now's the time for people to get out on the water, Thiesfeld said.

"The peak of the season is coming up soon and anglers shouldn't wait around much longer," he said. "Hardcore fishers will always be out there, but casual anglers looking for salmon should take advantage now."

The fishery runs seven days a week, with a limit of two salmon a day. As in other areas, selective fishing rules are in effect this year, requiring anglers to use single-point, barbless hooks and release any wild chinook they encounter. Starting Aug. 1, Commencement Bay will be open for salmon fishing.

Now that recent storms have given way to better weather, north coast anglers should have a good chance of catching **spring chinook** and **summer coho** in the Sol Duc River. Prospects have also improved for catching some hefty **summer steelhead** in the Bogachiel and Calawah rivers.

"While the recent rains put the rivers out of shape, they should also bring some summer coho to the Sol Duc," said David Low, WDFW fish biologist. "Now that we're having better weather, most rivers are fishable and should be busy. Conditions are near perfect in the Bogachiel and Calawah and people are catching pretty big steelhead - some weighing up to 18 pounds."

Anglers have also been finding **sea-run cutthroat**, which are following salmon up the rivers as they return to spawn. Up until last weekend's storm, anglers were doing fairly well on the Hoh, but it likely won't be fishable again until the last weekend in July, said Low. Low reminds anglers to check the *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for retention rules before heading out.

The influx of water and cooler temperatures should also draw more **summer steelhead** into the Wynoochee and upper Chehalis rivers, and may perk up the **spring chinook** action in the mainstem Chehalis above Porter Creek as well, said Rick Ereth, WDFW fish biologist.

"The recent rainfall should also improve fishing for **sea-run** and **resident cutthroat trout** in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor streams," he said. Ereth reminds anglers to check the *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for retention and gear rules. Salmon fishing on the Chehalis closes July 31 and will reopen October 1; the Skokomish River in Mason County opens for salmon fishing on Aug. 1.

Anglers will get another chance to catch **halibut** starting Aug. 3 when Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco) opens for Pacific halibut fishing three days per week - Friday, Saturday and Sunday - until the remaining quota is reached, or Sept. 30, 2007, whichever comes first.

Recreational **crab** fishing is open Wednesdays through Saturdays in marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 12 (Hood Canal) through Sept. 3. Crabbing is open seven days a week in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge) through Jan. 2.

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five male Dungeness crab with a shell width measuring at least 6¼ inches, plus six red rock crab of either sex with a shell width of at least 5 inches. All undersized crab, female Dungeness crab and all softshell crab of either sex must be returned to

the water.

Southwest Washington:

Catch rates for summer-run **steelhead** are picking up on the Columbia River and its tributaries where a number of fall salmon fisheries are scheduled to open Aug. 1. Meanwhile, anglers will be required to release any **sturgeon** they catch in the Bonneville Pool and from the Wauna power lines to Bonneville Dam after July 29. The latter area is scheduled to re-open for sturgeon retention Oct. 1.

Boat anglers fishing the Columbia River estuary averaged a **steelhead** per rod during the week ending July 22, while those fishing Drano Lake and the White Salmon River 150 miles inland were catching about one fish for every two rods. Bank anglers have also been reeling in hatchery steelhead on the White Salmon, Klickitat and a number of rivers below Bonneville Dam, where more than 3,000 steelhead are now moving up the fish ladders each day.

"Summer steelhead fishing is right on track and should continue to improve well into August," said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. "The bite tends to improve with large tidal movements, and we're going to see some of those in the days ahead."

The mouth of the Lewis River should be an especially good bet, said Hymer, noting that a good number of fish appear to be "dipping in" to the cooler waters there to beat the heat. (Recent temperatures in the mainstem Columbia have reached 70 degrees.) Heavy siltation has slowed fishing near the mouth of the Cowlitz River, although anglers fishing upriver at Blue Creek averaged about one steelhead for every three rods.

Hymer cautioned anglers fishing near the mouth of the Cowlitz to be mindful of shallow sandbars at the downstream end of Cottonwood Island near the entrance of Carroll's Channel and at the boat launch at Gearhart Park in Longview.

As in past years, only steelhead with a clipped adipose or ventral fin and a healed scar at the location of the clipped fin may be retained. Through July 31, anglers must release any adult salmon intercepted on the Columbia River downriver from Priest Rapids Dam.

But that's about to change Aug. 1 with the official start of the fall fishery. Among the waters opening to salmon retention that day is the popular Buoy 10 fishery, from the mouth of the Columbia River upstream to the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line.

However, unlike past years, anglers will not be allowed to retain **chinook salmon** intercepted in the Buoy 10 fishery until Aug. 22. That change, along with several others adopted this year, is designed to conserve wild "tule" populations of fall chinook salmon that spawn in tributaries below Bonneville Dam, said Cindy LeFleur, WDFW Columbia River Policy Coordinator.

"During the past year, the National Marine Fisheries Service directed us to reduce exploitation rates on tule stocks, which are listed for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act," LeFleur said. "Delaying chinook retention in the Buoy 10 fishery is a step, along with changes in the ocean fishery, in our efforts to comply with that directive."

When the Buoy 10 fishery opens Aug. 1, anglers will still be allowed to catch two adult hatchery **coho** - along with two hatchery steelhead - per day. This year's chinook-retention period (one adult per day) is scheduled from Aug. 22 to Sept. 3 and from Oct. 1 to Dec. 31.

Other changes in salmon-fishing rules taking effect Aug. 1 include:

- **North Jetty** - Salmon fishing open seven days per week when the Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco) or Buoy 10 areas are open for salmon. Barbed hooks are allowed. The daily limit and minimum size restrictions follow the most liberal regulations of either of these areas.

- **Lower Columbia River** - Upriver from the Buoy 10 fishery, salmon fishing opens from the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line upstream to Bonneville Dam. The daily limit will be six fish, including no more than 2 adults - only one of which may be an adult chinook. Any chinook, adipose fin clipped or not, may be retained. Anglers must release wild coho, sockeye and chum. To help conserve tules, anglers will also be required to release all chinook Sept. 5-30 downstream from a line from a boundary marker on the lower end of Bachelor Island across to the Warrior Rock Lighthouse.
- **Bonneville Dam to the Highway 395 Bridge at Pasco** - Anglers will be able to retain six salmon, of which no more than two can be adults. Any chinook, adipose fin clipped or not, may be retained. Anglers must release any wild coho they encounter from Bonneville Dam to Hood River Bridge and any chum intercepted downstream from The Dalles Dam. Night closure and non-buoyant lure restrictions will be in effect in the Bonneville Pool through Oct. 15.
- **Columbia Tributaries** - Anglers will be able to retain chinook salmon, adipose clipped or unclipped, on the Deep, Green, Toutle (including North Fork), Washougal, Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, (including North Fork), Wind, White Salmon and Klickitat rivers plus Drano Lake. Wild coho must be released on all these tributaries except for the Klickitat. Non-buoyant lure restrictions will be in effect on the Wind, White Salmon, Klickitat rivers and Drano Lake. Bonus daily limits will be in effect for hatchery adult coho on the Lower Cowlitz, Deep, Green, Kalama, Lewis (including North Fork), and Toutle (including North Fork) rivers. All salmon other than chinook or coho must be released on the lower Cowlitz. Camas Slough will be open when adjacent mainstem Columbia or Washougal rivers are open to fishing for salmon. The daily limit follows the most liberal regulation of either area.

For more information on all of these fisheries, anglers are advised to consult the **Fishing in Washington** rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>). Current fishing rules are also posted on the Fish Hotline at (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regions/reg5/hotline.htm>). For information on the ocean fishery, see the South Sound/Olympic Peninsula report above.

Eastern Washington:

Warm weather usually brings good fishing for warmwater fish species, such as **yellow perch**. Chris Donley, WDFW central district fish biologist in Spokane, said perch are abundant at many waters throughout the region. Coffeepot Lake in Lincoln County and Downs Lake in southwest Spokane County are good perch fisheries, he said. The Spokane River reservoir of Long Lake and Deer and Waitts lakes in Stevens County also are good. "But fish deep for those fish this time of year," Donley said. "They're not along the shorelines like they were during spring spawning. You have to jig for them at 25 feet or deeper."

Donley also recommends **trout** fishing during early morning hours or at night in the region. "Rainbows are really active now at night," he said. "Lake Roosevelt continues to produce them, and a lot of the smaller lakes up north and around Spokane are still a good bet." The lower Spokane River has nice rainbows and browns, and is much better fishing this year. Donley reminds river anglers to comply with the catch and gear restrictions listed in the fishing rules pamphlet.

Nighttime fishing for **kokanee** at Loon Lake in Stevens County is very good now, Donley said. "Use your fish finder to locate kokanee, then anchor over the top and fish for them," he said.

Curt Vail, WDFW district fish biologist in Colville, said the Pend Oreille River continues to produce

good catches of large **northern pike**. The river is also a good bet for **largemouth bass**, especially from Ione to Box Canyon Dam, and **smallmouth bass** in the Metaline Falls area.

North Central Washington:

Fishing has been hot lately at the Potholes Reservoir. Fishing for **walleye** early in the morning and top water **bass** in the evening has been good. Trolling for walleye with a spinner and crawlers or dragging leeches has been producing walleye in the sand dunes area of the reservoir. Trolling 90 to 125 feet behind the boat at about two miles an hour in 20 feet of water is working effectively. Some big **crappie** have been caught in the dunes area, but more are hitting jigs tipped with bait at the Mardon Resort dock during early morning hours. **Bass, perch** and **catfish** are coming in on night crawlers.

Early morning and evening are also the best times to fish lakes in the Okanogan district of the region during the heat of summer. Both Conconullys, Spectacle, Wannacut, Alta, and Pearrygin are still producing **trout**. Fishing for **bluegill** and **crappie** continues to be good at Leader Lake and **yellow perch** have been caught at Patterson Lake.

South Central Washington:

Recent hot weather has been discouraging lowland lake fishing and encouraging anglers to head for the mountains. Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist in Yakima, said mountain trails are snow free, except at the very highest elevations. "But bugs are abundant," he said. "So in most areas insect repellent is a necessity." Cummins said alpine lakes should be producing **cutthroat, rainbow** and **eastern brook trout** "until the snow flies this fall." For information on high lake fishing check "Trout Fishing in Washington's High Lakes" at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/outreach/fishing/highlake.htm> or the southcentral region's recent fish stocking records for high lakes at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regions/reg3/highlakes.pdf>. "Just remember that many lakes have natural reproduction and do not require stocking, so don't limit your fishing choices to the stocking list alone," he said.

Reader Email

Kat'n Ken Johnson, presently located to Manzanita, wrote this week after fishing Nehalem Bay, "Went fishing today but only for 1-1/2 hours. It is Wednesday so the boat traffic was at a minimum...Probably 10-12 boats in the Wheeler to Nehalem area. Those who were out there for about an hour+ before we got our lines wet reported that they had no take downs or anything at all before 9am. The wind is a factor after about 9-9:30am it really picks up. Fishing report for yesterday, Tuesday, was three fish caught and all were in the Wheeler area. One Chinook was taken about 100' downriver from the Highway 101 bridge yesterday, just downriver from Nehalem City Center. A couple of good sized Chinook were lost right in front of the Wheeler on the Bay Lodge and Marina. It's kind of a neat place because they're right on the river in downtown Wheeler and they also have a dock for your boat. You can stay there and be fishing in about 5-10 minutes after a great nights sleep. You just jump in your boat, push off and put your kicker in gear and BAM You're fishing!!! Water temperatures are hovering around 62-64 degrees as I write this. That is a much better temperature for "catching" possibilities compared to the rivers 74-76+ degree temps of last week before the rains fell. Water, right now, is perfect for fishing, but the greater numbers of Chinook are still holding outside in the Big Blue Pond. Fish are there and action is definitely picking up. My predictions is everything should pick up even more, in the next 2-3 weeks...Hopefully, we don't get any more 101-102 degree temperatures which made the Nehalem a nice warm place to swim, but horrible for the start of the mid-July fishery for Chinook here in the Nehalem River. During that heat spell when the

water was so warm there was absolutely no fish spotted on my fish finder.

Crabbing still sucks, professionally speaking, both in the bay area of the Nehalem, and also out of Garibaldi. A few are caught but after crabbing about three hours on a high slack, we only had 5 keepers in the traps. Also, finding Herring bait is an issue around these parts, lately. The word is a new shipment is coming in about two weeks. Hunted high and low to find some decent Herring and some tackle shops are out...If you're coming down to troll herring it might be wise for you buy some in the Portland Metro area (if they have it!!!) It is hovering around the \$6.25 - \$6.50 per dozen around these parts, if you can find it. Be like a Boy Scout and be prepared for the Buoy 10 fishery by bringing some Herring from the PDX Metro dealers...I've caught just as many Coho and Chinook on frozen herring as on the fresh ones bought out of some of the local Buoy 10 markets. I'm just talking about having a bit of insurance, just in case. Call your favorite tackle shop, down here in advance, to see what's on hand! Just Sayin! See you "ALL" down here, sooner or later!"

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

Marmot Dam goes boom. Video Goodness:

http://www.marmotdam.com/video5_files/plunger_video.html

Spring Chinook kill 'em the John Day:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2007/july/071907.asp>

Weekly Quote – "There will be days when the fishing is better than one's most optimistic forecast, others when it is far worse. Either is a gain over just staying home." - Roderick Haig-Brown

GOOD LUCK!