

The Guide's Forecast - volume 13 issue number 38

Northwest Oregon and Washington's most complete and accurate fishing forecast
Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 23rd – September 29th, 2011**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Anglers fishing Bonneville had some great fishing last week and action remains fair in water that traditionally doesn't produce good catches for another few weeks. Fishing should improve, even as passage is likely to slow. Anglers anchored with plugs seem to be producing the best results.

Anchor anglers using wobblers are still producing chinook from Portland to Warrior Rock but peak action is winding down. Anglers will begin to focus on coho near tributary mouths in the coming weeks.

The lower Willamette will remain closed for sturgeon retention through 2011. Middle Fork anglers are taking a few steelhead while trout fishing is fair on the North Fork.

Expect to see October Caddis start to appear on the McKenzie any day now. Steelhead fishing is fair.

A few coho have joined steelhead in the Santiams but overall, fishing is slow. Flow at Mehema will increase to over 3,000 cfs next week.

Sandy fishers are seeing coho in the lower river but hooking these finicky fish has been a challenge.

Coho fishing is underway in the Clackamas although catches are spotty. Spinners or drifted, cured eggs are getting hits.

Northwest – Action at Buoy 10 finally skid to a halt following the coastal deluge over the weekend. Hatchery coho should remain available but limits seem unlikely until the later returning "B" run arrives in October.

Crabbing in the lower Columbia is good.

Tillamook Bay anglers continue to get rewarded with good chinook fishing. Soft tides had most guides focused on the lower bay and ocean but the ocean won't be a good option if the offshore forecast comes to fruition.

Another large halibut nearing 70 pounds was taken near the green can just outside of Tillamook Bay on Tuesday. The nearshore season remains open.

Tillamook Bay fishing has only been fair with seaweed and eelgrass hampering success. Some wild coho are beginning to get caught with prospects improving later this month. Sturgeon are present in Tillamook Bay but until fresh water inundates the estuary, you're likely to be feeding juvenile crab with your offerings.

Ocean crabbing is awesome but rough seas will keep most bar options closed. Bay crabbing is good in most estuaries with Tillamook offering up limits for those willing to put in their time.

Nehalem Bay fishing has been good with chinook and coho in the mix. Stronger tides over the weekend should produce better results in the upper bay for spinner and herring trollers. The

bobber bite should also pick up.

The Nestucca, Salmon, Alsea and Siletz Rivers all produced fair to good results on the current tide series. Although a significant amount of rain fell over the weekend, river levels did not rise significantly in any of the coastal basins but it did get fish moving.

Southwest – Boats launching off the central Oregon coast have taken fairly easy limits of rockfish inside the 20-fathom line although lingcod have been off the bite. Ocean crabbing remains worthwhile and nearshore halibut remains open as of Tuesday this week. Albacore are an option whenever ocean conditions allow.

Winchester Bay has been good for chinook while the wild coho fishery which started the 15th has been spotty but will improve. North Umpqua steelheading is slow.

While chinook fishing has been fair in the lower Coquille with catches steady, Coos Bay has been somewhat better with hookups common over the past week.

Despite good numbers of chinook in Rogue Bay, fishing has been slow. It has been much better outside in the ocean when boats have been able to cross the bar. Chinook catches are also good below Grants Pass for plug-pullers and back-bouncers. The upper Rogue is a reliable fishery for anglers tempting steelhead with egg patterns fished below spawning chinook.

Salmon fishing is underway in the lower Chetco. Jacks are being caught as they are generally the first to arrive but adults are also coming over the gunwales.

Good news came in over the past week for halibut fishers south of Humbug Mountain with no early closure as rumored and halibut catches continuing through October.

Trout fishing was reported as slow over the past weekend at Diamond Lake although Greg Juber of McMinnville, Oregon caught the largest trout taken since ridding the lake of tui chub in 2006; a 26 1/2 inch rainbow weighing 7.10-pounds.

Eastern – Steelheading has been good on the Deschutes below Maupin. Trout fishing is fair to good at times with October Caddis amongst the hatches.

Trout catches have eclipsed those of bass at Davis Lake. Fishing is best when the wind is light.

SW Washington – The Cowlitz is a highlight for most district anglers, producing a mix of chinook, coho and summer steelhead. Nearly half of the fish being caught are wild however and must be released. Fresh fish should continue to enter through September.

The Kalama is producing some fall chinook while the Lewis is offering a mix of chinook, coho and summer run steelhead. The Lewis should see a bump in coho numbers in October.

Drano Lake remains a good option for steelhead and a few fall chinook are being taken. The Klickitat will also be a good option for fall chinook as numbers surge over Bonneville Dam.

Columbia River Fishing Report – After a fast and furious week of coho fishing in the estuary, catches have slowed for most although some are still reporting good success. Limits were easy late last week but by the weekend, rain had set in which theoretically sent a mass of fish upstream with excitement. Fish were filtering back in by mid-week however with some reporting

good action on bait while others reported good action on spinners. I don't get it, I just report the facts....

Although chinook fishing is slowing, retention was allowed briefly over the weekend with a few chinook reported in the catch in the Buoy 10 fishery. The section from Buoy 10 to Tongue Point remains open to chinook fishing through the end of the year (although as we know, it's a bit meaningless).

The incoming tide has produced the best results as of late, fishing close to the bridge as we near high tide. It's standard procedure, as we've been doing all season.

Although there was some opportunity for good chinook catches above Tongue Point on the last tide series, there wasn't any reportable effort to find out how the fishing was. Anglers working wobblers in the more traditional plunking areas near the mouths of the Cowlitz and Kalama Rivers did report good action although it was hard to beat the action in the Bonneville reach.

Bonneville anglers reported great catches. Both backtrollers and anchor anglers produced well with anchor fishers reporting some of the better action. Catch rates were sizzling by any one's standard with boaters reporting nearly 1½ chinook per boat and bank anglers catching a fish for every 5 rods. This is a bit unprecedented by most year's standards but anglers are ok with it.

Wobbler fishing in the Troutdale to Warrior Rock stretch is only fair and the action is likely to continue to drop off. Only .36 chinook per boat was reported in this stretch over the weekend creel checks.

Steelhead and coho are crossing in good numbers but anglers have an easier time targeting them upstream. Summer steelhead quality should be on the increase with the larger "B" run fish beginning to show in greater number.

Effort for ocean going salmon fishers has dropped dramatically. There are no reports from boats pursuing salmon or albacore out of the mouth of the Columbia.

Crabbing in the lower Columbia has been good but will improve in the coming weeks.

The Guide's Forecast – Starting with the estuary, although some good tides are coming up, a lull between the "A" run and "B" run of coho is likely this week. B-run coho, primarily destined for SW Washington rivers show in stronger numbers in October. A-run fish are early September fish and frankly, I'm a bit surprised the action for hatchery fish is remaining as strong as it is right now. I'll throw out an "under-prediction" rating for this fishery right now, given the way the action has held up for this long.

Spinners and bait will both likely continue to take fish but I'd put my money on bait 7 days of the week. Bring green label herring or see if you can find a school of anchovies to run out there if you're going to participate in this fishery.

Tides will build significantly after the weekend but run timing alone makes me skeptical that there will be good numbers of fish available for about another 2 weeks anyway.

For chinook anglers, the best piece of wobbler water will remain closed until October 1st. Even after it opens however, fishing will likely be well on its way out.

Meanwhile, look to Bonneville to continue to produce fair catches of chinook to backtrollers and anchor anglers. Even as numbers diminish, catches will likely remain fair to good through the

middle of next month. Backtrolled plugs often produce the best results but as we've mentioned several times already, anchor anglers using plugs have been taking good numbers as well. When air and water temperatures cool, fish slow down their migration patterns making Bonneville a great place to intercept them.

Sturgeon in this area opens soon but we'll report more on that next week.

The tides will be on the increase this weekend but still weak enough to justify a crabbing outing on the lower Columbia. You might as well bring your salmon gear while you wait for your crab gear to soak. Crabbing should only get better from here.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Chinook and coho counts are gradually increasing at Willamette Falls with the water temperature dropping into the lower 60s. As of September 19th, 669 Fall Chinook had been counted along with 323 coho. Despite the sturgeon opener on the Columbia, unlike seasons in the past, retention will not be allowed on the lower Willamette until sometime in 2012, and that window of opportunity is likely to be small.

McKenzie level and flow is good for this time of year and will remain anglers-friendly until fall rains start.

The North Santiam is at good level for fishing and drift boating while the South Santiam is a little low. Summer steelheading is promising on the North but it's the South Santiam that gets the hatchery fish.

Foster Reservoir, Mt Hood Pond, North Fork Reservoir and Small Fry Lake are scheduled for trout planting.

The Guide's Forecast – Upper Willamette bass fishers are enjoying good results for smallmouth. Cutthroat trout to 14 inches are being taken on the Middle Fork. Steelheaders on the Town Run are hitting a few and fish landed in this stretch have been in very good condition.

Trout fishing is worthwhile on the McKenzie with October Caddis starting to show while steelheading has been fair.

Look for coho to be entering the Santiam system over the coming weeks as counts at Willamette Falls increase. Spinners are popular for these fishes but remember that bait is allowed on the South Santiam and sometimes drifting good quality, cured eggs are preferred by often-finicky coho.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Recent rainfall had little effect on the low water of the Clackamas River. Fishing has been slow over the past week.

While the Sandy still shows signs of its glacial origins, the color is a more appealing green hue rather than grey. Coho are entering daily with the best fishing just around the proverbial corner. Most of the attention for coho is occurring on the lower Sandy but that will soon change.

The Guide's Forecast – The light of hope on the Clackamas is the burgeoning coho fishery as evidenced by bank anglers at the Bowling Alley Hole. While this is currently a very spotty fishery, a few have been banked here by spinner flingers as high as Barton.

There seem to be lots of coho in the Sandy as it's easy to spot them rolling and jumping but there have been few reports of hookups. Look for the bite to improve with as the weather

moderates and some rain falls. Coho will start to congregate in the upper river so when it starts, the action will be primarily from Cedar Creek down to Oxbow Park (but so will the crowds).

North Coast Fishing Report – It's a full assault at Tillamook right now; it's just too bad it's all eelgrass. Although the eelgrass is hampering success on Tillamook, there are fair numbers of fish around. Chinook catches have been consistent but with the ocean recently closed due to rather large seas, anglers have been restricted to inside fishing only lately. When the ocean has been open and calm, fishing has been good with not only fair numbers of chinook available, but an occasional halibut as well.

Both sides of the bay entrance, as well as the entrance itself, has been producing good catches on trolled herring. I have preferred to fish the south side, where we're likely to get out of the weeds and effectively fish for longer than a few minutes at a time. That's where I've found the bulk of my salmon bites and all of my halibut bites.

Wild coho have made a stronger showing as of late and will likely continue to do so through early October. Read current regulations carefully as ocean regulations are in effect, not the traditional bubble regulations that we're all used to right now. We don't like to quote regulations for obvious reasons but go here for the various regulations in association with north coast fisheries:

Coastal coho and chinook regulations:

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

Ocean salmon seasons (these regulations are currently in effect until October 1st):

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/salmon/Regulations/docs/2011_Ocean_Sport_Season_Regulation_Summary.pdf

And, the very hard to find regulations for the upcoming (October 1st) bubble opener:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/salmon/Regulations/docs/Tillamook_Sport_State_Waters_2011.pdf

Keep these links handy and study them before you head out, it could save you a lot of time and hassle!

As for inside the Tillamook Bay estuary, action has been fair recently but with the soft tides, the entire fleet is concentrated near the jetty tips, or as close as you can get to the jetty tips before the coast guard turns you around. This wouldn't be such a problem but a big swell and lots of eelgrass picking will keep any captain on his/her toes while running a boat. This is where the action is and as always, some days are better than others. Most veteran jetty dwellers would agree that this "holdover" tide series has not been as productive as last year or as good as it should be given the run forecast this season. None-the-less, it was really the only game in town for Wednesday. There are some wild coho falling in this zone as well.

The Ghost Hole is producing an occasional fish and there are fish present at Bay City but they seem reluctant to bite. The south channel did put out a few wild coho on Wednesday but it has been slow over there with a heavy weed inundation. The upper bay has been producing only an occasional fish although fish are present. The low tide exchanges don't seem to motivate biters in the upper reaches.

The Nehalem system is showing signs of recovery after a long dry spell. Chinook catches were good on the opener this week and stayed strong through the weekend and into Tuesday. Action

dropped off on Wednesday however; the strong ocean swell didn't help matters as some anglers theorize that a big, breaking bar discourages fish passage at the bay entrance. There are growing numbers of wild coho showing.

The Nestucca and Salmon Rivers should have jump started this weekend. Anglers versed in lower river herring trolling should have fared well while bobber tossers upriver should have started to see some of their season's most consistent results.

The Alsea has been productive as its run forecast led many to believe but weeds also has hampered success here. The soft tides will last a few days more and then it may be time to go upriver for some bobber action.

Many of these systems should begin to see more wild coho in the coming weeks. If you intend on keeping any wild coho, you should keep up to date on where the sportfleet is on the quota and what the bag limits are for each watershed. Do check out the links above but here is the link to the most recent quota updates:

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

Offshore crabbing is as good as it gets but the ocean forecast isn't pretty for the next several days so fishing and crabbing are on hold. We all know however that the weather forecasters aren't always right but check out what they have in store for us this weekend:

Fri...S wind 15 to 20 kt with gusts to 25 kt. Wind waves 4 ft. W swell 9 ft. Patchy fog in the morning.

Fri Night...S wind 10 to 15 kt with gusts to 20 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 12 ft. Patchy fog after midnight.

Sat...S wind 5 to 10 kt...rising to 10 to 15 kt in the afternoon. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 11 ft. Patchy fog in the morning. Slight chance of rain in the afternoon.

Sat Night...S wind 10 to 15 kt...rising to 20 to 25 kt after midnight. Wind waves 3 ft...building to 5 ft after midnight. W swell 9 ft. Chance of rain.

Sun...S wind 20 to 25 kt. Wind waves 6 ft. SW swell 11 ft.

Mon...S wind 30 to 35 kt. Combined seas 13 ft.

Hopefully, we haven't seen the last of our ocean opportunity for recreational crabbing, or fishing for that matter.

Cape Mears Lake, Coffenbury Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County), Sunset Lake and Town Lake are on the trout stocking schedule this week.

The Guide's Forecast – It should be a trying weekend for salmon anglers on Tillamook Bay. Although soft tides will still allow for some productive jetty fishing, eelgrass and a rough bar will frustrate anglers. You'll want to consider if you really want to be there with a 25 to 35 knot wind blowing you into the jetty.

BE CAUTIOUS: I've saw a boat one year get thrown onto the jetty when both of their motors fouled with eelgrass and they weren't able to maneuver away from the jetty. A large swell just

picked up their boat and set it on top of the jetty. With the jetty as treacherous as it's going to be this weekend, you'll want to make sure your equipment is in top working order.

By Sunday, the tide will be getting stronger so anglers should expect fish to wash up higher into the bay system, especially planning for a possible rain event that may happen later this week. With ocean fishing closed, there should be a much higher percentage of biters wash into the estuary. The upper reaches out of Memaloose should start producing again.

The south channel should see a better surge of wild coho this week but it still likely won't peak for another week or so. Keep your eyes on the limited quota, it could end anytime soon and you're responsible for knowing.

The tidewater of the Trask and Tillamook may be options this weekend and into early next week. A strong south wind may make this an appealing place to fish. The sloughs may also produce fish as adults will likely be waiting for a stronger rain than what is in the forecast.

Don't count on many hatchery coho in the system. Apparently it's rumored that only 6 came back to the Trask hatchery after the last rainfall. What happened there?

The Nehalem will likely be much the same. If the swell stays high, it may keep chinook at sea. There has been good action however and there will very likely be more. Better catches are likely up in the estuary as the tide gets stronger late into the weekend. Wild coho will likely make a stronger showing this weekend. The bar will be dangerous with the swell forecasted to be so high.

Tidewater anglers should begin to do better on the Nestucca and Salmon Rivers. Fish should be staging in tidewater in preparation for a good fall rain.

The Alsea and Siletz Rivers should also produce fine catches this weekend however the dropping barometer may have something to say about that.

Crabbing should continue to be fair in most coastal estuaries as large adult males begin to stage for spawning. Crabbers should pay special attention as to where they'll be placing their crab gear with the stronger running tide this weekend. The ocean won't be an option.

Razor clam digging north of Tillamook Head re-opened mid-month but the best tide series begins early next week. Digging will likely be poor with the high surf forecast.

Central & South Coast Reports – Offshore Chinook fishing is spotty but good for those who get into fish. The season will remain open through the month of September. Ocean crabbing has been worthwhile and will be legal through October 15th.

Albacore fishing has been red hot and rockin' out of Newport and Depoe Bay over the past week but offshore swell and wind forecasts are not conducive for launching in the week to come. Any further tuna forays this year will be contingent upon a break in offshore conditions.

With the first day of fall on Friday this week, sea-run cutthroat trout fishing will be officially underway on virtually all of the coastal streams. Learn where within the stream to fish these trout and the game is mostly beaten. They'll readily hit spinners and brightly-colored flies.

Here's a rundown of the various wild coho fisheries available on the coast, the relative quotas and percentage taken this season through September 18th:

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

The wild coho fishery will get underway on Tenmile Lake October 1st.

Hog lines are forming on the Siletz and Chinook are being caught daily but the run here isn't what it once was. There are opportunities here for bobber and bait as well and that has been productive at times. Patience is a virtue here.

Chinook are nosing into the Siuslaw with anglers reporting a few as high as Lake Creek. The number of boats present is far higher than that of salmon. Trolling herring in tidewater has resulted in a few early morning hookups with nice, large chrome fish. There are a few coho in the system as well but no landing reports.

Tuna have been taken about 40 miles offshore out of Reedsport recently and should remain available whenever ocean conditions allow such a trip. Crabbing has been excellent in Winchester Bay. The Crab Bounty Contest has had several tagged Dungeness tuned in to Sportsmen's Cannery in return for which the lucky crabbers have received a hat to signify their good fortune. There's more fortune to come as well, with one lucky number winning \$1,000. If that pre-determined tag isn't taken, the one grand prize money will be divided amongst three lucky crabbers to be determined by drawing. Unfortunately, thievery also rises along with the possibility of a large payoff so additional vigilance is advised. Chinook trollers are still scoring daily in Winchester Bay although salmon are moving into the lower Umpqua as well where anglers are doing a pretty good job intercepting them. Wild coho hopefuls had better get the job done soon as the quota is filling rapidly and is destined to close soon. Signs will be posted at boat ramps when the ODFW shuts it down. Smallmouth are being taken on the mainstem Umpqua which is a good thing for bass anglers as the South Umpqua closed to all fishing September 16th.

Coos Bay is reliably producing good catches of Chinook over the past week. Fish 40 pounds or better have been landed here over the past two weeks. Bank anglers are scoring from the jetty as well as the boardwalk. Bay crabbing has been very good but a boat is required for best results.

Crabbing has been good on the Coquille estuary where salmon trollers are taking fair to good catches of Chinook with the wild coho fishery off to a fair start. The Coquille River is providing good fishing for sea-run cutthroat trout with bait legal above tidewater since the 1st of September. The South Fork Coquille is closed to all angling.

Rockfishing out of Gold Beach has been excellent although ling cod don't seem to be biting. Tuna fishing has been fair for the few boats trying while crabbing remains very good offshore. Lower flows on the Rogue are doing a pretty good job of keggling Chinook in the estuary, creating opportunities for trollers. Catches have been fairly steady this week. Bank anglers on the lower river are scoring Chinook destined for the Indian Creek Hatchery. Back-bouncers and plug-pullers seem to be doing equally well for Chinook on the middle Rogue with the stretch below Grants Pass most productive recently. Steelheaders have continued to take summers, primarily by throwing spinners. Although there has been a slowing of summer steelhead hookups on the flies-only stretch of the upper Rogue, it's still a good bet at this time of year. This fishery is favored by fly anglers although spin fishers can get in the game by using clear plastic bubbles to through artificial flies. No other hardware may be used, even swivels.

A few early Chinook are being taken by trollers in the Chetco estuary but many are anxious for the 'bubble' fishery which opens October 1st through 12th and historically produces jumbo salmon.

Elk River fishing will commence with sufficient rainfall. This coming weekend? Probably not. Stay tuned.

Lost Creek Reservoir and Fish Lake are scheduled for trout planting this week.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Steelheading has been 'on' one day and 'off' the next on the lower Deschutes. At this time, all one can do is roll the dice and hit the river with the stretch around Maupin the best bet in the coming week. The payoff is worth it with steelhead counts at Bonneville above the ten-year average. There are plenty of fish in the Columbia which have yet to enter the Deschutes system. Similar results are coming to those fishing off the mouth but when it's good, it's very good indeed.

While Green Peter is about 35 feet below full pool, that's normal for this time of year. Fishing has been good here with a generous 25-fish limit.

Jigging is producing more kokanee than trolling at Paulina although the majority of fish taken recently are in full spawning colors and not fit for the table. It may be over for the year here.

Kokanee fishing has slowed at Odell although it still possible to take a fair number in a day with only a few showing signs of spawning. Some lake trout are being landed.

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.

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 the [WDFW website](#).

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 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

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Fall Flies you need for Fly Fishing in Oregon (commercial site; tie 'em or buy 'em):

<http://oregonflyfishingblog.com/2011/09/21/fall-flies-you-need-for-fly-fishing-in-oregon/>

Bonneville Dam Fish Camera, WA. (high speed):

http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/locations/fishcam_hs_wa.asp

GOOD LUCK!