

The Guide's Forecast - volume 14 issue number 45

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **November 2nd – November 8th, 2012**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- All the local rivers are swollen from the rains, leaving few options for fishing this week. Last week a handful of anglers reported good catch and release sturgeon fishing in the Portland Harbor. Most are undersize and barely legal size with the occasional larger fish. Even with the rise in water levels, these fish will likely still be hanging around and may offer some action. Barbless hooks are required and bait is legal. Smelt is the top bait if you can find them but herring, squid, sand shrimp, anchovies and good old earthworms will catch sturgeon any day. Most action happens just above and below the St Johns Bridge so launching at Cathedral Park or Swan Island would be the norm. Anchor in water from 30-80 feet of depth and use 4-12 ounces of lead. Steer clear of the shipping channel as ship traffic will remain steady.

McKenzie River levels should start to drop late this week as precipitation moderates. Caddis will remain the predominant pattern, whether nymphs, emergers or dries.

The Santiams are high and muddy, with conditions forecast to remain that way into the first full week of November.

When the rain begins to subside and the Sandy and Clackamas begin to drop, look for a few remnant silvers and expect the first winter steelhead to be caught from Meldrum Bar. Regulations change for salmon and trout on these systems beginning November 1st.

Northwest – Although effort has been light at mid-week, chinook remain available for the few willing to brave torrent conditions on Tillamook Bay. Rivers remain high, contributing to a stained estuary but chinook often stage at Bay City, the Ghost Hole and at the mouths of these rivers until river flows subside. Herring will take fish in turbid conditions but employ the use of scents for further attraction.

Dick's Sporting Goods in Lake Oswego will host a fall chinook seminar on November 8th, detailing the best methods to employ when pursuing these fish in fresh water. The event runs from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Tillamook area rivers are currently blown out, forcing a cancellation of the North Coast Rendezvous. Rivers, especially smaller tributaries such as the Necanicum and Kilchis, should provide some opportunity as early as Friday although leafy debris will likely hamper success for several more days. Watch for dangerous sweeper logs however as drenched stream banks and high winds certainly caused hazardous blow-downs for driftboaters.

The Trask and Wilson may fish by the weekend but plan on clearing lures and baits of leafy debris constantly to fish effectively. Both plugs and bait should be effective and fish should be plentiful when flows subside.

The Nehalem fishery is effectively over. This system will take a long time to clear and with fall rains underway, ideal conditions may not be witnessed for a long while.

Southwest- Offshore conditions have kept recreational and charter craft inshore over the past week. Forecasts indicate un-friendly ocean conditions off the central coast this week.

The Siuslaw wild coho fishery may be closing in the near future, depending on river conditions.

As of October 28th, 1,590 or 93.5% of the 1,700-fish quota had been taken. The Alsea closed earlier but the Siletz, Yaquina Umpqua Coos and Coquille will fish for a while.

The wild coho troll fishery at Siltcoos has been producing for a few weeks while Tahkenitch and Tenmile will start putting out fish in the next week or two.

Chinook and coho catches have slowed in Winchester Bay and the Umpqua mainstem. Smallmouth bass fishing is slowing as water temperatures drop in the Elkton stretch. Summer steelheading is fair on the North Umpqua where chinook fishing is disallowed.

Catches of coho and chinook have slowed on the lower Coquille and in Coos Bay and River.

Trollers in the Rogue estuary have been experiencing fair results for chinook and coho. Rogue levels are forecast to spike over the coming weekend, and then drop in the week to come. Freshets are luring salmon upstream where anglers are intercepting them. A combination of chinook, adult steelhead and half-pounders are being caught around Agness. Steelheading has improved on the middle Rogue with eggs or egg imitations effective. Gear fishing will once again be allowed on the upper Rogue as the flies-only restriction ends November 1st. Fishing is expected to be quite good as upper river summers have seen only feathery offerings and egg imitations for months.

Chetco estuary trollers have been taking fair but steady numbers of chinook on anchovies or herring with best results occurring on an incoming tide. The Chetco, scheduled to open above River Mile 2.2 on Saturday, November 2nd, opens today thanks to decent river volume and should provide chinook opportunities as rain continues to fall in the southwest. Following an increase to roughly 5,000 cfs, long range projections have the water dropping shortly after the opener but plunking will probably be the technique of choice at first. Last season, salmon to 40 pounds or better were landed.

Eastern – Fishing has been slow to fair on the Deschutes as anglers deal with periodic turbidity as a result of periodic rainfall and a mobilization of glacial sediment.

While northwest Oregon has endured a deluge recently, the Crooked River has remained low and stable. It is fishing well. Clouds and rain will trigger BWO hatches.

SW Washington- With most lower Columbia tributaries on a steady rise, anglers will have some additional opportunity for coho and chinook following the drop. That drop however may not take place until late in the weekend.

District rivers are far from the coho counts of 2011 confirming a downturn in returning trends this year. None-the-less, fair action can still be anticipated on the Cowlitz with limited opportunity on the other systems.

Anglers may want to look to the more controlled reservoirs upstream of The Dalles and the Bonneville Pool. Coho catches at the mouth of the Klickitat should remain consistent.

Soapbox Update: Two noteworthy events coming up this week:

Dick's Sporting Goods in Lake Oswego will host a fall chinook seminar on November 8th, detailing the best methods to employ when pursuing these fish in fresh water. The event runs from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. **Pro guide and publisher of The Guide's Forecast Bob Rees** will deliver this critical information to help you catch more fish. **North Coast State Forest Coalition organizer Chris Smith** will co-present with Bob on actions the coalition are doing in order to

fully protect sensitive spawning and rearing grounds for wild salmon on state forest lands. More info can be found at the coalition's web site and check out the other outings we're offering in the following weeks: www.forestlegacy.org

The other **big upcoming event** is the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife commission meeting in Salem on November 9th. At this meeting the public will get an opportunity to testify on behalf of Governor Kitzhaber's initiative for a sportfishing priority for the Columbia River. This is an unprecedented opportunity for anglers to advocate for drastic changes on allocation, thus meaningful fishing time for spring chinook, summer chinook, sturgeon and coho on the river that produces more angler trips than any other body of water in Oregon. For more information on how you can join this effort most effectively, contact Bob Rees at brees@pacifier.com

Columbia River Fishing Report – Although fish and wildlife creel checks are still indicating catchable numbers of chinook in the Bonneville area, these fish are largely spent and not a high quality product for the amount of effort one has to expend in pursuit of a good fish. None-the-less, the fishery will remain open and anglers will still have an opportunity to pursue salmon near Bonneville Dam. Some coho are still being caught as well but they are more rare than the few chinook that remain.

Upriver, steelhead fishing is picking up dramatically in the John Day Pool. Weekend checks revealed some impressive catches and action is likely to remain good well into November. Here are some impressive numbers from the John Day fishery (excerpt from the ODF&W report):

Weekly checking showed two adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus one unclipped steelhead released for six bank anglers; and one adult fall chinook, and 20 adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus 36 unclipped steelhead released for 48 boats.

This fishery is largely a troll fishery for boaters working the water immediately upstream of the John Day Dam. Trollers work plugs in the deep water working at fast enough speeds to keep plugs diving deep and true. Anglers fishing the John Day Arm itself should also be producing consistent results using bobber and jigs or bobber and bait this time of year.

The Dalles Pool will finally close to sturgeon retention beginning November 4th. Here is the latest release on the regulation modification:

THE DALLES DAM UPSTREAM TO JOHN DAY DAM:

Modifications were adopted at the October 29 Joint State Hearing for the 2012 recreational sturgeon fishery from The Dalles Dam upstream to the John Day Dam and all adjacent tributaries.

- ◆ **Allow the retention of white sturgeon three days per week on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and prohibit the retention of sturgeon four days per week on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday through November 3, 2012. The daily bag limit is one sturgeon between 43-54 inches fork length and an annual limit of five fish. The use of more than one single point barbless hook is prohibited.**
- ◆ **Prohibit the retention of sturgeon seven days per week during Sunday November 4, 2012 through December 31, 2012.**

Catch and release fishing near Bonneville is good, as would be expected for this time of year. Although historically, it may have been better than it is now, it's likely fish aren't holding in the

numbers they used to here due to sea lion predation in the fall and winter months. Although this may compromise action for catch and release anglers, action should still remain good overall for those that know where to target these fish this time of year. Smelt will be a top bait but is often hard to come by with recent closures in the Pacific NW. Smelt may still be used from Canada and Alaska so check your local sporting goods store. Sand shrimp and squid can also produce good results so don't overlook those baits as a strong option.

The Guide's Forecast – Chinook fishing on the lower Columbia is essentially over but anglers can still target sturgeon for catch and release fishing in the gorge and the Bonneville Pool. After November 4th, sturgeon retention on the entire Columbia system will be closed. Anglers will have to wait until 2013 for a possible retention opportunity. That is, if managers and the public will still allow it.

Coho are also an option but given the diminished returns this season, expect a long wait between opportunities. Bonneville and the mouth of the Klickitat will likely be the best places for interception. Just don't count on big numbers.

Serious steelheaders will look to the John Day Pool for action. Trollers will continue to take good numbers of hatchery and wild fish on plugs. You're likely to encounter more wild steelhead than hatchery but the fact of the matter is, you're likely to encounter action! It's better than a fish per boat up there with a little less than half of the fish being of hatchery origin.

In the estuary, the tides are right for good crabbing. It's an early morning high but a soft outgoing tide; then another soft incoming tide in the late afternoon. Crabbing should be great!

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "All the local rivers are swollen from the rains, leaving few options for fishing this week. Last week a handful of anglers reported good catch and release sturgeon fishing in the Portland harbor. Most are undersize and barely legal size with the occasional larger fish. Even with the rise in water levels, these fish will likely still be hanging around and may offer some action as opposed to staying indoors and keeping the couch warm. Barbless hooks are required and bait is legal. Smelt is the top bait if you can find them but herring, sand shrimp, anchovies and good old earthworms will catch sturgeon all day long. Most action happens just above and below the St Johns Bridge so launching at Cathedral Park or Swan Island would be the norm. Anchor in water from 30-80 ft in depth and use 4-12 ounces of lead. Try to stay out of the shipping channel and quickly pick up anchor and move toward shore if you hear five blasts of a vessels horn."

Coho counts at Willamette Falls have been dwindling since mid-October. Seasonally, that's about right but with fewer than 6,500 silvers over the Falls, it's not a great showing this year.

McKenzie flows topped 8,000 cfs on October 29th and is currently in the 6,000 cfs range. To put that in perspective, it was around 4,000 cfs in mid-October.

The North Santiam swelled this week with heavy precipitation. The flow has moderated somewhat but the drop is predicted to be gradual. Similarly the South Santiam water level shot up earlier this week but is not forecast to drop any further. It's running over 4,000 cfs at Waterloo and that's a lot of water.

Molalla River fishers should catch a break over the coming weekend as the water level is forecast to drop below the 12-foot level at Canby and the clarity is expected to be decent.

The Pacific Northwest Fly Tiers Rendezvous will take place at Glenn Otto Park in Troutdale on Saturday, November 3rd. This is a free event open to all interested parties.

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "The rains have left all the westside rivers and streams swollen and brown. Little to no fishing opportunity is apparent till the rain subsides and rivers begin to drop. One fishery that still remains is catch and release sturgeon fishing in the Willamette River. Last week anglers reported good numbers of undersize, "barely keeper size" and the occasional larger fish from the Portland Harbor. Although the river is rising and coloring up, it's likely these fish will remain and continue to bite through the winter. Launch out of Cathedral Park or Swan Island and look for water that is 30-80 feet in depth. Avoid anchoring in the shipping channel or you WILL end up moving or getting taken out by the constant barge traffic. Remember tides do come into play in the harbor and on big flood tides your boat will turn around, so best fishing is always on the ebb. Any commonly used sturgeon bait will work, but the smelt is king here and don't discount the earthworm, especially when used in conjunction with other baits. Sinker size will vary, but having a selection from 4–12 ounces will come in handy. Clean your gear of debris frequently and enjoy the action."

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "When the rain begins to subside and the Sandy and Clackamas begin to drop, look for a few remnant silvers and expect the first winter steelhead to be caught from Meldrum Bar."

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "When the rain lets up and rivers begin to recede, look for the last opportunity for silvers on the Sandy at Cedar Creek and the Clackamas River at Eagle creek. And soon after the Willamette River starts to drop and clear, expect the first winter steelhead to be caught by plunkers at Meldrum bar. Spin n glo's with coon shrimp are the bait of choice. A rod holder with a metal stake and a bell for the tip of your rod are also standard."

Clackamas and Sandy River levels spiked overnight on October 29th but are predicted to be dropping for the most part through much of the month of November. With broodstock steelhead making up the bulk of these plants, don't look for much to return until early spring. These fish are of high quality however.

North Coast Fishing Report – With continuous pounding of precipitation of our coastal waterways this week, effort has been predictably light on even the small amount of Tillamook Bay that is fishable. There was some boats pursuing chinook in the Ghost Hole and Bay City on Tuesday and Wednesday and while these boats didn't "light 'em up", they were taking a few fish on trolled herring during the high tide portion of the day. High winds and driving rain greeted what few anglers were fishing on Wednesday. It simply hasn't been a great week to fish.

With rivers blown, effort has been non-existent in the true freshwater reaches of these systems. High flows has deleted effort since early in the week. It's really tough to catch fish on a rising river but that should change should the weather forecast hold true (see the forecast section below).

High winds and the freshwater intrusion has kept crabbers at bay. There really isn't much to do when these fall storms come rolling through. We're saving the more juicy info for the forecast section so read on!

The Guide's Forecast – We've all been waiting on a break in the weather and it looks like we may finally get it. Rainfall is likely to subside substantially after Wednesday night. Following this last system, there may still be some winds but rivers are forecast to be on the drop for all of next week; a welcome change for fishermen from all angles.

Beginning with boaters, this could be a very good time to target chinook in Tillamook Bay. Despite cloudy water conditions, fish should be staging in the lower bay, particularly at Bay City, the Ghost Hole and maybe even the Corral in the middle part of the estuary. It's not imperative that visibility be high as I've known of some very epic bites in water where you couldn't see your herring turn 6 inches below the surface. That's about how it's shaping up in the estuary at mid-week. You just need to have a few things in mind when targeting fish under these conditions:

- 1) Scent heavily- no matter what your favorite is, use lots of it and re-scent regularly. Salmon will turn on their keen sense of smell even more when visibility declines,
- 2) Keep your bait very near to the bottom. Fish likely orient themselves close to the bottom, especially in turbid conditions.

Don't bother with fishing the jetty in these high water conditions. It's likely that fish will want to stage close to the river mouths, just waiting for flows to subside enough to justify the calories they are going to burn to get up them. Again, this would be Bay City, the Ghost Hole and the Corral in the middle of Tillamook Bay where the Kilchis and one arm of the Wilson River enter the main part of the estuary. It won't be long, again, assuming that flows subside, that the lower reaches of these rivers will begin to fish. Let's explore our options in these reaches of the watershed.

Most north coast rivers will offer up chinook options for boaters and bank anglers. In order from north to south, here are your options:

Necanicum River – A navigational hazard with all the recent high winds and saturated river banks, this system does harbor a fair run of hatchery chinook as well as a wild run. There already has been some nice fish taken here but if you put your boat in, prepare to forge a way through a fair amount of windfall and worst case scenario, you may end up leaving your boat somewhere that you don't want to. Of course you'll also have to be ready to deal with sweeper trees in swift water that most likely pose a threat. If that info doesn't scare you off, there should be ample numbers of chinook available without much competition. Run plugs or backbounce bait in every spot possible with fish holding anywhere in higher flows and the very distinct chinook holes in lower flows. Sometimes, this system fishes best in higher flows as gravel bars have a way of popping up everywhere in this system drops in flow.

North Fork Nehalem River- Another good option except most of the fish in this system are likely to be dark. These fish enter the system earlier in the year so many are close to spawning, There should be some fresh fish however and you may find a rare hatchery coho in good condition. The hatchery coho run here has been low however so don't get too excited. You'll need to know this river well to navigate it. There is a private ramp at the county line that the public can pay to have access to and the upper drift from the hatchery is inadvisable unless you know the river well and have a raft versus a hard-boat.

Mainstem Nehalem River – Not an option. The upper reaches are closed anyway to chinook angling. This river will be out of shape for some time yet.

Miami River- Not really a floatable river, this system should be getting a good batch of chum salmon back to it right now. It's open to the targeting of chum until mid-November but much of the land is private so you'll have to ask permission and/or pay when you find access. This fishery

should provide some nice sport and there are a fair number of chinook in the system as well. You really do have to respect private property however!

Kilchis River – Also a chum river but it bears a good number of chinook as well. Fresh chinook should be available high into the system on this high water event and the fact this run is just getting underway. Driftboaters should have good action here as early as Friday but it will quickly wane by Sunday. As flows drop, target fish lower into the system. Aggressive anglers may even try to skip the higher holes early to target some of the lower holes to have it to yourself. This run should stay viable into December.

Wilson River- A November mainstay, this system may begin to produce fish by Saturday in the lower reaches. Fish will move fast once the system begins to drop but anglers will be hampered by leafy debris throughout the weekend. If you keep your gear clean and the water is on the mend, you should find some good success here as this run too is just getting underway. The Wilson will produce bright fish in the upper reaches when the flows are still up. Plugs and bait will produce best and the tidewater section should stay productive through the early part of next week.

Trask River- Although typically an early season producer, there should still be some fair numbers of fresh fish entering this system. It's clear that the Trask has had a steady push of fish throughout the early part of the run and this should continue on into mid-November. The entire system should hold fish but like most systems, it should produce the best when flows are a bit high. Fish will also be well distributed throughout the system, in all types of water in the higher flows. Don't overlook shallow water when flows are up, you'll be passing over willing fish. There are some good bank fishing opportunities here.

Tillamook River- Primarily a bank fishing option, this system does get a good run of chinook. You'll have to ask permission to fish private land here but there are a few public access spots here, particularly close to the highway 101 restroom area. Like the Trask, this is a better early season producer so you may experience a larger percentage of dark fish here.

Nestucca River- Typically a great option for fall chinook, this system has gone downhill in recent years. You'll want to check regulations as it's only open below First Bridge but biters should be had when flows and leafy debris subside.

Salmon River- Most fish here should be well close to spawning. There may be a few fish that are still bright but they will be few and far between. Mostly a bank fishing show here with highest concentrations of fish and fishermen near the hatchery.

With all that salmon talk out of the way, trout season is now closed. Just thought we'd mention that.

Crabbing, maybe not although Netarts Bay should still remain an option. Freshwater now makes up the most concentration in north coast estuaries. Check the info in the Columbia section for lower estuary info.

Central & South Coast Reports – The wild coho season is ongoing at several south coast locations although there has been little impact on quotas over the past week with stormy weather. The Siuslaw remains on track for the next closure.

Siltcoos Lake has been productive for troll fishers targeting wild coho. Fish taken earlier this week were in the 10-pound range. While Tenmile and Tahkenitch are yet to produce good numbers, trollers should start catching coho in the next week or two.

Nearshore halibut closed at the end of day on October 31st although none of these fish were harmed this week as offshore conditions have prevented any attempt on their lives. This week appears to be a washout for any bar-crossings if wind and wave forecasts remain accurate.

Also closed on the last day of October is ocean Chinook fishing from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain. Ocean crabbing, which closed on October 16th, will re-open on the 1st of December.

Trout fishing is closed on many lakes and streams as of October 31st. Be certain to check the regulations for specific locations. Here ya go:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/index.asp#rules>

Offshore bottom fishing remains open to any depth for a limit of seven rockfish and/or two ling cod 22 inches or better in length. Best results seem to be in the areas off Coos Bay and Bandon.

Siletz levels remains high on the 1st day of November but it is dropping and should fish in the coming week. Prior to the spike on October 28th, it was fishing pretty well for trollers using spinners. Chinook have been running in the mid-20-pound range.

The Tags from crab in Yaquina Bay are worth \$20, a free hat and possibly \$1,000. See **Random Links**, below for information. Here's the short version:

<http://people.oregonstate.edu/~yochumn//images/Crab Project Flyer.pdf>

High wind and rough seas have prevented anglers from fishing the productive jaws area of Winchester Bay for the most part recently. Bobber and bait fishers redeemed themselves with limits near Winchester Creek earlier this week however. Wild coho are being taken by boat and bank anglers but effort has been light during rain storms this week. The Umpqua mainstem is forecast to be in the rise through the weekend, then drop into shape over the week to come. Expectedly, smallmouth bass fishing has been winding down as the water temperature has dropped and may be about done for the year. Steelheading is fair on the North Umpqua in both the bait and fly areas. The South Umpqua will remain closed through November.

Coos Bay has a fair to good catch rate for coho and is still producing the occasional Chinook but few have been making the effort in harsh weather. Wild or hatchery coho may be kept here until November 30th or the non-hatchery quota of 1,200 fish is filled.

Crabbing has held up well in the bay despite rainfall. Crabbers taking a blue-tagged red rock crab should notify the ODFW in Charleston at 541-888-5515.

Trollers dragging anchovies or herring behind a flasher are picking up a few coho and Chinook on the lower Coquille but fishing has been slow.

Lower Rogue water levels are on the rise as of Thursday this week but forecast to crest on Friday, November 2nd and continue to drop through the week to come. Chinook fishing has continued to slow in the estuary as Chinook head upstream with the freshet. Steelheaders are picking up summers in the lower river and coho are being intercepted on occasion although either or both must be of hatchery origin to keep here. Despite a couple of winter steelhead showing up in catches recently, this run won't really get underway for weeks. Boaters on the middle Rogue are taking fair to good numbers of Chinook on the stretch from Whiskey Creek to the deadline at the Hog Creek Boat Ramp on wrapped Kwikfish. The middle river water level rose

through Halloween but is now dropping which should create decent summer steelheading opportunities in the Grants Pass stretch. Steelhead fishing is expected to be good on the upper river. Lures may be used in addition to flies from the Gold Ray Dam site upstream to the boat ramp at Shady Cove Park, but no bait is allowed in this stretch.

The Chetco River is open above Mile Marker 2.2 as of the 31st of October. Here is the official regulation update:

- **Mainstem Chetco River opens for chinook and steelhead angling beginning Oct.31 with a bag limit of two salmon or steelhead daily and 20 per season.**
- **The Chetco Estuary downstream of river mile 2.2 also remains open for chinook and steelhead angling.**

Coinciding with this change in regulation, the Chetco level went from 1,000cfs to over 5,500 cfs as measured at Brookings. Fortunately, that's not too bad a level and the water is forecast to be dropping through mid-November. Historically, the Chetco above tidewater has been a productive Chinook fishery and has produced salmon to 40 pounds or better. Results are expected to improve into November with steelheading picking up from mid-November into December.

Several Chinook have been taken in the first deep hole above the mouth of the Elk River. With rainfall, salmon will be moving upriver.

Sixes River anglers have taken a few Chinook but results have been sporadic. It's early in the run with catches improving in weeks to come.

Diamond Lake closed on the last day of October. It will re-open on New Year's Day, 2013 as a year-around fishery.

Central and Eastern Oregon – While the Deschutes was still running murky on Tuesday this week, it was clearing and had decent color above White River by Wednesday morning. A few steelhead are being taken on plugs. Chinook fishing closed on November 1st but plenty of fish were taken the last day of October.

Water flow at the Imnaha River doubled in volume, from 150 to 300 cfs overnight on October 29th, but the clarity is expected to remain good so the river should produce steelhead over the coming weekend.

The Grande Ronde is blown out at this writing on the morning of November 1st. It went from 1,000 cfs to 4,000 cfs on Tuesday this week. It is unlikely to recover sufficiently to fish anytime this week.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for November 2012

North Puget Sound

(Island, King, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom counties)

The rainy season is setting in and the days are getting shorter, but anglers still have a variety of fishing opportunities to choose from in November. Three more areas open for chinook salmon fishing in Puget Sound, where the winter Dungeness crab fishery is also under way. Steelhead fishing should catch fire by the end of the month, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is stocking a popular fishing lake near Issaquah with 2,000 hefty rainbow trout.

Starting Nov. 1, marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island, and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) and 9 (Admiralty Inlet) open for **chinook salmon** fishing. Anglers fishing those marine areas have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook salmon. Chinook salmon fishing also continues under the same rules in Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton).

Anglers are reminded that Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) closes to salmon retention Nov. 1.

Meanwhile, **sport crabbing** is open seven days a week through Dec. 31 in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu), 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island, and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 12 (Hood Canal) and 13 (South Puget Sound).

Two areas – marine areas 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) and 11 (Tacoma-Vashon Island) – will not reopen this year, because the annual quotas for those waters were reached during the summer fishery.

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. In addition, fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. Additional information is available on the [WDFW website](#).

All crab caught in the late-season fishery should be recorded on winter catch cards, which are valid until Dec. 31. Winter cards are available at license vendors across the state. Those catch reports are due to WDFW by Feb. 1, 2013. For more information on catch record cards, visit WDFW's [catch record card webpage](#).

On freshwater, several rivers are open in November for salmon fishing, including the Nooksack, Samish, Skagit, Cascade, Stillaguamish, Snohomish, Skykomish, Wallace, Snoqualmie and Green.

Some of those rivers – the Skagit, Snohomish and Green – are also good spots for **winter steelhead** fishing, said Bob Leland, WDFW's steelhead program manager. "Anglers can certainly find some hatchery steelhead early in the month, but fishing usually starts to pick up around Thanksgiving," he said.

Because regulations vary for each river, anglers should check [WDFW's sportfishing regulations pamphlet](#) before heading out.

Earlier in the month, anglers will have an opportunity to catch large **trout** in Beaver Lake near Issaquah, thanks to the release of about 2,000 hatchery rainbows averaging about 2 to 3 pounds each. The release is scheduled for Nov. 7.

WDFW will close the Beaver Lake access site at sunset on Nov. 6 while the fish are being planted and reopen the site at sunrise Nov. 8. The lake, itself, will remain open to fishing those days.

Beaver Lake is best fished by small boat, although anglers also can be successful fishing from shore, said Justin Spinelli, fishery biologist for WDFW. Internal combustion boat engines are prohibited on the lake.

The daily limit is five fish, only two of which can exceed 15 inches in length. Anglers are advised to check the sport fishing rules pamphlet, which is available on [WDFW's website](#).

The lake's access site is most easily reached by way of East Beaver Lake Drive Southeast, off Southeast 24th Street in the city of Sammamish. Parking for vehicles and boat trailers is limited, and a valid WDFW Vehicle Access Pass or Discover Pass must be visible in vehicles parked at the access site. For more information about the Vehicle Access Pass and the Discover Pass, visit [WDFW's website](#).

Beaver Lake is one of several lowland lakes in western Washington open to fishing year-round.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

(Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason, Pierce, Thurston and Pacific counties)

Fall fisheries are under way in the region, where winter steelhead and chum salmon are making their way into the rivers and blackmouth salmon can be found on Puget Sound. Shellfish also are on the menu with the late-season crab fishery open in the Sound and two razor clam digs tentatively scheduled at coastal beaches.

In mid-November, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will proceed with an evening **razor clam** dig if marine toxin tests are favorable. Tentative opening dates and evening low tides are:

- Nov. 13, Tuesday, 5:54 p.m., -1.6 ft., Twin Harbors
- Nov. 14, Wednesday, 6:41 p.m., -1.9 ft., Twin Harbors
- Nov. 15, Thursday, 7:29 p.m., -1.9 ft., Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- Nov. 16, Friday, 8:18 p.m., -1.6 ft., Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks
- Nov. 17, Saturday, 9:09 p.m., -1.1 ft., Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks

Later in the month, razor clammers will have another opportunity if tests are favorable. Tentative opening dates and evening low tides for that dig are:

- Nov. 26, Monday, 5:16 p.m., -0.1 ft, Twin Harbors
- Nov. 27, Tuesday, 5:52 p.m., -0.3 ft., Twin Harbors
- Nov. 28, Wednesday, 6:27 p.m., -0.4 ft., Twin Harbors
- Nov. 29, Thursday, 7:01 p.m., -0.4 ft., Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- Nov. 30, Friday, 7:35 p.m., -0.3 ft., Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks
- Dec. 1, Saturday, 8:10 p.m., -0.1 ft., Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks

“Clam diggers should plan to take lights or lanterns for the nighttime digs and to check weather and surf forecasts before heading out,” said Dan Ayres, WDFW coastal shellfish manager.

No digging will be allowed before noon on any of the razor-clam beaches. Harvesters are allowed to take no more than 15 razor clams and must keep the first 15 they dig, regardless of size or condition. Each digger’s clams must be kept in a separate container.

All diggers age 15 or older must have an applicable 2012-13 fishing license to harvest razor clams on any beach. Licenses, ranging from a three-day razor clam license to an annual combination fishing license, are available on [WDFW’s website](#) and from license vendors around the state. More razor clam digs are tentatively scheduled Dec. 11-16 and Dec. 28-31.

Prefer **crab**? Sport crabbing reopened Oct. 13 in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu), 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island, and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 12 (Hood Canal), and 13 (South Puget Sound).

In each area, crabbing is allowed seven days a week through Dec. 31. Sport crabbing will not reopen this year in marine areas 10 (Seattle/Bremerton Area) and 11 (Tacoma-Vashon Island). The annual quotas in those areas were reached during the summer fishery.

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. In addition, fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. Additional information is available on the [WDFW website](#).

All crab caught in the late-season fishery should be recorded on winter catch cards, which are valid until Dec. 31. Winter cards are available at license vendors across the state. Those catch reports are due to WDFW by Feb. 1, 2013. For more information on catch record cards, visit WDFW’s [catch record card webpage](#).

While on the Sound, anglers can also fish for **blackmouth** – resident chinook. Beginning Nov. 1, anglers fishing marine areas 11 (Tacoma-Vashon Island) and 13 (South Puget Sound) can keep one chinook as part

of a two-salmon daily limit. However, salmon fishing in marine areas 5 (Sekiu) and 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) are only open through Oct. 31.

Elsewhere, anglers fishing Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) have a daily limit of four salmon, but only two of those fish can be a chinook. All wild chinook must be released.

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

In the rivers, salmon fishing remains open through Nov. 30 on the Bogachiel, Calawah, Clearwater, Dickey, Hoh and Sol Duc rivers. Also open for salmon fishing through November are the Elk, Hoquiam and Johns rivers in Grays Harbor County; and the Bear and Niawiakum rivers in Pacific County. In Mason County, the Skokomish River is open for salmon fishing through Dec. 15.

Meanwhile, fishing for **chum salmon** picks up in November. Popular fishing spots include the Hoodport Hatchery area of Hood Canal and the mouth of Kennedy Creek in Totten Inlet. Other areas where anglers can find chum salmon include the Dosewallips and Duckabush rivers in Jefferson County and Minter Creek in Pierce/Kitsap Counties. Those three rivers open for salmon fishing Nov. 1.

Hatchery steelhead are also an option on several rivers, including the Bogachiel, Calawah, Hoh, Quillayute and Sol Duc. All wild steelhead, identifiable by an intact adipose fin, must be released. "As the month progresses, hatchery steelhead fishing should steadily improve," said Bob Leland, WDFW's steelhead program manager. "Traditionally, steelhead fishing really starts to heat up around the Thanksgiving holiday."

Other good bets for steelhead include the Satsop, Wynoochee and Humptulips, said Leland. Because regulations vary for each river, anglers should check [WDFW's sportfishing regulations pamphlet](#) before heading out.

Southwest Washington

(Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Lewis, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties)

Thanksgiving Day traditionally marks the start of the popular **winter steelhead** fishery, although some anglers start working their favorite rivers well ahead of time. Catch totals will ramp up as area rivers swell from the falling rain, said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"Steelhead move upriver on pulses of water," Hymer said. "Once the sky opens up, we'll see more fish on the move."

The daily catch limit on the mainstem Columbia River is two adult hatchery steelhead, or two adult salmon (chinook and coho only), or one of each. On area tributaries, anglers may retain two adult hatchery steelhead *plus* the salmon limit listed for each river in the [Fishing in Washington](#) pamphlet.

In all waters, only hatchery-reared steelhead with a clipped adipose fin may be retained. All wild, unmarked fish must be released unharmed.

Major destinations for hatchery-reared steelhead include the Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis (east and north forks), Washougal, Elochoman and Grays rivers, along with Salmon Creek in Clark County, Hymer said. Other waters opening for steelhead fishing Nov. 1 are Abernathy, Coal and Germany creeks, the Coweeman River and Cedar Creek in Clark County and Mill Creek in Cowlitz County.

WDFW's [Hatchery Escapement Reports](#) can provide a good indication of the number of fish returning to each river. Anglers can also check the 2011 [Steelhead Smolt Plant Reports](#) determine how many young fish were stocked last year

But until winter steelhead arrive in large numbers, late-run **coho salmon** may be the best bet for anglers who want to catch fish. Catch rates on the Klickitat River – including both coho and **chinook salmon** – were running around a fish per rod in late October. Salmon fishing was almost as good on the Cowlitz River.

“These are fairly large fish, some weighing up to 20 pounds apiece,” Hymer said. “The trick is getting them to bite. The best time is when they are moving upriver, drawn by high water. Otherwise, it can be hard to get their attention.”

State regulations allow anglers to catch and keep up to six adult coho salmon per day on the Cowlitz, Klickitat, Kalama, Lewis and Washougal rivers – and on the lower portion of the Grays River. Except in the Klickitat River, only those fish with a clipped adipose fin may be retained. Several rivers – including the North Fork Lewis below Colvin Creek – also remain open for chinook salmon, although some close Nov. 1. Effective that day, the No. 5 fishway on the Klickitat River closes upstream to chinook fishing, the Wind River closes to all salmon fishing as does the stretch of the Columbia River from Beacon Rock to Bonneville Dam.

However, the lower Grays River and the West Fork – including the area around the hatchery – will be open for salmon through Dec. 31. Steelhead fishing will continue in those waters through mid-March.

Caught your fill of salmon and steelhead for the year? Here are some other options to consider:

- **Cowlitz sea-run cutthroats:** The bite on the Cowlitz River should continue through November. The best fishing is from Blue Creek near the trout hatchery on downriver. Anglers may retain up to five hatchery-reared cutthroats per day as part of the daily trout limit on the lower Cowlitz River, where the fish generally range from 12 to 20 inches.
- **Sturgeon:** Retention fishing will close at the end of the day Nov. 3 in The Dalles Pool, the last remaining area of the mainstem Columbia where a sturgeon may be kept this year. All other areas of the big river and its tributaries already shifted to catch-and-release.
- **Razor clams:** WDFW has tentatively scheduled two multi-day razor clam digs in November, including planned openings at Long Beach on Nov. 15-17 and Nov. 29-Dec. 1. Final word on those digs will be announced after marine toxin tests are conducted about a week prior to each scheduled opening. For updates, see WDFW's [Razor Clam Webpage](#).
- **Trout:** Anglers may retain up to 10 rainbows per day under bonus limits now in effect at Swift Reservoir and Lake Scanewa (Cowlitz Falls Reservoir). The same daily limit is in effect for kokanee at Merwin Reservoir.

Eastern Washington

(Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla and Whitman counties)

Catch rates for **Snake River steelhead** aren't as good as those in past years, but catch rates in some areas are good and expected to improve later this month.

As of late October, creel survey data shows an average of about 10 hours of fishing effort per steelhead caught in the stretch between Lower Monumental and Little Goose dams, said Joe Bumgarner, a WDFW fish biologist. About the same rate was tallied earlier in October in the stretch upstream of the Washington-Idaho state line in Clarkston, but Bumgarner says the Heller Bar area near the mouth of the Grand Ronde, was probably running closer to six hours per fish caught.

The Grand Ronde tributary of the Snake, which is traditionally a good steelhead fishery in November, is high and out of shape now. Once the river settles down it should provide better steelheading.

“The recent pulse of water here should pull steelhead in from the Snake River,” said WDFW district fish biologist Glen Mendel of Dayton. “Fishing should improve once it drops and clears.”

October creel surveys on other tributaries showed good catch rates among smaller numbers of anglers. The Tucannon averaged about four hours of fishing per steelhead and the Walla Walla averaged near seven hours per fish.

Bumgarner also notes good numbers of fish at “better-than-average catch rates” below Ice Harbor Dam and in the Wallula area on the Columbia River, both near the Tri-Cities.

Bumgarner reminds steelheaders of the three hatchery-marked steelhead daily catch limit and the barbless hook requirement. He also said to watch for the state boundary signs on the Snake at its confluence with the Clearwater River on the Idaho border; the boundary waters signs on the north shore of the Snake where it bends to the west in Washington should help clarify where either state’s fishing license is valid.

WDFW Wooten Wildlife Area Manager Kari Dingman reminds anglers that the Tucannon River impoundments on the Wooten closed to fishing Oct. 31.

Many of the region’s other top-producing trout fishing lakes are also closed. But there are a couple of exceptions, and several year-round-open waters worth trying at this time.

Southwest Spokane County’s Amber Lake remains open through the end of November for catch-and-release, selective-gear fishing for rainbow and **cutthroat trout**. Waitts Lake in Stevens County is open through February and provides rainbow and **brown trout, largemouth bass, and yellow perch**.

Big net-pen-reared **rainbow trout** and some **kokanee** are available at Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir off Grand Coulee Dam. Big rainbows continue to provide action at Sprague Lake, the year-round waterway that sprawls across the Lincoln-Adams county line just south of Interstate 90.

Rock Lake in Whitman County, open year-round, is still producing catches of rainbow and **brown trout**, along with some **largemouth bass**. Trout, bass, perch, **crappie**, and other species are available at Spokane County’s year-round-open Eloika, Newman and Silver lakes.

Northcentral Washington

(Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Grant and Okanogan counties)

Anglers have been reeling in **hatchery steelhead** at a rate of about a fish per rod during the special fishery that opened in mid-October on the upper Columbia River and key tributaries, said Jeff Korth, regional fishery manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

“We have a lot of extra hatchery steelhead that need to be removed, and anglers are doing a good job of it,” Korth said. “The problem is that we don’t have a lot of wild fish returning this year, which limits the amount of time we can leave the fishery open. Our immediate goal is to keep it going through November, but anglers should keep an eye on the WDFW website for any updates.”

The hatchery-steelhead fishery opened Oct. 16 by special rule on the Upper Columbia River from Rock Island Dam to Chief Joseph Dam, and on the Wenatchee, Icicle, Entiat, Methow, and Okanogan rivers. Similkameen River opens for hatchery steelhead retention under the same rule Nov. 1.

Under that rule, anglers are required to keep any adipose-fin-clipped steelhead they intercept, but must release all wild, unclipped steelhead. Anglers must stop fishing for steelhead after they have caught their daily limit of two hatchery fish.

Additional regulations for the special fishery are listed in the [Fishing Rule Change](#) on the WDFW website, but are not included in the *Fishing in Washington* fishing rule pamphlet. Any updates will be posted on the [Emergency Rule](#) webpage.

Anglers participating in the fishery are required to possess a Columbia River Salmon/Steelhead Endorsement along with a current fishing license.

“We hope to reopen this fishery in February or March, so we can intercept hatchery fish heading for spawning areas,” Korth said. “As during the current fishing period, we’ll keep anglers posted.”

Meanwhile, several lowland lakes are still open for catch-and-release fishing for **rainbow trout** through November, including Big and Little Green lakes near Omak, and Rat Lake near Brewster. Selective gear rules are in effect for these three lakes.

Perch are another option, said said Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist.

“Anglers interested in catching **yellow perch** could try year-round-open Patterson Lake near Winthrop,” Jateff said. “Expect the average size on these perch to be seven to eight inches. There’s no daily limit and no minimum size. We encouraged anglers to retain all perch caught regardless of size.”

Several other year-round waters in the region can also provide decent fishing in November. Banks Lake has a little bit of everything – **smallmouth** and **largemouth bass**, **crappie**, **yellow perch**, **walleye**, **kokanee**, even **lake whitefish**. Moses Lake and Potholes Reservoir have most of the same, plus net-pen-reared rainbow trout.

Southcentral Washington

(Benton, Franklin, Kittitas and Yakima counties)

Hatchery **steelhead** fishing is usually the main attraction in the Tri-City area at this time of the year, but anglers have been working hard for their fish, said WDFW fish biologist Paul Hoffarth at the department’s office in Pasco.

“Steelhead fishing has been unusually slow at a time when it should be ramping up,” Hoffarth said during the last week in October. “We’ve been seeing 20 anglers come in with one fish among them.”

Like last year, this year’s forecast is below the 10-year average and well below the record run in 2009, he said. “I hope I’m wrong, but it looks like we could be in for another tough month of steelhead fishing in this area.”

Anglers can retain two marked hatchery steelhead from the Highway 395 Bridge in Pasco to the wooden powerline towers at the Old Hanford townsite. Hatchery steelhead can be identified by a clipped adipose fin and/or a ventral fin clip. All unclipped steelhead must be released unharmed.

For more information about fishing seasons and regulations in the region, see the [Fishing in Washington](#) rule pamphlet.

Prospects for **walleye** fishing look much better, said Hoffarth, noting that November is a great time to hook some of these toothy gamefish below McNary Dam. “Fall fishing for walleye can be extremely good between Umatilla and Boardman in the late fall,” he said. “Those fish are putting on the feedbag for winter and are eager to strike big lures, night and day.”

Fishing is also picking up for **whitefish** on the Columbia River from Vernita Bridge to Priest Rapids Dam. The catch limit is 15 whitefish per day, but anglers are required to use a single-point hook, measuring no more than 3/16 inch from point to shank (hook size 14). The Yakima River opens to winter whitefish angling Dec. 1, as do the Naches, Bumping, Tieton and Cle Elum rivers. Fishing for steelhead or bull trout in all those waters is prohibited.

While most rivers and streams close to fishing after Oct. 31, the Yakima River remains open year around for catch-and-release fishing – notably for **trout** – above Roza Dam. Eric Anderson, a WDFW fish biologist stationed in Yakima, recommends fishing there or any of the year-round lakes in the region.

“Fishing opportunities aren’t as abundant in fall, but it’s still a good time to get out on the water,” he said. “Trout anglers can find some nice carryovers in year-round lakes and the scenery isn’t bad either with the fall colors on display.”

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

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Random Links

Oregon C.R.A.B Project: <http://www.oregoncrabproject.org/>

Want to tie the Chubby Chernobyl? Who doesn't? Instructions here:

<http://oregonflyfishingblog.com/2012/11/01/chubby-chernobyl-fly-tying-video/>

Digging Purple Varnish Clam from Siletz Bay:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=EOzUveuMTMc#!

GOOD LUCK!