

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 2<sup>nd</sup> – October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

**Willamette Valley/Metro** - Bonneville anglers are still finding decent numbers of chinook backtrolling plugs in the faster flows. Crowds have tapered but bright fish should still be available through mid-month. Catch and keep sturgeon fishing re-opens October 1<sup>st</sup> with allowable retention days Thursdays through Saturdays. The first few open weeks should be excellent as October is often the peak month for gorge anglers, both bank and from boats.

With water temperatures in the mid-60s at Willamette Falls, fall chinook numbers have topped the 1,000 mark while coho counts are remarkable at over 8,000 as of September 22nd. Catch and keep sturgeon fishing also re-opens on the Willamette for the same 3 days per week but action likely won't heat up again here until early in the new year.

The McKenzie is fishing well for steelhead and rewarding fly anglers with good catches of trout.

North Santiam levels are up due to water release from Detroit. Few steelhead are being taken in these conditions.

Coho fishing has been slow to fair on the Clackamas with rain expected to improve prospects. Eagle Creek has produced fish early in the day.

The Sandy has remained milky but coho fishing is fair to good. A lower freezing level will help to clear the water as the upriver glaciers stop melting. Hogliners fishing near the mouth are still taking a few chinook in the deep water but action should taper after the weekend.

Henry Hagg Lake, Mt Hood Pond, West Salish Pond, Dexter Reservoir and Foster Reservoir are scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout.

**Northwest** – Coho fishing in Astoria heated back up again with easy 3-fish limits coming from many boats over the weekend. These later returning coho are mostly destined for Washington tributaries and action in the area could last into mid-October. The commercial gillnet fleet began their season on Monday however, likely putting a damper on sport catches. The nets won't be fishing over the weekend but will resume on Sunday night.

Tillamook area anglers continue to find disappointment for their efforts as wild coho are making up the largest component of the catch. Chinook catches are few and far between but October is peak month for this estuary. A large hatchery return is forecasted for the Trask River but catches of these fish have also been scarce.

The ocean has been a poor option with rough weather and hazardous bar conditions. More of the same is in the forecast.

Rain is desperately needed for the north fork Nehalem to take off but with only possible showers in the forecast, fishing will remain good in the tidewater section only. Wild fish are comprising most of the catch here but the retention season closed last week after the 1,000 fish quota was quickly attained.

Anglers are justifying a trip to the coast by bringing their crab gear with them. The ocean crab fishery remains the most productive but fair numbers of keepers are also coming from coastal

estuaries. Effort is on the rise however.

**Southwest** – With warm water remaining nearshore, tuna are still being caught but are scattered and easy to put down by trolling through them. Boats are casting to schools to take fish.

High wind and waves predicted for the coming weekend will keep boats in port.

Crabbing is fair in most estuaries while limits are coming from the ocean. Offshore crabbing is scheduled to remain open through October 15th.

The offshore hatchery coho fishery is slow and most fish available are wild. It's scheduled to close at the end of September or a quota of 7,000 fish. Less than 10% of the quota has been taken to date.

The lower Coos and Coquille have produced decent catches of chinook. The Coquille remains open for wild coho until the quota of 1,500 is met. Boats launching out of Charleston continue to take skittish albacore when offshore conditions have permitted.

Chinook fishing in the lower Rogue has slowed. Jack numbers are very good however, and coho have started moving into the estuary. Back-bouncers upriver are experiencing fair results with chinook.

Rough ocean conditions recently have prevented boats from taking advantage of the excellent bottom fishing out of Brookings. Chinook fishing has been slow to fair in the lower Chetco.

**Eastern** – Visibility is fair on the Deschutes. Steelheading is fair to good with a few chinook being hooked. Action here should continue good into October with flyfishing likely to pick up as the weather cools.

Anglers are anxiously awaiting rainfall to stimulate steelhead runs into the Grande Ronde, Imnaha and Wallowa Rivers. Once fall rains hit, action should be excellent.

Smallmouth bass fishing should be excellent in the John Day Pool and upstream as juvenile shad begin their downstream migration. Cooler water temperatures will further stimulate the bite.

**SW Washington** – Coho opportunities should begin to peak in the coming weeks on the Cowlitz, Kalama and Lewis Rivers. Anglers working the mouth of the Toutle (Cowlitz system) are finding good success right now. Action will only improve as October is the peak month for many of these tributaries.

October 1<sup>st</sup> brings many regulation changes for district rivers, especially for chinook salmon. Check local listings before heading out.

Anglers can also take advantage of productive coho fishing in the mainstem of the Columbia near the mouths of many tributaries upstream of Portland. Trolling plugs can produce fair catches into November for rivers with returning hatchery coho.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Most anglers have written off the lower Columbia now that the gillnets have gone in. Sport effort is minimal; so minimal in fact that I have yet to receive a report that tells me how sportanglers are doing in the lower river. From the reports that I have read online, the action has certainly slowed. Rumor from the gillnet crowd is that it was originally good on the Monday opener but has since slowed dramatically. According to the fish records, the commercial fleet has come close to meeting the Department's expectations of 15,000 coho. The actual landings for Monday came in at 13,332 adults weighing an average of 8.7 pounds each. An additional 527 chinook

were landed with an average weight of 11.7 pounds. 111 sturgeon were also taken in the fishery but additional targeted sturgeon fisheries will have taken place by the time you read this newsletter.

Most anglers are writing off this fishery now that the nets are in. Action is certainly likely to taper but there are still a lot of fish to come in. From my years as a fish checker in Astoria in the late 80's, I remember great catches of coho into mid-October, specifically anglers targeting the big tides in the middle of the month at the Buoy 10 line. Now armed with the knowledge we have now proving that there are better places to fish other than the Buoy 10 line, anglers could expect hot action in the very near future. There likely won't be many anglers taking advantage of it but with the Tillamook fishery as challenging as it is, there will likely be some opportunistic anglers.

Upriver, anglers are still trying to grind out an occasional wobbler chinook near the mouth of the Sandy River and coming up with occasional success. Creel checks on Monday indicated 38 boats with 10 fish in the Troutdale area.

The Bonneville stretch should be entering its peak right now with good catches reported from both the bank and boat sectors. Bank anglers checked 10 fish for 13 rods in the area while boaters harvested 12 fish for 7 boats. These kinds of catches are not unprecedented for this time of year and in fact, the catches were off to a great start pretty early in the season. Early October will likely continue to produce good catches of chinook to both bank and boat anglers.

A big hit this week will be the re-opener of the sturgeon fishery above the Wauna Powerlines. Although the river downstream of the Columbia River Gorge is certainly an option, it likely won't be as productive as the stretch from Horsetail Falls upstream to the deadline. Early catch and release guides are indicating some quality fishing ahead. **Pro guide Dan Ponciano (360-607-8511)** reported a 35 to 40 fish day last weekend with nearly 6 fish in the keeper range. Effort was light but that is likely to change when you can go back to frying these fish on the grill. Grilling season re-starts on Thursday, October 1<sup>st</sup> with harvest opportunities being Thursdays through Saturdays until the end of the year or when the full quota has been met.

Trollers at the mouth of the Deschutes River are still trying for passer-by steelhead. Action is fair at best with most avid steelheaders already looking ahead to the John Day Pool as the next best place to intercept upriver bound fish.

**The Guide's Forecast** – The top story should be the sturgeon fishery in the gorge opening on October 1<sup>st</sup>. With a 2-month hiatus, action typically is great on the opener and for the first few weeks thereafter. It shouldn't be any different this year with keepers o' plenty to be had for those using as fresh a smelt as one can find. Shaker action should be good too but keepers will likely be a bit closer to the deadline in the swifter flows. Cape Horn will likely produce large quantities of shakers in the coming weeks, which is a great place to start out a beginning sturgeon angler.

Astoria anglers likely won't be impressed with what's available there. Fish should be available but the fishery was showing signs of faltering even prior to the commercial gillnet opener. More fish are due back through mid-month as the "B" run of coho was sizable, although not as large as the earlier returning "A" run fish that came through in droves. Bait or spinners will work on these fish but I don't recommend mixing the two techniques together, spinners always seem to take a back seat to the bait results when I mix the two together.

It appears as if the gillnets may not fish too late into October. We'll report back when we hear more but with the recent listing of lower Columbia coho, there is a new set of impacts lower river users must abide by and the gillnet impact rate may be coming close by the weekend. We'll know more by early next week. If the nets don't fish too late into the month, we could still see some fantastic October fishing ahead. It just may not be this weekend.

Anchor anglers still working the mouth of the Sandy should see their fishery begin to fade this week. There will still be a few to catch but serious anglers should consider moving up into the gorge where ample numbers of chinook should still be available well into October. Backtrollers will take the bulk of those fish, using Flatfish with sardine wraps on the bottom. This fishery should go strong for another 2 weeks.

Soft tides this week made for excellent crabbing and the action should continue to be good. Stronger tides this week however will limit the amount of time for a productive soak. The area between Buoy's 20 and 22 should produce the best results.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** –Willamette flow is predictably increasing and coho are charging over the Falls. Over 10,000 silvers are upriver but anglers have been challenged to fish them in the upper river and it's tributaries. This is a record number of coho for coho at Willamette Falls. Previous year's numbers don't even come close in recent seasons. The Willamette opened for sturgeon retention on Thursday, October 1st and will remain open on Thursdays through Saturdays for the rest of the year.

Rain showers this week have caused a light rise in the water level of the MCKenzie at Vida along with a drop in temperature to about 50 degrees.

As water is released from Detroit so that it may serve this winter as flood control, the water level of the North Santiam is up. Water temperatures are in the upper 40s to midlower 50s on the middle and upper river.

An angling event for kids is scheduled to take place from 9 AM to 2 PM at St. Louis Pond.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Steelheading will be productive on the upper Willamette around Eugene. This is the best time of year for this fishery. Good-sized smallmouth bass are being taken in the upper Willamette from Newburg to Wilsonville as the bass gorge themselves on preparation for the long, cold winter ahead. Mornings will be best particularly on sunny days. Overcast skies will extend the period of productivity. Crank baits and soft plastics will take fish at this time of year.

Steelheading has been good on the McKenzie for both gear and fly anglers. While summers are coloring up in many river systems, the fish here are in remarkably good condition. Try an October caddis larva to tempt McKenzie reddsides.

Steelhead are more challenging to locate in the high water of the North Santiam and slow to respond in the cool water. If you have a choice, fish elsewhere.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – For those who can tolerate crowds, the Bowling Alley Hole on the Clackamas has been producing coho periodically with best results at first light. Most of the fish banked have been wild but there are hatchery keepers around. Fish are scattered throughout the system now and more are entering daily. The more coho, the better chance of finding a biter. which as all coho anglers know can be a challenge.

Sandy anglers have seen some good days recently. Fly, spinner and egg fishers have taken coho below at Dodge and Oxbow

Parks and below Cedar Creek and Several limits were taken Wednesday this week. Early and late in the day is most productive. Boats at the mouth have seen some action recently both by anchor

fishing and trolling. Cedar Creek has been very slow this week but that will change as fresh coho are on the move. Unseasonably warm weather seems to have delayed the coho run this season so the best is yet to come.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – After a long dry spell for Tillamook Bay salmon, things are starting to look up for chinook seekers. Although far from most experienced Tillamook anglers expectations, some chinook are starting to show around the multitude of wild coho present in the estuary. Wednesday brought about fair fishing for lower bay anglers willing to hunt down the chinook in strategic locations.

With the ocean closed for most of the week, anglers have had to look far and wide inside of the bay for migrating chinook destined for one of the bay's five major tributaries. Effort is still strong in the upper bay as most of the entering salmon are headed for the Trask or Tillamook Rivers this time of year.

The weaker tide exchanges offered up a good possibility at the bay entrance but prime tide wasn't until later in the afternoon. One boat reported 5 chinook later in the day on Wednesday with 4 of them coming close to low slack along the inside of the north jetty around 4 to 5 p.m. that day. The guide reported finishing the day with a double with both fish nearing the 20-pound mark. Many guides are also reporting many of the fish recently appear to be smaller 3-year old fish indicating yet another missing age class of fish this year after poor ocean conditions killed many outmigrating juveniles in the fall of 2004 and 2005.

The best action at mid-week took place at Bay City and along the jetty with a few fish taken in the Ghost Hole as well. Reports from most anglers however were weighted towards wild coho as we caught 6 on Wednesday with nary a fin clip on any of them. Only a rare hatchery coho was being taken this week.

The upper bay has been producing just an occasional chinook this week but stronger tides could change that by the weekend. Most anglers are using spinners and catching an occasional wild coho as well. Red/white remains the popular color of choice.

District rivers remained low despite brief periods of torrential downpour. It's likely that a few salmon, mostly coho at this point, may have taken advantage of the limited precipitation and headed upstream to get to their hatchery roots. It's pretty apparent that there are not a lot of hatchery coho around for sport harvest, at least not in Tillamook Bay.

Reports from the North Fork of the Nehalem are similar with few hatchery coho being reported from the river or tidewater areas. Wild coho are still abundant but the retention season closed last week after the 1,000 fish quota had been taken. The North Fork Nehalem hatchery has very few coho present at their facility.

Down south, the Nestucca River is reported to have a few chinook available but like many north coast systems, the run size is predicted to be down. The Salmon River fishery is effectively over although some anglers are reporting an occasional fish coming from the Highway 101 hole. Action drops off dramatically in October however.

Bay crabbing is good on Tillamook and fair on Nehalem. Netarts Bay is also producing fairly for keepers for those willing to work at it. Ocean crabbing will hold up for another few weeks until the October 15<sup>th</sup> closure. We just need the weather to cooperate to get back out there safely.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Tides are shifting back to morning opportunities with some good low slack possibilities by the middle of next week. October is peak time for Tillamook Fall chinook and fish should become more available in the next week. The low slack will be in the early morning, followed by a stronger incoming tide which will likely not only bring some better numbers of fish into the estuary but seaweed and eelgrass will likely return in droves as well. It's been a bad year for seaweed and eelgrass in Tillamook Bay but hopefully the cooler nights will keep the weed from growing for the remainder of the year.

Anglers will want to follow the incoming tide up the bay with high slack bringing fish all the way up to the mouth of the Wilson River and upper oyster house. Herring will be effective but most upper bay anglers choose to use spinners as one can whip the abundant seaweed off your spinner tackle and you can oftentimes get back to fishing. With fewer numbers of chinook available, this tiresome technique will certainly challenge peoples patience this year.

The south channel shows no signs of holding chinook but we did land 5 wild coho here on Wednesday. The coho and oversized sturgeon are rolling frequently.

Rain is desperately needed to stimulate the river fisheries but none is in sight. Although this is good news for estuary anglers, it's time for these fish to get upstream and do their thing. I'm sure it won't be long from now. The North Fork Nehalem and Trask Rivers are due for a large return but I'm not optimistic given the number of hatchery coho I've seen in the lower bay this season.

The Nestucca is a better option than the Salmon River but Tillamook Bay is the best option (albeit a mediocre one) than any other north coast watershed.

Bay crabbing should stay good. Too bad the ocean forecast looks so grim for crabbers wanting to take advantage of the new ocean crabbing regulations this year. The forecast says.....

**FRI**

NW WIND 5 TO 10 KT...BECOMING N 10 TO 15 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 9 FT. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

**FRI NIGHT**

N WIND 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 9 FT. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

**SAT**

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 8 FT. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

**SAT NIGHT**

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT...EASING TO 15 TO 20 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. NW SWELL 7 FT. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

**SUN**

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 7 FT.

**MON**

N WIND 10 KT WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 7 FT.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – As of October 1st, bottom fishers may venture beyond the 40 fathom line to catch rockfish and ling cod. Ocean salmon fishing closed at the end of September from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain. The ocean remains open to Chinook (not coho) south of Humbug Mountain to the California border through September 7th.

Anglers on the Siletz saw the river turn on for Chinook recently at the crest of high tide. This is somewhat unusual here as this river has been spotty for fall fish over the past several seasons.

Chinook and coho moved into the Siuslaw this week producing fair to good fishing Wednesday this week. This was a pleasant surprise as it has been so slow here this year.

Trollers are doing well for coho in Winchester Bay but the majority are wild, requiring release. Crabbing is fair and improving in the bay. The mainstem is also fishing well for coho but hatchery fish are few. Coho are being caught above Elkton now. Steelheaders are doing well for summers on the North Umpqua while the South is too low to fish well.

Although fishing for Chinook has slowed in Tidewater on the Coos, catches are good on the South Fork. Trollers are doing well for Chinook on the lower Coquille.

Chinook fishing remains productive in the Rogue estuary although it has been a bit more challenging to get these fish to bite. Anchovy/spinner rigs remain the bait of choice. Coho are in the bay in sufficient number to create another fishery here. Early and late in the day have produced the better catches. Pressure has been light despite worthwhile results. Steelheaders are taking good numbers of adults and jacks in lower Rogue Canyon. In the Grants Pass stretch, action for summer steelhead is steady. The Rogue is closed to retention or targeting of Chinook above Hog Creek Boat Ramp. Cool water in the upper Rogue has caused the summer steelhead bite to slow.

Pressure is light in Chetco tidewater as Chinook have just begun trickling in. There has been a slight improvement recently but it's still slow although a jaw-dropping 58-pounder was on Wednesday this week and yes, there is a picture. One wild Chinook and two per year may be retained here and here are a good number of jacks in the estuary, however. While seas are predicted to come up this weekend, nearshore ocean forays for rockfish should be possible early mornings.

A few trollers are taking a shot at Chinook in tidewater on the Elk and Sixes but without significant rainfall, it has been very slow.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Steelheading is fair to good and improving on the lower Deschutes. Over 100 summers were counted at Sherars Falls on several days in September. The Deschutes is now closed to Chinook.

Steelhead are keggung up in the lower Grande Ronde River. With a record run this year, a spectacular season is anticipated when the first significant fall rains move fish upriver.

**Washington fishing reports:**

**From the WDF&W Weekender Report *September 30 - October 13, 2009***

**North Puget Sound**

Fishing for coho salmon has improved in Puget Sound, and saltwater anglers should continue to do well over the next couple weeks as the run pushes into the region's rivers and streams.

"**Coho** fishing has been pretty good recently in North Sound," said Steve Thiesfeld, a fish biologist with WDFW. "Anglers could have a couple more weeks of decent fishing before we start to see a transition in the marine areas from coho to **blackmouth** and **chum salmon** ."

Anglers who took part in the recent **Everett Coho Derby** benefited from the good bite. A total of 1,101 coho were weighed in during the two-day event. Jay Kemp turned out to be the derby's big winner. Kemp hauled in a 16.72-pound coho, taking home the \$3,000 first prize in the adult division. Pat Flynn, who weighed in a 16.52-pound coho, finished second and pocketed \$2,000, while John Stone's 15.74-pound silver was good enough for third place and \$1,000. In the kids' division, Sean McCauley took first with a 14.64-pound coho.

Thiesfeld said anglers looking to hook ocean coho should try fishing Point No Point, Jefferson Head, Possession Bar and Shipwreck. Fishing regulations for those areas, and other waters of marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), change in October. Beginning Oct. 1, anglers fishing Marine Area 9 will have a daily limit of two salmon, but must release all chinook. Those fishing Marine Area 10 will have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook.

Anglers looking to get an early start on the region's **blackmouth** season might also want to head to Marine Area 10, said Thiesfeld. Another option for blackmouth anglers is Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where beginning Oct. 1 anglers can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit.

Thiesfeld reminds anglers that beginning Oct. 1 only portions of marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) will be open for salmon fishing. Salmon fishing in Marine Area 8-1 will be restricted to the Oak Harbor area, west of a line from Forbes Point to Blowers Bluff. Anglers fishing Oak Harbor have a daily limit of two coho only.

In Marine Area 8-2, salmon fishing will be limited to the south end of the area, south of a line from Randall Point to the south end of the Everett Naval Station dock. Anglers in that area have a two salmon daily limit, but must release chinook.

Meanwhile, **crabbing** closes one hour past sunset today (Sept. 30) in Marine Area 7 - the only area in the region currently open for crab. The region's other marine areas are already closed for a catch assessment. See WDFW's sport-crabbing website ( <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab> ) for more information.

In the freshwater, several rivers are open for salmon, including the Snohomish, where there have been several reports of anglers hooking some bright coho salmon. Anglers fishing the Snohomish have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release chinook.

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 also is open for salmon. 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 salmon moving from the coast to area bays and rivers, anglers have some new options to consider in the region. Or, they might want to trade in their fishing rods for clam shovels. The first razor-clam dig of the fall season is tentatively scheduled in mid-October, provided test results show the clams are safe to eat.

If tests are favorable, WDFW will proceed with evening **razor clam** digs at Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks and Kalaloch Beach, which is scheduled to open for clam digging for the first time since spring 2007.

Tentative opening dates and evening low tides in October are:

- Friday, Oct. 16 (5:50 p.m. -0.5 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis
- Saturday, Oct. 17 (6:38 p.m. -0.8 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks, Kalaloch
- Sunday, Oct. 18 (7:23 p.m. -1.1 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks, Kalaloch
- Monday, Oct. 19 (8:06 p.m. -1.1 ft.) Twin Harbors

Dan Ayres, WDFW coastal shellfish manager, recommends that clam diggers take lights or lanterns for the nighttime digs and to check weather and surf forecasts before heading out.

Digging is restricted to the hours between noon and midnight. Harvesters are allowed to take no more than 15 razor clams and must keep the first 15 they dig, regardless of size or condition. Each digger's clams must be kept in a separate container.

A license is required for anyone age 15 or older. Any 2009 annual shellfish/seaweed license or combination fishing license is valid. Another option is a razor-clam only license available in annual or three-day only versions. Descriptions of the various options are available on the WDFW website at <https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov>.

More digs are tentatively scheduled Nov. 4-7, Nov. 14-17, Dec. 2-5, Dec. 31-Jan.3.

Meanwhile, anglers looking for salmon fishing opportunities might consider heading to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, where a non-selective fishery for **coho** and **chinook** gets under way Oct. 1 in Marine Area 6 (Port Angeles). A non-selective chinook fishery also gets under way Oct. 1 in Marine Area 5 (Sekiu), where anglers have been able to retain wild coho since Sept. 19. In non-selective fisheries, anglers may retain fish whether or not they have a clipped adipose fin.

Having Marine Area 5 open in October is a new opportunity for anglers, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. In past years, anglers had to wait until November for the chinook fishery to open. "The coho season has been exceptional this year and hopefully anglers will have some fun catching blackmouth as well," Thiesfeld said. A creel check conducted in the area during the Sept. 26-27 weekend showed anglers averaging one coho per rod.

The daily limit in both marine areas is two salmon of any species, except that only one fish may be a chinook. Thiesfeld reminds anglers that the salmon fishery in Marine Area 5 closes Oct. 15, while Marine Area 6 closes Oct. 31. Freshwater Bay, Port Angeles Harbor and Sequim Bay remain closed to salmon fishing, but anglers may fish for coho salmon in Dungeness Bay Oct. 1-31.

Also as of Oct. 1, anglers fishing in marine areas 11 and 13 (Vashon Island to South Puget Sound) will be allowed to retain **wild chinook** as part of their two-fish daily limit. However, all **wild coho** caught in Marine Area 13 must be released. Other fishing opportunities coming up in Puget Sound include **chum** and **blackmouth** retention in Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) beginning Oct. 16.

A new wheelchair-accessible fishing site is now available at the **Hoodsport Hatchery** for person with disabilities. The site includes an ADA-compliant ramp, grated walkways, and a new fishing platform with a gate, fencing, handrails and fishing slots. Only persons with disabilities who permanently use a wheelchair and/or those who have a designated harvest card are allowed to

use the site and to fish adjacent waters inshore from the yellow marker buoys to the mouth of Finch Creek. More information is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/do/newreal/release.php?id=sep2509a>.

Closer to the coast, salmon anglers fishing Grays Harbor (Marine Area 2-2) and the lower Chehalis River have been doing quite well since the Sept. 16 opening, said Erica Crust, WDFW ocean port sampler. "These are popular areas and folks are catching some nice fish," she said.

In Marine Area 2-2, which is open through Nov. 30, the daily limit is two fish, one of which may be a **wild adult coho**. All adult **chinook** and **chum** must be released.

Crust reminds anglers the upper Chehalis River above Porter Bridge opens to salmon fishing Oct. 1. Through Oct. 15, anglers on the river may retain two adult salmon as part of their six-fish daily limit. One of those may be a wild adult coho, but all adult chinook and chum must be released.

Other area rivers opening Oct. 1 include the Elk, Hoquiam, Humptulips, Johns, Satsop, Wishkah and Wynoochee rivers in Grays Harbor County, Kennedy Creek in Thurston County and the Nemah River in Pacific County. Crust advises anglers to check the 2009-2010 *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> for specific regulations and retention rules on these rivers.

Regulations are also changing on the Skokomish River in Mason County as of Oct. 1. Anglers may keep up to four adult salmon as part of a six-fish daily limit, but must release all **chinook** through Oct. 15. All **chum** must be released.

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.

### **Southwest Washington**

Large numbers of **coho salmon** are moving up the lower Columbia River into area tributaries and **chinook** are still biting in some rivers. But starting Oct. 1, anglers have another option to consider: **Sturgeon fishing** in the mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines upstream to Bonneville Dam.

"This is a great fishing opportunity for fall, especially for anglers who don't have boats," said Brad James, a WDFW fish biologist. "Bank anglers have done very well, historically, fishing for sturgeon just below Bonneville Dam."

Anglers may retain legal-size sturgeon Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays only until the area quota is met. White sturgeon must measure 38 to 54 inches from their nose to the fork in their tail to meet the legal size limit. James said about 5,000 fish are still available for harvest in the mainstem Columbia River under the quota for the area.

"I wouldn't be surprised if the fishery starts out strong," James said. "Sturgeon have moved out of the estuary and have been chasing juvenile shad that are out-migrating past the dam."

Thousands of **late-run coho salmon** have also been moving up the mainstem Columbia River, and should provide good fishing in the tributaries throughout the month of October, said Wolf Dammers, another WDFW fish biologist. Fishing for hatchery coho was slow in most rivers through September, although anglers averaged a legal fish for every three rods on the North Fork Lewis during one recent creel check.

"What we need now is some heavy rain to get the coho moving up tributaries throughout the region," Dammers said.

Best bets for hatchery coho in the coming weeks are the Cowlitz, Lewis, Kalama, Elochoman, Grays and the Klickitat rivers, he said. During the last week of September, anglers were catching both hatchery coho and some bright chinook salmon on the Cowlitz River below Interstate 5. Dammers said some nice, foot-long cutthroat are also biting near the trout hatchery.

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.

Starting Oct. 1, new rules will take effect on several of those rivers to protect spawning **chinook salmon** :

- All chinook salmon must be released 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. On the North Fork, fishing will close from Colvin Creek upstream 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.

In addition, Drano Lake is scheduled to be closed to all fishing from 6 p.m. Tuesdays through 6 p.m. Wednesdays throughout the month of October.

Miss those days of August when anglers reeled in a record number of **hatchery steelhead** from the lower Columbia River? Some fish from that run have been taking their time moving upriver and "laying in" near the mouth of the White Salmon River, Dammers said. "Anglers have been doing pretty well fishing for summer steelhead there in the last quarter of a mile of the Big White Salmon."

### **Eastern Washington**

Glen Mendel, WDFW southeast district fish biologist, said fishing for **fall chinook salmon** remains slow on the two portions of the Snake River that are open through Oct. 15. "Hopefully catch rates will increase with colder weather ahead, when water temperatures decrease and fish are more active," Mendel said.

The two stretches open for fall chinook are from the Highway 12 Bridge (near the mouth of the Snake River) upstream to the no-fishing zone below Ice Harbor Dam, and from the Highway 261 Bridge crossing on the Snake River (about one-half mile upstream from Lyons Ferry Hatchery) upstream to the no-fishing zone below Little Goose Dam.

Snake River **steelhead** fishing continues to pick up and Mendel notes discussions are under way to possibly liberalize the daily catch limit. Steelheaders should stay tuned for such fishing rule changes at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>, or sign up to receive notices through <http://wdfw.wa.gov/lists>.

Many **trout** fisheries in the northeast district's Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties remain open through October and could provide nice catches for fall family outings. Ellen Lake, north of Inchelium with a Colville National Forest campground, could be productive because it was rehabilitated last year. Gillette Lake, northeast of Colville with a Colville National Forest campground, has both rainbow and tiger trout. Browns Lake, northeast of Cusick with a Kaniksu National Forest campground, is usually best for fall cutthroat, although it's fly-fishing only with no motor boats allowed. Check out all the options at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/prospects>.

In southwest Spokane County, Clear Lake remains open through October and usually produces

good catches of **brown trout, crappie** and **largemouth bass** in late fall. Amber Lake, with **cutthroat** and **rainbow trout**, is open through November, but the last two months are catch-and-release with selective gear rules.

Catch and size limits have been lifted temporarily for some trout fisheries scheduled for rotenone treatments this month to improve future fishing. Lincoln County's Fishtrap Lake and Spokane County's Hog Canyon Lake and Creek have no size or catch limits through Oct. 11, but they will close to fishing Oct. 12 until further notice. Spokane County's West Medical Lake has no size or catch limits through Oct. 25 and will close to fishing Oct. 26 until further notice.

### **Northcentral Washington**

Hatchery **steelhead** fishing opened Sept. 29 on the upper Columbia River, and on the Wenatchee, Icicle, Entiat, Methow and Okanogan rivers, thanks to a strong run of both wild and hatchery-produced steelhead. WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist Bob Jateff of Twisp reminds anglers that this year's special fishery includes mandatory retention - anglers must keep any adipose-fin-clipped hatchery origin steelhead of at least 20 inches until the daily catch limit of four fish is reached. After they have retained four fish, anglers must stop fishing for hatchery steelhead.

Any wild steelhead caught - those with an intact adipose fin - must be immediately released unharmed without being removed from the water. Anglers also must release any steelhead with one or more round holes punched in the tail fin. "This fishery helps remove hatchery-origin steelhead and increases the proportion of wild natural-origin steelhead returning to spawning areas," Jateff said.

The Icicle River will be open through Nov.15 from the mouth to 500 feet downstream of the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery Barrier Dam. Anglers fishing the Icicle also will be allowed to retain three coho (minimum size 12 inches) per day, but must release coho equipped with an anchor tag. Fisheries on the other rivers are scheduled to remain open through March 31, 2010 unless the allowable incidental impact to wild steelhead is reached before then. They include:

- **Mainstem Columbia River:** From Rock Island Dam to 400 feet below Chief Joseph Dam. Night closure and selective gear rules apply, except fishing from a motorized vessel and bait are allowed.
- **Wenatchee River:** From the mouth to a sign about 800 feet below the most downstream side of Tumwater Dam. Night closure and selective gear rules apply.
- **Entiat River:** Upstream from the Alternate Highway 97 Bridge near the mouth of the Entiat River to 800 feet downstream of the Entiat National Fish Hatchery outfall. Night closure and selective gear rules apply, except fishing from a motorized vessel is allowed.
- **Methow River:** From the Highway 97 Bridge in Pateros upstream to the second powerline crossing, and from the first Highway 153 Bridge north of Pateros to the confluence with the Chewuch River in Winthrop. The second powerline crossing upstream to the first Highway 153 Bridge is closed to fishing. Night closure and selective gear rules apply, except fishing from a motorized vessel is allowed.
- **Okanogan River:** From the mouth upstream except closed waters from the Lake Osoyoos Control Dam (Zosel Dam) downstream to the first Highway 97 Bridge below Oroville. Night closure and selective gear rules apply, except fishing from a motorized vessel is allowed.

Jateff also noted that Okanogan County lakes are fishing well now, including Big and Little Twin near Winthrop, Blue on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, and Chopaka near Loomis. "Good numbers of **rainbow trout** from 12 to 16 inches can be found in all these lakes," he said. "Remember that Chopaka is fly-fishing only, and the other three lakes are selective-gear only."

Catch and size limits have been lifted temporarily for Okanogan County's Buck Lake, scheduled for rotenone treatment this month to improve future fishing. No size or catch limits are in effect through Oct. 25 and then Buck Lake will be closed to fishing Oct. 26 until further notice.

### **Southcentral Washington**

**Salmon** fishing in the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River near the Tri-Cities has been very productive, reports Paul Hoffarth, WDFW district fish biologist from Pasco. "Harvest is well ahead of last year and will likely get better as water temperatures cool," Hoffarth said. "So far this season, 2,508 adult fall chinook and 874 jacks have been harvested - 20 percent above last year at this time. Angler effort, measured in angler trips, has increased 7 percent from the 2008 fishery."

An estimated 1,872 fall chinook (1,389 adults and 483 jacks) were harvested in the Hanford Reach the week ending Sept. 27. Anglers averaged 1.2 chinook per boat.

The Hanford Reach, from the Hwy. 395 Bridge in the Tri-Cities upstream to Priest Rapids Dam, also opened Sept. 22 for the retention of **hatchery steelhead**. The daily limit is three hatchery steelhead. An estimated 287 steelhead were recently caught, of which 193 were harvested. Bank anglers averaged 11 hours per steelhead.

WDFW staff interviewed 94 boats (199 anglers) with 15 steelhead at Ringold. Steelhead catch rates for boat anglers were low because the majority of the boat anglers interviewed at Ringold were targeting chinook. In the upper Reach, from the wooden powerline towers to Priest Rapids, 10 boats (20 anglers) specifically targeting steelhead were sampled. They reported 20 steelhead caught (10 hatchery and 10 wild) - slightly better than one steelhead for each five hours of fishing.

Hoffarth also noted the Yakima River is open for salmon fishing below Prosser Dam but has been fairly slow to date. "The number of anglers fishing for salmon in the Yakima River remains slow and steady, but catch remains extremely low," he said. "Only eight adult chinook were harvested this past week and 20 overall for the fishery. Yakima River fishing tends to improve in October."

Both the Yakima River and the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River will close for salmon fishing Oct. 22. In addition, the Hanford Reach from the wooden power line towers at the old Hanford town site to Priest Rapids Dam will close for steelhead fishing Oct. 22. The Columbia River downstream of the wooden power line towers will remain open for steelhead fishing after Oct. 22, but the daily catch limit for hatchery steelhead will be reduced to two fish.

Jonathan Kohr, WDFW fish biologist, reports good **smallmouth bass** fishing in the Columbia River above the Vernita Bridge. "Throw any bottom type of plastic - worms, grubs, tube jigs - and you'll catch them," Kohr said. "They're scrappy and fun to catch and good eating. Dip them in batter and make fish tacos."

Kohr notes that removing smallmouth from the river helps save salmon. He also cautioned boat anglers to be careful of shallow rocks or bars because water levels have been extremely low.

### **TGF Inbox – Reader Email**

TGF irregular and good buddy Kaptn Ken Johnson reports on his trip to the Kalama/Goble stretch of the Columbia in the first two weeks of September: "We put 24 Chinook Salmon in the boat. Four of the fish we caught were Coho Salmon. Two of those were "Natives" so we let them go. They were in great shape for release for a running total of 22 salmon caught. 9 (NINE!) of the Chinook Salmon put into the boat, and subsequently in my 5 c.f. chest freezer were mine mine mine. They ranged from 17 - 26 pounds. The largest Chinook caught on this trip was by my illustrious neighbor, Paul Jones. After a tussle and "Nerves of Steel," we netted "HIS" 29-½ pound bright and shiny Chinook Salmon.

"I smoked a 25 pounder last week for a neighbor's party a week ago this last Saturday. I tried a fairly new "dry rub" brine that I haven't tried before. I left the meat in the brining mixture for 12 hours. Then, I pat it dry and set it out to air dry for about 3 hours, or until the meat actually "glazed" over a bit. I started the briquettes and wet Alder Chips and started the process. 7 hours later, I had a great finished product. Think I'll cut the brine time back to 10 ours! Otherwise, it turned out PERFECT! I'll be smoking Chinook for some time now, starting next week.

"Oh, the 250cc Honda Big Ruckus thing...I just threw that photo in for fun. I just got that and I'm pretty sure I'm selling the Harley. I put the Big Ruckus on the back of my trailer so, when I'm out and about for a couple/twelve days, I can get around anywhere I want, whenever I want to go to wherever I want to go to whenever I want to go! Then, once I arrive, I am there!

"I can hardly wait until NEXT year already. Didn't realize I was that hooked on fishing for "The Big Juans." It is now that time of year to start the fabulous crabbing and we're doing that right now. Looks like it will be a good year for crabs.....so far!? Can't fool Mother Nature!. The Coho fishing is pretty fair right now, but it could always be better. The ones caught are bright, shiny and full of fighting power."

Ken sent a bunch of picture; I'll include one here Ken's on the right:



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

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: [brees@pacifier.com](mailto:brees@pacifier.com)

Doug Rees: [doug@TheGuidesForecast.com](mailto:doug@TheGuidesForecast.com)

Michael Teague: [Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com](mailto:Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com)

**Random Links**

Lingcod fishing along the Pacific Ocean's West Coast

<http://www.lingcodfishing.net/>

Where to dig clams and go crabbing in Orgeon:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/shellfish/bayclams/wheretodig.asp>

**GOOD LUCK!**