

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 19<sup>th</sup> – September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** The mainstem recreational sportfishery is now closed from Bonneville Dam to Buoy 10. Anglers fishing in the Tongue Point to Bonneville fishery harvested an estimated 9,100 chinook even though catch rates were not as good as many had predicted. The Columbia River remains open for salmon and steelhead from Bonneville Dam upstream until the end of the year or the catch guideline is met.

Willamette sturgeon fishing remains slow but Bonneville bank anglers continue to witness improving catches. Smelt is a top bait this time of year and catches should continue to improve into October.

The McKenzie is producing good catches of trout and providing fair to good steelheading below Leaburg Dam. Trout fishing is excellent above the dam as well.

The North Santiam will remain high for the rest of the month. Steelheading is fair with the water temperature optimum.

With the season winding down, anglers are picking up a few bright steelhead on the Clackamas from McIver Park To Barton Park. Coho on the lower river has been spotty but has provided some productive days. Fishery managers increased the daily bag limit to 3 fin-clipped coho per day on the Clackamas and Sandy Rivers as well as Eagle Creek due to higher than average returns to these systems.

Rain is needed to turn on coho fishing on the Sandy but a few fish are coming from the mouth where small spinners are responsible for the limited catches.

**Pro guide Brandon Glass (503-260-8285)** reports that he's caught a couple of coho trolling small spinners at the mouth of the Sandy.

Mt. Hood College Pond, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake and Timber Lake are scheduled to be planted with trout.

**Northwest –** Coastal fall chinook fishing is underway on most coastal estuaries. Tillamook Bay offers the most consistent opportunity into December and catches in the upper bay were productive for spinner trollers on Saturday. Seaweed is prominent in the bay making spinner trolling the more feasible technique as anglers can whip weed from their lines and keep their gear fishing. High tide exchanges through the weekend should offer up ample opportunity for anglers.

Nehalem anglers are finding some chinook but coho catches have been pretty impressive. The bulk of the coho are wild but the hatchery keepers have been running exceptionally large this year. Ocean water is cold, in the mid to high 40 degree range making ocean and lower bay fishing challenging. The fish are responding better in the warmer waters of the upper reaches of the estuary.

The Nestucca and Salmon River chinook fisheries are peaking in the tidewater sections and effort is increasing on both systems. Bobber and bait or trolled spinners will take chinook. Tides play a

critical role in the success of these fisheries.

The Columbia River near Astoria is closed to all fishing but catch and release of sturgeon using fresh jigged anchovies for bait is excellent near Tongue Point.

The Necanicum River tidewater should have some chinook available but a strong rain is what most anglers hope for in this river system. Sea-run cutthroat trout remains a viable catch and release option but anglers can lobby the ODF&W commission on Friday in Forest Grove to support a regulation change for a limited consumptive fishery on the north coast. Details are available on the ODF&W website.

**Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944)** reports that fishing is picking up on the Siuslaw and fish are being caught every day.

In the last scheduled stocking of the year, Cape Meares Lake, Coffenbury Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County), Sunset Lake, Town Lake and Foster Reservoir will receive hatchery trout.

**Southwest –** Halibut fishing was spotty over the weekend with Saturday too rough to allow most boats to cross and Sunday producing mixed results. Likely the last opener of the year is scheduled for this weekend (September 20 and 21) with a 2-fish bag limit per angler. Tuna fishing was good over the past weekend and while waters are cooling off the central Oregon coast, there will likely be at least one more week of opportunity.

The ODFW Commission is considering proposals to either allow recreational ocean crabbing year 'round or to extend it to mid October rather than closing it in August.

Trollers are doing well for coho salmon in tidewater on the Umpqua but not so well for chinook. Fishing has been most productive between Reedsport and Gardner. Crabbing has been good in Winchester Bay.

Coos Bay and the lower river are producing mostly jacks with the occasional adult showing in catches. Coquille anglers are seeing a higher percentage of larger chinook.

The Rogue estuary is fishing well daily but the season is nearly over at this time of year. Trollers using herring or anchovy are taking a mix of large adults and jacks in crowded conditions. Boaters crossing into the ocean have done well for lingcod.

Diamond Lake has continued to fish well for trout to 20 inches. Early mornings have been most productive.

**Pro guide Rick Arnold (541-480-1570)** reports that Lake Billy Chinook is fishing well for bull trout. He has taken fish from 12 to 22 inches and one nearly 24.

Paulina is producing limits of foot-long-or-better bright kokanee despite the need to sort out fish which are starting to color up as spawning season approaches.

**Central and Eastern Oregon – Pro guide Steve Fleming (1-888-624-9424)** reports that the John Day River has continued to offer excellent smallmouth bass fishing as the weather and water cools.

Fishing has slowed at Green Peter with the lower water level.

**Eastern** – Numbers of steelhead in the Trap at Sherars Falls has been picking up as have catches on the lower Deschutes. Fishing has been best from Mack's Canyon to the mouth. Results for reddsides have been fair to good depending on hatch activity.

**SW Washington** – Coho are starting to show on some SW Washington tributaries. These systems typically get a stronger component of coho in October and early November and with the mainstem gillnet fishery targeting coho likely in jeopardy, late returning fish could flood district rivers. The Kalama, Cowlitz, Toutle and Lewis Rivers are all possibilities over the next 6 weeks.

Anglers still wanting chinook and steelhead should concentrate efforts on the Klickitat River and Drano Lake. The Klickitat will be peaking for chinook for just another few days and success for steelhead is beginning to drop on Drano Lake although still a viable fishery.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – With extensive salmon closures below Bonneville Dam, this column becomes quite easy to write. The season closed as proposed on September 16<sup>th</sup> with nearly 9,100 Chinook retained in the fishery from Bonneville Dam to Tongue Point. Fishing remained fair in the Longview area but anglers around the mouth of the Sandy did take some fish with the gorge being the best option for metro anglers. Gorge anglers averaged just over 1 fish per boat with plugs taking the bulk of the fish in the area. Both anchor anglers and backtrollers were doing well.

Dam passage is progressing well but it is clear that the run has peaked with numerous days passing over 10,000 Chinook each day. Passage has dropped to a range of 5,200 to 6,700 in the last few days. This just in.....a joint state hearing took place today with a run size update and discussion around an additional chinook season for the below Bonneville section of the Columbia River. The determination was made to re-open the Columbia on Saturday, September 20<sup>th</sup>.

Sportfishing above Bonneville Dam remains open with a guideline of about 1,200 chinook available for harvest. We don't have catch statistics for this section of river but the fishery does not appear to be in jeopardy at this time.

Steelhead fishing remains open on the Columbia River but effort has clearly shifted to chinook. The "B" run steelhead are now in the river but in far less numbers than the more prominent, but smaller "A" run steelhead that most of us encounter earlier in the season. With fewer numbers available, they are challenging to target.

Catch and release fishing for sturgeon in the estuary has been very impressive. Great catches of quality sized keepers has been coming from the Tongue Point area. The very few people pursuing these fish were able to jig plentiful numbers of fresh anchovies in the main channel of the Columbia. Although the fish did move from day to day, they weren't hard to find if you were willing to move often enough. With little pressure on these fish for the last 8 weeks, they were quite willing to bite. These fresh jigged anchovies can't be beat for bait.

**The Guide's Forecast** – With little else to fish for, angler effort will shift to other viable fisheries in the region. The crowds at Tillamook should increase in the coming weeks but steelheaders should have a return to productive fishing at the mouth of the Deschutes River in the coming weeks. Also, the John Day Pool should begin to boot out fair catches of steelhead in the coming weeks to plug trollers working the water above the impoundment.

Crabbers will also witness some great crabbing in the estuary downstream of Hammond. Softer afternoon tide exchanges should produce excellent results over the weekend although effort is likely to be light.

Catch and release sturgeon fishing is still a great option if you can find fresh anchovies for bait. You should always be carrying a herring jig on board for jigging purposes anyway but look for birds working the surface although diligent use of your fish finder will produce the best results.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – Coho are making their presence known in the lower Willamette from the mouth of the Clackamas down to Meldrum Bar. While all the rolling fish are attracting some attention from Bank fishers and trollers, no one seems to be hooking up in the low, warm water. It appears the fish ladder will be inoperative until at least September 21st.

The McKenzie remains in good shape with the water an excellent temperature range to provide good fishing for trout and steelhead. With wild trout strictly a catch and release fishery on the McKenzie, discussions are underway to implement a bait ban here. This would also put an end to the catch and release fishery for wild winter steelhead.

Recycling of fish on the North Santiam has ceased for the year. About 150 spring Chinook were recycled back downstream from the hatchery trap at Foster Dam on the South Santiam September 15th.

**The Guide's Forecast** – The lower Willamette is a good bet for smallmouth bass. Soft plastics are particularly effective. Sturgeon fishing will be a bust again this weekend.

The Mehama stretch has should produce a few steelhead as should Stayton. Above that point anglers are cautioned as with the early drawdown of Detroit, the water is high and fast.

McKenzie steelheaders will have the better success below Leaburg Dam while trout fishers will have the best chances at hooking up in the upper river.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – The mouth of the Clackamas has been jammed with anglers. While a few fish are being landed, it's a guerilla fishing scene at Clackamette Park. Eagle creek has been producing some coho to bait fishers.

This area also attracts snaggers - turn 'em in by calling the Oregon TIP line at 503-375-3555.

The best bet for a hookup on the Sandy River is trolling at the mouth. While there are fish rolling in the lower river, they're not biting. It will turn on with precipitation, but it may be over before it begins if that occurs late in the season.

**Pro guide Brandon Glass (503-260-8285)** reports, "I have been at the mouth of the Sandy river for Coho the last 2 days, I've only hooked a couple fish, but small spinners is the way to get these Coho. There must be at least 150-300 fish depending if they have moved up the river or not. I did see a 21 pounder caught today,(makes my 16 and 12 pounder look small). I was at Bonneville earlier in the week and the anchor show below Warrendale was were it was at. The back trollers struggled, but the anchor boys did well."

**The Guide's Forecast** – With larger than average coho runs forecast for the hatcheries at Cedar Creek on the Sandy River and Eagle Creek on the Clackamas, the daily bag limit has been increased to three as of September 17th. Coho angling closes at the end of October on Cedar Creel while Eagle Creek will remain open through November.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Although the action on Tillamook Bay is not red hot, action is consistent enough to call the season officially underway. Consistent catches are coming from the bay itself as ocean anglers are left trying to scratch out a few bites in big blue. Although the recent tide series is making the upper bay more appealing, there is still a large contingency of anglers working the ocean when it is open. A frigid 48 degrees on Wednesday, angler success was few and far between for herring trollers in the ocean. Anglers were finding greater success near Memaloose towards high tide and at low slack when water temperatures are more conducive to motivated biters in the area. Spinners have been taking the bulk of the fish as anglers are opting to utilize the technique that allows you to whip your gear back into shape with all the seaweed and eelgrass floating around. Also keep in mind that fish now entering the estuary are destined for the Trask and Tillamook Rivers, making the upper bay the obvious choice where fish are more likely to spend greater amounts of time before hitting the tidewater awaiting the next significant rainfall.

Coho are making up a good portion of the catch in the recent week with a fair number of the fish being wild. Hatchery coho are allowed to be taken until the end of October. The coho have been running exceptionally large this year so be sure to positively identify species before bonking. Coho can easily be mistaken for chinook when they are running large like they are this year.

The Nehalem estuary is performing a lot like Tillamook with better catches of chinook coming in the upper reaches of the bay where waters have a chance to warm from cold ocean water influence. Although most would report that coho are making up the bulk of the catch, chinook are present in fair numbers with most fish being taken on herring from Wheeler upstream. Only a small portion of the coho are fin-clipped so be prepared for release on this river system as well.

Angler effort is ramping up on the Nestucca River although catches are not all that great. **Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)** reports, "There are some, not a ton, of fish in the extreme lower end of tide on the Nestucca, as well as the Salmon. The water temperature remains a little high, but the incoming tide from the ocean is really cold. We're hoping to see the first good shove of fish during this cool down and precipitation. Crabbing in the lower bay is off the chart! Easy limits for all, with nice full bodies, and larger than average size. Have a great week!

There was still some bottomfishing effort out of Garibaldi with the friendly seas at midweek. Action is not exceptional as stocks have been hard hit from all the effort this season. The season is winding down and keep in mind that the bag limit was recently increased to 6 fish from 5.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Much of the effort will focus on Tillamook and Nehalem Bays this week. Fish should be available throughout the bay and with the upcoming weak tide series during daylight hours, effort will likely focus once again on the lower bay and jaws. Evening tides will be considerably stronger making the upper bay a possibility on the afternoon flood tide. Trolled herring will be the bait of choice although anglers will likely get frustrated with the seaweed and eelgrass in the estuary. The ocean may be an attractive option to escape the seaweed. And now for the ocean forecast.....

**FRI**

VARIABLE WIND 10 KT OR LESS. WIND WAVES 1 FT.  
SW SWELL 4 FT.

**FRI NIGHT**

VARIABLE WIND 10 KT OR LESS. WIND WAVES 1 FT.

W SWELL 4 FT.

**SAT**

W TO SW WIND AROUND 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 TO 2 FT.  
W SWELL 4 FT.

**SAT NIGHT**

W TO SW WIND AROUND 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 TO 2 FT.  
W SWELL 4 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

**SUN**

SW WIND 10 TO 15 KT...SHIFTING TO NW 15 TO 20 KT DURING THE  
AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 2 TO 3 FT. W SWELL BUILDING 5 TO 7 FT.

**MON**

NW WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 8 FT.

No matter what coastal system that you choose, the lower reaches will likely produce the best results. The Nestucca and Salmon Rivers should be fair options with the Salmon River likely to have peaked by the weekend. The longer these adults are waiting in the tidewater sections, the less likely they are to bite and a weak tide series won't help to motivate them.

Nehalem Bay itself will likely continue to produce fair catches of chinook although hatchery coho numbers will likely begin to taper off. If the ocean continues to stay cold, the jaws, being the best option in the holdover tides, may not produce many biters. It may be a challenging week on this coastal system.

It should be a productive week for crabbing in Netarts, Tillamook and even Nehalem Bay.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – The halibut quota may fill this weekend with yet another Saturday and Sunday all-depth opener and a two-fish limit. The difference on the 20th and 21st is that ocean conditions are predicted to be mild, allowing recreational boaters to have their way with the flatties.

While some sources are still getting it wrong, the ocean is open to 40 fathoms for rockfish and will open to all-depth bottom fishing for most species other than halibut starting October 1st.

Siletz Chinook fishing has been a dud this season. Fewer than one fish per day has been taken over the past week. It's getting late for decent numbers of Chinook to show here, but anglers remain hopeful.

Crabbing has improved out of Newport both for quantity and quality of the Dungeness. It has been a trip of 40 miles or so to find albacore recently and even then the results have been spotty. Most boats are returning with single digits.

The Alsea has a few (emphasis few) Chinook very low in tidewater. There won't be any fishing here until we get rain. When that occurs, be aware of the deadline change from Fall Creek, This year there is no angling allowed above Five Rivers.

**Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944)** reports, "Fishing is picking up on the Siuslaw. Good numbers of fish are being caught every day. We only managed 1 chinook today, but with the building tides fishing will be good this week."

The lower Umpqua turned on for salmon this week, producing decent catches of both coho and Chinook. The North Umpqua has been worthwhile for steelheaders and action is expected to improve with typical fall weather. Smallmouth bass fishing is holding up on the mainstem. Winchester Bay crabbers took quick limits of hard crab over the past weekend. Salmon fishing has been good near the jaws when the ocean lays down sufficiently to allow it although Chinook are also moving into the bay in decent numbers. It's shaping up to be good this coming weekend. Most trollers are hitting fish but many are finishing the day with only Chinook jacks to show for their efforts. Big baits are taking the larger fish. A few coho have been caught in the mid-teen weight range. The South Umpqua is closed until December 1st at which time it opens for winter steelhead season.

Crabbing has improved in Coos Bay. No limits reported but better numbers of large, hard crab are being taken. The Salmon Derby is scheduled this year for the weekend of September 27th. Fishing in the bay over the weekend was slow. Boats have been running over 50 miles offshore to find tuna, but fishing has been good at times. Late-season albacore are skittish and more difficult to get close to than earlier in the year.

Chinook fishing in the Coquille picked up over the past week and is good from Rocky Point to the mouth.

Rogue Bay trollers are enjoying fairly steady action for Chinook with spinner/anchovy combos, plug-cut herring and straight spinners all getting hit at times. While fish haven't been moving aggressively upriver, with the water temperature dropping, this is expected to change. When it does, it will virtually draw a curtain on the estuary action, so take advantage of it while it's producing. Fishing has been best in the Sand Spit area. Upriver, anglers are taking decent numbers of summer steelhead with half-pounders making up the bulk of the catch. Despite the lackluster fish movement, the Grants Pass stretch has been producing fair to good catches of Chinook to plug-pullers and back-bouncers. Steelheading has been fair but will improve into fall. The upper Rogue, restricted to flies-only above Gold Rey Dam, is closed to Chinook but is fishing well for steelhead. Bottom fishing has picked up out of Brookings with limits of rockfish and good catches of ling cod being reported this week. It's been good whenever ocean conditions have laid down sufficiently to allow a safe bar crossing. Tuna have been taken this week at about 40 miles.

The ODFW changed the timing of a recent Chetco River release of 30,000 Chinook smolts reared in the Elk River Hatchery. Previously, they released smolts in the morning when birds would actively feed, gobbling many of the little Chinook. The recent release was timed in the late evening when birds were roosting and was much more successful,

Anglers heading to Diamond Lake to take advantage of decent fishing for larger trout should call ODOT or OSP to check on road closures due to wildfires.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Counts at Sherars Falls showed over 100 hatchery steelhead on both September 15th and 16th along with a spike in Chinook numbers. Fish are moving now, numbers are up and fishing this weekend should be good at Shears Falls, Maupin and above.

**Pro guide Rick Arnold (541-480-1570)** reports from Lake Billy Chinook, "I have been out twice in the last two weeks for bull trout at LBC for the fall run. We caught 12 bulls one week and 10 the next. It appears that the majority of bigger spawners are still up river. Most of the fish ran 12-22 in. On the last trip, we did get one close to a keeper that was around 4 Lb. and pushing 24 in. I have one more trip planned in Sept. for sure and will see if any interest comes in Oct. before I shut down for the year. I can still book trips for the last two weeks of Sept.

before a week trip to California from Oct. 4-12."

**Pro guide Steve Fleming (1-888-624-9424)** reports that the John Day River has continued to fish well as the weather cools. Despite low water, anglers are scoring hundred-fish days with the smallies in great shape. The John Day is fishing best in the afternoon at this time and it's only later in the day that top-water lures have been effective.

"We just finished another great week on the John Day River. The cooler weather and nights cooled the river down to 60 degrees and the fish started a little slow for the first two hours each day, but our clients were still catching over 100 smallies per day with most coming in the afternoon. The river is flowing just over 100 CFS, and won't come up much till the middle of October after the ranchers quit irrigating October 1st. The fish are in great shape and very fat. The top water is only working in the late afternoon in the shadows, but everything else is working well. The 1/16 oz leadheads with Outlaw Baits 5" worm cut down and covered with Smelly Jelly Craw/Anise is still producing the most fish. So there is a spinner bait bite from time to time, buzz bait bite late in the afternoon, Texas and Carolina good all day but the best technique first thing in the morning, cause the fish are on the bottom in the warmer water. Crankbaits with rattles are also working in the deeper holes. Expect more of the same, with the water cooling a little more."

**Northwest Trout** – Henry Hagg Lake will receive 8,000 hatchery trout. The ODFW trout stocking schedule indicates this will occur during the week of September 22nd, but the Recreation Reports says it'll be this week. In any event, it's scheduled to receive 8,00 more, either next week or the week after. Hagg is drawn down starting late summer and into early fall in anticipation of fall and winter rainfall. With the water level quite low now, bank fishing can be challenging but is quite good at times. Henry Hagg closes November 16th and will re-open the first weekend in March. Boat ramps on opening day can provide hours of amusing entertainment.

Foster Reservoir will be stocked with 5,000 legal-sized trout

### **Washington fishing reports:**

#### **From the WDF&W Weekender Report September 16<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

##### **North Puget Sound**

Ocean **coho salmon** are starting to show up in the region, where saltwater and freshwater anglers have had some success recently hooking silvers.

Some of the best harvest numbers were seen at fish checks in central Puget Sound. For example, 48 anglers were checked with 21 coho Sept. 12 at the Armeni Ramp. The following day, 125 anglers were checked with 35 silvers at Armeni, while 103 anglers were checked with 36 coho at the Shilshole Ramp.

Point No Point, Jefferson Head, Possession Bar and Shipwreck should be good spots to hook ocean coho, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. Anglers fishing those areas, or other waters of marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), have a daily limit of two salmon but must release chinook. In Marine Area 9, anglers must release chum through Sept. 30.

Marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) also are open for salmon. Thiesfeld reminds anglers that marine areas 8-1 and 8-2 close to fishing for salmon at the end of the day Sept. 30.

Meanwhile, crabbing in the region is still an option but the opportunity is limited. Only the northern and eastern portions of Marine Area 7 remain open for crab. Those two portions are open Wednesdays through Saturdays each week through Sept. 30. The region's other marine areas are closed for a catch assessment. Additional information on the fishery is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crabreg/crabindex> .

In the freshwater, the **chinook** catch has tapered off recently in the Green (Duwamish) River, but coho are starting to show up. "From what I've heard, the coho catch has picked up on the Green," said Steve Foley, WDFW fish biologist. "And it sounds like they are still getting some chinook, but its definitely slowed down."

Anglers fishing the Green from Tukwila International Blvd. to I-405 have a daily limit of six salmon, only one of which may be a chinook, and no more than three adults. Those fishing the Green River from the 1st Ave. South Bridge to Tukwila International Blvd. must release chinook.

Elsewhere, Lake Washington opened for coho salmon Sept. 16. Foley said coho counts at the Ballard Locks indicate a decent return this year. "The best coho fishing will likely be early on," he said. "I recommend getting out on the lake early in the morning during the first few days of the fishery." Anglers fishing Lake Washington have a daily limit of four coho (minimum size 12 inches) from waters north of the Highway 520 Bridge and east of the Montlake Bridge.

Lake Sammamish also is open, with a daily limit of four salmon measuring at least 12 inches. Anglers can keep up to two chinook but must release all sockeye. Salmon fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek.

Before heading out to the rivers, or out on the Sound, anglers should check the rules and regulations for fisheries in WDFW's Fishing in Washington pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> ).

### **South Sound/Olympic Peninsula**

Now that salmon fishing has closed in most ocean areas, many anglers are turning their attention to the **coho** fishery along the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Several area rivers are also opening to salmon fishing in the weeks ahead, providing a range of other angling options.

While most coastal salmon fisheries are now closed, a portion of Marine Area 3 (LaPush) will be open daily Sept. 20 through Oct. 5 for a late-season fishery targeting **coho** and **chinook** salmon returning to the Quillayute River system.

For anglers heading to the area, the La Push Last Chance Salmon Derby will take place on Sept. 27 and 28 and features \$4,300 in prizes, including \$1,000 each for the top coho and chinook. "If the weather holds, it could be a good weekend for fishing," said Scott Barbour, WDFW fish biologist. For more information on the derby call 360-374-2531 or send an email to [chambers@forkswa.com](mailto:chambers@forkswa.com).

Meanwhile, effort is high for the non-selective **coho** fishery now under way off Sekiu (Marine Area 5), where anglers are averaging about one fish per boat, said Larry Bennett, WDFW fish technician.

"People are normally getting their limit this time of year, but the numbers have dropped off in recent weeks," Bennett said. "The sunny weather could be factor. Hopefully, cooler conditions will bring in the fish."

Anglers have until Sept. 30 to catch and keep hatchery and wild coho as part of their two-fish combined daily limit. Bennett reminded anglers that all chinook and chum must be released. Starting Oct. 1, a non-selective fishery for **coho** and **chinook** opens in Marine Area 6 (Port Angeles). The fishery is open through Oct. 31 with a two-fish combined daily limit. Only one chinook may be retained.

Also in October, anglers in Marine Area 11 (Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge) will be allowed to retain **wild chinook**. Anglers in Marine Area 13 may also retain wild chinook, but must release all wild coho. Good weather over the Sept. 13-14 weekend brought out the anglers in both areas, but few fish were caught.

Kirt Hughes, WDFW regional fish program manager, reminded anglers that Grays Harbor (Marine Area 2.2) opened for salmon fishing Sept. 16 (coho only; chinook and chum must be released). "The opening is two weeks earlier than last year with similar numbers of salmon expected to return," said. "Managers had first presented a season structure the same as last year based on preseason projections," Hughes said. "Working with our stakeholders through the North of Falcon process we found a compromise - by restricting the fishing area to avoid chinook we were able to offer the additional two weeks beginning September 16."

Hughes said the intent is to harvest abundant hatchery and natural coho while limiting the impact on chinook, which are not expected to meet their escapement goal.

A portion of the Chehalis River also opened Sept. 16, concurrent with the Grays Harbor opening, Hughes said. The lower Chehalis is open from the Lakeside Asphalt Plant down stream to the Hwy 101 Bridge, while shore anglers can take advantage of an early bank fishery at Morrison Riverfront Park.

Hughes advised anglers to check WDFW's 2008-2009 Fishing in Washington pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for details on boundaries and regulations. Other area rivers opening Oct. 1 for fall salmon fishing include the Elk, Hoquiam, Humptulips, Johns, Satsop, Wishkah and Wynoochee in Grays Harbor County; Kennedy Creek (upriver to the Highway 101 bridge) in Thurston County; the Nemah River in Pacific County; and the Skokomish River in Mason County.

Low and clear water continue to make it tough for anglers fishing the Quillayute system on the northern Olympic Peninsula, said Mike Gross, WDFW fish biologist. "There are **summer steelhead** and coho in the rivers, but we're in the doldrums with this weather and the fish get spooked easily," Gross said. "Some rain would help get the fish moving through."

Anglers fishing in the Quillayute system, which includes the Bogachiel, Sol Duc, Calawah and Dickey rivers, can keep up to two chinook as part of their limit of three adult fish. The total daily limit is six fish; all wild adult coho must be released until Nov. 1.

Anglers on the Hoh River can keep two adult salmon as part of their six-fish daily limit, but must release all wild chinook from the Oxbow Campground boat launch to Willoughby Creek until Oct. 16. Check the Fishing in Washington pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for specific regulations throughout the region.

### **Southwest Washington:**

The Columbia River is now closed to retention of chinook salmon below Bonneville Dam, although anglers might want to check for a possible update on salmon fishing in the big river later this

week. Any changes will be posted on the WDFW website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/>) and included on the Fishing Hotline (360-902-2500).

Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist, noted that anglers caught just over 9,000 chinook salmon during the 16-day chinook opening between Rocky Point and Bonneville Dam that ended Sept. 16. "According to the counts at Bonneville Dam, the fishery took place during the peak of the upriver bright run," Hymer said. "Catch rates were strong right down to the closing bell."

Meanwhile, fishing for **chinook** salmon is still an option on a number of tributaries to the big river, **coho** are stacking up behind them and **white sturgeon** are on the bite from Longview to Bonneville Dam.

"This is probably the best time of year for a bank angler to catch a legal size sturgeon on the lower Columbia," Hymer said. "The fishery just below Bonneville Dam is really starting to heat up."

On a recent weekend, 106 anglers fishing just below the dam reeled in 12 keepers plus some additional sub-legals and oversize fish that had to be released. Catch rates are also starting to pick up for boat anglers fishing farther downriver. The fishery is open for retention of legal-size white sturgeon from the Wauna power lines to Bonneville Dam on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through the end of the year.

Above the dam, anglers continue to catch a mixture of fall chinook, coho and summer-run hatchery steelhead in the Bonneville Pool, where chinook may be retained through the end of the year. Boat anglers are catching summer-run steelhead at Drano Lake, and bank anglers are landing fall chinook several miles up the Klickitat River.

Salmon fishing has also been productive on several tributaries to the lower Columbia. On the Cowlitz River, hatchery coho have been hitting lures and bait at the mouth of the Toutle, while bank anglers fishing the Kalama River have been catching a combination of fall chinook and hatchery coho. The Lewis River is closed to chinook retention, but one in four anglers have been taking home hatchery coho, according to a recent creel check.

Hymer said more bright, late-stock coho should start moving into rivers above and below Bonneville Dam in the weeks ahead, noting that all wild, unmarked coho must be released from the mouth of the Columbia to the Hood River Bridge and all tributaries in between. Hymer also reminds anglers that a "bonus bag" limit of four hatchery coho per day is in effect on the Grays, Deep, Elochoman, Toutle, Green, Kalama and Lewis rivers. And anglers can keep six hatchery coho per day on the Cowlitz River, as well as on Lake Scanewa and the Tilton and Cispus rivers. "If we get some rain, anglers could start filling those limits," Hymer said. "We need some rain to get those coho moving."

But anglers hoping to take home an adult chinook shouldn't wait too long. Many tributaries to the Columbia - or sections of those rivers - are scheduled to close Oct. 1 for retention of adult chinook to avoid interfering with spawning salmon. **Hatchery jack chinook**, marked with a clipped adipose fin, may still be retained in those rivers. Waters closing to retention of adult chinook Oct. 1 include:

- Elochoman River, upstream from the Highway 4 Bridge.
- North Fork Toutle from the Kidd Valley Road Bridge near Highway 504 upstream.
- Green River.
- Cowlitz River from Blue Creek to Mill Creek.
- Kalama River from the natural gas pipeline crossing upstream.
- Washougal River from the Little Washougal River upstream.

- White Salmon River from the posted markers half a mile above the Highway 14 Bridge upstream.

Also on Oct. 1, all fishing on the Lewis River will close from Colvin Creek (upstream from the salmon hatchery) to Merwin Dam. At Drano Lake, all non-tribal fishing will be prohibited Wednesdays.

With regulations changing in so many areas, anglers are advised to check the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet and in-season rules changes <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> before planning a fishing trip.

Plenty of anglers hit the Columbia River for the 16-day chinook opening between Rocky Point and Bonneville Dam that ended Sept. 16. On peak days, up to 1,600 boats were counted on the river. In all, anglers caught just over 9,000 fish - approximately the number anticipated by fishery managers in the pre-season catch estimate.

"According to the counts at Bonneville Dam, the fishery took place during the peak of the upriver bright run," Hymer said. "Catch rates were strong right down to the closing bell."

**Trout** anglers may want to know that Horseshoe Lake in Woodland was planted Sept. 9 with approximately 2,000 rainbows averaging 1.67 pounds apiece and 500 fish averaging 3.33 pounds. Goose Lake north of Carson is scheduled to be planted today (Sept. 17) with 600 one-pound cutthroats, plus 20 rainbows and 20 browns weighing 10 pounds each. Sea-run cutthroat are returning in strong numbers to the Cowlitz.

#### **Eastern Washington:**

Snake River **steelhead** fishers have been doing well recently, especially at the mouths of rivers in the drainage, such as the Clearwater on the Idaho border and the Tucannon in Columbia County. WDFW southeast district fish biologist Glen Mendel reminds steelheaders the daily catch limit is three hatchery-marked (clipped and healed-over adipose or ventral fin) steelhead. Barbless hooks must be used to allow the release of wild fish.

Mendel also notes the wording change on this season's catch record cards and in the fishing rules pamphlet under "New for 2008" does not mean Snake River steelheaders can take a wild steelhead. The catch record card now reads "One Wild Steelhead Allowed On This Card," Mendel explained, but it is meant only for those western Washington rivers where wild winter steelhead retention is allowed. Mendel said the statement was added when the 30-fish annual limit for hatchery steelhead was dropped, giving anglers the option of purchasing additional catch record cards for hatchery steelhead. Anglers are supposed to report the catch of a wild steelhead, only where it is allowed, on the first card, not subsequent cards. Mendel said the wording will be improved next year to avoid further confusion.

Mendel says there's one more thing for Snake River fishers to be aware of now - lots of **fall chinook** and **coho salmon** are showing up and they must be released unharmed if hooked. A fall chinook season might be possible, so anglers should stay tuned for an emergency rule change announcement on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

WDFW enforcement patrols report some walleye, catfish, and bass being taken throughout the Snake River. Officers also report issuing many warnings for boat safety problems.

Many rainbow and cutthroat trout lakes in the central part of the region will close to fishing Sept. 30. Fly-fishing at southwest Spokane County's Amber Lake has been excellent and a catch-and-release season there will run from Oct. 1 through November. Other popular southwest Spokane County waters - Badger, Downs, Fish, North Silver, West Medical and Williams lakes - close to all

fishing at the end of this month. Spokane County's Clear Lake will remain open through October, as will Liberty Lake - for the first time. Also closing Sept. 30 are Lincoln County's Coffeepot, Deer Springs, and Fishtrap lakes. Most northeast district lakes remain open through October, except for Pend Oreille County's Fan Lake, which also closes Sept. 30.

Five northeast district trout lakes scheduled for rehabilitation with rotenone later this fall have no daily catch or size limits for any game fish until Oct. 6 when they close to all fishing. Those lakes include Ellen Lake (Ferry County), Frater Lake (Pend Oreille County), Hatch, Little Hatch, and Williams lakes (Stevens County).

### **North Central Washington:**

**Rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** fishing in the Methow River system has been good, reports WDFW district fish biologist Bob Jateff of Omak, but the catch-and-release season ends Sept. 18. The season was originally scheduled to run through Sept. 30, but the early closure is necessary to avoid additional incidental catch of protected wild steelhead. Jateff noted that an increase in anglers on the Methow in recent weeks, coupled with an increase in the number of steelhead in the river, triggered the closure.

WDFW fishery managers are, however, considering the possibility of a special hatchery-marked steelhead fishery on portions of the upper Columbia River and some tributaries - including the Methow River - based on an assessment of wild and hatchery returns. Anglers should check for any updates on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> .

Jateff also noted **chinook salmon** fishing on the mainstem Columbia River has picked up a bit with fish up to 12 pounds being caught in the Bridgeport area. That season is scheduled to close Oct. 15.

As water temperatures cool down, many Okanogan County lakes will provide good fall trout fishing, Jateff said. Some of the more popular ones are Big Twin near Winthrop, Blue near Sinlahekin, and Chopaka near Loomis.

Two Okanogan County trout lakes scheduled for rehabilitation with rotenone applications later this fall have no daily catch or size limits for any game fish until Oct. 13 when they close to all fishing - Big Buck or Shaw Lake and Starzman Lake. Many Columbia Basin trout lakes close to fishing Sept. 30. Check the fishing rules pamphlet for details.

### **South Central Washington:**

The recreational fishing effort for the Yakima River's fall salmonid season is slow with very few anglers out on the water, said Paul Hoffarth, WDFW fish biologist for Pasco. An estimated 10 adult **fall chinook** were harvested last week and no **steelhead** to date, he said.

The **fall chinook salmon** fishery on the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River is a brighter picture, Hoffarth said. "Effort is down roughly 20 percent overall compared to last year, but harvest is running 40 percent higher due to a high number of jacks in the fishery this year," he said. Anglers averaged one-half a chinook per boat last week. So far, an estimated 288 adult and 207 jack fall chinook have been harvested during the Hanford Reach fall chinook fishery.

Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist for Yakima, reported fly fishers are enjoying **rainbow trout** in the Yakima River from Roza Dam upriver. "Flows are now low and the river is wade-able," Cummins said. "Most of the summer irrigation water released keeps the river running high, but every September the flows are reduced just before the spring chinook spawn in the Cle Elum and

upper Yakima River. Flows increase substantially in the Tieton River to provide irrigation. Spring chinook can be seen spawning in the Easton Reach of the Yakima and Cle Elum below the Dam." Cummins also said this might be the best time to spend a few days in the high country. "Mosquitoes are gone and the fish are generally cooperative this time of year," he said. "The weather has been fantastic, but anglers should be prepared for rapid weather changes this time of year."

### **Reader Email -**

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

Write to the TGF staff:

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### **Random Links**

Wildfire forces evacuations at Crescent and Odell Lakes:

[http://www.kgw.com/news-local/stories/kgw\\_091608\\_news\\_royce\\_butte\\_fire.824c1c38.html](http://www.kgw.com/news-local/stories/kgw_091608_news_royce_butte_fire.824c1c38.html)

Update here:

[http://www.oregonlive.com/news/index.ssf/2008/09/central\\_oregon\\_wildfire\\_gro\\_ws.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/news/index.ssf/2008/09/central_oregon_wildfire_gro_ws.html)

Public invited to trout, salmon conference in Gresham Oct. 3-5:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/STEP/step-conference.asp>

Anglers get final say on fishing proposals Friday in Forest Grove:

<http://www.registerguard.com/web/sports/outdoors/story.csp?cid=130272&sid=126&fid=41>

Health advisories issued for two Coos County beaches:

<http://www.statesmanjournal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080918/OUTDOORS/80918003/1034>

Elk Creek Dam removal started:

<http://www.mailtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080914/NEWS/809140323>

**Weekly Quote** – "Nothing is more trying to the patience of a fishermen than the remark so often made to them by the profane: "I had not patience enough for fishing!" - Arthur Ransome

**GOOD LUCK!**