

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 10th – July 16th, 2009**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- With a slow summer chinook season ending last week, anglers will now turn their focus to the summer steelhead run now ramping up on the lower Columbia. This year's return is expected to be another large one and fish passage at Bonneville is drastically ramping up as we near peak season. Boaters will take fish on anchor using spinners but bank anglers will have to wait another week before favorable tides produce good catches close to shore.

The water temperature at Willamette Falls reached 72 degrees as of July 6th. Sturgeon fishing is slow. The best fishing is on the Upper Middle Fork for trout.

Spinners have been effective this week for steelhead on the McKenzie River. The upper river is fishing well for trout.

A few steelhead and springers are being hooked on the Santiam but take a combination of bait and lures and fish early or late. Fish can be seen in the river at Packsaddle.

The occasional steelhead is being taken with spinners on the Clackamas but fishing here has been slow.

The Sandy is low and periodically glacial in color. Steelhead are scattered while a few springers are being taken below Cedar Creek.

Scheduled for trout planting this week are Big Cliff Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Carmen Reservoir, Clear Lake (Linn Co.), Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River below Leaburg Lake, Salmon Creek and the Santiam River above Detroit Lake.

Northwest – The ocean salmon fishery out of the Columbia River is limit fishing. Anglers are catching fish both north and south of the rivers mouth with bait or lures producing equally well. An occasional chinook is being taken as well. Jellyfish have been a periodic problem, avoid them at all costs as fouled gear requires meticulous cleaning for fish to respond to your offering.

Ocean crabbing in the lower Columbia has been fair with just better than half of the crabs in hard shell condition. The ocean is loaded with females but fair numbers of males are also available.

Razor clam digging was excellent on the last tide series but will close on July 15th through September 30th from Tillamook Head to the mouth of the Columbia.

Sturgeon anglers struggled to find keepers on the last 4-day season over the holiday weekend, but will have 6 additional days to collect their quarry on these open dates: July 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, and 19. The fishing remained best above the Astoria/Megler Bridge but Jeff Reams of Corvallis landed a 53.5 incher weighing 55 pounds last Friday downstream of Hammond, shortly after catching his limit of salmon fishing near the CR Buoy.

Garibaldi ocean salmon fishers had great action prior to the weekend storm front. South winds warmed offshore waters, scattering coho and plaguing the waters with jellyfish. The fishing will likely get good again when the weather becomes more consistent. A huge school of dolphins

were seen working bait on Tuesday just offshore of Rockaway.

Ocean crabbing is also good out of Garibaldi with nearly half of the keepers in a hard shell state. Bay crabbing is only fair.

Summer steelhead and fin-clipped spring chinook are still options on some district rivers but low, clear water will continue to challenge anglers for the next several weeks.

Great catches of albacore were reported from Newport to Astoria at mid-week. Boats traveling west 35 to 55 miles found willing schools of fish falling to live bait or tuna clones. July and August are peak months for tuna catches.

Trout planting will resume in the Northwest Zone in September.

Southwest – High winds again hampered anglers targeting all-depth halibut last Thursday and Friday. Only Saturday was really fishable which means it's likely the remaining 28,000 pounds in the quota were not caught and additional days will be added.

It appears the shad run this year isn't late as many hoped; it's just poor. The Coos and Coquille got a few while the Umpqua run is winding down.

The 'tail end' of a minus tidal series this coming weekend won't offer many clamming opportunities but will make for easy ocean launches if wind and wave conditions allow. Long-range forecasts are favorable.

Ocean coho action has been good out of Winchester Bay fishing 30 foot depths over 300 feet of water.

Pinkfin perch fishing is good from area beaches. Bass fishing is good in the mainstem below woods. Steelheading is improving on the North Umpqua although it will be primarily catch and release with hatchery numbers declining.

Stripers are being caught in the Coquille below Arago. Anglers launching out of Charleston are catching fair to good numbers of coho about two-thirds of which are wild.

Trollers in the Rogue estuary are targeting early fall chinook with limited success. Warm water in the river will hold these summer fish in the bay. Unmarked, non-hatchery chinook may be retained starting July 10th. Springers are being caught in the river around Lobster Creek and above, mostly by pro guides.

Coho catches were fair to good over the past weekend out of Brookings although the vast majority were wild, requiring release. Bottom fishing has remained excellent offshore. Conditions look favorable for easy bar crossings this coming weekend.

Rogue above Lost Creek is scheduled to be stocked with trout.

Eastern – Mornings and evenings are best on the Deschutes with caddis the primary bugs of interest.

Over the past weekend, kokanee were thick on depth finders at Odell but not biting.

SW Washington – Steelhead fishing on most district streams is disappointing. Upper Columbia

River bound steelhead should begin to improve catches on the next tide series beginning the 18th along lower river beaches.

Summer steelhead are being recycled on the Washougal River.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Just when you thought it was safe to hang up the sturgeon gear, well, we have 2 more 3-day openers headed our way. It seems that anglers have been having a tough time filling the sturgeon quota on the lower Columbia River this year. Several thousand more sturgeon remain on the quota and with catch rates seemingly on the decline, it doesn't look like we're in jeopardy of attaining the quota anytime soon.

Anglers worked hard to find keepers on the Forth of July, 4-day opener with some notable guides going bite less on some days. Many experienced anglers would tell you that it still seems the fish are present in good numbers, they just aren't biting all that well. The better fishing was still above the Astoria/Megler Bridge and even upstream of Tongue Point produced the best it seemed. I fished on Monday (catch and release) with just 2 rods fishing and we only took about 8 fish with one being in the keeper range. Most of our bites came on shrimp but we did get a few bites on anchovies.

Part of the problem this time of year is with the lack of interest, fresh bait is not typically ordered and delivered for the catch and release season. It will be important to plan ahead if you plan on participating in the catch and release fishery. See the next section of this newsletter for info on the weekend opener.

Salmon fishing off of the mouth of the Columbia is well, off the hook....literally. The bites are easy to come by but keeping your biters on the hook seems to take an act of God. I fished Saturday out of Hammond heading north to get out of the damn jellyfish. Anytime is too much time when you're fishing amongst the jelly's. Once it fouls your gear, you have to clean it ALL off as fish will NOT bite your bait if you have brown tentacles hanging off of your offering. Jellyfish were a real problem from Buoy 2 to nearly the CR Buoy. Avoid them at all costs.

As for the fishing, it is hard to believe it can get any better. The earlier you get out there, the more aggressive the fish bite and the quicker you'll limit out. Although the ocean north of the green line produced good catches, it does seem that there were more fish present on the south side of the red line. Just put your bait down and catch fish; it's that simple. Anchovies and herring were working equally well, your bait just had to spin to get bit. Spoons and spinners were also working well but we seemed to have a harder time holding on to fish that bit those offerings over bait. We did hook 2 nice chinook, losing one at the boat but putting a nice 24 pound Rogue River strain fish in the boat (marked with a left ventral fin clip). It's nice when those fish stay on the hook although we did lose one of the two chinook after a 10 minute fight. Chinook will be more prevalent in the catches as we get into late August.

Crabbing on the lower Columbia seems to be picking up but whether you crab in the ocean or the river, expect about half of your catch to be soft-shelled crab. Using fresh salmon carcasses for bait, we scored about 30 crab for 2 pulls (6 pots) crabbing near social security beach over the weekend. We didn't do nearly that well in the ocean however and even more of the crab seemed to be on the soft-shell state.

Clamming was excellent near Fort Stevens State Park for me on this last minus tide series. I'm sure it was good all along the Clatsop Beaches with good shows up higher in the sand making gunning' them quite easy. I dug my 15 clam limit in the same number of minutes twice this

week. Be aware that clamming closes from Tillamook Head north on July 15th through September 30th.

Tuna seekers are starting to look things over on the north coast and coming up winners as recently as Tuesday. Good catches of albacore were reported around the 124 55 line using live anchovies for bait. One boat reported catching 55 tuna in short order. This fishing should be good although it can vary from day to day, for the next several weeks.

Upriver, the summer chinook season didn't really impress too many people but those that backrolled, clearly out produced those that anchored this season. The summer chinook season is over now with anglers ready to focus on summer steelhead. Those fish can be intercepted on anchor, plunking spinners on the bottom. You just have to be in the right travel lane for consistent results.

Interest in the oversize sturgeon fishery is waning and fresh shad for bait is becoming very hard to come by. Keeper sturgeon fishing in the gorge won't pick up again until late September and October.

The Guide's Forecast – Even though we have another 3-day sturgeon opener beginning this Friday (July 10 – 12), coho are going to steal the show for the remainder of the season with the run prediction that is due back this year. It's easy limits when the ocean permits, just go south and keep yourself out of the jellyfish. This is no joke, the earlier you go, the quicker you'll limit out. Fish are more aggressive at first light so you not only get more bites but you get fish that get hooked better and you can spend the rest of your day pursuing sturgeon or enjoying the beverage of your choice.

For the sturgeon angler, the upcoming softer tide series will keep anglers fishing in the deeper water to obtain flow for motivated keepers. Taylor Sands between the bridge and Tongue Point should produce fair over the next two openers using shrimp in the shallower water and anchovies in the deeper runs. The lower you fish, the more bait you're going to need as crabs and trash fish will plague you till the end! The water upstream of Tongue Point will still likely be the most productive stretch. A combination salmon/sturgeon trip is in order for this weekend. Just do salmon first unless you want to be out on the ocean for a long period of time trying to get your limit of fish. The weekend ocean forecast looks like this:

FRI

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

FRI NIGHT

NW WIND 15 TO 20 KT...EASING TO 10 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 4 FT...SUBSIDING TO 1 FOOT AFTER MIDNIGHT. W SWELL 4 FT.

SAT

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

SUN

W WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 3 FT.

With the soft tides coming up, bar crossings should be easy, Rockfishing off of the south jetty out at the mouth of the Columbia should be productive and crabbing should be good too. It's shaping up to be a productive weekend.

Beach steelheaders should take the week off but boaters should find fair results for steelhead in the gorge. Anchor in the right lane and you could be in 'em using spinners on the bottom. Numbers are climbing daily at Bonneville.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – The temperature at Willamette Falls is up to 73 degrees. Counts remain 10 days behind but about 200 summers were passing daily and a similar number of springers at the end of June. Over 22,000 springers and nearly 14,000 steelhead have crossed as of the end of June. Traditional wisdom is to seek sturgeon in areas of decent flow. Unfortunately, there isn't much water movement in the lower Willamette with the water level down so low. A few shad are being taken as the run winds down.

North Santiam anglers report seeing good numbers of summer steelhead but getting them to bite or strike is tough. The water is too low for drift boats below the diversion dam.

Conditions are good on the McKenzie thanks to early rains and a good snowpack. Fly anglers are doing well for reddsides.

The Guide's Forecast – Warm water in the lower Willamette has put the kibosh on steelhead fishing although numbers at this time of year are too low to be optimistic even if the conditions were better. Sturgeon fishing also seems to have been negatively effected by high water temperatures with few fish being hooked and keepers rare. With large caddis, including some of the McKenzie Green variety, big stoneflies and outsized mayflies on the hatch in the Upper Middle Fork Willamette, fishing for trout here is good.

Try for steelhead below Leaburg Dam on the McKenzie where some boaters have taken three-fish limits of hatchery fish. Jig fishers stand the best chance of hooking a spring Chinook.

Detroit Reservoir has been fishing fairly well for trout with boat anglers catching about twice as many as those who are bank-bound.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Catching a summer steelhead is possible on the Clackamas, but requires putting in some serious to be successful. Jigs had taken a few as have spinners but at this time of year, first and last light angling will improve your odds. The good news is that fresh fish are entering daily now, likely anxious to get out of the warm water of the Willamette. There are certainly some spring Chinook around as the hatchery at Eagle Creek saw the first returns over the past week from the 2005 smolt release.

Spring Chinook and summer steelhead fishing remains slow on the Sandy River. The most productive area has been around Cedar Creek. Expect to find milky water here in warmer weather.

North Coast Fishing Report – With the ocean the best option on the north coast, coho anglers have been pretty excited about all that the ocean has had to offer in the recent week. Great catches were reported out of Garibaldi prior to Sunday and Monday's blow. Action has tapered off dramatically with the south winds warming ocean temperatures several degrees.

I fished out of Garibaldi on Tuesday, heading west to 180 feet just after dropping my crab pots to the north of the bay entrance. We were inundated with jellyfish for the first few bait drops until I got out to 240 foot of water. We just couldn't find any fish out there. For 6 rods fishing, we never drew a strike for about 1½ hours of fishing. Our highlight however was a school of

dolphins that had to easily number over 200 mammals were chasing bait all around the boat for about a half an hour. What a sight!

We heard of some action closer to shore where birds were working over bait pretty well near Twin Rocks (near Rockaway). We came back in to pull our crab pots and called it a day. We ended up with about 22 keeper crab of which half were hard shelled crab. No doubt that fish will acclimate to the temperature change and go on the bite again in the very near future.

Area rivers are low and clear but a few stealthy anglers are still taking jack chinook, a few adults and some summer steelhead. You have to be on the water early however for best results.

The Guide's Forecast – Like further north, the ocean is supposed to be pretty friendly in the coming days and through the weekend but you may not be all that surprised to learn that they do get this forecast wrong once in a while so it's best to check with Coast Guard station Tillamook Bay before you head out. Their phone number is: 503-322-3531 and they can give you bar AND ocean weather conditions.

Coho may remain scattered for a short while but they will certainly school back up again. With the number of fish available, action should continue good out of the north and central ports and even begin to improve in the coming weeks. Don't hesitate to try spoons, spinners and plugs out there; you just need to obey the single point barbless rule. These artificials are producing well and can cut down on bait costs although it's hard to beat a green label herring out there.

Garibaldi should be a productive port for albacore tuna as well. Fish will be from 35 to 50 miles offshore but well within range when ocean conditions allow.

Don't leave out the crabbing option. Although there are a fair number of softshells still in the catch, you can cull them for the quality keepers that are available. The higher quality your bait is, the better your catch will be. Use your fresh salmon carcasses and heads from the previous days catch. My pots produced better the closer I was to Tillamook Bay crabbing on the north side of the bay entrance. The south side should produce good catches as well.

Salmon, trout and steelhead fishing should be fair this week with the cloudy conditions that should afford anglers longer periods of optimum fishing time. River levels will remain low.

Central & South Coast Reports – An average of four albacore per rod are being taken off the central Oregon coast with warm water offshore and the 'tuna highway' connecting. Boats are getting into them in 58 degree water with some catching all they can carry. Blue water will be even closer this coming weekend.

Coho fishing has been fair to good out of Newport and Depoe Bay with anglers having to release a lot of natives to take a few fin-clipped keepers and many fish throwing the hook.

Anglers targeting bottom fish within the mandated 40-fathom line have been doing well. Ocean conditions this coming weekend are predicted to be friendly.

All-depth halibut fishing last weekend was good enough last weekend to more than fill the spring quota. 'Butt lovers won't have long to wait for another chance at deepwater quarry, however, as summer all-depth fishing opens August 7th for a quota of 4,469 pounds.

A few Chinook have been taken recently below Moonshine Park on the Siletz.

Crabbing has been fair to good in the bay at Waldport near the jaws, slow to fair at Yaquina.

Recent warm weather has revved up the smallmouth bite on the lower Umpqua. While most of the scores of fish being taken are on the smallish side, it's inevitable that, when catching a bunch in a day, there will be a few with some size and shoulders. It's should be quite worthwhile this coming weekend. Steelhead fishing is fair to good in the mainstem and lower Umpqua while sturgeon and shad fishing are slow. Boats launching out of Winchester Bay got into albacore over the 4th of July weekend, taking from six to a dozen each.

Boats launching out of Charleston have intercepted albacore at 25 to 30 miles from port this week. While the average catch rate was only two tuna per rod, this will improve in weeks to come as water warms. Ocean crabbing has improved although sorting of softshells is required.

The lower Rogue has continued to produce a few spring Chinook in the Agness. most of which are being taken by local pro guides. While only fair, fishing is better with catches steady on the upper Rogue while it's dead on the Grants Pass stretch. With counts of summer steelhead approaching 3,000 at Gold Ray Dam, there are sufficient numbers to start targeting them in the upper Rogue. Bait, flies and lures are all effective. While the Rogue as currently catch-and-release for fall Chinook, a few are trying with limited success. Starting this Saturday, July 10th, anglers can keep two wild Chinook as long as they stay below Hog Creek Boat Ramp.

Gold Ray Dam will join Savage Rapids as just a memory thank to \$5 million in Federal stimulus money. If, that is, the Powers That Be moves rapidly as the money disappears if the project is not competed in full by the end of 2010. Removal of the dam will open over 300 miles of spawning habitat on the upper Rogue.

Central and Eastern Oregon – The Deschutes is fishing well around Maupin with Caddis and PMDs. Pressure is light at this time of year.

Kokanee fishing is good at Paulina with limits coming to jig anglers. Mornings are best for fish averaging 13 inches.

Odell is producing fair but steady catches of kokes to trollers plying water from 30 to 50 feet.

As usual, Wickiup is delivering catches of extra large, fat kokanee. Trolling has been the most successful approach. If the bite dies off, show 'em something different.

Fishing is slow to fair for kokanee at Green Peter.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report July 8-21, 2009

North Puget Sound

Salmon and crab fisheries are open in the region's marine waters but many anglers are looking to the Skagit River, where a highly anticipated summer chinook fishery is set to get under way.

Beginning July 9, anglers will have the opportunity to fish for **summer chinook salmon** on a portion of the lower Skagit River for the first time in 16 years. "Big rivers can produce some big fish, and the Skagit is no exception," said Brett Barkdull, fish biologist for WDFW. "This is a great opportunity to catch a large chinook salmon on a river where anglers once hauled in fish weighing more than 50 pounds."

The Skagit will be open through Aug. 9 from the mouth of the river to the mouth of Gilligan Creek from noon Thursday through Sunday each week. Anglers will have a daily limit of two chinook, only one of which may be an adult.

Barkdull recommends using heavy rods and line, and suspects most anglers will be using big spinners, Kwikfish-type lures and maybe even sand-shrimp and herring. "The opportunity to catch a prize fish is there, but this certainly isn't a slam-dunk fishery," he cautioned. "Anglers need to be patient and be prepared to put in a lot of hours."

Wild Puget Sound chinook salmon are listed for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act. But because state and tribal co-managers are expecting an abundance of summer/fall chinook back to the Skagit, fishery managers were able to establish federally approved fisheries in the river this year, said Pat Pattillo, salmon policy coordinator for WDFW.

About 24,000 summer/fall chinook salmon are expected back to the Skagit River this year. That run would be almost 30 percent higher than the average return over the last nine years, said Pattillo.

"We have seen consistently strong returns of chinook salmon to the Skagit for nearly a decade, indicating that this stock is responding to conservation efforts," Pattillo said. "This year's run is expected to be even better and that allowed us to develop a recreational fishery, while still meeting our spawning goals for this stock."

However, with the uncertainty regarding angler participation and catch rates, the department took a conservative approach in structuring the Skagit fishery, said Pattillo. "We will be watching this fishery very closely," he said. "If it appears that we are going to fall below our spawning goals, we will have to meet with the tribes and consider some in-season adjustments, which could include early closures."

Farther upriver, anglers can still cast for **hatchery chinook salmon** on the Skagit and Cascade rivers. The upper Skagit is open to hatchery chinook retention from the Highway 530 bridge at Rockport to the Cascade River. On the Cascade, anglers can fish from the mouth of the river to the Rockport-Cascade Road Bridge. Both stretches are open through July 15.

The daily limit on the Skagit and Cascade rivers is four hatchery chinook, two of which may be adults (chinook salmon at least 24 inches in length). Statewide rules require anglers to stop fishing for salmon once they have kept two adults.

On the Skykomish, a new rule that went into effect July 5 prohibits the retention of chinook from the Lewis Street Bridge in Monroe upstream to the Wallace River, the only portion of the Skykomish River that was open to salmon fishing.

Low chinook returns to the Wallace River Hatchery prompted WDFW to close the river to chinook retention to help ensure enough salmon make it back to the hatchery to meet spawning goals. The rule change does not affect fishing for hatchery steelhead and other gamefish on the Skykomish River.

Out on Puget Sound, salmon fishing got off to a decent start in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where the fishery opened July 1. Anglers fishing in Marine Area 7 have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional **pink salmon**, but can only keep one chinook.

Elsewhere, fishing has been slow in Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) and at the Tulalip Bay "bubble" salmon fishery in Marine Area 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner).

Beginning July 16, saltwater anglers will have other options as marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 open for hatchery chinook salmon retention. Anglers in each marine area will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release wild chinook. Those fishing Marine Area 9 also must release chum salmon.

Meanwhile, the **crab** fishery is under way in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2, 9, and 10. Fisheries in those areas are open on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, plus the entire Labor Day weekend. That weekly schedule also will apply to crabbers in the eastern and southern portions of Marine Area 7, where the crab fishery is set to open July 15.

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6¼ inches. Fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. See WDFW's sport-crabbing website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>) for more information.

Before heading out to the rivers, lakes or Sound, anglers should check the rules and regulations for all fisheries on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> .

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

With the summer salmon season in full swing, anglers fishing Washington's coastal waters are finding an abundance of coho and some chinook as well. Elsewhere in the region, crab fishing is under way in most areas of Puget Sound.

Despite some windy weather and rough water, the first week of salmon fishing was fast and furious off La Push (Marine Area 3) where **coho salmon** were literally jumping out of the water, said Erica Crust, WDFW ocean port sampler. "The water is thick with coho right now and they're certainly fun to catch," Crust said. "People targeting **chinook** have to work a little harder, but there are some nice ones out there."

Wind and high seas kept many anglers close to shore near Westport and Ilwaco, but those who made it out were generally catching fish, Crust said. "With calmer weather expected, anglers should be able to get out for some good fishing."

Approximately 1.2 million hatchery coho are forecast to return to the Columbia River, which would make this year's run the largest since 2001. Most coastal chinook runs are expected to be similar to last year. The quota for sport anglers is 176,400 hatchery coho and 20,500 chinook compared to 20,000 hatchery coho and 20,000 chinook in 2008.

Ilwaco (Marine Area 1) is open for salmon fishing seven days a week. Westport (Marine Area 2) is open Sundays through Thursdays through July 23, switching to a daily fishery starting July 24. The north coast (marine areas 3 and 4) is open Tuesdays through Saturdays through July 17 and daily starting July 18.

The daily limit in all marine areas is two salmon, but only one may be a chinook. All wild coho must be released. Westport anglers may add one pink salmon to their limit, while those fishing the north coast may add two.

On the Strait of Juan de Fuca, creel checks conducted at Sekiu (Marine Area 5) during the holiday weekend revealed a mix of salmon. At Van Riper's Resort, 86 anglers caught 33 chinook, 34 coho

and 11 pink salmon. Those fishing near Olson's Resort averaged slightly more than one salmon per rod.

Marine areas 5 and 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) and 12 (Hood Canal south of Ayock Point) are open daily for hatchery chinook and coho. All wild chinook, wild coho and chum caught west of Ediz Hook must be released; all hatchery and wild chinook, wild coho and chum caught east of Ediz Hook must be released. Anglers also may keep two pink salmon as part of their daily limit. Marine Area 12 (Hood Canal south of Ayock Point) has a four-fish daily limit. Because rules vary in each area, anglers are advised to check the *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> before heading out.

Participation was high during the holiday weekend in Marine Area 11 (Tacoma)/Vashon Island), but results were disappointing. Creel checks at the Point Defiance ramp and boathouse showed 374 anglers catching 19 chinook and two coho.

The salmon fishery there runs seven days a week, with a two-fish daily limit. The minimum size for chinook is 22 inches with no minimum limit for other species. All wild chinook must be released. Anglers may add two pink salmon to their daily limit. Commencement Bay, now closed, will open to salmon fishing Aug. 1.

Six areas of Puget Sound opened for **crab** fishing July 1, including marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 8-1 (Deception Pass to East Point), 8-2 (East Point to Possession Point), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) and 11 (Tacoma/Vashon). Those areas are open Wednesdays through Saturdays only, plus Labor Day weekend, closing the evening of Sept. 7.

Crabbing is also under way in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south Puget Sound), where the fishery is open seven days a week through Jan. 2, 2010.

Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) will open for crab fishing July 29, Wednesdays through Saturdays only, plus the entire Labor Day weekend. The fishery will remain open through Jan. 2, 2010.

Crab fishers may retain male Dungeness crabs only with shells measuring at least 6¼ inches. The daily limit is five crabs. All undersized crabs, female Dungeness crabs and softshell crabs of either sex must be returned to the water. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/> or <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> .

Meanwhile, persistent dry weather on the Olympic Peninsula has caused rivers in the Quillayute system to run low and clear, making it tough for anglers to get a bite, said David Low, WDFW fish biologist. "We should be seeing **springers** and **summer steelhead** , but not much is happening," Low said. "All the rivers - the Sol Duc, Calawah and Bogachiel - need a good shot of rain to bring in the fish." Water levels are higher on the Hoh River due to glacier melt, but fishing has been sluggish there as well, Low said.

Anglers fishing the Quinault River should note that the daily limit for salmon is six jacks only, with no retention of adult salmon allowed until Sept. 1. The 2009-10 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet incorrectly stated that adult salmon could be retained starting July 1.

Due to ongoing dry conditions in many parts of the state, outdoor recreationists are reminded to take extra precaution to prevent fires. Fireworks are not allowed on any of WDFW's 900,000 acres in 32 wildlife area complexes and over 150 water access sites across the state and many do not allow camp fires or any other kinds of open fires. Where campfires are allowed, they are usually restricted to metal fire rings and must be kept to less than three feet in height and

diameter. Specific rules by property can be found at http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas . To report a wildfire or unattended or escaped campfire, call the state's wildfire fighters, the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), at 1-800-562-6010 or call 911. To obtain information on fire danger levels or burn bans by county, see <http://www2.wadnr.gov/burn-risk/index.html> .

Southwest Washington

The promise of strong **coho** returns has been drawing some area anglers seaward, although heavy winds made for rough conditions during the first week of salmon fishing off the coast. A summary of the first week of ocean fishing and the outlook for the weeks ahead can be found in the South Sound/Olympic Peninsula report above.

But for anglers who plan to fish in the Columbia River Basin, there are plenty of other good options available. **Sturgeon** fishing, for example. Fishery managers from Washington and Oregon have agreed to extend the retention fishery for white sturgeon below the Wauna power lines for six additional days, running Friday through Sunday July 10-12 and July 17-19.

Those additional fishing days are designed to give anglers an opportunity to catch 4,100 sturgeon still available for harvest by the recreational fishery when the regularly scheduled season ended July 5, said Brad James, a WDFW fish biologist. "Sturgeon fishing was a little below average for the season," he said, noting that this year's catch guideline for that area was 15,529 fish. "That left room for some extra fishing days."

As during the regular season, the daily catch limit is one white sturgeon, with a fork-length measurement of 41 to 54 inches. All green sturgeon must be released.

Those extra fishing days in the Columbia River estuary should be very productive. According to creel surveys conducted in the four days before the fishery closed July 5, two out of three charter boat anglers fishing that area took home a legal-sized sturgeon, as did one in every 3.5 private boat anglers. Forty percent of the sturgeon caught were legal-size fish.

Under previous rules, anglers also may catch and keep legal-size sturgeon from the Wauna power lines upriver to Marker 85 below Bonneville Dam on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays through July 31. Catch rates there have been significantly slower than in the estuary, James said. Anglers may retain white sturgeon with a fork length of 38 inches to 54 inches in those waters.

Meanwhile, the **summer steelhead** fishery continues to heat up on both the mainstem Columbia River and its tributaries. On July 6, more than 1,600 steelhead moved past Bonneville Dam, part of this year's expected return of about 350,000 upriver fish. So far, the best place to catch these 4-to-6-pound rockets has been around the sandbars in the lower river near Longview and Cathlamet, said Joe Hymer, another WDFW fish biologist.

"As water temperatures continue to rise, these fish tend to duck into cooler waters on their way upriver," Hymer said. "Look for them at the mouths of the Cowlitz, Lewis, White Salmon and Wind rivers and at Drano Lake."

On the Cowlitz River, anglers have been catching hatchery steelhead near Blue Creek as well as spring chinook at the barrier dam. Other good bets for early run steelhead include the North Fork Lewis, Kalama, Washougal, Klickitat, Toutle and Elochoman rivers, Hymer said.

As always, only hatchery steelhead with a clipped adipose fin and healed scar at the location of the clipped fin may be retained anywhere in the Columbia River Basin. Other rules in effect for

this and other fisheries are described in the *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet, available at license dealers and posted online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> .

Along with hatchery steelhead, anglers fishing the mainstem Columbia River also have been catching some **sockeye salmon** and **chinook jacks** , Hymer said. The fishery for adult summer chinook salmon is now closed on the lower river, but remains open through July from Bonneville Dam upriver to the Highway 395 Bridge at Pasco.

Hymer noted that the run-size forecast for summer chinook was recently reduced to about 58,000 fish, compared to an earlier prediction of 70,700. At the same time, the sockeye forecast was increased from 183,200 to 190,000 fish.

At the John Day Pool, bank anglers have been averaging seven **shad** per rod, and boat anglers five. Boat anglers fishing there also averaged a **walleye** per rod, slightly better than those at The Dalles Pool where boaters are also catching about three **bass** each.

Trout anglers should know that Takhlakh Lake was recently stocked with 200 excess broodstock rainbows, averaging 3 pounds apiece. Also, both Skate Creek and the Tilton River are scheduled to be stocked with 3,000 catchable-size rainbows during the second week of July and Mayfield Lake will get another 5,000 fish the following week.

Eastern Washington

Fishing for most species is best in the early morning or late evening hours, said Chris Donley, WDFW central district fish biologist. "You may need to change up how you fish for some species," he said. "**Crappie, perch** and **bass** are no longer near the shoreline, so you need to fish deeper."

Long Lake, the reservoir off the Spokane River in northwest Spokane County has been good for crappie, perch and both **smallmouth** and **largemouth bass** . Chapman Lake in southwest Spokane County is also producing both largemouth and smallmouth bass, plus some **kokanee** . Downs Lake, also in the southwest part of the county, has a few perch and some really nice largemouth bass. The usual **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** lakes in the area - Amber, Badger, and Williams - continue to provide good catches.

Rock Lake, further south in Whitman County, also continues to be good for trout fishing.

Lincoln County's Coffeepot Lake has good perch fishing now and the Twin Lakes has a little bit of everything available - rainbow trout, bass, crappie, perch, and **bullhead catfish** . Pend Oreille County's Diamond Lake is good for perch. Stevens County's Loon Lake is "fair at best" for kokanee, Donley said.

WDFW Spokane Trout Hatchery Manager Guy Campbell said fishing for **walleye** and big **rainbows** has been great in Lake Roosevelt. "There also have been some big carryover rainbows caught in Curlew Lake up in Ferry County," he said.

WDFW Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Manager Juli Anderson reports fly-fishers have recently caught trout measuring up to 17 inches long in Z Lake. "The lake also has catfish and is a good fishing area, if you're willing to walk the mile-plus to get there."

Eloika Lake anglers will need to use the private resort access from July 13 through the end of the month while a new boat ramp and dock are installed.

Public meetings to discuss proposed rehabilitations of various fisheries, including Fishtrap and West Medical lakes, winter-only Hog Canyon and Fourth of July lakes, and Cee-Cee-Ah Creek in

Pend Oreille County, will be held July 14 in Usk at the Kalispel Tribe of Indians Camas Center, 1821 N. LeClerc Rd.; and July 15 in Spokane Valley at the WDFW Eastern Region Office, 2315 N. Discovery Place. Both meetings start at 6:30 p.m.

Northcentral Washington

The **chinook** and **sockeye salmon** fishing season started July 1 on the mainstem Columbia, Similkameen, and Okanogan rivers. Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist, reminds anglers of the anti-snagging rule in place on the Okanogan and Similkameen rivers during the salmon season.

Sockeye salmon retention began July 1 on the upper Columbia River above Priest Rapids Dam because returns are predicted to be in excess of needs for wild fish escapement to the spawning grounds.

Public meetings to discuss proposed rehabilitations of various fisheries, including Dune, Harris, Sedge and Tern lakes and 16 Ponds in the Desert Wildlife Area, Canal, Heart, June, Windmill, North Windmill, Pit and North Teal lakes, Beda and Brookies lakes, and Buck Lake in Okanogan County, will be held in Ephrata, July 14, 6 p.m., at the WDFW Northcentral Region Office, 1550 Alder St. N.W.; and in Twisp, July 16, 7 p.m., at the Aspen Professional Building, 20268 Hwy. 20.

Southcentral Washington

WDFW Fish Biologist Jim Cummins said the Yakima River **spring chinook salmon** season is extended through July 15. Fishing has been slow and the effort has been relatively light. "Although there are still fish to be caught, mostly hatchery jacks, most of the fish have moved upriver of Roza Dam where the river is closed to salmon fishing," he said. Regulations for the fishery are available at <http://bit.ly/ITE4w> .

"Some rivers and streams are finally dropping into shape, but most are running a little higher than normal for this time of year," Cummins said. "Good bets might be the upper reaches of Naneum, Taneum, Teanaway, Little Naches and tributaries, and upper Rattlesnake Creek. Those streams and some other rivers and streams have special regulations that anglers need to know before going."

Cummins also said mosquitoes are reported to be extremely abundant in the high country, including places like Leech, Dog and Clear Lakes. "Many high mountain lakes are accessible, but anglers can expect snow patches on some of the trails," he said. "Fishing for **rainbow, cutthroat** and **eastern brook trout** can be rewarding at many of these lakes."

Eric Anderson, WDFW district fish biologist, said just about all of WDFW's catchable trout plants have been made now until October. Anglers can check what fish have been planted where at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg3> .

Sockeye salmon retention opened July 1 in the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River so anglers can retain sockeye caught during the summer chinook fishery. Sockeye salmon returns to the upper Columbia River are predicted to be in excess of needs for wild fish escapement to the spawning grounds.

Reader Mail

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

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GOOD LUCK!