

The Guide's Forecast - volume 15 issue number 43

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 18th – October 24th, 2013**

Willamette Valley/Metro - The Columbia River below Bonneville Dam continues to produce the odd productive day for chinook salmon, but more and more days are slow. The majority of the run has passed, but 2,000 to 5,000 kings a day are still ascending the ladders. Many of the fish staging below the dam are destined to spawn there and a high percentage are already donning their spawning colors, so anglers should take consideration and let them do their thing, unmolested.

Silver salmon are still climbing the ladder at Willamette falls at a rate of 200 - 400 per day and fishermen continue to take a few at the mouths of the Tualatin, Molalla and Yamhill Rivers. Silvers above the falls can be harvested regardless of having a fin-clip or not. Below the falls, little is happening except for the odd silver caught at the mouth of the Clackamas or at Meldrum Bar. A one day sturgeon retention opener is slated for Saturday, October 19th. Late season bass and walleye fishing is likely good, but few anglers are participating.

The McKenzie River is fishing well as brightly-colored foliage gives evidence of fall arriving. Rivaling the brilliance of the leaves are the large, colorful reddsides coming to hand for fly fishers. Drifted nymphs are effective early in the day with Caddis imitations and Adams effective as the day warms.

Bright coho can be seen rolling and jumping at various locations on the North Santiam but getting them to bite or strike is always a challenge.

Good water conditions prevail on the Clackamas River but few fish are there to catch. Very slow fishing for silvers has been the norm this season. Eagle Creek is the destination for most Clack silvers, but the water is getting low and the few fish that are there are scattered.

The Sandy offers better opportunity for silver salmon and the odd chinook. The river is still holding at a good level since last week's rain and fish are scattered from the lower river up to Cedar Creek. The fish seem to be more concentrated in the upper stretch. Both coho and chinook salmon must be fin-clipped to retain on the Sandy.

The family fishing event scheduled for October 19 at Canby Pond has been cancelled. Blame it on the weeds which are too thick to allow for a pleasant fishing experience.

Northwest – Although far from the blistering hot beginning anglers witnessed on Tillamook Bay, action for chinook remains consistent with the ocean and the Ghost Hole still producing some of the best catches. Calm ocean weather has drawn a renewed interest in the nearshore for chinook and the outlook seems favorable through the weekend. Too bad ocean crabbing is now closed as Lee Richey of Tualatin and his crew of 4 took their 60-Dungeness crab limits along with 4 chinook on Tuesday, just south of the jetty out of Tillamook Bay. Crabbing in Tillamook Bay itself is just fair but should improve pending any other storm fronts. The upper bay may turn on again with the strong tide series over the weekend.

Tidewater reaches of the Tillamook streams has slowed recently but may improve again following the strong upcoming tide series. The Wilson River should hold the greatest promise after mid-October.

The Nehalem system has jump started again, following the prolonged period of turbid water following the last rain event. Trollers working the mouth continue to do very well with some coho in the mix. Pressure has let up but the good fishing continues. No north coast estuary is close to achieving their coho quota and is slated to go through November.

The lower Columbia is vacant of anglers but one guide boat reported 2 chinook and 4 hatchery coho last week with fairly consistent catches of coho still coming. The strong tide series this weekend could bring about another small shot of coho for those wanting a serene experience. Crabbing is excellent downstream of Hammond.

Southwest- Offshore conditions are supposed to moderate into the coming weekend according to long-range forecasts. Nearshore and deep water lingcod fishing has been good with rock fishers taking mostly limits. Ocean crabbing has slowed but is still worthwhile.

Now that fresh water has been replaced with that of a salty nature, bay crabbers should expect some improvement in catches.

Winchester Bay trollers have continued to hook up with chinook on herring with most catches coming from the jaws and below the Highway 101 Bridge.

Florence boaters have taken a few large chinook trolling herring in tidewater over the past week. Pressure has been moderate.

Rogue Bay has provided some productive periods over the past week with scores of fish landed on some days. Catches are a mix of chinook and coho. Indian Creek chinook have finally started showing in catchable numbers and are hitting spinners. Steelhead and coho are being taken at Agness. Steelheading has been decent on the middle river with flies, lures and bait all effective at times. Upper Rogue fishing continues to yield consistent results for steelhead.

The Chetco Ocean Terminal Area Fishery closed October 13th with at least one 50-pounder and several 40-pound chinook landed. Trollers attention will now focus on Brookings Harbor from the jaws to the mouth of the Chetco River. Trolled anchovies are most effective. Halibut may be taken out of Brookings through the last day of October.

No chinook have been reported from the low, clear waters of the Elk or Sixes Rivers. Look for these to turn on later in the year.

Eastern – steelheading is fair to good on the lower Deschutes. Counts ramped up at Sherars Falls over the past week. Expect lower flows as the Bureau of Reclamation has the outflow from Wickiup down to a trickle to allow the reservoir to fill.

Steelheading has improved on the Grande Ronde River with some anglers reporting multiple fish. Flies and spinners have been effective.

SW Washington- Coho and chinook are still peaking on the big 3 district tributaries. The North Fork Lewis remains a top bet for quality chinook and coho are options on the Cowlitz, mainstem Lewis and Kalama Rivers. Fresh coho should be available through the end of October but returns are expected to be down.

Drano Lake remains a fair option for chinook but the lower Klickitat is still productive for chinook and some coho. Both should begin to taper after late October.

Catch and release sturgeon fishing is typically strong in October but without a consumptive opportunity, interest is low.

Columbia River Fishing Report – With so few anglers participating in such a disappointing late season, we will continue to ramp down our reports for this area. It was worth mentioning however that there was some fair late season coho action with a rare chinook in the mix. **Pro guide Kevin Newell (360-430-2521)** indicated that fishing was fair last week with 2 to 6 keepers reported per trip out of Astoria. Kevin has since wrapped up his lower Columbia season in pursuit of Willamette sturgeon however. It will be a crabbing show in the estuary now but the current strong tide series we're on now won't produce great catches unless you intensively crab during the tide exchanges.

Upriver, anchor anglers and trollers are about to wrap things up but those in the know are still taking fish on a nearly daily basis. Spinners and plugs dominate the techniques now but the day will soon come (and I mean soon) that the biters will fail to show. Unless you really know your stuff here, don't count on catching any fish in this volatile fishery. The weather alone may still be worth it however.

Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "The Columbia River below Bonneville Dam continues to produce the odd productive day for Chinook salmon, but more and more days are slow. The majority of the run has passed, but recent counts have dropped to between one and three thousand kings a day ascending the ladders. Many of the fish staging below the dam are destined to spawn there and a high percentage are already donning their spawning colors, so anglers should consider moving on to a different fishery."

The Guide's Forecast – The estuary fishery is over but most anglers believed that weeks ago, if not over a month ago. A few hatchery coho will remain and here is the netting schedule this week:

Non-Indian Fisheries
Late Fall Commercial Salmon Fishery

Adopted non-Indian commercial fishing periods as follows:
Season:

6:00 AM to 6:00 PM Wednesday October 16, 2013
(12 hrs)

6:00 AM to 6:00 PM Friday October 18, 2013
(12 hrs)

6:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday October 21, 2013
(12 hrs)

Area:
Zones 1-3. Upper deadline defined as a straight line projected from the Warrior Rock Lighthouse on the Oregon shore easterly through the green navigation Buoy #1 and continuing to the Washington shore.

We'll still be on a strong tide series through the weekend so your window for biters will only be a short window around high slack. Once the tide starts ripping, your success rates will drop and your crab buoys will go under on both the incoming and outgoing tides so be aware of your water velocities.

Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "On the Columbia River below the dam, anglers will still catch late season Chinook through the end of the month. Most are dark and are best left to spawn in peace."

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "Silver salmon are still climbing the ladder at Willamette falls at a rate of one to two hundred per day and fishermen continue to take a few at the mouths of the Tualatin, Molalla and Yamhill

Rivers. Best action has been reported near the boat ramp at Willamette Park (above Willamette Falls). Casting and retrieving red or fire tiger wiggle warts is the favorite tactic. The action is much less than consistent, but the occasional fish or two gets boated. Silvers above the falls can be harvested regardless of having a fin-clip or not. Below the falls, little is happening except for the odd silver caught at the mouth of the Clackamas or at Meldrum bar. A one day sturgeon opener, is slated for Saturday, October 19th from Willamette Falls down to the confluence with the Columbia River. The Multnomah Channel and Gilbert river are also open for the one day season. One sturgeon with a fork length of 38"-54" may be retained and only single barbless hooks are allowed. Best action will likely take place below the falls at Oregon City and in the lower Portland Harbor. The Toyota docks are a favorite spot. Late season bass and walleye fishing is likely good, but few anglers are participating leaving little to report."

Mid-October flows are only a little higher than those of mid-September on the McKenzie River. In addition to excellent water conditions and willing trout, the fall foliage is spectacular.

It is estimated that the number of coho which have passed over Willamette Falls has surpassed the season total of summer steelhead counted at that location. About a quarter of the coho headed upstream will enter the Santiam system. North Santiam levels will remain unseasonably high as the level at Detroit Reservoir must be reduced by 80 feet to allow for flood control over the winter months.

Alton Baker Canal, Dorena Reservoir and Waverly Lake Re scheduled for trout stocking.

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "Fishing for silvers above Willamette Falls is dropping off but a few stragglers will get caught for the next week.... or maybe two. Most have some color to them and have little table value. The sturgeon opener slated for Saturday will likely get average participation at best. A few keeper fish will get caught, but reaching the quota is a stretch, leaving the possibility for another opener in the near future. Stable, dry weather leaves good opportunity for late season bass and walleye fishing."

Many of those thousands of coho which have passed over Willamette Falls can be seen rolling and jumping at various locations on the Yamhill River. The dozen or more hopefuls at the mouth are using plugs and spinners but only catching a few.

With the morning chill on the McKenzie, one might expect to see frost on the pumpkins soon. As the sun warms the air, early-day nymphing gives way to productive dry fly fishing, however, as Blue-Winged Olives take flight. Patterns imitating October Caddis are effective.

While colorful late-season summer steelhead may be found on the south Santiam above the Lebanon dam, a better target might be the ever-growing number of coho which can be found on the lower North Santiam. When coho are in the mood to bite, spinners or jigs will be effective.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "Good water conditions prevail on the Clackamas River but few fish are there to catch. Very slow fishing for silver salmon has been the norm this season. Eagle Creek is the destination for most Clack silvers, but the water is getting low and the few fish that are there are scattered.

"The Sandy offers better opportunity for silver salmon and the odd Chinook salmon. The river has dropped since last week's rain and fish are scattered from the lower river up to Cedar Creek, with the upper stretch being the most productive. Both silver(coho) and Chinook salmon must be fin-clipped to retain on the Sandy."

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "A few scattered silver salmon are available from the mouth of the Clackamas up to Eagle Creek but they are so far and

few between that it makes any success a fluke. Expect the first of the winter steelhead run to arrive in late December.

"Low water is make the fishing tough on the Sandy. The next rain (which is nowhere in sight) might bring another squirt of silvers up the river."

North Coast Fishing Report – As mentioned last week, we're unlikely to see the epic fishing we witnessed in early October but fishing remains very consistent on Tillamook Bay and as you'll see on Friday's and Saturday's, anglers remain pretty excited to pursue them.

Most recently, I've been fishing the flat calm ocean, not only taking advantage of the awesome crabbing but also first crack at biting chinook before they enter the bay. Many veteran guides and avid anglers have remained focused on the Ghost Hole and it continues to produce catches on the early morning incoming tide push. With the stronger incoming tide push this week, fish will often bypass the deeper water and scoot right across the shallows, only to be intercepted in other areas such as the Bay City Piling slot, where a good bite was witnessed early on the incoming tide push on Wednesday. The bite went on for quite a while, well, for about an hour+ anyway, of quite productive fishing. There were also some boats effectively working the Ray's Place Piling although the bite wasn't as prolific as it was at the Ghost Hole or Bay City on Wednesday. There were also some fish in the west channel on Wednesday but mostly in the early part of the incoming tide. The ocean was rough on Wednesday morning and surprisingly restricted for much of the day. The jaws have not been fishing well on the strong incoming tides.

Herring, of course, dominate the catches in Tillamook Bay although spinners still have a place throughout the estuary. Chinook are still consistently being taken by spinner trollers at Bay City and the West Channel is also responsible for giving up a few spinner fish too. With fewer people using them right now, they certainly still have a place in your arsenal. One successful angler has cited the white-backed blades with red or orange is working best in the morning. I'm even going to try plugs on the monster incoming tide this weekend. Blue label herring remain hard to find but if you can get your hands on large green label herring, they are working fine. Just keep them fishing near the bottom, no matter if you're near high tide or low tide, or anytime in between for that matter.

The tidewater fishery has slowed somewhat but that could change on the current strong high tide series. The Wilson has produced well for this early in the season, indicating that the run should continue strong well into November. Although tidewater fly anglers typically do better under these clear-water conditions, they too have been struggling the last few days. The Trask has been relatively quiet too but more fish are likely to come.

The Nehalem system continues to produce good numbers of fish for the few anglers participating in the fishery. Although not consistent day to day, action from the mouth to Nehalem continues to produce good results. Trolled herring remains a staple here, especially as the water temperatures continue to drop. Wheeler and Nehalem produced the better catches on Wednesday while the jaws produced poorly. Coho seem more prevalent in the Nehalem system although few anglers are specifically targeting them. The North Fork Nehalem needs more water, angler interest and fish presence are both low.

The Nestucca is still seeing some fair returns and bobber tossers are still working tidewater from the Boat Ramp Hole in Pacific City well upstream to Woods. There are some darker fish in the system but the strong tide series this week should bring in some fresh ones too.

Although crabbing should be picking up in the coastal estuaries, the strong tides this week won't help success rates. With no fresh water influxes predicted for the near future, success will likely only get

better as the fall spawn comes on. The ocean closure may also inspire better catch rates as success was dramatically improving prior to the closure on the 15th.

The Guide's Forecast – With no precipitation in sight, anglers may welcome the upcoming strong tide series to bring fish into the bay. It could just work as we're already seeing some good catches on the strongest part of the push this week. The stand-bee's; Ghost Hole, Bay City and the West Channel should all produce fish this week but don't overlook other non-descript locations, even shallower water than you're used to fishing as these tides will put fish in unlikely places. Several anglers reported catching chinook in 6 foot of water recently. It can really pay to play away from your competition. The jaws will likely continue to disappoint anglers but the ocean could remain in play with this upcoming offshore forecast:

FRI

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 3 FT AT 10 SECONDS.

FRI NIGHT

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 3 FT AT 12 SECONDS.

SAT

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT...EASING TO 5 TO 10 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 3 FT.

SAT NIGHT

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

SUN

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

MON

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 9 FT.

No matter how calm the ocean is forecast to be, you often never know until you get there. I have bookmarked this great web page (<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/pqr/marine/BarObs.php>) that gives me a good idea as to what to expect. We were quite surprised on Wednesday, to cross an un-restricted bar and have a very large wave break just 15 feet off of my port bow. It was supposed to be a calm sea. We abruptly came back into the bay. The ocean is often a consistent producer but on these strong tide series, it seems bay fishing is more productive. The ocean bite dramatically drops off after the first 3 hours of daylight anyway.

Although the good bite at Bay City didn't seem to translate into a productive afternoon bite in the upper bay, that is often the case on these strong tides. We did take one of our 3 fish at Cap Johnson's in the upper bay but I never saw another fish taken. Seems odd, given the number of fish I saw taken at Bay City on the morning bite. Maybe those fish scooted across Kilchis Flats and into the lower Wilson River? It still seems likely that the upper bay fishery will turn on late into the incoming tide for a possible high slack bite near the mouth of the Wilson River and possibly at Memaloose. This will be a good week to see if that happens.

Like the Tillamook system, the Nehalem should also still produce some good results in the upper reaches of the bay. Also like the Tillamook, the jaws will be an unlikely producer on these strong tides as fish seem to just sweep into the estuary and not slow down until they reach the upper ends of saltwater. This

should continue to make Wheeler and Nehalem the top prospects in this system. Trolled herring will still reign but spinners should also be in your arsenal, especially if everyone else is trolling herring.

Nestucca anglers should have another good crack at fresh fish from Pacific City to Woods. Trollers may find themselves producing as well as bobber casters in the current tide series. Although most trollers use spinners or plugs, don't overlook herring in the tidewater reaches.

Not a great weekend for crabbers but razor clam diggers may find themselves in good spirits with the calm surf and adequate minus tide series already underway. The Clatsop Beaches will produce the best and by the weekend, you may need a lantern to take advantage of the best part of the tide.

Central & South Coast Reports – Fishing for bottom dwellers is good to excellent in the ocean at this time of year but crab may no longer be part of the bounty as of October 16th. Crabbing may take place only in bays and estuaries but the good news is that it should soon show improvement (though it hasn't yet) and will definitely pick up into winter months.

Offshore fishers will be greeted with a friendly ocean and mild breezes according to weekend forecasts. Most meat anglers are quite satisfied with the seven rockfish a day bag limits being taken by most on nearshore reefs. One cabezon 15 inches or better may be kept as a part of that limit until further notice as the quota is yet to fill.

The NOAA reports, "HIGH PRESSURE OVER THE NORTHEAST PACIFIC OCEAN AND THERMAL LOW PRESSURE OVER CALIFORNIA WILL LEAD TO A SUMMER LIKE NORTHERLY WIND PATTERN THROUGH THE UPCOMING WEEKEND." Here's a crazy (but not too surprising) result: With that favorable weather report, there are discussions of "just one more" tuna run for the year.

While ling cod are being taken by those targeting rockfish, now that there is no limit to the depths we may fish, specimens well in excess of the 22-inch minimum are coming from deep water haunts. Two per day may be kept but most ethical anglers are returning large females to ensure propagation of the species. Fishing has been good out of nearly every Oregon port with the ODFW reporting the average catch has been one and two ling cod for every angler.

Whole the Siletz is low, clear and dropping as are most coastal river although bright Chinook are moving in with the tides. Bobber and bait have been effective on the incoming with plugs taking fish on the ebb. Fishing will continue here for several weeks.

Salmon fishing has slowed on the Alsea with only a few fish being taken recently on the high tide with some locals even speculating that it may be wrapping up for the season here.

Siuslaw trollers have been taking some Chinook this week on herring fished very near the bottom near the railroad bridge.

Coho catches are reported as good this week in the Coos and Coquille systems. A few late Chinook are also being taken although these fish are spreading out. Crabbing has yet to show much improvement.

Results for salmon trollers have slowed at Winchester Bay over the past week with only a few Chinook and coho landed near the Chetco mouth. On the other hand, bobber and bait fishers have been scoring in the channel near the East Boat Basin with some limiting out. Those offering a "sandwich" (a combination of sand shrimp and eggs) are doing best with this method effectively eclipsing spinner fishing for effectiveness. A few coho have been taken on the Umpqua mainstem but results are spotty. The Swiftwater section of the North Umpqua has been most productive for steelheaders.

Fishing has been slow to fair for Chinook and coho on the lower Rogue River. About 75% of the coho hooked here are natives which have to be released. Adult steelhead and half-pounders are being taken on flies and spinners near Agness. Steelheaders are doing well in the middle river using a variety of baits and lures with the water temperature in the optimum mid-50s range. Steelhead catches are fair but steady on the upper Rogue where the water temperature only reaches the 50-degree mark on occasion. The flies-only restriction will remain in effect through October on the upper river.

The Port of Brookings website reports that salmon fishing in the Chetco has come to a halt for the year. Well, yeah, in the ocean, but bay anglers are continuing to enjoy at least fair results and as the Chetco level drops with dry weather, salmon will keg up in the harbor creating additional opportunities. Bobber and bait fishers will take fish in these conditions and south jetty dock anglers will have a pretty good shot at hooking up as well. Halibut may also be taken in the ocean out of the Port of Brookings through October 31st.

Elk and Sixes anglers have been taking no fish in low, clear water. This situation will remain unchanged until the next round of precipitation.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Traffic and pressure is light weekdays on the lower Deschutes. Fly casters targeting steelhead are catching a few but are finding large redsides anxious to take their offerings. Chinook steelhead and coho are being counted in ever0increasing numbers at Sherars Falls. Catches here have been good although it's sometimes a little crowded. Try it before the end of the month when it closes.

Fishing has been slow at Wickiup although anglers are occasionally being rewarded with nice-quality brown and rainbow trout.

Crane Prairie is producing decent numbers of trout but not the large once for which it is so well known.

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Random Links

18-foot oarfish found off southern California coast is supposedly a small one

<http://www.cnn.com/2013/10/15/us/california-18-foot-oarfish/>

Coos River Salmon 2013:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=gT_qTpWL5LQ

Pacific Northwest Fly Tyers Rendezvous November 9th

<http://nwflytyers.org/>

GOOD LUCK!