

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 10<sup>th</sup> – October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Salmon continue to pass Bonneville Dam in good numbers. The sportfishery at Bonneville is still producing the best catches on the lower river but the grade of fish is declining as adults near the spawning stage of their lifecycle.

Catches of coho were reported by wobbler fishers downstream of Portland. Most anglers will attempt to intercept these fish using spinners or bait at the tributary mouths. If the late run coho is under-predicted like the early run was, there could be some good fishing ahead. The early run coho returns are on track to be twice the predicted pre-season estimate.

Sturgeon fishers continue to post good catches of keeper sturgeon in the gorge. Larger keepers are coming from the faster water while decent catches of shakers are reported from downriver areas. This fishery is peaking right now.

The Willamette and open tributaries re-opened to fin-clipped chinook retention October 2<sup>nd</sup>. With the spring run all but upstream, catches are expected to be minimal. Chinook and coho are crossing Willamette Falls by the hundreds daily. Sturgeon anglers report lots of shakers but very few keepers in the lower Willamette.

October caddis are hatching in good numbers on the McKenzie and trout are keyed in on them. Dry fly fishing can be great but check on access due to wildfires.

Water temperature on the North Santiam is optimum and flows, while high, are stable and will remain that way until the next rainfall. Fishing has been fair around Fishermen's Bend.

Coho fishing on the Clackamas is spotty for reluctant biters. Eagle Creek has been producing but it is a very crowded fishery. Try eggs under a bobber.

Fishing has been tough on the Sandy River although a few have been taken at Oxbow Park. Coho catches are fair to good near Cedar Creek for those willing to fight the crowds.

Walling Pond and Walter Wirth Lake are scheduled to be planted with legal and larger trout.

**Northwest –** North coast fall chinook enthusiasts are still holding out hope for a fair return to coastal estuaries this fall. Low effort reflects the poor catch rates on most coastal systems. The weak tides have most anglers focused on lower Tillamook Bay with only an occasional adult being taken. Last year, action picked up significantly by mid-October and it could happen again this year.

Coastal rivers rose to ideal heights over the weekend but effort remained light. The Trask hatchery became inundated with coho adults and the North Fork Nehalem hatchery posted high numbers of jacks. Great north coast jack counts are good indicators of much better fishing for next year.

The Nehalem was producing wild coho almost exclusively with very few chinook in the catches. Nestucca River salmon fishing has been fair at best.

Crabbing remains good on many north coast estuaries but some soft shell adults are in the mix. The larger, legal sized males seem to be in the softest condition.

Great razor clam tides begin Monday of next week. The surf is predicted to subside which would make digging very productive.

**Southwest** – Morning incoming tides will aid boats launching for offshore trips. Offshore forecasts are favorable on Saturday and Sunday.

Crabbing is good in Winchester Bay. Chinook are as high as Roseburg on the Umpqua but are getting dark that high in the system. The North Umpqua has been fishing well for adult steelhead below the dam. There are also large sea-run cutthroat available and fishing will be good through October 31st, the last day it's open.

**Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944)** reports that with the recent rains, tidewater emptied out at the Umpqua with fish moving upriver. With the river dropping, expect a new batch of Chinook and wild silvers to hold in tidewater below Mapleton.

The Siltcoos and Tahkenitch systems should produce good results for the only wild coho fishery in the state. Since the fish are running large this year, this will be a worthwhile fishery. Plug trollers take the majority of the catch.

Salmon trollers have been doing fairly well in tidewater on the Coquille River. The Coos has been slow to fair.

The lingcod bite has been hot or cold for boaters launching out of Gold Beach into a sloppy ocean. Rockfishing made it worth the trip either way. Half-pounder fishing remains good and these fish have moved into the Grants Pass stretch.

Boaters have one more shot at the Chetco bubble ocean chinook fishery this Saturday, October 11th. While chinook are entering the Chetco, it will remain closed to salmon fishing (including jacks) until November 1st to protect the fish.

Diamond Lake has continued to produce limits of rainbows averaging 16 inches with fishing best mid-day.

**Eastern – Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411)** reports he has experienced slow fishing for steelhead on the Deschutes but that there should be an improvement soon.

Steelheading has started to heat up on the Grand Ronde around Monument. The best results are coming at first light. Flies and lures are both effective.

Steelheading is fair and improving on the Imnaha with fish scattered from the mouth up to Cow Creek.

**SW Washington** – Tributary anglers are anxiously awaiting returns of late returning coho to the Lewis and Cowlitz Rivers. Meanwhile, anglers are pursuing these fish at the river mouths using spinners and eggs.

With coho adults beginning to pass Bonneville Dam in good numbers, the Klickitat fishery at the mouth should begin to show signs of improvement.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – The Columbia is starting to show signs of slowing. Although there are still good numbers of salmon in the area, a quality fish is becoming harder to find. This is typical for this time of year but action has remained good for backtrollers working the faster water near the deadline. Jumbo jet divers and Kwikfish are taking the bulk of the fish and guides are commenting that the water flows are low, making backtrolling difficult in some areas. **Pro guide Dan Ponciano (360-607-8511)** reported that sturgeon fishing is also beginning to show signs of tapering. Although the weekend check indicated nearly a keeper per boat, the action has slowed from the previous week according to Dan. He stated anglers can get away with using light lead in the low flows with smelt and shrimp producing the best action. An occasional oversize is still in the mix. The gorge check was as follows (provided by ODF&W):

**Gorge Bank:**

Weekend checking showed 43 legal white sturgeon kept, plus two legal, three oversize, and 35 sublegal sturgeon released for 236 bank anglers.

**Gorge Boats:**

Weekend checking showed six legal white sturgeon kept, plus four oversize and 132 sublegal sturgeon released for seven boats (complete trips).

Portland to Longview boats produced 5 legal fish and just over 100 short sturgeon for 38 boats.

Downriver, effort has certainly dropped way off but boaters are still catching a few chinook. Also in the mix, some anglers reported fair catches of large coho on their wobblers last week. The weekend check indicated 5 fall chinook for 14 boats in the Portland to Longview stretch.

Upriver of Bonneville, anglers fishing the mouth of the Deschutes are still catching fair numbers of steelhead and some fall chinook as well. Although catches have tapered in the last week, fish are still available to trollers working plugs and spinners. The Deschutes itself is producing good catches of steelhead as October is frequently a peak month.

Crabbing in the estuary remains excellent. The crab are large, plentiful and in good condition. Crabbing downstream of Hammond is best with fresh salmon carcasses or tuna carcasses producing the best results.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Look for most Columbia River fisheries to continue to slide. Chinook are starting to deteriorate but a late surge is still a possibility. The action remains good enough to still justify a trip. Backtrollers will still produce the best results but you'll have to stick to the fast water to find the freshest fish.

Sturgeon anglers will also want to target their quarry in the faster flows. Smelt or shrimp or a combination of both will produce results. Bank anglers will also have good opportunity into late October but both users should expect a slight downturn in success.

Extreme tides along with standard run timing should bring in a batch of late returning coho destined for primarily Washington hatcheries. Although fish are likely to race through the lower river, action at the tributary mouths should pick up. Plunked bait or spinners usually does the trick and if managers underestimated the late run like they did the early run, there could be substantial numbers of fish available.

Crabbing, while excellent may be a bigger challenge this week on the lower Columbia as strong tides should keep crab buried during max flows.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – Chinook and coho continue to cross at Willamette Falls by the hundreds daily. Following a re-opener of the lower Willamette to Chinook fishing, word just came in that ODFW bigwigs are contemplating a complete closure for spring Chinook next year. It seems that barely enough springers to meet their egg needs which, when combined with dismal jack counts at the falls makes for a poor run next season. Stay tuned; the run forecasts for 2009 will be released early next year.

The unseasonably high and swift waters of the North Santiam hold summer steelhead in good number but the fish are scattered and prone to moving upriver and down with temperature variations.

The flow spiked on the McKenzie River October 5th, going from 2875 cfs to 3625. It has returned to the 3,000 cfs range with the temperature right around 50 degrees. The October caddis are thick on the McKenzie River and this river always fishes great in the fall.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Fishing for undersized sturgeon will be good but keepers will be rare for a while. Try Sellwood or lower for the best results. It'll improve shortly. Fish the Middle Fork Willamette in the stretch around Hills Creek for summer steelhead and large rainbow trout now. The trout fishing is quite good on dry flies at times.

Don't forget about fall bass. Every year at this time, bass go on a feeding spree to bulk up for the long, cold winter. I can be some of the best fishing of the year for larger smallies and largemouth.

North Santiam steelheaders are likely to catch one or two if the fish can be located. Orange lures and flies are popular here in the fall months and are effective as are drifted sand shrimp tails. Try locations between Fishermen's Bend to Packsaddle Park; it's been impossible to predict which area will be most productive.

Try dry orange caddis patterns on the McKenzie; the fish are looking up and will chase flies skittered on the surface. Steelheading will be worthwhile on the lower McKenzie.

State campgrounds are offering off-season bargain rates now through April next year. To get details, call 1-800-452-5687.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – The initial forecast for coho returns to the Columbia was 86,000 which was upgraded to 96,000. That figure was further upgraded today, October 9th, to 250,000 (!) which means more fish for the Clackamas and Sandy rivers. This could be a very good year indeed.

Finally, enough rain has fallen to entice fresh coho into the Clackamas. While the first push consisted of hundreds of fish which had turned dark from holding in the lower river and at the mouth during the low water, fish that are entering now are nicely chromed. Three fish limits are possible and many anglers have scored, even culling their three-fish limit from the many caught in a day.

Eagle Creek has been producing lots of action very early in the day and yes, it is a madhouse with anglers crammed on the banks of this tiny hatchery tributary. Most of the creek coho have colored up to varying degrees. Throw spinners or drift eggs under a bobber to get yours.

Coho catches have been spotty on the Sandy with some anglers doing well while others can't buy a strike. Fishing has improved over the past week, however, with most spinner flingers reporting at least a few hookups daily. So, the chance of a strike is good but what happens after that is up to the fisher on the other end of the rod. According to the ODFW, 30 to 40 anglers per day are taking limits at the mouth of Cedar Creek. Turn in snaggers: 1-800-452-7888.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Tillamook Bay anglers are still searching for answers (and fish) throughout the bay. At least the weaker tides this week gave fishers a chance to effectively fish without fouling their gear just minutes after deployment. Unfortunately, it just confirmed what we had already thought; there aren't many fish around to catch.

Anglers focused much of their effort along the jetty on the inside of the bay this week. There was one day (Monday) where we got the surpass go-ahead to fish the ocean. Although the weather wasn't "chamber of commerce" so much, it was very fishable and anglers fishing the south side of the south jetty did fairly well. One guide boat reported landing 3 chinook and having a few others on. In addition, they landed 8 coho that they returned to the ocean.

The weaker tides give anglers a longer window of opportunity to catch fish that are hesitant to cross the bar during peak ebb tide. The slower flows entice returning adults into the bay just after peak outflow but the down-side to that is during the traditional best part of the tide, low slack, there aren't many adults left to cross the bar to take part in a hot bite. Couple that up with the fact our numbers are clearly down this year and you have a lot of anglers waiting for something that is not going to happen.

There have been a few fish taken in the traditional fishing grounds; Ghost Hole, Bay City and a few in the west channel as well as the middle and upper bay but they are clearly few and far between. Effort counts are showing a decline in interest. On the weekend, parking lots are not full and the wait to put in your boat is not prolonged.

Ironically, not many people got excited about the rise in river levels that we witnessed on Tillamook area streams over the weekend. We had enough rain to bring most levels up at least a foot and fish must have taken advantage of this situation. The Trask River should have been a prime candidate for fishing but I have heard no reports from that system. Hatchery coho did make their way upstream in force and the hatchery trap is plugged with ripening fish. Jack counts at the North Fork Nehalem hatchery were very high when comparing to previous years as well.

Chinook should have been present in most north coast systems on this last rain freshet although the Tillamook and Trask should have had the bulk of them. The Nehalem should have also fished fair although most anglers would agree that this system has shown poor performance in recent years. The Nestucca is much the same with poor results in tidewater, not many adults were expected to be intercepted upstream when the river went up. One guide reported checking with 2 boats on the Wilson River. Both boats indicated they had caught (and released) one dark fish each on their float.

Before the rain, guides on the Nehalem reported continued good action for wild coho but an odd absence of adult chinook. Many of the chinook that we have been catching on Tillamook Bay

seem like 3 and 6 year olds with the 4 and 5 year old fish, which typically make up about 90% of the run, in short supply.

Sturgeon seemed to make a showing in the west channel last week on Tillamook Bay but don't seem to be revealing themselves so much this week. The one guide that went after them was plagued with sculpin and crab taking a bait almost before it hit the bottom. Needless to say, no sturgeon hit the deck of his boat on that trip.

Crabbing has been good in Tillamook Bay with some boats reporting taking several limits over the weekend. I crabbed on prime grounds on Monday with 5 pots, taking only 13 keepers for about 3 hours of crabbing. Several of the crab were soft shelled with only a few in prime condition.

October 1st marked the opener of deep water opportunity for bottomfishers. The weather turned rough soon after that so effort was low for large lingcod and seabass. Improving weather this weekend may stimulate effort for anglers in the know of where to go for the larger fish.

**The Guide's Forecast** – The weather is expected to improve over the weekend which may open up more ocean opportunity for chinook seekers. Tides, although increasing in size, are still not supposed to be extreme making lower bay and hopefully the ocean one of the better options for weekend anglers. Hopefully, the fresh water we had last week will have sent seaweed and eelgrass out to sea and out of our way.

Dropping river conditions should keep most salmon in the estuary and maybe tidewater bobber fishing could pick up once again. Last year, we witnessed similar fishing this time of year but action dramatically picked up on this same weekend. We're all waiting with baited breath but expectations aren't too high given the other factors we're seeing coast wide this fall chinook season.

Fish should be well distributed throughout the estuary with spinners and herring producing equally well this week. Hopefully, by the weekend, we'll be able to get out in the ocean and really get a sense on whether or not we're going to get a run this year. If you are motivated to get after the bottomfish, the offshore reefs (deeper than 40 fathoms) will likely produce the best results. These fish haven't been effectively fished on for several months by now.

Don't have high expectations for the Nehalem or Nestucca Rivers. Although fish should still be due to these river systems, recent results indicate there aren't high numbers of fish to go around. The effort should be low however which should improve your odds. The lower 5 miles of the tidewater sections and estuaries will produce the best. A few hatchery coho should be available to bank anglers on the North Fork Nehalem River and Trask River but fish as close to the hatcheries as is legal.

Crabbing should continue to produce good results for those putting in the effort. Although fishing effort is falling off, crabbers seem to be out in force so the freshest bait should produce the best results. The Nehalem, Nestucca, Netarts and of course the lower Columbia River are all strong options as well as Tillamook Bay.

Sturgeon fishers should wait for more freshwater before they get motivated to target sturgeon in Tillamook Bay. It's good to know that there seem to be fish present in the system but you'll have to wait for a reprieve from the crab before you can effectively target keepers in this fishery.

Clam diggers should take advantage of good tides and forecasted calm seas on the early part of next week. Clatsop beaches should produce limits of nice clams on the tide series that runs through the 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – All-depth restrictions for ocean bottom fishing have been lifted for the remainder of the year. Offshore anglers may fish any water in seeking six-fish rockfish and two-fish ling cod limits. Fishing has been good and is improving. All-depth halibut and ocean crabbing is closed.

The prediction of a friendly ocean posted earlier this week has held so those with a hankering to cross into the ocean should take advantage of the stellar forecast for this coming Saturday and Sunday. Skies will be clear and swells are predicted a 5 to 5.5 with winds at 6 to 7 mph. It seldom gets better than that on central the Oregon coast. Further south, wind and waves will be a little higher but still allowing safe crossings.

Fishing has been poor at the Siletz so far this year. It looks like another slow season at this once fine fishery.

Tuna are still within 50 miles of Depoe Bay and with the offshore weather report this weekend, a few are planning to make the run.

While most of the fish being hooked are wild coho, a few Chinook are being taken by anglers trolling spinners in the Yaquina River.

Siuslaw trollers are hooking mostly coho in their pursuit of Chinook in tidewater, even on large Kwikfish. Chinook catches have been few although a 42-pounder was landed last week.

Chinook Fishing is slow and coho action is fair for trollers on Winchester Bay between Osprey Point and Half Moon Bay. The mainstem has slowed for smallmouth bass with water temperatures dropping. Steelheading remains productive on the North Umpqua and is good in the flies-only stretch.

**Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944)** reports from the Umpqua and the surrounding area, "With the recent rains, tidewater emptied out. Most fish moved upriver. With the river dropping, expect a new batch of chinook and wild silvers to hold in tidewater below Mapleton. Trolling and bobber fishing will be equally effective once fish show again.

"Siltcoos and Tahkenitch Lakes are open for wild coho retention, 1 per day 5 per season plus 1 jack per day. Fishing should be very good through Nov."

There was too little rain to bring the Elk and Sixes river up to fishing level. Even if they had come into shale, it's too early in the season for these rivers to shine.

Trollers and back-bouncers are picking up Chinook in tidewater on the Coquille with results improving recently.

Trollers are finding a mixed bag in tidewater on the Rogue River with adult Chinook and numerous jacks being joined by good numbers of coho. Fishing is fair to good with typical fall flurries of action. The lower Rogue is providing good results with adult steelhead and jacks in the canyon. Anglers in the Grants Pass stretch are doing well for summers, half-pounders and recently, good catches of Chinook have been taken. The flies-only section of the upper Rogue has been productive with summer steelhead scattered.

The Wednesday opener last week of the Chetco bubble ocean Chinook fishery saw an estimated 190 Chinook taken for a 250 fish quota allocated for the four-day fishery. Larry Ellis, writing in the Curry County Pilot, described it as "incomparably fantastic." Boats launching at dawn saw the hottest action. Weather conditions prevented an effort Thursday through Saturday, however, so one day was added. This Saturday, October 11th, is the last chance this year to fish ocean Chinook. Coho hooked offshore may not be kept whether wild or of hatchery origin. Chinook fishing will be allowed on the Chetco River and estuary on November 1st.

According to biologists, the insect population on the bottom of Diamond Lake has increased from 125 pounds per acre as of last November to a current 264 pounds per acre. No wonder that trout here grow so large and do so quickly, A tip o' the fishing hat to Diamond Lake Resort for that info. Fishing is good here and some big ones well over 20 inches have been landed.

Members of the Joe Merchep Umpqua River Foundation, the Oregon State Police fish and wildlife division, Diamond Lake Resort, Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation, Susan Morgan, state legislator have contributed to the fund being offered to anyone with information leading to the apprehension of those responsible for putting golden shiners in into Diamond Lake. The reward is now \$8,300.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – The Metolius is at its peak now, offering anglers the best chance of the year at catching reddsides and bull trout from this challenging river. Hatches will continue here into November with green drakes most important pattern currently.

Trout fishing in the high Cascade lakes should be good.

**Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411)** reports that there's "not much happening on the coast, mainly a native coho show at present. Did fish the Deschutes between Warm Springs and Trout on a combo steelhead/trout trip. There are a few steelhead up there, but still slow. Looking for the steelhead fishing to pick up in the coming weeks. Trout fish was fair, with the best fishing in the evening. Caught most of the trout on small hare ears and Prince nymphs."

**Northwest Trout** - Walling Pond will be stocked with 400 legal-sized trout and 50 jumbo trout while Walter Wirth Pond will be stocked with 1,700 legal-sized trout and 150 larger trout and Mount Hood College Pond will be stocked with 400 legal-sized trout and 50 jumbo trout. Dexter Reservoir was stocked last week with 5,000 legal-sized trout. PowerBait will readily take freshly stoked trout but remember that they'll be shallow for 10 days or two weeks until their swim bladders acclimate to deeper water.

### **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 Phanhtavilay'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 -**

Good buddy Kaptn Ken Johnson writes. "Hey Michael, Sorry for the late photo's to TGF from my 9/1 thru 9/16 fishing trip on the Columbia River near Kalama, WA. We fished for 13 days total and brought 10 Chinook to the boat. I would say our catch rate was "average" for most fisherfolks who were out there. We saw a LOT of fish being caught, especially in our "Secret Spot" "somewhere" on the Columbia near Kalama. I'm including photo's of some of the fish caught. Three of the "Nooker's" didn't make it to the camera because when I returned to take the shots, the guys had already cleaned the fish and had them bagged and packed on ice...This was on the last day (9/16) and we were "Three for Four" which was a good way to end the short season there. On 9/16 we anchored early, at about 5:30am, but we were back on the docks by about 9:00am with our limit. Now, I'm going to focus on the Nehalem River because it is in my back yard, so to speak. Fish are being caught and several were yesterday. Fished here 9/25, and went 0/0. At the end of the day, we (neighbor George Hemmingway was fishing with me) ended up attempting to rescue a family stuck on the sand bar, below the Nehalem Bay State Park Boat Ramp on the Highway 101 side of the river. You know the sand bar I'm talking about. The one about 1 mile North of Brighton Marina. They were "High and Dry" on the sand. They had two small children on board, no anchor, and it was raining and quite windy. We were highly

concerned about the kids. We stuck around for 2-1/2+ hours to make sure they could make it out before dark. They had no top and the boat was totally open to the elements. To make a long story short, just before total darkness fell to us, the tide came in and floated the boat enough so that he could finally motor away. Because he didn't have an anchor (not against the law, btw, which I feel is STUPID!) he had to wait about 1 extra hour+ for enough water to get his boat to float enough to use the engine. No "kicker" either, btw! I feel a "kicker" is kind of like a spare tire and "Everyone should have one!" With the use of an anchor he could have set it out 50'-100' down river so when enough water started to float his boat, he could have pulled his bow around, toward the anchor, and got himself out of trouble SOONER. Instead, because of the 15-20mph Southerly winds, and the incoming tide, just as the boat would start to float a bit the wind pushed him further up on the sand bar. Along with the incoming tide it just made things worse. We called Tillamook County Sherriff's Office for assistance at the very beginning, again because of the children. We dialed 911. We were highly concerned because of the kids and possible hypothermia. BUT, it took them 2-1/2 HOURS to finally show up. That got us thinking about what would happen if this was a REAL EMERGENCY??? If it had just been the guy in the boat, we would have let him learn his lesson about not knowing the river he was navigating and wait for the incoming tides. (Been there, done that!) But, because he had two small children on board who were NOT properly dressed for rains and wind, we called. First they did NOT respond, at all. We had to call back after about 45 minutes. Then, a sheriff parked in a car on Highway 101 saw us hovering around in deeper water and "assumed" that we were the boat in trouble. He didn't see the grounded craft. He thought the troubled boat was free and everything was A-OK. He called it in as a "Done Deal" and that was that. We re-called and asked where everyone was, and then asked to be patched directly in to the Tillamook County Sherriff's Department." 911 initially failed us, but a boat was finally dispatched after we talked to the Tillamook County Sherriff's office directly. Just as the sheriff 'finally' showed up, TWO and a HALF HOURS AFTER THE INITIAL CALL, the families boat started to float. He finally started his engine and slowly motored out of danger. My "complaint" was about the slow, to no, response and that there were small children out there. Originally, on our first call a "Land Rescue" was totally possible. We told them that at 911! They could have "walked" down the embankments from Highway 101 and walked out, in waders, to rescue the children at least. But then the tide came in enough that it had to be a water rescue. Then, two-1/2 hours later, it was too late to rescue anyone. It could have gone bad, especially as it was getting dark, and that's why we stuck around. The children were freezing, and that is not a good thing! We tried and tried but couldn't get in close enough to get on the sand bar. It ended happily but with a totally cold, ending! This is something these kids will be able to talk about, around the camp fire, for years to come! I think dad is going to keep his mouth shut!"



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**

An absolute wealth of fishing information at ifish.net:

**<http://www.ifish.net/board/forumdisplay.php?f=41>**

Mark your calendar - Fall Fishing Jamboree in Salem November 1st:

**<http://www.oregonbassfederation.org/bluebassflyer.pdf>**

**Weekly Quote** – "The finest gift you can give to any fisherman is to put a good fish back, and who knows if the fish that you caught isn't someone else's gift to you?" - Lee Wulff

**GOOD LUCK!**