

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 23rd – October 29th, 2009**

Willamette Valley/Metro - Anglers chasing coho on the mainstem near the mouth of the Sandy River are still doing well with spinners and plugs taking the majority of fish. Action should remain steady for another few weeks or until significant rains send fish upstream. Boats walleye fishing in the area are averaging 2 kept fish per boat.

Gorge anglers are still catching an occasional chinook but these fish are now making poor tablefare. Sturgeon fishing has slowed for both bank and boat anglers with boaters taking a legal fish for about every third party. Late run coho numbers are peaking at Bonneville Dam indicating better fishing at the mouths of upstream tributaries in the coming days.

While the counts at Willamette Falls lag behind a week, coho number easily exceed a record-smashing 20,000 adults so far this season. Falls temperatures are up to the high 50s as the flow moderates. Bright steelhead are available below Dexter Dam.

McKenzie water levels have returned to those measured October 12th after spiking on October 14th. It is fishing well for summer steelhead.

Fluctuating water levels have further hampered an already problematic fishery on the North Santiam. Wild steelhead are being hooked around Mehema.

The Clackamas remains a tough fishery. A few coho were taken over the past weekend on jigs in the deeper, slower pools.

Coho catches are spotty on the Sandy with many dark chinook in the mix. The water is clear. Eagle Creek fish are black.

Northwest – After a poor performance over the weekend, Tillamook Bay chinook catches have improved in recent days. Low slack along the inside of the north jetty produced good catches early in the week. The morning low tide series continues to improve into the weekend for anglers using herring near the bottom. Ray B. Townsend of Milwaukie landed a 25-pounder in the ocean on Monday.

Although forecasters failed to accurately predict rainfall amounts last weekend, thousands of adult coho and some chinook moved upstream on the Trask and North Fork Nehalem where hatcheries are expecting big numbers of fish to return. So far, returns are below expectations and conditions remain challenging with extreme low and clear water. Only slight river fluctuations are in the forecast, keeping driftboats trailered through another weekend.

Good bar and ocean conditions allowed for ample harvest of rockfish in both nearshore and deep reef areas. The south jetty out of the mouth of the Columbia River produced fine catches of black sea bass. Weather forecasts for the near future offer little hope of offshore recreation into the weekend.

Coho fishing in the lower Columbia has finally diminished. Only a rare fish will be taken as adults move into tributary systems for a November spawn.

Crabbing in the lower Columbia is productive as well but last weekends strong tides likely didn't produce as good as this weekend's will. Unfortunately, high slack will occur during the dark hours

but with the weak exchange, productive crabbing should happen all day long.

Southwest – One of the best ocean Dungeness seasons in history came to a close on October 15th. Bay and estuary crabbing is good and improving with crab in excellent condition.

Coho are in at Tahkenitch but remain concentrated near the outlet. No fishing is allowed below the Highway 101 Bridge. The dam opened on the 17th.

Umpqua side drifters have been doing well for coho on the Elkton stretch of the Umpqua.

With a wild coho fishery in the Coos, Coquille and Yaquina rivers for the first time in many years, Umpqua anglers witnessed thousands of native fish present and hope for a season here in the future.

Coos anglers saw a slowing in chinook hookups and while there are lots of coho in the system, most are wild which must be released.

Trollers in Rogue tidewater have continued to see steady action with chinook, jacks and coho although action slows whenever the ocean is rough.

It's mostly a coho show in the Coquille system where nearly half of the 1,500 wild coho quota allowed here has been taken.

Offshore forecasts look dicey for ocean launches out of the Port of Brookings this coming weekend. Good-sized chinook are entering the Chetco providing fair to good opportunities below the Highway 101 Bridge. The river above the bridge opens November 11th.

Chinook moved into the lower Elk and Sixes with recent rain but additional precipitation is needed to get this fishery underway. There are some fish being taken in the tidewater areas however.

Eastern – Steelhead are being hooked on the Deschutes from Madras to the mouth. Water level is up but clarity is good on the lower river.

Steelheading is improving on the Imnaha with hardware anglers outfishing fly rodders.

The Grande Ronde is improving for steelhead with reports of a fish landed for every 6.7 hours of effort. Anglers are reminded that the bag limit on the lower Grand Ronde, Imnaha and Wallowa Rivers has increased to 5 per day in response to a record number of steelhead passing into the system.

Once the river temperature warms, the smallmouth bass bite is epic on the John Day River. Steelhead are beginning to show in the lower stretches.

SW Washington – Coho numbers and quality is peaking in district rivers right now. The Cowlitz, particularly at the mouth of the Toutle is producing well.

The Kalama and Lewis River is also producing with coho making up the bulk of the catch and an occasional summer steelhead in the mix.

The lower Klickitat River is producing great catches of coho as the effort will attest to. With adult coho passage peaking at Bonneville Dam, catch rates will continue to be high in the coming weeks.

Columbia River Fishing Report – The Buoy 10 coho fishery is effectively done. Although a few hatchery coho are still lingering in the estuary, action and effort has shifted upstream. Any coho left that low in the system are more likely to be wild in origin and must be released unharmed. If you are planning a crabbing trip to the area and have time between pot pulls, you may give it a try but a concerted effort will likely disappoint you. The crabbing effort however will likely delight you.

The Bonneville chinook fishery is also fading with the quality fading even faster than the action is. There are still fair catches happening however from both the bank and boat sectors; there's just very few quality fish around.

Still going good is the coho trolling at the mouths of many area tributaries. The mouth of the Sandy and the mouth of the Washougal are still producing fair numbers of fish. And as long as river levels don't wildly fluctuate, this fishery could go on for a few more weeks. Plugs and spinners are taking the lion's share of the fish.

Sturgeon fishing in the gorge remains somewhat disappointing given success rates from previous years. There should be better action than there is right now as October is often peak month for bank anglers in the area. There was a great spring catch however which could be having an impact on how the fishing is right now. None-the-less, it may be one of the best options for sturgeon right now in the NW corner of the state.

The walleye bite is also gaining momentum as water temperatures cool and fish begin to think more seriously about putting on a few pounds before winter sets in. Anglers fishing around Troutdale are averaging around 2 fish per boat.

ODFW sez: "Effective Thursday (Oct. 22), the daily bag limit for adult hatchery coho will increase to three fish in the mainstem Columbia River between Tongue Point and the Hwy. 395 bridge at Pasco, Wash., the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife announced Tuesday. The rule change was approved Monday at a joint meeting"

The Guide's Forecast – With lower river coho and upper river chinook "on the ropes", the only fishing game left in town is trolling for coho at the tributary mouths. With water levels predicted to stay in check this week, the action should continue to produce fair catches near the mouth of the Sandy and Washougal Rivers. Hot colored plugs as well as nickel spinners with red beads will likely produce some of the better results.

Sturgeon anglers certainly stand a chance at some quality keepers in the gorge 3-day openers from Thursday through Saturday. It is peak month however catches appear to be lighter than in years past. Smelt will produce the best and the larger keepers are likely in the faster water so fish close to the deadline when possible.

Did I mention how good the crabbing is? The weak tide series coming on this weekend should produce great catches of Dungeness crab from the lower Columbia. Soft, late afternoon tides should produce marvelously for crabbers with quality bait. Crab downstream of Buoy 22.

Offshore and nearshore bottomfishing won't be an option this weekend like it was last. The ocean weather is looking to get rough. Be safe, be smart.

Razor clam digging is now open coast wide but we won't see another favorable tide series until early November. The PSP toxin is no more!

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Sure 'nuff, as predicted in our Oregonian report (and the Fisheries Forecast, above), the coho count at Willamette Falls has topped 20,000. Frankly, it was a no-brainer call. Even as counts lag behind nearly a week, if no more than 150 a day have passed, the actual year-to-date count would be over 21,000 and that doesn't include an unknown number which pass through the locks. They're upstream somewhere and anglers can only hope the ODFW radio tracking of some of these fish will help to determine where the heck they are heading as those targeting coho have had minimal success at best. Flows have been fluctuating with the on again, off again rainfall but temperatures continue to hover in the high 50s.

The McKenzie has remained fishable but that may change with rain next week.

North Santiam steelheaders remain frustrated. Only a few coho have been sighted here.

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon fishing has been spotty on the lower Willamette but a few keepers are being taken. Coho have been seen in large number at the mouth of the Tualatin, Yamhill and the Molalla rivers on the upper Willamette. Getting into a biter remains the challenge with this finicky fish but plug-pullers seem to be having the greatest success and some have taken limits. For those who can crack the code, there's three-coho daily bag limit, fin-clipped or not in the upper Willamette and its tributaries. The Middle Fork will continue to reward fly anglers with decent trout action.

With Mayflies hatching, fishing will be quite good on the lower McKenzie. Expect to find large cutthroat and reddsides in worthwhile number.

Coho are entering the Santiam system where, historically at least, they'll make their way primarily to the South Santiam.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – With coho scattered in the low waters of the Clackamas, try anywhere above Barton Park and expect to put in your time with cured eggs or spinners in an attempt to hook up with the Fish of 10,000 Casts. Insufficient rain has fallen to entice decent numbers of fresh coho into the system and many of those present are turning dark. There are only dark fish in Eagle Creek but rain will flush them out and draw in fresher coho.

While there are a few bright coho on the Sandy, the majority of fish available are either in various shades of charcoal or dark Chinook. There are still a few decent summer steelhead available which seem to be hanging out in trout water. The best chance for a coho encounter of the chrome kind is between Oxbow Park and Cedar Creek. Expect to find the river colored up to some degree. Cedar Creek was productive for some over the past weekend but it is again low.

North Coast Fishing Report – Although the action in Tillamook Bay has finally picked up a bit, it's still far from what we've seen here in recent years (except last year was tough as well). Anglers fishing the jaws close to low slack earlier this week did witness some fair chinook fishing as the tide began to slow. With weaker outgoing tides, chinook are likely to utilize the bar crossings for longer periods of the outgoing tide than when exchanges that are heavier. That is quickly becoming the situation this week with high, low tides and low, high tides. Did you get that? In more simplified terms, there won't be much water on the tide exchanges this week making for better opportunity in the lower bay.

The coho in the estuaries have pretty much disappeared as the slight river rise was just enough to send hordes of coho upstream. Although I haven't got numbers of fish present at the hatcheries (North Fork Nehalem and Trask), I don't think those facilities are going to get nearly the number of fish that they thought they were going to get but it's still a bit early. Volunteers were on hand however to help with the coho overload; making for some good eats at the local food bank outlets.

The upper bay has not fished all that well in recent days. Although that is not all that uncommon for this time of year due to the fact that a good portion of the later running chinook are due to the Kilchis and Wilson Rivers. This keeps most fish using the east side of the bay where Ghost Hole and Bay City trollers are more likely to intercept them.

Tidewater anglers did have some good fishing in the lower Trask and the ditch last week but numbers have dwindled as the slight rain freshet sent many of those fish upstream. The Wilson tidewater will be the better option in the coming days although the poor tide series is not likely to draw in many fresh fish into the lower stretches of the Wilson and Kilchis Rivers.

The ocean did produce light catches prior to the swell blowing up but there is little hope for ocean opportunity if the NOAA forecast rings true.

Bay crabbing is only fair and a real disappointment after the ocean crabbing experiences we just got done having. Tillamook remains one of the best bets with Netarts and Nehalem a distant second.

The Nestucca and Salmon Rivers are tapering although you may not be able to tell that by the effort that still exists on these river systems. The Nestucca is likely the better of the two and should still provide decent catches for another few weeks. Like most north coast streams however, numbers are clearly down on this river system as well.

The Guide's Forecast – It's a soft tide series this weekend which should allow for the best opportunity for herring trollers working the lower jetty of Tillamook Bay. Hopefully, the seaweed remains somewhat tamed on these lower exchanges but fair numbers of chinook may show on these holdover tides. Run timing alone should bring about some better action.

Although we traditionally wait for low slack to hit to put out our best effort in the jaws, adults are likely to cross for a longer period of time with the weaker outgoing tide. Don't be afraid to focus your effort just after peak ebb (which is typically just after mid-way through the outgoing tide) along the jetty. I tend to make my first few passes along the jetty going with the tide instead of holding against it. I'll turn into the tide and hold as we get closer to low slack.

The current runs the softest closest to the bottom of the bay so keep your baits close to the bottom for motivated biters. As the tide slows and switches to incoming, you may want to stagger your baits if you have the rods to experiment with.

When the tide switches to incoming, you'll likely experience a bit of a lull in the action but adults are likely to begin working their way up into the estuary using the east side of the bay (Ghost Hole, Bay City) and across Kilchis Flats destined for the Kilchis and Wilson River mouths. With only a fair incoming tide, they may actually hold in the estuary for a while before migrating up, especially if river levels don't rise significantly over the weekend. Use herring for bait throughout the lower bay but spinners can once again become effective as you get closer to Bay City.

It will be a good tide to try your hand at crabbing and the action could be ok on Tillamook Bay. Crab close to the ocean for the best and biggest of the crab but we may have to wait a bit for better numbers of keepers to flush into the bay. Netarts and the Nehalem estuary are fair bets at best.

River levels are not expected to rise significantly for at least another week. Keep the driftboats at home or be prepared to polish your boat bottom if you try for a drift.

Central & South Coast Reports – Fair numbers of crab are being taken out of Newport in Yaquina Bay but the sorting of softshell is required with as many as half the Dungeness to soft to be worthy table fare. A few are fishing the Yaquina river but very few are touching a fish.

Crabbing has been excellent in Alsea Bay.

Trollers are starting to see a little action in the wild coho fishery at Siltcoos and Tahkenitch lakes but it has been slow to get underway.

Siuslaw anglers were catching Chinook mid to late last week but the action slowed way down into the weekend and has yet to pick up again.

Chinook fishing has slowed in Winchester Bay and Umpqua tidewater with recent rains drawing fish upriver. Catches have been fair to good in the Elkton stretch. Steelheading remains good in all areas of the North Umpqua where anglers have been enjoying a rewarding season. Fishing remains closed in the South Umpqua.

Trollers on the Coquille are making fair catches of Chinook. The wild coho fishery remains open here but catches are slow.

The South Fork of the Coos River is delivering decent catches of Chinook while trolling in tidewater has produced very few hookups recently. Crabbing is good in Coos Bay.

Trollers on the Rogue estuary are making fair, steady catches of Chinook and coho. While Chinook fishing is spotty around Agness, catches of half-pounders are good and fly angling effective here. The middle stretch of the Rogue from Hog Creek up to Gold Ray Dam is producing good catches of summer steelhead now. Chinook are spawning in this stretch so targeting them is illegal. The product of their spawn is helping to boost steelhead catches, however, as anglers use single egg imitations or flies to hook up with summers. In the upper Rogue which is restricted to flies-only through the end of the month, steelheading has slowed due to cold water temperatures. Nymphs and egg flies have been most effective.

Rain emptied tidewater last week on the Chetco, making for slow Chinook fishing recently. With the river closed above the Highway 101 Bridge, trollers here can only wait until the next push of fish.

Trout fishing at Diamond Lake has been worthwhile for fish to 20 inches with bait fishing most productive. Those who'd like to experience this fishery had better give it a try soon as it closes at the end of October.

Boats are jammed at the mouth of the Elk and Sixes and the Chinook fishery gets underway here. There were some large fish taken on the Elk early today, October 22nd.

Central and Eastern Oregon – A recent rise in the water level on the Deschutes has slowed that bite although steelhead continue to be hooked here and there from Macks Canyon to the mouth. With the steelhead count at John Day Dam well over half a million, it will only improve with better water conditions.

ODFW sez: "Beginning on Sunday, October 18, the bag limit for adipose fin-clipped steelhead will increase from three to five fish per day and will remain in effect through April 15, 2010 in the following areas:

- * Grande Ronde River from the Oregon/Washington state line to the mouth of the Wallowa River;
- * Wallowa River from the mouth to Trout Creek; and,
- * Imnaha River from the mouth to Big Sheep Creek.

"In the Snake River from the Oregon/Washington state line to the angling deadline below Hell's Canyon Dam, the bag limit will be five adipose fin-clipped steelhead of which no more than three may be 32-inches total length or greater.

"The states of Idaho and Washington have implemented similar regulations in the Snake River and tributaries."

Steelheading has slowed on the Grande Ronde of late as the water has risen and cooled.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report *October 14th - October 27th, 2009*

North Puget Sound

Anglers fishing the region's rivers and streams are still reeling in some coho salmon, while saltwater anglers have turned their attention to blackmouth and chum salmon. "We're now transitioning to blackmouth and chum in the marine areas," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "It's been a slow transition so far, but it could pick up as more chum move into the region and opportunities to hook blackmouth increase."

Anglers fishing for **blackmouth** - resident chinook - in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild coho. Those fishing in Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) also have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook.

Anglers fishing for **chum salmon** may want to try waters around Point No Point (north end of the Kitsap Peninsula) and Possession Bar (southern portion of Whidbey Island). Those two areas are often hot spots for chum salmon, Thiesfeld said. Anglers fishing those areas, or other waters of Marine Area 9 (Admiralty Inlet), have a daily limit of two salmon but must release chinook.

"When fishing for chum salmon, anglers should try trolling slow and using a flasher with a green coyote spoon, or a green, purple or pink mini hoochie," Thiesfeld said.

Thiesfeld reminds anglers that only portions of marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) are open for salmon fishing. Salmon fishing in Marine Area 8-1 is 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 is 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.

In the freshwater, there have been reports of anglers catching a few **coho** in the Skykomish and Snohomish rivers. Anglers fishing those two rivers 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

As area salmon fisheries make the transition from coho to blackmouth and chum, thousands of Washingtonians are preparing for the first **razor clam dig** of the fall season. Evening razor clam digs are scheduled at Twin Harbors (Oct. 16-19); Long Beach and Copalis (Oct. 16, 17 and 18); and Mocrocks and Kalaloch Beach (Oct. 17 and 18).

Digging at all beaches is restricted to the hours between noon and midnight. The best time to start is an hour or two before low tides, said Dan Ayres, WDFW coastal shellfish manager. He also recommends that diggers take lights or lanterns with them.

Because the digs are scheduled on variable days, Ayres reminds people to check the dates to make sure the beach they choose is open for digging. A map showing the locations of razor clam beaches is available at http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/razorclm/graphics/map_beaches.jpg.

Harvesters may 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 fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov.

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. -1.1ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks, Kalaloch
- Monday, Oct. 19 (8:06 p.m. -1.1 ft.) Twin Harbors

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 have a few options as the **coho** season shifts to chum and blackmouth in Puget Sound. "The fishing's been pretty good out of Port Angeles where folks still have some time to catch **blackmouth** and **coho** ," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. A creel check conducted at the Freshwater Bay Ramp during the

Oct. 10-11 weekend showed 18 anglers with seven chinook and six coho. The non-selective fishery runs through Oct. 15 in Marine Area 5 (Sekiu), while Marine Area 6 (Port Angeles) closes Oct. 31. Anglers are reminded that only coho may be retained in Dungeness Bay. In non-selective fisheries, anglers may retain fish whether or not they have a clipped adipose fin.

The daily limit in both marine areas is two salmon of any species, but only one fish may be a chinook.

Farther south, anglers are finding coho in the Skokomish River in Mason County, which has been a good producer in the past few years, Thiesfeld said. Anglers may keep up to four adult salmon as part of a six-fish daily limit, but must release chum salmon through Oct. 15. No chinook retention is allowed.

Other fishing opportunities coming up in Puget Sound include **chum** and **blackmouth** retention in Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) beginning Oct. 16.

Anglers fishing in marine areas 11 and 13 (Vashon Island to South Puget Sound) may retain **wild chinook** as part of their two-fish daily limit, but will be restricted to one chinook starting Nov. 1. All **wild coho** caught in Marine Area 13 must be released through Oct. 31.

On the freshwater, anglers are reminded that starting Oct. 16 only hatchery coho and jack chinook may be retained on a number of area rivers, including the Chehalis, Elk, Johns, Satsop and Wishkah rivers in Grays Harbor County and the Skookumchuck River in Thurston County. The Dungeness River in Clallam County opens to salmon fishing Oct. 16 with a daily limit of four coho only.

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. No wild coho may be retained.

Because retention rules and fishing regulations vary on the many rivers and streams throughout the region, anglers are advised to check the 2009-2010 *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> before heading out.

For a change of pace, anglers may want to venture out some evening and try jigging for **squid**, which generally make their way through Puget Sound in fall and winter. "We're heading into the peak of the fishery and Puget Sound has some good piers to fish from," said Greg Bargmann, WDFW marine ecosystem manager. Good bets include the Les Davis Pier in Tacoma and the Elliott Bay pier in Seattle. "Last year, squid fishing success seemed to be down, but squid populations can change greatly from year to year and it's hard to predict success," Bargmann said. "The squid caught during the fall and winter are not the large Humboldt squid in the news earlier this year, but are the smaller market squid which seldom exceed 12 inches in length."

Squid fishing is open year-round with a daily limit of five quarts or 10 pounds. Best success usually occurs at night. Legal gear includes a baitfish jig, a maximum of four squid lures or a hand dip net. Each angler must have a separate container. Squid fishing is closed in Hood Canal (Marine Area 12). More information on squid fishing is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/squid>. Information on fishing piers is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/piers/>.

Southwest Washington

Anglers are catching sturgeon from the Wauna powerlines upstream to Bonneville Dam, while late-run coho salmon continue to draw lots of attention above and below the dam. For trout, Swift Reservoir is still a solid bet for rainbows and the Cowlitz River continues to yield some nice, foot-long cutthroat.

Success rates for legal-size **sturgeon** have been highest in the gorge, but catches have been scattered throughout the Wauna-to-Bonneville section of the lower Columbia River that reopened Oct. 1, said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. The action dropped off somewhat after the first few days of fishing, but Hymer expects fishing to pick up with the arrival of the fall rains.

"The rain stirs things up, and sturgeon respond to that," he said. "It should get things moving again." White sturgeon may be retained from the Wauna powerlines to Bonneville Dam Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays only through the end of the year.

Rain and higher flows should also improve fishing for **late-run coho**, which were already producing decent catches from Buoy 10 to the Bonneville Pool before the skies opened up in mid-October. In the tributaries, fishing has been productive on the Cowlitz River and especially at the mouth of the Klickitat River, where three out of four anglers have been catching coho, along with some **chinook** and hatchery **steelhead**.

Bank anglers have also been catching coho on the North Fork Lewis River, although the majority have been dark fish or wild coho that must be released, Hymer said. "The rain should help move more bright, late-stock coho into the Lewis River, as well as the Kalama and Washougal rivers where fishing has been slow," he said.

Columbia River anglers should also note that Oct. 15 is the last day the anti-snagging rule - which prohibits certain types of fishing gear - will be in effect from Bonneville Dam to McNary Dam. Hymer strongly recommends, however, that anglers check the *Fishing in Washington* rule pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for other regulations applicable to specific rivers in the Columbia River Basin.

So far, this year's overall coho returns are running close to expectations, Hymer said. "The early run exceeded the pre-season forecast of 467,000 fish and the late run is looking promising," he said. "We expect to see late-run fish returning through November and beyond, but a total return of 700,000 coho to the Columbia River - as originally forecast - still looks like a real possibility."

If that forecast proves accurate, this year's coho run to the Columbia would be the largest since 2001.

At the Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery, Tacoma Power recovered 10,260 coho adults, 910 jacks, 1,354 fall chinook adults, 290 jacks, 26 summer-run steelhead adults and 105 sea-run cutthroat trout during the week ending Oct. 10. With the new collection facility in operation, fish can be processed faster now, Hymer said.

During the same week, Tacoma Power crews released fish at four sites:

- **Mayfield Lake** at the Ike Kinswa State Park boat launch: 912 fall chinook adults and 257 jacks, 89 coho adults and three jacks.
- **Tilton River** at Gust Backstrom Park in Morton: 269 coho adults and 12 jacks.
- **Lake Scanewa** above Cowlitz Falls Dam: 1,128 coho adults and 92 jacks.
- **Upper Cowlitz River** at the Skate Creek Bridge in Packwood: 786 coho adults and 49 jacks.

Reports on fish plants by Tacoma are available at <http://bit.ly/pQBi>.

At Lake Scanewa, 34 boat anglers racked up 25 **rainbow trout**, 12 adult coho and one jack in a recent creel survey. Twenty-eight bank anglers accounted for 15 rainbows, two adult coho and one jack coho. On the upper Cowlitz, 42 bank anglers kept 17 adult coho and released three others.

Meanwhile, boat anglers fishing the mainstem Columbia River near Camas/Washougal have been averaging three **walleye** per rod. Fishing should be good until the river cools, Hymer said.

Eastern Washington

The special season for **fall chinook salmon** that opened Sept. 1 on the lower Snake River will close as scheduled Oct. 15. WDFW district fish biologist Glen Mendel of Dayton reports very few fall chinook have been caught in that fishery.

On the other hand, Snake River **steelhead** action continues to be very good. According to WDFW enforcement officers, night fishing for steelhead has been especially productive near the Snake's confluence with the Clearwater River on the Idaho border. Mendel noted, however, that officers have issued several warnings for illegal use of barbed hooks and other violations on the river.

As of Oct. 7, the daily catch limit on the mainstem Snake River (including boundary waters with Idaho) increased from three to five hatchery-marked steelhead (clipped and healed-over adipose or ventral fin), of which not more than three may equal or exceed 32 inches total length. The five-fish daily limit (but not the upper size restriction) also applies to the section of the Grande Ronde River from the County Road Bridge to Oregon state line. All steelhead caught in the Grand Ronde from the mouth to County Road Bridge (about 2.5 miles upstream) must be released.

Mendel explains that the catch limit was liberalized because only a small number of the large return of hatchery steelhead are needed for hatchery broodstock, and that removing excess hatchery steelhead will benefit wild steelhead listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

Meanwhile, many streams and lakes throughout the region close Oct. 31 for **trout** and other species fishing. WDFW enforcement officers checking anglers note that many lakes are producing good catches in the final weeks of the season. Waters closing to fishing Oct. 31 are noted in the Fishing in Washington pamphlet.

Northcentral Washington

WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist Bob Jateff of Twisp reminds anglers that this year's special **hatchery steelhead** fishery on the upper Columbia, Wenatchee, Icicle, Entiat, Methow and Okanogan rivers, includes mandatory retention - anglers must keep any adipose-fin-clipped hatchery origin steelhead at least 20 inches long until they reach the daily catch limit of four fish. 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 salmon** (minimum size 12 inches) per day, but must release coho equipped with an anchor tag.

The Similkameen River will open to hatchery steelhead retention beginning Nov. 1.

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; Buck Lake will be closed to fishing Oct. 26 until further notice.

Many **trout** fisheries throughout the region close Oct. 31. There are also several that remain open through November, or are open year-round. Check the 2009-2010 *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> for details.

Southcentral Washington

The Columbia River closes Oct. 15 to the retention of all **salmon** between the Highway 395 Bridge at Pasco and Priest Rapids Dam. The in-season forecast for fall chinook escapement to the Hanford Reach has fallen below the natural spawning escapement goal of 28,800 adult chinook. All salmon must be immediately released unharmed and cannot be removed from the water prior to release.

WDFW district fish biologist Paul Hoffarth notes anglers can continue to fish for and retain **hatchery steelhead** between the old Hanford town site wooden power line towers and Priest Rapids Dam through October 22. Angling for hatchery steelhead from McNary Dam to the old Hanford town site wooden powerline towers will remain open after Oct. 22 under the regulations listed in the fishing rules pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>. Effective Nov. 1, the daily catch limit is reduced to two hatchery steelhead. Wild steelhead (adipose fin intact) must be immediately released unharmed and cannot be removed from the water prior to release.

Hoffarth's recent weekly creel checks on Hanford Reach steelhead showed a total of 327 steelhead caught with 261 hatchery steelhead retained. For the season so far, 957 steelhead have been caught, 625 hatchery steelhead retained, and 272 wild steelhead have been released.

The Yakima River will close to all fishing for all species on Oct. 22. Hoffarth's weekly creel checks on the Yakima showed effort and harvest picking up with 175 adult chinook, 37 jacks, and 10 adult coho caught. One wild steelhead was caught and released. For the season so far, 214 adult chinook, 37 jacks, and 10 adult coho have been harvested.

Hoffarth also notes **walleye** fishing has been good in the Tri-Cities area. "Nothing incredible, but if you put in a little time you should come away with a fish or two," he said.

TGF Inbox – Reader Email

New **subscriber Wayne S.** wrote, "Just joined as a member - but I don't really see any difference in the SW Report - free vs. member ??"

TGF co-editor Michael Teague, who writes the Southwest reports, responds, "Welcome to TGF where it is sincerely our goal to help **you** catch more fish!"

"You will be delighted to know that the Southwest newsletter report available to subscribers is not only many times larger than the Oregonian version (see 'Fisheries Forecast, above) but is completely new, written without reference to the abbreviated report which appears in the newspaper.

"Enjoy your subscription and please write again any time."

Reader Steve C. wrote to ask, "You mention Eagle Creek in your report. Do you refer to the Eagle Creek just above Bonneville dam?"

Michael, who also writes about the Clackamas and Sandy, again responds, "You'll find my Eagle Creek reference is always included in the same paragraph as the Clackamas River report. It is a tributary and the location of the hatchery.

"Good fishing."

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

Details - Coho bag limit increased to three fish on Columbia

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2009/october/102009b.asp>

Despite Economy, Fishing License Sales Up 8 Percent Nationwide

<http://rbff.mediaroom.com/index.php?s=43&item=201#>

GOOD LUCK!