

The Guide's Forecast - volume 13 issue number 27

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 8th – July 14th, 2011**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- After a short flurry of chinook success, Bonneville has slowed despite good water conditions and plentiful numbers. Boats anchored with plugs are still taking a few fish however but steelhead numbers should begin to swell in the coming weeks.

Sturgeon anglers working the gorge are few and far between but an occasional keeper and a fair number of oversize fish are still falling to fresh shad for bait. Action likely won't get good again until late September.

Water temperature is in the 60's and clear in the lower Willamette. Chinook and steelhead passage has remained fair but steady. Shad fishing is slow to good depending on location and technique. Trout fishing has been good on the Middle Fork. The Willamette remains closed at I-5 Springfield through October for bridge construction.

The McKenzie River has been fishing well for trout and summer steelhead action has picked up recently in the Eugene stretch.

Clackamas fishing has been very slow while Sandy results have been fair. Steelhead catches will begin to dominate the creel with the mouth of Cedar Creek the best option.

South Santiam springer fishing is fair but crowded with bank fishers at times.

Northwest – Sturgeon anglers taking advantage of the extension in the lower Columbia are producing fair results for keepers and oversize fish. Sturgeon are still keyed into sand shrimp for bait but that may change as anchovies are likely to make a showing in the coming weeks. On July 4th, Jorren Vanderzanden of Atlanta, Georgia took a 52-inch keeper just downstream of the Astoria Bridge on sand shrimp. The catch and keep season is expected to last until the end of July.

Salmon and steelhead anglers working the lower beaches had fair success on the last tide series but steelhead should begin to make up the bulk of the catch into July. Like most runs this year, this one is tracking late too.

A rough ocean kept most salmon effort at bay last week. Salmon remain available both north and south of the mouth of the Columbia but anglers will have to wade through lots of throw-backs in order to take a limit.

Salmon success out of Garibaldi was also sporadic but crabbing has picked up in recent days.

Nearshore halibut fishing closed abruptly yesterday. Success rates were better this year than last. Anglers will have another chance for the flatfish when the all-depth fishery opens again on August 5th.

Hatchery spring chinook were still being taken late last week on Tillamook Bay. It's about over now but chinook remain available in the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Trout fishing has been good on these systems as well but be mindful of regulations.

Southwest – The all-depth halibut season starting August 5th will allow fishing two days a week

for a quota of 44,288 pounds which includes rollover from the spring fishery. All but 322 pounds of the 13,800-pound quota caught in the nearshore fishery as of the last week in June.

Tuna have been caught offshore from Newport to Brookings mostly around the 125 line. That's 20 to 30 miles out depending on the port. Results will improve when warm water moves inshore.

Ocean coho fishing has been slow to fair but offshore crabbing has improved over the past week.

Coho are being taken out of Winchester Bay but Chinook have been too deep recently for recreational boats to fish.

Springers are being taken on the mainstem Umpqua near Elkton and into the North Umpqua. Shad fishing has been fair at best. Smallmouth fishing is good and improving on the South Umpqua where levels are dropping and the water is warming.

Tuna have been taken over the past week out of Charleston when boats have been able to cross the bar.

Bottom fishing has been good for rockfish out of Gold Beach, fair for lingcod. While the lower Rogue chinook bite turned on early last week due to lower water temperatures and precipitation, it died off when the water warmed again. Late in the weekend, trollers started to pick up chinook in Rogue Bay. The high waters of the upper Rogue have continued to produce springers.

Boats launching out of Brookings have enjoyed good nearshore results for rockfish and lingcod. Albacore have also been caught farther out. Ocean salmon fishing has been mostly unrewarding. Dock crabbing is fair in Brookings Harbor. Area beaches are producing surf perch. The Chetco River is good for cutthroat.

Diamond Lake results have been fair with catches expected to improve as hatches taper off. Prepare for troublesome midges (gnats) and mosquitoes.

Eastern – Lower Deschutes fishing has been very good with trout responding to evening hatches of Duns and Caddis.

The challenging Metolius has been fishing very well. Nymphs will produce in the absence of hatches.

Trout fishing is fair at Crane Prairie while bass fishing has been good.

Kokanee fishing has been slow at Green Peter although fish are tightly schooled. Jigs are taking a few but trolling has been most effective late in the day.

SW Washington – The spring chinook season was a bust for district anglers. Steelhead numbers seem to be down as well although most anglers are abandoning tributary systems to target both species along the banks of the Columbia River.

Bright colored spin-n-glos tipped with striped coon shrimp should produce good results when tides turn favorable again. High flows however should keep fish migrating close to shore. Tributary mouths begin to produce good results this time of year when traditionally, mainstem temperatures begin to rise. Columbia River temperatures are hovering around 62 degrees.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Although we're in peak season for summer Chinook on the mainstem Columbia, interest is not much on a river that remains unseasonably high for this time of year. Flows remain big on the mainstem but they are dropping and continue to warm. This is good news for anglers in pursuit of all species on the mainstem although anglers have more confidence in flows that seemingly concentrate fish in narrower slots of the river.

In the Bonneville area, there were some brief periods of good action but that has slowed recently reports **pro guide Dan Ponciano (360-607-8511)**. Dan reported some good action last week but stated if you get a couple of Chinook to the boat in recent days, you're doing pretty good. Dan said one thing that is hampering success is all the sturgeon that grab your plugs when targeting salmon. Spawning and actively feeding oversize are in the area and willingly taking plugs by anglers on anchor. There isn't much you can do to target salmon specifically as even spinners will entice the large leviathans. There clearly are fish in the area however as Bonneville Dam counts continue to be good.

Anglers will soon turn their focus to summer steelhead as a large run is in the forecast for the Columbia and upstream tributaries. Numbers passing Bonneville are just starting to climb with July 3rd posting the first day that the count topped 1,000 plus adults. We should be coming into peak season right now but the cool, wet spring likely has the run delayed like the other spring species. Anglers in the lower river are starting to show higher interception rates however. We're just coming off a good minus tide series that put a fair number of salmon and steelhead on the beach for bank plunkers.

Meanwhile, sturgeon anglers, of the few that are participating, are finding pretty consistent results when using shrimp for bait. The lower river below the Astoria Bridge is beginning to produce fair numbers of fish on the current tide series. We spent just about 3 hours in pursuit of sturgeon just downstream of the bridge on the Oregon side, taking 3 oversize fish, 3 keepers and about 5 sub-legals for 6 rods. We even had a few doubles over the course of the tide. We used sand shrimp exclusively. The best fishing has been coming close to low slack and the first part of incoming tide. You should target the sand humps as fish will move out of the deep and into the shallows when the flood tide comes in.

Most effort for sturgeon however remains upstream of the bridge and particularly upstream of Tongue Point. The big minus tide series does seem to push fish downstream however, making the lower reaches a stronger option. Marker 3 remains a popular destination although success rates have been dropping off there.

Ocean fishing out of the mouth of the Columbia has been challenging as of late. A wind-whipped ocean has kept interest low for both salmon and bottomfish. The minus tide has kept the bar a bit wound up as well, making early morning bar crossings less than pleasurable. There is no let up of the late morning NW wind forecast in the near future. Salmon are pretty far north anyway and you have to weed through lots of shakers before finding ones that you are able to keep. Ocean crabbing remains poor with lots of females in the catch.

The lower Columbia itself has been poor for crabbing, especially on the big tide series we're just coming off of right now. It likely won't improve with all the fresh water we've had in recent weeks. It may be late summer before we see good production come from the lower Columbia again.

The Guide's Forecast – With a weak tide series on the way, look for sturgeon to be the go-to species this weekend. Although the weak tides don't necessarily bode well for sturgeon either, the lack of strong flow will keep salmon and steelhead from seeking predictably shallow water near lower river beaches on the Columbia. Fish will still be available but don't count on high

concentrations of biters like we see on the stronger tides. Spin-n-glos in the hot colors will still take fish and keep in mind that salmon numbers should start to decline while steelhead numbers should start to increase. Plugs will still be the best choice for those still wanting to target summer Chinook. Spinners may become a better tool in the gorge when flows continue to drop and temperatures warm. Steelhead may still be challenging to catch in any big numbers until we see bigger numbers crossing the dam. Target rock outcroppings in the gorge.

Anglers seeking keeper sturgeon should be glad for the additional time in the lower river. There are fair numbers of quality keepers available and they are falling to shrimp although the anchovy bite should start to pick up. Don't hesitate to target fish in the shallower water but as the tide series wanes, the deeper water will become a good option. Shrimp should work equally well in the deep water but be prepared for more competition for your bait. In other words, you may need to bring more bait to power through the undesirable species but some target species should come along, particularly if you are marking them on the screen.

If you're targeting sturgeon in the gorge, there are some keepers available but oversize sturgeon make up the bulk of the density in the area. Fresh shad are still working for oversize below Marker 82 but shad strips will occasionally take keepers in the area. It may be October before we see consistent fishing for keepers in the gorge again.

Flows are expected to remain high on the river below Bonneville but with weak tides, this may be one of the better options if you plan on pursuing fish of the more silver variety. Spinners should begin to work better for salmon and steelhead as flows recede. Brass and red work good for both species and silver or nickel when the sun is shining bright. The fishing will be quite unpredictable this week but numbers of salmon and especially steelhead remain strong.

Shad anglers should still fare well over the weekend, despite a slight drop in passing numbers. Small Dick Nite spoons will produce well, especially on sunny days. Bank anglers are faring well too.

Offshore, although tides are improving for an over-the-bar excursion, the wind wave prediction will keep the high seas somewhat unforgiving. If you do choose to venture out, start early to take advantage of a good tide and it is advisable to fish to the north so you can ride the NW winds back to the river mouth. Bring anchovies for bait but herring should work well too.

Don't bother crabbing the lower Columbia or vicinity. Fresh water and numerous females will try your patience, especially for those that know what this area is capable of.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Hundreds of summer steelhead and spring Chinook continue to cross Willamette Falls daily. The year-to-date totals for springers is approaching 40,000 while over 17,000 summers are now upstream. Water temperatures are in the mid to upper 60 degree range. Springer fishing on the lower Willamette is a crap shoot and a betting man's game with long odds. Optimism is a challenge to muster regarding Chinook fishing in the first week of July. Effort is seasonally and understandably light.

Sportcraft Boat Ramp will receive a much-needed upgrade this summer. Boaters are advised that this popular ramp will be closed from July 15th until the end of October while the renovation taked place. Boaters are advised to use Meldrum Bar or Clackamette Park as alternate launches.

Water levels at the McKenzie have continued to drop with the temperature as of July 7th 62 degrees. The annual McKenzie River clean-up day is taking place this Saturday, July 9th. They can use all the help they can get for this opportunity to give something back to the river. To

volunteer, call the McKenzie Watershed Council Projects Coordinator at 541-687-9076 or Email projects@mckenzienc.org.

North Santiam levels have dropped and, while fishable, it's still higher than normal for this late in the season and too high to fish as well as it can. The South Santiam has also dropped but is in better shape for productive results and has better numbers of spring Chinook as well as hatchery summer steelhead. More than 2,100 summer steelhead and about 1,500 springers had entered the fish trap at Foster Dam as of the fourth week in June.

Scheduled for trout planting are Trillium Lake, Big Cliff Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Detroit Reservoir and Leaburg Lake.

The Guide's Forecast – While not exactly worthwhile, a few spring Chinook are being caught every day by diehard fishers in the lower Willamette at St. Johns and in Portland Harbor. It's too late in the year to be optimistic targeting Chinook. Shad fishing has been slow for most anglers at Oregon City and Coon Island on Multnomah Channel although those are the areas to try. As dropping water levels coincide with promising trout catches and fair steelheading results on the Middle Willamette, bank fishers are advised to expect to see dramatic changes in the riverbed and tributary mouths. Both hatchery and native trout are available. Nymphing will be effective for rainbows and swinging flies, tossing spinners and spoons or drifting lures is a good bet for summers.

Evenings have been most productive on the McKenzie for those seeking rising fish. The river has been planted with hatchery trout on several occasions but also boasts a healthy population of native rainbows and cutthroat trout. Nymphs will take some trout all day. Summer steelhead are hitting spinners and drift rigs below Leaburg Dam.

Prospects are fair on the North Santiam and fish have been caught here over the past week. There's better reason for optimism fishing the South Santiam, however as there are greater numbers of fish available and summers in the South a keepers. While bobber and jigs are probably the most popular, don't hesitate to throw spinners as they are an effective lure or try drift rigs if that's your forte.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Although the Clackamas water level has been on the decline, the prior record compared to the forecast shows a difference of less than a foot over a 30-day period so the daily change will be virtually imperceptible. Spring Chinook are entering the hatchery facility at McIver and summer steelhead have been trucked from the hatchery down to Riverside Park to provide anglers another shot at them. If you catch a summer steelie with a hole in the gill plate, thank the hatchery workers - that's a re-run. Eagle Creek is in good condition thanks to snowmelt offsetting the normal drop in the water level. Spring Chinook and summer steelhead are available in the creek, albeit in modest number

The Sandy River level is below 9 feet and less than 1,200 cfs at the town of Sandy. There has been no sign of glacial runoff causing the river to run milky as yet this season and with cooler, cloudy weather in the forecast for the coming week, the water condition should remain good.

The Guide's Forecast – As the Clackamas water level gradually drops and the weather remains warm, those interested in fishing will be required to make a very early appearance in order to beat the inflatable plastics hatch occurring now despite cold water. Eagle Creek is producing a few and pressure on the system is still fairly light.

Late-arriving spring Chinook will be in the lower Sandy and while results have been slow lately, there's reason for optimism when fresh fish are in the river. The stretch from Oxbow Park to the Columbia confluence hold the most promise of an encounter of salmonid kind. Bank fishers should consider the stretch below Cedar Creek or at Dodge Park.

North Coast Fishing Report – Most anglers are ready to focus on offshore salmon opportunities this time of year but a rough ocean is making it hard to get motivated for the fishery. Those that have made it out aren't reporting excellent success for keepers but the action is pretty good for wild coho and an occasional Chinook.

Most boaters are working the deeper 250 to 280 foot line, trolling herring for bait. The fish won't be too particular this time of year but since fresh bait really isn't an option right now, frozen green labels are in good supply and work just fine. It's wise to head north to avoid an uncomfortable ride back to the dock when the NW wind blows up in the late morning. It's been the most consistent part of fishing lately.

There were reliable reports of late hatchery spring Chinook in upper Tillamook Bay last Friday. It was rumored that 3 boats took 4 fish on the incoming tide in the upper bay. It's quite possible to have good fishing this late in the season given the good return that happened this year.

The Trask still has the largest concentration of fish but low, clear water has them off the bite. The hatchery hole is now closed but still loaded with fish. The Wilson and Nestucca also have fish hunkered down in the deep pools but you have to be up pretty early to find a motivated biter and that won't last long. Summer steelhead are in the Wilson and Nestucca as well but success is fair at best. The cutthroat trout fishing in these streams is great right now. You'll still have to employ stealth tactics to catch fish however.

The Nehalem typically kicks off around the 4th of July but has not shown strong promise in recent years. The summer run component of Chinook is clearly on the downside. Some fish should be available later in the month however but be mindful of regulations on where you can fish. Angling below the state park boat ramp is closed until Sept. 15.

Nearshore halibut was good before the closure on Wednesday. There were some sizable fish coming in for those dragging herring and squid in the nearshore. Bottomfishing remains good with the charter fleet exercising their Arch Cape locations. Lingcod are becoming less available as the summer wears on.

Tuna were reported off of Depoe Bay recently with the run being 28 to 32 miles offshore. The 125' 21 line was reported as having fish. Tuna clones trolled is the preferred technique right now.

Offshore crabbing is improving with one boat reporting about 22 keepers for 6 pots for a 3 hour soak. The fresher the bait, the better the catch and if you can let your pots soak overnight, it seems the catch will predominately be larger males. There are some in the softshell state however.

No additional hatchery trout stocking is scheduled in the Northwest Zone until September.

The Guide's Forecast – Wind waves may calm by the weekend as a 2 foot chop is in the forecast. It's still best to target your fishing time early in the morning, fishing to the north to ride the NW wind and waves back home in the late morning or early afternoon. Here is the offshore forecast:

FRI NIGHT N WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

SAT N WIND 10 TO 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT. PATCHY FOG.

SAT NIGHT N WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

SUN NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. SW SWELL 5 FT.

MON NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. SW SWELL 4 FT.

Offshore is likely the best bet for fresh salmon with coho making up the bulk of the catch. You'll have to troll a lot of country and go through a lot of baits before you get to realize a limit of legal fish. Wild coho are plentiful this year. Start the day off trolling in the upper 14 feet of the surface, then drop your baits deeper as the sun shines on the water. Nearshore water temperatures can be frigid so try and avoid the 40 degree stuff and seek mid-50 degree water further offshore if you need to. There is a good amount of upwelling taking place right now and while that's a good thing for marine life, it makes it pretty challenging to find willing biters that we can keep.

Do bring your crab pots and load them with quality bait. Crab in 30 to 35 foot of water to the north of the north jetty out of Garibaldi. Plan on letting go lots of females, especially if you pick your pots only after a short soak of 3 hours or less. Crabbing inside of Tillamook Bay is reported as improving but you'll need to spend all tide to get a sizable catch. Netarts Bay will likely be pretty busy so competition will be great. Nestucca estuary is an option this time of year.

Inland, the bay spring Chinook fishery is winding down fast. Salmon should be in fair numbers in the tidewater sections of the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. There should also be fair numbers of fish available on the mainstem stretches of these systems. Summer steelhead should be found in the faster water while Chinook will be in the slow, deep stuff.

The Nehalem system won't likely offer much for salmon fishers but trout should start to take off soon. The nearshore halibut fishing out of Nehalem is shut down until early August.

Bottomfishing should remain good with a softer tide series offering a better chance at getting a nice mess of fish. You'll just have to deal with a wind-whipped ocean.

The Siletz River should be a fair to good summer steelhead option. Like other systems, fish will be found in the swifter water, especially with a broken surface. Use small baits, in the form of eggs or sand shrimp and use light lead when in pursuit.

Tuna are not far off, but they are off. Seasoned vets will likely trek west to find them this week although consistency likely won't come for another few weeks.

Central & South Coast Reports – It came as no surprise when nearshore halibut closed this week. Catches were not only good, but larger-than-average sub-40-fathom specimens tend to fill out a 13,478-pound quota more quickly. And fill it did, closing on July 6th. The next and final opportunity for halibut this year will commence off the central Oregon coast on August 5th and 6th when the ocean opens once again for the all-depth summer season. Further openings will continue every other Friday and Saturday (August 19-20, September 2-3, September 16-17 and so on) with dates scheduled into October or fulfillment of quota.

Offshore forecasts for central Oregon ports looks promising for the coming weekend and very good for the coming week as winds are predicted to moderate along with ocean conditions.

Launching out of southern coastal ports was not an option for most craft mid-week with a rough ocean conditions and blustery winds creating unfavorable conditions. When charter and recreational boats have been able to get out, action for rockfish and ling cod has been good to great. Ocean crabbing has also been good.

Ocean coho catches have been spotty since the opener July 2nd and when boats have gotten into them, many have been wild, requiring release. Chinook results have been slow with fish 10 or more miles offshore in deep water. Ocean

Chinook season will remain open through September 30th while the hatchery coho fishery is scheduled through August 13th with a non-selective (hatchery or not) opener September 1st through 10th with seasonal bag limit of five wild coho per angler for the year.

Hatchery coho may be taken from the Umpqua any time of year (but are naturally subject to seasonal availability). In 2011, a wild coho fishery will open here September 15th through the end of November or a quota of 1,300 fish and a bag limit of two per anglers for the year.

Wild coho fisheries will be available again this year at Tenmile, Tahkenitch and Siltcoos lakes with seasonal information yet to be announced. One wild coho may be taken per day with a bag limit of five for the year may be

caught at the Siletz, Yaquina, Alsea, Siuslaw and Coos rivers with respective quotas. Be sure to check the regulations.

Summer steelheading has been fair to good on the Siletz with a recent push of fresh fish entering.

Newport boaters are crossing the bar to encounter fair to good numbers of Chinook and coho although the majority of the latter have had too many fins to keep.

When the ocean has allowed, boats launching out of Winchester Bay have been taking albacore within 25 miles of port, returning with large fish for this early in the season. The surf perch bit finally turned on in Winchester Bay around Marker 12. These fish, all females, enter the bay to spawn starting in May and provide a fishery for couple of months here. Nearby surf fishing is quite productive, however, and won't impact the spawning females. Effort is light while results are good for rockfish off the South Jetty. South Umpqua smallmouth bass fishers are enjoying good results but not hot as the water level remains above normal and water temperatures are not yet up to optimum levels. Spring Chinook are being caught in the mainstem and North Umpqua but catch rates have started to slow. Summer steelhead, stalled by high, cold water, still continue to enter the North through the month.

Boats launching out of Charleston are catching coho and Chinook but it's a matter of finding the fish as they have been scattered. Ocean crabbing has yielded limits. Few are crabbing in Coos Bay with results for those trying only fair at best. Fishing for sea-run cutthroat trout is fair to good in the lower Coos River.

Chinook are yet to show in the Coquille system but they should make an appearance in tidewater soon. Crabbing is slow to fair out of Bandon. Cutthroat fishing is ongoing in the river with a reminder that bait is now legal above tidewater.

The long, cold, wet spring combined with the late appearance of many anadromous fishes has created an overlap of salmon opportunities on the lower Rogue. Spring Chinook continue to be taken daily and while not the numbers caught earlier in the season, these fish are in great

condition. At the same time, fall Chinook have started appearing in

Rogue Bay, creating an alternate fishery as estuary trollers have taken advantage of the first appearance of the season and are hooking up. A few springers are being caught in the Grants Pass stretch but most anglers are trying for summer steelhead in the middle river now. This is historically the time of year when summer steelhead numbers are sufficient to count on a hookup or two on the upper Rogue. With Gold Ray Dam only a memory, however, the fish counts from that source are no longer an option. Counts at Cole Rivers Hatchery have been less than exciting but haven't been updated for a while. What the hell, it's always a better alternative than yard work.

Swells will be down but the wind will be up according to offshore forecasts for this coming weekend, making launches difficult out of the Port of Brooking. Boats here are crafty about launching very early, catching rockfish just outside and returning to port before the wind gets fierce.

As hatches wind down at Diamond Lake, catches will improve. Trout have been gorging on insects and not as receptive to angler's offering when stuffed with bugs. Rainbows in the lake are used to big meals, however, and as the natural food source is reduced, they'll be on the prowl and anxious to take bait or lure. Trolling has been effective with still fishing even more so as prospects improve. All boat ramps and roads are open now.

The Rogue River above Lost Creek will be stocked with trout again this week.

Central and Eastern Oregon – The John Day River is fishing well for smallmouth bass now although the water level and flow remain above average for this time of year. Flows have been moderating since the last week of June, however, and hydrological predictions indicate the river dropping into mid-July. This may be good news for those who may have done some dragging over gravel bars in low water of seasons past. It's not unusual to catch 50, 60 or even 100 smallies in a day.

Good-sized kokanee are being taken by deep trolling at Green Peter with early mornings and late evenings most productive. It has been scratch fishing during the rest of the day.

Mt. Hood Lakes are fishing well now with trout being caught recently at Harriet and Laurance. Timothy Lake can be congested at times but is producing fair to good numbers of kokanee.

Kokanee averaging 12 inches are hitting hoochies trolled behind flashers at Odell Lake. Boaters are returning with good numbers of fish.

Fishing is fair at Wickiup with the water level above average for this time of year.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for July 2011

Discover Pass: Now that summer has finally arrived, hundreds of thousands of Washingtonians will be packing up tents, lanterns, binoculars and fishing poles to spend time with family and friends outdoors. Starting July 1, many will also need to purchase a Discover Pass for vehicle access to state parks, campgrounds, boat launches and wildlife areas.

The new pass, approved this year by the state Legislature, is designed to help keep 7 million acres of state recreational lands open after steep budget cuts. An annual Discover Pass costs \$35, and a one-day pass \$11.50, when purchased from [WDFW online](#) by phone or from retail [license vendors](#).

State Parks will also sell the passes July 1-3 at its Olympia headquarters and regional offices in Burlington and East Wenatchee, in preparation for the Fourth of July weekend. The passes also will be sold at state park sites where staff is available.

"The Discover Pass allows state natural-resource agencies to maintain public access to millions of acres of state recreation lands," said Phil Anderson, WDFW director. "Sport fishers and hunters have traditionally supported WDFW wildlife areas and water access sites through their license fees; now all who enjoy these lands will share in their support."

The pass is required for vehicle access to recreation lands and water-access sites managed by WDFW, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission and the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The fine for not displaying the pass is \$99.

However, some exemptions to the requirement apply. For example, holders of most annual fishing and hunting licenses are not required to purchase a Discover Pass to use WDFW lands and water-access sites. For a list of these exemptions and other information, see the [Discover Pass website](#) or call 1-866-320-9933.

North Puget Sound

Summer has arrived, and anglers have their pick of numerous fishing opportunities. Freshwater anglers can cast for chinook at some of the region's rivers, as well as trout and bass at local lakes. On Puget Sound, the crab season opens July 1 in most areas, and additional salmon openings are just around the corner.

"The **salmon** fishing season really gets going in July, when more marine areas open in Puget Sound," said Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "And with the high cost of fuel these days, anglers in the region might want to take advantage of these opportunities to hook a salmon close to home."

Puget Sound salmon fishing opportunities in July include:

- **Marine Area 7** (San Juan Islands), which opens July 1. Anglers can keep one chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon.
- **Marine Area 10** (Seattle-Bremerton), where anglers will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, beginning July 1. However, anglers must release all chinook through July 15. Beginning July 16, anglers can retain hatchery chinook – marked with a clipped adipose fin – but wild chinook must be released.
- **Tulalip Bay "bubble" fishery** remains open each week from Friday through noon Monday through Sept. 5. Anglers fishing the bubble have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon.
- **Marine Area 9** (Admiralty Inlet) opens for hatchery chinook retention July 16. Anglers will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release wild chinook and chum.

Thiesfeld said anglers should be aware that the inner Elliott Bay salmon fishery is closed in July this year to protect Green River naturally spawning chinook, which are expected to return in low numbers. Check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) for details on salmon fishing opportunities.

Tara Livingood, Puget Sound recreational salmon fishery manager for WDFW, reminds anglers that they are responsible for correctly identifying their catch. In past years, some anglers were checked at the docks with undersized chinook they misidentified as pink salmon, she said.

"It's important that people take the time to learn the differences between each salmon species – both to protect the resource and to avoid a fine," Livingood said. Descriptions of each salmon species can be found on the department's [recreational salmon fishing webpage](#) and in the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#). Anglers also can ask WDFW's dockside fish samplers for a salmon identification card before heading out on the water.

Break out those crab pots. The **Puget Sound crab fishery** gets under way July 1 in most areas. The exception is Marine Area 7, where the southern portion (San Juan Islands/Bellingham) opens July 15 and the northern portion (Gulf of Georgia) opens Aug. 15.

Under new rules adopted earlier this year by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission, all marine areas of Puget Sound will be open for crabbing Thursday through Monday of each week.

Mike Cenci, WDFW's deputy chief of enforcement, said all crabbers should review the rules of the fishery before heading out on the water. "We've found that in the past a significant number of violations occur because people don't take the time to fully understand the rules of the fishery," Cenci said. "Those rules, such as properly measuring and identifying crabs, are important tools designed to protect the health of the crab population."

Information on the rules, including how to properly record and report catch information is available on [WDFW's crab fishing webpage](#). The page includes links to a printable "Crabbing in Puget Sound" brochure and a "Puget Sound Recreational Crab Guide," both of which have information on crabbing regulations.

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.

In freshwater, portions of the Skagit and Cascade rivers are open for hatchery **chinook salmon** fishing through July 15. The Skagit is open to hatchery chinook retention from the Highway 530 Bridge at Rockport to Cascade River Road. On the Cascade, anglers can fish for salmon from the mouth of the river to the Rockport-Cascade Road Bridge. The daily limit on the Skagit and Cascade rivers is four hatchery chinook, two of which may be adults (chinook salmon at least 24 inches in length).

Portions of the Skykomish River are also open for salmon fishing. Anglers fishing the Skykomish, from the mouth to the Wallace River, have a daily limit of two hatchery chinook only.

The Reiter Ponds section of the Skykomish River opens June 29 for game fish, including **hatchery steelhead**. For more on that fishery, check the [fishing rule change](#).

Trout fishing also is open at several of the region's rivers and streams. Under the statewide rule for trout, there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches in rivers and streams. However, some of the region's rivers and streams have a rule requiring trout to be at least 14 inches in length to keep. For details on river fishing opportunities, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

Meanwhile, lake fishing for **bass, bluegill, perch,** and **crappie** is steadily improving as water temperatures increase and fish become more active. "Early summer can be a tricky time for anglers, given the abundance of natural food and unstable weather patterns," said Danny Garrett, WDFW fisheries biologist. "As we move into summer and temperatures rise, fish tend to feed in shallow water - about 2 to 5 feet - early in the morning and late in the evening." When fishing for lunker bass, Garrett recommends topwater baits, such as buzzbaits, frogs, and poppers, and soft plastic twitch baits, including stick baits and flukes.

During the heat of the day, bass often move to deeper water near structures or other cover, Garrett said. In clear, deep lakes, such as Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish, anglers should focus on the outside edge of boat docks and along the weed line in 15 to 20 feet of water, he said, noting that a drop-shot technique with plastic bait is a good approach.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

The summer salmon fishing season is under way along the coast, where anglers are hooking some bright chinook and coho.

Fishing was good during the selective fishery (June 18-25) for hatchery chinook and that has carried over to the traditional season, said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"Anglers are doing well for **chinook**, as well as **hatchery coho**, which we are seeing more of this year," Milward said. "It's still early in the season, but signs are pointing to a good July for salmon anglers out on the coast."

Anglers fishing marine areas 1 (Ilwaco), 2 (Westport-Ocean Shores), 3 (LaPush) and 4 (Neah Bay) can keep up to one chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit, but must release any chinook measuring less than 24 inches and hatchery coho less than 16 inches. Wild coho must be released unharmed. Those fishing marine areas 3 and 4 also are allowed one additional **pink salmon** each day.

Salmon fishing is open seven days a week, except in Marine Area 2 where anglers can fish for salmon Sundays through Thursdays. Salmon fishing is scheduled to continue through Sept. 18 in marine areas 2, 3 and 4, and through Sept. 30 in Marine Area 1, although those areas could close early if catch quotas are reached. Milward reminds anglers to check for any rule changes at WDFW's website.

In Puget Sound, salmon fishing seasons open July 1 in marine areas 5 (Sekiu), 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) and 12 (Hood Canal), while salmon fisheries in marine areas 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 13 (South Puget Sound) are already under way. Because salmon fishing rules vary depending on the marine area, anglers should check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) for all regulations before heading out on the water.

Tara Livingood, Puget Sound recreational salmon fishery manager for WDFW, reminds anglers that they are responsible for correctly identifying their catch. In past years, some anglers were checked at the docks with undersized chinook they misidentified as pink salmon, she said.

"It's important that people take the time to learn the differences between each salmon species – both to protect the resource and to avoid a fine," Livingood said. Descriptions of each salmon species can be found on the department's [recreational salmon fishing webpage](#) and in the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#). Anglers also can ask WDFW's dockside fish samplers for a salmon identification card before heading out on the water.

Prefer shellfish? The **Puget Sound crab** fishery gets under way July 1 in most areas. The exception is Marine Area 7, where the southern portion (San Juan Islands and Bellingham) opens July 15 and the northern portion (Gulf of Georgia) opens Aug. 15.

Under new rules adopted earlier this year by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission, all marine areas of Puget Sound will be open for crabbing Thursday through Monday of each week.

Mike Cenci, WDFW's deputy chief of enforcement, said all crabbers should review the rules of the fishery before heading out on the water. "We've found that in the past a significant number of violations occur because people don't take the time to fully understand the rules of the fishery," Cenci said. "Those rules, such as properly measuring and identifying crabs, are important tools designed to protect the health of the crab population."

Information on the rules, including how to properly record and report catch information is available on [WDFW's crab fishing webpage](#). The page includes links to a printable "Crabbing in Puget Sound" brochure and a "Puget Sound Recreational Crab Guide," both of which have information on crabbing regulations.

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.

Anglers still hoping to land a big flatfish will have one more day in marine areas 3 and 4, where **halibut** fishing will be open June 30 only. In Marine Area 1, the late season for halibut opens Aug. 5. The fishery there will be open three days per week (Friday through Sunday) until the quota is taken or Sept. 30, whichever occurs first. Halibut fishing in Marine Area 2 (Westport/Ocean Shores) is only open in the northern nearshore area.

Meanwhile, a few of rivers are open for **salmon** fishing, including the Hoh, Quillayute and a portion of the Sol Duc. Beginning July 1, a few other rivers open for salmon fishing, including the Bogachiel, Calawah and Nisqually.

Trout fishing also is open at several of the region's rivers and streams. Under the statewide rule for trout, there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches in rivers and streams. However, some of the region's rivers and streams have a rule requiring trout to be at least 14 inches in length to keep. For details on river fishing opportunities, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

Southwest Washington

Summer chinook salmon will continue moving up the lower Columbia River in July in large numbers, joined by an even larger return of summer steelhead later in the month. Sockeye salmon, sturgeon and shad are also "in season" on the big river, and salmon fishing is open on the coast.

Although the Columbia River is still running high and cold, anglers have plenty of options for catching fish in July, said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"Anglers may need to change their tactics to match the conditions, but fishing should be good throughout the month," Hymer said. "Sometimes the biggest challenge is figuring out which option to pursue on a given day."

Summer **chinook salmon** are a good bet, especially during the first two-to-three weeks of July, Hymer said. According to the season forecast, 92,000 summer chinook – some weighing up to 40

pounds – are expected to enter the Columbia River this year, which would be the largest number since 1980.

Like last year, the six-week fishery for hatchery-reared summer chinook was made possible by the additional revenue produced by the new Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement fee.

“With water temperatures below normal, anglers will likely have the greatest success fishing closer to shore,” Hymer said. “Spinners work well under those conditions, although wobblers might be in order if the water temperature rises and the fish go deeper.”

The fishery runs through July 31 from the Megler Astoria Bridge up to Priest Rapids Dam. Anglers may retain up to two adult chinook salmon with clipped adipose fins per day. All wild, unclipped chinook salmon must be released.

During the summer chinook fishery, anglers can retain hatchery steelhead and sockeye salmon to reach their daily limit of two adult fish. Under a total daily limit of six fish, the limit for adult fish may include two salmon, two **hatchery steelhead**, or one of each.

Based on preseason forecasts, 400,000 summer steelhead and 162,000 sockeye salmon will move into the Columbia River and its tributaries this year. Steelhead usually start coming on strong in late July, just as the summer chinook run starts to taper off, Hymer said. Anglers fishing for hatchery steelhead near the shore of the Columbia River are most likely to hook a **sockeye**.

“Sockeye are pretty single-minded about moving upriver, so anglers should really consider them a ‘bonus fish’ if they catch one,” Hymer said. “But bank anglers should do pretty well with the combination of hatchery steelhead and sockeye salmon this month.”

A lot of those steelhead will be heading up area tributaries, including the Lewis, Kalama and Washougal rivers – and particularly the Cowlitz River. Once the weather warms up, many will also dip into the White Salmon River and Drano Lake, where fishing usually heats up in late July.

Out in the ocean, salmon fishing is open through Sept. 30 off the coast of Ilwaco (Marine Area 1) and through Sept. 18 in ocean areas farther north. For more information, see the regional Weekender report for [Region 6](#).

Rather catch a **sturgeon**? Fishery managers from Washington and Oregon have extended retention fishing through July 31 below the Wauna powerlines near Cathlamet and added fishing days June 30-July 2 and July 7-9 from Bonneville Dam upriver to The Dalles Dam. In the estuary fishery, the daily limit is one white sturgeon with a fork-length measurement of 41 inches to 54 inches. Anglers fishing the Bonneville Pool will have a daily catch limit of one white sturgeon, with a fork-length measurement of 38 inches to 54 inches.

As before, the area from the Wauna powerlines upriver to Marker 82 nine miles below Bonneville Dam will be open to retention fishing Thursday, Fridays and Saturdays through July 31. The Dalles Pool is also open to retention fishing until the annual catch reaches the 300-fish guideline. In those and other areas of the Columbia River, all green sturgeon must be released.

And don't forget **shad**. While not as highly prized as salmon or sturgeon, they can put up a good fight and make for good eating, Hymer said. While their numbers appear to be down this year, more than a million of them will likely mount a charge up the Columbia this month. There are no daily limits or size limits for shad, the largest member of the herring family.

Fishing for **walleye** usually slows down at this time of year, but **bass** fishing tends to pick up in the summer heat. The McNary Pool is generally the best bet for bass.

The good news for **trout** anglers is that this year's heavy snowpack is holding down water temperatures in most lakes and reservoirs, which should keep the fish biting well into summer, said John Weinheimer, another WDFW fish biologist.

"Cool water should prolong active fisheries in Swift Reservoir, Riffe Lake and a lot of other lakes and reservoirs throughout the region," Weinheimer said. Two of those reservoirs, Lake Scanewa and Mayfield Reservoir in Lewis County, will each be planted with about 6,000 catchable-size trout in July, he said.

The bad news is that the snowpack has also delayed stocking a number of high lakes. WDFW usually stocks Goose Lake, a popular fishing lake in Skamania County, by early June, but the road there was still inaccessible to a tanker truck at the end of the month, Weinheimer said.

"We're hoping the road will clear enough that we can get in there by the Fourth of July," he said. "It's a super-popular fishery and we know that a lot of people are waiting for word that it's been stocked. The same is true of several other high lakes in the region."

Meanwhile, Weinheimer suggests that angler cast a line at Northwestern Reservoir on the White Salmon River. "With the recent announcement that work to demolish Condit Dam will begin in October, this will be the last year to fish Northwestern, because it simply won't exist after the dam is removed."

Rainbow trout planted in Northwestern Reservoir range from 10-inch catchables to 5-8-pound broodstock.

Eastern Washington

As water temperatures warm, fishing success shifts from coldwater trout to warmwater or "spiny ray" species like bass and bluegill.

"These fish are just more active in warmer water and are easier to catch now," said Marc Divens, explains WDFW warmwater fish biologist. "There are some waters in the region that are specifically managed for warmwater species and others that are mixed waters, where trout fishing slows at this time and warmwater fishing picks up."

With a "slot limit" on largemouth bass, Divens encourages anglers to keep and use the smaller fish caught. As explained under the statewide freshwater rules on page 27 of the fishing rules pamphlet, only largemouth bass less than 12 inches may be retained, except that one over 17 inches may be kept. Up to five largemouth bass may be kept each day.

Smallmouth bass also have a size restriction – only one over 14 inches may be retained, with a daily limit of 10 fish. As with largemouth, anglers are encouraged to keep smaller bass. Overpopulation of these species can reduce the quality of fisheries.

Eloika Lake, seven miles north of Chattaroy off Highway 2 in north Spokane County, has **largemouth bass, yellow perch** and **black crappie**. Eloika is open to fishing year-round and has a WDFW access site, along with a resort.

Downs Lake, seven miles east of Sprague in southwest Spokane County, also has largemouth bass, yellow perch and black crappie. This quality crappie water is managed under a nine-inch minimum size and 10-fish limit on crappie. Downs is open March through September and has a resort with a small boat launch.

Silver Lake, one mile east of the town of Medical Lake in Spokane County, has largemouth bass, black crappie, **bluegill** and **pumpkinseed sunfish**. There's a nine-inch minimum size and 10-

fish limit on crappie there. Silver is open year-round and has both WDFW access and a resort.

Newman Lake, 12 miles northeast of Spokane in eastern Spokane County, has largemouth and **smallmouth bass**, bluegill, black crappie, yellow perch, and **bullhead catfish**. Newman is open year-round and has two resorts, plus WDFW access.

Liberty Lake, about a mile from the Idaho border in eastern Spokane County, is a mixed species fishery where **rainbow** and **brown trout** rule at the outset of the season, from March through May, but the spiny rays come on through the summer. Liberty has virtually all of the warmwater species, including **walleye**, but both species of bass and yellow perch dominate. There's a WDFW boat launch available.

Sprague Lake, on the Lincoln-Adams county line, is a mixed-species water where Divens says fall surveys showed an abundant population of small largemouth bass. "There are a few up to five pounds, but most are 10 to 12 inches," he said. "There's also a developing panfish population – bluegill and crappie – but in general they're still small and growing in size." Sprague is open year round and has two resorts and a WDFW access.

Coffeepot Lake, 12 miles northeast of Odessa in Lincoln County, can be excellent for yellow perch, black crappie and largemouth bass, but it's under selective gear rules. That means only unscented artificial flies or lures with one single-point, barbless hook are allowed.

The Twin lakes, in the Lake Creek drainage upstream of Coffeepot, have largemouth bass, perch, crappie, and other panfish. Upper Twin can be particularly good for bass. Both are open year-round and have Bureau of Land Management (BLM) access.

Deer and Loon lakes in Stevens County shift at this time of year from trout fishing to largemouth and smallmouth bass and other warmwater fish, especially at Deer Lake, 14 miles southeast of Chewelah. (Loon is a few miles further south, on the west side of Hwy. 395.) Both are open through October and have WDFW access and resorts.

Lake Roosevelt is famous for its walleye, but there's a good population of smallmouth bass in the big Columbia River reservoir, too.

The Snake River in the south end of the region is also a good bet for summertime smallmouth bass plus nice **channel catfish**.

Good **rainbow** and **cuthroat trout** fishing can still be had these days, says WDFW Regional Fish Program Manager John Whalen, it just takes a shift in either place or time of day to fish. Lowland trout lakes are better in very early morning or late evening hours. Trout lakes at higher elevation, mostly in the northeast district of the region, remain productive longer in the summer.

Those afield on the Fourth of July and throughout the month are asked to exercise caution against sparking a wildfire. Despite the delayed arrival of summer weather, wildfire danger is growing with warmer, drier weather, especially in eastern Washington.

DNR has banned burning from July through September in forested areas of the state. That means that campfires are allowed only in approved fire pits within designated state, county, municipal or other campgrounds. The use of gas and propane self-contained stoves and barbeques is allowed. For more information, see DNR's website at <http://1.usa.gov/jpjiZO>.

WDFW's own public conduct rules for wildlife areas and water access sites prohibit discharging of fireworks at any time.

Meanwhile, anglers (and hunters) have an opportunity on July 5 to get a little more out of their fishing (or hunting) license – discounts on Spokane Indians Baseball game seats during the 6th

annual Fish and Wildlife Night at Avista Stadium in Spokane. The stadium concourse that night will feature fish and wildlife displays and activities between innings will include some casting and other demonstrations or competitions. For more information, visit the [Spokane Indians website](#).

Northcentral Washington

Anglers have been catching an assortment of trout and chinook salmon around the region, while warmwater fishing is finally heating up after a slow start to traditional summer weather.

"The Basin's big three for good **walleye** and **largemouth** and **smallmouth bass** at this time are Moses Lake, Banks Lake, and Potholes Reservoir," said Chad Jackson, a district fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). All three year-round-open waters also have populations of **bluegill**, **crappie** and **yellow perch** that can produce good catches through the summer. With the late run-off this year, these big waterways are still at or near high pool, which has slowed normal shoreline action at some reservoirs, such as Potholes.

Evergreen Reservoir on the Quincy Wildlife Area in Grant County is another good July fishery in the Basin, with walleye, largemouth bass, bluegill and other species.

Lower Goose Lake, one of the Seep lakes south of Potholes Reservoir, has a good crappie and bluegill fishery. For crappie, Lower Goose has a minimum size of nine inches and a daily catch limit of 10 fish. It also has a restriction that only five bluegill over six inches can be kept, although there is no daily limit on smaller fish.

Hutchinson and Shiner lakes, on the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge seven miles north of Othello in Adams County, should be heating up this month for largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie and perch.

Meanwhile, fishing for **spring chinook salmon** on the Icicle River should continue to be good as more fish move through the system, said WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist Bob Jateff. The season continues on the Icicle through July 31, from the closure signs located 800 feet upstream of the mouth to 500 feet downstream of the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery barrier dam. The daily limit is three salmon, with a minimum size of 12 inches. A night closure is in effect.

Summer chinook salmon fishing starts July 1 on the mainstem Columbia River and some tributaries above Priest Rapids Dam. The daily limit is six chinook salmon, minimum size 12 inches. Up to three adults may be retained, of which only one may be an unmarked wild fish. Anglers need to consult the current sportfishing regulations for specifics on the area they would like to fish. All salmon fitted with a colored floy (anchor) tag must be released as these fish are part of ongoing studies being conducted by the Yakama Nation and WDFW.

Jateff reports Pearrygin, Wannacut, Wapato, Spectacle, and Conconully lakes and Conconully Reservoir are all producing good catches of **rainbow trout** in the 10-12 inch range, with carryover fish up to 15 inches.

"Water temperatures are starting to rise a bit, but anglers can still catch some nice fish at a number of selective gear lakes," Jateff said. "Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, Big Twin near Winthrop, and Blue Lake near Oroville can be productive during July if you use different fishing methods than earlier in the season. Fast-sinking lines are the norm, which allow the fly or lure to get to the proper depth. Anglers should play the fish as quickly as possible and not remove them from the water to help in recovery during these hotter months."

The Sinlahekin's Blue Lake, along with Okanogan County's Bonaparte and Lost lakes, are under a new rule this year to help protect the common loon, a sensitive species in Washington that is likely to become threatened or endangered without improved survival rates. The rule prohibits

the use of lead weights and jigs that measure 1½ inches or less along the longest axis. Ingestion of this small lead fishing tackle is a leading cause of fatal lead poisoning of loons, which have been known to nest on Blue Lake in the past and are currently nesting at Bonaparte and Lost lakes.

"The Methow River is currently running high, so serious trout fishing is probably delayed until the first week or two of July," Jateff said. The Methow and selected tributaries are restricted to catch-and-release fishing under selective gear rules. A number of tributaries are closed to all fishing, so anglers need to consult current regulations before they head out. Any bull trout caught must be released unharmed and can't be taken out of the water.

Those afield on the Fourth of July and throughout the month are asked to exercise caution against sparking a wildfire. Despite the delayed arrival of summer weather, wildfire danger is growing with warmer, drier weather, especially in eastern Washington.

The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has banned open burning from July through September in forested areas of the state. That means that campfires are allowed only in approved fire pits within designated state, county, municipal or other campgrounds. The use of gas and propane self-contained stoves and barbecues is allowed. For more information, see [DNR's website](#).

WDFW's own public conduct rules for wildlife areas and water access sites prohibit discharging of fireworks at any time.

The risk of wildfire isn't restricted to forested areas of the region, said Greg Fitzgerald, WDFW Columbia Wildlife Area manager. He said the wet spring has led to abundant weed growth, including dense patches of 12 to 16-inch cheat grass that is drying fast with hotter, windy weather.

Southcentral Washington

Area anglers have several good fishing opportunities in July, ranging from an extended spring chinook season on a portion of the Yakima River to newly stocked jumbo trout in three popular high-mountain lakes. On the Columbia River, the catch is running to walleye, shad and the occasional summer chinook salmon.

Citing the late arrival of this year's run, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) extended **spring chinook** fishing through July 31 on the 20-mile stretch of the Yakima River between the Interstate 82 Bridge in Union Gap to the Burlington Northern Railroad bridge 500 feet downstream from Roza Dam. The daily limit remains two hatchery chinook, with clipped adipose fins.

"Fishing has been very good for springers, especially in that stretch of the Yakima River," said Eric Anderson, a WDFW fish biologist in Yakima. "We expect to have hatchery fish available for harvest well into July."

Anderson noted that fishing is closed for steelhead, and that terminal gear in the spring chinook fishery is restricted to one single-point, barbless hook with a hook gap (from point to shank) of three-quarters of an inch or less. Bait and knotted nets are allowed in the section of the river open to salmon fishing.

A Columbia River Salmon/Steelhead endorsement is required to participate in the fishery. For additional regulations, see the [Rule Change](#) notice on the WDFW website.

On the Columbia River, most anglers fishing below the Tri-Cities have been focusing on **walleye**. Creel checks conducted during the last days of June included 51 anglers aboard 22 boats with 50 walleye. Catches of **shad** are also picking up. Shad counts at McNary Dam topped 5,000 fish per day in late June, and are expected to keep rising through mid-July.

Anglers have also been picking up a few **summer chinook** below McNary Dam, but the action has been slow upstream of the dam, said Paul Hoffarth, a WDFW district fish biologist in Pasco. Summer chinook and **sockeye** can be harvested in the Columbia River below the Highway 395 Bridge (blue bridge), but only chinook with a clipped adipose may be retained. The Hanford Reach area of the Columbia River is also open to fishing for hatchery chinook salmon with clipped adipose fins.

Anglers also should be aware that **sturgeon** sanctuaries are in effect in many areas of the Columbia and Snake rivers. These sanctuary areas below Ice Harbor, McNary and Priest Rapids Dams are closed to all fishing for sturgeon through July 31.

Meanwhile, fishing for stocked **rainbow trout** is still going strong on lowland lakes near Yakima, Ellensburg and Cle Elum, said Anderson, the fish biologist based in Yakima. He especially likes the prospects at Bear Lake and Clear Lakes in Yakima County and Easton Ponds in Kittitas County. Also, WDFW is planting hundreds of 1.5-pound **jumbo** trout in three popular "drive to" high-mountain lakes the last week of June. Those lakes include Leech and Dog lakes near White Pass, and Lost Lake near Snoqualmie Pass.

"These lakes will provide some outstanding fishing opportunities for the Fourth of July weekend," Anderson said.

Mountain streams were still running high in late June, but fishing conditions should improve there and in high lakes through July, Anderson said. For **kokanee**, he recommends Bumping Lake, Rimrock Lake and Keecheus and Kachess reservoirs.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Yeah, there's a fishing app for that (commercial site)

<http://www.fishheadapp.com/>

Beautiful photography, as always - Catch Magazine:

<http://www.catchmagazine.net/>

Details on Willamette closure at i-% Springfield:

<http://www.registerguard.com/web/newslocalnews/26485163-46/river-bridge-construction-schmitt-boat.html.csp>

Kansas man catches 466 pound halibut, a new world record:

<http://www.dailyjournal.net/view/story/6fb3a7b225064c1dbea00b839d3b8f56/AK--Giant-Halibut/S>

GOOD LUCK!