

The Guide's Forecast - volume 14 issue number 32

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **August 3rd – August 9th, 2012**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports,

"Steelhead continue to ascend the lower Columbia in good numbers but we have likely seen the peak of the run. Steelhead counts at Bonneville Dam have started to drop, but the fall chinook are right on their heels and have been showing up in the catch. Although the peak steelhead run might have passed, fishing this week should remain steady and by no means is it over. Anglers who alter their tactics and fish deeper water will continue to score with a mixed bag of steelhead and chinook."

Sturgeon fishing below the Skamania Island deadline has been average to slow, but effort has been light. Retention for sturgeon in this reach will close on August 1st, not to re-open until October 20th. The lower Marker 82 deadline will be in effect for another month.

Primary activities on the lower Willamette will consist of smallmouth bass fishing and wakeboarding.

Trout fishing has been fair on the McKenzie with caddis still the insect activity of interest to fly anglers.

Due to a change in the way water is fed to the North Santiam, temperatures are expected to improve fishing results here.

A few steelhead might be around on the Clackamas, but the low clear water makes for tough fishing.

A few straggler steelhead might be present on the Sandy in the stretch between the mouth of the Salmon river and Dodge Park.

Northwest – Ocean salmon south of Falcon closed with little attention as coho numbers were scarce throughout the season. Fishing did improve slightly indicating a northern migration towards the Columbia system is underway.

Most anglers fishing out of northern ports such as Garibaldi are targeting albacore. Ocean conditions have been exceptional, allowing boats easy access to ample numbers of the new favorite for saltwater anglers.

Crabbing makes a nice additional option to saltwater harvest although the bulk of the Dungeness remain in a soft-shell state.

The Nehalem is producing fair catches of chinook both inside the bay at Wheeler as well as near the estuary entrance. This fishery should only improve in the coming weeks although stronger tides will produce better results higher in the estuary.

North coast systems transition to fall salmon regulations where wild or hatchery chinook are open to retention. Check the ODF&W web site for more specific fall salmon regulations for both chinook and coho.

August can be the peak month for tidewater trolling for sea-run cutthroat trout.

Southwest – Recreational boats are catching albacore out of Newport and Depoe Bay whenever ocean conditions allow. With warm water and tuna moving closer to shore, charters are also making regular trips.

Bottom fishing has remained good off the central coast. Ocean crabbing is producing mostly limits although many are soft.

Coho catches slowed after anglers posted good catches (although few hatchery keepers) at the close of the fishery on July 31st. A non-selective (fin-clipped or not) coho fishery opens September 1st through 3rd and every Thursday, Friday, Saturday from September 6th through September 22 or a quota of 10,000 fish.

The summer all-depth halibut season opens from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain starting August 3rd and 4th, then every other Friday and Saturday through October 27th or a quota of approximately 53,000 pounds.

Chinook fishing has been fair to good out of Winchester Bay. Steelheading is fair on the North Umpqua while bass fishing is good on the South Umpqua.

Chinook catches have been good out of Charleston and tuna boats are taking good numbers at 25 or more miles out of port this week.

Bottom fishing out of Gold Beach has yielded limits whenever offshore conditions have allowed ocean access. Chinook are in the Rogue estuary in good number, which has resulted in improved catches. The lower Rogue has produced on the incoming tide. Fishing on the middle river is slow. Upper Rogue steelhead catches are good. Spring chinook may no longer be targeted above Dodge Bridge as of August 1st.

Large schools of baitfish in Brookings Harbor has created an alternative troll fishery inside the bay. Trolling anchovies will produce a few salmon and while not a hot fishery, it is a viable alternative when boats are unable to cross the bar.

Eastern – Redside fishing is fair on the lower Deschutes early and late in the day while steelheading is slow. Chinook fishing opened August 1st from the mouth at the I-84 bridge upstream to Sherars Falls. The warm water situation should improve as additional water releases are scheduled to start the 1st of August. Only a handful of fish have been counted at Sherars Falls since July 1st.

Walleye and smallmouth bass are providing good to excellent opportunity for anglers in the reservoirs above Bonneville Dam. Action may slow as water temperatures warm.

SW Washington – Most anglers remain focused on the mainstem Columbia for steelhead action and rightfully so. Deep water anchor anglers are still picking up good numbers of fish on plugs and the occasional spinner. Bank anglers can produce good numbers of steelhead on the upcoming strong tide series, especially if lures are tipped with coon shrimp.

Although the Cowlitz and Kalama are producing an occasional steelhead, the action will get much better later in August when salmon become another target. A fair return of chinook is forecast for many district systems.

The Drano Lake fishery is only producing moderate results. Steelhead numbers over Bonneville are fewer than anticipated for this time of the year. There may still be a sizable number coming

as flows and temperatures have varied wildly compared to most normal years.

Soapbox Update: It's time to register in the Buoy 10 Challenge. YOU COULD WIN \$1000.00 cold, hard CASH (once you cash the check that is....) Go to the NSIA homepage to enter NOW!
<http://www.nsiafishing.org/>

Columbia River Fishing Report – It was clear by the lack of anglers at the Buoy 10 opener that anticipation wasn't running high in Astoria on Wednesday. It's a good thing too because like most Buoy 10 openers, it was less than impressive.

Although I spent most of my time offshore on Wednesday, we did hit peak time at the mouth of Young's Bay in the early afternoon. It yielded no results as far as I could see. Talking to other trollers working the area, we all held up the "nuthin' here" signal; a clear indication that we were just practicing for better days ahead.

Anticipation was running high for me however, as ocean action for chinook was reportedly consistently good to the north of the mouth of the Columbia River. We were met with a stiff north wind however, that turned us back to the south, across the mouth of the river to friendlier seas on the south side of the river. Calm waters didn't prevail for too long as the NW wind soon picked up in the late morning on this side as well, making for a bumpy ride home about noon-time. Our grand total was 3 hatchery coho with few other boats posting better numbers. Reports of better fishing just the day before indicated that fair numbers of both chinook and coho were present south of Buoy 2. We found most of our action between 150 to 170 foot of water, trolling anchovies anywhere from 8 to 18 strips off of the reel. We didn't have any problem finding undersized chinook. It seems we may have a productive up and coming age class. Hopefully the Washington Beach to the north of the Columbia becomes an option in the near future. Watch out for submerged crab pots however. They are scattered all over up there!

Catch and release sturgeon fishing remains productive on the lower Columbia but you'd hardly know it; since no one is pursuing them. Action remains consistent where it has been for the last several weeks; just outside of the East End Mooring Basin, anywhere from 22 to 24 feet of water. Anchovies remain the top bait.

Although there is still a lot of water in the river, crabbing is picking up for the few doing it. One boat reported over 50 keepers last week while another reported less than 10.

Steelhead fishing is headed downward. Although fair numbers of fish are still migrating past the fish viewing window at Bonneville Dam, numbers are starting to dramatically taper as we begin to transition to fall chinook. Hopefully, this fall run won't disappoint like some of the other runs we were looking forward to this spring and summer. Bank anglers (and boaters) once again have opportune tides to work with for what will likely be the last hurrah for the summer run of steelhead on the mainstem Columbia. Of course you have to use coon shrimp with your spin-n-glos....as long as those spin-n-glos are "hot" in color. That would be the reds, oranges or pink shades of color.

The Guide's Forecast – Anglers will continue to look to the estuary for the first good hints of the summer salmon season to get underway in the Astoria area. Anticipation is running high as a large forecast is predicted but given the mis-predictions of the spring and summer run fish, managers and experienced run-watchers think this run too may also be over-predicted. Of course it's too early to be spouting off now.

Tides won't be too conducive to Young's Bay or mainstem Columbia fishing as they will occur later in the afternoon. By mid-week next week however, action is likely to pick up by then as the run is likely to get underway in pretty consistent numbers in the very near future. Water temperatures are warming so spinners and bait may produce equally productive results. It won't be an overly productive week on the lower Columbia however.

Offshore, many anglers still have tuna on the mind and that action remains good. Salmon are an easier reach however as most of us believe that they should be staging at the mouth of the river, readying their return to their natal grounds. If the ocean lays down in the near future, action on the north side of the river should get good again so be prepared for that. The only problem is, how can you be prepared for that when the weather looks like this:

FRI

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT...RISING TO 15 TO 20 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT.

FRI NIGHT

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT. PATCHY FOG.

SAT

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT...EASING TO 15 TO 20 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

SAT NIGHT

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

SUN

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 7 FT.

MON

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

Have I ever mentioned that wind waves are not your friend? Be sure to check the latest weather changes before venturing out and don't hesitate to turn back. You've heard me say it before, no salmon is worth your life...

If anglers do get a chance to get outside, chinooks should still be on the beach anywhere from 28 to 35 feet of water. Don't think you have to fish the bottom either. Most of the fish we've taken this year have fallen between 8 and 16 strips. Even the larger fish are feeding well off of the bottom of the ocean, no matter how deep you are. You'll get more bites if you head SW of the river mouth, between the Buoy 2 and the CR Buoy. We found most of our biters a but shallower on Wednesday, in 150 to 170 feet of water. Anchovies is the bait of choice on the south-side as well.

Ocean crabbing is fair with one boat reporting 20 keepers for 5 pots, crabbing south of the south jetty.

Catch and release sturgeon fishing should remain good this week. The best fishing however remains just outside of the East End Mooring Basin.

As for the middle-lower Columbia, **pro guide Chris Vertopoulos** reports, "Steelhead fishing the beaches remains a strong option and anglers should continue to score through the middle of the month. A few Chinook have been showing in the catch and expect that number to build as the we approach the bulk of the fall run. Reports from Bonneville have been strong but anglers have noticed a slight drop in the catch last week indicating the peak has passed. Also, the dam counts have begun to drop so that only strengthens the argument. Nonetheless, there are still good numbers of Steelhead passing through, so to try is far from futile. Either from a boat or from the bank, plunking a red, pink, purple or orange coon shrimp is the favorite offering. Above your coon shrimp, a spinning, flashing, floating attractor would be well advised. A size 10 or 12 Spin n Glow with some red on it or a couple of size 12 or 14 Lil corkies below a Martin tackle Thin Twin blade are two of the many options available that have accounted for their share of steelhead and Chinook. From Bonneville dam down to the mouth of the Sandy, smaller sized Colorado spinners in brass and red are also popular and will take both steelhead and Chinook. Red or orange Flatfish in the X-4, X-5 or U-20 sizes also are staples at the mouth of the Sandy, Lewis and Cowlitz. Most anglers are scoring in the 15-20 foot depths, but some anglers at Rainier and Goble are also doing well with lighted Brads Wigglers in depths up to 45 ft. The sturgeon fishing has been mediocre at best, but with such little effort it's hard to say what's really available."

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "Smallmouth bass fishing and wakeboarding here. One can only speculate but.... walleye fishing in the Multnomah channel should be good but the anglers who work this fishery remain tight lipped. Fisherman's Marine and Outdoor has reported a boost in walleye tackle sales and one should suspect that walleye are being caught here."

The McKenzie is at great level and flow for fishing as the wet spring we experienced here in Oregon is trumping summer weather. While most anglers are focusing on McKenzie reddsides, summers steelhead are available in fine number as the spring Chinook fishery winds down.

Water level and flow on the Santiams is excellent and the river is stable. Water temperatures are in the 50s which is conducive to decent results for fishing.

Trail Bridge Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Carmen Reservoir, McKenzie River below Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake and the North Santiam River above Detroit Lake are scheduled for trout stocking this week.

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "The summer months offer good bass and walleye fishing on the lower Willamette. Very good smallmouth fishing can be had along rocky shorelines where smallmouth tend to hang out. Plastics and diving crankbaits work well here but in backwater areas off the main channel, exciting top water action can happen in the evening time with spinner baits and top water minnows. For walleye, the Multnomah channel will offer the best action. Work the shelves above and below Rocky Point with bottom walkers and worm harnesses. A nightcrawler rigged with a green or chartreuse spinner blade is a known favorite of the few channel walleye anglers who have given up tid-bits of info. Troll upstream so as to troll as slow as possible, keeping your offering tight to the bottom. Expect to lose some gear as the channel is full of old logging gear, sunken trees, pilings and car bodies. Walleye over 10lbs are not uncommon here."

Throw dries on the McKenzie for a most rewarding summer fly fishing experience. Caddis patterns are a given at this time of year nut there are cream0colored mayflies in the mix as well. Resort to nymphing only if all the floating alternatives get snubbed although that hasn't been the cast over the past week or more. With hotter daytime temperatures forecast for the coming

weekend, a dry and a dropper may be the best option during daylight hours. Target summer steelhead with spinners or bobber and jig. Boaters should try plugs in tail-outs.

Steelhead populations are good and improving in the upper stretches of the North and South Santiam Rivers. Try spinners, drift bait or use the ubiquitous bobber and jig too intercept summers. Jigs should be small in clear water and black or very dark colors for summer fish.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "A few steelhead might be around on the Clack, but the low clear water on the makes for tough fishing. The inner tube is king here and steelhead fisherman are advised to fish early before the splash and giggle crowd shows up.

"Not much on the Sandy either, but a few straggler steelhead might be present in the stretch between the mouth of the Salmon river and Dodge park."

This Just In: ODFW closes upper Sandy River steelhead season

CLACKAMAS, Ore. — *The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has adopted temporary rules closing the upper reaches of the Sandy River to the harvest of summer steelhead through Aug. 31. The action applies to Sandy River upstream of its confluence with the Salmon River, and includes the Salmon River. Previously, under permanent rules the upper Sandy was open to retention of both wild and hatchery steelhead through the end of August*

"The closure is necessary to reduce unintended hooking mortality associated with catch and release of wild spring chinook incidentally caught by anglers targeting summer steelhead," said Todd Alsbury, ODFW district fish biologist. Sandy River wild chinook are protected under the federal Endangered Species Act. ODFW staff working temporary fish traps in the area recently observed large groups of spring chinook holding in pools due to extremely low water conditions that restrict upstream movement, according to Alsbury. He said anglers were beginning to target these areas simply due to the large number of fish, which are not likely to be summer steelhead. The area will remain closed to angling for steelhead or spring chinook after Aug. 31 under permanent rules.

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "If you have the desire to fish the Clack for the few available summer runs, go early before the rafters and tubers show up. A #3 brass or black nickel spinner would be a good bet, as would a 1/8th ounce black nightmare jig under a float. Fish the heads of the runs and behind every boulder.

"Very little fishing pressure on the Sandy, so there is little to report but it wouldn't be out of the question to find a steelhead or two below the mouth of the Salmon river. Look to the same water you would fish for winter steelhead. If the river remains silted from warm temps melting the glacier, fish bigger, brighter presentations to get their attention."

Despite the water level having dropped even further this week, the Sandy had good color on Wednesday this week. Despite this improvement, fishing was poor, even though it produced a few bright springers as recently as Sunday.

North Coast Fishing Report – With the ocean coho season ending with a dismal closure, there isn't much to report on until fall salmon start arriving in better numbers closer to the end of August along the north coast. The next coho opener won't require anglers to release wild fish,

which should dramatically increase anglers chances for taking home some salmon. That won't be until September however. Stay tuned.....

Chinook fishing on Nehalem Bay remains a strong option however. Anglers have been producing surprisingly good numbers in this fishery and it may only get better. Wheeler and Carrs Dock has been a consistent producer recently. Slow trolled herring near the bottom is the best you can do. The bar may be the better producer on the softer afternoon tide.

Local area river systems remain low with summer steelhead the best option right now. Spring chinook should be degrading fast.

Sea-run cutthroat trout should be peaking in most north coast tidewater sections right now. For those that forgot how to do it, use small pink and or white Rooster Tail spinners if you're shore fishing and troll Ford Fenders if you're trolling a worm from the boat.

The Guide's Forecast – Not much to look forward to offshore this week unless you're planning a tuna trip. The seas do look to be a tough go however:

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MON

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Don't bother targeting chinook in this district just yet. Unless you're fishing the lower Nehalem system (from the town of Nehalem to the jaws), you likely won't find much in the way of crowds here as this fishery faded in recent years.

Central & South Coast Reports – With the summer all-depth halibut season opening august 3rd and 4th, charters out of central coast ports are ready to accommodate the bootless masses. This fishery will continue every other Friday and Saturday through September 22nd or until 52,517 pounds are caught, according to the latest revised quota.

Albacore are getting plenty of attention from recreational and charter craft. Boats are traveling about 25 miles out to find tuna, at which time they will often take all they can accommodate. Occasionally, tuna hookups have occurred less than 20 miles out. Boats launching out of Newport

this found 60-degree water offshore and hooked tuna two, three and four at a time. Charter customers have been returning to port with from three to eight fish each.

Crabbing has been decent out of Newport inside Yaquina Bay with some boats returning with limits. Dock crabbing is slower but yielding fair catches.

South coast beaches have continued to produce good catches of surf perch with many anglers limiting out. When the bite is good (as it often is on the last two hours of incoming tide) plastic Berkeley Gulp baits have been all that is required.

Swells are forecast to increase starting late Friday and continue a through the weekend. Launches may be possible but be certain to check last-minute data.

There is still lots of tsunami debris being spotted by offshore boats. The NOAA would appreciate notification of debris sightings by Email at DisasterDebris@noaa.gov

On August 3rd, the ODFW will propose at a Salem meeting to increase the daily limit on smallmouth bass on the Umpqua River from ten to 15 per day. Attend the meeting to comment or send an Email to Rhine.T.Mesmer@state.or.us,

Boats launching out of Reedsport have been catching fair to good numbers of Chinook offshore. Winchester Bay crabbing is good as are catches from the jetties, except for surf perch which never really got rolling this year and is now, for all purposes, over. Some Chinook have been caught in the bay at the bar and while there have been a few coho caught, almost none of these have been hatchery keepers. As more Chinook enter Winchester Bay, they will start to enter the Umpqua mainstem and this fishery should begin to produce during the month of August. North Umpqua steelheaders are taking summer steelhead although fishing is only fair. Smallmouth bass fishing has been good on the upper mainstem and South Umpqua.

Trollers are taking a few Chinook inside Coos Bay with best results at the jaw but caution is advised as fishing this area is tricky and best suited to experienced boaters. Crabbing in the bay is good although sorting is required to cull out softshells. For those anticipating a camping trip to the Coos Bay area, be aware that showers at Horsefall Beach will be inoperative through mid-August due to a flawed design in waste water disposal.

Despite water temperatures generally above what might be the comfort zone for salmon, Chinook are making their way upriver on flood tides where lower river anglers are catching them in modest number. Half-pounders should start showing up in a couple of weeks and, unless it's a low run as it was last season, should offer worthwhile results a few weeks after that. Steelheading has improved on the middle river with a good early return early summers responding to baits and lures. The ODFW reports good catches on black-bodied, gold or brass-bladed spinners. A few Chinook have been taken but catch rates are low. With the second-best summer steelhead return in over a decade occurring at Coles River hatchery, catches are reflecting the good numbers of fish on the upper Rogue. Plug-pullers and spinner flingers are taking fish. Chinook season is closed above the old Gold Ray Dam site.

Boats launching out of the Port of Brookings have been doing well for Chinook offshore, often finding success only a couple of miles out. Trolling anchovies inside the harbor has been fair but consistent and is expected to improve through August as Chinook numbers increase.

Diamond Lake is providing decent mid-summer trout fishing but only once the fish are located. The west side of the lake has been most productive recently with trout averaging well over a foot and the occasional 20 incher to brighten the day. Bait fishing remains the best option.

An blue-green algae alert has been issued for Dorena Reservoir. Avoid swimming or any other contact with the water and keep pets from drinking it. See **Random Links**, below, for additional information on blue algae advisories.

The Rogue above Lost Creek is scheduled for trout stocking this week.

Central and Eastern Oregon – The lower Deschutes is open for fall Chinook fishing now and while numbers are still relatively low, the population will increase through August. Patient fly anglers are enjoying satisfying days on the lower Deschutes. Hooking a trout by taking the time to float a fly properly over reddsides which have seen their share of offerings is a rewarding summertime experience. Caddis hatches have been best on still days following a stretch of consistent weather. with steelhead making an appearance, a few are being caught on the far lower river. The cool waters of the middle Deschutes have been productive for nymph fishers.

The Crooked River has been a consistent producer for fly anglers throwing mayfly nymphs. Results should remain solid through August.

Fishing at Green Peter has been slow to fair for mostly small kokanee.

East Lake kokanee fishing is fair to good for trollers although some fish are starting lose scales already.

Kokanee catches slowed at Wickiup over the past weekend.

Results for kokanee have been fair at Timothy Lake for those fishing evenings.

Bass fishing has been good for fly anglers, particularly at the north end with best results early and late in the day.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for August 2012

North Puget Sound

Anglers are reeling in chinook in Puget Sound, where crabbing is still an option and two additional marine areas open for salmon Aug. 1. Others are also having some success at Baker Lake, which opened for **sockeye salmon** July 1 and remains open through Sept 4.

Anglers fishing Baker Lake can retain up to three adult sockeye that exceed 18 inches in length from the log boom barrier at Baker Dam upstream to the mouth of the upper Baker River. In a recent rule modification, each angler aboard a vessel may continue to deploy angling gear until the daily limit of sockeye has been retained for all licensed and juvenile anglers onboard. See the [rule change](#) for details. All other salmon, as well as bull trout, must be released.

“I expect that fishing will only get better, as more sockeye are put into the lake,” said Brett Barkdull, fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). “The fish are biters — once you find them, get your gear at the right depth to catch them.”

Barkdull reminds anglers to check for any [rule changes](#) on WDFW’s website. Anglers also can check the number of sockeye released into the lake on [WDFW’s website](#).

Meanwhile, the Skagit River, from the mouth to the mouth of Gilligan Creek, opens Sept. 1. The Skagit from the mouth of Gilligan Creek to the Dalles Bridge at Concrete opens for salmon fishing Sept. 16. Anglers fishing those sections have a two-salmon daily limit, all chinook and chum must be released.

Beginning Aug. 16, **Lake Sammamish** will also be an option for freshwater salmon anglers, who will have a daily limit of four salmon, and can retain up to two **chinook**. All sockeye must be released, and fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek.

On marine waters, "August is prime time for chinook in Puget Sound," says Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound salmon manager for WDFW.

"It's a chinook show now in marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands), 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton)," he said.

Those fishing Marine Area 7 can keep one chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit. They must, however, release wild coho and chum starting Aug. 1.

Anglers fishing marine areas 9 and 10 can keep hatchery chinook – marked with a clipped adipose fin – as part of a two-salmon daily limit. Wild chinook and chum must be released. August brings other opportunities to catch and keep salmon. Beginning Aug. 1, marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) open for salmon fishing. Anglers in those two areas have a daily limit of two salmon, but must release chinook. Check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) for details on current salmon fishing opportunities.

Prefer shellfish? The **Puget Sound crab fishery** is under way in most marine areas. The exception is the northern portion (Gulf of Georgia) of Marine Area 7, which opens for crab Aug. 16. In other Puget Sound marine areas, crabbing is open Thursday through Monday of each week.

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 also may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across.

Information on crabbing rules, including how to properly record and report catch information is available on [WDFW's crab fishing webpage](#). The page includes links to a printable "Crabbing in Puget Sound" brochure and a "Puget Sound Recreational Crab Guide," both of which have information on crabbing regulations.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Salmon fishing is king in the region, where anglers are hooking bright fish along the coast and in the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

On the coast, the daily catch limit is two salmon for all areas of the ocean fishery. Anglers fishing in marine areas 1 (Ilwaco), 2 (Westport) and 4 (Neah Bay) can retain one chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit. Those fishing in Marine Area 3 (LaPush) can retain two chinook per day. In all four marine areas, anglers must release wild coho salmon.

"Overall, salmon anglers have done well this summer," said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "I expect fishing to get even better in August, when more chinook and coho make their way along the coast toward the Columbia River."

Salmon fishing remains open seven days a week in all four marine areas. However, fisheries in those areas could close early if catch quotas are reached, said Milward. Anglers should check for any [rule changes](#) at WDFW's website.

Anglers are reminded that regulations in Marine Area 4, east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line, change beginning Aug. 1. Anglers fishing that area will have a daily limit of two salmon, but they must release chinook, chum and wild coho.

Meanwhile, salmon fisheries are under way in marine areas 5 (Sekiu), 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 11 (Tacoma/Vashon), the southern portion of 12 (Hood Canal) and 13 (South Puget Sound).

A lot of anglers focus on fishing the Strait of Juan de Fuca and northern Puget Sound this time of year, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW's Puget Sound salmon manager. "But don't count out south Puget Sound, where we are expecting a return of more than 60,000 salmon this year," he said. "The fish should be there, it's just a matter of putting some time in on the water and figuring out the fishery."

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.

Because salmon fishing rules vary depending on the marine area, anglers should check the [Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet](#) for more information.

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Additional information on the crab fishery is available on [WDFW's crab fishing webpage](#).

Halibut fishing is also still an option. The late season for halibut in Marine Area 1 opens Aug. 3. The fishery there will be open three days per week (Friday through Sunday) until the quota is taken or Sept. 30, whichever occurs first.

In freshwater, the recreational salmon fishery on the **Skokomish River** will get under way Aug. 10 from the mouth upstream to the Highway 101 Bridge. The daily bag limit on the Skokomish will be two salmon. Anglers must carefully release any chum and wild chinook salmon they catch. Anglers will be required to release any salmon not hooked inside the mouth, and retain the first two legal salmon they catch and stop fishing. In addition, single-point barbless hooks are required and a night closure and anti-snagging rule will be in effect.

The Skokomish River from the Highway 106 Bridge upstream to the Highway 101 Bridge will be closed to recreational fishing Monday through Thursday of each week, except Monday Sept. 3. The weekly closures on a portion of the Skokomish River are necessary to avoid potential gear conflicts with treaty tribal fishers, as well as limit impacts to wild chinook salmon, expected to return in low numbers this year.

Recreational fishing downstream of the Highway 106 Bridge will remain open seven days a week through Sept. 5.

Several other rivers are open for **salmon** fishing elsewhere in the region, including the Bogachiel, Calawah, Hoh, Nisqually, Quillayute and the Sol Duc.

Beginning Aug. 1, the Puyallup River, from the City of Puyallup outfall structure across the river from the junction of Freeman Road and North Levee Road to the Carbon River, also opens for salmon fishing. The lower section of the Puyallup, from the 11th Street Bridge to the City of Puyallup outfall structure, opens to salmon fishing Aug. 16. Anglers should be aware that the lower section of the river is closed Aug. 26 and Sept. 2, 3, 9, 10 and 11.

For more information on the Puyallup River regulations, as well as rules for other fisheries open in August, check the [Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet](#).

Southwest Washington

This year's **fall chinook** fishery opens Aug. 1 on the Columbia River, where a strong run of upriver brights is expected to exceed both the 10-year average and last year's return. Of the 655,000 "falls" included in the pre-season forecast, about 350,000 are projected to be upriver brights – the fourth largest return since record keeping began in 1964.

Those fish, along with **hatchery coho** and **summer steelhead**, should make August a great time to fish the lower Columbia River, said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"We're definitely expecting a big angler turnout for these fisheries," Hymer said. "The fall chinook fishery usually starts slow, then accelerates quickly through the month of August. The great thing about upriver brights is they tend to keep biting as they move upriver."

Although the opener for the fall chinook will extend upriver as far as Priest Rapids Dam, most of the action during the first few weeks focuses on the popular **Buoy 10 fishery** in the lower 16 miles of the river. Fishery managers estimate that anglers will catch nearly 14,000 chinook salmon by Labor Day, after which the retention fishery for chinook in the Buoy 10 area will close for the remainder of September. Anglers are also expected to catch 8,000 coho in that area by the time that fishery closes at the end of the year.

The daily limit for the Buoy 10 fishery is two salmon, two hatchery steelhead, or one of each. But, through Sept. 3, only one of those salmon may be a chinook. In addition, only those steelhead and coho marked with a missing adipose fin and a healed scar may be retained. This requirement does not apply to fall chinook on the mainstem lower Columbia River, where chinook salmon may be retained whether or not they are marked.

Additional rules for the Buoy 10 area and waters farther upriver are described in WDFW's [Fishing in Washington](#) pamphlet. Bank anglers planning to fish near the mouth of the Columbia River should be aware they will need to purchase a Discover Pass to park on State Parks property near the North Jetty. The vehicle access pass anglers receive with their fishing license only substitutes for a Discover Pass on WDFW lands.

By mid-to-late August, the bulk of the chinook run usually begins to move upstream with increasing numbers of coho moving in behind them. For anglers following upriver brights upstream, Hymer recommends fishing deep, between 40 and 50 feet down. For a lure, he suggests wobblers anchored with a heavy weight.

"Chinook go deep when water temperatures are high, so that's a good place to find them," Hymer said. "At the same time, anglers should take care not to drop anchor in the shipping channel. That can lead to real trouble."

While 2012 is not expected to be a banner year for hatchery coho, those fish will help to round out anglers' daily limits. WDFW currently expects about 240,000 coho to return this year – slightly lower than the past couple years and down significantly from the exceptionally large run of three-quarters of a million fish in 2009. Hymer said coho salmon usually bite best at Buoy 10 on herring and spinners, and later on bait and lures in the tributaries.

Meanwhile, plenty of **hatchery steelhead** are still available for harvest, said Hymer, noting that the smaller "A-run" fish should keep biting through mid-August. By then, the larger "B-run" steelhead – many weighing in the teens – will start arriving to pick up the slack. Together, returns of both runs are expected to total about 365,000 fish, about the same size of last year's total run.

The procession of fall chinook, coho and hatchery steelhead, should also provide good fishing on area tributaries for months to come, Hymer said. Like the mainstem Columbia River, most tributaries open for fall chinook Aug. 1, although those fisheries usually don't take off until September. For steelhead, Drano Lake and the Wind River are good places to cast for migrating fish dipping into cooler waters.

The White Salmon River has historically been another productive dip-in fishery, but how the fish will respond after Condit Dam was breached last fall remains to be seen. That issue is part of a study funded by Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement fees, but fishery managers reported a good sign in late July: Both salmon and steelhead were observed in the river above where the dam used to be.

Like last year, anglers will be allowed to retain up to six adult hatchery coho on all tributaries to the lower Columbia River with hatchery programs. Those rivers include the Cowlitz, Deep, Elochoman, Grays (including West Fork), Kalama, Klickitat, Lewis (including North Fork), Toutle (including Green and North Fork) and Washougal.

Unlike the mainstem Columbia River, chinook retention is limited to marked hatchery fish on those river systems, except on the Klickitat and Deep rivers where unmarked chinook can also be retained. Mark-selective fisheries also will be in effect on the Wind and White Salmon rivers.

New for 2012, any fall chinook and coho may be retained at Drano Lake beginning Aug. 1 and any chinook on the North Fork Lewis River beginning in mid-September. Anglers are advised to check the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet and any [emergency rules](#) applicable to specific waters before leaving home.

Of course, salmon and steelhead aren't the only fish available for harvest in August. **Walleye** fishing can be good in the Columbia River near Camas, as well as in The Dalles and John Day Pools. **Bass** fishing is also heating up from Bonneville Dam to McNary Dam. Anglers can also retain sturgeon measuring 43 to 54 inches in The Dalles Pool on a daily basis through Aug. 4, then Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays until further notice.

Hankering for **trout**? WDFW crews will plant 2,000 catchable cutthroat in Goose Lake just before the calendar flips to August. The timing of that plant, which normally occurs in fall, has been sped up this year due to a water-intake project at Skamania Hatchery.

On the Cowlitz system, Mayfield Lake will be planted with 65,000 catchable size rainbows, Lake Scanewa (Cowlitz Falls Reservoir) with 20,000, Skate Creek with 18,750 and the Tilton River with 18,750 by the end of August. Hatchery sea-run cutthroats should also provide some opportunity on the lower Cowlitz beginning in late August.

At the same time, the high wilderness lakes around Mount Adams and Mount St. Helens offer unparalleled fishing experiences for those willing to brave the mosquitoes. Riffe Lake in Lewis County is still giving up some nice landlocked coho, and Goose Lake north of Carson has received 1,000 brown trout and 6,000 cutthroats since mid-June. Council and Takhlakh lakes are also expected to receive 4,000 catchable size rainbows each.

Eastern Washington

Randy Osborne, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) central district fish biologist, says the best fishing in August is usually during very early morning or late evening hours. But mid-day anglers under cloud cover can reel in a few nice catches, too. Some of the best **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** lakes located near Spokane are Amber, Badger, Clear, Williams, and West Medical lakes in Spokane County, and Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County. The lower Spokane River has nice rainbows and browns, but river anglers need to be aware of catch limits, gear restrictions and other rules listed in the fishing pamphlet.

Mixed species waters are also a good bet. Along with some trout, **yellow perch**, **largemouth** and **smallmouth bass**, and **crappie** can usually be caught at Coffeepot Lake in Lincoln County, Downs Lakes in southwest Spokane County, Newman, Silver, and Liberty lakes in eastern Spokane County, Eloika Lake in north Spokane County, and the Spokane River reservoir of Long Lake.

Osborne reminds anglers that safety on and near the water should be a top priority. "Anyone recreating with watercraft should always have the correct number and size of personal flotation devices and use them while on the water," he said.

In the north end of the region, WDFW District Fish Biologist Bill Baker in Colville reports rainbow trout, **kokanee** and **walleye** fishing continues to be good at Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir off Grand Coulee Dam. Kokanee fishing is also productive at Stevens County's Loon Lake during evening hours.

Some of the high elevation lakes on U.S. Forest Service property in the northeast district that are stocked with rainbow and cutthroat trout may be good destinations for camping and fishing weekends. In Ferry County, try Davis, Ellen, Empire Swan and Trout lakes. In Stevens County, try Gillette, Heritage, Sherry, Summit, and Thomas lakes. In Pend Oreille County, try Carl's, Cook's, Frater, Halfmoon, Leo, Mystic, Nile, No-Name, Petit, South and North Skookums, and Yokum lakes.

Catfish and **sturgeon** fishing is usually productive in the Snake River system in the southeast part of the region in August, said Glen Mendel, WDFW district fish biologist in Dayton. Catfish are often landed in the backwaters and sloughs throughout the mainstem Snake, as well as in or near the mouths of tributaries like the Tucannon River. Catfish fishing is often much more productive at night, or at dawn and dusk.

Sturgeon fishers are reminded of the minimum 43-inch and maximum 54-inch tail fork length requirement and daily catch limit of one sturgeon. The Snake and its tributaries upstream of Lower Granite Dam are catch-and-release only for sturgeon. The section of the Snake just east of the Tri-Cities, from the mouth to Ice Harbor Dam, is also catch-and-release for sturgeon starting

Aug. 1.

Anglers heading for a weekend of camping near the Tucannon River, or its trout-stocked impoundments on WDFW's Wooten Wildlife Area in Columbia County, need to keep fire restrictions in mind. Wooten Manager Kari Dingman said that with hot, dry conditions, the Washington Department of Natural Resources has a campfire ban in effect.

"No campfires are allowed in any state campgrounds until further notice," Dingman said. "With the hot temps we've been having, the fishing in the lakes has really slowed down, but river fishing has picked up."

Dingman also reported an Aug. 17-27 closure of Wooten campgrounds 5 and 6 for a "large woody debris" project that involves placing full-size trees with rootballs into the river with a helicopter. There may also be some traffic delays that week due to temporary road closures while the helicopter is in operation.

Northcentral Washington

Two salmon fisheries not listed in the rules pamphlet will open Aug. 4, thanks to good returns of fish to northcentral Washington.

Travis Maitland, Chelan district fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), says **hatchery summer chinook salmon** returns to the Wenatchee River are in excess of spawning escapement needs, so fishing for marked (adipose-fin clipped) chinook in the section of the river from the mouth to just below Dryden Dam will be open Aug. 4-Oct. 15. Another section of the Wenatchee, from the confluence of Peshastin Creek to a line above Dryden Dam and the Icicle Creek Road Bridge, will open Sept. 1. Check the [emergency rule change](#) for details.

Also opening Aug. 4 is the Lake Wenatchee **sockeye fishery**. More than 30,000 fish coming through Tumwater Canyon on the Wenatchee River are headed for Lake Wenatchee, said Maitland. At least 7,000 fish are estimated to be available for harvest above the natural spawning escapement goal of 23,000 fish. Selective gear rules and other restrictions are in effect, so check the details in the [emergency rule change](#) for this fishery, scheduled to run through Aug. 31.

Maitland notes that in addition to a fishing license, anglers participating in these special fisheries must have the Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement (CRSSE), which makes the seasons possible by funding enforcement, and monitoring.

Bob Jateff, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Okanogan district fish biologist in Twisp, says **sockeye salmon** fishing has picked up considerably in the Columbia River near Brewster. Angling effort has been high with catch rates of two to three fish per angler. **Chinook salmon** are also being caught along with sockeye, but in much smaller numbers.

Jateff also notes the section of the Columbia River from Wells Dam upstream to the Hwy. 173 Bridge in Brewster has been open to salmon fishing since July 16. Anglers are required to release any sockeye or chinook with a colored anchor (floy) tag located just below the dorsal fin.

"The sockeye are running three to five pounds and the chinook are averaging 10 to 12 pounds," Jateff said.

Jateff reports fishing in the Methow River has been hampered by higher water flows, but it should be in good shape soon for the catch-and-release **trout** fishery under way. Selective gear rules are in effect and no bait is allowed. The open area of the Methow extends from the Lower

Burma Road Bridge (below the town of Methow) upstream to the Weeman Bridge (eight miles north of Winthrop).

Jateff also notes there are two sections of the Twisp and Chewuch rivers that are open to catch-and-release trout fishing. The Twisp is open from the mouth upstream to War Creek, and the Chewuch is open from the mouth upstream to Eight Mile Creek.

Anglers should check the current [sportfishing rules pamphlet](#) as all of these open areas have varying closure dates. Anglers can expect resident **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** in the 8-16 inch range.

As river and small creek flows recede, Jateff says it is a good time to fish the smaller tributaries within the Methow River drainage. Boulder, Falls, and Eightmile creeks are all within easy driving distance from Winthrop and provide good fishing for eastern brook trout. Daily limit is five brook trout in Falls and Eightmile Creeks, no minimum size. In Boulder Creek the daily limit for brook trout is 10, no minimum size. In the Beaver Creek drainage, anglers can retain five brook trout, no minimum size.

Watershed Steward and Area Habitat Biologist Ken Bevis of Winthrop attests to the good fishing opportunity on small waterways.

"Northcentral Washington's small creeks are generally under-utilized," Bevis said. "These little creeks drop into beautiful fishing shape by late summer and most have an abundance of small trout that hit on bushy dry flies." Bevis recommends floating a size 12 Royal Coachman, a small stimulator, Adams, or other little bushy thing downstream from where you stand.

"Sneak up on the pool and cast around the rocks at the top, working your way down to the tailout," he said. "Keep your casts short, sometimes less than 10 feet. Be sure to hide a little or your silhouette will spook them. Wear dull clothes, even a camo shirt - definitely not anything white or bright. And pinch those barbs to make it easy to release fish where you might need to because of rules to protect other species."

Bevis calls the little rainbow, cutthroat and brook trout he catches "pocket trout" because he uses his pockets as a creel. "These little gems are really good, though," he said. "Fry them crisp and eat the whole thing."

Southcentral Washington

Walleye fishing has been very good on Lake Umatilla this summer – and will likely heat up even more as water temperatures rise through August. Meanwhile, the summer heat is also clearing a way through the snow to trout fishing opportunities on dozens of alpine lakes.

As of late July, anglers were averaging more than three **walleye** per rod on Lake Umatilla, the 67-mile reservoir below McNary Dam on the Columbia River, according to Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) stationed in the Tri-Cities. "Fishing has been terrific at all the usual spots – Umatilla, County Line, Irrigon, Boardman and Paterson," Hoffarth said. "Walleye really put on the feed bag when the water heats up, so we can expect to see some more great fishing in the weeks ahead."

There is no minimum size limit for walleye at Lake Umatilla, although there is a daily limit of 10 fish, only five of which can measure over 18 inches and only one of which can be over 24 inches. There is also no minimum size for **smallmouth bass**, which are also showing up in the catch. Anglers have a daily limit of five smallmouth bass, only three of which can exceed 15 inches.

Sturgeon are also stirring, but July 31 is the last day for retention fishing on Lake Wallula and the Snake River below Ice Harbor Dam, and Lake Umatilla switched to catch-and-release May 20.

On the other hand, there's still plenty of time to catch and keep up to two **hatchery steelhead** from the mouth of the Columbia River to the Highway 395 bridge at Kennewick/Pasco. Fishery managers are projecting a strong run of 380,000 summer-run steelhead this year, many bound for the Snake River and mid-to-upper Columbia River. Hatchery steelhead can be identified by a missing adipose fin and a healed scar near their tail.

The Snake River will open for hatchery steelhead fishing Sept. 1, and WDFW expects to open sections of the Columbia River above the Highway 395 bridge later this summer or early fall. Look for announcements at the [WDFW website](#).

Anglers can also look forward to good fishing for **fall chinook salmon** in the weeks ahead. A strong run of 655,000 "falls" is expected to return to the Columbia this year, including 353,000 upriver brights that are expected to cross McNary Dam – many headed for the Hanford Reach. While salmon fishing has been hot above Rocky Reach Dam since mid-July, fishing doesn't really catch fire below Priest Rapids Dam until fall chinook arrive in September, Hoffarth said.

"Most of the summer chinook and sockeye just sail right through below Priest Rapids Dam," he said. "But with a strong run of falls expected this year, salmon fishing in the Hanford Reach should pick up in about a month."

The daily limit on the Columbia River is six chinook, of which two may be adults. Anglers are not required to release chinook with intact adipose fins, but must stop fishing after they retain two adult chinook. See the current [Fishing in Washington](#) rules pamphlet for additional information. On the Yakima River, salmon fishing closes July 31 at the end of the day, but will reopen Sept. 1 for fall chinook in the lower river. Eric Anderson, a WDFW fish biologist in Yakima, said the spring chinook fishery in the upper section between Union Gap and Roza Dam finished strong, despite high flows in May and June.

"Catch rates for springers really picked up in July as water levels dropped and more fish moved into the area," Anderson said. "Now anglers are looking ahead to the fishery for fall chinook." Water levels are also dropping in streams flowing into the upper Yakima and Naches rivers, improving fishing conditions for wild **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout**, Anderson said. Anglers should be sure to check the regulations for those streams, and release all salmon, bull trout, and steelhead, Anderson said.

An increasing number of high lakes are also becoming accessible to trout fishing around White Pass, Chinook Pass and Snoqualmie Pass as the snow continues to melt under the summer sun. WDFW stocks some small, hike-in lakes with rainbow or cutthroat trout, and some also have naturally reproducing **eastern brook trout** populations.

"Good fishing is now available for planted trout at Clear and Dog lakes in the White Pass area, and for **kokanee** averaging nine inches at Rimrock Lake off Highway 12," Anderson said. "Kokanee is also available at Kachess and Keechelus lakes off Highway 90, and fishing is good for both kokanee and cutthroat at Bumping Lake off Highway 410."

Anderson notes that all of those waters are closed to the taking of bull trout, "so anglers need to release any bull trout they intercept," he said. Anderson adds that hikers and anglers should check trail conditions before heading out, because some are still covered in snow. Information about current trail conditions is available from the U.S. Forest Service office in Naches and the Forest Ranger office in Cle Elum.

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Random Links

Tuna fishing data:

http://agate.coas.oregonstate.edu/data/ocs_tuna_nowcast.html

Buoy 10 info (commercial site):

<http://www.yakimabait.com/know-how-report/pdf/Buoy%2010.pdf>

Summer in Oregon - Algae Bloom advisories:

<http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/Recreation/HarmfulAlgaeBlossoms/Pages/Blue-GreenAlgaeAdvisories.aspx>

GOOD LUCK!