

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 25<sup>th</sup> – October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009**

**Willamette Valley/Metro** - The chinook bite near Bonneville Dam has tapered but action should pick back up again when water and air temperatures begin to decrease. Dam counts remain strong although there are a lot more fish due back to the system. Backtrollers working plugs are taking the majority of fish.

Sturgeon season from Wauna to Bonneville Dam is slated to re-open on October 1<sup>st</sup> and action is likely to be good in the gorge. October is frequently the peak month for keepers upstream of Multnomah Falls.

With the water temperatures in the mid to high 60s over the past week at Willamette Falls, steady triple digit counts have pushed the coho count over 4,300 and the run is just starting. Anglers are catching fish from Albany down to the Falls.

Water releases from the dams on the McKenzie are increasing water levels and has improved trout and steelhead fishing.

Coho have been slow to enter the low waters of the Clackamas. Rain would significantly improve this popular fishery.

Anglers targeting coho on the Sandy are picking up the occasional summer steelhead. Jacks are fairly plentiful and eagerly take cured eggs. Pressure is increasing at Cedar Creek where a few coho are being taken.

Detroit Reservoir, Foster Reservoir, Henry Hagg Lake and Alton Baker Canal are scheduled to be stocked with trout.

**Northwest** – Although strong east winds hampered effort on the lower Columbia this week, action remained good for hatchery coho for anglers trolling bait on the last half of incoming tide. Anglers can expect continued good catches in the area but the gillnet fleet will begin targeting "B" run coho starting September 28<sup>th</sup> from Astoria upstream.

Chinook season remains closed downstream of Warrior Rock near Longview.

The Necanicum tidewater has good numbers of salmon but they are reluctant to bite.

The Nehalem system will remain open to hatchery coho although few are being reported in the catches. The limited wild coho fishery is now closed after a quick harvest of 1,000 wild adults. Chinook must also be released unharmed in this watershed.

Effort is running high on Tillamook Bay but success is far from consistent. Immense amounts of seaweed are torturing anglers throughout the estuary so anglers anxiously await the morning bar report to see if they can safely fish in the ocean adjacent to the bay entrance. Like the Nehalem, hatchery coho are hard to come by.

The Nestucca and Salmon Rivers are putting out a few fish but you would think it was more based on the bank effort taking place along these systems. Catches typically begin to slow by early October on the Salmon River.

This is the last week for the late season hatchery coho season in the ocean from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain. Catches have not been impressive.

Ocean crabbing is excellent but only fair inside the bay. Netarts, Nehalem and Nestucca estuaries also remain an option.

Scheduled for trout planting are Lost Lake (Clatsop County), Sunset Lake and Town Lake.

**Southwest** – Mussel harvesting and razor clam digging is closed on the entire Oregon coast due to a naturally-occurring biotoxin.

North Umpqua anglers are taking summer steelhead on plugs and spinners while the mainstem is providing excellent fishing for smallmouth bass. Spinner casters are taking coho from the Winchester Bay jetty but seals are snatching many of the hooked fish. Most boats out of Reedsport are hooking up with coho.

Coos Bay closed on Saturday, September 19th for retention of wild coho with the quota of 1,000 filled. Crabbing has been fair in the bay, good outside in the ocean.

Fishing is very slow on the Coquille River with only a few jacks being caught. This system remains open for wild coho.

Trollers in the Rogue estuary are experiencing various degrees of success, much of which depends upon ocean conditions. When the surf is high, it deters chinook from crossing the bar which results in slow fishing. Conversely, some very good catches are being made on calm days.

Chinook are beginning to trickle into the lower Chetco but fishing is only fair. Bottom fishing offshore remains excellent with limits of rockfish and large ling cod being taken.

Lost Creek Reservoir and Fish Lake are scheduled to be stocked with trout.

**Eastern** – Although steelheading is good on the Deschutes, the White River is spewing silt and will likely continue to do so with warm weather in the coming week. With rare exception, over 100 steelhead a day are being counted at Shearers Falls. The upper Deschutes is fair to good for reddsides and, unlike the lower river, has very little pressure.

Steelhead are available in the Grande Ronde, Imnaha and Wallowa Rivers but action is slow with better success rates in the cooler month of October and November.

**SW Washington** – Good numbers of coho are beginning to enter the Cowlitz, Kalama and Lewis Rivers. Numbers should continue to build into mid-October with spinners and bait taking the majority of fish. A mix of bright and dark fish are in the catches and some chinook are available as well but check local regulations before heading out.

Gorge tributaries such as the White Salmon, Klickitat, and Washougal Rivers are putting out chinook, coho and summer steelhead. Fish may become more reluctant to bite as we enter the lower tide exchanges this week.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Down and out? I don't think so. Most people have folded it up on the lower Columbia but the "B" run component of the coho run is just getting underway. Action is heating back up again on the lower Columbia and the few anglers present are taking advantage of a great situation.

The program really hasn't changed in the Astoria area. You still follow the incoming tide upstream, fishing above the bridge as you near high slack. Then, target fish on the first part of the outgoing tide starting above the bridge and working your way back downstream if and ONLY if you run out of biters above the bridge.

As recently as Wednesday, guides were reporting excellent catches with both the morning outgoing and the afternoon incoming producing great catches with wild fish making up a large portion of the catch. None-the-less, quality keepers were falling to anglers after weeding through enough wild ones.

Bait is still the ticket on the river as those fishing spinners were left out in the cold on Wednesday. There may be some days where spinners will produce favorable results but this year, it's clearly been better to utilize bait when you have it available to you. Anchovies were working best but smaller green label herring are a close second.

The Oregon side of the river is not being fished very heavily and therefore, reports are scarce. My guess is that the Washington side will continue to be the better place to fish. Don't rule out the Oregon side however if for some reason the Washington side is not producing.

Crabbing remains good on the lower river but be aware of your tides as we lost 3 crab pots to the strong outgoing tide because we wanted to fish above the bridge on the first part of outgoing tide, but by the time we reached the pots on the Oregon side of the river near Buoy 20, we were too late and had to retrieve them the next day. The softer tide series will produce the better results for those interested in crabbing.

Ocean fishing remains open but the action is much better in the river. It's an awfully big ocean for what few fish remain out there, especially since you're looking for hatchery fish only. The fishery is slated to close on September 30<sup>th</sup> and is currently around 90% of its allocated quota.

Tuna excitement has tapered as well but there is still some consistent action coming from northern ports such as Astoria and Garibaldi. It's still a live bait show however the ocean forecast doesn't look so promising for the weekend and after. Wind waves suck!

Upriver, There was some good salmon and steelhead fishing reported from the ODF&W sampling crew with 20 boats with 38 fish on Monday near Troutdale and Tuesday, 33 boats reported 54 salmon and steelhead in the Rainier area. Although the ODF&W website doesn't differentiate between coho/steelhead and chinook in the Rainier check, the previous week revealed several days where better than 1 fish per boat was reported. Anglers are figuring out how to catch coho in this stretch of river.

In the Bonneville area, boat anglers continue to dominate the catch statistics here with last weeks results coming in at a little better than 1 fish per boat. Chinook are dominating the catches in this stretch with backrollers taking the lion's share of the catch. Bank anglers are also taking fish, mostly salmon with the weekend check coming in at 16 fish for 49 rods. That's a pretty good check for bank anglers this time of year.

Also in the gorge, anglers are beginning to test the waters for sturgeon in preparation for the October 1<sup>st</sup> opener. Anglers fishing the gorge dredged up fish for most of the week although again, the new ODF&W website doesn't differentiate between keepers and shakers so we can't be as helpful as we have in the past. Action is likely to be good on the 10/1 opener however.

And even further upriver, steelheaders are still scratching their heads as numbers continue to pour over Bonneville and The Dalles Dams. Most would think the action would be better for the number of

fish present but although anglers are catching a few fish, it's not gangbuster fishing. Granted, water conditions are warmer than they should be for this time of year but I also think "net fatigue" may also be playing a role as tribal fisheries continue to be conducted.

**The Guide's Forecast** – As we enter the "B" run component of the Columbia River coho, action should once again ramp up for anglers and gillnetters working the lower Columbia River. Many sport anglers steer away from the lower river this time of year because of the increased competition from the gillnet fleet for these quality "B" run fish. Having spent some time in this fishery and given the number of "B" run fish forecasted back to the river this year, anglers may really want to take a look at this fishery since chinook numbers are down in many coastal basins and the seaweed will drive one to drink on Tillamook Bay.

Bait may very well continue to take the cake when it comes to success on the lower river. Spinners have had their time but overall, bait has far out-performed hardware this year on the lower river. There is no reason why this should change in the final weeks of this fishery. Follow the same rules as we have been all season. With the tides shaping up this weekend to be good for early morning action, look to the water above the bridge or just below with high tide occurring near daybreak. Work the water just above the bridge if you still have incoming tide at first light but action was good in the deeper slots above the bridge on the first part of outgoing tide on Wednesday, it should be no different this weekend.

The ocean remains an option but the forecasted weather will make the river look a lot more appealing:

**FRI**

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT...RISING TO 15 TO 20 KT WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 2 FT...BUILDING TO 4 FT IN THE AFTERNOON. NW SWELL 6 FT. PATCHY FOG IN THE MORNING.

**FRI NIGHT**

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT...EASING TO 15 TO 20 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT. PATCHY FOG AFTER MIDNIGHT.

**SAT**

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT. PATCHY FOG IN THE MORNING.

**SAT NIGHT**

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT...EASING TO 15 TO 20 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. W SWELL 8 FT. PATCHY FOG AFTER MIDNIGHT.

**SUN**

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 9 FT.

**MON**

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 9 FT.

Wednesday is the last day anglers are allowed to pursue coho salmon north of Cape Falcon. Fish are scattered so stay in the river for your best opportunities.

As the tides get weaker, the crabbing should get better on the lower Columbia. Small tide exchanges should have crabs active during daylight hours. Also a note on shellfish, don't get too excited about the October re-opener for razor clams along the Clatsop County Beaches. The PSP toxin is now present in dangerously high levels keeping shellfish harvest closed for all of Oregon's Beaches.

Upriver, chinook action at Bonneville Dam should remain steady for both bank and boat anglers. Backtrollers should begin to see catches ramp up as a more localized stock of fish begin holding in the Bonneville area. Also, water temperatures should begin to cool as the evenings get cooler. This too should stimulate better action in this fishery. It's also likely that oversized sturgeon may take a look at your offerings so be sure to prepare for this likelihood if you are using your favorite plug out there.

The keeper sturgeon re-opener is just a week away so it may behoove a motivated angler to check out the possibilities before you're allowed to retain one for the dinner table. Action should be ramping up in the coming weeks for both bank and boat anglers. Frozen smelt are a must have for those participating in this fishery.

Steelheaders should keep trying at the mouth of the Deschutes River. Cooler nights should stimulate a better bite for trollers working the mouth and the lower stretches of the Deschutes. Now through November can be a good time to target fish in the mainstem as well from the John Day Dam and upstream.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – With several hundred coho crossing Willamette Falls daily and coho totals are pushing 5,700. This is not only a record for this time of year but is on track for to be the best since records have been kept starting in 1946. The ODFW is projecting a figure of 17,900 silver which would eclipse the previous record high set in 1970. For this reason, the limit of coho, all believed to be of hatchery origin above the Fall and in Willamette tributaries, is three per day, fin-clipped or not. The water temperature at the Falls was 67 degrees as of September 23rd with the level of the lower Willamette extremely low.

The McKenzie is in great shape and continues to fish very well for wild trout. Steelhead are still being caught below Leaburg Dam although they have been off the bite at times.

Area anglers are mystified that there aren't greater numbers of steelhead in the North Santiam considering that nearly 15,000 have crossed at Willamette Falls.

A free angling event for kids hosted by the ODFW will take place Saturday, Sept. 26 from 9 AM to 2 PM at West Salish Pond. The pond will be stocked with 1,200 legal sized trout as well as 1,000 that weigh a pound to a pound and a half. Tackle will be provided for youngsters who have non.

Henry Hagg will be planted with 8,000 legal-sized trout this week and again next week. The facility will remain open until the Sunday before Thanksgiving to re-open March, 2010.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Sturgeon retention will once again be allowed Thursdays through Saturdays on the lower Willamette and Multnomah Channel starting October 1st. Trolling spinners where smaller rivers enter the Willamette is will allow anglers the best chance of a hookup with some of the thousands of coho in the upper river. The daily bag limit is three hatchery coho in the Willamette and its tributaries. With the water level of the Middle Fork Willamette low, wading is getting easier. Try a variety of dries, wets and nymphs to enjoy good results with trout here. For a change of pace, try Multnomah Channel where walleye fishing has been worthwhile.

Take an assortment of caddis patterns for success on the McKenzie.

The North Santiam offers a much better chance of a steelhead hookup than the South Santiam but with fishing as spotty as it is, that's not an endorsement.

Target largemouth and smallmouth bass in lakes, ponds and rivers as they go on their fall feeding spree, gorging to bulk up for the winter months to come. This is the second-best time of year to catch large bass. Spring is considered best as egg-laden females will be at their heaviest. Releasing large fish ensures a decent fishery in seasons to come. It does no harm to keep a couple of mid-sized fish for the table for those who enjoy them.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – There are plenty of coho jumping, rolling and mocking the fishers at the mouth of the Clackamas who fling at them in futility with nary a hookup. This definitely qualifies as one of the most frustrating fisheries in the state.

Anglers throwing spinners from the bank are catching a few salmon at the mouth of the Sandy. Emphasize few. Large pods can often be seen holding in one area ignoring everything that's thrown at them. Still, it's the fishers who are persistent who are there when it turns on. Last Sunday was one of those times and it won't happen for anyone who isn't out there trying. Coho are moving through Dodge Park this year rather than holding. Consequently, fishing here has been spotty. For those who like plenty of company, some coho are being taken at Cedar Creek.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – It's a seaweed fest in Oregon's favorite fall chinook system. Tillamook Bay is loaded with vegetation and a vegetarians dream come true! Honestly, it's pretty hard to keep a bait fishing with the bay full of broken off eelgrass and the thin filmed, transparent green seaweed that keep us from fishing effectively. We're just now coming off a steep tide series so the grass may actually give us a reprieve this weekend.

Fishing however has been slow with a fair bite occurring today near low-slack along the jetty on Tillamook Bay. Although there was only a handful of boats taking fish, with the bulk of them wild coho, the action was fairly steady the last hour of outgoing tide. This is often the case as fish stage just outside of the jetty entrance until the current slows down enough for them to make a march over the bar, not having to burn too many calories upon initial entry.

Anglers are reminded that all wild coho must be released unharmed and with the number present, anglers are scratching their heads wondering where are all those hatchery fish that ODF&W forecasted for this basin. Most anglers are having to return their catch although a few select areas are open to the taking of wild coho. On the north coast, anglers fishing the Nehalem River have found good success targeting coho using spinners throughout the estuary. The 1,000 fish wild coho limit has been attained and therefore, the targeted wild coho fishery has closed effectively on Wednesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>. It was good fishing while it lasted. Chinook retention will remain closed and it's likely that effort will continue to drop on this river system giving catch and release fishers ample opportunity to explore their sort.

Chinook fishing is slow although we've heard from a reliable source that the upper bay produced good over the weekend with one guide boat reporting landing 5 fish on spinners. Seaweed is largely responsible. The jaws and ocean produced some catches this week but overall, it seems that the wild coho kept the interest of many anglers, at least until they had to return their catch back to the sea. The bubble fishery has only been producing an occasional chinook and a fair number of coho (mostly wild) are beginning to show.

Crabbing out of Tillamook Bay was fantastic over the weekend but has dropped slightly since then. We took easy limits a few days ago but only 33 keepers for 6 pots on Wednesday night. The ocean is the place to be but anglers are also taking some good numbers of quality crab inside the estuary as well.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Weak tides this week may quell some of the seaweed that is driving anglers to bass class this week. It's been nothing short of horrific. It will also increase traffic to the lower bay where boats will be jockeying for position near the bay entrance. To make matters worse, the ocean will likely be closed to too uncomfortable to fish in, further exacerbating the program. Have I got you convinced to stay home yet?

Given all of that information, there should still be some fair opportunities to catch Tillamook Bay chinook salmon over the weekend. Just be prepared to fight the seaweed as you must keep your baits weed free in order to catch fish here. The upper bay will be a poor option for anglers this weekend.

Bobber anglers that typically work the Hospital Hole this time of year are M.I.A. It's a clear sign that things aren't going well even though they should be by now.

Hatchery coho are not available in the numbers first thought coming back to the hatchery. There are likely fish in the Trask system but there isn't much public space available for an angler to get a cast out however. Try the hatchery hole this time of year but be aware that water conditions are not all aligned up so don't expect great results if you are bank fishing on the Trask for coho.

Bay crabbing should be ok but you'll do best if you can get away from where all the pots are crabbing. The ocean would be most ideal but again, the rough weather is likely to make that a poor option.

Remember: the Nehalem system is now closed to the retention of wild coho.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Ocean conditions predicted for the coming weekend will prevent punches out of central and southern Oregon ports. Too bad, too, as tuna are nearshore and crabbers are pulling quick limits in the ocean out of Newport although the bay has been fair to good for crabbing as well.

Retention of wild coho will close on the Yaquina in addition to the Coos which closed last Saturday. This was the first wild coho season in 15 years on two of the coastal rivers which were open this year thanks to a strong recovery.

Tuna are being taken out of Depoe Bay within the 30 mile line. These fish are skittish at this time of year but they are also large with a few going over 40 pounds.

Results have been fair for Chinook on the Siuslaw. Best catches have occurred at first light. Crabbing has been slow.

Trollers out of Reedsport have reported mixed success for Chinook with the occasional 'on' day when fishing has been consistent. Coho continue to be taken by spinner flingers casting from the jetty.

Coos Bay has been producing good catches of Chinook but anglers are reminded that wild coho must now be released as the 1,000 fish quota filled last Friday. Boats launching out of Charleston are going well for coho in the ocean. Boats traveling further offshore are experiencing fair to good results for albacore.

Coquille anglers are doing well, picking up Chinook adults and jacks on the troll.

High surf has prevented Chinook from crossing the bar into Rogue Bay on many days recently. The water temperature of the river is too low now to keep fish keged in the bay so when none are entering, action stalls for trollers in the estuary. Resourceful anglers have run upstream out of tidewater to chase them have also had success with adult steelhead and half-pounders. With summer steelhead spread throughout the system now, fishing is steady in the Grants Pass stretch with Chinook starting to show in catches. Chinook have entered the upper Rogue and may be seen in the shallows preparing to spawn. About 4,300 summer steelhead have crossed Gold Ray Dam. Steelheading is good on the upper river with almost every lure and fly effective. Boat traffic has been heavy on weekends.

A gradual improvement is taking place in the Chetco estuary for Chinook trollers. It's been slow to start and slow to produce but hopefully fish will start to enter in decent number in the coming weeks. There will be no Chetco bubble fishery this year. Jacks are in abundance bow but those over 24 inches are considered adults. Wild jacks are best returned as they count against the wild Chinook bag limit of one per day and two per year.

With the water cooling, fishing has continued to improve at Diamond, rewarding some anglers with limits of the superior trout for which this lake is well known.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Water clarity at the Deschutes improved mid-week but the White River is unpredictable one day to the next and could resume spewing any time. Steelheading has been good with fish hitting a variety of lures and flies. With thousands of summer steelhead crossing the John Day Dam daily and totals greater than 40,000, numbers of summers in the Deschutes will be increasing daily. Oddly, it's been slow for trollers at the mouth.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

#### **From the WDF&W Weekender Report September 2-15, 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](mailto: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."

### **TGF Inbox – Reader Email**

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

Write to the TGF staff:

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### **Random Links**

Check Oregon Fire restrictions: <http://www.inciweb.org/state/38/>

Dead Sticking Largemouth Bass: <http://searchwarp.com/swa21124.htm>

Bass Fishing The Power Drop Shot Rig: <http://searchwarp.com/swa21131.htm>

**GOOD LUCK!**