

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 6<sup>th</sup> – July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Summer chinook season closed on July 2<sup>nd</sup> from Bonneville Dam to Priest Rapids. No adult chinook may be retained from Tongue Point upstream until August 1<sup>st</sup> when fall salmon arrive. Overall, it wasn't a productive season but sport anglers did exceed their catch allocation. Dam passage is tracking behind preseason estimates.

Shad fishing is slowing making it more difficult to find quality bait for oversized sturgeon. Floater shad is the best option.

Steelhead counts continue to climb and weekend tides make for ideal fishing conditions along lower Columbia River beaches. Plunkers should take fair numbers of fish on spin-n-glos.

While the shad run is tapering off at Oregon City, it was still possible to take scores of them in a couple of hours over the past weekend. Sturgeon fishing has been slow. Smallmouth bass have been cooperating with anglers above the Falls as they're pitching crankbaits in the low, clear, mid-60 degree water. A little more flow, depth and color would improve prospects, however.

Reports of only an occasional steelhead are coming from the Dodge Park area on the Sandy River.

Action on the Clackamas slowed recently as the water cooled but weather this week should turn that situation around. Numbers of both summers and springers are good and improving. Boaters must exercise extra caution navigating the lower river as the water is very low.

North Santiam steelheaders are taking a few fish floating bobber and jigs. It's recommended that anglers trying this technique take a number of different colors of small-sized jigs. The South Santiam is getting a great deal of boat traffic with many of those anchoring in drifts. Fishing is fair for summer steelhead with fish being trucked downstream from Foster to Waterloo or Pleasant Valley.

Waters scheduled for trout stocking include Faraday Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Trillium Lake, Big Cliff Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Detroit Reservoir, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Salt Creek, North Santiam River above Detroit, Trail Bridge Reservoir and Middle Fork of the Willamette River above Hills Creek Reservoir.

**Northwest –** Sturgeon fishing closed on July 4<sup>th</sup> in the estuary. Catches remained good until the closure making catch and release fishing a strong option with little competition from other anglers. Anchovies may be difficult to find during the week making sand shrimp the best option in shallow water and fresh herring in the deeper slots. Anglers can also find success jiggging their own anchovies for bait.

Out of the Columbia, offshore anglers found coho from the CR Buoy southward 5 miles. Most fish are still averaging 4 to 6 pounds but a few larger fish have been taken. Ocean crabbing has been good.

From Garibaldi, a band of warm water scattered previously schooled coho but tuna are within 25 miles of shore. Bay crabbing remains challenging.

Low water favors only the stealthy bank angler seeking pocket water steelhead on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Small baits or bobbers and jigs early in the morning will produce the best results.

Good catches of coho are being taken by many of the boats launching out of Newport and fishing over 150 feet of water. Better than half the silvers being hooked are fin-clipped keepers. Chinook are being landed on occasion, but there aren't many out there. Crabbing is fair at Yaquina Bay although many softshells are in the mix. Herring are still available but numbers thinned early this week. Crabbing has been poor at Waldport.

**Southwest** – All-depth halibut will open again this week July 5th through 7th. One more spring opener is possible if sufficient poundage remains, but if so, it may not be a full three days. The summer central Oregon coast all-depth halibut fishery opens August 3rd and is scheduled to be open every other Friday through Sunday until the combined spring and summer quota of 226,989 pounds is taken or October 28th, whichever comes first.

Tuna were out of Winchester Bay 50 miles Monday this week although anglers over the weekend found them at 27 miles. In both instances, action was great once the albacore were located. Coho fishing has picked up offshore but the majority of fish landed have been wild, requiring release. One boat picked up 25 but kept only the four which were fin-clipped, another caught 15 to keep two. Ocean crabbing has improved with double-digit catches coming from 40 to 50 feet of water.

Boats did well out of Florence for coho earlier this week with many limits returned to port. Ocean crabbing was good as well although no limits were reported.

Halibut have been taken fairly close to port out of Coos Bay. This week's opener should be productive.

Rogue anglers have given up on the spring chinook season for the most part in the lower river. An occasional springer has been landed in the Grants Pass stretch but fishing is best in the Hatchery Hole. A few summer steelhead are being taken in the upper river.

Fishing for sea-run cutthroat trout was very good on the lower Chetco over the weekend.

Section 5 of the Rogue River is scheduled to be planted with trout.

**Eastern** – Scheduled for planting with hatchery trout in the Deschutes watershed are Campbell Lake, Deadhorse Lake, Miller Lake, Olallie Lake, Spring Creek and Spring Creek.

**SW Washington** – Area rivers remain low and steelhead anglers are challenged by poor water conditions. Boat anglers are catching some fish at Blue Creek but production is clearly down from last season.

Carson hatchery has taken in 1,400 spring chinook this season exceeding its escapement goal. The river is now closed for salmon but remains open for steelhead.

With Bonneville counts increasing, Drano Lake should begin producing fair numbers of steelhead in the coming weeks. Trollers will do the best, dragging flatfish but beach plunkers using shrimp take fair numbers as well.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – This week, the Columbia will turn from a high producing river system to a veritable desert as closures will rack the system from Priest Rapids Dam to Buoy 10, salmon and sturgeon. The official press release for the salmon closure:

***Summer Chinook Sport Fishery - Bonneville Dam to Priest Rapids Dam***  
**The retention of adult Chinook is prohibited effective 12:00 midnight Monday July 2 in the**

## **area from Bonneville Dam upstream to Priest Rapids Dam**

- 1. The fishery had originally been scheduled to remain open through July 31. Other permanent regulations remain in place.**
- 2. The fishery below Bonneville Dam closes to Chinook retention effective Sunday July 1, 2007.**
- 3. Check the 2007-2008 fishing pamphlet for permanent rules and regulations.**

Although it may not seem so, anglers did bypass their sport allocation for summer chinook and counts at Bonneville may indicate the run is actually over-predicted. Jack counts remain favorable for next years returns but it looks like this fishery will not re-open until the fall salmon arrive- technically, on August 1<sup>st</sup>. The river from Tongue Point to Bonneville Dam and upstream will then re-open for all adult chinook but watch for special regulations in the Longview area.

Sturgeon fishing in the Astoria area was excellent up until the closure date. As good as the season has gone, the catch and release season should be equally as good without the crowds. This is one of the best opportunities ever to teach newcomers to sportfishing how to properly fight fish. The greatest challenge will be to get fresh bait (especially anchovies) but sand shrimp will continue to produce good catches in water shallower than 6 feet. The best fishing remained from Tongue Point to the Astoria/Megler Bridge using anchovies for bait as most of the productive water in this stretch is between 6 and 30 feet. Call your favorite bait shop in advance to see if they have what you need. Otherwise, anglers may want to invest in herring jigs to get the job done. This is a very fun way to get your own (and highest quality) bait for salmon, sturgeon and even tuna if you are using a live-well. Here's the official closure notice for the lower Columbia River sturgeon fishery. Note this closure only affects the water from the Wauna Powerlines to Buoy 10:

### ***Estuary Sturgeon Sport Fishery***

**No change in the fishery season. The fishery in the mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna power lines (RM 40) downstream to the mouth at Buoy 10, including Youngs Bay; and all adjacent Washington tributaries will remain open through July 4 as scheduled.**

- Retention of green sturgeon is prohibited year-round per permanent rule.**
- Columbia River from the Wauna power lines upstream to Marker 85 remains open to white sturgeon retention on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays only, through July 31, 2007 and from October 1 through December 31, 2007 from the Wauna power lines upstream to Bonneville Dam.**

And speaking of tuna, on 7/4, we made a mad dash to the ocean on a favorable weather forecast. We had also heard reliable rumors of jumping tuna at 14 miles west of the CR Buoy out of the mouth of the Columbia. We found both unsubstantiated as we were greeted with a bigger wind chop than predicted and we never drew a strike from a tuna going west up to 28 miles offshore. Water temperatures were favorable- the fish just were not there. We came back in closer to shore and dropped the divers, flashers, hoochies and bait for coho and came up with a couple- one wild and one hatchery fish. We also landed 3 Spanish mackerel that I'll be using for crab bait.

Crabbing in the ocean out of the mouth of the Columbia is good and hard-shells are common. This will make a nice combo if you plan on going salmon fishing as the action for salmon was good on the opener but has since disintegrated. With a southerly influence in weather flow, the coho have scattered and are difficult to find schooled up. Before the water temperature change, boats were getting good numbers of fish south of the CR Buoy anywhere from right at the CR to 5 miles south. Chinook remain non-existent in the catch.

In-river steelheaders are beginning to pick up better numbers of steelhead. Bonneville counts are climbing and great tides this week attributed to higher catches. The best stretch of Columbia River beach will be from Sauvie's Island to Westport just west of Clatskanie.

**The Guide's Forecast** – With summer chinook and sturgeon closures on the Columbia, the only options remaining are ocean salmon fishing, bottomfishing and summer steelhead fishing. None of these options however look to be that great as the ocean forecast is not pretty in the coming days- especially the weekend. Even though softer tides will make for more friendly bar crossings, taken from the NOAA website located here: <http://seaboard.ndbc.noaa.gov/data/Forecasts/FZUS56.KPQR.html>, the weather forecast reads:

**FRI**

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT.  
NW SWELL 6 FT. PATCHY FOG IN THE MORNING.

**FRI NIGHT**

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT WITH GUSTS TO 30 KT. WIND WAVES  
5 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT.

**SAT**

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT... BUILDING TO 4 FT  
IN THE AFTERNOON. W SWELL 5 FT.

**SAT NIGHT**

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT...SUBSIDING TO  
2 FT AFTER MIDNIGHT. W SWELL 5 FT.

**SUN**

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT.  
W SWELL 5 FT.

**MON**

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT.  
NW SWELL 7 FT.

If you haven't read a lot of ocean weather reports, this isn't friendly so stay inland.

The news really isn't any better for beach plunkers targeting steelhead. Poor tides will keep steelhead off of the beaches making them harder to catch. Unless you want to do some catch and release fishing for sturgeon, you may just want to stay home this weekend. There will be better opportunities in the coming weeks.

And if you are going catch and release fishing for sturgeon, continue to concentrate your efforts from Tongue Point downstream to the Astoria/Megler Bridge. There has been a fair bite along the green line in front of the mouth of the Skipanon but that won't be a sure bet this week. Be prepared to be challenged in finding anchovies for bait as these will produce the best results. Fresh herring should be available however and that is a good substitute and will outlast anchovies and shrimp- herring have much more durable skin making it harder for sculpin and crab to penetrate.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – The number of anglers trying for shad is thinning at Oregon City as it's nearly the end of the run. Fish are still being taken, though, by anglers who are right on the path the shad are following, nose-to-tail, upriver. Counts at the Falls haven't been

updated since June 24th. Sturgeon fishing has produced mostly shakers with larger sturgeon a rarity.

Steelheading has been very slow on the North Santiam despite the numbers of summers present. Over 2,400 summer steelhead have entered the facility at Foster Dam on the South Santiam. Spring Chinook numbers remain low - fewer than 400 - but with the low counts at Willamette Falls, this is no surprise.

**The Guide's Forecast** – A few diehard are plying Portland Harbor for Chinook. It's totally a hardware show this late in the season. For late springers or summer steelhead, it'd be wiser to try the Clackamas as the water in the lower Willamette has topped the 70 degree mark.

Summer steelhead have finally shown interest in responding to lures on the South Santiam where fly anglers are also getting in on the action.

Fly fishing is fair to good on the Mckenzie with lots of bugs hatching towards evening. It's mostly a caddis show there now.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – The Clackamas has been under heavy fishing pressure this week although it is delivering some summer steelhead to anglers. As usual, the river gets owned by tubers, rafters and swimmers by mid-day, making first light the best bet for a hookup. The stretch from the new deadline below Rivermill down to Dog Creek has been producing for bank anglers.

The water of the Sandy River has taken on a glacial hue typical of this time of year. A little color here seems to have given a nudge to the steelhead fishing. It's still only fair but has picked up a little.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – The big news on the north coast is how close the albacore tuna are offshore. Great fishing for tuna has been happening out of many north and central coast ports. Garibaldi is the most consistent port on the north coast with lots of fish coming from 15 to 25 miles offshore.

Ocean catches of coho are spotty recently. Prior to the southerly winds, the coho fishing was quite good out of Garibaldi with fish being taken between 200 and 250 foot of water off of Twin Rocks. With the upcoming weather change over the weekend- more NW winds, fishing could once again improve once the ocean calms down enough to get out again.

Low, clear water is keeping steelheaders challenged on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Don't look for much change in these conditions in coming weeks.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Like the Columbia section, there isn't a lot of opportunity for anglers unless you are targeting salmon in the ocean. If you read the ocean forecast, it doesn't look promising. If you didn't read it, please go back to the Columbia section and stay home and mow your lawn. If you have to water your lawn, please keep it to a minimum as the fish will be thirstier than your lawn will be and many of them are listed on the Endangered Species List."

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Tuna have been taken about 35 miles out of Depoe Bay this week. Albacore are large and plentiful this year and, thanks to warm water offshore, closer than in seasons past. Many tuna taken recently have topped 25 pounds with a couple over 30. Most sport boats are taking 15 or more tuna in a day's fishing.

Most of the coho out of Newport and Depoe bay are coming at 20 to 25-foot depths over 150 to 200

feet of water. While most trollers are returning to port with fin-slipped limits, anglers are having to release two or three wild fish for every keeper. Herring remain available in Yaquina Bay with some folks over the past weekend jigging up hundreds of them.

**Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411)** reports, "Coho fishing remains excellent out of Newport and Depoe Bay as we limited out in two trips. The coho are really close in, any where between 90 and a couple of hundred feet. The further out you go the warmer the water, so save on gas and still in close. The water is very warm right, so I am not sure how long the good coho fishing will last. Combine that with the forming of another hypoxic zone (dead zone) anglers will need to stay on top of the ocean conditions for a successful trip.

All-depth halibut will be open July 5th through 7th off the central Oregon coast and probably another day or two will remain in the spring fishery. Drop crab posts off shore on the way out as keepers are coming from the ocean in 20 to 50 foot depths.

Smallmouth bass is the hot ticket on the mainstem of the Umpqua River with the shad run winding down. Sawyer's Rapids remains the only location where anglers still stand a chance at a shad hookup, but those with the need had better get there soon. The South Umpqua is good and improving for smallies while the North Fork is kicking out the occasional springer and summer steelhead with the water level dropping.

Boaters launching out of Winchester Bay found willing albacore at the 125 line mid-week. Even fist-timers took tuna in the warm water offshore. Multiple hookups were common.

Offshore trollers found salmon close to shore out of Florence on the Fourth of July holiday, taking hatchery coho and a few Chinook over only 50 to 120 feet of water. About half the fish hooked were wild, requiring release. Early afternoon wind had most recreational anglers heading back into port as seas came up.

Bottom fishing remains excellent offshore for various species of rockfish although fewer ling cod are showing up in catches.

The shad run is winding down on the Coos and Coquille Rivers. Striped bass are being taken after dark in the estuaries.

The Rogue River remains closed to the taking of wild, unclipped Chinook from any portion of the river and is closed to springers of any origin from Gold Ray Dam to Rogue Elk Boat Ramp. Hatchery spring Chinook catches are slow elsewhere although a few summer steelhead are beginning to show.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Wickiup is renowned for producing the largest kokanee in Oregon but has been reported as slow for weeks. Beat those light-biters with long, soft rods. A spinning reel on a fly rod isn't too extreme. Bait them with shoepeg corn and a bit of worm, watching for the slightest movement to set the hook. A rig like this will only work when the air is still, however. If the wind comes up, fuhgetaboutit.

Caddises are hatching on the lower Deschutes but fly anglers experienced only fair holiday fishing. Over 90% of the middle Deschutes is being diverted to irrigation. Above Bend, the upper river is delivering a mix of brown, brook and rainbow trout.

From the ODFW, July 5, 2007 - "River users should be aware that recent wildfires have burned along both banks of river from Heritage Landing State Park (river mile 0.4) upstream to the Sharps Bar area (river mile 6.0). Both sides of the river suffered intermittent burning into the streamside vegetation.

Public access is still open throughout the area, but anglers should be prepared to encounter burned conditions, which may limit camping opportunities in this area. Existing toilets in the area were also destroyed in the fire. Camping is not affected at Heritage Landing State Park."

With golden stones starting, the challenging Metolius is fishing as well as it ever does.

**Northwest Trout** – Henry Hagg is producing steadily for trollers pulling bait-tipped wedding rings with or without flashers.

Waters scheduled for trout stocking in the Willamette Valley include Faraday Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Trillium Lake, Big Cliff Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Detroit Reservoir, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Salt Creek, North Santiam River above Detroit, Trail Bridge Reservoir and Middle Fork of the Willamette River above Hills Creek Reservoir.

As most Oregon fishers know, the ODFW awards the boat pictures on the cover of the regulations booklet to those who 'do the right thing' returning salmon/steelhead/sturgeon tags. Many times in conversations with anglers., I have heard speculation this doesn't actually occur. To bust this myth, here are the lucky winners whose names were drawn at random. Both Randy Brown of Roseburg and John Lakey of Sutherlin won Alumaweld Guide Classic drift boats and trailers.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

**From the WDF&W Weekender Report June 27 - July 10, 2007**

#### **North Puget Sound**

Fishing has been slow for anglers on the saltwater, but catch numbers could rise as more marine areas open for salmon in July. Meanwhile, anglers casting for hatchery spring chinook at a couple of the region's rivers continue to do well.

Salmon anglers on the Skagit and Cascade rivers have had good success this year, said Brett Barkdull, a WDFW fish biologist. "Both boat and bank anglers are doing great on each river," he said. "The fishery continues to roar along at a pretty good pace, but time is running out for anglers."

Springer fisheries on both the Skagit and the Cascade run through July 8. Until then, the Skagit is open to hatchery chinook retention from the Highway 530 bridge at Rockport to the Cascade River, while the Cascade is open from the mouth of the river to the Rockport-Cascade Road bridge. The daily limit on both rivers is two hatchery chinook at least 12 inches in length.

Barkdull reminds anglers that **bull trout** and **Dolly Varden** retention is prohibited on the Cascade and Sauk rivers, and on the Skagit River from Rockport to the Gorge Dam.

Beginning July 1, anglers on the Skagit and Baker rivers will have a chance to catch **sockeye**. Barkdull said the opener appears to be shaping up nicely, as sockeye have already started to show up. "It looks like fishing could be good right off the bat," he said.

On the Skagit, the sockeye fishery is open from the Dalles Bridge to 200 feet above the east bank of the Baker River. On the Baker, anglers can fish from the mouth of the river to the Highway 20 bridge. The daily limit on each river is two sockeye at least 12 inches in length. Anglers should note two 1½-day closures on each river in early July. For details on the fishery, check WDFW's 2007/2008 Fishing in Washington pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regsfishregs.htm>).

Saltwater anglers are gearing up for mark-selective chinook fisheries in marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton). But those fisheries don't start until July 16. Until then, anglers will find a number of other fishing opportunities out on the Sound.

The catch-and-release salmon fishery in the northern portion of Marine Area 10 continues through June 30. However, beginning July 1, anglers fishing in the marine area will have a daily limit of two salmon, with no minimum size limit. Anglers must release chinook salmon, and handling rules are in effect.

Another option is Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), which also opens July 1 for salmon. "Early on, I expect fish to be scattered throughout the islands," said Steve Thiesfeld, another WDFW fish biologist. "Anglers will have to work at it, but there should be fish out there." Anglers will have a daily limit of two salmon, and can only keep one chinook, which must be 22 inches in length to retain.

Break out those **crab** pots. The crab fishery opens July 4 in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner), 9, 10, and the southern portion of 7. Fisheries in those areas will be open on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, plus the entire Labor Day weekend. See WDFW's sport-crabbing website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>) for more information.

Elsewhere, **coonstripe** and **pink shrimp** fisheries are in full swing in marine areas 8-1, 8-2, 9 and the northern and central portion of Marine Area 7. For more information on the shrimp fisheries check WDFW's website at <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/shrimpreg/shrimindex.shtml>.

Before heading out, anglers should check the rules and regulations for freshwater and saltwater fisheries in WDFW's 2007/2008 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

### **South Sound/Olympic Peninsula**

The summer salmon fishery kicks into high gear in early July with openings along the coast, the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Hood Canal. In addition, most areas of central Puget Sound are set to open for crabbing by July Fourth, and anglers can expect at least one more day of halibut fishing - scheduled June 28 - off the north coast.

"Overall, we're anticipating a better ocean salmon fishery than last year," said Doug Milward, WDFW ocean salmon manager. "We're already getting reports of some good-sized coho all along the coast."

Salmon fisheries opening July 1 include:

- Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco) - Open daily with a two-fish daily limit. Only one chinook may be retained and all wild coho must be released. Minimum size for chinook is 24 inches and 16 inches for coho.
- Marine Area 2 (Westport) - Open Sundays through Thursdays only with a two-fish daily limit. Only one chinook may be retained and all wild coho must be released. Minimum size for chinook is 24 inches and 16 inches for coho.
- Marine Areas 5 and 6 (Sekiu/Pillar Point and eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) - Open daily with a two-fish daily limit, plus two additional pink. Minimum size for chinook is 22 inches. No minimum size for other salmon. Release all wild chinook, coho and chum. Single-point barbless hooks are required.

- Marine Area 12 (Hood Canal south of Aycock Point) - Open daily with a four-fish daily limit. Up to two chinook may be retained. Minimum size for chinook is 22 inches. All chum must be released.

Salmon fisheries opening July 3 include:

- Marine Area 3 (LaPush) - Open Tuesdays through Saturdays only with a two-fish daily limit. Only one chinook may be retained and all wild coho must be released. Minimum size for chinook is 24 inches and 16 inches for coho. Anglers can add a pink from Aug. 1 - Sept. 15.
- Marine Area 4 (Neah Bay) - Open Tuesdays through Saturdays only with a two-fish daily limit. Only one chinook may be retained and all wild coho must be released. Minimum size for chinook is 24 inches and 16 inches for coho.

Anglers are advised to check the 2007-08 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> for additional regulations.

Meanwhile, salmon anglers have been doing well in Marine Area 11 (Vashon Island/Tacoma), where a WDFW creel check reported about one fish for every three rods over the June 23 weekend. The fishery runs seven days a week, with a limit of two salmon a day. Minimum size for chinook is 22 inches, but there is no minimum for other species. Commencement Bay is closed to salmon fishing until Aug. 1. Selective fishing rules are in effect this year, requiring anglers to use single, barbless hooks and release any **wild chinook**.

Still hoping to tie into a big flatfish? Recreational **halibut** fishers will get at least one more day of fishing off the north coast this month. On June 28, fishing will be open on all waters in marine areas 3 (La Push) and 4 (Neah Bay). There are 28,700 pounds remaining in the quota, allowing the fishery to reopen, said Carol Henry, WDFW fish biologist. "The weather's been great, so we hope anglers will come out and try for a fish." If enough quota remains, another day may be scheduled, Henry said.

Around the corner in Marine Area 5, halibut fishing remains steady. A WDFW creel check near Olson's Resort off Sekiu showed one halibut for every three rods. Anglers can fish this area five days a week until Aug. 3. The daily limit for halibut is one fish.

Recreational **Dungeness crab** fishing opens today (June 27) in Marine Area 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) and four more areas open July Fourth, including marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 12 (Hood Canal). Crabbing in all five of those areas will be open Wednesdays through Saturdays only through Sept. 3.

Crabbing is already under way in several other areas from the coast to south Puget Sound. Marine areas 4 (Neah Bay east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge) opened June 18 and will be open through Jan. 2, 2008, seven days a week. So far, preliminary results are mixed, said Dave Lowry, WDFW shellfish biologist. "Down in Nisqually they're fishing pretty well and getting some good size crabs, but rough water on the coast is making it hard to get a good catch. Overall though, we expect a good season."

Lowry reminds crab fishers that only male Dungeness crabs with shells measuring at least 6¼ inches can be taken. All undersized crab, female Dungeness crab and all softshell crab of either sex must be returned to the water.

He also advises crab fishers to be aware of several changes in this year's catch-reporting system, designed to improve catch estimates and make the reporting process more convenient for sport crabbers:

- Two-card reporting system: All sport crabbers fishing in Puget Sound will be required to report their Dungeness crab catch on separate summer and fall/winter catch record cards during the course of the season.
- On-line reporting: For the first time, sport crabbers will have the option of reporting their catch via the Internet in lieu of mailing in their catch cards. The website address will be printed on the catch cards along with the reporting deadlines.
- No coastal reporting: Catch record cards are no longer required to fish for Dungeness crab on the Washington coast (marine areas 1-4).

"We're encouraging people to use the new online reporting system that will be available this year right after Labor Day," Lowry said. "We really rely on the data we get, and we hope this system will make it much easier for fishers to report their catch."

The new catch record cards are available from license dealers throughout the state. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>, or <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crabreg/crabindex.shtml>.

### **Southwest Washington:**

The good news is that hatchery **steelhead** are moving into the lower Columbia River in increasing numbers, and **ocean salmon** fishing opens July 1 off the southern coast. The bad news is that catch-and-keep fishing for adult **summer chinook** salmon comes to an end June 30 below Bonneville Dam and the **sturgeon** fishery in the Columbia River estuary is fast approaching the area quota.

"Area fishing opportunities are once again in flux," said Steve Vigg, a WDFW fish harvest manager in Vancouver. "There's plenty of good fishing on the horizon, but it may be in a different spot with different gear."

As of June 24, anglers fishing below Priest Rapids Dam had caught 1,350 adult **summer chinook** salmon, fast approaching the area quota of 1,650 fish, said Robin Ehlke, another WDFW fish biologist. "We definitely expect to reach the quota by the end of the day June 30," she said.

Boat and bank anglers averaged one adult chinook for every 13.8 or 15.3 rods, respectively, that week, with the best boat fishing reported in the gorge. Bank anglers did well at Kalama, Vancouver and just below Bonneville Dam. Hatchery **steelhead** catches were best from Longview downstream.

Worth noting is that catch rates for summer chinook and summer steelhead have been running neck-and-neck on the lower Columbia River in recent days. And, while the chinook fishery is coming to a close, "the summer steelhead run really gets going in July," Ehlke said. Although summer steelhead counts at Bonneville Dam were lower than expected through June 24, WDFW is still projecting a run of 297,900 fish - just shy of last year's run of 319,000 fish, she said.

"Counts of hatchery steelhead are clearly picking up," Ehlke said. "We should start seeing catch rates ramping up soon in the Columbia River, as well as major tributaries such as the Cowlitz, Lewis, Kalama, and Washougal rivers. In addition, the mainstem Columbia below Bonneville Dam will remain open for hatchery steelhead and chinook jacks."

Ehlke noted that only steelhead with a clipped adipose or ventral fin and a healed scar at the location of the clipped fin may be retained. Anglers are advised to check the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for area-specific regulations.

As with adult summer chinook, the retention season for **white sturgeon** in the lower Columbia River

from the Wauna powerlines downstream is about to end. This year's sport catch is nearing the 16,200-fish quota for that area, and resource managers from Washington and Oregon will meet June 28 to decide whether to close the fishery before the scheduled ending date of July 5, Ehlke said. "If the catch exceeds the quota, it comes out of next year's allocation," she said. "It's a judgment call." Anglers can check that decision by calling the WDFW Fishing Hotline (360-902-2500) or the Fishing Rule Change site on the department's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/>).

Another option for sturgeon anglers is to move upriver. Sturgeon retention remains open in the Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines upriver to Marker #85 below Bonneville Dam and from Bonneville Dam upriver to The Dalles Dam. The first area is open to sturgeon retention Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only. Bonneville Pool is open seven days per week. All other areas upstream to McNary Dam are closed to sturgeon retention, although catch-and-release is allowed in the open areas.

Then again, anglers may want to head offshore for the start of the 2007 **ocean salmon** season. Marine areas 1 (Ilwaco) and 2 (Westport) open for salmon fishing July 1, with coastal areas farther north opening July 3. Waters off Ilwaco are open seven days a week, while salmon fishing off Westport is limited to Thursdays through Sundays. Anglers are advised to check the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for additional regulations.

### **Eastern Washington:**

Chris Donley, WDFW district fish biologist in Spokane, said **trout** can be easy to catch this time of year because most fish are located at creek mouths in cold, deep water. "Anglers should fish early morning or late in the evening at any of the usual places," he said. Those places include Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County; Amber, Badger, Clear, Fish, Medical, West Medical and Williams lakes in southwest Spokane County; and Rock Lake in Whitman County. "Use a fish finder to locate the concentrations of trout and then try smaller baits dropped vertically into the school," he said. "I like to use single salmon eggs, or worms and salmon eggs combined. Slow presentations are best."

WDFW Enforcement Officer Curt Wood also reports good trout fishing. While checking fishers recently at West Medical Lake, Wood said there were "some pretty good numbers of **rainbow trout** taken, most in the 14- to 17-inch range, mostly by boaters."

Other fisheries also have been good lately, Donley said. Downs Lake, east of Sprague in the southwest corner of Spokane County, has been yielding **yellow perch** and **largemouth bass**. Coffeepot Lake, northeast of Odessa in Lincoln County, also is good for perch and bass. Anglers are reminded that the use of bait is prohibited at Coffeepot Lake. The Twin Lakes, especially Upper Twin, and Deer Springs Lake in Lincoln County are producing largemouth bass.

"All the other bass waters in the region should be rolling along well right now," Donley said. "But as things heat up, go fishing in the early and late hours."

**Large black crappie** can be found in the deep areas of Lake Spokane or Long Lake, the Spokane River reservoir northwest of town. "You have to look hard for them," Donley said. "But they're there and they are big."

Sprague Lake also has been producing an occasional large crappie and some large **channel catfish**.

June 30 is the last day to try to catch a Snake River **hatchery spring chinook salmon**. The portion of the river from Texas Rapids boat launch upstream to the Corps of Engineers boat launch (about a mile upstream of Little Goose Dam on the south bank), has been open since early May. Daily catch limit is

one hatchery (adipose-fin-clipped) chinook of at least 12 inches in length. Anglers must use barbless hooks no larger than 5/8 inch (point of hook to shank).

John Whalen, WDFW regional fish program manager, said the special Snake River chinook season has been going well for anglers and the last days of the season could continue to be productive.

All fishers using WDFW water access sites are reminded that open fires outside of designated areas and all fireworks are prohibited.

### **North Central Washington:**

Summer **chinook salmon** fishing in the Columbia River above Wells Dam opens July 1. The river is open from the Highway 173 Bridge at Brewster to the Highway 17 Bridge at Bridgeport. A portion of the Okanogan River, from the mouth to the Highway 97 Bridge immediately upstream of mouth, also opens July 1. The daily catch limit is six salmon of at least 12 inches in length, only two of which can be adults (at least 24 inches). All sockeye and coho must be released.

Okanogan River anglers may see live-fish-trapping gear or catch a tagged fish. Both are part of a chinook salmon study, conducted by WDFW and the Colville Confederated Tribes. The fish-trapping gear is marked with bright orange signs, and some previously captured salmon were equipped with jaw tags before being released. If anglers harvest a jaw-tagged salmon, the tag should be returned, with the date and location of catch to WDFW or the tribes, or by calling 360-902-2240 or 509-634-2113. Anglers who call or send in information on tagged fish will be entered into a raffle for cash prizes.

"Catch-and-release **trout** fishing in the Methow should start to pick up during July as the river drops into shape," said Bob Jateff, WDFW district fish biologist in Omak. "But remember it's under selective gear rules and be sure to check the regulation pamphlet closely as some areas of the Methow and tributaries are closed to all fishing. Signs will be posted at all our access sites informing anglers of both the open and closed areas."

Lakes under selective gear rules in the Okanogan also continue to provide good trout fishing. Rat Lake near Brewster, Davis Lake near Winthrop, and Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area are three that are holding up well despite warmer temperatures.

WDFW Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Manager Dale Swedberg said Blue Lake is "a blue ribbon selective fishery," where rainbow and brown trout can weigh up to three pounds and reach up to 20 inches in length. "There's also good **brook trout** fishing in Forde Lake, if you can find an open spot in the emergent vegetation," he said. "Conner Lake is a good place to try to catch either rainbow or brook trout. If you don't mind a good hike through rattlesnake country, Dohney Lake may produce large brook trout."

Jateff said **rainbow trout** fishing is still steady at Conconully Lake and Reservoir, Wannacut, Pearrygin, and Spectacle lakes.

"And for those who would like to catch a few **bluegill** and **crappie**, Leader Lake has been good for bluegill measuring up to eight inches and crappie up to nine inches," Jateff said. Leader Lake, which is four miles west of the town of Okanogan, has a concrete boat launch and numerous campsites, he added.

**Walleye** fishing in Banks Lake is in full swing, said Matt Polacek, WDFW fish biologist. "Fish have been caught in 16 to 22 feet of water along weed beds and over flats," Polacek said. "Fishing seems to be best in the evening hours. Troll bottom walkers with a perch pattern worm harness baited with a night crawler. Fish over the flats around Steamboat Rock and in the Devil's Punchbowl over the old roadbed.

Also try north of Steamboat Rock in the large bays."

In the Columbia Basin, Potholes Reservoir water levels are dropping and surface water temperatures are climbing, signaling the beginning of "top water" **largemouth bass** fishing. Cast shallow diving plugs or spinner baits to catch bass and occasionally **walleye** in the sand dunes, Lind Coulee or O'Sullivan dam areas of the reservoir. Good **smallmouth bass** action and a few big rainbow trout has been reported in many areas outside of the sand dunes.

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### **South Central Washington:**

**Rainbow, cutthroat** and **brown trout** fly-fishing on the Yakima River has been good. Fly fishers report the best dry-fly action during daylight hours in the Upper Canyon.

Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist, said many other rivers and streams throughout the region are in good shape now and are producing nice fish. "The Naches and Rattlesnake are good for both rainbow and cutthroat trout that average eight to 10 inches, but larger fish are caught, particularly in the Naches," Cummins said. "Nanuem and Taneum Creeks are also good bets. Rattlesnake Creek and part of the Naches are catch-and-release only and have other special regulations. Anglers should check all the regulations before heading out."

WDFW District Fish Biologist Eric Anderson said fishing has been good for triploid and catchable size **rainbow trout** at Clear Lake, and for **kokanee** at Rimrock Lake in Yakima County. "But anglers need to pay attention to fishing rules on the waterway that connects these two lakes, the North Fork of the Tieton River, because protected **bull trout** are in the area," he said. "If you inadvertently catch a bull trout, you must release it unharmed."

Anderson said this is the time of year that bull trout slowly start migrating to their spawning areas. "They're especially vulnerable now," he said. "Bull trout tend to be more aggressive and grow larger than other native trout, such as rainbow and cutthroat. They're commonly confused with the non-native eastern brook trout and in many areas of the Yakima basin both species are found in the same waters." Anderson said brook trout have black spots on the backside dorsal fin, but bull trout have no distinct spots on the dorsal fin. "Remember no black, put it back," he said. Rainbow and cutthroat trout have dark spots on the body, but bull trout have light cream-colored to orange-colored spots on the body. "If you don't know the difference, just be safe and let it go," Anderson said. Anderson reminds anglers that in the North Fork Tieton River, fishing is prohibited within 400 feet of Clear Lake Dam and in the spillway channel below Clear Lake.

High lakes are a good destination for hot summer days and there is good fishing for triploid rainbows at Dog and Leech Lakes in the White Pass area of Yakima County and at Lost Lake near Snoqualmie Pass in Kittitas County.

**Channel catfish** and **smallmouth bass** continue to be caught in several locations along the Yakima and Columbia rivers, from the Tri-Cities to Yakima.

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### **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**

Lots of information at Broke Boats:

**<http://www.brokeboats.com/index.html>**

Article on Diamond Lake recovery:

**<http://www.registerguard.com/news/2007/06/19/c1.od.diamondlake.0619.p1.php?section=outdoors>**

**Weekly Quote** – "The Fourth of July, when many Americans rent kegs for their parties, is the nation's biggest beer-drinking holiday, ahead of Memorial Day, Labor Day and Super Bowl Sunday." - The Beer Institute.

**GOOD LUCK!**