

The Guide's Forecast - volume 13 issue number 37

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 16th – September 22nd, 2011**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Metro anglers are scoring excellent results for quality chinook on the mainstem Columbia above Warrior Rock. The deep channels are producing nicely for wobbler plunkers and the action should continue for a few more weeks.

Bonneville backtrollers are taking some chinook although it remains inconsistent. Action should pick up later this month. Sturgeon retention is still a few weeks away but the opener should be good.

Steelhead are available on the McKenzie but overall it's been slow, even for trout.

The North Santiam is slow although water conditions are good. A few hatchery steelhead have been taken on the South Santiam.

Fishing will remain slow on the Clackamas and Sandy as the coho run gets underway. Notoriously hard to coax, this is a fishery of persistence but rain can stimulate a good bite.

A toxic algae alert was issued September 9th for Timothy Lake and North Fork Reservoir. Avoid contact with the water at these locations.

Northwest – Despite the disappearance of angler effort, hatchery coho fishing remained red hot in the lower Columbia River. Boat limits were taken in no time early in the week, with anglers focusing on the last part of the incoming tide near the bridge using spinners or herring to entice biters.

Chinook season will re-open from Buoy 10 to Tongue Point beginning tomorrow through the end of the year. Chinook are still being caught in the area but the bulk of the run typically passes through the lower river by mid-September.

Another 3-day season for chinook above Tongue Point also begins tomorrow with the possibility for good fishing due to a weak tide exchange. This fishery will close beginning Monday the 19th however. The limit for both of the above fisheries is 2 salmon/steelhead in combination.

Crabbing is picking up in the lower Columbia with the weekend offering good options with the small tide exchange.

Tillamook Bay is heating up with the ocean and bay producing fair to good catches for this early in the season. Steve Mapua of Kent, Washington fished with 3 others on Tuesday, taking 5 chinook, 2 halibut, including a 41-pounder, and 60 large dungeness crab, all near the entrance of Tillamook Bay. Chinook are present in the upper bay but seem reluctant to bite.

There is an odd absence of hatchery coho in the west channel but fishing for wild coho on many north coast estuaries begins on September 15th with bag limits varying by watershed. The wild coho make a much stronger showing later in the month and early October.

Nehalem Bay from Nehalem Bay State Park seaward opened for chinook and coho retention today. This should be an excellent option this weekend.

The Nestucca, Salmon, Siletz and Alsea estuaries have all been producing quality fall chinook recently. Soft tides over the weekend will focus most of the effort near estuary mouths where trolled herring will take good numbers of fish.

Crabbing is picking up in all north coast estuaries and is phenomenal in the ocean right now. Most ocean keepers are so large, they are visibly legal but double-check size and sex to be sure.

Southwest – Bottom fishing slowed off the central Oregon coast over the past week and tuna catches have been spotty. Ocean crabbing remains excellent whenever boats have been able to get out. Nearshore halibut remained open as of this writing but is expected to close soon.

Chinook catches have been fair to good around Reedsport although boat traffic was very heavy over the past weekend. Anglers in the lower mainstem are also taking fish. While South Umpqua smallmouth bass fishing has been excellent, it closes to all angling at the end of day September 16th. Steelheading on the North Umpqua is slow.

Plugs and spinners will take fish in the wild coho fishery which opened September 15th on the Siletz, Yaquina, Alsea, Siuslaw, Umpqua, Coos, and Coquille rivers and bays.

Offshore efforts out of Gold Beach have yielded limits of crab and bottomfish. Rogue Bay has been crowded with boats and action sporadic. Fishing for adult chinook and jacks had been good in the lower Rogue until the water temperature rose once again over the past week. Chinook fishing has been worthwhile below Grants Pass with wrapped Kwikfish taking fish. Steelheading is good on the upper Rogue although it's flies-only from the Hatchery Hole down to the old Gold Ray Dam site.

Nearshore bottom fishing has been producing good catches of rockfish and lingcod out of the Port of Brookings.

Eastern – Steelheading has been fair to good on the lower Deschutes for those with the right technique. A few chinook have been taken recently.

Good catches of kokanee averaging 15 inches are being taken by trollers using downriggers at Green Peter. Expect to see some coloring up as spawning season approaches.

Trollers are taking good numbers of larger kokanee in great shape for this time of year at Odell.

Paulina has produced some limits of kokanee to anglers using jigs.

SW Washington – The Cowlitz River is a fair option for fall chinook with coho likely to show later this month. Some summer steelhead are also still available.

Effort around the Lewis and Kalama is largely taking place near the mouth, targeting coho. Catches are light.

Upriver, the mouths of the White Salmon and Klickitat Rivers should be fair options for chinook and an early coho. Early morning is most likely to produce the best results.

Columbia River Fishing Report – With the below Warrior Rock closure, wobbler anglers are seeking productive water upstream in search of quality upriver brights which is peaking right now. The action has been good with many more to come.

Success above Warrior Rock has been good although a good percentage of anglers prefer the water below the St. Helens closure. Anglers are sticking to the deep water, working wobblers on the outgoing tide.

This from a knowledgeable angler versed in the fine art of wobbler fishing; cut and pasted from the www.ifish.net website from "Silver Hilton":

If you haven't been bitten this past week, there is something grossly wrong with your presentation. Here are some ideas.

1) Are you in a line that is getting fish? Are there fish being caught on both sides of you? If so, that's good, means you're in a catching spot. Keep fishing there. If not, find such a spot. See below for some discussion about how to fish away from the pack if you're not confident with your anchoring. The popular spots are popular for a reason - people catch fish there, more so than other spots. You're best off fishing those spots until you figure the fishery out and can seek out your own spots. You're clearly not successful yet at doing that, so I'd stick to the popular spots.

2) Are you back bouncing correctly? When your lure is out, can you lift the line up, let it back, and feel the sinker bump the bottom? If not, adjust your technique/sinker weight until you can. This is quite likely something you're doing wrong if you are new to salmon fishing. You should be able to feel that sinker bumping the bottom when you lift the rod and let it back. **This is crucial, and is something a lot of newbies screw up.** The common error is to keep letting line out quickly after the sinker has hit the bottom. You want to let line out until the sinker hits the bottom, then thumb the spool. Lift your rod sharply up, let a little line out (6 inches to 2 feet) and feel the sinker hit again. Drop your rod, let the current fill the line, then lift the rod sharply and repeat. You should feel that sinker hit every time you let a little line out. Walk the lure back a bit, and put the rod in the holder. You don't need to be way far back in most places. You may need to go up or down in sinker weight to get this to work. If you can't get a little line out each time, you need less weight. If you can't hold the bottom, you need more weight. At the beginning of the tide, you'll be using 6 to 8 ounces. At the end of the tide, you may be up to 16 or 20 ounces. These weights assume 50 lb braided line, if your line is different, you'll need to adjust a bit. You will need to adjust your sinker as the current increases. Check that your sinker is on the bottom every half hour or so. If it's not holding, go up in weight.

3) Is your lure wobbling nicely? Depending on the lure and the current, the lure should be swaying side to side, from somewhere between 8 o'clock and 4 o'clock up to 10 o'clock to 2 o'clock. If not, fiddle with the bend in the middle of the lure until it does. Spinning is bad. Lure choice doesn't matter that much, we've caught fish on simons, alvins and clancies the past few weeks - they all work. Get something with either chartreuse or blue or both on it and you should be good.

4) Are you rigged correctly? Most of us are using a 5 foot leader and a 5 to 6 foot dropper. I use 40 lb leader - the fish are not leader shy. I use 20 lb on a slider for the dropper. Between my line and leader is a roller style bead chain.

5) (this is rare) Are you fishing in a trough? A lot of the Columbia has bars that cross the river perpendicular to the current. This looks like bumps on the depth finder as you approach your anchor spot from down river. If you have these bumps, you want to position your lure just on the downstream edge of one of these bumps. If you have your lure in a trough, the fish swim right over it. I manage this by picking fishing spots that are on a flat. This is usually relatively rare, most of the better spots are on flats, and are good precisely because they are on a flat.

If you are unsure of your anchoring skills and wary of fishing the pack, you can still catch these

fish. Find the channel edge upstream or downstream from the pack of boats, and anchor on the edge of the drop-off into 40 to 50 feet. You may not catch as many fish, but this time of year, you should be able to get -some- fish almost anywhere. Make sure you aren't in the shipping lane, but if you are fishing the drop-off, this usually won't be a problem. You need to be in hard current - if you're not in as much current as the catching boats (look at their anchor buoys to guesstimate) you're not in a catching spot. Chinook salmon (and steelhead) like current.

I don't think color matters that much on a wobbler, nor do I think you need to worry too much about scent. I do clean my hands and lures with dish soap, but don't think it matters much for fall fish. Springers are a different story.

That's really all there is to wobbler fishing. Quit wandering around the river, pick one spot, and learn where the fish are caught. Then get there early enough to get to where the fish are being caught, and you should improve your chances.

Thanks for all that detailed info Silver Hilton!

Gorge anglers had an excellent week with some fish taken by backtrollers while anchor anglers using plugs also did well. Boat anglers averaged over 1 fish per boat (1.27 precisely) while bank anglers took .17 fish per rod (13 fish for 82 rods). It's been an excellent week on the lower Columbia. Adults continue to pour over the dam with numbers ranging between 12,000 and 17,000 adults. Adult coho numbers are booming too.

Further downstream, although a sleeper fishery compared to the chinook fishery upstream, coho remain abundant in the lower river. Guides working the area report easy limits if you target the right time of the tide. The peak part of the flood has been producing excellent catches recently with many falling to spinners on the Washington side of the river on lower Desdemona Sands. Chinook have been abundant as well with one guide boat reporting starting off the day with a triple, all chinook that were released on Wednesday.

Additional chinook opportunity comes around once again on the lower Columbia but more on that in the forecast section of this segment.

Crabbing is picking up on the lower Columbia and can make a nice addition to your fishing effort in the area. Fresh salmon carcasses should be available.

The Guide's Forecast – What's with the additional opportunity? We'll let the press release speak for itself:

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release September 12, 2011

States reopen lower Columbia chinook seasons

CLACKAMAS, Ore. – Fishery managers from Oregon and Washington today announced that they will reopen some chinook salmon seasons in the lower Columbia River, effective Sept. 16. The additional fishing opportunity is possible due to lower than expected catches of ESA-listed lower river wild tule fall chinook.

Under the rule change adopted at a joint state hearing Monday afternoon, chinook retention will be allowed from Buoy 10 upstream 19 miles to Tongue Point starting Sept. 16 and continuing through the end of the year. The daily bag limit from Sept. 16 through the end of the year will be two adult salmon/steelhead in combination. Coho and steelhead must be adipose fin-clipped, but chinook can either be clipped or not. Retention of jacks is prohibited in this fishery until Oct.1.

Farther upstream, from Tongue Point approximately 69 miles upstream to the Warrior Rock/Lewis River line, chinook retention will be allowed Sept. 16, 17, and 18. Chinook retention (for adults and jacks) will close again effective Sept. 19 and reopen Oct. 1 through the end of the year. The daily bag limit is two adult salmon/steelhead in combination. Coho and steelhead must be adipose fin-clipped. When chinook retention is allowed, adult and jack chinook may be retained whether fin-clipped or not.

From the Warrior Rock/Lewis River line upstream to the Oregon/Washington border, chinook retention is currently open and will remain open until the end of the year with no changes from previously adopted seasons.

For more information visit ODFW's regulations update page on the Internet at http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/reg_changes/index.asp

Confused yet? Traditionally, this may not have meant much but anglers working the lower river are still catching good numbers of chinook along with limits of hatchery coho. Of course this can change at any time but there are only 1/3 of the predicted number of adults past Bonneville right now, indicating that there are many more to come. Softer tides this weekend could open up the Tongue Point bite again.

Spinners are likely to work well if the Tongue Point bite takes off again but bait has been a consistent producer up there this season. I don't think I'd leave the dock without bait and frozen herring will work just fine up there. Note the return of the 2 fish bag limit. How fun would that be?

Anglers targeting hatchery coho in the lower river should experience a downturn in success rates this week. Weaker tides don't help matters but if the return is as low as is expected, the good fishing couldn't last forever. It's been a pretty good hatchery stretch the last 12 days or so, it can't last forever unless the run is grossly under-predicted.

Working back upstream, wobbler anglers will see the additional 3-day opener but then will have to go back to the Warrior Rock deadline until further notice. Even though the tides are soft over the weekend, there should still be some good opportunity to work hardware in the deep slots of the upriver brights.

Bonneville has been a surprise as of late and may continue to produce good catches of chinook to anchor anglers and backtrollers. Plugs seem to be quite effective as most salmon have seen all the hardware they can handle in the downstream fishery. These fish seem to get more territorial as they enter the gorge.

Some summer steelhead remain available but most downstream of Bonneville anglers are

focusing on salmon. The larger B-run fish are coming through and most are getting targeted upstream of Bonneville near the mouths of cooler tributaries such as the Deschutes River. Daily adult counts remain around the 3,000 mark.

Crabbing should be productive around Buoy's 20 and 22 as well as lower Desdemona Sands. You can fish for chinook and coho while your pots soak.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Daily counts of fall Chinook and coho are ramping up. As of September 13th, over 400 Chinook had been counted with coho numbers approaching the 200 mark. These numbers will climb as we welcome the fall months and soon winter steelhead will join the ranks.

Many of the 21,000 summer steelhead which crossed Willamette Falls this season are in the McKenzie and Santiam systems.

North Santiam flows have been around 1,500 cfs with the South Santiam running a little less. This puts the entire system in pretty good shape with excellent clarity.

The Guide's Forecast – As temperature moderate and fall approaches, it's time to give some consideration to the spiny rays. Smallmouth bass on the Willamette will be starting to feed heavily in preparation for the change of seasons. Largemouth in backwaters, sloughs, lakes and ponds will start a feeding spree to fatten up in preparation for the long, cold winter to come. Some of the best catches of the year take place at this time and it's a largely neglected fishery.

While hot weather only had a moderate affect on steelheading on the McKenzie. Now that the weather is turning to moderate fall temperatures, expect fine results in the next six weeks or so. Trout fishers should include October caddis in their arsenal. It's time to switch gears for fall fishing.

Salmon, off-limits to fishing for a month now, are spawning on the upper North Santiam which can be a spectacle at this time of year. Some summer steelhead have been hooked around Minto Park but the best bet for a hatchery fish remains the South Santiam.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Clackamas water condition further deteriorated slightly over the past week with the water very low and clear. Fishing for salmon and steelhead has been a grind with little to show for efforts.

Conditions on the Sandy have remained unchanged over the past week as warm weather has the entire system off-color to varying degrees due to glacial runoff. There are fair to good numbers of Chinook and steelhead in the system and a few coho have been nosing their way into the river.

The Guide's Forecast – There are still a few salmon available in the Clackamas with a couple of rare chrome specimens landed this week. Overall, is has been very slow with late summer conditions evident. Spinner flingers have started lining the bank at the Bowling Alley Hole but there's very little action yet as evidenced by the lack of fish rolling at the mouth. It won't be long, though.

Fishing has been fair on the Sandy despite murky water with best results coming at the mouths of tributaries. Many of the late-season Chinook are darkening now. As the weather cools this week, water conditions may show some much-needed improvement and while some claim to enjoy fishing the gray-green water, most are looking forward to seeing an improvement in

visibility. Try for early coho around Cedar Creek. Drifting high-quality cured eggs or throwing spinners will be effective when these fish are on the bite. Results are bound to improve with rainfall.

North Coast Fishing Report – It can be bonanza fishing on the north coast this time of year and it's often one of the nicest times of the year to be on the coast. The weather is at its nicest and summer traffic is winding down. The hardest question may be, what do you want to catch?

On Tuesday, it seemed like everything was on the menu. Steve Mapua of Kent Washington fished with me (Bob Rees) just outside of the mouth of Tillamook Bay. Steve definitely had the hot rod that day as he took his 2 chinook limit and 1 halibut limit before anyone else on board had a bite. His limit of 12 dungeness were just a few hundred yards away soaking in the crab pots. The final tally for Tuesday's catch was 5 chinook, 2 halibut, 60 crab and 2 large sand dabs. I think the sea level dropped a foot after Steve left the scene.

One guide landed a triple between the south tip of the jetty and the green can on the same day. Action was fairly consistent on a very flat ocean on Tuesday but the bar and ocean swell roughed up a bit by Tuesday night, making Wednesday a little less comfortable. You can pretty much see where the action is surrounding the mouth of the bay but the south side has been one of the better producing areas early in the week. Boats were working the north side as well with some success.

We took the halibut trolling for salmon. I wish I could say I was targeting them but I'm pretty sure it was a serious fluke. One of our flatties tipped the scale at 41-pounds. The day before, I know of at least 2 halibut landed, one was rumored to be about 61 inches. There isn't much poundage left in the nearshore quota so if you do catch a halibut this week, you had better know if the season is open or not.

Ocean crabbing is off the hook although a fair portion of the huge keepers are still in a softshell state. I rarely have to put the measuring stick to them, and I do mean rarely. It doesn't seem to matter if you crab north or south of the bay entrance, the crab are there. Just be wary of the swell. I put my pots in 25 foot of water on Tuesday's flat seas only to find them in the surf on Wednesday. I think I aged about 15 years retrieving them back from the surf zone. I recommend you place your pots in at least 35 feet of water where a 9 foot swell won't drag them to the beach.

Inside Tillamook Bay, trollers working the upper bay this week have had fair success. The fish are clearly present but they are not biting so well. We got one of our 3 chinook in the middle bay on Wednesday, fishing herring near low slack. We also snagged and released a keeper sized sturgeon. The other 2 chinook came from the ocean.

Tillamook Bay chinook have also come from the Ghost Hole near high tide this week. High tide is also an obvious option in the upper bay as well with many of the early chinook entering the estuary destined for the Trask or Tillamook Rivers. The south channel has not been overly productive. There are some coho present as well as a few chinook. For the first time in nearly 2 decades, the retention of wild coho opened up on Thursday. Although it's still a bit early for high expectations, there was some effort out on the opener, targeting coho in the south channel. The wild component really shows up better later in the month and especially in early October. Spinners and herring will likely take biters.

The lower Nehalem Bay also opened to chinook and coho this week although no reports on angler success at this writing. Undoubtedly, it will be a productive week on the lower bay with

perfect tides lining up for the weekend. Look for the low tide exchanges to produce the best results.

The Nestucca, Salmon, Siletz and Alsea estuaries should all be producing fair to good results for chinook this week. Check out chinook and coho regulations in your favorite coastal waterway here:

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

To target chinook, bounce herring on the bottom on the entire outgoing tide. On the softer exchanges, chinook are likely to cross at high slack and the first part of outgoing. Then, they will wait until peak ebb and cross in pretty good number. Unlike the stronger exchanges, as we near low slack, there will NOT be a great bite as the bulk of the fish for that day will have already crossed the bar.

Chinook are also available in the tidewater reaches of many of these systems. Bobber fishing should be fair but oftentimes the softer exchanges don't motivate fish to bite in the tidewater sections. The Trask and Nestucca should be good options however. The Tillamook River should have fish available for trollers wanting a simple fishery to participate in.

Crabbing is picking up in most coastal estuaries. Tillamook and Nehalem are productive and most other estuaries should be productive too as males mover closer to shore in preparation for fall spawning.

The Guide's Forecast – This should be a good week for chinook anglers willing to work the lower reaches of north coast estuaries. Herring trolled on the bottom or holding in the outgoing tide should produce some fair to good opportunities this weekend. The early season seems to be off to a good start and should continue for the next several weeks.

Tillamook should be a highlight with anglers willing to pick seaweed likely to score good results along the inside of the north jetty and in the bubble, weather allowing. Seaweed and eel grass has been a problem but not the entire time. Lower tides exchanges don't seem to draw the grass problem as the higher exchanges. Do keep an eye on the sunken south jetty as the ocean swell is almost always bad off the south tip westward to the green can. Keep your baits on the bottom, especially on the outgoing tide. Most productive areas vary from 24 to 40 feet deep. The upper bay will likely produce poorly even though fish may be present. Even the west channel may be a poor option.

Here is the offshore weather forecast, it will dictate angler success this weekend:

Fri...NW wind 5 kt...backing to W in the afternoon. Wind waves 1 foot. W swell 4 ft at 9 seconds. Patchy fog in the morning.

Fri Night...W wind 5 to 10 kt...backing to S with gusts to 15 kt after midnight. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 5 ft at 9 seconds. Slight chance of rain. Patchy fog after midnight.

Sat...S wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 6 ft. Slight chance of showers in the morning...then chance of rain in the afternoon.

Sat Night...S wind 10 to 15 kt with gusts to 20 kt. Wind waves 4 ft. W swell 6 ft. Chance of rain in the evening...then rain after midnight.

Sun...S wind 20 to 25 kt...easing to 15 to 20 kt in the afternoon. Wind waves 5 ft. W swell 6 ft. Rain in the morning... Then chance of showers in the afternoon.

Sun Night...SW wind 10 kt...becoming W after midnight. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 9 ft. Chance of showers.

Mon...NW wind 5 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 10 ft.

Tue...SW wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 3 ft. W swell 6 ft.

Nehalem Bay should also be a good option near the bar. Herring on the bottom will likely produce good results. The summer run looks to be strong and the fall run should be even stronger. This system is rebounding nicely. It's also open to coho, both wild and hatchery but even though the hatchery component of the run should be underway, coho are scarce in most north coast estuaries. Hopefully the wild fish show as predicted. Better fishing ahead if you are partial to coho salmon.

If the Nestucca, Salmon, Alsea, Yaquina or Siletz estuaries are your preferred areas, be safe but fish close to the bar for best success. All of these systems should see a fair push of fish this weekend. Drop your crab pots for a nice bonus. Ocean crab should be making their way into surrounding estuaries. The tidewater stretches likely won't produce great results for chinook but fish are certainly present.

Central & South Coast Reports – Albacore were taken at 10 miles from shore out of Newport earlier this week. While occasionally offering only scratch fishing, this has been another excellent year for tuna off the Oregon coast and it ain't over yet. Drop crab pots on the way out of possible as ocean crabbing has been great while crabbing in Yaquina Bay has been slow.

Nearshore halibut remains open as of September 15th. Limitations include a maximum depth of 240 feet with no groundfish, sablefish, or Pacific Cod may on board although salmon are allowed to be taken on a halibut trip.

The 20-fathom restriction for rockfish and ling cod offshore will remain in place through the end of the year.

While coho may no longer be taken from the ocean, Chinook can be caught through September.

Wild coho started today on the Siletz, Yaquina, Alsea, Siuslaw, Umpqua, Coos, and Coquille rivers and Tenmile Lakes. Established wild coho fisheries will continue in Siltcoos and Tahkenitch lakes. Read details on some of these fisheries below.

While it will be later in the year for the coho fishery to get underway at Tahkenitch, visitors should be aware of a toxic algae advisory currently in place. While Oregon Health Authority's Public Health Division and Coos County Health Department officials urge avoiding contact with the water, they recommend that people who choose to eat fish from Tahkenitch should remove all fat, skin and organs before cooking.

Crabbing has been good in Winchester Bay with trollers picking up Chinook below Reedsport. Trolled, plug-cut herring and spinners have accounted for Chinook landings on the lower Umpqua this week as well. Results have been fair to good with anglers taking a mix of adult and jack salmon. Coho numbers are improving daily and will soon be the dominant specie in the fishery here. One wild fish may be kept per day here but only two are allowed for the season. Boaters are advised to avoid going between research vessels and buoys where nets are being set for

green sturgeon research which has been contracted by ODFW. All fishing will be closed on the South Umpqua as of September 16th through the end of November.

Chinook fishers on the lower Coos River have had some very good days when the Rogue was running too warm to fish well. The Coos Bay wild coho fishery starts today, Sept. 15th, through Nov. 30th or a quota of 1,200 fish. One per day is allowed up to five per year. Crabbing has been fair to good in Coos Bay although few are trying for them.

Coquille trollers have been taking fish to good numbers of Chinook with the wild coho fishery opening here as well. The bag limit here is the same as on the Coos although the quota is dialed back to a total of 825 fish. Crabbing is good below the 101 Bridge and has been fair from the docks.

Trollers using anchovy/spinner rigs are taking Chinook in Rogue Bay although fish have moved upriver as well. A few coho have been taken in the bay. In addition to Chinook in the lower Rogue, half-pounder catches have been fair. Plug-pullers and back-bouncers are making spotty catches on the middle river. The flies-only section of the upper Rogue from the old Gold Ray Dam site to Cole River Hatchery has been good as it usually is this time of year. Over 1,500 summer steelhead have entered the hatchery facility. Above Lost Creek Reservoir, trout fishing has been great thanks to weekly stocking for months on this stretch.

Albacore moved further offshore this week, putting them out of reach of most recreational boats launching out of Brookings Harbor. Weather patterns indicate a move nearshore should occur once again with tuna catches often enduring into October off the Oregon coast. Sea-run cutthroat trout fishing has been good in the lower Chetco although it remains closed to all fishing above milepost 2.2.

Wild fires in the Diamond Lake area have compromised water quality but are not near enough to the lake that they cause any reason for angler concern and no travelers will find no road restriction. Water remains clear with Power Bait taking the greater number of local jumbo trout. Visitors will also enjoy fewer mosquitoes as the seasons change.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Lower Deschutes water quality has been a variable over the past week as the White River has been periodically roiling the water. As of Thursday this week, the lower Deschutes visibility was good and will hopefully stay clear enough for decent fishing over the coming weekend. During trap operation at Shearers Falls September 11th through 13th, 19 Chinook and 44 steelhead were counted along with the season's first coho.

The Metolius has been fishing well for knowledgeable fly anglers who are taking some spectacularly colorful trout at this time of year.

Green Peter has been productive for kokanee with downriggers most effective. Many of the fish are showing signs of the approaching spawn.

Odell has been putting out good numbers of kokanee to trollers.

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 steelhead, 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 Tahkalkh – 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

Write to the TGF staff:

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Random Links

Wildfire road restrictions and closures:

<http://inciweb.org/state/38/>

Bobber fishing tips for steelhead:

<http://www.piscatorialpursuits.com/resourcecenter/floatfishing.htm>

GOOD LUCK!