

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 14<sup>th</sup> – October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Bonneville fishing remains a good option as both Backtrollers and anchor fishers continue to take chinook. Plugs remain the most effective for salmon but anglers will have a harder time finding fish of quality table fare as we enter the late season.

Sturgeon fishing remains good with some quality keepers and an occasional oversize taken during the last opener. Squid and shrimp are the best baits and the swift water seems to hold the most keepers. The fall season offers the best chance for bank anglers to catch keepers fishing close to the deadline at Bonneville Dam although action did slow from the previous week.

Fall chinook and coho passage at Willamette Falls is steady but modest. Upper Willamette water remains the place to fish as anglers are hooking smallmouth bass, rainbow, cutthroat trout and the occasional steelhead.

Fly anglers are enjoying good results for redsides on the upper McKenzie with October Caddis active. Steelhead are available below Leaburg Dam.

Water levels will be high this week on the North Santiam from precipitation and runoff from Detroit Reservoir.

While coho have been nosing into the Clackamas for a while, catches remain slow. Rainfall hasn't jump-started action as hoped.

Coho fishing is fair on the Sandy River where a few chinook have also been landed. Coho should be well distributed throughout the system but the water upstream of Dodge Park often produces the best results. Anglers will begin to concentrate at Cedar Creek where hatchery fish stage before heading to the hatchery.

**Northwest –** Another shot of both chinook and coho hit the lower Columbia over the weekend. High slack near the Astoria Bridge produced fair catches for the few anglers participating in the fishery. Coho action should heat back up again as the bulk of the second run coho enter the lower river. Crabbing in the lower Columbia is also picking back up again.

Nehalem fishers continue to do best for wild coho as it is one of the last remaining open fisheries on the coast. Biologists expect it to remain open through the weekend but regulation changes can happen at any time, based on effort. Some chinook remain present but are somewhat elusive.

Tillamook anglers continue to deal with eelgrass and seaweed issues, especially on incoming tide. This wouldn't be so much of an issue if there were good numbers of chinook available but success rates have tapered in recent days. There remains some great opportunities ahead however and catches are likely to pick back up again, maybe by the weekend. There are good numbers of wild coho in the west channel where catch and release anglers are finding consistent action.

The Alsea, Nestucca, Tillamook, Siuslaw and Yaquina are now closed to the take of wild coho as anglers have achieved the allowable quota. These systems remain open for chinook however and are producing some of the best catches in recent years. The Salmon River is starting to slow.

River levels rose mid-week and did draw some salmon into the upper reaches of north coast systems but precipitation wasn't significant enough to bring in the mother lode.

Crabbing remains good in most north coast estuaries. The ocean will close to recreational crabbing after October 15<sup>th</sup>. Seas will likely remain too rough for anglers to access through the weekend.

**Southwest** – Offshore conditions have been rough this week but long-range forecasts have offshore wind and waves moderating into the coming weekend.

Wild coho fishing was shut down on the Alsea October 10th with the 675-fish quota met as of that date.

Chinook fishing has been good in Winchester Bay and on the lower Umpqua mainstem. Steelhead remains slow on the North Umpqua.

Coos Bay trollers are taking decent numbers of chinook with the wild coho fishery productive and still open until further notice.

One of the more productive fisheries, pressure for chinook increased dramatically on the Coquille over the past week. The wild coho season closed as the quota filled on Wednesday this week.

Over the past weekend, boats out of Port Orford took limits of rockfish and lingcod when a productive area was located.

The Rogue estuary and lower river have been productive over the past week, yielding catches of adult chinook and coho along with decent numbers of jacks. Wrapped plugs are taking fall chinook on the middle Rogue while summer steelhead catches are fair in the flies-only upper river.

With the Chetco Bubble fishery closed as of October 12th, action will be limited to Brookings Harbor where catches have been spotty but are improving.

Still fishing with bait is productive at Diamond Lake as is fly fishing the weed lines for large, fat trout.

**Eastern** – Steelhead are scattered with catches fair to good on the lower Deschutes. Chinook, steelhead and coho are showing up daily in fair to good number the trap at Sherars Falls.

Late season trout results have been good on the Metolius but hatches are wrapping up. Weather will be a major factor into fall.

A slight river rise is in the forecast for the Grand Ronde which should stimulate summer steelhead to begin an upriver migration. Action should get better later in the month but especially into November.

**SW Washington** – District fishing remains best for coho near the mouths of SW Washington streams. The Cowlitz and Lewis remain the best bets, especially as late returning coho begin to make their way upstream on the mainstem Columbia. Spinners or plunked eggs will produce the best results and action should last through the next couple of weeks.

The Lewis and Cowlitz should see some additional fresh arriving coho in the coming weeks.

Anglers fishing the mouth of the Klickitat are finding fair numbers of coho and an occasional chinook. The White Salmon is also producing some coho although most are wild and must be released.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Action on the Columbia showed signs of re-birth as lower river salmon fishing picked up for the few that were fishing near Astoria. **Pro guide Lacey DeWert** reported taking 3 chinook and 2 coho over the course of the 3 day weekend. Now, that may not sound all the impressive except for the fact she was fishing by herself those 3 days and one day, she got her 2 fish in about 40 minutes. She was trolling herring above the Astoria Bridge (Washington side) in 14 to 20 feet of water right around high tide. One other guide reported fishing late last week on lower Desdemona Sands, waiting for this crab pots to soak sufficiently, netting 2 hatchery coho in about 45 minutes times near the high tide. These fish were taken on size 5 Fatal Flash spinners, red/white with a silver back. Historically, action in Astoria does heat back up again in mid-October as the second run coho make a showing this time of year on a tide series that looks a lot like the one we're currently on.

In the years when I was a fish checker in Astoria, we always saw a nice push of "B" run coho into the fishery at mid-month. Although this late run of coho, mostly destined for Washington tributaries, may not be as strong as the early run, it can be sizeable. In the case of this year, the run is forecast to come in just above 100,000 fish but it could be underestimated. The early component ("A" run) was recently upgraded in size as it became clear that it was coming in larger than expected. Although the weather may be less than desirable on this bigger body of water, there should be some fair numbers of fish around to harvest.

Meanwhile, crabbing in the area has been spectacular. Limits are easy for those willing to put in a little effort. Just drop your pots close to Buoy 20 or 22 near high slack or on the entire incoming tide if it's a weak tide, an collect your quarry after about a hour soak if you're using pots, 15 minutes if you're soaking rings.

Upriver, there is still some effort in the middle river for late run chinook and coho. Anchor anglers are still finding a few chinook on wobblers but most chinook effort has switched to the Bonneville area. Anglers working the mouths of the Cowlitz and Lewis Rivers are finding some coho and a rare chinook. This effort will likely taper significantly this week.

At Bonneville, anchor anglers are still most prevalent but backrollers are beginning to take good numbers of fish on some days. Finding swift flow is the key according to **Trevor Storlie of Red's Guide Service (503-307-5601)**. Working plugs in the swift water with about 100 feet of line out will likely draw strikes and a 2-fish limit is certainly a possibility.

**Trevor Storlie** also briefed us on sturgeon fishing, noting that the action remained good for boaters working the fast water too. Keepers were falling on squid and sand shrimp alone or best in combination with each other. Although there seemed to be a good bite on Saturday, no one expects the action to be as good as it was on the opener.

Bank anglers that have a good history in this fishery this time of year also witnessed a downturn from the previous week. Action remained best close to the deadline but WDF&W creel checkers noted a marked downward trend in success rates. Oregon creel census is likely to correlate.

On the Columbia, especially downstream of Bonneville Dam, anglers will see a downward trend for most salmon and sturgeon fisheries. We still have a few weeks of viable fishing but you'll see the detail in this section of the newsletter diminish over after the end of this month.

**The Guide's Forecast** – For those willing to go out a bit on a limb, action should be worthwhile again in the Buoy 10 fishery as late run coho begin their march upstream, headed for Washington hatcheries. These should be good sized fish and there should be ample numbers of them available for anglers versed in lower river trolling techniques. Target incoming tide on the lower river from Desdemona Sands to the Astoria/Megler Bridge, concentrating on the shallow sand flats just upstream of the bridge at high slack. Both the Washington and Oregon side should produce results on the first part of outgoing tide as well.

Both bait (herring) and spinners should produce results although I found bait to be most consistent for much of my season. Spinners certainly do have their place however but I recommend that you run all rods with the same gear. It seemed to be a biased bite toward bait if the fish had a choice between hardware and bait. Afternoon incoming tides will be pretty strong for placing crab pots but not so strong to move pots around unless they are not properly weighted. Don't let pots sit much after high slack however as a good low tide will be coming in the evening and buoy's will be pushed under the water's surface if not retrieved in time. This is when most people believe that their pots have been stolen but that's often not the case.

Upriver, wobbler action will continue to deteriorate but spinner casters and egg plunkers should continue to take fish near the mouths of Washington tributaries. Late run coho should stimulate catches although there will be more commercial effort in the next few days.

Here is the latest release on the upcoming mainstem gillnet season:

***Late Fall Commercial Salmon Fishery***

***Adopted non-Indian commercial fishing periods as follows:***

***Season 1:***

***6 AM to 6 PM Thursday October 13, 2011 (12 hrs)***

***Area: Zones 1-3***

***Gear: 6-inch maximum mesh size; un-slackened floater gillnet. Nets not specifically authorized for use in this fishery may be onboard the vessel if properly stored.***

***Season 2:***

***7 PM Thursday October 13, 2011 to 7 AM Friday October 14, 2011 (12 hrs)***

***Area: Zones 4-5***

***Gear: Drift gill nets. 8" minimum and 9¾" maximum mesh size restrictions. The multiple net rule is not in effect for this fishery.***

Bonneville anglers will continue to have the best access to numbers of chinook as fish stage near the dam in preparation for further upstream travel. Although numbers passing Bonneville are dropping, action remains worthwhile but far from consistent. The one thing that is consistent is the daily early morning bite. After the brief early morning flurry, action tapers dramatically. It's an anglers guess as to whether the anchor bite or the backtrolling bite will produce the best results. Regardless, bait wrapped plugs is producing the best results. Stick to the faster flows for better action and be sure to deploy enough line if you're backtrolling deep water.

Sturgeon fishers should continue to see a slowdown in their success rates but it will remain one of the best options of the year for those seeking keepers; especially if you are a bank angler. Bring squid and sand shrimp and be sure to freshen your bait regularly, especially if you are using sand shrimp exclusively. Like salmon fishing, seek the fast water as that is where the keepers are most likely to reside. Catch and release sturgeon fishing above Bonneville Dam can also be productive this time of year.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – With water temperatures hovering in the high 50s, fall Chinook and coho are crossing daily in low double digits. Summer steelhead passage has fallen to low single digits. While there are a few hopefuls trying in the Meldrum Bar stretch, most of the action is above the Falls at this time of year.

The McKenzie River near Vida spiked overnight on Wednesday, October 12th but as of today, flows have returned to previous levels. The Upper river has been productive for reddsides over the past week.

Both the North and South Santiam have come up recently but should be stable in the week to come. It's been no banner year for summer steelhead but they are available in the Santiam system along with a few coho. Be aware that coho may not be taken above Stayton on the North Santiam and above the Grant Street bridge in Lebanon on the South Santiam. Chinook fishing is closed on the entire system.

Willamina Pond. Detroit Reservoir and Walling Pond are on the trout stocking schedule this week.

**The Guide's Forecast** – With over 3,000 coho in the upper Willamette, it may be time to consider targeting them at the mouths of tributaries and while higher daily counts would certainly improve optimism, this is a convenient fishery for some valley dwellers. Try the Middle Fork for reddsides how as fly flingers have brought a few beauties to hand this fall. Another option would be to try the river from below Dexter to Springfield which has been producing a few bright steelhead and is a reliable stretch for cutthroat trout.

The McKenzie has continued to fish well with light boat traffic and plentiful reddsides along with the occasional steelhead in the mix for added excitement. While caddisflies are hatching, nymphs have been most reliable recently.

Steelheading is the best option on the Santiam system with best prospects above Greens Bridge on the North and upstream of Lebanon Dam on the South. Bobbers and jigs are effective as are spinners.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – When one considers that it is the nature of coho to enter a tributary when urged to do so biologically at a particular time of year and are less influenced by water levels than other anadromous species, it follows that the fish have been trickling in for a while and the lower river may not be the best bet to intercept them. With the season progressing, expect to see increased pressure on the Sandy. Coho are in the river in solid numbers now and can be seen rolling in many areas below, up to and within Cedar Creek. Because it requires good technique and patience to tempt them to lure or bait, some ethically-compromised individuals are attempting to hook them illegally.

Turn in poachers, snaggers & flossers!



**The Guide's Forecast** – Try higher on the Clackamas River, plying deeper holes and runs but still below Eagle Creek. It's a good bet you'll see fish in the river on these upper stretches. After that, it's up to you as coho are hesitant to bite or strike in fresh water. Despite recent rainfall, Eagle Creek is too low to fish.

The Sandy River offers the best chance in the valley to hook up with a coho. Persistence and versatility will go a long way to bolster success as there are no guarantees with these finicky fish. Take good quality cured eggs, yarnies and spinners. Try Wiggle Warts. Try everything shirt of those tactics discussed above. You're better than that.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – After several days of poor fishing, Tillamook finally took off again with a good showing of chinook at first light and low slack in the Ghost Hole on Wednesday. The bite didn't last long however, with a significant drop in action when the action typically heats up; the middle part of the incoming tide. A simultaneous bite took place in the upper bay with the "grassy knoll" (across from the mouth of the Wilson) and Ray's Place Piling (also known as the corral) also booting out a quick flurry of fish to spinner trollers in the upper reaches of Tillamook Bay.

Wild coho made up the bulk of the catch on incoming tide, especially in the upper bay although there were a few chinook caught at Bay City late in the incoming and a few more at high slack at the corral although few were fishing it then. The west channel still has hordes of jumping coho although a few chinook are available for herring trollers. There were several boats targeting wild coho for catch and release this week. They were doing fairly well too.

The jaws hasn't been very productive lately and eelgrass and seaweed has been an issue. The ocean remains big and anglers haven't been able to fish out there for several days now.

There are fish in tidewater of the Trask, Tillamook and even the Wilson although success is sub-par for the amount of fish around. River levels rose a significant foot or better with the Trask one of the best options on the recent rain event. The level didn't stay high for long as nice weather once again settled into the region, causing river levels to drop as fast as they came up. No word yet on how success was but for the rare driftboater working the water, the action was likely fairly good. Although it's not a gimme that action will be hot on a river rise like what we experienced on the 12<sup>th</sup>, it stands to reason that bait or plugs properly presented will likely take good numbers of fish. I have seen it however when fish keep their noses to the grindstone and won't bite a bait or plug to save their life (I know, oxymoron).

The Nehalem has remained somewhat quiet for chinook action although it has picked up slightly from the previous week. Wild coho remain abundant and a closure is imminent, likely sometime next week. The chinook bite is likely to taper as well but more fish are due back to the system.

The Nestucca has been termed "hit or miss" with tidewater supplying the best numbers of fish to sport anglers. Fish should be available upstream as well but do mind regulations as a new lower deadline is now being imposed. No fishing above First Bridge.

The Salmon River is slowing down but a fair run has come back to the system. Fish should be available to the hatchery but some are beginning to turn dark.

Bay crabbing turned a bit south after the rivers swelled on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Although some crabbers continued to do well, success dropped off after the weather system pushed through. Netarts remained the best north coast choice and the lower Columbia remains dynamite!

**The Guide's Forecast** – There is still lots of good fishing to be had in the Tillamook district in the coming weeks. With the spinner bite taking off in the upper bay and the herring bite building again in the lower, anglers will have to choose their high confidence area as both seem to be good selections. For whatever reason however, the last part of the outgoing tide and very first part of the incoming push seem to be the most productive.

Low slack/outgoing tides will begin to weaken over the weekend, making the lower bay one of the better options for early morning success. The softer tides make the last part of outgoing tide a good option along the jetty as fish will cross from the ocean to the bay for longer periods of time when the outgoing flow is not so intense. You will likely encounter eelgrass however and seaweed is likely to be an issue as well if the ocean swell stays large (as is forecasted). There may be some brief periods of ocean opportunity however but the success is NOT worth the risk so choose your days carefully. As we mentioned before, ocean crabbing closes after October 15<sup>th</sup>. Don't let your pots get caught outside after the closure.

Upper bay incoming tides will remain fairly strong through the weekend but the question is, will the chinook start biting again on the flood tide? That remains to be seen and the more likely scenario will be the Ghost Hole and Bay City for the flood tide in the late morning and early afternoon through the weekend. Use herring of course but spinners may be an effective tool if the eelgrass becomes too bothersome. You should be able to shake your gear free of sea-vegetation and get back to productive fishing.

Tidewater fishing may pick up as river levels once again drop. Fair weather is again in the forecast so fish are likely to collect in the tidewater stretches of most north coast tributaries. The Wilson should become a good option with the Trask a good option as well.

Fish may have moved on the Nestucca but it should produce opportunity through October. With low flows coming from above again, look to the tidewater section to provide the best opportunity. It's clear however that this is a rebuilding year again for the Nestucca.

The Nehalem should have a few more days of good coho fishing for wild fish enthusiasts. Some chinook should be in the show but action should begin to taper after the next week. Hatchery catches of coho, like the Tillamook system have been rare but the river was coming into fine shape after a small freshet (the best of the season) at mid-week.

Crabbing is likely to improve with the waning tide series. Most estuaries should pick up again but Netarts should be a highlight as is usually the case this time of year.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Offshore rockfish and ling cod may be taken at any depth now and catches are historically very good at this time of year, as is ocean crabbing. We say 'historically' because wind and waves have prevented boats from venturing out this week. According to forecasts, there may be an opportunity late in the coming weekend but those forecasts have been remarkably unreliable recently with conditions changing rapidly.

According to online data provided by the ODFW, as of today, October 13th, the Siletz remains open for wild coho with only a few bagged and over 550 remaining to be taken in the quota.

With fair results for the season filling the quota, wild coho may no longer be kept on the Alsea or Yaquina systems as of October 10th.

The Siuslaw has been slow for trollers with the river devoid of boats early this week and only the occasional Chinook hooked just above tidewater mid-week. With the quota filled, the wild coho fishery closed at the end of day on October 9th.

While Tenmile opened for wild coho on October 1st, and while no catches have yet been reported, a few have probably been hooked by now although the water level is too low for best results. Trolling spinners or plugs is generally most effective here. The lake outlet is a logical place for the action to start, then creek mouths. This fishery is scheduled to remain open through the end of the year if 875 wild coho aren't caught before that date.

Winchester Bay and the lower Umpqua mainstem slowed this week for fall Chinook but crabbing improved with more legal Dungeness being taken than a week ago. Sea lions have posed problems for anglers recently. Mainstem Chinook fishers have been making good catches as high as Roseburg with better numbers moving upstream with rain and cooler water temperatures. The North Umpqua flies-only stretch remains slow for steelheading. The South Umpqua is closed to all fishing until December 1st.

Crabbing at Coos Bay has been producing limits of Dungeness although effort in the area has remained light. Coos River trollers using spinners are hooking up with some regularity with both Chinook and coho. Reports indicate coho are scattered throughout the river up to Myrtle Tree but Chinook appear to be keggering up just below tidewater. Trolling herring behind a flasher has accounted for the majority of Chinook hookups. One wild coho per day up to five for the year may still be retained here with the ODFW reporting today that nearly 80% of the quota remains yet to be taken. In the unlikely event that the 1,200-fish quota doesn't fill, the season will continue through November 30th.

The wild coho fishery on the Coquille system closed on Wednesday this week following a strong week of catches as less than 30% of the quota was filled at the October 2nd update. Chinook fishing continues and has been fair to good.

Chinook catches slowed over the past week in the Rogue estuary and in the lower river although a few coho have been taken in the mix. Best results on the lower river have been from Indian Creek to the Highway 101 Bridge. According to reports from the annual seining operation conducted by the ODFW at Huntley Park, Chinook and steelhead runs are well below the 10-year average. No Chinook may be taken on the Rogue above the Hog Creek Boat Ramp (below Grants Pass). Steelheading on the middle Rogue has been spotty. Steelheaders on the flies-only upper Rogue have been making fair to good catches.

Chinook have started nosing into the Elk and Sixes river with prospects improving in weeks to come and as fall rains get underway.

Trout catches slowed a little over the past week at Diamond Lake. The daily bag limit is eight fish per day but will revert to five per day on October 28th. Ironically, the lake closes at the end of day on October 31st with the limit returning to eight fish when it re-opens in spring, 2012.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – With the lower Deschutes on the rise as irrigation efforts upriver cease for the year, steelhead are scattered and catches are spotty. It's definitely worthwhile, just not spectacular. Counts of all species have been good at Sherars Falls, particularly for hatchery steelhead. Caddis are hatching and trout are keyed on them although Blue-Winged Olives have been the productive pattern of choice for many. Some dandy redsides to 20 inches or better have come to hand recently.

Fly fishers on the Crooked River are hooking a good number of trout which are responding to a variety of patterns with fish responding to dry patterns at times. Water levels are excellent for fishing.

### **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](#).

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### **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](#).

## **TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail**

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## **Random Links**

New Weather Site (requires Adobe Flash):

<http://weatherspark.com/#!dashboard;a=USA/OR/Tualatin>

DRAWING FISH - an interesting study:

<http://fishfliesandwater.com/category/artistic/drawing-fish-52/>

**GOOD LUCK!**