

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **August 1st – August 7th, 2008**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Effort continues to drop for sturgeon in the Columbia River Gorge but oversized sturgeon are still available. The sanctuary above Marker 85 to the Bonneville Dam deadline opens up on August 1st and action should be good for mostly oversized fish. Fishery managers gave anglers additional days to pursue keepers upstream of the Wauna Powerlines. There will be no August and September closure so anglers are allowed to retain sturgeon between 42 and 60 inches in the same 4 day window, Thursday through Sunday. The keeper fishing likely won't pick up again until early fall.

Steelhead are still climbing the Bonneville fish ladder in great numbers. Catch in the gorge was best during the weak tide series but should improve downriver as bigger tide swings greet anglers this weekend.

Willamette water temperature is in the low 70's - conducive to bass fishing. The occasional keeper sturgeon has been taken in the lower river at Oregon City, but use caution in this stretch with the water level low.

Bait has been most effective on the North Santiam where water level is good but steelheading is spotty. Steelheading has been picking up on the South Santiam.

Cloudy mornings have been boosting results for fly anglers on the McKenzie River. Caddis are hatching well with nymphs and dry flies taking fish all day.

Bobber and jigs have fooled a few steelhead on the Clackamas, but it's been slow.

Anglers fishing high on the Sandy continue to take spring chinook that are in good condition. Steelheading has been slow to fair.

On the trout planting schedule this week are Breitenbush River, Clear Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake and Quartzville Creek.

Northwest – August 1st marks the opener of the Buoy 10 season in the lower Columbia River estuary. Salmon behave differently every year but consistently, the best fishing takes place beginning around mid-month. Chinook are typically the first to arrive but can be hard to target in the lower river. Many anglers are discouraged by extensive offshore salmon closures but salmon returns to the Columbia River are expected to top half a million in the coming weeks.

Ocean salmon fishing out of the mouth of the Columbia has slowed since the middle of last week. Limits have been hard to come by but anglers are reporting larger than average fish available. Available quotas north of Cape Falcon are likely to take angling opportunity into mid-month at least.

Albacore tuna have been taken in good numbers about 35 miles west of Buoy 10 near Astoria. Anglers first locate them by trolling tuna clones and then cast swim baits to concentrate the schools toward the boat. Water temperature is key to success and anglers are looking for water warmer than 60 degrees.

The halibut sport fishery off the Columbia River (Cape Falcon to Leadbetter Pt., WA) is open Aug. 1-2.

South of Cape Falcon to the California border, almost 50% of the coho quota has been taken. With only 9,000 fish available, it's an indication that both fishing and ocean conditions have been challenging. Calmer seas are forecasted to return by the weekend.

Although river levels are unlikely to rise, cloud cover and cooler temperatures should improve steelheading on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Spring chinook are beginning to turn color although anglers are still encouraged to harvest hatchery fish on the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca Rivers.

Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411) reports, that salmon fishing off of Newport and Depoe is very slow, hardly any boats going out. Halibut fishing was fair last weekend although fish were running small.

Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944) reports from the Siuslaw area that silver ocean fishing is SLOW. Crabbing is very slow in the ocean and terrible inside the mouth.

Southwest – Offshore forecasts have the wind shifting to the northwest this weekend and the ocean staying fairly mild. Conditions improve for ports further south.

The all-depth halibut sport fishery off central Oregon (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt.) will re-open Aug. 1-3.

Anglers launching out of Winchester Bay recently have found action for coho slowing. Sturgeon are being caught in the estuary but most are oversize. Smallmouth bass fishing is in full swing in the mainstem and South Umpqua.

Boats had to travel 50 to 60 miles out of Coos Bay over the weekend to catch only a few albacore.

Chinook catches picked up in Rogue Bay last week and into the weekend, with a few of fish topping the 40-pound mark.

Coho fishing has been fair to good out of Brookings with the fish growing rapidly in prime ocean conditions. Tuna required a boat ride of 40 to 50 miles over the past weekend.

The Chetco River is closed to steelheading but open for trout. The river will open for fall chinook fishing in September.

Diamond Lake has continued to fish very well with the south end remaining best for larger fish.

Loon Lake and Section 5 of the Rogue River are scheduled to be stocked with trout.

Eastern – Pro Guide Steve Fleming (1-888-624-9424) reports that John Day River continues to drop slowly, but the fishing is great and that they are biting on anything, but some colors better than others.

The lower Deschutes is fishing best for trout in the early mornings. Cloudy weather this week should extend the productive fishing time somewhat. Steelhead are running upriver in excellent

numbers, giving anglers reason for optimism on the Deschutes. Anglers are experiencing fair steelheading now but results will improve in August.

SW Washington – Steelhead remain the main focus for SW Washington anglers. The Cowlitz and Lewis Rivers are still producing but anglers working the mouth of the Cowlitz are not finding the success they have in years past due to channel modifications.

Bank anglers working Columbia River beaches this weekend should find favorable results.

WDF&W reported great catches of steelhead at the mouth of the White Salmon River last week for anglers using prawns. Drano Lake has slowed.

Columbia River Fishing Report – With the recent closure of the estuary sturgeon fishery, my job as a writer gets a lot easier. The fishery closed with a bang and surely exceeded the estuary's allowable catch of just over 13,000 keepers. Fishery managers decided they would take the additional quota out of the upper river component but simultaneously modified the season extending the 4-day per week fishery into August and September. More on that later.

Reports of good success from estuary anglers were consistent for the Saturday opener from both upstream and downstream of the Astoria/Megler Bridge. More recently, action for catch and release fishing has been very good as well. One guide reported landing about 20 fish on the morning tide on 7/30 on the shallow water of the shipping channel (Oregon side) using shrimp and anchovies for bait. The guide also witnessed numerous fish rolling and finning near the boat indicating there were a lot of fish present. Water temperatures are warming but that doesn't seem to be slowing the action at all. It likely will have detrimental impacts on the population when the gillnet season gets underway in early August however. Warm temperatures are not conducive to high survival rates when undersize and oversize sturgeon get turned back.

Salmon fishing in the area has been hit or miss in the ocean recently. Ocean anglers have had a bit of a challenging time in the last few days being comfortable on the ocean but boats did go out on 7/30 and found great fishing out of the mouth of the Columbia Rivers. Some 6 passenger boats made their way back to port by 9:00 a.m. with limits of coho and a few Chinook. One charter boat reported catching several larger Chinook by fishing north of the mouth of the river. Traditionally, this is where the bulk of Columbia River bound Chinook are returning from.

Prior to the 30th, anglers were struggling to find good catches but one boat reported better than average catches last Sunday by fishing north of the mouth of the Columbia in about 350 feet of water. The captain landed 3 fish by 10:30 south of the Columbia but then went north in the calm seas. After finding birds working the surface for bait several miles west of land, he dropped in the baits and had another 3 keeper salmon in no time flat. He noted that the fish were clearly preferring plug-cut herring over anchovies and that has been rather consistent all season. He also noted the fish were quite robust for this time of the year with some of the hatchery coho pushing 10 and 11 pounds! That's a great sign for several reasons! The water temperature was about 56 degrees in the southern water and nearly 59 degrees to the north.

Salmon quotas for the area north of Cape Falcon (Manzanita) to Leadbetter Point (top of Long Beach) are almost half way through their allowable impacts. Fishery managers are tracking both Chinook and coho catches. The Chinook catch is a guideline and the coho catch is an actual quota. Chinook guidelines are almost never met in this fishery area. We'll be fishing into mid-August it certainly looks like. Catch rates for this area are still hovering around .74 keepers per

angler but almost half of the reported catch are wild fish or undersized Chinook which are promptly returned to the ocean.

Upriver, steelhead fishing remains good although beach plunkers didn't have great opportunities this week due to a poor tide series. Gorge anglers ruled the roost this week as dam counts continue to impress onlookers. Bank anglers in the gorge tallied 34 steelhead caught (just over half of those were hatchery keepers) for 78 rods. Boat anglers in the same section checked 9 hatchery fish and 5 wild ones for 6 boats. It's pretty consistent fishing in the gorge right now, especially when poor tides lock out bank anglers downstream.

As previously mentioned, sturgeon anglers upstream of the Wauna Powerlines divide got some additional opportunity through the summer months. The informational release reads:

The Compact adopted the following rules at the July 24 Joint State Hearing for the sturgeon sport fishery above Wauna power lines (RM 40) upstream to Bonneville Dam, including all adjacent Washington tributaries, and the lower Willamette River (including the Multnomah Channel) upstream to Willamette Falls for 2008:

- Allow the retention of white sturgeon four days per week on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday during January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008 (**including August and September**).
- Prohibit the retention of sturgeon three days per week on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday during January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008.
- Retention of green sturgeon is prohibited as per permanent regulations.
- Daily and annual catch limits listed in the 2008 Oregon Sport Regulations pamphlet remain in effect.

Keeper fishing in the area continues to be slow and likely won't pick up again until mid-September. Oversize action continues to be good although fresh bait is still hard to come by. Effort remains low but the fish are still present and should be into the fall months.

The Guide's Forecast – With many anglers anticipating the opening of the Buoy 10 fishery, salmon is once again on the minds of many. Unjustified amounts of bad press however will likely create little optimism in Oregon's signature fishery with most anglers still motivated to intercept salmon in the ocean environment. Needless to say, the Buoy 10 opener is likely to be a snoozer. Couple this with the upcoming gillnet openers in the area and it will be hard to get motivated for a fishing trip in the area. If you do go however, please document all the floating dead sturgeon you see by taking photos of them. Send them to Bob Rees at brees@pacifier.com so I can catalog them for future use in an effort to curb this bad management practice.

The ocean fishing should be improving and already seems to be showing signs of that. Ocean weather will certainly dictate effort. The forecast for this weekend states:

FRI SW WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 6 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF RAIN OR DRIZZLE IN THE MORNING.

FRI NIGHT W WIND 10 TO 15 KT...EASING TO 5 TO 10 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

SAT W WIND 5 TO 10 KT...BECOMING NW 10 TO 15 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

SAT NIGHT NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

SUN NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

MON NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

Catch and release sturgeon opportunities in the Columbia River estuary should be excellent this weekend with favorable tides keeping sturgeon on the hunt. In the deep water, fish anchovies for bait although they should work on the shallower flats as well but take sand shrimp along if you plan on fishing shallow waters, especially upstream of Tongue Point.

Upriver, bank anglers should enjoy the good morning tides this week as plunking for steelhead should be in full swing. Numbers of fish will likely continue to impress biologists and reward anglers. Hot colored spin-n-glos in reds, oranges and pinks will continue to be the ticket but fish them close to shore where calorie counting adults will be migrating. The beaches between Tenasillahe Island and Sauvies Island should produce fair results this weekend.

Gorge steelheaders should continue to do good on plugs and spinners. Target fish in 6 to 12 feet of water depending on flow rates. Mornings always prove to be most productive.

Despite the additional days allotted sturgeon anglers in this gorge and downstream to the Wauna Powerlines, fishing for keepers will be challenging.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Online data for the lower Willamette has not been updated for two weeks. Odd, too, since the sure aren't backed up counting fish. It's a sure bet that the water temperature is in the 70s and at mid-July, the daily numbers were dwindling.

Flow at the McKenzie has leveled off and the temperature is steady, holding around 52 degrees at Vida. The level is good for angling.

Both the North and South Santiam rivers are running higher than normal for this time of year, although both are quite fishable. Trucking of hatchery summer steelhead from the trap at Foster downstream to run again on the South Santiam has been a weekly event on the South Santiam through July. Nearly 3,500 summers have been recycled this year.

The Guide's Forecast – The low, warm water of the lower Willamette isn't appealing to very many anglers. Some are catching a few smallmouth bass but this time of year is tough even when the conditions are good. Sturgeon fishing has slowed with fewer undersized fish being caught and released. The only report of a keeper over the last retention period came from Oregon City but use caution below the Falls as there is some vertical rocky structure that could do serious damage to a boat hull. Stay near the east bank if you try it.

Steelheaders are reporting slow fishing on the North Santiam despite decent conditions. It has just been tough to tempt these finicky fish despite the fact there are good numbers in the river. Try small baits of roe or a sand shrimp tail. A few are being taken daily. It has been very slow on the South Santiam.

The upper McKenzie is fishing well for catch-and-release of wild trout. See Random Links, below, for information on the McKenzie River Trail.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – The Clackamas is producing summer steelhead for those fishing deeper areas early and late in the day. Spinners or jigs tipped with a

bit of sand shrimp have been effective. The hatchery has had nearly 400 return so far this season, almost all of which were trucked downstream to Riverside Park to run again. Since the water has topped the 60-degree mark, fishing has slowed. Spring Chinook fishing has wrapped up here although there are a few in Eagle Creek.

There are very good numbers of fish in the Sandy right now but they're been challenging. Bait has been most effective in encouraging them to bite. Anglers will find a mix of steelhead along with hatchery and wild spring Chinook. Springer are in mixed condition; some are landing bright fish but the majority are turning dark.

North Coast Fishing Report – It's been another slow week for anglers looking for action on this part of the coast. With rough ocean conditions and poor coho fishing south of Cape Falcon, anglers are restricting themselves to inshore halibut opportunities and rockfishing. Action has been fair for both species and anglers will get another crack at an all-depth season from August 1 – 3. The fishing should be good but angler observation indicates that most of the fish are rather small this year. Ocean forecasts should be tolerable for long range distances. Albacore tuna still seem to be pretty far offshore south of Cape Falcon.

Inland, rivers remain low despite a little precipitation that fell earlier this week. Summer steelhead and spring Chinook remain available but challenging conditions on north coast anglers is keeping crowds away.

There is some sturgeon effort taking place in the Tillamook River tidewater although few keepers are being taken. Mud shrimp is the preferred bait.

The Guide's Forecast – For convenience sake, we have re-posted the ocean forecast here:

FRI SW WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 6 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF RAIN OR DRIZZLE IN THE MORNING.

FRI NIGHT W WIND 10 TO 15 KT...EASING TO 5 TO 10 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

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MON NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

Coho action should be improving but to date, the fishery has under-performed and doesn't show any sign of really rebounding. Only effort will tell but maybe halibut anglers will put in an effort on their return home from the offshore halibut grounds.

Savvy, low-water anglers should still target steelhead in the shallow riffles with small baits and spinners. The deep, slow holes should also hold less motivated steelhead that may respond to bobber and jigs. The Nestucca and Wilson Rivers offer up the best chances at fish.

Central & South Coast Reports – Warm water is moving closer to the beach off the central and southern Oregon coast. This has many boaters getting excited about prospecting for albacore. Closer, however, is not close and this is not a trip to be undertaken lightly, by an inexperienced skipper or under-equipped boat. It's likely to be a run of no less than 40 miles and probably 40 or more. That said, there are those making plans to do it out of Depoe Bay, Newport, Charleston and Winchester Bay. Tuna have been taken out of all these ports this year but they've been far offshore.

This weekend looks to be fair for crossing the bars into the ocean. There's a mild to moderate wind forecast and only small swells are predicted. Morning minus tides can make for a difficult crossing in the best of conditions so plan for it and use caution.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday are the first days for the summer season all depth halibut so there is an option if tuna are out of reach. The third (and best) option is to do both! Just keep safety as the highest priority.

Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411) reports, "Bob, not much to report. Salmon fishing off of Newport and Depoe is very slow, hardly any boats going out. Halibut fishing was fair last weekend, mostly a lot of the chicken size halibut caught at both the south and north end of the Rockpile. There is another halibut opener this upcoming weekend, but the weather forecast is not very promising. Oh has for tuna, when out 55 miles out of Depoe the other and never even had a strike."

With baitfish and krill abundant in a healthy ocean, coho are putting on weight rapidly. Most are running well over the 10-pound mark. As of the latest weekly update, 47.5% of the ocean coho quota had been taken, with the better numbers coming to anglers launching out of Winchester Bay. How long this fishery continues will be primarily weather-dependent.

Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944) reports from the Siuslaw, "Just got back from the Togiak River (Bristol Bay area). Cold and wet summer with a lot of high water. Fishing was OK, some good days for kings but many scratch fishing days.

"As for the central coast, silver ocean fishing is SLOW. Crabbing is very slow in the ocean and terrible inside the mouth. Wish I could say more. I'd expect a chinook or 2 to show up in the river though within the next couple of weeks. Will keep you posted."

Smallmouth bass anglers continue to score in the mainstem Umpqua where fishing is heating up above Scottsburg. The South Umpqua is offering world-class fishing for smallies while the North Umpqua offers summer steelhead and spring Chinook with catches fair to good. Fishing for summer steelhead has been good, particularly early mornings. Some anglers really have this fishery dialed in and are limiting on nearly every trip.

Trollers in Rogue Bay are taking fall Chinook daily. The light effort may be due in part to anglers awaiting catch rates to rise above the current 20 to 30 per day. The annual bag limit is 10 fall Chinook. Anchovy trolled with a green spinner blade at the front is the preference of trollers and it is effective here. Catches are coming from the Highway 101 Bridge to the bar and evening fishing has been best. The Grants pass stretch has been slow for steelhead and Chinook. It will be a hatchery steelhead only fishery on the upper Rogue starting Friday with spring Chinook closing on August 1st.

It's worth mentioning that with the Rogue flow at twice the average rate this year due to heavy snowmelt, extra caution is advised to those drifting the upper river. A third person lost their life

last weekend despite wearing a PFD. The same hazard appears to be responsible in each incident, a rock that's normally underwater at Blossom Bar. It's best to avoid this area.

Surf perch in the Gold Beach area continue to reward beach fishers with slab pinkfin weighing two pounds or better.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Pro Guide Steve Fleming (1-888-624-9424) reports "The John Day River continues to drop slowly, but the fishing is great. Lots of fish with an occasional big one. They are biting on anything, but some colors better than others. The fish are all fat, and very active. They seem to be feeding in the slight current areas lately, on something that is flowing down river. Usually they are in the back eddies, but now they are more in the current. The best set up is the Outlaw Bait 5" Ripple tails (black, green pumpkin, electric grape, watermelon, and white) fished on a 1/16 oz jighead, covered with Smelly Jelly Craw/Anise."

Deschutes anglers should find prospects for spring Chinook improving along with water conditions at Sherars Falls. Plunking the holes below the falls has been effective when the water level has allowed. Steelhead are being taken from Mack's Canyon to the mouth and with counts at Bonneville nearly twice those of 2007, it should be a good season. Heck, it's good now, and there's a three-fish limit, one of which can be a Chinook. Trout anglers continue to do well on the lower river although the caddis hatches have dwindled somewhat. When the water heats up here, so will the fishing. The middle Deschutes will get pretty skinny in August to offer mush to anglers. It's offering fair fishing now to fly anglers throwing attractor patterns.

Anglers did well at the kokanee derby that was held at Green Peter over the past weekend. Trollers did best, landing kokes running 14 to 16 inches and fat. The first place, five fish limit was one-tenth away from seven pounds.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report July 23rd - August 5th, 2008

North Puget Sound

Several summer fisheries are open, including **crab** and **sockeye**, but the biggest draw to the region is the popular mark-selective fisheries for hatchery **chinook salmon** in the marine areas of central Puget Sound.

Selective fisheries in marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) started much slower than last year, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "Catch rates are definitely down in both areas this year," he said. "But anglers are still finding bright fish in some areas."

Anglers fishing the northern end of Admiralty Inlet - the Port Townsend area - have had the best results, said Thiesfeld. During the first opening weekend of the fishery (July 19-20), anglers in marine area 9 averaged about one legal chinook for every six rods, while those fishing Marine Area 10 averaged one keeper for every 20 rods.

Anglers in marine areas 9 and 10 are allowed to keep hatchery chinook - marked with a clipped adipose fin - as part of a two salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook. Those fishing Marine Area 9 also must release wild coho and chum salmon. Beginning Aug. 1, anglers fishing in Marine Area 10 must release chum.

The chinook selective fisheries in those two marine areas are open through Aug. 15, or until the quota is reached. "At the current catch rate, it looks like the selective fisheries will continue into August," he said. "But this is a quota fishery, so I've been encouraging anglers to get out on the water while they still have the opportunity."

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 dehooker to remove the hook.
- Cut the leader if the fish has swallowed the hook.
- Avoid touching or handling the fish, especially around the eyes and gills.
- Support the entire length of the fish if it must be lifted out of the water. Do not lift the fish by the tail or jaw.
- Gently place the fish back in the water.

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

Elsewhere, Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) is open for salmon. Anglers can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit. Beginning Aug. 1, anglers in Marine Area 7 must release wild coho and chum salmon.

Farther south, salmon fisheries in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) get under way Aug. 1. Once those fisheries open, anglers in the two marine areas must release all chinook.

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 eastern and southern portion of 7. Fisheries in those areas are open on a Wednesday-through-

Saturday schedule, plus the entire Labor Day weekend. See WDFW's sport-crabbing website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>) for more information.

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

Before heading out on the water, 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

Salmon catch rates have been fair along the coast and eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca, but the season has yet to take off in south Puget Sound. On the other hand, **crab** fishers have been getting their limits in almost every area and **halibut** anglers will get a few more days of fishing along the coast.

Anglers fishing for salmon have been doing fairly well off Ilwaco and Westport (marine areas 1 and 2) where recently the average has been about one fish per person, said Doug Milward, WDFW ocean salmon manager. "In Ilwaco, people are mainly catching **coho**, while the catch at Westport is about half **chinook** and half coho," Milward said.

Along the north coast (marine areas 3 and 4) recent effort has been light with catch rates ranging from fair to poor, Milward said. "There hasn't been much action, and people going out are averaging about one fish per rod off La Push and one fish for every two rods in Neah Bay." In both areas, anglers are landing about one coho salmon for every two chinook, Milward said.

Ilwaco and Westport are open for salmon fishing 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. Starting Aug. 1, anglers fishing east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line in Marine Area 4B (Neah Bay) may retain hatchery coho only. All chinook, all wild coho and chum must be released.

Anglers planning to launch their boats in South Bend are advised of an error in the Willapa River listing in the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet. The boat launch referenced as the downstream boundary for the Willapa River fishery is operated by Pacific County, not WDFW. For that reason, anglers using that facility should be prepared to pay a launch fee.

On the Strait of Juan de Fuca, recent creel checks at Sekiu (Marine Area 5) showed 456 anglers catching 65 chinook salmon over the July 19 weekend, while 84 anglers fishing near Port Angeles (Marine Area 6) caught 20 chinook. Anglers fared better further east near Port Townsend (Marine Area 9) where the average was about one fish for every 2.5 rods.

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.

Fishing has improved along the west coast of Vancouver Island and the San Juan Islands and Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist, is hopeful that the **salmon** fishing will soon pick up in south Puget Sound, where catch rates have remained low since the July 1 opener. Recent creel checks taken near Point Defiance (Marine Area 11) showed one in ten anglers landing a fish.

"The numbers show anglers getting half the catch rate as they were last year," Thiesfeld said. "Hopefully the fish coming in through northern Puget Sound will start showing up down south, but we're definitely having a slow start."

Anglers will get at least one more day to catch **halibut** on the north coast when marine areas 3 and 4 (La Push and Neah Bay) reopen July 26. The nearshore area will be open shoreward of 30 fathoms deep and anglers may fish at all depths in area 4B (Cape Flattery to the Sekiu River).

The fishery may reopen Aug. 1, if enough quota remains, said Heather Reed, WDFW coastal policy coordinator.

"There's a small chance we could offer another nearshore fishing day after the 26th," Reed said. "Once we get that day's catch data, we'll announce it as soon as possible."

In Marine Area 1, the halibut fishery off Ilwaco will reopen Friday, Aug. 1 and Saturday, Aug. 2. The rules for that area prohibit fishing for, retaining or possessing bottomfish, except sablefish and Pacific cod while halibut is on board.

The only recreational halibut fishery remaining open on an ongoing basis is the nearshore fishery in Marine Area 2 (Westport), which is open Fridays and Saturdays.

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.

Meanwhile, the **Dungeness crab** fishery appears to be going well in all marine areas except Hood Canal (Marine Area 12), said Rich Childers, WDFW shellfish policy coordinator. "There's a high abundance of crab in many areas of Puget Sound and people are easily getting their limits," Childers said. "The exception is Hood Canal where the numbers are low even compared to last year."

Crab fisheries in marine areas 6,7-South/East, 8-1, 8-2, 9, 11, and 12 are open on a Wednesday-through-Saturdays schedule, plus Labor Day Weekend. Crabbing is open seven days a week in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge) through Jan. 2, 2009.

Marine Area 7 North (Lummi Island/Blaine) will open Aug. 13, Wednesdays through Saturdays, plus Labor Day weekend.

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 are running low and clear and fishing has been intermittent on area rivers, said Rick Erath, WDFW fish biologist. "Summer **steelhead** have been showing up in the north ponds of the Calawah River, but many streams have dropped down and could use some rain."

Several area rivers will open for salmon fishing in the coming weeks, with the Skokomish River in Mason County and the Naselle and Willapa rivers in Pacific County opening Aug. 1. The Puyallup River in Pierce County and the Quilcene River in Jefferson County open Aug. 16.

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 boundaries and regulations.

Southwest Washington:

Anglers are catching limits of **hatchery steelhead** from the Cowlitz River to the White Salmon River, as others prepare for the fall salmon season that opens Aug. 1 at Buoy 10 and other

waters around the Columbia River Basin. But a more immediate issue is the sturgeon opening set for the weekend of July 26-27 in the lower Columbia below the Wauna powerlines.

Faced with heavy fishing effort and high catch rates below Wauna, fishery managers from Washington and Oregon are concerned that the catch during that weekend could exceed the area catch guideline. Fishery managers from both states have scheduled a joint hearing July 24 at 9 a.m. to discuss fishing seasons for sturgeon both below and above the powerlines.

"Anglers planning to fish for sturgeon in the lower Columbia River during the July 26-27 weekend should check on the outcome of that meeting before they head out," said Brad James, a WDFW fish biologist. Anglers can check for updates on the WDFW website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/>) or by calling the Fishing Hotline at (360) 902-2500.

Meanwhile, anglers continue to reel in summer-run hatchery steelhead on the Columbia River and several tributaries. Fishing remained good around the trout hatchery on the Cowlitz River, where 78 boat anglers were checked with 63 hatchery steelhead in their creels during the week ending July 20. On the mainstem Columbia River below Bonneville Dam, boat anglers averaged one fish for every 2.3 rods while bank anglers caught a fish for every 3.5 rods.

But with approximately 6,000 steelhead now moving past the dam each day, a lot of the action has been moving upriver to Drano Lake and the White Salmon River, said Joe Hymer, another WDFW fish biologist.

"With water levels dropping and temperatures rising, success rates have started to cool off in the lower river and more fish are moving upriver," Hymer said. "But we're just nearing the peak of the upriver run, so there should still be plenty of good steelhead fishing throughout the river."

Not to mention salmon fishing. Starting Aug. 1, fall salmon seasons will open on the Columbia River and area tributaries with some notable differences from last year, said Cindy LeFleur, WDFW Columbia River policy coordinator.

In all, 376,800 adult fall chinook are expected to return to the Columbia River this year, compared to 219,600 last year, LeFleur said. But to protect weak runs, including those listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), fishery managers adopted new conservation measures for some areas, while providing more fishing time in others.

Like the Buoy 10 fishery, for example. Under this year's rules, anglers fishing will have the entire month of August - plus Labor Day - to catch and keep chinook salmon during the Buoy 10 fishery near the mouth of the Columbia River. That compares to just 12 days last year. On the other hand, anglers will be required to release all chinook salmon intercepted from Rocky Point/Tongue Point to Bonneville Dam, except during a retention fishery set for September 1-16.

These fishing seasons in the lower Columbia River are designed to conserve ESA-listed chinook salmon bound for the Lewis and Snake rivers, while focusing the fishery on abundant upriver brights returning to hatcheries above Bonneville and wild fish headed for the Hanford Reach, LeFleur said.

"The goal is to target those healthy upriver hatchery stocks, which tend to bite well when they first enter the river," LeFleur said. "We're also expecting a strong return of chinook reared in net pens in select areas throughout the lower river."

Chinook fisheries in several tributaries to the Columbia River will also be affected by new measures adopted during the annual North of Falcon season-setting process. For the first time,

for example, mark-selective fishing rules will be in effect for chinook jacks on eight rivers, requiring anglers to release chinook salmon less than 24 inches long that are not adipose fin clipped hatchery fish.

Columbia River tributaries affected by new fishing rules that take effect Aug. 1 include:

- **Lewis River and fall chinook sanctuary:** Anglers will be required to release all chinook salmon intercepted on the Lewis River, where wild chinook returns are expected to reach only about half of the 5,700-fish escapement goal. The requirement to release chinook will be in effect in the Lewis River, the North Fork Lewis River and in an eight-mile area of the Columbia River near the mouth of the river that is defined in the fishing rule pamphlet. Fishing for hatchery coho and hatchery steelhead will remain open, but fishing from boats will be prohibited on the North Fork Lewis from Johnson Creek upstream to Merwin Dam to minimize chinook handling.
- **Cowlitz and Toutle Rivers:** Anglers must continue to release all chinook - except marked, hatchery-reared jacks - because hatchery returns are not expected to meet management goals. Anglers may still retain hatchery steelhead and hatchery coho caught in both rivers.
- **Kalama, Washougal, Wind and White Salmon rivers, plus Drano Lake:** Anglers may retain any adult chinook salmon, but must release any wild, unmarked chinook jacks they encounter.

"All of the new rules are included in the 2008-09 *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet," said Pat Frazier, regional WDFW fish manager. "Anglers should make a point to check them out before they hit the water."

Frazier noted that the new mark-selective fisheries for chinook jacks reflect the fact that - for the first time - all chinook jacks returning to hatcheries in the Columbia River Basin are marked with a clipped adipose fin.

"The immediate benefit is that anglers will have a opportunity to catch and retain marked chinook jacks on a number of rivers," he said. "In so doing, they'll actually benefit wild chinook by getting hatchery fish off the spawning grounds." Within a few years, all hatchery-reared fall chinook salmon - including adults - returning to the Columbia River will be identifiable through mass marking, Frazier said.

For now, anglers should be aware that July 31 is the last day to fish for hatchery spring chinook on the Grays and Elochoman rivers - and for hatchery steelhead on the Grays. Both are scheduled to open for fall salmon fishing Sept. 1.

Eastern Washington:

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

Donley also recommends **trout** fishing during early morning hours or in the evening at almost any trout water in the region. "Rainbows are really active now at night," he said. "Lake Roosevelt continues to produce them, and a lot of the smaller lakes up north and around Spokane are still a good bet." The lower Spokane River has nice rainbows and browns, and is much better fishing

this year. Donley reminds river anglers to comply with the catch and gear restrictions listed in the fishing rules pamphlet.

Nighttime fishing for **kokanee** at Loon Lake in Stevens County has been very good, mostly for those anglers fishing from boats with glo-hooks and maggots or corn in 30 to 40 feet of water, Donley said. "Use your fish finder to locate and then anchor over the top and fish for them," he said.

Wherever anglers go this time of year, WDFW officials urge caution with campfires and anything else that might inadvertently start a wildfire in the region's dry vegetation.

North Central Washington:

Chinook fishing has picked up on the mainstem Columbia River above Wells Dam, where anglers have been catching some good-sized chinook in the 20 pounds-plus range, along with some sockeye running 3 to 5 pounds. Anglers are reminded that the daily limit is two adult salmon. Meanwhile, a new section of the river opened from Wells Dam to the Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster through Aug 31. The section from the Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster to the Highway 17 Bridge at Bridgeport, including the mouth of the Okanogan River will remain open until Oct. 15th.

The Methow River has dropped into good fishing shape with fly fishermen reporting catches of **rainbow** to 15 inches and cutthroat to 16 inches. Larger dry flies, as well as nymphs under strike indicators are both good methods. Anglers should check the fishing pamphlet closely, as sections of the Methow are closed to all fishing, including the mouth to the Lower Burma Road Bridge.

Spiny ray anglers can expect good catches of perch in Patterson Lake (Winthrop) and bluegill/crappie in Leader Lake (Omak). There is no minimum size and daily bag limit on these species in Okanogan County.

South Central Washington:

Recent hot weather has encouraged anglers to head for the mountains. Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist in Yakima, said mountain trails are snow free, except at the very highest elevations. "But bugs are abundant," he said. "So in most areas insect repellent is a necessity." Cummins said alpine lakes should provide good fishing for **cutthroat**, **rainbow** and **eastern brook trout** "until the snow flies this fall." For general high lake fishing information and potential hike-in and higher elevation fishing destinations, anglers can look at the "Trout Fishing in Washington's High Lakes" publication at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/outreach/fishing/highlake.htm> or the southcentral region's high lakes fish stocking records on the Region 3 website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/reg/region3.htm>. "Just remember that many lakes have natural reproduction and do not require stocking, so don't limit your fishing choices to the stocking list alone," he said.

Reader Email -

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

McKenzie River National Recreation Trail Information:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/willamette/recreation/tripplanning/trails/uppermckenzie/mckenzie3507.html>

Sockeye come back in record numbers:

<http://www.oregonlive.com/news/oregonian/index.ssf?/base/news/1216877107209520.xml&coll=7>

Weekly Quote – "Fishing is the part of life that's filled with more or less regular successes, and failures that don't really matter because there's always a next time. You come to see that a life frittered away with sport and travel makes perfect sense, but no one trip ever tells the whole story." - John Gierach

GOOD LUCK!