

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **August 17th – August 23rd, 2012**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro – The Buoy 10 season is fully underway although anglers can't expect excellent results every day of the week. Sunday produced poorly but chinook action since has been good with a few more coho beginning to show in the catch. Chinook are taking both bait and spinners with anchovies producing the best bites lately. Anglers have the opportunity to jig their own bait as the estuary is inundated with huge schools of the preferred bait, oftentimes vibrating the lines of deployed gear. Bob Sturmer of Tigard landed a 22-pound upriver bright on an anchovy on the Washington side, just above the Astoria/Megler Bridge on Tuesday. The Oregon side in front of Hammond has been producing fair catches beginning about 2 hours after low slack but the Washington side above the bridge has also been fairly consistent close to high slack. Action should continue to improve this week with larger chinook and more numerous coho likely to show.

Coho catches out of the mouth of the Columbia remains relatively poor. Most anglers remain focused on the Columbia River where ample numbers are available.

Crabbing has also been good near Buoy 21 but stronger tides this weekend may slow success.

With all the Salmon and steelhead excitement going on elsewhere, bass fishermen have the Willamette river to themselves this time of year.

Rafters and tubers own the Clackamas river. It will be the same on the Sandy until coho start to show in September.

Trout fishing has been good on the McKenzie with even the hatchery trout good-sized and aggressive.

Minto Park and the drifts below Mill City hold summer steelhead on the North Santiam. Drifted baits of sand shrimp have been effective in deeper holes.

Northwest - Chinook catches continue to improve in the Nehalem system and action should continue into September. Anglers should find another productive week around Wheeler using trolled herring for bait, coho may also begin to show later in the month.

Crabbing in the ocean remains excellent but crab remain largely soft shelled. Bay crabbing should be fair in Netarts, Tillamook and Nehalem Bays.

Offshore, anglers have had a hard time pursuing tuna offshore with the inclement weather. When weather improves catches should be excellent as peak season is upon us.

Southwest - Boats had a tough time getting out of central Oregon ports recently due to rough ocean conditions. When launches have been possible, bottom fishing has been good and crabbing excellent.

All-depth halibut will re-open on Friday and Saturday, August 17th and 18th. Ocean swells are forecast to be moderating into the coming weekend.

A few Chinook are being taken daily in Winchester Bay on herring trolled behind flashers. South Umpqua smallmouth fishing has been good for both fly and gear anglers. Use caution at the rapid above Osprey; it's getting tricky and will get worse.

Albacore catches have been good 17 to 25 miles out of Coos Bay and Bandon and recreational boats have returned to port with all they could carry when the ocean has cooperated. Bay crabbing has been good.

Charters out of Gold Beach have been taking limits of rockfish and ling cod when ocean conditions allow launches. Ocean Chinook fishing has also been good. While trolling in the Rogue estuary is producing Chinook, it is hot one day, cold the next. Lower Rogue steelheaders are picking up half-pounders around Agness. Middle river results are fair as fall Chinook start to show in catches while fishing for summer steelhead remains good on the upper Rogue.

When the ocean has laid down, Chinook fishing out of the Port of Brookings has been very good with many taking early limits. Tuna were taken last week although they boat doing so traveled over 40 miles west to hook up.

Eastern - A stealthy approach will put fly anglers in close proximity to reddsides on the lower Deschutes. They are receptive to small caddis, Mayfly and diminutive, bushy dries on light leaders. Steelhead continue to entering with improving results from Mack's Canyon to the mouth.

Kokanee fishing has been fair to good for jig fishers evenings at Paulina.

Soapbox Update: The Buoy 10 Challenge is just a few days away and big prizes are at stake. Be sure to go to NSIA's web site at www.nsiafishing.org to see what all the hub bub is about!

Southwest Washington - Steelhead catches along lower Columbia beaches are beginning to wane. District anglers are anxiously awaiting good chinook returns, which should begin to show in catchable numbers in 2 weeks. Until then, the Cowlitz will remain a top bet for summer steelhead. The Kalama and Lewis are fair at best for summer steelhead.

As passage at Bonneville jumps, so should catches at Drano Lake and the Klickitat River mouth. Chinook, steelhead and some coho will be available throughout September with the peak beginning the first week of September.

Columbia River Fishing Report – It's game on in the lower Columbia but as most Buoy 10 anglers would know, it's never a given that you'll get what your after here in the estuary (or just about anywhere anglers pursue their sport).

Chinook fishing is peaking right now and should continue good if the run comes in as predicted. Early indicators would say that this is a sizeable return this year. An all-day effort is likely to yield anglers more than one opportunity for a nice chinook.

Like the fishing, the bite has been unpredictable. The standard places are still producing fish but it's not always as one would think given the conditions we've been handed in recent days. Most recently, the bite has been first to show on the Oregon side, along the red or green buoy line, about 2 hours after the low slack at Buoy 10. The first good push of chinook are showing in the Oregon shipping channel and washing up the Oregon shoreline but not finishing up at Young's Bay like they used to. They do show up again on the first part of outgoing tide just above the bridge however as there was a good bite there on Wednesday but like most bites this year, it didn't last long.

Action at Chinook was good several days ago but that bite fell on its face recently. The Washington side is producing good catches on the incoming tide near the bridge with a good bite reported on Wednesday for boats hovering at the bridge. Like "hovering" on the Oregon side, boats will just hold in the incoming tide with their gear deployed anywhere from 22 to 35 feet down, waiting for the fish to wash through. Some days, the bite lasts for a while but the most recent two days, Tuesday and Wednesday, that simply wasn't happening.

I've spent my last few days banking on a high tide bite above the bridge on the Washington side. It paid dividends on Tuesday but not so much on Wednesday. We likely had the same number of bites on Wednesday as we did Tuesday but our strike to hook ratio was WAY different. It didn't seem to matter whether we were using spinners or bait, we just couldn't keep the fish hooked. I spent my early afternoon trolling with the tide on the shallow humps just above the bridge, trying to stay in water that was 22 to 26 feet deep on the incoming tide. When the tide changed, I had luck both in the shallow and in the deep on the first part of the outgoing tide. This is also when the Oregon bite has been taking off so you'll have to make a decision on which side you're going to fish. The good news is that high tide occurs earlier on the Washington side vs. the Oregon side so you have about 45 minutes to decide which state you're going to stay committed to for the peak part of the outgoing tide. We've seen chinook taken in water as shallow as 16 feet this year (above the bridge).

And as far as that goes, Wednesday was the first day that I didn't land a fish on a spinner. The two-tone green fatal flash with blue tip was producing consistently for several days but has fallen by the way-side. On Tuesday however, the silver UV Fatal Flash with a pink/red tip and red beads had a minimum of 5 bites but lost more fish than it landed (what's the deal with those treble hooks anyway? How do they get off when I can't rig one up without hooking myself three times or more?). I haven't deviated much with my spinner selection but it seems the spinners get more attention closer to high slack on most days.

As in recent years, bait has been plentiful in the lower river and one can't help but think that why would a salmon want your bait when there are so many others to choose from? Although I can't quite answer this question, properly rigged, your bait is supposed to look much more wounded than a free swimming anchovy. And it is anchovies that are plentiful in the lower estuary. I've been using anchovies for bait recently and have found good success when targeting the chinook. Of course I want to use the biggest anchovies that I jig up for chinook bait but we caught one of the larger chinook of the season on Tuesday on a smaller sized anchovy. You just have to put it in front of their face. Green label herring have also been working fine and **pro guide Brandon McGavran** has been using the larger blue labels with success lately. Herring is admittedly hard to come by unless you seek fresh. Fresh herring has been working fine but they have been running about green label size, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. I've been rigging my anchovies whole and naked. No flasher, diver, bungee or bling. Just lead and a bait.

The ocean has remains slow overall. Coho dominate the catches however and anglers are finding them in the traditional haunts such as the CR Buoy and Buoy 2 when the tide turns and start to flood. The chinook bite to the north of the river entrance remains slow but effort has been light with the rough seas. Tuna effort out of Astoria has been light with the chinook bite going full bore.

There has been some coho in the river as well but they are not available in ample numbers yet. We shouldn't expect ample numbers either but if you get 1 or 2 this time of year, you're doing pretty good. They are typically the salmon that responds the best to fresh jigged, trolled anchovies.

Not many people are crabbing the river but there are ample numbers available. The stronger tides have not helped success rates lately however.

Upriver, **pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "steelhead continue to be caught on the Columbia River but the Chinook are starting to show in good numbers and anglers are switching their tactics. As the popular steelhead spots become less crowded, the deeper salmon slots are filling with boats. With the rivers warm temperatures, most of the action will take place at the cooler tributary mouths such as the Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, Sandy and Washougal. Anchor fishing is still the dominant method with wobblers being most popular for Chinook and small plugs and coon shrimp working best for the steelhead. As you move closer to Bonneville Dam, spinners begin to work their way into the mix as the elevated current speed can keep a spinner working properly. Small red and gold spinners have been a staple for steelhead while slightly larger blades are better for taunting the Kings. Steelhead counts over the dam are beginning to wane, while the Chinook count has been surprisingly good for this early; suggesting that the fall king run is a strong one." Jack counts are especially impressive for this early.

The Guide's Forecast – It'll be another big week for salmon anglers in the Astoria area. With the peak of the run upon us, anglers will be coming to Astoria in droves in hopes of finding the big one. Unfortunately, the tides won't be too conducive to good early morning fishing. Not much will change however. Anglers will still wait in line to launch their boats at the crack of dawn, only to float around until the first part of the incoming tide when the first rush of biters will hit the river. If anyone really reads this newsletter, do yourself a favor and forgo the early morning rush and simply target the best 8 hours of the tide from low slack through the first 2 hours of incoming tide. I won't be starting my trips until 9 or 10 a.m. in the coming days. At least through the weekend. Admittedly however, I have been burned before but with the water temperature hitting the standard summer high of 70 degrees today, the last part of the outgoing tide will remain the poorest producing part of the day; it's only taken me about 16 years to get this figured out.....

You'll have some choices out of the gate this weekend but you'll definitely want to go downstream towards the mouth of the river, where the first part of the incoming tide will bring with it, fresh chinook and coho with the cooler ocean influence. I've been starting near Buoy 21 but the closer you are to low slack, the closer you want to be to Buoy 11 or 10. Be sure to work your way upstream however with the incoming tide. The Hammond bite 2 hours into the incoming tide has been consistent for most of the week and should continue so. Don't count on the Young's Bay bite to take off but if you don't see consistent catches where you're fishing, it can really pay off to try a "rogue" strategy such as Young's Bay.

A little later in the tide, say 3 to 3.5 hours into it, anglers may want to try the bridge hover on the Washington side (it should work on the Oregon side as well but no one does it). Like Hammond, just drop your baits or spinners down 25 to 35 feet deep and wait 'em out. Although Wednesday was the first day there was any effort doing this, it should pan out for a good part of the week with the stronger tide series we're coming up on. Finish your day above the bridge at high slack and the first part of outgoing tide. If you don't see the Washington side bite take off pretty early in the outgoing, you may consider heading back over to Oregon to see if they're going to go at high slack and the first part of outgoing on the 26 to 30 foot line on the Washington side of the shipping channel.

Tule chinook are starting to show up in the catches and Rogue River chinook seem on the wane. I have yet to see any of the classic "grey backs" that are the authentic upriver brights but there are plenty of bright chinook in the catches. Anglers may have to decide however if they want to keep a big tule chinook if they catch it. Hopefully, coho begin to show in better numbers.

All options are on the table as far as bait goes. Blue and green label herring as well as fresh, anchovies and spinners. A wobbler may even work as I've had good history with those down here as well. Spinners will get fewer bites but the fish will be of a higher quality (less jacks).

Ocean salmon fishing is an option but why bother? The chinook are in the river! Crabbing won't be a great option either even though they are present in fair numbers in the river.

Upriver, As the fall Chinook run gets underway, there are still a few anglers scoring well with the last of the summer steelhead on the Columbia river. From Cathlamet up to Bonneville Dam, boat and bank anglers alike continue to catch steelhead in fair enough numbers to warrant the effort. Spin n glows with coon shrimp have taken over the preferred bait spot in recent years, but anglers are still taking a few with red or orange X-5 or U-20 Flatfish and lighted Brads Wigglers.

Now that Chinook are starting to show, most steelhead fishermen will make the switch to deeper water looking for a catch that will outweigh the typical steelhead by three to five times. Heavier gear, heavier sinkers and deeper water are all important considerations when switching from steelhead to Chinook. Boat rods rated for 12-25 or 15-50 lb test are best suited for the salmon fishery and sinkers from 6 to 16 ounces are the norm. Look to water ranging from 25 -50 ft for best results as the Chinook prefer less light and the 2-4 degree cooler temperature that's common at those depths. Wobblers such as the Alvin, Clancy or Simon in a wide array of colors are the preferred lure for anchor fishermen and are also very popular with the bank fishermen. A chrome, nickel, silver plate or stainless steel wobbler with blue reflective prism tape is a long-time favorite for fall kings, but the painted colors like green tipped rainbow, pearl/chartreuse and flame red fair well on darker days. A leader/dropper ratio of 5"x5" or 6"x5" is the standard. In other words, use a 5-6ft, 40lb test leader with a 5ft, 20lb test dropper. Try changing your hooks out to a premium 2/0 Gamakatsu or Owner treble hook for better hook-ups, also add a second split ring between the hook and wobbler for best results. Scrub your wobbler with lemon joy and water OR douse it with your favorite oily scent and wipe it down with a clean rag, this will wash away any foul odors that may have accumulated and give it a nice clean, fresh smell. Then you can apply a small amount of your favorite scent to the hook only....then deploy.

Wing dams are favorite spots, but deeper slots and channels just below the tributary mouths are congregation zones with the rivers temps up around 67-70 degree's. From Washougal upstream to Bonneville dam, as the current picks up small to medium sized spinners are more common offerings. A size 5 Bear Valley, Clamshell or Cascade, blue or purple tipped rainbow spinner is \$\$\$. Shorten your leader to 4ft with a dropper length of 24 to 36 inches. In two to three weeks anglers will start backtrolling Kwikfish below the deadline at Bonneville for some fast action.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "With all the Salmon and steelhead excitement going on elsewhere, bass fishermen have the Willamette river to themselves this time of year. With this week's hot weather upon us, fishermen need to get out there early to find any un-molested water before the water-sport crowd shows up. Walleye are still a possibility in the Multnomah channel."

With the water level low and temperature high at Willamette Falls, daily fish passage is negligible.

McKenzie River water conditions are low and clear, having dropped a little over the past week but the water temperatures have remained fairly steady, hovering around the mid-50s at Vida.

Water level and flow are excellent on the North and South Santiam rivers and is forecast to remain that way for at least a week. Daily counts of spring Chinook and summer steelhead are

predictably declining at Foster Dam on the South Santiam. Plenty of summers are in the river now, however.

In yet another sign that it's mid-summer dog days, there's no trout stocking anywhere in the Willamette Valley this week. Planting of hatchery trout will resume on the week of August 20th.

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "Small mouth bass fishing is available in the early mornings before the ski-do's and jet ski's show up. Plastics fished tight to drop offs will score well as will crankbaits worked near structure. Walleye are also available in the Multnomah channel. Work a bottom walker/worm harness rig with a chartreuse spinner blade along the shelves in 12-20 ft of water. Be prepared to lose plenty of gear."

Steelheading is challenging on the McKenzie at this time of year. The fist-light bite has produced some hatchery fish this week, however. Try small spinners, bobber and jig or drifted baits of cured eggs.

The South Santiam is a fair to good bet for steelhead on spinners or bobber and jig. Try high on the system with best odds of a hookup coming at first light.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "Rafters and tubers own the river, don't fight it :D

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "Rafts, inner tubes and Keystone Light in a tall can are the game here.

Sandy river tubers prefer Budweiser. The first silvers and a few chinook will start to show by mid-September."

North Coast Fishing Report – About the only thing going on south of the Columbia River is the Nehalem chinook fishery. Recent reports indicate that there is once again, good numbers of summer chinook returning to the system. Trollers working the Wheeler to Nehalem stretch are picking up consistent action using mostly herring for bait. Stronger tides that we're currently experiencing should keep the bite in the upper bay and the cooler ocean water temperatures should produce fair results for persistent anglers working the incoming tide. Spinners should work well the higher you go in the estuary but fish can become increasingly picky the higher in the system that they go. Be versed on this year's regulations as they do change often, especially the upper deadline. Coho should start to show soon.

Offshore, there aren't a lot of good options for salmon but if you're looking to tuna fish, or take advantage of the next halibut opener, this is the ocean for you:

FRI

S WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FT. W SWELL 4 FT AT 0 SECONDS. AREAS OF FOG IN THE MORNING.

FRI NIGHT

SW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

SAT

S WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

SAT NIGHT

SW WIND 5 TO 10 KT...BACKING TO S AFTER MIDNIGHT.
WIND WAVES 1 FT. W SWELL 3 FT.

SUN

SW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FT. W SWELL 3 FT.

MON

NW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 3 FT.

River fishing for steelhead in the Tillamook area streams will be challenging in the forecasted weather.

The Guide's Forecast – Nehalem should be another good option this week. With the bulk of the fishing community focused on the lower Columbia, anglers won't find big numbers of people to compete with. With the good news from the fishing front however, there will certainly be growing interest. Troll herring for the best results but don't overlook the success spinners can have in the upper reaches of tidewater.

If you have the proper gear and boat, this will be the week to albacore fish. It should be worth the trip out there, even if you just get to see what a beautiful ocean it will be.

Sea-run cutthroat trout fishing should be picking up in most tidewater areas of north coast rivers. Troll lake trolls tipped with worms.

Central & South Coast Reports – If the offshore forecast for the coming weekend remains accurate, ocean conditions will be excellent for boaters. Low swells and mild winds will make for a very friendly ocean.

With warm water relatively close to the west coast, tuna are being hooked as close as 15 miles, with consistent action reported 18 to 20 miles out. Boats are returning to most central and southern Oregon ports with good catches of albacore although Bandon has been most productive over the past week.

The rockfish and ling cod bite slowed mid-week for boats launching out of Depoe Bay although results remained good for ocean crabbing.

Good news for those anticipating the non-selective coho season during which all legal -sized, ocean-caught coho may be kept, fin-clipped or not. The quota has been increased from 10,000 to 11,800 fish. This fishery opens September 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, then every Thursday, Friday and Saturday through September 22nd or fulfillment of the quota.

About 2,900 hatchery coho or just over 36% of the 8,000-fish spring quota was taken earlier this year. It is this shortfall which has allowed the increase in the September quota.

The next opportunity for all-depth halibut will be on Friday and Saturday, August 17th and 18th. During the first opener on August 3rd and 4th, 13,008 pounds were taken off the central coast which leaves 73% of the quota remaining. Newport topped other ports for the best catches, as was the case through the spring opener.

Trollers dragging herring have had it very slow on the lower Siuslaw, but it's still early for this fishery to be truly productive.

Trollers around Reedsport are taking Chinook with results reported as slow but steady. Results slowed a little over the past weekend but anglers who stuck with it took fish, some of which scaled better than 30 pounds. Results will improve in weeks to come and coho will be in the mix toward the end of the month. Crabbing is producing fair to good catches with the quality showing improvement following the summer molt. Catches of smallmouth bass are good on the upper mainstem Umpqua and into the South Umpqua. Fishing for summer steelhead is slow to fair on the North Umpqua.

Coos Bay casters have picked up a couple more Chinook by throwing spoons from the jetty. Trollers are also taking a few with best results near the jaws as results slowly improve for those fishing the bay. Crabbing has been good for boats in the bay. Rockfish and greenling catches are decent from the jetties.

Chinook fishing in the lower Coquille has been very slow with trollers using herring picking up only the occasional fish. The most frequent action has come from around the Highway 101 Bridge.

Rising water temperatures in the lower Rogue has stalled Chinook movement and slowed steelheading. When water temperatures start to drop, fishing for half-pounders around Agness should be worthwhile. Steelheading is fair and the occasional Chinook is being landed in the Grants Pass stretch. Upper Rogue water levels are predicted to remain steady which is good news for steelheaders who have continued to reap the benefits of a strong, early return of summers to Cole Rivers hatchery.

Chinook catches are fairly steady around the mouth of Brookings Harbor and good just outside in the ocean. Cutthroat trout fishing has been excellent in Chetco tidewater and the lower river but anglers are reminded the river is closed above Milepost 2.2.

The Rogue River above Lost Creek was stocked with hatchery trout again this week and fishing in this stretch has been excellent.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Steelhead catches are improving on the lower Deschutes with spinners most effective over the past week. Daily counts of Chinook and summer steelhead at Sherars Falls only picked up slightly in the first two weeks of August.

Despite low, clear, warm water on the Wallowa River, results for trout fishers improved over the past week.

There's not much surface action on the Metolius but nymphs are producing decent numbers of trout.

Kokanee fishing is holding up at Green Peter with trollers using downriggers taking fair to good numbers of fish at 50 to 70 feet. Hoochies and flashers have been effective for kokanee which are varying in size.

Fishing is fair to good at Lake Billy Chinook with some trollers taking limits on corn-tipped lures fished behind flashers.

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 taylor," 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](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov).

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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GOOD LUCK!