

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 17th – July 23rd, 2009**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Steelhead counts are beginning to climb at Bonneville Dam as we approach peak passage season for the summer run. Although poor tides prevented downstream anglers from harvesting high numbers of steelhead, gorge anglers did fair although the catch was disproportionate to wild fish. Gorge anglers should see improving catches in the coming weeks but anchoring in the migration lanes is critical to success here.

Flow at Willamette Falls has increased slightly with the water temperature down to 69 degrees. Sturgeon fishing is slow to fair. The best fishing on the river is for trout on the Middle Fork Willamette during evenings above Hills Creek Reservoir.

Steelhead on the North Santiam are still reluctant biters. Try above the North Santiam Park.

The McKenzie is in excellent shape and fishing well for trout all day long.

Coho fishing on the Clackamas will start up in late August. A few steelhead are being taken here. The Sandy is only fair for steelhead in the low flows and silted water conditions. Early mornings are best.

Expect to pay more for fishing licenses and tags next year. A new two-rod angling license will be an option for lakes and reservoirs at a cost of \$15. Boats 10 feet or longer must buy a permit for \$5.

Harriet Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Alton Baker Canal, Breitenbush River, Detroit Reservoir, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Quartzville Creek, Salt Creek, North Santiam River above Detroit Lake and Trail Bridge Reservoir are scheduled for trout planting.

Northwest – On the lower Columbia, the sturgeon opener yielded fair catches but less than a fish per boat was the average. Another 3-day sturgeon opener begins tomorrow and runs through Sunday but more days could be added if the catch remains slow.

Most anglers are focusing on the red-hot salmon action just off of the mouth of the Columbia. Excellent ocean conditions yielded easy limits for anglers out of Astoria with one charter boat reporting 30 keeper coho by 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday. The coho are getting larger with a rare coho topping out at 11 pounds. Only a rare chinook shows in the catches.

Further south, fishing improved out of Garibaldi but limits are still not the rule although possible when anglers get out early. Although the jellyfish are still present, they're not nearly the problem they were a week ago. Crabbing is excellent in the ocean out of Tillamook Bay but many of the keepers remain in the soft-shelled state.

Jason Waicunas of Bay City landed 2 pink salmon on Tuesday out of Garibaldi. Although an anomaly, pinks can be identified by larger dark spots on the upper and lower lobe of the tail and small scales. They could easily be mis-identified as small chinook salmon but anglers are allowed to retain up to 3 per day, like fin-clipped coho south of Cape Falcon.

ODF&W tallied over 10,000 tuna crossing the docks last week in the calm weather. A persistent

NW wind will make the trip out to the tuna grounds much less appealing this week but action should remain excellent for those willing to travel west 22 to 40 miles.

The Nehalem River summer chinook fishery is typically underway this time of year but low returns have triggered a season closure in this watershed at least until 2010. It should be a good year for coho however including a limited season for wild fish.

District rivers remain low and clear challenging summer steelhead anglers.

Southwest – The last all-depth halibut opener on July 2nd through 4th was very successful with over 25,000 pounds of fish caught, nearly filling the quota and closing the curtain on the spring season. The remaining poundage will roll into the summer season which will start August 7th through 9th and run every other Friday through Sunday.

Albacore fishing is in full swing now off the entire Oregon coast. Anglers launching out of central and southern ports are doing well when they find 59 degree water. A 40+ pound tuna was recently taken out of Charleston.

Friendly ocean conditions recently allowed offshore anglers to take advantage of good coho fishing. Over 8,000 hatchery fish have been taken while more than 10,000 wild coho were released. A minus tidal series will begin early mornings this coming weekend. Plan bar crossings accordingly although the weekend offshore forecasts look marginal.

Catches of sturgeon in the lower Umpqua and Winchester Bay recently improved. Steelhead are in the North Umpqua but they're challenging to hook.

Tuna catches have been great out of Charleston but it's a trip of nearly 40 miles for the best results although catches start at 15.

Boats out of Florence are doing well for coho and making good catches of ocean crab.

Trollers in Rogue Bay are taking the occasional early fall chinook. Unclipped fish may now be retained as part of the daily bag limit. A few steelhead are being taken in the Grants Pass stretch but the upper Rogue offers better prospects.

Anglers launching out of Brookings are nailing limits of large rockfish and ling cod. Limits of coho are also being caught just a half-dozen miles out of port.

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

Eastern – Trout fishing has been very good over the past week on the Deschutes. Trout are feeding on the surface from Trout Springs to Maupin.

SW Washington – Although some steelhead effort remains on the Cowlitz and Kalama Rivers, the majority of steelhead action will be by plunkers working the lower Columbia beaches from Vancouver to Longview. Minus tides should produce fair catches to both bank and boat anglers with boat anglers focusing effort at the mouths of district tributaries.

Drano Lake should begin to heat up for steelhead as Bonneville passage increases. Trolled plugs are effective in this fishery.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Another sturgeon opener is scheduled for this weekend starting Friday (July 17th) through Sunday, July 19th. Although it likely won't be a barn burner, action should be fair and provide a nice opportunity for those wanting a grand slam of species this weekend. It's all on the table this weekend; salmon, crab, tuna, sturgeon and bottomfish. It should be a great weekend to recreate on the Oregon coast.

The charter boat fleet did fare well last weekend indicating some of the deeper water downstream and just upstream of the Astoria/Megler Bridge could hold some opportunity. You'll want to order lots of bait for this water as it will be crab and trash fish infested but smelt or fresh herring could give you an upper edge as they are more durable baits. With the water warming rapidly, the bite will likely become a bit more challenging in the coming weeks.

Even in the upriver fishery, steelhead should provide some good opportunity for bank anglers working the Portland to Astoria stretch and boaters in the gorge. With a strong minus tide series beginning on Saturday, steelhead should once again gravitate to the shoreline to get out of the calorie burning current further offshore. Passage at Bonneville is really picking up and this could very well be a peak week for steelhead plunkers. Over 350,000 summer steelhead are due back to the Columbia this year although the early component of this run never did really materialize.

Anchor anglers will fare the best in the gorge fishery but you have to anchor in the right lane to expect consistent action. There are some good bank angler opportunities in the gorge as well but patience is a key component in a somewhat "draw" fishery. In other words, luck plays a role but you can increase your odds by using scent and using it often when trying to entice fish.

And if you want to see what salmon fishing was like pre-European settlement, you should head west into the ocean for a quick limit of coho near the CR Buoy. Early risers will do the best, just get 'em fishing. You'll want to bring lots of bait here as well. Spoons and spinners will work well too, and you don't have to re-bait them. It's always good to have a few of those on board in case you do run out of bait.

Tuna action was also great west of the mouth of the Columbia and should only improve as we move into August. Tuna chasers had to go out about 40 miles to get into them but the trip was worth the effort when you got out there. Live bait was working for some of the few anglers using it.

Ocean crabbing is not nearly as good out of Astoria as it is down south but there are still some keepers present. Soft-shells are here in large numbers as well but the river itself has decent numbers when the tides are in your favor. If you can get fresh salmon carcasses, I highly recommend it!

The Guide's Forecast – If you're serious about your harvest, you won't overlook the ocean salmon option this weekend. Watch the bar for safe crossing conditions but early limits are in order if you can weck through the natives and land a larger portion of the strikes you'll receive. It's hard to believe it can get any better but it actually can. Only a rare chinook is in the catch and that will likely remain the case until early August.

Beach plunkers should fare well along the lower Columbia as numbers at Bonneville are climbing to nearly 4,000 adults per day. Hot colored spin-n-glos should take fish close to shore, especially for those that believe in scent. Upriver, boat anglers should also fare well in the gorge using small spinners in 10 to 16 feet of water, fishing them very close to the bottom of the river.

Sturgeon anglers should target keepers coming off of sand bars on the minus tide series. Start shallow and work your way to the deeper water when the tide gets close to low slack. Use fresh herring or anchovies in the deeper water and sand shrimp in the shallower water. You'll have to get lucky to limit but it certainly is possible.

Crabbing for quality shelled keepers will likely be best in the river but watch those tides as a big exchange this weekend will pull buoy's under during peak incoming and outgoing tide.

Don't go razor clam digging, it's closed along Clatsop Beaches.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – As of July 15th, water temperature at Willamette Falls was up to 70 degrees which is out of the comfort zone of any but warmwater gamefish.

The McKenzie is in great shape thanks to early season rains and a decent snowpack which has prevented the low, clear conditions from which other rivers suffer at this time if year.

The North Santiam is low but stable and will remain that way for at least 10 days. Water temperatures are in the 50s river-wide. Fishing has been tough with plenty of steelhead and springers around but they have been reluctant to bite or strike anything. Biologists estimate there are 80 steelhead per river mile on the North Santiam.

The Guide's Forecast – Trout fishing is fair to good all day long on the Middle Fork Willamette above Hills Creek Reservoir and it gets even better when hatches start up in the evening. Trout are looking up and taking various dries. There's no better fishing anywhere on the river with the possible exception of smallmouth action ay many locations above the Falls.

Steelhead continue to be taken on the McKenzie below Leaburg Dam. Expect some company. Trout fishing has been good for fly anglers just about anywhere o the system.

Steelhead have been taken on jigs at Packsaddle Park and North Santiam State Park and Fisherman's Bend are good for bank fishing. Try Waterloo Park on the South Santiam for a decent shot at summers.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Spinners have been most effective at tempting steelhead on the Clackamas where fishing has been slow to fair. Springers can be seen at McIver but are not biting in the warm water.

Very few fish are being taken from the low water of the Sandy River. Conditions are either crystal clear of glacial gray. The best spot to try remains just below Cedar Creek where a few have been taken on spinners. It's frustrating to see fish rolling here while remaining unwilling to bite. We haven't heard of many anglers using a pink plastic worm on inland rivers but it is certainly an effective lure for low water coastal streams.

North Coast Fishing Report – After a wonderful week of calm weather, anglers remain focused on ocean coho out of Garibaldi. The action has lighted up after a productive weekend but rest assured, there are still great numbers of fish available. We fished offshore on Tuesday and Wednesday this week. On Tuesday, we started late (got fishing around 9:00 a.m.) and ran into immediate bites fishing due west of the tip of the north jetty in about 170 feet of water. We were only in the bite for a brief period before it got challenging out there. We ended the day with

2 pink salmon and 5 hatchery coho with only a few throwbacks in the mix. Yes, you read that right, pink salmon. Although not the highest of quality, in the ocean phase, they are quite edible and put up a great fight for their size. The 2 pinks we landed were about 4 and 5 pounds. Like fin-clipped coho, you are allowed 3 per day and they don't have to be fin-clipped. Although a bit of an anomaly, pinks do forage off the Oregon Coast when conditions are right. They can be identified by heavy oval spots on both the upper and lower lobes of the tail along with faint, black spots on their back. Their scales are really small. They can easily be mistaken for a small chinook and that's likely why many don't cross the dock. Anglers think that when they're that small, they must be coho and with the adipose fin, they must be wild and therefore released. Just depending on how desperate you are to fill your limit, anglers may want to exercise their option to take these fish. The pinks hit small, plug-cut herring fished pretty close to the surface.

On Wednesday, we were greeted with a NW wind from the get-go and a bank of fog that for all I know, extended to Japan. Thank God for GPS! With fresh salmon carcasses baited in my crab pots, we started off dropping them north of the north jetty out of Tillamook Bay and proceeded NW until we got into 100 foot of water. I figured since we weren't making great time heading to the salmon ground anyway, we'd just drop in our baits and get busy limiting the boat. WRONG! We were immediately inundated with jellyfish and picked up our baits and continued west. We sat down in 150 foot of water and again hit jellyfish although it didn't seem as bad. We picked up again and finally began seriously fishing at about 170 foot of water and began getting bit. It never was lights out fishing on Wednesday but after about 4 hours of good effort, we remained stuck on 4 coho in the box with just a few released but several other bites and lost fish. We ended the fishing day with just 4 keepers in the box and headed to the crab pots hoping for a bigger bounty. We did right by setting the pots as we picked out 37 keepers of which we only had to measure one of them. Unfortunately, the vast majority of those keepers were soft-shelled but it sure looks promising for the fall crabbing!

Overall, coho fishing has clearly dropped off recently out of Garibaldi although some boats still came in with their limits on both of the days we fished. Historically, the action out of Garibaldi really begins to heat up this time of year and even though there has been some great offshore action lately, it will get better and more consistent as we head into early August. The majority of Oregon's offshore coho migrate up from the south coast and into the Columbia by mid-August. I think we're in for some pretty good action in the coming weeks.

And since we're talking saltwater fishing, it's no secret that the albacore are in. Anglers harvested record numbers of tuna last week and if it weren't for a stiff NW wind in the afternoon, it would likely be another banner week this week. The action was steady for those taking advantage of friendly seas and willing tuna. Cedar plugs and tuna clones scored big numbers for offshore anglers. Most boats ventured at least 25 miles offshore with some going 40 miles to find consistent catches.

Clearly, ocean salmon fishing is dominating the conversation on the north coast but inland, freshwater fishing opportunities still exist for the bank angler. Steelhead will be the primary focus for anglers working the riffles and deep pools on the Wilson, Nestucca and Three Rivers. Holding salmon and steelhead are often quite reluctant to bite in these summer low water levels but fish can be taken in the early morning under stealth conditions. Small baits should be used first and if they draw no response, work spinners or spoons down deep to possibly draw a strike. Don't be too disappointed if you can't entice one to sacrifice itself, these are challenging water conditions to deal with.

Sturgeon reports inside the bay are less than stellar. Anglers often frequent the banks of the Tillamook River this time of year but even that action seems next to non-existent this season.

Juvenile crabs now inundate the upper bay making it hard to keep a bait on long enough to entice a sturgeon. It'll be a while before the first rain freshet washes them back to sea.

And speaking of bay crabbing, those seeking keepers are better off outside in the ocean but crabbers working the bay hard for keepers are coming up with fair catches. Working crab harbor, Lyster's Corner and along the jetty when tides allow are all productive areas this time of year. I have seen more than one crab ring head to the ocean however so make sure your gear is properly rigged for the water you are crabbing.

The Guide's Forecast – As the coho put on about a pound per week, and the fact we can enjoy a 3-fish bag limit south of Cape Falcon, anglers are likely to continue to target coho out of the northern ports. Here is the ocean forecast for the weekend but it's always a good idea to check an updated version here: <http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/data/Forecasts/FZUS56.KPQR.html>

FRI

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT IN THE AFTERNOON.
WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 2 FT. PATCHY FOG IN THE MORNING.

FRI NIGHT

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT...SUBSIDING TO
1 FOOT AFTER MIDNIGHT. W SWELL 3 FT.

SAT

NW WIND 5 TO 10 KT...BECOMING 10 TO 15 KT IN THE
AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 2 FOOT. NW SWELL 4 FT.

SAT NIGHT

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

SUN

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

MON

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES
1 FOOT. W SWELL 4 FT.

Weekend weather looks to be very friendly for offshore anglers although a trip to the tuna grounds will still be more of a bumpy ride than to a run out for salmon. Don't hesitate to start fishing in 150 foot of water and head NW until you find consistent catches. With a NW wind dominant in the forecast, anglers will want to head to the north so if the wind does pick up, it's a much easier ride back to port than if you were stuck to the south of the bay entrance and needing to head back north to get back to Tillamook Bay. With wind is typically always calmer in the morning and the greater the difference between coastal and Willamette Valley temperatures, the stronger the wind will blow.

As far as technique, it's a no-brainer. If the fish are there, they will bite but as I have mentioned numerous times in this newsletter, the fish always bite MORE aggressively in the early morning than they do in the late morning. They fill up fast as they are eating like piranha's out there so first come first serve. Also, trolling at a faster clip seems to draw more aggressive bites. As the sun rises higher in the sky, fish deeper in the water column. We caught fish later in the morning as deep as 50 feet on the line counter using lead with our green label herring.

You may want to consider dropping your crab pots as well as crabbing is off the hook as long as you don't mind soft-shelled crabs. They are plentiful out there and large in size, they are just not of the best eating quality. You may find a few more hard shelled crab inside the estuary. With a minus tide series starting on Saturday, you'll want to be much more cautious when crossing the bar. By mid-week of next week, maximum ebb will occur near daylight when most boats will want to be crossing the bar. This could be a very bad idea if the westerly swell is significant.

Bay clamming should be good but razor clam digging north of Tillamook Head is now closed until the 30th of September.

Central & South Coast Reports – Forecast for offshore conditions have improved over the last couple of days. Launches should be easy for boaters who are cautious of early outgoing tides. Afternoon winds are predicted to increase to the teens so plan accordingly.

It is estimated over 10,000 tuna were taken over the past week, one of the strongest showings ever according to the ODFW. Most were taken about 30 miles or more offshore with the best numbers coming out of Pacific City (!). A (very) few bluefin tuna have been caught out of Newport Depoe Bay and Coos Bay.

Offshore coho fishing has been very good with nearly everyone trying bringing one or two hatchery fish back to port coast-wide. About 30,200 coho have been taken so far this season. There's about 80% remaining in the quota of 110,000 fish from Cape Falcon south of Falcon down to the California border.

The spring all-depth halibut fishery has closed as the quota has been filled. The summer all-depth fishery begins on August 7th.

Coho fishing has been rewarding for trollers launching out of Newport and Depoe Bay.

Trollers launching out of Winchester Bay are doing well for coho with anchovies taking a better number of silvers in the morning recently with hoochies most effective later in the day although some anglers swear by Apex spoons. Most catches are coming in the top 20 feet of the water column (or less) over 200 to 400 feet of water. Winchester had the highest catch rate per angler July 6th through 12th.

Crabbing in Winchester Bay is fair to good although sorting of softshells is required. Shad and sturgeon fishing is slow but the mainstem and South Umpqua have continued to provide excellent fishing for smallmouth bass. Summer steelhead fishing is good and improving on the North Umpqua.

Contact Tony's Crab Shack in Bandon to take part in the local crab derby which runs through September 6th, The top prize is \$1,000 with drawings for cash prizes held periodically until then.

Sturgeon fishing is slow in the Coos River but the few fish landed recently have been keepers. Smelt are being taken by jiggers in the bay.

Over the past weekend, albacore were taken at 15 miles from port but fishing improves further out. Look for water 60 degrees or better that transitions to blue although fish are being caught in water that's in the high 50-degree range. Coho fishing offshore is good with anglers releasing many wild fish to take home a few hatchery keepers. Limits of Dungeness are being taken in the ocean.

It seems odd that there are more Chinook in Rogue Bay than there are anglers. Early-season catches have been decent. One wild Chinook per day may be retained below Hog Creek Boat Ramp. Summer steelhead are being taken in the Grants Pass stretch. While fewer than 12,000 spring Chinook have been counted at Gold Ray Dam, daily passage is improving as are catches in the upper river. Springers are being caught daily at the popular Hatchery Hole although about 50% of the fish hooked are wild, requiring release. Good numbers of summer steelhead are emerging the upper river now and are responding to all manner of bait and lure. Salmon flies are active on the upper river.

Brookings anglers should be able to get out mornings this coming weekend. Coho trollers have been hooking mostly wild fish although the ratio of fin-clipped keepers is improving. Ocean coho are running large for this time of year with really good feed offshore pushing weights to 10 and 11 pounds. Albacore to 30 pounds were taken over the past weekend at 35 miles from port. Bottom fishing remains very good and surf perch fishing has produced better numbers as the ocean flattened out.

Sea-run cutthroat trout are responding well to bait in tidewater on the Chetco and upstream, where the use of bait is not allowed, cuts are smacking spinners and brightly-colored flies. Look for these fish in dark, boily water and under brush along the bank rather than in seams.

It's challenging to rate the fishing at Diamond Lake. Catches have slowed, fishing is slow to fair but the trout are large and fat. You'll catch a few every day.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Trout fishing is good to excellent on the Deschutes on the Trout Creek to Maupin stretch. There are many insects in the surface film which creates fine opportunities for dry fly fishing. A few steelhead are being caught at Sherars Falls but it's still early for this fishery. Boats trolling the mouth report very slow fishing.

Nymphing has been effective during the cay on the Metolius with dry fly action occurring evenings.

Green Peter has continued to produce good numbers of kokanee, even at mid-day. Bass fishing is fair to good here.

Trollers at Wickiup are doing well for kokanee and, as usual, catching larger fish here.

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.

TGF Inbox

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

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: bree@pacifier.com
Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com
Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Know your fish! Coho? Chinook? ID charts here:

http://www.oceaned.org/files/pac_salmon_id.pdf

A slick method for filleting salmon & steelhead from a regular poster at ifish.net:

<http://www.ifish.net/board/showthread.php?t=51868>

The Eighth Annual Metolius River Fly Fishing & Bamboo Rod Fair, a Free event is this coming weekend:

<http://www.campshermanstore.com/events.php>

GOOD LUCK!