

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **November 16th – November 22nd 2007**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Got eggs? We'll **GIVE** them to you **FREE!** That's right. Starting after Thanksgiving, come down to the coast and enjoy a night or two at The Guide's Guesthouse in Bay City, Oregon. Centrally located, The Guide's Guest House, brand new construction completed in May of 2007, can comfortably sleep up to 4 people with full kitchen and bathroom. Keep your driftboat safe and sound and with every night booked, you'll receive a jar of Bob Rees' personally cured Tillamook Bay chinook roe for your fishing needs! Prices start as low as \$37.50/person for a group of 4! It's a deal! Call Bob or Nancy at (503) 377-9696 or email brees@pacifier.com.

Willamette Valley/Metro- As the weather turns, anglers will lose motivation to fish in the Columbia River Gorge. Keepers also are migrating from this area, in search of warmer waters found downriver and in the lower Willamette. Catch rates have already peaked and are clearly on the decline.

The temperature at Willamette Falls is hovering at the 50-degree mark. Sturgeon fishing has remained reliable with plenty of shakers and a good number of keepers being caught.

The water condition at the Sandy remained good as of Monday this week. A few late summer steelhead are the only fish of interest with salmon closed here and winter steelhead still weeks away.

While Thanksgiving is the traditional winter steelhead kickoff, it's early to expect decent results. Still, a few anglers plan on hitting the Clackamas next week. Fortunately, there are still summers available.

On the Santiam system, steelhead are moving around with normal fluctuations in water conditions at this time of year. Try the stretch from Packsaddle Park down to Stayton.

This is the last week to try for trout and warmwater gamefish at Hagg Lake as it closes for the season at Sundown on Sunday, November 18th.

Northwest – Anglers still holding out hope for productive Tillamook Bay fishing are typically coming home empty-handed this season. The Ghost Hole and West Channel are only occasionally putting out fair numbers of fish. With local area rivers higher than they have been in weeks, most fish are heading right to the river systems.

Monday's weather system produced good results from the Trask and Wilson Rivers although debris kept anglers from effectively fishing for at least part of the time Tuesday. The initial push of bright fish entered most north coast streams early in the week but forecasters are calling for more rain freshets kicking off a more consistent driftboat season.

In the order of most productive options, the Wilson, Kilchis, Trask, Nestucca, Necanicum and Nehalem Rivers should all be producing fair numbers of fish this weekend. Fish the smaller systems when river levels are high but keep in mind that high winds and rain-soaked riparian areas are ripe for downed sweepers- responsible for lost lives every year.

Anglers were catching chum salmon on the Miami and Kilchis Rivers early in the week but these rivers will close to targeted fishing for these depleted runs beginning Friday. It is catch and release only until then.

Sturgeon are present in Tillamook Bay but crabs are too numerous for anglers to succeed consistently. The west channel fishery is just getting underway.

Crabbing remains poor on Tillamook Bay but fair on Netarts and Nestucca estuaries. The lower Columbia River is excellent for large Dungeness.

Another minus tide series hits north coast beaches on Thanksgiving. Razor clam diggers will likely do best in dry sand digging. Rough surf will likely hamper success however.

The first weeks of November have not been kind to chinook anglers on the Siletz. No new pictures have been posted at Coyote Rock so far this month.

Crabbing is slow to fair at Yaquina and Alsea bays.

Southwest – Another rough week is forecast offshore, keeping recreational boaters off the ocean.

Coho passage at Winchester Dam has been decent with over 1,000 reported as of mid-October. While fishing hasn't been impressive in the mainstem North Umpqua, it is expected to improve as the coho run ramps up. Dropping water temperatures are curtailing smallmouth bass catches in the mainstem as expected. Ling cod fishing has been good out of Winchester Bay when the seas have allowed safe crossing.

Anglers fishing the jetty at Coos Bay have been taking large kelp greenling (known locally as sea trout).

The Elk River was at 4.5 feet on November 11th following nearly an inch of rain on Monday this week. Chinook have been taken but the water level is dropping.

Chetco River levels increased over 4.5 feet from November 12th to the 13th, hitting nearly 6,000 cfs overnight Monday this week. Increased flow is bringing in fresh, chrome chinook which are wasting no time charging upriver. Backbouncing eggs and bait-wrapped plugs will take fish as levels drop. Bank anglers will score with bobber and bait or drifted roe.

When the weather breaks and the bar allows safe passage offshore, bottom fishing is excellent off the southwest coast with rockfish and ling cod in the best condition of the year.

While no trout stocking is scheduled for the remainder of 2007, the ODFW will occasionally conduct winter plantings, often of larger trout or broodstock steelhead.

Eastern – The water level is up at the Deschutes and is expected to stay that way for some time. Trout fishing has slowed in the lower river and steelheading remains slow.

Grand Ronde steelheaders experienced decent action in low water over the weekend for a mix of hatchery and wild fish. Recent weather events however should stimulate the bite and more consistent fishing will occur well into the winter months. **Pro guide Mac Huff (800-940-3688)** reports that a few Grande Ronde steelhead have been taken daily since mid-October but that the water has been very low this year.

SW Washington – A few winter steelhead are beginning to show in area streams. The Cowlitz, Kalama and Lewis systems have already seen their first few fish.

Coho remain available in the Cowlitz and Lewis but catches are light. Some chinook are still being caught but must be released.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Moderate temperatures has kept sturgeon available in the Columbia River gorge where both bank and boat anglers are still showing catch rates high enough to justify a trip up there. Over the weekend, boat anglers averaged nearly a keeper per boat and still a fair number of oversized fish in the catch. Needless to say, shaker action remain good in the gorge as well. Bank anglers were averaging better than a keeper for every 10 rods. It is getting a bit late to still see this kind of good action but as long as water temperatures are stable, the action should remain fair. Keepers are certainly getting culled from the fishery but the accessibility of the lower Willamette sturgeon fishery may take some pressure off of the gorge and allow for stable catch rates. Smelt remains a top bait but squid will hold a place for anglers willing to diversify.

The other popular destination, (the Portland to Longview stretch) is still showing signs of improving. A keeper for every 8 boats was the weekend total with a fair number of shakers also showing in the catches. As water temperatures cool, this section of the mainstem will become more popular with anglers and sturgeon alike.

Although salmon angling remains open to bank anglers upstream to the Bonneville deadline, effort is light and catch is nil. Dam counts for almost every specie are dwindling to nearly single digits.

Upriver however, the steelhead fishery is just weeks underway where John Day anglers will continue to find success trolling plugs just upstream of the John Day Dam. This fishery is quite pleasant, especially if you have a cover on your boat and have the propane heater going full blast. Just put out your plug and troll erratically. Colors can play a role in your success to bring lots of options as no one seems to draw consistent strikes. Weekly checking showed two adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept and one unclipped steelhead released for 18 bank rods; and 21 adipose fin-clipped steelhead and one coho kept, plus seven unclipped steelhead released for 64 boats.

The Guide's Forecast – Wicked weather is in the forecast for the gorge and most of NW Oregon into the weekend. Although cold temperatures are not necessarily going to be a factor for weekend anglers, heavier winds and rain may keep most from participating in the slowing fishery. None-the-less, keepers will likely continue to be an option for gorge anglers with the Portland to Longview stretch a distant second.

Steelhead trollers will continue to have some good options in the John Day Pool and the John Day Arm itself. Although the fishing will not be consistent every day, with peak season upon us, dedicated anglers in the know should be able to expect fair results for a full day effort. Trolling plugs in the top 15 feet of water should put you in the zone and some quality fish are available. Anglers are noting only a rare "B" run steelhead, the larger adults destined for the Clearwater River in Idaho.

Although crabbers will want to pay attention to the weather, the tides are quite favorable for a bountiful crab harvest this weekend out of Hammond near Buoys 20 and 22. Seals may be present and competing for your crab bait so prepare yourself with turkey legs (fitting, isn't it?). A mix of both caged fish and fowl should bring bounty to your pots in the lower Columbia River

Estuary.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Water temperatures at Willamette Falls have been fluctuating in the low 50s recently. Warmer is better in the lower river as the winter sturgeon season approaches. Fish migrating downstream in the Columbia will seek the normally higher temperatures of the water of the Willamette and provide a rewarding fishery particularly well suited for boaters ill-equipped for the swifter, deeper waters of the larger river.

Soft plastics continue to take smallmouth bass on the upper Willamette. Some nice smallies have been taken with some in the three to four pound range.

The North Santiam is running somewhat high, swift and clear.

The Oregon Anglers Survey was revealed recently and it is that demon time, to no one's surprise, that prevents most of us from enjoying more piscatorial pursuits. Read it below in **Random Links**.

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon catches will continue to improve as we move into the winter months and additional fish migrate to the lower Willamette from the Columbia. Odds of taking home a keeper are pretty good now. Sand Shrimp has been a reliable bait bit squid and herring have accounted for a few. Keep moving to find fish as keeper-sized sturgeon have come from various locations over the past week. Anglers have scored at Oregon City, Portland Harbor, Kelly Point and lower Multnomah Channel. Sturgeon may be kept on any day until December 31st.

Bass feed heavily in late fall on the upper Willamette but action is slowing with the water temperature cooling.

Expect the North Santiam to rise and the flow to increase significantly over the weekend. While it should be dropping next week, there will still be a lot of fast water. The Packsaddle to Stayton stretch holds the better promise for late summer steelhead with bank fishing available at the park. Use decent-sized lures and baits in softer water to tempt steelies in these conditions.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – An annual love/hate relationship with Oregon meteorologists has begun.

The prediction of heavy rain starting over the past weekend fell through, making this writer's prediction about the rivers exactly wrong. We've got to give those folks credit; the weather is difficult to guess in this part of the country. Anyway, we finally got rain on Monday this week.

There are certainly better fisheries than the Clackamas and Sandy rivers at this time. Despite decent water levels, good color and a three-coho limit, Eagle Creek is not a worthwhile destination as the available fish are dark.

The Sandy, having produced at least a single, confirmed winter fish, is likely to see a few hopefuls on Thanksgiving morning, seeking action prior to the family dinner gathering. Winters will, indeed be entering with rainfall over the coming weeks followed by steelhead of the broodstock variety. A few summer steelhead remain available above Dodge Park to Cedar Creek although many are becoming as colorful as the fall foliage. Don't target coho, though, as the Sandy is closed for salmon for the season.

Rob Brown at Jack's Snack and tackle (503-665-2257) reports that while rain on Monday had the river high and muddy that by today (Thursday, November 15th) the river had dropped four feet, was in great shape and had good color. Rob went on to say that if the next round of rainfall bring up the water level again, there are likely to be additional winter natives and possibly a couple of hatchery fish by Thanksgiving, but predicts catchable numbers of fin-clipped steelhead probably won't be available 'til mid-December. He commented that there are very few anglers fishing the Sandy this week.

North Coast Fishing Report – It seems like forever since we had our last rain event but the small amount of rain that the north coast received on Monday paid dividends for driftboaters able to get out in the middle of the week. Since the wind and rain was short lived, it didn't put rivers out for very long and even the larger systems were fishing well by Wednesday. On Tuesday, the Trask River was choked with chinook as tidewater anglers bouncing bait scored great results and driftboaters upstream did well later that afternoon. Fish were clearly on the move in the higher flows. The Trask peaked at just under 8 feet and didn't seem to have the leafy debris problem that is more common on the Wilson River. Although fish were caught from tidewater to Mills Bridge on Tuesday, by Wednesday the debris had washed through the system much better making for better angling opportunities. It was quite the popular destination however as it was challenging to find a place to park the boat with so much traffic running the river. Doesn't anyone work anymore?

I drifted the Trask River on Wednesday, knowing that the Wilson would be getting the bulk of the pressure. The river was already lower than I had hoped and had more of a stained/clear color than that steelhead green we all like so much. At the start, the East wind was blowing so hard that my hands blistered early in the program. We finally scratched up a wild coho above Johnson's Bridge but it was slim pickings after that. We finally decided to wait out some tide fish at the last chance hole before the 101 take-out. Although it took a while, we managed 3 good bites, hooking 2 of the fish on plugs and landing a nice bright hen of about 15 pounds. Although most boats on the float had 1 or no fish, one boat found a couple of productive pockets landing 5 chinook for 3 anglers. They were clearly high boat on the float!

Smaller streams like the Necanicum likely received a push of fish as well but the high winds likely put trees in the river making it dangerous to navigate. Chainsaws are a must for these more dynamic systems but be aware that cutting trees out of the river compromises fish habitat so only cut for safe navigation and no more. Lifejackets are an overlooked necessity on smaller streams and have recently saved lives. It's holiday season remember, your families need you.

On the Nestucca, **pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)** reports, "Who knows what is going to happen now that we are in the middle of a hurricane! The river has fished poorly over the last several days, so we are uncertain what the fish are doing and where they are. We are having good rain for the first time in weeks, so things should stir up a bit. The best bet is to hit the river where you choose, and see what happens. They are there some place...Crabbing in the bay is good, with nice big fatties...Have a great week."

Bay fishing remained consistently poor prior to the storm with most guide boats dredging up one or two opportunities into the weekend. North Coast Rendezvous anglers averaged less than a fish per angler for the 2-day event. The event was still a success however raising over \$100,000 for fish enhancement projects in the area. Organizers, guides and participants all deserve a heaping hand of gratitude.

We did try some sturgeon fishing in the west channel of Tillamook Bay on Saturday but we clearly need some more fresh water to push out the crab that were more interested in our bait

than the sturgeon. There have been a few sturgeon taken in Tillamook Bay (and one oversized fish snagged and released on a spinner) but effort is light this time of year.

Bay crabbing remains poor on Tillamook but good on Netarts and Nestucca estuaries.

The Guide's Forecast – Well, this is the kind of weather an angler hopes for! After a couple of weeks of having to break out the sunscreen all over again, my skin is finally getting re-hydrated. The current storm systems are ideal for the driftboater as they are not too high to put the rivers out for very long and when the larger systems are too high to fish, the smaller systems are in ideal shape. Beginning Friday, the north coast is supposed to get more precipitation (although it's falling now just outside my window at 1:40 a.m. on an early Thursday morning). Rain is forecasted to continue into the weekend with two separate hydrological peaks on Friday and Saturday. The Wilson is predicted to crest around 7 foot on both days and begin to recede starting on Sunday. Hopefully, this larger system will take any remaining debris to sea and allow us to fish a bit more un-impeded for the remainder of the season.

Bottom line: Rising rivers are hard to find biting fish on. Adults are quite motivated to scream upstream as they know they have the best access to smaller streams in higher flows. They will be moving and not slowing down for a bite to eat. The rivers are forecasted to be on the rise for much of the weekend. That is, IF the forecast comes through. Consistency is not on the side of the weather forecaster this year.

When the rivers do drop, the Kilchis, Necanicum and to a lesser degree, the North Fork Nehalem will be the first to offer chinook opportunities. Of those, the Kilchis will be the best choice but believe me, you won't have the river to yourself. Plan on large numbers of driftboaters to join you in your party. This is the premier fishing trip for NW anglers- what did you expect anyway? Shortly after the Kilchis clears, the Trask, followed by the Wilson and Nestucca will offer the best chances of late run kings. Of these, the Wilson will be the best choice but like the Kilchis, it will be jammed with anxious and tense anglers. The one bonus is the higher flows will hopefully keep anglers off of the anchor and working the holes as fish will be on the move. Obviously, there is much more room to catch fish on the Wilson than the Kilchis too. Remember, it is illegal to target chum salmon after the 15th of November and fair numbers will be present in the Miami and Kilchis Rivers but they are also in the Wilson and a rare one in the Trask River.

Sturgeon tides aren't all that favorable this weekend. With the weather forecast, it may be best to stay off of large bodies of water. Wind is likely to hamper both salmon and sturgeon success.

Central & South Coast Reports – The Siletz and Alsea are expected to crest this coming Saturday and forecast to start dropping Sunday. Anglers will want to target these rivers as they are on the drop although neither has been particularly productive this season. Crabbing has been slow in both bays. The Siletz fished no better Monday this week even with additional water in the river. A good number of fish are moving through as anglers can 'see' them on their depth finders. They're just not biting.

Bottom fishing out of Newport has been rewarding with fair to good catches of rockfish and above average catches of ling cod. Unfortunately, high winds are predicted to combine with rough seas this weekend, preventing ocean access. Crabbing is fair but improving in Yaquina Bay.

Coho will be of greatest interest to anglers in the mainstem and North Umpqua with over 2,700 having crossed Winchester Dam as of November 13th. Crabbing has improved in Winchester bay with a few reporting limits.

Very mild tides during daylight hours this week

Coos River anglers have seen a reduction of Chinook hookups. While the Coos remains open for finclipped coho below Chandler Bridge through the rest of the year, fishing has been slow. Anglers are experiencing similar results on the Coos which is open for hatchery coho below Lampa Creek. On a bright note, these ocean tributaries are a possibility for a Thanksgiving Day winter steelhead.

The Elk River, at 4.9 on Tuesday this week, fell to 3.7 by Wednesday. Conditions on the diminutive Elk and Sixes River change quickly so anglers must hit them when conditions are right; "you shoulda been here yesterday" is a common condition here. Wednesday this week, both rivers kicked out a number of bright Chinook. Rain is forecast return to the southwest Oregon coast over the weekend, drying out early next week making Monday or Tuesday the likely to be the productive target days.

With the Rogue River level up, half-pounder catches are down on the lower Rogue although winter steelhead are entering now. Coho are being taken on brightly-colored metal lures and cured salmon eggs in the Grants Pass stretch. Drift boaters did fairly well for steelhead on the upper Rogue over the weekend, but fishing slowed this week. A few coho are also being taken but most are darkening.

The Chetco will rise to unmanageable levels this coming weekend if the prediction for heavy weekend rains comes to pass. It should come into shape nicely next week, however, and anglers will find Chinook throughout the system. The Chetco fishes best between 1,000 and 4,000 cfs. All methods from bank and boat have been productive here when the river is in shape.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Pro guide Mac Huff (800-940-3688) reports, "Since late October steelhead fishing in the Grande Ronde River in northeast Oregon and Southeast Washington has been consistent, but low numbers. I am almost always connecting with steelhead each day, sometimes landing some, often missing some. There seems to be always one chance during the day, some days a few chances, but, so far numbers up to a half dozen or so on with gear and up to four with flies.

"Water levels have remained near record lows this fall and only once spiked above average flows during October. That freshet brought some fish upstream, which started the improvement in catching. Fish have continued to trickle upstream, but are waiting for more water to move out of the Snake River. That water is here now. Widespread rain on Monday and more coming for a couple days will bring the river up and fish along with it. Anglers can anticipate better catching later this week and though the rest of the season, with occasional weather disruptions."

Northwest Trout – This is the last week to fish Hagg Lake as it closes for the season at Sundown on Sunday, November 18th. Warmwater fishing has been very slow this week with the water cooling but trout fishing has been fair to good. A few anglers have scored limits by starting early in the day. Most are taking fair to good numbers of fish with many of them 14 inches or better.

No trout planting is scheduled anywhere in Oregon this week but will resume at some locations next week.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report **November 14th – November 27th, 2007**

North Puget Sound

A few late-season **coho salmon** can be found in the region's rivers and streams, but freshwater anglers are mostly reeling in **chum**. Meanwhile, several marine areas in the region also are open for **salmon**, and some anglers fishing the saltwater are finding nice **blackmouth**.

"The **blackmouth** fishery isn't going as strong as it was during the first week of November," said John Long, WDFW fish biologist. "But even though it has slowed, I have heard reports of a few nice fish caught in the region."

Anglers participating in the recent Bayside Marine Salmon Derby in Everett took advantage of the hot bite earlier this month. A total of 267 anglers weighed in 129 fish during the two-day event, which took place Nov. 3-4. Don Allen was the derby's big winner. The Marysville resident hauled in a 17-pound, 15-ounce chinook, taking home the \$2,000 first prize. Rich Olson, who weighed in a 13-pound, 13-ounce chinook, finished second, while Bill Hayes' 11-pound, 6-ounce chinook was good enough for third.

Four marine areas in the region are open for blackmouth, which are resident chinook. Anglers fishing marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) are allowed to keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit. Those fishing in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) also have a two-salmon daily limit, but can keep up to two hatchery chinook per day. Wild chinook salmon, which have an intact adipose fin, cannot be brought aboard the boat in areas 8-1 and 8-2.

Long reminds anglers fishing for blackmouth that **crabbing** also is a possibility. Marine areas 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu), 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 9,10, 11 (Tacoma/Vashon), 12 (Hood Canal) and 13 (south Puget Sound) are open to sport crabbing seven days a week through Jan. 2. Marine areas 8-1 and 8-2 will reopen for crab fishing on a daily basis Nov. 22-25 during the Thanksgiving holiday.

Crabbing will not reopen this year in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where the summer catch slightly exceeded the annual quota.

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6 ¼ inches. In addition, fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/index.htm>.

In the rivers, most reports indicate anglers are hooking **chum salmon**, although a few **coho** continue to be caught in some streams. Among the hot spots in the region are the Snohomish and Skykomish rivers.

For **trout** anglers, Beaver Lake near Issaquah could be the best place to cast for rainbows over the next couple of weeks. About 3,000 hatchery rainbows – averaging approximately 3 to 5 pounds each – are scheduled to be released into the lake the week of Nov. 12. 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.

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

Chum and **blackmouth** salmon will still occupy center stage for the next couple weeks, but anglers will soon turn their attention to winter **steelhead**. Meanwhile, a **razor clam** dig is tentatively scheduled to open the day after Thanksgiving and **crab** fishing is open seven days per week in most areas of Puget Sound.

As the **chum** fishing season nears its peak, many of the big fish are making their way into South Sound streams. Chum salmon can now be found in virtually every small stream in the area, including such popular fishing spots as the mouth of Kennedy Creek on Totten Inlet and near the Hoodspout Hatchery on Hood Canal. According to recent creel checks, anglers were catching at least one fish per rod at both sites. Anglers are reminded that the daily limit in the Hoodspout "hatchery zone" is four salmon, with a maximum of two chinook.

Anglers working Perry Creek in Thurston County also averaged a fish per rod over the Nov. 10 weekend. Other areas opening to chum-salmon fishing, effective Nov. 1, include the Dosewallips and Duckabush rivers in Jefferson County, and Minter Creek in Pierce/Kitsap counties.

While heavy rains and high tides have temporarily stalled salmon fishing in coastal rivers along the coast, catch rates should improve once the weather gets better, said Scott Barbour, WDFW fish biologist. "Most rivers are out of shape right now, although the Calawah and Sol Duc on the Olympic Peninsula are fishable and anglers are still finding some coho and chinook," he said.

By the time conditions improve, anglers can start thinking about the **winter steelhead** season, Barbour said. December is the big month for hatchery steelhead on the North Olympic Peninsula – including the Quillayute River system and Hoh River – but early returns start showing up around Thanksgiving, he said.

Rather be out on the bay? **Blackmouth** fishing remains steady in south Puget Sound, where 24 anglers near Point Defiance recently caught 15 chinook. The daily limit is two salmon, although only one chinook may be retained.

On the coast, Rob Reifsnnyder of Spanaway won the \$500 first prize for catching the biggest fish during Westport's month-long Boat Basin Salmon Derby. Reifsnnyder's hatchery coho weighed nearly 15 pounds.

The next **razor clam** dig is tentatively scheduled Nov. 23-24 on evening tides at Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks. Two more evening digs are planned Nov. 25-26 at Twin Harbors. Final approval for all digs is contingent upon marine toxin tests that show the clams are safe to eat. Kalaloch Beach will remain closed to razor clam digging throughout the 2007-08 season.

Evening low tides during the planned dig are at 5:21 p.m. Friday, Nov. 23 (-1.3 ft.), 6:11 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 24 (-1.7 ft.), 7 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 25 (-1.8 ft.) and 7:48 p.m. Monday, Nov. 26 (-1.6 ft.).

Harvesters are allowed to take no more than 15 razor clams and must keep the first 15 they dig, regardless of size or condition. Each digger's clams must be kept in a separate container. A license is required for anyone age 15 or older. Any 2007 annual shellfish/seaweed license or combination license is still valid.

Recreational **crab** fishing got under way Nov. 1 in five marine areas of Puget Sound and will be open seven days a week through Jan. 2. Crab fishing is open in marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 12 (Hood Canal). Three other marine areas – 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south Puget Sound) – have been open continuously since June 18.

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6¼ inches. In addition, fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/index.htm>.

Southwest Washington:

Rough weather over the Veterans Day holiday served as a reminder of coming winter weather conditions – and the **winter steelhead** fishery often associated with them. Although area anglers continue to reel in good numbers of **sturgeon** and **hatchery coho**, many have begun to gear up for the hatchery steelhead season that will run well into the winter months.

“We’re getting more calls about the winter run steelhead fishery,” said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. “The focus is definitely shifting in that direction.”

Fishing for **hatchery steelhead** is already open on several tributaries to the lower Columbia River. In addition, the Grays River opens from the mouth to the Highway 4 Bridge Nov. 15. While a few winter steelhead have returned to area hatcheries, the fishery doesn’t usually get going until around Thanksgiving, Hymer said. Weekly escapement reports can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hat/escape/escape.htm>.

“A lot depends on river conditions and the general timing and strength of the run,” Hymer said. Most of this year’s returning hatchery fish were planted on the Cowlitz, Lewis, Elochoman and Kalama rivers. For information on last year’s smolt plants, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/harvest/06-07/smolts.htm> on WDFW’s website. As in past years, anglers must release wild steelhead with an intact adipose fin.

Meanwhile, catch rates for **hatchery coho** have remained fairly strong both above and below Bonneville Dam. “Some coho are starting to turn dark, but bright fish are still showing up in the catch,” Hymer said.

Two of three boat anglers fishing in the Bonneville Pool near the mouth of the Klickitat River took home hatchery coho during the week ending Nov. 11. Those fishing the Lewis River maintained a similar average – and also caught an equal number of fall chinook, which they were required to release. Bank anglers fishing near the salmon hatchery on the Lewis River averaged about one coho for every three rods, including fish released.

Bank anglers are also catching some coho at the barrier dam and below on the Cowlitz River, where the catch limit is six hatchery adult coho per day. WDFW recently extended the six-fish bag limit above Cowlitz Falls Dam, where fishery managers are working to reestablish a naturally spawning coho run.

“The higher catch limit on the upper Cowlitz is consistent with the recovery effort, because it will help to control the number of hatchery fish that reach the spawning grounds while supporting the recreational fishery,” said Pat Frazier, WDFW regional fish manager. “So long as anglers keep catching those hatchery fish, we can move more of them above the dam without interfering with

the restoration effort," he said.

Flows increased and visibility decreased on some lower Columbia tributaries after a storm blew through western Washington the day after Veterans Day. With the return of winter conditions, Hymer recommends that anglers check stream-flow conditions on two websites before leaving home:

http://www.nwrfc.noaa.gov/river/river.cgi?zoom?2?1.1.1.1.0_1.1.1.1_1?zoom?62,343?165,253
and <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/WA/nwis/current/?type=flow>.

Then again, the recent storm might have improved the **sturgeon fishery** below Bonneville Dam, said Hymer, noting that high, dirty water can invigorate the bite. Bank anglers fishing just below the dam averaged a legal-size sturgeon for every 8.5 rods during the week ending Nov. 11. Boat anglers fishing in the Camas/Washougal area also took home some legal-size fish.

Eastern Washington:

The best catch rates for Snake River hatchery **steelhead** are above the interstate bridge near Clarkston, where anglers averaged seven to eight hours per fish, according to the latest creel surveys. Steelheaders in that stretch should be careful to avoid drifting into the Clearwater River across the state line into Idaho, which requires a separate license. No part of the Clearwater River can be legally fished with a Washington license only.

Anglers are also doing well fishing from the mouth of the lower Grand Ronde River – a tributary of the Snake River – to the Oregon state line. Creel surveys show that anglers fishing those waters have been averaging 11 to 12 hours per fish.

Other stretches of the Snake River are yielding steelhead at slower, but steady, rates. The Wallula area, from the Oregon state line to the mouth of the Walla Walla River, has required about 13 hours of angling effort per steelhead. Anglers have averaged between 13 and 14 hours per fish from Lower Granite Dam to the interstate bridge at Clarkston, and 17 hours per fish from Little Goose to Lower Granite dams. For all the creel survey numbers, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/snake/index.htm>.

WDFW fish biologist Glen Mendel reminds anglers fishing on the Snake River that any chinook salmon must be released immediately. That includes surplus fall chinook trapped for production at Lyons Ferry Fish Hatchery and released back to the river. Like naturally spawning chinook, those fish are protected as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act.

"The hatchery needs a good mix of chinook from throughout the run, so some of the fish trapped earlier are being released to make room for others," Mendell said. The chinook are being released near Lower Granite and Little Goose dams, depending on where they were collected. Mendel said they are marked by clipping the top or bottom of the tail (caudal) fin to identify the fish in case they are trapped again, and to learn more about their movements through fish ladders at the Snake River dams.

North Central Washington:

Fishing has been slow for **hatchery steelhead** on the Wenatchee River, where angler participation and catch rates have dropped recently. Art Viola, WDFW district fish biologist, said water temperatures have decreased and a number of fish seem to have moved upriver.

"The water temperatures have dropped into the high 30's, and that may be part of the reason the fishery has slowed," he said. "But it's just hard to say exactly why."

Viola said he estimates the catch rate on the river has fallen to well over 10 hours of effort per hatchery (adipose-fin clipped) steelhead caught. The special season for hatchery steelhead runs through March 31 from the mouth upstream to Icicle Road Bridge west of Leavenworth,

South Central Washington:

Fishing for **hatchery steelhead** in the Ringold area of the Columbia River near the Tri-Cities has picked up now that anglers are allowed to keep any hatchery steelhead with a clipped adipose fin. Throughout October anglers could keep only those fish with a clipped adipose fin and a clipped right ventral fin, said Paul Hoffarth, WDFW fish biologist.

"The dual clippings identify fish reared in the Ringold Hatchery," Hoffarth said. "Until November, we target those fish exclusively to make sure we get enough fish above Priest Rapids Dam to meet escapement goals."

This year, returns to the Ringold Hatchery have been relatively low, Hoffarth said. "But there's lots of other hatchery steelhead with adipose clips that anglers can catch and keep."

The fishery is open through March 31, 2008 from the Highway 395 Bridge at Pasco/Kennewick upstream to the wooden powerline towers at the old Hanford town site.

Reader Email –

From Subscriber Mike W. - I have really enjoyed the fishing reports to help me zero in on the best fishing opportunities. I have a need for some more specific information. I have some visitors coming in from the East coast on December 3 to fish for sturgeon and would like to provide the best opportunity to catch some fish. Just catching shakers I am sure would make their day with a chance at a keeper. I am not familiar with Kelley Point, lower Willamette or the Multnomah channel and understand from your reports that this fishery for sturgeon picks up due to warmer water from the Willamette as the Columbia cools and the action shuts down below Bonneville. It would be great if we could fish locally but not quite sure as to the specific spots to try. Also this time of the year the weather can be nasty on the Columbia as I am planning to launch in Vancouver weather permitting. I suspect the Multnomah channel might be a better spot in tough river conditions but I do not know where the spots are to fish and or launch. Any advice would be greatly appreciated.

Replied to by Michael T. - we always enjoy hearing from our readers. Thanks for writing.

Sturgeon catches on the Columbia are actually declining while fishing is improving on the Willamette. No hotspot has emerged, however, but Kelly Point (which is where Kelly Point Park is located at the mouth of the Willamette) has produced keepers recently. Many spots on the lower river from the St. Johns Bridge to the mouth have been productive but some nice fish have also come from Oregon City. In Multnomah Channel, try below Coon Island.

Sand shrimp has been the most reliable bait, the fresher the better, but squid has also been taking fish. Some anglers are covering all the bases by using a combination of the two.

Use your depth finder, anchor above a hole and fish downstream into the hole, preferably on the outgoing tide. Sturgeon like current and muddy water, so the next round of rainfall should only improve your odds. As always (and you're probably as tired of hearing this as we are of writing it), move around to find larger biters, especially when fish are scattered as they are now.

Please let us know how you do out there.

Since TGF doesn't have a Nevada or Colorado section, we've posted the following here.

Pro guide Rick Arnold (541-480-1570) reports, "I had the opportunity to fish with one of the local hot sticks at Pyramid Lake, NV. for lahontan cutthroats this past weekend. My website partner, Mark, met me there and we fished with Brad Stout from Sparks, NV. It had been slow recently so we felt pretty good to catch some bigger trout of 7.75, 6, 5 and 4.5 LB. Total catch was 15 trout and all were released."

"The only word on the local CO front was that Crescent Lake was producing some browns."

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

Write to the TGF staff:

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Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Tribe seeks smelt listing:

*http://www.tdn.com/articles/2007/11/08/area_news/doc4732c37fbe60c391306443.txt

ODFW Angler Survey Available Now:

*<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2007/November/110707.asp>

Weekly Quote – " Worm fishing teaches the beginner where trout lie in the streams. That alone makes it worth while. It also teaches him the ways of trout with bottom food, a necessary knowledge to successful wet fly and nymph fishing. While bait fishing the novice should carefully catalog locations and the incidents of his various expeditions in his mind for future reference. He will find such information invaluable when entering upon the higher branches of the art." - Ray Bergman

GOOD LUCK!