

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 11th – July 17th, 2008**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Steelheaders in the Columbia River gorge are not succeeding in catching high numbers of summer-run fish despite good numbers crossing Bonneville Dam. Peak passage of these fish will continue through the months of July and August. Fin-clipped steelhead, summer chinook jacks and shad remain open while all adult chinook and sockeye must now be released unharmed.

The Gorge is still producing oversized sturgeon but fresh shad to use for bait is becoming exceedingly more difficult to catch. Only a rare keeper is reported in the creel census. The Bonneville Pool sturgeon retention period comes to a close after Friday. The annual quota has been met.

Shad catches are spotty on the lower Willamette with the run nearly done for the season. Sturgeon fishing has been slow. Fly anglers on the Middle Fork Willamette are doing well for trout as the level drops.

Summer steelhead catch rates have improved on the North Santiam now that the flows are moderating.

A few steelhead have been caught on the Clackamas but they are scattered, making for spotty action.

Sandy anglers have been picking up fair numbers of spring chinook since the water cleared late last week.

The McKenzie flow has continued to moderate at Vida with the water temperature gradually rising into the low 50s. Fishing is good early and late in the day with the Caddis hatch in full swing on the lower river.

Scheduled for trout stocking are Big Cliff Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Carmen Reservoir, Clear Lake, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above and below Leaburg Lake, Salmon Creek and the North Santiam River above Detroit.

Northwest – Lower Columbia River plunkers found only fair success for steelhead on the last minus tide series. Softer tides this week will slow catches even further.

In the Columbia River below the Wauna Powerlines to the mouth, the first of three retention periods opens for sturgeon today through Saturday, with good prospects for quality fish. Catch and release fishing has been good out of Tongue Point with Sue Allen of Portland landing a 56-incher on July 5th.

Salmon fishing out of most north coast ports remains spotty and strong NW winds are keeping most anglers in port. Albacore tuna were last reported over 60 miles west of Garibaldi; out of reach for most of the sportfleet.

Although salmon and steelhead are available on the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca Rivers, low, clear water has most fish wary of any offerings reports **Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)**. Early morning and early evening are providing the best opportunities with small clusters of eggs and

spinners the best choices.

Ocean crabbing has improved recently with bay crabbing in Tillamook, Nehalem and Netarts a distant second.

Southwest – Soft tides this weekend will favor crabbing with prospects improving. Check for soft shells at this time of year.

North winds may keep boaters off the ocean this weekend on the central and south Oregon coast.

Tuna were caught out of Winchester Bay last week when ocean conditions allowed the required 70-mile trip offshore. Tuna will move closer to shore with warmer water. Smallmouth bass fishing has been good on the mainstem Umpqua, excellent on the South Umpqua.

Steelheaders on the upper Rogue are doing well and it will only get better into July.

Boaters heading out of Brookings Harbor had to travel further to find coho over the weekend, but when they did, fishing was good although a high percentage were wild, requiring release. Bottom fishing remains excellent.

Offshore anglers are reminded that as of July 7th, the rockfish bag limit is five per day and is restricted to 20 fathoms or less due to heavy pressure on bottomfish due to the ocean chinook closure.

Trout at Diamond Lake are gorging on nymphs now, making them a little tougher to tempt although persistent anglers have continued to take limits of fat, healthy fish.

Section 5 of the Rogue River is scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout.

Eastern – Fly anglers on the lower Deschutes will find caddis hatching in force this week with trout responding well to imitating patterns. The water has cleared below White River.

Steve Fleming (1-888-624-9424) reports the smallmouth bass fishery on the John Day is at its peak with motivated anglers having the opportunity of hooking over 100 fish for a day's effort. All manner of lures have been effective with soft plastics working best.

The Imnaha and Wallowa rivers opened to the retention of hatchery spring chinook on the Fourth of July. The Wallowa was high and cloudy over the weekend while the high water at the Imnaha has good color. Anglers may fish springers here through July 13th.

SW Washington – The Cowlitz and North Fork Lewis Rivers remain great prospects for summer steelhead. Sidedrifters are taking the bulk of the fish but bank anglers are also finding success near the trout hatchery on the Cowlitz.

The Klickitat River should begin to boot out steelhead. River conditions fluctuate with air temperatures in the Cascade Mountains so check flows before investing time into this fishery.

Protect your catalytic converter – for FREE

Many drivers of Toyota trucks have been targeted by thieves while parked at pullouts along several rivers the past couple of fishing seasons

The Tigard Police department is doing free catalytic converter engraving on Toyota vehicles on

Saturday, July 12th from 10 AM to 1 PM at the Public Works Building, 8777 SW Burnham St. in Tigard. All those who avail themselves of this service will receive a window decal to discourage would-be thieves. 'Can't beat the service - or the price!

Columbia River Fishing Report – Columbia River fishers that pursued steelhead on the great tides last week didn't fare as well as I had hoped. There were fair catches and anglers with extensive knowledge of this fishery did fare well. While one boat in the gorge lopsided the catch statistics with a creel of 7 steelhead (4 hatchery, 1 wild) and one summer Chinook released, the catch report from boats in the Portland to Westport stretch is a little more representative at 17 adipose fin-clipped summer steelhead kept, plus nine unclipped steelhead and two summer Chinook released for 46 boats. Bank anglers in the same stretch only landed 4 hatchery fish for 90 rods. Bank anglers in the section below Westport reported a dozen keeper steelhead for 32 rods.

Sturgeon fishing in the gorge remains best for oversized fish but fresh shad are becoming more difficult to harvest. Shad numbers at Bonneville are dropping significantly and it's a little early for hunting for floater shad. Only a rare keeper is being taken below the Marker 85 deadline.

In the estuary sturgeon fishery, it's been catch and release until today (7/10), with good catches of both keepers, shakers and an occasional just oversized fish. I fished on Saturday, July 5th with a mixed crew from Klamath Falls, Portland and California for about 6 hours, taking at least 20 fish from a spot above Tongue Point. At least 6 of those fish were keepers with half of them over 50 inches in length. We landed one fish that we estimated a little over 60 inches. All these fish were taken on sand shrimp as anchovies were not available for the little effort during the catch and release season. We were the only boat in the area although some of the credit has to go to the fact the weather was less than ideal. The following section will have more details on the current catch and keep forecast.

Ocean salmon fishing has been put on hold recently due to high NW winds that are making for rough ocean conditions. Wind waves coupled with a small swell are making fishing conditions challenging out of north coast ports. More on that also in the following section of this newsletter. Creel data from the previous week however indicate catch rates have jumped in this section of the coast with near .7 fish/rod reported. Chinook catches have improved every week but coho numbers still edge out Chinook with 197 coho and 122 retained in the previous weeks fishery.

Ocean crabbing remains spotty and is, of course catches are reflected by ocean weather. Most effort is taking place on the south side of the south jetty in 30 to 50 foot of water. The crabs, what few there are, are in good shape. River crabbing remains poor.

The Guide's Forecast – The weekend highlight will be the estuary sturgeon retention fishery already underway. Catches were good on the opener as expected and with both anchovies and shrimp available for bait, both produced good results. Water temperatures have reached the mid-60's, making for more active fish. The warmer water has also brought anchovies into the river and that's the reason why we're seeing a greater response to them as bait.

Both the above and below Astoria Bridge fisheries should produce good results. Sturgeon were well established along the green line and on lower Desdemona Flats prior to the closure and with a softer tide series now underway, that should still be the go-to place to catch keepers. Anchovies will work best in the deeper water but bring shrimp if you plan on fishing water shallower than 8 feet. Anchovies did seem to be present above Tongue Point when I fished up there last Saturday making them a good choice if you are looking in the upstream areas as well.

The ocean forecast is still calling for strong NW winds but the strongest winds are forecasted for waters south of Tillamook. No doubt there will be some NW winds in the northern portion of the

state, it's just a matter of whether or not we'll get a morning reprieve. My guess is that ocean anglers will be greeted with consistent winds all day but somewhat tolerable in the morning. Earlier is always better when ocean fishing for softer winds and more aggressive biters. Chinook catches may continue to slide in the coming weeks but coho catches should only improve from here. Both herring and anchovies should produce results.

Oregon coastal waters have reopened for mussel harvest but tides aren't very good for access to them this week. It's a better week for crabbing although the ocean still remains your best bet and is contingent on the weather.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – The flow over Willamette Falls has dwindled over the past week as the water temperature has risen into the high 60s. Water that warm is tough on anadromous fish but also means they won't spend any more time in the lower river than necessary, heading either to cooler water upstream or in the Clackamas.

The water level of the McKenzie remains a little high but is dropping with the temperature still a little cool. The river below Leaburg Lake will be boat-stocked with 5,250 legal-sized rainbows this week and has been fishing fairly well.

The North Santiam level is down sufficiently to fish well. Recycling of summer steelhead took place again on the South Santiam Monday this week with 284 summers getting trucked downstream.

The Guide's Forecast – The lower Willamette has been slow for sturgeon fishing with hookups for even smaller fish dropping off. Shad fishing is also slow at the tail end of the run in Oregon City.

Try the lower McKenzie this weekend with caddis patterns. It should be rewarding.

Anglers are picking up summer steelhead with the North Santiam in decent shape. Warmer water temperatures and reasonable flows have combined to create a good opportunity to score here this weekend. Trout fishing has also been quite good on the North Santiam but anglers should be aware that retention is only allowed above Big Cliff Dam.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Clackamas Fish Hatchery has counted nearly 800 spring Chinook so far this season. The Clackamas was fishing well over the 4th of July weekend, kicking out chrome springers and steelhead but action slowed this week. It's still the best bet in the metro area for summer steelhead. Be sure to try bobber & jig if targeting summers!

A few spring Chinook have been taken on the Sandy River this week but it's been spotty. Springers are upriver to Cedar Creek now and most are still in good shape.

North Coast Fishing Report – It hasn't been a high action week for the north coast as the best option remains the ocean fishery. In the previous week, a paltry 8 coho were reported for 153 angler trips. Rough weather has curbed ocean effort in recent days with no real reprieve in sight.

Only a few anglers remain diligent in search of fresh water spring Chinook on Tillamook Bay. Reports of Chinook are still coming from the jetty and the softer tide series this week makes this portion of the bay a strong favorite. The reality is however that the hatchery run is coming to a halt; it's simply getting pretty late in the season. **Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)** reports, "The Nestucca is Slow! There are a few Chinooks around, but they are really shifty, and mostly off the bite. Once again this year, the numbers are down. Same goes for summer steelhead. They are around, but it seems there just are not as many as in a normal year. Super small baits in the faster

water is the best approach. But, good luck, there just simply aren't that many fish here to be had. Have a great week!"

There was still some sturgeon effort in the estuary last week with the favorable tides we had but weaker tides this week will not offer that fishery up as a viable option.

The Guide's Forecast – Bank anglers may have the corner on this opportunity as both salmon and steelhead should be well distributed in the district's rivers. Best salmon bets will be on the Trask and Wilson Rivers where salmon should be hunkered down in the deeper holes and best pursued with bobber and bait. Steelhead will be residing in the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers, in the shallower, but broken surfaced areas of riffles and 4 to 6 foot slots. The better biters will be in the faster flows but some steelhead should fall to bobber and jigs in the deep, slower water.

The current weather pattern is forecasted to be with us through the weekend making ocean fishing a poor option as well. Details of the forecast are as follows:

FRI N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 6 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT.

FRI NIGHT N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT. PATCHY FOG AFTER MIDNIGHT.

SAT N WIND 20 TO 25 KT...EASING TO 15 TO 20 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 5 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT. PATCHY FOG IN THE MORNING.

SAT NIGHT N WIND 15 TO 20 KT WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT.

SUN N WIND 15 TO 20 KT WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

MON NW WIND 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT.

Central & South Coast Reports – Shad fishing picked up on the mainstem Umpqua as the water level dropped even though the run is winding down. The ongoing good news here is the smallmouth fishery, however, which is good and improving in the main river around Elkton and excellent in the South Umpqua. While the occasional steelhead or spring Chinook has been hooked on the North Umpqua, fishing is slow and the springers are coloring up. While windy conditions will keep boaters from crossing the bar until the weekend at the earliest, coho fishing out of Winchester Bay has been good and tuna were taken when the ocean was friendly enough to make a longer trip.

Anglers fishing offshore out of the Gold Beach area are taking remarkable numbers of ling cod. Those fishing the surf have been making good catches of perch. Bottom fishers targeting rockfish, cabezon and greenling are subject to a five-fish limit and must fish inside the 20-fathom line.

The upper Rogue is producing catches of spring Chinook and summer steelhead. Nearly 9,000 springers had crossed Gold Ray Dam as of the end of June and while that represents a modest run, it puts a decent number of salmon upstream. Rogue estuary trollers have seen an increase in Chinook catches over the past week with the fall run just getting underway. The Chinook restriction put in place to protect wild springers is over starting this weekend so salmon caught in the Rogue w lower will no longer have to be fin-clipped to keep although only clipped fish may be kept above Elephant Rock through July 31st. Dropping flows over the past week is likely to slow the movement of fish

somewhat. Trout fishing above Lost Creek Reservoir has been good as this stretch has been stocked weekly for a month.

Boaters launching out of Brookings have been scoring very good numbers of coho trolling near the surface over 300 or more feet of water. Limits are being taken although the majority of silvers coming over the gunwales have been wild which must be returned to the water. Hoochies in link or the popular purple haze have been responsible for the greatest number of hookups. Catches of blue and black rockfish are excellent.

Fishing became challenging this week as high winds, forecast to continue all this week, have kept boaters inside bays and estuaries. Since the opener on June 22nd, about 3,000 of the hatchery coho quota of 9,000 have been taken. The season is scheduled to remain open through August 31st but anglers are likely to fill the quota prior to that date.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Trout fishing has been fair on the Deschutes below Warm Springs, good below Trout Creek. Caddis patterns will be of primary interest to fly anglers (and fish) with Pale Morning Duns showing afternoons although hardware fishers are also doing well. Steelhead fishing should be good soon with counts at Bonneville nearly twice what they were at this time last year and over 1,000 have crossed The Dalles Dam.

The water level at Crane Prairie is the highest it's been in 10 years and while a few very large rainbows are being taken, fishing is only fair.

Kokanee fishing has been good at Green Peter with anglers also taking a few trout and landlocked Chinook.

Steve Fleming (1-888-624-9424) reports, "The John Day River is kicking out some big numbers of fish, and still a Master Angler (20"+) smallmouth now and then. The fishermen that stay on task are getting 100+ fish per day, but the average is 60 per fishermen. The water was 70 degrees at 8 AM yesterday, and warms up to 74 by late afternoon. The flow is slowing, but still around 1000 CFS. Still a couple of weeks to do the longer trips between Clarno and Cottonwood (71 river miles) in 4 to 8 days, or the shorter version, Thirtymile Creek (private access through Rattray Ranch, 541-384-4189) to Cottonwood (42 river miles) is 3-5 days.

"Everything is working: top water, buzz baits, spinnerbaits, Texas rigs, Split shot, Carolaina rigs, drop shot, you name it. The water is warm and the fish are busy biting. Fly fishing is going well, and those that can cast well, and work a fly rod are getting good numbers. A couple of weeks ago I had two clients that boated over 170 fly fishing in one day, but they were good fly fishermen. Still, it's a good time for the beginner to get out and get lots of bites and some hook ups.

"The Service Creek to Twickenham section is getting a little hard on hard boats, but still doable. Clarno Rapids is reduced to a series of big rocks and boulders. The Upper Basalt Rapids, should be lined around, but the rest is pretty simple.

"The number one bait is still Outlaw Baits 5" ripple tail worm in black, green pumpkin, pumpkin, electric grape, bluegill, watermelon, or white fished on a 1/8 oz jig head, covered with Smelly Jelly Craw Anise."

Northwest Trout – Scheduled for trout stocking in the Willamette Valley this week will include Big Cliff Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Carmen Reservoir, Clear Lake, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above and below Leaburg Lake, Salmon Creek and the North Santiam River above Detroit.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report July 9th – June 22nd

North Puget Sound

With summer's arrival, anglers have their pick of a number of fishing opportunities throughout the region. **Crab** and **chinook** fisheries are under way in Puget Sound, with additional salmon openings around the corner. And in the rivers, anglers can cast for chinook, as well as **sockeye** and **steelhead**.

On the Skagit, salmon fishing had been "fair to good," but recent heavy flows knocked the river out of shape, said Brett Barkdull, WDFW fish biologist. "Right now the Skagit is still a bit high but it is fishable," he said, adding that the Cascade River is very fishable.

The Skagit River is open for hatchery chinook retention from the Highway 530 bridge at Rockport to the Cascade River. On the Cascade, anglers can fish from the mouth of the river to the Rockport-Cascade Road Bridge. Both stretches are open through July 15.

Anglers fishing the Skagit and Cascade rivers have a daily limit of four hatchery chinook, two of which may be adults (chinook salmon at least 24 inches in length). Barkdull reminds anglers that statewide rules require anglers to stop fishing for salmon once they have two adults in their possession.

Recent high water also slowed **sockeye** fisheries on the Skagit and Baker rivers, said Barkdull. "Sockeye are coming in, but fishing has been up and down depending on the flows," he said. Anglers on each river have a daily limit of two sockeye salmon at least 12 inches in length. On the Skagit, the sockeye fishery is open from the Dalles Bridge to 200 feet above the east bank of the Baker River.

The Skagit and Baker are open for sockeye through July 31, except both rivers will be closed from 12:01 a.m. July 9 to 2 p.m. July 11, said Barkdull who suggests checking WDFW's *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) before heading out on the rivers.

Elsewhere, a portion of the Samish River is open, with a daily limit of two salmon. Beginning this year anglers fishing the Samish must follow the stationary gear rule, which requires the line, weight, lure or bait to be moving (not stationary) while in the water. Farther south, anglers on the Skykomish River are finding nice-size chinook and hooking some hatchery **steelhead**.

Out on the saltwater, salmon fishing started strong in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where anglers can keep one chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit. Catch counts on opening day (July 1) in the San Juans indicate 22 anglers at the Bellingham ramp checked seven chinook, while 36 at the Washington Park ramp brought home 13 chinook.

Beginning July 16, anglers will have other options as marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) open for hatchery chinook salmon retention. Anglers in those two areas will be allowed to keep hatchery chinook - marked with a clipped adipose fin - as part of a two salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook. Those fishing Marine Area 9 also must release wild coho and chum salmon, said Steve Thiesfeld, another WDFW fish biologist.

The chinook selective fisheries in marine areas 9 and 10 run through Aug. 15, or until the quota is reached. Thiesfeld reminds anglers that regulations vary for inner Elliott Bay, Sinclair Inlet and public fishing piers in those marine areas. 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 de-hooker 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/>.

Meanwhile, the **crab** fishery is going strong in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner), 9, 10, and the southern portion of 7. Fisheries in those areas - as well as the eastern portion of Marine Area 7, which opens July 16 - 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.

Before heading out, anglers should check the rules and regulations for all saltwater and freshwater fisheries in WDFW's *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

While **salmon** fishing has been slow in most areas along the coast, catch rates have been decent for anglers fishing along the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Elsewhere in the region, anglers can put a pot down for **crab** in Puget Sound or head to the Olympic Peninsula for **summer steelhead**.

On the coast, the **salmon** fishery got off to a hot start the first few days of July, but it dropped off later in the week, said Wendy Beeghley, WDFW fish biologist.

"Angler effort was highest out of Westport and most people were catching their two-fish daily limit on opening day of the coho season," Beeghley said. "Then success rates started going down mid-week and anglers were averaging about one fish a piece."

This situation is not uncommon on the ocean and while it's somewhat slower now, the fishing could pick up over the next few weeks, Beeghley said.

Success also depends on the weather, she said. "Even though it's sunny and pleasant on land, conditions on the water are often windy, making it tough for people to get out."

Meanwhile, the fishing has been fair off Ilwaco where anglers are catching about one chinook for every two coho. Farther north at La Push and Neah Bay, angler effort has been low and those going out are averaging less than one fish for every two people, Beeghley said.

Coastal fishing for all salmon species opened June 29 in marine areas 1 and 2 (Ilwaco and Westport) and July 1 in marine areas 3 and 4 (La Push and Neah Bay). Ilwaco and Westport are open Sundays through Thursdays; La Push and Neah Bay are open Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Anglers fishing these areas may keep two chinook, two coho or a combination of both as part of their two-fish daily limit. The minimum size for chinook is 24 inches and 16 inches for coho. All wild coho must be released.

On the Strait of Juan de Fuca, creel checks off Sekiu (Marine Area 5) showed 341 anglers catching 103 **chinook** salmon over the July 5 weekend, while 48 anglers fishing off Ediz Hook (Marine Area 6) caught 16 chinook salmon. Also, anglers fishing off Sekiu caught 25 **halibut** over the same weekend. Halibut fishing will remain open in Marine Area 5 through July 21 on Thursdays and Mondays only.

The salmon fisheries in marine areas 5 and 6 are open daily with a two-fish daily limit. All chum, wild chinook, and wild coho west of Ediz Hook must be released; all chum, all chinook and wild coho east of Ediz Hook must be released. Handling rules are in effect.

Beginning July 16, anglers will be allowed to keep **hatchery chinook** - marked with a clipped adipose fin - in marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle Bremerton). Anglers in each area will have a daily limit of two salmon, but must release all wild chinook. The chinook selective fisheries run through Aug. 15, or until the quota is reached.

"This fishery was very popular last year and we expect it to be good this year," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. Thiesfeld recommended fishing the mid-channel, Point No Point and Jefferson Head. He also advised anglers to get out early before the quota is met.

Anglers are advised to check the 2008-09 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> for more information on regulations and handling rules.

Salmon fishing remains sluggish in Marine Area 11 (Tacoma/Vashon Island), where effort was high over the July 5 weekend but creel checks at the Point Defiance ramp showed 343 anglers catching only 23 **chinook** and six **coho**.

Eight additional recreational **Dungeness crab** areas opened July 2, including marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 7 South (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception pass to East Point), 8-2 (East Point to Possession Point), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 12 (Hood Canal). Those areas are open Wednesdays through Saturdays only, plus Labor Day Weekend, closing the evening of Sept. 1.

Opening week catch results were mixed throughout Puget Sound, said Rich Childers, WDFW shellfish policy coordinator. "Participation was good overall and preliminary reports show that people were catching their limits in eastern and northern Puget Sound while catch rates were lower in southern Puget Sound," Childers said.

Crabbing is also 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, 2009.

Marine Area 7 East (Bellingham and Samish bays) will open for crab July 16 and Marine Area 7 North (Lummi Island/Blaine) will open Aug. 13. Both areas will be open Wednesdays through Saturdays only, plus the entire Labor Day weekend.

Crab fishers may take only male Dungeness crabs with shells measuring at least 6¼ inches. All undersized crab, female Dungeness crab and all soft-shell crab of either sex must be returned to the water.

Like last year, Puget Sound crab fishers are required to record their Dungeness crab catch on two separate catch record cards - one for the summer season and one for the fall/winter season. They also have the option of mailing in their catch cards or reporting on the Internet. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crabreg/crabindex>.

On the Olympic Peninsula, rivers in the Quillayute system are benefiting from plenty of rain this year, which is keeping the water high and fishable, said David Low, WDFW fish biologist. "While **salmon** anglers on the Sol Duc had some success earlier in the season, chinook catches have dropped off lately," Low said. **Steelhead** fishing may produce better results for anglers on the river, where a fair number of fish have started to show up since the July 1 opener, Low said.

Anglers may keep up to six salmon per day, but only two can be adults. All wild adult chinook and wild adult coho must be released through Aug. 31. Steelhead anglers may keep two hatchery steelhead per day. All wild fish must be released.

Meanwhile snow melt on the Hoh River is causing poor visibility for anglers and effort has been slow so far, Low said. Anglers on the Hoh may keep up to two hatchery steelhead per day. Salmon fishing is open Wednesdays through Sundays only with a limit of six fish per day. Only one adult may be retained and all wild chinook must be released. Low reminded anglers that selective gear rules are in effect July 1 through Aug. 31.

Southwest Washington:

Columbia River anglers have turned their attention to **white sturgeon** and **hatchery steelhead** now that the fisheries for adult summer chinook and sockeye salmon are over for the year. Sturgeon anglers can look forward to three added openings this month in the Columbia River estuary, as catch rates for hatchery steelhead continue to improve throughout the lower river.

With 4,200 **white sturgeon** still available for harvest in the estuary, fishery managers scheduled three additional openings from the Wauna powerlines downstream to the mouth of the Columbia River. The retention fishery in that area, which closed June 25, will reopen July 10-12, July 17-19 and July 26-27. As during the regular season, the daily limit is one legal-size sturgeon, measuring 45 to 60 inches.

"We're expecting a fairly large turnout for those openings," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "Sturgeon fishing was very good in the estuary last month, and it's likely to be good this month as well."

Catch rates have also been high for sturgeon in the Bonneville Pool - so high that the fishery is now scheduled to close at the end of the day July 11. During the first week of July, boat anglers

averaged a legal-size fish for every two rods, racing through the remainder of the 700-fish quota for that area, Hymer said. "It goes pretty fast at that rate," he said.

In addition to the openings coming up in the estuary, anglers still have an opportunity to catch and retain sturgeon Thursdays through Sundays from the Wauna powerlines upriver to Marker 85 below Bonneville Dam. The catch limit for that fishery - which is expected to remain open at least through July - is one white sturgeon, measuring 42 to 60 inches, per day.

Anglers fishing for **hatchery steelhead** have also been doing well on the lower Columbia River and several tributaries. During the first week of July, boat anglers fishing below Bonneville Dam averaged half a steelhead per rod, while bank anglers took home a fish for every 4.6 rods. Those fishing near the trout hatchery on the Cowlitz River did even better, reeling in a hatchery fish per rod.

"We're nearing prime time for hatchery steelhead fishing below Bonneville," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "The catch is increasing and shifting to upriver fish, which are a little smaller but bright as a chrome hubcap."

Hymer reminds anglers that the catch limit for steelhead has been increased to six hatchery fish per day on the Cowlitz and North Fork Lewis rivers, where hatcheries have met their broodstock requirements. Three rivers - the Cowlitz, Kalama, and Lewis - have also reopened for retention of hatchery-reared chinook salmon, although steelhead now make up the majority of the catch in those rivers. For more information on the new regulations for those rivers, see the WDFW rule change website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

Hymer reminds anglers that wild steelhead - identifiable by an intact adipose fin - must be released throughout the Columbia River Basin. "Some anglers have asked why there is a box for wild steelhead on their catch record card if they can't retain them," Hymer said. "The answer is that wild steelhead can be retained on a dozen rivers in Washington - most of them on the Olympic Peninsula - but none of them are in this region of the state."

Both catch and effort above Bonneville Dam were light for hatchery steelhead through the first week of July, but that is likely to change in the next few weeks, Hymer said. He noted that a third of a million upriver steelhead are expected to return to the Columbia River this year, and the tally at Bonneville Dam has been increasing day by day.

"The water has been fairly high and cold, which might slow the fish from turning into the Bonneville Pool tributaries to cool off," Hymer said. "But with more than 2,000 fish now passing Bonneville in a day, the action should start picking up soon."

Boat anglers fishing the Bonneville Pool have been averaging five **bass** per rod, while bank anglers have been averaging a bass apiece. Some **shad** are still being taken below Bonneville Dam, but the run - and the catch - is tapering off. Through July 6, just over two million shad had been counted at the dam, compared to 2.5 million last year.

For **trout** anglers, Hymer suggests Goose Lake in Skamania County, which was planted July 2 with 2,290 cutthroat weighing more than half a pound each. Anglers may also encounter some even bigger trout planted last year, he said. Bank anglers fishing Riffe Lake are catching mainly landlocked **coho** while those at Mayfield are catching primarily rainbows. Hatchery rainbows will continue to be planted throughout the summer in the Tilton River, Skate Creek, and Lake Scanewa (Cowlitz Falls Reservoir).

Snake River water levels are finally down and that means **sturgeon** fishing is picking up. WDFW Regional Fish Program Manager John Whalen reminds sturgeon anglers that it's catch-and-release only above Lower Granite Dam. Minimum size is 48 inches, maximum size is 60 inches, and the daily catch limit is one sturgeon.

Whalen also notes **kokanee** fishing is very good now at Loon Lake in southern Stevens County and Chapman Lake in southwest Spokane County. Deer Lake, just northeast of Loon, may be slow for kokanee but it's not bad for **smallmouth bass**, he said.

Chris Donley, WDFW central district fish biologist, said Sprague Lake continues to provide good catches of **rainbow trout** and an occasional big **channel catfish**. The catfish are 10-pounders that were returned to Sprague after last fall's lake rehabilitation treatment. Donley reminds Sprague anglers that the thousands of warmwater species that were recently stocked in the lake, such as **crappie**, **bluegill** and **largemouth bass**, are for future fishing and won't be in the catch this year.

Rainbow and **cutthroat trout** are still good bets very early and very late in the day at Amber, Badger and Williams lakes in southwest Spokane County. Donley reminds anglers that Amber is under selective gear rules with a two trout daily catch limit and a requirement to release all trout marked with a missing adipose fin. Other good trout fishing relatively close to Spokane can be found at Clear, Fish, Medical, and West Medical lakes in southwest Spokane County, Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County, and Rock lake in Whitman County.

Wherever anglers go at this time of year, WDFW officials urge caution with campfires and anything else that might inadvertently start a wildfire in vegetation that is drying out with summer heat.

Bob Jateff, WDFW district fish biologist from Omak, reported that fishing for **summer chinook salmon** on the mainstem Columbia River above the Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster has been slow. "The fishery opened on July 1 with a few fish in the 15-20-pound range caught on trolled herring," he said. "Fishing should improve considerably as more fish pass Wells Dam and move into the area off the mouth of the Okanogan River."

Jateff reminded anglers that **sockeye salmon** can also be retained this year and count as part of the daily two adult salmon catch limit. He also noted that starting July 16, an additional section of the river will be open for fishing, from Wells Dam upstream to the Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster. A night closure and non-buoyant rule restriction is in place for the Okanogan River from the mouth upstream to the first Highway 97 Bridge. Angler information signs will be posted at all boat launches.

Rainbow trout fishing in the Methow River Valley has also been slow, Jateff reported, as river levels continue to be somewhat high due to runoff and recent rains. Selective gear rules are in effect as well as catch-and-release-only rules. Anglers should check the regulation pamphlet carefully because the Methow, Twisp and Chewuch rivers have certain areas that are closed to all fishing.

Lake fishing in the Okanogan has been good, Jateff noted, with reports of trout being caught in the 14-inch range at most of the selective gear lakes, such as Little and Big Twin lakes near Winthrop, Big and Little Green lakes near Omak, and Rat Lake near Brewster. Aeneas Lake, a fly-fishing only water, received a plant of 500 triploid rainbow trout that run up to two pounds each and should provide good angling opportunity. Chopaka Lake, rehabilitated in fall 2007, received catchable-size rainbows this spring and is now producing good catches of 14-15-inch fish.

Jateff also reported fishermen are having good luck with **bluegill** and **crappie** in Leader Lake near Okanogan and with **yellow perch** in Patterson Lake near Winthrop. **Smallmouth bass** anglers are doing well in Palmer Lake near Loomis and in the Okanogan River. **Largemouth bass** are the main species in Whitestone Lake near Tonasket.

Wherever anglers go at this time of year, WDFW officials urge caution with picnic or campfires, and anything else that might inadvertently start a wildfire in vegetation that is lush from spring rains but drying out with summer heat.

South Central Washington:

Eric Anderson, WDFW fish biologist from Yakima, reported Lost Lake in Kittitas County was finally planted with over 1,000 triploid **rainbow trout** that run about one-and-a-half pounds each. "Our fish planting was delayed due to snow blocking access to this popular back country lake near Snoqualmie Pass," Anderson said.

Anderson noted that more trails are opening up in the mountains so anglers can finally start planning high lake fishing trips. "But check trail conditions first," he said. "Not all trails are accessible at the very remote, high elevation lakes. Check with the Forest Service District Ranger Station for the area you plan to visit."

For other information about catchable-size trout plants in lowland and high lakes check the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>. For high lake fish plants in the Yakima basin see http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg3/r3_highlakes.htm.

Anderson also noted stream fishing conditions continue to improve as water levels drop and the water clears. He recommended checking the fishing regulations pamphlet for special stream rules.

Reader Email -

Reader 'C.W.' asked via the message board at the TGF website, "what is happening with the shad? Willamette, Columbia?"

TGF co-editor Michael Teague replied, "I cover the Willamette beat and can tell you the shad fishery in Multnomah Channel at Coon Island never did heat up this year. Shad fishing has been somewhat better at Oregon City but it's slowing as the run is winding down at this time of year. It's still possible to catch a dozen or more in a day, but you'd better get there soon. You'll still have plenty of company if you do.

"Good luck on the water."

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

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Rogue River dam in Southern Oregon to come down:

<http://www.oregonlive.com/newsflash/regional/index.ssf?/base/news-25/121519044420250.xml&storylist=orlocal>

Important information for boaters:

<http://www.boatblue.org/takeaction.aspx>

Weekly Quote –

The important part of fishin' ain't the fish but the fishin',

The important part of lovin' is the love.

The important part of doin' most anything you're doin',

Is doin' it with all of your heart. - Tim Bays, from Fishing Music

GOOD LUCK!