

The Guide's Forecast - volume 13 issue number 36

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 2nd – September 8th, 2011**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Although inconsistent day to day, the wobbler fishery around Portland is underway. The best fishing is taking place from Portland to Longview with some hoglines consistently out-producing others. Veteran anglers expected better results on the current tide series but better action is likely to happen next week. Action is reported as good at the mouth of the Cowlitz.

The gorge is predictably slow for salmon, even though thousands are pouring over the dam daily. Summer steelhead counts are beginning to slow and so is the action. Larger, "B" run fish will begin to make a showing but warmer water temperatures keep these quality fish from biting on the mainstem.

Water temperatures at Willamette Falls is approaching 72 degrees. Fish upriver for bass which is good; trout success is only fair.

Trout fishing is worthwhile on the McKenzie with Caddis the primary hatch. Summer steelhead are available but most springers are dark.

Despite indications otherwise, North Santiam flows will increase starting September 1st. Salmon are due to spawn.

The Clackamas is low, clear and very slow for fishing. Coho may begin to show at the mouth and lower drifts although Clackamas coho are notoriously known for not biting all that well this far up the system.

A few steelhead are being taken from the milky waters of the Sandy where most chinook are past their prime. Coho should begin to show with the peak likely in early October. Returning numbers are not forecasted to be large however.

Northwest – Effort in the Buoy 10 fishery plummeted when chinook season closed on Sunday. Anglers are enjoying sparser effort but catches of hatchery coho are slim. Anglers are still tangling with fair numbers of chinook however, indicating more good fishing ahead for upriver anglers. Gail Aylor of Sisters, Oregon released an estimated 35-pounder in front of Hammond on Tuesday, the fish took a small spinner at 18 feet. Weaker tides should stimulate a good chinook bite above Tongue Point for the holiday weekend.

There are still coho available in the north of Cape Falcon ocean fishery but windy weather will keep most anglers in-river over the weekend. You'll still have to weed through lots of wild fish to take a hatchery limit.

South of Cape Falcon, anglers will get to experience a rare opportunity beginning September 1st. Two salmon of any species, whether from a hatchery or of wild origin may be retained as long as it meets minimum length requirements. The short season begins on September 1st and lasts through September 10th or until a quota of 5,900 fish are retained. Seas are predicted to be rough so participation is likely to be low in the early part of the season.

Tillamook Bay saw its first chinook of the season last week as strong tides drew Trask and Tillamook River fish into the upper estuary. The weaker tide series will be more conducive to

lower bay herring trolling. Coho are largely absent from the bay but a wild coho fishery on many coastal basins begins on September 15th. Check regulations carefully before participating in this fishery.

The Nehalem has been producing some chinook catches in open waters. Coho are oddly absent but should make a strong showing soon.

Southwest – Ocean coho fishing opens September 1st. During this non-selective opportunity, two fish may be kept, fin-clipped or not. Chinook may also be taken through September 30th.

Chinook fishing has improved for those trolling or mooching Winchester Bay. Typical of fall chinook, some days are better than others but fish over 30 pounds have been landed.

Rockfish and lingcod catches are good out of central Oregon ports. Tuna fishing remains worthwhile whenever offshore conditions allow. Ocean crabbing is excellent. Nearshore halibut remained open at this writing.

Tuna Charters out of Charleston have been doing well. Coos and Coquille chinook catches have been fair but steady. Action is expected to improve in the next couple of weeks.

Offshore bottom fishing has been very good out of Gold Beach. Fall chinook trolling in Rogue Bay has been hot or cold over the past week with best results coming late afternoons and evenings. Fortunately, it was good for the Sea Lion Patrol Salmon Derby on Saturday, August 27th. Chinook are moving upstream during cool, foggy mornings. Summer steelheading is good on the upper Rogue in higher-than-normal flows.

Mild offshore conditions over the last week allowed boats easy ocean access out of the Port of Brookings. Limits of rockfish were the rule, many limited on lingcod and several Pacific Halibut weighing 40 pounds or better were landed. Fair numbers of chinook have been landed with albacore taken further offshore.

Eastern – Steelheading has continued to improve on the lower Deschutes while hot weather has slowed trout results.

With trout moving into the channels, Crane Prairie results are improving.

East Lake is producing limits of kokanee with the fish starting to show signs of the upcoming spawning season.

Kokanee fishing is poor at Paulina.

SW Washington – The mouth of the Cowlitz is producing a mix of chinook, coho and a few steelhead. This will be a coveted hot-spot over the next several weeks as migrating chinook enjoy a cool reprieve from the warm waters of the mainstem. Wobblers and spinners will take the majority of the fish.

The Lewis does have some summer steelhead available but most anglers will wait for the late arriving coho.

Boat anglers at Drano Lake are still faring well for steelhead with chinook catches likely to improve in the coming days.

The mouth of the White Salmon River should also produce nicely for the next several weeks with chinook early and coho a bit later.

Columbia River Fishing Report – All systems slow in Astoria as the Buoy 10 targeted Chinook fishery abruptly closed on Sunday. There are still ample numbers of Chinook in the system but anglers are no longer able to retain Chinook downstream of Tongue Point.

The season closed with good fishing although Chinook became more accessible only during short periods of the tide. It's all a moot point now as Chinook fishing will remain closed until October 1st, when it isn't even meaningful at that time.

Coho fishing, particularly for hatchery fish has become challenging. It's not all that surprising given the number of fish predicted to return and the early season results offshore. For a group of 6, if we get 3 hatchery fish, we're doing pretty good. As I mentioned earlier, the catch and release fishing is pretty good however. We are releasing a few Chinook and wild coho every day and getting as much as 15 opportunities a day right now. That's still pretty good fishing in anyone's book.

Of course you're asking how the Tongue Point bite is. Well, on this tide series, it isn't very good. I got a good late afternoon pass in at Tongue Point on Monday near high slack. We marked a lot of fish but they weren't responsive to the offerings we had out (herring and spinners). We didn't see much going on and the guides that fished up there in the early morning found poor results as well. Too much river influence to expect much results. That should change over Labor Day weekend however so be sure to read the "Forecast" section of this report.

The good coho bite most recently has followed this pattern; late in the outgoing tide, there has been a bite just downstream of the Desdemona Light Marker recently. Low slack on the Oregon side, around Buoy 20 to 14 (go to the Washington side if you want to release a bunch of Chinook), incoming tide in front of Hammond, the earlier on the push the better. Late comers haven't been seeing much so fish there about an hour after low slack. Then, one of the better coho bites has been coming out of the deep water on the Washington side and fishing the shallower sand flats to the south of the Washington channel (Blind Channel). Coho and a few Chinook have been quite responsive to spinners and bait in 14 to 18 feet of water. There are plenty of sealions working this area as well. The outgoing tide bite for coho has not been impressive.

Speaking of sealions, enjoy this epic tale of avid angler Len Clark on a recent outing on the lower Columbia:

We had a great day of fishing on the water above the Astoria bridge on Tuesday, August 23rd after a high pressure front blew everyone off the water the day before.

The weather was awesome and so was the fishing. We had 10 take downs, brought 7 to the boat and had 3 Chinook and one silver in the box. It was as good as it gets for a foursome of amateur fishermen. Len Clarke, former President of the North Coast Steelheaders, had his son Scott and his 11 year old Grandson Jackson along with Scotts' business partner and Lens' former baseball player Adam Dion, out for a family fishing day in his 20' open Alumaweld sled. Lines went into the water at 6:30 AM and the anticipation began.

Jacksons' rod was the first pull down and touch water about 20 minutes into the day as he hooked the first fish. When Jack picked up the rod the big buck immediately took 200 feet off the reel as it made a ferocious run with Jackson screaming "fish on"! After a 20 minute fight he will

never forget, the fish was in the net with Jackson was jumping up and down like he just won a major championship! It was a great scene.

"It was that kind of day as we were lucky enough to hook up about every half hour with a big Chinook or a healthy Coho", said Clarke. "We all took turns landing big fish as it was one of those days when we felt we were dialed in to what the fish wanted. Any large Chinook was a keeper while the native Coho were released as quickly as possible, normally without coming out of the water".

After a lull in the action at about mid afternoon we were talking about calling it a day but we were only 1 Chinook from a limit so we decided to try to get one more. Suddenly Adams' rod made a dive and a pull so we were all energized once again. Quickly we pulled all the lines when the fish made a series of enormous athletic jumps. It ran and pulled off line as it treated us to a great show after a long period without action. Scott grabbed the net and settled in for the scoop as Adam eventually guided the big Coho toward the net. "Pull the rod up and over your head" Scott said as Adam lead it to the climax of a great fight. The fish was a big native but it had rolled around in the net wrapping the net around itself with hooks stuck in the net so Scott could not release it from the water. Hanging over the side of the boat Scott proclaimed "We need to bring it in to get the hooks out of the net so we can release it". He started to stand up when an enormous mouth appeared from below the net. Scott was an accomplished athlete at OSU and his athleticism took over as he jerked the net backward almost falling on his back. The net was followed by a huge teathy mouth slamming itself against the boat "Oh my God!" he said. "That was so close, it looked like a great white as the profile of the body filled my vision followed by the incredible wide mouth of the attack". Len was in his seat watching the entire affair as the huge head of the sea lion came out of the water. "I thought it was coming into the boat" he said as the entire crew watched in shock. There were only a few boats left in the water and we were out there mostly by ourselves so we were likely being watched by the hungry aggressors.

While being in a state of shock and astonished by what had just happened, we all caught our breath and went about refocusing on unraveling the net to save the fish. As the fish came free Adam embraced it and said to the fish "You got lucky", as he cradled it in his hands for the release. The big fish had been out of the water for several minutes so Adam carefully put it down in the water on the other side of the boat with his hand under the belly for balance while holding the tail and moving it back and forth waiting for a quiver from the fish to know it got some oxygen so it could swim away. The fish seemed to be ready to go so Adam moved his hand from the belly to hold it by the tail for the opportunity for the fish to shake loose. Fishermen have experienced this release many times and it is a great emotional feeling to release a wild fish. However, as Adams hand was pulling away from the belly a huge splash came from out of the water under the boat as the enormous beast broke through the water literally ripping the fish out of his hands. It must have been waiting under the boat for one more opportunity for a free meal.

Len was still sitting in his seat watching the whole affair. "It all happened so fast", he said. "From where I was sitting I watched Adam put it in the water and seconds later this huge head appeared from the water over the side of the boat going at full speed with the fish in its mouth. The entire head was visible, leaping through the air with the fish in its mouth. Adam fell back in shock. "Oh my God, I think I felt his whiskers, that was too close! Those things are out of control". We all felt like a ship at sea under attack. It was a very weird sensation for all of us as we just sat there for a few minutes while recognizing what had just happened. A great day of fishing could have ended in disaster if the aggressor had grabbed either Scott or Adam during the encounter. You just do not think about a sea lion stalking you like a wolf might stalk a wounded unarmed hunter in the woods.

The monster sea lion must have weighed over a thousand pounds and it could have cared less about taking a human along for the ride if got hold of a hand or more while attacking for food.

When we came back to the dock at the East Basin in Astoria we watched the tourists taking pictures of the "sweet mammals" that have taken over the docks in the basin. If they only knew what the predators are doing to our salmon population. There are signs there explaining the history of the mammals. There should be counter signs explaining why we need to control the number of salmon killers in our home waters. They are out of control and hungry. I guess some one needs to die before our politicians and gamekeepers recognize the problem. On this day, we were lucky that we were not the catastrophic example.

Spinners and bait have both been producing good catches although most would believe that spinners provide a better target opportunity for those in pursuit of coho. We've been catching plenty of Chinook on spinners this season. I've been using fresh bait but fresh bait deliveries will likely go to every other day after the Labor Day weekend. Some of my most recent fresh herring orders have been sub-par.

Back to the report. Offshore, anglers have not taken advantage of the bounty that still exists offshore. Rough seas will keep most at bay as has been the case most recently. Guides still had to weed through the wild ones to catch and keep their hatchery limits but Monday brought all smiles to the folks that took advantage of a rare calm sea. Like the river, Chinook retention is now closed offshore so hatchery coho is the primary target.

Tuna interest is light as they are far offshore and catches aren't what they have been in recent years.

Sport crabbing remains open through October 15th but few people are taking advantage of that also. The crab are beginning to fill out better in recent weeks.

Back in the freshwater, anglers upstream of Tongue Point, particularly in the Longview to Portland stretch are finding mixed results. The most consistent area is the mouth of the Cowlitz where wobbler anglers are taking good numbers of Chinook. One angler fishing the Kalama area reported the mouth of the Cowlitz went off at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday so they were expecting a flurry of activity around noon. Well, it never happened and that angler reported hooking only 1 fish in the last 4 trips to the mouth of the Kalama even though this particular spot has produced good fishing this season already.

Most anglers prefer to stick to the cooler water influence of the Cowlitz River. It has a history of producing good catches throughout the early part of the season. Summer steelhead and a few coho are falling to anglers as well at this location.

Interest in this fishery remains largely downstream. Anglers upstream of Portland have not gathered in large numbers yet but effort upstream typically dwarfs effort in the Kalama to Longview stretch. Fish seem to be more acclimated to the warm water temperatures and therefore more likely to bite in this section. None-the-less, anglers working the water upstream of Kalama will catch plenty of fish this season.

The Bonneville area won't produce great catches until later in the fall. Late September and the first half of October are typically the best, when fish begin to slow down and don't suffer warm water shock. The fishing will likely be quite good up there this season but it won't be for a while yet.

The Guide's Forecast – To start off with, it's been a see-saw of regulation changes for ocean fishers the last few weeks, especially pertaining to Chinook. Here's the latest regulation revision and the rationale behind it:

8/31/11 ACTION NOTICE: The National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Fishery Management Council, states of Washington and Oregon, and ocean fishers have reviewed the status of the ocean recreational salmon fishery in the areas from the US/Canada Border south to Cape Falcon, Oregon. The following action was taken relative to the recreational ocean salmon seasons in all Ocean Salmon Management Areas North of Cape Falcon including: "Neah Bay", "LaPush", "Westport", and "Columbia River":

ACTION TAKEN: Effective Monday, September 5, 2011, the daily bag limit in the recreational ocean salmon seasons North of Cape Falcon, Oregon is increased to allow the retention of up to one Chinook salmon.

RATIONALE: On August 23rd an assessment of the North of Cape Falcon recreational salmon fishery indicated that there would not be enough Chinook salmon to support continued retention of Chinook salmon in the ocean recreational ocean fishery in this area. Action was taken to prohibit retention of Chinook beginning Monday, August 29th. Catch updates for the period of August 22-28 indicated that the Chinook catch per angler, and the overall Chinook landings were much lower than expected. This allowed fishery managers the flexibility to reopen the ocean areas for Chinook retention beginning on Labor Day.

Just when you thought it wasn't safe to retain Chinook in the ocean.....you get it.....

Buoy 10 is usually headlining this section of the report this time of year but for the most part, folks have packed up their belongings and migrated upstream. The Chinook closure and success rates on hatchery coho are the reason why. Anglers have spent the last several years expecting limits or near limits of coho in this fishery only to find half that good a chance this year. Hatchery coho numbers are clearly down this year and we just keep running into Chinook that we're required to release downstream of Tongue Point. There were some positive signs in Wednesday's results however with some guides bringing in 5 to 6 quality keeper coho for 6 rods, targeting them successfully around the Hammond area.

Guides and anglers were finding success out of the strong outgoing tide flow on Wednesday, by fishing the flats downstream of the Desdemona Light Marker where Desdemona Sands negates the strong ebb tide. This strategy paid dividends as Chinook and coho were caught there in good numbers before low slack on Wednesday. Spinners were largely responsible for a good percentage of the catch but fish were taking herring as well. Warm water clearly exists in the estuary, which is conducive to spinner fishing.

Frustrated with the release of the number of Chinook we've been seeing in the catch lately, I had to take my folks up to Tongue Point where we had a chance to keep a legal Chinook. I have been taking advantage of the late high tide by starting late. Hitting Tongue Point just before high slack was my intention, and when the fishing was the most productive just over a week ago. Despite the fish finder being stacked to the gills with fish, we couldn't draw a strike. One other guide boat was working the area stating that they took 2 Chinook back to back right at high tide. A poor showing for the number of fish that were clearly present.

Prior to this debacle, we fished the shallow flats above the bridge (15 to 18 feet of water) where we had great history just a few days ago. Although there were some fish present, they weren't there in the numbers that we had anticipated. The other 2 guide boats working the area hooked into coho but both had to tangle with seals to boat their quarry. One guide reported the seal

coming through the net to grab his fish, only to be sent to the orthodontists office to have his teeth straightened back out. They got the fish but had to release it. The seal's teeth must not have been too crooked as the mammal grabbed the fish shortly after release.

Anglers will want to pay close attention to the weekend tides however. If the Tongue Point fishery is going to take off again on the waning tide series, it should happen on Saturday or Sunday morning. By Monday morning, this fishery should be a-blazin' Tongue Point clearly fishes better on a softer tide series and that program begins late in the holiday weekend. Troll spinners and maybe even bait will work in what has historically been some very impressive Chinook fishing in this area. High slack and the first half of outgoing tide should produce excellent results but some years, it just doesn't pan out. Most guides are banking on it however.

As far as the ocean goes, well, here's the offshore forecast:

FRI...N WIND 15 TO 20 KT WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT.
SW SWELL 4 FT.

.FRI NIGHT...N WIND 15 TO 20 KT WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES
6 FT. SW SWELL 5 FT.

.SAT...N WIND 15 TO 20 KT...EASING TO 10 TO 15 KT IN THE
AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 6 FT. SW SWELL 3 FT...SUBSIDING TO 3 FT IN
THE AFTERNOON.

.SAT NIGHT...N WIND 15 TO 20 KT WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES
5 FT. SW SWELL 2 FT...BUILDING TO 2 FT AFTER MIDNIGHT.

.SUN...N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. SW SWELL 3 FT.

.MON...N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. SW SWELL 3 FT.

The swell looks "swell" but those wind waves, you don't want anything to do with those. Too bad with the opportunity that exists out there right now.

Upriver anglers should be coming into their season. Wobblers will be a workin' on the entire outgoing tides and anglers working the Longview area should fare pretty well this week. Although tides are weakening, there should still be meaningful opportunity for the week. Some anglers may elect to troll on the slack tide, using spinners and wobblers fished near the bottom. Anchor anglers typically use the 5 X 5 rule; that is, a wobbler rigged with a 5-foot leader and a 5-foot dropper lead line. One guide I talked to was using 24 ounces on Wednesday and still having to walk his lure way back in order to get it to fish near the bottom.

The Longview area should continue to be the bright spot, particularly near the mouth of the Cowlitz River. Although the Kalama should get good too, consistency has never been a common trait for anglers participating in this fishery (in any fishery for that matter). Troutdale may get more consistent this week too as fish begin to show in bigger numbers. It's highly unlikely that the Bonneville area will produce any spectacular results.

Crabbing both in the lower Columbia and just offshore should be pretty productive on this tide series. Commercial crabbers just wrapped up one of their more productive seasons in the last decade. Fresh salmon carcasses should be available.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – At last updates, the daily count of any one of the species crossing Willamette Falls could be accounted for on the fingers of a single hand. Nothing of interest to anglers is happening here or in the lower river. Although we keep hoping to see even a slight surge in daily coho counts, realistically, it's still very early in the season cooler weather of the first fall rains will likely be required to get them moving.

The McKenzie has settled in to stable condition once again following some fluctuation earlier this week. Prospects for native cutthroat and stocked trout are good.

Despite assurance from agencies that flows on the North Santiam would remain unchanged through September, an increase from the current 1,110 cfs to 1,500 cfs is scheduled to have occurred on August 31st. It's supposed to remain at that flow for the next 10 days. Following that, all bets are off.

The Guide's Forecast – The occasional bright steelhead has been taken recently on the Town Run and may be worth a final nod. Otherwise, try for smallies around rocky outcrops, a fishery about which one can maintain optimism. Trout fishing is promising on the upper river above Corvallis,

Try caddis dries early and late in the day while nymphs will be effective during daylight hours. While it's not lights-out fishing, it remains a beautiful and worthwhile destination. Steelhead are available and most are still in decent condition.

Fishing remains slow on the North Santiam which is better suited for boat trips than angling, particularly with the additional water flows. Results should be fair for summer steelhead on the South Santiam with recycling of fish ongoing.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Little has changed with on the Clackamas over the past week. With summer coming late this year, the waters are low and clear.

Expect to find ever more opaque water conditions on the Sandy River as glacial runoff is in full force at the Sandy River and it will stay that way for a while. Coho, the next run of interest, is weeks away.

The Guide's Forecast – The few reports coming from the Clackamas indicate a slowing in fishing results with only the occasional steelhead cooperating at first light. Any spring Chinook taken this late in the season will be well past its pull date.

Try the Sandy River at Revenue Bridge or around Cedar Creek, Lower expectations to avoid disappointment. Boats at the mouth of the river are not doing any good, either.

North Coast Fishing Report – More upcoming opportunity for north coast anglers as well. Fall Chinook are starting to grace most north coast estuaries, especially given the most recent strong tide series we're just coming off of. Chinook catches have been confirmed in upper Tillamook Bay which is no surprise. Trask and Tillamook Chinook typically make their first strong appearance about this time. Spinner trollers and plug plunkers should have seen some action over the weekend although it's still a short bit away from full steam ahead.

The Nehalem has lain witness to some fair Chinook fishing over the last week. Chinook were taken from Wheeler to Nehalem on the stronger tide series indicating that the run is rebuilding

on a positive trend. Although most would say that there is an odd absence of coho, both wild and hatchery, some fish were spotted jumping in recent weeks.

Anglers received more good news when managers added an additional 4 days of opportunity for the unprecedented offshore opportunity for wild coho south of Cape Falcon. Here's the latest press release:

8/25/11 ACTION NOTICE: The National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Fishery Management Council, Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, and ocean fishers have reviewed the status of the ocean recreational salmon fishery from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. The following action was taken relative to the recreational ocean coho salmon season scheduled for September:

ACTION TAKEN: In the area from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., the scheduled non-selective coho salmon quota for September is increased from 3,000 to 5,900, following the impact neutral rollover of the remainder of the July-August quota. The open days of this season are adjusted to include all days from September 1-10. Therefore, retention of all legal sized coho will be allowed from September 1 through the earlier of September 10 or attainment of the quota of 5,900 coho. The entire month of September is open to retention of all other species of salmon within this area.

RATIONALE: The season regulations adopted in April, were established to allow for a non-selective coho season (no fin-clip requirement) on September 1-3 and September 8-10 (Thursday through Saturday) with a quota of 3,000 landed coho. The adopted regulations also allowed for an impact neutral rollover of any remaining quota from the July 2 through August 13 season to the September season. That impact neutral rollover allowed the September quota to be increased to 5,900 coho. With the increased quota, the additional four days of September 4-7 could be included in the fishery with little risk of exceeding the quota. Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife staff will monitor landings to insure that the quota is not exceeded.

And more good news on consumptive wild coho opportunity, many coastal estuaries and lower river reaches will be open to a limited wild coho take. Each watershed differs so read your respective waterways carefully. Go here for details on both the coastal fall Chinook and wild coho seasons:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/docs/2011_Coastal_Fall_Chinook_Seasons_table.pdf

Repeating the ocean forecast (found in the Columbia River section of this newsletter):

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SW SWELL 4 FT.

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It doesn't look like a great weekend to test your skills on a wild ocean caught coho. What an opportunity for sport anglers after waiting on the sidelines for nearly 2 decades! It will be hard taking out my first wild coho but it would certainly be gratifying to take a lethally hooked fish that would normally go to the crabs.

And speaking of crabs, some good opportunity should be coming up for crabbers on the softer tide series hitting this weekend. No matter what estuary you like to crab the best, there should be some good afternoon tides to take advantage of some quality crabbing. Although the offshore opportunity may be challenging with the forecast we've reprinted, ocean crabbing should really be gaining momentum right now.

The Guide's Forecast – The soft tide series this weekend will be a lower bay trollers delight. For estuaries open to Chinook fishing in the lower bay, we're setting up on a nice tide series that should produce multiple opportunities for those in the know. Read the Nehalem regulations carefully as a lower bay closure is still in effect until mid-month.

With all the nearshore opportunity (coho, Chinook, tuna, crab) it's too bad the ocean is forecasted to be as wind whipped as it is. Hopefully the forecasters have it all wrong. Until offshore conditions improve, the estuary mouths should be a good option but seaweed will certainly be an issue with the warm summer temperatures we've been experiencing.

Most north coast estuaries should see the first fair push of Chinook inland. Herring on the bottom will take the lion's share of the biters. Fish the high slack and entire outgoing tide through low slack for the best results. Light lead is encouraged for the shallow bars on unimproved estuary mouths such as the Nestucca and Salmon Rivers.

Do drop your crab pots this weekend but be prepared for heavy traffic too. This means use highly visible buoys. Fresh salmon carcasses should not be hard to come by.

Central & South Coast Reports – Offshore bottom fishing out of central Oregon coasts has been fair to good this week for rockfish and ling cod. Those venturing further west have been doing well for albacore. Ocean crabbing has been great for numbers although checking for softshells is required but will be less of a bother as we move into the fall months.

The non-selective ocean coho season which opened September 1 from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain was originally scheduled for each Thursday through Saturday for 3,000 fish. The fishery was recently upgraded to seven days a week through September 10th or a quota of 5,900 coho. During this 10-day opportunity, all coho 16 inches or longer, wild or hatchery.

And on that topic, Charter boats returned to Depoe Bay early today with limits of coho. Go get 'em while they're available.

Ocean conditions out of Newport and Depoe Bay are forecast to be friendly for those rightfully anxious to make piscatorial pursuits over the coming weekend. Commonly, ports further south are challenged by offshore winds and this week is no different. For those with the ability to fish offshore Sunday and early next week. even the south coast ports will enjoy moderating breezes if predictions remain accurate.

Boats are taking albacore out of Depoe Bay and Newport whenever ocean conditions have allowed safe passage although results have been spotty this week. Tuna have been located a little over 25 miles out of port.

For those who chase their own bait (which is certainly a smart alternative for quality bait at a bargain price), herring has been caught in good number this week from Yaquina Bay.

Most coastal streams and rivers are open for sea-run cutthroat trout. These fish are fairly plentiful and willing to strike a variety of flies or lures. Bait is allowed in tidewater only.

The annual Gardiner-Reedsport-Winchester Bay STEP Salmon Derby takes place over Labor Day weekend beginning one-half hour before sunrise on Saturday, September 3rd. Tickets are just \$10 or \$25 for a boatload of hopefuls, available at local Reedsport merchants. Top prize is \$650 with plenty of other prizes and drawings. Tickets may be purchased as late as 9 AM Monday, September 5th. Crabbers can also get in on some loot with the Crab Bounty Contest kicking off this weekend and continuing until the afternoon of October 1st. Netting tagged Dungeness can be worth as much as \$1,000. Crabbing has been terrific in Winchester Bay over the past several weeks and shows no sign of letting up. Even dock crabbers are scoring limits. A few Chinook and fewer coho nosed into the lower Umpqua mainstem over the past week but Chinook are not of the size for which the Umpqua is famous for although a couple have been taken over 30 pounds and one of 30 on Sunday last. Fall fish are in greater abundance in the Reedsport area and coho results will improve in weeks to come. The North Fork Umpqua remains fair but steady for summer steelhead with about half of the fish hooked hatchery keepers. Smallmouth bass fishing is good and should remain steady for several weeks to come.

According to data provided by the ODFW, it's taking an average of 30 angler hours for each Chinook landed at Coos Bay. While it's not red hot, results will continue to improve in September as more fish enter the system. Fall Chinook is an on again off again fishery everywhere. In the Coos system, not only is there a variance in results day to day but also productive locations are likely to be different one day to the next. Stay flexible and be willing

to move to find biters here. Bay crabbing has been good although there is not a great deal of effort for Dungeness here. The wild coho fishery opens on September 15th and will continue through The month of November or a quota of 1,200 fish. Check the regulations with regard to deadlines. One wild coho may be kept per day up to five from the season.

Trollers on the lower Coquille are hooking up with Chinook regularly. Be aware that as the season gets underway, boat traffic will get heavy, especially on weekends. Crabbing has been good in the lower estuary.

Trollers in Rogue Bay are having mixed success with the bite on one day, off the next. Chinook are scattered throughout the estuary and heading upstream through the lower river. Higher flows are causing a moderation of water temperatures and encouraging Chinook to move upstream rapidly. Plug pullers in the Grants Pass stretch have been taking Chinook in fair number. A few summer steelhead remain available in the middle Rogue where anglers have taken them by tossing spinners. The flies-only season starts on the upper Rogue on September 1st. With flows more than those which would be considered normal, upper river long-rodders who may be discouraged will take heart in an announcement Wednesday this Week by the Army Corps of Engineers that they will start flow reduction this week. Outflow from Lost Creek will be reduced by 100 cfs per day, taking the upper Rogue from its current 2,700 cfs to a more-normal seasonal flow of 1,000 cfs. There are plenty of steelhead in the upper Rogue.

Diamond Lake is fishing well to the Power Bait crowd and results should remain good for the next couple of months.

Scheduled for trout planting this week are Clearwater Forebay #2, Hemlock Lake, Lake in the Woods, Lemolo Reservoir, the Rogue above Lost Creek and in preparation for the Labor Day holiday weekend, ODFW has released 1,000 trophy trout in Harriet and Trillium lakes.

Central and Eastern Oregon – With well over a quarter-million summer steelhead above Bonneville, the water temperature of the lower Deschutes is, at last, lower than that of the Columbia into which it flows. This change has summer steelhead seeking relief from higher water temps in the cooler water of the Deschutes and improving results for those of us chasing those fish. Action is decent for fly casters and hardware anglers and while best results are coming to those fishing early and late in the day, steelhead are being hooked even when the sun is on the water. About a third of the steelhead in the lower river are wild. Check with ODOT regarding access as several roads and highways are closed due to wildfires.

Prior to treatment to eliminate illegally-introduced bullhead catfish and restore South Twin Lake to a rainbow fishery, the ODFW has proposed suspension of bag and length limits. A determination will be made by September 3rd and, when implemented, will remain in place through October 23rd. Trout fishing is reported to have declined since bucket biologists though dumping catfish in the lake would be a swell idea.

Trolling hoochies has been most effective at Green Peter. Fair to good numbers of fish are being landed in a mix of sizes. Kokes are beginning to show a little color as spawning season approaches but are still fit for the table.

Fair to good numbers of kokanee are being taken on the troll at Odell Reservoir. A variety of lures have been effective with one combo working one day, another on the next.

Paulina has been slow but results should improve as the weather moderates.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for September 2011

North Puget Sound

Anglers fishing the marine areas of Puget Sound should still find some pink salmon in early September. But the bulk of the pink run will have made its way into the region's rivers by the middle of the month.

"**Pink salmon** fishing is starting to pick up in the rivers as we move into September," said Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Freshwater fishing opportunities for pink salmon should be good early in the month." In northern Puget Sound, Thiesfeld recommends fishing for pink salmon in the Snohomish, Stillaguamish, Skagit and Snoqualmie rivers.

Back on the saltwater, anglers are hooking some bright **ocean coho** in portions of Puget Sound, said Thiesfeld. "We should see more and more of those ocean fish make their way into the Sound as the month progresses," he said.

Point No Point, Jefferson Head, Possession Bar and Shipwreck should be good spots to hook ocean coho, Thiesfeld said. Anglers fishing those areas – or other waters of marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) – have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release chinook. In Marine Area 10, anglers also must release

chum salmon through Sept. 15, while those fishing in Marine Area 9 must release chum through Sept. 30.

Marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) are also open for salmon. Anglers fishing those two marine areas have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release chinook salmon.

Another option is Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where anglers have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but can keep only one chinook. Anglers in Marine Area 7 must release chum and wild coho.

Thiesfeld said the best bet for **freshwater anglers fishing for coho** salmon in the region might be the Snohomish, Skykomish and Snoqualmie rivers, where abundant runs are expected to return this year. Other options for coho include the Nooksack, Skagit and Stillaguamish rivers.

Meanwhile, most areas of Puget Sound will close to **recreational crab fishing** at sunset on Labor Day. The only two areas of the Sound that will remain open to crab fishing after Labor Day are marine areas 7-North (Gulf of Georgia) and 7-South (San Juan Islands/Bellingham). Crabbing in those two areas is open through Sept. 30.

Sport fishers who crab in marine areas 7-North and 7-South after Labor Day must record their catch on winter catch record cards. Winter cards are now available at sporting good stores and other license vendors across the state.

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6¼ inches. Fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. See WDFW's [sport-crabbing website](#) for more information.

Crabbers are reminded that their summer catch record cards are due to WDFW by Oct. 1 and must be returned whether or not the cardholder caught or fished for crab during the season. Crabbers who fail to file catch reports for 2011 will face a \$10 fine, which will be imposed when they apply for a 2012 Puget Sound crab endorsement. Completed cards can be mailed in or recorded online. Additional information is available on [WDFW's website](#).

WDFW will announce winter crab seasons for Puget Sound in early October, after completing its assessment of the summer fishery.

Elsewhere, **Lake Sammamish** is open for salmon fishing, with a daily limit of four salmon, of which two may be chinook. All sockeye must be released, and fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek. Sammamish Lake's larger neighbor, **Lake Washington**, opens Sept. 16 to coho fishing. Anglers will be allowed four coho per day (minimum size 12 inches) from waters north of the Highway 520 Bridge and east of the Montlake Bridge.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Starting Labor Day, anglers fishing off the Washington coast can again catch and keep one chinook salmon per day as part of their daily catch limit.

Fishery managers for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) approved the change a week after announcing that anglers would be required to release any chinook salmon they catch in coastal waters.

Pat Pattillo, salmon policy coordinator for WDFW, said updated harvest data show that ocean catch rates slowed enough prior to the chinook closure on Monday (Aug. 29) to allow anglers to resume catching chinook salmon Sept. 5.

"When we announced the chinook closure, harvest rates were at record levels," Pattillo said. "Since then, the catch has slowed substantially and we're confident that we can keep the fishery open through the end of the season."

Anglers fishing in all ocean areas can currently catch up to two marked, hatchery coho salmon per day, and those fishing in marine areas 3 and 4 can also catch one additional pink salmon per day. Starting on Labor Day, they will again be able to substitute a chinook salmon for one coho salmon in their daily catch.

Salmon fishing is scheduled to continue through Sept. 18 in marine areas 2 (Westport-Ocean Shores), 3 (LaPush) and 4 (Neah Bay), and through Sept. 30 in Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco). However, salmon 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](#).

In the **Strait of Juan de Fuca**, anglers fishing in late August were having some success catching ocean coho, said Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound salmon manager for WDFW. "The pink run is moving into the rivers, so anglers are turning their attention to coho salmon," he said. "Labor Day weekend is usually the peak of the hatchery coho run in the Strait."

Anglers fishing marine areas 5 (Sekiu) and 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release chum, chinook and wild coho. Regulations change in Marine Area 5 on Sept. 19, when anglers will no longer have a bonus bag limit for pink salmon but they will be allowed to retain wild coho.

"Fishing for coho salmon should get even better in the middle of the month, when anglers fishing Marine Area 5 can retain any coho salmon," Thiesfeld said.

Farther south, salmon fishing opens Sept. 1 north of Ayock Point in Hood Canal (Marine Area 12), where the daily limit is four coho. All other salmon species must be released. The same rules apply to the Quilcene/Dabob bay fishery, which opened for salmon fishing Aug. 16.

Salmon fishing is currently open south of Ayock Point, where anglers can retain two chinook as part of their four salmon daily limit. However, they must release chum salmon.

In the **southern portion of Puget Sound**, anglers fishing Marine Area 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release wild chinook. Anglers fishing Marine Area 13 (South Puget Sound) have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook and wild coho.

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

Meanwhile, most areas of Puget Sound will close to **recreational crab fishing** at sunset on Labor Day. The only two areas of the Sound that will remain open to crab fishing after Labor Day are marine areas 7-North (Gulf of Georgia) and 7-South (San Juan Islands/Bellingham). Crabbing in those two areas is open through Sept. 30.

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WDFW will announce winter crab seasons for Puget Sound in early October, after completing its assessment of the summer fishery.

In freshwater, the popular salmon fishery on the **Puyallup River** is in full swing. Anglers fishing the Puyallup should continue to hook pink salmon through the middle of September, when the focus will shift to coho. Anglers are reminded that the Puyallup River is closed to fishing Sept. 4, 5, 6, 11, 12 and 13 from the 11th Street Bridge to the City of Puyallup outfall structure across the river from the junction of Freeman Road and North Levee Road.

Elsewhere, **several rivers** around the region open to salmon fishing Sept. 1, including the Carbon River in Pierce County; Copalis River, Van Winkle Creek and Joe Creek in Grays Harbor County; the Bear and Niawiakum rivers in Pacific County; and Clearwater River in Jefferson County. Salmon fisheries on the Skokomish and Nisqually rivers are already under way. Before heading out, anglers should check the [Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet](#) for all rules and regulations.

Southwest Washington

September is prime time for salmon fishing in the Columbia River Basin, as large numbers of fish move upriver and into tributaries on both sides of Bonneville Dam. Anglers fishing the lower river from Buoy 10 to the dam this season are expected to reel in nearly 32,000 **fall chinook** and 8,000 **hatchery coho** – most of them, this month.

"Prospects are good for salmon fishing this month, but it's important to remember these fish are on the move," said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "As the month goes on, successful anglers will follow the fish upriver and into the tributaries."

The retention fishery for chinook salmon ended Aug. 28 at Buoy 10, but hatchery coho should remain strong below Rocky Point throughout the month. Even so, the prospect of catching a hefty chinook salmon is drawing most anglers farther upstream.

Through Sept. 9, anglers can keep one adult chinook per day as part of their limit from Rocky Point upriver to Bonneville Dam. Anglers fishing those waters have a daily limit of six fish, including two adult salmon (chinook or hatchery coho) or hatchery steehead, or one of each. Beginning Sept. 10, chinook retention will close from the Lewis River downstream but increase to a maximum of two adult chinook per day upriver to Bonneville Dam. Starting Oct. 1, when most wild tules have passed, the stretch of the Columbia River below the Lewis River will also open to retention of two adult chinook per day.

"Anglers targeting chinook do best in fairly deep water – 40 to 50 feet down," Hymer said. "Some of the best fishing for both salmon and steelhead will be at the mouth of tributaries, where the fish hold up before heading upstream."

As the month progresses, salmon fishing will heat up farther upstream in the tributaries, Hymer said. He reminds anglers of several new rules that will be in effect on various rivers this season:

- **Grays, Elochoman, and Washougal rivers** – Waters will be closed to fishing immediately above and below the racks/weirs (when they're in place).
- **Cowlitz and Tilton rivers** – Starting Sept. 1, night closure and anti-snagging rules will be in effect on the Cowlitz River from the posted PUD markers on Peters Road to the mouth of Ohanepecosh and Muddy Fork and on the Tilton River from the mouth to West Fork. When the anti-snagging rule is in effect, only fish hooked inside the mouth may be retained. This hooking rule has been in effect from Mill Creek to Barrier Dam on the Cowlitz River since April and runs through November.
- **Kalama River** – A stationary gear restriction will be in effect from Sept. 1 through Oct. 31 from the railroad bridge below I-5 upstream to the natural gas pipeline. (Historically, the markers at the mouth of the river were the lower boundary for this rule.) The railroad bridge now marks the lower boundary for the stationary gear restriction, the night closure and anti-snagging rule.
- **Wind and White Salmon rivers** – The daily limit is based on the most liberal regulation in effect on those two rivers or the adjacent section of the mainstem Columbia River. This rule effectively allows anglers to keep an unmarked fall chinook near the mouth of those two rivers.

Like last year, anglers can retain up to **six hatchery adult 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. Regulations for these and other fisheries are described in WDFW's [Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet](#).

Anglers planning to fish the North Fork Lewis River should be aware that the Yale Park boat ramp will be closed from Sept. 5 through October. PacifiCorp will be making upgrades include resurfacing the parking lot, adding parking lines and providing a wheelchair-accessible route through the day-use area. The Beaver Bay boat ramp at the upper end of Yale Reservoir will remain open.

There are, of course, a variety of other fishing opportunities besides salmon available to area anglers this month. Anglers are still catching **walleye** below Bonneville Dam and **trout fishing** is still an option at Tilton River and a number of lowland lakes, including Swift Reservoir and Mayfield Lake.

But for anglers who don't mind a hike, September is a great time to head for the **high wilderness lakes** around Mount Adams and Mount St. Helens. Hymer recommends three such lakes – Goose, Council and Tahkalk – that offer drive-in access.

"The mosquitoes should die down around the high mountain lakes after the first frost arrives," Hymer said. "Sure, the fish are usually small, but the leaves are beginning to turn, the air is crisp and you can really experience the change of season."

Eastern Washington

September fishing can be very productive throughout the eastern region, with cooling lake water for trout and growing runs of steelhead and salmon in rivers.

The Snake River hatchery **steelhead** season is open Sept. 1 through March 31, when up to three hatchery marked (adipose-fin-clipped) steelhead can be kept. For the first time in recent history, the entire Snake River also opened Sept. 1 to retention of hatchery **chinook salmon**.

Glen Mendel, WDFW southeast district fish biologist, said the fishery is possible because of the large run of upriver bright hatchery fall chinook expected to return to the Snake River this year. Those fish are making their way up the Columbia to the Snake and should start to make up some of the catch by mid-September. The season could remain open through Oct. 31, unless catch rates exceed or run size fails to meet expectations.

As with steelhead, all wild chinook – which are protected under the Endangered Species Act – must be released immediately without removing them from the water. But anglers can keep three hatchery marked (adipose fin-clipped) fall chinook adults (24 inches in length and larger), and three adipose fin-clipped jack fall chinook (less than 24 inches, but at least 12 inches). The rule is consistent with Idaho regulations allowing harvest of hatchery fall chinook in the Idaho boundary waters of the Snake River.

Anglers must use barbless hooks when fishing for chinook or steelhead in the Snake, and they must stop fishing for salmon and steelhead for the day once they have retained three hatchery steelhead, regardless of whether the salmon daily limit has been retained.

Several of the region's best **rainbow** and/or **cutthroat trout** fishing lakes close at the end of September. This month is the last chance to fish Badger, Fish, West Medical and Williams lakes in southwest Spokane County; Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County; and Fan Lake in Pend Oreille County. Amber and North Silver lakes in Spokane County shift to catch-and-release only on Oct. 1.

Chris Donley, WDFW central district fish biologist, said that depending on air and water temperature changes and fall insect hatches, those lakes can be almost as productive as the first weeks of the season in the spring.

Two other lakes in the central district – Lincoln County's Coffeepot Lake and Spokane County's Downs Lake – close at the end of the month, but are usually good bets in September for **yellow perch** fishing. Coffeepot also yields rainbows and **black crappie**.

Plenty of lakes throughout the region remain open through October or year-round, and can provide good fishing in September. Clear Lake, near the town of Medical Lake, has **brown trout** biting during the month and usually produces good catches of crappie and **largemouth bass** as fall advances. Stevens County's Deer and Loon lakes continue to provide a variety of fish, from bass to **kokanee**. Lake Roosevelt and Sprague Lake both offer good-size rainbows.

Fishing at hatchery-trout-stocked Tucannon River impoundments in the southeast district slowed in the heat of the summer, but should pick up this month with cooling water temperatures. Three of the seven – Beaver, Deer and Watson lakes – have had low water levels for the past month and are likely not fishable. But Big Four, Blue, Curl and Rainbow lakes may be worth trying. The Tucannon fishing lakes are on WDFW's Wooten Wildlife Area, where manager Kari Dingman reports extremely dry conditions. She reminds fishers who plan to use the area's campgrounds that there is a ban on campfires through September, by order of the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Northcentral Washington

Some popular **rainbow trout** lakes in Okanogan County that have been under catch-and-release rules all spring and summer are shifting to "catch and keep" fishing. Starting Sept. 1, anglers will be allowed to catch five trout a day on Campbell, Cougar and Davis lakes in the Winthrop area. WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist Bob Jateff says anglers at these lakes can expect fish in the 10-12- inch range, with carryovers up to 15 inches. Bait is allowed on all three lakes, but last year's new county ordinance prohibits gas-powered motors on Davis Lake.

September is also a good time to hike up to one of many alpine lakes in Okanogan County and cast for **cutthroat trout**, Jateff said. With dry conditions and some wildfires already burning, anglers should watch for burning restrictions on public lands.

Jateff also notes that anglers should watch for an announcement about an opportunity to fish without limits at three Okanogan County trout lakes that are scheduled to be treated this fall to get rid of undesirable fish species. Alta Lake near Pateros, along with Fish Lake and Schallow Pond near Conconully, will have catch limits lifted later this month, so that anglers can remove as many fish as possible before rehabilitation next month.

Starting Sept. 1, the fishery for hatchery **summer chinook salmon** that opened on the lower Wenatchee River will expand to include the stretch from Peshastin Creek to above Dryden Dam and the Icicle Creek road bridge west of Leavenworth. Anglers can retain two adipose-fin-clipped adult or jack summer chinook salmon, but all other fish must be released. Selective gear rules and night closure are in effect. The season is scheduled to run through Oct. 15.

For all the rules on these and other seasons, anglers should check the fishing pamphlet or emergency rule updates at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/> .

Southcentral Washington

Counts of **chinook salmon** and **steelhead** passing McNary Dam have been climbing day by day, setting the stage for popular fisheries throughout the region. While those fisheries often start out slow, they can ramp up quickly by mid-September as more fish move past the dam. "There's a lot of anticipation out there right now," said Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Anglers are catching fish here and there, but they know a lot more are headed our way. By the middle of the month, we could have several thousand upriver brights in the Hanford Reach."

According to the preseason forecast, 760,600 **fall chinook salmon** will enter the Columbia River this year, and about two-thirds of them will move past Bonneville Dam.

Most areas of the Columbia River have been open for salmon fishing since Aug. 1, and two major tributaries will open in September. The Yakima River opens for salmon fishing Sept. 1 from the Columbia River upstream to Prosser Dam, although the area around the Chandler Powerhouse will remain closed as in previous years. "The best fishing on the Yakima is in October, but some fish will start moving in this month," Hoffarth said.

Farther east, the Snake River also opened Sept. 1 for hatchery fall chinook above the Highway 12 Bridge. Anglers must use barbless hooks when fishing for salmon and steelhead in the Snake River. Anglers are advised to check the *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet and [emergency rules](#) for all waters before heading out.

Anglers are also catching some **hatchery steelhead**, and the harvest should pick up throughout the month, Hoffarth said. Catches were above normal – but still slow – in late August on the Columbia River from the Highway 395 Bridge (Blue Bridge) downstream. Hoffarth noted that

steelhead fishing above the Highway 395 Bridge is not scheduled to open until Oct. 1, but could open earlier if the numbers pick up.

Effective Sept. 1, the Snake River opens for hatchery steelhead fishing with barbless hooks. "As with salmon, look for fishing to improve as the water cools and more fish move upriver," Hoffarth said. "Steelhead move fast. They don't stay in one spot very long, so anglers have to be there when they arrive."

Meanwhile, **walleye** fisheries are in full swing, producing nice catches in the Columbia River above and below McNary Dam, as well as in the Snake River. **Sturgeon** fishing is restricted to catch and release in most of the Columbia River, including Lake Wallula and the Hanford Reach. **Trout** fishing is also still an option in many southcentral region rivers and streams, including the Yakima, Naches, Little Naches, and Bumping rivers in Yakima County, and the upper reaches of Taneum Creek, Naneum Creek, Manastash Creek, and the forks of the Teanaway in Kittitas County. Most rivers and creeks have special regulations like selective gear rules that prohibit bait. Most also have statewide trout catch limits of two trout with an 8-inch minimum size. Anglers should check the rules pamphlet for all details.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

In an Email to TGF co-editor Michael Teague with the Subject Line 'Multnomah Channel,' subscriber **Mark B.** wrote to ask, "I'm brand new to fishing from a boat and I'm not familiar with good spots to fish in the Portland Metro area. We plan on heading out on a weekday sometime next week, do you have any suggestions on where we should focus our efforts?"

"Any advice you can offer would be greatly appreciated!"

Michael Replied, "We're always delighted to hear from readers and offer whatever advice we can to help them catch more fish. If you're thinking of fishing Multnomah Channel (or any part of the lower Willamette), there's not much fishing to be had, however.

"You didn't mention what sort of boat you have but your best bet at this time is the Columbia. Please let us know about the size of your craft so we can provide detailed information."

Subscriber Ken M wrote, "How about an article on the dam removal going on now on the White Salmon river? Scheduled to blow & go in October, washing ~ 2 million CY of sediment down river, burying salmon and steelhead spawning beds and expected to create huge sand bar in Columbia river similar to that of the Hood River. Should destroy local fishery for a number of years."

TGF co editor and pro guide Bob Rees replied, "Thanks for your comments Ken.

"I hope you're not right about the dam removal curbing angling success. I also hope the dam removal eventually bolsters the fish returns there and opens up massive amounts of spawning and rearing habitat as it is supposed to! We hope to report on the pitfall and successes of dam removal in the future! Thanks for being a TGF subscriber"

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

93-year-old crowned Queen of the Silver Salmon Sisterhood in Valdez:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDQe2sS4apM>

Rainbow Trout Caught on Rattlesnake Fly:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KzSWMNiqVo&feature=player_embedded

GOOD LUCK!