

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 26th – October 2nd, 2008**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Effective today, fishery managers adopted a 2-fish bag limit for chinook on the mainstem Columbia River from Warrior Rock to Bonneville Dam. Anglers fishing near Bonneville Dam have averaged a chinook per boat and success rates will likely continue to climb as temperatures begin to drop and more resident fish begin to congregate below the dam.

Sturgeon fishing is also picking up in the area with boat and bank anglers tallying good results. Quality keepers begin to also congregate near the dam with October a peak month for sport anglers.

The fish ladder at Willamette Falls remains closed for construction. Trollers have managed a few coho hookups around Meldrum Bar. Sturgeon fishing remains slow although a few keepers have been boated.

While the McKenzie River has risen a little, it continues to fish very well with caddis patterns.

The North Santiam is high but it is producing some steelhead. There's a chance for a hookup anywhere between Mehema and Packsaddle Park.

Clackamas anglers are catching a few coho but it has been slow.

Hundreds of coho can be seen on the main river but they're rarely hitting anything. Coho have entered Cedar Creek and are being caught below the hatchery. Fishing at the rivers mouth is also slow, despite high numbers of visible jumpers.

Henry Hagg Lake is scheduled to be planted with 8,000 legal-sized trout this week.

Northwest – Most anglers will begin focusing on the north coast, particularly Tillamook Bay as it offers the best chance at large fall chinook well into November. Action has recently slowed with a poor tide series but flurries of activity can be had near the estuary entrance and in the bubble fishery just outside of the jaws. Coho are still making up a good portion of the catch but many of those fish are wild and must be released. Improving tides should produce better results for upper bay spinner trollers by the weekend.

A mid-week weather system is predicted to rise river levels only slightly. Coho and a few chinook may take advantage of the rain freshet but much more precipitation is needed to justify the launching of driftboats.

Only a few chinook are being taken amongst the coho in Nehalem Bay. Action has been best around Wheeler but most anglers are frustrated with their results.

The Nestucca and Salmon Rivers do have fish present but numbers are down so persistence is necessary. Crabbing is a good alternative.

The Siletz and Alsea estuaries have not been productive so far. It's still too early to call these systems a bust but it's pretty clear that these runs have suffered for a second year in a row.

Tuna chasers are still in pursuit but last week, action was best out of Astoria where live bait

produced good results for many ocean fishers. The weekend may offer another chance at offshore schools but the weather is likely to be more inconsistent into October.

Southwest – The weekend offshore forecast predicts improving conditions and moderating winds.

Trolling for chinook in the Umpqua estuary has been rewarding with some larger fish being hooked recently. Crabbing is good in Winchester Bay. Albacore have been taken this week at 60 to 70 miles offshore.

Boats launching out of Coos Bay did well for offshore rockfish with most getting limits but ling cod were hard to come by. The salmon derby will be held on Saturday, September 27th. Fishing in the river has been slow.

Bandon halibut fishers did well for large fish during the (perhaps) last all-depth opener over the past weekend.

Trollers in Rogue estuary have seen steady action for chinook with the occasional large coho showing in catches. Fishing upriver slowed dramatically over the weekend for steelhead and half-pounders while the Grants Pass stretch heated up for chinook. Sea-run cutthroat trout and half pounder fishing has been good in the Wild and Scenic section.

Most of the boats launching out of Brookings have been returning with six-fish limits of bottom fish and catches of ling cod are improving.

The Seventh Annual Salmon Derby at the Chetco terminal fishery will take place on October 1st through 4th.

Diamond Lake continues to fish well for rainbows to 16 inches with the occasional 18-incher being landed.

'Trophy-sized' rainbows are scheduled to be planted at Lost Creek Reservoir, Oak Springs, Willow Lake, Applegate Reservoir, Cole Rivers and Fish Lake. 'Trophy' trout measure 16 inches or better.

Eastern – Over 100 Chinook and more than 300 hatchery steelhead were counted at Sherars Falls last week although fishing was slow over the weekend for both steelhead and trout anglers. Anglers are taking some nice brown trout on the middle river. The upper Deschutes which is fishing well for large brook trout now, will close between Little Lava Lake and Crane Prairie at the end of September.

SW Washington – Coho are beginning to show on many district streams. The Lewis and Cowlitz are two good options but the Toutle is also producing some catches.

Beginning October 1st, many area streams close to the retention of chinook. Check regulations before heading out to fish.

The Klickitat is producing some catches of chinook but coho will show in greater numbers beginning in late October through November.

Columbia River Fishing Report – For a nice change of pace, the news gets even better on the lower Columbia River! Another recent run size update has Oregon and Washington fishery managers upping the daily bag limit for chinook salmon, from Bonneville Dam to Warrior Rock (just upstream of the Lewis River) to 2 chinook per day! This action follows on the heels of the re-opener just a few days earlier. The 2 recent bits of good news are captured in these press releases:

Fishery managers reopen Columbia River chinook season

Date: September 18, 2008

Contact: Chris Kern (971) 673-6031
Rick Swart (971) 673-6038
Fax: (503) 947-6009

CLACKAMAS, Ore. – Better than expected returns of Columbia River chinook salmon prompted fishery managers from Oregon and Washington to reopen the season below Bonneville dam starting Saturday.

Effective Saturday, Sept. 20 until Dec. 31, 2008 or further notice, anglers will be permitted to keep chinook salmon caught between the Warrior Rock-Bachelor Island line above the mouth of the Lewis River upstream to Bonneville dam. The Columbia remains closed to retention of chinook salmon below Warrior Rock-Bachelor line out of concern for Lewis River wild chinook, which are protected under the Endangered Species Act.

Fishery managers from the Oregon and Washington departments of fish and wildlife made the decision to reopen the season at a joint state hearing Thursday after reviewing reports from biologists that upgraded the upriver bright run size to 212,500 chinook from the preseason estimate of 164,400 chinook.

Prior to the run upgrade, the fall chinook salmon fishing season below Bonneville had closed on Sept. 16.

“We’re pleased to be able to offer the additional opportunity in a year when we didn’t think we would have it available to us,” said Steve Williams, assistant administrator for the Fish Division of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. “It wasn’t something that we anticipated going into the season. We thought we were going to be tighter than this. There was no plan to get us through to the end of the year, and here we are offering a one-fish bag limit below Bonneville until the end of the year. That’s a really good thing.”

Under the rules adopted at Thursday’s hearing, anglers may keep up to two adult salmon and/or steelhead in combination, but only one of those fish may be a chinook. Retained chinook do not have to be fin-clipped. However, any coho salmon or steelhead must be adipose-clipped in order to be retained, as prescribed under permanent fishing regulations. Adipose-clipped coho and steelhead may also be kept in the Columbia River below its confluence with the Lewis.

Anglers should be prepared for in-season changes and check for the latest information, which is available on the ODFW website at http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/reg_changes/columbia.asp, or through the ODFW telephone hotline at 1-503-947-6000. In-season fishery modifications by the states of Oregon and Washington are also posted at http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/action_notes.asp.

Additionally, the bag limit increase is captured here:

Daily bag limit change for fall chinook salmon in the Columbia River

Date: September 24, 2008

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CLACKAMAS, Ore. – The daily bag limit on fall chinook salmon in the Columbia River between Warrior

Rock and Bonneville dam will increase to two adult fish, effective Thursday, Sept. 25 through the remainder of the year.

Fishery managers from Oregon and Washington moved to raise the bag limit Tuesday in response to continued improvement in the projected upriver bright fall chinook return. The action follows a decision last week to reopen the fall chinook season from just above the Lewis River to Bonneville Dam.

"The continued strong showing of upriver bright fall chinook this year has given us a chance to provide some additional opportunities for anglers," said Chris Kern, assistant manager of Columbia River fisheries for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. "We still have some stocks of concern in the lower river that aren't doing as well as the upriver brights, though, and we've had to restrict these additional opportunities to the area above the mouth of the Lewis River in order to protect those stocks."

The extended season and increased bag limit only apply to the Columbia River from the Warrior Rock-Bachelor Island line above the mouth of the Lewis River upstream to Bonneville Dam. As a result of the changes, anglers may now keep up to two adult chinook, coho, and steelhead per day in combination in this area. Bag limits for jacks remain unchanged and retained chinook do not have to be fin-clipped. Coho and steelhead must be adipose fin-clipped under permanent fishing regulations. Adipose fin-clipped coho and steelhead may also be kept in the Columbia River between Tongue Point and the Lewis River, but chinook (including jacks) must be released in this area.

Since rules can change based on run size and other factors, anglers should be prepared check for the latest information, which is available on the ODFW website at [COLUMBIA ZONE: 2008 Regulation Changes](#), or through the ODFW telephone hotline at 1-503-947-6000. In-season fishery modifications by the states of Oregon and Washington are also posted at [Columbia River Action Notices](#).

Good numbers of adults and jacks continue to pass Bonneville Dam and numbers should continue to offer anglers in the area some good opportunity into the first half of October. Catches have dropped off for chinook downstream of the Columbia River Gorge but that is typical for this time of year. Dropping water and air temperatures and the presence of more resident fish should continue to bolster catches for anglers versed in the Bonneville Dam fishery.

Backtrolling plugs is often the most productive method to target these fish in the Bonneville area. The weekend check showed 15 chinook adults for 10 boats. Bank anglers tallied 8 adults for 41 bank anglers. Troutdale boats checked in 5 chinook adults for 32 boats. Eleven chinook were caught for 33 boats in the Portland to Longview stretch for anglers likely drowning wobblers.

Sturgeon fishing in the area is also improving. As is typical for this time of year, anglers are seeing some of the best catch rates of the year. Both boat and bank anglers are faring well but historically, bank anglers really begin to put the spank on keepers next to Bonneville Dam. This weeks check revealed 9 legals for 183 bank rods in the gorge while 14 boats retained 11 keepers in the same area. Oversize sturgeon are still coming from both fisheries. Plug back-trollers often encounter oversize sturgeon this time of the year while targeting salmon. If you have a favorite plug, you had better beef up your leader material in case you hook into one of these brutes. Smelt is working best for most anglers targeting sturgeon in this section of river.

Troutdale boats are catching a few keepers as well but 41 boats fishing the Portland to Longview stretch retained 10 keepers and let go another 2 keepers and 112 shakers in the weekend check.

Trollers at the mouth of the Deschutes River are in full swing and steelhead are passing The Dalles Dam in full force these days. Chinook numbers are beginning to dwindle, which often has a bearing on steelhead success for trollers. Action should stay consistent for another few weeks.

The Guide's Forecast – Metro anglers should focus their efforts on the backtrolling or anchoring show near Bonneville Dam. This section of river should become the most productive (by far) for the

next several weeks. The quality of fish available to anglers right now should be high. In just a few weeks however, anglers will have to sort out darker fish in order to find good tablefare. The 2-fish bag limit now available to anglers is a rare treat this year. This fishery would be a good place to exercise that opportunity. Backtrollers may also want to look to using eggs, either backbounced or backtrolled in this area. It could be a very effective method for taking fish although it doesn't quite have the history that Kwikfish do for this fishery.

The downstream fisheries will continue to falter. Anchor anglers will find an occasional fish but consistency will be a thing of the past. The mouth of the Sandy River may be a second option but a distant second in my opinion.

Sturgeon anglers should get excited about the fall prospects. Action is taking off nicely and plenty of keepers should become available as October rolls on. This is an opportune time for a sturgeon/salmon combo trip for this area and great catches are a real possibility! Boat anglers will have the best access to these quality keepers but bank anglers typically see their best results of the year in October as well.

Crabbing in the lower estuary has been excellent but stronger tides should effect success. The incoming tide won't be too strong for weekend crabbers and limits should still be the rule for this fishery.

And speaking of crustaceans, razor clam digging opens up again along Clatsop Beaches beginning October 1st. A good tide series will greet anxious diggers on the opener but you'll want to bring a reliable lantern as low slack will happen well after sunset. Digging should be good if the surf isn't too rough.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Operation of the fish ladder at Willamette Falls resumed on September 22nd following maintenance which had it closed for several weeks. As expected, modest numbers of fall Chinook and summer steelhead are heading upriver along with several hundred coho.

The decision by the ODFW not to adopt a bait ban on the McKenzie River has met with mixed responses from the angling community. Fly anglers who are careful to release wild trout unharmed, are particularly disappointed.

Both the North and South Santiam water levels have increased and are flowing rapidly.

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon fishing is still slow for larger sturgeon although those too short to keep can be entertaining to catch and release. Coho are kegged at the mouth of the Clackamas where they can be seen rolling. Some of these fish are already starting to show some color. Trollers working from that area down to Meldrum Bar will pick up a few on plugs, but don't expect hot action. Action will pick up in to the fall and winter months. Fish the Middle Fork Willamette for large trout. Caddis are on the hatch but nymphs have been most effective. Fish mid-day through the afternoon on the Hills Creek Dam stretch.

The McKenzie level and flow is up even more from rain showers this week, but that won't prevent anglers from experiencing excellent fishing. Throw caddis patterns for best results.

Try below Leaburg Dam on the South Santiam, drifting small baits of good quality cured eggs for a show at hooking a summer steelhead. Summers are scattered on the North Santiam with fish being taken from Fishermen's Bend, Mehama and Packsaddle.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Anglers on the lower Clackamas have experienced periodic flurries of success with coho despite the warm water and slow bite. The Bowling Alley Hole has been jammed with spinner flingers who are taking a few. It'll turn on when the water temperature drops a few degrees or we got a significant rain shower.

Despite low, clear water on the Sandy River, coho fishing has been productive for some anglers who have been making decent catches. Steelhead are also being taken with the best fishing at first light.

Rain is needed to heat up the action here although if it comes late in the season, the run will be over before it begins. It's doubtful that showers this week had much of an impact. Some fish are navigating the skinny waters, however, as anglers jamming Cedar Creek are taking a few coho. Coho are entering the trap at the hatchery in large number, so fishing here can be good at times for those willing to cope with the crowds.

Rain will turn around fishing (to head in a positive direction) at many locations, the Clack and Sandy included. If the NOAA long-range forecast holds true, look for precipitation to fall in significant amount starting the middle of next week. A bag limit of three per day was put into effect starting September 17th and will remain in force until the season closes at the end of October.

Alert from the Multnomah County Sheriffs Office:

"MCSO River Patrol Deputy Ken Yohe reports that the Sandy River, approximately 1 mile north of Dabney State Park, has been completely blocked to all boating traffic (even as small as inner tubes) due to six large trees that have fallen into the river due to bank erosion. The trees lie just past a sharp bend in the river, in a narrow, swift-current spot. There is no danger of the river backing up, but floating debris and the swift current makes it very dangerous for anyone to approach the snags, by boat or on foot. All recreational users of the river are advised to not use the river for 'float trips' until further notice. River Patrol Deputy Stephen Dangler, 503-793-8103, is working with the State Parks Department, Glen Latrell 503-695-2262, to find ways to remove the trees."

North Coast Fishing Report – It's been a slow-go for anglers plying the waters of Tillamook Bay recently. Poor tides has slowed the upper bay spinner fishery although some guides continue to see good results for coho in the middle bay. Herring trollers working the ocean and jaws have been rather disappointed with catches recently. Strong winds tapered effort at sea at mid-week but a return to favorable seas is expected by the weekend.

Some large fish have come across the dock recently. Fish in the high 40's were reported on several days last week including one that tipped the anglers scale at 52 pounds (It weighed 49 at Garibaldi Marina so be sure to drop a couple of 16 ounce leads down its gullet to make sure you get a 50 pound club hat!) These fish were taken at the jaws and there has been a little bite close to low slack when your gear isn't fouled by seaweed or eelgrass.

Only a slight rise in river levels is expected with our current weather system which may trigger coho into the Trask River. Jack returns are looking pretty favorable this early in the game. Some chinook are sure to follow but many will likely remain in tidewater awaiting a better freshet opportunity. Driftboats will remain "drag-boats" until we get much more precipitation. The Trask will be the best option when rivers come in on the first significant rain.

The Nehalem River is producing fair catches of coho but system experts are wondering if a chinook run will actually materialize this season. People are pleased with the action but few coho in the catch are available for legitimate harvest. It's good to see a strong wild component; it may translate into a better than anticipated return to the spawning grounds which would spell better ocean opportunity in the near future.

The Nestucca continues to draw anglers but catches remain light. Tidewater fishers have struggled for much of the season but hopefully, better tides will bring better results. The same holds true for Salmon River anglers although most are not willing to give up. It's one of the best river systems for bank anglers to take advantage of.

The Siletz and Alsea estuaries are a disappointment when most agree there should be a good showing by now. Like other nearby estuaries, hopefully, better tides change the luck of fishermen.

Crabbing has slowed somewhat on Tillamook Bay. Fall effort in the area is likely taking a toll. Crab numbers should continue to climb into the winter months however.

The Guide's Forecast – Those better tides I was referencing are on the horizon. Actually, they are currently underway! Pre-dawn minus tides mean strong morning incoming tides and Trask and Tillamook bound chinook should still be a strong option in the upper bay for spinner trollers. Low slack will often produce a good bite at the Oyster House Hole or just downstream. The lower ends of tidewater for the Tillamook and Trask Rivers should also produce fair results. Incoming tide should prove favorable for both plug bouncers and spinner trollers. Hopefully, seaweed won't hamper success too bad as it is still quite prevalent throughout the bay.

Ocean anglers have this forecast to look forward to:

FRI

N WIND 5 KT...BECOMING NW WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. NW SWELL 8 FT...SUBSIDING TO 6 FT IN THE AFTERNOON.

FRI NIGHT

NW WIND 10 KT...BACKING TO SW WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. NW SWELL 6 FT...BECOMING W 4 FT AFTER MIDNIGHT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF RAIN AFTER MIDNIGHT.

SAT

SW WIND 10 KT. GUSTS UP TO 15 KT IN THE MORNING. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF RAIN.

SAT NIGHT

NW WIND 5 KT...VEERING TO NE AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 7 FT.

SUN

S WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

MON

S WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

It's a pretty favorable forecast for those that like the outside option. A swell that big however makes the bar iffy; it's a coast guard station Tillamook Bay call at this point. Herring is the only bait used in the lower bay with any efficiency.

Open season for bottomfishers outside of 40 fathoms beginning October 1st. Catches of large lingcod and ample seabass should please anglers for the brief amount of time they have access in calm seas.

Action should pick up on all southerly estuaries as well. The Nestucca, Salmon, Siletz and Alsea estuaries should get a good flush of fall chinook if they do indeed plan on making a spawning run this year. Herring will take the bulk of the biters but spinners and plugs will become more effective the higher in the estuary or tidewater one fishes.

Coho should still be in some of these estuary fisheries but hatchery fish will likely head upstream with not many fresh ones behind them. Hatchery fish peak earlier than wild fish do.

Crabbing should remain fair in most estuaries.

Central & South Coast Reports – The ODFW has adopted a proposal that will mean more time to crab offshore. Starting in the 2009 season, ocean crabbers will be able to seek Dungeness until October 16th rather than getting cut off in mid-August. The ocean will be off-limits to crabbing from October 16 through November 30th.

The rockfish limit will remain six fish per day with fishing allowed out to the 40-fathom curve for the rest of 2008. It is imperative that canary and yelloweye rockfish be released unharmed to assure that we get the privilege of angling for groundfish. A free card for identifying various species of red rockfish is available at the following locations:

- Astoria - Englands Marine
- Bandon - Bandon Bait Shop
- Brookings - Sport Haven Marina and 4M Tackle
- Charleston - Englands Marine and Basin Tackle
- Garibaldi - Garibaldi Marina and Big Tuna Marine
- Gold Beach - Lex's Landing and Rogue Outdoor Store
- Newport - South Beach Marina and Englands Marine
- Rockaway Beach - Lyster's Bait & Tackle
- Warrenton - Tackle Time Charters

The card may be seen online here: *<http://www.oceaned.org/RockfishID.htm> and for techniques to successfully release rockfish, see Random Links, below.

With only 6% of the central coast all-depth halibut quota remaining, there will be one more opportunity on Saturday, September 27th for a one-fish bag limit. Fishing out of Newport and Depoe Bay was excellent over the past weekend with most anglers bagging a pair of flatties. Some boats did combo runs, taking halibut limits then heading out to catch albacore.

Chinook fishing at the Siletz has yet to heat up. Only one in 10 boats is landing a fish as of a report this week.

The 7th Annual 2008 U da Man Fishing Tournament will be held in Newport on Sunday, October 12th. The entry fee is only \$30 with proceeds benefiting Chinook salmon enhancement in Yaquina Bay and River. The top three places finish in the money with first place paying \$500. Launching is free from the South Beach ramp. Info and entry forms are available at area merchants.

Boaters out of Newport and Depoe Bay should find favorable conditions for crossing into the ocean this weekend. Anglers have taken good numbers of albacore recently but this late in the season it remains to be seen how long this fishery remains within reach of recreational boaters. Crabbing has been fair in Yaquina Bay but the Dungeness have been large and hard.

Fishing has been slow on the Alsea but this will change with the first decent fall rain.

Siuslaw anglers are seeing good numbers of wild coho but few of the Chinook which are historically in tidewater at this time of year.

Limits of large, hard Dungeness are being taken by crabbers out of Florence.

While the chances of hooking a 20-pound Chinook in Umpqua tidewater are pretty good right now, historically, September is the month when 40- and 50-pounders are occasionally landed. It's prime time now for the best fishing of the year. Upstream, smallmouth bass fishing remains good but is winding down. The North Umpqua is productive for summer steelheading while the South Umpqua is closed to all angling.

The Rogue estuary rebounded this week and is fishing very well for Chinook and coho. Trollers are taking a mix of coho, adult Chinook and jacks in the area from the Highway 101 Bridge to the power lines. One of the keys to triggering a bite from the larger Chinook is to troll large baitfish while smaller herring or anchovy will trigger coho bites, especially if fished with a pink spinner blade.

Anglers in the Grants Pass stretch are catching decent numbers of adult steelhead and half-pounders with Chinook fishing only lukewarm. Bait has been the better option here. Steelhead fishing is fair in the flies-only upper river. While about 3,000 summers have crossed at Gold Ray Dam, passage has slowed but is expected to pick up again.

Offshore conditions are predicted to be favorable for Brookings anglers to launch boats and enjoy the excellent ocean bottom fishing that's been ongoing here with an increased bag limit and access to deeper water. Ling cod fishing has been fair but is expected to pick up in the coming weeks. Rock fish catches have been excellent with limits the rule. While not the case with ling cod, catches have continued to improve.

All the money received from the \$35-per-angler entry fee for the Seventh Annual Salmon Derby will be returned to the top three placing anglers. The Derby will run Wednesday through Saturday, October 1st through 4th and is limited to the first 200 entrants. Call 541-469-3301 to get in on the fun.

The water temperature has dropped and the fishing has improved at Diamond Lake. While the hatches have tapered off, trout are fat from gorging on abundant insects that hatched by the googol (a very large number, indeed) earlier in the season. The south end of the lake is still the most productive and PowerBait is out fishing lures.

The OSP is taking the dumping of Golden Shiners at Diamond Lake very seriously. The individual who aids in the apprehension of the perpetrators responsible will receive over \$8,000, the bounty on these cretins.

Central and Eastern Oregon – The Deschutes has been offering good fishing for steelhead over the past week. Plug-pullers in the lower river are nailing the occasional large 'B' run steelhead.

Kokanee fishing is fair at Green Peter with the fish coloring up a little but they're fat and the majority remain fine for the table.

Odell has been producing good numbers of kokanee averaging 13 inches with only a small percentage too near spawning to keep.

Lake Billy Chinook has been fishing well for kokanee anglers using jugs. About a third of the fish in

catches are showing some color.

Northwest Trout - The data at the online trout stocking schedule and the ODFW website have differed one to another recently, but according to their website, updated September 24th, trout weighing one to one and a half pounds will be stocked at Junction City Pond, Walter Wirth Pond, Walling Pond, St. Louis Ponds, and Salish Pond. Henry Hagg Lake, Foster Reservoir, Mt. Hood College Pond and Timber Lake are scheduled to receive legal-sized rainbows this week.

All of the rainbow trout on the stocking schedule this week for the Rogue Watershed District of the Southwest Region are what the ODFW refers to as 'trophy-sized,' measuring 16 inches or better. Scheduled for planting of these jumbo fish are Lost Creek Reservoir, Oak Springs, Willow Lake, Applegate Reservoir, Cole Rivers and Fish Lake.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report September 16th – 30th, 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 it's 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.

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 downstream 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:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Release Methods for rockfish courtesy of Department of Fisheries and Wildlife:

<http://seagrant.oregonstate.edu/sgpubs/onlinepubs/g05001.html>

Good information on various nearshore species from the ODFW, but don't expect a surf perch to look like the amusing photo on this page:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/swwd/oceanfish.pdf>

Weekly Quote – "Calvin Coolidge's exploits as a fisherman are well known. One of his favorite angling places was the River Brule. Once a newspaper reporter asked him how many fish approximately were in the Brule, and the President answered that the waters were estimated to contain about 45,000 fish. 'I haven't caught them all yet,' he said, 'but I've intimidated them.'" - John McKee

GOOD LUCK!