

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 7<sup>th</sup> – October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Although counts at Bonneville are dropping dramatically, success rates are hit and miss for salmon as anglers enter the late season. Upriver brights make up the bulk of the catch through the month but anglers will have to grade through fish to find some of tablefare quality. Plugs will remain the best option for action.

Sturgeon effort on the Saturday opener was high and success was fair. Bank anglers fared well with counts from the Washington side tallying a keeper for every 4 rods. Sand shrimp fished near the deadline should be consistent throughout the month of October. Boaters landing on the Oregon side reported 25 legals landed for 33 boats. There were also a fair number of oversize sturgeon in the mix.

About 1,500 fall chinook and 2,300 coho have crossed Willamette Falls. Try for steelhead or trout on the Middle Fork.

Smallmouth bass fishing is good many places above Willamette Falls.

October Caddis are out in full force on the McKenzie with trout responding to matching patterns. Steelhead remain available.

The North Santiam will be fluctuating this week although there are coho in the system.

While coho care trickling into the Clackamas system, catches are negligible. Rain should improve prospects.

Coho fishing is fair on the Sandy. Cedar Creek is producing a few but is getting pressure.

**Northwest –** North coast chinook fishing slowed this week although good numbers of fish seem to be present. Spinner fisherman fared well in upper Tillamook Bay late last week as Tillamook and Trask chinook staged before heading into tidewater. The current soft tide series has anglers focused on the lower bay where the Ghost Hole, Bay City and the jetty has been producing just a few fish.

The wild coho quota on Tillamook Bay has been utilized, closing the fishery effective today. All chinook and hatchery coho may still be retained although hatchery coho have been oddly absent.

The ocean out of Tillamook Bay has been productive for both salmon and crab but rough ocean conditions have kept boats inside with no signs of improvement.

The Nehalem has been productive with both wild coho and chinook falling to herring trollers near the jaws. A rough bar is in the forecast so anglers need to use precautionary measures. The wild coho quota is double what the Tillamook quota was and remains open.

Weather systems are forecast to raise river levels on the north coast, possibly allowing for an early driftboat season on some of the larger river systems. The Trask should be a high priority but other systems should also produce fish if the weather models are accurate. Check local

regulations before heading out however as complicated rules remain in effect on a watershed by watershed basis.

Soft tides on the Siletz, Salmon and Nestucca will likely slow the bite. These river systems are just passing peak season right now with action likely to improve when the tides do beginning early next week. The Alsea tidewater bobber fishing and trolling should also improve after the weekend. These systems are showing signs of improving returns over previous years.

**Southwest** – When the ocean has cooperated and with the depth restriction lifted, offshore bottom fishing has been very productive for rockfish and lingcod. Boats dropping pots on the way out have harvested excellent Dungeness catches.

With the wild quota filled earlier than other systems on the coast, the Umpqua River and bay closed to harvest on October 1st. Chinook catches are good in Winchester Bay and the lower Umpqua mainstem.

Lower Coquille chinook trolling is productive with a larger-than average return predicted this year.

Coos Bay trollers have been taking chinook regularly with hookups occasionally hitting double digits. Chinook will move up the Coos River as the season progresses. Crabbing is good in the bay.

Rogue Bay has been producing good catches of adult and jack chinook and coho to trollers over the past week. Upriver, side drifting has been more productive at times. Steelhead fishing was good on the upper Rogue although it shut down early this week due to muddy water from a broken irrigation ditch.

Referred to locally as “Hawg Season”, the Chetco Terminal fishery opened October 1<sup>st</sup> and will continue through October 12th. This fishery is known to produce chinook to 40 pounds or better. Slow-troll herring starting just outside jetty tips for one per day and five for the season. Fall salmon are also being taken inside Brookings Harbor with catches expected to improve later in the month.

Elk River fishing will commence with sufficient rain but it was still low early this week.

Diamond Lake trout catches are good for still-fishers and trollers but weather is likely to be problematic during October.

**Eastern** – Steelheaders are taking fish regularly on the lower Deschutes. Some days have been better than others as the peak of the season approaches. Fly fishers come to the Deschutes in force this time of year to take advantage of lower than normal flows and willing fish. There's less attention on trout but catches are good for nymph fishers.

The Grande Ronde and Imnaha Rivers begin to see steelhead around this time of year. However, until water temperatures drop and flows rise, fish are likely to hold in the lower reaches and will not be very receptive to gear. Fishing should improve later this month.

**SW Washington** – The Cowlitz, primarily around the mouth, is a target for many anglers seeking late run coho and the occasional chinook. Catches have been fair and with a recent upgrade in the early season coho numbers, catches are likely to be better than first anticipated.

October is actually a better month for district anglers targeting coho as many of the later returning fish are destined for the Lewis and Cowlitz systems.

The Lewis is also an option for chinook and coho although many of the chinook are turning dark.

The mouth of the Klickitat should be a good option for chinook and coho anglers although catches were light there over the weekend.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – With coho but a distant memory in the lower river, anglers are still seeking opportunities upriver near Bonneville Dam. Soft tides however brought out crabbers in the lower river and catches were bountiful with one crabber (maybe overemphasizing) averaging 20 keepers per pot. Regardless, seems like he limited pretty easily that day. It's about time for that crab fishery to take off again.

Upriver, although effort is waning for Chinook near Bonneville, the action remains good for those backtrolling the area. Plugs take the lion's share of the fish this time of year and even though fish passage is on a clear decline, willing biters are not in short supply. Experienced anglers will note however that this fishery is not consistent day to day with some days clearly out-performing others.

Anglers will have to weed through the salmon to find some of table quality but they are they in catchable numbers. As we near mid-month, it will become even more challenging to find quality fish for take-home. The action however, should remain good through the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of October.

Sturgeon anglers posted predictably good results for the opener on Saturday. Effort was high as one guide put it, some of the highest he'd seen in recent years. Action was good too with boats and bank anglers scoring good catches of keepers close to the deadline. There was also a good number of oversize fish present as well. Depending on what side of the river you were fishing, success rates differed. Washington creel reports a keeper for every 4 rods while Oregon creel checkers noted a keeper for better than every 5 rods. Nineteen oversize fish were reported for 33 boats on the weekend check.

The Portland to Longview stretch produced a surprising amount of legal sturgeon. 62 boats reported 18 legals and 113 sub-legals for the weekend check. 29 bank anglers took home another 4 keepers and released 27 shakers for the day.

Boat effort for salmon in this stretch is certainly down but anglers are still catching Chinook and some coho in select areas. This is the time of year when boaters begin to take fair numbers of coho near the tributary mouths. Casting spinners and soaking eggs are both effective methods this time of year.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Although we don't talk extensively about late season coho opportunities at the mouth of the Columbia, they do exist and action can be quite good this time of year. Back when I participated in this fishery, the big tide series during the middle of October always proved to be a consistent time to target these large coho. That tide series is coming up, beginning late in the weekend. Although it's not an outstanding tide series, it's certainly good enough to provide some good action on the lower river. The late season component of the run was forecast to be similar to the early "A" run which was recently upgraded. With a poor ocean catch of hatchery coho, this late run of coho may provide some great opportunity next week for motivated anglers.

Upriver, Chinook angling will continue to wane but we should see another fair to good week of action in the gorge. Backtrollers should take fair numbers of fish but be aware that oversize sturgeon are willing takers too so gear up in case you hook one of these behemoths. Unless you're anchored with heavy lead, use jumbo jet divers (blue is the preferred color) with larger Flatfish or Kwikfish in greens or reds. Anglers often deploy up to 100 feet of line to get the lure fishing deep enough where the biters are. Be prepared to release fish that aren't quality enough for take-home.

Sturgeon would make a nice combination trip in the gorge as keepers should remain plentiful for the next few weeks. Faster water this time of year seems to be more productive as keepers, oversize and shakers attempt to put on some last minute weight before the slim winter months kick in. Sand shrimp is a fall favorite but squid can produce good results this time of year as well. The closer to the deadline you are, the more likely you are to find keepers. Good shaker action can be had near Horsetail Falls and Cape Horn.

Tides will remain favorable for crabbers looking for appetizers from the estuary. A softer early morning high tide should provide ample opportunity for those looking for an easy limit. Drop your gear near Buoys 20 or 22 or further north on lower Desdemona Sands. The fresher the bait, the quicker the limit. The crab are filling out nicely here.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – With the water temperature a fairly steady 60 degrees at Willamette Falls, the passage of coho and fall Chinook is equally steady. Over 1,600 Chinook and 2,600 coho are upstream now. Summer steelhead are still being counted but daily numbers have dropped to single digits this late in the season.

McKenzie River levels have been on the rise this week with precipitation but is still quite fishable.

Expect to find flows at 3,000 cfs on the North Santiam for a while as water is being released from Detroit Reservoir in preparation for use as flood control.

From their website: "**ODFW** will host a family fishing event at Mt. Hood Pond Saturday, Oct. 8 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The department will release 2,000 legal-sized rainbow trout for this event, along with 200 larger fish. Staff and volunteer instructors will be present to loan fishing rods and tackle for youngsters who want to fish but don't have gear. The event is free." Jeff Fulop is the event contact at 971-673-6034.

In the last trout stocking for the year, Henry Hagg Lake will receive another 8,000 legal-sized rainbow trout. The pale facility will remain open through the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

Mt. Hood Pond and Dexter Reservoir are also scheduled for trout planting this week.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Despite local focus on the salmonids in local rivers and streams, the smallmouth bass fishery is the best shot for a good day on the upper Willamette. Farther upstream, fly anglers may want to take advantage of trout which are keying on October Caddis on the Middle Fork.

Dry patterns to replicate October Caddis have drawn interest on the McKenzie. On those days when the trout aren't looking up, try pupae imitations like a Possie Bugger.

There are summer steelhead in the North Santiam but catch results remain slow. Coho are nosing in but with numbers over the Falls down this year there are likely to be too few to target them.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – Even with heavy rain at times in the valley, the level and flow at the Clackamas River have changed very little and forecast indicate little hope for the week to come. Boat anglers definitely have the advantage here. While nobody wants a gully washer, enough rain to raise the river significantly is needed to get this coho fishery underway.

Coho catches have been slow to fair over the past week on the Sandy but have shown signs of a slight improvement. Plug pullers appear to be having the better success here. Coho will continue to enter even in the absence of precipitation but will be on the move en masse with several straight days of rain. Crowds are predictably appearing at the mouth of Cedar Creek periodically.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Coho are in the Clackamas in modest number and were seen mid-week rolling above Barton Park. Catches remain spotty but a few are being landed every day. Recent rain put a little water in Eagle Creek and jammed the bank with hopefuls. The creek is once again low and clear. There are still summer steelhead available in the Clack but they're getting fairly colorful.

Until sufficient rain falls to put coho on the move, deep holes will remain the best bet for coho fishers on the Sandy. Results will improve into October as more fish enter. Most techniques are effective at times but spinners, plugs and cured eggs are most popular. Also, try eggs under a bobber and cover as much water as possible. Expect scratch fishing for a while as it's not shaping up to be much of a run - at least so far this season.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – It's Chinook as usual on Tillamook Bay and after several sub-par days of fishing, the action took off nicely on Wednesday. It was the last day allowed for the retention of wild coho and it ended with a bang. Boats working the inside of the north jetty on lower Tillamook Bay scored big numbers of wild coho and Chinook were present in good numbers too. Prior to Wednesday, it was hunt and peck success with a few boats doing quite well at Bay City and a rare flurry in the Ghost Hole. The upper bay produced poorly when the tides softened up but spinner trollers did well there late last week.

The grass remains a bit of a problem on Tillamook Bay but after the big tides and high seas, the slimy translucent green seaweed is not such a problem as it was a week ago. Eelgrass however remains an issue but at least you can see it hit your line before you realize you need to reel up and clean it off. It's at its worst near the jetty during peak outgoing. That happens to be when the fishing is at its best along the jetty. With the weak outflow, salmon will cross the bar for a longer period of the outgoing tide. On stronger outgoing tides, the fish wait until after peak ebb before burning calories to make the bar crossing into the estuary.

The middle two hours of incoming tide has produced the best results in the Ghost Hole and Bay City. Herring has worked with some anglers trying spinners and scoring more on coho than Chinook. The biters seem to cease biting after Bay City as not many have been taken on this soft tide series in the upper bay.

The ocean has been a mess but it did fish good on Sunday, the last day that it was feasible to fish out there. We landed 3 chinook, including a 28-pounder and numerous coho. The bite was on along the south jetty but when a strong south wind came up in the afternoon, the fun was gone. Long-range ocean forecasts don't look hopeful for more time in the bubble. The general ocean season has come to a close so the bubble fishery remains the only option.

Further north, the Nehalem is still producing fish but most of the fish are wild coho. There is a rare hatchery fish and some Chinook are still certainly in the system but guides are stating there is a lull in Chinook activity at the moment. Spinners are taking a good share of the fish but herring is important if you want an authentic crack at a Chinook. The softer tides have anglers focused on the lower reaches of the estuary.

To the south, the Nestucca remains viable although effort and success are not stellar. Chinook are available throughout tidewater however but the current weak tide series should keep anglers focused on the lower reaches. The jaws should be a good option about now. Keep in mind that Chinook fishing above First Bridge is closed.

The Salmon River is producing fair numbers of Chinook this season and like many north coast systems, the lower bay and tidewater stretches will produce the best results on the current soft tide series. Trolled herring or bobber and eggs will work best.

Although we've seen some rain on the north coast, it hasn't been substantial enough to send a bunch of fish upstream. Most systems only realized a small bump in water levels, keeping adult salmon in the tidewater sections where bobber tossers have good access to them. Fish are certainly in the Trask and Tillamook but I was surprised to learn that there were jumpers in the Wilson as well. This may be a good indication that a strong run may be returning to this system in the coming weeks. None-the-less, if you're a driftboater, you haven't missed much yet....

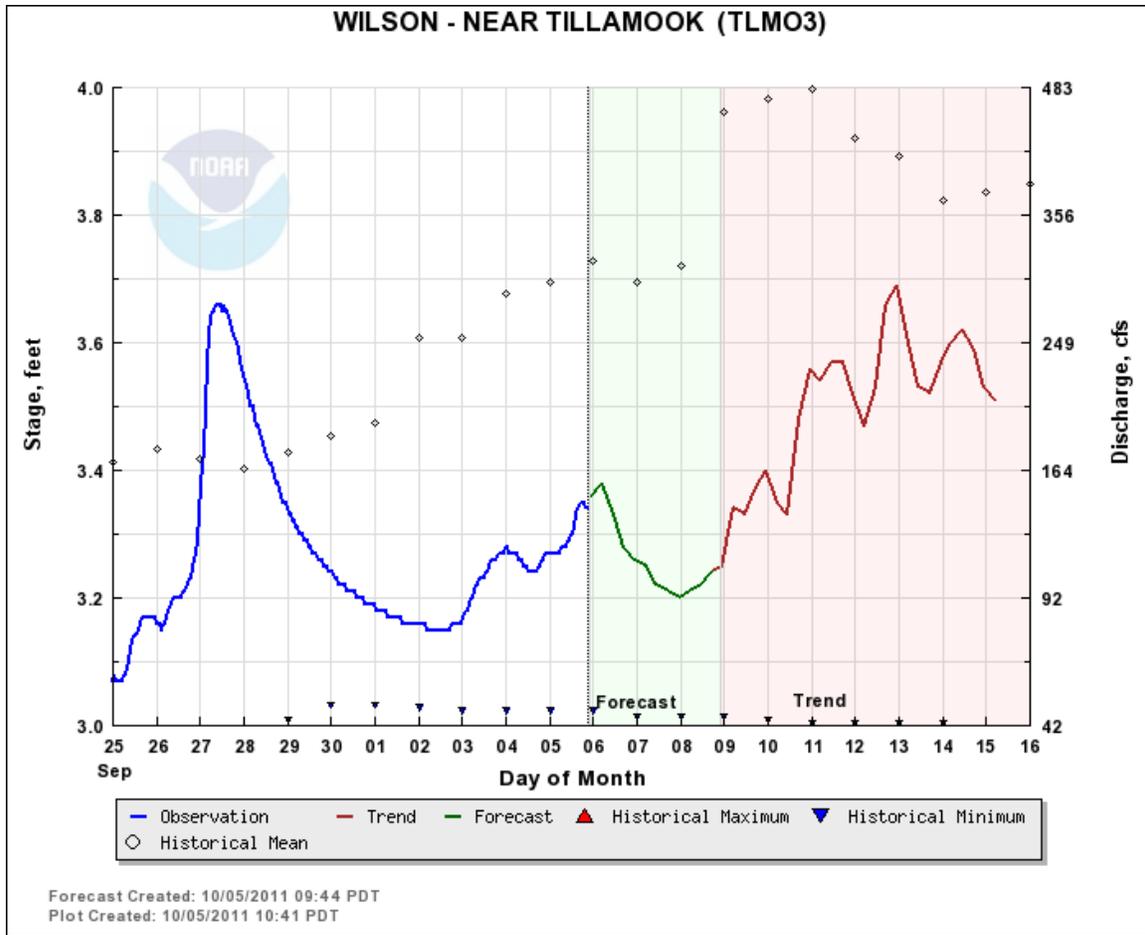
The Siletz has been fair for most of the season but has been a bit slow recently. Action will likely improve with a better tide series with fair numbers of Chinook and coho still available through October.

The Alsea is similar although bright fish should begin to move into tidewater with more regularity on the next good tide series. The mouth has been hit or miss but a good forecast for the Alsea should produce good results in the coming weeks.

Crabbing remains good in most estuaries but north coast crabbers serious about their sport have been putting in their time on Netarts Bay. It's been a worthwhile effort recently and that shouldn't change anytime soon. The ocean will remain open through mid-October but it's too rough to be an option in the near future.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Our home waters of Tillamook Bay will be the most popular destination for fall Chinook anglers this month. Despite the good fishing, effort seems to be down, likely due to the inconsistency of the fishery and the seaweed maintenance required in order to fish effectively.

Tillamook should remain a strong option and let's hope this recent (Wednesday) push of fish remains in the bay for a while. Weather models indicate north coast river levels are likely to rise in the coming week but it still may not be significant enough to send the mother lode upstream.



The trend doesn't look good for driftboaters, the Wilson isn't even scheduled to get above the 4-foot stage in the next several days. The Trask closely mirrors the Wilson and even larger systems such as the Nehalem likely won't get the rain necessary to stimulate an upriver bite. Even if we did get enough rain to move fish upriver, many systems on the north coast are closed to the take of Chinook in their upper reaches so check local regulations before heading out. As we've pointed out before, those Chinook and coho regulations can be found here:

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/docs/2011\\_Coastal\\_Fall\\_Chinook\\_Seasons\\_table.pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/docs/2011_Coastal_Fall_Chinook_Seasons_table.pdf)

The east side of Tillamook Bay will likely remain the best bet as more Wilson and Kilchis River fish begin to enter the system. Herring will likely remain the best option but if eelgrass continues to hamper effective fishing, spinners will be a good option as weed can be shaken off so you can get back to fishing. Keep in mind however that you're a bit more likely to encounter coho using spinners and they must be released back into the water unharmed. The south channel may also be a good option but lately, it's been fishing best for coho. There have been Chinook taken over there recently however. The upper bay may start producing again, especially into the weekend.

Like these Tillamook systems, watersheds to the south will benefit with increased flow from a larger tide swing. This increase in swing should begin on Sunday, stimulating better biting opportunities and bringing more fish into the system. Look for the Salmon River to be receiving its last good push of fish and the Alsea and Siletz to pick back up again. The Nestucca should produce better results from the Boat Ramp Hole to Woods over the weekend.

Although the tide swing is improving for flow, that shouldn't adversely affect the good crabbing going on in many coastal estuaries. Netarts will likely remain the most productive but the lower reaches of most north coast estuaries should remain consistent as well.

The ocean doesn't look to be a good option either as here is the National Weather Service's forecast:

FRI

SW WIND 5 TO 10 KT...RISING TO 15 TO 20 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 2 FT... BUILDING TO 4 FT IN THE AFTERNOON. W SWELL 8 FT... SUBSIDING TO 6 FT IN THE AFTERNOON. CHANCE OF RAIN.

FRI NIGHT

SW WIND 10 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT...SUBSIDING TO 2 FT AFTER MIDNIGHT. W SWELL 6 FT. CHANCE OF RAIN.

SAT

S WIND 10 TO 20 KT. GUSTS UP TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 7 FT. CHANCE OF RAIN.

SAT NIGHT

SW WIND 20 TO 25 KT...BECOMING NW 15 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 5 FT... SUBSIDING TO 3 FT AFTER MIDNIGHT. W SWELL 8 FT. RAIN.

SUN

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 12 FT.

MON

S WIND 25 TO 30 KT. WIND WAVES 6 FT. W SWELL 9 FT.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Offshore boats have been unable to get out this week due to rough ocean conditions and gusty winds but with bottom fishing open to all depths as of October 1st and excellent ocean crabbing, it's well worth taking advantage of narrowing windows of opportunity as they arise in fall. Forecasts indicate that conditions should cooperate on Friday and Saturday this week, but check last minute updates before making the trip. Nearshore halibut is scheduled to remain open through October 31st providing the quota doesn't fill prior to that date.

In another move to relax regulations, the ODFW now allows bottomfish and halibut both to be on board a boat at the same time. Just be certain that halibut are taken in water no deeper than 40 fathoms to stay in line with regulations.

The Oregon albacore fishery is not quite over with warm water pushing nearshore this week, particularly Winchester to Coos bay. But this is subject to change daily and those hoping to boat late-season tuna should check the latest SST. At this time of year, ocean conditions and offshore wind will be the primary factors in the 'do-ability' of tuna trips rather than water temps and chlorophyll graphs. Catches were good in the first weekend of October, though.

Tenmile, Tahkenitch and Siltcoos lakes opened for wild coho on October 1st. While there will be none to be had until rain brings some in, Siltcoos is likely to be the first to produce. Be aware

that during this fishery, fishing with two rods is not allowed for those who have purchased a special license to do so and even when targeting other species. One wild coho and one jack may be retained up to five for the season.

Chinook and coho catches have been slow to fair but good for those in the right place and the right time with the right stuff. So, have you got the right stuff? Here's a last minute heads up to those who'd like to have some fun for a good cause and find out if they do:

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2011**  
YAQUINA BAY, NEWPORT, OREGON

**NINTH ANNUAL**  
**"U-DA-MAN"**  
**2011 Fishing Tournament**  
**WHERE SIZE DOES MATTER!**

\$30.00 per angler. Hats to the first 150 paid applicants.  
PROCEEDS TO BE DONATED FOR USE IN THE CONTINUING ENHANCEMENT EFFORTS OF THE YAQUINA BAY SALMON STOCKS.

**1ST PLACE ~ \$500**  
**2ND PLACE ~ \$300**  
**3RD PLACE ~ \$200**

**CHECK-IN:** 5:45AM-9:00AM at the [NEW](#) South Beach Marina  
**ON THE WATER:** 7:00AM-3:00PM SHARP, from Yaquina Jetty Tip to Toledo Red Barn  
**WEIGH-IN:** 3:15PM-3:45PM adjacent to New South Beach Marina Fish Cleaning Station  
**CHINOOK ONLY, MUST be bled before weigh-in**  
**RAFFLE PRIZES AND PRIZES FOR ALL FISH WEIGHED!**  
**LAUNCH SITE:** Free launch at the [NEW](#) South Beach Marina thanks to the Port of Newport  
**FEES CAN BE PAID AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATION:**  
Englund Marine, 880 SE Bay Blvd, Newport, OR, 97365 541-265-9275

Option to mail entries payable to U-DA-MAN Tourney c/o Englund Marine (address above)

Brochures available at the above location.

LaQuinta Inn, South Beach offering rooms \$84 + tax. For reservations call 800-531-5900 or 541-867-7727

**ALL APPLICABLE 2011 OREGON SPORT FISHING AND BOATING REGULATIONS MUST BE FOLLOWED. FAILURE TO FOLLOW WILL RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION**

The Asea is getting serious pressure from boat and bank anglers 'most everywhere below Five Rivers. While there are some salmon in the system, this is one of those locations where the fishers far outnumber the quarry.

Bobber anglers are picking up the occasional fish in Tidewater on the Siuslaw. There are more fish on the way for this system.

Crabbing has been improving on Winchester Bay. Chinook fishing has been good in the bay for trollers and fair to good for bank anglers throwing spinners or bobber fishing. If you missed it in the Fisheries Forecast, above (or elsewhere), be aware that the wild coho fishery on the Umpqua system provided good results while it lasted but closed as the 1,300- fish quota filled on October 1st. Chinook catches have been steady with fish in the mainstem up to the confluence of the North and South Umpqua rivers. Steelheading in the flies-only section of the North Umpqua remains slow. The South Umpqua is closed to fishing through November.

Coquille Chinook fishers have been kickin' some tail this week with reports of decent fishing occurring here every day. Trolled herring behind a flasher has been accounting for most of the fish. Crabbing is decent below the Highway 101 Bridge and fair from the docks in Bandon.

Coos Bay crabbing has been yielding mostly limits to those trying from boats. Chinook catches have remained good in the bay with trollers taking fish regularly. Catches of wild coho showed improvement this week in the bay off the jetty as well as the lower Coos River.

Catches have moderated in Rogue Bay but have remained worthwhile for most trollers. With Indian Creek fish staging for their return to the hatchery, bank anglers on the lower Rogue are making fair to good catches of both Chinook and coho from the mouth of the creek to the Highway 101 Bridge. Chinook retention closed on the Rogue River above the Hog Creek boat ramp on October 1st but doe bot effect fishing downriver from that point. Water conditions have improved on the upper Rogue following a mud event due to a broken irrigation ditch earlier this week. Prospects and catches have picked up, too, with egg patterns getting grabbed by summer steelhead which are feeding below spawning Chinook.

While a few Chinook are being taken by trollers on the lower Chetco, the best bet by far through October 12th is the bubble fishery. The ocean has been kicking the crab out of boats this week but is forecast to mellow out Friday and Saturday this week. This fishery, often referred to locally and the 'Chetco Hawg' season, produces fish over 40 pounds and a few 50-pounders every year.

While southwest Oregon has received some precipitation this week, it hasn't been sufficient to get Chinook fishing underway at the Elk River. Keep an eye on water levels and hope for the best but long-range forecasts are calling for only showers in the coming week.

Diamond Lake has been fishing well for trout averaging 15 inches or better and one over 30 inches almost every time out. A recent report indicated good catches of crawfish here as well. With the bugs at a minimum this time of year and snow yet to fall, it's a great place for a pleasant family outing.

Bradley Lake is scheduled for trout planting.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – With steelheading approaching the season peak on the lower Deschutes, anglers are doing well on the stretch from Trout Creek to Maupin and while a few are being taken at Warm Springs, the numbers are still a bit sparse in that area. While there is less attention on trout at this time of year, results have been decent for fly anglers using nymphs.

Rain this week has increased flow on the Grande Ronde River and has been enough to jump start the steelhead fishery here. Flows are expected to continue improving with additional precipitation in the forecast.

While the Imnaha has been too low to fish recently, rain this week should stir steelhead which have been holding at the mouth to begin moving upstream where anglers will reap the benefit.

Cascade High Lakes are at their seasonal peak, providing fine action for fly fishers. Look for Chanterelle's to be fruiting at this time of year as well to add a delicious Oregon delicacy to your dinner.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

*From the WDF&W Weekender Report for October 2011*

#### **North Puget Sound**

October is usually primetime for coho fishing in the region, where anglers should continue to find fish in the marine areas. However, the best action for coho likely will be in the rivers later in the month.

"Anglers can still find **coho** in the marine areas in early October, but fishing in the rivers will steadily improve as the month progresses," said John Long, statewide salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Several rivers are open in October for salmon fishing, including the Nooksack, Skagit, Cascade, Stillaguamish, Snohomish, Skykomish, Wallace, Snoqualmie and Green. Because regulations vary for each river, anglers should check [WDFW's sportfishing regulations pamphlet](#) before heading out.

In the marine areas, anglers fishing for coho should try Point No Point, Jefferson Head, Possession Bar and Shipwreck. Fishing regulations for those areas – and other waters of marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) – change in October. Beginning Oct. 1, anglers fishing Marine Area 9 will have a daily limit of two salmon, but must release all chinook. Those fishing Marine Area 10 will have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook.

Anglers looking to get an early start on the region's **blackmouth** season might also want to head to Marine Area 10, said Long. Another option for blackmouth anglers is Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where anglers can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit beginning Oct. 1. However, anglers fishing Marine Area 10 must release wild coho.

Other salmon fishing options include marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner). Anglers fishing those marine areas in October have a daily limit of two salmon but must release chinook.

Later in October, some saltwater anglers will turn their attention to chum salmon, said Long, who recommends trolling slow for chum and using a flasher with a green coyote spoon or a green, purple or pink mini-hoochie.

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.

**Lake Washington** also is open to salmon fishing. Anglers are allowed four coho per day (minimum size 12 inches) from waters north of the Highway 520 Bridge and east of the Montlake Bridge.

Meanwhile, **crabbing** closes one hour past sunset Sept. 30 in marine areas 7-North (Gulf of Georgia) and 7-South (San Juan Islands/Bellingham) – the only areas in the region currently open for crab. The region's other marine areas are already closed for a catch assessment.

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.

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.

### **South Sound/Olympic Peninsula**

Summer has come to a close, but salmon fishing is still going strong in the region, where marine and freshwater opportunities continue throughout October.

In the Strait of Juan de Fuca, anglers fishing Marine Area 6 (Port Angeles) can keep one **chinook** as part of a two-salmon daily limit beginning Oct. 1. Anglers are reminded that Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) is only open for salmon fishing through Sept. 30.

Farther south, anglers fishing in marine areas 11 (Tacoma/Vashon Island) and 13 (South Puget Sound) will have a two-salmon daily limit beginning Oct. 1. Note, however, all **wild coho** caught in Marine Area 13 must be released.

In Hood Canal (Marine Area 12), fishing regulations change Oct. 16, when anglers will have a daily limit of four salmon, but only one of which can be a chinook.

Grays Harbor (Marine Area 2-2) also is an option for salmon anglers. The harbor remains open through Nov. 30 with a daily limit of two salmon, but chinook and **chum** must be released.

In freshwater, area rivers that open for salmon Oct. 1 include the Elk, Hoquiam, Johns, Satsop and Wishkah rivers in Grays Harbor County; and Kennedy Creek in Thurston County. Anglers should check the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) [sportfishing rules pamphlet](#) for specific regulations on these rivers.

Regulations are also changing on the Skokomish River in Mason County. Beginning Oct. 1, anglers may keep up to four adult salmon as part of a six-fish daily limit, but must release all **chinook**. All **chum** must be released through Oct. 15.

Elsewhere, anglers fishing in the Quillayute system – which includes the Bogachiel, Calawah, Dickey and Sol Duc rivers – can keep two adult salmon, plus two additional **adult hatchery coho** as part of the six-fish daily limit. In Clallam County, the Dungeness River opens to salmon fishing Oct. 16 with a daily limit of four coho only.

Don't forget to dig out those clam shovels. Tentative dates for **razor clam** digs will likely be announced this month. Keep checking [WDFW's razor clam webpage](#) for details.

Meanwhile, 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.

### **Southwest Washington**

Coho salmon are moving up the Columbia River and into area tributaries, where bright chinook are also still striking at lures and bait on some rivers.

But starting Oct. 1, anglers have another option to consider: **Sturgeon** fishing in the mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines upstream to Bonneville Dam. The fishery was originally scheduled to open Oct. 8, but fishery managers added three additional days – Oct. 1, Oct. 6 and Oct. 7 – to help reach the area harvest guideline.

"This is a great fishing opportunity for fall, especially for anglers who don't have boats," said Brad James, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Bank anglers have done very well, historically, fishing for sturgeon just below Bonneville Dam."

Anglers may retain legal-size white sturgeon Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays only until the area quota is met. The daily limit is one legal-size fish, measuring 38 to 54 inches from its nose to the fork in its tail. There is also a limit of five sturgeon per year.

James said 2,626 white sturgeon are still available for harvest in the mainstem Columbia River under the annual quota for the area. "I wouldn't be surprised if the fishery starts out strong," he said. "Sturgeon have moved out of the estuary and have been chasing juvenile shad that are outmigrating past the dam."

Meanwhile, anglers fishing in the lower Columbia River and area tributaries have been catching respectable numbers of early stock **hatchery coho**, which will be reinforced by late-stock fish in the months ahead. In all, about 102,300 late-stock coho are expected to return this year on the heels of 168,500 early-stock fish, said WDFW fish biologist Joe Hymer.

"Like last year, this year's run is about average, but it should provide some good fishing if the forecast proves out," he said.

All areas the Columbia River below Bonneville Dam will be open for chinook fishing as of Oct. 1, including the stretch from the Lewis River down to Rocky Point. The daily limit for adult fish below the dam is two chinook or hatchery coho, two steelhead or one of each.

As in past years, anglers must release all wild steelhead, which can be identified by an intact adipose fin. The same is true for coho intercepted on the Columbia River and its tributaries from the Hood River Bridge downstream. For catch limits and other rules applicable to salmon fisheries on the big river or its tributaries, see the [Fishing in Washington](#) rules pamphlet.

For bright late-run coho, Hymer recommends the Cowlitz, Lewis, Grays, Klickitat, Kalama and Washougal rivers. He noted, however, that the Grays River will close to all fishing between Highway 4 and the South Fork on Oct. 16, when the West Fork will also close from the mouth to 300 yards below the hatchery road.

Although the focus of the salmon fishery switches to coho in October, **chinook** should continue biting through the month on a number of rivers. The Lewis and Klickitat rivers were hotspots in late September, as was Drano Lake. Anglers may retain any chinook salmon, clipped or not, on the North Fork Lewis, but Colvin Creek (upstream from the salmon hatchery) will close to all

fishing Oct. 1 up to Merwin Dam. Fishing will be closed at Drano Lake throughout October from 6 p.m. Tuesdays to 6 p.m. Wednesdays.

For **trout**, Sept. 30 is the last day to fish Mineral Lake, but Swift Reservoir remains a good bet for rainbows. The area around the Cowlitz Trout Hatchery is also productive for hatchery sea-run cutthroats in October. Those aggressive fish averaging a foot or more can be caught on a variety of gear including bait, flies, or lures.

Anglers should also be aware that Goose Lake north of Carson was planted with 2,832 cutthroats averaging nearly a pound each in late September. It might also be a good time to hit other high mountain lakes when the fall foliage is in full color and the mosquitoes are dying down.

Silver Lake near Castle Rock can also be good for crappie. There is a 9-inch minimum size limit and a daily limit of 10 fish.

### **Eastern Washington**

Snake River anglers continue to reel in good numbers of hatchery steelhead and hatchery fall chinook salmon, especially near the confluence with Idaho's Clearwater River. On the downside, WDFW enforcement officers report low compliance with regulations for those fisheries, and have issued a significant number of citations during recent patrols.

Under current rules, the daily limit for steelhead is three hatchery-marked fish measuring at least 20 inches in length with a clipped adipose or ventral fin and a healed scar at the location of the clipped fin. For salmon, the daily limit is three adipose fin-clipped adult chinook (24 inches in length and larger), and three adipose fin-clipped jack fall chinook (less than 24 inches). Minimum size for chinook that can be retained in the Snake River is 12 inches.

Barbless hooks are required when fishing for chinook or steelhead in the Snake River. All chinook and steelhead with unclipped adipose fins must be immediately released unharmed. Anglers are prohibited from removing any chinook or steelhead from the water unless it is retained as part of the daily bag limit. It is important that anglers accurately identify their catch, because unmarked chinook salmon, coho salmon and steelhead are also present in the Snake River during this fishery.

Anglers should refer to the current sport fishing rules pamphlet (available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>) for other regulations, including possession limits and safety closures. The hatchery steelhead season on the Snake runs through March of next year, but the fall chinook salmon fishery will close Oct. 31 – unless circumstances merit an extension.

October is the last month – and often a very good time – to fish the region's popular trout-stocked lakes, as well as some rivers and streams. Fall insect hatches are providing trout food, so anglers who use flies or lures that mimic that forage often do well.

Many waters in Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties produce good catches of **rainbow trout** and other species at this time. Some of Spokane County's best trout lakes closed Sept. 30, but there are enough exceptions to keep fishing productive. WDFW central district fish biologist Chris Donley of Spokane notes Clear, Chapman and Liberty lakes provide trout, **bass** and other fish through October. Amber Lake remains open through November for catch-and-release fishing. A number of year-round waters – including Eloika, Long and Newman lakes – have trout, bass, **crappie**, **perch** and more.

Most rivers and streams in the region close Oct. 31, but sections of some major waterways, including the Spokane River, remain open year-round or into next spring, some with specific restrictions listed in the rules pamphlet.

Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir off Grand Coulee Dam, provides some of the best year-round fishing. Anglers trolling for big rainbows and walleye should find plenty of action, especially from the Daisy area north. Walleye fishers can also be successful casting jigs near the shoreline or using bottom bouncers.

In the south end of the region, the Tucannon River impoundments on WDFW's Wooten Wildlife Area remain open through Oct. 31, but three of the seven trout-stocked fisheries are currently not fishable. WDFW area manager Kari Dingman reports Watson and Beaver lakes are dry because the rising river blew out the inlets, and Curl Lake has been drained for maintenance. Rainbow, Blue, Spring and Big Four lakes are still fishable and catches should pick up during this last month with cooler weather.

Dingman also notes that conditions in the Blue Mountains in general are still very dry so anglers and others passing through the area need to be very careful with anything that could start a wildfire.

### **Northcentral Washington**

Since the fishery opened Sept. 28, anglers have an opportunity to catch **hatchery steelhead** on the upper Columbia River above Rock Island Dam, and on the Wenatchee, Icicle, Entiat, Methow, and Okanogan rivers. **Salmon** fishing on the Columbia River from Wells Dam to Brewster also re-opened Sept. 28 and will run through Oct. 15.

WDFW regional fish manager Jeff Korth said about 18,000 adult steelhead are expected to return to the upper Columbia River this year – enough to allow the steelhead fisheries for the eighth straight season. However, both wild and hatchery-reared fish are expected to return in significantly lower numbers than in the past two years, requiring additional constraints on those fisheries.

"Allowable impacts on wild steelhead will be tighter this year, so we may have to close earlier than in the past two seasons," Korth said. Three areas of the Columbia River – Vernita, Priest Rapids and Wanapum – will not open at all for steelhead fishing this fall.

Steelhead fisheries are carefully managed to protect naturally spawning steelhead listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Korth said the fisheries will be closely monitored and fishing rules enforced to protect wild steelhead.

The daily limit on all rivers is two hatchery steelhead, marked with a clipped adipose fin and measuring at least 20 inches in length. Any steelhead with an intact adipose fin must be released unharmed and must not be removed from the water. Anglers must also release any steelhead with one or more round holes punched in their tail fin.

Like last year, anglers must retain any legal hatchery steelhead they catch until they reach their daily limit of two fish. Once they have retained two fish, they must stop fishing for steelhead.

"These selective steelhead fisheries are specifically designed to help maintain a high proportion of wild steelhead on the spawning grounds and enhance recovery of the region's wild steelhead," Korth said. "Anglers can play an important role in that effort by removing hatchery fish above the number needed to meet spawning goals."

Retention of hatchery steelhead on the Similkameen River opens Nov 1. As with the other fisheries, anglers are required to possess a Columbia River Salmon/Steelhead Endorsement as part of their valid fishing license. For all the rules, see WDFW's [Rule Change](#) webpage.

Meanwhile, time is running out for two fisheries set to close Oct. 15:

- **Lake Chelan tailrace:** A new fishery for **hatchery summer chinook salmon** has been open since Sept. 14 in the tailrace of the hydroelectric powerhouse operated by the Chelan County Public Utility District in Chelan. The experimental fishery – designed to give anglers a shot at the hatchery fish moving through – is restricted to the outfall area extending one-third of a mile downstream from the safety barrier near the powerhouse to the railroad bridge at the Columbia River. No fishing is allowed in the Chelan River between the tailrace and Lake Chelan. See the Rule Change webpage noted above for current regulations.
- **Lower Wenatchee River:** Also closing Oct. 15 is the fishery for hatchery summer chinook salmon that opened on the lower Wenatchee River in August and expanded in September to include the stretch from Peshastin Creek to above Dryden Dam and the Icycle 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.

Some popular **rainbow trout** lakes in Okanogan County remain open through the winter for daily catches of up to five trout. Campbell, Cougar and Davis lakes in the Winthrop area are all open through March 31. 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.

This is also a good time to hike up to one of many alpine lakes in Okanogan County and cast for **cutthroat trout**, Jateff said.

#### **Southcentral Washington**

Steelhead are moving into the Hanford Reach, but most anglers will likely stay focused on **fall chinook salmon** through mid-October. Approximately 90,000 chinook – some tipping the scales at 40 pounds apiece – are expected to return to the Reach this year, and early October is the best time to catch some, said Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Anglers were averaging a half a chinook per boat in early September, but that should pick up as more fish move into the Reach and water temperatures cool, Hoffarth said.

"Folks have a great opportunity to catch bright, good-eating fish through the first half of the month," Hoffarth said. "But these fish come to the Reach ready to spawn and they start turning dark later in the month."

The salmon fishery is open through Oct. 22 from the Highway 395 Bridge in the Tri-cities to Wanapum Dam, but closes Oct. 15 upriver from Wanapum Dam. Anglers are advised to check the [Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet](#) for daily catch limits and other regulations that apply to specific sections of the Columbia River.

Meanwhile, pressure is growing to switch over to **hatchery steelhead**. Based on a moderately strong forecast, state fishery managers opened the steelhead fishery two weeks early from Highway 395 to the old Hanford wooden powerline towers.

"October is a good time to start targeting hatchery steelhead," said Hoffarth, noting that the fishery runs through March 31. "The water is cooling off and the fish are getting more aggressive."

Another good prospect for salmon is the Yakima River, where fishing for fall chinook and coho usually comes alive around the second week of the month. Best bets for catching fish include waters downstream of Prosser Dam and Horn Rapids Dam, said Hoffarth, noting that fishing is closed within 400 feet downstream of those diversions.

"The salmon start moving slowly into the Yakima, then all of a sudden they're stacked like cordwood," he said. "I think we're going to see a dramatic improvement in that fishery in the weeks ahead."

Rather catch some **walleye**? October is also a great time to hook some of these toothy gamefish below McNary Dam, Hoffarth said. "Fall fishing for walleye is dynamite between Umatilla and Boardman," he said. "Those fish are putting on the feedbag for winter and are eager to strike big lures, night and day."

Meanwhile, **trout** fishing is still an option at many rivers and streams, including the Yakima, Naches, Little Naches, and Bumping rivers in Yakima County. Other possibilities include the upper reaches of Taneum Creek, Naneum Creek, Manastash Creek; the forks of the Teanaway in Kittitas County; or any of a number of [high lakes](#).

Most rivers and creeks have statewide trout catch limits of two trout with an 8-inch minimum size. Many, however, also have special regulations, including like selective gear rules that prohibit bait. Regulations for these and other fisheries are described in the [Fishing in Washington regulation pamphlet](#).

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#### **Random Links**

Loookie Loos advised by ODFW to spawning salmon viewing locations:  
<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2011/october/100511.asp>

Trophy Trout Techniques:  
<http://www.trophytrouthunter.com/id41.html>

**GOOD LUCK!**