

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 6th, – October 12th, 2006**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - Today is re-opener of retention season for sturgeon from the Wauna Powerlines near Westport to Bonneville Dam. The season will last through December 31st but only on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Anglers are allowed one fish between 42 and 60 inches and the fishing is likely to be excellent in the Columbia River Gorge. Bank anglers should post some of the best results with smelt taking the bulk of the fish. The lower Willamette, including Multnomah Channel will also open to retention but won't produce good results until the winter months.

Salmon fishing from Bonneville Dam to the Highway 395 Bridge near Pasco reopened on September 30th. Anglers should have fair fishing although the quality of the salmon should begin to fade by mid-month. Catch and release fishing below Bonneville remains open and is producing good results.

A cooling Columbia is sending summer steelhead upriver destined for tributaries like the Grand Ronde, Imnaha and Snake Rivers. Better fishing is on the way.

Coho and chinook are crossing Willamette Falls in good numbers. Although a targeted fishery doesn't exist for salmon in this area, a few coho are being taken around Meldrum Bar. Willamette boaters are advised to use caution at the ramps in the lower water of this section.

Coho angling is spotty but summer steelheading is holding up on the Clackamas. Rain is needed to bring bright coho into Eagle Creek.

The Sandy River is giving up a few silvers. Trollers are catching some at the mouth with spinners and drift fishers are finding colored silvers below Cedar Creek. Fish are not moving fast in the low water of the Sandy.

Steelheading on the North and South Santiam remains fair to good.

Henry Hagg Lake, Mt. Hood Pond, Dexter Reservoir, and Foster Reservoir are scheduled to be planted with trout this week.

Northwest – Tillamook remains consistent for chinook although the best bite remains in the lower bay and ocean. Ocean conditions have allowed a heavy harvest just outside the bay entrance although the bite varies from day to day. Recently, the best bite has been near low slack in the late afternoon along the north jetty on the inside of the bay. Spinner trollers are taking fish but when the bulk of the biters are getting culled in the ocean, results aren't impressive.

Crabbing remains challenging on Tillamook Bay but fair on Netarts and Nestucca estuaries.

Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808) reports, "The Nestucca tidewater has a lot of fish present but sculpin and salmon smolts are eagerly taking baits fished for adult chinook. The Pacific City Boat Ramp is putting out consistent catches but conditions are crowded."

The Salmon River near Lincoln City is still producing fish but has passed its prime. Significant rain would increase catch rates coast wide but is nowhere in the forecast.

Fishing is slow on the Siletz with spinners and plugs out-producing bait.

Although October seems late for albacore, boaters have taken tuna out of Newport as recently as the 1st. The Yaquina River is giving up a few Chinook and coho. Crabbing is a solid option in the bay.

Southwest – Following a rough weekend, boaters launching out of Reedsport found a flat ocean and lots of Chinook. Winchester Bay has been spotty, but produced well late last week. Smallmouth bass fishing is slowing on the Umpqua as the water cools.

Coos and Coquille trollers have seen an increase in the Chinook catch rate over the last few days.

Chinook fishing has been slow on the Siuslaw.

Trollers in the Rogue estuary are seeing inconsistent results but when it's good, it's really good. Steelheading is fair in the upper river, flies-only section.

Bottom fishing out of Brookings remains phenomenal, with rockfish running very large and substantial numbers of ling cod in the mix. Chetco Bay is producing decent catches of adult Chinook and jacks. Ocean salmon anglers started fishing again on October 1st. The offshore Chinook fishery closes October 12th.

Eastern - Though steelhead counts at Bonneville exceed the 10-year average, they've been slow making it upriver. The Grande Ronde has yet to receive numbers sufficient to create better than a fair fishery. Imnaha anglers, on the other hand, are enjoying fine steelheading. Anglers in the lower Deschutes will find good numbers, light pressure and excellent water conditions.

The October Caddis hatch is in full swing on the Wallowa River with imitations taking scores of trout keyed on the large insects.

Waters stocked this week include the South Fork of the Crooked River and Taylor Lake.

Southwest Washington- Coho fishing on the Cowlitz River remains best below the I-5 Bridge while steelheading is best above the bridge. All chinook must now be released between Blue Creek and Mill Creek.

Coho fishing should also begin to peak on the Lewis River- particularly near the hatchery.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife approved the first fall clam digs this week. Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks and Kalaloch Beaches will open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday (October 6 – 8) between the hours of noon and midnight. A fourth night of digging was approved at Twin Harbors and Long Beach only on October 9th.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Not much to report but some good news on a Columbia River re-opener for salmon and one for sturgeon too! Official regulations are as follows:

For salmon:

Columbia River anglers may again retain chinook from Bonneville Dam to Pasco

OLYMPIA – Columbia River anglers will again be able to keep chinook salmon they catch between Bonneville Dam and the Highway 395 bridge at Pasco under a new rule approved today by fishery managers in Washington and Oregon.

The new rule – approved less than three weeks after the area was closed to chinook retention – takes effect Saturday (Sept. 30) at 12:01 a.m. and runs through Dec. 31.

Bill Tweit, Columbia River policy leader for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), said the latest action was triggered by the fact that the number of chinook salmon migrating upriver past Bonneville Dam have been significantly higher since mid-September than expected.

“Anglers fishing above Bonneville Dam didn’t get much of a chance to take home chinook salmon earlier in the season,” Tweit said. “The additional fish we’re seeing now will allow us to provide some additional fishing time in that area, without exceeding conservation guidelines or compromising the commercial fishery in the lower river.”

Tweit noted that anglers must still release any chinook salmon they catch downstream from Bonneville Dam to Rocky Point/Tongue Point near Astoria. Anglers fishing in that area may, however, retain hatchery coho and steelhead, which can be identified by a missing adipose fin.

Additional regulations are described in WDFW’s Fishing in Washington rule pamphlet, available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

And now the sturgeon re-opener:

WAUNA POWERLINES UPSTREAM TO BONNEVILLE DAM: Effective October 1 through December 31, this section of the Columbia River is open to the retention of sturgeon on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays with a daily bag limit of one fish between 42 and 60 inches in length and the annual limit is five fish. The use of more than one single point barbless hook is prohibited. Catch and release of sturgeon is allowed on non-retention days.

The following modifications were adopted for the 2006 mainstem Columbia River Sturgeon fishery from the Wauna powerlines (River Mile 40) upstream to Bonneville Dam, including all adjacent Washington tributaries and the Willamette River downstream of Willamette Falls (including Multnomah Channel). The modifications include:

Allow the retention of sturgeon three days per week on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday and prohibit the retention of sturgeon four days per week on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday beginning Sunday October 1, 2006 through Sunday December 31, 2006.

Catch and release of sturgeon may continue during sturgeon retention closures.

Fishery will be managed for a catch guideline of 12,000 fish in this section of the Columbia River and specific retention dates may be adjusted to meet the guideline.

Anticipation is building for the re-opener for sturgeon as fall can be the peak time for the Columbia River Gorge. Bank anglers have an especially successful time this time of year but ironically, catch rates for bank anglers over the weekend was poor. Just 4 bank anglers were fishing but recorded no catch. Effort will certainly be high on the Thursday opener. Boat anglers in the gorge posted 4 keepers and 60 shakers for just 7 boats. It may take a while for anglers to locate the schools of fish but action should be excellent if history repeats itself (but just when has it repeated itself this year?)

Effort has also been building for anglers participating in the catch and release salmon fishery in the gorge. Eight boats tallied 30 chinook over the weekend check and action should continue to build into mid-month. With another late run, quality fish should still be available for catch and release opportunities. Unfortunately, run size updates will not allow sport anglers any additional opportunity

for harvest with exception of the above Bonneville fisheries. But the gillnets go in starting October 8th starting at 7 pm and going for 24 hours. The target catch is about 1,500 chinook and 5,000 coho. Good luck? The gillnets still have about 1,150 white sturgeon available for harvest

The Guide's Forecast – Most anglers are anticipating productive fishing for Columbia River Gorge sturgeon beginning on Thursday. With the extended closure and some promising catch and release statistics over the last few weeks, anglers shouldn't be disappointed. In the lower flows, keepers should be stacked in the swifter water where bank anglers will have better access to them than even boaters. Smelt will be the stand-by bait for both bankies and boaters. Boaters will also want to target keepers in the swifter flows near the deadline but those looking for fast action should find good shaker action to Cape Horn. As the season progresses, anglers will have to get more creative to produce consistent results. Also, keep in mind that there will likely be gillnets working the water in the gorge for this weeks opener and it could hamper results.

Salmon anglers above Bonneville should take advantage of still good numbers of fish crossing the dam. Tributary mouths will be key places of interception- particularly at the Deschutes and Klickitat Rivers. Anglers versed in the Hanford Reach backtrolling fishery will have some great opportunities as well in the coming weeks. Cooler water temperatures and the fact these fish are reaching their final destinations should stimulate some good activity this weekend. Plugs and backbounced eggs should take good numbers of fish.

Steelhead are again on the move but anglers working the mouth of the Deschutes and selected areas of interception downstream of the dams should produce some good catches of summer run fish. The productive John Day Pool fishery is still several weeks away from peaking but the way the season is shaping up should prove excellent for anglers in these reaches.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – The number of salmon streaming over Willamette Falls is encouraging. While coho crossing the Falls are all natives, the count on November 27th was over 2,100, indicating that the species is on the move. The Chinook count of 1,522 on the 27th is about the combined total for the last two years combined - and it ain't over yet. Willamette Boaters should exercise caution at the ramps in the low water. Some problems have been witnessed, primarily from backing too far down - and sometimes off - the ramp. The lower Willamette opened for sturgeon retention on Thursdays through Saturdays each week. No keepers have been reported.

The North Santiam remains a little high but will be stable until the first significant Fall rain. Both North and South Santiam offer a good prospect for a fish or two.

The Guide's Forecast – While there aren't many who target salmon in the lower Willamette in the Meldrum Bar area, a few optimistic souls are trying with varying degrees of success. Coho seem to bite marginally better once they enter the Clackamas (some would say if at all), but there have been brief periods when a good bite has turned on here with several silvers taken all at once. Don't expect much from the sturgeon fishing for a while. It will improve in the lower Willamette and Multnomah Channel later in the year.

Orange and red lures seem to be most effective in the cooling waters of the North Santiam at this time of year. The stretch from Stout Creek upstream to Packsaddle Park offers the greatest potential for a hookup. Steelheaders are taking fish on the South Santiam using jig and bobber rigs.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Steelheading remains an option on the Clackamas with some very bright fish available. Look for steelies feeding below spring Chinook redds as springer spawning is in full swing. Use care not to disturb bedding salmon.

Bobber and cured salmon eggs seem to be hooking the most coho on the Sandy. It's slow fishing in low, clear water. Coho are unlikely to bite unless they're on the move and there aren't many moving. Those just holding in one place are likely to spurn angler's offerings.

North Coast District Fishing Report – October spells peak season for fall chinook anglers in this district and Tillamook is topping the charts as to be expected. This fishery is always sporadic but consistency is coming about. Fair numbers of chinook were taken inside the bay on 10/4 although seaweed continues to hamper success. The ocean finally gave way to rougher conditions but remained open to sportcraft all day. A short and not-that-impressive of a bite took place in the ocean but the Ghost Hole produced about a dozen salmon on the first part of the incoming that day. The school moved up the bay, likely headed for the Trask and Tillamook Rivers where trollers at Ray's Place Piling and Cap Johnson's took fish close to high slack. Spinners worked the best as I trolled herring with no results. The seaweed gave us a nice reprieve during this time but didn't last long until inundating the gear once the flow started out. SEAWEED continues to plague bay trollers making the ocean the most fun out of your many options. There was also a good bite at first light at the Oyster House Hole in the upper bay.

Ocean trollers are sticking to the north tip of the north jetty where the NW swell doesn't have as much of an impact as it does on the south side. Anglers trolling to the north, even as north as Twin Rocks have been getting fish at first light. Larger tides may be inspiring fish to move up bay at a faster rate however causing the slight downturn in the ocean fishery.

Avid angler 'G. B.' wrote to share his T-Bay experience late last week, "I got into the coho casting spinners in the south channel pretty well Thursday and Friday. It felt like I made a million casts, but ended up landing 16 fish. All were native until near the end of the second day when I got a clipped fish. Fish were rolling, jumping, cavorting around, really fun to watch. I also caught a little jack. One fish opened up his jaws and inhaled my spinner just as I saw it coming out of the water at the boat. Kinda surprised me. It made my line go slack and I actually said something like "what the heck???" Then, I had to reel like crazy for a couple of turns and had a 10-lb native on with about 6 feet of line. Hope all is well. Tight lines."

Bobber fishing in tidewater hasn't been outstanding although there are fair numbers of anglers trying. The Trask is the most popular spot for anglers with the 2-bit Hole drawing the most attention. With the stronger tides this week and cooler overnight temperatures, action should pick up.

The Nestucca seems to be full of fish but as **pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)** puts it, "The Nestucca has a ton of fish in tide water. But there have been some problems. There is a ton of smolts and bull heads, so getting good baits to a willing biter has been extremely tough. We are just moving a bunch, and searching for a fish that can see fresh bait. There is no real consistent bite, however, low slack and high slack has been the best. Most people are tossing and trolling spinners, simply because of all the little guys ripping on bait. Out of the entire tide area, the best place to be is the PC boat ramp. Bring your own rock, and expect some company. Once we see some cooler weather and a little rain, we should see things pick up a bit, and some of the little guys head to the ocean. Then we should be in good shape. Have a great week!"

Razor clamming, scheduled to open October 1st on Clatsop beaches, has been delayed due to high levels of the naturally-occurring biotoxin domoic acid. Regular testing will be conducted by the Department of Agriculture to determine when this activity will be safe. Razor clamming will remain open from Tillamook head south to the California border. Bat clams are safe coast-wide.

The Guide's Forecast – This should be a good weekend for bay trollers in Tillamook. A good low tide will greet trollers in the upper bay where spinners should dominate the catches. With the bulk of the tide being out, anglers should have some short but sweet weed free opportunities in the upper bay. Use red/white spinners at first light and on overcast days but as the sun gets higher in the sky, be sure to switch to metallic colors tipped with red or green. We should witness some of the best in-bay fishing of the season this weekend.

As the tide swings in on Tillamook, start in the lower bay on the first part of incoming tide like the Ghost Hole. The farther in the tide pushes, the farther up-bay anglers should chase these fish. Although bait should work well in the upper reaches, spinners will perform well and if weed is present, it's easier to keep those spinners spinning when you can whip the weed from the swivels. You can't do that with herring without compromising your baits. The larger tide exchanges will have herring trollers (trollers for that matter) pulling their hair out as much as seaweed from their lures!

The ocean may be an option but the bay fishery should produce better results this week. NW winds are forecasted for upcoming afternoons but the seaweed factor itself may drive many anglers mad.

Bobber tossers working the Trask tidewater and adjacent sloughs should find fair success this weekend. Be sure to tip your eggs with sand shrimp and expect bait stealers when fishing near rip-rap. The sculpin and chinook smolts may pose some competition issues.

Crabbing in Tillamook Bay remains fair at best. Some of the best crabbing is taking place at Lyster's corner but more extreme tides may make this and Crab Harbor the best bets. Crabbers working the channels may find their pots laden with seaweed and somewhat sanded in if you leave them too long. Netarts and Nestucca estuaries remain the better bets.

Central & South Coast Reports – Boat traffic on the Siletz is fierce but the fishing only fair at best. Lures continue to out-fish bait here.

Yaquina has been spotty with Chinook scattered up past Toledo. Salmon are being hooked everywhere from mid-bay upstream. Ocean anglers caught albacore offshore Saturday and Sunday but that may have been the last weekend tuna runs will be practical for recreational boaters. Getting into Albacore again this coming weekend is unlikely if the current wind and wave forecast remains accurate in tuna water. Yaquina and Alsea anglers should see an improvement in Chinook action this weekend. Seals are thick, though, so keep an eye out for them. Crabbing has been great but strong tides may have a negative effect on catches.

Catches of ling cod are surprisingly good for this time of year. Lings are starting to adopt their own version of Fall coloration and the females are filling out with eggs. These fish will enter shallow water along jetties and rocky outcroppings to spawn in January and February making them vulnerable to bank-bound anglers.

The ocean laid down, the wind calmed and offshore Chinook anglers caught scores of big, bright fish out of Winchester Bay earlier this week. Ocean trollers are hooking up at depths of 120 to 150 feet over 400 or so feet of water. Inside Winchester Bay, catches have been spotty although it produced well late last week. Smallmouth bass fishing is slowing on the mainstem Umpqua as the water cools. The South Umpqua is closed until November 30th.

Siuslaw trollers continue to catch a few Chinook in the lower river, but many are putting in some long days in the pursuit.

Trollers dragging plug-cut herring or hardware are catching a fair number of Chinook in tidewater on

the Coos and Coquille rivers.

Chinook are gradually moving upriver on the Rogue, in part due to extra water being released from Savage Rapids Dam. Both plugs and bait are taking salmon. Evenings have been most productive recently in the estuary although this remains a hot or cold fishery. Steelhead and half-pounders are being taken downstream of Agness but seem fish seem reluctant to journey and higher than that area. Steelheaders in the Grants Pass stretch have seen some improvement in the action for summers. Fishing for salmon is not allowed above Gold Ray Dam to Hog Creek. Steelheading is fair to good on the upper fly-only section of the Rogue.

Chetco anglers report a slight improvement in tidewater Chinook catches, but fishing is still only fair.

The trophy salmon season opened out of Brookings and Gold Beach on October 1st. One fish over 20 inches is allowed per day and four for the season which ends October 12th. The limit inside the bays remains two per day.

Central and Eastern Oregon – The Deschutes is in great shape with the lower river fishing described as "the best in years." Water levels and favorable temperatures have combined to create ideal conditions. Steelies are up as far as Warm Springs with many more on the way but the lower river will be most productive. Hardware or fly gear will take fish in the coming week. Trout fishers will find October Caddis and Mahogany Duns effective along with the standard assortment of nymphs.

Steelhead are entering the John Day River with water levels up sufficiently to entice the fish. With a little rain, this fishery will really turn on.

Grande Ronde steelheaders have yet to see strong numbers enter but good, perhaps great, fishing is just around the corner. While counts at Lower Granite Dam is well below average, Bonneville counts have been great with cooler water temperatures encouraging steelhead to move.

Northwest Trout – Mt. Hood Pond, Dexter Reservoir, and Foster Reservoir are scheduled to be planted with trout this week. Goof Department: Henry Hagg Lake was reported as receiving the last planting of the season last week. While it did receive 8,000 eight-to-10 inch rainbows, it will get another 8,000 this week, but this is the very last planting until it closes on November 19th. Really.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report:

North Puget Sound

It's been a tricky fall for **salmon** anglers. Despite strong **coho** returns to some of the area's rivers, catch rates are way down on the saltwater. "Clearly this is one of those years when the coho are lock-jawed," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fisheries biologist. "In most marine areas, coho just aren't biting."

The limited harvest was evident at the recent Everett Coho Derby. A total of 3,046 adult and youth tickets were sold for the event, but only 410 silvers were weighed. Of the anglers who did catch fish, R. Scott Slaughter turned out to be the derby's big winner. Slaughter hauled in a 16.82-pound coho, taking home the \$2,500 first prize in the adult division. Frank Hannon, who weighed in a 16.79-pound coho, finished second and pocketed \$1,500, while Debbie Olson's 16.73-pound silver was good enough for third place and \$1,000. In the kids' division, Mathew Klemm took first with a 14.21-

pound coho.

Coho fishing might be slow, but anglers in the region now have the option of turning their attention to **chinook**. A seven-month-long selective fishery for hatchery winter blackmouth is under way in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner). The fishery, which began Oct. 1 and runs through the month of April, should be a good opportunity for anglers in the coming weeks, said Thiesfeld. Anglers can keep up to two hatchery chinook per day, so long as the fish measure at least 22 inches in length. Wild chinook salmon, which have an intact adipose fin, cannot be brought aboard the boat.

"According to some reports, there are a lot of shakers around," said Thiesfeld, who recommends using large spoons or plugs to reduce the catch of those sub-legals. "Anglers who hook a shaker need to properly handle those fish before releasing them."

Elsewhere, anglers in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit, while anglers in Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) can take home one chinook as part of the two-salmon daily limit in that area beginning Oct. 16.

Freshwater fisheries also are slow for coho. The Snohomish and portions of the Stillaguamish, Snoqualmie, Skykomish and Skagit rivers are currently open for salmon fishing. Chad Jackson, WDFW fish biologist, said anglers on the Snohomish River haven't had much success with silvers. "There's plenty of coho in the Snohomish but they just aren't biting," he said.

Anglers fishing the Snohomish River, as well as the Skykomish, Snoqualmie and Stillaguamish rivers, have a daily limit of two salmon measuring at least 12 inches but must release chinook and **pink** salmon. Anglers on the Skagit River are allowed three salmon daily measuring at least 12 inches, but must release chinook. Anglers should check WDFW's *2006/2007 Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for more information on those and other fisheries in the region.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

The first **razor clam** dig of the fall season will get under way Friday, Oct. 6, on evening tides at all five of Washington's ocean beaches. WDFW approved the digs at Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks beaches after a series of marine toxin tests confirmed that the clams there are safe to eat. The National Park Service approved the digs at Kalaloch Beach, which is located within Olympic National Park, to coincide with those at the other coastal beaches.

All five beaches will be open Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 6-8. A fourth evening of digging is also scheduled Monday, Oct. 9, at Twin Harbors and Long Beach only. Digging will be restricted to the hours between noon and midnight each day at all five beaches.

"Overall, razor clam populations are up on the beaches south of Grays Harbor and down some compared to last year on those beaches to the north," said Dan Ayres, WDFW coastal shellfish manager. "This will likely mean more digging opportunities at Long Beach and Twin Harbors during the 2006-07 season."

Harvesters are allowed to take no more than 15 razor clams and must keep the first 15 they dig, regardless of size or condition. Each digger's clams must be kept in a separate container. A license is required for anyone age 15 or older. Any 2006 annual shellfish/seaweed combination fishing license is still valid. Another option is a razor-clam only license available in annual or three-day only versions. Descriptions of the various licensing options are available on the WDFW website at <https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov/>.

Evening low tides during the dig will occur at 6:39 p.m. Friday, Oct. 6 (-0.6 ft.); 7:28 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 7 (-1.3 ft.); 8:16 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 8 (-1.6 ft.); and 9:03 p.m. Monday, Oct. 9 (-1.6 ft.). One final weekend of ocean **salmon** fishing remains as the "LaPush Late Season Area" fishery continues. Fisheries managers recently announced that two chinook may be kept as part of the two-salmon daily limit. This season runs through Oct. 8. See WDFW's *2006/2007 Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for details on the area's boundaries. While Marine Area 5 (Sekiu to Pillar Point) closed for all salmon fishing Sept. 30, Marine Area 6 (East Strait of Juan de Fuca) opened for salmon retention Oct. 1. However, recent WDFW creel counts have been showing virtually no fish being caught at the Port Angeles count sites. "It's just been a difficult season for salmon anglers," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "The fish have shown up in certain areas, but aren't always biting."

Unfortunately it's the same story around inland waters, with catch counts showing few salmon being caught in marine areas 11 (Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge), 12 (Hood Canal) and 13 (South Puget Sound). "Some rain would help bring the fish into Puget Sound and area rivers," said Thiesfeld. "But given the lateness of the season, they may be more interested in spawning than feeding at this point."

New fishing opportunities opening in Puget Sound include chum retention in all of Hood Canal beginning Oct. 16. The forecast for chum in the canal is up slightly this year over last, said Thiesfeld. **Blackmouth** fishing also opens Oct. 16 in Marine Area 10. He noted that Manchester and Allen Bank in Kitsap County are popular spots to sink a line.

More area rivers also open for fall fishing Oct. 16. The Dungeness River in Clallam County (from the mouth to Gold Creek) opens for **trout** and **coho** only, while the Humptulips River in Grays Harbor opens from the mouth to Ocean Beach Road for trout and salmon. A section of the Hoh River from Willoughby Creek to Morgan's Crossing boat launch also opens for salmon fishing Oct. 16. In Pacific County, anglers can begin salmon fishing the Willapa River from the Highway 6 Bridge to Fork Creek. Anglers are advised to check WDFW's *2006/2007 Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for details before fishing these waters.

Recreational **crab** fishing remains open in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu and Pillar Point) and 13 (South Puget Sound) seven days a week through Feb. 28. WDFW will announce this month if crab fishing will reopen in other waters where the catch has not met area quotas.

Southwest Washington:

Anglers still looking for a chance to take home a **sturgeon** this year will have a great opportunity to do so when the retention fishery from the Wauna powerlines to Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River resumes Oct. 5. After a two-month hiatus, anglers can again keep one legal-size white sturgeon per day in those waters Thursday through Saturday each week until the area harvest guideline is reached. That could take through the end of the year, given that more than 9,400 sturgeon remain to be caught under the area's 12,800-fish annual guideline, said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist.

"I can't remember when this many sturgeon were available for the fall fishery," Hymer said. "Fishing should be good from Camas up to Bonneville Dam. Bank anglers fishing below the dam will have their best chance of the year to catch a legal-size white sturgeon."

"Keepers" must measure at least 42 inches but no more than 60 inches. Anglers are limited to one sturgeon per day and five per year. "If you still have notches left on your catch record card for sturgeon, this is a great opportunity to fill them up," Hymer said.

Meanwhile, **salmon** anglers fishing above Bonneville Dam have a chance to fill a few notches, too, now that chinook retention is once again allowed from the dam up to the Highway 395 bridge at

Pasco. Those waters were reopened to catch-and-keep chinook fishing after fish counts revealed that more chinook salmon have been passing over Bonneville Dam since mid-September than expected, said Bill Tweit, WDFW Columbia River policy leader.

"Anglers fishing above Bonneville Dam didn't get much of a chance to take home chinook salmon earlier in the season," Tweit said. "The additional fish we're seeing now give us a chance to provide more fishing time, without exceeding conservation guidelines or compromising the commercial fishery in the lower river."

Tweit noted that anglers must still release any chinook salmon they catch downstream from Bonneville Dam to Rocky Point/Tongue Point near Astoria. Anglers fishing in that area may, however, retain hatchery coho and steelhead, which can be identified by a missing adipose fin. But some of the best action for those fish has been on the tributaries, where late-run hatchery coho are overlapping with fall chinook runs, Hymer said. While late coho runs are expected to be smaller than the early run, he said bright fish are expected in the Washougal, Lewis, Kalama, Cowlitz, Elochoman and Klickitat rivers. Fishery managers are also expecting 12,000 late-run chinook to return to the North Fork Lewis River in the days ahead. The best place to intercept these hatchery fish is at the Cedar Creek Hole near the hatchery, Hymer said.

On the Cowlitz River, creel checkers counted 167 boat anglers with 30 adult chinook, 17 hatchery coho and 11 hatchery steelhead during the week ending Oct. 1. Bank angling has been slow from the Interstate 5 bridge downstream (except at the mouth of the Toutle River), but creelers counted nonetheless 14 hatchery coho, 10 hatchery steelhead, two chinook and a number of sea-run cutthroat trout among the 142 bank anglers checked on the Cowlitz that week. Bank anglers also picked up seven fall chinook on the Klickitat River, where 16 boat anglers added another 11 fish to the tally.

Anglers should be aware that chinook-release rules are now in effect in the following waters to protect spawning salmon:

- Elochoman River, upstream from the Highway 4 Bridge
- North Fork Toutle from the Kidd Valley Road Bridge near Highway 504 upstream
- Green River
- Cowlitz River from Blue Creek to Mill Creek
- Kalama River from the natural gas pipeline crossing upstream
- Washougal River from the Little Washougal River upstream
- White Salmon River from the posted markers half a mile above the Highway 14 Bridge upstream

In addition, all fishing is now closed from Colvin Creek (near the salmon hatchery) upstream to Merwin Dam on the Lewis River. Night closures went into effect Oct. 1 at Drano Lake, where all non-tribal fishing is now prohibited on Wednesdays. Additional regulations are described in WDFW's Fishing in Washington rule pamphlet, available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>. Meanwhile, Tacoma Power employees resumed transporting fish to Lake Scanewa during the last week of September with the releases of 1,285 coho adults, 175 coho jacks and one spring chinook adult into the Cowlitz River at the Day Use Site. In addition, they released 105 coho adults and 23 coho jacks into the Cipsus River above the mouth of Yellowjacket Creek during the week. A total of 699 coho adults, 46 coho jacks, one cutthroat trout, 518 fall chinook adults and 35 jacks were released into Mayfield Lake at Ike Kinswa Park boat launch during the week.

Anglers casting for **trout** should be aware that Goose Lake was planted with 1,545 cutthroat averaging nearly a pound each on Sept. 25. Another 334 one-pounders went to the South Lewis County Park Pond near Toledo the next day, while Battleground Lake got 813 cutts and - hold on to your poles - 30 rainbows weighing 10 pounds apiece.

Eastern Washington:

The **steelhead** run and catch in the Snake River is picking up steam. Glen Mendel, WDFW district fish biologist, said numbers of fish available and water conditions are usually very good in October, so catches should increase. "River flows are low and clear and water temperatures aren't bad," he said.

River and stream fishing for **trout** and other species throughout the region also is good, with fish feeding on fall insect hatches. Many of those waterways, or portions of them, close to fishing at the end of October. Fishing lakes that didn't close last month will close Oct. 31 also. One notable exception is Amber Lake in southwest Spokane County, where catch-and-release rainbow and cutthroat trout fishing, under selective gear rules, continues through November. Anglers should check the fishing pamphlet for more information on those and other fisheries.

WDFW enforcement officers recently conducted boat patrols on Lake Roosevelt and found lots of fishers with lower-than-usual catches of rainbow trout for this time of year.

North Central Washington:

Bob Jateff, WDFW district fish biologist, reminds anglers that Pearrygin Lake in the Winthrop area of Okanogan County, which normally closes Sept. 30, will remain open to fishing through Oct. 8. There are no daily catch or size limits, allowing anglers to take as many **rainbow trout** as possible before the lake is treated with rotenone to remove undesirable fish populations. The lake will close to fishing Oct. 9 when the rehabilitation treatment begins.

Jateff said some other trout fishing lakes to try in the Okanogan during October are Blue Lake in the Sinlahekin Valley, Ell Lake in the Aeneas Valley, Big Twin Lake near Winthrop, and Rat Lake near Brewster. "These are all under selective gear rules and should provide good fishing opportunities for both lure and fly anglers," he said. All are open through the month of October.

The Methow River has been closed to fishing for all species, including **steelhead**, since Oct. 1. Joe Miller, WDFW northcentral regional fish program manager, said staff are evaluating the possibility of conducting a steelhead fishery in the upper Columbia River and tributaries within the parameters of the federal Endangered Species Act. No decisions have yet been reached about that fishery.

South Central Washington:

The latest weekly creel report from WDFW Fish Biologist Paul Hoffarth indicates an estimated 731 **chinook salmon** (662 adults, 69 jacks) were harvested in the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River near the Tri-Cities. Anglers averaged one chinook for every 22 hours fished, he said, or roughly one-half chinook per boat. Total chinook harvest to date is 1,579 (1,419 adults, 160 jacks). In 2005, 3,665 chinook had been harvested through Oct 2. Angler effort has been slightly below last year's effort, he said.

Meanwhile, the fall chinook salmon harvest on the lower Yakima River east of Prosser and west of the Tri-Cities has been so high that the season's scheduled run through Oct. 22 could be curtailed. Hoffarth explained that this year's Yakima chinook run of about 2,500 fish is about one-third smaller than last year's, but the harvest of 297 fish to date is already more than three times greater than this time last year. Most of the catch has been near the Chandler hydroelectric powerhouse discharge area, which is about eight miles east of Prosser, just north of Interstate 82 off the Chandler Canal. Yakima River water is diverted from Prosser Dam to the Chandler facility. "The fish are so vulnerable there that we may be reaching an overharvest of fall chinook in the Yakima River," Hoffarth said. "We also have a high incidence of snagging in that area, and unless fish are hooked inside the mouth or on the head, they're illegal to possess." Snagging citations bring a \$540 fine. Stay tuned for a possible emergency rule change about the length of this season.

Reader Email

Got a question, story to tell or information to share? We'd like to hear from you!

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: drees@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: SailCat@SailCat.com

Random Links

Need a shuttle on one of Oregon's rivers? You'll probably find it here

<http://www.wcflyfishers-ore.com/Rivershuttles.html>

Bonus video - Fishing is dangerous!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0wxPYtGpVvk&mode=related&search=>

Weekly Quote – "The season is ended. There was not enough of it; there never is." - Nick Lyons

GOOD LUCK!