

The Guide's Forecast - volume 12 issue number 37

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 10th – September 16th, 2010**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - Chinook fishing on the lower Columbia from Longview to Portland is peaking right now. Although success rates vary day to day, success is good for anchor anglers working wobblers in 30 to 50 foot of water. Anglers will lose access to chinook in waters downstream of Warrior Rock beginning September 12th but fishing upstream of this deadline should remain productive into October. Nearly 20,000 adult chinook per day are crossing Bonneville Dam.

With water temperature in the mid-60s, coho continue to cross Willamette Falls. The best chance for a hookup is for steelhead on the Middle Fork or Town Run.

Trout fishing and steelheading is fair on the McKenzie. Parking will be closed at the Upper McKenzie River Trailhead until construction is completed in October.

The North Santiam is on the rise from water release at Detroit and rising water is not conducive to good fishing. South Santiam steelheading has been challenging despite decent numbers in the river.

Fishing has been slow for coho on the Clackamas although crowds are forming at the Bowling Alley. A few can be seen rolling but it will be a week or two before fishing is worthwhile. Water temperatures will play a role in angler success.

There are a few coho being taken at the Sandy now. Try spinners or drifted roe in the early morning for best results. Adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon may also be retained with the extreme lower portions of the river the most likely place of interception.

Estacada Lake, Faraday Lake, North Fork Reservoir and Small Fry Lake are scheduled for trout stocking.

Northwest – After a banner week of coho fishing downstream of Tongue Point and a short-lived chinook bite upstream, action in the Buoy 10 fishery has slowed dramatically. Although tens of thousands more coho are due back to the river, the run size is down from previous years so success should remain mediocre. Trolled bait will remain the best option, targeting coho on the Washington side of the river both upstream and downstream of the Astoria Bridge.

Ocean fishers will continue to struggle for hatchery coho although September can often bring good success for "B" run hatchery fish destined for Washington State hatcheries later in October. Crabbing should improve in the nearshore and is excellent in the lower Columbia during soft tide exchanges near Buoy's 20 and 22 on the Oregon side.

Early September can be an excellent time to target albacore tuna 20 to 30 miles offshore and the ocean forecast looks favorable through the weekend. Tuna will respond best to live anchovies but will spook easily if not approached in a stealthy manner.

Chinook catches are improving in the Tillamook district. Quality fish have been taken in upper Tillamook Bay and in the bubble outside of the mouth. Strong afternoon tides favor upper bay fishers over the weekend but early mornings should be productive near the bay entrance as well.

A few chinook are nosing into Nehalem Bay but this fishery remains restrictive so check regulations before participating. The Nestucca River remains closed to salmon angling until after this week. It's scheduled to open September 16th although catches are expected to be light.

The Salmon River near Lincoln City should be heating up with a fair return expected back to the hatchery this season. A stronger tide series should favor bobber and bait anglers in the upper tidewater and near Highway 101.

Alsea River anglers saw good catches near the mouth on Saturday but the fishery has remained sporadic since. Action will likely remain hit or miss into early October. Crabbing is good.

Southwest – Albacore are being caught 30 to 35 miles off the central Oregon coast.

Salmon fishing is slow to fair for trollers in Coos Bay although Marshfield Channel is getting a great deal of boat traffic.

Trollers are taking fair to good numbers of fall chinook on herring or anchovies in the lower Umpqua River. Dungeness limits are being taken offshore in 60 to 80 feet of water. Boats are making successful tuna runs out of Winchester Bay.

Chinook fishing is very slow on the lower Rogue and in the estuary. Anglers on the Grants Pass stretch are landing large, bright chinook. The upper Rogue is fair for steelhead, closed for chinook and only flies may be used.

Coquille trollers are taking chinook and coho. One wild coho may be retained per day here, up to five for the season.

When the ocean laid down over the past week, bottom fishers have caught limits of rockfish just outside the jaws at Brookings. Ling cod catches have been light but the fish are good quality.

Enter early for the salmon derby running October 1st through 12th during the Chetco bobble fishery opener. There are only 200 slots available and this one fills up in short order. Contact Mike Ramsay at Sporthaven Marina for information or to sign up.

Diamond Lake has continued to fish well for large, fat trout.

Eastern – Fish the lower Deschutes early or late in the day for the best shot at a steelhead hookup. Counts at Sherars Falls are improving. Although not as productive as it used to be, the troll fishery at the mouth should begin to produce better numbers of the larger "B" run steelhead. Destined for Idaho tributaries, fish over 15 pounds become more common.

Green Peter has continued to produce good-sized kokanee, most of which remain in decent condition.

SW Washington – Anglers should find ramped up opportunities on many district streams with chinook and coho beginning to show in stronger numbers this week.

The generous 6 adult coho bag limit may be a bit over-ambitious but anglers working the Lewis, Cowlitz, Kalama and Washougal Rivers do have a chance for some good fishing with spinners and small clusters of eggs a strong option.

Drano Lake anglers should find their chances for a fall chinook increasing with big numbers crossing Bonneville. This system, like many others in the district, now requires the release of all non fin-clipped chinook.

Columbia River Fishing Report – It got surprisingly quiet on the lower Columbia this week with the disappearance of coho and Chinook happening almost simultaneously. Last weeks forecast predicted coho catches would continue to be good on the lower river but by the weekend, it was obvious that the coho were beginning to run through the system and the Chinook bite at Tongue Point was waning fast.

We still had some decent fishing over the weekend but went from a 14 keeper day on Thursday the 2nd, to just a 8 coho day (5 kept, 3 released) by Sunday. The bite was clearly beginning to slide. Early in the week, guides were struggling to find more than a few coho for their boat-load of customers. We were targeting coho by the Astoria/Megler Bridge but with the network of guides working the lower river, the best place to intercept the fish seemed to be near the shipwreck on the Washington side in about 25 feet of water. Unusually cool water began to return to the lower Columbia lowering temperatures on the peak part of the incoming tide to the high 50's. We haven't seen temperatures that cold for many weeks. This turned the spinner bite back into a bait bite, causing many to scrap their plans for a full weekend effort over the holiday. By Monday, effort was quite low.

The Tongue Point Chinook bite wasn't much better. After initial reports of some pretty good fishing, we ventured up there on Thursday (9/2), netting a total of 6 adult Chinook, 5 jacks and 3 coho for a full days effort. Almost all the fish fell to plug cut herring, a few came on anchovies and fewer came on spinners. By Friday, the action was clearly slowing but a mix of Chinook, coho and an occasional large "B" run steelhead were in the catch. Interest was dropping off by the weekend with more people once again focusing on the coho downstream, closer to the bridge. The Chinook were clearly on their way upstream as evidenced by catches in the wobbler fishery upriver.

Ocean fishers were still experiencing sporadic catches near the river mouth with unconfirmed reports of one charter boat landing 6 Chinook and 6 coho on a short afternoon run just north of Buoy 1. There was some guide effort out on Wednesday but action was hard to come by for vessels running to the north. Southerly boats had mediocre reports as well.

A tuna sea is forming however with friendly weather offering up some good opportunities this week. Tuna fishing has been good out of the mouth of the Columbia with live bait performing the best most recently.

Crabbing on the lower Columbia also continues to pick up although stronger tides will put a damper on success or at least limit the amount of time that productive crabbing will take place. The ocean also remains a viable option and there are numerous pots fishing to the north of the river entrance, impeding salmon trollers from effectively working the water.

Further upriver, anchor anglers are in full gear with wobblers taking good numbers of fish from Longview to Portland. Reports of multiple opportunities per day are coming from many boats, working the entire outgoing tide for best results but trollers are taking a few fish as well. Thirty five to 45 foot of water is working the best but anglers can find takers in deeper and shallower water.

Anglers are reminded of the September 11th closure (9/11 is the last day to fish this stretch) from

Warrior Rock downstream for Chinook salmon. The deadline is detailed on this map:
http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/reg_changes/docs/ColRiverClosedSalmonMap.pdf

Bonneville anglers are also faring well although results certainly vary by angler. The ODF&W weekend check indicated 15 kept adult Chinook for 20 boats. Bank anglers tallied 18 keepers for 147 rods.

Adults continue to pour over Bonneville Dam with several days passing over 15,000 adults. Passage started a bit slow but is ramping up nicely although early indicators show the run is tracking slightly behind expectations. It's of course, too early to tell.

Steelhead numbers are ramping back up again as well with the larger "B" run fish showing in good numbers this year. Although it's challenging to target these fish in the lower river, salmon anglers intercept them once in a while, especially anglers using spinners to entice strikes. Sportanglers upriver are able to take these fish in slightly better numbers.

The Guide's Forecast – It's not looking too great for anglers working the lower Columbia River. Most anglers realize the run size is down from last year but there should be a better spurt of fish showing up in the coming days. There are certainly more hatchery fish to come but anglers are beginning to focus their efforts in other fisheries.

If you do continue to pursue coho in the lower river, seriously consider bringing herring jigs and targeting anchovy schools to get your own bait. Bait deliveries become rare this time of year so you can't rely on any of the bait shops to supply your needs. At the very least, bring your own green or blue label herring and fish them near the bottom to draw strikes.

There is NO sense in fishing before low slack and I recommend centering your effort around high slack. The water is likely to remain cooler for the remainder of the season so put your spinners away and plan on a bait bite. The second half of incoming through the first 2 hours of outgoing has been producing the best results.

The big tide series should draw in more fish but crabbers will be disappointed with their results. Strong tides may take buoys under and only enable pots to fish effectively for short periods of time. It's not a good weekend for a fishing and crabbing combo trip.

Chinook retention is now closed downstream of the mouth of the Multnomah Channel. Action upstream should remain good through the end of the month with wobbler anglers taking quality fish on the outgoing tide. Although this will be the best time to target Chinook, trollers can draw a few strikes using spinners and wobblers when the tide isn't running.

Bonneville anglers will backroll plugs for strikes and may become frustrated on some days when the bite is off for no apparent reason. October seems to become more consistent for backtrollers, when waters cool and more resident fish are in the area. The adult upriver brights are in fine condition right now however.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – The lower Willamette from the Falls to the I-205 Bridge opened for catch-and-release sturgeon fishing at the beginning of September but it'll be the 1st of November until it's legal to keep one. Spring Chinook counts cut off on the 15th of August with a total of 65,293. While Chinook continue to cross, they'll be counted as fall fish. Coho are (or rather were) crossing in single digits but counts have only been updated through August 18th at which time a total of 40 had been counted. The water temperature is in the mid to upper 60's at the Falls.

McKenzie level and flow is good although fishing has been only fair lately.

There are good numbers of steelhead in the Santiams although enticing a strike from them can be a challenge here. Chinook season is closed. The Santiams opened for coho on the first of September.

The Guide's Forecast – The stretch of the Willamette from Eugene to Springfield, dubbed the Town Run, has continued to be a fair to good bet for steelheading and one of the better fishing opportunities on the Willamette. Steelhead will be in mixed condition now; some are bright while others will be well past their prime.

Steelheading is slow to fair on the McKenzie with many of the fish showing a good deal of color now. Trout fishing is most dependable above or below Leaburg Lake thanks to recent plantings.

North Santiam water conditions are less than favorable as the Army Corps of Engineers is dropping the water level at Detroit in preparation for the reservoir to serve as flood control.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Coho fever is afflicting anglers on the Clackamas River. Despite the crowds building at the Bowling Alley Hole, fishing is slow. While rain isn't specifically required for coho to enter the river, fishing results will definitely improve in lower water temperatures which will occur once fall rains begin.

With coho entering the Sandy, pressure is starting to build here. Coho will be found in the Sandy as high as the mouth of Cedar Creek now. Catches are light however, as it's still very early in the run. While the Sandy is losing its glacial coloration, recent rain showers muddied the river a bit.

The Guide's Forecast – Spinners have fooled a few coho on the Clackamas as high as McIver Park but it seems like there aren't very many fish in the river although the PGE facility has recycled 45 of them to Dodge Park. In a week or two, numbers should be better but it remains to be seen how cooperative those fish will be. Coho are always a challenge in the river.

The better coho fishing this early in the season will be low on the river. Try near the mouth with spinners or drifted, scented yarn. Bank fishers will have a shot at them in Oxbow Park. The Sandy has been fishing better than the Clack but that situation could change tomorrow.

North Coast Fishing Report – Fall Chinook season is underway in Tillamook although most anglers don't recognize that. Reports of fish throughout the Tillamook system indicate that indeed, a rebound in returning adults is likely. Quality Chinook and a few hatchery coho have been taken in the Tillamook Bay Bubble, upper bay, Ghost Hole and West Channel. Strong tides currently underway are likely to drive fresh Chinook well into the estuary. It doesn't come without a price however. Seaweed is once again inundating the estuary, making it difficult to effectively fish the bay with any kind of gear. Trask and Tillamook River bound fish are oftentimes present in fishable numbers but with the Columbia fishery going full bore, most of the attention is drawn to that fishery. The tidewater stretches are also likely producing a few fish for the few anglers in pursuit.

Although few anglers are working the Nehalem system, there are fish present. ODF&W employees seining waters upstream noted a nice increase in Chinook numbers this week with a handful of fish topping 40 pounds. There are only select sections of the lower watershed that remain open with return numbers expected to be low again. Check regulations here:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/docs/2010_Coastal_Fall_Chinook_Seasons.pdf
before venturing out.

The Nestucca River will open on September 16th but check the regulation link above for more detail as more complicated regulations exist in this watershed. The fishing should be fair on the opener as tidewater typically peaks about that time.

Tuna reports out of Garibaldi remain favorable with live bait taking the bulk of the catch. The tuna continue to move in and out but jumpers should be noticeable when you hit the proper water. Jigs should also be effective this time of year.

Crabbing is improving both inside and outside of north coast estuaries. The crab are beginning to fill out nicely. When fresh salmon or tuna carcasses are available, use them for bait for the best response.

Sea-run cutthroat trout should be available throughout the watershed but bank anglers may be able to target them in the lower stretches of the river this time of year. A limited consumptive fishery now exists on many north coast streams so check regulations before going out.

The Guide's Forecast – With strong tides through the weekend, upper bay action should be fair to good for Tillamook and Nehalem Bay anglers. Herring or hardware should take fish with the primary focus centered around high slack. Kwikfish worked by holding on the incoming tide may also take fish but be prepared to fight seaweed in your quest for early chrome. The fish typically run larger in the early part of the season.

Hatchery coho should also be available to spinner tossers or trollers in Tillamook and Nehalem Bay. Hatchery fish are destined for the Trask and North Fork Nehalem Rivers but become somewhat reluctant biters in the estuary oftentimes.

The ocean forecast looks favorable for those wanting to target Chinook in the nearshore. The bubble fishery out of Tillamook should provide some decent opportunities to herring trollers and you should be able to get out of the seaweed fishing in the salt.

Be sure to drop your crab pots out there as the ocean remains open to recreational crabbing through October 15th. The crabbing should be good!

The National Weather Service is predicting fair seas over the weekend for those wanting to target tuna offshore. By Monday however, the wind waves are predicted to be a bit more than most want to tolerate:

FRI SW WIND 10 KT OR LESS. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 5 FT AT 9 SECONDS.

FRI NIGHT W WIND 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 5 FT.

SAT NW WIND 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

SAT NIGHT NW WIND 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

SUN SW WIND 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

MON W WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

Central & South Coast Reports – Chinook fishing is slow on the Siletz but, according to Coyote Rock, a few are being taken daily.

A few Chinook have nosed into the lower Alsea but numbers too low to consider. There have occasionally been flurries of hookups at the bar. Fishing has been good for sea-run cutthroat trout. While there are a few fall Chinook near the mouth of the Siuslaw, it's too early to consider targeting them successfully.

Albacore require a 25 to 35 mile trip out of Newport or Depoe Bay but for boats up to the task, catches have remained good. The season will end when the ocean cools but there should be a few more productive weeks. For those without the way or means of chasing tuna offshore, they may be purchased whole off the docks for about \$2 per pound. While it's possible to buy loins, these fish are remarkably easy to break down ('cark'). For those who might have missed the link last week, here's how: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tb-jNxvSSrU>.

Chinook are being taken in Winchester Bay and the lower Umpqua but seals have been stealing fish right off the end of anglers' lines. A few coho are in the mix but must be fin-clipped to keep. Crabbing is improving and many are taking limits with a higher percentage of hardshells showing in rings and traps. Smallmouth bass fishing remains good on the South Umpqua but the toxic algae advisory remains in place around Canyonville.

Fairly steady Chinook action is taking place for trollers at Coos Bay and boat traffic has thinned out considerably since the Labor Day weekend. Most anglers are concentrating on the channel but those breaking away to troll the lower bay and south jetty are also scoring. Crabbing has been good. Boats launching out of Charleston to make the westward trek for albacore are having some success.

Trollers using plug-cut sardines or herring are making good catches of Chinook in the lower Coquille. Action improved recently and has remained fairly steady.

Following yet another week of lackluster action due to a slow bite at the Rogue estuary, it appears the situation is turning around. As the Rogue dropped early this week, Chinook once again responded to trollers, particularly in the evening. The combination of low water conditions and keged Chinook creating worthwhile fishing is a typical situation in early fall on Rogue Bay. Upriver in the Agness stretch, Chinook catches are fair and this area has been good for half-pounders. Chinook catches are fair to good on the middle river with plug-pullers and side-drifters taking fish. This stretch is expected to be roiled this week, however, as work resumes at the old Gold Ray Dam site although off-color water is of little detriment to bank fishers. While only flies may be used on the upper Rogue, spin fishers are allowed to cast for steelhead using a bubble. Weighted flies are OK but no additional weight may be added. Whether using conventional fly gear or spinning rods, steelheading is good although unclipped fish have to be released and Chinook may not be targeted. The best catches have been coming late in the day.

Brookings resident Leroy Blodgett took first place and a \$5,000 prize at the Slam's Salmon Ocean Derby over Labor Day weekend out of the Port of Brookings with a Chinook weighing 36.3 pounds. The three day tournament had 461 registrants who landed a total of 72 fish. With ocean fishing closed for Chinook and coho now, the only additional opportunity will be the bubble fishery October 1st through 12th. While the Chetco mouth gets the most attention, the ocean outside the Elk and Sixes rivers will also be open and productive.

Offshore bottomfishing is still producing limits of rockfish to persistent fishers. Ling cod catches are fairly light with the depth restriction keeping efforts within the 20-fathom line but the lings

have been in prime condition.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Water temperature on the lower Deschutes has dropped and steelheading has improved as a consequence. Results will only get better in the coming weeks as more fish enter and as the huge push crossing Bonneville now works its way upstream. The lower river has steelhead scattered and with the decent water temps, they'll push above Sherars Falls very shortly.

The challenging Metolius River is fishing well for trout. Later this month, bull trout will be available with action continuing for them into October.

Odell is fishing remarkably well for kokanee with fish at various levels, bright and fat.

The Imnaha opened for steelhead retention on September 1st but it will take a drop in water temperature and some rainfall to kickoff this fishery.

Grande Ronde steelheaders are looking forward to a fine season with great numbers heading up the Columbia. A few summers have already been landed at Troy.

Largemouth bass put on the feedbag in the fall in order to pack on weight for the long, lean winter months. So it is at Davis Lake that fishing is not only good but anglers stand a good chance of landing the largest fish of the year.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for September 2010

September 2010

Contact: (Fish) 360-902-2700

(Wildlife) 360-902-2515

North Puget Sound

Coho salmon are moving into Puget Sound in increasing numbers, with the bulk of the run expected to arrive from the ocean later this month. Anglers can also expect good fishing in several rivers and lakes.

"After Labor Day is when we usually see a big push of ocean coho move into Puget Sound," said Steve Thiesfeld, a WDFW fish biologist. "We should see more and more of those ocean fish make their way into the Sound as the month progresses."

Once those fish arrive, Point No Point, Jefferson Head, Possession Bar and Shipwreck should be good spots to hook ocean coho, Thiesfeld said. Anglers fishing those areas - or other waters of marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) - have a daily limit of two salmon but must release chinook. In Marine Area 10, anglers also must release chum salmon through Sept. 15, while those fishing in Marine Area 9 must release chum through Sept. 30.

Marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) also are open for salmon fishing. Anglers fishing Marine Area 7 can keep one chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild coho and chum. Those fishing marine areas 8-1 and 8-2 also have a daily limit of two salmon but must release chinook.

Meanwhile, recreational **crab** fishing will close for a catch assessment in most areas of Puget Sound on Labor Day. Areas closing one hour after sunset Sept. 6 include Marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10, 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 12 (Hood Canal)

Marine Area 7 remains open on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, plus the entire Labor Day weekend, through Sept. 30. Marine areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (South Puget Sound) remain open for crabbing through Jan. 2, seven days a week.

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/fishing/shellfish/crab/>) for more information.

Crabbers are reminded that their summer catch record cards are due to WDFW by Oct. 10 and must be returned whether or not the cardholder caught or fished for crab during the season. Crabbers who fail to file catch reports for 2010 will face a \$10 fine, which will be imposed when they apply for a 2011 Puget Sound crab endorsement. Completed cards can be mailed in or recorded online. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/shellfish/crab/crc.html> . Crabbers who continue to fish in an open area after Sept. 6 should record their catch on their winter catch card.

In freshwater, Thiesfeld said the best bet for anglers fishing for coho salmon in the region might be the Stillaguamish and Skagit rivers, where abundant runs are expected to return this year. The Stillaguamish and Skagit, as well as the Snohomish, Skykomish, Snoqualmie and Green (Duwamish) rivers open for salmon fishing Sept. 1.

Thiesfeld reminds anglers fishing the Green River that chinook salmon must be released. Elsewhere, Lake Sammamish is open for salmon fishing, with a daily limit of four salmon, of which two may be chinook. All sockeye must be released, and fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek. Sammamish Lake's larger neighbor, Lake Washington, opens Sept. 16 to coho fishing. Anglers will be allowed four coho per day (minimum size 12 inches) from waters north of the Highway 520 Bridge and east of the Montlake Bridge.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Salmon anglers on the coast are still catching fish as the ocean fishery enters the home stretch. Coho fishing is expected to peak in mid-September, as the bulk of the run moves through the Strait of Juan de Fuca into Puget Sound.

During the last week of August, anglers on the coast were still finding some bright chinook as the coho catch began to climb, said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for WDFW. "I expect fishing to continue to be good for chinook and coho as we move into the final weeks of the fishery," he said.

Salmon fishing is scheduled to continue through Sept. 18 in marine areas 3 (LaPush) and 4 (Neah Bay), through Sept. 19 in Marine Area 2 (Westport-Ocean Shores) and through Sept. 30 in Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco). However, salmon fisheries in those areas could close early if catch quotas are reached. Milward reminds anglers to check for any rule changes at WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations> .

Anglers fishing marine areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 can keep up to two chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit, but must release any chinook measuring less than 24 inches and hatchery

coho less than 16 inches. Wild coho must be released unharmed. All four ocean marine areas are open to salmon fishing seven days a week

In the Strait of Juan de Fuca, anglers fishing in late August were picking up a few ocean coho but the big push of silvers into Puget Sound isn't expected until after Labor Day, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "By the middle of September, coho fishing should pick up in the Strait, as well as in areas of northern and central Puget Sound," he said.

Anglers fishing marine areas 5 (Sekiu) and 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) have a two-salmon daily limit but must release chum, chinook and wild coho. However, anglers fishing Marine Area 5 will be allowed to retain wild coho beginning Sept. 16.

Farther south, salmon fishing opens Sept. 1 north of Ayock Point in Hood Canal (Marine Area 12), where the daily limit is four coho only. All other salmon species must be released. The same rules apply to Dabob and Quilcene bays, which opened for salmon fishing Aug. 16.

In the southern portion of Puget Sound, anglers fishing Marine Area 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook. Anglers fishing Marine Area 13 (South Puget Sound), have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook and wild coho.

Because salmon fishing rules vary depending on the marine area, anglers should check the Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>) before heading out on the water.

Meanwhile, recreational **crab** fishing will close for a catch assessment in most areas of Puget Sound on Labor Day. Areas closing one hour after sunset Sept. 6 include Marine areas 6, 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), 11 and 12.

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Several **rivers** around the region open to salmon fishing Sept. 1, including the Carbon River in Pierce County; Copalis River, Van Winkle Creek and Joe Creek in Grays Harbor County; the Bear and Niawiakum rivers in Pacific County; and Clearwater River in Jefferson County. Salmon fisheries on the Skokomish, Puyallup and Nisqually rivers are already under way.

On a portion of the Hoh River, anglers can now fish for salmon seven days a week and keep up to two adult salmon as part of their six-fish daily limit.

Before heading out, anglers should check the rules and regulations for all fisheries on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations>.

Southwest Washington

September is prime time for salmon fishing in the Columbia River Basin, as large numbers of fish move upriver and into tributaries on both sides of Bonneville Dam. Anglers fishing the lower river below the dam are expected to reel in nearly 30,000 **fall chinook** and 13,000 **hatchery coho** this season - most of which will be taken this month.

"Prospects are good for salmon fishing this month, but it's important to remember these fish are on the move," said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "As the month goes on, successful anglers will follow the fish upriver and into the tributaries."

The retention fishery for chinook salmon ended Aug. 31 at Buoy 10, but hatchery coho should remain strong below Rocky Point throughout the month. Even so, the prospect of catching a hefty chinook salmon is drawing most anglers farther upstream.

Through Sept. 12, anglers may take one chinook per day as part of their limit from Rocky Point upriver to Bonneville Dam. Anglers fishing those waters have a daily limit of six fish, including two adult salmon or steelhead or one of each. The retention fishery for chinook ends Sept. 12 below the Lewis River, but that section will remain open to fishing for hatchery coho, hatchery steelhead and hatchery **sea-run cutthroats**.

"Anglers targeting chinook do best in fairly deep water - 40 to 50 feet down," Hymer said. "Some of the best fishing for both salmon and steelhead will be at the mouths of tributaries, where the fish hold up before heading upstream."

As the month progresses, salmon fishing will heat up farther upstream in tributaries ranging from the Cowlitz to the White Salmon rivers, Hymer said. He reminds anglers of several new rules that will be in effect on those rivers this year:

- **Wild chinook release:** New this year, all unmarked chinook (adults and jacks) must be released on the Cowlitz, Toutle, Green, Washougal, Wind and White Salmon rivers, plus Drano Lake and Camas Slough. Like last year, anglers must also release unmarked chinook on the Grays, Elochoman and Kalama rivers.
- **Lewis River rule:** Hatchery fall chinook may be retained through September on the Lewis River, including the North Fork. Beginning Oct.1, all chinook must be released and fishing from any floating device will be prohibited on the North Fork Lewis River from Johnson Creek upstream to Colvin Creek.
- **Fishing closures:** Cedar Creek, a tributary of the North Fork Lewis River, is closed to all fishing in September and October. Lower Lacamas Creek, a tributary of the Washougal River, will also close to all fishing in September.

Like last year, anglers can retain up to **six hatchery adult coho** on all tributaries to the lower Columbia River with hatchery programs. Those rivers include the Cowlitz, Deep, Elochoman, Grays (including West Fork), Kalama, Klickitat, Lewis (including North Fork), Toutle (including Green and North Fork) and Washougal.

Regulations for these and other fisheries are described in WDFW's Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet, available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>.

There are, of course, a variety of other fishing opportunities besides salmon available to area anglers this month. **Smallmouth bass** are coming on strong above John Day Dam, and **trout fishing** is still an option at Skate Creek, Tilton River and a number of lowland lakes, including Swift Reservoir.

But for anglers who don't mind a hike, September is a great time to head for the **high wilderness lakes** around Mount Adams and Mount St. Helens. Hymer points to three such lakes - Goose, Council and Tahkalkh - that even offer drive-in access.

"The mosquitoes should die down around the high mountain lakes after the first frost arrives," Hymer said. "Sure, the fish are usually small, but the leaves are beginning to turn, the air is crisp and you can really experience the change of season."

Eastern Washington

The Snake River **steelhead** catch-and-keep season opens Sept. 1 and it promises to be another good one. "Steelhead are returning to the Snake in large numbers again this year," said Glen Mendel, WDFW's southeast district fish biologist. "We have seen very strong early returns throughout the summer so far."

Mendel said about 375,000 fish are expected to return this year - not as many as last year, when about 600,000 entered the Columbia River. But this year's projected return is still large enough to provide good fishing opportunities, said Mendel. "Snake River water temperatures are currently warm and that may slow the bite when the steelhead retention season opens Sept. 1," Mendel said. "But water temperatures should drop soon with cooler weather ahead, and then the action should pick up."

Mendel notes that the mouths of the Snake's tributaries, such as the Tucannon and Grande Ronde, and the confluence with the Clearwater River on the Idaho border, are usually most productive at the start of the season. He reminds steelheaders that barbless hooks are required and the daily trout catch limit of six fish includes up to three hatchery-marked steelhead (healed scar at clipped adipose or ventral fin).

Trout fishing throughout the region usually picks up as fall approaches, said Chris Donley, WDFW district fish biologist, who reminds anglers that several of the best-producing trout lakes near Spokane close Sept. 30. "This is the final month for fishing Badger, Williams, and Fish lakes in southwest Spokane County and Coffeepot Lake in Lincoln County," Donley said. "Badger and Williams have both cutthroat and rainbow trout, Fish Lake has brook and tiger trout, and Coffeepot has rainbows plus **yellow perch** and **black crappie** ."

Donley said September can also be good for yellow perch fishing at southwest Spokane County's Downs Lake, which also closes Sept. 30. Amber Lake, near Badger and Williams, is also good for cutthroat and rainbow trout fishing, Donley said. Selective gear rules are in effect at Amber Lake through September.

Clear Lake, near the town of Medical Lake, has **brown trout** and usually produces good catches of crappie and **largemouth bass** in late fall. Like a number of other waters throughout the region, Clear Lake remains open through October.

Year-round waters that produce well in the fall include Lake Roosevelt and Sprague Lake, both of which offer good-size rainbows.

In the north end of the region, access to the Boundary Dam reservoir on the Pend Oreille River is limited this month because of a drawdown for maintenance of the Seattle City Light dam. Beginning Sept. 1 and lasting up to 11 days, the reservoir will slowly be drawn down 40 feet to an elevation of 1,950 feet.

The low water condition is expected to prevent access at all boat launch facilities Sept. 9-16 on the Boundary reservoir, including the Boundary Forebay, Metaline Park, and Campbell Park immediately below Box Canyon Dam. The Boundary Dam campground and boat launch will be closed Sept. 11-19 to accommodate the maintenance project. For more information about this project, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/regions/region1/>.

Northcentral Washington

Several popular Okanogan County **trout** lakes that have been under catch-and-release rules in past years will open Sept. 1 for a new "catch-and-keep" season. Those waters include Davis, Cougar, and Campbell lakes in the Winthrop area, where anglers will have a five-fish daily trout limit and bait will be allowed.

Rainbow trout are the predominant species, Jateff said, and anglers should expect fish in the 10- to 12-inch range, with carryovers up to 15 inches, said WDFW Okanogan District Fish Biologist Bob Jateff. Anglers should also note that, effective this year, there will be no gas-powered motors allowed on Davis Lake due to a new county ordinance.

Jateff said trout fishing has been good at the Methow River, where catch-and-release and selective-gear rules are in effect. The Methow River from Lower Burma Road bridge upstream to the McFarland Creek bridge will close Sept. 15. The rest of the river upstream to Foghorn Dam (Winthrop area) will close Sept. 30.

"September is also a good time to hike up to one of many alpine lakes in Okanogan County," Jateff said. "There are many waters with predominately **cutthroat trout**, which can be a good change of pace from lowland lake fisheries during the fall. Just be aware of fire restrictions this time of year."

Jateff also said **salmon** fishing on the Columbia River near Brewster/Bridgeport has been fair, with a few more chinook starting to show up in the catch. "Most of the fish are being picked up in the 40- to 50-foot depth while trolling with spinners tipped with a whole shrimp," he said. "**Sockeye** are still being caught as well."

The salmon fishery from Wells Dam to the Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster closed Aug. 31, but other portions of the Columbia, Okanogan and Similkameen rivers remain open through Sept. 15 or into October. For all rules, see the special regulation online at <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/erule.jsp?id=925>.

Anglers looking for information about **steelhead** fishing on the upper Columbia River and its tributaries should watch the WDFW website for any special openings that are not in the sportfishing regulations pamphlet.

Southcentral Washington

Counts of **chinook salmon** and **steelhead** passing McNary Dam have been climbing day by day, setting the stage for popular fisheries throughout the region. While those fisheries often start out slow, they can ramp up quickly by mid-September as more fish pass the dam.

"There's a lot of anticipation out there right now," said Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Anglers are catching fish here and there, but they know there are a lot more headed our way. By the middle of the month, we could have a couple thousand upriver brights in the Hanford Reach."

According to the preseason forecast, 664,900 fall chinook salmon will enter the Columbia River this year, and about two-thirds of them are headed past Bonneville Dam.

Most of the Columbia River is open for salmon fishing, and the Yakima River opened for salmon fishing on Sept. 1 from the Columbia River upstream to Prosser Dam. The area around the Chandler Powerhouse will remain closed as in previous years. "The best fishing on the Yakima is in October, but some fish will start moving in this month," Hoffarth said.

Fishing for **hatchery steelhead** should also pick up throughout the month, he said. Catches were slow in late August on the Columbia River, which is open for steelhead fishing from the Highway 395 Bridge (Blue Bridge) downstream. Effective Sept. 1, the Snake River opened for hatchery steelhead fishing with barbless hooks.

"As with salmon, look for fishing to improve as the water cools and more fish move upriver," Hoffarth said. "Steelhead move fast. They don't stay in one spot very long, so anglers have to be there when they arrive."

Meanwhile, the month began with **walleye** fisheries in full swing, producing nice catches in the Columbia River above and below McNary Dam, as well as in the Snake River. **Sturgeon** fishing is restricted to catch and release in most of the Columbia River, including Lake Wallula and the Hanford Reach.

Trout fishing remains available in many southcentral region rivers and streams, including the Yakima, Naches, Little Naches, and Bumping rivers in Yakima County, and the upper reaches of Taneum Creek, Naneum Creek, Manastash Creek, and the forks of the Teanaway in Kittitas County. Most rivers and creeks have special regulations like selective gear rules that prohibit bait. Most also have statewide trout catch limits of two trout with an 8-inch minimum size. Anglers should check the regulation pamphlet for all details.

Thinking about catching **kokanee** in Rimrock Reservoir? Sooner is better than later, advises Perry Harvester, regional WDFW habitat manager. Water drawdowns began at the reservoir in late August and will likely render the launch ramps useless for larger boats by mid-September. "Car-top boat should still be fine, but it's going to be tough to get larger boats in the water with the ramp high and dry."

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Random Links

Heroes of Conservation videos:

<http://www.fieldandstreamextras.com/heroes/videos.php>

GOOD LUCK!