

The Guide's Forecast - volume 12 issue number 29

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 16<sup>th</sup> – July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** The summer chinook fishery continues to wind down with passage numbers finally dipping to fewer than a thousand fish per day this week. Steelhead numbers are on the increase however and anglers versed in Bonneville tactics should see excellent catches in the coming weeks.

Shad fishing and oversize sturgeon fishing are slow in the Columbia River Gorge.

Water temperature was 73 degrees at Willamette Falls on Tuesday this week. No recent fish passage data is available. Shad fishing is about done. Try for walleye in Multnomah Channel as fishing often improves at this time of year, particularly after dark.

River level is gradually dropping on the McKenzie at Vida with the water temperature holding in the mid-50s. Try below the hatchery for a decent chance of a steelhead hookup.

Fish around McIver Park or higher on the Clackamas. There are fish but they're slow to bite. Spring chinook are beginning to color up so steelhead will be the main quarry.

The Sandy River has been glacially impacted periodically with hot weather. Fishing is slow but steelhead can be found in pocket water in the upper reaches.

Try higher on the North or South Santiam with bobber and jig for steelhead.

**Northwest –** Offshore out of Garibaldi, salmon fishers are still finding coho but action slowed this week as weather hampered ocean effort. Chinook are still a rare catch but soon, tuna will become a focus for many anglers. Rough ocean conditions are forecast through the weekend with wind waves building to 4-foot.

Crabbing in the ocean and north coast estuaries is improving and should continue to do so into the fall months.

Razor clamming is now closed for much of the state. Domoic toxins have clamming closed south of Tillamook Head (Cannon Beach) to Bandon and a seasonal closure is in effect north of Tillamook Head to the Columbia River until September 30<sup>th</sup>.

Spring chinook remain available in some north coast streams. The Wilson, Trask and Nestucca remain the best bets but fish are holed up in deep pools and somewhat reluctant to bite. Summer steelhead may fall to small baits on light leaders, especially for those willing to fish at first light.

Coastal cutthroat trout fishing should be peaking in tidewater stretches of many north coast streams. Anglers can troll trout gear or flyfish with bright colored patterns for best success. Some systems are now open to a small bag limit so check local regulations before hitting your favorite stream.

Sturgeon fishing on the lower Columbia got extended once again. Beginning today through August 1<sup>st</sup>, anglers can still keep 1 white sturgeon per day between 41 and 54-inches

downstream of the Wauna powerlines. Catch rates are improving but still vary day to day. Anchovies remain a top bait; an indicator that schools are beginning to utilize the lower river.

Steelheaders working lower Columbia River Beaches did well last week but tides will soften and so should success rates. Targeting steelhead at the mouths of SW Washington streams can pay dividends however as fish nose into cooler waters before continuing their migration upstream.

**RECENT PRESS RELEASE: NEWPORT, ORE.** –Fishery managers have decided to close the central Oregon coast (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain) nearshore (inside 40-fm) sport Pacific halibut fishery on 11:59 p.m. Saturday, July 17, because the quota has been met. Full press release in the long version of the newsletter.

**Southwest** – Now that spring All-Depth Halibut catches have been totaled, it seems anglers caught the quota plus an extra 6,500 pounds, exceeding the quota by 6%. Summer All-depth Halibut opens August 6th.

Offshore launches will have to early this coming weekend to catch the incoming tide. Forecasts indicate a friendly ocean this coming weekend.

A few boats have scored limits trolling offshore out of Winchester Bay with results improving. Albacore have been hooked 30 to 40 miles out. Sturgeon are finally on the bite. A few chinook are entering the lower Umpqua but algae is hampering angler effort.

Tuna are being taken out of Bandon and Charleston as warm water moves toward shore. Early albacore are running large.

With water temperatures in the lower Rogue high, chinook are kegged up in the bay providing decent fishing to trollers.

Limits of rockfish and good catches of ling cod are being taken by boats nearshore out of the Port of Brookings.

An algae bloom on Diamond Lake has shut down the bite.

**Eastern** – A \$1,000 first prize is up for grabs at the third annual Kokanee Power of Oregon fishing derby on Saturday, July 17th. Call Greg Graham at 541-973-4831 for information.

Limits of kokanee are being taken by trollers at Odell Lake although jigging is also catching fish. Lake trout fishing is fair to good.

Chinook fishing has been good in the Imnaha River.

**SW Washington** – District rivers are beginning to heat up for steelhead. The Lewis is a strong summer steelhead prospect and the Cowlitz is picking up significant momentum as well.

Sidedrifters are taking good numbers of fish near Blue Creek and with a daily limit of 3 adults per day, it makes the trip worthwhile.

Boaters working the mouth of the Cowlitz are also starting to realize results. With Bonneville counts the way they are, anglers can be assured that thousands of fish per day are swimming past their target area. Spinners often work well here but anglers have begun to utilize shrimp for bait.

Anglers targeting steelhead at Drano Lake are also taking good numbers of fish. Anglers prefer to fish at night either trolling plugs while bank anglers often plunk bait. This fishery should be peaking through early August.

The Klickitat River should also be a great prospect but warm temperatures may cloud the river with glacial run-off.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – You wouldn't know it from the effort but the steelhead show near Bonneville is the best game in town! I finally got to fish in this fishery with legendary fish advocate Jim Martin on Wednesday and we found some fish! With Bonneville counts climbing, it was really exciting for me to get to take part in this epic fishery.

We ended up having 5 opportunities, landing 4 fish and keeping 2 hatchery steelhead and a hatchery summer Chinook at about 12 pounds! Jim commented this was the most boats he's seen here in a while but it still didn't seem crowded to me. We fished both spinners and coon stripe prawns with spinners. Each offering got about the same action but Jim mentioned that this was the first fish he caught on a prawn and indicating that the Chinook were typically more likely to take a spinner than bait in this fishery.

There were other boats certainly participating in this fishery but mostly upriver from us. There was action had by many indicating that passage at Bonneville is up to date and accurate. What's most exciting is the fact that the current run is tracking about 3X what last years awesome run was! It's anybody's guess where we'll end up this year!

Summer Chinook is obviously on the downturn with only about 600 per day passing Bonneville these days. Other anglers in the area reported catching mostly wild fish with steelhead making up the bulk of the catch. Steelhead numbers are pretty impressive right now with several days over 10,000 fish crossing Bonneville Dam. And the wonderful thing is, this isn't even peak passage time! It looks like a fun year ahead.

There was a rare sturgeon angler in the area but guides were desperately looking for floater shad to entice oversize in the area. Even the floater shad were hard to come by. Sturgeon anglers are still restricted to fish below Marker 82. Keepers are relatively non-existent in the gorge fishery right now but that is likely to change by late September.

Downriver, bank anglers had fair to good action on the strong tide series this week. Both Chinook and steelhead made up the bulk of the catch but some anglers are still reporting catches of sockeye from the bank. Beaches downstream of Portland is where the bulk of the pressure takes place with both boaters and easy access bank anglers finding success.

In the estuary, sturgeon remains the main focus and with this season's catch rates, effort remains low. Catch rates are picking up however with some quality fish in the creel check. I ran a trip on Sunday with 4 guys, landing about 7 fish, with 3 in the keeper range, 2 over 50 inches! Anchovies picked up the bulk of the bites, as it seems the schools of baitfish are beginning to move into the lower estuary.

Offshore, coho action has been good but rough seas recently has kept most of the smaller boats in port. It's not really worth the run for 6 to 7 pound coho. The action should only get better but even though the run outside of the mouth will likely be building, sporadic fishing can be common as some boats as late as Wednesday reported slower catches.

Most boats are still targeting coho near the CR Buoy with some fair catches reported near Buoy 1 and Buoy 2. It's a pretty simple procedure, troll herring, either plug cut or whole, anchovies work well too, anywhere from 6 to 12 pulls in the a.m. and down deeper as the sun comes up. Most boats are reporting action at the CR and SW of the CR Buoy.

Crabbing is starting to pick up for ocean crabbers. There are a fair number of soft-shelled crabs in the catch and one charter captain reported his best success for a 3-day soak as the older males will chase the females out of the crab pot after a while. Keep your bait in a bait cage to keep your pots fishing for the longest period of time however!

**The Guide's Forecast** – It's time to really start thinking about learning the Bonneville fishery. It's pretty clear by now that a significant run of steelhead is building in the Columbia River and anglers should be taking advantage of it.

Small spinners with metallic and red in combination will continue to produce good results well into early August with numbers of steelhead adults building daily. Thursday marks the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive day that counts at Bonneville topped over 10,000 adults. Coon strip shrimp is also taking fish but be sure to hook them up with a roll so they spin slowly in the current. Don't count on having a great chance for a summer Chinook, passage at the dam is fading. In the last 3 days, only 600+ adults had crossed at Bonneville Dam.

Floater shad are becoming hard to find but if you do find one, it will make for great sturgeon bait. Effort is slowing for oversize and keeper sturgeon in the gorge and likely will continue to dwindle until the September fishery kicks in.

Beach plunkers certainly stand a chance at summer steelhead but the tides won't be conducive to high success rates. Boaters working the river mouth are the more likely winners while fish take a break from warm mainstem water temperatures. The Cowlitz will be a good place to intercept them although action was slow on Wednesday.

Additional sturgeon opportunity will allow estuary anglers to continue their pursuit of keepers near Astoria. The action should be picking up as water temperatures continue to climb with anchovies likely the preferred bait both deep and shallow. It shouldn't be too long and anglers should be able to jig their own bait in the lower estuary. The season is slated to go through August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Offshore, rough seas will continue to keep small boats "at-bay" while a few of the larger charter boats will fish on fair numbers of available coho. Although the action became more sporadic this week, boats that persistently pursued coho were able to typically come up winners. The better fishing continued to be near the CR Buoy and to the SW of it. Drop baits down deeper as the morning progresses. Get your crab pots fishing too although your catch may have a fair number of soft-shelled crabs in the catch. See the offshore forecast in the forecast section of the North Coast Fishing section.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – Water temperature at Willamette Falls is 71 degrees as of July 15th and rising. Fish passage numbers have been updated only through July 29th, at which time there was a slight downturn in daily numbers as the temperature hit 67 degrees. Currently, the only action in the lower river would be for warmwater gamefish as the shad run is done. Water level and flow is fluctuating on the Middle Fork Willamette due to the Army Corps of Engineers doing dam repair upstream.

McKenzie level and flow have been dropping very slightly with the water temperature holding steady at 55 degrees. In other words, the river is in great shape for fishing.

The North Santiam is a decent level and flow with the water clear. Summer steelhead are scattered but are holding in predictable locations.

Take the family to Leaburg Hatchery on Saturday, July 17 during the Outdoor Day from 9 AM to 2 PM. Located 26 miles north of Springfield, , enjoy demonstrations, fly-casting instruction and fish identification among other family-oriented activities. Park at the Leaburg ball field & catch a ride on the free shuttle as there will be no parking available at the hatchery facility.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Despite the fluctuation of water level below Jasper on the Middle Fork, there are good enough numbers of summer steelhead in this stretch of the river to provide worthwhile fishing.

The lower McKenzie is productive for trout early and late in the day as surface activity makes for effective use of dries. Action tapers off mid-day however. Above Leaburg Dam, a variety of patterns, nymphs and terrestrials will be effective. Expect to encounter better numbers of wild trout on this stretch. Above Blue Creek, Green Drakes are hatching during the day with Golden Stones appearing in the evening.

Summer steelheading is fair to good on the North Santiam with good numbers of fish occupying every river mile. Try darker-colored lures and don't neglect bobber and jig which has been effective here. A few springers are being taken here as well.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – Good numbers of steelhead are available and scattered the entire length of the Clackamas although results have been spotty. Eagle Creek may be worth a shot for springers although it's been getting low and clear so try the deeper holes.

Summer weather has predictably turned the upper water of the Sandy River milky from glacial runoff. Fishing has been slow.

A temporary rule remains in place which allows for a three-fish limit on the Clackamas and Sandy, two of which may be Chinook. Good luck with that.

**The Guide's Forecast** - McIver or higher on the Clackamas remains the stretch offering the better chance of a steelhead encounter but expect to work for fish. First-light anglers have a definite advantage at this time of year.

The only place that has shown any measurable results on the Sandy is around the mouth of Cedar Creek where clearer water has produced a few steelhead. This one is not worth the trip at this time.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Inland, north coast fishing is slowing with the dropping and warming waters. Spring Chinook remain available but are turning in color and therefore, degrading. Summer steelhead are also available with the Wilson and Nestucca systems but like salmon, they'll be well hunkered down meaning small baits and stealthy tactics will be required to entice fish to bite. Early morning effort will also be very important. Fish should be well distributed throughout these systems but target them at the heads of holes and in pocket water where a broken surface is likely to allow them the confidence to commit suicide.

Most of the effort in this stretch of coast should be taking place offshore right now. Rough seas however is preventing sensible anglers from fishing in the big water. Halibut, salmon, rockfish and crab are all good quarry to pursue and tuna will be added to that list shortly. Crabbing is picking up but you should still use fresh bait for best results.

Summer Chinook used to be a common pursuit on the Nehalem this time of year but run numbers have plummeted in recent years. The season remains open but catch and effort are low. Herring or spinners often take fish in the Wheeler area. Check regulations for this watershed from the ODF&W web site as they are complicated this year.

This just in:

### **For Immediate Release Thursday, July 15, 2010**

#### **Nearshore halibut fishing closes after quota met**

**NEWPORT, ORE.** –Fishery managers have decided to close the central Oregon coast (Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain) nearshore (inside 40-fm) sport Pacific halibut fishery on 11:59 p.m. Saturday, July 17, because the quota has been met.

“The nearshore Pacific halibut fishery has been popular with anglers in 2010,” said Lynn Mattes, halibut project leader for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. “Angler effort through early July is up more than 25 percent from 2008 and 2009. The average size of landed halibut increased by approximately 3 pounds in 2010 compared to 2009.”

ODFW conferred with NOAA Fisheries and the International Pacific Halibut Commission and determined none of the 12,284-pound quota remained to continue the central coast nearshore Pacific halibut fishery.

The summer central coast all-depth Pacific halibut season opens Aug. 6 and is scheduled to be open every other Friday and Saturday until the remaining all-depth quota of less than 29,000 pounds is taken.

The high-relief area of Stonewall Bank is closed to halibut fishing to reduce incidental catch of yelloweye and canary rockfish. Both species are considered over fished and must be released immediately. The closed area is defined by latitude and longitude waypoints, which are available on the Marine Resources Program Web site:

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/regulations/sport\\_fishing/stonewallasp](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/regulations/sport_fishing/stonewallasp)

The daily bag limit is one fish and there is no minimum length for Pacific halibut. The possession limit is one daily limit at sea and three daily limits on land. The annual limit per angler is six fish.

Sport anglers are reminded possession of groundfish is not allowed north of Humbug Mountain when a Pacific halibut is aboard their vessel during all-depth Pacific halibut dates. The exceptions are Pacific cod (true cod, not lingcod) and sablefish (black cod) which may be retained with halibut between Humbug Mountain and Cape Falcon. Other non-groundfish species, such as tuna and salmon during authorized seasons and in authorized areas, may be possessed with halibut on open all-depth Pacific halibut days.

More details on regulations can be found at:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/finfish/halibut/seasonmaps/Halibut%202010%20regs%2003152010.pdf> or in the 2010 Oregon Sport Ocean Regulations for Salmon, Halibut and other Marine

Species booklet. General regulations can be found in the 2010 Oregon Sport Fishing Regulations booklet.

Crabbing in several of the north coast estuaries is also picking up but won't peak until late September and October.

**The Guide's Forecast** – If you're going to pursue fresh water species (salmon and steelhead) in a north coast watershed, be prepared for low, clear water tactics. Bait will work best but use hardware, spinners in particular after plying the waters with bait. Sea-run cutthroat trout may also be an option but like their cousins, will respond best in low-light conditions. Bay options are few but the soft tide series will be conducive to herring trolling near the mouth of Tillamook Bay. A rare summer Chinook may be available on Nehalem Bay.

Offshore, anglers will not be impressed with conditions. The ocean may fish best in the early morning, before afternoon winds make the seas uncomfortable. Coho will be the best bet, targeting them in 200+ foot of water NW of the tip of the Tillamook Bay jetty. Plug cut herring should be the bait of choice.

**FRI** NW WIND 15 TO 20 KT WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 7 FT AT 8 SECONDS. PATCHY FOG IN THE MORNING.

**FRI NIGHT** NW WIND 15 TO 20 KT. GUSTS TO 25 KT IN THE EVENING. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

**SAT** NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 7 FT.

**SAT NIGHT** NW WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

**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. NW SWELL 6 FT.

It shouldn't be too long before interest increases for albacore. July becomes a pretty consistent month for success rates to increase on the north Oregon Coast.

Crabbing should continue to improve in most north coast estuaries. The softer tide series should be another good reason to put in some effort over the weekend. Razor clam digging is closed on the north coast.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Use caution exiting and entering Yaquina Bay as a dredge will be operating at the mouth until August 5th or so. Herring are being taken on jigs inside the bay.

Charter boats out of Depoe Bay took good numbers of tuna as recently as July 12th inside 30 miles but winds have since pushed warm water further offshore.

With the spring all-depth halibut quota filled and then some, offshore anglers are looking forward to the summer all-depth fishery which opens Aug. 6, every other Friday and Saturday through October 30th or until the quota of 141,265 pounds is met.

Anglers plying Coos Bay for perch and greenling have been hooking up with California halibut to 10 pounds.

Offshore salmon fishing is gradually picking up out of Reedsport and a few Chinook have been taken by anglers trolling shallow for coho. It certainly isn't hot fishing, but it's encouraging to see an improvement in results. Ocean salmon fishers have yet to put a significant dent in the quota or 26,000 fish-clipped fish through the 4th of July weekend. Coho are running larger than usual for this time of year. Ocean crabbing has been productive for those willing to sort through catches as the majority are females. Sturgeon fishing has continued to improve. A variety of fish are being taken by anglers bottom fishing off the South Jetty. A few Chinook are nosing into the lower Umpqua. Shad fishing is winding down here. Spring Chinook catches have slowed on the North Umpqua. The South Umpqua is producing good numbers of smallmouth now that the water level has dropped and warmed. No bait is allowed for smallies or trout on the South Umpqua.

With the water temperature of the lower Rogue in the mid-70's, Chinook are stacking up in the bay and trollers are taking advantage of the situation, scoring fair to good catches daily. Best results come following the turn of the tide. The middle Rogue remains largely non-productive as Chinook are scurrying upstream without holding anywhere. With demolition of Gold Ray Dam in progress, be certain to stay clear of the construction area; at least 500 feet below the dam and 1,000 feet upstream. Expect periodic roiling below the dam from the activity here. Counts at Gold Ray Dam have not been updated as a replacement for the fish counter (who quit at the end of June) has not been found. Spring Chinook counts were the best in many years at that time, however. Summer steelhead are abundant and responding to a variety of bait and lures.

Boaters launching out of Brookings Harbor are taking very few Chinook and only the occasional hatchery coho. Warm water has once again moved further offshore, putting albacore out of reach for most recreational boaters. Rockfish and ling cod catches are very good nearshore. With the algae bloom at Diamond Lake, Power Bait has been the best producer by far, not just for numbers but also for larger trout. Guard your loins against the local mosquito population which is massive whenever the wind calms.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Summer steelhead have started pushing into the lower Deschutes although numbers have yet to build. Caddis are hatching and results have been good for fly anglers targeting reddsides.

Despite being productive at this time of year historically, kokanee fishing remains slow for most anglers at Wickiup.

Kokanee fishing has been fair to good at Odell whenever the wind isn't fierce which, unfortunately, hasn't happened very often recently.

Wallowa Lake, famous for large and record kokanee, has been fairly slow and is producing mostly smallish fish.

Odell has been productive for kokanee early in the day with the bite shutting down mid-morning.

Paulina is producing limits of kokanee to jig fishers who are putting in their time. Be prepared for mosquitoes which can get thick here in the evenings.

## **Washington fishing reports:**

***From the WDF&W Weekender Report July 7<sup>th</sup> – July 21<sup>st</sup>, 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](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.

### **TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail**

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

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### **Random Links**

Clamming seminars:

[http://www.theworldlink.com/sports/outdoors/article\\_ed6d8bc2-8be4-11df-a702-001cc4c002e0.html](http://www.theworldlink.com/sports/outdoors/article_ed6d8bc2-8be4-11df-a702-001cc4c002e0.html)

All manner of shellfish information from the ODFW:

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

**GOOD LUCK!**