

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **August 19th – August 25th, 2011**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Although counts at Bonneville are ramping up for salmon, catch rates remain subdued in the gorge as fish are more likely to pass upstream in the warmer water temperatures. There will be occasional flurries of action but the more consistent fishing is likely to happen later in September and October when water temperatures begin to drop.

Steelhead action has also slowed with the warming temperatures but remains a very viable option for both bank and boat anglers working the Bonneville area. Fish are typically traveling in deeper lanes however; target 15 to 20 foot of water using spinners tipped with coon shrimp right on the bottom.

Downstream, boaters working wobblers on the outgoing tide are beginning to show promising catches of fall chinook in the Portland to Longview stretch, particularly around the mouth of the Cowlitz. Although this fishery is still weeks away from peaking, a strong early showing is to be expected with the large run predicted this year.

Daily Chinook and steelhead counts have fallen to single digits in the 70-degree water at Willamette Falls. Bass fishing is good above the Falls.

Fly anglers are enjoying steady results in stable water conditions on the McKenzie with flurries of activity early and late in the day.

Fishing is near standstill on the Sandy with the river milky due to glacial runoff.

Steelheading has been fair at times on the Clackamas with early mornings the only chance to fish.

Steelheading has been slow on the North Santiam with conditions best at Packsaddle. South Santiam prospects are somewhat better.

Northwest – Buoy 10 catches of chinook were surprisingly disappointing this weekend but success rates began climbing on Monday. Some of the season's larger chinook return earlier as is indicated by catches earlier this week. Fish to 40 pounds have been taken recently. Trolled herring remains a favorite for chinook near Astoria but some fish are falling to spinners, especially on the last part of outgoing tide. Chinook catches should explode this week while coho numbers are just starting to build.

Success rates in the ocean remain sporadic with hatchery coho present in good numbers one day and relatively absent the next. Wild coho numbers are impressive and undersize chinook are prevalent in the fishery as well. Anglers are still misidentifying chinook as coho with a large number of ocean anglers receiving citations. Check your catch carefully before bringing it into the boat.

Nehalem Bay is putting out surprisingly good numbers of chinook in the Wheeler and Nehalem areas. Catches may slow this week with the smaller tides but the season is off to a good start. Regulations remain detailed in the estuary so check carefully before heading out.

It's still early for Tillamook Bay and reports of heavy seaweed will likely hamper anglers for some

period of the tide this fall. A stronger return is expected for chinook and coho this season with Labor Day weekend offering up the first reasonable chance at a chinook in the area.

Tuna chasers took advantage of calm seas the last several days, traveling up to 50 miles offshore in pursuit of peak season action. Coolers were easily filled but stronger winds this week will likely keep anglers from making the long trek west.

Crabbers both in the ocean and in estuaries on the north coast are reporting improved catches of crab. Most are reporting a large percentage in a softshell state however but that should improve as September and October come.

Southwest – Central Oregon charters are taking good numbers of bottom fish. Tuna catches have been hot or cold with hot days delivering good numbers of large albacore. Coho is closed until September 1st.

Most coastal rivers have good populations of sea-run cutthroat trout now. These cooperative fish will take a variety of flies or lures and bait in tidewater.

Tuna anglers launching out of Charleston have been taking good numbers of albacore. Chinook have been taken at Coos Bay over the past week and more recently from the Coquille River. Numbers aren't remarkable yet but a good return is forecast for these fisheries.

Anglers mooching herring at the jaws in Winchester Bay have made some good catches lately. A fair number of fish are in the 30-pound class.

Boats launching out of Gold Beach have been making good catches of rockfish and lings. Ocean crabbing is fair to good. Salmon trollers in Rogue Bay have been nailing chinook on spinner-anchovy rigs with regularity. Area beaches are producing good numbers of surf perch.

Rockfish and lingcod catches have been decent out of the Port of Brookings where ocean anglers are landing Pacific halibut with regularity. A few chinook are being taken but results have been only fair. If the forecast holds for the coming weekend, albacore fishing should improve.

SW Washington – Although still early for consistent success in district streams, chinook are starting to make their way into some lower Columbia tributaries. With low returns of wild chinook expected on most systems, only fin-clipped chinook may be retained on most. Check regulations before angling.

A weak tide series will keep bank anglers from experiencing big success for steelhead this week. Anglers working deeper water with wobblers, especially near the mouth of the Cowlitz, should have a good chance at a nice upriver chinook in the coming weeks.

District rivers produce better coho catches later on in October.

Eastern – Steelheading is improving on the lower Deschutes and fish are being hooked all day long. Swinging flies has been effective this week. Nymphing is producing good catches of trout averaging 17 inches from Warm Springs to Trout Creek.

Kokanee fishing was slow at Wickiup over the past weekend.

Wallowa Lake is producing good numbers of kokanee although no large fish have been landed recently.

Columbia River Fishing Report – After a disappointing weekend, it's game on for Chinook on the lower Columbia River. It started pretty good on Monday with numerous boats taking good numbers of Chinook in the sport fleet. Through Wednesday, action was pretty consistent for herring trollers working the Washington side of the river, above the bridge on high tide. The Young's Bay bite also took off again at first light on Wednesday morning. Spinners and herring both took fish.

Anglers that took off for the Washington side of the river, above the bridge at first light on Wednesday morning, hefty rewards awaited for some. One guide boat reported landing 10 Chinook for 12 chances by 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday morning. Of course, not all boats (guide or sport-boat) reported results like that but there was clearly a good bite in the early a.m. on Wednesday, and it's likely to continue into the weekend.

Trollers working the 18 to 20 foot line in front of Young's Bay reported Chinook falling to both spinners and herring. The chartreuse/green dot with metallic green back Fatal Flash produced good results on Wednesday. One guide boat reported going 2 for 6 (yes, we lose fish on trebles trailing spinners too) and seeing about 15 other fish caught. The bite died quickly however as the warm water influence of the late outgoing tide hit.

For me, I've spent all week doing late starts. Leaving the dock between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m., we've been getting our first opportunities close to low slack low on Desdemona Sands on the Washington side in about 28 to 30 foot of water. Although it hasn't been hot action, 2 to 3 opportunities on this part of the tide is usually a good start to the day. From there, it's been a long time without action as the Chinook seem pretty reluctant to take bait or spinners for much of the incoming tide. We'll take an occasional fish on the incoming tide but most often, we have to wait until we get close to high slack before we find biters again. It's a long stretch without much activity until the coho show up in better numbers. We're averaging about 3 wild coho per day now and I've only taken one hatchery coho so far this river season.

High slack has provided some good action above the bridge in the evening time and should so again this weekend. It will be around 6:00 p.m. or later however and there has been some wind to deal with as is often the case. The high slack bite has been taking place on the shallower sand flats (24 to 28 feet of water) and clear up to the restrooms and higher. As the tide turns, I've been trolling off of the shallow humps, into the 28 to 30 foot water (Blind Channel) just a mile above the bridge or less on the beginning of the outgoing tide and getting Chinook and an occasional coho.

The green line bite has been next to non-existent for much of the week. There were some boats getting fish over last weekend above the bridge but the bite wasn't all that impressive for the effort that was taking place. For either side, I wouldn't call the first part of outgoing tide an "epic" part of the tide; at least not what we're used to for this time of year.

Offshore, NW winds came up on Wednesday and small craft advisories will likely be in effect through Friday. After a few consistent days of coho fishing, especially SW of the Columbia River Buoy, the bite died and fish were hard to find. No matter where you went, anglers noted the high incidence of wild coho in their catches. You had to weed through numerous fish before getting lucky enough to take a limit of fish. The shallow water north of the river mouth did produce fair action for much of the week but that too has been inconsistent as of late.

After a very brief relaxation of the Chinook bag limit in the ocean, the 2 Chinook bag limit was rescinded and brought back down to a 2 salmon limit, of which only 1 may be a Chinook. Chinook catches exploded off of Westport, threatening to shut down the ocean fishery prior to

Labor Day. With Chinook in good numbers in the river now, anglers may not be so motivated to head west for a good chance at salmon.

Crabbing in the river has picked up a bit although far from the potential we're likely to see in the fall. One sport boat reported 10 keepers for just 2 pots near Social Security Beach last weekend. And that was with a heavy tide. Crab pots litter the inside sand flat at Buoy 20, not a troller's paradise.

Further offshore, not many anglers are in hot pursuit of tuna as it's a long trip west to get into them. With salmon well underway, you won't find the interest until the kings are gone anyway. We still have many more weeks of tuna opportunity, the salmon action won't last much longer.

Upriver, anglers are coming into their own in the wobbler fishing around Longview. Many of my customers, coming from the valley, have commented that there are swarms of boats fishing at the mouth of the Cowlitz right now. Creel checks indicate that the bite is underway but maybe there is more interest than catch right now. That will change very soon however. Here is the ODF&W check from the region over the weekend:

Portland to Longview Bank:

Weekend checking showed four adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus one unclipped steelhead released for 105 bank anglers.

Portland to Longview Boats:

Weekend checking showed 43 fall chinook adults, one fall chinook jack and 45 adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus 12 unclipped steelhead and two unclipped coho released for 140 boats (313 anglers).

Further upriver, the delayed migration of summer steelhead is uniquely happening when fall Chinook are about to arrive. It's providing some dual action for both species in the gorge, although steelhead success clearly outweighs Chinook success right now. Here are the checks from the region this weekend:

Gorge Bank:

Weekend checking showed 23 adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus 22 unclipped steelhead released for 150 bank anglers.

Gorge Boats:

Weekend checking showed one fall chinook adult and 13 adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus 10 unclipped steelhead released for 15 boats (39 anglers).

Troutdale Boats:

Weekend checking showed three fall chinook adults, one fall chinook jack and 12 adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus 11 unclipped steelhead and one sockeye released for 65 boats (136 anglers).

We'll begin to see a waning of summer steelhead although numbers will likely remain strong for a few more weeks. Fall Chinook counts are showing marked improvement with the peak still a month away. Action for Chinook varies year to year in this reach with late September and early October the more likely weeks for multiple opportunities. Anglers theorize that the fish blowing through there now are on a definite mission to get upstream while later returning fish that are more residential, are likely to bite better in the cooler water temperatures of early fall. Whatever the case may be, better fishing in this stretch is yet to come, no matter how many Chinook are crossing at Bonneville in the coming weeks.

The Guide's Forecast – Although you may have read that last weekend should have been the break-out weekend for this Buoy 10 fishery, well, I was off by a day. BUT, this weekend will be the best one yet for Chinook and some coho should start to show in better numbers.

The tide is shaping up to be a good one, an ideal situation with a high tide at first light. You'll get the best of both worlds with a first light bite, coupled with a high tide and peak season. It all spells disaster for a near-record return of fall Chinook just now starting to peak in the lower river. What else does it take to excite you? Don't bother calling for a reputable fishing guide, they're all booked.

Anglers will want to take advantage of the cooler water temperatures near the bridge. For anglers partial to the Oregon side, the mouth of Young's Bay should deliver some good action from sun-up through the first 2 hours of the morning. For traditional anglers, the Washington side above the bridge should deliver some good action for bait trollers and spinners should work fair as well.

I rigged up an anchovy spinner mooching rig on Wednesday and took 2 of our 6 Chinook using it on the flood tide. Half brass/half white with a red dot in the middle and metallic pink on the back side. A size 5 Fatal Flash blade rigged with beads, spinner tubing and a fresh jigged anchovy, which are thick in the river right now. I know coho love these anchovies but Chinook will certainly take them too as I witnessed earlier on Wednesday.

The bulk of our fish were taken on fresh herring however with a few fish still falling on Buzz's size 8 Flash Glo spinner. Sorry to the readers that went looking feverishly for them at Fisherman's Marine and Outdoor. They should be in stock soon!

Do pay attention to the tides this weekend. As we near the weekend, the tide series will weaken and the cool ocean water won't make it's way as high up the river as it has been in recent days. Although the standard spots above the bridge and at the mouth of Young's Bay likely will produce good results like they have been, fishing a little lower, like on lower Desdemona Sands may be a good option as well for fish that won't get pushed up as high as they normally would on an incoming tide. The weak tides will allow anglers to use lighter leads or smaller divers and should prolong the bite. When flows pick up momentum, the bite dies quickly and that shouldn't be the case this weekend and beyond. This will be the weekend to fish for Chinook at Buoy 10.

Here are the tides for the week, via web-link:

<http://www.saltwatertides.com/cgi-local/oregon.cgi>

If you're going offshore, you may be making a mistake. Good action will be had in the river during the morning hours, this is the same time that the best action takes place in the ocean. The coho are scattered and most of the catch lately has been wild fish. Here is the offshore weather forecast:

.FRI...N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT.
W SWELL 4 FT.

.FRI NIGHT...NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND
WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

.SAT...N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT.
SW SWELL 4 FT.

.SAT NIGHT...N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. SW SWELL 4 FT.

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

.MON...NW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 4 FT.

Crabbing in the river or offshore should be a fair option this weekend as well. Just be mindful of where you place your gear as there will be a lot of trollers out there.

Upriver, the weak tides won't bode so well for wobbler dunkers. Strong outgoing tides produce good results for boat plunkers. Longview to Portland should still be a good option but just as weak tides should produce a prolonged bite at Buoy 10, it will shorten up the potential opportunity in the upriver areas.

Steelhead should make for a great option in the Columbia River Gorge this weekend. Although temperatures are on the rise and numbers are on the fall, there should still be good opportunity for spinners working from shore or boats in the area. Even further upriver, trollers working the mouth of the Deschutes should continue to see good catches for those trolling plugs, especially in the morning hours when air temperatures are the most pleasant.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – With the Willamette level down and the water temperature up, fish passage at Willamette Falls has slowed to a virtual trickle. As fall approaches, coho are showing in the counts although only 10 have passed thus far.

McKenzie River conditions are good, stable and clear. Fishing is about the best trout action that mid-August can provide.

North Santiam River level and flow have been stable for a while but fishing is only fair at best. Steelhead are being recycled on the South Santiam.

Clear Lake and Leaburg Lake are scheduled to be stocked this week.

The Guide's Forecast – Best bets on the Willamette are for smallmouth bass above the Falls or trout in the Middle Fork. Early and late day fishing will yield best results for either species.

Look for Pale Evening Dun hatches during the day and again in the evening on the McKenzie. Terrestrials are effective all day long here.

Hatchery steelhead are available in the South Santiam as well as spring Chinook although results have been spotty. Bobber and jigs are effective as are cured eggs.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Clackamas water level and flow is stable but stability hasn't done anything to improve late summer fishing results. Catches of summer steelhead and late-season spring Chinook have slowed.

Sandy water levels have dropped slightly. While anglers will be greeted with milky green condition due to glacial runoff in warm weather, it is fishable. Best results will come to those who boat it.

The Guide's Forecast – Steelheaders have a second chance at summers which are being trucked from the hatchery facility at McIver to Riverside Park. If you land one with a hole punch in the gill plate, that's a re-run. Springers aren't biting in the warm waters of the Clackamas but they're getting a little long in the tooth anyway.

Spring Chinook condition is surprisingly good on the Sandy for late summer. While catches slowed over the past week, bright fish have been landed recently with best results around Cedar Creek and Revenue Bridge.

North Coast Fishing Report – It's a bit of a lull time for most north coast anglers. The Nehalem is the only bright spot for Chinook this early in the season and it has been surprisingly bright as of late. Softer tides this week however may put this fishery on the back-burner unless you were to brave a rough ocean and dangerous bar to fish just outside of the jaws.

The Wheeler/Nehalem area has been producing fish however but even though they may still be there this weekend, they are less likely to bite in the softer flows. Herring will be the bait of choice but anglers will find some Chinook receptive to spinners.

Tillamook is early but there should be some fish around. Don't count on good fishing. There is a lot of weed in the bay already, this will hamper success.

There are some fish coming from the Alsea and the upcoming weak tide series may make for some good trolling at the mouth this weekend.

Offshore Chinook fishing remains open but anglers will likely wait a bit longer to take advantage of a building run in the coming weeks.

Sea-run cutthroat fishing should be a good option for trollers working tidewater. Fish should start to stage for the fall and there should be ample feeding opportunities in the lower reaches of every watershed.

This should be a decent weekend for crabbers on many north coast estuaries. There will likely be a fair percentage of soft shelled crabs in the mix however. They should begin filling out nicely in the coming weeks however.

The Guide's Forecast – Anglers looking for early Chinook will want to take advantage of the weak tide series we're just now coming into. Work the lower estuaries with the Nehalem (check regulations for open areas!), Tillamook, Nestucca, Salmon and Alsea Rivers all fair options. The runs will just be building in these areas this weekend.

Offshore bottomfishing will likely continue to slow but crabbing should be picking up.

Troll for trout in the tidewater stretches of your favorite north coast river but check regulations as they vary by watershed too.

Central & South Coast Reports – There are fresh photos of Fall Chinook at Coyote Rock but it's early to plan a trip to the Siletz. First or second week in September - maybe.

Over the past weekend, charters launching out of Depoe Bay had their trips cut short but in a good way. Planning make a run of 50 miles or so, albacore were found about half that distance and anglers were able to cast to them to catch all they were able to carry.

Rough seas out of central Oregon ports mid-week has restricted fishing effort. Due to bumpy seas, bottom fish catches have been spotty. Crabbing has been fair to good although catches must be sorted of softshells, a situation which will improve as fall approaches. Fish early to take advantage of better water temperatures.

Although halibut fishers caught good numbers during the summer all-depth fishery on the first two-day opener, they fell short of catching the entire 41,783-pound quota by about 11,000 pounds. Rather than offer an additional single, all-depth fishing day, the ODFW rolled that overage into the nearshore quota, re-opening it as of August 13th. Halibut catches have been good this year in waters shallower than 240 feet, although these fish tend to be smaller than those in deeper water.

Sea-run cutthroat are available in nearly every coastal river. These fish were not legal to target for many years due to severely depressed numbers, Now that the population has rebounded, we are thankful to once again have this resource available. Many of us choose to catch and release these wild fish and, while not required, use barbless hooks in pursuit of them. Hitting a wide variety of lures and suckers for brightly-colored flies, the only 'trick' to catching sea-run cuts is to know the type of water in which they hold. Unlike steelhead, these fish will be in dark, boily water or under the brush line at the edge of a river from where they'll dash out to intercept prey - or your lure.

Winchester Bay has deliver fair, spotty catches of Chinook to moochers in the jaws and a few are being taken in Reedsport as the season picks up. Ocean crabbing is good while bay crabbing is improving along with the quality of the Dungeness although some sorting is still required. Sturgeon fishing has been fair but lower Umpqua catches are almost invariably oversized. Striped bass are being caught by nocturnal fishers although getting reports from those guys is next to impossible. Smallmouth bass fishing has been good on the South Umpqua with fish landed occasionally to three and four pounds. North Umpqua steelheader are enjoying steady success. With the South Umpqua dropping and warming this week, results for smallies is expected to improve.

Salmon fishing has slowed out of Charleston although rockfish catches have been good when the seas allow safe crossing. Catches are somewhat better inside the bay along the jetties with mooching on the incoming tide the preferred technique. Tuna were taken early this week and catches were pretty steady but boats were chased back to port mid-morning when the ocean started to get rough. Coos Bay has excellent clam beds which has been very productive during minus tidal series.

A few Chinook have been caught in tidewater on the Coquille but it has been slow to spotty. Crabbing is worthwhile with Dungeness starting to harden although many aren't completely full of meat.

Fall Chinook continue to be taken by trollers in Rogue Bay although catches are inconsistent. With salmon pushing into the Rogue, many are trying for them with some success in the lower river. Water temperature will determine when Chinook move into the river and upstream but with flows higher than average this year, the run upriver may occur quickly. Half-pounders are also being taken on the lower river. Fall Chinook have been taken on the middle Rogue as high as Grants Pass where boaters are taking them on bait or wrapped Kwikfish. While there isn't a great deal of pressure, the upper Rogue has continued to provide good results for summer steelhead. The stretch from Dodge Bridge to the old Gold Ray Dam site remains open for Chinook through the end of August.

Boats launching out of the Port of Brookings this week have run west 40 miles or so take tune. Warm water was out of reach but Albacore of 15 to 20 pounds were located where ocean temps were in the low 50s. Fishing was good nonetheless.

Rogue above Lost Creek was planted with trout again this week as it has been every week since mid-May. There's gotta be some decent hatchery rainbow catches to be made above Lost Creek Reservoir by now.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Over 28,000 steelhead (about a quarter of which are wild) have crossed The Dalles Dam over the past week. Prospects are improving daily on the Deschutes. So is the fishing. What are you doing sitting there at a computer when you could be catching them?

Crane Prairie has been producing decent trout catches, Callibaetis are hatching late mornings and Caddis as evening approaches.

Some boats are taking limits at Green Peter while others are struggling. Catches are a variety of sizes although it's possible to cull some 15-inchers.

Lake Billy Chinook is producing nice, bright kokanee for trollers.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for 2011

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North Puget Sound

Anglers are reeling in chinook and coho in Puget Sound, where crabbing is still an option and two additional marine areas open for salmon Aug. 1. Others are also having some success at Baker Lake, which recently opened for sockeye salmon.

Anglers fishing Baker Lake can retain up to three adult **sockeye salmon** that exceed 18 inches in length from the log boom barrier at Baker Dam upstream to the mouth of the upper Baker River. All other salmon, as well as bull trout, must be released.

"The fish are biting, it's just a matter of finding them," said Brett Barkdull, fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Most anglers have done well once they get over them, and I expect that to continue into August as more sockeye make it into the lake."

The sockeye salmon fishery at Baker Lake is open until further notice, said Barkdull, who reminds anglers to check for any [rule changes](#) at WDFW's website.

Meanwhile, freshwater anglers are gearing up for upcoming salmon openers on select rivers. Those rivers include:

- **Skagit River:** Opens Aug. 1 from the mouth of the river to the mouth of Gilligan Creek. The Skagit from the mouth of Gilligan Creek to the Dalles Bridge at Concrete opens for salmon fishing Aug. 16. Anglers fishing those sections have a three-salmon daily limit, plus one additional pink salmon. All chinook and chum must be released.
- **Snohomish River:** Opens Aug. 16 with a three-salmon daily limit, plus one additional pink salmon. Chinook and chum must be released.

- **Green River:** Opens Aug. 20 from the 1st Ave. South Bridge to Interstate 405. Anglers fishing the Green have a daily limit of six salmon; up to three adult coho and chum (combined) may be retained. Chinook must be released.

Beginning Aug. 16, **Lake Sammamish** will also be an option for freshwater salmon anglers, who will have a daily limit of four salmon, and can retain up to two **chinook**. All sockeye must be released, and fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek.

On Puget Sound, anglers can fish for **salmon** in marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands), 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton). Those fishing Marine Area 7 can keep one chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon. They must, however, release wild coho and chum starting Aug. 1.

Anglers fishing marine areas 9 and 10 can keep hatchery chinook – marked with a clipped adipose fin – as part of a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon. Wild chinook must be released. Anglers fishing Marine Area 9 also must release chum salmon, and – effective Aug. 1 – so will those fishing Marine Area 10.

August brings other opportunities in the region to catch and keep salmon. Beginning Aug. 1, marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) open for salmon. Anglers fishing those two areas will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release chinook.

Check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) for details on current salmon fishing opportunities.

Prefer shellfish? The **Puget Sound crab fishery** is under way in most marine areas. The exception is the northern portion (Gulf of Georgia) of Marine Area 7, which opens for crab 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.

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.

Hunting: The general hunting season for **black bear** opens Aug. 1 in most of the region. Hunters are allowed two bear during the general season, but only one bear can be taken in eastern Washington. Check the [Big Game Hunting Seasons and Rules pamphlet](#) for details.

Successful black bear hunters must submit a bear tooth to WDFW for age data collection and report their hunting activity over the phone (1-877-945-3492) or [on-line](#). Successful bear hunters who report their harvest are entered in a drawing for special hunting permits.

Hunting opportunities on tap for next month include early archery seasons for **elk**, early archery and muzzleloader seasons for **deer**, and the general hunting season for **cougar** that gets under way with a statewide archery-only season followed by a muzzleloader hunt.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Summer salmon fishing is in full swing along the coast, where anglers are hooking bright chinook and nice-size coho.

"Fishing has been good for both **chinook** and **coho** in all marine areas," said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "In the coming weeks, I expect fishing to get even better as more salmon return to our coastal waters."

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. Marine areas 1, 3 and 4 are open to salmon fishing seven days a week, while Marine Area 2 is open Sundays through Thursdays each week.

Salmon fishing is scheduled to continue through Sept. 18 in marine areas 2, 3 and 4, and through Sept. 30 in Marine Area 1. However, fisheries in those areas could close early if catch quotas are reached. Milward reminds anglers to check for any [rule changes](#) at WDFW's website.

Anglers are reminded that regulations in Marine Area 4, east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line, change beginning Aug. 1. Anglers fishing that area will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus one additional pink salmon. But they must release chinook, chum and wild coho.

Elsewhere in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, anglers are still having some success hooking salmon in marine areas 5 (Sekiu) and 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), as salmon fisheries in marine areas 11 (Tacoma/Vashon), the southern portion of 12 (Hood Canal) and 13 (South Puget Sound) continue to gain momentum.

Because salmon fishing rules vary depending on the marine area, anglers should check the [Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet](#) before heading out on the water.

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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.

Halibut fishing is also still an option. The late season for halibut in Marine Area 1 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 currently open in the northern nearshore area seven days per week until the quota is reached or Sept. 30, whichever occurs first.

In freshwater, the recreational salmon fishery on the **Skokomish River** will get under way Aug. 1 downstream of the Highway 106 Bridge and Aug. 2 upstream of the bridge to the Highway 101 Bridge under regulations similar to last year. The daily bag limit on the Skokomish will be two salmon for anglers fishing from the mouth of the river to the Highway 101 Bridge through Sept.

30. Anglers must carefully release any wild chinook salmon they catch. They also must release chum salmon through Oct. 15.

Anglers will be required to release any salmon not hooked inside the mouth, and retain the first two legal salmon they catch. In addition, single-point barbless hooks are required and a night closure and anti-snagging rule will be in effect.

The Skokomish River from the Highway 106 Bridge upstream to the Highway 101 Bridge will be closed to recreational fishing on designated Mondays and Tuesdays to avoid potential gear conflicts with treaty tribal fishers. Those closures are scheduled for Aug. 1, 8-9, 15-16, 22-23, 29-30 and Sept. 6.

Recreational fishing downstream of the Highway 106 Bridge will remain open seven days a week through the fishing season. For more information, see the [fishing rule change](#) on the WDFW website.

Several other rivers are open for **salmon** fishing elsewhere in the region, including the Bogachiel, Calawah, Hoh, Nisqually, Quillayute and the Sol Duc. Beginning Aug. 1, the Puyallup River, from the City of Puyallup outfall structure across the river from the junction of Freeman Road and North Levee Road to the Carbon River, also opens for salmon fishing.

The lower section of the Puyallup, from the 11th Street Bridge to the City of Puyallup outfall structure, opens to salmon fishing Aug. 16. Anglers should be aware that the lower section of the river is closed Aug. 28, 29 and Sept. 4, 5, 6, 11, 12 and 13.

For more information on the Puyallup River regulations, as well as rules for other fisheries open in August, check the [Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet](#).

Southwest Washington

This year's **fall chinook** fishery opens Aug. 1 on the Columbia River, where a strong run of upriver brights is expected to push the total return well above the 10-year average. Of the 776,300 "falls" included in the pre-season forecast, nearly 400,000 are projected to be upriver brights – the highest number since 1987.

Those fish, together with **hatchery coho** and **summer steelhead**, should make August a very good time to fish the lower Columbia River, said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"We're definitely expecting a big turnout by anglers for these fisheries," Hymer said. "The fall chinook fishery usually starts slow, then accelerates quickly through the month of August. The great thing about upriver brights is they tend to keep biting as they move upriver."

While the fall chinook season opens upriver to Priest Rapids Dam, most of the action during the first few weeks focuses on the popular **Buoy 10 fishery** in the lower 16 miles of the river. Fishery managers estimate that anglers will catch nearly 11,000 chinook salmon by Aug. 28, when the retention fishery for chinook closes in the Buoy 10 area. They also estimate anglers will catch 7,000 coho in that area by the time that fishery closes at the end of the year.

The daily limit for the Buoy 10 fishery is two salmon, two hatchery steelhead, or one of each. However, anglers may retain only one chinook salmon (minimum size, 24 inches) per day as part of their daily limit through Aug. 28. Only those steelhead and coho marked with a missing adipose fin and a healed scar may be retained. This requirement does not, however, apply to fall chinook, which may be retained whether marked or unmarked.

Additional rules for the Buoy 10 area and other waters upriver are described in WDFW's [Fishing in Washington](#) pamphlet.

Bank anglers planning to fish near the mouth of the Columbia River should be aware they will need to purchase a Discover Pass to park on State Parks property near the North Jetty. With some exceptions, the pass is now required to park a vehicle on lands managed by State Parks, WDFW and the state Department of Natural Resources. The Discover Pass was created by the Legislature earlier this year to keep recreation lands open to the public in the wake of steep budget cuts.

An annual Discover Pass costs \$35 and a one-day pass is \$11.50, when purchased online from WDFW (<https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov/>), by phone, or from retail license vendors. However, holders of most annual fishing and hunting licenses are not required to purchase a pass to use WDFW lands and water-access sites. For more information, see the Discover Pass website (<http://www.discoverpass.wa.gov/>) or call 1-866-320-9933.

By mid-to-late August, the bulk of the chinook run usually begins to move upstream while increasing numbers of coho move into the Columbia River behind them. For anglers following upriver brights upstream, Hymer recommends fishing deep, between 40 and 50 feet down. For a lure, he suggests a wobbler anchored with a heavy weight.

"Chinook go deep when water temperatures are high so that's a good place to find them," Hymer said. "At the same time, anglers should take care not to drop anchor in the shipping channel. That can lead to real trouble."

While 2011 is not expected to be a banner year for hatchery coho, those fish will help to round out anglers' daily limits at Buoy 10, Hymer said. WDFW currently expects about 270,000 coho to return this year – similar to 2010 but down significantly from the exceptionally large run of three-quarters of a million fish two years ago.

"Coho will still contribute to the fishery," Hymer said. "At Buoy 10, they usually bite best on herring and spinners, and then bait and lures later in the tributaries."

Meanwhile, plenty of **hatchery steelhead** are still available for harvest, said Hymer, noting that the smaller "A-run" fish should keep biting through mid-August. By then, the larger "B-run" steelhead – many weighing in the teens – will start arriving to pick up the slack. Together, returns of both runs are expected to total about 367,000 fish, about the same size of last year's total run.

The succession of hatchery steelhead, fall chinook and coho salmon should also provide good fishing on area tributaries for months to come, Hymer said. Like the mainstem Columbia River, most tributaries open for fall chinook Aug. 1, although fishery usually doesn't take off until September. Meanwhile, Drano Lake and the White Salmon River are good places to try for steelhead looking for cooler waters.

Like last year, anglers will be allowed to retain up to six adult hatchery coho on all tributaries to the lower Columbia River with hatchery programs. Those rivers include the Cowlitz, Deep, Elochoman, Grays (including West Fork), Kalama, Klickitat, Lewis (including North Fork), Toutle (including Green and North Fork) and Washougal.

Chinook retention is limited to marked, hatchery fish on these river systems, except on the Klickitat and Deep rivers where unmarked chinook can also be retained. Mark-selective runs will also be in effect on the Wind and White Salmon rivers, plus Drano Lake. Anglers are advised to check the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet and any [emergency rules](#) applicable to specific waters before leaving home.

Of course, salmon and steelhead aren't the only fish available for harvest in August. **Walleye** fishing can be good in the Columbia River near Camas, as well as in The Dalles and John Day Pools. **Bass** fishing is also heating up from Bonneville Dam to McNary Dam.

For **trout**, the high wilderness lakes around Mount Adams and Mount St. Helens offer unparalleled fishing experiences for those willing to brave the mosquitoes. Riffe Lake in Lewis County is still giving up some nice landlocked coho, and Goose Lake north of Carson has received 6,200 brown trout, 6,000 cutthroat and 500 rainbow since the end of June. Hatchery sea-run cutthroats should also provide some opportunity on the lower Cowlitz beginning in late August.

Anglers planning to fish **Northwest Lake** in Klickitat County should be aware that all boat access will be closed as of Aug. 15, when PacifiCorp will start drawing water from the lake in preparation for decommissioning Condit Dam. Boat ramps at the campground and off Powerhouse Road will also be closed, effective July 29. Bank fishing will still be allowed, but PacifiCorp representatives caution anglers to be careful of mucky shoreline conditions. Crews are scheduled to breach the 123-foot dam in late October, opening up miles of salmon and steelhead habitat.

Eastern Washington

The month of August usually means a slow-down in fishing throughout the region, but this summer's cooler and wetter conditions are keeping the action decent on both trout and warmwater fish species.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) district fish biologist Chris Donley said the most successful trout fishing is still during very early morning or late evening hours. But mid-day anglers under cloud cover are also reeling in nice catches.

Some of the best **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** lakes close to Spokane are Amber, Badger, Clear, Fish, Williams, and West Medical lakes in Spokane County, and Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County. The lower Spokane River has nice rainbows and browns, but river anglers need to be aware of catch limits, gear restrictions, and other rules listed in the fishing pamphlet.

Mixed species waters are also a good bet. Along with some trout, **yellow perch**, **largemouth** and **smallmouth bass**, and **crappie** can usually be caught at Coffeepot Lake in Lincoln County, Downs and Chapman lakes in southwest Spokane County, Newman and Liberty lakes in eastern Spokane County, Eloika Lake in north Spokane County, and the Spokane River reservoir of Long Lake and Deer and Waitts lakes in Stevens County.

In the north end of the region, rainbow trout, **kokanee** and **walleye** fishing continues to be good at Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir off Grand Coulee Dam. Kokanee fishing is also productive at Stevens County's Loon Lake during night time hours.

Some of the high elevation lakes on U.S. Forest Service property in the northeast district that are stocked with rainbow and cutthroat trout may be good destinations for camping and fishing weekends. In Ferry County, try Davis, Ellen, Empire, Swan and Trout lakes. In Stevens County, try Gillette, Heritage, Sherry, Summit, and Thomas lakes. In Pend Oreille County, try Carl's, Cook's, Frater, Halfmoon, Leo, Mystic, Nile, No-Name, Petit, South and North Skookums, and Yokum lakes. Find specific locations and more about these mostly small fishing lakes in [WDFW's 2011 Fishing Prospects](#).

Catfish and **sturgeon** fishing is usually productive in the Snake River system in the southeast part of the region in August. Catfish are often landed in the backwaters and sloughs throughout the mainstem Snake, as well as in or near the mouths of tributaries like the Tucannon River.

Sturgeon fishers are reminded of the minimum 43-inch and maximum 54-inch tail fork length and daily catch limit of one sturgeon. The Snake and its tributaries upstream of Lower Granite Dam are catch-and-release only for sturgeon. The section of the Snake just east of the Tri-Cities, from the mouth to Ice Harbor Dam, is also catch-and-release for sturgeon starting Aug. 1.

On the W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area along the Tucannon River in Columbia County, anglers are still catching lots of hatchery-stocked rainbow trout in several of the area's man-made lakes. WDFW area manager Kari Dingman reports that cooler temperatures this summer have helped keep those fisheries productive longer than normal.

"Anglers who camp on the Wooten are reminded there are no campfires allowed at this time," Dingman said. "Even though it's still relatively green for this time of year here, especially on the south end of the wildlife area, it's drying out fast and the grass is quite tall and thick. We recently had several campfires left unattended when the campers packed up and left."

Wherever anglers go, they are reminded to be extra careful with anything that could start wildfires. Outing plans should include a check on campfire restrictions on state or federal public lands.

The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has a burn ban in effect through Sept. 30 on all forest lands under Department of Natural Resources jurisdiction. That means all outdoor burning is banned with the exception of recreational fires in approved fire pits within designated state, county, municipal or other campgrounds. The use of gas and propane barbeques and self contained stoves are allowed. Visit DNR's website for [fire information by county](#).

Northcentral Washington

Anglers fishing for **chinook** and **sockeye salmon** are starting to pick up fish on the mainstem Columbia River from Priest Rapids Dam upstream to below Chief Joseph Dam. Sockeye running three to four pounds and chinook up to 20 pounds are being taken in that area, reports Bob Jateff, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"Chinook are best caught on trolled plugs or cut herring," he said. "Sockeye are caught primarily with prawn spinners."

Jateff reminds salmon anglers of the night closure and anti-snagging rule in effect in three areas – from Rocky Reach Dam to the most upriver point of Turtle Rock, the Okanogan River from the mouth upstream to Highway 97 Bridge in Oroville, and the Similkameen River from the mouth to 400 feet below Enloe Dam.

Beginning Aug. 1, anglers can retain adipose-fin-clipped adult and jack summer **chinook salmon** in the lower mainstem Wenatchee River, where summer chinook returns are predicted to exceed spawning escapement needs. The daily limit is two adipose-fin-clipped summer chinook (adult or jack). All other fish must be released and selective gear rules and night closure are in effect.

The section of the Wenatchee River opening for chinook fishing Aug. 1 extends from the mouth (confluence with the Columbia River) to a point 400 feet below Dryden Dam is open through Oct. 15. From Sept. 1 through Oct. 15, the fishery will expand to include waters stretching from the confluence of Peshastin Creek to a line perpendicular to the river at a marker on the opposite shore, (approximately 1,000 feet above Dryden Dam) to the Icicle Creek road bridge on the west end of Leavenworth. All chinook with a floy (anchor) tag attached and/or caudal punch must be released.

On the Methow River, an increasing number of trout anglers are starting to show up as water levels start to recede after a prolonged period of high flows, Jateff said. "At this time of the year, weighted nymphs will be the choice for fly anglers, but large dry flies will also produce fish," he said, adding that anglers should still be extremely cautious when wading or floating the river.

Resident **rainbow**, **cutthroat**, and **whitefish** are the main species available in the Methow. All bull trout must be released and must not be removed from the water. Selective gear rules are in effect in this catch-and-release only. Jateff advises checking the current sportfishing pamphlet carefully as there certain sections on the Methow that are closed to all fishing.

WDFW habitat biologist Ken Bevis of Winthrop confirms that fly fishing can be highly productive as rivers and streams in Okanogan County drop into shape. "Try skittering a bushy dry fly across tail-outs of deep pools in the crystal clear streams," he said. "The action can be fast and furious, even if the fish are only eight inches or so. But be sure you know the difference between trout, so you can follow the regulations."

As water temperatures warm, some lowland lakes will provide angling opportunities for spiny ray fishermen, Jateff said. He notes that Patterson Lake, near Winthrop, has **yellow perch** as well as **smallmouth bass**. Spectacle Lake, southwest of Tonasket, has yellow perch in the 10 inch range as well as a sizeable rainbow trout population.

Leader Lake, near the town of Okanogan, has **bluegill** in good numbers, but yellow perch were illegally introduced there and are now threatening that fishery, Jateff said. "We are urging anglers to remove as many perch as possible from Leader Lake – regardless of size – to maintain the current quality bluegill fishery there."

Southcentral Washington

Walleye fishing has been very good on Lake Umatilla this summer – and will likely heat up even more as water temperatures rise through August. Meanwhile, the summer heat is also clearing a way through the snow to trout fishing opportunities on dozens of alpine lakes.

As of late July, anglers were averaging more than three walleye per rod on Lake Umatilla, the 67-mile reservoir below McNary Dam on the Columbia River, according to Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) stationed in the Tri-Cities.

"Fishing has been terrific at all the usual spots – Umatilla, County Line, Irrigon, Boardman and Paterson," Hoffarth said. "Walleye really put on the feed bag when the water heats up, so we can expect to see some more great fishing in the weeks ahead."

There is no minimum size limit for walleye at Lake Umatilla, although there is a daily limit of 10 fish, only five of which can measure over 18 inches and only one of which can be over 24 inches. There is also no minimum size for **smallmouth bass**, which are also showing up in the catch. There is a five-fish daily limit for smallmouth bass, only three of which can exceed 15 inches.

Still fishing for **sturgeon**? Be aware that sturgeon fisheries switch to catch-and-release rules Aug. 1 at Lake Wallula (the McNary Pool of the Columbia River) and the Snake River below Ice Harbor Dam.

On the other hand, anglers can catch and keep up to two **hatchery steelhead** – identified by a clipped adipose fin – from the mouth of the Columbia River to the Highway 395 bridge at Kennewick/Pasco. Fishery managers are projecting a strong run of 390,900 summer-run steelhead this year, many bound for the Snake River and mid-to-upper Columbia River.

The Snake River will open for hatchery steelhead fishing Sept. 1, and WDFW expects to open sections of the Columbia River above the Highway 395 bridge later this summer or early fall. Look for announcements at the [WDFW website](#).

Anglers can also look forward to good fishing for **fall chinook salmon** in the weeks ahead. A strong run of 760,000 "falls" are expected to return to the Columbia this year, including 175,000 upriver brights that are expected to cross McNary Dam -- many headed for the Hanford Reach.

"The fishery officially kicks off Aug.1 up to Priest Rapids Dam, but fishing doesn't really catch fire in our area until September," Hoffarth said. "With so many fish expected this year, fishing should be good once it gets going."

The daily limit on the Columbia River is six chinook, of which two may be adults. Anglers are not required to release chinook with intact adipose fins, but must stop fishing after they retain two adult chinook. See the current [Fishing in Washington](#) rules pamphlet for additional information.

On the Yakima River, salmon fishing closes July 31 at the end of the day, but will reopen Sept. 1 for fall chinook in the lower river. Eric Anderson, a WDFW fish biologist in Yakima, said the spring chinook fishery in the upper section between Union Gap and Roza Dam finished strong, despite high flows in May and June.

"Catch rates for springers really picked up in July as water levels dropped and more fish moved into the area," Anderson said. "Now anglers are looking ahead to the fishery for fall chinook."

Water levels are also dropping in streams flowing into the upper Yakima and Naches rivers, improving fishing conditions for wild **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout**, Anderson said. Anglers should be sure to check the regulations for those streams, and release all salmon, bull trout, and steelhead, he said.

An increasing number of high lakes are also becoming accessible to trout fishing around White Pass, Chinook Pass and Snoqualmie Pass as the snow continues to melt under the summer sun. WDFW stocks some small, hike-in lakes with rainbow or cutthroat trout, and some also have naturally reproducing **eastern brook trout** populations. Specific information on trout stocking in area lakes is posted on the [WDFW website](#).

"Good fishing is now available for planted trout at Clear and Dog lakes in the White Pass area, and for **kokanee** averaging nine inches at Rimrock Lake off Highway 12," Anderson said. "Kokanee is also available at Kachess and Keechelus lakes off Highway 90, and fishing is good for both kokanee and cutthroat at Bumping Lake off Highway 410."

Anderson notes that all of those waters are closed to the taking of bull trout, "so anglers need to release any bull trout they intercept," he said. Anderson adds that hikers and anglers should check trail conditions before heading out, because some are still covered in snow. Information about current trail conditions is available from the U.S. Forest Service office in Naches and the Forest Ranger office in Cle Elum.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

Subscriber Mike T. (not our co-editor) wrote, "I saw this [in TGF] "Good steelhead counts at Bonneville should continue to fuel fisheries on the Klickitat River and Drano Lake"

"went to the Klickitat last week saw a couple guides and reports were they are doing repairs on the fish ladder in the lower river and steelhead are not able to pass right now.

"we did not touch a fish...."

Pro guide and TGF co-editor Bob Rees responded, "Sorry for the oversight on the Klickitat. You are right. The tribes/BPA is doing fish passage work on the lower river. I found this article here: <http://www.columbian.com/news/2011/aug/12/klickitat-fishway-nearing-completion/>

"It appears the work should be completed next month. Let's get those fish upriver.

"Good luck and thanks for the heads up!"

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Depoe Bay Boat owners aim to sink ordinance:

http://www.thenewsguard.com/news/article_dcac7efa-80c7-11e0-80fc-001cc4c03286.html

50-pound Opah taken off central Oregon (great pic):

<http://www.ifish.net/board/showthread.php?p=3784586#post3784586>

Fly Fishing For Bass on the Willamette River:as

<http://oregonflyfishingblog.com/2011/08/16/fly-fishing-for-bass-on-the-willamette-river/#more-7792>

GOOD LUCK!