

The Guide's Forecast - volume 11 issue number 31

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 31st – August 6th, 2009**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - Steelheaders working the mainstem Columbia near Bonneville are experiencing excellent results but being in the right traveling channel is critical for success. Prawns baited on spinners is the ticket in 8 to 15 feet of water. Water fluctuations will occasionally disrupt the action. Nearly 10,000 steelhead per day are crossing Bonneville Dam.

Walleye fishing is fair in the Columbia River Gorge with fish to 10 pounds recently taken.

The 76-degree water temperature at Willamette Falls has all but stopped daily fish passage and has stalled sturgeon fishing in the lower river. Try for reddsides late in the day on the Middle Fork.

The upper McKenzie continues to fish well for trout in the mornings and evenings with mayflies on the hatch.

Steelheading has slowed on the North Santiam but a few are being caught at first light.

The Clackamas River has been producing a few steelhead early in the day before the swimmers hit the water. Expect low, clear conditions.

There are a few springers to be caught in the Sandy River but anglers have really had to put in their time here.

Scheduled for trout planting are Alton Baker Canal, Breitenbush River, Clear Lake (Linn Co.), McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake and the North Santiam River above Detroit Lake.

Northwest – The famed Buoy 10 fishery opens on August 1st with expectations running high for the river fishery. There has been years when the opener produced good results and this may be one of them given the huge number of coho due back to the river this year. Large bait balls have also been spotted in the river indicating that there may be feeding salmon just below them. The tides aren't favorable for good fishing conditions however but the ocean is an excellent alternative as it has been producing easy limits near the CR Buoy.

The last of the sturgeon openers occurred last weekend and catches were good. The season will remain closed until next year when fishery managers are expected to lessen the quota that sport and commercial fishers will be allowed to harvest.

Garibaldi ocean fishers are not having an easy time limiting with the 3-fish bag still in place. A good ocean forecast coupled with soft tides for safe bar crossings should put a dent in the quota this weekend. Large numbers of anglers and recreationalists are flocking to the coast to escape the Willamette Valley temperatures.

Offshore albacore tuna should also be a great option with fairly calm seas and favorable water temperatures adding up to good success rates. We're in prime time for this up and coming species.

Tillamook Bay also opens up for all chinook on August 1st. Catches will be sparse until early September however. Anglers are reminded that the once popular August chinook fishery will

remain closed for the remainder of the year on the Nehalem system. Wild and hatchery coho will be a strong option later in the month of August.

Southwest – The coho season south of Humbug Mountain will run through August 31st or a quota of 110,000 hatchery fish. As of July 26th, 71.4% of the quota remained.

Mussel harvest remains closed on the entire Oregon coast due to a naturally occurring toxin.

Sturgeon fishing is holding up well in the Umpqua estuary although most are oversized. Offshore trollers out of Reedsport report decent coho action. Smallmouth bass fishing remains hot in the Elkton stretch of the mainstem. Steelhead are smacking spinners on the North Umpqua.

Charter boats launching out of Bandon have returned to port with a full load of albacore. Crabbing in the bay is yielding limits.

Recreational boats have made worthwhile catches of albacore out of Charleston.

Trollers in the Rogue estuary did very well over the past weekend with estimates as high as 80 fish on Sunday alone. Both bait and spinners are taking these early fall chinook.

Recreational boats launching out of Brookings have reported continued good catches of coho. Action has been good only eight miles out. Bottom fishing has produced mostly limits of rockfish while ling cod catches are improving. Crossing the bar should be no problem this coming weekend according to long-range forecasts. Fishing for surf perch is good when the ocean lays down.

Trout fishing has improved on Diamond Lake.

Rogue above Lost Creek is scheduled for trout stocking.

Eastern – Trout catches have dropped off with only smaller fish responding from Warm Springs to trout Creek with the weather turning extremely hot. Steelhead fishing is picking up with the jump in counts at The Dalles Dam. The lower 14 miles of river is producing good catches for spinner tossers and side planning pluggers.

Fishing is good at Olallie where anglers are limiting on rainbow trout. Early mornings have been most productive.

Early morning trollers are doing well for kokanee at Green Peter in 30 to 60 foot depths.

SW Washington – Anglers have generous bag limits of coho to look forward to on many district streams. Check listings for updated regulations but returning adults won't peak for another several weeks. Chinook restrictions will remain in place for many area rivers.

Steelhead action remains poor on most rivers but a few keepers are coming from the Cowlitz River.

Drano Lake is producing excellent catches of summer steelhead but the bulk of the catch are wild fish and must be released.

Columbia River Fishing Report – It's Buoy 10 time! But that doesn't mean you should be getting too excited about the opportunities on the opener. Historically, there have been good catches on the opener when we have expectations for a high return of adult coho to the river; it just happens to be one of those years! But really, it's anyone's guess how the opener will go but it surely won't be a barn burner. The tide exchanges during the daylight hours are not impressive and likely won't wash or motivate many chinook or coho into the river for opening day.

Thankfully, the fishing just offshore is pretty darned good on most days. Most recently, I took brother Doug Rees and his in-laws on big blue on Wednesday but the bite was considerably off from what it had been the previous day. After our 5th hatchery keeper and 7 wild ones in a row, the majority of the fishing participants agreed that the ocean wasn't for them. We went and checked the crab pots, taking 19 nice keepers with over half of them finally getting some meat in them! Other boats that spent the time working at it, did get their limits but it wasn't the fast and furious fishing that we had come to expect for most of the season thus far. The bite was definitely off this day.

The fish are beginning to show some size however and most anglers are clearly seeing larger fish than they have in the previous weeks. Chinook are still a rare catch unless you are counting the numerous jacks that are being caught out there right now. Better numbers are just around the corner however.

We were drawing consistent strikes with green label frozen herring as the quality of the fresh herring doesn't seem all that good. Fresh anchovies are producing equally well and if you're really motivated, the fresh anchovies that you jig are the best bait you can get! There are plenty of schools of bait as you head west into the ocean; whether you jig them near Buoy 10 or before or in the ocean near the jetty, they are plentiful.

The CR Buoy had been producing the best catches but boats that headed north to Buoy 1 and trolled south to the CR did well first thing this morning and another guide reported doing well, finishing up his limit by trolling south of the CR Buoy in about 277 feet of water. It's amazing the difference a day can make. Boats that went north of Buoy 1 yesterday didn't do well at all.

The ocean crabbing is good with an average of 4 to 6 keepers per pot. We have been crabbing south of the south jetty in about 30 feet of water. There are still a fair number of soft shelled crabs in the catch but they are definitely starting to fill out and the majority of the keepers are clearly legal.

River crabbing is about the same as it is in the ocean but you have to play the tides to ensure you're not crabbing on the ebb tide. The danger of crabbing in the river is that boats can easily run over your lines, severing the buoys from the pots and you'll think someone ripped off your pots (which is also a possibility, albeit much more unlikely than a boat running over your gear). Fog has exacerbated this issue and more fog is likely in the coming weeks.

Upriver, during this weak tide series, boat and bank anglers working the Columbia River Gorge have the advantage and catches have been good if you are in the right travel lane. One angler recently reported to me that the action was a lot like ocean salmon fishing. When you're in the right lane, you can expect up to 25 chances in a day. Limit fishing is coming from the select few that are in the right lane (have I stressed that enough?). The "new" ticket in this area is using prawns for bait behind a spin-n-glo or spinner. It has been deadly effective.

Steelhead are pouring over Bonneville Dam with nearly 10,000 adults passing every day. It's easy to see why the gorge fishery as well as Drano Lake and the lower Deschutes River are producing

so well. These fisheries will only get better into early August with many more fish predicted to come.

The lower river sturgeon fishery ended on a good note but estuary anglers didn't achieve their full quota allotment. Although the final estuary fishery tally hasn't been calculated, it looks like about 2,200 sturgeon remain in the quota that estuary anglers won't have access to. The 2009 catch and keep sturgeon fishery below the Wauna Powerlines is officially closed until 2010. Although it's never a bad idea to leave more in the river, especially if fishery expectations have been met for the most part, one would have to ask, why don't some of the other user groups contribute to this conservation initiative? One would hope that the commercial fleet would also consider such a measure. And speaking of the commercial fleet, here is the proposed (likely adopted) commercial fishing schedule for the month of August. Please pay special attention to the zones that the nets will be allowed to fish in. Zone 1 is Buoy 10 to Tongue Point and the nets won't fish this area after August 10th.

Season:	7 PM Tuesday August 4 to 7 AM Wednesday August 5	(12 hours)	
	7 PM Thursday August 6 to 7 AM Friday August 7	(12 hours)	
	7 PM Sunday August 9 to 7 AM Monday August 10	(12 hours)	
	8 PM Tuesday August 18 to 6 AM Wednesday August 19	(10 hours)	
	8 PM Thursday August 20 to 6 AM Friday August 21	(10 hours)	
	8 PM Sunday August 23 to 6 AM Monday August 24	(10 hours)	
	8 PM Tuesday August 25 to 6 AM Wednesday August 26	(10 hours)	
	8 PM Thursday August 27 to 6 AM Friday August 28	(10 hours)	
	Area:	<u>August 4-10:</u> Zones 1- 5	
		<u>August 18 -24:</u> Zones 3-5, upstream of the Kalama River (Upstream of a line projected from the Goble Ramp on the Oregon Shore to the downstream end of the Kalama Chemical dock on the Washington shore).	
<u>August 25-28</u> – Zones 4-5			

This table should help you decide whether or not you fish the ocean or river. Remember, after August 10th, the nets will not be in the river below the Kalama River.

The Guide's Forecast – Although the Buoy 10 fishery will get all the press this week, it's really not the best option on the table. Ocean fishing will remain the best bet for coho and a bit of a stronger showing of chinook in anglers fish boxes this week. The action should remain excellent out of the mouth of the Columbia. Here is the ocean weather forecast that is certainly likely to change:

FRI

S WIND 5 KT...VEERING TO SW IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. NW SWELL 4 FT. PATCHY FOG IN THE MORNING.

FRI NIGHT

NW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. NW SWELL 4 FT. AREAS OF FOG AFTER MIDNIGHT.

SAT

N WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. NW SWELL 4 FT.
AREAS OF FOG IN THE MORNING.

SAT NIGHT

NW WIND 10 KT WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES
2 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT. PATCHY FOG AFTER MIDNIGHT.

SUN

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

MON

W WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. NW SWELL 4 FT.

WOW! Now that is an ocean forecast I can get behind. If indeed this prediction comes through, it's going to be a big week for ocean fishers! Couple this forecast with nice bar conditions and the fishing should be very exciting. Head to the CR Buoy as early as you can and if you run out of biters, head further south or north to Buoy 1. The fish are there, you may just have to find them in one direction or the other. Drop your crab pots out there!

With weather like this, anglers should strongly consider offshore albacore fishing this weekend. This forecast has bloody fish boxes written all over it. The tuna shouldn't be too far offshore although recent reports were not as strong as they were just a few weeks ago.

Steelheaders won't have great tides to work until the middle of next week and the fish should be there. The question is, will the warm water drastically effect the bite? Only time will tell but get those hot colored spin-n-glos fishing close to shore where the fish will be. It's peak migration right now.

The more likely success story will continue to be in the Columbia River Gorge where anglers should be seeing consistent flows to keep gear working. If they are spilling at the dam however, fast fluctuations will certainly slow the action. Get those prawns fishing!

Good tides for crabbing, both in the river and in the ocean. They are starting to fill out!

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – With the water temperature climbing at Willamette Falls, daily fish counts are dwindling. The runs are winding down

regardless and hot water does nothing to accelerate passage. On July 25th, the most recent daily data available, the count

for steelhead and spring Chinook was 13 each. It's about four minutes to August so let's call this one over for 2009.

Sturgeon fishing closes on the lower Willamette at Sunset on Friday, July 31st. It will re-open the 1st of October.

The McKenzie is still in good condition and despite recent scorching temperatures, the water at Vida has remained in the mid-50-degree range.

There are plenty of steelhead in the North Santiam, but they're tougher to hook than to spot. It is estimated that there are 150 summer steelhead and about 50 spring Chinook per river mile here. Few springers are hooked than summer for obvious reasons but both species are in prime conditions now. Malfunctioning equipment at Detroit and Big Cliff caused fluctuations in the water level but that should have been repaired by now with levels returning to normal for this time of year which means low. Boat with care.

The Guide's Forecast – The Middle Fork Willamette has continued to provide good fishing for trout, particularly in the evenings when insect hatches start.

Nymphing on the upper McKenzie will produce trout during the day with the better action in the evenings when bugs start to hatch.

Mornings and evenings offer the best chance of a steelhead on the North Santiam. Spinners, jigs and flies have all gotten grabs at times.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – While the area can get crowded, the runs below River Mill dam on the Clackamas have been producing the occasional spring Chinook. Summer steelhead are scattered river-wide but fishing is slow in the low, clear water.

Periodically running glacial, producing low visibility at times, the Sandy is also producing a few springers near Cedar Creek. Summer steelhead fishing is slow but fish can be tempted at first light or again in the late evening hours.

North Coast Fishing Report – With inland fisheries still several weeks away from peaking, the ocean will remain the best option for motivated boat anglers this week. The ocean forecast is very favorable and weak tides will make for easy bar crossings. Wednesday, the bite out of Garibaldi was not good as very few anglers reported catching any big numbers of fish. Wild coho and jack chinook were more prevalent on Wednesday anyway.

It shouldn't be long before great numbers of fish are available out of Garibaldi as migrating fish travel from south to north and should be arriving very soon on the area. As a general rule, green label herring trolled close to the surface in the morning and down deeper later in the day should produce multiple opportunities.

The crabbing in the ocean is excellent too and in the bay, stay seaward of Kincheloe Point.

Low, clear water conditions will challenge bank anglers this week on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. If you don't know how to catch them in these conditions, you should learn because it can be done.

Here is a run-down of the 2009 coastal sportfisheries that open up on August 1st:

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Contact: Ron Boyce (971) 971-6081
Jessica Sall (503) 947-6023
www.dfw.state.or.us Fax: (503) 947-6009

For immediate release

Wednesday, July 29, 2009

Coastal fall chinook regulations take effect Aug. 1

SALEM, Ore. -- As fall chinook season approaches on Oregon's coastal rivers and streams, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is reminding anglers that temporary regulations go into effect on many of these waters beginning Aug. 1.

For a second year in a row, biologists are predicting weak returns of fall chinook to coastal rivers and streams.

"We've tried to craft some recreational fishing seasons that maximize fishing opportunity while still protecting weak stocks," said Ron Boyce, ODFW ocean salmon/Columbia River program manager.

This year, ODFW biologists have set river-by-river daily and seasonal bag limits based on the relative strength of the predicted return to that river. Harvest limits range from one wild adult chinook per day and two fish for the season on rivers with weak stocks, to two fish per day and 10 for the season on rivers with more robust populations.

In addition, there is a seasonal limit of 10 non fin-clipped chinook salmon for all waters (Northwest and Southwest coastal rivers and open ocean terminal areas at the Elk and Tillamook rivers). This seasonal bag limit does not include the Buoy 10 or Columbia River fisheries.

Three fisheries, the Nehalem and Winchuck rivers and the Chetco terminal area, will be closed to the harvest of chinook salmon.

Rivers with a bag limit of one per day and two per season: Siletz, Yaquina, Yachats, Alesia, Floras, Sixes, Hunter Creek, Pistol and Chetco.

Rivers with a bag limit of one per day and five per season: Necanicum, Tillamook Basin, Tillamook ocean terminal area, Nestucca, Salmon, Siuslaw, Umpqua, Coquille, Elk River and Elk ocean terminal area.

Rivers with a bag limit of two per day and 10 per season: Coos and Rogue.

The coastal fall chinook season for rivers and streams begins Aug.1 and continues through the end of the year.

Anglers can see a complete description of the temporary regulations by going to the fishing page on the ODFW Web site www.dfw.state.or.us

The Guide's Forecast – The ocean should be easy for salmon but you may have to find them. Don't hesitate to move in any direction but there should be larger concentrations of fish in the coming weeks off of Garibaldi.

Anglers shouldn't waste their time in most of the coastal estuaries this time of year. It will get much better in just a few short weeks from now.

If you're good at low water techniques, early morning may produce a few biters for motivated anglers. With water temperatures warming, conditions will get even more challenging.

Central & South Coast Reports – A few Chinook have been caught on the Siletz in the month of July but the run here is small. While most have been in the 20 pound range, the largest reported was a 37 pounder taken on the 28th.

While mussel harvesting remains closed coast-wide, the naturally-occurring toxin responsible effects no other shellfish.

Coho are being caught about 10 miles out of Yaquina Bay while it's been a run of 40 miles or more for albacore. Ocean crabbing has been very good although some sorting of softshells is required.

Boats launching out of Depoe Bay have been taking a fair to good number of coho about half of which have been wild. Most boat limits are coming in about four to five hours of trolling. The number of coho over 10 pounds is improving.

Early fall Chinook have been taken recently near Reedsport in fair number for this time of year. Some of the fish taken this week have run 35 to 40 pounds although most, of course, are smaller. Sturgeon have been caught but it's for mostly oversize fish. Smallmouth bass fishing remains very good on the Elkton stretch of the mainstem Umpqua as well as on the South Fork. While most of the fish are on the small side, a few decent fish will be amongst the scores that any angler will hook in a day although any fish over 2 1/2 pounds is considered a lunger here. Spring Chinook season closes on the North Umpqua on Saturday, August 1st. Summer steelhead fishing has slowed.

Warm water outside of Coos Bay has moved closer to shore this week and with it, Albacore. A trip of 12 to 13 miles out of Charleston will reveal blue water which signifies the tuna grounds. Drop lines. Hang on. Earlier this week it has required a run of 30 miles or better. Drop pots on the way out for decent ocean crabbing. Coho fishing has been strangely slow offshore but may improve as the ocean temperature rises.

Sturgeon fishing is slow to fair on the lower Coquille where Chinook are yet to show.

Anglers trolling the Rogue estuary are doing well for Chinook now. As long as the Rogue River stays warm, salmon will remain kegged in the bay and their numbers are increasing daily. Over 100 Chinook were landed on Tuesday this week with some fishers limiting out. The lack of ocean Chinook fishing for the past couple of years has resulted in a very good river fishery this year. Most of these fish are in the 20 pound range but many are 30+ and several have been over 40 and at least two have hit the 50 pound mark. One wild Chinook per day may be retained anywhere downstream of the Hog Creek Boat Ramp. The first fall Chinook re passing through the Grants Pass stretch now and a few are being taken. A combination of Spring Chinook and summer steelhead are available on the upper Rogue.

With a forecast of 4.5 to 5 foot swells at 9 seconds and light offshore breezes, launching should be no problem on the south coast this coming weekend. Albacore are being caught about 30 miles out of Brookings Harbor this week. Cutthroat trout fishing has been worthwhile on the Chetco but anglers are reminded that no bait if allowed above tidewater. The gauge at Second Bridge on the Chetco has been checked and recalibrated recently due to suspiciously low readings. It was off by 60% but it's accurate now.

Trout fishing has picked up at Diamond Lake despite the hot weather. The reported average is three trout per anglers (that's three of those fat, broad-shouldered rainbows, though) with a few limits.

A advisory from Diamond Lake Resort: "Highway 138 is closed between Glide and Steamboat due to a wild fire. If you are coming from Roseburg, go to Canyonville and take the Tiller highway to highway 62 near Shady Cove. Then take 62 and 230 to Diamond Lake. If you are coming down I-5 from the north, take highway 58 at Eugene to Highway 97. Then go south on 97 to the highway 138 junction. Go west on 138 for 22 miles and you are here. If traveling I-5 north either turn on 97 north or highway 62 at Medford."

Note: See this week's announcement from the ODFW regarding special regulations and closure in the fall Chinook season starting August 1st for southwest rivers at the end of the North Coast report, above.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Trout fishing is challenging on the Deschutes in the heat of summer but nymphing is producing a few on the lower river as well as the upper stretches. The middle Deschutes is just not worth the effort at this time.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report July 22-August 4, 2009

North Puget Sound

The Skagit River chinook salmon fishery got off to a slow start in early July, but the bite has picked up a bit recently. Meanwhile, saltwater anglers have had some success fishing for chinook and coho salmon in Puget Sound, where crabbing also is open.

"Overall, **salmon** fishing has been fair out on the Sound," said John Long, WDFW's statewide salmon manager. "I've heard recent reports of anglers in the region landing some nice chinook, particularly in marine areas 9 and 10."

Some of those anglers were competing in the Elliott Bay Salmon Derby, which took place July 18. Antonios Henry took home the event's \$5,000 top prize after landing a 29.9-pound chinook. Colton Chandler captured second place and was awarded \$2,000 for his 28-pound chinook, while Richard Devine finished third and earned \$1,000 for his 24.1-pound salmon.

Anglers fishing marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) 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**, while anglers in Marine Area 10 are required to release chum beginning Aug. 1.

Anglers also can fish in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where salmon fishing has been good recently. Those fishing Marine Area 7 have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but can only keep one chinook. Beginning Aug. 1, anglers fishing Marine Area 7 must release wild coho and chum.

Long said anglers will soon have more options when marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) open for salmon Aug. 1. Anglers fishing those two areas will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release chinook.

Meanwhile, the **crab** fishery is under way in marine areas 8-1, 8-2, 9, and 10, as well as the eastern and southern portions of Marine Area 7. Fisheries in those areas are open on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, plus the entire Labor Day weekend.

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.

In the freshwater, the **summer chinook salmon** fishery on the lower Skagit River has picked up a bit, said Brett Barkdull, WDFW fish biologist. "Fishing has slightly improved, but it certainly isn't red hot," he said.

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

Elsewhere, the Reiter Ponds section of the Skykomish River has opened for gamefish, including steelhead. That section of the river (1,500 feet upstream to 1,000 feet downstream of the Reiter Ponds Hatchery outlet) opened July 18 after the hatchery collected enough steelhead broodstock to meet egg-take goals.

Anglers in the region are reminded that the **Lewis Street boat launch** in Monroe is closed as crews install a new boat ramp and make other improvements to the site. The water access site, which is located near the Skykomish River Bridge on Highway 203 in Monroe, will be closed through July 30, said Kye Iris, WDFW regional lands supervisor.

Funded with a grant from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office, the improvement project includes paving a portion of the access site and adding ADA parking. Iris said two alternative boat launches are nearby. Those sites are located in Sultan off Highway 2, and off First Street in Snohomish.

Before heading out for a day of fishing, 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

Ocean fishing continues to clip along for salmon anglers who can now drop a line for coho and salmon seven days a week in all coastal waters. The biennial pink salmon migration has begun in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, while Puget Sound crab anglers are catching limits in most areas that are open. The popular Hood Canal crab fishery opens July 29.

Salmon fishing is requiring a little more effort than in the early days of the summer season, but anglers are still catching their limits in all areas of the coast, said Erica Crust, WDFW ocean port sampler. "Westport has really picked up and people are finding some nice **chinook** in the 20-30 pound range," Crust said. "Anglers fishing near Willapa Harbor during the July 18 weekend were doing especially well, limiting on coho and some hatchery chinook."

There was also some fast fishing farther north, where anglers at La Push and Neah Bay encountered good numbers of coho and some chinook as well, Crust said.

All coastal areas are now open seven days a week including Ilwaco and Westport (marine areas 1 and 2) and La Push and Neah Bay (marine areas 3 and 4).

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 July 19 at Ediz Hook near Port Angeles (Marine Area 6) showed 22 anglers catching three chinook. That same day 303 anglers near Sekiu (Marine Area 5) brought in 44 chinook and 24 coho. Checkers in the area also counted 44 **pink salmon** , which bodes well for south Puget Sound anglers who have been struggling since the July 1 opener, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist.

"It should be a banner year for pink salmon, with more than five million forecast to return to the major basins in Puget Sound," Thiesfeld said. About 3,400 pink salmon are expected to return to the Hoodport hatchery, but the majority of the fish are wild. Because of their two-year life cycle

(they return in odd-numbered years), pink salmon are smaller than most salmon, averaging four to five pounds. "But they are easy and fun to catch, which is especially good for kids," Thiesfeld said. "The run should last from August through mid-September."

Thiesfeld reminds anglers to clean all pink salmon immediately and keep them cold to protect their flesh, which is soft and easily bruised.

Pink salmon heading for the Puyallup River basin should help boost fishing success near Tacoma (Marine Area 11), where a creel check taken near Point Defiance during the July 18 weekend showed 731 anglers with 77 chinook and 17 coho. More opportunities will be available in the area when Commencement Bay opens to salmon fishing Aug. 1.

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.

Meanwhile, the **Dungeness crab** fishery appears to be going well in marine areas now open for crabbing, said Rich Childers, WDFW shellfish manager. "There's a high abundance of crab in many areas of Puget Sound and people are easily getting their limits," Childers said. "WDFW enforcement officers are also finding that most anglers they've checked have catch cards with them and are following size, gender and limit rules."

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>. Crab fisheries in marine areas 6, 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10 and 11 are open on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, plus Labor Day weekend, closing the evening of Sept. 7. Crabbing is open seven days a week in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 and 13 through Jan. 2.

The Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) crab fishery was delayed this year to avoid disrupting the mating season and will open on July 29. Recent test fisheries conducted by WDFW in Hood Canal indicate that crab abundance has increased this year compared to 2008, Childers said. Marine Area 7 North (Lummi Island/Blaine) will open Aug. 12, Wednesdays through Saturdays only, plus the entire Labor Day weekend, closing the evening of Sept. 30.

Anglers are reminded that the **halibut** fishery in Marine Area 1 will re-open Aug. 7 on a Friday-through-Sunday schedule until the 4,219-pound quota is reached. "It could go quick, but we won't know for sure until we see how many people go fishing for halibut and how big the fish are," said Heather Reed, WDFW coastal policy coordinator.

Several regional rivers will open for **salmon** fishing in the coming weeks, with the Skokomish River in Mason County and portions of the Naselle, Nemah and Willapa rivers in Pacific County opening Aug. 1. The Puyallup River in Pierce County and the Quilcene River in Jefferson County open Aug. 16.

The state continues to experience ongoing dry conditions and 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/index.html . 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

Anglers with constraints on their time will have to choose their fishing days carefully in the weeks ahead. Those ready to go right now will find good - and improving - fishing for **hatchery steelhead** from the lower Columbia River to the Bonneville Pool tributaries. They might want to consider, though, that the sturgeon fishery in the estuary has been extended for three more days, July 24-26. Then again, those who wait until Aug. 1 can fish for salmon at Buoy 10 and any number of other waters opening for **fall salmon** fishing that day.

"Now is the time to make plans about where to go, where to stay and where to moor your boat," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "A lot of fishing opportunities will be opening up in the coming days, and a lot of anglers will want to get in on the action."

Summer **steelhead** fishing has continued to heat up - along with water temperatures - on the mainstem Columbia River and tributaries stretching upstream to the Bonneville Pool. Boat anglers fishing between Rocky Point and Bonneville Dam averaged one fish for every two rods during the week ending July 19. Bank anglers netted a fish for every four rods. The best catch rates were observed from Kalama downstream and in the gorge, where 178 bank anglers pulled in 53 steelhead and released 56 others July 21.

On the Cowlitz River, boat anglers have been reeling in hatchery steelhead from Mission Bar to Blue Creek. As daily steelhead counts continue to climb at Bonneville Dam, success rates have also picked up at Drano Lake and on the White Salmon River.

In all areas, anglers may retain only hatchery steelhead with a clipped adipose or ventral fin and a healed scar. "The good news there is that the proportion of marked, hatchery fish below Bonneville has increased in recent days," Hymer said.

Rather hold out for **sturgeon** ? With 2,400 more fish available for harvest under the area guideline, the sturgeon fishery in the Columbia River estuary has been extended for another three days. In a joint action July 21, fishery managers in Washington and Oregon agreed to reopen the fishery Friday through Sunday from July 24-26 between the mouth of the Columbia and the Wauna powerlines near Cathlamet.

That action follows a similar six-day extension approved for mid-July. "Fishing was generally good, but we didn't get the turnout we expected because a lot of anglers decided to fish for salmon off the coast," said Brad James, another WDFW fish biologist. "That left room for some extra fishing days."

Salmon will no doubt loom even larger in anglers' minds by the time that fishery wraps up. Starting Aug. 1, the fall salmon season will open on the Columbia River from Buoy 10 to the Hwy. 395 Bridge in Pasco and on a lot of tributaries in between. More than 700,000 coho are expected to enter the Columbia River this year along with nearly 533,000 chinook, generating high hopes for the upcoming fall salmon fishery.

"This year's coho return to the Columbia is expected to be largest since 2001," Hymer said. "Add an above-average chinook return to that and you have a pretty favorable outlook for fall salmon fisheries."

A major focus of anticipation is the Buoy 10 fishery near the mouth of the Columbia River, where fishery managers are planning for a catch of 10,700 chinook and 119,100 hatchery coho. During the month of August, the daily limit will be two salmon (but only one chinook) or hatchery steelhead or one of each. All salmon other than chinook and hatchery coho must be released. Barbed hooks will be allowed.

The north jetty is open for fishing seven days per week when the Buoy 10 area or Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco) are open for salmon fishing.

The daily adult catch limits are the same for anglers fishing from the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line to Bonneville Dam, where fishery managers are planning for a catch of 15,100 chinook and 1,900 coho. Fishing rules for these and other areas are described in WDFW's Fishing in Washington pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs>).

Hymer said fall fishing rules for area tributaries, also described in the pamphlet, reflect both the expected size of this year's coho return and the transition to mark-selective chinook fishing in those rivers. "The rules are basically designed to protect wild chinook, while giving anglers a chance to remove as many excess hatchery fish from spawning areas as possible," he said. "Rules regarding release of wild adult chinook and jacks vary, because some hatcheries began fin-clipping fish earlier than others. So we're still a year or two away from the day when all returning chinook will be marked."

Below is a summary of the new rules that will be in effect on various tributaries to the Columbia River starting Aug. 1:

- **Bonus hatchery coho retention:** Anglers may retain up to six hatchery adult coho on all lower Columbia tributaries with hatchery programs, including the Cowlitz, Deep, Elochoman, Grays (including West Fork), Kalama, Klickitat, Lewis (including North Fork), Toutle (including Green and North Fork) and Washougal rivers. Last year, the Cowlitz River was the only system with a daily limit of six hatchery adult coho.
- **Release all wild chinook:** Anglers must release all chinook (adults and jacks) on the Elochoman and Kalama rivers, where mass-marked fall chinook that are two, three and four years old will be returning this year. Very few five and six year-olds are expected, so this regulation provides additional protection for wild chinook adults with a minimal loss of sportfishing opportunity for older unmarked hatchery fish.
- **Release wild chinook jacks:** This rule will be in effect on the Cowlitz, Toutle (including Green and North Fork), Washougal, Wind and White Salmon rivers, plus Drano Lake. Two and three year-old mass-marked fall chinook will be returning to the Cowlitz, Toutle and Washougal rivers, while two, three, and four year-olds will return to the Little White Salmon National Fish Hatchery. Some strays from various hatcheries also can be found in the Washington tributaries above Bonneville Dam.
- **Hatchery chinook strays on the Lewis River:** Anglers may retain stray hatchery chinook on the Lewis River and North Fork Lewis through September. While no fall chinook are released from Lewis River hatcheries, some stray tules are found in the system.
- **Boat angling restriction on the North Fork Lewis River:** This regulation, which applies to the Cedar Creek area, will be delayed until October to give anglers greater access to the large number of hatchery coho expected to return to the river. The restriction on boats will still take effect in time to protect wild fall chinook, which are expected to return in improved numbers but just above the minimum escapement goal.
- **Grays and Elochoman rivers open Aug. 1:** The starting date for fall salmon fisheries has been moved up to allow anglers to catch early arriving fish, particularly Select Area Bright fall chinook that stray into the Grays River.

Meanwhile, **sturgeon** fishing has been slow from the Wauna powerlines to Bonneville Dam, and will switch to catch-and-release during August and September. Catch-and-release fishing will open Aug. 1 in the area from Marker 85 to the deadlines below the dam, which has been closed to protect spawning sturgeon.

Farther upriver, boat anglers have been catching **walleye** and **bass** in the John Day Pool. Those fishing The Dalles Pool have mostly been catching bass.

At Riffe Lake, bank anglers have been catching a mixture of **landlocked coho**, chinook, steelhead and a few bass. Those fishing Mayfield Lake have been catching rainbows around the hatchery. WDFW stocked Chambers, Knuppenburg and Long lakes in Lewis County with 510 catchable-size brown trout apiece from July 9-14.

Eastern Washington

Despite the heat, anglers can still find fish in the cool early morning and late evening hours. But if you're looking for something really different, WDFW central district Fish Biologist Chris Donley suggests going after **crawfish**.

Whether you call them crayfish, crawdads, or freshwater lobsterettes, the Signal Crawfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) is one of Washington's most under-used resource. Growing to six inches or more, it's the largest native species in the country and just as tasty as any shellfish. "Crawfish seem to be in good numbers in many of our lakes that have rocky shorelines and bottoms," Donley said. "Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County and Amber, Badger and Williams lakes in Spokane County have crawfish. So does Lake Roosevelt, Loon Lake in Stevens County and Bead Lake in Pend Oreille County."

Crawfish are caught in traps or pots similar to those used for crab and shrimp on the coast. Donley said some sporting goods stores in eastern Washington sell traps designed for crawfish. Trap or pot marking rules, including the use of some type of flotation device on the surface of the water above the pot, are similar to those for crab and shrimp - found on page 133 of the fishing regulations pamphlet.

"Crawfish are active at night, so set traps for overnight soaks using something oily or smelly for bait, such as fish-cleaning leftovers, chicken gizzards or even a punched-out can of cat food," Donley said. "The best spots to sink traps are where there's 15 to 40 feet of water and rocks or woody debris."

No sport fishing license is required to catch crawfish, but there is a season, which runs from May through October. Rules include: five pots per person; crawfish must be a minimum size of 3-1/4 inches; and the daily limit is 10 pounds in the shell. Check all regulation details on page 128 of the fishing pamphlet.

Donley said **largemouth** and **smallmouth bass** fishing continues to be productive during early and late hours at many fisheries throughout the region, including Downs and Chapman lakes in southwest Spokane County.

Bill Baker, WDFW northeast district fish biologist, said **kokanee** fishing has been productive at Lake Roosevelt and is picking up at Loon Lake during evening hours. Some of the high elevation trout lakes on U.S. Forest Service property in Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties may be good bets to escape the heat for camping and fishing weekends.

Northcentral Washington

Salmon fishing has picked up considerably on the mainstem upper Columbia River above Wells Dam in Okanogan County. Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist of Omak, says chinook up to 20 pounds and sockeye up to five pounds are being caught in the river section from Wells Dam upstream to the Highway 17 Bridge just below Chief Joseph Dam near Bridgeport.

The daily catch limit for salmon is six fish, only four of which may be adults and up to two of the adult salmon may be chinook. "All salmon with an anchor or floy tag attached must be released, which includes both chinook and sockeye," Jateff said.

Jateff says **trout** fishing on the Methow River and selected tributaries has also picked up, with both rainbows and cutthroat up to 16 inches being caught. Selective gear rules and catch-and-release are in effect for this fishery. Consult WDFW's Fishing in Washington pamphlet at wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm for areas closed to fishing on the Methow, Chewuch, and Twisp rivers.

"Surface water temperatures are increasing in local lakes, but anglers willing to fish slow and deep, like 15 to 25 feet deep, are doing well for rainbow trout," Jateff said. "Big Twin Lake near Winthrop and Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area are two selective gear lakes with a one-fish limit that continue to produce trout, even in the heat of the summer."

Water levels on Potholes Reservoir are dropping rapidly with summer's heat, and that can make it easier fishing for some species. **Yellow perch, crappie** and **bluegill** catches are reported being caught from the dunes area of the big waterway. Early morning top water largemouth bass fishing is also productive.

Southcentral Washington

Paul Hoffarth, WDFW district fish biologist from Pasco, reports that during the most recent creel checks on the Columbia River west of the Tri-Cities, no one was even fishing for **salmon**. Since the season opened last month, anglers have retained four adult chinook, 56 jack chinook, and eight sockeye.

"Anglers continue to pick up a few **walleye**," Hoffarth said. "In our last check, 25 anglers had 21 walleye. Based on the fishing effort reported, that averaged out to one walleye for every six and a half hours of fishing."

Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist from Yakima, says rivers and streams are now low and clear so they should be producing rainbow and cutthroat trout catches. He reminds anglers to know the rules - selective gear requirements, catch limits, size minimums and maximums - all available in the Fishing in Washington regulations pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

"Our low elevation lakes are likely slow due to the hot weather," Cummins said. "It's almost too hot to even try fishing them. A better bet would be the high elevation lakes, those above 3,500 feet. There are both drive-to and hike-to waters with decent trout fishing in Yakima and Kittitas counties. If you're not familiar with them, check out our 'High Lakes Primer' available on the region's webpage." (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/regions/region3/>)

TGF Inbox – 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 (this week, **really** random)

Marine species identification manual:

<http://www.spc.int/coastfish/Fishing/IDManualHLL/IDManualHLL.htm>

How to Make Your Own Shrimp Gun:

<http://www.limestonemedia.com/fishing/how-to-make-ghost-shrimp-pump.html>

Nice boat:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/worldnews/article-1192640/Admiral-Abramovich-launches-300million-mega-yachtski-The-worlds-biggest-submarine.html>

GOOD LUCK!