

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **August 26th – September 2nd, 2005**

Fisheries Update: Although the Buoy 10 fishery is underway, action is not what one would expect for this time of year. We may still be surprised however as the tides are ripe for high success rates over the weekend. The Oregon and Washington sides are producing equally well- depending on what time of the tide anglers wish to target their salmon.

The tributary mouths like the Cowlitz and Kalama should begin to produce good results by the weekend. Wobblers rule this fishery and the edges of the shipping channel often produce as well as the mouths of these tributaries. The Troutdale fishery may also kick in but anglers will have to compete with gillnetters for a August 25th, 11 hour opener.

The Columbia River Gorge may be best left to the steelheaders. The larger B run steelhead should begin to show in greater numbers but avid anglers likely know that the bulk of the run has passed Bonneville Dam by now.

Sturgeon effort is non-existent in the estuary and the gorge. Crabbing in the estuary remains fair at best.

The North Oregon Coast is nearing the start of its fall Chinook run. The Nestucca and Nehalem estuaries typically start about this time. The weaker tide series may produce some results for dedicated anglers trolling herring near the mouths of these systems.

Crabbing is great in many Northern Oregon Coastal Estuaries like the Tillamook, Netarts and Nestucca.

The summer all-depth halibut season is open every Friday. Saturday and Sunday until the quota fills. Catches are great and some of the fish are quite large. A Salem man took one too large for the scale at South Beach which was estimated at 134 pounds. Offshore bottom fishing is excellent with regular, albeit reduced limits common.

Offshore salmon fishing out of Winchester Bay has been goon whenever the wind permits.

Look for additional release on the Rogue River scheduled for September 1st to encourage Fall chinook upstream. The low waters have kept the fish kegged in the bay although the fish are mostly uncooperative with the numerous anglers trying for them.

Anglers launching out of Brookings, disappointed at the opening week, were rewarded with catches last weekend. Over 400 chinook were caught with some going 30 and 40 pounds.

The Clackamas and Sandy are low and slow. The lower Willamette is low and warm, and with sturgeon retention closed, offers little to anglers. North Santiam steelheaders may expect to find good water conditions and fish on the upper stretches.

Lake Billy Chinook is putting out scores of kokanee to trollers. Jigs are scoring kokes at Odell Lake.

Deschutes fly fishermen are finding decent action early and late in the day on caddis dries. Nymphing is only fair throughout the hot days.

Trout were stocked this week at Big Creek Reservoir numbers 1 and 2, Cleawox Lake, Estacada Lake, Faraday Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, Clear Lake, Badger Lake, Spring Creek, Fall River and Shevlin Pond.

Washington

With two weeks to go before the Labor Day weekend, the coastal salmon season finally hit its stride. By the end of the third week of August, anglers fishing off Westport were averaging nearly 1.4 salmon per rod - mostly chinook - with other areas not far behind.

"This is the best salmon fishing we've seen all season," said Wendy Beeghley, a fish biologist who monitors the ocean fishery for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "We've had better years, but anything over a fish per person isn't bad."

At the same time, thousands of pink salmon have been pushing through the Strait of Juan de Fuca, keeping anglers busy throughout most of Puget Sound. At such popular fishing spots as "Humpy Hollow" and "Shipwreck," catch rates have bested a fish per rod. Schools of coho are following close behind.

"These fish have got to move through now," said Doug Milward, WDFW coastal fisheries manager. "Chinook and coho are moving along the coast headed for the Strait, coastal rivers and the Columbia River to spawn. The action is far from over, it just moves to inside waters."

Those with shellfish or combination license should make sure to take a crab pot on any salmon-fishing expeditions in near shore waters, Milward said. As noted below, all crabbing areas are currently open - either four or seven days per week - plus the entire Labor Day weekend.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Is this as good as it gets?..... If this is an all-out Buoy 10 break-out, we are in for a tough season. Fishing has picked up significantly, as tides have become more favorable for the a.m. angler. A morning high slack coupled with an outgoing tide has opened up some opportunities on the Oregon side of the river. Anglers were finding good success at the bridge on the Oregon side and along the green line for the first 2 hours of outgoing tide. As the tide series begins to weaken, that bite may last longer. I started my morning (8/24) at the bridge hooking up a Chinook shortly after putting in the water. That fish took a herring and broke the mainline- one of the few herring bites I have had all season. The second fish took a red/white blade- a hatchery coho of about 10 pounds. Fish on this side of the river were biting between 15 and 18 pulls. Some guide boats took 3 to 5 fish in the first 2 hours of daylight. The bite soon slowed and I took off to the Washington side above the bridge and hit a wild coho and upriver bright Chinook- both took spinners in about 40 foot of water. After a long troll to the Chinook wing jetties, we broke off to the Oregon side at Buoy 22 to conduct a downstream troll on the last part of the outgoing tide. We hit two fish (landing one Chinook) right off the bat and continued our troll to nearly Buoy 12 without another strike. There has been some good fishing on lower Desdemona where anglers can get out of the fast flow of the main channels and even troll cross-wise. There have been some good coho bites in this slack water but Chinook are available too.

More coho are beginning to show in the river and the ratio of wild versus hatchery is about 50/50. The coho are mixed in with the Chinook making it hard to target coho at any given time. The traditional coho bite at Buoy 10 on the incoming tide has been non-existent. Also, the traditional Chinook bite at low slack from Buoy 11 to Buoy 10 has been non-existent. Anglers are having to be more innovative to find good results this season so think outside the box!

Spinners continue to be a top offering for me with the red/white my best producer. Another consistent color continues to be the black/purple tipped blade with red or white beads. Greens (chartreuse in particular) has been productive for some guides but the hot colors seem to be more popular. I have fished wobblers for only a limited time but have yet to produce a fish. I had more confidence in them last year when there were more fish present.

The Washington side above the bridge continues to produce consistent results but only close to high tide. The last half of incoming (very late and very early in the day) and the first part of outgoing are

the best.

The ocean has been hit or miss lately. We traveled to the 46 01.2 line the other day (near Tillamook Head) and took an easy limit for the Alan Danner crew on 8/21. The ocean was flat as a pancake and there were many boats fishing in the area. Birds and whales were present and the baitfish were everywhere. We only took 2 Chinook but the other 8 coho we took averaged 7 to 9 pounds but we had a 14 pounder too. Anchovies worked as well as herring and we even took our largest Chinook (10 pounds) on an Alvin wobbler at 40 strips. As an afternoon NW wind was forecasted, many guides weren't enthused about making that run again but found good success closer to the mouth of the river. By Wednesday (8/24) the ocean action had turned sporadic again when it should only be getting better.

Pro Guide Bill Kremers (541-602-0881) adds this, " ... have had some excellent salmon about 3 miles west, southwest of the Weather Buoy. Have been limiting the boat out on this week in less than four hours. These includes releasing several native coho, lost coho at the boat and lots of short strikes. We are going out between 9 and 15 pulls and using cut plus herring soaked in Pro Cure Bad Azz dye. Crossing the bar is still a challenge at low tide as there as been some big swells between Buoy 8 and Buoy 4, but coming back on the high slack has been much easier. Hopefully as the tide slacken this week running out will be a little easier."

Upriver, dam passage at Bonneville is beginning to pick up. After dismal numbers for most of the month, the first big day of 1,000 adults passed on 8/20. By the 21st, more than double that had passed. Success rates for sportanglers in the Portland to Longview stretch have shown improvement too. Although there were still more steelhead than Chinook taken in last weeks creel check, that will change this week. Anglers working wobblers in the deeper waters around the mouths of the Cowlitz, Kalama and the mouth of the Willamette are finding increased odds for salmon success. The standard Alvin and Brads wobblers are producing good with chrome a top color. From Troutdale to Bonneville, steelhead are still the target species. This likely won't change until water temperatures lower sometime in October.

Sturgeon effort is non-existent but gorge anglers stand a chance for good action with little competition. Warm water however has sturgeon lethargic from Bonneville to the estuary. Gillnets however continue to fish in zones 4 and 5 which will hamper sturgeon and salmon success.

Crabbing remains poor and bottom fishing does as well.

The Guide's Forecast – For weekend anglers, it has become apparent that these fish want a high tide exchange and not a low tide exchange. I am still reeling from my mis-prediction last week but it is becoming apparent that we are not going to see the numbers that were forecasted. The tide really couldn't have been any better than it was on 8/24 and although we saw the best bite of the season so far, it was far from what we have seen in the past. I still expect the next several days to produce good results for anglers working the water near the bridge- both Oregon and Washington sides. Anglers should head right to these spots for the top end of the incoming tide and troll erratically until the tide starts to slack out. When outgoing tide begins, align yourself with the green buoy line (Oregon side)- inside or outside of it, and troll your way downstream keeping your baits or spinners between 16 and 30 strips. The Washington side should also produce good results from the bridge to the Chinook wing jetties. Low slack will offer experimental anglers some opportunity but Buoy 10 is not the slam dunk possibility that it has been in years past. The Buoy 22 to Buoy 20 troll has been one of the better options.

The Chinook bite should stay consistent for most of the weekend and into next week and coho are beginning to make a better show. It will still be hard to target either species so anglers may want to be prepared to release Chinook since there is supposed to be more of those than coho present in

this fishery. Patterns are still the rule but the patterns just aren't the same as they have been in the past.

With these prime tides, I might recommend to remain in the river instead of heading west to "Big Blue". Opportunities should only increase as the week wears on and a long run to the ocean would be unjustified. The National Weather Service forecast for the ocean doesn't look all that good either. For those desperate enough to go to the ocean, you should plan on sticking close to the river buoys for safety sake and the fact the fish should really begin to stage in this area, this week.

Upriver, Chinook fishing should substantially improve at the mouth of the Cowlitz and Kalama this week. Good numbers of fish are certainly beginning to migrate upriver and the tributary wobbler fishery should get underway really soon. The water from Troutdale to just downstream of the Willamette will also be prime area to target fish but anglers should be aware that the gillnets will once again be fishing from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. from August 25th to the 26th. This will have an effect on sport angler success.

Steelhead anglers in the gorge should begin to see more of the larger B run summer steelhead show. These Idaho bound fish are often taken incidentally while angling for salmon in the mainstem. Those that know where and how to target these fish may realize good results following the big tide series we are just coming off of.

With water temperatures high and salmon season in full swing, why would one go sturgeon fishing? If one would go, the gorge may be the best option although sturgeon fishing in the estuary is likely fair as well. The sturgeon really don't need the stress however and the fight is much different in these water temperatures.

Better save crabbing for the fall time in the estuary. Reports of more stolen pots are coming from sport fishers. When is the law going to nail this guy?

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – With sturgeon retention closed on the Willamette River and Multnomah channel and the lower river running low, warm and virtually devoid of salmonids, there's little to attract fishermen here.

The North Santiam remains a viable option for steelheaders with stable conditions and good numbers of summers available.

The Guide's Forecast – With water levels and temps favorable, steelheaders should ply the waters of the North Santiam anywhere above Stayton. Spinners are effective as any lure here.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – There's been no change in the condition hence no reason for optimism regarding the Clackamas River. The possibility of rain showers early next week might stir up a little action if the steelhead move and a few coho enter. Sandy levels remain low and rain could only help here as well.

While the Sandy will become a worthwhile destination when (and if) the coho run materializes, until there's a change in the weather, the river will remain low with water too warm for salmonid comfort and off-color due to glacial runoff.

North Coast District Fishing Report – Better reports are coming from the Nehalem River. This is a transition time for Nehalem Chinook as a mix of both summer and fall Chinook are showing in the system. A bit early for the Nehalem or the Tillamook districts to be getting fishable numbers of Chinook to show but Labor Day weekend can often times be productive on both estuaries. With the smaller tides we are coming on, lower bay herring trollers will stand the best chance at fish.

Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808) reports, "The Nestucca is slow on fall Chinook. It is just a tad early still. I am looking for them every day, and expect to see a push of fish sometime in the next week. The guard rail, PC boat ramp and PC bridge, are good places to see and check out. Crabbing in the extreme lower bay has been off the charts good, with nice firm and full sea crabs."

A few anglers continue to pursue summer steelhead despite the low water conditions. Anglers in the know on low water tactics, can have good success in these conditions. The Nestucca and Wilson Rivers are really the only options for coastal summer steelhead.

The warm water of the Tillamook is also having an effect on the sturgeon bite. The Tillamook River holds the most promise for bank anglers but keepers are harder to come by.

The Guide's Forecast – Salmon fishing may improve on Nehalem Bay and Nestucca Bay. Small tide exchanges allow herring trollers to work the lower estuary for extended periods of time. The Nestucca fishery should begin to show signs of life if we are to have if we are going to have a good run this year. Tillamook is still a few weeks away for any great opportunities but some fish may be available in the terminal area.

Crabbing is worth your time and the weaker tide series bodes well for success.

Central & South Coast Reports – Boaters launching out of Garibaldi during the all-depth halibut fishery last weekend found the flatties along with a few tuna offshore 25 to 35 miles. Newport anglers took halibut limits near The Rockpile.



Halibut fishing offshore has rewarded many anglers with fine catches, but none more so than Larry Sydaw of Salem who brought a flattie to the South Beach boat ramp on Yaquina Bay which scaled at 122 pounds, although the scale wasn't high enough to get the fishes tail off the ground, skewing the weight low. It was finally (albeit unofficially) estimated at 134 pounds. A combo bait of shad and shrimp tempted the monster halibut.

All-depth Pacific halibut summer season is open every week Friday through Sunday between Cape Falcon near Manzanita, and Humbug Mountain near Port Orford until the quota is met.

Over a dozen chinook were landed last weekend in the lower Siletz but most boats returned to dock with empty fish boxes. Of those fish taken, however, there were some dandies over 30 pounds and a couple over 40. The better results seem to be coming from the areas between the Boat Works and Chinook Bend. Steelheading will remain slow above tidewater until there's an improvement in the

low, clear, warm water conditions.

Crabbing at Yaquina Bay is an option for the upcoming weekend with mild tides ensuring good catches. Expect to find about three-quarters of the Dungeness full of meat and hard-shelled and red rock crab in the mix for those who like them.

Trollers have been successful out of Winchester Bay over 220 to 350 feet of water with flashers and green hoochies attracting both coho and chinook. Effective depths have varied from 30 to over 100 feet any day the wind doesn't blow boats off the water.

Inside Winchester Bay below Reedsport between 15 and 28, trollers have been taking chinook 20 to 30 pounds or a little better. The best fishing has been on the turn of the tide from low to high which has presented a problem as there is a great deal of line-clogging debris moving in at that time.

Chinook have been reluctant to move upriver on the Rogue where low levels and high water temps are keeping them keggered up in the bay. Unfortunately, the bite hasn't been great in Rogue Bay, either. Hopefully, the water release scheduled for September 1st will turn things around for this fishery. Currently, the number of boats fishing the bay is many times greater than the number of chinook being taken and sea lions are getting more than their share of the few fish which are hooked.

Ocean salmon fishing finally caught fire out of Brookings over last weekend as more than 400 chinook were taken by boaters. Many of these were over 30 pounds and a few topped the 40-pound mark. In addition, one lucky angler boated a 44-pound ling cod. Action is best six to 12 miles offshore which means this fishery is viable only when the offshore conditions cooperate. The ocean last weekend was described as "just like a lake."

Central and Eastern Oregon – Steelhead counts are strong at Bonneville Dam with over 5,300 crossing on August 23rd alone. Perhaps those plug pullers at the mouth of the Deschutes will finally see some action.

Deschutes fly fishermen are finding decent action early and late in the day on caddis dries. Nymphing is only fair throughout the hot days.

Pro Guide Macc Huff (800-940-3688) dropped us this note of advice, "I see Grande Ronde River fishing info filtered into last week's report from somewhere. I'm sure that nymphs will work, but has anybody considered grasshopper patterns? It's about all anybody needs and some nice teen-sized fish are showing up as the water cools back into the 60s." Thanks, Mac. You are our man on the Grande Ronde!

Northwest Bass & Panfish - Bass fishermen on the Willamette are finding smallmouth fairly active on mornings when cloud cover lingers. Soft plastics have been most effective with crankbaits taking a few at times.

Subscriber Calvin N. reports from the South coast: "We just finished up a four day canoe/camp/fishing trip on the Umpqua River from Yellow Creek to Elkton from 8/18-8/21. Although this was mainly a multi-family canoe and rafting trip, the fishing was fantastic with lots of smallmouth bass available. Shown here is my son, Lucas Noling (age 13), with a nice 3 pounder caught on a black Rooster Tail. We also found success with orange/black Rooster Tail, plastic crawdads with a leadhead weight, and spinner baits. Basically, anything that looks like a crawdad worked well. We caught several fish with crawdad claws sticking out of their throats. The large fish for our trip was a 7 pound smallmouth caught on a orange/black Rooster Tail although most fish were in the 1/2 pound range. It was a scenic float with lots of wildlife sightings (bald eagle, osprey,

turkey, deer, etc.) and few people until we got downstream of Smith Rapids. The fishing was noticeably better upstream of Smith Rapids. We saw a couple of chinook in the river as well. Water temperatures were in the 75 degree range - great for swimming.



"If you should make this float be aware of several Class III+ rapids, and fire danger is high with dry conditions and afternoon winds. Good luck!"

Northwest Trout - Lake Billy Chinook is putting pit scores of kokanee to trollers using Ford Fenders and wedding rings tipped with white corn. Jig fishermen working the east side early mornings are scoring kokanee at Odell Lake.

North coast lakes, absent from the ODFW trout stocking schedule for the past few weeks, got a visit from the tank trucks Tuesday at Big Creek Reservoir numbers 1 and 2 and Cleawox Lake. In the Willamette Valley, Estacada Lake, Faraday Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake and Clear Lake were planted. Badger Lake, Spring Creek, Fall River and Shevlin Pond received a fresh fish injection of State-raised rainbows in the Deschutes watershed.

Washington Fishing Report

North Puget Sound - Big numbers of **pink** salmon have inundated the region's marine areas, along with a horde of anglers trying to catch them. The southern portion of Marine Area 8-2, including the popular "Humpy Hollow" and "Shipwreck" fishing hotspots, produced catches averaging better than one fish per rod, according to recent WDFW creel checks.

Productive terminal tackle included the time-tested favorites of a small hot pink imitation squid tied to a 24-inch leader behind a white flasher and trolled at various depths, or casting small pink lures to fish that are swimming near the surface. WDFW District Fish Biologist Brett Barkdull, who recently fished off both the eastern and western shores of Whidbey Island, said his latest fishing trip produced plenty of action - once he found the fish. "We had to hunt around a bit for the schools, but once we found them, the fishing was pretty good," Barkdull said. Beach anglers on Whidbey Island can find plenty of action for pinks - and the occasional **coho** salmon - at Bush Point, Fort Casey and Lagoon Point.

Anglers can take two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, in marine areas 7 through 10. Fishing has been slow in Marine Area 7, where the daily bag limit can include one **chinook** salmon (2

inches or longer). While primarily a pink show, a few kings and early hatchery coho salmon have bolstered fish counts at boat launches throughout the San Juans. Fishing has picked up significantly in marine areas 8-1 and 8-2, with pink salmon providing the bulk of the bite. A few nice chinook are still being taken in the Tulalip Bay "bubble" fishery, which is open Friday through noon Monday of each week through Sept. 27.

The Port Susan portion of Marine Area 8-2 is closed to fishing through Aug. 31 to protect Stillaguamish River salmon stocks. The closure includes all waters north of a line from Camano Head to the northern boundary of the Tulalip Bay bubble fishery. To check the boundaries of the Port Susan closure area and the Tulalip Bay bubble fishery, check page 112 of the Fishing in Washington [sport fishing rules pamphlet](https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/index.jsp) (<https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/index.jsp>) on the Internet.

Central Puget Sound has been producing steady catches of pink salmon and an increasing number of coho. WDFW Fisheries Biologist Steve Foley hooked several coho off Jefferson Head, which is south of Kingston on the west side of the Sound. "The fish are definitely getting bigger," Foley said, noting that one silver topped the 5-pound mark. Pink salmon can also be found in central Puget Sound, and many of those fish are likely headed to the Duwamish-Green River, which empties into Elliott Bay. The bay, including all waters east of a line from West Point to Alki Point, opens to fishing for pink and coho salmon today (Aug. 24) after a brief closure to protect a weaker-than-expected chinook return.

Marine Area 10, including Elliott Bay, has a two-fish daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon. Release all chinook and chum salmon. Don't forget to take the **crab** pots on any salmon-fishing expeditions in Puget Sound and the San Juans. Crabbing is open Wednesdays through Saturdays - plus the entire Labor Day weekend. Call the shellfish emergency rule change hotline, at 1-866-880-5431, or online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crabreg/> on the Internet for more information.

Freshwater salmon-fishing opportunities are picking up, particularly on rivers with healthy pink salmon runs. At the top of that list is the Snohomish River system, which is expected to see the largest return of "humpies" in the state this year. "There are enough pinks in the lower Snohomish to get people interested, but it's still a bit early for really good fishing," said Chad Jackson, WDFW District Fish Biologist for the Snohomish and Stillaguamish systems. "Mid September is expected to be the peak time for fishing in the Snohomish," said Jackson, noting that the devastating flood in October 2003 may have knocked out some of the river's earlier-spawning fish. The daily limit on the Snohomish River is four salmon, no more than two of which can be coho or chum. All salmon must be at least 12 inches in length to retain, and all chinook must be released.

The Snoqualmie River, a major tributary to the Snohomish, opens to salmon Sept. 1. Anglers on the Snoqualmie can keep two salmon of at least 12 inches in length, and all chinook and pink salmon must be released. The lower portion of the Skykomish River is also open to fishing for salmon. Anglers can fish from the mouth to the Lewis Street Bridge in Monroe and retain four fish, no more than a total of two coho and chum. Chinook must be released.

The stretch of the Sky from Monroe to the forks opens to salmon fishing Sept. 1 under the same daily bag limits and species restrictions as the lower river. The Skagit River is also expected to see a nice return of pinks this year, and fishing is now open from the mouth to Gilligan Creek. However, fisheries biologists say low, dirty water is sinking catch rates. Blame a lack of rainfall for the low flows, while the slate gray coloration is the result of glaciers that are feeding the Suiattle and Whitechuck rivers a steady diet of rock flour.

More river fishing opportunities come on-line Sept. 1, including the Nooksack River (from the reservation boundary marker upstream to Deming) with a two-fish daily limit. All pinks, wild chinook

and wild coho salmon must be released. The Stillaguamish River also opens Sept. 1 to salmon fishing from the bridge at Marine Drive to the forks. Anglers can keep two fish per day, but all chinook and pink salmon must be released.

The lower Duwamish-Green River - the destination for many of those pinks that anglers have been catching off Seattle - opens to salmon fishing Sept. 1 in waters downstream of the First Avenue South Bridge. Because of lower-than-expected chinook numbers, anglers must release all chinook. Additionally, the stretch of river from the Tukwila International Boulevard/Pacific Highway South bridge to the I-5 bridge remains closed to fishing through Sept. 15.

Lake Sammamish opened to salmon fishing Aug. 16 with a two-fish daily limit. All sockeye must be released. Sammamish's larger neighbor, Lake Washington, opens to coho salmon fishing on Sept. 16. The daily limit will be two coho (minimum size 12 inches), and fishing is open north of the State Route 520 floating bridge and east of the Montlake Bridge. In the meantime, Lake Washington continues to produce excellent catches of **smallmouth bass, crappie, perch** and a few nice **cutthroat trout**. Washington, like virtually every other lowland lake, is quite warm, so trout anglers should be prepared to fish deep at dawn and dusk.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula - With two weeks to go before the Labor Day weekend, the coastal salmon season has finally hit its stride. By the end of the third week of August, anglers fishing off Westport were averaging one **chinook** apiece and 1.4 salmon overall. Overall catch rates off Ilwaco and LaPush were close behind, with chinook making up about one-third of the harvest. "This is the best salmon fishing we've seen all season," said Wendy Beeghley, a WDFW fish biologist who monitors the ocean fishery. "We've had better years, but anything over a fish per person isn't bad."

At Neah Bay (Marine Area 4), the only ocean area not open seven days per week, anglers have been averaging about a half a **coho** per rod - and one **pink salmon** for every three rods. Beeghley said anglers should check for possible rule changes (<https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/index.jsp>) concerning the Neah Bay fishery on the WDFW website or the Fishing Hotline (360-902-2500). With catch totals still considerably short of season quotas in all areas, salmon fisheries are currently scheduled to run through Sept. 18 in Westport, LaPush and Neah Bay, and through Sept. 30 in Ilwaco. Willapa Bay, meanwhile, is providing anglers a shot at catching a king salmon without venturing into the ocean. Creel checks Aug. 19 and Aug. 22 showed a total of 172 anglers with 55 chinook and four coho, said Scott Barbour, WDFW fish biologist. "That's not bad fishing - and the water is better," Barbour said. "You don't have to go over a bar. There are several places you can access it from. You just go around the corner and you're fishing."

In the Strait of Juan de Fuca, coho salmon are beginning to show up in increasing numbers where pink salmon have dominated the catch in recent weeks. Creel checks for Aug. 15-21 showed pinks outnumbering coho 919 to 578, the numbers were beginning to flip by the end of the week, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW recreational salmon manager. "Typically by Labor Day the pinks should be tailing off," Thiesfeld said, noting that September is generally the big month for silvers around Sekiu and Port Angeles. "I would expect the coho to start taking off at any time." In the strait, as on the coast, anglers must release any unmarked coho they catch. Hood Canal, where the salmon fishery is reaching its peak, is also a good bet for kings.

In the Hoodspout area, 24 anglers checked Aug. 21 at Mike's Beach Resort caught 25 kings. Two other creel checks in the Hoodspout area that day found 113 anglers with 75 chinook. "It's probably the best fishing we've had in Puget Sound all summer," Thiesfeld said. "Hood Canal has been a real sleeper the last couple years." Already peaking is Sinclair Inlet between Port Orchard and Bremerton, where a salmon derby attracted 170 anglers Aug. 20-21 to the bay.

Of the 92 checked Aug. 20 at the Port Orchard ramp, 32 boated kings. The derby-winning fish weighed in at 24 pounds, 6 ounces. Meanwhile, fishing conditions on many area rivers have been less than ideal.

Those on the north coast of the Olympic Peninsula are running low and clear while others - such as the Puyallup River - are too murky. Glacial flour has reduced visibility on the Puyallup at times to zero, said Hal Michael, WDFW fish biologist. Still, creel checks Aug. 19-23 showed every fourth angler - and there were a lot of them - landing a salmon, mostly pinks. "They're moving upstream fine," Michael said. "If you're fishing something that the fish can smell, they might find it. Otherwise it's just random chance that the bait or lure ends up in the fish's mouth."

On the north Olympic Peninsula, the water is clear and low, putting a damper on fishing, said David Low, WDFW fish biologist. An exception is the Quillayute River, where good numbers of summer coho are showing up.

Fishing off the inlets in the deep South Sound, such as the mouth of the Nisqually River, Chambers Creek and Gig Harbor, has proved successful for many anglers, Michael said. A 6-year-old landed a 44-pound, 10-ounce king Aug. 19 near Gig Harbor.

Crabbers are reminded that all **crab** fishing areas will be open all three days - Saturday, Sunday and Monday - of the Labor Day weekend. Between now and then, three marine areas - 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south Puget Sound) - will be open seven days per week. Eight areas are open for crabbing on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, including Marine Area 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 9 (Admiralty Inlet) 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 12 (Hood Canal).

Southwest Washington –

From **Pro Guide Jeff Knotts (509.547.7450)** at JB's Guide Service Fishing the riffle on the Big White Salmon for steelhead remains slow. The mouth however is doing fair to good for those doing the bobber & shrimp thing. The bench should start seeing salmon action for those throwing spinners as well as the jiggers outside the mouth.

I have friends doing very well at Drano. But be prepared for at least one confrontational experience as it seems competition for the best spots is fierce. The best fishing is definitely coming off bait on the bottom or off bobbers. It seems you just have to keep switching from your favorite shrimp recipes to eggs to sand shrimp to figure out what they want most. Be patient on the boat launches, everyone is doing their best.

Salmon fishing remained slow at Buoy 10 through the third weekend in August, but started to come alive the next day. "We're getting reports of a significant bump in catch rates," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "This could be the surge everybody's waiting for."

Those who didn't wait averaged just one salmon - mostly **chinook** - for every 10 rods during the week of Aug. 15-21. By comparison, last year's catch rate during the same period was better than half a fish per rod. "There's no doubt that the run is late," said Wolf Dammers, another WDFW fish biologist from the department's Vancouver office. "But with ocean catches improving significantly over the past couple of weeks, it stands to reason that we should start seeing more fish in the river." One good sign: More than 2,500 adult chinook salmon were tallied Aug. 21 at Bonneville Dam, the highest count of the summer season.

Anglers planning to fish or camp near the mouth of the Columbia River should be aware that the jetty access road, as well as the parking lot at Benson Beach, will be closed through October while the

Army Corps of Engineers works to repair the north jetty. For safety reasons, climbing on the jetty is strongly discouraged. For more information, see <http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/pa/news/home.asp>.

As fish counts have increased, so too has the number of anglers. During a weekly flyover Aug. 20, a WDFW monitoring crew counted 300 boats targeting salmon or hatchery-reared **steelhead** - up from 115 boats the week before. About one-third of those 300 boats were congregated near the mouth of the Cowlitz River, where fall chinook and summer steelhead have been competing for anglers' attention.

Overall, boat anglers fishing the mainstem Columbia below Bonneville Dam have been averaging one chinook or steelhead for every six rods. For bank anglers, the average has been one fish for every 11 rods. Interest in summer steelhead is still running strong at Drano Lake, although catch rates have dropped to about three-quarters of a fish per rod compared to 1.7 fish per rod in early August.

The Lewis, Wind and White Salmon rivers are also still producing some summer steelhead, although a growing number of anglers have begun to target fall chinook where streams flow into the Bonneville Pool. There should still be some steelhead there, too. Hymer notes that nearly 120,000 steelhead counted to date at Bonneville Dam have not yet crossed The Dalles Dam. "A lot of those fish are probably seeking relief in the cooler water of the tributaries until the mainstem cools down," he said.

Six boats were spotted fishing for **walleye** upriver from the I-5 bridge during the aerial survey, while those targeting **sturgeon** has dropped off considerably since the fishery below Bonneville Dam switched to catch-and-release. Coming up: Two tributaries to the lower Columbia will open for salmon fishing Sept. 1: Grays River opens for hatchery coho and the Elochoman River opens to both fall chinook and coho that day.

For **trout** anglers, Mineral Lake has been producing good catches of rainbows and should get even better in early September when WDFW plants the lake with more than 2,000 half-pounders. Mayfield Lake is also worth a try, as are the areas' high mountain lakes where fishing is expected to heat up as the weather cools down.

Looking for some really big fish? James L. Hutchison of Vancouver landed a 33 pound, 8 oz. **catfish** on chicken livers while bank fishing at Round Lake (just below Lacamas Lake) Aug. 11. Hutchison reported it took a half an hour to land the fish on a light, 6 foot long trout rod. The fish has been tentatively identified as a channel catfish, which were released into Lacamas Lake at least twice - once in the late 1980's and again around 1993. The state record for channel catfish is 36.2 pounds.

Eastern Washington – From Pro Guide Pat Long of Snake River Guide Service (1-509-751-0410) Water temps are dropping some on the Snake and Clearwater with the current cooling trend. The steelhead counts at the four Snake River dams are improving and the fishing on the lower Clearwater, as well as the middle section (C&R only), is picking up to some degree. If weather patterns hold we will see some good fishing on this stretch of river in the next few days.

On the Snake the bass fishing is still excellent, we're fishing top water for the first 1/2 hour or so in the AM and then moving out to deeper water with plastics as the sun pushes the fish off the edges. Sturgeon fishing has been slow for the oversize fish on the upper Snake, shakers are abundant and willing but the big gals are not too co-operative at this time. This fishery will light up again as we come into the early fall months with cooler water and higher flow patterns.

Nighttime fishing at Sprague Lake is yielding **channel catfish**, reports WDFW District Fish Biologist Chris Donley of Spokane. "The successful anglers there aren't revealing what they're using, but I suspect they're catching them on shrimp and other baits," he said.

Kokanee fishing remains good at Loon Lake in southern Stevens County. Lake Roosevelt is also producing kokanee and nice-sized **rainbow trout**. "The action at many of our trout lakes throughout the region should start picking up as summer winds down with lower air and water temperatures," Donley said. "Some lakes have remained pretty good throughout the summer for anglers who are out really early and late."

WDFW Enforcement Officer Lenny Hahn of Spokane said anglers continue catching trout at Williams Lake in southwest Spokane County and Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County. Fishing appears to be slow at eastern Spokane County's Newman and Liberty lakes, Hahn reports, despite the mix of trout and warmwater species in those waters. **Cutthroat trout** are especially good up at Marshall Lake in Pend Oreille County now.

Curt Vail, WDFW district fish biologist stationed in Colville, says fishing for rainbows at Curlew Lake has improved now that local volunteers, particularly Gordon McIntyre, have corrected net pen-rearing problems. "The quantity of rainbows is still rebuilding, but the quality is outstanding," Vail said.

The **steelhead** harvest season on the Snake River system opens Sept. 1 with a daily catch limit of three steelhead (rainbow trout over 20 inches). WDFW Regional Fish Program Manager John Whalen notes that with lower flows in the Snake's tributaries this year, the big fish may be holed up in the mainstem. But wherever fresh cold water is coming in, like at the mouth of the Clearwater River in the Lewiston-Clarkston area, steelhead are being caught.

North Central Washington - Summer **chinook salmon** fishing in the Brewster/Bridgeport area continues to be good, with fish averaging 12 to 15 pounds, says WDFW Fish Biologist Bob Jateff. "Trolling with herring is the most popular method, but fish have also been caught by jigging," he said.

Fishing for **sockeye salmon** remains closed in the region. Jateff also notes that trout fishing in the Methow River slowed when hot weather reduced stream flow and increased water temperatures.

Cutthroat trout in the 12- to 14-inch range and **rainbow trout** 8 to 10 inches can still be caught with surface fly patterns. Jateff reminds anglers that the sections on the Methow River above the Weeman Bridge and below Gold Creek are closed to fishing. Big Twin Lake has been producing 11- to 15 -inch trout for anglers fishing slowly and deep. WDFW Fish Biologist Jeff Korth reports that 15- to 17-inch **kokanee** can still be caught at Banks Lake, while good **smallmouth** and **largemouth bass** fishing can be found at Potholes Reservoir in the Columbia Basin.

"Fall is just around the corner and fishing in general really picks up in the Basin during the fall," Korth said. "For trout, our selective fishery waters have some of their best days in the fall, and those waters with year-round seasons should have some nice big fish left. **Walleye** fishing in particular improves as temperatures cool."

South Central Washington - The Columbia River Hanford Reach **fall chinook salmon** fishery that so many anglers look forward to at this time of year may be slow-going, says WDFW Fish Biologist Jim Cummins. "Lower Columbia River dam counts are low, probably because water temperatures are running about 72 degrees and the upriver movement of fall chinook appears to be delayed or slightly below expectations," he said.

"The Hanford Reach fall chinook fishery, which has been open since Aug. 16, usually becomes productive in early September and generally peaks the last half of September and early October when fish numbers are generally high." Cummins said high water temperatures could delay upriver migration. "We need a cooling trend to reverse this situation," he said. Cummins also noted that salmon and **bull trout** fishing is closed in the Naches River and tributaries and in the upper Yakima River where these fish have begun to spawn.

"American River salmon have almost completed spawning and mainstem Naches, Little Naches and Bumping River spring chinook will be spawning soon," he said. Bull trout start spawning at the end of August in some areas and peak spawning is in September. Cummins reminds people to avoid harassing these spawning fish and refrain from building "recreational" dams that can prevent or impede upstream salmon and bull trout migration. "Upstream migration to spawning areas is particularly precarious this year because of unseasonably low water flows," Cummins said.

High mountain lake fishing for **rainbow, cutthroat** and **eastern brook trout** is still a good bet in the last days of summer. WDFW Habitat Biologist Perry Harvester reminds anglers that Rimrock Lake will be drawn down for irrigation purposes over the next month, and launching of large boats on the concrete ramps won't be available much longer. Gravel ramps will remain suitable for small boat use for the next few weeks. Harvester said drought conditions could likely result in a significant drawdown in the reservoir later this year, and fish could be flushed from the lake.

Reader Email

We know everybody would rather be fishing than writing to TGF, but we'd really like to hear from **you!**

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: drees@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: SailCat@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Desktop wallpaper from National Geographic:

http://seabed.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/wallpaper2.tmpl?issue_id=20050901

Eighty miles off the Oregon coast and only reverse works:

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20050819/ap_on_fe_st/backward_boat

Weekly Quote – "Piscator non solum piscatur – There is more to fishing than catching fish." - Unknown

GOOD LUCK!