

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 4th – September 10th, 2009**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - The Columbia River upriver bright fishery is well underway with anglers reporting mixed results from Longview to Portland. Chrome wobblers are the most popular to use and anglers target these quality fish in 35 to 55 feet of water. Boaters need to use caution when anchoring as commercial ship traffic maintains the right of way in the deeper channel. This fishery will peak in the next 15 days.

Sturgeon fishing remains closed until October 1st but most anglers are focusing on salmon anyway. October fishing in the Columbia River Gorge will be productive next month however.

The water temperature at Willamette Falls has fallen to the high 60s. Only 40 or so coho have been counted.

With coho returns projected at greater than 700,000 to the Columbia, anglers will be allowed to keep three hatchery fish on the Willamette, Sandy, Clackamas and Eagle Creek. Coho should be in the Sandy and Clackamas by Labor Day weekend.

Nymphing has been effective for trout above Leaburg Dam.

Estacada Lake, Faraday Lake, Harriet Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, Trillium Lake, West Salish Pond and McKenzie River below Leaburg Lake are scheduled to be planted with trout.

Northwest – The Buoy 10 fishery opened up to a 3-fish bag limit on Tuesday with great action reported on both the Oregon and Washington sides of the river. Bait and spinners are working but at different times of the tide. Jack chinook and coho are both numerous in the area so bring lots of bait as double digit opportunities are common. The best places to get bait in the Hammond/Warrenton/Astoria areas include: **Hammond Bait and grocery (503-861-2088), Tackle Time (503-861-3693), and World Class Sportfishing if you're in the West End Mooring Basin (503-791-4094)**. It's important that you call BEFORE 2:00 p.m. the day BEFORE you go fishing as the bait is coming from the Puget Sound area.

The ocean is now closed to coho fishing but tuna boats are reporting fair success about 40 miles west. Live anchovies produce the best results this time of year and action is likely to remain good well into September. Ocean crab are improving in quality and efforts are paying off. The lower Columbia would be a good option but big tides only offer a short window of opportunity.

Anglers may still take chinook salmon above Tongue Point and fair catches of chinook came on spinners over the weekend. The bite has since slowed and history suggests that the chinook don't bite well on the larger tide swings we're now experiencing. It will be best to stick to the coho fishery downstream of Tongue Point.

Chinook are beginning to show on Tillamook Bay and larger tides should produce a few fish on spinners in the upper bay. Some of the seasons larger fish show first and are likely destined for the Trask or Tillamook Rivers. Anglers are allowed just one wild chinook per day but additional hatchery fish, both chinook and coho may also be retained. Check regulations on the ODF&W web site before

going fishing.

The Nehalem Basin is now open to both hatchery and wild coho. Only 1 wild coho may be retained of the 3 coho allowed in the system. Chinook retention is prohibited.

Southwest – Offshore crabbing is producing limits of nice Dungeness. Catches are good enough that the season has been extended through October 15th.

Tuna fishing has been good when the ocean has laid down. Charter boats have returned to port with catches of over 100 albacore on productive days.

Fall chinook season is underway in southwest rivers. Adult chinook as well as good numbers of jacks have been taken in the lower Umpqua over the past week. Steelhead are being caught on the North Umpqua.

Catches of chinook have picked up and are steady in the Coos system with best results at Marshfield Channel. The derby taking place on Saturday and Sunday, September 12th and 13th, will benefit STEP projects locally.

Action for chinook has improved in the Coquille with a few salmon over the past week topping the 40-pound mark.

Wild coho may be retained on the Coos and Coquille systems as of September 1st but check regulations for boundaries. Stay below the new deadlines, however, which are the Doris Boat Ramp on the Coos and Highway 42 South Bridge on the Coquille.

With water temperatures on the lower Rogue dropping into the high 60's, chinook are moving from the bay up into the river. Trollers in the estuary have continued to experience steady catches but chinook are also being taken in decent number around Agness.

Limits of colorful rockfish and some very large ling cod are being brought into the Port of Brookings whenever offshore conditions allow boats to cross the bar.

The Rogue above Lost Creek will be stocked again this week.

Eastern – Visibility on the Deschutes remains poor below White River but steelheading is fair and improving around Maupin.

Leaburg Lake is producing limits of trout to bait fishers.

Kokanee fishing is winding down in most lakes and reservoirs as spawning time nears.

SW Washington – The Kalama, North Fork of the Lewis and Cowlitz River are starting to produce some catches of coho salmon. Steelhead are in the mix as well but coho will begin to dominate the catch over the next several weeks.

These systems also have returning chinook and anglers need to check local regulations to verify whether their favorite system is open to the retention of chinook or not.

Wind River and Drano Lake anglers are still catching fair numbers of steelhead although action is dropping off from previous weeks. The White Salmon is producing a mix of salmon and steelhead.

Columbia River Fishing Report – It's just as one would expect when 700,000 coho are due back to the lower Columbia. You may have to work a bit for them but use the right bait and target fish in the right area and you will not be disappointed. I have been using anchovies almost exclusively the last week with limits of coho nearly every day. With anchovies thick in the river, it seems the likely candidate for motivated fish. The best places to get bait in the Hammond/Warrenton/Astoria areas include: **Hammond Bait and grocery (503-861-2088), Tackle Time (503-861-3693), and World Class Sportfishing if you're in the West End Mooring Basin (503-791-4094)**. It's become pretty routine in the lower river and the fish are definitely on pattern although success rates certainly vary from the Oregon and Washington sides of the river. One day it seems most productive on the Washington side while the next, it's the Oregon side. We'll describe in more detail what to expect for next week in The Guide's Forecast section of this region.

Although fish this week are certainly suckers for anchovies, many anglers are finding consistent success using spinners. These will likely become even more consistent as the season wears on. The longer these fish stay in fresh water, it seems the more likely they are to respond to spinners. One thing that has become quite obvious is that spinners are taking larger fish than bait. On Tuesday, of the 11 coho that we kept, the 4 largest fish were males and they came on a black and white Fatal Flash spinner with red beads. You'll get fewer bites with a spinner but the fish you do catch will be of quality size. And this was an issue over the last few days as jack Chinook and coho have inundated the lower river. For example, on Monday, I'm sure we had over 50 "bites" using strictly bait but a larger portion of those bites were jack Chinook or coho, many of which we didn't hook. We did end up taking 20 legal coho that day but the adult coho came later in the tide and from the Washington side of the river. The scary thing is, I don't think the coho have even actually shown up yet. I think we have even better fishing ahead....

Over the weekend, anglers did try their hand at the Tongue Point fishery, taking fair numbers of Chinook and a few coho in the mix as well. By Sunday however, the word got out as this spinner fishery is much easier than the bait fishery down below. The bite of course dropped off although there were still a few Chinook and some coho taken in the area from the lower end of Rice Island to Buoy 50 near Tongue Point. It seems however, the stronger the tide, the poorer the fishing is in this region of the river.

Further upriver, upriver bright anchor anglers are faring well although like any other year, success can vary from day to day. Overall, the action is good downstream of Caterpillar Island for those using wobblers in 35 to 55 feet of water. Chrome and blue wobblers have been effective but each angler has their preference that has produced results in the past. Jacks have recently made up a larger portion of the catch but an occasional fish into the mid-thirties are still gracing the scales. There have been recent checks of a 1 fish per boat average.

The ocean has closed although it looks like sport anglers may have fallen short of attaining their ocean quota. Last estimates through August 30th indicate that we've achieved nearly 86% of our quota but that's not counting the last day of the season, August 31st. With ample numbers of coho available in the river, why would anyone go west? It seems unlikely that the Departments would re-open ocean coho fishing but I could be wrong. I've had some fantastic September coho fishing in the past south of the CR Buoy. We still have several hundred thousand "B" run coho destined for the lower Columbia due back in mid-October. We have more hot action ahead.

Without any ocean salmon fishing going on, and the commercial crab season now closed, recreational crabbing in the ocean is a wide-open opportunity. Not many people are doing it but avid anglers Tom Bonk and John Hummel did very well over the weekend dropping their pots south of the south jetty over the weekend. Limits were easy and the crab are beginning to fill out although some were still somewhat soft. River crabbing is good also but since most anglers find themselves up above the

bridge at high slack, waiting too long to pick your pots could mean waiting really long until the tide slows enough to pick them at low slack.

Tuna chasers are finding good success out of the ports of the lower Columbia. September is prime time for albacore, especially for those willing to use live bait to catch them. We often find great seas in September and that's likely to be the case this month as well. The fish are large this time of year and oftentimes, you can hunt them by looking for jumpers. If you get into a red hot bite, chunk baits often work just fine. You can really rack up the fish if you find a large school, staying on them for long periods of time under the right conditions.

The Guide's Forecast – Starting with the signature Buoy 10 fishery, it will be a busy weekend with the limit jumping to 3 coho per person and it being the holiday weekend and all. The only good news for anglers not ready for the rainy season is the likelihood of rain over Friday and Saturday. Although it appears that there could be significant rainfall over the weekend, it likely won't have a huge impact on how the fishing will be. The wind is forecasted to come from the south, making fishing from the Oregon side much more appealing. Unfortunately, the Washington side has been the more consistent side to fish. Let's just hope the "Storm Team X" gets another one wrong...

The tide is later now, prompting me to wait a bit later to start my day. I will be focusing my effort around high tide. There are about 3 times of the tide when the fish bite the best:

- 1) The last half-hour of outgoing tide- My theory suggests that salmon are staging in the ocean, awaiting for the water velocity to slow down so they don't have to burn so many calories entering the river. The stronger the outgoing tide, the longer it will take for the velocity to slow so the closer to low slack the fish will begin crossing. Plus, fish are well oriented to where "upriver" is so they're more likely to make tracks before incoming tide begins. What you will likely encounter this time of tide is an incoming saltwater wedge down low in the water column while the outgoing tide is still moving out near the surface. That's why your divers do what they do this time of the tide. Keep in mind that you want to target the colder, ocean-influenced water down deep so drop your gear down deep to get those fish. Bait works best this time of tide although I have taken fish (Chinook in particular) at the Buoy 10 line this time of the tide.
- 2) The 2 hours of incoming tide through high slack- Following the cold water upstream, we've been doing well on most strong incoming tides working the 20 to 24 foot line on the Washington side, doing an upstream troll this time of the tide. Fish will be stratified this time of the tide so if you have enough rods to experiment with, fish a rod or two just a short ways under the surface of the water. We're getting some fish just 12 feet on the line counter! Fish will come up for bait but they typically won't go down. We start hitting fish just downstream of the Desdemona Light Marker on up to the bridge. Be sure to fish near the bridge close to high slack. You'll especially want to fish upstream of the bridge on the shallower humps the last 30 minutes or more of incoming tide.
- 3) The first part of outgoing tide- Fish clearly behave differently once the outgoing tide hits. The cold ocean water is still influencing the bite and fish are preparing to fight the velocity so they oftentimes gravitate closer to the bottom of the estuary where flows aren't as intense. I've even seen fish hold just off the shelf of a sandy hump where the strong flows can go over the tops of their heads. Both the Oregon and Washington sides of the river can produce results during this time but Washington has the reputation for being the most consistent. Most anglers target the 20 to 24 foot line but action in the deep water (around 40 to 45 feet) can also produce outstanding results.

If anything, be early in anticipation of these bites happening. Of course, noting is set in stone but these general rules have worked very well for me this season and will likely produce consistent results into the future.

The Hammond bite has also been fairly consistent this week however it never did materialize on Tuesday. The previous few days however were very productive for bait and spinner trollers working the deep water between Hammond and Buoy 20. This is also a prime time to fish your baits shallow but be here around 2 hours after low slack when the water really begins pushing.

If our calculations are correct, don't bother targeting Chinook or coho above Tongue Point this weekend. We need softer tides to produce more consistent results. We may get surprised however and the bite could become consistent this week. We're still learning about this developing fishery.

As I mentioned previously, bait has been producing consistent limits or near limits for me every day. Anchovies have been the ticket but other sources are telling me that fresh herring are working well also. Over the last few days, spinners have also worked well for me. I only had one of my 5 rods fishing a spinner today (black/white Fatal Flash with red beads) but it took 4 of our 11 keepers and they were the biggest 4 fish of the day. Want big fish? Use spinners, it's as simple as that.

Upriver, with the increasing tides, and run timing on the side of anchor anglers, action should remain fairly steady this week although a weather change can also change the fishing. Wobblers are always key but finding the right travel lane is way more important. One day they bite inside, the next, outside. Anglers definitely need to spend their effort around outgoing tide and with the bigger tides this week, more opportunity exists. There will be lulls in the activity but look for the first 2 hours of outgoing and the last 45 minutes of outgoing tide to produce the best results. Fish are well distributed throughout the system and the best action seems to be coming from the Longview to Caterpillar Island stretch.

Steelhead continue to pass in good numbers over Bonneville Dam but action remains only fair in the warmer water. The weekend cooling could stimulate the bite again but most anglers are focusing their efforts on the salmon migration this time of year, using different gear than what a steelhead may prefer. There will be ample opportunity upriver a little later in the season.

Summer steelheaders at the mouth of the Deschutes are taking fair numbers of steelhead trolling plugs. With The Dalles Dam passage just past peak for the season, action is likely to slow down. Fair catches are likely through the month of September but the warmer the water gets, the more these fish are on a mission to get upstream and into cooler tributaries.

Offshore, the weather is looking a bit frightful with a southerly system bringing lots of wind and rain in the very near future. Here is the offshore forecast, you may want to stay in the river or at home this weekend:

FRI S WIND 10 TO 15 KT...EASING TO 5 TO 10 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF RAIN IN THE MORNING...THEN RAIN LIKELY IN THE AFTERNOON.

FRI NIGHT S WIND 5 KT...RISING TO 5 TO 10 KT WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 6 FT...BUILDING TO 8 FT AFTER MIDNIGHT. RAIN LIKELY.

SAT S WIND 15 TO 20 KT...VEERING TO SW IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 4 FT...SUBSIDING TO 2 FT IN THE AFTERNOON. W SWELL 9 FT. RAIN.

SAT NIGHT SW WIND 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 8 FT. SHOWERS LIKELY.

SUN SW WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 10 FT.

MON W WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 9 FT.

You'll want to do your crabbing inland as well, preferably on the Oregon side of the river, close to shore to stay out of the south wind.

Tuna fishing will be NO fun this weekend.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – As of the last day of August, 44 coho had been counted at Willamette Falls and the summer steelhead counted was over 14,600 as the water temperature dropped to 68 degrees.

The McKenzie continues to maintain good level and flow at Vida with the water temperature in the mid-50s.

North Santiam level and flow will be increasing slightly every day starting September 4th. When the volume has increased by about one-third, it will then stabilize until mid October or fall rains. While over 14,600 summer steelhead have crossed at Willamette Falls, numbers in the Santiam system are inexplicably low.

From the ODFW: "West Salish Pond will be stocked this week with 667 trophy class trout in what has become a Labor Day weekend tradition in the North Willamette Watershed.

"More than 16,000 legal-sized rainbow trout will be released into North Fork Reservoir this week in preparation for the Labor Day weekend holiday. This is the largest release of the year in the North Willamette Watershed District."

The Guide's Forecast – Try the Middle Fork Willamette above Cougar and above Hills Creek reservoirs which has been rewarding anglers with broad-shouldered trout. Fly anglers should watch for improving caddis hatches. The Town Run and the Middle Fork below Dexter Dam will produce summer steelhead.

Fish the North Santiam if seclusion is your goal. Pressure is very light with steelheading slow to fair. It may turn around, however, as September can be a very good month on the Santiam system for summers.

Try the upper McKenzie for trout action all day long as we shift into the fall season. While it's pretty much a nymphing game now, hatches will improve in the coming weeks with caddis the primary bug du jour. The stretch below Leaburg Dam continues fair to good for steelhead.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Steelhead are upriver on the Clackamas and while fishing has been slow to fair, try high on the river to target them. While coho can be seen rolling at the mouth one day and no sign of them the next and spinner flingers are yet to show en masse at the popular Bowling Alley Hole. Only a few silvers have been hooked here and there. Perhaps the next round of rain forecast for over the weekend will get a few up into the river. They're coming; over 200 coho entered the PGE trap in the first three days of September.

Showers coming this week are unlikely to be sufficient to make the difference at the Sandy. It is extremely shallow at the mouth so it will take some serious rainfall to move coho into the river.

North Coast Fishing Report – The first shot of fall Chinook were reported last week in upper Tillamook Bay. Historically speaking, there can be some good fishing in Tillamook this time of year with crowds mostly focused on lower Columbia River fishing. Stronger tides this week should push fresh Chinook into the upper bay where spinner trollers can take fish with some regularity. A 48-pound Chinook was rumored to have recently been taken. Plugs can also take early September fish either holding in the current or working them in the tide on an outgoing or incoming tide. These September fish are in prime shape as they are numerous weeks away from spawning. The ocean and lower bay will not be great options for salmon fishing with the tides being as strong as they are. Some coho are also reported in Tillamook and Nehalem Bays.

Anglers took advantage of the late season ocean coho fishery now underway on the north coast. The highest effort will take place out of Garibaldi but anglers reported mostly slow fishing in the nearshore waters. Some boats did OK but it was just a matter of luck landing in the right place when a hatchery pod was coming through.

Focusing a bit more on coho on the north coast, action should pick up in the coming weeks on both the Nehalem and Tillamook bays. Ample numbers are expected back and a 3 fish bag limit is in place on both systems. Chinook are still allowed in the Tillamook system but not the Nehalem. Check regulation details before heading out. For example, the Nehalem is now open to the take of wild coho (only 1 of your coho may be wild, out of a 3 fish bag limit) with a 1,000 fish quota. The details are finite so study them carefully here:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/reg_changes/docs/2009_coastal_coho_and_fall_chinook.pdf.

The Nestucca can also begin to heat up this time of year but anglers aren't too anxious as adult returns are expected to be down a bit more this year. The jaws are a good option when the tide swing begins to soften.

Crabbing is also picking up with some crab coming in with full shells. The crabbing action will only get better over time and now we have the ocean as an option into mid-October.

The Guide's Forecast – If the weather actually materialized as predicted, the north coast won't be a great place to recreate over the weekend. Chinook numbers should begin to build in Tillamook Bay however with the spinner bite most likely to produce the best results. As tides soften, it will be time to head back towards the jaws for staging fish to cross the bar and eat your herring.

Coho will become more likely in the catches as that run is forecasted to be big on the Tillamook and Nehalem systems. Spinners will take these fish higher up in the estuaries but fresh bait will be hard to beat closer to the bay entrance.

Crabbing will only get better from here.

Central & South Coast Reports – Tuna fishing has been good out of Newport and Depoe bay when conditions allow launching. Unfortunately, forecast for this weekend indicate high wind and waves. Boaters traveling to warm water out of Depoe mid week found warm water and all the tuna they could carry back to port. Albacore are running 20 to 30 pounds.

Just over 85% of the ocean coho quota had been harvested as of the end of August. The transfer of 8,300 coho to the Westport area reduced the total ocean quota to 96,500. A wild coho fishery is being considered by the NOAA in Yaquina and Coos bays and the Coquille estuary. If approved, anglers will be allowed one adult and one jack up to five per year.

Mussel harvesting is now open from Agate Beach south to the California border. All other shellfish harvesting remains open on beaches and in estuaries.

Ocean crabbing has been good, but give that foremost leg (not the one with the claw) a squeeze close to the shell. If it's not hard, the crab is considered a softshell and the little meat it contains will be watery. Hard crab will be available in the fall and opportunities will increase with the ocean crabbing closure pushed to mid-October.

Crabbing in Yaquina Bay has been fair to good for those using chicken for bait (and the seals stay away from rings and traps).

Trollers in Winchester Bay had a very slow weekend for Chinook and coho. Soft plastics have been taking very good numbers of smallmouth bass in the mainstem Umpqua and fishing is expected to be good at the two-day derby taking place this coming weekend at Elkton. North Umpqua steelheaders are making good catches in both the bait and flies-only stretches.

Albacore anglers are making good catches out of Charleston but rough ocean conditions have kept boats at bay on many days. When boats could get out this week, drifting and casting to jumpers 30 miles out was most effective. Crabbing is good in the bay be sure to sort out softshells. Coos Bay is producing fall Chinook to trollers.

Anglers trolling spinners are catching Chinook in the lower Coquille where the action is fair to good and improving.

Rogue Bay trollers continue to pick up 40 to 50 fall Chinook, most of which are around 20 pounds but several 30 to 40 pounders have come over the gunwales. Estuary anglers are taking the occasional Coho in their catches as well. Thanks to a recent dip in river water temperature, Chinook are being taken upstream to the Agness stretch. Wrapped Kwikfish are taking Chinook bound for the Applegate River in the middle Rogue with one wild fish and up to 10 per year allowed anywhere below Gold Ray Dam. The lower Rogue Canyon has fine numbers of adult steelhead, most of which are on the smallish side, as well as good numbers of half-pounders. Fishing on this stretch has been good. With the upper Rogue now flies-only and about 3,800 summer Chinook over the dam. long rodders are doing fairly well in this stretch. Thanks to weekly plantings for the past two months, the for upper Rogue above Lost Creek is fishing well for hatchery trout.

Rough ocean conditions this coming weekend will make it challenging for the many boats expecting to take part in the Slammin' Salmon ocean Chinook derby out of Brookings. On the first day of the derby on Thursday, September 3rd, results were very disappointing as over 520 boats launched to return with only three fish. Bay fishing for fall Chinook has been slow to take off as well. Tuna action has been off some days with the albacore disinterested in biting. Some enterprising anglers have score by casting to fish with down-sized lures. Bottom fishing has produced limits every day launching has been possible. Some very large ling cod have also been brought back to port.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report September 2-15, 2009

North Puget Sound

An abundant **pink salmon** return continues to steal the headlines, but anglers also are beginning to hook a few ocean **coho**, which are expected to enter Puget Sound in larger numbers in the coming weeks.

"Some ocean coho have already been caught in central Puget Sound, so we should see more of those ocean fish in the next couple of weeks," said Steve Thiesfeld, a WDFW fish biologist.

When they do arrive, Point No Point, Jefferson Head and Possession Bar should be good spots to hook ocean coho, said Thiesfeld. Anglers fishing those areas, or other waters of marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, and must release chinook. Chum salmon also must be released in Marine Area 9 through Sept. 30 and in Marine Area 10 through Sept. 15.

Marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) are also open for salmon. Anglers fishing those two marine areas have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon. All chinook salmon must be released.

Another option is Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where anglers have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but can only keep one **chinook**. Anglers in Marine Area 7 must release wild coho and chum.

Meanwhile, there's still time to catch **crab**. The crab fishery runs through Sept. 7 in marine areas 8-1, 8-2, 9, and 10. However, the fishery will remain open through Sept. 30 in Marine Area 7. Crabbing is open in all areas 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.

Crabbers are reminded that their summer catch record cards are due to WDFW by Sept. 21 and must be returned whether or not the cardholder caught or fished for crab during the season. Crabbers who fail to file catch reports for 2009 will face a \$10 fine, which will be imposed when they apply for a 2010 fishing license. Completed cards can be mailed in or recorded online. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>. Crabbers who continue to fish in an open area after Sept. 7 should record their catch on their winter catch card which is valid from Sept. 8 through Jan. 2.

In the freshwater, anglers can fish for salmon on portions of several rivers, including the Skagit, Skykomish, Stillaguamish and Green.

Elsewhere, Lake Sammamish is open for salmon fishing, with a daily limit of four salmon, up to two chinook may be retained. All sockeye must be released, and fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek. Sammamish Lake's larger neighbor, Lake Washington, opens Sept. 16 to coho fishing. Anglers will be allowed four coho per day (minimum size 12 inches) from waters north of the Highway 520 Bridge and east of the Montlake Bridge.

Before heading out, anglers should check the rules and regulations for all freshwater and saltwater fisheries in WDFW's *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Coastal salmon anglers continue to fill their daily limits as the ocean fishery enters the home stretch. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of coho and pink salmon are moving through the Strait of Juan de Fuca and into Puget Sound.

Although salmon fishing is now closed off Ilwaco (Marine Area 1), anglers are still finding plenty of hatchery coho along the rest of the coast, said Erica Crust, WDFW ocean port sampler. "It's been an amazing season, with anglers catching an abundance of good-sized coho," Crust said. "We've seen a lot of happy people this year."

Salmon fishing is scheduled to close Sept. 20 at Westport (Marine Area 2), La Push (Marine Area 3) and Neah Bay (Marine Areas 3 and 4), where fishing is currently open seven days a week.

Looking for other coastal fishing opportunities? Starting Sept. 16, the salmon fishery east of Buoy 13 in Grays Harbor (Marine Area 2-2) will be open seven days week through Nov. 30, while a portion of the La Push fishery will be open daily Sept. 26 through Oct. 11. Willapa Bay remains open for salmon fishing on a daily basis until Jan. 31.

Crust advises anglers to check the 2009-2010 *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> for specific retention rules, limits and boundary guidelines. Anglers are also advised to check the Fishing Hotline at (360) 902-2500 for updated information on changes in coastal fisheries.

Salmon anglers fishing the Strait of Juan de Fuca are also having a banner year, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. Creel checks conducted Sunday, Aug. 30 near Sekiu showed catch rates of nearly three **hatchery coho** and four **pink salmon** per boat. "We're past the half-way point for pinks and they're beginning to tail off, but we've had an outstanding fishing season so far in marine areas 5 and 6," Thiesfeld said.

Anglers hoping to land a **wild coho** can get their gear ready for a non-selective coho fishery starting in Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) Sept. 19. Until then, anglers must release all wild coho they encounter.

"Fishing for coho generally picks up after Labor Day," Thiesfeld said. "With the catch rates we've been seeing, the fish are definitely coming through."

Anglers fishing in Marine Area 6 (Port Angeles) may retain two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon as part of their daily limit. All chum, chinook and wild coho must be released.

Meanwhile, anglers were out in force in Marine Area 11 (Tacoma/Vashon), during the Aug. 29-30 weekend. A creel check conducted near Point Defiance showed 416 anglers with 174 pink salmon.

The coho should be right behind them, Thiesfeld said. "This is one of the best summers for coho since 2004 at Sekiu, and that's a good indicator for September coho fishing in northern Hood Canal and the Sound," Thiesfeld said.

The salmon fishery in Marine Area 11 runs seven days a week, with a two-fish daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon. The minimum size for chinook is 22 inches with no minimum limit for other species. All wild chinook must be released.

Salmon fishing opened Sept. 1 north of Ayock Point in Hood Canal (Marine Area 12), where the daily limit is four coho only. All other salmon species must be released. The same rules apply to Dabob and Quilcene bays, which opened for salmon fishing Aug. 16.

Several rivers around the region opened to salmon fishing Sept. 1, including the Carbon River in Pierce County; Copalis River, Van Winkle Creek and Joe Creek in Grays Harbor County; the Bear and Niawiakum rivers in Pacific County; and Clearwater River in Jefferson County. The Puyallup River opened Aug. 16.

As of Sept. 1, anglers fishing in the Quillayute system - which includes the Bogachiel, Sol Duc, Calawah and Dickey rivers - can keep two adult salmon, plus two additional adult hatchery coho as part of the six-fish daily limit.

On the Hoh River, anglers can now fish for salmon seven days a week and keep up to two adult fish as part of their six-fish daily limit.

Before heading out, anglers are advised to check the 2009-2010 *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> for specific regulations.

Recreational crabbers should be aware that the summer **Dungeness crab** fishery will close for a catch assessment in several areas of Puget Sound after the Labor Day weekend. Areas closing Sept. 7 one hour after sunset include 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). Crabbing will be open the entire Labor Day weekend, Sept. 5-7.

Marine Area 7 (Bellingham-San Juan Islands) remains open Wednesdays through Saturdays only, plus the entire Labor Day weekend, closing the evening of Sept. 30.

Marine Area 12 (Hood Canal) remains open Wednesdays through Saturdays only, plus the entire Labor Day weekend, closing Jan. 2, 2010.

Marine areas 4 and 5 in the Strait of Juan de Fuca and 13 in southern Puget Sound are scheduled to remain open seven days a week through Jan. 2.

Crabbers are reminded that their summer catch record cards are due to WDFW by Sept. 21 and must be returned whether or not the cardholder caught or fished for crab during the season. Crabbers who fail to file catch reports for 2009 will face a \$10 fine, which will be imposed when they apply for a 2010 fishing license. Completed cards can be mailed in or recorded online. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab>. /

Those who file their catch reports by the deadline will be entered in a drawing for one of 10 free 2010 combination fishing licenses, which allow the holder to fish for a variety of freshwater and saltwater species.

Southwest Washington

The ocean salmon fishery off Ilwaco (Marine Area 1) is now closed, but anglers are reeling in lots of **coho, chinook** and **summer steelhead** from waters of the Columbia River open to those species. Steelhead fishing has also been good at the mouths of rivers spilling into the Bonneville Pool, but the spotlight is soon expected to shift to chinook and coho salmon moving into tributaries above and below Bonneville Dam.

"Fall weather has arrived a few weeks early, and the fish are on the move," said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. "Anglers have a lot of options right now, depending on what they want to catch and how far they want to travel."

At the Buoy 10 fishery near the mouth of the Columbia, hatchery coho are the name of the game. Although anglers must now release all chinook, they can now take home up to three hatchery coho (or substitute hatchery steelhead for up to two of those fish).

On better days, anglers fishing the Buoy 10 area in the last 16 miles of the Columbia River have averaged nearly a fish per rod, said Hymer, noting that North Jetty remains open to fishing under Buoy 10 rules. Daily creel counts for the fishery are available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regions/reg5/buoy10.htm>.

Mainstem Columbia River anglers looking to fish for chinook salmon can do so just about anywhere from the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line upstream to the Highway 395 Bridge in Pasco. (One exception, effective Sept. 13, is from the Lewis River downstream, described on Page 74 of the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet.) The daily limit is six fish per day, of which two may be adult salmon or, hatchery steelhead, or one of each. Below Bonneville Dam, only one of the adult salmon may be a chinook.

"Anglers are catching chinook salmon above and below Bonneville Dam, although the bulk of the catch has been concentrated between Longview and Vancouver," Hymer said. So far the run seems to be on track."

Some of those chinook - along with early stock hatchery coho - are beginning to show up in anglers' creels from the Cowlitz River to the White Salmon River. Salmon fishing on those and other Columbia River tributaries should peak from mid- to late September, Hymer said.

"We're nearing a time when anglers really can fill a six-salmon daily limit on some area tributaries," Hymer said.

Hymer reminds anglers that a number of permanent fishing rules took effect Sept. 1, as described in the *Fishing in Washington* rule pamphlet <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>. New retention rules for area tributaries effective this year include:

- **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 wild 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 opened Aug. 1:** The starting date for fall salmon fisheries was moved up to allow anglers to catch early arriving fish, particularly Select Area Bright fall chinook that stray into the Grays River.

Although the number of chinook and coho salmon crossing Bonneville Dam continues to rise, hatchery steelhead still makes up the bulk of the fish caught in rivers flowing into the Bonneville Pool. Conditions were crowded on the White Salmon River, where 19 anglers caught 16 steelhead and released three others, according to a recent creel check. At Drano Lake, 85 boat anglers caught 45 steelhead and released 23 others during the same period.

Looking for something different? Try fishing for hatchery **sea-run cutthroat** on the lower Cowlitz River. Casting flies, spinners, or bait from the trout hatchery downstream can be rewarding this time of year. Also consider that **walleye** fishing has been picking up from Camas to Bonneville Dam as temperatures cool. Finally, now is a great time to fish the area's **high mountain lakes**, where anglers can catch trout in relative solitude. "I'm told that the huckleberries are in season, which can be an added bonus," Hymer said.

Eastern Washington

Snake River **fall chinook salmon** fishing opened on two sections Sept. 1 with some expansions and rule changes from last year's first test fishery. The special fishery, not listed in the rules pamphlet, is available because the numbers of fish returning are within allowable limits for potential impacts to wild fish. It could run through Oct. 15, depending on close monitoring of the fishery and fish run.

Glen Mendel, WDFW southeast district fish biologist of Dayton, says the changes from last year's test fishery, which was the first Snake River fall chinook fishery in nearly 30 years, include both expansion of open area and new rules. The river sections to open are 1) from the Highway 12 Bridge (near the mouth of the Snake River) upstream to the no fishing zone below Ice Harbor Dam; and 2) from Highway 261 Bridge crossing the Snake River (approximately one half mile upstream from Lyons Ferry Hatchery) upstream to the no fishing zone below Little Goose Dam.

Mendel notes the second area is the stretch that flows past the mouth of the Tucannon River, which is not open to chinook salmon fishing. "The mouth is defined by our enforcement officers as a line from the north side of the curve of the road west of the Tucannon River near a mile marker sign, to the north edge of the high bluff east of the Tucannon River," he said. "Anyone fishing south of that invisible line is technically within the Tucannon River and cannot keep fall chinook salmon."

In most of the open areas, the daily catch limit is two marked hatchery (adipose fin-clipped) adult chinook (24 inches or longer), and four chinook jacks (less than 24 inches) either wild or hatchery-marked. One exception, Mendel notes, is along the "wall" and walkway area upstream of the juvenile fish-bypass return pipe (below Little Goose Dam), where the daily limit is just one hatchery (adipose-clipped) adult chinook and up to two jack chinook.

Another change is that a night closure is in effect for all species within the identified boundaries of this limited fishery, including **steelhead**, which opened for the traditional catch-and-keep season Sept. 1.

"We need these kinds of regulations on a new fishery, at least for the first few years, so that we can continue to offer fall chinook fishing in future years," Mendel explained.

Adult chinook or steelhead with unclipped adipose fins must be immediately released unharmed. Anglers must use barbless hooks when fishing for chinook or steelhead in the Snake River. No chinook or steelhead can be removed from the water unless it is retained as part of the daily catch limit. Other rules and salmon identification information is in the pamphlet.

Mendel reminds steelheaders the daily trout catch limit of six fish includes up to three hatchery-marked steelhead (healed scar at clipped adipose or ventral fin). The mouths of the Snake's tributaries like the Tucannon and Grande Ronde, and the confluence with the Clearwater on the Idaho border, are usually most productive at the start of the catch-and-keep steelhead season.

Northcentral Washington

Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan District Fish Biologist of Twisp, reports **chinook salmon** fishing from Brewster to Bridgeport on the Columbia River has picked up.

"The summer chinook being caught are averaging 20 pounds," Jateff said. "Trolled plugs seem to be the lure of choice. Anglers need to remember that the area from Wells Dam to Brewster closed Aug. 31 for all salmon fishing. Anti-snagging rules and night closure are in effect for all salmon areas from the mouth of the Okanogan River upstream, including the Similkameen."

Jateff also reported the Methow River **trout** fishery continues to produce resident rainbow and cutthroat for fly and lure anglers under catch and release, selective gear regulations. The fishery is open from the Lower Burma Road bridge below the town of Methow to the Foghorn Dam, one mile upstream of Winthrop. Jateff encourages anglers to use gear that will not target either steelhead or bull trout in order to minimize impacts to these ESA-listed species.

Southcentral Washington

The lower Yakima River opened Sept. 1 for **salmon** fishing, including all areas from Prosser Dam downstream to the Columbia River. The night closure and anti-snagging rules are in effect for all species.

Paul Hoffarth, WDFW district fish biologist of Pasco, reminds Columbia River **fall chinook salmon** anglers that the anti-snagging rule is also in effect for salmon and steelhead between Bonneville and McNary dams. See page 15 of the fishing rules pamphlet for more details.

The action on fall chinook sport in the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River should be picking up this month. The fishery is scheduled to continue through Oct. 22. Hoffarth reminds anglers to release all steelhead caught in the Columbia River above the Highway 395 bridge at Pasco.

As long as warm weather rules, some of the best fishing in the Tri-Cities area is still for warmwater species. Hoffarth reports **walleye, bass**, and **perch** fishing continues to be productive, especially in Lake Umatilla, the John Day Dam pool on the Columbia River.

Reader E-mail

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

Catch tuna? Here's how to clean:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aeiI1T7uu0o>

Oregon Trout Fishing Guide:

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/docs/Fishing%20Guide%20to%20NE%20Oregon%202007%20\(3\).pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/docs/Fishing%20Guide%20to%20NE%20Oregon%202007%20(3).pdf)

GOOD LUCK!