

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 3<sup>rd</sup> – October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro** - Although salmon fishing is beginning to slow on the lower Columbia River, anglers fishing the gorge are still taking chinook at a rate of nearly 1 for every other boat. The action should hold up for just another few weeks but the quality of fish will begin to degrade.

Sturgeon anglers in the gorge continue to see sturgeon success climb with nearly a keeper per boat taken for boat anglers. Bank anglers are still taking keepers as well at a rate of 1 for every 6 rods.

Chinook and coho are crossing Willamette Falls by the hundreds every day. With a 34-day closure of the fish ladder, the actual totals will remain unknown. Sturgeon fishing is yielding few keepers.

Fishing has been fair to good on the North Santiam with good numbers of steelhead scattered from Mehema to Packsaddle Park. Bobber and jig will catch fish here.

Surfacing coho are frustrating Clackamas River anglers but upcoming rains should stimulate better action. Coho are being caught periodically on Eagle Creek when pods move through.

Coho fishing has been fair on the Sandy River with a significant number of jacks being taken. Action should be very good with precipitation. Use caution - There has been no update on the trees blocking the river above Dabney. Cedar Creek is busy with anglers.

Scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout are Henry Hagg Lake, Mt Hood College Pond, Timber Lake, Dexter Reservoir and Foster Reservoir.

**Northwest** – Large numbers of coho jacks are present in Young's Bay near Astoria. Spinner casters working the tidewater areas are taking good numbers of fish. It looks much more promising for next years coho run.

Tillamook Bay anglers are struggling for results. With heavy concentrations of seaweed in the bay, anglers focused most of the week's effort on a calm ocean but wild coho made up more of the catch than chinook.

Forecasted precipitation could clear the bay of vegetation but river levels are scheduled to rise making driftboating a good option. The Trask River will likely produce the best as the earliest returning fish are headed for this system. Some hatchery coho may also be available. Be sure to positively distinguish between large wild coho and chinook as multiple violations have recently been witnessed.

Also in need of clarification is the ocean crabbing season. Recently adopted to extend to October 15<sup>th</sup> beginning in 2009, crab pots have been spotted in the ocean this week. Violators will be cited until the ocean opens back up for crabbing on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Bay crabbing on many north coast estuaries, including Tillamook Bay, has picked up significantly in recent days.

The Nestucca and Salmon Rivers will continue to get chinook into October but catches are beginning to slow from the peak period. The Alsea and Siletz Rivers continue to disappoint.

Razor clam season re-opens along Clatsop Beaches on Wednesday with favorable tides for just the first 2 days. The next tide series will come at mid-month.

**Southwest** – The tides won't be a factor if wind and wave predictions are accurate; bar crossings into the ocean will likely be treacherous into the weekend.

Fall is an excellent time to pursue sea-run cutthroat trout. Most of the coastal rivers have runs and larger fish are taken through October.

Crabbing has been good out of Florence for big, hard Dungeness.

**Bill Kremers (541-754-6411)** reports, "Fished the Siuslaw yesterday by Florence. Chinook fishing is slow, but coho is better to good.

**Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944)** reports, "Fishing on the Siuslaw has been fair. We're averaging 2-4 fish/day.

It's been spotty for chinook on the Coos River. A few chinook are falling daily for trolled, plug-cut herring in tidewater on the Coquille.

Winchester Bay has been fair to good for crabbing. Chinook and coho fishing has been worthwhile in tidewater on the Umpqua while smallmouth bass fishing continues to reward anglers upstream. Steelheading has slowed on the North Umpqua following wildfires.

Trollers in Rogue tidewater are catching chinook and coho. Crabbing has also been good. The Grants Pass stretch picked up for chinook over the weekend. Steelheading on the upper Rogue has been spotty.

The fall chinook ocean terminal fishery is open through Saturday, October 4th on the Chetco. Large salmon are taken every year during this brief opportunity.

When the ocean has laid down, boats out of Brookings have taken mostly limits of rockfish. Ling cod have been elusive but they are running large.

Diamond Lake fished well through the weekend with bait the top producer for trout to 20 inches.

**Eastern – Steve Fleming (1-888-624-9424)** reports the John Day's water is cooling off, and the bite is slow in the morning. but by 10 Am it gets going and is very good in the afternoon.

**Pro guide Mac Huff (800-940-3688)** reports from the Grande Ronde River that this is the year to catch steelhead (yes, plural) on a dry fly! As the second largest run on record enters the Snake River, steelhead are already occupying the Grande Ronde.

Trollers working the mouth of the Deschutes have been catching more salmon than steelhead lately. Spinners and plugs, especially in green have been producing results.

Fly anglers are doing well for trout on the lower Deschutes and have been surprised occasionally with steelhead hookups. Fishing for large browns on the middle Deschutes has been good as the spawn approaches. Anglers are also sight-fishing for big bull trout in the middle river.

**SW Washington** – The Toutle River is producing good results for coho salmon anglers. The Cowlitz and Lewis Rivers also have fishable numbers. Later returning coho should stimulate

catches on these river systems into November.

Although coho are beginning to show on the Klickitat River, chinook are making up the bulk of the catch. The bulk of the effort is taking place at the rivers mouth.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Although salmon fishing is winding down on the lower Columbia, there are still a few decent options for anglers in search of an opportune 2 fish limit. It's been a rare scenario on the Columbia in recent years but the updated run size justifies the increase in bag limits.

Anglers are still required to target chinook upstream of the Lewis River to protect those stocks of chinook and there is some effort still taking place there by wobbler plunkers. The bulk of the effort however is happening in the Bonneville area where fish are more concentrated and more resident fish may be staging in the coming weeks. Catch rates for this section of the Columbia have improved in the recent week with backrollers taking the bulk of the fish. Anchor anglers can take fish here as well and some anglers may choose to backroll eggs this time of year. Be cautious with your favorite Kwikfish as oversize sturgeon will quite often grab your backrolled plugs this time of year. It's an easy way to lose gear.

Sturgeon anglers are beginning to take real interest in this area as it is beginning to boot out some great catches of keeper sturgeon. Both boat and bank anglers are doing well with boat anglers averaging nearly a keeper per boat. Quality fish are beginning to congregate in this area in larger numbers. Bank anglers fishing near the deadline should also fare well into late October. They have access to water upstream of the boating deadline. Smelt and shrimp are top baits in this fishery.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Starting from downriver, anglers may want to keep in mind that there are a lot of coho still due back to the lower Columbia River in the coming weeks. There is a very distinctive late ("B-run") return of coho that are typically destined for the Washington tributaries. These fish begin to show in good numbers in October but often peak in mid-October. Anglers are not allowed to target these fish below Tongue Point but when we left this area (Tongue Point) around the second week of September, the fishing was pretty good and an upcoming soft tide series could produce a repeat performance. Spinners trolled on the bottom of the river produced great results. The "B" run fish this year is predicted to be about the same size as the predicted early run fish; and those fish were under-predicted. Stay tuned for more info although there isn't likely to be high participation so our information may be a bit limited. Target coho fisheries will continue at the mouths of many Washington tributaries and action should be good. Be sure to check out the Washington "Weekender Report" in this weeks edition.

As for chinook fishing, action should continue to wind down for lower river plunkers although Bonneville anglers should still find fair action into the middle of October. Backrollers will rule the roost here but bank anglers should begin to see better action as well. As the water temperatures cool, and adults begin to stage in the area in preparation of mainstem spawning, the action should improve. Couple this opportunity with putting some time in for keeper sturgeon and you could really have a good day of gorge fishing. It's a beautiful place to fish this time of year!

As for sturgeon fishing, catch rates last weekend were as follows (from the ODF&W fishing report):

**Gorge Bank:**

Weekend checking showed 32 legal white sturgeon kept, plus two legal, eight oversize, and 27 sublegal sturgeon released for 187 bank anglers.

**Gorge Boats:**

Weekend checking showed 19 legal white sturgeon kept, plus seven oversize and 199 sublegal sturgeon released for 21 boats (complete trips).

**Troutdale Bank:**

Weekend checking showed no catch for nine bank anglers.

**Troutdale Boats:**

Weekend checking showed one legal white sturgeon kept, plus one oversize and nine sublegal sturgeon released for five boats (complete trips).

**Portland to Rainier Bank:**

Weekly checking showed three sublegal sturgeon released for 12 bank anglers.

**Portland to Longview Boats:**

Weekend checking showed 17 legal white sturgeon kept, plus three legal and 64 sublegal sturgeon released for 35 boats (complete & incomplete trips).

Of course, smelt will be a top bait if you were able to get some from this years limited catches. Sand shrimp will be a close second but many anglers have their own concoctions for keepers this time of year so creativity can often pay dividends. The action will likely peak in the coming two weeks.

Trollers working the mouth of the Deschutes will also find success into the middle of the month. Spinners and plugs will continue to take chinook and steelhead in this area and the John Day Pool may also begin to boot out steelhead to trollers. This fishery can be very inconsistent this time of year but remains a good option for metro anglers as it is only a short distance from Portland.

Anglers in the know may also want to check out Young's Bay for coho jacks. Trooper Trygve Klepp of Astoria reported, "Fishing for Y-Bay coho jack salmon is hot! I've never seen so many jacks in the system. Guys are catching them with spinners and bait at the more easily accessible tide gates around the bay. Tidewater Klaskanine River at the tide change is good too."

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – Nearly 1,000 fall Chinook and 1,250 coho crossed Willamette Falls during the first five days of operation (September 22nd through 26th) following maintenance work on the fish ladder.

Pressure is light and steelheading has picked up on the McKenzie.

Steelhead recycling has concluded on both the North and South Santiam rivers.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Trollers will have a shot at coho in the stretch of the lower Willamette from the mouth of the Clackamas to below Meldrum Bar. Sturgeon may be caught around St. Johns but it has been mostly a catch and release fishery for shorts too small to keep. Fish the Middle Fork Willamette above Hills Creek for rainbows. Terrestrials and October Caddis are out in abundance. Wildfires have been a problem in this area, so call the Middle Fork Ranger District at 541-782-2283 to check on local conditions.

Steelhead are being caught on the North Santiam this week from Fishermen's Bend to Mehama. Action is only been fair, however.

Lures and flies have been equally effective at fooling those McKenzie River steelhead.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – Coho catches have improved slightly on the Clackamas River. A few have been taken at the mouth and there are a whole bunch of people catching very few fish at the Bowling Alley Hole. The urge to spawn is driving many fish higher than that as they're scattered through the river with mostly dark fish in Eagle Creek. The freshet this week will have them on the move and bring in the hundreds around the mouth and from the Willamette but it remains to be seen if they'll start biting. A few are being taken on spinners, particularly early in the day, but cured salmon eggs have been getting more attention.

Rain this week is not actually needed to bring fish into the Sandy - there are plenty of them, they're chrome and can be seen almost anywhere on the river. It is hoped, however, that the coming precipitation will turn them from lock-jawed into biters. Fishing has been best at the mouth of Cedar Creek which has had anglers jammed in there tightly. The tree above Dabney is still blocking the river and at the current level it is not possible to get around it by water.

Sandy and Clackamas Rivers and Cedar and Eagle creeks have a three fish per day bag limit on hatchery coho. Release all natives. Turn in snaggers at 503-375-3555 or 1-800-452-7888.

Some anglers have voiced hope that crowds will thin a little this weekend as the fall hunting season begins October 4th.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – If it wasn't for the option to fish the ocean, Tillamook Bay trollers would be fit to be tied! Seaweed is plaguing estuary fishers to the point that for most of the day, anglers are not effectively fishing. It doesn't seem to matter where you fish, the seaweed is present. The upper bay near low tide is an exception where trollers can get in a few hours of seaweed free fishing when one actually has a chance at getting a fish. Action has been slow however with only an occasional chinook being taken and a good handful of coho, of which most are wild and must be released.

We have been fortunate enough to have the ocean as a viable alternative to bay fishing and the seaweed hasn't been nearly as bad out there but the action leaves much to be desired. Only a rare chinook is being taken in the bubble fishery but wild coho are plentiful and are by far, making up the bulk of the catch. A few boats, including myself, have been trolling south towards Cape Mears and picking up an occasional chinook and more wild coho. I have been working the 25 to 35 foot lines with herring on the bottom and fishing to about 3 miles south of the south jetty. It's even more seaweed free in this area but you'll need to check your lines once in a while. For the near future however, this will be a poor option as the ocean is forecasted to turn upside down in the very near future.

West channel fishers are finding coho almost exclusively with seaweed only giving anglers a short reprieve near high slack. The upper channel is producing the best results, if they could be classified as "best". One guide reported good numbers of sturgeon rolling in the upper channel and actually tried to target them on Wednesday. With such high salinity levels however, the juvenile crab and sculpin take your bait well before a sturgeon ever gets a chance at it. His results were nil.

Tidewater of the Trask produced a few chinook to bobber tossers early in the week. Anglers reported fair catches both upstream and downstream of the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Ramp in Tillamook. Low slack always produces the best results. Some chinook were also taken trolling spinners in the Tillamook tidewater.

The Nehalem continues to put out only a few chinook with lots and lots of wild coho present. One guide boat reported landing 9 coho for the day, of which one was hatchery. It looks like a good year for wild coho.

Check the Columbia River report for good info on Young's Bay coho jack fishing!

The Nestucca and Salmon Rivers are slow but the Salmon seems to have enough effort to make me think it is fishing better than the Nestucca. Anglers working the tidewater sections of the Nestucca have been pretty disappointed.

Crabbing has been excellent in Tillamook Bay and in other estuaries as well. Softer tides this week may even improve catches even further but don't leave your pots out overnight unless you're in a protective cove as strong night tides will likely foul gear or sweep it away.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Fishing is a bit up in the air in Tillamook County as a storm is predicted to hit the region by the time this newsletter "goes to print". Wind will keep many anglers from fishing the ocean due to rough weather and in the bay because they will get blown around so bad, it'll be hard to stay in the channels. Seaweed will compliment the frustration. If we get the predicted rainfall for the area, some of the seaweed and eelgrass may exit the bay for the season. The more rain we have, the better the weed situation will be in the estuary. The ocean will flat out, not be an option.

Driftboaters may want to watch the river levels closely because if the Trask gets enough rain to rise the river level even a foot, action should take off in that river system. Both coho and chinook should be available although don't expect easy limits as only fair numbers of fish have shown so far. It's a bit early for the Wilson River to produce good fishing but some early returning fish may be available. The Nestucca and Nehalem may also be options depending on the amount of rainfall that we receive.

Also, if river levels rise enough, it will send tidewater holding fish upriver effectively shutting down any bobber bite that may have occurred in the Trask and Tillamook Rivers.

Sturgeon do seem to be in the bay but until we get much higher amounts of freshwater entering the system, don't count on being able to keep a bait fishing long enough to catch a keeper.

Crabbing should remain fair in most coastal estuaries, even with the forecasted precipitation.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Predictions for offshore conditions this weekend have become more sever. Boaters are scratching it off as a possibility although wind and waves are forecast to settle down nicely on Monday next week. Fishing warriors with the ability to fish weekdays are hoping the southwest winds will have pushed warm water closer to shore for a chance at October tuna.

The all-depth halibut season is over for the year. The quota was exceeded an estimated one-half of one percent. Good job, guys and gals! Halibut may continue to be taken within the 40-fathom line as 37% of the quota is remaining.

As of October 1st, anglers no longer have any depth restriction for bottom fishing anywhere on the Oregon coast and may retain six rockfish and two ling cod 22 inches or better daily. Count kelp greenling in your bottom fish limit.

Fall Chinook have yet to show in any significant number on the Siletz. Rain this week will be a virtual make or break for this season's fishing.

Crabbing has been slow to fair this week at Yaquina Bay but the crab are in good condition. Waldport has been a little better but sorting of many small and female crab is required.

The Alsea has been a dud this year but anglers are hoping that's been due to very low water levels. If the river is to shine this season it'll be following rain this week. The river is forecast to rise from the current 1.15 to 2.29 at tidewater by mid-day Saturday. Stay tuned. Chinook fishing has been slow in tidewater on the Siuslaw but precipitation this week gives trollers reason for optimism.

Coquille trollers and back-bouncers have seen an improvement in Chinook catches on the lower river. The Coos River has jumpers and rollers everywhere but fishing has been slow.

Trollers are seeing little action with salmon at Winchester Bay. As the water temperature declines, so has the action with smallmouth on the mainstem Umpqua River. The North Umpqua is productive for summer steelhead in the flies-only stretch. The South Umpqua will open to winter steelhead fishing on December 1st.

**Bill Kremers (541-754-6411)** reports, "Fished the Siuslaw yesterday by Florence. Chinook fishing is slow, but coho is better to good, especially right around high tide. Just about everyone is trolling herring. Hoping the incoming cooler weather and rain will turn on the fishing."

**Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944)** reports, "Fishing on the Siuslaw has been fair. We're averaging 2-4 fish/day. Chinook and wild silvers (to be released) in the mix. Fish are well distributed from Swisshome down, with mostly dark fish up high. We're getting fish trolling spinner and with bobbers. Next week should be significantly better."

Limits of Dungeness have continued to come to crabbers out of Florence, but it remains to be seen what effect rain this week will have on their success. This should be the week that fans of the Elk River can enjoy fishing for fall Chinook. Instant action; just add water.

Trollers in Rogue tidewater are experiencing lots of hookups now as good numbers of coho have joined the Chinook and jacks - lots of jacks. With the best run of half-pounders on the Rogue in several years and the remarkable number of Chinook jacks, one might think this the Year of the Small Fish - if not for the 40 and 50 pounders also being landed. Steelhead fishing is fair while Chinook fishing is slow in the Grants pass stretch with a few half-pounders showing in catches. As of October 1st, the Rogue is closed above the Hog Creek Boat Ramp. The upper Rogue which remains a flies-only area, is fishing well for summer steelhead.

In a bit of ironic if not directly fishing-related news, readers may recall that we reported on September 12th that the Curry County Planning Commission trounced plans for a mining and processing facility five miles up the Rogue River by Tidewater Contracting. This week, Gary Allen Green, Tidewater CFA, was charged with embezzling as much as \$1 million dollars from the aforementioned contracting company. It seems he had his \$200,000 sailboat all packed a ready to go when the local sheriff apprehended him. Green is being held on \$10 million bail.

The first day of the brief Chetco Hawg season on Wednesday this week was hampered by high winds and a rough ocean. Fishing was good and about 190 Chinook were caught the morning of the opener but the wind picked up and blew boats off the ocean early in the afternoon. Technically titled the 2008 Chetco River Ocean Terminal Area Fall Chinook Fishery, it may be a bust this year as conditions are predicted to deteriorate through Saturday, October 4th, which is

the last day of this opportunity. Historically, this has been a chance for some of the biggest Chinook of the year and plenty of 'em. The limit is one per day and four for the year. The Chetco River is closed to Chinook fishing until November 1st.

**Update: "Action Notice 10/2/2008:** The Chetco River State Waters Fall Chinook recreational fishery will open for one additional day of fishing on Saturday, October 11. Catches on the first day of the season (Oct. 1) totaled approximately 190 Chinook on a catch guideline of 250 fish. Weather and ocean conditions will preclude fishing on the remaining three days of the initial open period of October 1-4, and fishery managers agreed to open for one of the alternate dates as provided in the season structure as the catch was still well under the guideline."

Additional dates of October 12th, 17th and 18th will be considered if the weather doesn't allow fishing on the above-mentioned dates.

During the current storm brewing off the central and southern Oregon coast, Brookings anglers will be missing out on stellar bottom fishing. Larger rockfish have come out of port to the south. Earlier this week about a third of those trying for ling cod were successful and a few took limits.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – It's great to hear again from **pro guide Mac Huff (800-940-3688)** who reports from the Grande Ronde River, "I went from Oct. 1 - 21 with a single steelhead hooked and landed, so I was pretty bummed out about the season. After that I consistently got fish, but numbers caught remained as low as the water in the river. This season fish are already in the river and more are stacking in every day. I get started in earnest with steelhead on Friday, but have already had a client hook (and lose) a steelhead (a little better start than last year) and others have had days with multiple fish coming to dries as well as the usual wet flies.

"This is the year to catch steelhead (yes, plural) on a dry fly! As the second largest run on record enters the Snake River, steelhead are already occupying the Grande Ronde. Recent rains will speed their migration into the Ronde and this season is poised to be as good as any during the first few years of this decade, when on good days my clients could have more than a dozen steelhead come to their dry fly each day.

"This is an exciting opportunity to enjoy the memorable experience of catching steelhead with a surface fly presentation. No matter where you've fished, a dry-fly steelhead will rank at the top for memorable fly fishing experiences."

**Steve Fleming (1-888-624-9424) reports,** "The John Day's water is cooling off, and the bite is slow in the morning. but by 10 Am it gets going and is very good in the afternoon. The fish have pulled out of the flats and are headed for the deep wintering holes. It makes it easier to key in on them and we are still getting lots of 100+ days per person, Master Angler 21" on Saturday. The flows jumped up, and are headed back down (up to 189 CFS and 134 CFS today). They will head back up on October 1, when everyone has to stop irrigating. The morning temp is 50-53 degrees and warms up 4-5 degrees by the afternoon, the deep water is the warmest in the morning, so fish deep and slow at that time. There is still top water action late in the day, and they are biting on most everything at that time. The little fish are still active, but will stop when the water temp falls to 48. The Outlaw Baits (5" Ripple Worm) fished on 1/16 oz leadhead still produce the best when covered with Smelly Jelly Craw/Anise."

Action for steelhead on the Deschutes is expected to heat up with rain this week. It has been very slow for trollers at the mouth but to witness the aluminum hat you'd think they're killing

'em. It has been so slow that the traffic at the mouth has started to thin.

**Northwest Trout** - With Foster and Detroit reservoirs each receiving 5,000 trout earlier this week, fishing is expected to be worthwhile. The fresh-stocked trout will remain in shallow water for about two weeks while they acclimate to deeper areas. Be aware that with the water level low at Detroit, boaters will need to launch at Mongold.

According to the ODFW Recreation Report, Henry Hagg Lake received another 8,000 legal-sized rainbows this week. Hagg is drawn down starting in late summer to allow for winter rains. At this time of year, it's very low.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

**From the WDF&W Weekender Report October 1<sup>st</sup> – October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

#### **North Puget Sound**

For the most part, fishing has been slow this fall for **coho salmon** in both the marine and freshwater fisheries. But, despite the low catch rates, there have been some scattered reports of anglers reeling in some nice-size silvers.

"Some anglers who have recently caught **coho** are bringing in good-size fish," said Steve Thiesfeld, a WDFW fish biologist. "But, overall, it's been tough out there for salmon anglers. The coho that are around just aren't biting."

That was evident at the recent Everett Coho Derby. A total of 2,087 adult and youth tickets were issued for the event, but only 246 silvers were weighed. That's well below last year's total of 1,166 coho. Of the anglers who did catch fish, Jonathan Kelly turned out to be the derby's big winner. Kelly hauled in an 18.16-pound coho he caught in the Snohomish River, taking home the \$2,500 first prize in the adult division. Brady Peterson, who weighed in a 16.63-pound coho he caught in Marine Area 9 finished second and pocketed \$1,500, while Hut Phanthavilay's 16.44-pound silver - caught in the Snohomish River - was good enough for third place and \$1,000.

Anglers looking to hook ocean coho should try fishing Point No Point, Jefferson Head, Possession Bar and Shipwreck, Thiesfeld said. 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.

Thiesfeld reminds anglers that beginning Oct. 1 portions of marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) open for salmon fishing. Salmon fishing in Marine Area 8-1 is restricted to Oak Harbor, west of a line from Forbes Point to Blowers Bluff. Anglers fishing Oak Harbor have a daily limit of two coho only.

In Marine Area 8-2, salmon fishing is limited to the south end of the area, south of a line from Randall Point to the south end of the Everett Naval Station dock. Anglers in that area have a two salmon daily limit, but must release chinook.

Anglers looking to get an early start on the region's **blackmouth** season can head to Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where they can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit.

Blackmouth - resident chinook - fishing opportunities will expand Oct. 16, when anglers in Marine Area 10 also will be allowed to keep one chinook as part of that area's daily limit of two salmon.

In the freshwater, there have been a few reports of anglers doing well fishing for coho on the Green (Duwamish) and Snohomish rivers, but overall catch rates for coho have been down in the region. "On the Skagit River it's been about the same as most everywhere else - slow," said Brett Barkdull, another WDFW fish biologist. "There's been a few fish caught, but it's not great fishing." Anglers fishing the Skagit have a daily limit of two salmon, but must release chinook.

Elsewhere, the **chinook** catch has tapered off recently in the Samish River, where anglers have a daily limit of two salmon. "It looks like the end of the road when it comes to chinook this season, and unfortunately I haven't heard any reports of anyone catching coho yet," Barkdull said.

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**

As more **salmon** move in from the coast to area bays and rivers, anglers can look forward to catching fish closer to home. Or, they might consider trading their fishing rods for clam shovels for the first **razor-clam** dig of the season. The dig is tentatively scheduled to begin Oct. 16, provided that test results show the clams are safe to eat.

Three evening **razor-clam** digs are tentatively scheduled at Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks Oct. 16-18, while Long Beach is scheduled for two evening digs Oct. 17 and 18. Dan Ayres, WDFW coastal shellfish manager, recommends clam diggers take lights or lanterns with them because low tides for digging will occur later in the evening. He also recommended checking weather and surf forecasts before heading out.

Digging will be restricted to the hours between noon and midnight. Harvesters are allowed to take no more than 15 razor clams and must keep the first 15 they dig, regardless of size or condition. Each digger's clams must be kept in a separate container.

A license is required for anyone age 15 or older. Any 2008 annual shellfish/seaweed license or combination fishing license is still valid. Another option is a razor-clam only license available in annual or three-day only versions. Descriptions of the various licensing options are available on the WDFW website at [fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov](http://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov). Clam diggers are not required to display their licenses on outer clothing.

Tentative opening dates and evening low tides in October are:

- Thursday, Oct. 16 (8:30 p.m. -1.5) Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks
- Friday, Oct. 17 (9:17 p.m. -1.5) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks
- Saturday, Oct. 18 (10:08 p.m. -1.2) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks

More digs are tentatively scheduled Nov. 13-16 and Dec. 11-13.

Meanwhile, anglers looking for salmon fishing opportunities can head to Marine Area 6 (Port Angeles) where a non-selective fishery for **coho** and **chinook** is now under way through Oct. 31.

"With the exception of a few special areas, the entire area's open for fishing and people can keep wild or hatchery **coho**, **chum** and **blackmouth**," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist.

The daily limit is two salmon, but only one may be a chinook. Freshwater Bay, Port Angeles Harbor and Sequim Bay remain closed to salmon fishing, while Dungeness Bay is open for coho salmon only.

Also as of Oct. 1, anglers in Marine Area 11 (Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge) may retain **wild chinook** as part of their two-fish daily limit. Wild chinook may also be retained in Marine Area 13, but anglers must release all wild coho. Other fishing opportunities coming up in Puget Sound include **chum** and **blackmouth** retention in all of Hood Canal beginning Oct. 16.

Thiesfeld reminded anglers that the Skokomish River, from the mouth to the Hwy 101 Bridge, is open for **coho** fishing through Dec. 15. While chum may be retained after Oct. 15, no chinook retention is allowed on the river.

Plenty of salmon anglers have been fishing Grays Harbor (Marine Area 2.2) and the lower Chehalis River since the Sept. 16 opener, but the catch has been low, said Scott Barbour, WDFW fish biologist. "So far there have been one or two good days on the lower Chehalis, which is typical for this time of year," Barbour said. "Hopefully we'll get some rain to bring in more fish and move them upriver." While some adult coho are showing up, most of the fish have been jacks, he said.

Fishing on the upper Chehalis River is now under way, Barbour said. "Through Oct. 15, anglers may retain one wild coho as part of their six-fish daily limit, but all chinook and chum must be released," he said. Starting Oct. 16 only hatchery coho may be retained on the river.

The same is true for other area rivers including the Elk, Humptulips, Johns, Satsop and Wishkah rivers in Grays Harbor County; Kennedy Creek in Thurston County and the Nemah River in Pacific County.

Barbour advised anglers to check WDFW's 2008/2009 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet ([wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm](http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm)) for details on boundaries and regulations.

Meanwhile, more area rivers will open for fall fishing Oct. 16 including a portion of the Dungeness River in Clallam County, which opens for **trout** and **coho** salmon. A section of the Hoh River from Willoughby Creek to Morgan's Crossing boat launch also opens for salmon fishing Oct. 16. In Pacific County, anglers can start fishing for salmon on the Willapa River from the Highway 6 Bridge to Fork Creek and from the Hwy 4 Bridge to the Salme Bridge on the Naselle River. Anglers are advised to check WDFW's 2008/2009 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet ([wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm](http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm)) for details before fishing these waters.

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.

### **Southwest Washington:**

The signs of fall are everywhere in the Columbia River Basin, and they aren't confined to falling leaves and chilly mornings. As experienced anglers know, this is the time of year when:

- Catch rates for **sturgeon** start to eclipse those for salmon on the lower Columbia River.
- Chrome-bright **late coho** start to take the place of early runs in the mainstem Columbia and its tributaries.

- All or part of several key tributaries are closed to retention of **chinook salmon** to avoid interfering with spawning fish.

"This is truly a time of transition for area fisheries," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "The summer season is morphing into fall, with a whole new set of fishing opportunities."

Opportunities to catch white **sturgeon** are clearly on the rise. Boat anglers fishing upstream from Longview averaged one keeper for every 4.6 rods, while bank anglers fishing just below Bonneville Dam averaged a legal-sized fish for every 8.6 rods. Boat catches were spread throughout the river. Approximately 150 boats and 480 bank anglers were counted during a Sept. 27 aerial survey.

**Salmon fishing** in the mainstem Columbia River has also been holding up well between the lower end of Bachelor Island near the mouth of the Lewis River upriver to Bonneville Dam. In that area, boat anglers have been averaging one adult chinook for every six rods. Anglers there may retain up to two adult chinook salmon as part of their daily limit.

Anglers fishing the mouths of the Cowlitz and Toutle rivers have been picking up good numbers of hatchery coho, and those fishing the Cowlitz near the trout hatchery have been catching some nice sea-run cutthroat as well. Bank anglers fishing the North Fork Toutle have been averaging an adult hatchery coho for every two rods. The Lewis River has also been productive for hatchery coho, as has the Kalama River. Anglers must release all chinook salmon caught on the Lewis River and all adult chinook on the Kalama. The same is true for unmarked coho, which must be released in all fisheries downriver from the Hood River bridge.

Tacoma Power released 775 coho salmon and 96 jacks into the upper Cowlitz River at the Skate Creek Bridge over the Cowlitz River in Packwood, along with 287 adult coho and 23 jacks into the Cispus River during the week ending Sept. 28. In addition, 257 adult chinook and 138 jacks were released at the Ike Kinswa State Park boat launch at Mayfield Lake.

**Trout** anglers might want to try the Swift Reservoir on the Lewis River at this time of year, Hymer said. "The lake was planted late and the water temperature is cooling," he said. "This should be a good time to hit it."

Fishing for hatchery coho should pick up in the weeks ahead as more late-run fish move in from the ocean, Hymer said. "Late-run coho are showing up at the mouths of several tributaries to the Columbia River," Hymer said. "Once we get some rain, those fish will start moving and wind up in creels throughout those rivers." The Cowlitz and Lewis rivers are good prospects for late-run hatchery coho, he said. In addition, early run fish should be on the move in the Grays and Elochoman rivers after the next rain.

Above Bonneville Dam, boat anglers have been catching some chinook salmon, with most of the effort concentrated around the mouth of the Klickitat River. The Klickitat, both inside and outside the mouth, should remain good for chinook salmon as well as coho salmon in the weeks to come, Hymer said.

Starting Oct. 1 (today), many tributaries to the Columbia - or sections of those rivers - will close 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 Oct. 1 to retention of adult chinook salmon** 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 North Fork 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 from 6 p.m. Tuesdays through 6 p.m. Wednesdays during October.

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.

### **Eastern Washington:**

Angler effort has been high during the **hatchery fall chinook salmon** fishery on the Snake River near Little Goose Dam, but so far few chinook have been caught, said Glen Mendel, WDFW southeast district fish biologist. Creel checks and angler counts conducted the first weekend of the special season showed about 30 fishing boats above Texas Rapids boat launch to the tail race of Little Goose Dam, plus over 20 boats in the area of the Tucannon River confluence. No chinook were checked and catch rates for **steelhead** were poor. Up to half of the anglers checked were actually fishing for **bass** and **catfish**.

The hatchery chinook fishery is scheduled to remain open through Oct. 15 but could close earlier if the allowable incidental impact to wild chinook is reached. Chinook fishing is open only from the Railroad Bridge crossing the Snake River about a half-mile downstream of the mouth of the Tucannon River upstream to the no-fishing-zone below Little Goose Dam, plus from the safety zone boundary above the dam up to the south shore boat launch about one mile upstream of Little Goose Dam.

The salmon daily catch limit is one hatchery-marked (adipose fin clipped and healed) adult fall chinook (24 inches or greater), plus two hatchery jacks (under 24 inches, with a minimum size of 10 inches). Anglers must stop fishing for salmon once an adult hatchery salmon has been retained. All chinook or steelhead with unclipped adipose fins and all coho salmon must be immediately released unharmed. Chinook and steelhead anglers must use barbless hooks and a night closure is in effect.

Chris Donley, WDFW central district fish biologist, said that with most other trout fisheries closed, it's a good time to fish for rainbows at year-round Sprague Lake, on the Lincoln-Adams county line, and for browns at year-round Rock Lake in Whitman County. Clear Lake in southwest Spokane County is open through Oct. 31 and is still producing both rainbows and browns. Any mixed species water that's still open should provide good early fall fishing, he said.

Both Donley and Marc Divens, WDFW warmwater fish biologist, recommend anglers go after panfish, especially along the dying weed lines in waters like Long Lake (the Spokane River reservoir) and Eloika Lake in north Spokane County.

"**Largemouth bass** should be putting on the feed bag in preparation for winter the next few weeks," Donley said. "So fishing should be good."

Divens said eastern Spokane County's Newman and Liberty lakes are also good bets for **bass** and **crappie**. "Fall is a great time of year to catch warmwater fish species because they are busy fattening up for winter," he said.

Newman Lake is open year-round and Liberty Lake is open through October.

### **North Central Washington:**

**Fishing:** WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist Bob Jateff of Omak reminds anglers that **salmon** fishing on the mainstem Columbia River from the Highway 173 Bridge at Brewster to the Highway 17 Bridge at Bridgeport will close Oct. 16. WDFW enforcement officers recently cited three anglers for fishing closed season on the Okanogan River in Omak. The three were found in possession of five chinook salmon and a hatchery steelhead.

An upper Columbia River **steelhead** season is likely to open very soon under an emergency rule change, he noted, so anglers should check the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> for the announcement.

Trout fishing also looks promising. "Selective gear lakes in Okanogan County have experienced good **trout** fishing in the last several weeks with cooling water temperatures," Jateff said. "Best bets are the Big and Little Twin in the Winthrop area and Blue Lake in the Sinlahekin. Blue Lake has both brown and rainbow trout up to 18 inches, and Big and Little Twin have rainbows in the 15-17 inch range."

Chopaka Lake near the town of Loomis has had very good fishing for rainbow trout 15-17 inches, Jateff said. Chopaka is a fly-fishing-only lake, and should provide good fishing until it closes Oct. 31.

Year-round Patterson Lake near Winthrop has been producing catches of **yellow perch** throughout the summer and fall. Jateff encourages anglers to retain as many perch as possible from this lake. Jameson Lake, south of Mansfield in Douglas County, re-opens this month (Oct. 1-31) for rainbow trout that usually average 11 inches, with carryovers to 15 inches.

### **South Central Washington:**

Paul Hoffarth, WDFW fish biologist in Pasco, reports increasing angler effort and catches in the lower Yakima River **fall chinook** fishery. An estimated 116 adult fall chinook and 22 jacks were harvested the week of Sept. 29, with a total effort of about 2,200 angler hours. Harvest for the season is estimated at 149 adults and 22 jacks. No steelhead have been reported in the catch. Anglers averaged one chinook for every 17 hours of fishing. The catch rate was best in the lower Yakima, from the mouth to Horn Rapids.

A 21-mile section of the Yakima River bordering the Yakama Nation Reservation will be closed to non-tribal fishing for all **fall chinook** and **coho salmon** (hatchery and wild) Oct. 1-22. The section runs from the Hwy. 223 bridge (at Granger) upstream to Sunnyside (Parker) Dam. Fishing was closed because the Yakama Nation has federally reserved, exclusive fishing rights on waters that border its reservation and has not currently waived those rights to allow a non-tribal sport fishery.

The sport fishery for fall chinook and coho salmon remains open through Oct. 22 in the river reach between the Hwy. 240 bridge at Richland and Prosser Dam, which is downstream of the

Yakama Reservation boundary (see Page 90 in the 2008/2009 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet for details, (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> ). Fishing for steelhead remains closed. All steelhead must be immediately released unharmed and cannot be removed from the water prior to release.

### **Reader Email**

TGF co-editor Michael Teague heard from good buddy Rich G. who wrote, "I spent a few days at O'Dell Lake lodge. I fished until I didn't want to anymore. Toured the area lakes one day, saw Crescent Lake, Waldo Lake, Charlton Lake, Davis Lake, and surrounding area. I almost caught several fish. There was hardly anyone in the campgrounds I toured. It was cold at night, warm during the day."



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**

Ocean mapping project: <http://pacoos.coas.oregonstate.edu/>

**Weekly Quote** – "To a fisherman, the sounds of a river are as musical as any symphony, and twice as compelling." - AJ McClane

**GOOD LUCK!**