

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 17th – October 23rd, 2008**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Anglers fishing in the Columbia River Gorge are finding mostly dark chinook in their catches. Dam passage is also slowing indicating the run is nearing its end. Coho counts are still up however and upriver anglers are taking a few fish. Sturgeon fishing in the gorge has tapered but catch rates remain good for both boat and bank anglers.

Sturgeon fishing on the lower Willamette has been fair to good for numbers but few keepers are being landed. Coho are crossing Willamette Falls in strong numbers.

McKenzie River anglers continue to find success with native rainbows and cutthroat. October caddis are active now with the most productive hours mid-day at this time of year.

The North Santiam is producing a few summer steelhead and coho are entering in good numbers. Try just below Mehema for the chance of a hookup with one or the other.

Coho fishing in the Clackamas is slow to spotty. Eagle Creek is low and is producing few fish. Coho can be seen holding in the Clackamas at the mouth of Eagle Creek.

Sandy anglers have had some good days recently with several anglers reporting limits caught by casting spinners.

Detroit Reservoir is scheduled to be stocked with hatchery trout this week.

Northwest – Spinner trollers in Tillamook Bay found better catches in the upper bay in recent days. Although success rates are far from previous years, several fish over 40 pounds have been taken. The best fishing is near high tide when seaweed becomes less of a limiting factor in fouling gear. Wild coho are still prevalent in the estuary and are large enough to where anglers are mistaking them for chinook and illegally taking them.

Saltwater anglers were treated to calm seas over the weekend but chinook catches in the bubble remained poor. Those that ventured offshore found a variety of species including large lingcod, halibut and a few tuna. Seas are forecasted to subside by the weekend offering another opportunity for deepwater species.

Very few chinook are showing on other coastal systems including the Siletz and Alsea Rivers. These systems are typically peaking right now but there is a clear absence of adults for anglers to harvest.

Crabbing dropped off in north coast estuaries recently but is likely to pick up again as the fall progresses. An excellent minus tide series is currently underway along coastal beaches, allowing clam diggers good access to razor populations from Seaside to Astoria. Bring a lantern however as the tides are at night.

Southwest – The weekend forecast looks favorable for offshore anglers. Central and south coast anglers should be able to access the ocean without issue, although there will be a soft outgoing tide in the morning.

Offshore boats launching out of Reedsport are having no problem taking limits of large rockfish although lingcod have been elusive. Chinook are being taken on the Umpqua mainstem with a 50-pounder coming in last week. Catches of large coho have also been very good. The North Umpqua water temperature has dropped into the mid-40s which has slowed the bite.

Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944) reports that he's seeing signs that fishing may improve significantly this week on the Umpqua, that trollers picked up several nice chinook on Sunday and Monday and that bobber fishing improved as well

Crabbing is fair in Coos Bay. The Coos River has been producing a few chinook on trolled spinners.

Salmon cross the bar in far greater number when the ocean calms down. On those days recently, the Rogue River tidewater was quite productive for chinook and coho. The lower Rogue will remain productive with action moving upriver out of tidewater. Steelheading is good in the lower Rogue canyon as it usually is this time of year. Offshore anglers have been taking limits of rockfish and lingcod.

Salmon fishers in the Brookings area and beyond are looking forward the Cheto chinook opener on November 1st. Given the results of the recent ocean bubble fishery, it shaping up to be a great season.

Diamond Lake continues to be very productive despite frigid overnight temperatures. Fly anglers and trollers are catching some but bait remains the best option with the South side of the lake putting out the best catches.

Eastern - Pro guide Steve Fleming (888-624-9424) reports that the John Day River water level has come up and the temperature has dropped but that smallmouth bass fishing remains good afternoons.

Steelheading on the lower Deschutes has been hot or cold for anglers using spinners or flies. Some of the larger "B" run fish are beginning to show however. Trout are responding well with October Caddis the primary pattern of interest.

Water levels on the John Day have improved but steelhead have yet to show in any great numbers. Bass action remains fair in the afternoon

The Grand Ronde River is scheduled to improve in the coming weeks although in these low water conditions, good numbers of fish were picked off near the mouth.

SW Washington – Effort is growing on the Lewis River for anglers awaiting later returning coho due back through November. The Cowlitz is still producing fair numbers of coho although anglers are struggling for consistency.

With coho numbers still climbing at Bonneville Dam, Klickitat anglers should also show improvement in their salmon quest. Spinners are responsible for many of the coho this far into freshwater.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Action on the mainstem Columbia is beginning to slow for salmon. Most anglers are still focused on the Columbia River gorge for action and although the fish are still there, they are turning color and of poor table quality. Effort has dropped significantly but fish are still being caught. The ODF&W weekend check indicated the following:

Gorge Bank:

Weekend checking showed one adipose fin-clipped coho kept and one unclipped steelhead released for eight bank anglers.

Gorge Boats:

Weekend checking showed four fall Chinook kept for two boats (complete trips).

Troutdale Boats:

Weekend checking showed three fall Chinook, 11 adipose fin-clipped coho adults, and one adipose fin-clipped coho jack kept, plus two fall Chinook and two unclipped coho released for 47 boats (complete trips).

Portland to Longview Boats:

Weekend checking showed five fall Chinook and four adipose fin-clipped coho kept, plus six unclipped coho released for 15 boats (complete trips).

Pro guide Dan Ponciano (360-607-8511) confirmed the effort is on the slide. Dan stated sturgeon are still a good option however and anglers are picking up fish on both shrimp and smelt. The bulk of the effort is taking place from Cape Horn to the deadline with the larger fish coming from closer to the deadline. Dan was going to shift effort to the Willamette before too long as that fishery is likely to gain momentum in the coming weeks.

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon will become the main focus point for anglers fishing upstream of Portland in the coming weeks. Bank anglers will continue to have access to keeper sized fish but success is likely to taper in the very near future. Shrimp, either with or without smelt has been a good bait. If you're looking for lots of action, fish in the slower water downstream of Beacon Rock. You're more likely to catch a keeper in the faster flows near the deadline.

The salmon fishery is about over for the lower river. A few chinook may still be making their way upstream but they will likely be of poor quality. There are a few anglers that know how to target the late returning coho in the mainstem and this should remain a viable opportunity for the next few weeks. Boats troll spinners along sand bars with some anglers being pretty consistent in this fishery.

Estuary crabbers should find favorable tides early next week. Weak incoming tides should only produce better results in an already very productive fishery. Crab downstream of Buoy 22 but the harbor just upstream of Hammond can also produce good results if the river is rough.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – While sturgeon fishing improves in the fall and into winter on the lower Willamette, it hasn't happened yet this year.

Water temperature has dropped on the McKenzie but the conditions are excellent for fishing.

High water at the North Santiam are a challenge to both anglers and drift boats.

The Guide's Forecast – Fish the 'Town Run' (Middle Fork Willamette) for trout now as catches have been very good. Summer steelhead are also being taken in this stretch. Wait until the lower river hats up for sturgeon or take the kids out for decent catch-and-release fishing for shorts.

The upper McKenzie continues to fish well for trout with the best fishing mid-day which is typical in the fall. Try below Leaburg for steelhead where fishing has been fair to good.

Steelheaders who are confident fishing high, swift water are taking a few summers on the North Santiam but it's spotty even for the best.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Coho are on the move at the Clackamas with Eagle Creek the destination. While it's been crowded here at times, anglers are catching fish on the creek by drifting yarn.

Bobber and jigs have taken some coho at Doge Park on the Sandy River. Cedar Creek has lots of silvers present which will bite occasionally but most are dark here.

North Coast Fishing Report – North coast anglers have now given up hope for a great year of fall chinook fishing on most coastal estuaries. Tillamook remains the bright spot for most of the coast but multiple fish days are a rarity indeed. The strong tides this week bolstered catches in the upper bay leaving lower bay and ocean fishers wondering why they were left out of the mix. The upper bay has been producing the most consistent results with the last half of outgoing tide and the last half of incoming tide the most productive to catch fish. Spinners have been the ticket on the outgoing tide while herring has produced good results on the incoming, particularly at high tide. The corral and the picket fence have been producing the best catches.

There are still some fish in the west channel but the bulk of the catch over there has been coho. Wild coho that is and they must be released, of course. Herring is working the best over there although there are a few people trolling spinners with some success. Coho in particular seem to like spinners the best.

There continue to be some quality sized fish in the creel. Several more fish over 40 pounds were tallied this week but don't get too excited; it was hard enough catching one fish, let alone one over 40 pounds.

The ocean was running about 51 degrees when I was fishing it the other day. Certainly not too cold but for some reason, it seems that the biters were bypassing us out there and headed into the bay. It was a nice option for a few days last week as seaweed plagued us on the inside waters. The ocean may be a good option this weekend and with the waning tide series, fish may be more likely to linger instead of heading for the upper bay so quickly.

Seaweed has made spinner fishing a good option as anglers can whip their rod tips to free their spinners of debris and get back to fishing. With herring, you have to pull your baits all the way in to clear the weed from your line.

Down south, the Nestucca hasn't been any better with poor results reported from most areas. **Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)** reports, "The Nestucca is Slow, Slow, Slow... With last weeks rain, it messed things up terribly. We had a couple of days in the river itself, but mostly wild coho and jacks. There were just a few fish caught on the lower river, but most were colored up.

At the same time, tide went totally dead with very few fish caught. Hopefully this week things will change. We are hoping for a good shove of fish, for we have fair weather and nice big tides."

The Salmon River is really done and not too many people were that excited about the results it produced. The Alsea and Siletz are also on "amber alert" as large concentrations of fish are clearly absent from these watersheds.

Crabbing dropped off significantly in Tillamook Bay but crabbers pulled lots of keepers out of the estuary about 1.5 weeks ago. It will likely rebound and maybe as early as next week when more favorable tides will dominate the morning.

The Guide's Forecast – Although most would have guessed that this tide series would have been the make or break for the Tillamook run, it's still likely that we'll see some decent fishing in the coming weeks on Tillamook Bay. Given the fact however that we are seeing some unprecedented low returns on most coastal systems, it wouldn't be wise to have high expectations for results for the remainder of the season. Mid-October is typically transition time when Trask and Tillamook River fish begin to wane from the fishery and we start to see more Wilson and Kilchis fish. They typically utilize the east side of the bay making the Ghost Hole and Bay City strong options.

Weak tides after the weekend however will have anglers looking for the lower bay and ocean to begin producing better results than the upper bay. On these softer tides, adults are more likely to take their time in getting back to their natal streams and therefore, more likely to bite. Herring seems to be the better bait in the late season but spinners will still continue to take their fair share of fish. The greens, particularly the chartreuse green dot blades and white/green/chartreuse tip spinners, with white backs will also likely produce consistent results. The red/white spinners are still a favorite but use the metallic blades when the sun is shining!

Tillamook Bay will likely continue to be the bright spot as anglers realize that 5 rivers for adults to return to are far better than one. Success should remain an option through the first week of November on most north coast streams.

The Nehalem and Nestucca Rivers remain poor for chinook and most of the hatchery coho are upstream at the hatchery on the north fork of the Nehalem River.

A few minor bumps on the hydrograph are predicted for next week but we really need a gullywasher to get the river driftboat fishery underway. There are fish available in tidewater of the Trask River but the Wilson will remain a poor option until later in the month.

Although crabbing has slowed on many north coast estuaries this week, it may pick back up again with the more favorable crabbing tides beginning on Sunday.

Central & South Coast Reports – Albacore have moved East with the ocean cooling, putting them out of reach of even the best-equipped offshore skipper. Not so those targeting bottom fish, however,. Conditions look marginal for a launch Friday or Sunday while the wind is forecast to kick up on Saturday,. It will be worth a last-minute check of the local conditions.

While few are trying, halibut fishing inside the 40-fathom line will remain open and with plenty of poundage remaining in the quota, is likely to be extended beyond the scheduled closure at the end of the month.

Mussel harvesting has been closed everywhere on the Oregon coast due to the presence of PSP, a naturally occurring but hazardous toxin.

While a few Chinook are being caught daily in tidewater on the Siletz, it has been a very slow season.

Chinook fishing in the Yaquina River has been very slow and, given the time of year, looks to be shaping up as a poor season. As an example, nearly 200 anglers fishing the U Da Man Tournament last Sunday, October 12th, caught only a half-dozen Chinook. On the bright side, this tournament pays for the planting of 50,000 Chinook in the Yaquina every year. Crabbing has been pretty good in Yaquina Bay but many of the Dungeness are undersized.

According to an October 10th article in the Newport Times, three Woodburn men found out both these facts when they offered to allow an OSP officer to inspect their catch after reporting the crabbing was "pretty good." The three coolers in their possession contained 105 Dungeness and 120 red rock crab. Two of the Dungeness were of legal size. None of these cretins had a crab gauge. The Times reported all crab were released but how many survived is unknown. The men were cited for a number of violations.

Crabbing is fair to good out of Waldport. Fishing has been poor on the Alsea with some days yielding no fish whatsoever. Hopefully things will pick up when the fall rains arrive but it's getting pretty late to expect it to get hot.

The coho fishery at Siltcoos and Tahkenich will get underway after sufficient rain has fallen to get the fish moving.

Siuslaw trollers are experiencing slow fishing. Coho outnumber Chinook by 10 to one but the vast majority of the silvers are wild fish. One or two Chinook per day are being taken and as late as it is in the season, it's unlikely for any to show in great number. Crabbing out of Charleston has been fair to good.

Coquille tidewater has been producing good numbers of quality crab. Anglers have seen Chinook catches picking up recently on spinners or back-bounced eggs.

The lower Umpqua is fishing well for coho, most of which are unclipped, but only a few Chinook are being landed. The smallmouth bass fishery has slowed with the water cooling. Summer steelheading is worthwhile in the flies-only section of the North Umpqua. Angling re-opens on the South Umpqua November 1st.

Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944) reports from the Umpqua and beyond, "We're seeing signs that fishing may improve significantly this week. Trollers picked up several nice chinook on Sunday and Monday. Bobber fishing improved as well in the area from C&D Dock to Mapleton. Building tides should mean good fishing this week.

"Silver fishing in Siltcoos and Tahkenitch lakes is still slow. Tahkenitch is a better choice as algae blooms on Siltcoos has hindered visibility."

While there has been a little activity on the lower Elk River, it's early in the season here. The first decent rainfall will start up the fishery here and at the Sixes.

Rogue Bay trollers saw the good fishing last week take a nosedive into the weekend. Chinook can be seen (and caught) milling around in the river below Indian Creek, waiting for a freshet to they can make the final run. Although getting late in the run, half-pounder fishing is holding up well around Agness. These little Chinook are grabbing flies and lures in Rogue canyon but bait is not allowed in this stretch for the rest of October. Summer steelhead catches are good in the Grants Pass stretch, slow on the upper river where the water is cold where only flies are allowed until

October 1st although these may be cast legally with spinning outfits using a plastic bubble to do so.

Brookings anglers are looking forward to fishing offshore this weekend with friendly wind and wave predictions in the forecast. With no depth restrictions, limits of rockfish and ling cod have been taken whenever conditions are favorable.

Dave Lehton, a charter boat skipper, took a day off to fish recreationally on the last day of the Chetco bubble fishery on October 11th. He was glad that he did, as his adventure yielded a 52-pounder which won the derby and put over \$2,300 in his pocket.

Diamond Lake is fishing best early and late in the day with limits of large rainbows the rule.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Pro guide Steve Fleming (888-624-9424) reports, "The John Day River came up a lot, and is now flowing 325 CFS, and predicted to stay that high for at least 10 days. The water temp has dropped down to 48-50, and the bass are still biting good in the afternoon. The steelhead should be coming up the river with this increase, but I haven't heard of anybody catching any. The water is clean, and look good for catching fish."

October caddis are hatching in abundance on the Deschutes with a Blue-Winged Olive hatch occurring like clockwork mid-day. The lower river has started to produce some big hatchery steelhead on brightly-colored jigs fished under a bobber.

Kokanee at Green Peter have started entering the tributaries to spawn although a few remain available in deep water. Despite cold overnight temperatures, the water temp has not yet dipped so low that it has curtailed the bass fishing although both small- and largemouth are scattered.

Northwest Trout - Detroit Reservoir has been stocked with 7,000 hatchery rainbows this week. Fishing here has been worthwhile.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report October 15th – October 28th, 2008

North Puget Sound

The region's salmon fisheries continue to be slow for freshwater and saltwater anglers. But the bite could pick up as the **chum** run makes its way into Puget Sound and the region's **blackmouth** season gets into full swing.

"It's been a tough year for anglers fishing for chinook and coho in the region," said Steve Thiesfeld, a WDFW fish biologist. "Salmon fishing, however, could improve in the next few weeks as **chum** move into northern and central Sound and opportunities to hook **blackmouth** increase."

Anglers fishing for blackmouth in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit. Blackmouth - resident chinook - fishing opportunities expand Oct. 16,

when anglers in Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) also will be allowed to keep one chinook as part of that area's daily limit of two salmon.

Those fishing for chum salmon may want to get out on the water sooner than later, said Thiesfeld. "In the past, the chum return usually peaks in late October and early November," Thiesfeld said. "But this year, anglers are already catching some chum salmon."

The area around Point No Point (north end of the Kitsap Peninsula) and Possession Bar (southern portion of Whidbey Island) is often a hot spot for chum salmon, Thiesfeld said. Anglers fishing that area, or other waters of Marine Area 9, (Admiralty Inlet) have a daily limit of two salmon but must release chinook.

Thiesfeld reminds anglers that portions of marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) are 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.

In the freshwater, there have been reports of anglers catching some chum - as well as a few coho - in the Skykomish and Snohomish rivers. But, overall, salmon fishing in the region's rivers continues to be slow.

Meanwhile, salmon fishing opportunities continue at Lake Sammamish and Lake Washington. Anglers fishing Lake Sammamish have a daily limit of four salmon measuring at least 12 inches. Anglers can keep up to two **chinook** but must release all sockeye, and salmon fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek. At Lake Washington, only a couple of weeks remain in the salmon fishery, which wraps up at the end of October. Before the fishery closes, anglers are allowed four coho per day (minimum size 12 inches) from waters north of the Highway 520 Bridge and east of the Montlake Bridge.

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

Salmon anglers are making the transition from **coho** to **blackmouth** and **chum** , as more waters open to fishing for those species around the region. Meanwhile, the first **razor-clam** dig of the fall season starts Oct. 16.

Three evening **razor-clam** digs are 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 <http://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov> . Clam diggers are not required to display their licenses on outer clothing.

Opening dates and evening low tides 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.

Ayres said Kalaloch Beach in Olympic National Park would be closed at least until spring 2009 because the clam population there remains low. "However, there is a population of small clams that may grow to harvestable size by spring," Ayres said. Kalaloch was closed for the entire 2007-08 season.

Anglers looking for salmon fishing opportunities should get their rods ready for **chum** and **blackmouth** , as the coho season tails off, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. Chum season usually peaks in late October and November as the fish move from northern Puget Sound into bays and rivers, but this year may be different, Thiesfeld said. "Many other salmon runs were early this year and tests show that chum may also be early."

Thiesfeld suggests anglers try fishing Kennedy Creek in Thurston County and the waters around Hoodspout in Hood Canal, which opens for chum and blackmouth retention Oct. 16. In addition, the Skokomish Rivers just south of Hoodspout has been producing a fair number of **coho salmon** , he said. While chum may be retained after Oct. 15, no chinook retention is allowed on the river.

On Nov. 1 the Dosewallips and Duckabush rivers in Jefferson County, and Minter Creek in Pierce/Kitsap counties will also open for chum retention.

In Marine Area 11, anglers launching from the Point Defiance Boathouse have had some success catching **blackmouth** even though the season's been disappointing for most anglers, Thiesfeld said. "This year, fish are mainly being caught by these experienced anglers who know the area, otherwise it's been pretty tough." Creel checks over the Oct. 11-12 weekend showed 17 anglers caught nine fish. Anglers fishing in Marine Area 11 may retain wild chinook as part of their two-fish daily limit.

Along the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the salmon season ends Oct. 31 in Marine Area 6 (Port Angeles), but a new blackmouth fishery starts Nov. 1 in Marine Area 5 (Sekiu). Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) also opens for chum and blackmouth Oct. 16.

Farther south, fishing on the Chehalis River has been slow lately, but a flush of rain could change that in a hurry, said Scott Barbour, WDFW fish biologist. "Some rain would bring more fish in and get them moving up into the Satsop and Wynoochee rivers as well," Barbour said. He reminded anglers that starting Oct. 16 only hatchery coho may be retained.

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 advises anglers to check WDFW's 2008/2009 Fishing in Washington pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for details on boundaries and regulations.

Oct. 16 also marks the start of fall fishing in a number of area rivers, 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 that day. 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 (<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.

For a change of pace, anglers may want to venture out some evening and try jigging for **squid**, which generally make their way through Puget Sound in fall and winter, said Greg Bargmann, WDFW marine ecosystem manager. "We're heading into the peak of the fishery and Puget Sound has some good piers to fish from," Bargmann said. Locations include the Les Davis Pier in Tacoma as well as the Elliott Bay pier in Seattle. Squid fishing is open year-round with a daily limit of five quarts or 10 pounds. Legal gear is a baitfish jig, a maximum of four squid lures, a herring rake or a hand dip net. Each angler must have a separate container. Squid fishing is closed in Hood Canal (Marine Area 12). More information on squid fishing is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/squid/index.htm>. Information on fishing piers is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/piers/>.

Southwest Washington:

One in 3.6 boat anglers fishing the Columbia River Gorge upriver from Camas have been taking home legal-size **sturgeon** in recent days. Then again, **hatchery coho salmon** have also been drawing a lot of attention as their numbers mount above and below Bonneville Dam.

"This is prime time for sturgeon fishing below the dam," said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. "Sturgeon really tie on the feedbag at this time of year, as the water cools and they prepare for their dormant phase. People are catching some nice, legal-size fish."

Although boat anglers still have the edge, bank anglers fishing just below Bonneville Dam averaged a legal-size sturgeon for every 11 rods in a creel survey conducted in mid-October. Squid, sand shrimp, smelt, anchovies and night crawlers all work well as bait, Hymer said.

Meanwhile, **coho salmon** are moving into Columbia Basin tributaries in far greater numbers than expected. Fishery managers recently raised their annual run projection for late-run coho to 200,000 fish - a big increase from the 68,000-fish pre-season estimate. Counts at Bonneville Dam have increased steadily in recent weeks, now ranging between 2,000 and 4,000 a day.

Some of the best fishing has been on the lower and upper Cowlitz River, where the limit is six hatchery adults per day. Anglers have been doing well on the lower river at the barrier dam, Blue Creek and all the way down to the mouth of the river. The Kalama and Lewis rivers, where the catch limit is four hatchery adult coho per day, have also been thick with fish. The limit is also four adults per day on the Elochoman River below the Highway 4 Bridge, and two fish per day on the Washougal and Klickitat rivers - all good bets for hatchery coho.

But getting hatchery coho to bite can be tricky, Hymer said. "If you're on the water at the right time, it's possible to get your limit," he said. "But other times, especially after a heavy rain, they'll just barrel up the river without paying any attention to what gear you throw at them." Hymer

reminds anglers that all wild coho with an intact adipose caught downstream from the Hood River Bridge must be released.

In the mainstem Columbia River, most fishing for hatchery coho below Bonneville Dam has been concentrated around Lady Island in the Camas/Washougal area. Above Bonneville, the mouth of the Klickitat River remains a popular spot, drawing 42 boats on a recent Sunday morning. Anglers have been averaging about one coho per boat, catching chrome-bright fish weighing up to 20 pounds. Any coho, adipose clipped or not, may be retained in the Klickitat and at its mouth since the area is above the Hood River Bridge. Oct. 15 is the last day for night closures and restrictions on non-buoyant lures in the Bonneville Pool. Drano Lake remains closed to fishing on Wednesdays during October.

If the coho aren't biting, Hymer suggests that anglers fishing the Cowlitz River consider shifting gears. "There's a dark black cloud of **sea-run cutthroat** pooling right below the Cowlitz Trout Hatchery right now," he said. "Those fish average about 14 inches long, and can really brighten up an afternoon, readily taking flies, lures, or bait." Anglers are required to release any wild, unmarked cutts they catch, but the vast majority of those below the trout hatchery are marked with a clipped adipose fin, Hymer said. "It may be the only hatchery run of cutthroat in the state," he said, noting that the trout limit is five fish per day with a minimum length of 12 inches.

Swift Reservoir is another good option for trout. In May, WDFW planted 60,000 catchable-size **rainbows** into the reservoir, and those that eluded anglers' hooks should measure about 13 inches long by now, Hymer said. For best results, Hymer recommends that boat anglers fish the upper end of the reservoir in water less than 40 feet deep and troll a 2-ounce weight and pop gear followed by lures or bait.

Eastern Washington:

WDFW southeast district fish biologist Glen Mendel of Dayton reminds anglers that the special **fall chinook salmon** fishing season in the Snake River near Little Goose Dam closes Oct 15. "Fishing has been very slow, and most anglers have given up on trying to catch a fall chinook," Mendel said. "We estimate about a dozen fall chinook have been caught so far. The tail of the run is still passing through, but most of the fall chinook that will pass through the Little Goose area have already done so. The **steelhead** catch rate in this area also has been slow."

Mendel noted, however, that steelhead fishing farther upstream on the Snake River near the mouths of the Clearwater and Grand Ronde rivers remains good.

Many **trout** -stocked lakes in the region close to fishing Oct. 31. Mendel recommends that anglers take advantage of these last weeks of fishing at the Tucannon River impoundments in Columbia County - Beaver, Big Four, Blue, Deer, Rainbow, Spring and Watson lakes. Blue Lake recently received over 500 quarter-pound rainbow trout from the Tucannon Fish Hatchery.

WDFW northeast district fish biologist Bill Baker says some of the best fishing of the year can be found in these last weeks of the season at many trout waters, including Ferry County's Davis, Ellen, and Swan; Stevens County's Bayley, Black, Cedar, Deep, Deer, Jump-Off-Joe, Little Pend Oreille chain of lakes, Loon, McDowell, Mudget, Rocky, and Starvation; and Pend Oreille County's Browns, Crescent, Davis, Diamond, Frater, Halfmoon, Horseshoe, Leo, Marshall, Mystic, Nile, No-Name, Petit, Sacheen, Skookum and Yokum.

Spokane County's Chapman, Clear, and Liberty lakes also close at the end of October. Amber Lake remains open for catch-and-release-only fishing through November. Close to Spokane, several year-round lakes remain good bets for trout and other fish species, including Eloika, Long, Newman, Silver, and Sprague.

North Central Washington:

Steelhead fishing in the Upper Columbia River and tributaries above Wells Dam has yielded mixed results since the Oct. 4 opener, said Bob Jateff, WDFW district fish biologist in Omak. "The mainstem fishery has been the best with both shore and boat anglers picking up steelhead in the 4- to 10-pound range," he said. "Anglers do need to be aware of a new hook restriction on the mainstem Columbia River this year, with selective gear rules - use only a single barbless hook, although bait is allowed."

In the Methow River, Jateff said fishing has been slow for both hardware and fly anglers. Single barbless hooks with no bait allowed is mandatory for the Methow. "We strongly encourage anglers to retain the first two adipose-fin-clipped steelhead caught in order to allow a higher percentage of natural-origin fish on the spawning grounds," he said.

Fishing has been spotty on the Okanogan River, Jateff said, with a few fish reportedly caught below Malott. Selective gear rules are also in effect on the Okanogan, with no bait allowed.

"Anglers can find good fishing for trout this time of year at Okanogan County lakes that are open until Oct. 31," Jateff said. "Big Twin near Winthrop and Blue near Sinlahekin are both selective gear rule waters and can provide good fishing for rainbow trout in the 14- to 18-inch range." Chopaka and Aeneas, which are fly fishing only lakes should also be good for rainbows up to 16 inches, he said. At Aeneas Lake, anglers can also catch larger triploid trout up to 18 inches. "Patterson Lake near Winthrop continues to provide good catches of yellow perch and anglers there are encouraged to retain as many perch as possible in an effort to balance the existing population," Jateff said.

Anglers do need to be aware that the **salmon** season will end one hour after sunset on Oct. 15 for the mainstem Columbia River from the Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster to the Highway 17 Bridge in Bridgeport, including the Okanogan River from the mouth to the first Highway 97 Bridge upstream. Salmon fishing gear rules have also been changed to reflect current rule restrictions for steelhead on the mainstem Columbia.

Lake Chelan re-opened for **hatchery-reared landlocked chinook salmon** fishing Oct. 15 through Feb. 8, 2009. All of Lake Chelan, except within 400 feet of the mouths of all tributaries, is open. Anglers can keep up to two fish measuring at least 15 inches daily. Art Viola, WDFW district fish biologist, said the re-opening is possible because efforts to provide a salmon fishery based on hatchery-reared triploid summer chinook stocking have been successful. No catch record card is needed. Landlocked summer chinook are not listed or protected under the Endangered Species Act.

South Central Washington:

Yakima River **fall chinook salmon** fishing effort and catch has been dropping, reports Paul Hoffarth, WDFW district fish biologist from Pasco. "From our last creel check, anglers averaged one salmon for every 12 hours of fishing," he said. An estimated 101 adult fall chinook, seven chinook jacks, 14 adult coho, and four coho jacks were harvested the week ending Oct. 12. The middle section of the river, from Benton City to Prosser, has been the most popular. Harvest since the season began Sept. 1 is estimated at 374 chinook (345 adults and 29 jacks) and 69 coho (29 adults and 40 jacks). The fall chinook fishery in the lower Yakima River remains open through Oct. 22.

Hoffarth also noted that fall fishing for **walleye** can be terrific on the Columbia River below McNary Dam - an area that regularly has good catch rates through October.

Eric Anderson, WDFW fish biologist from Yakima, reminds **trout** anglers that many catchable-size trout are planted in Yakima and Kittitas counties' year-round lakes in the fall.

"Although these fish are smaller than our spring planted trout they still provide good angling opportunity in our year-round lakes," Anderson said. "Some of these fish carry over through the winter to a larger size in the lake without tying up valuable rearing space in the hatchery."

Reader Email -

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

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Sherars Falls Fish Trap counts:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/fish_counts/sherars_falls/index.asp

Threat of lawsuit spurs Corps of Engineers in to action after seven-year stall:

<http://oregonflyfishingblog.com/2008/10/13/willamette-spring-chinook-recovery-gains-momentum/>

Weekly Quote – "Releasing a fish is an act of faith, the same as planting a tree. It requires faith that the seed will take, and that our own progeny will want and will deserve and will in their turn protect and pass on the things - the walnut trees and the wild rivers and the wild fish - that we preserve and pass on to them." - Dave Hughes

GOOD LUCK!