

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 20th, – October 26th, 2006**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Ironically, salmon fishing slowed when the season below Bonneville reopened for the retention of Chinook. Backtrollers are still catching a few but success has dramatically dropped off.

Sturgeon anglers in the gorge are taking advantage of the fall bite with nearly a keeper per boat recorded last weekend. Bank anglers are faring well also with better than a keeper for every 5 rods fishing. Smelt will produce the best results into November but action should gradually slide as keepers get culled from the fishery. Quality keepers are present however.

Anglers in the Troutdale area are still catching a few hatchery coho. Action here should taper as the late run makes its final push. Spinners are taking the bulk of the catch.

The water flow at Willamette Falls is over 10,000 cfs. Over 1,900 Chinook have crossed with the coho numbers approaching the 5,000 mark as the runs wind down. A few anglers are trolling Wiggle Warts in the Meldrum Bar area, taking an occasional coho, but the tributaries are more productive.

Try fishermen's Bend and above for summer steelhead on the swollen North Santiam. Trout anglers are looking for large October caddis hatches occurring in the mornings and evenings.

Eagle Creek rose with the recent precipitation, allowing hundreds of coho to enter the hatchery facility there. Fishing has been slow to fair with most of the fish past their prime.

Rain got coho on the move in the Sandy River and roiled the water late last week and into the weekend. Anglers pitching spinners or drifting bait are managing to catch a few of these finicky fish.

Mt. Hood Pond is scheduled to be planted this week with legal and larger trout.

Northwest – The Tillamook Bay fishery continues to produce consistent results. Weak tides have made the lower bay the best option but sporadic spinner bites have been occurring near low slack in the upper bay. Red and white spinners are producing best. The best fishing in the lower bay has been inside the jaws near low slack. Over the weekend, this will occur extremely early and late in the day so plan your trip accordingly. The ocean swell is not forecasted to be friendly over the weekend.

Recent rains on the north coast didn't impact streams although slight rises sent some darker fish upstream on the Trask and Tillamook River. No significant river level rises are forecasted putting driftboaters on the wait for a while longer.

Nehalem area anglers are taking a few fish trolling near the city of Nehalem and bobber fishing upstream of town to the Highway 53 bridge. There is a mix of bright and dark fish present.

Crabbing is excellent in the lower Columbia River with quality sized keepers coming from the Hammond area.

Razor clam digging along Clatsop Beaches opened again on Wednesday with the first favorable tide on Friday night. Be cautious of a large surf but clamming should be excellent.

Late last week, the Siletz showed some life, rewarding bobber fishermen and herring trollers with several nice Chinook. It slowed again over the weekend.

The Yaquina River is producing slow but steady Chinook fishing, improving over the weekend, while the bay is still providing good catches of large, hard-shelled Dungeness.

Alsea River anglers are finding the best success between Taylor's Landing and Canal Creek. Trolling is best below Taylor's Landing while bobber boats are taking quality fish above.

Southwest – Catches of coho have outnumbered those of Chinook in Winchester Bay recently. A mix of wild and hatchery coho are present. Armand Pena of Lakeside and Norm Ritchie of Portland took limits of hatchery coho in front of the elk refuge in the Umpqua tidewater on Friday using copper spinners with red beads. Armand's 11- pounder qualified for placement in the STEP conference fishing tournament that day.

Coos Bay anglers are seeing a high number of softshells but sorting out a limit of crab is possible. Chinook fishing is fair in the bay.

Anglers in the Rogue estuary are experiencing the best Chinook and coho fishing at first light although precipitation took many fish upstream. Trolled anchovy with a spinner blade is still the most popular, but spinners are also fooling a few. A mix of steelhead and Chinook have provided fair fishing in the Grants Pass stretch. Steelheading is fair in the upper Rogue which will remain flies only through October.

The ocean was rewarding Chinook fishermen daily when offshore salmon fishing closed out of Brookings on October 12th. Limits of ling cod were taken over the weekend along with good numbers of rockfish.

Chetco herring trollers are catching fair to good numbers of Chinook. Bobber and bait is productive in upstream areas.

Eastern - Deschutes River steelheaders continue to experience good catches in an outstanding run this year. Effort is down despite the good fishing and steelhead are more receptive to flies this time of year. Trout fishing is rewarding on both nymphs and dries.

Southwest Washington- The Cowlitz River continues to provide some late run coho opportunities. Fish are averaging larger this time of year but a mix of dark and bright fish are being landed. Summer steelhead also remains an option but recycling numbers are dropping.

The most recent checks in the Hanford Reach on the Washington side indicated better than 1 chinook per rod for boat anglers working the area. Quality fish are becoming harder to find however.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Just when chinook anglers had a reason to get excited, the re-opener of retention has turned out to be more of a challenge than one would want. During the catch and release season, it wasn't uncommon for guides to be releasing double digit numbers. Success recently has dropped dramatically. **Pro guide Dan Ponciano (360-607-8511)** reported that one fishery or the other is performing but not both together. Dan is referring to the sturgeon fishing in the gorge as well as the salmon fishing. Dan began the day targeting salmon at Bonneville. Before giving up and heading for sturgeon, Dan took one dark fish downstream of Tanner Creek. Dan stated the quality of fish just depends on the day. One day you will find all good fish while the other, all dark ones. Dan suggested targeting brighter fish in the swifter water downstream of Tanner Creek. Backrolled Kwikfish is the ticket here and the mornings are producing the best results. The Oak Tree Hole to the Islands is producing the best bites.

Dan also reported on sturgeon. Stating that the greatest amount of effort is taking place from the deadline downstream to the slabs, good numbers of keepers and shakers are being taken in the swifter flows. Although action has been good all the way downstream to Cape Horn, limits can be attained if anglers persist in the upper areas. Dan says the Thursday openers are obviously going to be the best. The fish are responding well to smelt but squid is also a great bait this time of year.

Upriver, steelhead action is beginning to perk up nicely for John Day area anglers. Although still weeks away from peak fishing, the weekly check tallied 33 hatchery steelhead retained and 11 wild fish released for 54 boats. Bank anglers recorded 7 hatchery fish and 6 wild ones for 40 rods over the weekend. Plug trollers working the expansive water just above the impoundment will find consistent results in the coming weeks. The larger "B" run Idaho bound fish are present in larger numbers so don't hesitate to use larger plugs to target these fish.

The estuary is putting out limits of quality keeper crabs. Although this is nothing new, it appears as if the fall crab fishery may produce good results and the crabbing should only get better. Most of the keeper males are well filled out.

The Guide's Forecast – Anglers should be most excited about the Thursday openers for sturgeon for the rest of the year. Although keepers are getting culled from the fishery weekly, you can expect good fishing to last into early November. Smelt and squid will take the bulk of the keepers and the closer you fish to the deadline, the better your odds should be. Keep in mind however that this is where the bulk of the effort will take place too. Finding secluded areas downstream, even to Cape Horn, could pay dividends to those willing to explore or knowledgeable in the area. As a general rule, the lower in the gorge you go, the more shaker action you are going to get. Don't be too surprised if you hook into an oversized sturgeon if you are backtrolling Kwikfish.

And backtrolling Kwikfish is the way to go if you are still targeting salmon in the Columbia River Gorge. Like sturgeon anglers, the swifter water from the deadline to the islands will produce the best results and brighter fish will be more likely to be here. Tanner Creek is putting out dark fish and should be avoided. The quality of the salmon in this area will dramatically decrease after this week.

Upriver, trollers working the John Day area of the mainstem should begin to post even better catches of summer steelhead on plugs. Although mornings are best, these fish will take plugs during any time of the day- especially given the swift drop in water temperatures now underway.

Further upriver, backtrollers working the Hanford Reach are scoring good results for chinook using Kwikfish. Although it may also be challenging to find bright fish in this fishery, bucks can often cut favorably but keep in mind these are exclusively wild fish and this resource deserves extra special respect.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – With river flows increasing at Willamette Falls, coho are once again on the move as over 120 crossed on both the 16th and 17th. While these fish are wild, this is a reliable indicator of fish movement, and when coho are moving, they're much more likely to bite than when holding. As of October 18th, flow at the Falls topped 11,000 cfs, a number not seen since June. Summer steelhead and Fall Chinook are trickling through in insignificant number.

Since Detroit Reservoir and Foster Dam serve as flood control at the above the North and South Santiam respectively, water levels and flows are up as preparations are being made for winter rains.

The Guide's Forecast – The East bank of the lower Willamette from Meldrum Bar to the mouth of the Clack has produced a few coho over the last week. While the tributaries provide better fishing, this

non-standard fishery is an option for some anglers. A few sturgeon have been taken in the lower Willamette, but this fishery won't ignite until after some serious rain. Sturgeon like it muddy.

The North Santiam holds promise for summer steelhead fishing but can be tough in the higher water. Fishermen's Bend is a good place for bank anglers to start, working upstream from there. Be sure to take your camera; the riverbanks are fully festooned with Fall foliage. Fortunately, the leaves remain mostly on the trees so the water is clear of debris.

A trip to the McKenzie to try for summer steelhead below Leaburg Dam should be worthwhile. It's certainly easier to find a biter steelie here than to count on hooking a coho elsewhere.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – The coho entering the Clackamas are of hatchery origin and are bound for Eagle Creek with hundreds entering daily as flows increase here. Rain early and again late this week has increased flows and improved the bite in the although the majority of the fish moving through have been dark. Eagle Creek is getting jammed at times as pods of coho rush through and over 1,500 coho had entered the holding pen at the hatchery earlier this week. The best fishing is always as the water level is dropping, so plan accordingly. This system will drop fairly rapidly over the dry weekend.

Many of the coho present in the Sandy are also darkening, but catches were decent below Cedar Creek Monday and Tuesday this week. The rain that fell overnight Wednesday will likely roil the water, but the Sandy will be fishing by the weekend with fresh, bright coho available and there should be some biters in the bunch.

North Coast District Fishing Report – The Tillamook district continues to be one of the success stories of the Oregon Coast this year. Consistent catches continue to come from the bay and the ocean. Seaweed is still a factor but with the weak tide series we are currently on, it is only a problem on peak incoming or outgoing tide. Calm weather has allowed for an extensive outside fishery this month and numbers have been good. What's unusual however is the fact that the early bird doesn't necessarily get the "bird". Although it is always a good idea to be fishing near first light, some of the best fishing has been taking place later in the morning or even in the afternoon. None-the-less, the ocean has been a great place to escape the seaweed issue so prevalent in the estuary. It feels good knowing that your gear is actually working!

As is usually the case, the last part of outgoing tide has been productive on the inside of the north jetty. The earlier in the tide, the closer you want to be to the jaws. As the outgoing tide progresses, work your way up the bay to Lyster's corner where you should be at low slack. Keep those herring on the bottom and keep your gear seaweed free. The heavier the flow, the closer to the bottom the fish will be. I have been using 10 to 16 ounces and sometimes, it's been hard to keep those on the bottom. The Ghost Hole has been producing good results on the first part of the incoming tide. These fish are riding the tide up the bay so the closer to high slack we are, the further up the estuary you should be fishing. High slack near the mouth of the Wilson or along the picket fence has been producing steady results. Red and white spinners has been productive- especially in the low light conditions of the morning and the all day cloud cover that we witnessed over the last few days. Stick to the solid colors (greens, reds and whites) on the dark days and metallic colors when the sun is shining. Kwikfish is another option on the incoming tide but you have to worry about seaweed infestation with your plugs versus whipping the seaweed off your spinner and not wrecking your sardine fillet on the underside.

Tidewater anglers have been doing fair on the Trask River and adjacent sloughs. If you can get away from the sculpin and salmon smolt and target low slack where holding fish are, some quality Chinook are coming from the lower stretches. The weak tide series we are currently on is keeping the brighter fish in the lower stretches from Jack Salmon Point and downstream. There are plenty of dark fish above

the 5th Avenue Boat Ramp.

Driftboaters never got a chance to fish the area rivers as the recent precipitation only rose the rivers about a half of a foot. The coho that were in the estuary made their way upstream as well as some dark chinook. It will take a real deluge to get these area rivers fishing.

The lower Nestucca was quiet on Wednesday but poor tides are keeping most fish in the upper tidewater stretches or in the ocean. Bobber tossers are finding a mix of dark and bright fish from Woods to Riverbend Lodge.

The Nehalem River is also producing a few fish (far from its capability) in the tidewater stretches above the town of Nehalem. The fish are falling to trolled spinners or bobber and egg/shrimp combos from the Highway 53 bridge downstream. The herring bite at the jaws is not very impressive.

Crabbing in Tillamook Bay remains fair at best. Crabbers are likely to average 1 or 2 keepers per pot. Not even the freshest of crab bait is producing great results.

Razor clam enthusiasts have a Clatsop Beach re-opener to look forward to. Here is the official press release:

Razor clamming opens Wednesday on Clatsop beaches.

NEWPORT, Ore. - Clatsop beaches will open to razor clamming at noon on Wednesday, Oct. 18, after having been closed since July 13 because of unsafe levels of domoic acid.

Following the Wednesday opening, all Oregon beaches will be open to razor clamming.

Shellfish harvesting areas are closed when toxins exceed an alert level of 20 parts per million for domoic acid. Oregon Department of Agriculture sets this as a safety level because it is below the amount known to cause illness.

Domoic acid is a naturally occurring toxin produced by marine phytoplankton or algae. Eating shellfish contaminated with domoic acid, even at low levels, can cause minor illness within minutes to hours after consumption. The toxin cannot be destroyed by cooking, adding baking soda, or any other method. In mild cases, symptoms can include vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and headache.

A recreational shellfish license is required for anyone 14 years or older to harvest all shellfish. The daily sport limit for razor clams is the first 15 taken regardless of size or condition-small and broken clams must be retained and counted as part of the limit, not reburied or discarded. Reburying a razor clam, even if its shell is unbroken, usually results in the clam's death.

A razor clam reaches an average size of 3.5 inches in its first year and up to 4.5 inches by the second year. Growth slows after the second year as energy is used for reproduction rather than accelerated growth. For more information on Oregon's razor clams, including tips on how to dig them, visit www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/shellfish/razorclams.

For additional information on shellfish toxins please visit the Oregon Department of Agriculture website at http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/FSD/shellfish_status.shtml or call their shellfish hotline at 1-800-448-2474.

The Guide's Forecast – Better tides are coming this weekend for upper bay spinner trollers. The larger incoming tides coupled with the likelihood of some Tillamook Bay bar closures could put spinner trollers on the map over the weekend. Weekend anglers will have the benefit of working the last part of

outgoing tide through low slack and then a good incoming push to boot. We should start to see some of the Wilson River component arrive this week and the Trask and Tillamook fish taper off. The fact that the run timing on these rivers intersect this week can only mean good things for weekend anglers. The strong minus tides beginning on the 23rd could put good numbers of fish in the tidewater sections of the Trask and Wilson Rivers.

The start of the Wilson and Kilchis fish makes the lower bay a good option for Tillamook trollers. The Ghost Hole has produced nicely already this season but should only get better as we enter the last half of October. The Bay City hole should also begin to produce more consistent results before fish blow across Kilchis Flats on the appropriate tides. It should be a good week for Tillamook area anglers. The bay will be crowded also as tournament anglers ply the waters in search of trophies. Good luck steelheaders!

The Nestucca and Nehalem Rivers should also produce results through the weekend. On the Nestucca, tidewater anglers starting with the Boat Ramp and Guardrail Holes should produce the best and bright fish will be the rule. The Nehalem should produce the best near the city of Nehalem trolling spinners or herring. Bobber anglers will have their best luck for fresher fish early next week.

Crabbing is best on Netarts and Nestucca bays with Nehalem a close third. Expect just one or two keepers per pot on Tillamook Bay.

Go razor clam digging starting on the 21st. You'll need your headlamp and don't forget your shellfish license!

Central & South Coast Reports – While the Chinook fishing remains slow in tidewater on the Siletz River, steelheading above has improved thanks to recent precipitation and a cooling of the water temperatures.

It's worth noting that this is roughly mid-season of the Fall run in many places. While sand shrimp with pink yarn is a top bait early in the season and good-quality cured salmon eggs are best later in the season, try the two together for the next couple of weeks. The additional expense where the critical point of contact occurs is minimal compared to tackle, fuel and accommodations. Catching salmon is what we're there for and we might as well tip the odds in our favor as much as possible. The best chance for a decent bobber bite is at low slack tide.

Although Chinook fishing is fair to good on the Yaquina River and fish are being taken daily. A 45-pounder was taken last week near Toledo. Crabbing has been very good in the bay.

Incoming tide has been most rewarding on the Alsea with many anglers reporting hookups. Bill Kremers (5410754-6411) reports, "Fall Chinook is improving on the tidewater section of the Alsea. Most of the Chinook are now up river from Taylors Landing. Trolling are using either cut plug herring or Blue Fox spinners. The best trolling section is between Taylors and Canal Creek. The bobber boats are usually upriver from Canal Creek. Here is a picture of Chris Berry (and proud father) with an Alsea he caught on a guide trip with me last Saturday. He caught the salmon on a cut plug herring.



Chinook action slowed following decent results a week ago on the Siuslaw. It's still worthwhile as fresh fish are moving into the system. Trolling plug-cut herring is effective here with bobber & bait is catching a few at the top of tidewater.

Boats launching out of Reedsport have experience good results for coho and Chinook on spinners and plugs. The mainstem Umpqua River has slowed for Chinook, coho and steelhead. The smallmouth bass fishery winding down with the seasonal cooling of water temperatures. Restricted to unweighted flies only, steelheading is slow in the North Umpqua. The South Umpqua is closed until December 1st.

Coquille Chinook anglers have seen a lull in the action while Coos Bay fishers are experiencing fine fishing with most everyone getting a chance at a fish.

Fishing slowed in most areas on the Rogue following a previous week of fine action. Most of the salmon in the bay now are coho with best results for then the signature anchovy/spinnerblade combo. Spinners and bobber & bait combos have taken good numbers of Chinook at the mouth of Indian Creek as salmon are returning to the hatchery upstream. It's a mixed bag at Agness with half-pounders, adult steelhead, and Chinook being caught although fishing is spotty. The Grants Pass stretch has been most productive for those targeting steelhead with various baits and lures effective here. Steelhead action has cooled along with the water in the upper, flies only stretch of the Rogue. This area will open to the use of bait and hardware on November 1st. While early summer steelhead counts were impressive, as the run winds down the total of about 7,300 at Gold Ray Dam is only fair for this system.

It remains to be seen if rain this week will have much impact on South coast rivers. The last blast did little to increase flows. Chetco anglers are seeing consistent action for Chinook by adopting the Rogue River Rig with low water keeping salmon keged in tidewater.

While rockfishing has been excellent all season out of Brookings, ling cod have made up only a portion of the catch. As offshore prospects improve, limits of both lings and rockfish are common. Unfortunately, days offering friendly ocean conditions will be fewer as Fall turns to winter. With the ocean closed to salmon fishing, anglers concentrating their efforts in tidewater are finding plenty of jacks anxious to take baits presented under a bobber. First light is the best time to nail them. With the next decent rainfall, these fish will bolt upstream.

Central and Eastern Oregon – While fishing on the Grande Ronde is only fair, pressure is heavy, It's recommended that anglers get out at first light for the best chance of landing a fish. Steelhead are averaging seven pounds.

With the late steelhead run this season, the Deschutes continues to deliver. Two-salt fish are starting to show in the mix. Anglers will find the best fishing from Maupin up to Warm Springs. Trout fishing continues to improve along with water conditions.

Anglers with the itch to take advantage of the increased trout activity in Central Oregon Lakes had better check the regs. Some (such as Lake Simtustus and Big Lava Lake) will close on Halloween along with the streams.

Northwest Trout – The only trout stocking the week will be at Mt. Hood Pond. A mix of catchable-size (eight-to-10-inch) and larger (12-inch) will be planted.

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 Humpulips 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 cuts 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? Shoot us an Email!

Write to the TGF staff:

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Random Links

About Razor Clams from the ODFW: <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/shellfish/razorclams/>

Details on Tillamook Bay and Fall Chinook fishing: <http://www.steelheaduniversity.com/tillamook.htm>

Weekly Quote – "Man, from his inferior share of the earth's surface, to which little space he appears confined without a fin to dive or a wing to soar, contemplates with pleasure the scintillating heavens; while the sublime roar of the ocean, its breakers beating the shores into fragments with its billowy battalions in close lines, and in storms booming like thunder, penetrate his soul with awe and reverence at the power manifested, to which, in comparison, his own is nothing." - Genio Scott

GOOD LUCK!