

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 15th – October 21st, 2010**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

A note from pro guide Chris Vertopoulos on a memorial/gathering for our dear friend Mark Yano in Tillamook this weekend. Please attend if you can!

****There will be a memorial gathering/potluck here in Tillamook Oct 15th. Everyone is invited.** Held at Swiss Hall on 3rd st. @ 6:30PM. Bring a dish and your favorite beverage. Even a pizza or bucket of "Colonel Sanders".

We miss you Mark !

Willamette Valley/Metro - Although the sturgeon opener in the gorge started slow, success rates have jumped slightly in the recent week. Some keepers are available but oversize fish seem to make up a large portion of the catch. The fall fishery in the gorge can provide some of the best opportunity for bank anglers to tangle with keeper fish.

Salmon fishing from the gorge to Troutdale continues to wind down with fewer quality fish in the catches. Late run coho should offer some opportunity near tributary mouths in the coming weeks.

Steelheading remains good on the Willamette below Dexter. The upper Willamette and Middle Fork are fishing well for trout.

Trout fishing and steelheading will be holding up through October on the McKenzie, weather permitting. The water level will be dropping in the coming week.

Coho fishing has been slow on the Clackamas despite decent numbers of fish in the river. Eagle Creek is low and clear.

The Sandy River has been off-color but has good numbers of coho available. The bite has been slow to fair. Try various lures and baits for the best chance of a hookup.

Northwest – Tillamook district anglers fared well over the weekend. The predicted wind storms never materialized so what few anglers fishing over the weekend scored fair results. The upper bay produced the best catches but the fish that were present, shot upstream on the recent rain freshet. Chinook fishing has since slowed with only an occasional fish taken from the upper bay to the Ghost Hole.

Weekend rain afforded driftboaters their first real chance at chinook and coho on Monday. The Trask was laden with salmon but were very reluctant to bite. Wild coho were present in heavy numbers but good numbers of chinook were present as well. Flows quickly dropped back down to summer lows, making driftboating challenging once again.

Although it was still a bit early for the Wilson River to produce catches, a few chinook were present early in the week. Flows have subsided making fish wary to anglers offerings. Another rain freshet isn't due in the near future.

Recreational crabbers have not been able to take advantage of the ocean extension for well over a week now due to rough ocean and bar conditions. The season closes after Friday with so much

potential lost. Bay crabbing is poor in Tillamook and fair in Netarts and Nehalem estuaries. Soft tides will favor crabbers over the weekend.

The Nehalem and Nestucca Rivers were predictably slow and the North Fork Nehalem hatchery received another shot of hatchery fish this week. Coho catches were only fair near the hatchery with many of the fish landed being wild, requiring release. The hatchery coho run on the north coast is all but over.

Southwest – Crabbing has been poor to slow in Winchester Bay recently. Boats fishing below the confluence of the North and South Umpqua are doing well using bobber and bait combos. The best results occur early and late in the day.

Trollers are taking coho at Siltcoos Lake which are bound for Maple Creek.

Coos Bay has been productive for chinook with Marshfield Channel a high traffic area. Crabbing has been fair to good in the bay.

The wild coho quota on the Coquille has been filled and this fishery is closed. Trolling plug-cut herring is taking chinook in tidewater.

Boats out of Port Orford took limits of black and blue rockfish over the past week. In addition, crabbing has been good for quality Dungeness.

Good returns are forecast for the chinook fishery off the mouth of the Elk River starting Friday, October 15th but fall rains will mark the real kickoff.

Trollers in the Rogue estuary continue to hook plenty of coho, most of which are wild requiring release. Only a few chinook are being taken from the bay. Chinook fishing has been worthwhile upriver below Indian Creek.

The Chetco Ocean Terminal Fishery the first 12 days of October produced mixed results and several chinook over 40 pounds. Rockfishing is good out of the Port of Brookings Harbor with ling cod catches improving.

Eastern – While steelhead numbers are good in the Deschutes now and pressure has been heavy, the bite has been only fair with fish hesitant to strike lure or fly. Persistence is required of these fish as action can occur at any time of day. Recent rains has clouded the river, slowing success rates. Trout catches have improved as cloudy days produce Blue-Winged Olive and Caddis hatches in the evenings.

Steelhead are hitting dark colored flies on the Grande Ronde. Fishing is picking up between freshets.

Mann Lake has been treated with rotenone to control undesirable species introduced by the public. It will be restocked.

SW Washington – The first winter run steelhead of the season was tallied at the Cowlitz hatchery this week. Anglers are catching a mix of chinook, coho and sea-run cutthroat trout.

The Kalama and Lewis also has fish present with numbers of hatchery fish improving in recent days. The late run should be peaking in the next 10 days on these systems.

The Klickitat River should taper for chinook but improve for coho. Anglers working the mouth should find success into November.

Columbia River Fishing Report – As far as Columbia River anglers are concerned, the chinook fishery at Bonneville is still the best thing going. Boat anglers tallied nearly a fish per boat in the area with 26 boats reporting 22 fall chinook adults, three fall chinook jacks and two adipose fin-clipped coho kept, plus two fall chinook and two unclipped coho released. Success is still largely coming from the backtrolling fleet, for those using plugs wrapped with sardine fillets or tuna bellies. Bank anglers aren't reporting the same results as 25 bank rods only reported a single fall chinook retained. This isn't uncommon for this time of year. Passage numbers at Bonneville are dwindling fast with the first less than 1,000 fish day reported on 10/11 and the numbers are continuing to slide. Another nice spike of late run coho are currently passing Bonneville with a 5,000+ fish day detected on the same day (10/11). Anglers haven't quite figured out how to consistently target coho in the Bonneville region just yet and typically, coho don't bite so well that far from the salt. However, many of these fish will be intercepted at tributary mouths like the Klickitat in the weeks to come.

Sturgeon effort in the gorge is also picking up but the catches have been sub-par to date. Catch rates are the reason for the lighter than normal effort as bank anglers that consistently do well this time of year, are struggling for keepers. ODF&W checks indicated only 6 legal fish for 147 bank rods over the weekend while boaters did a fair bit better. Of the 26 boats checked, 23 legal white sturgeon were kept, plus 14 oversize and 275 sublegal sturgeon were released. It may take a bit longer to find willing fish but persistent anglers will likely continue to see improved catches over the next several weeks although action isn't likely to be as good as we've seen in recent history.

Walleye fishing in the Troutdale area has been good with 18 walleye kept and another 4 released for just 5 boats. These fish can go on a heavy feed before the winter sets in and their metabolism begins to slow.

Buoy 10 fishing has slowed once again. It was not expected to be a prolonged period of productive fishing for B run coho as the predicted run size was smaller than the earlier returning A run that comes through in late August/early September. After a pretty good weekend last weekend, fish are still available but success has tapered from last week. Crabbing in the area remains phenomenal however.

It's still a bit early for John Day Pool steelhead fishing. Effort is ramping up but success rates are poor. An occasional fall chinook and a rare steelhead are being taken. This fishery gets considerably better in late November.

The Guide's Forecast – Look for the Bonneville chinook fishery to wane. Although catch rates may remain favorable, quality fish will be much harder to come by. Faster flows may harbor brighter fish but dusky hens are likely to be poor tablefare while a slightly darker buck may still cut favorable. Plugs will continue to produce the best action but you will likely have to use divers to get to the biters near the bottom. After this week, the majority of fish will be in poor shape.

Sturgeon anglers shouldn't go into this week with high expectations. It's already clear that success rates won't mimic years past. Some quality fish should be available but it seems boaters will out-produce bank anglers pretty handily, which isn't always the case this time of year. Smelt, squid and shrimp will be top baits and swifter flows will likely produce more aggressive biters. East winds have hampered effort in the early mornings, especially in upriver areas. One important note, WDF&W reports that nearly half of the remaining quota for this section of river

has already been taken in the first part of October since the opener. This fishery may close if success rates remain good well before the proposed end of year closure.

Walleye fishing should remain productive.

Some guides favor the weak tide series coming up this weekend for coho prospects on the lower Columbia. Historically, these weak tides can produce fair catches above Tongue Point for spinner trollers. There should be fish available but numbers shouldn't be great if the prediction is accurate. Gillnets will fish tonight (Thursday) and Monday nights in upriver areas and all day Thursday in the estuary targeting all species of salmon but focusing on primarily coho.

It also appears that the compact has modified the retention regulations in the area:

Non-Indian Recreational Fisheries

Mainstem Columbia River from Buoy 10 upstream to Oregon/Washington border

Effective **12:01 AM Sunday October 17, 2010**, until December 31, 2010 (or further notice):

Open for Chinook, coho, and adipose fin-clipped steelhead Aug. 1 – Dec. 31, 2010, or until harvest guideline is achieved.

Coho must be adipose fin-clipped if kept downstream of the Hood River Bridge.

Daily bag limit is 2 adult salmon/steelhead in combination and 5 jacks.

All other permanent angling regulations described in the "2010 Oregon Sport Fishing Regulations Pamphlet" remain in effect.

Crabbing in the lower Columbia should be awesome with the low tide exchange forecasted through the weekend. Early mornings will produce the best results. Protect your crab bait with bait cages as ravenous seals will certainly take your offerings.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – About 20,000 coho have crossed Willamette Falls and those fish will be found at the mouths of the Tualatin, Molalla, Yamhill and Santiam rivers. Catching them is another matter as results have been spotty. With the run well into wind-down, 25,000 steelhead are above the Falls, primarily in the Santiams.

McKenzie water level and condition are inviting and conducive to fly fishing.

With coho already as high on the System as Minto on the North Santiam, they should be in the system in fishable number. A total of three per day may be kept, finclipped or not starting November 1st. In addition, steelhead remain available in the upper North and South Santiams. The North Santiam level and flow are forecast to remain steady over the coming week.

While Detroit Reservoir was planted with 7,000 legal-sized rainbows this week, Walling Pond Walter Wirth Lake received a combination of legal and larger trout. Subsequent stockings at Walling and Walter Wirth this year will include trout at least 12 inches and later in the year, broodstock trout.

The Guide's Forecast – Target steelhead below Dexter Dam on the upper Willamette. Some of these will be debutants, shiny with just a blush on the cheek while others are colorful as a streetwalker but all will be entertaining on the end of a line. Trout fishers will be rewarded by employing October Caddis dry and nymph patterns on the upper Willamette above Hills Creek Reservoir down through the Middle Fork to Lookout Point.

Try orange-hued flies on the McKenzie and look for takes all day of the temperatures have not been too cold overnight. Otherwise, fish mid-day through the afternoon. October caddis patterns will be effective even if the hatch is not evident. See **Random Links**, for some pattern suggestions.

Bobber and jig is the most common and effective method for summer steelhead on the Santiams. Try spinners for coho although either method will take both species. Historically, fall colors mean orange-colored lures and flies here and they do seem to be most effective. Caddis patterns are hooking some nice trout on the upper North Santiam.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – There are coho from the mouth and scattered upstream although fishing has been slow as they haven't been anxious to bite or strike.

A few coho have been taken at Oxbow and Dodge parks on the Sandy. Expect plenty of company, even on weekdays, at any location that offers relatively easy access. A hike upstream or down may offer a little elbow room and possibly some fish which haven't been hammered. The water has colored this week from glacial runoff but that's been good news lately. The coho are less spooky and seem to bite better when there's less visibility. Three hatchery coho may be kept per day on the Sandy and with fish are being caught here, there isn't even irony in that statement.

The Guide's Forecast – A few fish were taken early this week on the Clackamas at Eagle Creek which is now low and clear. The river near the mouth of the creek would be as good a place to try as any although most pressure remains on the lower river near the mouth.

The Sandy has some bright fish available (but not in the creek, at least at this time). Include scented yarn drifted with a corky in your arsenal.

Coho are tough on any of the inland rivers. To tip the odds slightly in favor of the angler, try at first and last light. If lures aren't drawing strikes, use cured eggs. Patience and persistence take more coho than any other approach.

North Coast Fishing Report – With the latest rain freshet, action in Tillamook Bay has slowed from the previous week. High tides pushed ample numbers of fish to the upper bay where trollers and even shore bobber tossers were getting good action near the Memaloose Boat Ramp. Although some fair numbers of fish were taken on the outgoing tide, the incoming tide produced good action for those holding with plugs on the incoming tide or working herring as we neared high slack. Spinner trollers were of course also taking fair numbers of fish.

With heavy rains deluging anglers on Saturday and Sunday, fish were staging pretty hard near the river mouths in anticipation of an upstream run when flows peaked. This amplified the

success while fair weather anglers showed their true colors when winds were forecasted to be gusting to 50 knots over the weekend. But as per usual, the meteorologists botched the prediction and only rain kept people from getting excited. A fair incoming tide push allowed for another good day in the upper bay on Monday afternoon, even though fish were clearly on the move into district tributaries.

And the fish were loaded on some of the area's rivers. We floated the Trask River on Monday, expecting to get an early limit and home for breakfast while prepping fish for the smoker. Well, wouldn't you know it, we never got a bite despite salmon wakes in every tail-out and surfacing fish (likely mostly coho) in about every piece of slack water. Almost all anglers reported the same results; no strikes, no errors and certainly no home runs. Wild coho seemed to make up the bulk of the fish present but chinook were certainly present in fair to good numbers. We backrolled plugs right onto their noses while bobber and egg fishers worked the water from above. One bank angler using eggs claimed the fish were rising to his bobber and one even took his bobber under the water (while the hook was still loaded with fresh cured salmon eggs just a few feet below his bobber).

The Wilson came up over a foot as well but dropped like a rock without the subsequent precipitation following the storm. The Wilson typically produces better results later in the month but especially in November so it didn't draw as much interest as the Trask; and effort was light on the Trask on Monday as well. We did hear of one boat landing one coho and chinook on the Trask River on Monday but we talked to a lot of boaters.

Most recently, weak tides now dominate the Tillamook fishery so the upper bay action has slowed dramatically while lower bay fishing, particularly along the jetty, showed signs of improving by Wednesday of this week. Tuesday (10/12), was one of the poorest days of fishing I have seen to date. Besides the bite on the last half of outgoing tide on Wednesday, there was a short snap occurring in the west channel on the first part of incoming tide for both chinook and a few wild coho. This should stay consistent for much of the week as fish begin to refill the estuary in the coming week.

The ocean has remained either closed or dangerous where no one is crossing over the bar, even when it is open. The crabbing would likely be excellent out there but not worth risking your life for. The crabbing inside of Tillamook Bay has been poor but good in Netarts Bay.

There are a few more sturgeon beginning to show in Tillamook Bay but no one is targeting them just yet. It's a good sign for some possible November or December fishing, especially when we get the crab out of the upper bay so we can effectively catch fish with our baits on the bottom again.

Tidewater is starting to produce some more consistent catches of chinook but that could taper as the weak tide series takes hold. The Trask has been the most productive for bobber tossers with only a few fish available in the lower Wilson.

The Nestucca and Nehalem continue to draw little attention. The Nehalem however is producing a few chinook for anglers in the Wheeler area. The fish are falling to herring on the incoming tide but check regulations to open areas. It was fishing fair on Wednesday and with all the pressure focused on Tillamook, there is a fair chance at a quality chinook for a few more weeks.

The North Fork Nehalem continues to get hatchery coho back to their trap. Fishing for the lock-jawed adults however remains challenging. A few fish are coming from the handicap platform on a daily basis but other anglers are hard-pressed for consistent results.

The Guide's Forecast – With the weak tide series currently on hand, lower bay trollers will score the best results trolling herring along the north jetty (inside). Although the bar on Tillamook may open (but likely with some restrictions), it doesn't look like it will be all that friendly. The jaws will likely be the better producer anyway so target your fishing time towards the last half of outgoing tide. Keep your herring near the bottom and your lines seaweed free for the best results.

The West Channel will also be a good bet, from low slack through the first few hours of incoming tide. Herring and spinners were working at mid-week with chinook more likely to hit bait than spinners over there. Chinook may also be available at high slack and the first part of outgoing tide. You still have to be watchful for eelgrass to foul your line. The upper bay is dead and will remain that way with the exception of maybe a few willing biters at first light. The best action will certainly take place from mid-bay, downstream. Some anglers are still using plugs even though fish seem to respond best on plugs in the stronger tides.

The seaweed shouldn't be as big an issue this week as it was last. Softer tides keep it from breaking free and wreaking havoc.

Driftboating won't be an option for a while longer as there is no measurable precipitation in the forecast. There are big numbers of fish, wild coho, some chinook, in the Trask River as well as some fish in the Wilson. Bank anglers should have fair access to them in the coming days but they will darken quickly and they won't be very responsive to offerings in the low, clear water.

Bay crabbing will likely be only mediocre but some quality keepers may come from the extreme lower portions of the estuary. Watch for boating traffic however as that is where the bulk of the fleet will be targeting chinook this weekend. Netarts may continue to be the estuary of choice for serious crabbers.

Soft tides may produce good catches in the lower Nehalem Bay. Herring typically takes fair numbers of fish in the lower stretches and this may be the last good crack at these fish before the run peters out. The Nestucca remains a poor option.

Central & South Coast Reports – The offshore forecast is marginal but best by Sunday. Predictions are for fair conditions off the central coast, rougher off the south.

Trout fishing is open in bays and coastal rivers through October 31st.

Chinook fishing has been poor to slow for all but the guide boats on the Siletz River. It seems like boats outnumber the salmon here.

Tuna trips have been made out of Newport this week although success has been marginal. Boats will continue to hunt albacore through October as long as warm water can be reached by recreational boats. Crabbing has been fair to good in Yaquina Bay. The river is producing fair numbers of wild coho which must be released here. Boats are trying but few Chinook have been reported.

Crabbing is slow at Alsea Bay out of Waldport. Chinook fishing has been poor to slow on the Alsea River. Most of the salmon landed here have been wild coho.

Traffic is increasing with the Siuslaw starting to produce a little better both in numbers and size of Chinook. A 38 pounder was taken earlier this week.

Trollers are taking a few coho pulling plugs at Siltcoos but it has been slow so far this season. Bank fishers can take fish here by throwing spinners. It's expected to improve in the coming weeks.

Winchester Bay produced decent Chinook catches this week to both trollers and bank fishers throwing spinners. Crabbing has been good in the bay. Rain over the past weekend moved Chinook and coho upriver on the Umpqua and improved catches in the mainstem. Try floating good quality cured eggs under a bobber for Chinook at the forks. Steelheading is good in the flies only stretch of the North Umpqua. The South Umpqua is closed to fishing of any kind.

The wild coho fishery at the Coquille turned on last week with anglers taking sufficient numbers to fill this year's quota and triggering a closure as of Monday, October 11th. Fishing remains good here but only fin-clipped coho may be retained for the remainder of the season.

Crabbing in Coos Bay has been excellent the Dungeness are in good condition having recovered from the summer molt. There are good numbers of coho in the system but anglers may keep only hatchery fish. Chinook catches have been quite good in the bay with the better catches this week coming by trolling above Chandler Bridge to the lower South Coos.

While the preponderance of wild coho make it mostly a catch-and-release fishery, it has not been unusual for anglers to catch 10, 15 or even 20 fish a day in the Rogue estuary. Hot pink or bright red plugs are effective. While the Chinook bite picked up a little, there are fewer to be caught in the bay. Half-pounders are being taken in good numbers in the Agness stretch. Although fishing for fall Chinook is now closed above Hog Creek, steelheading has been improving on the middle Rogue. Steelheading remains good in the flies-only area above the old Gold Ray Dam site.

This season's Chinook fishery will kickoff on the Elk and Sixes with the first decent fall rain. The rivers are too low to fish currently.

While boats seeking bottomfish must remain in less than 120 feet of water for the remainder of the year, that limitation has not prevented anglers from taking limits of colorful rockfish over the past week when ocean conditions allowed fishing. In addition, ling cod catches have improved over the past week. The bubble fishery has closed but the numbers of large Chinook which were holding off the bay entrance have gradually started entering, creating a fair fishery inside. Catches will improve as more Chinook enter. The Chetco River will remain closed above River Mile 2.2 until November 5th.

A 51-pound, 3 ounce Chinook took first place for Brookings angler Fred Anderson in the big fish derby which took place during the Chetco Terminal (bubble) Fishery October 1st through 12th. The monster salmon was weighed just 90 minutes before the derby closed on the final day. Anderson pocketed \$2,445 for the accomplishment. See a photo of the behemoth here: [http://www.currypilot.com/mambots/content/multithumb/images/b.900.700.0.0.stories.newStories.2010 October.derby winner.jpg](http://www.currypilot.com/mambots/content/multithumb/images/b.900.700.0.0.stories.newStories.2010%20October.derby%20winner.jpg)

Cool overnight temperatures seem to be agreeing with the trout at Diamond Lake as catches have been improving for both boat and bank anglers. Trout are averaging 12 to 14 inches but there are still 20-inchers taken here with some regularity. Limits are generally filled within two or three hours and some have been releasing fish to extend their time on the lake.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Despite a good early-season run of summer steelhead on the Deschutes, the fish have been off the bite this week. Occasional hookups are occurring and fresh

fish are entering making it worthwhile to be on the river. The water, off color from recent rainfall, is starting to drop and clear but it seems to have relieved the high water temperature problem.

Wallowa anglers are scoring decent numbers of trout and steelhead, yet pressure here is very light.

The Imnaha is producing steelhead to anglers who put in their time. Fewer hours per fish are required on the lower stretch. Steelhead numbers are well above average in the Columbia so prospects here will only improve.

Tens of thousands of dead goldfish are littering the banks of Mann Lake. It was treated with rotenone because some room-temperature-IQ-types used live goldfish for bait and they quickly bred to overpopulation levels. Mann Lake, once best-known for supporting Lahotian trout, will be re-stocked next year.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for 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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