

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 23<sup>rd</sup> – July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Huge numbers of steelhead continue to pour over Bonneville Dam with over double the return rate this year than last. Peak passage last year took place in mid-August but now is the time to go as water temperatures will rise, putting catch rates on the drop. Small brass and red spinners should take fish along shore edges in the gorge while hot colored spin-n-glos will work for beach anglers in the current minus tide series.

Summer chinook numbers are dropping fast but an occasional fish is still being caught in the Bonneville fishery.

As flow continues to drop on the lower Willamette, water temperatures remain in the high 60s, down from the mid-70s a week ago. Over 60,000 adult spring chinook and 22,000 summer steelhead have crossed Willamette Falls and are now in the tributaries. Fishing is poor in the lower river although the Middle Fork is a great level and color, producing decent catches of rainbows and cutthroat.

Steelheaders continue to catch a few below Leaburg Dam on the McKenzie. Trout fishing is good with evening's best.

Fishing has been slow for steelhead on the Clackamas. In the warmer weather, river rafters have inundated the lower river making for challenging fishing conditions for most of the day. Target steelhead early in the day with the McIver Park area offering up the best prospects.

The Sandy is nearing the end of the summer steelhead season. Early mornings will produce the best possibilities but target steelhead from Dodge Park and upstream.

Trout have moved deeper at Diamond Lake with best catches coming in 30 to 40 feet of water. A toxic algae advisory is in effect here suggesting people remove internal organs and skin before cooking trout.

**Northwest –** Morning seas have allowed for coho effort to take place on the north coast with Garibaldi remaining a productive port for the south of Falcon fishery. Mixed reports are coming in however with some boats doing better than others but the most consistent fishing seems to be in water deeper than 200 foot. Wild fish are making up the significant portion of the landed catch but most anglers are impressed with the size of the coho this early in the season. Chinook catches are rare and will likely continue to be that way.

Anglers working the ocean out of the mouth of the Columbia are also reporting good catches but seas haven't been as friendly, especially after mid-morning. Anglers continue to focus their effort SW of the CR Buoy but risk a bumpy ride home if they don't get an early limit. Seas are forecasted to be rough for the next few days.

Ocean crabbing on the north coast is improving but a mix of hard and soft-shelled crab are in the catch. Estuaries from Nehalem to the Nestucca are also improving for sport crabbers.

Catch rates of sturgeon are showing a marked increase although effort remains low. Anchovies remain a top bait and as water temperatures continue to warm, they should become even more

effective. The catch is best above the Astoria/Megler Bridge as sculpin are plaguing fishers in downstream areas.

**Southwest** – Offshore ocean forecasts are marginal for the coming weekend. Launches may be hampered by morning minus tides.

Ocean salmon fishing is slow despite showing slight improvement in catches. A few coho anglers have landed large chinook while trolling shallow water offshore.

Tuna fishing is expected to improve this week as warm water once again moves closer to shore.

Better than average catches of near-shore halibut filled the quota early this season, resulting in a closure of the fishery on Saturday, July 17th.

Sturgeon fishing has been worthwhile in the lower Umpqua although many of the fish hooked here are oversized. Smallmouth bass results have been good around Elkton. North Umpqua steelheading is slow.

Anglers out of Gold Beach have experienced fair but improving results for large fall chinook in the lower bay. Steelheading on the Rogue above Gold Ray Dam has been productive for smallish but feisty sea-run rainbows. These fish are willing to make a grab at a variety of offerings from bait to flies and plugs.

Area beaches are producing good catches of pinkfin perch.

**Eastern** – Water in the lower Deschutes has been pushing 70 degrees but according to PGE, should start cooling around the 1st of August which will improve summer steelhead prospects. The middle Deschutes has been producing brown trout in the evenings. Upper river anglers are taking small brook trout.

Large, dry stonefly imitations are taking fish on the Wallowa River all day long. Fish near the bank. Spring chinook fishing will close on the Wallowa and Imnaha Rivers beginning July 26<sup>th</sup> after an extension earlier in the month.

Prineville Reservoir anglers are reporting catching larger trout than usual. Pine Hollow is also producing good catches of rainbow trout.

**SW Washington** – Anglers remain focused on the summer run of steelhead marching upriver in masse on the lower Columbia right now. The mouth of the Cowlitz has been a favorite spot but success has been surprisingly slow recently.

The Lewis and Cowlitz River are also fair options but Cowlitz River anglers will find better catches later into August. Side-drifted clusters of eggs will produce the best catches.

The Drano Lake fishery remains one of the best bets for district anglers with thousands of fish passing through each day. Trollers and plunkers are taking fair numbers of fish with night-time fishing producing the best results.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Until salmon season begins to ramp up, fishing communities in the Astoria area will remain relatively quiet although there are some quality opportunities taking place in the area right now. Most anglers remain focused on offshore salmon but have

found recent success pursuing sturgeon in the lower river. Ocean conditions have been favorable recently, with the mornings most tolerable before the afternoon winds kick up.

Ocean salmon success rates have dropped off a bit but the fishery certainly remains viable. Anglers have had to work harder to obtain limits and are targeting their quarry SW of the CR Buoy, trolling to the SW bearing in mind that a NW wind is quite prevalent, especially in recent days.

Chinook remain scarce although anglers to the north (that is, from Westport Washington to Vancouver Island and beyond), Chinook seem pretty common in the catches. One report from a commercial troller working out of Newport (although Chinook are still scarce in their catches) indicated Columbia River Chinook are about 3 times as prevalent as they normally are. All things point to a large return headed towards the big river. This should bode well for ocean anglers in the coming weeks.

In an updated report, one guide that fished the ocean on 7/21 reported difficulty in finding salmon at first but came across a pile of diving birds and jumping bait. After putting in the trolled anchovies, they began to have pretty consistent fishing ending the day with 5 Chinook and 2 nice coho for 4 rods. Two of the 5 Chinook were over 20 pounds with the largest going 29 pounds! The guide stated he didn't have any other boats around him and he was fishing south of the CR Buoy. Ironically, Chinook made up the bulk of the catch. As we've previously mentioned, the coho are running large for this time of year.

Another notable, NOAA forecasts have been "off" as of late. When rough, wind wave laden seas are in the forecast, the ocean has frequently been very nice. 6/21 was no exception as many decided not to go out yet the seas were friendly to all those that ventured out.

Sturgeon fishing in the estuary is where it should be. Good catches of quality keepers are coming from the river upstream of the Astoria/Megler Bridge. I had my best day of the season on 6/21, taking 4 nice keepers and turning one other back. All our fish were taken before high tide (on the incoming) with the most aggressive bites coming during the peak part of the flow. Anchovies took all our fish as I didn't even try sand shrimp. We were fishing deeper water with most of our rods in 14 to 22 foot of water. Shaker action is pretty good as well.

Most boats are fishing upstream of the Astoria Bridge as crab and sculpin are molesting baits relentlessly downstream. It's clearly the best sturgeon action of the year right now but a lot of that has to do with what little effort is taking place. The water temperature is nearly an ideal 65 degrees. We've been targeting our keepers in water deeper than 12 feet with an occasional fish coming in 8 foot of water. Anchovies is clearly the bait of choice.

Steelheaders fishing the lower Columbia had a good week last week with both bank and boat anglers scoring fair to good results downstream of Longview. The minus tide series produced the results we had predicted and likewise, the action is likely to drop off a bit as tidal action slows.

Up at Bonneville, action also remains steady with boaters faring the best using brass and red spinners. Target steelhead off of rocky outcroppings in about 10 to 13 feet of water. Make sure you have current strong enough to work your spinners a foot off of the bottom. Dam counts continue to climb with the peak likely to happen around mid-August. This is a quality fishery right now but still draws little interest for the huge numbers of fish returning this year.

Walleye are making a strong showing in the John Day Pool and some salmon and steelhead anglers are taking walleye incidentally at the mouth of the Deschutes River.

**The Guide's Forecast** – There are several options for Columbia River anglers this week from the river to the sea. There are enough options for this writer to not have a solid recommendation on which way to go.

Starting with the ocean, the coho bite has been a bit off but should pick up in the coming weeks as Columbia River bound fish begin to stage near the river mouth. Chinook were the highlight on Wednesday but that can change on any given day. We've all heard the old timers talk about working scum lines, rip lines and diving birds but that hasn't paid huge dividends for me over my years of fishing. There is some consistency however to this theory as one guide did quite well on Wednesday working a flock of diving birds and coming up with a nice batch of Chinook.

The CR Buoy will remain the place to be as it's too early for the fishery near the light-house to consistently produce just to the north of Peacock Spit off of the North Jetty. Although you shouldn't expect consistent Chinook opportunities, you should prepare for it with the number of returning adults forecasted back to the Columbia this year. Coho will still be the likely focus so troll fresh herring or anchovies shallow in the morning and down deeper as the morning progresses.

Sturgeon action is a very viable option for estuary fishers with Taylor Sands producing some of the better catches. Anchovies is clearly the bait of choice but target water from 10 to 20 feet deep. Both the incoming and outgoing tide is producing good catches but you can fish deeper water with less lead on the incoming tide. Crabs are present in much of the lower Columbia but less problematic upstream of the Astoria Bridge. Effort remains low in this fishery.

Steelheaders are entering the best of the best but tides will play a role in success this week. Weak tides will not be conducive to productive fishing so beach plunkers and boat anglers will not find outstanding success despite growing numbers of steelhead present. The exception will be Bonneville area anglers where consistent flows should allow for good spinner fishing this week. Anglers are still allowed to retain fin-clipped summer Chinook but those numbers are fading.

Walleye fishing from Bonneville upstream should be good at this time. Slow trolled spinner and worm combinations should take fish and fair numbers of larger walleye tipping the scales at over 10 pounds are being reported from the John Day Pool.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – water temperature at Willamette Falls is in the high 60s. Over 60,000 spring Chinook and nearly 23,000 summer steelhead had been counted but data has not been updated in over two weeks. At that time, daily springer counts were declining while steelhead numbers were holding steady.

Waters of the McKenzie remain quite fishable and if natives aren't your favorite, weekly stocking has plenty of hatchery fish available above and below Leaburg Lake.

Most of the salmon and steelhead which have crossed the Falls are destined for the Santiam system making it the most logical place to intercept a few. Springer and summer recycling is taking place on a weekly basis on the South Santiam.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Multnomah Channel is producing a few walleye. Steelhead are being taken below Dexter Dam for those who enjoy lots of company while fishing. The Town Run (Eugene to Springfield) is productive for steelhead as well as a productive area for fly fishers targeting trout.

Fly anglers on the McKenzie are catching fair to good numbers of reddsides and a few cutthroat on nymphs with caddis action occurring evenings.

The Santiams are definitely worth a try for summer steelhead. There are plenty of fish in the system with jigs and cured eggs effective recently. Try between Packsaddle Park and North Santiam State Park for steelhead on the North Santiam. Expect to find stable, clear water system-wide.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – Expect to find low, clear water on the Clackamas, typical for this time of year. Steelhead are scattered with only a few cooperating with anglers at first light. Thereafter angling gets tough as loud, cheerful youngsters fill the waters with colorful, inflatable plastic craft which is also typical for late July.

The Sandy is beginning to show it's glacial origins as the water is turning milky, a common problem when the weather warms during Oregon summers.

**The Guide's Forecast** - If you try Eagle Creek, while there are some springers in there, get some knowledge of the terrain in advance as the best (perhaps only) shot at a hookup will be at first light and generally requires a bit of a hike.

The better chance at a steelhead on the Sandy will be above Oxbow but expect to work for every fish. Fishing is slow with only the occasional hookup near the mouth of Cedar Creek but it's nit really worth the trip.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – All eyes are on the ocean now with fair numbers of coho available offshore. Limits are not the rule however but fair to good action is being witnessed for anglers putting in a good morning effort fishing NW of the entrance of Tillamook Bay. Although some fish are being picked up around 170 foot, the better action is taking place from 200 to 270 foot of water. A large percentage of the coho are of wild origin and Chinook are next to non-existent in the catches. Anglers here are also reporting coho that are large in size with one angler reporting a native fish close to 20 pounds. Anglers are fishing plug-cut herring close to the surface (8 to 12 feet down) with the best action coming the first 5 hours of sun-up.

Ocean crabbing is continually picking up but a mix of both hard shelled and soft-shelled keepers are coming from well-soaked pots.

Salmon and steelhead remain hunkered down in the district's watersheds but are quite reluctant to bite. Chinook are getting well past their prime and steelhead can be found in the pocket water stretches of the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Early morning will produce the best results.

Few anglers are taking advantage of the sea-run cutthroat opportunities that now exist on the north coast. Many streams are now open to a consumptive fishery but check local listings before heading out.

The Nehalem fishery remains a dead zone for Chinook. Anglers are awaiting the coho which won't enter until late August. There will be no wild coho season on the Nehalem this season.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Watch for proper ocean conditions for offshore coho fishing this week. Head NW out of Tillamook Bay and cover as much water as you can until you find results. Trolled herring, green or red label should produce consistent strikes and green hoochies are working well

too. It's pretty important to have bait when fishing in the ocean, whether you're using in conjunction with artificials or not.

If you're a savvy fresh water angler, you can target steelhead in the early morning. Fish small baits and light fluorocarbon line in the pocket water, there should be fish present.

Not much going on in the estuary right now although crabbing has picked up on Tillamook, Nehalem and Nestucca estuaries. Netarts can produce fair catches as well this time of year but effort runs high on this estuary.

Try trout fishing your favorite stream whether it's catch and release or not. Trollers should be able to take fish in tidewater as well but few seem to remember this is a productive technique still.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Beginning Saturday, July 24th, boaters may not venture beyond the 30-fathom line vying for rockfish. This change was made to further protect yelloweye rockfish. Fortunately, bottomfishing results have been pretty decent in water 8- to 12- feet deep. In addition, boats may no longer retain cabezon as of that date although rock and jetty fishers are allowed to keep them.

The first of four Oregon Tuna Classic events was a challenge in seas to 12 feet over the past weekend. Only 35 of 60 teams registered actually made the attempt at the 40+ mile offshore journey and only a dozen turned in five fish for competition. One-tenth of an ounce decided the difference between first and second place with Team Engage out of Ilwaco, Washington snagging the \$3,000 top prize.

Offshore water is pretty cool which means a very long run for albacore and low ocean temperatures only extend further off the more southerly ports..

Chinook and coho fishing has been slow out of Depoe Bay although a charter boat returned with a 27-pounder on Wednesday this week. Ling cod have been more cooperative than rockfish this week. Albacore have been too far offshore to be a consideration for recreational or charter anglers.

Boats launching out of Winchester Bay are taking very few ocean coho. A few Chinook have been caught along the South Jetty with this fishery expected to improve around the first week of August. Crabbing has been worthwhile inside the bay. After several weeks of so-so results for perch fishers in Winchester Bay, the bite has turned on at the often crowded Marker 12. Pinkfin surf perch are live-bearers and since these fish return to the bay to carry on the strain, these fish are laden with young. South jetty anglers continue to find success with a variety of species. Upriver, smallmouth bass anglers are doing very well river-wide. This fishery will continue for months to come.

Coquille Chinook anglers are anticipating the start of the run which should occur soon.

Trollers in Rogue Bay continue to find it challenging to find local anchovies so most are using sardines or herring. Seep trolling near the mouth has proved most effective with at least 30 Chinook taken Friday and Saturday and over 40 this past Sunday. On recent days when the early fall Chinook have turned on, the fish didn't seem to mind with the majority of boats landing one or more fish running 25 to 30 or more pounds with a 38-pounder taken on Saturday, July 17th. Anglers on the middle Rogue have continued to endure defeat with Chinook which are moving through the middle Rogue rapidly without demonstrating any inclination to hold or bite. Spring

Chinook fishing is good on the upper Rogue with stung (albeit unknown) counts over Gold Ray Dam. For those who don't recall, the fish counter moved on to greener pastures. Plugs have been particularly effective on the productive stretch of river below Coles River Hatchery. Scattered steelhead continue to respond to a wide variety of bait and lure on the upper river.

Trout fishing remains good at Diamond Lake for fish averaging 15 inches and often topping 20. A toxic blue-green algae alert remains in place.

A question was raised this week regarding toxic blue-green algae, alerts for which appear in TGF every time the weather turns warmer in Oregon. For further information, see **Random Links**, below.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Fly fishing is good on the Deschutes is good from Trout Creek to Mecca Flats. Trollers at the moth are doing well for steelhead although the majority are wild fish.

Wallowa Lake is producing well for this niche fishery. While no one seems to be loading their boat, everyone is catching fish of decent size, running from two to five pounds with the occasional larger specimen. Orange lures seem to be most effective and don't forget the shoepeg corn.

Odell is producing 25-fish limits to trollers using downriggers. Early mornings and late evenings are bets.

Kokanee fishing is good for trollers launching early at Paulina with some boats taking limits by mid-morning.

It was sort of good while it lasted. The spring Chinook season on the Wallowa and Imnaha Rivers, extended indefinitely on July 12th, will definitely come to an end on Sunday, July 25th. Fishing had slowed, particularly on the Imnaha, as water temperatures warmed.

Largemouth bass are cooperating with fly anglers at Davis Lake. The lake is fairly shallow now with best results at first light on surface lures.

Find large rainbows at Crane Prairie in the channels now as the weather warms. Various bogs are in the air including a few late Golden Stoneflies. Caddis are starting to appear in the evening.

#### **Washington fishing reports:**

*From the WDF&W Weekender Report July 7<sup>th</sup>*

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#### **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!

### **Write to the TGF staff:**

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**Random Links**

Toxic Blue-Green Algae information:

<http://search.kval.com/default.aspx?ct=r&q=%22blue-green+algae%22>

**More:**

<http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/bluegreenalgae/>

World Record Catfish:

<http://news.yahoo.com/video/us-15749625/fisherman-makes-world-record-catch-20984569>

41 1/2-pound trout caught off Racine is likely world record:

<http://www.jsonline.com/sports/outdoors/98649849.html>

**GOOD LUCK!**