

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 18th – September 24th, 2009**

Willamette Valley/Metro- Backtrollers at Bonneville Dam are surprised at the good fishing being had right now for chinook salmon. Dam counts indicate action should continue into early October and as water and air temperatures cool, the action should heat up even more. Flatfish wrapped with sardines are consistently taking fish in the early mornings.

The river downstream of Warrior Rock near Longview is now closed. The fishery was mediocre at best but Butch DuBois of Toledo Ohio took a 20-pounder just prior to the September 14th closure on a wobbler near the mouth of the Lewis River. Effort will now shift upstream.

With the water temperature moderating to 67 degrees at Willamette Falls, daily coho counts have jumped to triple digits, pushing the total to nearly 1,200 as of Monday this week. Anglers are figuring out the coho fishery above the falls, in which clipped or non-clipped coho may be retained.

Walleye catches are beginning to improve in the Multnomah Channel for anglers using worms on bouncing rigs on the bottom.

With October caddis joining a number of other hatches on the lower McKenzie, trout fishing is good. Steelhead catches improved over the past week below Leaburg Dam.

North Santiam level and flow will be steady for two weeks, then increase. For steelhead, try from Packsaddle down to Mehema.

The Clackamas has been slow for coho fishers at the Bowling Alley Hole.

Fishing has been slow to fair with occasional flurries of action at the mouth of the Sandy River. Cedar Creek is getting crowded.

Scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout are Mt Hood Pond, North Fork Reservoir and Small Fry Lake

Northwest – Action for coho at Buoy 10 has slowed dramatically. Although not uncommon, given this years large return, some anglers are calling it quits for the season. Another batch of fish are likely due over the weekend as tides improve. The best fishing is likely to take place above the Astoria/Megler Bridge near high tide and the first part of outgoing tide as well.

Salmon fishing out of Tillamook Bay was slow earlier in the week but improving tides should bring more fish into the estuary. Chinook numbers should begin to build in the bay and wild coho will likely take a stronger hold in the estuary well into October. Ocean crabbing out of Garibaldi is phenomenal but bay crabbing is productive as well.

The Nehalem estuary has been producing fair numbers of wild coho, of which one may be retained. Hatchery coho are present as well but not as willing to bite. Chinook must be released unharmed.

The Nestucca, Salmon and Alsea Rivers are all options right now and stronger tides this weekend should increase opportunity for upper river anglers using bobbers and bait or trolling spinners.

Anglers are still in pursuit of tuna although success rates have been sporadic with live bait still producing the best results

Southwest – Sunday, September 11th, was the last day that cabezon could be retained. They'll be off limits until 2010. The quota of 15.8 metric tons had been filled

Mussel harvesting remains open from Rob Creek (south of Yachats) to the California border.

The Umpqua Valley Fly Fishers are sponsoring the North Umpqua Fall Fly Tying Festival at Glide Community Center located at 20062 N. Umpqua Highway in Glide. The free event will take place from 9 AM to 4:30 PM.

Anglers casting spinners from the jetties at Winchester Bay have continued to make fair to good catches of mostly wild coho and jacks. Fishing is spotty out of Reedsport. Steelheading remains worthwhile on the North Umpqua.

The Coos and Coquille rivers have been productive for chinook in tidewater. Boats launching out of Charleston are traveling about 30 miles to make decent catches of albacore.

Rogue Bay trollers have continued to catch good numbers of Chinook. Some days recently have produced 100-fish. Catches of fall chinook are improving in the Grants Pass stretch.

Bottom fishing out of the Port of Brookings has been outstanding. Limits of rockfish are being caught and ling cod have been taken to 35 pounds. Conditions for launching are marginal this weekend but should allow for early morning trips.

Eastern – Steelheading on the lower Deschutes has continued to improve as summer steelhead numbers improve. The river is in good shape when cooler daytime air temperatures prevail. It's running cloudy now.

Anglers at the mouth of the Deschutes are only doing fair on trolled plugs. This is supposed to be peak season.

Eastern Oregon steelhead favorites should begin producing fair catches by the last week in September. The near record run of steelhead up the Columbia should bode well for these tributary fisheries for the month of October and November.

SW Washington – The coho fishery at the mouth of the Toutle is beginning to pick up and should last through mid-October. The Cowlitz itself is also producing fair catches of coho.

Chinook fishing is still open on many district streams but is due to close beginning October 1st. Be sure to check regulations.

The Lewis River is a good option for coho but numbers should build even better into October when second run fish begin to show.

The Klickitat River is producing some chinook for bank anglers near the mouth.

Columbia River Fishing Report – With Buoy 10 still fresh on the minds of many, success rates have fallen as the fruitful coho fishing in the lower river has finally began to show signs of ending. For about 6 days now, anglers have had a harder time finding good action for what was seemingly an endless supply of coho on the lower Columbia. Another storm front hit Astoria on my last day of fishing (9/13) netting us only a few bites (mostly by mackerel) above the Astoria Bridge on the Washington side. Through mid-week, action remained fair at best. Although it's clear that the bulk of

the "A" run fish are upriver now, it is typical to have fair size pods of good sized coho continuing to use the estuary for the next several weeks. If history repeats itself, there should be another good rush of fish on the next good tide series. That's next week already! Bait remained a staple for me, anchovies that is. Some guides swore by spinners and produced results, it just wasn't me! Smaller sized French blades in pink and orange worked well for some.

Typically on these "holdover" tides, action at Tongue Point can really kick in as well. That is also NOT the case as a few guides tried in earnest to get a bite going up there with little success. The chinooks were also MIA for most of the season here as well. The Tongue Point fishery was short lived this year despite good numbers of fish coming through.

As a courtesy repeat from last weeks newsletter, we're reprinting the regulations reflecting the upriver closure from Warrior Rock downstream for Chinook.

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.

Action in this section remained quiet except for some sporadic action near Longview prior to the closure. Overall, this season was a bit of a disappointment but some quality fish were taken.

Upriver, action in the Bonneville stretch remains good for this early in the season. Some quality Chinook are being hooked by anchor anglers and backtrollers using plugs. The Tanner Creek closure remains in effect as hordes of Chinook are making their way upstream there. Oversize sturgeon are also picking up dead ones as they float back downstream and likely some live ones! They can be viewed close to the Tanner Creek mouth. Catch and keep sturgeon fishing remains closed in the area but not for much longer.

Further upstream, anglers working the mouth of the Deschutes River continue to take an occasional steelhead and Chinook. Overall however, action is somewhat subdued given the size of the run this year. It should be full throttle right now but effort is less than in years past. Wind has hampered efforts lately.

Offshore, effort is also light with few pursuing coho even though ample numbers of hatchery fish should still be available although it may take some searching to find them.

Tuna anglers are still a bit frustrated as some offshore fishers report great action while others are struggling to get into good numbers of fish. It's certainly a live bait show but fish seem more wary

than usual. It seems to be all about the "sneak". If a school decides to sound, forget it, you better find another willing pod of jumpers.

Crabbing is only getting better in the nearshore waters and the lower Columbia. The crab are really starting to fill out too. Ocean conditions should allow for some good harvest in the coming weeks but the mainstem itself should become a viable place to expect a limit as the fall wears on.

The Guide's Forecast – If you are still open to risking it, the lower Columbia is still likely to produce good catches of coho in the coming weeks. Center your fishing trip around the high tide but if you only have a few hours to fish, target high slack and the first 3 hours of outgoing tide. The tides will begin to get big again, which is likely to bring in good numbers of fish as well. If you are going to put in a full day, start down low, like lower Desdemona Sands, trolling upstream as the tide floods in. Make sure you are above the bridge for high slack and the first part of outgoing tide. Depending on how high the high tide is, the higher in the estuary you should target your quarry. Spinners may work well but I have the most faith in fresh anchovies. If you can't access anchovies, go with cut plug green label herring or whole green label herring. They should produce good results if the fish are present; just be sure to keep your baits fishing near the bottom.

Anglers targeting Chinook are still left with a lot of water above Longview. The most consistent action seems to be at Bonneville Dam where anglers are regularly taking Chinook to 25 pounds. Backtrolled plugs will take the bulk of the fish and action should only get better as the season wears on. Warm weather however can put a damper on the bite after the morning rush. The deadline downstream should produce fair catches for the remainder of the season. Effort is light.

Steelheaders still have some good opportunity at the mouth of the Deschutes River. Weather will dictate success in this fishery. Passage at The Dalles Dam is good with 5,000 to 7,000 fish passing daily. The one drawback is the Indian gillnets are taking a good chunk of fish from the mainstem. There are still a lot to go around however.

For adventuresome anglers, the ocean is still an option but be prepared to go in search of keepers. The last known area was north of Buoy 1 on the Washington side but we've had late season luck well south of the CR Buoy off of Seaside (in calm seas of course) trolling deep and finding quality keepers destined for the Columbia likely in October. There are still a lot of fish due to the lower river when the "B" run fish come in later this month. They are forecasted to make up a significant portion of the run this year.

For offshore tuna chasers, even though the season is coming to its end, there should still be some good opportunity for live bait fishers on Friday and maybe Saturday. Of course the weather forecast can change at any time.

The ocean forecast is as follows:

FRI NE WIND 5 TO 10 KT...BACKING TO N IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 7 FT.

FRI NIGHT W WIND 5 TO 10 KT...BECOMING SW 10 TO 15 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF RAIN IN THE EVENING...THEN RAIN LIKELY AFTER MIDNIGHT.

SAT NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 7 FT. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

SAT NIGHT N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 8 FT.

SUN N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. W SWELL 7 FT.

MON NE WIND 15 TO 20 KT WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. W SWELL 6 FT.

Whatever you do to recreate in the lower Columbia, you will want to bring your crab gear and soak your pots. Action and quality will rule in the salt but the lower river itself should produce ample results.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – While the water temperature is creeping up once again at Willamette Falls, it remains to be seen how this effects fish passage. Our money is on an increase in daily counts as late as it is in the season.

The McKenzie River water level is slowly dropping but temperatures are holding steady in the low 50s.

North Santiam boast good numbers of steelhead present but only trout have been caught recently.

The Guide's Forecast – The best chance at a hookup on the Willamette is on the Town Run and Middle Fork with trout and summer steelhead cooperative now. Bass fishing is fair in the upper and lower Willamette but will improve as we move into Fall and lower nighttime temperature trigger feeding as this fish bulk up for winter.

Redside fishing will be good this weekend in the McKenzie with October caddis starting to hatch. Fish below Leaburg Dam for a decent chance of a summer steelhead hookup.

Try the South Santiam below Foster Dam. It's slow but a few steelhead have been taken here and anglers' chances here are certainly better than on the North.

Detroit Reservoir will be a worthwhile destination this weekend for good numbers of nice trout with the occasional fish over 20 inches.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Most people prefer to avoid the zoo referred to as the Bowling Alley Hole on the Clackamas. Coho are moving upstream now but are reluctant to bite so take a variety of lures and baits and keep changing up until you connect. Vary retrieve speed with plugs & spinners; if drifting eggs, try doing so under a float. Coho are being caught in crowded conditions on Eagle Creek with dark lures or yarn most effective. A little rain will most certainly improve prospects while a gullywasher will put all the fish upriver in a day or two.

The Sandy River has coho moving through all the way to Dodge Park. Catching them can be a challenge but anglers who are persistent are hooking fish. The stretch below Cedar Creek has a few but there are many more fishers than fish. The early morning hours have been most productive.

North Coast Fishing Report – Effort in Garibaldi would have you think that the action is off the hook here on the north coast. The parking lot was full on Tuesday but action seemed less than stellar according to the folks that are paying attention. There was some action in the ocean and a little in the bay as well with coho seemingly making up the bulk of the catch. There has been some fair Chinook action in Tillamook Bay in both the upper and lower reaches but most of the action should be taking place in the lower reaches coming off of the weak tide series we're currently on.

We dropped crab pots in the ocean on Tuesday and witnessed a fair number of boats pursuing salmon in the bubble fishery. We only saw one coho caught while we were traversing the waters. Overall, action was slow the last several days in Tillamook.

The Nehalem, while closed to the taking of Chinook, has been producing fair to good catches of coho, especially at the jaws. One angler reported double-digit landings late last week with a mix of hatchery and wild fish available. He also released 4 chinook.

Other coastal estuaries are not reporting stellar success. The Nestucca and Salmon River estuaries and tidewater sections should be producing good results now and action is likely fair but reports have been slow to come in, indicating that the action is fair at best.

The Alsea has been hit or miss with the action best for wild coho. Some Chinook are being caught but it's likely to pick up better later in the season. The Alsea is also not expecting a great run of Chinook this year.

Crabbing on the north coast is good, especially in the ocean. We crabbed the ocean on Tuesday and landed 4 easy limits for a 6 hour soak with quality bait. The large soft shelled crab we were pulling in July are now full of meat and in prime condition. With the new fall ocean crab season, it's as good as it gets.

The Guide's Forecast – Better tides are likely to lead to better fishing. Run timing should also allow for better numbers of fish to show this time of year. The bulk of the Trask and Tillamook fish should begin to appear in Tillamook Bay with fish well distributed throughout the system. Trask and Tillamook fish however do NOT spend much time in the lower bay like the later returning Wilson and Kilchis fish. I see fair numbers of boats fishing the Ghost Hole this time of year but I would expect poor results until at least mid-October. The South (West) channel should be an option, especially with the numbers of coho due back to the bay this year. The upper bay should begin to produce fair numbers of Chinook in the coming days with a few fish close to low slack but fair numbers on the late part of the incoming tide. The middle bay should produce as well but keep in mind that the run forecast for the Tillamook is also likely to be down from historic good returns. Hatchery coho are expected to return in good numbers and should be present for the next several weeks. We could of lost good numbers to the last rain freshets however making the Trask River a good second option.

The Nehalem will likely continue to produce fair results for coho anglers. Wild coho are allowed for retention but we encourage people to consider releasing wild hens or fish not lethally hooked. A 1,000 fish quota is in place.

The better tides may also stimulate a bite on the lower Nestucca and Salmon Rivers. Slight rises in river levels may also stimulate fish to migrate into the lower reaches of north coast streams. All methods may take fish in the tidewater sections of these rivers although bobber fishing in known holdover holes on these 2 systems are likely to produce the best. Trolled spinners or plugs may also produce an occasional fish.

Most coastal estuaries should be producing good catches of Dungeness crab. I know the ocean will produce beyond your expectations!

Central & South Coast Reports – Although mentioned in the Fisheries Update, above, it's worth another reminder. With the 2009 quota filled, cabezon may no longer be retained for the remainder of the year.

Crabbing has been good in Yaquina Bay with several crabbers reporting limits.

Fall Chinook can be seen in fair to good number in Siletz tidewater and there are plenty of boats chasing them but very few are being hooked.

Action at the Alsea has been slow to get underway although a few Chinook have been landed near the bay entrance. As with many locations, rainfall would certainly improve the situation. Anglers are reminded that this year it's one per day and two for the year for the Siletz, Yaquina and Alsea. With warm water close to shore, albacore catches have been good whenever the wind and wave action calms down. A large dorado was taken recently out of Winchester Bay.

Smallmouth bass anglers continue to be rewarded with great catches in the mainstem Umpqua River on soft plastics. North Umpqua steelheading is good in both the bait area and in the flies-only stretch. Catch the free North Umpqua Fall Fly Tying Festival at the Glide Community Center in Glide, Oregon on Saturday, Sept. 19th from 9 AM to 4:30 PM.

Most southwest river harbor good numbers of sea-run cutthroat trout at this time of year. They're suckers for spinner and brightly-colored flies.

Coos and Coquille anglers are taking Chinook by trolling spinners or anchovies. While the Coquille is seeing a very good return of fall Chinook, most of the fish are jacks. None of the locals or guides recall a greater jack return which should bode well for next year's run. Fishing for striped bass has been slow, however. Boats launching out of Coos Bay are taking all the tuna they can carry on board. When that is, they can locate them. Tuna at this time of year are large. Inside Coos Bay, salmon trollers are catching California halibut with some regularity. One such fish was taken during the tournament over the past weekend weighed 30 pounds..

Trollers on Rogue Bay can count on the bite shutting down if the surf comes up. Because the river temperature dropped into the mid-60s over the weekend, it's possible (and practical) to run upriver to target moving fish. Those who have done so recently have been rewarded with a few Chinook and good catches of adult steelhead and half-pounders. When the ocean lays down, the estuary continues to deliver steady results with fresh fall fish entering daily in good number. Catches on Tuesday this week were off the chart. Over 200 Chinook were landed by trollers in the bay with most in the 20s, many in the 40s and one over 60 pounds. Anchovy/spinner combinations continue to account for most catches. Upstream to Rogue Canyon where bait is not allowed, steelhead and half-pounders are being taken in good number on lures and flies. Plugs are accounting for fair to good numbers of Chinook.

While trollers are taking some Chinook on the lower Elk and Sixes river, it will only get better with some rainfall.

Chinook fishing in Chetco tidewater has yet to heat up this year. The river is closed to all fishing above the Highway 101 Bridge.

Central and Eastern Oregon – As numbers of steelhead increase on the Deschutes, so does fishing pressure. Plenty of players will be encountered from the mouth to above Maupin on any day of the week, Warm weather set off the White River once again which is likely to keep spewing through the coming week. Chinook can be seen making the upstream effort all day long at Shearers Falls.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report September 16th - 29th, 2009

North Puget Sound

The bulk of the pink salmon run has moved into the rivers, where anglers have had success hooking humpies. Meanwhile, catch rates for coho salmon are starting to improve, likely signaling the arrival of ocean silvers into Puget Sound.

Some of the best coho harvest numbers were seen at fish checks in central Puget Sound. For example, 214 anglers were checked with 137 coho Sept. 12 at the Shilshole Ramp, while 423 anglers brought home 295 at the Everett Ramp. The following day, 221 anglers were checked with 172 silvers at Shilshole, while 214 anglers were checked with 163 coho at Everett.

Point No Point, Jefferson Head, Possession Bar and Shipwreck should be good spots to hook ocean coho, said John Long, statewide salmon manager for WDFW. 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, but must release chinook. In Marine Area 9, anglers also must release chum through Sept. 30.

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** but the opportunity is limited. In northern Puget Sound, only Marine Area 7 remains open for crab. Marine Area 7 is open Wednesdays through Saturdays each week through Sept. 30. The region's other marine areas are closed for a catch assessment.

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 are hooking **pink salmon** on several rivers, including the Stillaguamish, Snohomish, Skagit 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.

Lake Washington opens today (Sept. 16) to coho fishing. Anglers are 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

With the ocean **salmon** season coming to a close, anglers are focusing on the coho fishery heating up along the Strait of Juan de Fuca. In addition, more area rivers are now open to salmon fishing, although anglers are reminded of a partial closure on the Puyallup River.

Salmon fishing at Westport, (Marine Area 2), La Push (Marine Area 3) and Neah Bay (Marine Area 4) closes Sept. 20, while Ilwaco (Marine Area 1) will remain open through Sept. 30.

However, a portion of Marine Area 3 will reopen Sept. 26 - Oct. 11 for a late-season fishery targeting **coho** and **chinook** salmon returning to the Quillayute River system. "The La Push fishery is very popular," said Wendy Beeghley, WDFW fish biologist. "There's still fish out there and judging from this year's overall results, anglers should be successful."

Anglers heading to the area may want to take part in the La Push Last Chance Salmon derby, scheduled Sept. 26 and 27. For more information, call the Forks Chamber of Commerce at 1-800-443-6757, or send an email to chambers@forkswa.com

Other coastal areas open to fishing include the salmon fishery east of Buoy 13 in Grays Harbor (Marine Area 2-2), which is open daily through Nov. 30, while Willapa Bay is open daily until Jan. 31.

Beeghley 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.

On the Strait of Juan de Fuca, anglers fishing in Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) will be able to retain two **wild coho** as part of their two-fish daily limit when the non-selective coho fishery opens Sept. 19-30. All **chinook** and **chum** must be released. Starting Oct. 1, anglers in the area may retain one **chinook** salmon as part of their two-fish daily limit.

Meanwhile, a non-selective fishery for coho and chinook gets under way Oct. 1 in Marine Area 6 (Port Angeles), where anglers will be able to retain one chinook as part of their two-fish daily limit. Through Sept. 30, all chinook, wild coho and chum must be released.

In south Puget Sound, anglers fishing in Marine Area 11 (Tacoma/Vashon Island) will be allowed to retain **wild chinook** as part of their two-fish daily limit beginning Oct. 1. Anglers fishing in Marine Area 13 may also retain wild chinook, but must release all wild coho.

In Hood Canal (Marine Area 12), the daily limit is four **coho** only. All other salmon species must be released. The same rules apply to Dabob and Quilcene bays in northern Hood Canal.

Anglers are reminded that recreational fishing on the **Puyallup River** is closed from noon Sundays to noon Tuesdays, Sept. 20-22 and Sept. 27-29 due to public safety concerns and to reduce gear conflicts between sport anglers and tribal fishers. The section closed extends from

the 11th Street Bridge in Tacoma to the City of Puyallup Outfall Structure across the river from the junction of Freeman Road and North Levee Road. Recreational fishing will remain open seven days a week upstream of the closed section. The lower section will reopen seven days a week beginning at noon Sept. 29.

Salmon fishing is now under way on the Chehalis River, which opened Sept. 16 from the Hwy 101 Bridge in Aberdeen to the Porter Bridge. The daily limit is six fish. Up to two adults may be retained, but only one may be a **wild adult coho**. Adult chinook and chum must be released.

Area rivers opening Oct. 1 for fall salmon fishing include the Elk, Hoquiam, Humptulips, Johns, Satsop, Wishkah and Wynoochee in Grays Harbor County; Kennedy Creek (upriver to the Hwy 101 bridge) in Thurston County; the Nemah River in Pacific County; and the Skokomish River in Mason County.

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.

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.

Recreational 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

Anglers are still averaging a **coho** per boat most days in the Buoy 10 fishery at the mouth of the Columbia River, but the action is shifting to the Cowlitz River and other tributaries below Bonneville Dam. Several rivers will close to **chinook** retention Oct. 1, but new fishing opportunities - including a catch-and-keep **sturgeon** season above the Wauna powerlines - are also on the horizon.

Starting Oct. 1, anglers will be able to catch and keep white sturgeon Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from the Wauna powerlines upriver to Bonneville Dam.

"Fishing opportunities in the Columbia River Basin are again in flux," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "The chinook catch is tapering off, but we now have coho salmon in all of the major tributaries. "That fishery will continue to build through the end of the month, as the sturgeon fishery gets under way above Wauna."

Best bets for hatchery coho in the coming weeks are the Cowlitz, Lewis, Kalama, Toutle, Elochoman and Grays rivers, Hymer said. Anglers have been catching both hatchery coho and chinook salmon at the confluence of the Cowlitz and Toutle rivers and where the Green River flows into the North Toutle.

Anglers may retain up to six hatchery-reared 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. Except on the Klickitat River, only those fish with a clipped adipose fin and healed scar may be retained.

While coho are expected to be abundant this year, Hymer acknowledges that they can be reluctant to bite. The best time to catch them is after a heavy rain, or when water levels rise, he said. "Nothing cures lockjaw as well as a good hard rain," he said. "The action should also pick up when the late-run fish move into these river systems."

Meanwhile, after a record catch in August, the fall chinook fishery below Bonneville Dam has tapered off in recent days. Although fisheries for hatchery coho and **steelhead** remain open, anglers fishing the mainstem Columbia River must now release any chinook they intercept from the Lewis River downstream (see boundary map at <http://bit.ly/AF4Qt>).

However, anglers still have an opportunity to harvest fall chinook on the mainstem Columbia from the Lewis River upstream. One of the best spots should be in Bonneville Pool at the mouths of the tributaries plus in Drano Lake and the Klickitat River, Hymer said.

The Lewis is scheduled to close to chinook retention to protect wild fish, which are expected to return in numbers just above the minimum escapement goals. Effective Oct. 1, anglers will be required to release all chinook salmon on the Lewis River including the North Fork. In addition, fishing from any floating device will be prohibited on the North Fork Lewis from Johnson Creek to Colvin Creek. Also effective Oct. 1, Colvin Creek will be closed to all fishing upstream to Merwin Dam to protect naturally spawning fish.

Several other regulations also come into play Oct. 1 to protect naturally spawning fish. All chinook must be released on the North Fork Toutle River from the Kidd Valley Bridge near Highway 504 upstream. Adult chinook - but not hatchery jacks - must be released on the Green, Washougal (from Little Washougal River upstream) and the White Salmon River (from ½ mile above the Hwy. 14 Bridge upstream). Marked, hatchery fall chinook - both adults and jacks - may still be retained on the Grays, Elochoman and Kalama rivers.

"This is one of the benefits of moving toward selective fisheries for fall chinook salmon," Hymer said. "We need to protect naturally spawning fish, but anglers can continue to catch abundant hatchery salmon throughout the season."

Looking for something a little different? Anglers should try fishing for hatchery **sea-run cutthroats** on the lower Cowlitz River. Bank and boat anglers stand a good chance to catch these aggressive foot-long fish on bait, lures, or flies.

While fishing opportunities routinely change with the seasons, Hymer admits that a recent influx of **mackerel** into the lower Columbia River caught him by surprise. "First Humboldt squid off Sekiu and now this," he said. "Mackerel seldom come this far north and this is the first time I can remember fish reported in the lower river. Ocean conditions are clearly topsy-turvy this year."

Eastern Washington

Snake River **steelhead** and **chinook salmon** fishing is slowly picking up. Catch rates are still very low for chinook in the only two open sections for that species - from the Highway 12 Bridge (near the mouth of the Snake River) upstream to the no-fishing zone below Ice Harbor Dam, and

from Highway 261 Bridge crossing the Snake River (about one half mile upstream from Lyons Ferry Hatchery) upstream to the no-fishing zone below Little Goose Dam.

Steelhead catches are increasing in the upper river near the Idaho border, and along the "wall" and walkway area upstream of the juvenile fish bypass return pipe below Little Goose Dam.

Glen Mendel, WDFW southeast district fish biologist, reminds anglers that in the "wall" area below Little Goose Dam, the daily chinook catch limit is just one hatchery (adipose-fin-clipped) adult (24 inches or greater) chinook and up to two jack (less than 24 inches) chinook. In the rest of the two sections open for chinook, the daily catch limit is two marked hatchery adult chinook and four chinook jacks either wild or hatchery-marked.

WDFW Enforcement Sgt. Jim Nelson said that some anglers believe they can legally fish with two poles for steelhead and salmon in the Snake River reservoirs behind dams. Washington's new two-pole option went into effect last month, but waters with anadromous and/or ESA-listed species are excluded from two-pole fishing, as described at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/twopole>.

"I think since these reservoirs all carry names like Lake Bryan, Lake Sacajawea, Lake Wallula, some people are confused by the two-pole option, which is available at most of our lakes, ponds and reservoirs," Nelson said. "Adding to the confusion is the fact that the state of Idaho allows two-pole fishing in anadromous-species waters."

In Washington, the two pole endorsement is not valid on the Columbia or Snake rivers mainstem, except Rufus Woods Reservoir and Lake Roosevelt.

Whether with one or two poles, Lake Roosevelt is currently producing good catches of big **rainbow trout**, according to Chris Donley, WDFW central district fish biologist.

"Sprague Lake is also really cooking, too," Donley said. "But both Roosevelt and Sprague are open year round, so this might be the time to take advantage of the last couple weeks of fishing on trout lakes like Badger, Coffeepot, Fish, and Williams, which all close Sept. 30. Badger, in particular, has some nice carryover **cutthroat trout**."

Donley noted September can be really good for **yellow perch** fishing at southwest Spokane County's Downs Lake, which also closes Sept. 30. Clear Lake, near the town of Medical Lake, has **brown trout** biting now and usually produces good catches of **crappie** and **largemouth bass** in late fall. Clear Lake remains open through October.

"Amber Lake is taking off now for cutthroat and rainbow trout fly fishing," Donley said. "It's open through November, but the last two months are catch-and-release with selective gear rules."

Northcentral Washington

Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan District fish biologist from Twisp, reports **chinook salmon** are still being caught in the Brewster/Bridgeport area on the upper Columbia River. That salmon season is scheduled to close Oct. 15.

"The Methow River **trout** fishery is scheduled to close September 30th, but anglers should be aware that if incidental **steelhead** take limits are approached, sections of the river could close early," Jateff said. "Anglers should avoid targeting steelhead during the trout fishery."

Jateff also noted lowland lakes fishing in Okanogan County will pick up this month and next as water temperatures cool and trout become more active. Selective gear rule lakes, such as Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, and Big and Little Twin lakes near Winthrop, should all provide good fishing during the later part of September and through October.

Many Columbia Basin trout lakes close to fishing Sept. 30. Check the 2009-2010 *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> for details.

The Columbia Basin's year-round Moses Lake and Potholes Reservoir continue to provide fishing for **trout, perch, crappie**, and **bluegill**. Potholes' annual MarDon Marathon Dock Tournament is Sept. 25-27; see <http://www.mardonresort.com> for details.

Southcentral Washington

"This is a great time to fish for **rainbow trout** in the Yakima River upstream from Roza Dam and the Naches River," said Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist from Yakima. "It's catch-and-release in this stretch and the low flows and mild days make fishing this time of year a real pleasure."

Cummins says the upper Yakima should produce rainbow trout for both boat and bank anglers. "Water is no longer being released from upper Yakima River reservoirs as the result of the annual 'flip-flop' designed to reduced flows where chinook salmon spawn in the upper Yakima," he said. "Not only does this increase salmon spawning habitat and protect redds from winter low flows, but anglers can enjoy the increased fishing opportunity resulting from the low flows."

Cummins also noted fishing success for **rainbow, cutthroat**, and **eastern brook trout** in high mountain lakes is generally best this time of year. "You can enjoy mild daytime temperatures, cool evenings, and colorful vegetation and most of the bugs found in July and August are gone," he said. "Just be aware that some hunting seasons are in progress as you hike in and out of these lakes."

Reader E-mail

Reader Joseph B. writes with a question about coastal coho, "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 were to find info. ok'ing the harvesting of native COHO on the Nehalem."

Bob Rees replied, advising to "Go to:

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

"Good luck!"

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

Orvis and Deschutes Trout Unlimited Fly Casting Tournament September 18th through 20th. Win schwag or big bucks:

<http://oregonflyfishingblog.com/2009/09/16/orvis-and-deschutes-trout-unlimited-fly-casting-tournament/>

Rogue River Video Guides:

<http://www.mailtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?category=ROGUERIVER>

GOOD LUCK!