

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 9th – July 15th, 2010**

Willamette Valley/Metro- Summer chinook numbers are beginning to fade at Bonneville with most anglers unimpressed with the results this season. High flows contributed to low catch rates and action is likely to continue to taper in the coming weeks. Fish over 40 pounds have been taken recently however. Warmer water usually means salmon will respond better to spinners and wobblers. Flows have moderated in recent days and are expected to stay that way throughout the week.

Steelhead anglers near Bonneville should begin to see improvements in catches. Downstream, beach anglers struggled with the low tide exchange last week but that should change this week as minus tides will get flows running again. This will likely be one of the peak weeks for steelhead fishing from beaches downstream of Portland.

Sockeye fishing is still open for recreational anglers although few intercepted them despite a record run passing Bonneville. Large returns may grace the Columbia again in the near future so anglers may want to learn to how produce results in this fishery. Trollers successfully take fish on Lake Washington near Seattle trolling metallic red hooks behind dodgers.

Water temperatures as of July 5th dropped three degrees to 63. Fish counts have not been updated but were strong through the third week of June but the water was nearly 10 degrees cooler. The shad run is winding down at Oregon City.

A few chinook are being taken at Leaburg Dam on the Mackenzie as well as the occasional steelhead to jig fishers.

A few chinook are being hooked at Waterloo on the South Santiam.

Steelheaders on the Clackamas are taking a few but this will be a first-light fishery this week. Spring chinook are concentrated in deeper pools upstream with few anglers finding success targeting them.

Steelhead are visible on the Sandy but have been reluctant to take bait or lure.

Northwest – Coho catches out of Garibaldi were fair last week and the action should continue through most of July. Anglers targeting fish in water over 200 foot deep found the best action. Garibaldi produced the best catches of any port on the Oregon coast in the south of Falcon ocean fishery. Ocean crabbing has only improved slightly with many crabs in a softshell state.

A few hatchery spring chinook are still trickling into Tillamook bay but effort is waning. The tidewater stretches and a few deep holes on the Wilson, Trask and Nestucca Rivers will continue to hold fish, but most will be reluctant to bite in the warmer, low flows that are characteristic for this time of year.

Adult chinook remain a rare catch on the north coast but fishery managers lifted the 1 chinook restriction, allowing anglers to retain any 2 salmon from the Canadian border to Cape Falcon near Manzanita. Coho still need to exhibit a healed over adipose fin clip to be lawfully taken. Size restrictions also remain in effect.

Coho fishing out of the mouth of the Columbia has also been productive for anglers willing to

travel SW of the Columbia River Buoy. Captains are reporting a nice grade of fish for this time of year; a sign of good feeding conditions offshore this spring.

Sturgeon fishing in the lower Columbia still remains a slog. Most would agree fish seem to be present but unwilling to bite. Fishery managers are likely to meet again this week to discuss the possibility for another season extension.

Southwest – Offshore salmon fishing has been a disappointment for most boats whether trying for hatchery coho or chinook.

Boats launching out of Bandon have been finding warm water and decent albacore hookups between 40 and 50 miles from the beach. Charleston boats have also returned with tuna.

Chinook fishing is slow in the lower Rogue, slow to fair on the middle river with fish charging through without holding. The upper Rogue, however, is producing catches of both spring chinook and summer steelhead.

Offshore bottom fishing has been outstanding out of Brookings Harbor. Limits of rockfish and ling cod are being brought to dock any day the wind has allowed boats to fish. Forecasts for the coming weekend are marginal which combined with morning minus tides may make crossing into the ocean problematic. Albacore are being taken within 50 miles of port.

Surf perch fishing has been good whenever ocean conditions have allowed, providing limits of pinkfin to many long-rodders.

Diamond Lake is fishing well, producing a few trout every day that measure in pounds rather than inches.

Eastern – With the stonefly hatch a memory for 2010, think caddis patterns for redsides on the lower Deschutes.

Fishing is fair for fly anglers at Davis Lake for largemouth bass.

Green Peter has been fair for trollers looking for kokanee hookups.

Trout and kokanee fishing is good at Wallowa Lake and who knows, there may be another world record kokanee swimming around in there.

The Imnaha has dropped and cleared to great condition and is putting out fair numbers of spring chinook now that flows have finally subsided.

SW Washington – The lower Cowlitz may begin to produce catches of summer steelhead now that mainstem water temperatures are on the increase. Most district streams however are producing fair at best and action isn't likely to pick up until later into August.

Steelhead counts at Bonneville justify a trip to Drano Lake for trollers and bank anglers. Night fishing seems to produce the best results but check regulations carefully before heading out.

The Klickitat River should also begin to see better catch rates for summer steelhead although glaciated coloration may affect success rates in the warmer weather.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Summer chinook fishing remains the signature fishery on the lower Columbia, even though anglers still struggle for consistent results. Bonneville remains the place to be and if you're anchored in the right travel lane, you can expect some action over the course of the day. Plugs were effective for much of the early part of the season but spinners and wobblers have taken on a larger role with the increase in water temperatures as of late. Most anglers are targeting fish in 12 to 17 feet of water and now that flow velocities have subsided, anglers can effectively fish that deep of water.

Chinook counts at Bonneville have slowed somewhat as the peak passage date has likely come and gone. Ample numbers of chinook will still pass Bonneville for the next few weeks but action will likely remain sporadic as the run transitions into fall run fish.

Steelhead numbers are pretty impressive at Bonneville right now. Although still weeks away from peak passage, up to 5,000 adults per day (both wild and hatchery) are passing the facility right now. Although effort in the gorge remains focused on mainly salmon, anglers are likely to refocus their efforts for steelhead in the coming weeks. Coon shrimp and small spinners will effectively take fish in the area right now.

Beach plunkers downstream didn't put the hurt on them in the soft tide series last week but that should change this week (see forecast section). Most of the fish remain the cookie cutter 6 to 8 pound "A" run fish that make up the bulk of the run. There are a lot more fish to come.

Anglers targeting sturgeon in the gorge are not just having a hard time finding oversize fish but they're having a hard time finding fresh shad to target those oversize fish with. Keepers are very rare here.

Downriver, estuary anglers have reported a slight up-tick in success although action remains far from consistent. Some nice sized keepers are coming from the Astoria to Hammond stretch however. Effort remains low except for a good handful of boats over the holiday weekend. Weaker tides concentrated anglers in the deep water but strong tides this week will open up more opportunities in the shallows. Late breaking report: Good action had by boats working Taylor Sands near Tongue Point. Some quality keepers are falling to shrimp and anchovies on the a.m. flood tide. Lower Taylor Sands due north of the city of Astoria should also produce good results.

Offshore, anglers targeting coho fared well after the July 1 opener. Some boats reported limits of coho fishing SW of the CR Buoy in 200 to nearly 300 foot of water. Herring and anchovies worked the best and anglers reported fish to nearly 9 pounds although the average was closer to 5 or 6 pounds; not a bad grade of fish for this early in the season.

State officials have now closed razor clam digging from Bandon to Tillamook Head near Cannon Beach due to elevated levels of domoic acid. The beaches north of Tillamook Head remain open to razor clam harvest.

Crabbing in the estuaries of the north coast is picking up with some large keepers recently reported. Ocean crabbing will always be more productive this time of year but many of the crab may be in the softshell state right now. Fresh crab bait will always produce the best results.

The Guide's Forecast – Begin switching your salmon gear out for steelhead fishing. Many more thousands of steelhead are passing Bonneville right now and you may still inadvertently catch a summer chinook while targeting steelhead. Small spinners and spin-n-glos tipped with shrimp will produce the best results. You may want to target steelhead in shallower water (4 to 7 feet) than

you've been targeting chinook recently (12 to 18 feet). Steelhead numbers will only climb in the coming weeks.

Sturgeon fishing is best left up to the estuary anglers. Gorge fishing will continue to slow and estuary success should continue to climb. Anchovies will be a top bait in the estuary as warmer temperatures draw fish in from the ocean. Sand shrimp may work better in shallower water but downstream of the bridge, it will likely be tough to keep them fishing with the sculpin population in full bloom. The Tongue Point area should remain a good option for keepers.

The ocean forecast doesn't look all that good for anglers seeking offshore salmon. Wind waves will be the killer and a minus tide series won't help matters either. Here is the offshore forecast through the weekend:

Fri...N wind 10 kt...rising to 15 kt in the afternoon. Wind waves 3 ft. NW swell 6 ft. Patchy fog in the morning.

Fri Night...NW wind 20 kt...becoming N after midnight. Wind waves 3 ft. NW swell 5 ft. Patchy fog after midnight.

Sat...NW wind 10 to 15 kt. Gusts up to 20 kt in the afternoon. Wind waves 3 ft. NW swell 7 ft. Patchy fog through the day.

Sat Night...NW wind 10 to 15 kt with gusts to 20 kt...easing to 5 to 10 kt after midnight. Wind waves 3 ft. NW swell 5 ft. Patchy fog through the night.

Sun...NW wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 3 ft. NW swell 6 ft.

Mon...NW wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 3 ft. W swell 8 ft.

Go dig razor clams before the July 15th closure on Clatsop Beaches. South of Tillamook Head (Cannon Beach) is now closed to harvest. You'll get very sick if you eat clams from here to Bandon. Digging should be good!

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Willamette Falls fish counts have not been updated since June 25th. At that time, over 1,500 spring Chinook were crossing per day while daily summer steelhead counts remained in the mid-200s. This was while the water temperature climbed to 60 degrees. By the end of June, water temps hit 68 and it's difficult to imagine that kind of passage continuing. Water at the Falls is currently 64.4 degrees. It is interesting to note that nearly 80% of the 2010 springer run has been of hatchery origin.

McKenzie River trout anglers have continued to have fair to good success with caddis hatches occurring daily.

The Santiam system is a decent level and flow for fishing and is expected to remain stable over the coming week. Upper stretches remain a little on the cool side.

The Guide's Forecast – Bring out the hardware and plenty of patience to ply the warm water of the lower Willamette for late-season spring Chinook. Trollers are actually taking a few. With shad fishing running down for 2010, get out there now to catch the tail end of the run. A few hours' effort will probably yield six to 10 shad.

It's not a secret spot by any means and seclusion is not an option here but steelhead continue to

be caught below Leaburg Dam on the McKenzie.

Try the South Santiam for the best shot at a spring Chinook or a summer steelhead ... perhaps the best of any of the Willamette tributaries. There are summer steelhead in the North Santiam but results have been slow.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Level and flow are low with the water clear although water temperatures are decent on the Clackamas. A few springers have been taken from Eagle Creek.

Hot weather is likely to cause the Sandy to run milky at any time although at this writing on July 8th it is clear. The river is dropping, however, and the Columbia is backing up into the mouth.

The Guide's Forecast – The Clackamas has the better numbers as well as biters although fish have seemed a little timid. With fishing slow to fair, be prepared as one might only get one or two chances in any single day. Try jigs, spinners and cured row.

The few anglers trying on the Sandy are fishing but not catching, It is poor to slow. The best shot at a hookup here is upstream of Oxbow Park but it's a long shot.

North Coast Fishing Report – With spring chinook but a memory, angler interest will shift offshore to coho salmon. The coho fishing was pretty good last week although only persistent anglers took home limits of fish. Garibaldi was the best port south of Cape Falcon and will likely remain that way. You didn't have to go too far to find the fish but you did have to cover a lot of water and be patient to find a limit of fish.

Although limits were not all that common, early risers found the best success NW of the Tillamook Bay entrance. It's always a good strategy to head to the north in case the wind picks up; you'll have a much easier ride home coming with the wind waves versus against it.

Springer fishers were still at it on the last weak tide series catching a few hatchery salmon along the jetty that were fresh from the sea. The run is winding down and a hatchery fish will be a rare catch in the bay itself.

Trask River anglers were still doing well in a select few holes however. Deep pools are holding fish in fair numbers and the Wilson and Nestucca are still producing fair as well. Three Rivers closes on Sunday. Small baits and fluorocarbon line are pretty important in this fishery and the early angler usually reaps the best rewards.

Only a rare summer steelhead is coming from the Wilson or Nestucca River. Anglers versed in pocket water fishing and that are well acquainted with these river systems will produce consistent catches.

The Nehalem used to be worth fishing in July but that just hasn't been the case in recent years. Although it's open, a poor forecast will likely mean another tough year, even for the most persistent anglers. No fish have been reported yet.

Sea-run cutthroat trout fishing should also be fair in most north coast systems. Gone are the days of tidewater trollers for these fish but this technique should still produce using Ford Fenders and worms.

The Guide's Forecast – There won't be many options on the north coast this week with the rough seas forecast. If you do head west for coho or nearshore halibut, get out early for the least amount of wind. Be very cautious however as fog and a screaming outgoing tide will make bar crossings fairly treacherous.

Don't expect an easy limit (especially compared to last year) if you're targeting coho out of Garibaldi or south. It hasn't been easy but Garibaldi is your best bet. Drop your crab pots and bring along bottomfishing gear but I'll reiterate, this won't be the most comfortable seas you'll experience this season. It may be a better week for preparation than participation.

Don't bother with Nehalem River chinook, it will be poor. Springer catches on Tillamook Bay will be rare as well but plug pullers may find a keeper or a wild one in the upper reaches or tidewater.

Estuary crabbing should continue to pick up but stronger tides won't be all that conducive to good catches. At least wait until low slack before you start and hopefully the bay crab will be in better condition than the ocean males will be.

Central & South Coast Reports – Wind and waves will allow for offshore launches but morning minus tides will make timing critical. Clamming opportunities will be good in bays and estuaries but be aware that razor clamming is closed from Bandon to Tillamook Head.

Offshore salmon fishing remains slow for both Chinook and hatchery coho. For those trying, troll in the upper 20 feet of the water column for coho, slower and deeper for Chinook.

Ocean crabbing picked up as offshore conditions calmed but keeper males are in the minority and the occasional softshell is showing in catches. To check, squeeze the foremost leg (aft of the pincer) at the leg section nearest the body of the crab. If there's some give, it's soft and not worth keeping. Crabbing is slow to fair in bays and estuaries.

Anglers at buoys 12 and 13 in the lower Umpqua are taking good catches of female pinkfin perch which have entered Winchester Bay to spawn. Catches of males is also good from area beaches. Shad fishing is good in sunny weather on the Umpqua near the popular Yellow Creek. The spring Chinook run on the North Umpqua has continued to wind down with anglers making only fair catches over the past week. Smallmouth bass fishing is good on the South Umpqua now that the river has dropped and warmed. Best results will come early and late in the day in hot weather.

Shad have finally shown at the Coquille River where a few have been caught.

The Saltwater educational event is scheduled from 11 AM to 4 PM on Saturday, July 10th, near the boat ramp at Gold Beach. It is an opportunity for beginning and advanced anglers to hone their skills. This free event is hosted by the ODFW.

Action started over the past weekend for south coast tuna with one of the charters returning to Bandon with over 30 albacore averaging 20 pounds. Warm water moved further offshore late this week, meaning runs of 40 miles or more will be required to make a tuna connection. Halibut catches were reported as slow during the last all-depth halibut opener. With the spring fishery now closed, the summer all-depth halibut beginning August 6th.

Spring Chinook fishing has improved but is only fair on the lower Rogue although some summer steelhead have shown in catches around Agness. Springers continue to navigate the middle

Rogue without slowing down; making for slow fishing in this stretch. With decent numbers of spring Chinook and steelhead in the upper Rogue, catches have been best here. Concentrate springer efforts above Shady Cove. Wrapped plugs are accounting for hookups. A last minute appeal regarding the Gold Ray Dam removal project has been overturned with demolition work resuming Tuesday this week.

A copious bounty of bottomfish is available out of the Port of Brookings consisting of colorful rockfish, cabezon and large ling cod. Anglers fishing herring just outside in 65 feet or less have been returning with limits or near-limits daily. Sardines and smelt are thick in Brookings harbor, allowing fishers to jig up buckets full. Move until a school is found and have some fun.

Diamond Lake is providing good fishing for all with a variety of bait, lures and flies taking trout averaging 14 inches. Be aware mosquitoes are becoming troublesome so prepare accordingly.

Central and Eastern Oregon – The Deschutes is running high but on the drop. There are some large redsides available in the lower river. It will be legal to retain Chinook on the Deschutes through October, 2010.

With high water hindering fishing efforts on the Wallowa and Imnaha rivers, Chook retention will be allowed to continue. A closure date will be announced pending angler success. About 75% of this year's run are fin-clipped. Hot weather didn't trigger snowmelt as expected so the Wallowa remains at good level and flow. Spring Chinook fishing is good on the Imnaha with a mix of adults and jacks being taken.

Green Peter has been producing fair to good catches to deep trollers. Effective depths lately have been at 40 to 50 feet with a dodger & scented hoochies with better catches in the mornings.

A day of trolling various depths at Odell will yield limits of nice, fat kokanee.

Wickiup has been slow recently for kokanee.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report July 7th – July 21st, 2010

Contact: (Fish) 360-902-2700 (Wildlife) 360-902-2515

Chinook salmon are king in coming weeks

Summer fishing seasons are now in full swing, requiring anglers to make some tough decisions about how to spend their time on the water in the days ahead. Salmon, steelhead, trout, crab, sturgeon, bass and walleye - all are now available for harvest.

But for thousands of anglers, nothing beats the thrill of reeling in a big chinook salmon. Many are doing just that as waves of chinook move south toward the Washington coast, then east into the Strait of Juan de Fuca, coastal streams and the Columbia River.

"This season is off to a good start, and it should only get better," said John Long, statewide salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Right now, anglers are catching chinook salmon from the Washington coast and Puget Sound to the upper Columbia River, with additional fisheries opening in the next few weeks."

Starting July 8, the catch limit off the coast will increase from one adult chinook salmon to two as part of anglers' daily limit. Beginning July 16, anglers will be able to catch and keep hatchery chinook in marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) of Puget Sound. Fishery managers estimate that nearly 653,000 fall chinook will return to the Columbia River this season, about 234,000 more than last year. Another 226,500 chinook are expected to return to rivers flowing into Puget Sound.

"The majority of the chinook salmon caught in statewide fisheries are hatchery fish, specifically raised for harvest," Long said. "The regulations include a number of provisions designed to protect weak, wild runs and it is essential that anglers know the rules and follow them out on the water."

Fishing regulations for salmon and other fisheries are outlined in WDFW's *Fishing in Washington* rule pamphlet, available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>. In-season updates are also posted on that website and are also available by calling WDFW's Fishing Hotline at 360-902-2500.

Anglers and others spending time on Puget Sound should also be aware that most areas of the Sound are now open for crabbing. In fact, two additional areas - 7 South and 7 East - near the San Juan Islands open for crabbing July 14. For more information on that and other outdoor activities now available throughout the state, see the regional reports below.

North Puget Sound

Summer has arrived, and anglers have their pick of numerous fishing opportunities. In the freshwater, anglers can cast for chinook and steelhead at some the region's rivers, as well as trout and bass at local lakes. On Puget Sound, crab and chinook fisheries are under way, with additional salmon openings around the corner.

Salmon fishing got off to a good start in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where anglers can keep one chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. Catch counts on opening day (July 1) in the San Juans show 46 anglers at the Bellingham ramp checked 12 chinook, while 65 at the Washington Park ramp brought home 15 chinook.

In Marine Area 8-2, fishing continues to be slow at the **Tulalip Bay "bubble" fishery**, said Thiesfeld. The fishery is currently open each week from Friday through noon Monday through Sept. 6. Anglers fishing the bubble have a two-salmon daily limit. Chinook must measure 22 inches in length to retain.

Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) also is open for salmon fishing, but anglers must release all chinook through July 15.

Anglers will soon have other opportunities in the region to catch and keep chinook. Beginning July 16, marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 open for hatchery chinook salmon retention. Anglers in those two areas will be allowed to keep hatchery chinook - marked with a clipped adipose fin - as part of a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook. Those fishing Marine Area 9 also must release chum salmon.

The chinook selective fisheries in marine areas 9 and 10 run through Aug. 31. Thiesfeld reminds anglers that regulations vary for inner Elliott Bay, Sinclair Inlet and public fishing piers in those marine areas. Check the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>) for more information.

When releasing salmon, anglers should keep the fish in the water and avoid using a net, Thiesfeld said. If a net is needed, use a rubber net or a soft knotless nylon or cotton net. Thiesfeld also suggests that anglers:

- Look for the adipose fin while playing the fish, and use polarized sunglasses to reduce glare.
- Avoid the use of light tackle and play the fish quickly to avoid exhausting it.
- Modify tackle to reduce potential injury to the fish. For example, use circle hooks when mooching and only one hook on hoochies and bucktails.
- Use a dehooker to remove the hook.
- Cut the leader if the fish has swallowed the hook.
- Avoid touching or handling the fish, especially around the eyes and gills.
- Support the entire length of the fish if it must be lifted out of the water.
- Do not lift the fish by the tail or jaw.
- Gently place the fish back in the water.

Anglers can find information on selective fishing and selective fishing techniques on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/selective/techniques/>.

Meanwhile, the **crab** fishery is under way in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner), 9 and 10. Fisheries in those areas are open on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, plus the entire Labor Day weekend. The southern and eastern portions of Marine Area 7 will open July 14 under the same weekly schedule. The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6¼ inches. Fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. See WDFW's sport-crabbing website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>) for more information.

In freshwater, anglers can fish for hatchery **chinook salmon** on the Skagit and Cascade rivers. The Skagit is open to hatchery chinook retention from the Highway 530 bridge at Rockport to the Cascade River. On the Cascade, anglers can fish from the mouth of the river to the Rockport-Cascade Road Bridge. Both stretches are open through July 15. The daily limit on the Skagit and Cascade rivers is four hatchery chinook, two of which may be adults (chinook salmon at least 24 inches in length).

On the **Skykomish** , a new rule that went into effect July 6 prohibits the retention of chinook from the mouth upstream to the Wallace River, the only portion of the river that was open to salmon fishing. Low chinook returns to the Wallace River Hatchery prompted WDFW to close the river to chinook retention to help ensure enough salmon make it back to the hatchery to meet spawning goals. For more information, check the emergency rule change at <http://bit.ly/aJ7YgD>. Before heading out, anglers should check the rules and regulations for all fisheries on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Anglers' chances of catching and keeping a chinook salmon off the Washington coast have improved in recent days with the start of non-selective fisheries for chinook in all ocean areas. Chinook can now be retained coastwide, whether fin-clipped or not.

Now, another change in state fishing rules will allow anglers to keep two of those fish per day. Starting July 8, they will be able to retain two chinook - instead of just one - as part of their two-salmon daily limit.

As in previous years, only coho with a clipped adipose fin and a healed scar may be retained as part of that limit. Anglers may now retain coho in all ocean areas, although this year's recreational quota for coho is 67,200 fish, down from 176,400 last year.

Patrick Pattillo, WDFW's salmon policy coordinator, said the state initially took a cautious approach in setting the limits for the coastal chinook fishery this summer.

"With predictions of chinook stocks nearly three times as large as last year, we were concerned that we could see very high catch rates for chinook - as we did in 2002 - resulting in an early closure," said Pattillo. "But from what we've seen so far, we no longer have that concern." Even so, the fishery has been productive - especially around Westport. During the marked selective chinook fishery in June, anglers caught approximately 4,571 chinook off the coast between the opening and June 27. The vast majority of those fish were taken in Marine Area 2 off Westport where nearly 7,000 anglers landed 4,263 marked chinook. The mark rate there was 73 percent.

On July Fourth, when non-selective rules took effect, fish counters sampled 245 anglers in Westport with 129 chinook and 82 coho. In Ilwaco, the 603 anglers sampled had caught 733 coho and 83 chinook.

"The effort hasn't been real high, yet, but it will build this summer," said Doug Milward, WDFW ocean fisheries manager. "It always does, especially around Ilwaco."

Meanwhile, salmon fisheries opened July 1 in marine areas 5 and 6 in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, where early reports indicate fishing for hatchery chinook will be similar to last year's successful fishery. The waters around Port Angeles provided the best salmon fishing for the opener. Between July 1 and 4, creel counts showed that about 400 anglers reeled in approximately 160 chinook salmon at Ediz Hook.

Olson's Resort and Van Riper's Resort in Sekiu both provided reasonably good salmon fishing, with anglers throughout both marine areas also landing a few **rockfish**, **lingcod** and **greenlings**.

Elsewhere in Puget Sound, fishing effort has been generally light. In Marine Area 11 off Tacoma and Vashon Island, creel counts the week of June 28-July 4 produced 61 chinook. Most of those fish were caught off Point Defiance and near Gig Harbor. On July 3, 165 anglers were surveyed with five chinook and 88 **flatfish**. So far, very few **coho** have shown themselves in Puget Sound.

Marine Area 9, west of Whidbey Island, opens to salmon fishing July 16.

The rules for catching chinook and coho vary depending on the marine area. All of the seasons and rules can be found in the *2010 Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet*. The pamphlet is free at the more than 600 stores that sell hunting and fishing licenses. It's available at WDFW offices and at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>.

If crab is your seafood of choice, you're in luck. **Dungeness** and **red rock crab** seasons are open in the Strait of Juan de Fuca and most areas of Puget Sound. Dungeness and red rock crab seasons are:

- Marine areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (Tacoma-Vashon) - Opened June 18 and runs through Jan. 2, seven days a week.

- Marine areas 6, 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10, 11 and 12 (much of Puget Sound) - Opened July 1 and are open Wednesday through Saturday through Sept. 6, and open the entire Labor Day weekend.
- Marine areas 7 South and East (south and east of the San Juan Islands) - Will open July 14 through Sept. 30, Wednesday through Saturday, and the entire Labor Day weekend.

There is a daily limit of five Dungeness crab in Puget Sound. Minimum size is 6¼-inches and only males in hardshell condition may be kept. In the Sound, all gear must be removed from the water on days when the fishery is closed.

The daily limit of red rock crab is six in all marine areas. Minimum size is five inches and either sex may be kept.

Crab fishing rules can be found on pages 137-139 of the 2010-11 edition of Washington's *Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet*, which contains maps of all the marine areas and sub-areas. The pamphlet is free and available at the more than 600 stores where hunting and fishing licenses are sold. The pamphlet also can be downloaded from WDFW's web site at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>.

Before heading out, crabbers should check for any emergency rule changes adopted since the fishing pamphlet was published. Those changes can be found on WDFW's website at <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/> or by calling the Shellfish Rule Change toll-free hotline at (866) 880-5431.

Lake Aberdeen and Lake Sylvia in Grays Harbor County both received significant plants of **rainbow trout** this spring and well into June, and were among the 10 Region 6 lakes listed on WashingtonLakes.com's "Top Lakes Scoreboard." Lake Tarboo in Jefferson County and Lake Louise in Pierce County also made the list.

Southwest Washington

Anglers continue to reel in hefty summer chinook salmon on the lower Columbia River, although the fishery is being reshaped by an influx of upriver steelhead, changing river conditions and new fishing opportunities on the coast. Other considerations include a record sockeye run and the fact that sturgeon retention is allowed in the estuary at least through July 11.

During the first four days of July, WDFW interviewed 310 boat anglers on the lower Columbia River with 21 adult summer chinook, 30 steelhead and no sockeye. Also contacted were 989 bank anglers with 33 adult **summer chinook**, 124 **steelhead** and eight **sockeye**.

"The fishery has begun to change with the arrival of increasing numbers of upriver steelhead," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "Those fish are starting to draw anglers away from the deep water toward the bank, where they're targeting hatchery steelhead and sockeye."

Under this year's expanded season, the daily limit for adult salmonids is two marked hatchery chinook or marked hatchery steelhead (or one of each) on the mainstem Columbia River from the Megler-Astoria Bridge upstream to the Highway 395 Bridge at Pasco.

The current mix of summer chinook and steelhead contains a significant portion of wild fish, so anglers should be sure to check for a clipped adipose fin and healed scar on both species, Hymer said.

Anglers can also count any **sockeye** measuring at least 12 inches toward their two-adult daily limit from the Megler-Astoria Bridge to Priest Rapids Dam. Through July 6, just over 353,000

sockeye had been counted at Bonneville Dam, surpassing the previous record of 335,300 fish in 1947.

But counting sockeye is not the same as catching them, Hymer said. "These silver torpedoes are fairly single-minded when it comes to moving upriver so anglers should really consider them 'bonus fish' if they catch one," he said. One sockeye was recently recycled downstream to the Massey Bar on the Cowlitz River three times during the same week and returned to the Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery each time.

Most **hatchery steelhead** caught in recent days were taken along the banks of the Columbia River from Longview downstream. Averaging four to six pounds apiece, these upriver fish are expected to light up a number of fisheries as they move toward hatcheries on the upper Columbia and the lower Snake River. Look for them later this month at the mouth of the Cowlitz and Lewis rivers plus Drano Lake and the White Salmon River, where they typically dip into the cooler water of the tributaries to beat the heat.

Fishing is also expected to be good this month on the Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, Washougal and Klickitat rivers as separate runs of hatchery steelhead move into those tributaries to the Columbia River.

But, while summer steelhead have begun to upstage summer chinook, Hymer expects to see anglers catch a lot more salmon - including the occasional 40 pounder - before the fishery closes at the end of the day July 31. According to an updated forecast, 75,000 summer chinook will return to the Columbia this year - the fourth largest run since 1980.

Hymer notes, however, that fishing tactics for chinook salmon have changed since the fishery got under way last month. Since then, average water temperatures have risen to 63 degrees and flows have dropped by half.

"Fishing tactics have changed to reflect the conditions," Hymer said. "Most anglers fishing for summer chinook are going deep - 20 to 30 feet down - and using large plugs wrapped with sardine fillets in addition to wobblers and other fall gear."

One question is whether salmon fishing might be better in the ocean. All areas off the Washington coast are now open for the retention of both chinook and **coho** salmon. For more information, see the South Sound/Olympic Peninsula of this report. Anglers have also been catching good-size landlocked coho at Riffe Lake in recent days.

Another option is to fish for **white sturgeon** on the Columbia River below the Wauna powerlines, although that could present a challenge given the low catch rates in those waters. The current opening runs through July 11, after which fishery managers from Washington and Oregon will meet to discuss whether to again extend the fishery.

During the week ending July 5, private boat anglers interviewed at the Deep River and Knappton ramps averaged a legal-size sturgeon for every 9.5 rods. At the ports of Chinook and Ilwaco, 41 percent of charter boat customers caught legal-size fish, but private boaters averaged just one fish for every 12 rods.

Meanwhile, the shad fishery has about run its course, but **walleye** fishing is picking up in The Dalles Pool. Bass fishing is also improving as water temperatures rise.

Trout anglers should know that Goose Lake near Carson has been planted with 5,500 catchable-size **brown trout** and 6,000 **cutthroat** since mid-June.

Eastern Washington

Fishing is picking up for warmwater species in waterways throughout the south end of the region, especially during cooler evening hours. **Smallmouth bass** are found throughout the Snake River and channel **catfish** can be found in its backwaters and sloughs. Both species are caught near the mouth of the Walla Walla River.

Smallmouth bass may be caught below Prescott in the lower portion of the Touchet River. The Columbia River and its connected sloughs have **yellow perch, crappie, smallmouth and largemouth bass, channel catfish, brown bullheads** , an occasional **walleye** , and other species.

Waters in the north end of the region are also seeing warmwater fish action. The Pend Oreille River's Boundary Dam reservoir is good for smallmouth bass, and its Box Canyon Dam reservoir is good for largemouth bass. **Northern pike** are also throughout the river. Stevens County's Pierre Lake has largemouth bass, crappie, and bullhead catfish. Loon and Deer lakes in southern Stevens County have both species of bass, plus bullheads, perch, and **bluegill** . Pend Oreille County's Diamond Lake is usually good for perch this time of year.

Long Lake, the reservoir off the Spokane River in northwest Spokane County has been good for crappie, perch and both smallmouth and largemouth bass. Chapman Lake in southwest Spokane County is also producing both largemouth and smallmouth bass catches, plus some **kokanee** . Downs Lake, also in the southwest part of the county, has a few perch and some really nice largemouth bass.

Spokane County's Amber, Badger, and Williams lakes continue to provide good catches of **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** during early morning or evening hours. Rock Lake in Whitman County also continues to be good for both rainbow and **brown trout** fishing.

Northcentral Washington

Bob Jateff, WDFW district fish biologist, said **salmon** fishing in the mainstem Columbia River above Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster, and in the Okanogan and Similkameen rivers, was slow at the start on July 1.

"It's picking up considerably now as more fish pass over Wells Dam and start to stack up off the mouth of the Okanogan River," he said. "Anglers should check the current fishing rules pamphlet very closely, in addition to any emergency rule changes for opening dates and daily catch limits. And remember there is a night closure and anti-snagging rule in effect for the Okanogan and Similkameen rivers."

Anglers can retain adult **sockeye** salmon in the mainstem Columbia River above Priest Rapids Dam and in the Okanogan and Similkameen rivers. The daily limit is six salmon, but only up to three adult **chinook** , of which only one wild adult chinook may be retained. All sockeye and chinook with a floy or anchor tag attached must be released, and all coho and steelhead must be released. For all the details of this fishery, see <http://bit.ly/cE8tGj>.

Okanogan County lowland lakes are continuing to provide **rainbow trout** for both selective gear and bait anglers. "Cooler weather this past month has kept surface water temperatures cooler and the trout more active than normal," Jateff said.

The water level on the Methow River is starting to drop and will begin to provide opportunities for trout fishing during the catch-and-release season that began last month. Selective gear must be used and no bait is allowed.

"If you're interested in spiny ray fishing try Leader Lake for **bluegill** and Patterson Lake for **yellow perch**," Jateff said. "There are no daily limits for either of these species in Okanogan County."

Fishing at Banks Lake for rainbow trout, **smallmouth bass**, and **walleye** has been decent, according to last month's WDFW creel reports. Anglers at Banks were averaging a little over an hour of fishing for every trout and bass caught, and about two hours for every walleye caught. Some **largemouth bass** were also caught at an average rate of about four hours per fish, but the sample size was very low.

Art Viola, WDFW district fish biologist, reminds anglers that Blackbird Island Pond, a juveniles only fishery in Leavenworth off the Wenatchee River in Chelan County, will not open to fishing until July 15. "We've had such an unusually cold spring that juvenile steelhead aren't expected to leave until mid July this year," Viola said. "So we won't be stocking trout in the pond yet." Blackbird Island Pond is used as both a hatchery steelhead acclimation pond and a trout-stocked fishing pond for anglers under 15 years of age.

Southcentral Washington

Sockeye salmon have been moving up the Columbia River in record numbers in recent weeks, arriving in Central Washington waters just in time for the summer weather. But catching sockeye is proving to be a challenge. Fortunately, there are plenty of other options for anglers right now, including chinook, rainbow trout, bass and catfish.

A creel check in the John Day Pool conducted the week of June 21-27 tallied 150 anglers in 60 boats, along with 36 bank fishers. The bank anglers caught an estimated 53 hatchery **summer chinook** and released 14 wild fish. No sockeye were observed in the catch that week, even though upwards of 21,000 sockeye passed by the John Day Dam each day.

The number of boaters dropped off dramatically the following week, as did the catch. Thirty-four anglers surveyed during the week ending July 4 had caught three hatchery chinook and released three wild fish. As in the previous week, all salmon were caught from the bank.

Paul Hoffarth, WDFW's fish biologist in Pasco, credits high water in the Columbia River for the difficulty anglers have had catching salmon from a boat. Conditions, though, are improving. Flows in the Yakima River is back to normal, and the Snake and Columbia rivers have begun to go down, setting the stage for better **bass** and **walleye** fishing, said Hoffarth.

Hoffarth reminds anglers that all wild, unmarked chinook salmon and steelhead must be released. The daily limit is six hatchery chinook, up to two of which may be adults. Anglers must stop fishing once they retain the adult portion of their daily limit. Any **steelhead** retained counts toward the daily limit of two adult fish, said Hoffarth, who reminds anglers that the Yakima River is closed to salmon and steelhead fishing.

Steelhead fishing remains closed for the Columbia River upstream of the Highway 395 bridge and in the Snake River until the fall.

As for the difficulty of catching sockeye, WDFW fish and wildlife biologist Joe Hymer says that for a variety of reasons they are a hard fish to catch. "Sockeye mainly feed on zooplankton/krill, and

most (river) anglers don't use gear that a sockeye would typically eat," he said. "A lot of times they use gear that is too big."

The single-minded nature of sockeye also makes them hard to catch, Hymer said. "Sockeye move through an area pretty quickly," he said. "In the lower Columbia, we see pretty good catches if the water is high and cool. But when the water drops and warms, the fish go deeper. Not until they get into a concentrated area like Lake Wenatchee and Lake Osoyoos, where anglers troll slow using gear that's small and easier to bite, do catch rates go up."

As in other areas, water levels in the upper Naches and upper Yakima tributaries have continued to drop, making them easier to fish. Eric Anderson, WDFW fish and wildlife biologist in Yakima, said this trend should continue through the summer, when fishing in most tributaries should be good for wild trout, cutthroat, rainbow and brook trout. Anglers should note that it is closed to fishing for or retaining **bull trout**, salmon and steelhead throughout the Yakima River basin. "We have continued to stock lakes in the region and all are posted on the WDFW website's catchable trout stocking reports," said Anderson. "All of those reports have been updated with the latest **triploid trout** plants."

Anderson reminds anglers they can research lakes by county by going to the 2010 Washington Fishing Prospects report <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/prospects/>. He advises, however, that before heading out to an unfamiliar lake or stream, anglers should check the Washington Fishing Regulations at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/> "Each stream and lake you intend to fish may have different rules and catch limit restrictions," said Anderson.

For those who don't mind a little hike, Anderson says that as the weather warms and the snow recedes, Central Washington's high mountain lakes provide good angling opportunities. The region's high lakes fish stocking information is available at http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg3/r3_highlakes.htm **Kokanee** are continuing to bite at Keechelus and Rimrock lakes, where the daily catch limit is 16 fish.

Jumbo triploid trout were planted at Lost Lake in Kittitas County, as well as in Dog and Leech lakes in Yakima County. These fish are running about 1.5 pounds each. Leech Lake is fly-fishing only. Also in June, 4,500 catchable-size trout and 200 jumbos were planted in Easton Pond in Kittitas County.

Sturgeon fishing remains open in Lake Wallula (McNary Dam to Priest Rapids/Ice Harbor Dams) through July of this year. However, sturgeon fishing is prohibited from in the sturgeon sanctuaries from Goose Island upstream to Ice Harbor Dam in the Snake River and upstream of the Priest Rapids Hatchery outlet to Priest Rapids Dam in the Columbia River.

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