

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 22st – July 28th, 2011**

Willamette Valley/Metro- With the summer chinook closure earlier this week, anglers will again focus on summer steelhead which should be abundant in the mainstem Columbia. Boaters usually do very well this time of year in the gorge but continued high water may delay the action up there. Metro area beaches, such as those on Sauvie's Island, should provide a fair opportunity for bank anglers using spin-n-glos that are heavily scented. Chinook season will re-open on August 1st but won't get good again in the metro area until late August.

Daily fish passage at Willamette Falls dropped off a little at mid-month. The shad run, disappointing for many, seems to be over. Trout fishing has been good on the Middle Fork Willamette.

McKenzie anglers are catching rainbows and native cutthroat. A few bright summer steelhead were taken over the past weekend. Flow increased with precipitation on Tuesday of this week.

Fish are being seen on the North Santiam below Fishermen's Bend but few are biting. A few summers have been landed upstream to Packsaddle.

A few steelhead have been caught at McIver, but overall it's been very slow on the Clackamas.

The Cedar Creek area on the Sandy is producing a few summer runs but it has been crowded.

Northwest – With momentum gaining for albacore tuna fishing, focus has quickly shifted from salmon to "long-fins" out of most northern ports. Action for coho is reported as fair NW of the Tillamook Bay entrance but calm seas have had anglers more motivated to travel further west in pursuit of bigger quarry. Garibaldi, Pacific City and Depoe Bay remain the 3 most productive ports on the Oregon Coast for coho salmon although wild fish dominate the catches.

Tuna anglers were having success just outside of 20 miles to the west. However, warm water pockets change almost daily so anglers interested in learning how to successfully target this species should get to know how to read sea surface temperatures at www.terrafin.com. Trollers are doing best using bright colored clones but jigging should pick up later in the season.

Sturgeon fishing remains good on the lower Columbia with numerous oversize fish in the catch. Keepers remain focused on sand shrimp for bait with Taylor Sands and the water above Tongue Point producing good catches. The better bite has been on the incoming tide.

Tides become less favorable for beach plunkers looking for summer steelhead. Fortunately, with the high summer flow, action should stay fair for those working hot colored spin-n-glos in the outgoing tide. Jones Beach near Westport to Rainier should produce well.

River fishers on the north coast should be focusing on sea-run cutthroat trout in the lower reaches of most watersheds. Action should peak in the next several weeks with small spoons or lake trolls tipped with worms. Regulations vary by watershed so check them carefully before venturing out.

Chinook are rumored in the Nestucca tidewater. Chinook fishing in Nehalem Bay has been predictably poor. Other district streams are very low and clear, creating challenging conditions for those targeting coastal summer steelhead.

Southwest – Ocean-bound boaters out of Winchester Bay found albacore over the past weekend at

just over 25 miles to catch all they could carry back to port. Very few coho have been taken outside of Winchester and crabbing is slow. Steelheading is worthwhile in the North Umpqua while smallmouth bass fishing has turned on in the South Umpqua.

Tuna fishers out of Charleston enjoyed good fishing last weekend with most boats landing good numbers.

Offshore bottom fishing has been hot or cold one day to the next out of Gold beach with easy limits one day and only a few opportunities the next. Ocean crabbing has been fair but steady. Salmon fishing in Rogue Bay fell off over the past week as chinook catches picked up in the lower river due to good flows of cool water, a non-typical event in July. Fishing is poor in the middle river but the upper Rogue has continued to put out springers and summer steelhead.

While central and northern Oregon ports have been bagging albacore for weeks, boats launching from the south have had to cover a lot of water to find tuna. Over the past week, however, warm, blue water moved nearer to shore, enabling recreational craft to make good catches out of Brookings fewer than 20 miles out. Mild offshore conditions contributed to boater success although didn't help chinook and coho fishing which has been poor.

Eastern – Steelheading remains slow on the lower Deschutes with numbers of summers in the river still low. Trout fishing is good as water levels drop.

Fishing is fair on the Wallowa River with the water level starting to drop. Wallowa Lake has been fishing well.

Water remains high on the Grande Ronde hampering results which would otherwise be decent at this time of year.

Surf perch fishing has been excellent at river mouths, particularly the Winchuck and Elk.

SW Washington – The Cowlitz remains the best summer steelhead option for inland anglers although effort remains highest along lower Columbia beaches as run numbers increase. Plunkers are tipping their offerings with striped coon shrimp.

All district systems are down in summer steelhead adults showing up at the hatchery facilities with the Washougal the one exception. These systems have produced poorly for much of the year.

With passage numbers on the climb, the Wind and Klickitat Rivers should begin to produce more consistent catches. Bobber and jigs will work well when the water is clear. Flows should remain good for much of the season.

Columbia River Fishing Report – After a great run on the Columbia, numbers are starting to ramp down. Passage at Bonneville is starting to wane for the tens of thousands of summer Chinook, sockeye, shad and the like and what was with that chum salmon that passed earlier this week? Anyone get the final destination of that fish?

With a downturn in dam passage, success rates for salmon has dropped off too. The good news; summer steelhead numbers are really starting to ramp up, and it's about time! Catch rates however don't really reflect big numbers in the mainstem. The most likely segment of the mainstem is the Portland to Longview stretch or just downstream of that but only 3 hatchery fish were taken for 147 bank rods. Gorge boats, typically slayin' about this time of year, were producing poorly. High water is certainly to blame (we always have to have a scape-goat, right?)

Flows are forecast to continue to drop but it's still quite high for this time of year. Hopefully that will change in the coming weeks as there are still hundreds of thousands of fish to come, assuming they're coming...

That makes sturgeon fishing the highlight on the mainstem this week. Sturgeon fishing remains good with Taylor Sands and the shallows just upstream of Tongue Point strong options for those seeking keepers. Water from 6 to 12 feet is producing best with the incoming tide producing the best results, especially on the big minus tides we're just coming off of. Anchovies have yet to make a productive bait, especially with all the high water coming from downstream. The high water is keeping the anchovies in the salt. That too will change in coming weeks.

The season is still slated to close on July 31st and it's been a great late season. Effort reflects that as weekends have been very busy. There have been numerous oversize fish caught and released in recent weeks.

Looking offshore, anglers haven't been all that excited about coho west of the Columbia River. Coho have remained pretty far offshore with the north producing the best results. Weather hasn't been too cooperative with bar crossings the first obstacle encountered by outgoing anglers.

Saltwater anglers have certainly taken a higher liking to tuna with the season off to a good start. A large grade of fish is not far offshore with some anglers targeting fish starting at 25 miles. Trolled tuna clones have produced the best results in recent days with some anglers jigging up good catches after the first trolled fish hits the spread. From a fishery perspective, this program is just getting underway. It's only going to get better from here.

Crabbing is fair in the ocean and poor in the river. Anglers paying attention to softshell crab should plan on weeding through about half of their catch.

The Guide's Forecast – Although steelhead offer the best chance at action for most anglers, success rates have been less than impressive. Beach plunkers should have done really well on the last tide series but creel checks tell a different story. The potential won't be as strong this weekend with a waning tide series, even though there are a lot of fish in the system.

Bonneville anglers probably shouldn't count on great catches either as high flows will continue to limit success rates. Fish close to shore and although anglers typically use spinners this time of year, bait along with spin-n-glos should be a better option in the higher, cooler flows.

Beach and boat anglers from the estuary to Portland shouldn't have high expectations but it remains a great option for those that don't have a boat. Scent lures heavily as this is the only technique where fish have to come to you to catch them.

Summer Chinook will be an incidental catch that you'd have to release anyway. Don't target them.

Sturgeon fishing remains a great option for those with boats. Weaker tides should prolong opportunity but you do want to target water that has flow. Keep to the shallows where fish are more likely to be actively feeding. Sand shrimp remains the only bait that you need but bring lots of them because you want to be fishing quality baits all the time. I've been going through about 2 dozen shrimp per angler. If you're "yellow goo" is gone from your bait, a sturgeon (or trash fish) hit your bait and there's really no reason for it to come back. Keep quality bait fishing.

Target Taylor Sands but when I last fished there, action wasn't as good as it had been. We found a good portion of our fish on Taylor Sands closer to the bridge, in about 8-foot of water. The

water upstream of Tongue Point has been producing fewer bites but the fish have been in the keeper range. Keep in mind there are oversize in the area and you're likely to encounter one if you put in a full day in productive water.

Salmon fishing likely will remain less than impressive. Plan on going fair distances to get keepers and wild fish do make up the bulk of the catch. North remains the better place to target with trolled herring or anchovies. The offshore forecast, although not always accurate (especially the farther out you read it) is:

FRI

N WIND 5 TO 10 KT...RISING TO 10 TO 15 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. GUSTS UP TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

FRI NIGHT

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT. PATCHY FOG AFTER MIDNIGHT.

SAT

N WIND 5 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT. PATCHY FOG.

SAT NIGHT

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT. PATCHY FOG.

SUN

NW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

MON

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 6 FT.

Offshore albacore will take the lion's share of attention this week with favorable bar crossings. Although the swell isn't bad, wind waves will create some less than ideal conditions for those planning an offshore excursion. It's a pretty easy fishery once you get yourself out there. Look for the blue water, warmer than 61 degrees and start trolling. From there, experience will dictate your success. Throw jigs at them and hope for good action. The predicted rough ocean chop will keep most boats from venturing out but anglers are on the watch for better conditions.

Bottomfishing should improve with a weak tide series after the weekend. Dog days have set in however so action isn't as hot and heavy as one would experience in the late spring. Rough wind chop won't bode well for anglers looking for a bounty. Crabbing offshore should be improving while crabbing in the river will likely remain poor.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – There seems to be no urgency to update Willamette Falls fish counts online at this time of year. Suffice to say there are roughly 20,000 summer steelhead and about twice that number of spring Chinook in the river above the Falls with a couple of hundred of each crossing daily.

While the McKenzie experienced an increase in flow overnight on July 19th, it has dropped back down and is in great shape for fishing. Water temperatures are fairly stable in the low 50s.

The Santiam system is in excellent fishing condition. Over 3,200 summer steelhead and 4,000 springers had been counted at the Foster Dam fish trap on the South Santiam as of July 13th.

Estacada Lake, Faraday Lake, Harriet Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Carmen Reservoir, Detroit Reservoir, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, and the North Fork Santiam River above Detroit Lake are scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout.

The Guide's Forecast – Although there are still salmon in the lower Willamette, as water temperatures approach the 70 degree mark, the chances of enticing one to strike are nil. Likewise, a poor shad season has just about wound up with very few even interested in trying for them at this time of year. Cutthroat are cooperating on the Middle Fork where occasional summer steelhead hookups are providing pleasant surprises to trout fishers.

Fly fishers are enjoying good results on the McKenzie by matching hatches of Golden Stones and caddis. Nymphing during the day is quite effective. Steelheading has been fair with persistent anglers getting a chance or two on every trip.

Try below Foster Dam for summer steelhead and spring Chinook. Hookups have slowed and some areas are crowded but chances of landing a fish seem to be best in that stretch. Boaters have the option of trying lower where fresh fish continue to enter.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Despite the calendar telling us it's summer, Clackamas flows have held fairly steady thanks to upper elevation snowmelt. The later-than-normal spring Chinook run will continue entering the Clack but fish seem to be wasting no time milling around the lower river and are instead high-tailing it upstream. Summer steelhead are also in the system. Recent rainfall increased flow at Eagle Creek and may draw a couple of additional springers into the system. There has been little angler effort on the creek this season.

Rain this week caused a rise in the Sandy River levels but the change was momentary as it has since returned to the same conditions as it was in mid-July.

The Guide's Forecast – With seasonably warm temperatures in the forecast, hit the Clackamas early in the day as happy-splashers will outnumber anglers this coming weekend. Alternately, one could try for summers above Rivermill. While catches above the dam have fallen off recently, it may be worth a shot for a steelhead hookup.

A few steelhead have been taken near Cedar Creek and Oxbow as well as the occasional springer near Dodge Park but results have been slow. Spinners have been effective on the river above Dodge. Results aren't expected to improve in the sunny, warm weekend to come.

North Coast Fishing Report – Most anglers will remain focused on offshore opportunity with salmon a bit more popular on the shorter bar run out of Tillamook Bay. Anglers are typically running north so as to ride the NW wind chop back to port when it picks up in the late morning. Action has been fair but do plan on weeding through lots of wild fish before taking your limit of hatchery fish. Fish have been running 5 to 7 pounds but should be putting on weight daily. Hatchery fish have recently been reported off of Rockaway and Manzanita in the 220 to 280 foot range.

Crabbing has been fair although a fair number of soft shell crabs are still being caught.

Tuna fever remains strong out of Garibaldi with some anglers reporting upwards of 40 quality fish for a day's effort. This shouldn't change in the near future but check the Columbia River forecast section for the offshore forecast. It doesn't look too favorable. Action would likely be great for those willing to get pounded a bit.

Back inshore, there isn't a whole lot to get excited about. Rivers remain low with summer steelhead and cutthroat trout the best target potentials. Spring Chinook are starting to get color but will still cut red. Problem is, they've been in fresh water so long that they're much less likely to bite. Summer steelhead should be targeted in the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers but returns are minimal. There isn't a lot to be excited about for freshwater opportunity until rains swell district streams.

Crabbing is picking up slightly on most north coast estuaries but far from the potential in the fall.

The Guide's Forecast – It's dog days and although ocean opportunity rules the roost this time of year, offshore conditions don't look very favorable for excursions this week. Wind waves are the buster with a 3-foot wind chop motivating about every angler to mow the lawn instead of head west for coho or tuna.

Coho and tuna would be strong options if the weather was cooperating. If anglers do go offshore for the coho option, head north as winds in the late morning will likely kick up and you can ride them home. Troll shallow in the morning and go progressively deeper as the day wears on.

If you're tuna fishing, plan on going out a minimum of 25 miles. Look for blue water and troll until you hit a school and throw jigs at them, keeping one on the line as long as possible. Although fish will respond better to live bait later in the season, live bait should work well this time of year if you can stay on the fish. The good news, fishing will only get better from here.

If you're targeting salmon or steelhead inland, prepare for low water conditions. Fish are spooky and there may be a few that are willing to bite first thing in the morning. Fish the fast water with small baits, preferably clusters of eggs. Heads of holes will likely hold willing steelhead on the Nestucca and Wilson Rivers. Spinners may work as well.

Sea-run cutthroat fishing will be best in tidewater but anglers should be able to get into fish in the upper reaches of most coastal systems as well. You'll want to target fast water, especially water that has a broken surface. Check regulations carefully as they vary by watershed.

Central & South Coast Reports –Boats launching out of central Oregon ports have been experiencing fair to good results for rockfish and have been picking up a few ling cod on every trip. Coho catches which were very slow over the past weekend, picked up a little mid-week and gave hope for the coming weeks. Tuna results have been good and will improve as offshore water warms.

Offshore bottom fishing rules update - starting today, July 21st, anglers seeking bottom fish are not allowed to do so in water deeper than **120 feet** (20 fathoms). This rule change is to protect over-fished, deep-water species yelloweye and canary rockfish. In addition, as of this date, cabezon may no longer be taken by boat fishers although shore-fishers can still keep 'em. See **Random Links**, below, for 20-fathom waypoints.

Offshore results for coho out of Winchester Bay have been slow and the majority of the few coho landed have been unclipped so couldn't be kept. Ocean crabbing has been fair. Chinook are being taken in the lower bay but not many. Albacore tuna catches have been good when boats have been able to get across the Umpqua bar. Pinkfin perch remain available in the bay although the bite has been off and on with best results at first light. Generally, surf fishing from area beaches has been more reliable this year. Crabbing has improved a little in Winchester Bay while the South Jetty has been fairly reliable for rockfish and greenling. Shad fishing on the Umpqua

mainstem was nearly a bust this year as the water never did come into optimum shape. Spinners remain available on the North Umpqua in modest number although they may no longer be taken starting the 1st of August. High, cool water delayed summer steelhead which means opportunities for them will continue for a while. With the South Umpqua dropping and warming (finally), smallmouth bass fishing is good and improving with the best results yet to come.

Boats launching out of Charleston have been doing very well for a variety of rockfish as well as returning to port with decent ling cod catches. A few Chinook have been taken in the jaws of Coos Bay. Crabbing has picked up a little inside although effort has been light. Trout fishing has been fair in the Coos River.

There seems to be some disagreement among local anglers and guides as to whether the Chinook in the lower Rogue are late springers or early fall fish. Those who are catching them seem more concerned with getting them to the boat than properly labeling them. Regardless, fishing in the estuary has been nonproductive this week while Chinook have been taken in the lower Rogue daily. Usually, the lower river water temperature has been driven upwards by hot summer weather in late July while Chinook seek the ocean-cooled waters of the bay where they are intercepted by trollers. But this is not a 'usual' year. The middle Rogue is not worth the effort at this time. With water volume on the upper Rogue considerably faster than average for this time of year, summer steelheaders have been challenged to adapt. Try pulling plugs until the water level drops to a more manageable level. Results are historically good for summers at this time of year.

Results for trout at Diamond Lake has been contingent upon insect hatches. Fishing is best when rainbows haven't been gorging on bugs. While not the most pleasant fishing conditions, bugs are far less troublesome on cool, drizzly days. Still-fishing, fly casting and trolling have been effective.

Fish Lake and the Rogue above Lost Creek are scheduled to be stocked with trout.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Nymphing has been effective on the lower Deschutes with hookups improving in the evening. Caddis hatches are of greatest interest although Pale Morning Duns are making an appearance in the afternoon. Results on the middle river have been slow to fair with warm weather conditions although the upper Deschutes has been productive.

Results have been good on the Metolius for anglers starting with hatches in the afternoon and fishing well into the evening.

Despite high flows, Wallowa River fly anglers have been doing well for trout this week for good-sized rainbows.

Trout fishing has been a bit of a grind at Crane Prairie but a few historically large rainbows have been taken recently.

Steadily on the drop for the past week and forecast to continue through July, the John Day is producing good catches of smallmouth bass.

Trollers at Green Peter are reporting a spotty, on-and-off bite for kokanee. Some have endured, fishing most of the day to take limits of small to medium kokes.

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 **cutthroat 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:

Rockfish Deadline - 20-Fathom Waypoints:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/regulations/sport_fishing/20fmwaypts.pdf

New ODFW Publication - 50 Best Places to Fish within 60 Minutes of Roseburg:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/lets_go_fishing/docs/50_in_60_Roseburg.pdf

GOOD LUCK!