

The Guide's Forecast - volume 15 issue number 38

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 13<sup>th</sup> – September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

After a successful Buoy 10 season, I'm moving my operation to Tillamook; my home port!

With Tillamook Bay off to a strong start, you'll want to book your September or October trips now for the north coast's largest and hardest fighting salmon. I have some quality dates still available with an ocean crabbing option available through October 15<sup>th</sup>. Salmon and crab.....my favorite!

Go to: [www.northwestguides.com/fishing](http://www.northwestguides.com/fishing) or email Bob Rees at [brees@pacifier.com](mailto:brees@pacifier.com) or call (503) 812-9036

**Willamette Valley/Metro** - Huge numbers of chinook are crossing Bonneville Dam and things are shaping up for a record return that was likely under-forecast. Catches are good for both boaters and bank bound anglers, but still not what they could be if the water was 3 to 4 degrees cooler. As the nights get shorter and cooler, expect fishing for chinook salmon to improve through October. Little attention is being given to catch and release sturgeon fishing with good numbers of salmon in the river.

Silvers are showing up in the Willamette River at the mouth of the Clackamas, but it's far from productive. The water is still very warm and fishing will likely improve in the coming weeks after the weather starts to cool.

Bass fishermen are scoring catches from Oak Grove downstream to Ross Island, but effort has been very low the last couple weeks. Walleye are still on the menu for the Multnomah Channel but effort is light here as well.

McKenzie River flows have been fairly steady this week. Fly fishing for trout should be worthwhile over the next several days, particularly those with cloud cover.

Santiam River levels are up with recent releases of water from upstream impoundments. Steelheading remains slow.

A few coho are getting caught in riffles below Cross Park on the Clackamas River. It can be a rough crowd and lawlessness is common, so mind your manners if you decide to participate.

Not much to report yet for the Sandy River, but the silvers are due and it's likely that a few forerunners are already up to Cedar Creek.

**Northwest** – Buoy 10 anglers are still searching for catchable numbers of hatchery coho. It appears as if coho were grossly over-predicted. Coho jack catches were impressive but jacks along with the ample numbers of chinook still in the estuary, must be released downstream of Tongue Point. Tongue Point to Warrior Rock remains open for fin-clipped chinook and coho and managers will review the new run size upgrade on Thursday to determine if additional opportunity is available in the lower river. The current weak tide series will make the Tongue Point fishery explode once again.

Wobbler fishers in the Longview reach witnessed white-hot fishing over the weekend. It has since slowed but ample catches continue to happen.

Offshore, north of Cape Falcon, any 2 salmon may be retained; wild or hatchery coho or chinook. Fishing to the north of the river along the Long Beach Peninsula seems to be the most productive. September can offer some of the finest ocean weather. A very friendly ocean is forecast from today through the weekend. Ample numbers of albacore are available and will readily take live bait.

Nehalem Bay herring trollers have been taking impressive numbers of chinook over the weekend. The jaws and Wheeler are producing quality fish.

Tillamook Bay fall salmon fishing is also producing nicely. Effort will shift to the lower bay on the weaker tide series.

The wild coho fishery continues offshore and starts on most inland systems on September 15<sup>th</sup>. Check the ODF&W web site for your specific estuary and tidewater systems.

Ocean and estuary crabbing should be good this weekend.

The lower reaches of the Nestucca, Salmon, Siletz and Alsea Rivers should all produce good catches of chinook this weekend.

**Southwest-** This is a great time of year for ocean crabbing. The quality of meat is approaching that of fall and winter while offshore conditions are launch-friendly with greater frequency than they will be later in the year.

Tuna fishing has been challenging over the past week. Single-digit catches were the rule for boats launching out of Depoe Bay and Newport with many catching only one or two.

A few chinook are being taken on the Yaquina by boats launching at Toledo and heading upriver.

Boats launching for out of Reedsport have been doing well for ocean chinook. Crabbing has improved on Winchester Bay with the Crab Bounty contest continuing through the end of September. Return spinner-tagged Dungeness whole to Sportsman Cannery for a hat and a chance in the \$1,000 drawing. Bay trolling is producing chinook as has fishing the lower Umpqua mainstem.

Coos Bay trolling has been productive for chinook over the past week. Offshore fishing has been productive for salmon. Bay crabbing is fair to good for boats, slow off the docks.

Offshore fishing was good out of Gold Beach for bottom fish over the past week until weekend conditions shut down bar crossings. When the lingcod bite has turned on, limits have come quickly. Bay trolling has been slow. Fall chinook and summer steelhead are being taken on the lower Rogue and while it's only fair, it's worth the effort. Chinook catches have been good on the middle Rogue with plug-pullers doing best on wrapped Kwikfish although back-bouncers are also taking fish. Upper Rogue flows increased on Tuesday this week, an annual occurrence in an effort to reduce water temperatures and encourage chinook to migrate upriver. Steelheading is expected to be good, particularly for those swinging streamers with the river flies only above Fisher's Ferry boat ramp.

Ocean chinook fishing closed out of Brookings at the end of day September 8th. The next opportunity will be the Chetco Ocean Terminal Area Fishery from October 1 through 13, which will be take place from Twin Rocks to the Oregon/California border up to 3 miles out. It should be a rewarding fishery. Bottom fishing has been fair to good and should only get better in the coming weeks.

**Eastern** – Water conditions are improving on the lower Deschutes. The White River is causing only moderate issues with clarity as of Tuesday this week and the river looks good above the White. Steelheading has been fair but should improve with better water conditions. Redsidies are hitting caddis imitations.

Trout are being caught at Big Lava Lake and while numbers are decent, larger fish are elusive.

Hosmer Lake is producing decent catches of trout including stocked cutthroat.

**SW Washington-** Chinook and coho are available on the big three tributaries in the district. Chinook, coho and some sea-run cutthroat trout are all starting to show. Anglers should release dark wild chinook as they make for poor table fare and are at depressed levels.

The Klickitat becomes a popular fishery for chinook about now and should produce fair numbers for the next few weeks. Coho will follow suit and last well into the fall.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – The Buoy 10 fishery is effectively over. Hatchery coho have yet to make a strong showing and this late in the game, it appears as if they will not. The Departments of fish and wildlife designate an "A" run and a "B" run of coho with the A run typically the stronger of the two with 500,00 fish in the forecast. Either they are way later than they have been before, or they are not coming. I believe it is the latter. The ironic thing, is that ocean fishing for coho seems to be pretty good for hatchery fish.

Although effort remains light for ocean salmon, those that are going out are finding fairly consistent success. Although far from hot action, anglers that put in their time are managing a limit of quality coho and still some chinook. For some reason, SW of the river mouth continues to produce poor results. The best fishing seems to be along the Long Beach Peninsula and at the lighthouse in 25 to 50 foot of water. With fresh bait unavailable, with the exception of the Port of Ilwaco, anglers will have to find an alternative to the much favored anchovy. Frozen green label herring have been working fine both in the river and outside but if you're launching from Washington, fresh anchovies is the best option.

Back in the river, the most recent reports indicate a slow-down in the fishing. The last good day was Tuesday, with excellent results for both chinook and coho but caught in the wrong places, requiring release instead of retention. The Washington side, both above and below the bridge, has been very productive for coho but hatchery fish are a rare find. The Oregon side, downstream of Tongue Point, produced ample chinook on Tuesday but seemed to be barren by Wednesday. Most of us anticipated a banner Tongue Point program by Wednesday, and it started off fair, with lots of fish present on the fish finder in the early a.m. but shortly slowed to a snail's pace shortly after the tide started running. Fish seem to disappear from the screen, when the tide was at maximum outgoing. We only caught two chinook on Wednesday with several jacks harassing our bait as well. A few fish were caught through high slack in the early morning but the tapering of action surprised us all by mid-morning. Moss and weed was a real problem on Wednesday and kept us from effectively fishing for much of the tide.

With the decline in fishing effort, interest in estuary crabbing has dropped off too. Although we're coming off of a strong tide series, the current weak tide series we are on now, would likely produce great catches of crab downstream of Hammond.

It's pretty clear from the effort present, that people are giving up on this fishery. With only a 31% mark rate for chinook and very few hatchery coho present, it may not be worth the effort. If the ocean is any indication, there is not a school "3 miles long X 5 miles wide" as is often reported on an annual basis.

With Oregon and Washington's technical advisory committee (TAC) meeting on Tuesday and upgrading the run, managers met by phone today (Thursday) to discuss additional options for sportanglers downstream of Bonneville Dam. Here are the results of that compact call:

### **Joint State Action**

In joint Oregon and Washington state action the states discussed the following recreational fisheries and took the following actions:

#### **Area:**

Buoy 10 upstream to the Warrior Rock line (a line from the Warrior Rock Lighthouse on the Oregon shore through red buoy #4 to the orange marker atop the dolphin on the Washington shore).

#### **Date:**

Friday September 13 through Monday September 30, 2013.

#### **Catch Limits:**

Two adult hatchery (adipose fin-clipped) salmon or steelhead.

#### **Date:**

Tuesday October 1 through Tuesday December 31, 2013

#### **Catch Limits:**

Two adult salmon or steelhead. Coho and steelhead must be adipose fin-clipped. All other permanent rules apply, including no retention of Chinook jacks (<24-inches) downstream of the Tongue Point-Rocky Point line until October 1.

Read these newly modified regulations carefully!

Anchor anglers targeting chinook using wobblers had a good string of productive days starting last weekend. Although that 31% mark rate sent many chinook swimming, anglers were still pretty excited for the red-hot fishing during that time frame. Many anglers reported doubles, which is pretty impressive for an anchor fishery. Certainly Bonneville Dam counts indicate that there were huge numbers of fish around. The Longview reach in particular was productive but savvy anglers targeted their quarry upstream of Warrior Rock, where they didn't have to look for the absence of an adipose fin. By Wednesday, action had slowed dramatically for wobbler fishers. Ironic, given the numbers of chinook in the Astoria area on Monday and Tuesday.

**Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "Huge numbers of Chinook are crossing Bonneville Dam, with 63,000 on Monday and over 50,000 crossing on Tuesday. Things are shaping up for a record return that was clearly under-forecast and yesterday the departments upped the predicted return to a possible 800,000 Chinook. Catches have been good for both boaters and bank bound anglers, but still not what they could be if the water was 3 to 4 degrees cooler. Boaters are either backtrolling bait wrapped Kwikfish or anchor fishing with wobblers, spinners or Kwikfish. All lure types are getting bit, but the Kwikfish is likely the best producer, especially backtrolled. As the nights get shorter and cooler, expect fishing for Chinook salmon to improve through October. When the dam passage drops off significantly (traditionally the second week of October), its game on for the backtrollers as they are fishing over many fish that will

spawn right below the dam. It's important to recognize that the bump in fishing coincides with the cooler fall air and water temps and the fact that many of these fish are starting to pair up and start digging redds. When they start sitting on and guarding their redds, they become aggressive towards interlopers and that includes Kwikfish. It then increasingly becomes a fishery where anglers have pick through quite a few sub-par fish to get a quality fish. At some point, it's best to let them alone to do their thing. Little attention is being given to catch and release sturgeon fishing with enormous numbers of Chinook salmon in the river."

Tuna fishers are gearing up for an offshore adventure with the ensuing ocean forecast. Hopefully, anglers don't suffer the same fate as our brethren in the southern ports, where recent reports indicate an absence of fish. Be sure to bring live bait this time of year as that will certainly produce the best results.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Effort and success will likely continue to wane in the Buoy 10 fishery. Many of us had high hopes for another round of chinook fishing, only to have them squashed on an ideal tide Wednesday. A Thursday update however indicated that action once again took off above Tongue Point and action was fast and furious with fewer weeds in the water. Anglers were into fish immediately this morning but the best action took place at high tide and throughout the first half of outgoing tide. There were mixed reports coming from Tongue Point on Thursday but most would agree that it was significantly better on Thursday than it was on Friday. Given the magnitude of the chinook run this year, action should once again pick up in this fishery into the weekend. One frustrating factor was the large amount of vegetation that fouled our gear on Wednesday; moss coupled with other aquatic vegetation kept us from fishing effectively for much of the outgoing tide. This is to be expected with 70+ degree water temperatures coming from upriver.

With coho a no-show, don't look for great salmon opportunity downstream. These fish are way overdue but still could make a strong showing, there just aren't many indicators to say that they will. Ocean fishing out of the Columbia could be one of the better options, especially since any adult salmon may be retained. We would suggest starting to the north since we've had good history here recently, but it is also one of the shorter runs you can make. Be sure to steer clear of Peacock Spit at the north tip of the north jetty. It is often a place where a boat could be in jeopardy near the shallow sands.

**Thursday update:** there were better numbers of hatchery (and wild) coho showing on Thursday. The best action took place below the Astoria/Megler Bridge on the Washington side. Frozen herring did the trick as fresh bait is still hard to come by. Upstream of the bridge, sealions are anxiously awaiting for your every hook-up.

And speaking of the ocean, tuna fishers using live bait should find good success over the weekend. You'll still have to plan on traveling greater than 25 to 30 miles but the seas are forecast to be very friendly.

Crabbing downstream of Hammond should be great, especially if you have fresh tuna or salmon carcasses available to you. With the low tide exchange, anglers might find better biters downstream of the Astoria Bridge. Holding in the deep water off of Chinook can often produce good results. That will also keep you close to your crab gear so you don't have to run far between harvesting fish and shellfish. The shipping channel, hugging Social Security Beach on the Oregon side could also be a surprise sleeper on this tide series. There will likely be lots of room in the estuary as anglers are focused on all the other strong options available to us this time of year.

**Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** predicts, "The Columbia River is already

fishing good for kings, but is going to get even better once the air and water temps start to drop. Expect the fishing to improve after this week's HOT weather subsides and fishing to hold up strong through October."

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "Silvers are showing up in the Willamette River at the mouth of the Clackamas, but it's far from a bloodbath. The water is still very warm and fishing will likely improve in the coming weeks after the weather starts to cool. Bass fishermen are scoring catches from Oak Grove downstream to Ross Island, but effort has been very low the last couple weeks. Walleye are still on the menu for the Multnomah Channel but effort is light here as well."

McKenzie flows at Vida have been fairly stable at 2,500 cfs. This is a little higher than the summer level but still quite fishable.

Expect the North Santiam to be gradually rising at Jefferson while it will remain fairly stable at Mehama until rain causes a slight increase in flows around mid-month. South Santiam flows will remain steady subject to the next round of precipitation. Foster Dam counts resumed on the 10th of September after being unavailable since the 5th. On The 10th, 27 summer steelhead were noted along with 320 Chinook.

Alton Baker Canal is scheduled for planting with hatchery trout this week.

**The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** predicts, "Little is happening on the Willamette River, but with the silvers starting to show at the mouth of the Clackamas, the anticipation is building. After the Hot weather, expect more silvers to show and some numbers of fish to be taken. Bass anglers can do well this time of year once the water temperature drops 4-6 degrees. Anglers should also expect walleye fishing in the Multnomah Channel to revive again once the fall season starts to arrive."

Enjoy fishing the McKenzie this weekend with excellent seasonal flows and caddis hatching periodically.

Expect only slow results for steelhead on the Santiam system. For decent results, anglers might try trout fishing high on the system.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "A few coho are getting caught in riffles below Cross Park and at the bowling alley(no longer there). It can be a rough crowd and lawlessness is common, so for your own personal safety, mind your manners if you decide to participate in the coho circus. As the days shorten and the nights cool down, the silvers will make their way upstream and can be caught by all the usual, traditional methods. Casting spinners is a favorite and tends to work best early and late in the day. Size 3 and 4 blue fox spinners in a wide variety of colors will do the job most of the time, but certain custom finish and color combinations work exceptionally well. There is a significant difference between nickel, polished silver and matte silver and the reflections they emit. Most all factory, out of the package blue fox spinners have a lightly polished silver, brass or painted blade surface. Other worthy finishes like nickel, gold, matte silver or black nickel are rarely used in factory, mass produces spinners, so if you want something super Ninja, it leaves anglers to buying the individual components and building their own custom spinners. Coho love nickel and seasoned anglers have known that for a long time, but it's easily forgotten as fewer and fewer anglers are crafting their own lures with so many highly marketed popular brands available. It's fun and relatively easy to do and you can build a killer product any way you want it

for about a third of the price of a popular, packaged brand. That being said, a #3 nickel French blade with Kelly green prism tape or flat chartreuse tape are long time Clackamas favorites for fall silvers. Couple either blade with a brass body and you are in the money. Early in the morning or later in the evening, the flat chartreuse taped blade produces best. When the sun is starting to hit the water, the green prism taped blade shines best.

"A few fishermen are starting to work the lower Sandy River looking for silvers, so it likely that a handful have already succumbed. Most are casting spinners and the same holds true here as does on the Clack. It's likely that not a bunch will happen until the hot weather leaves us for some cooler, early fall temperatures. Some years the Sandy gets decent numbers of bright Chinook mixed in with the less desirable Tule stock. With the abundance of lower river bright Chinook plowing their way up the Columbia River this season, we are banking that this is a good year to try. After the first fall rains, drift boaters might be wise to work the lower river from Oxbow or Dabney park down. Backroll wrapped size 15 or 16 Kwikfish or backbounce gobs of cured roe at the heads of the deep runs. Bobber fishing the deep slow pools will get fish also."

**The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** predicts, "River fishers are waiting for the first strong push of silvers to arrive on the Clack and it will likely happen within the next week or two, weather and water temperature dependent....rain is the key.

"The Sandy River is on the same schedule as the Clack and a solid rain and cooler evenings will trigger the first good silver bite. By mid-October, if water conditions bump up, anglers can expect handfuls of Chinook to be present as well. With any luck, some of them will be bright, quality fish worthy of the BBQ."

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Fall chinook are beginning to show in all major river systems on the north coast. Here is a break-down of your options from north to south:

Necanicum River- A sleeper but a good one. Chinook begin to show this time of year although maybe more likely on a stronger tide series where this shallow estuary has a hard time passing salmon in lower flows. Fish will likely begin to stack in tidewater. This system is supplemented with hatchery plants.

Nehalem River- After a strong summer chinook showing, fall chinook are also making a strong showing right now. Both the jaws and Wheeler have been quite productive recently. Trolled herring near the bottom is producing quite well. The soft tides and calm ocean should make for a great weekend fishery near the bay entrance.

Tillamook Bay- An obvious choice, this system is starting to produce good catches of Tillamook and Trask River bound chinook. The softer tides keep wise anglers on the lower reaches and adjacent ocean waters where fish should be concentrating in catchable numbers. The season here is off to a good start.

I fished the jaws and adjacent areas (both south and north of the bay entrance) as a killer swell caused breaks on the middle ground on Thursday with some swells reaching 11 feet in length. Fishing was decent however as we had 10 bites, materializing on 6 of them but one of them was a jack. Most of the fish were smaller than 20 pounds with maybe one right at 20 pounds.

Nestucca River- Although this system has been somewhat depressed, maybe it will make a stronger showing this year. Mid-September is typically when the first good push of fish show.

Trollers at the jaws and bobber fishermen at the Guard Rail Hole and the Boat Ramp Hole, could see some good fishing this weekend. Let's hope we see an improved season from previous years.

Salmon River- Should also get its jump-start this weekend as herring trollers should be excited to work the mouth. This system gets a good return of hatchery chinook, which should be peaking now through the first week of October. You'll start to see higher concentrations of cars parking along Highway 101 in pursuit of bobber and bait chinook just upstream.

Siletz River – Like other north coast systems, it should begin to produce chinook catches about now. The run has been improving and should be good again this year. Herring and hardware trolling in tidewater is effective.

Alsea River- Anglers have enjoyed great success for chinook on this system in recent years. Some of the best fishing takes place on these weak tides where herring trollers working the mouth produce impressive catches. This weekend should be no exception.

And as if these great chinook options weren't enough, both hatchery and wild coho fishing in the ocean is now open 7 days per week until the quota is filled. There is a lot of the quota to go, which really is an indicator of how slow the fishing has been to date. Here is the press release on the ocean coho extension:

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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**Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013**

### **Ocean coho fishing expands to all week on central coast**

NEWPORT – Starting Thursday (Sept. 12), anglers can keep any legal sized salmon they catch in the ocean on the central Oregon coast after fishery managers increased the popular non-selective coho fishery to seven days a week.

The ocean coho fishery between Cape Falcon and Humbug Mountain opened Sept. 1 and was scheduled to be open every Thursday through Saturday throughout September. During the first five open days of the season, ocean conditions for coho were less than ideal, and anglers only landed a total of 2,410 coho out of the quota of 19,580, according to Eric Schindler, ocean salmon supervising biologist for the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife.

"Fishery managers felt they could open seven days a week and still remain within the coho quota," Schindler said. "This is the third consecutive year we've had a non-selective coho fishery in September. It has been very popular with anglers."

The daily bag limit is now two, legal-size salmon (chinook at least 24 inches, coho at least 16 inches, and steelhead at least 20 inches). Anglers are reminded that single-point barbless hooks are still required for ocean salmon angling or if a salmon is on board the vessel in the ocean. If anglers catch the coho quota before the end of September, fishery managers will close the coho fishery and anglers will be required to release all coho they catch.

The all-salmon-except-coho fishery from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain will remain open through the end of October.

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Ocean crabbing should be excellent but Thursday's results were less than impressive with 4 pots crabbing with a fresh tuna head in each pot, yielding just 16 crab on a calm ocean. Only 1 pot had great numbers of crab; they just don't seem to be around as much this year as they have

since the fall extension instigated about 3 years ago. Estuary crabbing should be fair but expect more pressure inside.

Also opening on the 15<sup>th</sup> are the inland coho fisheries. Here is the most recent press release regarding this great opportunity:

## **NEWS RELEASE**

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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Sept 10, 2013

### **Wild coho fishing on coastal rivers begins Sept. 15**

SALEM, Ore. – Wild coho seasons on many coastal rivers and bays will open beginning Sept. 15, marking the fifth year in a row coastal rivers will open to the harvest of wild fish. This year 13 river systems on Oregon's coast will be open for wild coho harvest, and for the first time in recent years many will open without quotas and in-season management.

Fishery managers are predicting there will be 191,000 adult wild coho in the ocean this summer, most of which will return to Oregon's coastal rivers and streams. While that number is down a bit compared to some recent years, it is up substantially from the 1990s when returns averaged just 48,800 fish a year and coho fishing in most areas was closed or severely restricted.

This year the following river systems will be open for the harvest of wild coho: Nehalem, Tillamook, Nestucca, Siletz, Yaquina, Alsea, Siuslaw, Umpqua, Coos and Coquille rivers, Tenmile lakes and Beaver and Floras creeks. Most seasons begin on Sept. 15 and continue through November, but there are exceptions.

The biggest change from last year's seasons will be in the mid-coast and mid-south coast where several rivers will have fixed wild coho seasons instead of harvest quotas.

"Bag limits will remain conservative, in part because returns did not materialize as forecast last year," said Mike Gray, ODFW fish biologist in Charleston. "We're also trying to move away from the expensive and labor intensive creels and quotas to fixed season structures." Quotas will remain on some rivers where harvest rates need to be closely tracked, he added.

For the North Coast, the fisheries are a bit more conservative than last year with a reduced seasonal bag limit on the Nehalem.

"Our wild coho populations tend to be a bit smaller than many of the other coastal basins, primarily due to differences in freshwater habitat," said Chris Knutsen, ODFW fish biologist in Tillamook. Even with slightly smaller returns, Knutsen predicts good coho fishing along the North Coast.

River-specific seasons, quotas, bag limits and closed areas can be found on the [ODFW website](#).

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**The Guide's Forecast** – One of the advantages of fishing the weaker tides on the north coast is the theoretical tapering of moving vegetation through the estuary. That hasn't necessarily been the case on Tillamook or Alsea (and likely other estuaries as well) but anglers can still get some quality catch time in on the outgoing tides, especially the last half of the outgoing. Action should be great on all the previously mentioned systems, using herring fished near the bottom. Be sure to check for weeds often as this will make a difference. All of these estuaries should be productive but you'll find more people in the more popular destinations such as the Nehalem and Tillamook Bays. The upper reaches of these estuaries likely won't produce all that well with the effort and catch that will take place in the lower reaches coupled with the fact that the fish won't move as far up-bay on the weaker tides.

As far as bait, Thursday was my first day in pursuit of Tillamook chinook. We had 10 bites and landed 6 fish, harvesting 5 and letting a jack go. Using a mix of whole-rigged blue and green label herring as well as plug cut blue label baits, all produced good but the whole-rigged blue label produced surprisingly well. Of course it might be just luck but those fish, big and small, seemed to be keyed in on those bigger baits. We spent most of our time on the south side of the south jetty but westward of the tip as a strong ocean swell kept us from accessing some of the more productive areas of the adjacent ocean water.

It would also be wise to soak some crab gear on these weak tides. Success seems sporadic by estuary but conditions are ripe for fair to good catches.

Tuna boats will be heading west through the weekend, assuming weather conditions remain as forecast. Live bait will produce the best but jigging should work as well.

Don't expect knock-down coho fishing anywhere but the ocean will offer up the best opportunity for those trolling green label herring in water deeper than 180 foot south of Cape Falcon. It will still be a few weeks before coho make a stronger showing in these coastal estuaries.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – The big news this week is the scuttling of the Thursday through Saturday openings for ocean coho between Cape Falcon and Humbug Mountain, wild or hatchery, in favor of a seven-day-per-week fishery through September 30th. This opportunity will end if the quota of 19,580 fish is taken, of course, but only 2,410 coho have been reported so far this season due primarily to marginal offshore conditions. Chinook 24 inches or better may be taken through the end of October but the daily bag limit remains two per day of combined species. Go get 'em.

Wild coho may be kept in several coastal rivers and bays starting April 15th. One change anglers will notice is the implementation of open seasons rather than quotas as the former is less labor-intensive hence lowering the cost to the ODFW. For a complete list of all 13 fisheries, quotas, limits and seasons, see **Random Links**, below.

Ocean conditions and water temperatures look promising for tuna over the coming weekend. Trips are certainly being discussed. Trips of 30 to 35 miles are likely but getting on a good bite of albacore averaging well over 20 pounds each makes it worthwhile. Launch out of Newport, Depoe Bay or ports north.

Tuna fishing out of south coast ports has been so poor this season some commercial charters have ceased booking for them.

If the offshore forecast holds true, it will be a fishy weekend for sure. Swells of 2.5 feet or less at nine to 14 seconds combined with winds mostly under 10 mph is bad news for ocean fish and crab.

Bottom fishing out of Newport and Depoe Bay has produced mostly limits of rockfish and ling cod as well as excellent results for ocean crab. The 30-fathom limit for lings will be lifted October 1st.

The Siuslaw has been experiencing heavy boat pressure while producing very few Chinook as the water has been quite warm. The preferred trolling rig is a whole or plug-cur herring about 40 inches behind a flasher fished with four to eight ounces of lead.

Boats launching for ocean Chinook out of Winchester Bay have been doing well. With Chinook entering the bay now, trolling for them has produced fair to good results as has mooching herring at the bar. Fish below the Highway 101 Bridge on the Umpqua for the best chance of a Chinook hookup although there have been some reports of fish being taken upstream. Smallmouth fishing has remained good on the upper Umpqua mainstem. Steelheading is fair to good on the North Umpqua with early mornings providing the better catches. Bass fishing is good on the South Umpqua but try it before Monday, September 16th as the river closes to all fishing on that date.

Coos Bay Chinook catches slowed a little this week but it has still been well worth dragging a herring and flasher around. Boats mooching at the bar early mornings have done well at times. Salmon will also be found upstream on the South Coos River. Personal limits have been taken at times. Boat limits have been taken at when the bite has been on.

Trolling for Chinook in Rogue Bay remains slow this week although back-bouncers and plug pullers are picking up some fish on the lower river. Chinook fishing on the middle Rogue up to Gold Hill has been worthwhile. With the Middle Rogue Steelheaders Chinook fishing derbies wrapping up on September 7th, it was observed that more fish were taking this year than in the last four. Back-bouncing, wrapped Kwifish and side-drifting have all been effective in this stretch. With water temperatures in the high 50s on the upper Rogue, steelheaders have continued to do well. Water flows are predicted to be dropping through the coming weekend on the upper river.

With ocean salmon fishing closed out of Brookings Harbor as of Sunday, September 1st, offshore anglers are looking forward to the annual Hawg Fishery, officially titled the Chetco Ocean Terminal Area Fishery on October 1st through 13th, during which Chinook maybe taken up to three miles out from Twin Rocks to the California border. This opportunity frequently produces the largest salmon of the year but is subject to the whims of mother nature. If wind and wave conditions allow, Chinook fishing is expected to be great.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Water condition on the lower Deschutes has continued to show improvement this week although the White River is still effecting visibility below that tributary mouth. Chinook and summer steelhead counts at Sherars Falls showed dramatic improvement over the first 10 days of September. Lower Deschutes fly anglers have taken some dandy redsides over the past week during evening hours.

Boat traffic has thinned out at Suttle Lake where fishing for smallish kokanee has been very good. Trolling is the best approach although anything over 10 inches is a lunker here. It's early to be trolling plugs for brown trout but that fishery should be decent in October.

Wickiup has been producing good numbers of rainbows and brown trout and is putting out fish of both species over the 20-inch mark.

Odell has been producing decent numbers of kokanee to trollers. While some are beginning to show some color, most remain in good condition.

The water level is getting low at Green Peter, While the Thistle launch is useable, Whitcomb is nearly high and dry. Check the latest water condition here: <http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/nwp/teacup/willamette/gpr.pdf>

### **Washington fishing reports:**

*From the WDF&W Weekender Report for September 2013*

#### **North Puget Sound**

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

Anglers fishing the marine areas of Puget Sound should still find some pink salmon in early September. But the bulk of the pink run will have made its way into the region's rivers by the middle of the month.

"**Pink salmon** fishing is starting to pick up in the rivers as we move into September," said Ryan Lothrop, Puget Sound recreational salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Freshwater fishing opportunities for pink salmon should be good early in the month."

In northern Puget Sound, Lothrop recommends fishing for pink salmon in the Snohomish, Stillaguamish, Skagit and Snoqualmie rivers.

Back on the saltwater, anglers are hooking some bright **ocean coho** in portions of Puget Sound, said Lothrop. "We should see more of those ocean fish make their way into the Sound throughout the month," he said.

Anglers fishing marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release all chinook. In Marine Area 10, anglers must release hatchery chinook starting in September, and must release chum salmon through Sept. 15. Those fishing Marine Area 9 must release chum through Sept. 30.

Marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) are also open for salmon. Anglers fishing those marine areas have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release chinook salmon.

Another option is Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where anglers have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but can keep only one chinook. Anglers in Marine Area 7 must release chum and wild coho.

Lothrop said the best bet for **freshwater anglers fishing for coho** salmon in the region might be the Snohomish and Skagit rivers, where abundant runs are expected to return this year. Other options for coho include the Nooksack, Skykomish, Snoqualmie, and Stillaguamish rivers.

Meanwhile, most areas of Puget Sound will close to **recreational crab fishing** at sunset on Labor Day. The only two areas of the Sound that will remain open to crab fishing after Labor Day are marine areas 7-North (Gulf of Georgia) and 7-South (San Juan Islands/Bellingham). Crabbing in those two areas is open through Sept. 30, Thursdays through Mondays only.

Sport fishers who crab in marine areas 7-North and 7-South after Labor Day must record their catch on winter catch record cards. Winter cards are now available at sporting goods stores and other license vendors across the state.

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6¼ inches. Fishers may also keep six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across, are in hard-shell condition and have a minimum carapace width of 5 inches. See WDFW's [sport-crabbing website](#) for more information.

Crabbers are reminded that their summer catch record cards are due to WDFW by midnight Oct. 1 and must be returned whether or not the cardholder caught or fished for crab during the season. Crabbers who fail to file catch reports for 2013 will face a \$10 fine, which will be imposed when they apply for a 2014 Puget Sound crab endorsement. Completed summer cards can be mailed in or submitted online after Labor Day. Additional information is available on [WDFW's website](#).

WDFW will announce winter crab seasons for Puget Sound in early October, after completing its assessment of the summer fishery.

Elsewhere, **Lake Sammamish** is open for salmon fishing, with a daily limit of four salmon, of which two may be chinook. All sockeye must be released, and fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek. Sammamish Lake's larger neighbor, **Lake Washington**, opens Sept. 16 to coho fishing. Anglers will be allowed four coho per day (minimum size 12 inches) from waters north of the Highway 520 Bridge and east of the Montlake Bridge.

### **South Sound/Olympic Peninsula**

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

So far, salmon season 2013 has been very good in salt and freshwater around the region, and fisheries managers indicate that will continue in September. Large numbers

of chinook, coho, and pink salmon have entered or are entering fresh water, while other chrome-sided salmon remain in saltwater.

“Fishing should remain good through the end of the season in marine areas 1-4, especially for **coho salmon**,” said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). “They grow rapidly in advance of their spawn and remain in saltwater a little longer than their cousins.”

Ocean salmon fisheries are currently scheduled to continue through Sept. 30 in marine areas 1 (Ilwaco) and 2 (Westport) and through Sept. 22 in marine areas 3 (La Push) and 4 (Neah Bay).

Anglers are allowed to keep two **chinook salmon** per day as part of their two-salmon daily limit in all four ocean marine areas, and those fishing in marine areas 3 and 4 are also allowed two bonus pink salmon. All wild coho must be released in marine areas 1-4.

Milward reminds anglers to check for any rule changes at [WDFW's website](#).

**Albacore tuna** fishing typically peaks in September for these lightning-fast visitors to offshore waters. Tuna fishing was inconsistent in August, but began to stabilize and improve moving into September. No daily bag limit applies to albacore, so successful anglers often go home with large quantities of delicious tuna loins.

Closer to shore, **black rockfish** and **lingcod** fisheries have remained strong all summer in the four ocean marine areas. Rockfish are open year round in the ocean, and lingcod are available throughout September and into October.

Anglers will be allowed to catch salmon in Grays Harbor (Marine Area 2-2) for the second consecutive year after a five-year moratorium on fishing the large bay west of Aberdeen. The initial season runs Sept. 16-22, with a daily limit of three salmon, only one of which may be a chinook. A second season runs from Sept. 23-Nov. 30, during which anglers may also keep three salmon but must release all chinook.

Down the coast in Willapa Bay (Marine Area 2-1), salmon fishing is already under way, and early September is prime time for the bay's large chinook. Coho show in strong numbers later in the month.

Up to six salmon may be retained in Willapa Bay, but only three adults may be kept. All wild chinook and chum salmon must be released. Anglers may fish Willapa Bay with two fishing rods so long as they have purchased a Two-Pole Endorsement.

In the Strait of Juan de Fuca, anglers fishing marine areas 5 (Sekiu) and 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) have a two-salmon daily limit (plus two additional pink salmon),

but must release chum, chinook and wild coho through Sept. 14. Regulations change in Marine Area 5 on Sept. 15, when anglers will be allowed to retain wild coho as part of their two-salmon daily limit. Fisheries managers expect salmon fishing to be very good in these waters throughout September.

Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) opportunities expand Sept. 1, when the area north of Ayrock Point opens with a daily limit of four coho salmon. The area south of Ayrock Point has been open for salmon since July 1 with a daily limit of four salmon, two of which may be marked chinook. Anglers must release all wild chinook and chum salmon. Hood Canal's Skokomish River has been very popular for chinook salmon, and that action should carry well into September. See current regulations on the stream [here](#).

September often marks the peak of salmon fishing in the South Puget Sound. Marine areas 11 (Tacoma-Vashon Island) and 13 (South Puget Sound) should offer good opportunities to catch chinook, coho, and especially pink salmon. Anglers are allowed two salmon as their daily limit, plus a bonus of two pinks. In Marine Area 11, all wild chinook must be released, and in Marine Area 13 wild coho and wild chinook must be set free.

Late-arriving **pink salmon** to the Nisqually River should offer some extraordinary fishing in the saltwater as these fish make their way to the river over the first couple weeks of September. Pink salmon are usually best as table fare when they are taken in saltwater, but don't overlook the Nisqually River. Almost one million pinks are expected back to the small river north of Olympia, and the fish stay in good shape for several days as they enter freshwater. Be certain to check WDFW's fishing regulations pamphlet before hitting the water.

Meanwhile, most areas of Puget Sound will close to recreational crabbing at sunset on Labor Day. The only two areas of the Sound that will remain open to crab fishing after Labor Day are marine areas 7-North (Gulf of Georgia) and 7-South (San Juan Islands/Bellingham). Crabbing in those two areas is open through Sept. 30, Thursdays through Mondays only.

Sport fishers who crab in marine areas 7-North and 7-South after Labor Day must record their catch on winter catch record cards. Winter cards are now available at sporting goods stores and other license vendors across the state.

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. Crabbers may also keep six **red rock crab** of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across, are in hard-shell condition and have a minimum carapace width of 5 inches. See WDFW's [sport-crabbing website](#) for more information.

Crabbers are reminded that their summer catch record cards are due to WDFW by Oct.1 and must be returned whether or not the cardholder caught or fished for crab during the season. Crabbers who fail to file catch reports for 2013 will face a \$10 fine, which will be imposed when they apply for a 2014 Puget Sound crab endorsement. Completed summer cards can be mailed in or submitted online after Labor Day. Additional information is available on [WDFW's website](#).

WDFW will announce winter crab seasons for Puget Sound in early October, after completing its assessment of the summer fishery.

In freshwater, September marks the end of kokanee fishing for the season as the fish prepare to spawn, but cooler temperatures in September typically re-ignite the **trout** bite. Check out lakes like Offut, Clear, Ward, Summit, Saint Clair, and many more lakes with strong trout populations in the region; see lake stocking information [here](#).

Spiny rays like **bass**, **panfish**, and **tiger musky** also come alive as water temperatures cool, triggering their instinct to feed heavily to carry these warmwater fish through winter. For panfish and bass, try Kapowsin, Tanwax, Ohop, Summit, Long, Pattison, Black, Hicks, and Munn lakes. Munn is a selective fishery with excellent and overlooked bass and **bluegill** fishing.

Cowlitz River impoundment Mayfield Lake offers some of the state's best tiger musky fishing and is also an overlooked gem for trout anglers.

### **Southwest Washington**

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

September is prime time for salmon fishing in the Columbia River Basin, as large numbers of fish move upriver and into tributaries on both sides of Bonneville Dam. Chinook fishing at Buoy 10 near the mouth of the river closes Sept. 1 at the end of the day, but anglers will still have plenty of options to catch chinook salmon, coho and steelhead throughout the Columbia River Basin. This is also a great time to hook some trout in the high wilderness lakes.

After three weeks of high catch rates, fishery managers from Washington and Oregon required anglers fishing at Buoy 10 to release all unmarked chinook salmon. That decision allowed the fishery to remain open through Sept. 1, with a total catch (including release mortalities) of about 25,000 chinook.

But many more **chinook** – as well as **coho** and **steelhead** – will be available for harvest on the mainstem Columbia and its tributaries in the weeks ahead, said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Approximately 678,000 fall chinook are expected to enter the big river this year, including about 434,000 upriver brights – the highest number since record keeping began in 1964. WDFW has also projected a return of 434,000 coho – three times more than last year – although steelhead are running behind pre-season projections this year.

“September is a great time to fish the Columbia River Basin, but it's important to remember these fish are on the move,” Hymer said. “As the month goes on, successful anglers will follow the fish upriver and into the tributaries.”

Hymer reminds anglers that barbless hooks are required when fishing for salmon or steelhead anywhere on the Columbia River and on most of its tributaries. He also has some advice for anglers fishing the mainstem Columbia River.

“Chinook salmon tend to run fairly deep, so anglers generally do best fishing about 40 to 50 feet down,” he said. “Some of the best fishing for both salmon and steelhead will be at the mouth of tributaries, where the fish hold up before heading upstream. When anchoring in deeper water, anglers should be alert for ship traffic.”

Fishing will remain open at Buoy 10 for hatchery coho and hatchery steelhead after the chinook fishery closes, but Hymer expects the action to move above the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line to Bonneville Dam in September. Chinook retention is allowed there at some times and places, but anglers should be aware of when and where:

- Through Sept. 5, the daily catch limit is six fish per day – including two adult salmon, two adult steelhead or one of each. Barbless hooks are required and only one adult salmon may be a chinook. Anglers may keep either marked or unmarked chinook, but must release any coho salmon or steelhead that is not marked with a clipped adipose fin.
- Starting Sept. 6, anglers must release all wild chinook intercepted downstream from a projected line from the Warrior Rock lighthouse through Red Buoy No. 4 to the orange marker atop the orange dolphin on the Washington shore.
- From Sept. 13 through Sept. 30, all chinook intercepted downstream from the Warrior Rock line must be released.

Hymer said this year's fall chinook run appears to be moving upriver sooner than usual, producing early catches in tributaries above and below Bonneville Dam. By the end of August, anglers were reeling in salmon and steelhead from the Cowlitz River to the

Klickitat River , he said. Fishing should be good there and on other area rivers throughout September, he said.

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.

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

On the Lewis River (including the North Fork), only hatchery chinook may be retained through September. At Drano Lake, anglers may keep any coho (adipose fin clipped or not) throughout the season.

Meanwhile, anglers are still catching **walleye** above and below Bonneville Dam. **Trout** fishing is also still an option at a number of lowland lakes, including Swift and Merwin reservoirs on the Lewis system, where anglers can take advantage of increased catch limits for rainbow and kokanee. At Swift Reservoir, anglers must release all salmon larger than 15 inches in length and any bull trout or steelhead they intercept. Also, anglers can keep 10 hatchery rainbows per day at Lake Scanewa on the Cowlitz River.

For anglers who don't mind a hike, September is also a great time to head for the **high wilderness lakes** around Mount Adams and Mount St. Helens. Hymer recommends three such lakes – Goose, Council and Takhlakh – that all offer drive-in access.

“The mosquitoes should die down around the high mountain lakes after the first frost arrives,” Hymer said. “Sure, the fish are usually small, but the leaves are beginning to turn, the air is crisp and you can really experience the change of season.”

### **Eastern Washington**

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

The catch-and-keep season for hatchery steelhead on the Snake River has been open since mid-June, but angler effort is expected to grow this month as the run passing the Snake River dams increases.

In addition, for a third consecutive year, fishing for hatchery-marked **fall chinook**

**salmon** starts Sept. 1 and is scheduled to run through Oct. 31, but could close earlier depending on harvest rates and run size.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) District Fish Biologist Glen Mendel says the steelhead run appears to be coming in weak this year. As of late August, the A-run of upriver summer steelhead was about 61 percent of the preseason forecast. The B-run steelhead passage was also tracking less than expected so far, but it is still early in the return timing for these fish. The steelhead season runs through March 31.

A large run of upriver bright hatchery fall chinook is expected to return to the Snake River, so anglers should have good opportunities, Mendel said. An estimated return of about 40,000 adults and another 15,000-20,000 jacks are expected in the Snake River at Lower Granite Dam. This is well above the annual returns to the Snake River in the past several decades and continues the upward trend for the past several years.

Up to three hatchery-marked steelhead (those with clipped adipose or ventral fins and a healed scar) can be retained daily. The salmon daily harvest limit in the Washington portion of the Snake River is three adipose fin-clipped fall chinook adults (24 inches in length and larger), and six adipose fin-clipped jack fall chinook (less than 24 inches). Minimum size for chinook is 12 inches.

Barbless hooks are required when fishing for steelhead or salmon. All wild steelhead and chinook, which are protected under the Endangered Species Act, must be released immediately without removing them from the water. Once anglers have retained three hatchery steelhead, they must stop fishing for salmon and steelhead for the day, regardless of whether the salmon daily limit has been retained.

Mendel also reminds anglers to check their catch carefully, because coho salmon are also returning to the Snake River this time of year and those fish must be released. Check the fishing pamphlet (page 96) on how to identify coho; one indicator is that chinook have a black gum line and coho have white.

On the Tucannon River, a tributary of the Snake, critically low levels of wild steelhead have prompted a change in the fishing rules, starting Sept. 1. An [emergency rule change](#) reduces area of the Tucannon River open to steelhead fishing as well as the daily catch limit and the length of the fishing season. Also under that rule, anglers are required to keep hatchery-marked steelhead they intercept.

This month is the last chance to fish several of the region's best **rainbow** and/or **cutthroat trout** fishing lakes. Closing Sept. 30 is West Medical and Williams lakes in southwest Spokane County, and Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County.

Fish Lake in Spokane County also provides anglers the unique opportunity to catch **eastern brook trout** until Sept. 30. Anglers are reminded that Amber Lake shifts to catch-and-release-only on Oct. 1.

WDFW Central District Fish Biologist Randy Osborne said that if conditions are right, September fishing at these lakes can almost rival the first weeks of the season in the spring. "Air and water temperature changes during this month can trigger late summer/early fall insect hatches, which can equate to some pretty productive fishing conditions all month long," he said.

Spokane County's Downs Lake and Lincoln County's Coffeepot Lake also close at the end of the month but can yield good catches of **yellow perch, black crappie,** and **rainbow trout** during September. Badger Lake in Spokane County, which also closes Sept. 30, has become infested with **largemouth** and **smallmouth bass,** and **pumpkinseed sunfish,** and Osborne encourages anglers to harvest limits of those fish that are of legal size (only largemouth less than 12 inches except one over 17 inches; only one smallmouth over 14 inches.)

Plenty of other lakes throughout the region remain open through October or are open year-round. Clear Lake, near the town of Medical Lake in Spokane County, typically produces good catches of **brown trout, crappie,** and **largemouth bass** as fall advances. Lake Roosevelt and Sprague Lake both offer good-size rainbows. Stevens County's Deer and Loon lakes continue to provide a variety of fish, from bass to **kokanee.**

The WDFW access site on the northeast shore of Sacheen Lake, 11 miles southwest of Newport along Highway 211 in Pend Oreille County, will be closed Sept. 9-30 to reconstruct the boat ramp. Sacheen Lake, which has rainbow, tiger, and eastern brook trout, remains open to fishing through Oct. 31.

Sept. 28 is the 40th annual National Hunting and Fishing Day and the 20th annual National Public Lands Day, both of which will be celebrated at WDFW's Eastern Regional office grounds in Spokane Valley with an afternoon fair of local sportsmen clubs. The Inland Northwest Wildlife Council's "virtual reality" fishing and shooting booths and introductory information and demonstrations on fishing and hunting will be featured. For more information, contact WDFW Eastern Regional office at 509-892-1001.

### **Northcentral Washington**

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

The upper Wenatchee River, from the confluence with Peshastin Creek (above Dryden Dam) to the Highway 2 Bridge at Leavenworth, opens Sept. 1 for **hatchery chinook**

**salmon** fishing. The daily catch limit is four, of which only two can be adult fish (24 inches or more). Selective gear rules and a night closure are in effect. Some of the best opportunities should be near Leavenworth.

Columbia River fisheries in the region are still open, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Regional Fish Program Manager Jeff Korth says there should be some **summer chinook salmon** milling around the mouth of the Chelan River.

During the month of September, fishing for resident **rainbow trout** and **cutthroat trout** up to 16 inches can be good in the Methow River, said Okanogan District Fish Biologist Bob Jateff, who reminds anglers that this fishery is under catch-and-release and no-bait-allowed rules.

“Remember, too, that the lower section of the Methow, from Lower Burma Road Bridge upstream to Gold Creek, will close on Sept. 15,” Jateff said. “The remaining area, from Gold Creek upstream to Foghorn Dam near Winthrop, is scheduled to close on Sept. 30. Anglers should not target steelhead during September on the Methow River, because that can lead to early closures for this very popular catch and release trout fishery.”

Jateff also notes that as lake temperatures cool a bit this month, other fishing waters can be good for trout when the fish become more active. These include Big Twin Lake near Winthrop, Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, and Chopaka Lake near Loomis.

“For the warmwater angler, lakes such as Leader, Patterson, and Palmer can provide good opportunities for **yellow perch, crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass** and **smallmouth bass**,” Jateff said.

Starting Sept. 1, Davis, Campbell, and Cougar lakes, all near Winthrop, shift from a catch-and-release to a catch-and-keep season on trout. The daily catch limit is five fish, and bait is allowed. Jateff reminds anglers who use bait that the first five fish caught count towards the daily limit whether kept or released.

### **Southcentral Washington**

(Benton, Franklin, Kittitas and Yakima counties)

The cooler weather of September signals a transition from the blazing southcentral Washington summer to cooler autumn temperatures that spur fish and wildlife activity across the region. Big game become more active, bass bite better, and salmon and steelhead shoot upstream to spawn.

This year, a whole lot of salmon are shooting upstream.

According to the preseason forecast, 678,000 **fall chinook salmon** will enter the Columbia River this year, and about two-thirds of them will keep moving past Bonneville Dam on route to the mid-Columbia and Snake Rivers.

An anticipated 146,000 fish will return to the Hanford Reach this year, including 90,000 wild fish returning to spawn in the only remaining free-flowing stretch of the Columbia River in the United States. Fisheries managers also predict a large return of 45,000 chinook to Priest Rapids Hatchery and another 11,000 to the Ringold-Meseberg Hatchery.

While the September salmon fishery in the Columbia often starts out slow, fishing usually ramps up quickly by mid-September as more fish move past the dam and water temperatures drop, said Paul Hoffarth, a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) fish biologist based in Pasco.

"There's a lot of anticipation out there right now," Hoffarth said. "Anglers are catching fish here and there, especially very experienced anglers, but they know a lot more are headed our way, and earlier than normal. By the middle of the month, we should have plenty of upriver brights in the Hanford Reach for good fishing."

Most areas of the Columbia River have been open for salmon fishing since Aug. 1, and two major tributaries will open in September.

The Yakima River opens for salmon fishing Sept. 1 from the Columbia River upstream to Prosser Dam, although the area around the Chandler Powerhouse will remain closed, as in previous years. "Most fish move into the Yakima after water temperatures drop to a comfortable level, usually sometime in late September or early October." Most of the Yakima's chinook hold in the cooler Columbia before their run up their natal river.

The Snake River also opens Sept. 1 for hatchery fall chinook. State fishery managers predict another strong return of upriver bright chinook salmon to the Snake this year and have again set the daily catch limit to include three adult hatchery chinook, plus six hatchery jack chinook under 24 inches in length. The Snake River is open from the Highway 12 bridge near Tri-Cities upstream to the Oregon state line above Heller Bar, and only hatchery (adipose-clipped) chinook can be harvested.

Anglers must use barbless hooks when fishing for salmon and steelhead in the Columbia and Snake Rivers and cannot remove any chinook or steelhead from the water unless it is retained as part of the daily bag limit. Anglers are advised to check the [sportfishing rulespamphlet](#) and emergency [rules](#)

for all waters before heading out.

Anglers have also been catching some **hatchery steelhead** both above and below McNary Dam, and the harvest should pick up throughout the month, said Hoffarth. For a second year, steelhead appear to be returning in numbers well below pre-season estimates, but enough fish have entered the river system to meet conservation objectives and provide good fishing opportunities throughout the season.

September is sometimes slow for these ocean-going rainbow trout due to warm water temperatures, especially in the Snake River, but anglers have success fishing very early in the morning, at dusk, and in the dark of night. Shrimp fished under lighted bobbers and trolled lighted plugs account for most of the fish at night, and the same offerings along with spinners and traditional plugs take fish during daylight hours.

Anglers can retain two hatchery steelhead per day in the Columbia River and three hatchery steelhead per day in the Snake River. Hatchery fish must measure 20 inches and are identifiable by a missing adipose fin with a healed scar.

"WDFW is expecting several thousand steelhead to return to Ringold-Meseberg Hatchery this fall, but steelhead fishing in the Columbia River above the Highway 395 Bridge at Kennewick is not scheduled to open until Oct. 1." Hoffarth indicates an early opening is unlikely this year due to lagging steelhead returns.

**Walleye** will also garner attention from the region's anglers this September. These toothy fish are considered by many to be the best table fare, and they bite aggressively in September and throughout much of the fall in anticipation of leaner months ahead. The Snake River below Ice Harbor Dam is one of the region's best walleye fisheries, as is the Columbia River below McNary Dam.

Good walleye fishing can be found almost anywhere on the big river, but the stretch from McNary downstream to Crow Butte is considered by many to be Washington's crown jewel walleye fishery for large fish. Popular tactics include trolling worm harnesses and spinners behind bottom-bouncing sinkers, trolling deep-diving plugs, and jigging blade baits or plastic baits on jig heads.

**Smallmouth bass** share habitat with walleye and sometimes spend the summer even deeper than their toothy neighbors, as deep as 50 feet. They move in shallower as waters cool and food sources come available. Fishing tends to improve for these hard-fighters in September and carries on through October until cold water sends them back to great depths to spend the winter.

Sturgeon fishing is restricted to catch and release in most areas of the Columbia River, including Lake Wallula and Lake Umatilla.

Meanwhile, in the White Pass and Yakima areas, fishing picks up again in September for **rainbow and cutthroat trout** as water temperatures become more favorable in the lakes and streams in the northern part of the region. Leech, Dog, and Clear lakes near White Pass offer great access, stunning scenery, and good opportunities to catch trout.

Popular moving-water trout fishing destinations include the Yakima, Naches, Little Naches, Teanaway, and Bumping rivers, as well as Taneum, Naneum, and Manashtash creeks. Most rivers and creeks have special regulations like selective gear rules that prohibit bait. Anglers should check the regulation pamphlet for all details.

### **TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail**

TGF Subscriber Michael T. (not our co-editor) wrote to this week, "I really appreciate all of the good info that comes each week in the guides forecast. I was wondering if you could share some strategy and timing for when to fish the below Bonnie for fall salmon.

"Are there some general areas you would recommend for backtrolling up there? I have fished it a few times for Springers, but wanted to expand my knowledge of the area. Do the tides impact this area much? I wouldn't think they would, are there other factors I should be considering when fishing this area?

"I also attached a few pics from my Astoria trip this past August. One is of my oldest son earning an ice cream treat for him and the rest of the kids on board that day by kissing the fish.



"We are heading down to Astoria for some silver action this weekend, do you have any reports that you could share, focus areas, etc?"

"Thank you in advance for your hard work and willingness to share the info."

Weekly contributor and **pro guide Chris Vertopoulos**, who has the most knowledge regarding this fishery, replied, "The tides are not much of an issue up at Bonneville, as you always have plenty of flow. This makes for good back trolling as well as anchor fishing water. The best back trolling water is up along Ives Island and Hamilton Island just below the boat ramp in the Wa. side. Also, Moffit Creek has some good back trolling water on the Oregon side. Jumbo jet divers are the rule for back trolling and letting out at least 80 to 100 feet of line is key. Anchor fishing spots dot both sides of the river from the deadline downstream for many miles. Look for the hog lines, you won't miss them. I have a friend/fishing guide is doing particularly well up there, anchor fishing in 20 to 30 feet of water with bait wrapped Kwikfish. The fishing should be going strong and improving, as the water cools through October. Good luck"

#### **Write to the TGF staff:**

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#### **Random Links**

A Sample Bite of Oregon Fly Fishing:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=uvsiKxbNg2c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=uvsiKxbNg2c)

2013 Coastal Coho Salmon Sport Regulations:

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/docs/2013\\_coho\\_fisheries.pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/docs/2013_coho_fisheries.pdf)

Gangsters of the flat - Winner, SFA SA 2012 fly fishing film competition:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OS\\_hv\\_Y410A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OS_hv_Y410A)

**GOOD LUCK!**