

The Guide's Forecast - volume 14 issue number 29

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 13th – July 19th, 2012**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Mainstem Columbia anglers can only focus on summer steelhead now. Although flows are still fluctuating, adults passing Bonneville Dam are beginning to rise and peak passage is not far away. Temperatures remain favorable for sportanglers and action is likely to get really good as early as next week. Beach fishing on Sauvie's Island is a great way to introduce this fishery to young anglers.

There are still spring salmon in the Willamette River. Over the weekend there were a handful of fish taken at Scappoose, Rocky Point and the head of Multnomah channel

McKenzie water levels have been fluctuating this week although trout fishing remains good. Steelheading and springer fishing has been spotty but numbers in the river are promising.

North Santiam River conditions are excellent. Try early or late in the day around Packsaddle or Minto Park. Both spring chinook and summer steelhead should be available.

The Clackamas continues to produce some summer steelhead for local fishermen in the know, but the fishing isn't what it was a week or two ago. Spring chinook fishing is winding down although most would say it never got going.

Glacial coloring is going to be the norm on the Sandy River with the warmer weather. This makes for tougher fishing in most cases, but does open other opportunities up river between the mouth of the Salmon River and Revenue Bridge. Fish are most often found in the pocket water so plan on losing a lot of gear in pursuit of these fish.

Northwest – Coho fishing out of the Columbia has been spotty recently but more consistent action is likely in the coming weeks. A good mix of chinook remain in the catch although the nearshore bite off of Long Beach has withered.

Tides are ripe for south jetty bottomfishing near the Columbia bar but NW winds and a high swell will slow interest and success. Catch and release sturgeon fishing remains a good option with anchovies becoming the bait of choice.

Coho fishing out of Garibaldi is slow but should pick up later in the month as Columbia River coho make their way from the south coast to their natal rivers in the Columbia basin. Nearshore halibut should begin to improve.

Tillamook district rivers remain low and clear but summer steelhead are being taken in the upper reaches of the Wilson and Nestucca systems. Cool mornings and evenings seem to produce the best results. Use small baits when pursuing these fish.

Southwest – Boats launching out of central Oregon ports have experienced spotty results for coho and chinook, good lingcod catches and fair fishing for rockfish. Ocean crabbing is excellent for numbers, fair for quality.

Albacore are being taken but it's still a spotty fishery that will improve in weeks to come. Trips of 30 miles have been required at times recently.

All-depth halibut fishing is closed until August although they may be taken inside 40 fathoms. Ocean swells are forecast to build into the coming weekend.

Bay crabbing has been good for numbers but the quality is poor with virtually all crabs coming in soft. These contain only a small amount of watery meat.

South coast beaches are producing good catches of surf perch and some 15-fish limits.

Chinook fishing is slow on the Umpqua mainstem, summer steelheading is fair. Good catches of springers have been taken in the North Umpqua recently. Bass fishing is good in the South Umpqua.

Trollers using baits of anchovy or herring in Coos Bay have seen an improvement in chinook catches over the past week.

Charters out of Gold Beach have been taking decent numbers of rockfish and lingcod. Offshore coho and chinook fishing has been worthwhile. The bay troll fishery for summer/fall chinook has started. Lower river boats are taking a few springers daily. Fishing on the middle Rogue has slowed with the water warming. Upper Rogue springer fishing remains good while summer steelhead fishing is improving. Evenings have been best.

Ocean chinook fishing has been good out of Brookings which bodes well for the upcoming fall season on the Chetco. Boats are also taking mostly limits of rockfish and large lingcod.

Eastern – Wading the lower Deschutes is a good way to beat the heat. Caddis are hatching well and reddsides are looking up.

The Willamette River is the place to go for trout fishing on dries as great hatches of Golden Stones are in progress. It was too high to wade on Tuesday this week but will be dropping.

Bass fishing is good at Davis Lake with best results at first and last light. The Odell Creek arm is productive for trout.

SW Washington – Summer steelhead remain the focus for most district anglers. The Cowlitz continues to be the best producer but the Kalama and Lewis can also produce fair results this time of year.

Most anglers continue to bank on the mainstem Columbia, plunking spin-n-glos tipped with coon shrimp. The stronger the flows, the better the fishing with another minus tide series starting the middle of next week.

Columbia River Gorge anglers start to get excited this time of year as steelhead nose into the Wind River and Drano Lake. Trollers and plunkers can both score results but check regulations before venturing out.

Soapbox Update: Now is the time to act in support of conservation areas on state forest lands. The North Coast State Forest Coalition is organizing NW Oregon stakeholders in engaging the Board of Forestry on **July 26th** at the monthly meeting. We're asking the board to adopt the concept of long-term protections of fish and wildlife habitat on state forest lands. Go here to sign the petition and we'll take your voice to the meeting although we'd much rather have you present in person to convey how our favorite forest product, wild fish, is an important source of social and economic benefit as well. Our petition can be found here: www.forestlegacy.org. If you can join us at the Board of Forestry meeting, contact Bob Rees at brees@pacifier.com.

Columbia River Fishing Report – With numerous closures placed on Columbia River fisheries, effort once again looks west as the offshore coho season comes in full swing this month. Although fishing is likely to get better, catch rates in recent days has been good with both chinook and coho almost equally present in fair numbers to the SW of the river mouth. The bite targeting larger chinook, just to the north of the north jetty has waned. Action on that side of the Columbia River bar is not consistent but it was a good June season. It's pretty clear however, there is a good number of chinook offshore right now. And speaking of good numbers, the bulk of them are undersize. A good sign of good recruitment from the previous year. Hopefully, this young crop translates into great adult returns in the coming years.

It's no secret out there, just troll herring shallow early and deeper later. It's just a matter of finding the fish when they are there. Starting at the CR Buoy is a good bet although you can find fish in shallower water than that. The coho are starting to show some size already. They will be quality fish by late August.

Bottomfishing is going fair right now with some boats putting in time on the early morning high tide. Once it starts running out however, the action slows as undercurrents run too hard to effectively fish. The short-term swell forecast doesn't look good for this fishery. An early NW wind won't help matters either.

Catch and release fishing is going well too. Quality sized sturgeon are responding to anchovies better than they have in the early season although shrimp will certainly work well in the shallow water still. Fish seem to be more plentiful below Tongue Point now and that likely won't change anytime soon as salinity levels continue to climb. Action will likely remain good above Tongue Point as well with very little effort by sportanglers.

Steelheaders should be anxious to get after summer run fish on the upcoming tide series. Although flows remain favorable, the minus tide series coming up should also produce good results. Bank anglers did see an improvement in steelhead numbers coming off of the beaches last week, particularly in the Portland to Longview stretch. It's the first time in several weeks that more steelhead than sockeye were caught. Although we're on a weak tide series now, by the middle of next week, we'll be back on a strong outgoing tide when steelhead migration should be peaking. The gorge fishery for steelhead remains poor however, mostly due to high flows coming from the upstream impoundments for summer spill.

Crabbing in the lower river remains poor and only fair in the ocean off of the mouth.

The Guide's Forecast – With salmon in the spotlight, it's poor timing for the ocean to whip up. The forecast doesn't look great for the weekend with the swell forecast to come up into the weekend:

FRI

NW WIND 10 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT AT 7 SECONDS.

FRI NIGHT

NW WIND 15 TO 20 KT...EASING TO 10 TO 15 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

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NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 9 FT.

MON

N WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 8 FT.

If this wind forecast doesn't come to fruition, action is likely to remain good to the SW of the river mouth. Anglers will have to keep expecting large numbers of shaker chinook with legal chinook likely to only tip the scales at 6 to 10 pounds. There is only a rare larger chinook being taken. Coho are putting on some pounds however so don't be afraid to troll larger baits for larger fish. It seems pretty likely however that offshore anglers will want to wait this one out. If you do go out, I suggest exercising your NW option in the morning, so you can ride the wind back to port when it picks up in the late morning or early afternoon.

Catch and release fishing will remain a good option and with the weak tide series, you may have to rely on the deep water action where you have access to fish using lighter leads on the peak tide flow. Look for the downtown area to produce good results but Taylor Sands should be a reliable option as well if you seek shallow water action. Anglers will have an early morning high slack with outgoing for most of the morning. The tide changes will produce the best and you can feel more confident that anchovies will begin to produce the best results in the coming weeks.

Steelheaders should begin to see improving catches, especially as we near mid-week with the stronger tide series coming on. Stick to the hot colored spin-n-glos and tip them with shrimp for the best results. Don't fish too far off of shore, keeping in mind that the stronger the flow, the closer to the beach you want to fish. The gorge isn't likely to produce great results until flows subside even further. We just passed the 1/2 million mark for sockeye; a feat we haven't seen in a long, long time.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "There are still salmon in the report this week for the Willamette River. Over the weekend there were a handful of fish taken at Scappoose, Rocky Point and the head of Multnomah Channel. Vu Tran (aka DejaVu) of Beaverton scored two hatchery keepers in the channel on Sunday on plug cut herring and reports of surprising numbers have come in from the top to the bottom of Multnomah Channel. Again, many fish are of upper Columbia River origin, just taking a detour between Sauvies Island and the Oregon shore, before finding their way back out to the Columbia proper. If you are completely done with salmon and looking for warm water alternatives, the smallmouth fishing can be spectacular this time of year. Rocky shoals and shorelines, behind islands and even along pilings and wing dams are favorite "smallie" hang-outs, fish to four pounds are not uncommon. Though there is little effort, walleye fishing can also produce decent action for anglers probing the shelves and shoreline down in Multnomah Channel. Walleye fishing should improve as the summer progresses into early fall when it hits its pinnacle."

Daily counts at Willamette Falls have remained steady although the water temperature has climbed to the mid-70s as of July 12th, which is likely to have an impact on fish passage. The latest counts as of July 8th indicate 34,535 spring Chinook have passed the Falls at a recent rate

of about 250 per day while 23,200 summer steelhead have crossed at a rate of about 150 per day. Most of these anadromous fishes are in upstream tributaries now, primarily the Santiams and the McKenzie Rivers.

The McKenzie has been on a slow, steady drop during the month of July and is in prime summer condition for fishing.

As of July 10th, over 3,600 spring Chinook and more than 5,200 summer steelhead had entered the trap at Foster Dam. Many of the Chinook and the majority of the steelhead have been trucked back downstream from the hatchery, most recently to Pleasant Valley and Waterloo. Recycled fish may be recognized by a hole punch through the gill plate.

Alton Baker Canal, Breitenbush River, Clear Lake, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River below Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg, Quartzville Creek, Salt Creek and the North Fork Santiam River above Detroit Lake

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "A few anglers will half-heartedly try for springers in the Multnomah Channel and at Fred's Marina this week..... and to everyone's surprise, a high percentage of them will likely be grilling fresh Chinook that evening. Troll green or blue label plug cut herring or a rainbow type spinner for best results. Anglers looking for other alternatives will ply the Willamette for Smallmouth bass and walleye. The smallmouth have been off the spawn for a spell now and are getting hungry and active again. They are looking more for food and are less concerned about territory so mimicking the available fodder can work to the anglers' advantage. Crank baits that look like juvenile salmon and steelhead and earth-tone plastics would be a smart choice. The walleye tend to be less specific or more specific depending on how you look at it and the standard night crawler harness with a spinner blade will coax up any self-respecting walleye."

Don't neglect the upper Willamette where husky reddsides are awaiting your presentation and the water beckons for a refreshing wade on a warm day. Hatches and water conditions are improving on the Middle Fork near Oakridge. Summer steelhead are also available to hardware and fly anglers so go get 'em. Bass fishers on the upper river are seeing an improvement in the bite as well. Some large smallies are being taken this week on the Willamette in the Salem area.

While fishing couldn't be described as hot on the McKenzie, it is consistent with trout responding steadily to swung wet fly offerings. Or try a nymph (such as a Possie Bugger) under an indicator or as a dropper off a big, bushy dry fly. These techniques have proven effective recently as the river shifts into full summer mode. Steelheaders with knowledge of the river are doing fairly well for summers and picking up the occasional spring Chinook.

North Santiam River levels have fluctuated at times this week but are gradually dropping. The South Santiam River is stable. The entire Santiam system is at excellent level and flow for fishing and steelhead populations are very good. Throw spoons or spinners, drift small clusters of cured eggs or toss the ubiquitous bobber and jig.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "The Clack continues to produce some summer steelhead for local fishermen in the know, but the fishing isn't what it was a week or two ago. Anglers willing to cover a lot of water are likely to encounter a steelhead or two and might even get lucky enough to summon up a late spring Chinook in the deeper runs. The upper half of the river below Rivermill dam will be the best option. Early morning and late evening are the fishing hours as rafters and tubers are in the majority with the hot weather.

PGE has drained Faraday Lake in an effort to improve water temperatures on the upper Clackamas and has promised to take further steps which will improve fish passage and habitat. The lake will be closed for the remainder of the year but will re-open in 2013.

"Glacial coloring is going to be the norm on the Sandy River with the warmer weather. This makes for tougher fishing in most cases, but does open other opportunities upriver between the mouth of the Salmon River and Revenue Bridge. Normally this section runs "air clear" earlier in the summer, but when temperatures in the valley hit 80+ for days on end the glacier starts to bleed and the steelhead and spring chinook move into the canyon water for some cooler water and some silt to give them cover. Look for the cleaner water early in the morning and the siltation to increase after about 1pm depending on how far down the river you are."

The Sandy is running even dirtier than the usual glacial runoff, indicating the possibility of a slide or consequence of recent thunder showers in the Cascades. Whatever the cause, the water is opaque this week.

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "During the heat wave, the splash and giggle floater is king on the Clack. Get there early for any opportunity, or show up after 6pm if you want a chance at a steelhead or late springer. The crack of dawn will be the witching hour when the water is best rested and a swung #3 brass, nickel or black spinner stands a good chance of luring a summer steelie. Stay away from the silver plate larger spinners as they tend to spook more fish than they coax. Low profile sizes and subdued finishes are going to catch more fish in the low, clear water conditions. The black nightmare jig and float is also a favorite rig for the stealthy low water angler. Concentrate on the stretch of water from Barton upstream for the best success.

"Fish early in the AM on the Sandy River for the best opportunity as glacial silt will increase as the day progresses. Focus on the water below the mouth of the Salmon River and the canyon water between Dodge and Oxbow Parks for the best concentrations of fish. Drift fishing corky and sand shrimp tail or roe can be very effective in the holes below the Salmon River mouth and size 3 and 4 spinners are also a favorite in this stretch. If the water has lots of color (silt) to it, fish the same color set up you would in winter time conditions. Pearl pink, pink, orange and flame red show up well in the silty water and risk the chance of a willing steelhead seeing your offering."

North Coast Fishing Report – It's hurry up and wait on the north Oregon coast where saltwater anglers are still waiting for reports of coho action to pick up. Action remains subdued out of most ports south of Cape Falcon. Garibaldi Marina reports very few coho coming from the sportfleet with interest waning. There was good effort from the opening of the season due to calm ocean conditions; the fish simply were not there.

Meanwhile, with nothing to report from the ocean, inland fisheries are stalling as well, with low, clear water conditions and warm temperatures holding back action for summer steelhead and spring chinook. Effort is concentrated in the district's rivers, particularly the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca systems. Even well-versed anglers were giving the water a break as warmer temperatures are seemingly having an impact on success. The hatchery hole on the Trask remains open but fish are becoming unresponsive to the onslaught of effort over the last several weeks.

The Nehalem system however remains one of the best July options on the north coast as the summer chinook run begins to pick up steam. We fished the jaws at Nehalem, picking up just

one chinook (about a 10 pound hatchery fish) on the first part of outgoing tide on Wednesday morning. We heard of just one other fish taken but that was for just 4 boats working the bar. There was some other effort at Wheeler but no report on success. There have been a few fish taken there recently however. On the stronger tides, moss has been an issue, hampering what little effort exists out there. The good news: action is likely to get even better in the next several weeks.

The bigger news out of the Nehalem was the success we had for nearshore halibut. We gingerly crossed the bar out of the Nehalem, something I urge EXTREME caution doing, to pursue halibut near the buoy just outside of the mouth of the bay. We were pleasantly surprised when we can across 2 quick halibut, one about 15 pounds, the other nearing 35 pounds, on slow-trolled herring on the bottom. The depth in that area is about 65 feet and we just simply kept our baits rigged like we were trolling for salmon. Check regulations but be aware that if you catch a salmon on halibut gear, unless you were using a barbless hook, it must be released. I honestly don't know how likely that is but I'm sure it's a possibility.

Bottomfishing remains good, not as good as earlier in the spring however but effort will be dictated by ocean weather, which doesn't look too favorable in the coming days:

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Crabbing in the ocean is picking up and has been decent in the estuary too. Tillamook is more productive than Netarts Bay right now.

ODFW sez, "The annual conservation closure for the 18 miles of beaches in Clatsop County to razor clam digging starts July 15. ODFW has closed the Clatsop beaches to diggings since 1967 to protect newly-set young clams that are establishing themselves on the beach during this time of the year."

The Guide's Forecast – It doesn't look like a great week ahead for north coast anglers, especially with the seas forecasted as they are. Although the best prospect may be the Nehalem system, we're still several weeks away from better fishing here. That said, it looks to be more productive than offshore coho and certainly more comfortable with the small tide exchange that we should be experiencing. Anglers can look farther to the west if the Nehalem Bay Bar is calm,

and sneak offshore for a chance at a nearshore halibut. You have to fish inside of 40 fathoms but action near the Nehalem Bay Buoy (around 65 feet) was certainly productive on Wednesday.

Offshore action should improve but anglers won't be happy about their choice if they get caught in the wind and swell action that is forecasted. If you do go, head NW from the Tillamook Bay jetty tip so you can ride the swell and wind waves back to port when it does "blow-up". Trolled herring near the surface should produce a few opportunities but don't bank on a limit, certainly not an easy limit.

Inshore anglers still have opportunity on the Wilson and Nestucca for summer steelhead and the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca for late run spring chinook but you'll want to target the deep water, using small baits and be quiet about it. Early mornings will produce best and hope for cloud cover, which is often the case on the coast.

Crabbing in Tillamook and Nehalem Bays should be fair this week with Netarts a distant second. The soft tide series will produce better results.

Central & South Coast Reports – Charters launching out of Newport and Depoe Bay have continued to struggle with rockfish although about half the boats have taken limits of lingcod. Coho and Chinook fishing has been slow. Ocean crabbing remains very good.

Offshore swells as well as onshore breezes are forecast to be increasing through the coming weekend, peaking on Saturday, and then moderating over the week to come.

Tuna are being caught but it has been spotty out of most ports and usually a long ocean ride of 30 miles or more to find warm water and albacore although boats out of Depoe Bay hooked up at 25 miles on Wednesday this week. Catches will improve into August and they will be much closer to port.

The spring all-depth halibut season off the central Oregon coast closed with 9,572 pounds of the 111,249-pound quota remaining. That weight will be added to the summer fishery which opens August 3rd and 4th for an increased quota of about 53,000 pounds. It's scheduled to be open every other Friday and Saturday until the quota is taken or October 27th, whichever comes first.

We consider readers of this newsletter to be fairly experienced anglers, so this tidbit of advice will probably come as no surprise to the majority. With summer temperatures solidly in place for the foreseeable future, fish early and late in the day.

It is interesting but not surprising that with the ODFW talking about a limited, seasonal retention of non-hatchery steelhead on the Umpqua, detractors have come up with an online petition to protect wild Umpqua steelhead forevermore. It seems the system is working without detriment to unclipped steelhead on the Rogue.

Boats launching out of Reedsport to cross the bar at Winchester Bay have been experiencing spotty ocean salmon fishing with some getting near-limits while others have blanked. Crabbing has been fair to good in Winchester Bay although most are softshells. Surf perch fishing in the lower Umpqua has not generated catches as it had in previous seasons although some are being caught daily. The stretch to try is from Gardiner down to the mouth of the river. Shad fishing remains slow on the Umpqua mainstem where few are fishing springers and only the occasional steelhead is being taken. With the water level dropping on the North Umpqua, summer steelhead are on the move and catches are improving. South Umpqua smallmouth bass fishing is good but

not yet in its prime. When the fishing is at its best here, it's no big deal to catch 100 smallies a day. Boat anglers are faring best using soft plastics.

A few Chinook are being picked up in Coos Bay by trollers and moochers. Chinook fishing will improve here through July and generally peaks in August. Crabbing has been good for numbers although most are soft at this time of year. Clamming is excellent in Coos Bay whenever there is a series of minus tides, the next of which will occur July 16th through 23rd.

Trollers are taking the occasional Chinook in the Rogue estuary. It's still early for this fishery although high water temperatures in the lower Rogue will usually keep them kegged up in the bay. Results will continue to improve through July. Spring Chinook fishing is well into the wind-down phase on the lower Rogue although summer steelheading is fair above Agness. Steelhead and the occasional spring Chinook are being taken on the middle Rogue although results have been spotty. The upper river is producing a few spring Chinook although fishing is only fair at best. Summer steelhead are becoming the stars here and it's no wonder as well over 500 summer steelhead have passed through the Cole Rivers Hatchery so there are plenty upriver for anglers to target.

Over the past week, limits of rockfish have been fairly common out of the port of Brookings. Lingcod to 15 pounds have been seen hitting the cleaning table with some frequency with the occasional 30-pounder turning up in catches.

The trout bite has slowed at Diamond Lake which isn't unusual for this time of year.

The Rogue above Lost Creek is scheduled for trout stocking.

Central and Eastern Oregon – It's been a scorcher on the lower Deschutes lately but that isn't preventing caddis and mayflies from hatching nor is it deterring broad shouldered redsides from sipping them off the surface. Pressure is light with the heat on.

In a July 10th bulletin, the ODFW announced the spring Chinook fishery on the Wallowa River will close at sundown on July 15th due to lower-than-expected returns this season.

High temperatures seem to agree with the smallies in the Jon Day River as catches seem to be improving one day to the next. Over the past weekend, air temperatures topped 100 degrees and the smallmouth fishery was better over the past Sunday than the previous Saturday. Wading fly fishers casting poppers and streamers were busy all day although hardware anglers took a little better quality fish.

The Crooked River has been fishing great although it has been a little crowded at times. Fish are being taken all day long here.

Summertime lake trout are deep but available at Odell. Troll for them using downriggers at depths of 100 feet or more.

The water level at Green Peter should be good through July. It will produce kokanee but be prepared to ply the depths with downriggers or do some deep jigging as water temperatures rise.

Mosquitoes are thick on the shoreline but kokanee fishing is good at Paulina. Kokanee fishing has also been decent on nearby East Lake.

For those headed to Crescent Lake, be aware that a kokanee derby is scheduled for July 14th.

Most of the Kokanee coming out of Wallowa Lake are averaging 11 inches but every so often it's still kicking out lunkers that are measured in pounds rather than inches.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for July 2012

North Puget Sound

The summer fishing season revs up in July, when numerous fishing opportunities are available. Freshwater anglers can fish for trout and salmon at some of the region's rivers. On Puget Sound, additional salmon openers are just around the corner, while the popular crab season gets under way July 1 in most areas.

All but one marine area in Puget Sound opens for crab fishing July 1. The exception is Marine Area 7, where the crab fishery opens July 15 in the area's southern portion (San Juan Islands/Bellingham) and Aug. 16 in the northern portion (Gulf of Georgia).

The crab fishery in all marine areas of Puget Sound will be open Thursday through Monday of each week. Crabbers should note, however, that the season gets under way with a two-day opening (July 1-2), and will be closed July 3-4 before re-opening on its regular weekly schedule Thursday, July 5.

Rich Childers, shellfish policy lead for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), said state and tribal test fisheries indicate the crab population in Puget Sound remains abundant. "The test boats have done very well," Childers said. "I expect this summer's fishery to be similar to last year's, when crabbing was good throughout the entire season in most areas of Puget Sound."

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6¼ inches. Fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. Most marine areas will close the evening of Sept. 3 for a catch assessment. However, Marine Area 7 will remain open through Sept. 30.

Additional information on the crab fishery is available on [WDFW's crab fishing webpage](#). July also brings opportunities to hook salmon in the marine areas of Puget Sound. Those saltwater opportunities include:

- **Marine Area 7** (San Juan Islands), which opens July 1. Anglers can keep one chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit.
- **Marine Area 10** (Seattle-Bremerton), where anglers will have a daily limit of two salmon beginning July 1. However, anglers must release all chinook through July 15. Beginning July 16, anglers can retain hatchery chinook – marked with a clipped adipose fin – but wild chinook must be released.
- **Tulalip Bay "bubble" fishery** remains open each week from Friday through noon Monday through Sept. 3. Salmon anglers fishing the bubble have a two-salmon daily limit, and are allowed to use two fishing poles with the purchase of a two-pole endorsement.
- **Marine Area 9** (Admiralty Inlet) will be open July 1-15 with a daily limit of two salmon, but anglers must release chinook and chum. Hatchery chinook retention will begin July 16, when anglers will have a daily limit of two salmon but must release wild chinook and chum.

Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound salmon manager for WDFW, said he expects anglers will do well in some areas opening July 1. "The San Juan Islands have been a steady producer of hatchery chinook the last few years," he said. "And Marine Area 9 is a fair bet for resident coho." Before heading out, anglers can check [creel reports](#) for information on catch and effort in Puget Sound. WDFW fishery samplers collect the information each week at fishing access sites throughout Puget Sound.

In freshwater, portions of the Skagit and Cascade rivers are open for hatchery **chinook salmon** fishing through July 15. The Skagit is open to hatchery chinook retention from the Highway 530 Bridge at Rockport to Cascade River Road. On the Cascade, anglers can fish for salmon from the mouth of the river to the Rockport-Cascade Road Bridge.

The daily limit on the Skagit and Cascade rivers is four hatchery chinook, two of which may be adults (chinook salmon at least 24 inches in length).

The Skagit also is open to fishing for **sockeye** salmon. Anglers can fish for sockeye, from Highway 536 (Memorial Highway Bridge) at Mount Vernon to the mouth of Gilligan Creek through July 15. Anglers have a daily limit of three sockeye, with a minimum size of 12 inches. Despite high flows and dirty water, anglers on the Skagit continued to catch fish as June came to a close, said Brett Barkdull, another WDFW fish biologist. "Anglers, especially bank anglers, are doing very well given the river conditions," he said. "With the high water, the sockeye are hugging the shore where bank anglers can get to them."

Anglers should note that gear restrictions take effect on portions of the Skagit River beginning July 5. For more information, check the [emergency fishing rule change](#).

Meanwhile, the **Baker Lake sockeye fishery** gets under way July 1. The daily limit at Baker is three sockeye salmon. Barkdull said the fishery will likely start slow, but should pick up later in the month. "I wouldn't really expect there to be significant numbers of fish in the lake until mid-to-late July," he said.

Anglers can check the number of sockeye released into the lake on [WDFW's website](#).

Trout fishing also is open at several of the region's rivers and streams. Under the statewide rule for trout, there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches in rivers and streams. However, some of the region's rivers and streams have a rule requiring trout to be at least 14 inches in length to keep. For details on river fishing opportunities, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

Lake fishing for **bass, bluegill, perch, and crappie** is steadily improving as water temperatures increase and fish become more active. "Early summer can be a tricky time for anglers, given the abundance of natural food and unstable weather patterns," said Danny Garrett, WDFW fisheries biologist. "As we move into summer and temperatures rise, fish tend to feed in shallow water – about 2 to 5 feet – early in the morning and late in the evening." When fishing for lunker bass, Garrett recommends topwater baits, such as buzzbaits, frogs, and poppers, and soft plastic twitch baits, including stick baits and flukes.

During the heat of the day, bass often move to deeper water near structures or other cover, Garrett said. In clear, deep lakes, such as Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish, anglers should focus on the outside edge of boat docks and along the weed line in 15 to 20 feet of water, he said, noting that a drop-shot technique with plastic bait is a good approach.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Summer salmon fishing is in full swing along the coast, where anglers have been reeling in bright chinook since mid-June.

"The chinook selective fishery got off to a quick start and anglers have continued to do well since," said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "I expect that will continue in July, when anglers should start finding more hatchery coho salmon as well."

Anglers fishing marine areas 1 and 2 can retain one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit. They must, however, release wild coho salmon.

On the north coast, the chinook selective fishery continues through June 30 in marine areas 3 and 4, where anglers have a daily limit of two salmon. Anglers are required to release wild chinook and all coho during the selective fishery.

Beginning July 1, the traditional recreational fishery for chinook and hatchery coho will get under way in marine areas 3 and 4. Anglers fishing marine areas 3 and 4 will have a daily limit of two salmon, but must release wild coho salmon.

Salmon fishing is open seven days a week, except in Marine Area 2 where fishing is open Sundays through Thursdays.

Halibut is still an option out on the coast. Marine Area 1 is open for halibut fishing Thursday through Saturday each week through July 14 or when the quota is reached, whichever occurs first. The fishery will reopen on Aug. 3 and continue three days a week (Friday-Sunday), until the remaining quota is taken, or Sept. 30, whichever occurs first.

In **Puget Sound**, salmon fishing seasons open July 1 in marine areas 5 (Sekiu), 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) and 12 (Hood Canal – south of Ayock Point), while salmon fisheries in marine areas 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 13 (South Puget Sound) are already under way.

Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound salmon manager, said salmon anglers fishing the inside portion of Marine Area 4 have done well, suggesting that fishing will get off to a good start in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. "Early indications look good," he said. "Anglers have done really well for chinook during the ocean selective fishery, and that could stretch into the Strait."

Farther south, fishing for hatchery chinook in Marine Area 11 has been good, Thiesfeld said. "Westport is getting all the attention, but the folks fishing the Tacoma area are doing pretty well," he said. "There are definitely some fish to be caught in Marine Area 11."

Thiesfeld reminds anglers fishing Hood Canal that chum and wild chinook must be released. Because salmon fishing rules vary depending on the marine area, anglers should check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) for all regulations.

Before heading out, anglers also can check [creel reports](#) for information on catch and effort in Puget Sound. Recreational fishery samplers with WDFW collect the information each week at fishing access sites throughout Puget Sound.

Meanwhile, the **crab fishery** gets under way July 1 in all but one marine area in Puget Sound. The exception is Marine Area 7, where the crab fishery opens July 15 in the area's southern portion (San Juan Islands/Bellingham) and Aug. 16 in the northern portion (Gulf of Georgia).

The crab fishery in all marine areas of Puget Sound will be open Thursday through Monday of each week. Crabbers should note, however, that the season gets under way with a two-day opening (July 1-2), and will be closed July 3-4 before re-opening on its regular weekly schedule Thursday, July 5.

Rich Childers, shellfish policy lead for WDFW, said state and tribal test fisheries indicate the crab population in Puget Sound remains abundant. "The test boats have done very well," Childers said. "I expect this summer's fishery to be similar to last year's, when crabbing was good throughout the entire season in most areas of Puget Sound."

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6¼ inches. Fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. Most marine areas will close the evening of Sept. 3 for a catch assessment. However, Marine Area 7 will remain open through Sept. 30.

Additional information on the crab fishery is available on [WDFW's crab fishing webpage](#). In freshwater, a few rivers are open for **salmon** fishing, including the Hoh, Quillayute and the Sol Duc. Beginning July 1, a few other rivers open for salmon fishing, including the Bogachiel, Calawah and Nisqually.

Trout fishing also is open at several of the region's rivers and streams. Under the statewide rule for trout, there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches in rivers and streams. However, some of the region's rivers and streams have a rule requiring trout to be at least 14 inches in length to keep. For details on river fishing opportunities, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

Southwest Washington

Anglers who fish the lower Columbia River are gearing up for hatchery steelhead now that most salmon-fishing opportunities are moving upstream. Steelhead fishing is expected to heat up in the weeks ahead after the summer salmon fishery below Bonneville Dam closes at the end of the day July 1.

Approximately 364,000 upriver steelhead are expected to enter the Columbia this year, along with thousands more bound for lower-river tributaries, said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Those fish, bound for the upper Columbia and Snake rivers, tend to run four to eight pounds apiece.

"This year's return is expected to be about the same as last year's," Hymer said. "Steelhead tend to run close to shore, so bank anglers will likely have the advantage in the weeks ahead, especially with the river running high and cold."

Anglers fishing downriver from Bonneville can take up to two hatchery steelhead per day as part of their six-fish catch limit, which can also include hatchery jack chinook salmon. All wild fish with an intact adipose fin must be released.

Hymer said fishery managers had hoped to extend the salmon fishery beyond July 1, but bumped into two obstacles. On one hand, only about 54,000 summer chinook returned this year, compared to the pre-season projection of 91,200. That reduced the allowable catch, although anglers fishing the lower river are still expected to take home 2,850 adult hatchery summer chinook by the end of the season.

On the other hand, anglers caught 4,000 sockeye this year, shattering last year's record of 1,300 fish and pushing up against the impact guideline for the lower river. "Those fish were a welcome addition to this year's fishery," Hymer said.

Anglers gearing up for hatchery steelhead should consider fishing area tributaries as well as the mainstem Columbia River, he said. As Hymer sees it, the best bet is probably the Cowlitz River, where fish start arriving in larger numbers early in the month.

Other options include the Lewis (North and East forks), Kalama, Washougal, South Fork Toutle, Green, and Elochoman rivers. Anglers should check the [Fishing in Washington](#) rule pamphlet for regulations specific to those rivers.

Above Bonneville Dam, fishing seasons remain open for adult hatchery chinook and sockeye salmon, as well as hatchery steelhead. For adult fish, the daily limit remains two salmon, two steelhead, or one of each.

Anglers might also want to try fishing Drano Lake, the lower Wind River or the White Salmon River, where salmon and steelhead have historically dipped in to beat the heat. Just how many enter the White Salmon remains a question, however, since the process of removing Condit Dam filled the mouth of the river with sediment.

"All three of those waters are open for fishing, and we encourage anglers to give them a try," Hymer said. "We planted the White Salmon with hatchery steelhead, and we're very interested to see how anglers do in those waters."

Rather catch a **sturgeon**? Fishing remains open in The Dalles Pool seven days a week, with a daily limit of one fish measuring 43-54 inches (fork length). From Marker 82 approximately 9 miles below Bonneville Dam down to the Wauna powerlines, anglers can retain sturgeon measuring 38- 54 inches (fork length) Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays through July. After a strong finish, the sturgeon fishery in the estuary below Wauna is set to close at the end of the day July 4, four days earlier than previously scheduled. That area will remain open to catch-and-release fishing.

"Catch rates improved significantly in recent weeks, which cut the fishery short by a few days, said Cindy Le Fleur, WDFW's Columbia River policy manager. "Our goal was to keep the estuary fishery open to anglers through the Fourth of July, and we hit that mark." As the snow recedes, trout fishing is gearing up in the region's many high lakes. Access to these lakes will improve quickly as the weather continues to heat up, said John Weinheimer, another WDFW fish biologist.

Goose Lake, a forest lake in Skamania County, was recently planted with thousands of good-sized brown and cutthroat trout, Weinheimer said. Meanwhile, kokanee fishing is still going strong at Merwin Reservoir and fishing for rainbows has been good at Swift Reservoir. Riffe Reservoir on the Cowlitz River has also been good for landlocked coho.

Bass, walleye, and tiger musky fishing are in full swing, too, Weinheimer said. For bass and walleye, head to the Columbia River. Tiger musky are biting in the Merwin and Mayfield reservoirs.

Eastern Washington

As water temperatures warm, fishing success shifts from coldwater trout to warmwater or "spiny ray" species like bass and bluegill.

"These fish are just more active in warmer water and are easier to catch," said Marc Divens, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) warmwater fish biologist in Spokane. "There are some waters in the region that are specifically managed for warmwater species and others that are mixed waters, where trout fishing slows at this time and warmwater fishing picks up."

With a "slot limit" on largemouth bass, Divens encourages anglers to keep and use the smaller fish caught. As explained under the statewide freshwater rules on page 17 of the fishing rules pamphlet, only largemouth bass less than 12 inches may be retained, except that one over 17 inches may be kept. Up to five largemouth bass may be kept each day.

Smallmouth bass also have a size restriction – only one over 14 inches may be retained – with a daily limit of 10 fish. As with largemouth, anglers are encouraged to keep smaller bass. Overpopulation of these species can reduce the quality of fisheries.

Eloika Lake, seven miles north of Chattaroy off Highway 2 in north Spokane County, has **largemouth bass, yellow perch** and **black crappie**. Eloika is open to fishing year-round and has a resort and a recently refurbished WDFW access site

Downs Lake, seven miles east of Sprague in southwest Spokane County, also has largemouth bass, yellow perch and black crappie. Downs Lake is managed under a nine-inch minimum size and 10-fish limit on crappie. Downs is open March through September and has a resort with a small boat launch.

Silver Lake, one mile east of the town of Medical Lake in Spokane County, has largemouth bass, black crappie, **bluegill**, and **pumpkinseed sunfish**. There's a nine-inch minimum size and 10-fish limit on crappie there as well. Silver is open year-round and has both a resort and WDFW access.

Newman Lake, 12 miles northeast of Spokane in eastern Spokane County, has a variety of species, including largemouth and **smallmouth bass**, bluegill, black crappie, yellow perch, and **bullhead catfish**. Newman Lake also offers the opportunity to fish for tiger musky (a sterile hybrid northern pike/muskellunge cross). Newman is open year-round and has two resorts, plus WDFW access.

Liberty Lake, about a mile from the Idaho border in eastern Spokane County, is a mixed species fishery where **rainbow** and **brown trout** rule at the outset of the season, from March through May, but the spiny rays come on through the summer. Liberty has virtually all of the warmwater species, including **walleye**, but both species of bass and yellow perch dominate. There's a WDFW boat launch available.

Sprague Lake, on the Lincoln-Adams county line, is a mixed-species water, where Divens says surveys show an abundant population of small largemouth bass. "There are a few up to five pounds but most are 10 to 12 inches," he said. "There's also a developing panfish population – bluegill and crappie – but in general they're still small and growing in size." Sprague is open year round and has two resorts and WDFW access.

Coffeepot Lake, 12 miles northeast of Odessa in Lincoln County, can be excellent for yellow perch, black crappie and largemouth bass, but it's under selective gear rules. That means only unscented artificial flies or lures with one single-point, barbless hook are allowed.

The Twin lakes, in the Lake Creek drainage upstream of Coffeepot, have largemouth bass, perch,

crappie, and other panfish. Upper Twin can be particularly good for bass. Both are open year-round and have Bureau of Land Management access.

Deer and Loon lakes in Stevens County generally shift at this time of year from trout to largemouth and smallmouth bass and other warmwater fish, especially at Deer Lake, 14 miles southeast of Chewelah. (Loon is a few miles further south, on the west side of Hwy. 395.) Early summer kokanee fishing at Loon Lake, primarily in the evenings, can also be very good. Both of these lakes are open through October and have WDFW access and resorts.

Lake Roosevelt **walleye** fishing in the upper portion of the reservoir (upriver from Kettle Falls) can be very productive during early July. There's a good population of smallmouth bass in the big Columbia River reservoir, too.

The Snake River in the south end of the region is also a good bet for smallmouth bass plus nice **channel catfish**.

Good **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** fishing can still be had these days, said John Whalen, WDFW regional fish program manager. Lowland trout lakes are better in very early morning or late evening hours. Trout lakes at higher elevation, mostly in the northeast district of the region, remain productive longer in the summer.

The Tucannon River impoundments in the south end of the region are still providing good fishing for rainbow trout, said Kari Dingman, WDFW Wooten Wildlife Area manager. The cool, rainy weather this spring has probably extended the life of those hatchery-stocked fisheries, although Dingman notes "it's finally starting to warm up and feel like summer."

From July through September, anglers making weekend outings of their fishing trips in forested areas of the region need to keep in mind that campfires are only allowed in approved fire pits within designated state, county, municipal or other campgrounds. That's under orders of the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the state's wildfire fighters who protect lands, including WDFW's. The use of gas and propane self-contained stoves and barbecues is allowed under the ban. For more information, see [DNR fire safety news](#).

Northcentral Washington

Based on the record numbers of **sockeye salmon** coming over Bonneville Dam and heading this way, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) fish biologists are expecting excellent fishing during the season that opens July 1 within the mainstem Columbia River and selected tributaries above Priest Rapids Dam.

In late June few summer Chinook and sockeye had made their way above Priest Rapids, but by mid-July biologists expect the fisheries to really kick in and provide good action. Check the status of incoming adult fish through the interagency interagency [Columbia River Data Access in Real Time \(DART\) website](#).

The daily limit is six chinook salmon, minimum size 12 inches. Up to three adult chinook may be retained, of which only one may be a wild adult. Anglers are also allowed to keep six sockeye salmon, minimum size 12 inches. All salmon with a colored floy (anchor) tag and/or tail (caudal) punch must be released as these fish are part of ongoing studies being conducted by the Yakama Nation, Colville Confederated Tribes and WDFW. Anglers may fish with two poles in areas open to salmon fishing, as long as they have purchased the Two-Pole Endorsement. All salmon fishing on the Columbia requires the Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement.

In addition, from Hwy 173 Bridge in Brewster to 400 feet below Chief Joseph Dam, anglers can

fish for and retain **trout** through August 15. Daily limit is 10 fish with a minimum size of 12 inches.

"The Methow River is currently running high," said Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist in Twisp. "Serious trout fishing is probably delayed until the first or second week of July."

Jateff reminds anglers the Methow and selected tributaries are only open for catch-and-release fishing under selective gear rules. Anglers will need to consult current regulations, since a number of tributaries are closed to all fishing. Any **bull trout** caught must be released unharmed and can't be taken out of the water.

Jateff suggests trying some smaller tributaries in the Methow area, such as Beaver Creek (Methow River tributary) and Boulder Creek (Chewuch River tributary). **Eastern brook trout** are the main species in both of these small streams and liberal catch limits are provided. In Beaver Creek, it's five brook trout per day, no minimum size, and in Boulder Creek, it's 10 brook trout per day, no minimum size.

"Trout production lakes to try are Alta, Wannacut, Pearrygin, Spectacle, and both Conconully reservoir and lake," Jateff said. "**Rainbow trout** are the main species in these waters and anglers can expect to catch fish in the 11- to 13-inch range, with larger carryover fish up to 15 inches. There are private resorts and/or state parks on most of these lakes, with boat launching facilities available."

Jateff says **yellow perch** anglers should try Patterson, Palmer, or Spectacle lakes for fish in the six- to 10-inch range. Palmer Lake also has a good population of **kokanee** in the 11- to 13-inch range; Patterson Lakes has kokanee in the 10- to 11-inch range.

Travis Maitland, WDFW Chelan District fish biologist, reports the Icicle River **spring chinook salmon** fishery, that opened June 2 and continues through July 31, has been consistently producing a few fish each day.

"We've seen the occasional 'hot day' when most everyone is getting them to bite," Maitland said. "As groups of salmon move out of the Wenatchee River into the Icicle, that action will continue. It seems to occur with water temperature and river discharge fluctuations, so it's a timing game, and not exact science."

Maitland also notes that although the Lake Chelan **kokanee** fishery has slowed down a bit from earlier in June, "anglers still continue to catch some of the nicest kokanee that Lake Chelan has offered in recent memory." Many of the fish have been in the 14- to 16-inch range and occasionally larger.

Chad Jackson, WDFW Columbia Basin district fish biologist, said warmwater fishing is finally heating up after a slow start to traditional summer weather. "The Basin's big three for good **walleye** and **largemouth** and **smallmouth bass** fishing are Moses Lake, Banks Lake, and Potholes Reservoir," Jackson said.

All three year-round-open waters also have varying populations of **bluegill**, **crappie** and **yellow perch** that can produce good catches through the summer. With late run-off this year, these big waterways are still at or near high pool, which has slowed normal shoreline or dockside action at some, like Potholes.

Evergreen Reservoir on the Quincy Wildlife Area in Grant County is another good July fishery in the Basin, with walleye, largemouth bass, bluegill and other species.

Lower Goose Lake, one of the Seep lakes south of Potholes Reservoir, has a good crappie and bluegill fishery. Lower Goose has a minimum size of nine inches and a daily catch limit of 10 for crappie. It also has a restriction that only five bluegill over six inches can be kept, although there is no daily limit.

Hutchinson and Shiner lakes, on the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge, which is seven miles north of Othello in Adams County, should be heating up this month for largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie and perch.

From July through September, anglers making weekend outings of their fishing trips in forested areas of the region need to keep in mind that campfires are only allowed in approved fire pits within designated state, county, municipal or other campgrounds.

That's under orders of the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the state's wildfire fighters who protect lands, including WDFW's. The use of gas and propane self-contained stoves and barbeques is allowed under the ban. For more information, see [DNR fire safety news](#).

Southcentral Washington

Area anglers have several good fishing opportunities in July, ranging from an extended spring chinook season on a portion of the Yakima River to newly stocked jumbo trout in three popular high-mountain lakes. On the Columbia River, the catch is running to walleye, shad and the occasional summer chinook salmon.

Citing the late arrival of this year's run, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) extended **spring chinook** fishing through July 31 on the 20-mile stretch of the Yakima River between the Interstate 82 Bridge in Union Gap to the Burlington Northern Railroad bridge 500 feet downstream from Roza Dam. The daily limit remains two hatchery chinook, with clipped adipose fins.

"Fishing has been very good for springers, especially in that stretch of the Yakima River," said Eric Anderson, a WDFW fish biologist in Yakima. "We expect to have hatchery fish available for harvest well into July."

Anderson noted that fishing is closed for steelhead, and that terminal gear in the spring chinook fishery is restricted to one single-point, barbless hook with a hook gap (from point to shank) of three-quarters of an inch or less. Bait and knotted nets are allowed in the section of the river open to salmon fishing.

For more information, see the [fishing rule](#) on the WDFW website.

On the Columbia River, most anglers fishing below McNary Dam have been focusing on **walleye** and **shad**. Anglers have also been picking up a few **summer chinook** below McNary Dam, but the action has been slow. Summer chinook and **sockeye** can be harvested in the Columbia River upstream to Priest Rapids Dam but only those chinook with a clipped adipose may be retained. For additional rules on the salmon fishery, see the 2012-13 [Fishing in Washington](#) pamphlet. A Columbia River Salmon/Steelhead endorsement is required to participate in salmon fisheries on both the Yakima and Columbia Rivers. A two-pole endorsement is also available for anglers fishing the open section of the Yakima River and for salmon fisheries opening in July above Priest Rapids Dam on the Columbia River.

Rather catch **sturgeon**? Anglers can catch and keep sturgeon measuring 43 to 54 inches (fork length) through July 31 in Lake Wallula (McNary Dam to Priest Rapids and Ice Harbor dams). Be aware, however, that sturgeon spawning sanctuary areas below each of those dams are closed to all sturgeon fishing. The sanctuary areas are described on Pages 75 and 81 of the fishing rule pamphlet.

Fishery managers are asking sturgeon anglers fishing in the Columbia and Snake river reservoirs above McNary Dam to watch for and return **special tags** found in some of the fish. The yellow plastic markers are shaped like a piece of spaghetti, and are attached to the base of the fish's dorsal fin.

"The tag program helps inform us of the abundance and distribution of white sturgeon above McNary Dam," said Olaf Langness, WDFW fish biologist. "We appreciate anglers' cooperation in this effort."

Fishery managers ask that anyone who encounters a tagged sturgeon remove and return the tag, along with information on the date and location of the catch and whether the fish was kept or released. Anglers who keep a tagged fish are asked to report the sturgeon's fork length, measured from the tip of its snout to the fork in its tail.

The tags and information should be mailed to the Sturgeon Tag Reward Program, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), 17330 SE. Evelyn St., Clackamas, OR 97015. Respondents who include their name, mailing address and telephone number will be sent a complimentary "Columbia Basin Sturgeon Conservationist" baseball cap.

Meanwhile, fishing for stocked **rainbow trout** is still going strong on lowland lakes near Yakima, Ellensburg and Cle Elum, said Anderson, the WDFW fish biologist based in Yakima. He especially likes the prospects at Clear and Dog Lakes in Yakima County and Easton Ponds and Cooper Lake in Kittitas County.

Anderson notes that WDFW is planting hundreds of 1.5-pound **jumbo** trout in three popular "drive to" high-mountain lakes the last week of June. Those lakes include Leech and Dog Lakes near White Pass, and Lost Lake near Snoqualmie Pass. Cooper Lake, in the upper Cle Elum River basin, also received a planting of 765 jumbos along with 8,160 catchable rainbows (11-13 inches) planted in mid-to-late June. All four "drive-to" mountain lakes should provide excellent trout fishing through the summer months and into the early fall.

"These lakes will provide some outstanding fishing opportunities for the Fourth of July weekend," Anderson said.

Mountain streams were still running high in late June, but fishing conditions should improve there and in high lakes through July, Anderson said. For **kokanee**, he recommends Bumping Lake, Rimrock Lake and Keechelus and Kachess reservoirs.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

It was great to hear from reader and one-time regular reporter **Cap'n Ken** who wrote this week, "**Story One:** Off to the big pond the other day, to fish primarily for bottom fish about one mile straight out from the Manzanita Beach. Our top secret spot was about 1 mile off the beaches of Manzanita itself. We started off letting the tides drag us with my engine off, pulling 10" Herring right on the bottom. That way, we picked up some bottom fish, some too small to keep yet still

retaining the bait. A couple of keeper Ling's grabbed the hook to start off the day. On about the 4th drift through, something pretty BIG hit Mark's rod. After a tussle a nice fat 25# Halibut came to the boat. My boat is kind of small in the aft portion but after getting the Halibut inside we put it to rest. This is a photo of Mark holding his prize...

"Story Two: Went out into Tillamook Bay last week. Decide to fish "The Jaws" so I went with my neighbors Terry & George. We started trolling off the bottom with herring about one-quarter mile inland from the Coast Guard Tower. We quickly had two rigs out while Ol' George was putting his rig together. Finally, George was ready. He dropped in, bounced the bottom and cranked her up about two turns. As he was walking back into the boat ***POW*** I was sure he was stuck on the bottom, a common occurrence with this crew! This time however, the "bottom" fought back. After a wind-blown, boat turning "around" when it shouldn't be, being really too near the rocks adventure, we netted a nice 23# Nook so we were at least not skunked, yet again. I have a REAL Street Sign at the end of my driveway that reads: "Skunked Again Drive." Boat worked great, catchin' was decent and the weather, except for the wind, cooperated nicely."

Thanks, Ken. Good fishing and keep in touch!

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com
Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com
Chris Vertopoulos: chrisv@pacifier.com
Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

USDA Information on the Deschutes & Ochoco National Forests:
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/centraloregon/home>

GOOD LUCK!