

The Guide's Forecast - volume 14 issue number 30

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 20<sup>th</sup> – July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Excellent steelhead reports are coming from the lower Columbia River. From Jim Crow Island, Puget Island and St. Helens on up to Bonneville dam, hatchery summer steelhead are being caught in viable numbers by beach and boat anglers alike. Along with the steelhead, the occasional chinook is hooked, but anglers must now release adult hatchery and wild chinook as well as any sockeye, until the river opens to retention August 1st below Tongue Pt.

The Columbia River Gorge is traditionally peaking for steelhead right now but flows are keeping hot action at bay. That should change as passage numbers ramp up but unlike the lower river, this fishery performs better in lower flows.

Salmon effort is near non-existent on the lower Willamette this late in the season. Bass fishing has been fair to excellent depending on the day. Steelhead counts at the falls have exceeded last season creating good prospects on the upper Willamette. Counts are dwindling with the level dropping and the water temperature rising.

With the water low and stable, the McKenzie is an excellent prospect for trout and summer steelhead this week.

The North Santiam has been dropping over the past week and the entire Santiam system is forecast to remain stable. There are plenty of steelhead available.

Fewer summer steelhead are being caught on the Clackamas as the weather has warmed, but early morning and late afternoon trips to the river still offer the opportunity for a hook-up or two.

A few summer steelhead are still available on the Sandy River, but pressure has dropped off dramatically.

**Northwest –** Coho fishing remains slow out of most northern ports, despite history indicating some peak activity should be taking place at this time. The best prospect remains out of the mouth of the Columbia where catches remain sporadic with both coho and chinook showing SW of the river mouth. Trade winds are curbing effort with little change in sight.

Nearshore halibut remains one of the better prospects with some quality fish coming out of Newport and Garibaldi recently. Ocean crabbing is picking up as well but many of the crab remain in a soft shelled state.

Catch and release sturgeon fishing in the lower Columbia River is great. With little effort and ample numbers of fish responding to fresh anchovies, action is likely to remain good until water temperatures warm to the upper 60's. Rich Riley of Rockaway Beach landed several fish in the keeper range just out of the East End Basin on Sunday.

Although recent rains have not done anything for river levels on the north coast, the cooler, unsettled weather may spur inland summer steelhead action on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Fish will remain spooky however so small baits and stealthy tactics remain the key.

North Coast estuaries and tidewater sections of most river systems should start producing

consistent catches of sea-run cutthroat trout. Trolled spinners and worms or plugs should take aggressive fish. Check local regulations before taking fish home.

**Southwest** – Charters out of central Oregon ports are planning albacore trips this week. Ocean crabbing has been excellent. Boats were kept at bay earlier in the week due to rough ocean conditions.

Recreational boats launching out of Newport are finding albacore between 25 and 30 miles out and picking up limits of Dungeness on the return to port.

Offshore conditions are forecast to be marginal this week. Check the most recent conditions before making the trip.

South coast beaches continue to be productive for pinkfin surf perch, often producing 15-fish limits.

Boats crossing the bar out of Reedsport are taking fair to good catches of chinook. Lower Umpqua fishing is tough with algae thick. The disappointing shad season is winding down. Smallmouth bass fishing is decent and improving on the South Umpqua.

ODFW fish counters ranked Coos Bay third on the south coast for ocean chinook catches. Crabbing in the bay is fair to good.

Only fair numbers of chinook are falling to trollers in the Rogue estuary. Despite a slow bite, a 44-pounder was landed over the past week. With water temperatures over 70 degrees in the lower Rogue, chinook will keg in the bay which will improve trolling prospects. Small pods of steelhead are moving through the lower river. Middle Rogue fishing is slow. Upper river fishing is worthwhile although most springers are wild, requiring release. Steelheading is good.

With well over 1,500 chinook landed, Brookings is the top port by far according to the ODFW. Launch early and stay on the troll for best results. Coho are also being landed but have been running 20 to one wild fish over hatchery keepers. A few chinook have been landed in the harbor. Offshore bottom fishing has been excellent.

**Eastern** – The lower Deschutes is in good summer condition thanks to a wet spring and is fishing well for reddsides despite often-scorching weather with caddis on the hatch.

Showers over the past weekend raised & roiled the Wallowa River. It is predicted to be fishable late this week. Chinook season closed July 15th.

Caddis are hatching periodically on the Crooked River. When the hatch is in progress, trout fishing is good.

**SW Washington** – Boat anglers on the Cowlitz are averaging better than a steelhead for every other boat. Bank anglers are catching a mix of chinook and steelhead although steelhead outnumber chinook about 2 to 1.

The Kalama, Washougal and Lewis are also fair summer steelhead prospects with most fisheries performing similar to last year.

District effort remains largely focused on the mainstem where good numbers of summer steelhead were taken last week for anglers using spin-n-glos tipped with coon shrimp. It's clearly

peak season for this fishery right now.

The Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries should take off for steelhead as Bonneville passage ramps up.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Steelhead is the best game in town, and it's pretty good. Although the gorge fishery has yet to reach its potential (we can thank high summer spill regime for that), the fishery below Portland is performing well for plunkers working the banks of the mainstem Columbia. Some of the best catch rates of the week took place in the Portland to Longview stretch where boaters almost tallied a fish per boat for summer steelhead. Although almost exactly half of the fish caught are wild, there are good numbers of hatchery fish available for take-home. Here are ODF&W's stats for the week, downstream of Bonneville Dam:

**Gorge Bank:**

Weekend checking showed one adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus three unclipped steelhead released for 15 salmonid bank anglers.

**Gorge Boats:**

Weekend checking showed two adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus 16 unclipped steelhead, four adult summer chinook, and one sockeye released for 11 boats (42 anglers).

**Troutdale Boats:**

Weekly checking showed four unclipped steelhead and one adult summer chinook released for 12 boats (28 anglers).

**Portland to Longview Bank:**

Weekend checking showed 10 adipose fin-clipped steelhead and two adipose fin-clipped jack chinook kept, plus 11 unclipped steelhead and two unclipped jack chinook released for 119 bank anglers.

**Portland to Longview Boats:**

Weekend checking showed 28 adipose fin-clipped steelhead and two adipose fin-clipped jack chinook kept, plus 29 unclipped steelhead, six adult summer chinook and one unclipped jack chinook released for 66 boats (164 anglers).

**Estuary Bank (Wauna Power Lines to Tongue Point):**

Weekly checking showed no catch for one bank angler.

**Estuary Boats (Wauna Power Lines to Tongue Point):**

Weekly checking showed no catch for one boat (three anglers).

The best catch rates were actually experienced in the Columbia River Gorge but the ratio of wild to hatchery was clearly weighted to the wild side. Although not the least uncommon, to be so weighted towards wild, certainly a bit of an anomaly.

Dam counts for steelhead continue to ramp up rapidly. Counts will continue to improve in the coming weeks although it appears that peak passage will be a bit later than it typically is, assuming the run size prediction is more accurate than the chinook returns for spring and summer fish. Fishery managers under-predicted sockeye however so let's give it some time.

Steelheaders are using the standard tactics, hot colored spin-n-glos tipped with shrimp, coon shrimp in most cases. Small sand shrimp can also be effective but may be harder to find a small

enough size. This is the standard these days, anything short of the standard, and it's likely you'll be out-fished by someone that went the extra mile.

Chinook and sockeye catches are beginning to ramp down, and that's a good thing as anglers aren't allowed to retain either of those species unless it's a fin-clipped jack chinook.

The other favorite fishery still lingering is sturgeon. Sturgeon action above Wauna is fair with a keeper coming from about every 6.5 boats. Action has much improved downstream in the estuary however, where catch and release action is nearly as good as it gets. I fished the estuary over the weekend scoring several fish on Saturday and fewer on Sunday but more action than I've seen all season. And the quality size of the fish was nearly unprecedented as well. We caught far more keeper-sized fish than sub-legals with a few oversize in the mix as well. There was no need for any other bait than anchovies as the fish responded very well to those. We targeted these sturgeon just out of the East End Mooring Basin, in about 25 feet of water. The fish were laden in there and it had been lasting for several days. By Sunday however, action died down a little bit and some sort of trash fish was taking a bunch of our bait before sturgeon could get a hold of it. The shallow water just above the bridge was producing good catches as well. With the water temperature nearly ideal and ample numbers of fish present, it's a quality fishery right now.

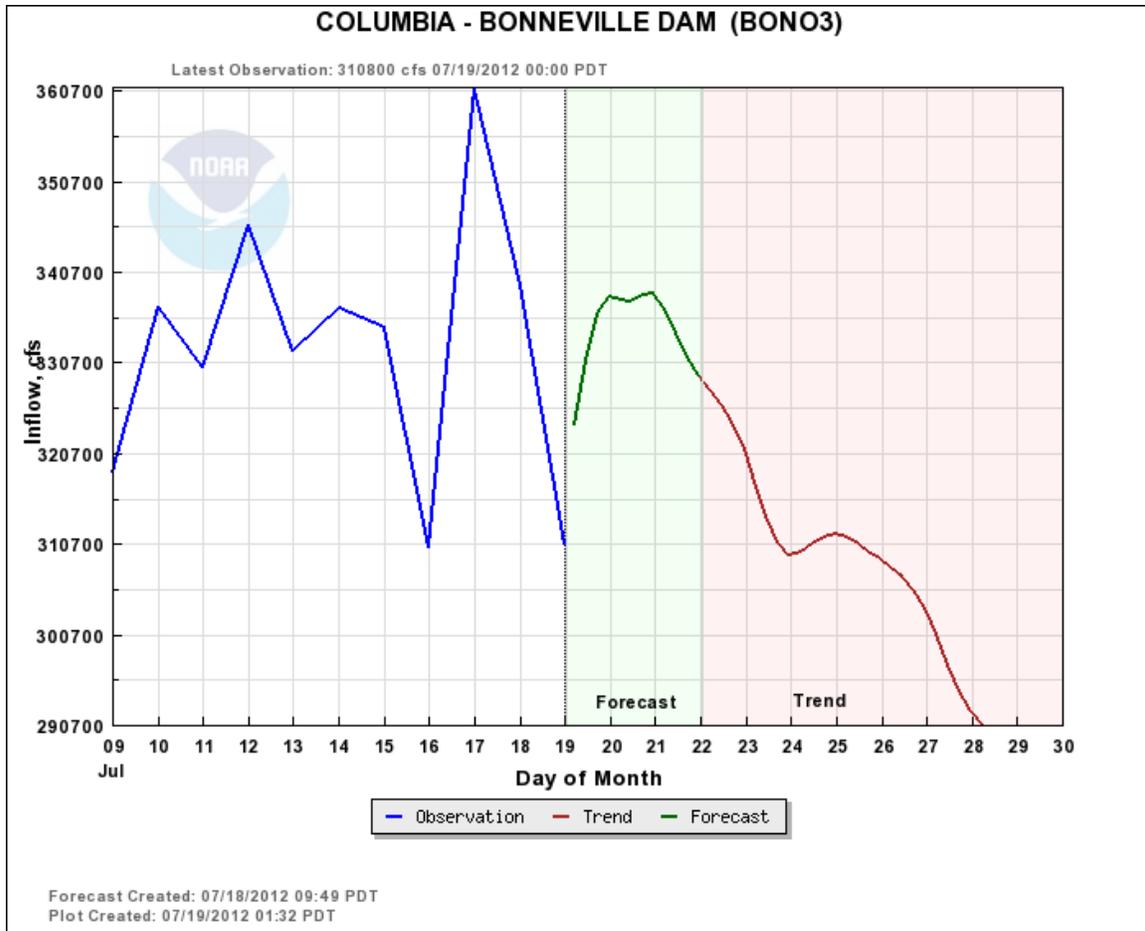
Off of the mouth of the Columbia, salmon action isn't all that great. Besides anglers having to deal with a large ocean swell and frequent wind waves in the afternoon, the bite is less than consistent for those trying to find some coho for the freezer. Early morning anglers are producing the best results but undersize chinook remain a nuisance for trollers working the ocean SW of the river mouth. The chinook bite we witnessed to the north well over a week ago has disappeared. Anglers should plan on hunting the water and hope for silver.

Offshore crabbing is improving although many of the crab remain in a softshell state. The lower Columbia remains inundated with fresh water so in-river crabbing is good, if you want to catch and release juveniles all day.

Bottomfishing was excellent for the few folks that tried it last week on the soft tide series. It seems that anchovies produced the best results on the sunken jetty. The ocean has been too rough to enjoy a trip lately.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Steelheaders should see some "as good as it gets" action this week, with the strong tides and peak run timing beginning to coincide with each other. Flows remain high and topping that with a strong minus tide series and good water temperatures, action should be great for plunkers, both bank and boat, that work red, orange or pink spin-n-glos close to shore this week. If you're not able to use coon shrimp for bait, you had better saturate your spin-n-glos with scent as you'll need to separate yourselves from the hundreds of other lures these fish have seen from anglers downstream of you.

Bonneville area fishing should continue to improve with flows finally expected to go under the 300,000 cfs mark by next week. This is certain to keep fish migrating close to shore where both bank anglers and boaters can easily target them. Spinners seem to work best in this environment and they will only become more effective as flows subside and temperatures rise.



Catch and release sturgeon fishing will likely remain good but the fish are likely to move from the previous hot spots from the week before. It's pretty likely however that the water between Tongue Point and the Astoria/Megler Bridge will remain consistently good. The stronger tide series will only bode well for better action this week. Although sand shrimp should still certainly be effective, baitfish such as anchovies should certainly remain effective and grow in popularity as the strong influx of freshwater begins to subside. There should be some fair fishing downstream of the bridge as well although crabs may be a factor as flows drop. It would be best to stick to shallower water when fishing downstream of the bridge.

Anglers will continue to fight a rough ocean with wind and waves only briefly predicted to subside in the coming days. Here is the offshore forecast for the area:

**FRI**

SW WIND 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT.

**FRI NIGHT**

W WIND 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

**SAT**

NW WIND 10 KT...RISING TO 10 TO 15 KT IN THE AFTERNOON.  
WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

**SAT NIGHT**

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT...VEERING TO N AFTER MIDNIGHT.  
WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

**SUN**

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT...WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT.  
NW SWELL 5 FT.

**MON**

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 6 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

If you do go salmon seeking, it's best to stick to the known, target coho from 175 to 225 feet of water south to SW of the weather buoy or CR buoy and once you find fish, try and stay on them. In other words, if you go through a patch of biters, be prepared to pick up your gear and run through them again, on the same GPS track that you just came through. Anchovies seem to be producing the best catches. There aren't a lot of hatchery coho that anglers should expect this season. An occasional chinook should also be in the catch.

Plan on a fair majority of your crab to be in a softshell state if you crab offshore and that may not change until later in the fall.

Doing any bottomfishing? New regulation change begins Saturday:

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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**For immediate release**

**Tuesday, July 17, 2012**

**Boat anglers may no longer retain cabezon**

NEWPORT – Beginning Saturday, July 21, sport anglers fishing from boats may not retain cabezon. Fishing for other bottomfish – such as most rockfish species, lingcod and greenling – remains open.

Landing data for the sport fishery indicates the ocean and estuary boat harvest cap of 15.8 metric tons for cabezon has been met. Sport boat anglers may continue to harvest other legal species, but may not retain cabezon.

Shore anglers, including shore-based divers, may still keep cabezon.

"Cabezon have an excellent survival rate when released," said Lynn Mattes, project leader for marine recreational groundfish fisheries for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. "Unlike rockfish, cabezon do not have swim bladders and therefore do not suffer from barotrauma (expansion or rupture of the swim bladder when the fish are brought up from deep waters) that can cause stress, injury, and sometimes death in rockfish."

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "Not much to report on the Willamette river, but salmon effort is near non-existent this late in the season. Bass fishing has been fair to excellent depending on the day and the anglers reporting, but by July most years this warm water fishery is in full swing."

With stories and photos of drought conditions throughout much of the United States on the front page of the Oregonian this week, it might be a good time to count our blessings for the above-average water conditions a wet spring provided all of us in the Pacific Northwest this year.

The water temperature at Willamette Falls has approached the mid-70s and the flow has dwindled to less than 10,000 cfs, fish passage has followed, dropping off sharply. There are nearly 35,000 springers upstream now. Summer steelhead counts greater than 23,000 is more than last year at this time. These fish are available in the upper Willamette and its tributaries.

While the water level at the McKenzie River was dropping up to about a week ago, it has been stable since, creating excellent summer fishing conditions.

As of July 16th, nearly 4,500 spring Chinook had been counted at Foster Dam with fish passage remaining strong. About 5,000 summer steelhead were also counted as of that date with many of those recycled downstream to Wiley, Pleasant Valley and Waterloo.

Breitenbush River, Carmen Reservoir, Detroit Reservoir, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Salmon Creek, North Fork Santiam River above Detroit, Estacada Lake and Harriet Lake are scheduled for trout planting.

**The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts,** "Small mouth bass fishing should remain good on the Willamette river. Structure like pilings, rip-rap, wing jetties and around snags are where you will find fish. Crank baits and plastics work well in the warmer months but spinner baits and buzz baits will take the occasional fish especially in the evenings or on overcast days."

Try the Willamette River between Dexter Dam and the mouth of the McKenzie River for steelhead. With decent numbers over the Falls, there are good populations in this stretch now and results have been rewarding. Summer steelhead in this stretch are good-sized, bright and willing.

Plan on using low water tactics on the McKenzie to be rewarded with broad-shouldered redds. Use stealth tactics and long leaders in these conditions. Fish are looking up and responding to dries but large nymphs are also effective at times. In warm weather, tennis-shoe wading is a relief from the heat. There are plenty of summer steelhead in the system but summer fishing requires patience and persistence. Being on the river at first light will tip the odds in your favor.

Try the South Santiam around Wiley Creek. A popular area, it's often a little crowded but when the bite is on it has been worth enjoying a little company. Spinners, plugs and backbounced eggs have been taking steelhead on the river this week. The North Santiam has good populations of steelhead and a fair number of springers in places. Fish early to avoid the non-fishing recreational crowd.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports,** "Fewer summer steelhead are being caught in the Clack as the weather has warmed, but early morning and late afternoon trips to the river still offer the opportunity for a hook-up or two. Occasionally an angler might also happen upon a late spring Chinook but consider their quality before retaining them.

"A few summer steelhead are still available on the Sandy river, but pressure has dropped off dramatically. Like the Clackamas, fishermen still stand a chance of hooking into a late spring chinook but they seem to be few and far between this late in the season."

**The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** predicts, "There will be summer steelhead available into September on the Clackamas. When water temps get into the 60's, look for holding water that offers plenty of oxygen. Riffles, boulder strewn runs and below creek mouths will hold more fish as it offers cooler water with a higher concentration of dissolved oxygen. Bobber/jig and small spinners in subdued colors will take fish over bright, gaudy patterns. Black, purple, blue and blood red would be appropriate jig colors while nickel, black and tarnished brass are spinner finishes to try.

"Same as the Clack, the Sandy will have summer steelhead into Sept and even October. Anglers who cover lots of water will have the best success of finding willing biters. Presentations that attract fish from a distance are most productive when water must be covered for any success. Spoons, but especially spinners are great as fish can see and hear them coming from quite a radius in the clear water conditions. Again, use smaller spinners like size 3 and 4 in subdued, less flashy color combinations. Take an all brass Blue Fox spinner and put it in a jar or cup covered with soil from your garden for 4-7 days. Rinse it off and you will have a dull bronzy finish that summer steelhead really go after in clear water. Bobber/jig and bobber/bait can work well in pocket water and boulder runs."

Sandy water conditions have been negatively affected this week by silty water from glaciers as well as from Cedar Creek, further complicated by construction at the hatchery. As of late Wednesday this week, the river was clearing and the water color was good. Barring further complications from thunderstorms today (07/19), try subtle offerings like jigs, drifted sand shrimp or a combination thereof. Bright, flashy lures will often spook fish in low, clear water. Expect results with summer steelhead that are fair at best and don't count on a spring Chinook encounter.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – It's a ghost town out there, not only for effort but also for fish. (Do you see a correlation?). Coho remain scarce out of most northern ports with Garibaldi consistently slow for offshore anglers. It's possible however that this could change in the near future as winds are once again expected to change to a NW influence, which should cool the waters down and improve fishing.

It's just been dismal out there although one boat reported fair catches for chinook and coho by coming in close to shore where there was a band of cooler water (less than 55 degrees) that salmon seemed to be hanging in.

As we mentioned in the Columbia River section, with the low abundance of coho expected back to these systems this year, anglers shouldn't expect much for action for hatchery fish right now. There doesn't even seem to be many wild coho around right now either however.

Freshwater prospects don't look all that great either. With waters continuing to drop and clear, fish are only getting more spooky in these conditions. Steelhead in the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers remain the best bet. Small baits and spinners may work best in the wee morning hours.

Nehalem Bay should begin to fish more effectively for chinook in the coming weeks. Returning adult summer chinook should be entering in greater numbers in the next several weeks. If history repeats itself from the previous year, action should improve in the next 2 weeks. The stronger tides may cause the better production to take place in the upper reaches of the estuary.

Bay crabbing is picking up with Tillamook, Nehalem and Netarts producing the best, in that order.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Anglers may have Friday and Saturday to target offshore coho and chinook but be aware of the afternoon winds. You may want to target your quarry to the NW of your home port so you can ride the trade winds back to port. Troll anchovies shallow to start with but do go deeper if you're not having consistent bites by mid-morning. Anglers still need to be aware of the fin-clip rule while fishing in the Tillamook Bay Bubble through the end of this month.

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Nearshore halibut may certainly be an option as this is getting to be the time of year when they become more active. Slow trolled herring from the mouth of Nehalem Bay is commonly effective this time of year.

Bottomfishers must be aware of the regulation change for cabezon:

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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Freshwater steelhead anglers need to fish early and late with small baits or lures in the broken-surfaced waters of the Wilson or Nestucca Rivers.

Deploying a lake troll for trout is likely to be productive for boats working the tidewater stretches of most north coast river systems.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – The forecast for offshore boaters this coming weekend has improved somewhat over the last couple of days. Be sure to get the latest conditions but as of Thursday this week, it looks good for bar crossings.

As of July 15th, only 776 ocean-caught hatchery coho had been taken from Cape Falcon to the California border. Since this is less than 10% of the 8,000-fish quota, it would appear this fishery will go the distance, closing on the last day of July. If the take is low at that time, perhaps the difference will be rolled into the non-selective coho fishery opening in September.

Chinook fishing has been fair to good offshore, depending on the port from which boats have launched (other factors aside). For instance, as of mid-July, 3,659 Chinook had been harvested, about 30% of which hit the cleaning tables at the Port of Brookings. Winchester Bay was next in productivity, followed by Charleston with Newport.

Warm water has moved within 10 miles of the beach and with it, tuna, at times. For the most part, it's been a much further trip, often 30 miles offshore, to find albacore. They'll be moving in closer to shore in the coming weeks. For those willing to make the long run, catches have been good for the most part.

Ocean crabbing has been producing consistent numbers and many limits for Dungeness that are in generally better condition than those one finds in bay or estuaries.

Cabezon may no longer be kept by boat anglers as of Saturday, July 21st. This despite the one-per-day restriction which biologists hoped would extend the fishery. Most other rockfish species, ling cod and greenling are not affected by this closure.

Surf perch fishing on beaches near river mouths and bay entrances has been yielding limits for many long-rodders casting bait into the waves. A few Chinook have been taken by trollers in the bay as well as the lower river below Reedsport but this early in the season, the fishery is really just an alternative when the bar is closed.

When conditions allow bar crossings, ocean Chinook fishing has been worthwhile out of Reedsport. A few Chinook have been taken near the Highway 101 Bridge and a couple were caught by casting off the rocks at Half Moon Bay. Crabbing has been excellent in Winchester Bay with some boats taking limits, albeit of marginal quality at this time of year. Perch fishing in the upper bay and lower Umpqua remains slow. Shad fishing on the mainstem Umpqua is all but over for the year. Steelheading has been fair on the North Umpqua where the occasional springer is being landed. With the waters of the South Umpqua dropping and warming, smallmouth bass fishing is improving although it's getting to be more of a challenge to hook the big ones.

Boats out of Charleston have been doing very well for albacore when offshore conditions have allowed trips. Trollers inside Coos Bay are picking up the occasional Chinook with effort increasing on days when the bar is closed. This fishery will be at its best in August. Crabbing in the bay has been worthwhile from boats, slower from the docks but about half of those taken are softshells.

With warm water in the lower Rogue continuing to confine Chinook to the estuary, trolling results will only improve through July and into August. The lower Rogue water temperature has topped 70 degrees which is good for bay fishing, not so much for lower river results. The middle river is producing a few summer steelhead and the occasional late springer but overall it's slow. Upper Rogue anglers are taking good numbers of hatchery summer steelhead. Fish with a hole punch in the gill plate have been recycled from the hatchery. Often the color is so good that's the only way to tell. While spring Chinook are still being hooked on the upper river and there is a bright fish landed occasionally, the majority of them are showing considerable color. Bucks will be in better condition for the table than hens of the same color. With stocking taking place weekly in the Rogue above Lost Greek Reservoir, catches of hatchery trout in the far upper river are good.

Boats have continued to return to Brookings, the top Oregon port for salmon catches, with decent numbers of Chinook whenever ocean conditions have allowed offshore launches this week. Catches of hatchery coho remain spotty. Good numbers of ling cod averaging 10 pounds are turning up at the cleaning station along with mostly limits of rockfish of varying hue.

The trout bite at Diamond Lake has been an on again, off again affair with bait fishers and trollers doing about equally well. The south end of the lake has been most productive. Boat fishers aren't subject to the problem but bank anglers should be prepared to repel mosquitoes.

Fish Lake and the Rogue River above Lost Creek are scheduled for trout stocking.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – With clear, warm weather forecast for the weekend, caddis will be hatching on the lower Deschutes and redsides will be responding to dries. Trout can just get stupid when these bugs are on the water particularly late in the evening. This is a good time of year to be on alert for rattlesnakes. The fish trap at Sherars Falls is usually installed in June and removed in November with data posted online for the months of July through October. This season there's been nothing, perhaps owing to the early closure of Chinook fishing. Then again, maybe it's just late getting started. We'll let readers know counts if and when they become available.

East Lake is fishing well and is producing some nice brown trout whenever the wind dies down, when has been infrequently of late.

Water conditions on the Wallowa River have been subject to thunderstorms which has created muddy condition periodically. While the level is a little high, it is forecast to remain stable with decent water conditions through the coming weekend. It is producing large trout when the visibility is decent.

Following a large planting of hatchery trout in Wallowa Lake on Monday this week, fishing has been fast and furious although kokanee fishing is not worthwhile.

Conditions on the Imnaha are conducive to floating the river from Minam to Troy. Bass fishing has been good low on the river.

The John Day River has been roiled periodically but thunderstorms but will produce good numbers of smallmouth bass and the occasional lunker at this time of year whenever the water clears.

Green Peter is producing good numbers of kokanee of mixed size to trollers using downriggers and hoochies at 50 to 60 foot depths.

Jigging is producing fair numbers of good-sized kokanee at Paulina.

Trollers at Timothy Lake are picking up very good numbers of very small kokanee.

### **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 barbeques 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**

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### **Random Links**

Daily outflow for Foster Dam:

<http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/report/fos.htm>

Daily outflow for Detroit dam:

<http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/report/det.htm>

Daily outflow for Big Cliff dam:

<http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/report/bcl.htm>

**GOOD LUCK!**