

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **November 24th – November 30th, 2006**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Happy Thanksgiving! We are grateful for our subscribers!

Willamette Valley/Metro- Columbia River sturgeon fishing remains good and in the murky waters of the NW, is one of the better options. Keepers are still being taken with some regularity in the gorge for anglers using smelt and sand shrimp combinations. Sub-legal action is good from the gorge downstream to Rainier. Bank anglers are still doing well with higher flows pushing fish closer to the shore and good action should last until the end of the month when temperatures drop.

Steelheaders are coming into their prime season in the John Day area. The mainstem is picking up for both boaters and bank anglers. The John Day River itself is a viable option when trolling slows. Trollers are taking most of their fish in the morning.

Willamette sturgeon action is improving with a cooling Columbia. The stretch from the St. Johns Bridge to the mouth is producing best using smelt. Anglers still need to be wary of floating debris. Although limits are not the rule, some quality fish are available.

Thanksgiving usually brings out the first of the serious steelhead plunkers at Meldrum Bar just downstream of the mouth of the Clackamas. With turbid water conditions and high flows, fish will be hugging the shoreline. Anglers shouldn't get their hopes up too high however. Incidentally caught coho, hatchery or wild, must be released downstream of Willamette Falls.

The Sandy and Clackamas are quiet this time of year. Recent precipitation, a coho closure and the end of a stocking program that brought back earlier returning steelhead make these metro rivers a poor option until February.

Northwest – With the recent break in weather, anglers were out in force on Tillamook Bay and the Kilchis River. The Kilchis remained one of the few fishable rivers on the north coast but the Wilson showed signs of improvement on Monday. Forecasted weather will once again put the larger systems on hold.

Anglers working the Kilchis from Kilchis Park downstream were met with lots of competition. Patient anglers working the lower stretches were rewarded with a mix of dark and bright fish. With the consistently high water, fresh fish were moving all the time but very few anglers scored excellent results as is usually the case when we experience fewer rain freshets.

The Wilson and Nestucca had fair numbers of fish present but the Wilson never got much clearer than 10 inches of visibility. The water below Highway 101 produced the best catches on the Nestucca over the weekend. The Nestucca run will begin to fade fast while the Wilson will last into mid-December- if it ever clears again.

A large log jam exists on the Trask River at the Railroad Bridge about 2 miles upstream from Highway 101. It is impassable but hopefully the dropping flows will break it up.

Although unconfirmed reports of winter steelhead are coming from the north coast, Thanksgiving typically motivates anglers to try their luck on the Wilson, Kilchis, North Fork Nehalem or Necanicum Rivers in search of early success. These rivers will fish best in mid-December however.

Tillamook Bay is still producing good catches. The Ghost Hole is responsible for the bulk of the action and effort. Nearly 30 fish were estimated in Monday's catch. Crabbing is a poor option on Tillamook Bay but Netarts is yielding good catches of hard shelled Dungeness crab. Effort has not picked up for sturgeon although numbers should begin to increase later this month.

The lower Columbia River out of Hammond is producing excellent catches of keeper crab. The tides will be good over the holiday weekend and commercial pots are likely to enter in early December.

Southwest – The Chetco River is one of the best November options but high water will once again prevent productive opportunities for this south coast favorite. It may come back into shape late into the weekend.

The Elk and Sixes Rivers produced some of the best catches of the year over the weekend. Driftboaters backbouncing eggs and backtrolling plugs scored good numbers but forecasted weather may put many south coast streams out until the weekend. The Elk will be one of the first to clear when rains subside.

Summer steelhead in the upper reaches of the Rogue River is still the best option in this region. The quality of the summer fish will begin to fall after Thanksgiving and anxious plunkers working the lower reaches may score winter fish when flow stabilize.

Eastern - The Grande Ronde is likely to have some of the more stable flows in the state. Last week, anglers tallied 1 steelhead for every 15 hours fished. Catch rates should begin to improve as the month progresses.

The Umatilla won't get good until later in the year.

The Snake River is improving but fish are most congregated below Hells Canyon Dam.

Southwest Washington- SW Washington streams remain challenging to fish due to high water conditions. Steelhead have become available on the Cowlitz Rivers but success is limited. Anglers should focus efforts along river banks using bright colored lures and scented baits. The Cowlitz will remain the best bet but more high water is forecasted through the holiday weekend.

The Grays River opened to fishing for hatchery steelhead on November 15th from the mouth to the Highway 4 bridge.

But here's the best thing going in SW Washington! Lamiglas will hold its first ever factory clearance sale on Saturday December, 9th here at Lamiglas. We will have over 3000 rods which include closeouts, obsolete models and blem. Lots to choose from. We will also have rod blanks and components for the custom rod builder. I wanted to personally invite all Ifisher's to come on by our factory at 1400 Atlantic Ave. in Woodland, Washington for this huge event. We will also have Jack Glass, Dave Vedder and Carmen McDonald on hand to talk about different fishing techniques. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Saturday, December 9th 2006. See you there!

Columbia River Fishing Report – Sturgeon fishing in the Columbia River Gorge remains the fishery of choice with keepers coming from both the bank and boat fisheries. Over 1 keeper per boat and numerous shakers were recorded from boat anglers over the weekend and a few oversized fish

are still being caught. As the season progresses and quality fish are culled, anglers will have to get a bit more savvy about pursuing their prey. Smelt is the standard bait but you have to fish super-standard baits if you are to expect the better results. Tip your baits with squid or shrimp for the best opportunities at keepers and shakers. With all the shaker action going on, you had better bring lots of bait.

Bank anglers are producing excellent results as well posting 75 legal sturgeon kept, plus seven legal, four oversize and 114 sublegal sturgeon released for 344 bank rods. Anglers theorize that the higher flows are keeping fish close to the bank where flows aren't as intense. It's all about calorie counting this time of year with limited food supplies.

Steelheaders are most active in the John Day Pool where boat anglers are coming across better numbers of steelhead every week. Weekly checking showed seven hatchery steelhead kept plus two wild steelhead released for 22 bank rods; and 24 hatchery steelhead kept plus 12 wild steelhead released for 46 boats. Trollers are varying their plug colors over the course of the day with darker plugs producing later in the day. Metallic colors work best on that rare day when the sun is shining. A cool wind is the only constant one can expect in this region. Working the lower John Day River itself breaks up the monotony of trolling the reservoir upstream of the John Day Dam. Use caution when navigating the lower John Day but it's worth the trip up there. Bobber and jigs work well but soaking a sand shrimp tail is also a great option along the cut banks. Set bobbers between 4 and 5 feet below the surface.

Crabbers on the lower Columbia have also suffered from the overabundance of water coming down NW Oregon tributaries. Although crabbing was excellent prior to the deluge, it has dropped off. I crabbed on the 21st and 22nd in less than ideal conditions, taking 58 Dungeness for 6 people on the first day and about 49 on the second. That was for 8 pots crabbing. The bulk of our keepers came from the Buoy 22 area to the upper tip of Social Security Beach in water from 22 to 35 feet deep. We used frozen salmon carcasses, mink carcasses, shad and chopped herring. Seals and at least 1 sealion were working the area so you'll have to cage any fish you are using for bait. Also, it looks probable that the commercial pots may be going into the river and ocean prior to the traditional opener on December 1st.

The Guide's Forecast – Thursdays remain the best days to catch quality keepers and shakers in the gorge but the other 2 retention days are fishing good as well. Although the action this time of year is always "slotty", if you get in the right lane, a limit is quite feasible. Most of the effort remains in the faster water near the deadline but as temperatures drop (like they have this week), this bite should taper as fish become lethargic. Fishing will likely slow in December so get out there while the fishing is good. The river below the mouth of the Willamette is producing mostly shaker sturgeon for anglers but may improve slightly when gorge temperatures force fish downstream. In recent years however, this fishery has not produced great results and its success hinges on the upcoming smelt run.

Look for the John Day area to peak in the coming 10 days. Although weather is always cool here, action could easily justify a trip eastward. Although the mainstem Columbia will host the most fish, it is a larger body of water and therefore can be difficult to locate a fish. Don't rule out the possibility of good action on the John Day River itself.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – The lower Willamette River will offer the possibility of a hookup in the valley. Water will be on the rise and muddy although sturgeon like it that way. The water flow at Willamette Falls has moderated and visibility has improved, a situation likely to reverse with heavy rains mid-week.

Another option in the lower Willamette is plunking from the bank at the Meldrum Bar and on the other stretches of Willamette riverbank below the mouth of the Clackamas River. Some steelhead may be available.

While the North Santiam has plenty of colorful summer steelhead and a few winter natives, water conditions are going to be prohibitive for a while. In addition to runoff from recent rains and more precipitation this week, the water level at Detroit Reservoir must be returned to winter-level low for flood control. This is scheduled to be completed by December 1st. Then again, it might rain some more.

The Guide's Forecast – As the Columbia cools, sturgeon will seek comfort in the warmer waters of the lower Willamette and they will bite. Smelt, sand shrimp and squid are the best baits to tempt sturgeon below the Falls and Multnomah Channel. The stretch from the St. Johns Bridge to the mouth is currently producing best. Anglers will sort through some 'shorts,' but keepers will be available. Rain won't deter the action, but high wind and floating debris can create dicey conditions for boaters. Check the forecast before launching.

Plunk for winter steelhead with a combination of a Spin 'N' Glos and sand shrimp or prawn tail. Use sufficient weight to hold it in place. In heavy current, steelhead will take the path of least resistance very near the bank. Make short casts for the best chance of an interception. Chat it up with the locals, most of whom are willing to share tips and technique.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Due to the stocking of hatchery winter steelhead of wild parentage, broodstock steelies run on a schedule indicative of their lineage. Expect the Sandy and Clackamas to start producing catches in January, offering better fishing in February. Pressure is light and a few fish have been taken on Eagle Creek when water conditions have allowed.

North Coast District Fishing Report – We wait and we wait.....and just how many people can you put on the Kilchis River? The Kilchis, the gem of the north coast has been the only option for desperate to drift anglers since the month of November has started. Although it has produced consistent results, it is overcrowded and cutting into the quality of experience that most solitary driftboaters really crave. One day last week, one angler counted over 80 boat trailers at its access points. It looks like this will likely continue at least through the holiday weekend. Boats have been averaging several opportunities a day (some of those opportunities have been chum- and it's illegal to actually target chum salmon this time of year). The Kilchis' flow has remained pretty stable so a fresh batch of fish has been coming on each tide. When waters are high like they are, fish are on the move and anchoring can be the most effective method. There has been some limited time frames where fish will have actually settled down into more traditional holes on the river where working a stretch (that means not on anchor) has produced dividends.

Other area rivers have produced catches but most remained too high for overly productive opportunities. Anglers fished the Wilson over the weekend. I took my customers upriver from the bottom end on Saturday and fished for about 1½ hours but never had a grab. The water had about 10 inches of visibility and there was a fair amount of leafy debris still in the water, keeping us busy clearing it off our hooks. There was 2 other boats fishing in the same stretch, same story. **Pro guide Kent Anderson (503-550-6303)** reported much of the same over on the Nestucca. Kent stated there were many boats trying over the weekend but action wasn't all that great. Kent started his day at First Bridge but found himself rowing downriver to find better water. He finally found some water below the Highway 101 Bridge where he hooked 4 fish, landing 2. Most of the boats he had talked to didn't come into fish until they were lower in the river system. A good deal of the

Nestucca fish are distributed throughout the system.

The Trask River was coming into fishable stage but a huge log jam is keeping anyone from drifting. The jam exists below the Railroad Bridge about 1 mile upstream of the Highway 101 takeout. Can you imagine the fish getting through? Bank anglers working the water should have fair opportunity when flows subside. Trask fish are likely to be on the dark side this late in the season but there should be a few chromers around.

Netarts Bay remains the only crabbing option for those desperate for holiday treats. Check the Columbia River report for Hammond crabbing info.

Sturgeon anglers have yet to venture out in force on Tillamook Bay. The weather has just been too volatile and the chinook bite keeps on coming. That's right, chinook are still being taken with regularity in the Ghost Hole and at Bay City. Although the bay remains turbid at times, it is still producing good catches for those trolling herring on the bottom. Many guides agree that the layer of turbid water in on the top only and may not effect the deep running salmon. Call Garibaldi Marina to check open times if you are needing any quality herring (503-322-3312).

The Guide's Forecast – Most rivers, including smaller streams will likely not fish over the holiday weekend. If the forecast gets botched, smaller streams like the Kilchis, North Fork Nehalem and Necanicum may offer up a mix of chinook (fresh and colored), steelhead, chum salmon and coho. Only chinook and fin-clipped steelhead may be retained. The higher drifts will be the most productive at first but boat ramps have been washed out so prepare for alternatives. The Siskeyville boat slide is currently out!

Weather will likely keep sturgeon anglers tying rigs versus exploratory trips to see if they are actually out there. Can you blame 'em?

Crab Netarts Bay for the best option for Dungeness. Be sure to check the tides as the late afternoon outgo is a screamer! Better tides for crabbing begin early next week so get that Christmas shopping done early!

Central & South Coast Reports – Sturgeon fishermen are looking forward to plying the Umpqua below Roseburg with recent rain causing muddy water which should get those fish on the bite. Summer steelheading has improved on the North Umpqua. Plunkers fishing the swollen river close to the bank have taken a few winter steelhead recently in the mainstem. Sawyers Rapids seems to be the productive spot to fish.

The first winter steelhead are expected to arrive this week on the Coquille River with the heavy rains in the forecast. A break in the weather this weekend should provide anglers with an early fish or two.

While neither the Elk nor Sixes Rivers delivered red hot fishing over the weekend, water conditions were decent, allowing anglers a shot at some fish. Action was fair to good. These systems are subject to rapid changes with precipitation, blowing out one day and, given a dry period, fishable the next. Elk and Sixes Chinook anglers have had it very good recently, where, despite stormy conditions, they're managing multiple hookups daily. Fish are bright and averaging in the mid-20s.

Winter steelhead fishing has started on the lower Rogue although it's still too early for decent action. Coho are being taken in modest numbers from the Grants Pass stretch downstream into the lower river. Fishing for summer steelhead has been good on the middle Rogue with cured eggs most effective, although most steelies taken in this stretch are natives. All manner of bait and lures is

taking summers on the upper river, particularly at the Hatchery Hole with improved water temperatures turning on the bite here.

Bottom fishing for ling cod has been excellent out of Charleston although conditions recently haven't allowed frequent forays. When fishers can get out, limits are the rule.

Central and Eastern Oregon – The Grande Ronde River is usually a late November favorite but action hasn't picked up like most had anticipated by this time. It's too early to call the run a bust as fish are beginning to show in fair numbers around the Troy area. The Imnaha and Umatilla Rivers can also be popular destinations this time of year but only the Umatilla is showing signs of promise. Angler checked there this weekend reported a fish for every 7.8 hours of effort. River flows are good and should remain stable with the snow level dropping.

Dropping freezing and snow levels should put a damper on Central Oregon angling opportunities. It looks like winter will arrive early this year. Start tying flies for next year!

Northwest Trout – Crescent Lake is producing dandy lake trout with some specimens in the 'teens. Bundle up if you go and prepare for sub-freezing temperatures.

Walling Pond and Walter Wirth Lake were planted with hatchery trout this week.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report:

North Puget Sound

The **chum salmon** return to many area rivers was nearing its peak when recent heavy rains swelled the region's waters. Once river levels get back to normal, the fish might not be as abundant, but anglers should still have a decent chance to hook a chum. "When we finally get a break in the weather and the rivers have a chance to drop back into shape, anglers should find some chum and even some coho salmon," said Tim Flint, WDFW salmon resource manager. "Although, with these recent heavy rains, it's tough to say when that will be."

Saltwater fisheries are an option for anglers waiting for river conditions to improve. Effort has been light, but stalwart anglers that braved the recent rain and wind did find some salmon in Puget Sound. One bright spot was Nov. 8, when three anglers were checked at the Everett Ramp with four **chinook**.

Anglers participating in the selective **blackmouth** fishery in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) 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. In marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) anglers can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit in each area. Anglers in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) also have a two-salmon daily limit but must release chinook.

Seven marine areas of Puget Sound also are open to recreational crabbing. Marine areas 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu), 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 9, 10, 12 (Hood Canal) and 13 (south Puget Sound) are open seven days a week through Jan. 2 unless catch quotas for those areas are reached before then.

Marine areas 7S (San Juan Islands), 7E (Anacortes to Bellingham), 7N (Bellingham to Pt. Roberts), 8-1, 8-2 and 11 (Tacoma-Vashon Island) will remain closed to sport crabbing for the season. Back on the freshwater, about 3,000 hatchery rainbows - averaging approximately three pounds each - are scheduled to be released into Beaver Lake near Issaquah the third week in November. Beaver Lake, which is one of several westside lowland lakes open to fishing year-round, is best fished by small boat, although anglers can also be successful fishing from shore, said Chad Jackson, WDFW fish biologist. The daily bag limit is five fish, and bait anglers must keep the first five trout they catch.

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

In a sure sign that the dog days of summer have given way to the dog days of fall, thousands of **chum salmon** are now moving into fisheries throughout the region. "We've got schools of chum out front and they're being caught," says the phone message (360-877-5222) at the Hoodport Hatchery on Hood Canal. That's something of an understatement. A creel check conducted Nov. 11 counted 84 bank anglers with 170 chum salmon taken in the "hatchery zone," where the daily limit is four salmon (with a maximum of two chinook) per rod. "That's pretty good fishing by any measure," said Hal Michael, a WDFW fish biologist.

While high water in mid-November temporarily stalled chum fishing in area rivers, Michael said catch rates should pick up quickly once those rivers drop back into shape. "We're just approaching the middle of the run in most rivers," he said, adding that recent updates indicate many runs are exceeding pre-season forecasts. "There will still be a lot of opportunities to catch chum salmon in the weeks ahead," said Larry Phillips, another WDFW fish biologist. Most chum salmon caught in area waters range from six to 15 pounds, he said.

Both biologists pointed to Kennedy, Perry, McLane, Johns, Schneider and Skookum creeks in the South Sound area as good bets for chum fishing, once water levels drop. Other areas now open to chum salmon fishing include the Dosewallips River and Duckabush River in Jefferson County, and Minter Creek in Pierce and Kitsap counties.

Michael recommended that bank anglers fishing the estuaries near the mouths of those creeks and rivers start casting just before high tide for best results.

Anglers are also advised to check the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for boundaries, catch limits and other regulations for each area. In doing so, anglers targeting chum salmon should also check the regulations for other fish species before they cast a line, Michael said. "There are still a fair number of late-running coho in many of these waters," he said. "Also a lot of 'egg predators' such as **char** and **sea-run cutthroat**. You may be fishing for chum salmon, but it's important to know the rules for these other species before you get one on your line."

Anglers should also start watching for **winter steelhead**, said Mike Gross, a WDFW fish biologist for the Olympic Peninsula. Although heavy rains render most area rivers "unfishable" in early November, Gross expects to see early steelhead in the catch once the rivers fall back into shape. "The steelhead fishery on the Olympic Peninsula traditionally gets under way around Thanksgiving, but all this water could bring early-run steelhead in sooner," Gross said. He noted that WDFW will release a pre-season forecast for steelhead returns in early December and that the department will start conducting creel surveys soon on many area rivers. All anglers planning to fish for steelhead

should check the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet for regulations applicable to specific rivers before they go.

Rather catch crustaceans? Recreational **crab** fishing reopened Nov. 1 for the fall season in four marine areas of Puget Sound, including marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 12 (Hood Canal), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) and 9 (Admiralty Inlet). Crab fishing in those area will be open seven days a week through Jan. 2. Also open seven days per week are marine areas 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south Puget Sound), where fishing has continued uninterrupted since those areas opened June 18. Marine Area 11 (Tacoma) will remain closed for the season along with several other areas in Puget Sound where area catch quotas were reached during the summer season.

Clam diggers should note that the next **razor-clam** opening is tentatively scheduled Dec. 2-3 at Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks and Kalaloch beaches if marine toxin tests show the clams at those beaches are still safe to eat. Twin Harbors would be open one additional day, Dec. 4. Copalis Beach will again remain closed to digging those days due to the low number of clams in the total allowable catch. Clam digging will be restricted to the hours between noon and midnight each day.

In addition, WDFW has tentatively scheduled a dig over the New Year's holiday, pending the results of upcoming marine toxins tests. If those results are favorable, evening digs will be held Dec. 31 at all five ocean beaches - including Copalis - and continuing Jan. 1 at four beaches: Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks and Kalaloch. One beach, Twin Harbors, would also remain open for an evening dig Jan. 2.

Again, digging will be restricted to the hours between noon and midnight each day.

Southwest Washington:

Snake River **steelhead** fishing appears to be improving in all upstream stretches of the mainstem and in most tributaries, according to the latest steelhead creel survey conducted by WDFW fish biologists and their colleagues in Idaho and Oregon. The best catch-rate was on the Tucannon River where anglers averaged less than six hours of fishing per steelhead. Steelheaders checked on the Walla Walla River averaged less than seven hours of effort per fish. On the Snake mainstem, the stretch from Little Goose dam to Lower Granite dam saw an average of just over seven hours of fishing per steelhead. On the Lower Grande Ronde River, from Bogans to the Oregon border, the average catch rate was less than 10 hours per steelhead.

See <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/snake/index.htm> for all the details from the latest creel survey.

Glen Mendel, WDFW district fish biologist, reminds Snake River steelheaders that the season, which runs through mid-April, is only for retention of hatchery fish - those fish with a clipped adipose or ventral fin and a healed scar at the location of the clipped fin. All wild steelhead, which are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, must be released unharmed. Barbless hooks are required when fishing for steelhead to protect wild steelhead that are caught and released. Mendel also reminds anglers that sections of some tributaries in the Snake River basin - Grand Ronde, Touchet, Tucannon, Walla Walla - are closed to **trout** fishing but remain open to hatchery steelhead fishing through April 15. Check the fishing rules pamphlet for section details.

Recent WDFW enforcement patrols of Lake Roosevelt indicate angler numbers and harvest of the reservoir's net-pen-reared **rainbow trout** were low. But that was likely due to recent rainy, windy weather that kept the trout from biting and the anglers at home, said WDFW Fish Biologist Heather Woller. As more wintry conditions settle in and water temperatures drop, Lake Roosevelt fishing will improve. "Our best catch rates are usually recorded in December and January when anglers have to brave freezing weather," she said.

Opening Dec. 1, are the region's four winter-only **rainbow trout** lakes - Fourth-of-July on the Lincoln-Adams county line, Hog Canyon in southwest Spokane County, and Hatch and Williams lakes in Stevens County. Chris Donley, WDFW central district fish biologist, said he will have more data on what anglers can expect at Fourth of July and Hog Canyon later this month after pre-season sampling. But he indicated that last season's good fishing at those lakes might not be repeated due to infestations of baitfish like fathead minnows.

North Central Washington:

Upper Columbia River hatchery **steelhead** fishing has been good, said Bob Jateff, WDFW district fish biologist. "Steelheaders above Wells Dam have had catch rates of one fish for every seven or eight hours of effort," he said. "Boat and shore anglers are doing the best around the docks at Pateros, drifting jigs tipped with whole shrimp." Jateff said hatchery steelhead are averaging six to eight pounds, with some fish up to 12 pounds. Recent flooding on the Methow River slowed participation and possibly success rates in the Wells pool area, but fishing should pick up again as conditions moderate.

The steelhead fishery is currently open from Rocky Reach Dam upstream to 400 feet below Chief Joseph Dam. Only adipose-fin-clipped, hatchery-origin steelhead can be retained, and the daily limit is two fish. Statewide gear rules apply and a night closure is in effect. All steelhead with an intact adipose fin and steelhead with an anchor (floy) tag must be immediately released unharmed without removing it completely from the water.

Jateff reminds angler that both the Okanogan and Methow rivers are closed to fishing for all gamefish at this time.

Rat Lake near Brewster and Big and Little Green lakes near Omak are still open for catch-and-release **trout** fishing until Dec. 1. "Then all three lakes will switch to a catch-and-keep season," Jateff said. "Rat Lake fishing should be excellent for rainbows ranging from 11 to 14 inches."

Potholes Reservoir is producing large **rainbow trout** for bank anglers and **largemouth bass** for boat anglers, who can now reach the sand dunes area because of high water levels. When Columbia Basin irrigation canals are shut down in early November, the reservoir water level rises and the year-round fishery improves.

South Central Washington:

The Columbia River **steelhead** fishery in the Ringold area (from Hwy. 395 Bridge at Pasco to Old Hanford townsite wooden powerline towers) has been productive. According to the latest weekly creel report, the estimated 139 steelhead caught this month exceeds last year's catch for the entire month of November. WDFW Fish Biologist Paul Hoffarth said the current catch rate may even be larger than 2004, a banner year for Ringold steelhead. "Boat and bank anglers also continue to pick up an occasional **chinook salmon**," he said. The number of boats in the Ringold area has declined with the closure last month of the salmon season above the wooden powerline towers, Hoffarth said. The Ringold bank fishery continues to be popular. For the week of Nov. 6-12, bank anglers averaged one steelhead for every six hours fished. Boat anglers averaged one steelhead for every 14 hours fished.

The Ringold bank fishery is defined in the fishing rules pamphlet as the water of the Columbia River adjacent to Ringold Hatchery from WDFW markers one-quarter mile downstream of the Ringold wasteway outlet to WDFW markers one-half mile upstream of Spring Creek. Only the hatchery side of the river is open for bank fishing.

Hoffarth reminds steelheaders that as of Nov. 1, all hatchery steelhead with just clipped adipose fins may be retained, up to the daily catch limit of two. Last month only hatchery steelhead with both adipose fin and ventral fin clips could be retained.

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!