

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 11th – September 17th, 2009**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - The mainstem Columbia upriver bright chinook fishery is frustrating anglers. Action has been sporadic from the mouth of the Sandy to Longview but fish should be available through the end of September. If the run prediction is accurate, only about half of the run has passed Bonneville. Counts have slowed dramatically this week although success in the Columbia River Gorge is not likely until early October. The mainstem below Warrior Rock near the mouth of the Lewis River closes to chinook retention beginning September 14th.

The Willamette is 70 degrees at the Falls and about 130 coho have been counted. Trollers and backbouncers are working the river from the mouth of the Clackamas to Meldrum Bar with limited success.

Pressure is light on the North Santiam with steelheading slow to fair.

On the Clackamas, it's time to quit chasing upriver steelhead and target coho on the lower river. The crowded Bowling Alley Hole has been producing and following the recent rainfall, fish should be available to Barton Park.

Coho moved into the Sandy following recent rains but, as usual, they are reluctant to bite or strike anything. Scores of fish have spotted traveling upstream.

Northwest – With the recent rains, the Buoy 10 fishery is beginning to fade. Large number of coho are still due back to the lower river as the late season, "B" run of coho will continue to return well into October. The most consistent action is just before high slack near the Astoria/Megler Bridge with spinners and bait producing equally well.

The ocean north of Cape Falcon has reopened for fin-clipped coho although most anglers are likely to focus their efforts inland at this point. Good action can still be had for the next few weeks but with few boats in pursuit, it may be challenging to find willing biters. Ocean and lower Columbia crabbing continues to improve.

Tuna chasers scored good results after the south wind warmed offshore waters. Live bait continues to be the key to great catches and action should continue consistent at least through mid-month. Anglers at Buoy 10 started to catch pacific mackerel indicating that offshore waters are beginning to warm.

Tillamook Bay is starting to produce fair catches of chinook and coho. Softer tides this week should shift effort to the jetty where anglers working blue label herring should find some opportunities for chinook. Smaller baits are more likely to take coho as they enter the bay but spinner casters working the upper reaches should find success also.

The Trask and North Fork Nehalem Rivers are likely holding hatchery coho but fish will be spooky in the low water. Spinners at first light, especially in tidewater may produce results.

The Nestucca and Salmon Rivers should begin producing catches although returning numbers are not forecasted to be very high this year. The Nehalem will remain closed to chinook angling for the rest

of the year.

Southwest – Second season ocean coho opened Sept 1st for 7,000 fish, revised to 9,560 with the transfer of the remaining summer quota. Two hatchery coho may be retained per day.

When boats have been able to get out into the ocean they have been taking a mixed bag of albacore to 30 pounds and large Humboldt squid.

Crabbing in the ocean and in southwest bays and estuaries is good, but checking for softshells remains necessary.

Spinner casters have been making decent catches and taking a few limits of hatchery coho from the jetty at Winchester Bay. There are greater numbers of wild fish that must be released and sea lions have been problematic here.

Tuna fishing has been good about 30 miles out of Charleston when the ocean permits. Trollers on the Coos had a very slow weekend but that didn't prevent plenty of participation. There are a good numbers of jacks showing.

Wild coho may be retained in the Coos and Coquille Rivers but check the new regulation for bag limit and deadline details. These fisheries will close November 30th or when quotas are filled.

Chinook fishing in Rogue Bay has been offering steady action for trollers but fish charged upriver with recent rain and the drop in water temperature. Bay fishing continues to be fair as the action moves upstream.

Rough seas are predicted for the coming weekend out of the Port of Brookings.

Trout fishing is fair at Diamond Lake but should improve as water temperatures drop.

Eastern – The lower Deschutes is improving as steelhead continue to move in. Steelhead are scattered up to Sherars Falls. The river remains off color downstream of White River but conditions are improving with cooler weather.

Green Peter is providing good action to trollers using downriggers. Kokanee here are still in good condition despite fall coming on.

SW Washington – The Kalama, Lewis and Cowlitz are all producing catches of chinook and coho with some steelhead still mixed in. Coho will become the species of choice as numbers build into October. Liberal limits apply to most tributaries so check regulations before heading out.

The Washougal is also producing catches of chinook and coho but the Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries are beginning to fade.

The Klickitat is now an option for chinook but may become more popular later in the fall when good numbers of coho may be available as the run passes Bonneville.

Columbia River Fishing Report – It's a different environment on the lower Columbia these days. Although good numbers of coho are beginning to fill up in the estuary again, anglers lost access to hordes of fish when the southerly influenced storm hit over the Labor Day weekend. Forty to 50 bites were possible for a boat load of 6 rods when now, we may only get between 15 and 25 bites for

a day of fishing. By Wednesday however, action seemed to have picked up although most anglers were wrestling with high numbers of natives in search of fin-less coho.

On Wednesday, motivated anglers caught high slack at daylight and a mild outgoing tide to see one of the better outgoing tide bites of the post-storm season. We were making short passes from the shipwreck on the Washington side to the bridge and getting between 3 and 5 bites per pass. The majority of the bites came on anchovies although spinners were taking an occasional fish too. The key to our success here was a mild outgoing tide that kept our trolling speed below 3 mph and the cooler water and cloudy weather that keeps the salmon in the estuary from the previous high tide. On Tuesday night, the few boats that stuck it out for high slack, did well above the bridge on the first part of outgoing tide, on spinners, no less.

Most recently, the best time to target coho has been on the early push of incoming tide. The last part of outgoing tide will still offer up a few bites between Buoys 14 and 12 but that bite seems to be getting more inconsistent. About 1 hour after low slack, the water on the west end of Desdemona Sands is producing good results trolling from the 30 foot depth, "uphill" into 22 and 20 foot of water. I call this piece of water the tongue of lower Desdemona Sands. It has been a consistent producer for much of the season but recently, the lower tongue produces best on the first 2.5 hours of incoming tide before you head to the bridge for the high tide bite. Keep your baits on the bottom and bait is what has been key to my success. Spinners don't seem to work well until we get closer to the top of the tide and the first part of outgoing tide. Of course, as we all know fishing, this is subject to change.

One thing that doesn't seem to change, is the fact we have predating marine mammals in the water and they are responsible for many interactions between angler and beast. We lost our 5th salmon to a seal/sea lion on Wednesday and I get the feeling it won't be our last either. There was 2 of them working just upstream of the bridge on the Washington side Wednesday and this is the area where we've lost most of our fish this season. Bring your paintball guns folks.

The ocean recently reopened but glowing reports was not part of the program for the few boats headed out there in pursuit of ocean salmon. Why go west when the river is filling back up with coho? One recent report indicated that there was good coho fishing north of Buoy 1. The action to the north has been inconsistent but when it's "on" up there, it's really on! With many more hundreds of thousands of fish to come back to the lower Columbia, the action outside should stay good for a while. When I fueled at the dock at the West End Basin on Wednesday, the lady at the fueling station said that ocean going boats were complaining about squid. Every time you dropped your bait over the side, a Humboldt squid would take it and you never had a chance at a salmon. We caught a small handful of Pacific mackerel the other day near Buoy 12 indicating that warmer waters (likely from the south wind/rain storm we just had) brought with it, warmer waters and non-desirable species. But it also brought the tuna closer to shore.

Those that went out prior to Wednesday's "blow", found good success on the 46.20 x 124.46 line with another boater reporting good action at 46.20 X 124.47. Live bait is certainly the key this time of year but swim baits can also take fish. There is nothing better than a September albacore. Many fish are running close to 30 pounds.

Upriver, anglers have witnessed a significant slow down in the upriver bright fishery although many anglers would agree that the season has not been consistent at all. Although fair numbers of fish are still passing at Bonneville, it may not be the numbers we thought for a year when a half a million fish are due back. It wouldn't be unprecedented for a large batch of later returning adults but only about 200,000 fish of a 500,000 fish run has bypassed Bonneville. Of course wobblers are responsible for the vast majority of fish taken with many anglers customizing their own lures. Only the seasoned

veterans are consistently producing results but in a year like this one, nothing is a given. Anglers are reminded of the closure after September 13th upstream of Longview. From the ODF&W website:

COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, Tongue Point upstream to a line projected from the Warrior Rock Lighthouse (Ore.) through red buoy #4 to a marker on the lower end of Bachelor Island (Wash.). [See map](#)

- Open for retention of adipose fin-clipped steelhead and adipose fin-clipped coho (adults and jacks) August 1 – December 31.
- Open for retention of adult and jack ($\leq 24"$) Chinook (fin-clipped or not) during August 1 – September 13. The combined daily bag limit is two adults (only one of which may be a Chinook) and five jacks.
- This area will be CLOSED for retention of Chinook (adults and jacks) from September 14 – December 31, but will remain open for coho and steelhead. The daily bag limit from September 14 onward is two adipose fin-clipped steelhead and adipose fin-clipped adult coho in combination.

Although the Bonneville Dam area itself is not typically a productive place to fish until the water temperatures drop, action is fair for backtrollers working the faster water with Flatfish and Kwikfish with a sardine wrap. Eggs may be an effective bait as well but these freshwater acclimated fish become more territorial this time of year and may fall easier to plugs than bait. If the weather and water continue to cool, action at Bonneville could stay fair for the remainder of the season.

Further upriver, steelheaders are being challenged by warm water conditions. Passage is still good at Bonneville with 3,000 to 5,000 still crossing each day. Trollers working the mouth are not finding good success and Deschutes River anglers are hampered by cloudy water conditions. We'll have to wait until the cooler fall temperatures re-inspire the summer runs.

Softer tides are making for some good crabbing in the lower Columbia. Soft tides will continue through the weekend. Ocean crabbing remains open and is likely very good.

The Guide's Forecast – Coho will still take the headlines this week as Buoy 10 should continue to produce good catches well into this month. It was beginning to look a bit dismal after the storm system pushed through and sent most of our estuary coho upriver and into the tributary fisheries. Good for the bank angler but bad for the estuary fisher. It became more evident on Wednesday that this fishery is not over and in fact, action will continue well into October.

As I have stated before, the Columbia River coho run is split into 2 distinct runs, an "A" run and a "B" run with "B" run fish coming back to the river well into October. If history repeats itself, we may see a slight slow-down in action in the estuary but there will likely be another strong push of hatchery coho in the next 12 to 14 days if this run prediction actually comes to fruition, and it likely will. Anchovies are still producing the best for me, keeping my whole baits spinning and very near to the bottom of the area I am fishing if the depth is less than 35 feet. In deeper water, I am stratifying the baits anywhere from 14 to 45 feet on the line counter, depending on the time of the tide we're working. I fish deep on the last part of the outgoing tide where the cooler, saltwater wedge will bring the first push of fish into the river. When the ocean influenced water is well into the estuary, I will run 2 of my 6 rods between 12 and 16 feet on the line counters to intercept the shallow running fish. And, there ARE shallow running fish for much of the incoming tide.

Spinners may work better a little later in the season and some guides are certainly posting good numbers right now using spinners. My experience shows that the best time to employ spinners is close to high tide and the first part of outgoing. Red/white and red/pink is producing the best and if

you have those colors in the size #5, that is the best one to use since many of the larger males have headed upstream.

The softer tide series may not push a lot of fish above the bridge on the flood tide. Pay attention to the action below the bridge as oftentimes we have had our better luck off of the Chinook wing jetties on some of the softer tides that we'll see this week. On Saturday for example, there is only about a 5 foot incoming tide followed by a 2 foot outgoing. The fish may stay low in the estuary for such a mild swing.

You can target coho in the ocean still but why? If a morning bar crossing is favorable, you may try your luck to the north and you may very well find an easy limit out there. Bring lots of bait however in case you run into a large pod of wild fish or Humboldt Squid like some are talking about. If you go west, at least bring your crab pots so you can take advantage of a better bounty.

With just a few more days of upriver bright fishing below Longview, veteran anglers aren't too optimistic that catches will be great. A softening tide series will limit the amount of tide anchor anglers can work their wobblers and the action is slowing anyway. The farther away from the estuary you get, the weaker the tidal influence will be. Bonneville Dam may be a viable option as cooler water temperatures may begin to slow dam passage and fish will fall more easily to backrolled plugs and baits. The fish are in prime condition now.

Tuna fishers need to bring live bait if they are serious about their fishing. Hopefully, the ocean lays down so you can spot jumpers to cruise into and release your anchovy victims. Keep the water well chummed and you could be on a willing school for a long time, plugging your boat to capacity. The last known location for tuna can be found in the above information, in the Columbia River report of this newsletter.

Upriver, steelheaders will continue to be plagued by warm water. The "B" run steelhead are present in good numbers but not so willing to bite. An occasional fish will fall to Chinook gear but it's hard to target these fish in the warmer flows of the river right now. November can be a good option near the John Day Dam but that is a few months away. Sporadic action may take place at the mouth of the Deschutes River.

Crabbing in the lower Columbia River will be a good option for either an overnight soak or a late afternoon option.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – With the flow increasing, water temperature at Willamette Falls is down to 67 degrees. About 220 coho and 427 fall chinook have been counted so far this season.

The McKenzie level and flow are on the drop after spike following rain last week. Water temperature is in the low 50s at Vida.

The North Santiam is slow to fair for summer steelhead.

In case you missed it, ODFW sez, "Coho are returning in such large numbers that ODFW has bumped the bag limit to three fish on the Willamette, Clackamas, Sandy, Molalla, Santiam, Yamhill and Tualatin rivers and Eagle Creek."

The Guide's Forecast – Summer steelheading is worthwhile on the Willamette Town Run near

Eugene. Try this stretch early or late in the day for steelies that are bright a full of fight. Troll Multnomah Channel or below the mouth of the Clackamas for a shot at incoming coho.

Trout fishing remains good in the McKenzie and the occasional steelhead is still being landed.

The best chance for a steelhead hookup on the North Santiam is around Fishermen's Bend.

Trout fishing has picked up at Hagg Lake and should provide a worthwhile experience. Be prepared for low water conditions.

Trollers are taking limits of triploid rainbows from North Fork Reservoir.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Try low on the Clackamas as coho are entering now or at the mouth of Eagle Creek where a few have been taken this week. The Bowling Alley Hole is seeing normal (heavy) pressure for this time of year and a few are being landed. Trout fishing has been fair to good on the upper Clackamas.

With water conditions improving on the Sandy, catches of coho are improving. Try at the mouth of Cedar Creek or up into the creek itself. Some anglers are still finding bright Chinook that are willing to join them for dinner.

North Coast Fishing Report – Despite good opportunity for salmon out of other northern ports, action is less than impressive for those seeking late season hatchery coho and the occasional offshore (bubble fishery) Chinook. Cody of Garibaldi Marina (503-322-3312) reported just a handful of coho being brought to the dock while most of the Chinook action is taking place inside of Tillamook Bay. As the season progresses, more coho will likely be taken while anglers are in pursuit of big Chinook. The bubble fishery is likely to produce those results but good catches of coho will also come from inside of Tillamook and Nehalem Bays as well.

Reports on the Nehalem indicate that there are lots of coho in the system but as is often the case for these fresh water dwellers, they are quite reluctant to bite. Spinners may take a few fish over the course of the day but limits are not likely unless you target them closer to the jetty using herring for bait. A small wild fish quota is now in place on the Nehalem but please consider respectfully releasing wild fish, particularly hens unless they are mortally wounded. There should be enough hatchery coho to satisfy one's needs.

Chinook have been reported throughout the bay but anglers will likely begin to target Chinook and coho closer to the mouth on the upcoming weak tide series. The Nestucca and Salmon Rivers are also options but the soft tides typically don't bring in big numbers of fish and the lack of flow often keeps fish from being inspired enough to sacrifice themselves to a lure or bait.

Crabbing is good on Tillamook and the Nehalem and Netarts estuaries are also good prospects. The ocean remains the best option but don't underestimate the ocean conditions this time of year as the Nehalem Bar tipped a boat load of people over just last week. All escaped with their lives but by the skin of their teeth. The ocean forecast is as follows:

FRI N WIND 5 TO 10 KT. GUSTS UP TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 4 FT.

FRI NIGHT N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 8 FT.

SAT N WIND 5 TO 10 KT...BACKING TO NW IN THE AFTERNOON. GUSTS UP TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 10 FT.

SAT NIGHT NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 11 FT. PATCHY FOG AFTER MIDNIGHT.

SUN NW WIND 5 TO 10 KT WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 11 FT.

MON S WIND 5 TO 10 KT WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 8 FT.

Friday looks like a great day to recreate on the ocean. Salmon? Bottomfish? Tuna? Crabbing? All are good prospects for Friday.

Although rivers remain low on the north coast, the holiday storm may have moved coho into the Trask and North Fork Nehalem Rivers. None-the-less, with warm days ahead and clear water conditions, action is likely to remain challenging. Small baits and spinners may take coho and steelhead in the upper reaches of the Nestucca and Wilson Rivers may also be an option.

The Guide's Forecast – The best option this weekend for coastal fishers will be targeting salmon along the jetties of Tillamook and Nehalem Bay. Both coho and Chinook should be available and willing to bite on the outgoing tide. The softer tide series should allow anglers to fish rather weed free on the outgoing as large amounts of eelgrass have been reported in Tillamook recently. On weaker tides, I've noticed the first good batch of fish typically come across the bar right after peak ebb, which often comes about 3.5 hours after high slack. On stronger tides, we usually have to wait until the tide gets closer to low slack before fish cross the bar. Use smaller baits and fish higher in the water column for hatchery coho, bigger baits on the bottom for Chinook.

Bay fishing may drop off as weak flows keep fish hunkered down in the deeper holes and less willing to bite. The lower ends of the estuary may offer the best chances for Chinook and coho but don't have high hopes for great catches in the upper reaches of Nehalem, Tillamook or Nestucca estuaries.

Sea-run cutthroat haven't gotten a lot of press since the re-opener for catch and keep fishing. This can be an excellent time of year to pursue these fish, especially in the tidewater sections of most north coast streams. Spinners for bank casters and Ford Fenders with a trailing worm is the old-timer style and both are likely to draw action during appropriate times of the tide.

Go crabbing! Whether you do it in the bay or in the ocean, you should be rewarded with great catches if you use quality bait. The condition is improving dramatically each week.

Central & South Coast Reports – Wild coho may be taken from the Yaquina, Coos and Coquille rivers now through November 30th or fulfillment of quota. The Coquille has the highest allotment at 1,500 native coho. For details on all the 2009 wild coho fisheries, see Random Links, below.

Ocean coho catches have slowed off the central and south Oregon coast.

Mussels are once again safe to harvest south of Agate Beach to the Oregon-California border according to the ODA so go get some tasty bivalves to round out that seafood supper.

Soon, tuna boats will make the last trip of the year out of Newport and Depoe Bay. For now, however, warm water remains within reach (for those equipped and fueled to make trips of 30 to 40 miles offshore) and catches of albacore remain good. Unfortunately, ocean conditions have limited opportunities and the cycle of high wind and waves has seemed to coincide with weekends lately. This coming Saturday and

Sunday is maintaining that pattern; it's likely to be rough offshore. Wednesday this week produced good catches of albacore out of Depoe Bay and Newport for those who made the trip.

The Siuslaw was under a lot of pressure last weekend as man boats trolled tidewater. Very few fish were taken, however.

Fall Chinook angling has picked up in the Coos and Coquille estuaries where trollers are making fair to good catches on anchovies and spinners.

Bank-bound anglers throwing spinners are taking good numbers of coho from the jetty at Winchester Bay. While the majority of the fish are wild, requiring release, catches are good enough that many are taking limits. Keep an eye out for seals; they'll sure be watching you when you hook a fish. Crabbing is good for numbers in the bay but the majority are softshells at this time of year. Smallmouth bass fishing remains great in the mainstem Umpqua while North Umpqua steelheaders are doing well in both the flies-only stretch and where bait is allowed.

Boats got out of Charleston this week but found only tough, scratch fishing for a very few tuna.

Catches of Chinook have been very good in Rogue bay this week while weekday pressure has been light. Anchovies trolled with green spinner blades are accounting for the majority of hookups. With water temperatures once again too high in the river to encourage migration, these kegged fall fish are eager to cooperate with anglers. When the water temperature has dipped recently, Chinook have taken the opportunity to move upstream,, creating a viable fishery in the Agness area although fishing has only been fair. The lower has good numbers of adult and half-pounder summer steelhead and these fish are willing biters on most any lure or fly. No bait is allowed in lower Rogue Canyon where steelhead catches have been good. Chinook are falling for wrapped Kwikfish in the Grants Pass stretch while the upper Rogue is fair to good for summer steelhead in the flies-only stretch.

Brookings anglers may have some opportunities to enjoy the excellent bottomfishing early mornings before the wind starts to blow and the ocean gets lumpy. A. K Saadat of Brookings took two places in last week's three-day Slammin' Salmon Derby. The 39.8 pound Chinook he caught on Friday held at first place for the \$5,000 prize and also qualified him for second place in Friday's best combined weight. In all, \$20,000 in cash and prizes were awarded.

Diamond Lake is primed to produce some larger trout lower water temperature will encourage the big boys to move out of the depths to prowl shallower water. A derby will take place here September 26th and 27th for \$5,000 in prizes. A \$20,000 Boulton boat and motor will be awarded to the angler lucky enough to catch the one, lone tagged trout.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Trollers are taking very few steelhead in the warm water of the Columbia although they have been hooking some Chinook. The White River has nearly quit spewing silt and the water conditions of the Deschutes downstream of the White's mouth is clearing up. With over half a million steelhead over Bonneville and nearly 300,000 over McNary Dam, numbers of summers continue to climb in the lower Deschutes. Trout fishing has been very good below Macks Canyon.

Kokanee are hitting well at Green Peter for trollers plying the depths with downriggers. Despite the lateness of the season, the kokes are bright with intact scales and running to 16 inches.

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>

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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.

TGF Inbox – Reader Email

Reader Fernando C. reports, "Coho are running hard at the Lewis it is so unfortunate that we are having a problem with many idiots trying to snag them. The hatchery especially, Big problem.

If it's possible can you announce that on the next your next fishing report with a hot line number to report such issue. Thank you!"

Keep `em handy, readers.

ODFW TIP Hotline: **1-800-452-7888**

WDFW TIP Hotline: **1-800-902-2936**

And **subscriber Joseph Burk** writes - I read your newsletter from 09-03-2009. It stated that one wild Coho may be kept on the Nehalem River. I have been looking, and was not aware that NOAA had ok'd the harvesting of native Coho. Although I was aware that ODFW had ok'd the proposal , when I spoke with ODFW , they said they were waiting for NOAA to approve before they announced it publicly. I wanted to know where to find info. ok'ing the harvesting of native COHO on the Nehalem.

Bob Rees replies –

Go to:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/reg_changes/docs/2009_coastal_coho_and_fall_chi_nook.pdf and although it says "subject to NOAA approval" it did go through so have at them if you choose. We're hoping that folks only take lethally hooked wild coho and/or males only, letting the females go free if they will live after release!

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

2009 Oregon Wild Coho Fishery:

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

NOAA Online Charts for the Northwest:

<http://www.sailing-the-northwest.com/2008/03/noaa-online-charts-for-the-northwest/>

GOOD LUCK!