

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **November 6th – November 12th, 2009**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - Catches of sturgeon in the Bonneville area continue to drop as keepers got culled from the population from the higher effort in the month of October. Fishery managers will be weighing further cutbacks in the 2010 quota as it appears keeper range fish are seeing a downturn in population.

Salmon effort is non-existent at Bonneville but a few anglers remain persistent trolling the mouth of the Sandy River. Catches here have slowed as recent rain freshets sent anxious adults to the spawning grounds and hatcheries upriver.

Water temperature at Willamette Falls as of November 2nd had dropped to 52 degrees. An average of about 200 coho per day were crossing in the last week of October with the YTD total about 24,000. Sturgeon fishing is fair at best in the Portland Harbor.

The McKenzie has been challenging but is producing some reddsides.

The mainstem, North and South Santiams are open for coho. A few are as high as the Little North Fork with catches reported at Greens Bridge and Jefferson.

Eagle Creek on the Clackamas is crowded and off-color with mostly dark coho present but it is producing a few bright fish.

Sandy's Cedar Creek came up over the weekend and was muddy on Monday. Returning adult coho are expected throughout the month and with the recent extension, anglers should have good opportunity for bright fish for another few weeks.

Most moving water closed to trout fishing at the end of October. Check regulations for your favorite body of water.

Junction City Pond was stocked Friday, October 30th with legal and larger trout. Limits of trout averaging 12 inches are being caught by boat and bank anglers in the low water at Henry Hagg Lake.

Day-use fees will be waived at Federal Forest Service sites on Veterans Day, November 11th.

Northwest – Chinook catches in Tillamook have improved slightly with most chinook being taken in the Ghost Hole. The large tide series currently underway should put fish into the estuary into the coming weekend. Most fish are averaging between 20 and 24 pounds with an occasional 30 pounder in the mix.

Upper Tillamook Bay has been producing an occasional chinook but the bulk of the effort is now concentrated on the lower bay. Later returning fish are typically destined for the Wilson and Kilchis Rivers triggering most anglers to target the east side of the estuary.

The Wilson tidewater has had small schools of fish available to bobber and fly fishers. More fish should stage there until the next rain freshet sends them upstream. That rain freshet is due to hit

over the weekend.

Coastal rivers did see a significant rise last weekend that pushed chinook and coho into all major watersheds. Good fishing was short lived however as flows dropped quickly and the lack of adults this season had anglers looking elsewhere early in the week.

Chum salmon are present in the Wilson, Kilchis and Miami Rivers and must be released unharmed.

Another storm system may put coastal systems out again but when water levels drop back in, the Wilson and Kilchis Rivers should be good fishing for chinook and an occasional chum salmon. The Nestucca should also produce fair catches this late in the season.

Although crabbing has improved in many coast estuaries, strong tides will keep crabbers from witnessing good catches over the weekend. An excellent crab tide series takes place just before Thanksgiving.

Southwest – With the ocean kicking up this weekend, boaters will be unable to launch anywhere on the southwest Oregon coast.

Coho are being taken on the mainstem Umpqua but most are wild.

While the Tahkenitch wild coho fishery has been slow, Siltcoos, while crowded, has been producing some fish. Silvers are scattered with a concentration at the outlet. Troll Wiggle Warts or spinners to take fish here.

With fresh chinook moving into the Coos, catches picked up slightly but it has been spotty.

Trollers are taking fair catches of chinook on the lower Coquille. The wild coho fishery remains open here with about 50% of the quota filled but it has been slow.

Catches in Rogue Bay have continued to slow as rain draws fish upstream. Fish have been caught at the mouth of Indian Creek. Early and late in the day is most productive. Bank anglers are also scoring here.

Chinook moved upriver on the Chetco with recent precipitation. Fishing is scheduled to open above the Highway 101 Bridge starting Saturday, November 7th but low water and flow may keep it closed.

Anglers have taken some large chinook at the mouth of the Elk River with a 58-pounder landed on Halloween.

Eastern – Paulina has been kicking out some jumbo brown trout and **Pro guide Rick Arnold (541-480-1570)** has pictures to prove it. See the subscription version of TGF for more along with a photo of a 14-pounder.

Steelheading has been consistent on the lower Deschutes where water temperatures are starting to drop.

Although the Imnaha water level is low, steelheading has been good.

While results have been spotty one day to the next, Grande Ronde steelheaders have made some good catches.

John Day anglers are getting their season underway with catches from both boat and bank anglers underway according to **Pro Guide Steve Fleming (888-624-9424)**. Action should begin to ramp up in the coming weeks with a peak towards the Thanksgiving holiday. Improvements are going to be made to LaPage Park in the near future so anglers are encouraged to call the responsible office before driving all the way up there. The Army Corps office number is (541) 506-7819.

SW Washington – The Cowlitz has recently slowed for coho despite the large returns coming back to the hatchery. The Lewis continues to produce fair catches but dark fish will begin to dominate the catch.

The Klickitat River remains a good option with dam counts at Bonneville at a near historic high. This fishery should last late into the month.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Fishing activity continues to draw to a close on the mainstem Columbia with a continued downturn for sturgeon anglers in the gorge and coho action still dropping off as fish begin their upstream migration to their natal river systems. About the only thing Columbia anglers have to look forward to is the John Day area steelheading about ready to head into its peak this month.

Creel counts indicate that keepers are harder to come by near Bonneville Dam as 135 bank rods checked in 8 keeper sturgeon last weekend. Boat fishing is not impressive either. Cooler temps and the fact that many keepers have been culled from this fishery will not improve matters either. Sturgeon anglers can expect a long hiatus before ample opportunity comes up again.

Coho trollers working the mouth of the Sandy and Washougal Rivers are not enjoying the success they've seen in recent weeks. About a fish for every 3 boats was tallied in the Troutdale region over the weekend with a further slowdown likely this week.

John Day area anglers are taking advantage of fair conditions and steelhead are being caught but it's likely not as good as what anglers had expected given the huge number of steelhead that have passed through the system this year. Boats fishing out of LaPage Park tallied nearly a fish for every boat in last week's creel checks but a large percentage of the fish were wild and had to be released. Bank anglers averaged even better with nearly a fish for every rod although the ratio of wild to hatchery was 2:1. Fun to catch but you can't barbeque a memory I always say. Anglers have been asking about a potential closure at LaPage Park with a rumored closure on Wednesday (11/4). It may be wise to call the USACOE office at (541) 506-7819 before driving up there to launch.

Crabbing in the estuary out of Hammond remains excellent. It's the traditional great opportunity although big tides will not produce as long during the tide as softer ones coming up later in the month. None-the-less, persistent crabbers had no problem taking easy limits of quality keepers, especially on Saturday when the conditions were ideal.

The Guide's Forecast – With most salmon and sturgeon fisheries below Bonneville Dam coming to a crawl, one of the best options remains the John Day Pool and John Day Arm for steelhead. It seems as temperatures drop, action for these still quality summer runs really ramps up for trollers and bobber fishers. We should start to see catch rates climb to some pretty impressive numbers in the coming weeks. Trollers will take the bulk of the catch working the pool just upstream of the dam but boaters fishing the lower 5 miles of the John Day should also score good catches. Bank anglers working the shore from the dam deadline (upstream deadline) to the mouth of the John Day River will also take fish. The wild ratio is up now but that could change in the coming weeks. It's usually closer to a 50/50 hatchery to wild ratio.

Crabbing is the other strong option on the Columbia this weekend. The mid-afternoon high tides are still somewhat big but with the number of keepers present, you shouldn't have trouble getting keepers if you're crabbing effectively during the right time of the tide.

Coho is still an option for boaters working the mouths of the mainstem tributaries but don't expect great fishing. Hatchery fish are ready to go at most hatcheries but there are always some straggling fish lagging, especially on big return years.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – What a great year. For coho, that is, with 24,372 crossing as of Halloween ... sans costume, we can assume. The water temperature is 51 degrees as of November 5th. Willamette level and flow will increase over the coming week as visibility diminishes.

Summer steelhead have continued to enter the trap at Leaburg Dam on the McKenzie and are being recycled downstream. Fishing has been fair.

The last round of rainfall caused a rise in the North Santiam water level although it has remained marginally fishable with decent numbers of steelhead and a few coho in the system.

The Guide's Forecast – Readers may recall the effort we reported here by ODFW biologists to radio track coho crossing Willamette Falls. Preliminary data confirmed what appeared in TGF with regard to the destination of the majority of the record run: the Yamhill, Tualatin and Molalla rivers. Fewer of these coho headed for the Santiam system, a situation reported by local anglers. Anyone catching a radio-tagged fish is asked to release it. With precipitation, coho will enter the tributaries en masse although it remains to be seen what percentage of these fish will be bright enough to keep. Sturgeon catches are expected to improve as the water flow increase and becomes muddy, just the way they like it.

The coming storm will make the McKenzie unfishable for a while Watch for an update next week.

Coho are being caught on the North Santiam around Mehama and Packsaddle. Detroit Reservoir has to drop over 40 feet to function as flood control so the coming rainfall will inevitably effect the North Santiam although prediction on the degree to which it will rise are mixed. Fishing has only been fair here at best and isn't expected to improve in the coming week as a low pressure front brings wind and more rain.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Coho are scattered on the Clackamas and while the occasional bright fish has been taken near the mouth, indicating fresh fish are entering, fishing upriver has been spotty. Perhaps this next round of rain which will start tonight (Thursday, November 5th) will provide the freshet which will get coho moving and, hopefully,

biting. Eagle Creek has produced coho this week but the vast majority are various stages of charcoal and crimson with few fit for the table.

Sandy anglers have been taking some coho but it seems like a 'right time, tight place' situation. Some are catching while others blank. With the level and flow optimum for fish passage, coho are lingering at any particular location. According to the ODFW, "Over the past week, the Sandy hatchery collected 8,300 hatchery coho and 87 wild coho, bringing the season total to 14,400 fish." Of these, nearly 13,000 have gone to the Oregon Food Bank.

North Coast Fishing Report – It's pretty clear there are a fair number of unemployed fishermen out there. Why else would there be so many anglers when the fishing is so poor? It's been a sea-saw week on Tillamook Bay although most would agree the fishing has been consistently poor. As I cruised into Garibaldi Marina today, the harbor was empty and I could still park in the premier parking places by the public boat ramp. This shouldn't be happening on November 4th.

I started out my fishing week on Sunday with a group from Utah. We lucked into 3 chinook by 7:45 (2 in the Ghost Hole and 1 at Bay City). We saw very few other fish taken. On Saturday, the lower Wilson was rumored to have been too brown to fish effectively but it should have dropped down into shape by Sunday. And given the good tide series we were on, I decided to go up and give it a try. We got our last fish (30-pounder) flat-lining a white/green Flatfish in the lower tidewater stretches. We had 2 other good bites besides that. Beaming with confidence, we returned for the same program the next day only to land a wild coho at Bay City and a chum salmon up the Wilson again. We did see other fish caught but I wouldn't have said it was better than Sunday. One day you're the windshield, the next day you're the bug! I finished up my week on Wednesday with another wild coho and only saw one other fish caught by **pro guide Roger Goodwin**. Roger motored up to me with rods put away stating he in fact had 3 chinook in his boat! I didn't even see 3 chinook taken on this gorgeous fall day! Getting a late report, my neighbor hooked 2 chinook and landed one of them at Bay City on the first part of the outgoing tide. With few exceptions, it's been a very poor week on Tillamook Bay.

Effort in the upper bay is still going on with fish being taken daily. The bulk of the effort is taking place on the lower bay between the Ghost Hole and Bay City however as most of the later returning fish are destined for the Wilson and Kilchis Rivers where the river mouths are on the east side of the estuary.

Following last weekends rain freshet, fresh fish were available in the Wilson River. The river rise was short lived and there were dark fish present as well but anglers working the lower portions of the Wilson did find some bright fish. Since then, fish again concentrated in the tidewater section of the Wilson and anglers have been having to hunt them down for any consistent success. One angler reported going 3 for 7 in the Wilson tidewater on Wednesday with 1 fish in chrome condition and the other 2 "keepable" but a little dusky in color. The Nestucca reportedly fished well last Sunday and Monday but quickly dropped back into low water status as fish began to hold up again.

The Trask also had fish but most were darkening quickly. Some wild coho are still around so be sure to properly identify your catch before bonking.

The first winter steelhead of the season was caught off of the handicap dock on the north fork of the Nehalem River on Wednesday. They also had one 10-pound buck enter the trap at the hatchery on the same day. This is a good sign for this early in the season.

Crabbing remains fair in Netarts Bay and Nehalem Bay is also still producing fair numbers of quality keepers. With the ocean crab fishery now closed, more quality keepers should filter into the estuaries this time of year.

Razor clam digging along the north Clatsop Beaches produced fair for diggers willing to brave high surf and night time tides. A new storm front moving in will likely curb success rates late in the week.

The Guide's Forecast – Tides are beginning to soften although they will remain strong enough over the weekend to keep effort in the middle bay and not along the jetties. The one exception however is the potential for a low slack bite over the weekend with a small outgoing tide in the early morning. It would be wise to fish from sun up through low slack along the inside of the north jetty assuming it will be a safe place to fish as the ocean weather is likely to be quite scary with the storm front expected to move onshore.

The best incoming tide bite will happen in the Ghost Hole at least half way through the incoming tide. The seaweed happens to be at it's worst during the middle 3 hours of the incoming so plan on picking lettuce if you wish to be fishing effectively. Most recently, the best action has been closer to high slack and even the first part of incoming tide (especially on Wednesday) but most boats headed for home at this time of the tide. Bay City was also a fair option the later we got into the incoming tide. The seaweed gets much more concentrated in well defined lines towards high slack so it's much easier to fish effectively the longer you wait for the tide to come in.

Simply put, it's a herring show; keep 'em fishing on the bottom.

Driftboaters should have another good chance at chinook on several coastal systems over the week as river levels are forecasted to fluctuate within fishable stages into early next week. The Kilchis and Wilson Rivers are good options this late in the season but the Trask and Nestucca as well as a possibility on the Necanicum may all be options depending on the water heights on your favorite rivers. Utilize the smaller streams when rivers like the Wilson, Trask and Nestucca Rivers are too high to fish. Plugs will certainly take fish but backbounced eggs will be equally efficient when you can find concentrated numbers to work over. The chinook will hold in the tailouts during higher flows and drop down into the deeper holes when flows subside.

Early winter steelhead may be available on the North Fork Nehalem, Wilson, Kilchis and Nestucca Rivers. If the summer steelhead run and wild coho returns are any indication, we may have a good run of fish coming back to our north coast streams this year.

Crabbing will likely remain best on Netarts Bay but other estuaries may be fair as well. Tillamook, Nehalem and Nestucca Bays should produce fair catches but success may drop as the fresh water influx comes this week from all the rain in the forecast.

Central & South Coast Reports – The first major storm of the year is due to hit Oregon this evening (November 5th) with coastal winds to 50 miles an hour or more. The ocean will be angry this weekend, with swells of 20 feet or better favoring storm waters over boaters.

While the entire coast remains closed to mussel harvest, razor clams are safe to dig everywhere.

Bottom fishing has outstanding during brief interludes when the ocean has laid down. Shore-bound fishers are doing well throwing soft plastics from the jetties and rocks, but keep an eye on the surf if you try it.

Crabbing has been good in coastal bays and estuaries with a fairly dry fall so far this year but if the upcoming storm flushes too much fresh water into these waters, it will shut down until salinity levels rise again. Ocean crabbing closed in mid-October.

The Siletz River is forecast to rise a foot and a half in the next couple of days. While the fall Chinook run has been modest here, this increase should bring in a few fish.

Fishing for Chinook and mostly wild coho has slowed in Winchester Bay. Unclipped silver must be released unharmed here. Crabbing has been good. The mainstem Umpqua has Chinook and coho on the move up to the confluence of the North and South forks. While wild coho must be released, action for both has been good. Chinook are responding best to cured eggs while coho are hitting spinners. Steelheading has slowed in the cold water of the North Umpqua. The south Umpqua remains very low and will remain closed through November.

Trollers on Tahkenitch and Siltcoos lakes have been hard pressed to find any action. With high winds and heavy rain predicted over the next several days, it'll be best to wait out the storm. These fisheries have been worthwhile in seasons past and with the good returns this year, still hold promise.

Coos Bay crabbers have been taking good numbers of Dungeness. Even those tossing nets and traps off the docks are scoring near-limits. Although Chinook catches are slow in tidewater, the South Fork Coos is producing good catches.

With fresh Chinook moving into the lower Coquille over the past weekend, catches improved here for trollers. Wild coho fishing remains open here with only about half the quota filled but catches have been few.

There is little pressure from trollers on Rogue Bay although a few Chinook are being taken daily, primarily on anchovies. Upstream, there has been a little on-and-off action around Agness although most of the Chinook here are dark, awaiting a freshet to move upstream. Steelhead and half-pounders are being taken in decent number here, however. Steelheaders on the middle Rogue have been doing well with plugs taking fish. The lower Rogue Canyon has been producing good numbers of adults and half-pounders. Bait fishing has been allowed above the Shady Cove Boat since October 31st and with steelhead responding well, catches have been good. The upper Rogue comes into its own at this time of year, with summer steelhead responding to all manner of bait, lure and flies. Coho fishing is poor.

The Chetco estuary is providing steady action for Chinook although many are moving upriver now. Southwest anglers will be unable to fish the Chetco above the Highway 101 Bridge on the scheduled November 7th opener due to low water conditions according to the ODFW. It will remain closed until sufficient rain falls to alleviate the condition and to protect over-harvesting of Chinook. As a consequence, fishers have been traveling further south just a few minutes to California's Smith River where action for big kings had been good. Be sure to meet the Sunshine State's license and tag requirements to enjoy this bounty. Many anglers here are opting to return native hens which may be kept legally but, when released, will contribute to the regeneration of wild Chinook runs in the future.

Chinook fishing has been slow on the lower Sixes River while the Elk has continued to produce both adult Chinook and jacks. It's still early for these ocean tributaries and it remains to be seen what effect the coming storm will have although these small rivers recover rapidly following an increase in level and flow. Precipitation is forecast to taper off next week.

Diamond Lake is closed until early next year.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Pro guide Rick Arnold (541-480-1570) reports, "On my last trip of the year to Paulina, we did fairly well on browns with the two nicest browns going 6 and 7 LB. Most were in the 10-16 in. class. I met my good buddy John "Dink" Werwie for a week of fall action on one of the most beautiful lakes here in Central Oregon. The weather was bouncing back and forth with small fronts coming through but was good overall. Water temps were down under 50 degrees.

"During our stay, we met Dan Stewart who caught two killer male browns during his two week stay at the lake. The first was a 28 in. buck that weighed in at 13 LB. the second that was caught while we were there tipped the scales right at 14 LB. He had an incredible trip with (7) browns over 5 Lb. that I know of. What a way to end the season!"

Below is Dan Stewart with his jaw-dropping 14-pound Paulina Brown.



Fishing has been good on the lower Deschutes although the White River blew out over the past weekend, causing low-visibility downstream. Pressure is surprisingly light.

The lower John Day has been fishing well for steelhead but upcoming precipitation may roil the water. See Reader Email, below, for information on the LaPage boat ramp.

Pro Guide Steve Fleming (888-624-9424) reports, "The John Day River is running around 400 CFS, clear, and 40 degrees. This is a little colder than usual at this time, and the bass fishing is slowing down to a few fish per day and those are usually caught in the afternoon in the deep wintering holes.

"Steelhead continue to be caught in the river below Cottonwood Bridge (river mile 41). The ODFW reports those fishing in the Columbia River arm of the John Day River (first 10 miles) are boating 60% hatchery fish and averaging one fish per boat with 35-40 boats fishing in that area. There have been reports of an average of 2 fish per drift boat between Cottonwood Bridge and

Rock Creek. We only boated one the other day, a nice 29" hatchery female. Hot shots, Quick Fish, Blue Fox, Steelies, Float and Jig, are some of the more popular techniques. Some days are bright and sunny, and some are cool and overcast, but not much rain on the river."

Grande Ronde steelheaders were into multiple hookups last week but action slowed over the past weekend as water temperatures dropped.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report *October 28th – November 10th, 2009*

North Puget Sound

Anglers are still hooking a few coho in the region's rivers and streams, but chum will soon be taking center stage. Meanwhile, some anglers fishing areas of Puget Sound have been reeling in blackmouth and will soon have the option of dropping a crab pot in select areas.

Starting Nov. 1 at sunrise, Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) and most of Marine Area 9 (Admiralty Inlet) will reopen for **sport crabbing** seven days a week through Jan. 2, 2010. The portion of Marine Area 9 south of a line from Foulweather Bluff to Olele Point will remain closed for the season.

Crab fishing also will remain open seven days a week through Jan. 2 in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south Puget Sound), where the fishery has continued uninterrupted since summer. Marine Area 12 (Hood Canal), currently open Wednesdays through Saturdays, will close for the season at 6 p.m. Oct. 31.

Sport crabbing will not reopen this year in marine areas 6 (Strait of Juan de Fuca), 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) and 11 (Tacoma/Vashon Island), where the summer catch reached the annual recreational quota.

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. For more information about recreational crabbing in Puget Sound, see WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab>.

While on the Sound, why not fish for **blackmouth**? Effort has been low, but anglers have hooked a few of the resident chinook in central Puget Sound. Anglers fishing Marine Area 10 have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook.

Beginning Nov. 1, opportunities for blackmouth will increase, as marine areas 8-1, 8-2 and 9 open for chinook. Anglers fishing those marine areas will have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook salmon. Anglers are reminded that Marine Area 7 closes to salmon retention Nov. 1.

In the rivers, the **coho** season is winding down and **chum salmon** will soon be arriving in greater numbers. There are reports of anglers still catching a few coho in the region's streams but, overall, fishing has been slow.

Lake Sammamish is also an option for freshwater salmon anglers, who have a daily limit of four salmon, and can retain up to two chinook. 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, but only for a few more days. Anglers fishing the lake, which is open through Oct. 31, 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 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

Anglers targeting chum and coho in Puget Sound and area streams will soon have some other options to consider. A late-season Dungeness crab fishery will get under way Nov. 1 in select areas, and two razor clam digs are planned later in the month.

Starting Nov. 1 at sunrise, recreational **crab** fishing will reopen in Marine area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), and most of Marine Area 9 (Admiralty Inlet) seven days a week through Jan. 2, 2010. The portion of Marine Area 9 south of a line from Foulweather Bluff to Olele Point will remain closed for the season.

Crab fishing also will remain open seven days a week through Jan. 2 in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south Puget Sound). However, only a few more days remain to catch crab in Marine Area 12 (Hood Canal), which is open Wednesdays through Saturdays through Oct. 31.

Sport crabbing will not reopen this year in marine areas 6 (Strait of Juan de Fuca), 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1, 8-2 (east of Whidbey Island) and 11 (Tacoma/Vashon Island), where the summer catch reached the annual recreational quota.

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.

Recreational crabbers are required to send in a winter catch card or report their catch online by Jan. 15. People failing to submit their winter reports will receive a \$10 fine when they apply for a 2010 Puget Sound crab endorsement. For more information about recreational crabbing in Puget Sound, see WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab> .

Meanwhile, **chum** salmon are gathering in front of the Hoodspout Hatchery facility in southern Hood Canal, where the fishery has been open since Oct. 16. Although it's the early part of the run, the numbers are building, said Mark Cylwik, WDFW hatchery specialist. "The run normally peaks just before Thanksgiving, so November is a good month to enjoy some chum fishing," Cylwik said. A recent creel check on the Hoodspout shore showed 20 anglers with 10 chum. To avoid competition with tribal beach nets, Cylwik recommends fishing on days other than Tuesdays and Thursdays, when the Skokomish Tribe has been conducting its fishery. Anglers can call (360) 877-5222 for a recorded message about Hoodspout fishing conditions.

The mouth of Kennedy Creek near Shelton also is known for attracting chum, but so far the run has been light. A creel check conducted Oct. 24 showed 39 anglers with seven fish. Other traditionally good November chum rivers are the Skokomish and Nisqually rivers, where salmon fishing is currently under way. Starting Nov. 1, anglers can target chum in several other streams, including the Dosewallips and Duckabush rivers in Jefferson County and Minter Creek in Pierce/Kitsap Counties.

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.

On the Chehalis River in Grays Harbor County, participation and catch rates have slowed as salmon head out of the mainstem and into the tributaries, said Scot Barbour, WDFW fish

biologist. Twenty-four anglers recently checked at the Fuller Bridge on the river had five **hatchery coho** , while 11 anglers checked near Montesano had two.

"The Wishkah and Satsop rivers are good bets right now and lots of people have been fishing the Humptulips," Barbour said. "But this time of year, success depends on the weather and the height of the river. Anglers need to hit the rivers when they're high enough to bring in salmon, but not so high that they're unfishable."

Barbour reminds anglers that only hatchery coho with a clipped adipose fin and **jack chinook** and **coho** may be retained on a number of area rivers, including the Chehalis, Elk, Johns, Satsop, Wishkah and Wynoochee rivers in Grays Harbor County and the Skookumchuck River in Thurston County.

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.

In the South Sound, 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. Also starting that day, anglers may retain **wild coho** caught in Marine Area 13.

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.

Meanwhile, anglers looking for some late-season **trout** fishing might consider a trip to Black Lake in Thurston County, where 2,500 one-pound rainbows will be stocked in time for the Oct. 31 weekend. "In the past this late fall plant has resulted in good catch and effort through the winter," said Larry Phillips, WDFW fish biologist. "In addition to these fish, anglers often encounter large hold-over fish from last spring's planting, as well as wild coastal cutthroat."

On the coast, many of the 30,250 **razor clam** diggers who participated in the Oct. 16-19 season opener on five ocean beaches took home their 15-clam limit. More digs are tentatively scheduled Nov. 4-7 and Nov. 14-17, subject to the results of marine toxin tests.

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. Good bets include the Les Davis Pier in Tacoma and the Elliott Bay pier in Seattle.

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

Hatchery **coho** salmon are still providing most of the action on the lower Columbia River, although bank anglers fishing for sturgeon immediately below Bonneville Dam are also catching fish. About one in 10 took home a keeper during the week ending Oct. 26.

From the Wauna power lines near Cathlamet upstream, anglers can keep one **white sturgeon** daily measuring between 38 and 54 inches fork length on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays only. Anglers are reminded the statewide annual limit is five fish per license year (April through March).

Meanwhile, anglers looking for **hatchery coho** have several good options to choose from, both above and below Bonneville Dam. The hotspot is still the Klickitat River, where bank and boat

anglers have been taking home an average of one fish apiece. Fishing pressure has been heavy throughout the lower river, and boat anglers have been doing well trolling prawn/spinner rigs just off the mouth.

Fishing also continues to be productive in the Cowlitz, North Fork Lewis and Kalama rivers, said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. The Elochoman and Washougal rivers would also be good bets, he said. As of Oct. 21, nearly 35,000 adult coho had returned to the Cowlitz salmon hatchery, the highest count by that date since at least 1990.

"We are now fairly confident that total coho returns to the Columbia River Basin will meet or exceed the pre-season forecast of 700,000 fish, making it the biggest run since 2001," Hymer said. "The great thing is that the fish are still biting fairly well. The rain has really recharged fishing throughout the system."

Anglers fishing the Cowlitz River have also been intercepting some **chinook, steelhead** and **sea-run cutthroat** (especially near the trout hatchery). Hymer noted, however, that all adult chinook salmon intercepted on the Cowlitz River from Blue Creek upstream to Mill Creek must be released. For other regulations in effect on the Columbia River and its tributaries, he recommends that anglers check the WDFW website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) before heading out.

One new emergency rule listed there allows Columbia River anglers to retain up to three adult coho salmon from the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line upriver to the Highway 395 Bridge in Pasco.

Those fishing the mainstem Columbia near the mouth of the Lewis River should also be aware that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will begin blasting and dredging the shipping channel around Warrior Rock on the north end of Sauvie Island on Nov. 1. All watercraft will be prohibited from entering a 1,500-yard safety zone around the site without permission. Boaters who wish to enter the safety zone can contact the Coast Guard at VHF 13 or VHF 16 for specific instructions. For additional information, see <http://www.crci-project.info>.

Ready for winter? Hymer noted that four **winter-run steelhead** recently turned up in the trap at the Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery, a portent of another fishing season ahead. That fishery usually starts to ramp up around Thanksgiving, he said. "Talk about a quick transition," he added. "I'm still trying to get used to the fact that summer's over and fall is here."

Anglers who want to make the most of the current season might want to try Swift Reservoir, which will remain open to fishing for **game fish** and **salmon** through Nov. 30. Fishing has been reported to be excellent for rainbows averaging 12-13 inches with some up to 20 inches. Hymer also suggests fishing Silver Lake near Castle Rock for **crappies**. Anglers have reportedly been doing well there too in recent days, he said.

Eastern Washington

Steelhead fishing on the Snake River continues to heat up as temperatures cool. Joe Bumgarner, a WDFW fish biologist, said limited creel checks indicate good catch rates in various river sections. Anglers who were recently checked in the Wallula area, from the Washington-Oregon state line to the mouth of the Walla Walla River, averaged just under 11 hours of fishing per steelhead caught. From Ice Harbor Dam to Lower Monumental Dam, anglers averaged just under 12 hours per catch, and from Lower Monumental to Little Goose Dam, slightly more than 11 hours per catch. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife recent creel checks on the Lower Grand Ronde River showed an average of just over nine hours of fishing per steelhead caught on the Washington section, from Bogans Oasis to state line.

Bumgarner reminds Snake River system steelheaders that barbless hooks must be used and all wild steelhead must be kept in the water and released immediately. Because of the abundant return of hatchery-marked steelhead (clipped adipose or ventral fin with healed scar), up to five can be retained daily.

Many streams, rivers and lakes throughout the region close to all fishing Nov. 1. Waters that remain open year-round and are currently providing good catches of **rainbow trout**, include Sprague Lake on the Lincoln-Adams county line and Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir off Grand Coulee Dam.

Northcentral Washington

Methow River hatchery **steelhead** fishing recently expanded, thanks to greater numbers of wild fish moving upriver. Now open is the section from the second powerline crossing upstream from Pateros to the first Hwy. 153 Bridge. The daily limit is four adipose fin-clipped, hatchery-origin steelhead, with a minimum size of 20 inches.

The regulations state that anglers must retain any of these fish they catch, since the open area expansion is intended to reduce the number of excess hatchery-origin steelhead on the spawning grounds. Increasing the proportion of naturally produced spawners is expected to improve genetic integrity and stock recruitment of upper Columbia River steelhead through perpetuation of steelhead stocks with the greatest natural-origin lineage, said Bob Jateff, WDFW district fish biologist.

Anglers are required to release all steelhead with an intact adipose fin. Any steelhead caught with an intact adipose fin may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately. Any steelhead with one or more round holes punched in the caudal (tail) fin must also be released.

Selective gear rules apply, no bait is allowed and a night closure is in effect. Boats with motors are not allowed.

Southcentral Washington

Paul Hoffarth, WDFW district fish biologist, reports Columbia River **steelhead** fishing in the Tri-Cities area has been picking up in the past week.

Although the steelhead and salmon sport fishery above the wooden powerline towers is closed, the steelhead fishery below the powerline towers is scheduled to continue through April 15, 2010.

"In the Ringold area this past week bank anglers averaged one steelhead for 6.6 hours of fishing and boat anglers averaged one steelhead for 4.8 pole hours, or 2.5 steelhead per boat," Hoffarth reported.

Hoffarth noted that through Oct. 25, an estimated 1,509 steelhead have been caught between the Highway 395 bridge at Pasco/Kennewick and the wooden powerline towers. Of these, 982 hatchery steelhead were harvested and 344 wild steelhead were caught and released.

The three-hatchery steelhead limit for the Columbia River from the Hwy 395 bridge at Pasco/Kennewick upstream to the old Hanford town site wooden powerline towers reverts back to a two hatchery steelhead limit Nov. 1.

Perry Harvester, WDFW regional habitat program manager, says some standard techniques are being used for the steelhead.

"Trolling lighted Brad's Wiggler plugs work at night, and using dyed shrimp with purple/pink/black jigs in various combinations under a float work day or night," he said. "Plugs and spinners can work during the day as well, but appear less effective than lighted plugs at night. In areas with faster moving water, drifted eggs or shrimp work, too."

Harvester also reports there are still bright **coho salmon** in the Klickitat River and in the Columbia River off the mouth of the Klickitat. The catch limit within that reach of the Columbia River was recently raised to three adults.

Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist, reports a few of the region's year-round lakes have recently been stocked with hatchery **rainbow trout** . He notes most rivers and streams are closed after Oct. 31. The exception is the Yakima River catch-and-release fishery, which should continue to provide opportunity this fall until colder weather sets in.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

In answer to a question from **reader Dave B.**, TGF co-editor Bob Rees writes, "Improvements are going to be made to LaPage Park in the near future so anglers are encouraged to call the responsible office before driving all the way up there. The Army Corps office number is (541) 506-7819.

"It sounds as if the date is coming up soon but somewhat in flux. It also sounds like the closure won't last long.

Good luck!"

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

ODFW Fly Tying Workshop in Salem, Sat., Nov. 14:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/outdoor_skills/workshops.asp

Five minutes of outdoors fame - ODFW want your photos:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/photo_gallery/photography.asp

GOOD LUCK!