

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 21<sup>st</sup> – September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Sportanglers were hit with an unexpected closure on the Columbia on Wednesday. The river closed to the taking of chinook from Bonneville downstream. The remainder of the river closed at mid-night, last night. Catches have been light but managers will monitor the run to see if additional openers are warranted. The upriver bright run is tracking 40% below pre-season expectations.

**Pro guide Jim Nicol (503-550-3166)** reports picking up good numbers of coho and CHinook at the mouth of the Cowlitz but warns that trolling here can be a challenge.

Although sturgeon fishing in the gorge remains fair, expectations are for better fishing in the coming weeks. Boat anglers are faring best but some of the best bank fishing of the year takes place in October.

Soft plastics are taking good numbers of smallmouth bass on the lower Willamette.

Clackamas River anglers are anxious for precipitation where cooler, stronger flows should stimulate an otherwise challenging coho bite.

The Sandy River is providing coho action at first light but pretty much shuts down once the sky becomes bright. **Pro guide Jim Nicol (503-550-3166)** reports seeing very few coho hooked at the mouth of the Sandy.

Steelheaders experienced fair to good results on the North Santiam over the past week. Hundreds of spring salmon can be seen spawning now.

October caddis have started showing on the upper McKenzie.

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

**Northwest –** Tillamook Bay is producing good catches of fall chinook although rarely is fishing good for more than 2 days in a row. Soft tides kept anglers near the jaws but heavy bar restrictions are likely into the weekend. A 42-pounder was weighed in at Garibaldi Marina on Tuesday.

Nehalem Bay remains slow but the fall run fish should show in better numbers this week.

The lower Columbia remains open for fin-clipped coho but catches dropped off last week. Crabbing remains good near Buoys 20 and 22.

Tuna anglers venturing out 43 miles did excellent on Friday last week but only fair on Saturday. The tuna bite becomes sporadic this time of year with live bait fishing significantly out-producing all other methods. Live bait is hard to come by however.

The Alsea River slowed for chinook fishers but the Yaquina is likely be pick up on coming weeks.

Albacore were once again available in good number fewer than 40 miles out of Depoe Bay over the past weekend.

A charter boat returned to Newport last Saturday with a Dorado on board, a certain indication of the tropical-temperature water offshore. Most boats seeking all-depth halibut took limits about 27 miles out of port.

**Pro guide James Stevenson (503-581-5347)** confirms that Chinook catches are down at the Alsea this year.

Fish checkers at Oregon ports weren't bothering to measure or weigh halibut over the last all depth opener. All-depth halibut is likely to close this week.

Fishing is starting to pick up here on the Siuslaw. Most fish are being caught from the mouth of the North Fork to the Dairy Hole with plug cut herring a top bait.

Siltcoos and Tahkenitch Lakes will open for wild coho beginning October 1<sup>st</sup>. Be sure to check regulations for bag limits are restrictions before participating.

**Southwest – Pro guide Bill Kremers (541 754 6411)** reports landing a big halibut out of Newport before the closure.

Chinook, planted as smolts in 2004, have returned to the Umpqua as adults and are holding below the Calapooya River on the mainstem. North Umpqua steelheaders are experiencing fair to good results on a variety of baits and lures. Fly anglers are also taking fish here. Smallmouth bass fishing is rewarding from Sawyer's Rapids to Elkton.

Boaters hitting the ocean out of Coos Bay experienced outstanding bottom fishing for a variety of fish including some dandy ling cod. The lings will approach shallow water around rocks and jetties to spawn around the first of the year at which time they'll be available to bank-bound anglers. Crabbing has been fair to good in Coos Bay.

The lower Rogue was productive last week but slowed over the weekend with far more anglers than chinook in the estuary.

The ocean was friendly over the past week, then kicked up on Sunday. During that extended calm period, anglers traveling about 45 miles offshore once again found warm water and tuna. Bottom fishers are being rewarded with rockfish and large ling cod.

Fish Lake and Diamond Lake will be stocked with trout.

**Eastern –** The caddis hatch on the Metolius is bringing a lot of fish to the surface. If matching the hatch is ineffective, try attractor patterns to get their attention.

While steelhead counts are slowing at Bonneville, they are crossing The Dalles fairly well. Numbers are building in the lower Deschutes, providing decent results in the lower river. Anglers trolling the mouth are taking steelhead and fair numbers of coho. The "B" run fish have yet to show in any large numbers. Chinook retention is now closed.

**Pro guide Rick Arnold (541-382-4843)** reports a Brown Trout out of East Lake weighing over 12 pounds which he'll be mounting soon.

**SW Washington** – The mouth of the Toutle River is producing some coho for bank anglers while Barrier Dam is fair for fall chinook.

Lewis River anglers are taking a few coho, chinook and steelhead. More late-run coho are due back but their numbers are predicted to be down.

The Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries slowed as steelhead began moving out of the Bonneville Pool. The season is about over here.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Well, there's one good thing about the early closure of chinook retention on the Columbia River from Buoy 10 to Pasco Washington, I don't have to do reports anymore! A big price to pay however for a fishery that should be "blue ribbon" this time of year. The fishery really didn't amount to much this season but anglers really enjoy this fishery as it's a relaxing way to enjoy a chance at a quality fish. This closure will certainly change focus to Oregon's coastal streams and estuaries.

**Pro guide Jim Nicol (503-550-3166)** reports, "I recently moved down to my old stomping grounds at the mouth of the Cowlitz River trying to target some Coho and did better. We landed 7 fish . Three were Coho and 4 Chinook. Hopefully this is another big push of fish headed up the Columbia. The best time to work this area would be at the flood portion of the tide and the first few hour of the outgoing. WARNING - Trolling in this area is challenging due to the steep river bottom shelf that these fish are holding on. You will find the fish holding in the Cowlitz River water that is spilling into the mainstream of the Columbia. Look for 62 to 58 degree water located at the tip of Cottonwood Island. Anglers trolling this area should be courteous and show good river etiquette and be aware of what the boats trolling around you are doing at all times. It is definitely not an area for the novice troller. Spinner's are the rule (Brass/red, Brass/orange, brass/pink/white) and the depth can range from 10 ft. to 35 ft."

The Columbia remains open for fin-clipped steelhead and coho as well as sturgeon. Those fisheries, although not going gangbusters, do offer up some fair opportunity in the Portland to Astoria stretch. Astoria coho is winding down but there should still be enough fish there to allow anglers a fair chance at some quality fish. The coho are large this time of year and there are some large tidal exchanges on the horizon giving anglers some glimmer of hope after this weekend.

Steelhead fishing remains good at the mouth of the Deschutes and a surprising number of coho are also appearing in this fishery. Numbers of steelhead have certainly increased over the Dalles Dam and slowed at Bonneville indicating the fall migration is clearly upon us.

Sturgeon angler effort is on the increase but the additional summer fishing time hasn't panned out as much as one would have thought. The gorge remains the best area to target keepers with recent checks of 31 legals for 117 bank rods and 19 legals for 29 boats. Some oversized fish continue to accompany the catch.

Offshore, tuna anglers scored excellent results last Friday with one boat of 4 anglers reporting over 50 nice albacore. The deckhand described it as mayhem only moving once over a 6-hour period. The tuna were responding best to live anchovies but once they got the school into a feeding frenzy, they threw out rattle traps to draw strikes as well. Although the action wasn't as fast and furious as Friday, the same boat scored about 28 keepers. The ocean has got quite big since last weekend and it doesn't look like calm conditions are in the near forecast. This fishery is likely wearing down although October action can be very good.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Although the Buoy 10 fishery remains an option for sport anglers, it may

not be the best option. Fish should continue to trickle into the lower river in sporadic numbers but remember that the bulk of this years run is returning as "A" run fish. That is the earlier returns which really peak the first 2 weeks of September. "B" run fish begin entering now, are destined for mostly Washington tributaries and peak in mid-October. The strong minus tide series beginning on Monday, September 24th could inspire some fair numbers into the river and upstream. With the water cooling small baits (either jigged anchovies or herring) will take the lion's share of the catch but spinners could be effective as well.

With chinook no longer an option, sturgeon will be on the minds of many in the Portland area. Bank anglers excel this time of year and this year shouldn't be any different. The fishery is open 7 days per week until the end of the month and if quotas aren't in jeopardy of being achieved (highly unlikely), it could stay open 7 days per week until the end of the year. Stay tuned on this option.

It's peak season at the mouth of the Deschutes and fishing for steelhead is good. One guide mentioned that coho are being caught in good numbers in this fishery by the anglers targeting steelhead. Plugs are the best way to target fish in this area and remember, chinook retention is now closed....sorry!

Weak tides this week will be great for crabbing. Pressure is dropping and success is climbing! Fresh bait is best but remember to take into account the seal activity- you'll want to cage that bait!

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – Temperatures dropping to 68 degrees as of September 18th had virtually no effect on fish passage at Willamette Falls. Daily fall Chinook numbers remained in the single digits with fewer than 100 counted thus far in the season. Coho daily counts reached 41 on the 14th, only to fall again with 174 having been counted thus far into the season.

The North Santiam water level has been increased again despite Detroit being fairly low. Other than the effect of rain, flows are supposed to remain steady for the remainder of the month.

**The Guide's Forecast** – No reports of keeper-sized sturgeon from the lower Willamette have come in this week and catches of smaller sturgeon have been slow. The best bet for is the smallmouth bass fishery which is resulting in good catch-and-release action.

North Santiam steelheaders have had another fairly productive week although catches have been spotty. Small spinners or bobber 'n' jig rigs have resulted in hookups recently.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – Showers this week got the coho on the lower Clackamas biting a bit better. They turn on with rain, run like crazy, and then turn off after the precipitation ceases. Bank anglers are crowding into the lower most holes on the Clackamas at the bowling alley. It's a mess to fish here with almost any location upstream preferable and relatively productive. Steelheaders wishing to avoid the crowds suffering from coho madness in the lower Clackamas will be rewarded fishing upriver as results have been decent recently. With coho up to Dodge Park on the Sandy, anglers are liable to hook up while seeking steelhead. The flow has increased a little this week which has coho on the move and that's when they're most likely to bite.

The lower Sandy River is providing coho action at first light but pretty much shuts down once the sky becomes bright. Recent showers put a little water into Cedar Creek and have improved the color. Steelhead and coho are present, though neither in large number. The coho population will increase along with the action as soon as the Northwest receives the first fall rain. A good run is expected here.

**Pro guide Jim Nicol (503-550-3166)** reports, "Fishing in the Sandy River/Government Island

area had slowed the last few days for Chinook and very few Coho are being caught. Anglers throwing spinner's at the mouth of the Sandy are coming up with little success for their efforts. The wobbler fisherman have slowed as well at the power lines. I recently back trolled sardine wrapped Kwikfish from above the Sandy all the way down past Government Island and trolled spinner's on the incoming tide with only two opportunities and came up with zero in the box."

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Even though Tillamook fishing is far from consistent at any time during the season, it sure holds true for this week. Weak tides have most anglers concentrated at the bay entrance where sporadic bites often frustrate fishers. Seaweed is not a big issue with the weaker tides but having the ocean closed due to rough bar conditions bottlenecks boats and kind of takes away from a great experience in this area.

I started my season on 9/18 with 5 anglers on board. We spent all our time along the jetty and a brief time in the ocean when the bar opened later in the day. When tide and swell direction are going in unison, it smoothes out the bar and makes for some tolerable fishing. We took 2 nice chinook first thing in the morning- one weighing in at 23 and the other at 25 pounds. By day's end, we totaled 9 bites, landing 7 fish- 2 wild coho and 5 chinook. All fish were taken on herring in the jaws with the exception of 1 coho and 1 chinook in the ocean. The bite was consistent for most of the day but was oddly best before low slack. The weaker tides keep salmon moving the entire tide instead of just close to low slack. The next good bite took place near high slack but overall, we had bites throughout the day. Always important, keep your baits seaweed free and close to the bottom. You can get away with staggered baits at first light but as the day progresses, you need to be on the bottom. Although I didn't fish on the 17<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup>, I was told that the fishing was not nearly as good as it was on the 18<sup>th</sup>- hence, the definition of sporadic.

Effort has been light in the upper bay although there have been fish present there this season. There should also be fish keggung up in tidewater but reluctant to bite due to the low tide exchange. It'll take some magical eggs to keep these fish from lockjaw until we get some larger tidal exchanges.

The Nehalem has been a disappointment and it clearly shows by the traffic on Tillamook. Hopefully, the later returning fall run comes up much stronger than the summer run. It is due to enter peak period in the next 6 weeks.

The Nestucca also has fish present but again, with the weak tides, action has been slow for most fishing the tidewater section of this river. Bobber and spinner casters at the Boat Ramp and Guard-rail hole have not been producing excellent results. Some fish are being taken at the jaws by herring trollers.

**The Guide's Forecast** – With weak tides on tap for the weekend, most boaters will focus their efforts in the lower bay. The jaws will be the main attraction but the Ghost Hole during the latter half of incoming and high tide should produce a few fish as well. Don't look for the ocean to be friendly enough to fish as weekend forecasts don't look good. Be sure to keep your herring fishing deep and the competition will be stiff so you'll have to break out all the tricks to expect good results.

Anglers wishing to fish the upper bay and tidewater shouldn't expect great results either. Even if the fish are there- and there are fish present, the weak tide series will keep most fish from biting. There won't be many fresh fish washed in and those that do come into the upper bay weren't that motivated to bite in the first place. Realize they just negotiated a gauntlet of herring with hooks in them on the way in! If you do have to fish tidewater, the Trask and Tillamook Rivers will be your best bet. Bring lots of bait because the salmon smolts and sculpin will pick you dry!

The Nehalem should be coming on soon if the fall fish actually do arrive. A mix of coho and chinook

will be present but it's likely there won't be big numbers of them for sport harvesters this weekend. Bring along your crab pots as reports are encouraging.

Nestucca anglers will face much of the same thing. The extreme lower bay should be the best bet with herring working the entrance on the entire outgoing tide and high slack. Bobber tossers will be working over older fish but some should fall each day over the weekend. Tides do get better by Sunday.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – From offshore out of the Columbia to the ocean out of Brookings, anglers are reporting hooking up with Humboldt Squid. These critters have been running from four to seven feet in length. The evaluation of their culinary value varies from one angler to the next who has tried them. Evidently, the secret to tasty squid is in the preparation. Recipes are widely available on the internet.

As expected, the ODFW announced Wednesday this week that the All-Depth Halibut fishery of the central Oregon coast (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain) is closed for the remainder of 2007. Increasing the daily bag limit to two fish per angler last Friday through Sunday filed the quota.

With chinook runs late on the Southwest coast and numbers low so far this season, anglers are grateful for every hookup.

Cooler weather seems to have had a positive effect on water temperatures on the lower Siletz which, in turn, has triggered an improvement in chinook catches this week.

**Pro guide Bill Kremers (541 754 6411)** reports he "was halibut fishing this past weekend out of Newport. We fished both the south east corner of the Rockpile and the north end. Only hooked one halibut on the southern end, but it was a big one, which unfortunately broke lose right at the boat. The fishing was better at the northern end as we limited the boat on both trips. The halibut here were not as big, but we did manage some nice fish over forty inches. Still waiting to hear if we have reached our halibut quota yet or not. Regardless it looks like a rough week off shore. If I cannot get out halibut fishing, I will be salmon fishing in Yaquina Bay for the coming month. What I like about fishing here is that we can set out the crab pots while we go salmon fishing, and if there is a calm ocean we can quickly run off shore and get in some fishing for ling cod and bottom fish."

Crabbing has picked up in Yaquina Bay with limits common this week. Use non-fish bait like chicken or turkey else sea lions will have their way with your equipment. The few trolling the bay for salmon are having little success.

Chinook angling has been very slow at Alsea Bay. A few are being picked up at the jaws. Crabbing has been good.

**Pro guide James Stevenson (503-581-5347)** sent this straight forward report: "Alsea sucks, saw one fish caught 60 boats, I had one bite on an anchovy, fished around drift creek upper bay. Place where we launched said they are 100 fish behind last year in fish weighed by this time."

**Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944)** reports, "Fishing is starting to pick up here on the Siuslaw. Most fish are being caught from the mouth of the North Fork to the Dairy Hole. Fish are being reported all the way to C&D Dock, but there's little pressure above. Most folks are trolling plug cut herring, and some guys are using wobblers and spinners.

"Siltcoos and Tahkenitch Lakes will be open again this fall for coho salmon beginning Oct. 1. This is the only wild coho fishery in Oregon and fishing can be excellent. This unique fishery takes place in the

lakes. Most guys troll but I've had some great days fly fishing. I'll provide details and reports as we get in season, including some great bank fishing opportunities."

A handful of chinook have been taken by trollers using plug-cut herring on the incoming tide in Umpqua tidewater. The most productive stretch seemed to be above and below the bridge at Reedsport this week. Soft plastics have continued to provide good results with smallmouth bass in the mainstem and South Umpqua.

Fair to good catches of chinook have been reported for trollers working tidewater in the Coos and Coquille.

Action has picked up over the past week for both coho and Chinook on the lower Rogue River and estuary. With the flow reduced from Lost Creek Dam, the fishing in the Grants Pass stretch has gone from barely fair to plainly poor. Steelheading is slow on the upper Rogue.

The ODFW will hold a workshop September 22nd, the topic of which is Fly Fishing for Steelhead on the Rogue River which will be held, appropriately enough, at the Valley of the Rogue State Park near Grants Pass. Volunteers will be on hand to instruct this adult class.

While chinook fishing was fair to good off the mouth of the Chetco prior to the ocean closure, none have been taken inside as yet.

When the ocean laid down last week, boaters were able to find large numbers of albacore 40 to 50 miles out of the port of Brookings. Anglers were landing tuna over the 30 pound mark. While some albacore seasons have continued through September in years past, with Northwest winds kicking up this week and the ocean showing a cooling trend, it remains to be seen whether or not it's over for the year.

**Central and Eastern Oregon – Pro guide Rick Arnold (541-382-4843)** reports "I don't have much for you guys for local info over here, with one exception. Brian Wildish caught the biggest brown of the season out of East Lake a couple of weeks ago. The big hen went 12 LB.+ and I will have the privilege of mounting it for him.

"The big news was our trip to Lake Diefenbaker in Saskatoon, Canada to film a DVD and fish with the Konrad twins who caught the 43 LB. 6 oz. world record rainbow back in June, 2007. In (3) nights of fishing, we caught (21) rainbows that AVERAGED 19 LB.!!!! You can check out the story with photos and a teaser clip that will be up soon on my website."

"I should have some reports of bull and brown trout trips over the next few weeks."

Fly anglers on the Owyhee River are taking good numbers of Brown Trout on large streamers.

Good numbers of steelhead are entertaining hardware and fly anglers alike on the lower Deschutes but the bite has been on one day, off the next.

**Northwest Trout –** The ODFW has planted 8,000 rainbow trout, imported from California. These fish are specialized in that it is their nature to feed on chubs, the nuisance fish which overpopulated the lake and led to the rotenone treatment last year. It is hoped that this natural solution will prevent tui chub from taking over Diamond Lake in the future.

In the Willamette Valley, Mt Hood Pond, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake and Foster Reservoir are scheduled to be planted with trout this week. Fish Lake and Diamond Lake will be stocked with

trout in the Southwest Zone.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

**From the WDF&W Weekender Report September 19<sup>th</sup> – October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007**

### **North Puget Sound**

Saltwater anglers are finding an increasing number of coho salmon throughout the region, likely signaling the arrival of a big push of ocean silvers into Puget Sound. Meanwhile, freshwater anglers on Lake Sammamish have had some success fishing for chinook, and the Stillaguamish River remains one of the top spots to cast for pinks.

But the best bet for salmon anglers waiting for that flood of ocean coho is the marine areas of Puget Sound. "We're just starting to see a rise in the number of coho caught in central Puget Sound," said Doug Milward, a fish biologist for WDFW. "During a recent creel check, anglers in the Shilshole area averaged almost a fish per person. That's good fishing, and hopefully it will continue over the next few weeks."

Point No Point, Jefferson Head and Possession Bar should be good spots to hook ocean coho, said Milward. Anglers fishing those areas, or other waters of marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), through Sept. 30 have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, and must release chinook. Chum salmon also must be released in Marine Area 9 through Sept. 30. Milward reminds anglers that regulations in marine areas 9 and 10 change beginning Oct. 1, when anglers will have a daily limit of two salmon and must release chinook.

Meanwhile, crabbing in the region is still an option, but only one marine area remains open and for a limited time. The eastern and northern portions of Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) are open for crab Wednesday through Saturday each week through Sept. 29. See WDFW's sport-crabbing website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/> for more details on the fishery.

In the freshwater, pink salmon fishing has been "red hot" recently for anglers on the Stillaguamish River, said Kirt Hughes, another fish biologist for WDFW. "Anglers have been landing pinks left and right," he said. "Even if it has slowed down a bit, the Stillaguamish should continue to provide a great fishing opportunity."

Anglers fishing the Stillaguamish River have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release all chinook.

Elsewhere, anglers fishing on Lake Sammamish are finding some chinook salmon. An abundant return of chinook to the Issaquah Hatchery this year has made for pretty good fishing in the lake, where anglers have a daily limit of two salmon measuring at least 12 inches. All sockeye must be released, and salmon fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek.

Lake Washington also is open for salmon. Anglers have a daily limit of two coho per day (minimum size 12 inches) from waters north of the Highway 520 Bridge and east of the Montlake Bridge. Chinook salmon must be released.

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**

Now that salmon fishing has closed in most ocean areas, anglers can focus on the coho fishery heating up along the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Salmon anglers can also look forward to the opening of several area rivers in the coming weeks.

While most coastal salmon fisheries north of Leadbetter Point closed in mid-September, a portion of Marine Area 3 (LaPush) will be open daily Sept. 22 through Oct. 7 for a late-season fishery targeting coho and chinook salmon returning to the Quillayute River system.

"The La Push fishery is very popular," said Wendy Beeghley, WDFW fish biologist. "There's still fish out there and judging from this year's overall results, anglers should be successful."

The La Push Last Chance Salmon Derby will take place on Sept. 29 and 30 and features \$4,300 in prizes, including \$1,000 each for the top coho and chinook. For more information, call 360-374-2531 or send an email to [info@forkswa.com](mailto:info@forkswa.com).

Anglers are reminded to review WDFW's 2007/2008 Fishing in Washington pamphlet

(<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for details on boundaries and regulations.

On the south coast, Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco) is open for salmon fishing until Sept. 30. In Marine Area 2, Grays Harbor will be open Oct. 1 through Oct. 31. Anglers can keep one chinook and one wild adult coho as part of their two-fish daily limit. Willapa Bay will remain open for salmon fishing through Jan. 31.

Meanwhile, the non-selective coho fishery currently under way in Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) is proving productive for area anglers. "This is a classic hook-nose coho fishery and anglers should be catching some bigger fish," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. Over the Sept. 15-16 weekend, more than 800 anglers fishing near Sekiu averaged nearly one fish per rod.

While the salmon fishery off Sekiu closes Sept. 30, a non-selective fishery for coho and chinook will open Oct. 1 in Marine Area 6 (Port Angeles). The fishery is open through Oct. 31 with a daily limit of two fish (combined). Only one chinook can be retained.

Also in October, anglers in Marine Area 11 (Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge) will be allowed to retain wild chinook. Anglers in Marine Area 13 may also retain wild chinook, but must release all wild coho.

Additional opportunities for fall fishing will become available in October when several area rivers open for salmon fishing, said Hal Michael, WDFW fish biologist. "Now's the time when river fishing picks up as coho leave the saltwater and begin to enter the streams," he said.

Rivers open for salmon fishing Oct. 1 include the Chehalis, Elk, Hoquiam, Johns, Satsop, Wishkah and Wynoochee in Grays Harbor County; Kennedy Creek (upriver to the Highway 101 bridge) in Thurston County; the Nemah River in Pacific County; and the Skokomish River in Mason County.

Many of these rivers are open to coho fishing only and anglers are advised to check WDFW's 2007/2008 Fishing in Washington pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for rules applicable to specific rivers.

## **Southwest Washington:**

After today (Sept. 19), anglers will be required to release any chinook salmon they encounter from the

mouth of the Columbia River upstream to the Highway 395 Bridge in Pasco. Fishery managers from Washington and Oregon approved the new non-retention rule - which took effect Sept. 18 below Bonneville Dam - in response to low numbers of upriver bright chinook counted at the dam through mid-September.

The new rule will be in effect for the remainder of the season to help conserve upriver brights moving up the mainstem Columbia River, said Cindy LeFleur, WDFW Columbia River policy advisor.

"In-season data indicates the upriver bright return will be even lower than expected this year," said LeFleur, noting that the official run forecast has now been reduced to 105,000 fish from the 185,200 estimated pre-season. "Given what we know, we couldn't allow the retention fishery to continue any longer this season."

But anglers still have options for salmon and steelhead fishing in the Columbia River and its tributaries, LeFleur. The new regulations do not affect coho fisheries in the Columbia River and - at least for now - anglers can still retain chinook salmon they catch in the tributaries, she said.

"Biologists are still assessing chinook returns to the lower Columbia tributaries," LeFleur said. She recommended that anglers keep an eye on the department's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/>) or check the Fishing Hotline (360-902-2500) if they're planning a trip to area tributaries feeding into the Columbia River below Bonneville Dam.

On the Cowlitz River, hatchery coho - not chinook - accounted for most of the action during the second week of September, Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. The 89 bank anglers surveyed that week caught and kept 75 hatchery adults, along with five adult chinook salmon. Hymer reminds anglers that there is a six-fish bag limit for adult hatchery coho on the Cowlitz.

Also productive that week was the north fork of the Lewis River, where 109 bank anglers caught 30 adult coho (releasing 11 of them), along with two hatchery steelhead. The 27 boat anglers surveyed on the North Fork that week caught and kept nine chinook and six adult coho. Anglers can retain up to four adult hatchery coho per day on the North Fork Lewis, Grays, Deep, Elochoman, Kalama, and Toutle rivers.

"The best fishing usually follows the heels of a good rain," said Hymer, noting that some anglers should trek to the Grays and Elochoman rivers. Anglers looking for chinook might want to try the Washougal River rather than Lacamas Creek, which is now closed to all fishing. Earlier this month, a release of water from Lacamas Lake Dam attracted a large number of fall chinook into the stream along with an influx of anglers, some of whom were found to be fishing illegally. As a result, Lacamas Creek has been closed to all fishing until further notice.

Farther east, boat anglers have been catching some coho on the Wind and White Salmon rivers and Drano Lake, although steelhead catching have been declining rapidly as thousands of fish move past The Dalles Dam. Coho anglers throughout the lower Columbia River Basin should expect a "transition period" as early-run stocks make way for late-run fish in early to late October, said Hymer, noting that most of those late-run fish will be heading to the Cowlitz, Lewis and Klickitat rivers.

"We're not expecting a huge run of late-run coho this year, but anglers will know them when they see them," Hymer said. "These are bright fish, often weighing eight pounds or more."

For bank anglers hoping to take home a sturgeon, the area just below Bonneville Dam is still the place to be. In a recent creel survey, 151 bank anglers caught 17 legal-sized fish in that area. Farther downstream, 37 boat anglers took five legal-sized sturgeon in the Camas-Washougal area, where four others caught 10 walleye including one that weighed a whopping 17 pounds.

Time is running out for anglers thinking about fishing Mineral Lake one more time this season. Mineral is set to close Sept. 30. Swift Reservoir, open through October, can be a good place to catch rainbows in the fall, although low water may complicate launching a boat. Another option is to head to high mountain lakes. Pesky mosquitoes should be tapering off with the cooler, moist weather while trout are fattening up in preparation for winter.

Want to catch some hatchery sea-run cutthroat trout? Hymer says Blue Creek downstream on the Cowlitz is the place to be.

### **Eastern Washington:**

Now is the time to fish several of the region's best trout fishing lakes - not only because changing weather conditions usually mean catching is good, but also because they close Sept. 30. Badger and Williams lakes in southwest Spokane County have been producing good catches of rainbows and cutthroat throughout the five-month season. West Medical Lake in southwest Spokane County and Fishtrap Lake on the Lincoln-Spokane county line have also been excellent for rainbows, including stocked triploids and broodstock. Amber Lake, near Badger in Spokane County, has provided some of the biggest trout, although it shifts to a two-month-long, catch-and-release season after Sept. 30. Also closing at midnight Sept. 30 are Fan Lake in Pend Oreille County, Liberty Lake in eastern Spokane County, and Downs, Fish and North Silver lakes in southwest Spokane County.

Sprague Lake, on the Lincoln-Adams county line, is normally open year-round, but will close Oct. 1 until further notice so that WDFW crews can apply rotenone to the waters throughout the lake's drainage for fishery rehabilitation. For now, Sprague Lake catch and size limits on all gamefish have been waived to allow removal of as many fish as possible before the treatment. There are crappie, channel catfish, walleye and some rainbow trout available to anglers who can catch them.

Fishing on the Snake River is picking up with cooler temperatures and shorter days. Catches have been steadily increasing near the Clearwater River confluence near Clarkston. Watch soon for creel checks by WDFW fish biologists and their colleagues in Idaho and Oregon, posted on the WDFW eastern region webpage at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/snake/index.htm>.

Walleye fishing has been fair overall in the lower Snake and mid-Columbia rivers. Flows have declined and the spill has ended at McNary Dam resulting in improved fishing for walleye below McNary Dam.

### **North Central Washington:**

Catch-and-release trout fishing on the Methow River continues to be good, with some anglers catching rainbow and cutthroat up to 18 inches, said Bob Jateff, WDFW district fish biologist in Omak. "Surface fly patterns as well as lures have been productive," he said. Jateff reminds anglers the season closes on the Methow Sept. 30.

Chinook salmon fishing on the Columbia River in the Brewster/Bridgeport area has picked up a bit in recent days. Jateff reports the majority of the fish have been caught in the upper section just below the Highway 17 Bridge in Bridgeport. The chinook season is open through Oct. 15.

"Okanogan County lake fishing should improve considerably as fall progresses and water temperatures cool down," Jateff said. Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, Ell Lake near Tonasket, and Big Twin near Winthrop are three selective gear trout lakes that should offer good fishing until the end of October, he said. Anglers also should not pass up late season opportunities to catch panfish in both Leader Lake near Omak and Patterson Lake near Winthrop. "Leader is good for both bluegill and crappie, and Patterson is good for yellow perch," Jateff said. "Jigs tipped with a small piece of worm are

effective methods for all three of these fish species."

Jateff also said that anglers who want to catch a few brook trout should explore some of the open fishing tributaries of the Methow River system. "Boulder Creek and Falls Creek are both tributaries to the Chewuch and hold good numbers of brook trout," he said. "Anglers may keep up to five brook trout per day, no minimum size, but please check the regulation pamphlet carefully, since there are tributaries that are closed to all fishing."

Jeff Korth, WDFW district fish biologist in Moses Lake, said with nighttime air and water temperatures dropping, trout angling in the Columbia Basin should be picking up. "I've recently seen quite a few anglers at Blue and Park lakes getting in last-of-the-season catches," he said. Both lakes close to fishing Sept. 30.

Sprague Lake, which is on the Adams-Lincoln county line, is normally open year-round. But this year, the lake will close Oct. 1 so that WDFW crews can apply rotenone to the waters throughout the lake's drainage for fishery rehabilitation. Until the closure, Sprague Lake catch and size limits on all gamefish have been waived to allow removal of as many fish as possible before the treatment. There are crappie, channel catfish, walleye and some rainbow trout available to anglers.

The 17th annual Wenatchee River Salmon Festival is Sept. 20-23 at the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery in Leavenworth. The event features salmon and other wildlife watching at the hatchery and in the stream, nature-related art and craft booths, "recycled" salmon sculpture, an animal costume parade, the amazing salmon maze, a Native American encampment, outdoor recreation exhibits and hands-on educational activities. Call 509-548-6662 for more information, or see <http://www.salmonfest.org/>.

## **South Central Washington:**

From Sept. 20 through the remainder of the season, Columbia River anglers are required to release any chinook salmon they encounter below the Highway 395 Bridge in Pasco. The new regulations, approved by fishery managers from Washington and Oregon, do not affect coho fisheries in the Columbia River or salmon fisheries in any of its tributaries. Paul Hoffarth, WDFW fish biologist, explained that the agreement to end chinook retention on the mainstem Columbia River was due primarily to the low number of upriver bright chinook salmon counted at Bonneville Dam through Sept. 16. "Based on the counts and catch totals to date, the pre-season run forecast of 185,200 upriver chinook has been reduced to 105,000 fish, a reduction of more than 40 percent," he said.

The Hanford Reach of the Columbia River, Highway 395 Bridge to Priest Rapids Dam is open for salmon retention at this time where fishing has just started to pick up. An estimated 292 adult chinook and 39 jacks have been caught so far, which is just slightly behind last year at this time (318 adults and 40 jacks). Staff sampled 23 percent of the boat anglers.

Hoffarth noted that while the Snake River opened for steelhead on Sept.1, the Ringold-area steelhead fishery would open Oct. 1. "Large numbers of steelhead are moving past McNary Dam and into the Snake and mid-Columbia," he said. "Anglers are required to use barbless hooks while fishing for steelhead in the Snake River and only hatchery steelhead may be retained."

Hoffarth said he's starting to see a few more anglers on the Yakima River fishing for salmon. Creel checkers interviewed more than 20 salmon anglers each day over the past weekend and 58 anglers during the week. A couple of adult salmon and nine jacks were caught.

Walleye fishing has been fair overall in the lower Snake and mid-Columbia rivers. Flows have declined and the spill has ended at McNary Dam resulting in improved success for walleye below McNary Dam.

**Reader Email** - Reader Roger N. who was bass fishing at the mouth of the Yamhill last week, wrote again on September 12th about his latest adventure, "We decided to fish for Tuna instead of chasing the salmon. Salmon fishing is really slow. We had 5 Tuna to the boat but only landed 3 of them. Two of them broke our line at the boat. We caught them 28 or so miles off the Depoe Bay whistler. We could have caught more but we decided we had better get back in order to conserve our gasoline supply. I had not caught Tuna on sports gear before and discovered it was a real battle bringing them in on a rod and reel. I just barbequed some tuna steaks for the first time and found they are comparable to Halibut in taste but a little richer, delicious!!!"

After helping Roger K. to rig up for Chinook trolling on Tillamook Bay, he shared this, "Thanks for the info. Did work the ghost hole Wednesday and observed 12 boats and 6 fish caught. Unfortunately, I was not one of them. Nice size one was 36 lb and one 32lb..."

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

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: [brees@pacifier.com](mailto:brees@pacifier.com)

Doug Rees: [doug@TheGuidesForecast.com](mailto:doug@TheGuidesForecast.com)

Michael Teague: [Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com](mailto:Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com)

### **Random Links**

Braid to Monofilament knots:

**<http://www.saltwatersportsman.com/saltwater/fishing/article/0,12746,472807,00.html>**

OSMB Guide to Oregon ports and bar crossings:

**[http://www.oregon.gov/OSMB/coastal\\_waters/CoastalWaters.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/OSMB/coastal_waters/CoastalWaters.shtml)**

**Weekly Quote** – "It is pleasant to observe that the eldest and most democratic of all fraternities is that of the fishermen, wherein membership is shared by the veriest aboriginal and the most cultured of cosmopolites. These speak a kindred language and are never at loss to comprehend one another when the theme is fishing." - Ben Hur Lampman

**GOOD LUCK!**