

The Guide's Forecast - volume 12 issue number 41

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 8th – October 14th, 2010**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - The mainstem Columbia continues to kick out late returning chinook salmon, mostly to anglers working the Bonneville Dam area. Backtrollers working the swifter current should continue to pick up quality fish for the next week or so while anchor anglers working wobblers will find more challenging fishing.

As is often the case, the sturgeon opener in the gorge was good for both boat and bank anglers. October can be a great month for catch and keep anglers using smelt or shrimp for bait. Success rates often drop dramatically after the initial opener but bank anglers seem to continue on with good catch rates, fishing close to the deadline.

Water temperature at Willamette Falls is in the mid-60s. Coho are crossing in good number heading for the tributaries. This fishery is relatively new but numbers justify an effort. Spinners cast at the tributary mouths should take fish but freshwater coho behavior often frustrates more than rewards, even the most persistent angler.

Summer steelhead fishing remains worthwhile on the McKenzie where fly fishers are scoring. The upper river is producing good catches of trout.

While a few coho have been caught on the Clackamas, it has been slow.

Sandy River anglers are picking up coho on spinners or eggs despite the murky, gray-green water conditions. Cedar Creek is producing fish and is crowded.

Mt Hood Pond is scheduled to be planted with trout.

Northwest – Although effort on the lower Columbia near Astoria is low, anglers targeting late running "B" run coho found fair success last Friday and through the weekend trolling spinners and herring on the incoming tide. Strong tides this weekend could also produce good catches but boaters need to be warned of high winds in the forecast for the weekend. With much less traffic on the river, anglers need to take additional precautionary measures. Crabbing will be a poor option in the extreme tides.

Tillamook chinook anglers witnessed a slight slow-down in success rates this week. Wild coho in the west channel seemed to have moved upstream but the area may kick out a few chinook throughout the month. The Ghost Hole and Bay City are starting to produce some results for herring trollers working the incoming tide. Seaweed is impeding success but persistent anglers seem to be catching some nice 4 and 5-year old fish. There have been a lot of smaller 3-year olds caught this season as well, boding well for larger fish over the next 2 years.

The ocean has been too rough to fish and recreational crabbers have been shut out as well. Crabbers working Netarts Bay continue to do well while Tillamook is just fair for keepers.

The Nestucca and Nehalem continue to produce poorly for what little effort is taking place. The Salmon River is past its prime but the season was fair.

Only a slight river rise is predicted this week, putting driftboaters off for a while longer. The Trask will produce the best catches when rivers swell.

Yaquina Bay was producing some chinook near Toledo but fish seem to be moving through the system quickly. Fish were not holding well in the lower estuary.

An excellent minus tide series should produce good numbers of razor clams for evening diggers along north coast beaches, particularly Clatsop beaches. A high surf could effect razor clam shows however and diggers should use extreme caution, especially at night. Always clam with a partner.

Southwest – Coho are being caught in good number on the Coquille with the wild quota nearly filled. Bright pink lures seems to be key to success.

Coos Bay is also producing strong catches of coho, which must be finclipped hatchery to retain. Trollers and bobber anglers are taking good numbers of chinook adults and jacks. Boats launching out of Charleston made good catches of Albacore over the past weekend.

Rogue Bay fished well over the past week with trolled plugs effective. Catches have been running four to one coho over chinook. Most coho are wild here, requiring release.

Rough seas kept boats off the ocean at Brookings over the past week but conditions calmed somewhat over the weekend. Boats crossing the bar to take advantage of the Chetco ocean salmon fishing had little success, however. This fishery will continue through October 12th. Chinook catches are spotty in tidewater. As tuna season winds down, albacore have recently been caught 30 miles offshore.

Elk River anglers are making good catches of sea-run cutthroats in tidewater with best results early and late in the day.

Eastern – Steelhead are in the Deschutes as high as Warm Springs but results have been best below Maupin. This stretch is under pressure, particularly on weekends. The White River has been spewing mud periodically.

Steelheading has been good on the Grande Ronde River with anglers hooking multiple fish. Action will only improve with rainfall.

Kokanee fishing is wrapped up in most lakes with the fish spawning in tributaries. One exception is Odell which is putting out a mix of bright fish and those just starting to color up.

SW Washington – District rivers should receive a good shot of late run fish this week with the tributary mouths producing some of the best action for spinner fishers.

The Cowlitz and Lewis Rivers should produce some of the best late season options with some chinook, steelhead and cutthroat trout also available. Regulations vary so check local listings before going.

The mouth of the Klickitat has been producing nicely but coho should begin to make up the bulk of the catch over the next several weeks.

The first fall razor clam dig is set to begin today at noon along the Washington coast. Check the WDF&W web site for more specific information.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Anglers are still working the Columbia River, mostly from Bonneville Dam downstream to the mouth of the Sandy River. Bonneville produced the best catches with better than a fish per boat average over the weekend. Backtrollers continue to take advantage of the territorial instinct that typically effects salmon the longer they remain in fresh water. Although numbers of Chinook crossing Bonneville Dam is quickly going downhill, resident fish numbers should remain strong so anglers can take advantage of healthy numbers of fish over the next few weeks.

The quality of fish remains high, especially when numbers remain high but anglers should see a gradual decline in the quality of fish into mid-month. Bucks will always remain a better option for consumption, often cutting more orange than hens.

The larger T-55 Flatfish or the new mag-lip plugs put out by Worden's will have real application here. The water is deep enough however to justify using jet planers to get the lures down deep enough where salmon will bite. Anglers will want to beef up their gear, especially if you are using valued plugs with lots of good history as oversize sturgeon can sometimes take anglers offerings this time of year.

The Oak Tree Hole and waters near the deadline offer the swiftest flows to take advantage of and that water is typically where the freshest and most aggressive biters typically migrate. Both sides of the river should produce results but check defined closures in the area before venturing out.

Anglers fishing the Troutdale area have had sporadic results but one angler reported doing well backtrolling in the area. Most anglers fish from the anchor using wobblers for lures. This fishery will continue to go soft but coho fishing in the area has historically picked up this time of year for anglers trolling spinners or plugs.

The fall consumptive sturgeon fishery has re-opened upstream of the Wauna Powerlines near Westport, Oregon. This fishery draws most interest in the gorge where both bank and boat anglers produce some of the finest catches of the year. That hasn't been the case this season however although effort has been somewhat subdued. The catch record indicated:

Gorge Bank:

Weekend checking showed 17 legal white sturgeon kept, plus one oversize and 23 sublegal sturgeon released for 176 bank anglers.

Gorge Boats:

Weekend checking showed two legal white sturgeon kept, plus three legal, three oversize and 42 sublegal sturgeon released for six boats (15 anglers).

Troutdale Boats:

Weekend checking showed three legal white sturgeon kept and 107 sublegal sturgeon released for 26 boats (56 anglers).

Portland to Longview Bank:

No report.

Portland to Longview Boats:

Weekend checking showed 10 legal white sturgeon kept and 64 sublegal sturgeon released for 62 boats (142 anglers).

Guides working the area stated that this fishery produced similarly last year and that bank anglers did show marked improvement as October rolled on. The river near Rooster Rock produced excellent results this spring which could be impacting fall catch rates. The fishery is slated to remain open Thursdays through Saturdays through the end of the year.

Anglers working the Portland to Longview stretch continue to produce poorly, especially for chinook. "B" run coho are starting to make a show with spinner tossers working the water near the mouth of tributaries with returning numbers of hatchery coho.

Further downriver, Buoy 10 anglers saw a new flush of fish starting just prior to the weekend. Friday produced great catches of "B" run coho along the green line and on the Washington side near the Astoria/Megler Bridge. Historically, the first big tide series nearing mid-October brought in good numbers of late run coho and it appears this year isn't any different. Spinners were working well in the warmer water and with bait in limited supply, many anglers were using hardware. With anchovies off the list, folks had to bring their own herring if they were interested in fishing bait. Crabbing in the area has been productive but the current strong tide series will have crabs "off the bite".

The John Day Pool fishery is starting to gain some interest but anglers have yet to put out impressive numbers of fish for the effort going out. This fishery typically produces better towards Thanksgiving for anglers targeting steelhead. There were both Chinook and steelhead caught this week in this fishery:

John Day Pool (Columbia River above John Day Dam and John Day Arm):

Weekend checking showed no catch for three bank anglers; and two adipose fin-clipped steelhead, two fall chinook adults and two fall chinook jacks kept, plus one unclipped steelhead released for 16 boats.

The Guide's Forecast – The Bonneville fishery will remain the most viable for those anglers targeting Chinook. Fishing should be good for backrollers working plugs in the faster flows. Tuna-belly or sardine wrapped plugs should produce the best but anglers may want to try eggs as well.

Coho could start to make a stronger showing for experienced anglers that have a history of targeting these fish in the gorge and near Troutdale. This fishery typically produces better in November however.

Sturgeon anglers will hopefully continue to see an improving bite but it may come slowly as keepers continue to get culled from the fishery. Bank anglers seem to have the upper hand in this fishery and will target keepers closest to the deadline. Smelt will be the best bait but shrimp and squid are also options. Stay in the fast flows for the most aggressive fish. Sturgeon fishing also looks to be a fair option in the Portland to Longview stretch. Smelt rules the roost in this section.

Buoy 10 anglers should have some decent opportunities on the current strong tide series. Target high tide and shortly thereafter for the best action fishing on the Washington side near the bridge and above or on the green line on the Oregon side. Spinners should work fine but anglers may want to try bait, fresh-jigged anchovies will be best but green label herring may be a viable alternative. No word on whether or not anchovies are available in the estuary.

Lower Columbia River estuary crabbing will be a poor option unless you become quite efficient near either high or low slack. There will be better tides later in the month and the crabbing should be excellent.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Over 15,000 coho had crossed at Willamette Falls as of the end of September but there was no October data available at deadline this week. About 1,000 per day were being counted in the last week of September so the YTD total is considerably higher. While open to catch and release sturgeon fishing, retention isn't allowed in the lower Willamette until November 1st.

Steelheading on the McKenzie has been good over the past month. With a decent return this year, it should hold up for a while.

Up to three coho, clipped or not, can be kept on the mainstem North and South Santiam up the respective deadlines. Those deadlines, at the Grant Street bridge in Lebanon on the South Santiam and the Stayton-Scio Bridge on the North Santiam are in place to protect spawning Chinook and will be lifted November 1st.

A free kids' fishing event will be held by the ODFW on Saturday, Oct. 9 at Mt. Hood Pond from 9 AM to 2 PM. This event is free, instructor/assistants will be present and tackle will be provided to youngsters with none.

The Guide's Forecast – The Middle Fork and Town Run on the upper Willamette will continue to produce summer steelhead for a while. Try the mouths of tributaries above the Falls where coho will be holding. The Tualatin, Yamhill, Molalla and Santiam Will all attract silvers.

Fly fishers are seeing October caddis on the McKenzie. The river is fishing well for trout from high to low. Summer steelheading will continue through October.

Steelhead are more plentiful than coho on the Santiams and tend to be more receptive to anglers' offerings. The North Santiam had been high from Detroit releases through Tuesday this week is now at normal level and flow for this time of year and will remain so with the exception of whatever effect rainfall will have, into next week. Try Fishermen's Bend or Mehama for summer steelhead.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Coho fishing has remained challenging on the Clackamas. Frustrated fishers can see coho around carver but have had little luck regardless of what's thrown at them. On the bright side, there are lots of fish in the river now.

Sandy visibility has been poor periodically as warm, sunny weather has been triggering glacial runoff on the Sandy River. Rain this weekend will likely improve water conditions. There are lots of boats at the mouth.

The Guide's Forecast – Weekend showers may turn around the Clackamas coho fishery, not because of the extra flow but if there's sufficient precipitation to lower the water temperature a couple of degrees. Coho aren't too particular about how much water there is in the river as they are influenced primarily by their biological clock. When it's time, they go.

Anglers targeting coho shouldn't be too discouraged by gray-green, murky water on the Sandy. This is the time to break out big, flashy spinners or drift a gob of juicy eggs. The Sandy has been one of the more productive coho fisheries. Persistence and switching up has been the key here. Keep changing baits or lure colors until you get bit. If fishing from shore, try Oxbow. Even if you don't hook fish, you're sure to see some here. Cedar Creek will fish with the rain but it will be a genuine zoo.

North Coast Fishing Report – Tillamook Bay anglers are supposed to be reaching ample opportunity this month but fishing remains sporadic although overall, consistently fair to good for anglers working both sides of the estuary.

Most recently, the ocean saw a rare opener on Wednesday but produced poorly for most. Ocean conditions remained somewhat dangerous, especially on the south side of the entrance. A 54-foot vessel capsized on the Tillamook Bay bar early this week although all crew were safely rescued. More rough weather is in the forecast so review The Guide's Forecast portion of this section for the most recent ocean forecast.

The incoming tide has produced some catches at Bay City and in the Ghost Hole. The majority of fish taken are clearly Chinook but a few coho are present as well with the bulk of those being wild. On the current tide series, the upper bay is producing better. Stronger tides move fish up-bay quicker, giving anglers access to areas that are typically more weed-free. Early morning produced good catches on Wednesday along the picket fence and in the corral (Ray's Place Piling). Spinners were responsible for the bulk of the catch with red/white and chartreuse green dot producing best. As the day progresses, metallic colors become a stronger option.

Seaweed has been a factor in success rates, especially in the lower bay. The south (some call it west channel) has also been inundated with seaweed. The slimy green stuff during peak incoming and eelgrass near the high tide. It's all troublesome and if anglers don't remain diligent in removing the weed, it will cost them opportunities.

Strong tides have seaweed on the move and infiltrating the estuary well into the upper bay. The early morning outgoing will be far enough along to allow for several hours of seaweed-free fishing.

The October opening of the Nehalem bar produced poorly for most participating in the fishery. Despite good tides for bar fishing and no previous pressure, the fish weren't there in any great numbers. Wild coho were present and continue to be present now. Most recently, reports of good chinook fishing have come from the Wheeler to Paradise Cove stretch with some anglers reporting limit fishing (1 fish/day). Anglers are also reporting high incidences of wild coho with very few hatchery coho in the mix. Most fish are being taken on a combination of herring and spinners with hardware producing the most bites higher up in the system. Be VERY aware of the complex regulations here. Hatchery coho fishing at the hatchery is slow with only an occasional keeper being taken at the handicap platform. The bulk of the run is at the hatchery.

The Nestucca is rumored to still be fair at best. Pressure is certainly down this season so the few anglers participating don't have a lot of competition to deal with. The current tide series should give us an idea as to how the run is shaping up this season.

The Salmon River is fading with the bulk of the run upstream.

Crabbing is great in Netarts Bay with some quality ocean keepers coming in the catch. Tillamook Bay is only fair for crab and the current tide series is not producing anything close to a limit of keepers.

The Guide's Forecast – It'll be an upper bay show this week. The ocean doesn't look to be an option with the forecast detailed below. Strong tides will keep seaweed plentiful in the lower bay, only giving anglers a reprieve near high slack and then, only for a short period of time.

Thu Night...S wind 20 to 25 kt with gusts to 30 kt. Wind waves 5 ft. W swell 8 ft at 11 seconds. Chance of rain through the night.

Fri...S wind 25 to 30 kt with gusts to 35 kt. Wind waves 6 ft. W swell 8 ft. Chance of rain.

Fri Night...S wind 30 kt with gusts to 40 kt. Wind waves 7 ft. W swell 9 ft...building to 12 ft after midnight. Rain.

Sat...S wind 25 to 30 kt with gusts to 35 kt... Easing to 20 to 25 kt in the afternoon. Wind waves 7 ft... Subsiding to 5 ft in the afternoon. W swell 12 ft. Rain.

Sat Night...S wind 25 to 30 kt with gusts to 40 kt. Wind waves 7 ft. SW swell 12 ft. Rain.

Sun...W wind 20 to 25 kt. Wind waves 5 ft. W swell 15 ft.

Mon...N wind 15 to 20 kt. Wind waves 3 ft. W swell 15 ft.

The strong tide series that we're currently on should be conducive to upper bay fishing. That good fishing should translate into both high and low tides during daylight hours. An even cooler option are the minus tides in the late afternoon that should produce some good fishing for plug fishermen in the lower stretches of tidewater of the Trask and Tillamook Rivers. The upper bay will offer up plug pulling opportunities as well.

Spinners will take the bulk of the catch but herring should produce results as well. Warmer water temperatures will also favor spinner selection over bait and with the weeds being a problem throughout the estuary, spinner fishermen can whip the weed off of their rod tips and keep their offerings fishing. You simply can't do that with herring on for bait.

Tidewater anglers will struggle a bit with the high tide exchanges but the best periods will be nearing the high and low slack periods where slowing drifted baits should entice strikes. Tip your eggs with shrimp.

Rain is in the forecast starting Friday night with an expected swelling of district rivers about 1 foot in height. Overall, a 1-foot rise in river levels isn't all that significant but it is big enough to inspire some fish to engage in an upstream migration. The Trask will be the best bet for chinook and a few straggler hatchery coho. Wild coho should also be in the system and must be released unharmed. It's early for Wilson fish to arrive but if the rain is significant enough, it could produce some early fish.

The Nehalem may continue to produce some chinook as early October can be a good month for this system. The Wheeler to Nehalem reach should produce the best catches as strong tides drive fish higher into the estuary. Be cautious when identifying your catch. There are some large wild coho in the mix that closely resemble a smaller chinook.

If the Nestucca is going to produce, it should be on this tide series. This could be the best one for most north coast systems.

Crabbing this week will be best closest to high slack. Strong tides will likely keep crab buried for much of the tide. Clammers should spend some time digging along north coast beaches. If the surf stays subdued like it was on Wednesday, the surf and dry sand should produce limits. The problem is, it's not predicted to stay that calm. Use extreme caution when clamming in the dark.

Some sturgeon have been inadvertently hooked in Tillamook Bay. This is about the time for some to show but numbers should build into November.

Central & South Coast Reports – While a few diehards made the run offshore for albacore off the central Oregon coast over the past weekend, participation was light and as warm water moves further offshore, the 2010 season will come to a close. Tuna fishing was very good this year, better only in 2007 and 2009.

Crabbing in bays and estuaries has continued to improve as has the condition of the Dungeness. Most crab has recovered from the summer molt and are sporting hard shells and that means top-quality meat.

A few fall Chinook are being caught on the Siletz but fishing here has been a grind. Days can go by without a hookup while other tributaries are productive.

Crabbing is slow in the bays out of Newport and Waldport. Ocean crabbing, which closes October 15th, has been slow to fair. Chinook fishing has been slow for the most part in Alsea tidewater. Rain this weekend could have a positive effect.

Chinook are being taken by trollers on the Siuslaw by trollers. Plug-cut herring fished right on the bottom using a two-foot dropper has been most effective. Try the Mapleton or Cushman area but expect some company.

Trollers are catching Chinook in Winchester Bay with bank anglers hooking up occasionally. Coho are entering the lower Umpqua where catches have been good. Only hatchery fish may be kept here. Be certain that hooked fish are missing the adipose prior to netting them. Coho are particularly susceptible to scale damage so the mortality rate of fish released after netting is high. Chinook fishing has been good in the mainstem Umpqua. Steelheading has been good on the flies-only stretch. The South Umpqua is closed to fishing.

Coquille anglers have continued to see action for Chinook and coho this week. This fishery has been particularly rewarding this season. Trolling herring or anchovies in the Bandon to Coquille stretch has been producing limits for many over the past week.

Tuna have been taken fairly close to shore out of Charleston. Reports over the past weekend were of hookups 10 to 11 miles out. Trollers and bobber fishers at Coos Bay and lower river are enjoying good results for Chinook with catches here a mix of adults and jacks.

Some of the best salmon action is occurring in the Rogue estuary where trollers are hooking remarkable numbers of coho. The only downside is that nine out of ten of these fish is wild and non-fin-clipped coho must be released here. Chinook are also in the bay as well as the lower river. Many of the fish showing recently are bound for Indium Creek. Chinook are being caught upriver at Agness as well as an adult and half-pounder steelhead. As many as five half-pounders (steelhead less than 16 inches) may be kept along with two adults. Fishing on the middle Rogue has been slow this week. The Rogue River flow is skinny above the old Gold Ray Dam site but fishing for summer steelhead is good. This stretch remains flies-only although spin fishers may use a floating bubble to lob flies legally here as long as no additional weight is used. With Chinook spawning, egg patterns are effective here.

The Chetco Bubble fishery remains open through October 12th. Catches have been fair so far but this limited opportunity is well-known for producing some large fall Chinook. On fish may be kept per day up to five for the season.

Trout fishing improves at Diamond Lake in the fall. This is not necessarily true of the weather, however. Time is running out so get there while you can for a shot at good catches of large rainbows. Once the weather turn sour it will be too late. Winter comes early here.

Oregon's rivers have kings

The Coos, Umpqua, Coquille, Rogue and Chetco all have kings some have a Coho bite. On the Rogue more than one angler was hooking upwards of 20 plus Coho a day.

Plugs were the weapon of choice on the Rogue, it's no secret, for more than 20 years each October anglers in the know have been pulling both solid fire red or flame orange size 30 and 35 Hot Shots, Mag Warts or K-11 Kwik Fish for multiple hook ups, the only bad thing is you can't retain a Wild Coho on the Rogue.

Chinook bite on the Rogue is scattered at this time and success on kings is dropping off big time. As predicted more almost two weeks ago when an influx of Coho move in it's a telltale sign the King run is coming to an abrupt end.

Moving up the coast to the Coquille, anglers can retain #1 wild Coho until the quota is reached. Chinook habits on this river seem to change up as the month of October comes into view, anglers will see a drop in water temps and the use of large Plug Cut baits run closer to the rivers bottom working very well.

The Rocky Point area is one of the better areas to wet a line trolling down river to Bullards State Park.

Pete Celli and Tom Hope both hooked up including Hope hooking a nice Coho on a fly rod

Stand by for rain, as it comes hopefully so will the kings as coastal river levels breath life back into the Elk, Sixes and Chetco Rivers. Get those Kwik Fish ready!

Central and Eastern Oregon – The lower Deschutes has been fair for steelhead but has been fishing very well for reddsides. Small nymphs have been most effective recently.

Lake Billy Chinook is producing five-fish limits of small kokanee which are in great shape for this late in the season.

Washington fishing reports:

October 2010

North Puget Sound

October is usually primetime for anglers fishing for coho salmon in the region, where some fish will be hooked in the marine areas but the best action likely will be in the rivers.

"The coho fishery started slow in Puget Sound, but we could see more fish move into area waters and make for some decent fishing in October," said Steve Thiesfeld, a fish biologist with WDFW.

"If that happens, those fish will continue to make their way into the rivers, providing anglers a great fishing opportunity throughout the month."

Several rivers are open for salmon, including the Snohomish, Skykomish, Stillaguamish, Snoqualmie and Wallace. Anglers fishing those rivers have a daily limit of two coho only. The Skagit, Cascade, Green (Duwamish) and Nooksack also are open for salmon but regulations vary

for each river. For details, check WDFW's sportfishing regulations pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>.

In the marine areas, anglers fishing for ocean coho should try Point No Point, Jefferson Head, Possession Bar and Shipwreck. Fishing regulations for those areas, and other waters of marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), change in October. Beginning Oct. 1, anglers fishing Marine Area 9 will have a daily limit of two salmon, but must release all chinook. Those fishing Marine Area 10 will have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook.

Anglers looking to get an early start on the region's **blackmouth** season also might want to head to Marine Area 10, said Thiesfeld. Another option for blackmouth anglers is Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where anglers can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit beginning Oct. 1.

Thiesfeld reminds anglers that beginning Oct. 1 only portions of marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) will be open for salmon fishing. Salmon fishing in Marine Area 8-1 will be restricted to the Oak Harbor area, west of a line from Forbes Point to Blowers Bluff. Anglers fishing Oak Harbor will have a daily limit of two coho only.

In Marine Area 8-2, salmon fishing will be limited to the south end of the area, south of a line from Randall Point to the south end of the Everett Naval Station dock. Anglers in that area will have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release chinook.

Later in October, some saltwater anglers will turn their attention to chum salmon, said Thiesfeld, who recommends trolling slow for chum and using a flasher with a green coyote spoon or a green, purple or pink mini hoochie.

Meanwhile, **crabbing** closes one hour past sunset Sept. 30 in Marine Area 7 - the only area in the region currently open for crab. The region's other marine areas are already closed for a catch assessment. 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 continued to fish in an open area after Sept. 6 should record their catch on their winter catch card.

Anglers should be aware that salmon fisheries at **Lake Washington** and **Lake Sammamish** will close Oct. 2 because of low coho returns to the area. For more information, check the emergency rule changes at <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/>.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Oct. 4 Update: Razor-clam digging will be allowed Oct. 7-10 at Twin Harbors beach and Oct. 8-9 at Copalis, Mocrocks, Kalaloch and Long Beach.

With salmon moving into the bays and rivers, anglers have several options to consider in planning a fishing trip in the region. Or, they might want to trade in their fishing rods for clam shovels. The first razor-clam dig of the fall season is scheduled in early October.

WDFW approved the digs at Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks and Kalaloch after marine toxin tests confirmed the clams were safe to eat. Opening dates and evening low tides in October are:

- Oct. 7, Thurs. - 6:55 p.m. (-1.0 ft.), Twin Harbors
- Oct. 8, Fri. - 7:42 p.m. (-1.4 ft.), Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks, Kalaloch
- Oct. 9, Sat. - 8:28 p.m. (-1.5 ft.), Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks, Kalaloch
- Oct. 10, Sun. - 9:15 p.m. (-1.3 ft.), Twin Harbors

Clam diggers are reminded that they should take lights or lanterns for the nighttime digs and to check weather and surf forecasts before heading out. No digging will be allowed before noon on any of the five razor-clam beaches. Harvesters are allowed to take no more than 15 razor clams and must keep the first 15 they dig, regardless of size or condition. Each digger's clams must be kept in a separate container.

All diggers age 15 or older must have an applicable 2010-11 fishing license to harvest razor clams on any beach. Licenses, ranging from a three-day razor clam license to an annual combination fishing license, are available on WDFW's website at <https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov> and from license vendors around the state.

More razor clam digs are tentatively scheduled Nov. 5-8, Nov. 20-21, Dec. 3-6 and Dec. 31-Jan. 2.

Meanwhile, anglers looking for salmon fishing opportunities might consider heading to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, where a non-selective fishery for **coho** and **chinook** gets under way Oct. 1 in Marine Area 6 (Port Angeles). The daily limit in Marine Area 6 will be two salmon, except that only one fish may be a chinook. In non-selective fisheries, anglers may retain fish whether or not they have a clipped adipose fin. Anglers are reminded that marine areas 1 (Ilwaco) and 5 (Sekiu) are only open for salmon fishing through Sept. 30.

But beginning Oct. 1, anglers fishing in marine areas 11 and 13 (Vashon Island to South Puget Sound) will be allowed to retain **wild chinook** as part of their two-salmon daily limit. However, all **wild coho** caught in Marine Area 13 must be released.

In Hood Canal (Marine Area 12), fishing regulations change Oct. 16, when anglers will have a daily limit of four salmon, but only one of which can be a chinook.

Grays Harbor (Marine Area 2-2) also is an option for salmon anglers. The harbor remains open through Nov. 30 with a daily limit of two salmon, but **chinook** and **chum** must be released. Crabbing in Puget Sound is still open in a few areas. Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) closes Sept. 30, but marine areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 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, area rivers that open for salmon Oct. 1 include the Elk, Hoquiam, Humptulips, Johns, Satsop and Wishkah rivers in Grays Harbor County; and Kennedy Creek in Thurston County. Anglers should check the rules pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/> for specific regulations on these rivers.

Regulations are also changing on the Skokomish River in Mason County. Beginning Oct. 1, anglers may keep up to four adult salmon as part of a six-fish daily limit, but must release all **chinook**. **Chum** must be released through Oct. 15.

Elsewhere, anglers fishing in the Quillayute system - which includes the Bogachiel, Sol Duc, Calawah and Dickey rivers - can keep two adult salmon, plus two additional **adult hatchery coho** as part of the six-fish daily limit. In Clallam County, the Dungeness River opens to salmon fishing Oct. 16 with a daily limit of four coho only.

Anglers should be aware that salmon fisheries on the **lower Quilcene River** and at **Quilcene/Dabob Bay** will close Oct. 2 because of low coho returns to the area. For more information, check the emergency rule changes at <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/>

Southwest Washington

Coho salmon are moving up the Columbia River and into area tributaries, where anglers can still reel in bright chinook on some rivers. But starting Oct. 1, anglers have another option to consider: Sturgeon fishing in the mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines upstream to Bonneville Dam.

"This is a great fishing opportunity for fall, especially for anglers who don't have boats," said Brad James, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Bank anglers have done very well, historically, fishing for sturgeon just below Bonneville Dam."

Anglers may retain **legal-size sturgeon** Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays only until the area quota is met. White sturgeon must measure 38 to 54 inches from their nose to the fork in their tail to meet the legal size limit. The catch limit is one sturgeon per day, with a statewide annual limit of five fish. James said about 2,300 fish are still available for harvest in the mainstem Columbia River under the annual quota for the area.

"I wouldn't be surprised if the fishery starts out strong," James said. "Sturgeon have moved out of the estuary and have been chasing juvenile shad that are outmigrating past the dam."

Meanwhile, the catch of early stock **hatchery coho** was decent on the lower Columbia in September, with more late-stock fish scheduled to enter the fishery in October and into November, said Joe Hymer, another WDFW fish biologist. In all, about 98,000 late-run fish are expected this year compared to 188,000 early run fish.

Although the run predicted this year is only about 40 percent the size of last year's return, Hymer said anglers can still expect at least a month of good fishing. "Last year's run was above average, but this year's fishery should still be fairly decent if the forecasts prove out," he said.

The best fishing for bright late-run coho is on the Cowlitz, Klickitat, Kalama and Washougal rivers, Hymer said. The Lewis River also attracts late-run coho, but chinook fishing closes there Oct. 1, as does fishing from floating devices around the salmon hatchery and all fishing above the hatchery. The Kalama River remains closed for chinook retention through the end of the year.

The Grays River closes for salmon fishing Oct. 15 to conserve chum salmon but the lower river re-opens in mid-November for late stock hatchery coho and hatchery winter-run steelhead.

As in past years, anglers are required to release any wild coho - which have an intact adipose fin - intercepted on the mainstem Columbia River and its tributaries from the Hood River Bridge downstream. For catch limits and other rules applicable to salmon fisheries on the big river or its tributaries, see the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet, available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>.

Although the focus of the salmon fishery switches to coho in October, **chinook** should continue biting through the month on a number of rivers. The Klickitat River was a hotspot in late September, as was Drano Lake. Fishing will be closed at Drano Lake throughout October from 6 p.m. Tuesdays to 6 p.m. Wednesdays.

Anglers planning to fish for salmon on the Cowlitz River should be aware they may now retain **one wild chinook** as part of their two-chinook limit on that river. In addition, the daily chinook limit has been increased to two adult chinook salmon on the Columbia River from the mouth of the Lewis River to Bonneville Dam.

For **trout**, Sept. 30 is the last day to fish Mineral Lake, but Swift Reservoir remains a good bet for rainbows. The area around the Cowlitz Trout Hatchery is also a good bet for hatchery sea-run cutthroats in October. Those aggressive fish averaging a foot or more can be caught on a variety of gear including bait, flies, or lures.

Eastern Washington

October is the last month - and often a very good time - to fish many of the region's popular trout-stocked lakes and some rivers and streams. Fall insect hatches are providing trout food, so anglers who use flies or lures that mimic that forage can be successful.

Many Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille county waters produce good catches of **rainbow trout** and other species. Bill Baker, WDFW northeast district fish biologist, reminds anglers to check the regulations before heading out because some waters, such as Bayley and Rocky lakes, have shifted to catch-and-release.

Some of Spokane County's best trout lakes closed Sept. 30, but there are still plenty of opportunities. Chris Donley, WDFW central district fish biologist, said Clear, Chapman and Liberty lakes provide trout, bass and other fish through October. Amber Lake remains open through November for catch-and-release fishing. A number of year-round waters, including Eloika, Long and Newman lakes, have trout, bass, crappie and perch.

Most rivers and streams in the region close Oct. 31, but sections of some major waterways, like the Spokane River, remain open year-round or into next spring, some with specific restrictions listed in the rules pamphlet. In mid- to late October, WDFW fish biologists will be electrofishing at night the urban Spokane River stretch between the Maple Street and Ft. George Wright Drive bridges, catching and tagging wild redband rainbow trout to learn more about the population. Anglers are reminded that tagged trout must be released if caught by anglers.

Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir off Grand Coulee Dam, provides some of the best year-round fishing. Baker reports good trolling action on big rainbows and **walleye**, mostly from the Daisy area north. Walleye fishers have also been successful casting jigs near the shoreline, using bottom bouncers, and other methods. Several **smallmouth bass**, running 10 to 12 inches, were recently caught by Roosevelt shore anglers near Ft. Spokane and Hawk Creek.

Snake River **steelhead** action slowed the last week of September, but fishing should improve when the water cools down, said WDFW Enforcement Sgt. Dan Rahn. "There are lots of steelhead in the river but they just aren't biting," he said. "Steelhead were rolling on the surface just above Little Goose Dam, but they would not bite."

Rahn reminds steelhead and salmon fishers to use only barbless hooks. Anglers 15 years of age and over are required to possess a Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement when fishing for these species on the Snake River.

Northcentral Washington

Oct. 1 is the start of a special rules hatchery **steelhead** fishing season on a portion of Okanogan County's Okanogan River from the mouth upstream to the Highway 97 Bridge in Oroville. Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist, said the fishery, like those on other upper Columbia River tributaries, will reduce the number of excess hatchery-origin steelhead and increase the proportion of natural-origin steelhead on the spawning grounds.

Jateff reminds steelheaders heading for the Okanogan of the rules in effect: selective gear, night closure, no bait rules, 20-inch minimum size, and regardless of the fishing area above Wells Dam, a requirement to retain any adipose-fin-clipped hatchery-origin steelhead caught up to the daily limit of four fish. Anglers are also required to possess a Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement as part of their valid fishing license.

Jateff reports that steelhead fishing picked up the last week of September in the Methow River as fish continued to move into the river. The fishing area on the Methow, which has been open since Sept. 8, starts at the mouth and goes upstream to the confluence with the Chewuch River at Winthrop. Selective gear rules, night closure, and no bait allowed are currently in effect for the steelhead fishery on the Methow.

Jateff reminds anglers that **summer chinook salmon** fishing in the mainstem Columbia River from Wells Dam to the Highway 17 Bridge in Bridgeport will close one hour after sunset on Oct. 15. He says a few salmon are still being caught above Wells Dam and also upstream in the Bridgeport area. Selective gear rules and a night closure are in effect for this fishery, but bait is allowed.

WDFW Enforcement Captain Chris Anderson said salmon fishing on the Columbia River from White Bluffs up to Priest Rapids Dam - a stretch that closes Oct. 22 - was good during the last week of September. "Normally there's a pretty good morning bite that lasts about two hours," he said. Anderson reminds anglers that the mouth of Hatchery Creek below Priest Rapids Dam is closed to fishing to protect fish that are pooled up at the mouth of the creek leading into the hatchery.

Jateff said fishing **rainbow trout** lakes in October can be very good as water temperatures cool and trout become more active. Some good bets would be Big Twin near Winthrop, Blue on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, Aeneas near Tonasket, and Chopaka near Loomis. All of these lakes stay open for fishing through Oct. 31. Chopaka and Aeneas are fly-fishing only, and Blue and Big Twin are selective gear waters. There is a one fish daily limit for all of these lakes.

Other Okanogan County trout waters Jateff recommends during the month of October are both Conconully Lake and Reservoir and Wannacut Lake. All three produce good-size rainbow trout, including some triploids, and they are open through Oct. 31.

Jameson Lake in Douglas County, which closed July 4, re-opens for an Oct. 1-31 season on a hatchery plant of approximately 7,500 half-pound rainbows.

Bass fishing on year-round Potholes Reservoir, Moses Lake and other waters that are open in the Columbia Basin usually improves as fall advances.

Southcentral Washington

Steelhead are still moving into the Hanford Reach in large numbers, although most anglers are expected to continue focusing on fall chinook salmon through mid-October. Up to 77,000 adult fall chinook are expected to return to the Reach this year, more than double last year's final count. Through Sept. 26, anglers fishing that area had caught a record 3,075 of those fish, along with 404 jacks.

Plenty of bright **chinook salmon**, some tipping the scales at 40 pounds, remain to be caught through the first half of October, said Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"Anglers have a great opportunity to catch bright, good-eating fish through the first half of the month," Hoffarth said. "But these fish come to the Reach ready to spawn and they start turning dark later in the month."

The salmon fishery is open through Oct. 22 from the Highway 395 Bridge to Wells, but closes Oct. 15 upriver from the dam. Anglers are advised to check the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>) for daily catch limits and other regulations that apply to specific sections of the Columbia River.

The question for many anglers, Hoffarth said, is when to switch over to **hatchery steelhead**. The steelhead fishery, which opened a month early due to unusually large returns, runs through March 31 from Highway 395 to the old Hanford wooden powerline towers and through Oct. 22 from the powerline towers upriver to Priest Rapids Dam.

"October is a good time to start targeting hatchery steelhead," Hoffarth said. "The water is cooling off and the fish are getting more aggressive."

Another good prospect for salmon is the Yakima River, where fishing for fall chinook and hatchery coho usually comes alive around the second week of the month. Best bets for catching fish include waters below Prosser Dam and Horn Rapids Dam, Hoffarth said.

"The salmon start moving into the Yakima, then all of a sudden they're stacked like cordwood," he said. "I think we're going to see a dramatic improvement in that fishery in the weeks ahead." Rather catch some **walleye**? October is also a good time to hook some of these toothy fish below McNary Dam, Hoffarth said. "Fall fishing for walleye is dynamite between Umatilla and Boardman," he said. "Those fish are putting on the feedbag for winter and are eager to strike big lures, night and day."

Trout fishing is available in many southcentral region rivers and streams, including the Yakima, Naches, Little Naches, and Bumping rivers in Yakima County. Anglers can also catch trout on 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. Regulations for these and other fisheries are described in the Fishing in Washington regulation pamphlet, available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>.

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GOOD LUCK!