

The Guide's Forecast - volume 12 issue number 42

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 22nd – October 28th, 2010**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - Chinook salmon angling is winding down on the Columbia with only a handful of quality fish checked in last weekend. The fish are getting dark with plugs remaining the most productive method for success. Adult coho numbers are dipping but overall, numbers of adults passing Bonneville should fuel a good fishery at the mouths of upstream tributaries.

The sturgeon bite remains fair to good in the Bonneville area but success rates taper downstream of Horsetail Falls. Fishing for keepers should remain a good option through the end of this month although the quota for this section of river is nearing.

Walleye fishing is good from Troutdale into the gorge with some quality fish coming from this burgeoning fishery.

About 19,000 coho have been counted at Willamette Falls with the run showing signs of winding down. Steelhead remain available to fly and gear anglers below Dexter Dam on the upper Willamette.

McKenzie fly anglers have some fine opportunities afternoons and evenings as October caddis hatches pick up. Good-sized rainbows and bull trout are cooperative this time of year.

The Sandy River is still producing coho to anglers drifting eggs or throwing spinners. Most of the action will take place from Dodge Park to the mouth of Cedar Creek this time of year.

Coho fishing remains slow on the Clackamas although there are a few steelhead available.

Northwest – Although the Tillamook fishery is clearly producing better this year than in years past, multiple chinook days are still not very common. Anglers working the west channel were taking consistent numbers near daybreak with a lot of wild coho in the mix as well. Stronger tides may stimulate the later returning Wilson and Kilchis fish this week but seaweed can sometimes hinder success rates on these tides. The Ghost Hole and Bay City should begin to produce more consistent catches.

Trask tidewater bobber fishers have done well in the recent week but that could change with the upcoming precipitation.

Another bump in river levels is forecasted through the weekend. Although rivers aren't expected to rise too high, the precipitation should be enough to trigger an upstream migration. The Trask should be a good bet with the Wilson run finally getting underway. Be prepared to properly identify wild coho as they have been running as large as many of the chinook this year. There has been a lot of 3-year old chinook in the 8 to 12 pound range.

The Nestucca continues to produce poor results despite fair effort from persistent anglers. The Nehalem, also predicted to have a down year, had produced some fair chinook catches in the Wheeler area. Wild coho numbers are swelling on the South and North Fork Nehalem.

Chinook success on the Siletz has been sporadic and more than half of the 400 fish quota for wild coho remains available.

Crabbing picked up in most estuaries on the weak tide series last week but may slow again as fresh water inundates estuaries and a bigger tide swing comes into play.

Southwest – Ocean crabbing is closed as of October 16th. Bays and estuaries remain open for crabbing with ocean harvest resuming on December 1st.

Tuna were caught over the past weekend about 50 miles off the central Oregon coast. As long as warm water is within reach and ocean conditions allow, boats will continue to try for albacore through October.

Action for chinook in Coos Bay is winding down. It was slow over the weekend with only the occasional colored salmon landed.

Port Orford anglers have been taking limits of rockfish and ling as well as limits or near-limits of ocean crab right up to the closure on October 15th.

Elk and Sixes Rivers terminal (bubble) ocean chinook fishery opened October 15th and will fish through November 5th. Rain in the forecast this week should create some good opportunities here.

While action slowed a little over the past week in the Rogue estuary, catches of mostly wild coho and chinook bound for Indian Creek have been good. The flies-only area on the upper Rogue continues to be good for steelhead.

With the Chetco ocean fishery closed now, boats are restricted to trolling Brookings harbor. Catches have been slow but will soon improve.

Time is running out to take advantage of the worthwhile trout fishing at Diamond Lake as facilities close here at the end of October.

Eastern – Pro Guide Mac Huff (800-940-3688) reports, "Steelhead have been in the river for several weeks, but the fly bite has been slow. Gear anglers are doing better and this week's creel report for Oregon tallies about 6 hours per steelhead.

Although the water temperature is no longer a problem on the lower Deschutes, steelheading is slow. Try the middle Deschutes for fair to good trout fishing and a little solitude at this time of year.

The lower John Day River is picking up for steelhead but should peak later in November.

Steelheading is fair to good on the Grande Ronde River above Troy.

Crooked River fly fishers have been experiencing good results as Blue Winged Olives hatch on cloudy afternoons.

SW Washington – The Cowlitz continues to put out some coho with quality winter steelhead due back to the system later next month. The mouth of the Toutle River can produce good catches this time of year.

The Kalama and Lewis Rivers should be peaking for late run coho this week and next but some of the earlier returning fish are beginning to turn dark. Wild coho are also in the mix and must be released unharmed.

The Klickitat River should fire off for coho in the coming weeks, especially with the fair number of coho passing Bonneville at this time.

Columbia River Fishing Report – With salmon fishing on the wane, more focus will be placed on sturgeon in the coming weeks. Historically, sturgeon fishing can be white hot for both bank and boat anglers in the gorge this time of year.

Although Chinook is still an option for backrollers in the area, most salmon are starting to degrade, making them poor tablefare for consumptive users. Action is still fair but clearly down from previous weeks. Numbers of adults crossing the dam is clearly on the drop as well.

Although sturgeon anglers are picking up fair numbers of keepers, success rates are not what they have been in years past. Nearly half of the remaining quota was taken in the first 5 days of retention in early October, leaving about another 1,100 fish for the remainder of the season. It seems unlikely that the remaining quota will last the rest of the year but hopefully, we make it into November. There were lots of keepers taken this spring near Rooster Rock, eating into the upriver quota this year.

Only an occasional keeper is coming from the Portland to Longview stretch but this fishery hasn't been overly productive the last few years anyway.

Walleye have been a big hit recently near Troutdale lately with some pretty impressive catch rates coming from there as well as the lower Columbia River Gorge. These fish will continue to go on a binge feeding before the cold weather sets in.

Coho are still available at several SW Washington tributaries and action should still be peaking for these late run fish destined for several area hatcheries. The Buoy 10 fishery should be well on its way out.

Crabbing however in the lower Columbia River is white hot. Favorable tides and summer like weather has made keeper crabbing near Buoy's 20 and 22 nothing short of phenomenal. Slightly stronger tides likely slowed success rates slightly but limits were still the rule.

The Guide's Forecast – For metro anglers, sturgeon will likely be the main target for most but some will still target darkening Chinook in the Bonneville area. Backrollers are almost as likely to encounter an oversize sturgeon as they are Chinook and certainly if you're backbouncing eggs, it's a highly likely encounter.

Sturgeon fishing should remain fair but keepers will likely be harder to come by in the near future. None-the-less, the quota is likely to be filled well before the December 31st target date. Smelt, squid and shrimp will all successfully take fish this time of year, it's all about location, location, location. The swifter water near the deadline offers up the best opportunity.

Don't count on the Portland to Longview stretch for any significant sturgeon catches; this section has failed anglers in the spring and the fall in recent years.

If you have wanted to try for walleye, this would be the time to experiment as they are on the bite right now and should be until the next significant weather change (which is coming up soon). The Troutdale to Corbett stretch is producing well.

Stronger tides shouldn't discourage crabbers but you'll have to focus your effort closer to the slow down of the tide. Limits should still be quite feasible but you'll want to be prepared for peak time near high slack. Fresh bait will likely guarantee limits.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – The nearly 20,000 coho which have crossed Willamette Falls can be found primarily at the mouths of upstream tributaries. A hatchery fish above the Falls is an anomaly but wild coho may be kept in the upper Willamette and its tributaries. The ODFW call is a 'temporary' rule but three per day may be retained.

The McKenzie has been fishing well for trout and fair for steelhead.

Summer steelhead and coho are available in the Santiam system. No fishing is allowed above the Grant Street Bridge in Lebanon on the South Santiam and the Stayton-Scio Bridge on the North Santiam.

The Guide's Forecast – Rain will be the big game-changer in the next several days. If it falls as predicted, this will be the first serious fall precipitation, crashing the fishing activity for a while, then improving it.

Sturgeon retention will once again be allowed in the lower Willamette starting November 1st. Anglers are successfully targeting steelhead in the Middle Fork and on the Town Run. Coho holding at the mouths of the Yamhill, Tualatin and Molalla rivers will be heading upstream with what appears to be the first fall rainfall beginning this week.

Trout fishing will resume on the McKenzie when the river recovers from the deluge.

The North Santiam level, flow and water temperature are all in the right range for excellent fishing. Run this week will fix that. The deadlines on the upper North and South Santiams will be lifted November 1st.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Another slow week for anglers targeting coho in the Clackamas. Spinners have taken a fish here and there as have good-quality cured eggs.

Lower temperatures in the coming week will likely stop the glacial runoff from occurring on the Sandy but it will be replaced by mud and sand from the rain.

The Guide's Forecast – Rain this week will bring fresh coho into the Clackamas and improve prospects. Best results will come once the precipitation tapers off or stops and the water level is dropping. Eagle Creek will blow out with a few inches of rainfall but will be full of coho and jammed with hopefuls. There are some bright steelhead around for those willing to put in their time for them and, unlike coho, they're likely to bite or strike when located.

Coho are responding to angler's offerings on the Sandy and fishing is likely to be good as the water level drops following rain this week. Spinners and drifted eggs have been effective here.

North Coast Fishing Report – The Tillamook fishery has been somewhat ho-hum lately but consistency is applicable this year. Some of the most consistent numbers have been coming from the west channel where anglers have been able to rely on a good first light bite with a mix of Chinook and wild coho present. Both have been quite willing to bite herring trolled on the

bottom, which is averaging about 7 to 12 feet deep on the upper end where most of the action has been taking place. The bite drops off when the sun comes up over the coast range and flat dies when the tide changes to outgoing, which has been late in the morning.

The ocean still remains a nemesis for many anglers as its anger has kept most boats well inside the tips. When it has been open and safe to fish, Chinook success has been less than impressive. There are some signs of an improving bite in the Ghost Hole and Bay City area as Wilson and Kilchis fish are scheduled to make a stronger appearance in the coming days. It's usually the second half of October when they make a better show. Seaweed has frustrated anglers in recent days, especially along the jetty but late last week, there was some good action on the last few hours of outgoing tide with one day, reports of 30 fish taken.

The upper bay has been a poor producer lately, with only a few fish at first light in recent days. The tides have not been conducive to good success but that could also change this weekend. Some Trask and Tillamook fish are still likely to run into November.

The Tillamook and Trask tidewater have had fish for bobber tossers to take advantage of. There have been reports of some pretty good bobber bites in the Tillamook with loads of people targeting Chinook near the handicap dock. The deep hole there does hold a lot of fish on certain years.

Rivers have remained low so driftboating has not been an option but that could change soon.

The Nestucca River has been quiet for most anglers with what Chinook present, reluctant to succumb to most anglers' offerings. There are fish present in fair numbers in tidewater however with some fly-casters doing quite well for a depressed run this season. Low, clear water can often produce well for fly-fishermen under these circumstances.

The Nehalem is plugged with wild coho, which there is no consumptive season for this year. There are some Chinook present with some anglers doing fairly well from Paradise Cove to Wheeler last week. It's a volatile fishery however so one does not know what to expect. Herring is a top bait but spinners will draw strikes as well, especially for herring.

Crabbing was a bit better for pot soakers last week. The lower west channel near crab harbor produced fair results and fair numbers are also coming from the Nehalem estuary. Netarts continues to be one of the better producers but recent fatalities should be a warning to recreationalists that this is no body of water to take for granted. The ocean is now closed to recreational crab harvest until December 1st. Rough conditions hampered effort the last few weeks of the season.

The Guide's Forecast – A stronger set of tides should draw in the later returning Wilson and Trask River fish this weekend. A strong front, likely to raise river levels should stimulate action as well. High winds may not make fishing fun and a dropping barometer may make fishing challenging at times but this should be a peak week for Chinook on the bay.

The west channel should remain a good option but the Garibaldi side and Bay City should begin to produce more consistent catches as well. Herring will dominate within the fleet this week but spinner trollers may have an advantage if weed continues to plague area fishers. Anglers can whip their rods (violently) and keep their offerings fishing. Unfortunately, you can't do that with herring.

Follow the incoming tide up the bay with Bay City being a good place to be near high tide. The middle bay and near the mouth of the Wilson should still produce some results close to high tide.

The lower reaches of the Wilson, Trask and Tillamook Rivers may also harbor fish at high slack and the first part of outgoing tide.

If the rivers come up as forecasted, river action should be excellent with the Trask and Wilson producing the best. A one-foot rise or hopefully better will make action quite exciting on these two river systems. The higher the rise, the higher in the watershed you should fish. Rivers were only expected to rise about a foot or slightly better but updated models are showing a much more significant rain model in the forecast. Watch for the drop and act accordingly. If rivers do show a significant rise, smaller streams like the Necanicum could be a strong option too. This little river has good history this time of year.

The Nestucca and Nehalem may also hold some potential but review upriver options closely as these watersheds have extensive restrictions on them this year. The tidewater areas will be a bust if flows come up as predicted.

If enough fresh water inundates the estuary, it will likely wash crabs out to sea, including pesky juveniles that rob sturgeon anglers baits, even in the upper reaches of Tillamook Bay. Sturgeon have been incidentally snagged in the west channel and some have been seen rolling.

Crabbing should not be fun or productive if the weather hits as predicted. Use extreme caution if you choose to go out. Clamming will likely be a poor option.

Central & South Coast Reports – While ocean crabbing closed mid month, the season was fully a month longer than in years past. Those with a taste for sea spiders will be rewarded with good numbers in bays and estuaries at this time of year and the Pacific will re-open once again for the taking of Dungeness on December 1st.

Albacore were taken as recently as Monday this week and catch results were pretty good but it was a 50-mile trip out of Newport to get them. That may have been the last trip unless offshore conditions settle down while warm water is still within reach of recreational boats.

Anglers fishing the Alsea Bay entrance have been scoring decent numbers of coho and the occasional large Chinook. Trolled herring has been responsible for the majority of hookups.

Crabbing has been slow to fair at Florence. Trolled herring is taking Chinook in the Siuslaw but for the most part it has been slow.

Coho are being taken by trollers at Siltcoos Lake and rain this week should bring more fish into the system. Try hot pink or fluorescent red Wiggle Warts to draw strikes as these plugs have been more effective than spinners this season.

Like many coastal rivers, the mainstem Umpqua is packed with coho, most of which are wild which must be released unharmed. The flies-only section is providing good results for steelhead.

While wild coho may no longer be kept in the Coquille, Chinook catches are good in the lower river for those trolling to catch them.

Coos Bay has been providing good catches of Chinook above the Highway 101 Bridge.

Trollers in Winchester Bay are taking fair to good numbers of Chinook near the jaws. There are lots of coho in the bay but it's mostly a catch and release show for these primarily wild fish.. Only fin-flipped coho may be retained here. Crabbing has been good.

Although the action for Chinook in Rogue Bay has continued to wind down, patient boaters are still hooking up with a few Chinook. Prospects are better upstream near the mouth of Indian Creek although the number of darker fish is increasing. It's no longer worth making a trip for Chinook at this stage of the game. Bank fishers have opportunities for Chinook by throwing plugs or drifted cured eggs beneath a bobber above the Highway 101 Bridge. Steelhead and half-pounder catches are good at Agnes for those throwing spinners. As with many coastal estuaries, Rogue Bay is full of mostly wild coho. Steelheading is fair on the middle river while the upper Rogue remains good in the flies-only area. Once rain hits the upper Rogue, all bets are off, however.

According to predictions and indicators, the Elk and Sixes bubble fishery which started October 15th will be a good, strong return with a substantial component of larger Chinook. Anglers should expect those days with the greater tidal exchange to be most productive. Scented, plug-cut sardines are a good choice to hook up with some of these fish. With rain in the forecast this week, Chinook are expected to enter the Elk where boaters will have the opportunity to catch them without dealing with harsh offshore conditions.

The Chetco bubble fishery is closed but provided very good results for anglers at times, particularly as the deadline loomed. When boats have been able to get out, nearshore bottomfishing has yielded limits of rockfish for many with ling cod numbers improving. If offshore forecasts for the coming weekend hold true, boats will not be able to get out. Chinook fishing in Brookings harbor has been slow but precipitation this week should improve results.

The outstanding trout fishing at Diamond Lake is worth mentioning again. Everybody is catching fish and many are taking limits but October 31st will be the last opportunity to fish here.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Lower Deschutes steelheading remained slow this week. Shearers Falls has been good some days, not so good others. Trout fishing is fair to good

The Metolius River Wood Restoration Project wrapped up on October 18th. In the course of this project, about 1,000 logs and other structures were placed on the river to improve or create fish habitat. The portions of river access, closed to the public for their protection, will re-open on October 22nd.

Pro Guide Mac Huff (800-940-3688) reports, "Steelhead have been in the river for several weeks, but the fly bite has been slow. Gear anglers are doing better and this week's creel report for Oregon tallies about 6 hours per steelhead.

"Early last week we hooked 13 steelhead in 4 days on flies. Good steelhead fishing, but a bit below hopes because of last season's memories. This season's return is about 200,000 fish behind last year, so we expect excellent fishing through the season, but maybe quite not the results of last season.

"Steelhead fly fishing is better this week and will continue to improve now into December."

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 out-migrating 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/>.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

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

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Oregon Channel Catfish Ranch:

http://www.fishsvr.com/catfish_2.htm

ODFW **upper** Willamette sturgeon stocking program:

<http://cartt.4j.lane.edu/ttr/sturgeon/sturgeon.html>

GOOD LUCK!