

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 13<sup>th</sup> – July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Warm water temperatures have most river users swimming instead of fishing. Despite a significant climb in dam counts and favorable tides over the weekend, steelhead anglers did not fare well on the recent tide series. Angling is now closed for adult chinook but anglers are allowed to retain jack salmon.

Effort is low for oversized sturgeon and fresh shad are hard to come by. Floater shad make the best bait this time of year.

Warm weather has pushed the Willamette temperature to 76 degrees at the falls. Chinook and steelhead continue to cross but they aren't biting well in these conditions. Shad fishing is getting spotty with the best catches coming in the evening. Boaters should be cautious at ramps with the river so low.

The color of the Sandy makes it look unfishable as dam work upstream has combined with seasonal glacial runoff to turn the water opaque. Even in these less than ideal conditions, summer steelhead are still being hooked.

Steelheading in the Clackamas has been fair to good and hasn't been too crowded with anglers. A few spring chinook have also been hooked this week.

Persistence is paying off on the North Santiam with steelhead taking bait and striking lures from Fishermen's Bend to Mehama.

Hatchery trout are scheduled to be planted in the Breitenbush River, Carmen Reservoir, Clear Lake, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above and below Leaburg Lake, Quartzville Creek, Salmon Creek and the North Santiam River above Detroit.

**Northwest –** Heavy winds kept most recreational craft in port much of the week. Previous reports indicated fish were well scattered with inconsistent water temperatures on the north coast. One report from just outside of the mouth of the Columbia indicated hatchery coho were present in good numbers but anglers had to weed through several wild coho and undersized chinook to get their limits.

Catch and release sturgeon fishing remains great in the Tongue Point area with anchovies producing the best results. Call ahead to ensure bait orders can be filled as demand has dropped making bait deliveries inconsistent.

**Pro guide Brandon Glass (503-260-8285)** reports slow walleye fishing in the lower Columbia but hopes for an improvement this week.

The weekend ocean forecast calls for favorable conditions which has more anglers excited about tuna than salmon. Forecasted ocean temperatures look more favorable for tuna fishing. Look for water 61 degrees and warmer for tuna while salmon prefer temperatures in the range of 56 to 59 degrees.

Newport ranks number one for coho landings according to a July 8th ODFW report. More fish-per-trip were landed out of Depoe Bay although fewer boats launched. Offshore tuna fishing held up whenever boaters could safely cross the bar.

North and mid-coast lakes will not be stocked with trout again until September.

**Southwest** – Wind has kept boats off the ocean for several days on the central and southern Oregon coast. Conditions are forecast to improve for the weekend, but early morning minus tides will complicate bar crossings.

While summer steelheading has yet to show anglers much action, smallmouth bass fishing on the Umpqua is producing plenty of fish per trip. Salmon fishing had been decent until the wind came up late last week.

**Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411)** confirms decent fishing for smallies but advises drift boaters that low water requires wading to push and pull in places.

So far, pressure is light on the Rogue River estuary where trollers have been picking up chinook, It's early for this fishery but some boats have landed multiple fish about half of which were hatchery. Unclipped Chinook may be retained starting July 14th. Fishing for half-pounders has been fair but everything else is slow on the Rogue River.

**Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541 268 6944)** reported in to confirm catches of early fall Chinook mixed with late springers.

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

Tuna fishing remained rewarding last week with albacore within 30 miles of the port of Brookings. Since then, high winds have hampered effort and pushed the warm water further offshore. Chinook and coho have been 10 to 12 miles out in 350 to 400 feet of water.

**Eastern** – The lower Deschutes has caddis hatching well in the mornings and evenings, coincidentally, the best times to fish on the scorching east side. With over 90% of the water in the middle Deschutes dedicated to irrigation, fishing in the warm water is not so promising.

Anglers are beginning to consider the Deschutes for steelhead but the Dalles Dam counts dictate how the action will be. Numbers are still a bit low for great action on this premier river. Last year, it began fishing best the latter half of August but passage at Bonneville is improving significantly.

The cool, spring-fed water of the Fall River is fishing quite well for brown trout, even on the hottest days.

**Pro guide Rick Arnold (541-480-1570)** reports good fishing for browns a Wickiup with some over the six pound mark.

Waters scheduled to receive hatchery trout this week include Badger Lake, Campbell Lake, Deadhorse Lake, Fall River, Shevlin Pond and Spring Creek.

**SW Washington** – Besides being warm, steelhead returns region-wide are down 60 to 80% from last years run. This makes area prospects dismal until fall run fish begin tricking in. The mouth of the Cowlitz however should begin to produce more consistent results are mainstem returns ramp up.

Steelhead fishing in Drano Lake is poor.

The Guide's Forecast would like to congratulate Jenni Logsdon Martin of **www.ifish.net** for being selected again this year as one of the top 25 most influential people in Oregon.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – With much of the angling opportunity closed on the mainstem, anglers are focusing their efforts in the salt for salmon action. Although there have been some reports of good steelhead fishing in the Bonneville area, it is absolutely critical to anchor in the right lane for consistent action. The anglers that know these productive travel lanes are either up early to “reserve” these spots or actually spend the night out there to ensure a productive day of fishing. With the numbers of steelhead crossing that we are witnessing now, their effort is paying dividends for them. Small spinners are taking the bulk of the fish plunked right on the bottom. To find these productive lanes, you’ll have to go up there and watch where other anglers are fishing or find your own. They are coveted secrets.

Downriver, plunkers didn’t fare as well as most had expected on this last tide series. There were some fish taken in the Portland to Longview stretch but catch rates were low. Chinook jacks are also allowed to be retained but make up a small fraction of the catch. They still have to be fin-clipped.

One of the best opportunities is the catch and release sturgeon fishing taking place in the estuary right now. The action remains excellent and the crowds are non-existent. In the softer tides of the current series, we did really well in the deep water along the red-line above Tongue Point. Good action for sturgeon of all sizes was common in 40 to 45 foot of water between Buoys 44 and 50. Anchovies were king and oddly, they even seem to be out-producing shrimp in shallow water as of late. The water is warming but this action should stay fairly consistent until later in the month. Anchovies were still available at the bait shops but it likely won’t be long before you may have to jig your own. They seem to be showing in good numbers in the lower river.

Ocean fishing for salmon seems inconsistent lately. What has made it most inconsistent is the winds offshore making for uncomfortable boating conditions. If it’s not the NW wind, the South wind has been blowing on occasion from the get-go. When boats have been getting out, the most recent report was good fishing despite the fact you had to weed through wild coho and undersized chinook. The fish are growing nicely with some larger fish reported. It’s pretty clear that there is good sources of food in the ocean for these fish.

**The Guide’s Forecast** – Another round of minus tides should make beach plunking for steelheaders an option. With growing numbers of fish showing, the fishing should be better than the dismal showing of last week. It’s pretty simple fishing that young and old can have fun with. Beaches from Portland (Sauvie’s Island) to Westport should all produce fair results and anglers with boats have a more secluded shot on the islands like Tenasillahe near Wauna. Hot colored spin-n-glos produce the most strikes and keep in mind these fish are beach huggers- don’t cast out very far from shore!

Sturgeon anglers should call ahead to reserve their anchovies for bait. With the stronger tides, the shallow water should be a good option for shrimp casters too. However, with an ever increasing number of baitfish showing up, anchovies will likely be the best option. The late morning flood should allow anglers to find sturgeon in the deep water above Tongue Point.

Ocean goers will want to be wary of potential foggy conditions coupled with a strong morning outgoing tide which can have bar entrances treacherous for crossing. Oftentimes, Clatsop Spit will protect boaters on the bar crossing by tucking in behind it (that is, hug the south jetty on the inside of the river when crossing) but these types of tides are a recipe for disaster. Use extreme caution when recreating outside this weekend. Anglers will want to target salmon from 220 to 300 foot of water looking for the colder water temperatures (53 to 58 degrees) for salmon. Coho will be your primary target so fish shallow with anchovies of plug cut herring. You might as well drop your crab pots south of the river entrance- it’ll be worth your time but softshells should begin to show soon.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – As water temperatures climb at Willamette Falls, daily run numbers of spring Chinook and summer steelhead are dwindling. The latest data shows 76 degrees, far more appropriate for spiny rays than salmonids. A few shad were caught again over the weekend with best results at Oregon City. Over the last sturgeon retention period, the cast majority of fish taken were too small to keep and even shaker action had slowed from previous weeks.

**The Guide's Forecast** – With the shad run just about over, the best part of fishing for them is that few people are doing so which means you won't have to play bumper boats in the lower Willamette. Sturgeon fishing is not expected to improve this week.

Steelhead are inhaling jigs suspended under floats on the Santiam, providing fair fishing. This has been the most effective technique lately. Impaling a small piece of sand shrimp on the hook often boosts productivity. With the water upstream of glacial origin, upper stretches will be too cold to provide worthwhile fishing. Look for mid-50-degree water temperatures, likely to be in the stretch around Fishermen's Bend. Fishing is expected to improve as the water level drops.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – Anglers on the Clackamas are seeing an improvement in spring Chinook catches. The hatchery confirms that additional fish present with "good numbers" entering the trap recently. Boats from McIver Park to Barton are hooking up with bank anglers scoring above Dog Creek to the dam. Drifted Corky and yarn as well as spinners have been drawing strikes. Plan on making a pre-dawn run with the water level decreasing here. Summer steelhead are being taken above Barton but fishing has only been fair.

The Sandy River is still running a gray muddy color. While a few summer steelhead are being hooked in very low water between Dodge and Dabney, and the occasional springer has been hooked at Cedar Creek, overall it's very slow. It's also unknown how long the Marmot Dam removal project will be dumping dirt into the water, but when the dam goes the silt will follow.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – With warm, dry conditions abounding (even a forest fire in the upper reaches of the Nestucca River), anglers on the north coast are focused west for saltwater species. Both tuna and salmon are getting the bulk of the attention with tuna high on the minds of many. Winds kept many at bay over the week but friendly seas are forecasted ahead. A report from about 11:00 on 7/12 a few miles west of Twin Rocks near Rockaway Beach was poor fishing. Rick King of Portland reported no action for him or the other boats around him with temperature running just above ideal at 57 degrees. Previously, Garibaldi Marina reported fair action in 170 to 190 foot of water off of Twin Rocks. Ocean crabbing remains good out of Garibaldi too.

Anglers are not putting a lot of effort forth for salmon or steelhead on north coast streams. Conditions are just too challenging for most but the few people versed in low water tactics are picking up a few fish. You won't find much competition along these streams.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Like we mentioned in the Columbia River report, anglers will need to exercise caution when crossing the bar this weekend. Minus tides may make for hazardous conditions but the ocean forecast is for friendly seas ahead:

**FRI**

SW WIND 5 TO 10 KT...BACKING TO S WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 4 FT AT 9 SECONDS.

### **FRI NIGHT**

S WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 3 FT. PATCHY FOG AFTER MIDNIGHT.

### **SAT**

S WIND 10 KT WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 3 FT. PATCHY FOG IN THE MORNING. SLIGHT CHANCE OF SHOWERS IN THE AFTERNOON.

### **SAT NIGHT**

SW WIND 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 3 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

### **SUN**

S WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. SW SWELL 4 FT.

### **MON**

NW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. SW SWELL 4 FT.

Now, if ocean temperatures cooperate, it could spell out a lot of fun for anglers pursuing tuna and salmon over the weekend. Bring along your crab pots for an additional haul.

River anglers will be challenged with the ongoing warm trend but small offerings in the pocket water and shallow, broken-surfaced riffles may produce a few steelhead. Try and keep your harassment of pooled up salmon and steelhead to a minimum as water temperatures are warming to where fish will get stressed pretty easily. The lower reaches of the Wilson and Nestucca will have better numbers of willing fish.

This will also be the last opportunity for razor clam diggers along Clatsop Beaches before the mid-month closure. Tides are excellent and the surf is supposed to be small- ripe for a great harvest!

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Boaters found salmon five to six miles out of Depoe Bay last weekend, taking them over 230 to 300 feet of water. Trollers heading northwest out of Newport hit coho over less than 200 feet. Coho fishing has been spotty. Over 19% of the coho quota had been taken coast-wide and this only three weekends into the season.

Warm, blue water that holds tuna was beyond the 125 line mid-week but those willing and able to make the long haul on a lumpy ocean scored albacore. Tuna were taken considerably closer on Thursday, July 12th. If the south wind comes through as forecast, tuna water should move even nearer to shore again by the weekend. Tuna catches have been so good this year that 2007 already ranks as one of the top three, exceeded only by tonnage landed in 2004 and 2006. It should finish as a record year.

A few Chinook were amongst the more abundant coho catches for boats returning to Newport Monday this week. Herring catches have slowed in Yaquina Bay but it's still possible to jig up enough for a days fishing.

It'll be an unusual weekend offshore as the northwest experiences mild winds and calm seas while the surf out of southwest ports will kick up. At least that's the forecast mid-week. Morning minus tides will make early bar crossings hazardous. If boats can get out of southwest ports this weekend, they'll find excellent bottom fishing although finding ling cod has been a challenge lately.

Campers in the Siuslaw National Forest will not be able to build campfires due to the hot, dry conditions. Pressurized, liquid-fuel camp stoves will be allowed, however, and fires may be built in developed campgrounds.

Offshore conditions moderated sufficiently to allow charter boats to launch out of Winchester Bay on Wednesday this week. Coho were widely scattered and only 20% of the fish landed were fin-clipped keepers. The occasional Chinook is coming to anglers dropping gear deep but only 20% of ocean anglers trying for them are hooking up. Ocean crabbing remains good

Umpqua anglers are enjoying good smallmouth bass fishing in the mainstem and South Fork. Shad fishing is winding down but a few continue to be taken at Sawyer's Rapids. Steelheading is slow.

**Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411)** adds this, "High winds along the coast made it difficult to get in some salmon and tuna fishing this past week. The good news is that the forecast is calling for great ocean conditions through the coming weekend. The north winds has cooled the water right along the coast so its looking like the better fishing will be out a little in the 200 to 300 feet of water. With the southwest forecast the later in the week the salmon could be moving back in a little closer. I will be looking for 52 to 55 degree water before I start fishing, unless I see other boats catching fish. Hopefully the coho have put on another pound or two. One other note, there are some large minus tides this weekend so be careful crossing the bar, especially at Winchester and Tillamook.

"Since it was too windy on the coast, I fished the main Umpqua for some great smallmouth bass action. Lots of fish around and once we get away from the access points the fishing was excellent for bass up to eighteen inches. We caught most of our fish on slow sinking Rapala and jigs rigged with small rubber grubs and worms. The top colors were: salt and pepper and a sparkle and red. The Umpqua is getting real low in spots as we had to do little pushing and pulling to get the boat over a couple of ledges, so plan on getting wet feet."

The beaches south of Florence are closed to the taking of clams and mussels due to elevated levels of the toxin which causes paralytic shellfood poisoning according to the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

Night fishing has produced a few striped bass on the Coos and Coquille rivers.

The Rogue River from the mouth to Whiskey Creek will re-open to the retention of unclipped Chinook Salmon on Saturday, July 14th. This just as Chinook are entering the bay with guide boats reporting some decent catches. Bait has been most effective in the Grants Pass stretch for summer steelhead late in the day although fishing has been only fair with anglers experiencing similar results for springers in the middle river. Steelheading improved over the last week in the upper Rogue as about a thousand steelies have passed Gold Ray Dam and fish are scattered. Spring Chinook continue to be caught at the hatchery hole but the stretch below Rogue Elk Boat Ramp remains closed to springer fishing. Salmon are offshore out of Reedsport although weather conditions have kept most boats inside. It looks as if moderating winds will make for friendlier seas this weekend. Coho have been in the upper 20 feet of the water column offshore. Boaters may opt to troll the bay with late spring Chinook along with fall Chinook showing early. Perch fishing is very good in the estuary although these fish are in the bay in such significant number they can be an annoyance to trollers trying for Chinook.

**Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541 268 6944)** reports, "Fall chinook are starting to show in the Rogue at Gold Beach. Right now its light pressure and light catch. Clipped chinook are making up about half the catch. The Rogue is closed to retention of wild chinook through July 13.

"When you can get outside, the salmon are close. Limits of coho are being caught out of the Siuslaw and Winchester Bay."

Biologists are concerned that warm water temperature combined with low water levels could eventually kill Chinook in the lower Rogue. It is hoped that additional water releases from Lost Creek Lake will ameliorate this situation and prevent the loss of fish.

According to an ODFW release on July 10th, wild coho numbers off the south coast are so good they're considering opening the Coos and Coquille rivers and potentially Tenmile Lake. A decision will be made following a public meeting July 17th from 7 to 9 PM at Southwester Oregon College in Coos Bay.

At \$35 a head, the Salmon B. Slammin Derby out of Gold Beach on August 11th is affordable to anyone and offers over \$2000 in cash prizes. Contact Lex's Landing (800-290-6208) for information or tickets.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – The lower Deschutes turned on with lots of caddis flies coming off the water although it's been too hot to fish mid-day.

Odell is fishing well for kokanee although the fish have been running small this year.

Wickiup has been delivering good trout catches to trollers but kokanee have been challenging. The few kokes being taken are good sized, however, typical for this impoundment.

**Pro guide Rick Arnold (541-480-1570)** adds this, "I got a first hand report from a buddy that fished Wickiup on Sun. He and his son caught (5) browns in the afternoon to 6.5 LB. Most were caught on downriggers pulling plugs.

"The word from Crescent and Odell is that macks are showing at 60-85 feet for those pursuing the suspended fish. Use big plugs that resemble the kokanee. Speaking of kokanee, Crescent has cooled off with the bite real early, but nice sized fish. Odell is more wide open but smaller fish than normal.

"Paulina is kicking out a lot of kokanee with the average of 13-14 in. Biggest going to 17 in. Use the usual kokanee attractors if your trolling. East is about the same on size with the fish more scattered. Some browns early and late to 6-7 LB. pulling plugs."

An unusual angling opportunity will be available at Powder River, a tributary to Brownlee Reservoir, as the ODFW has released 250 to 300 spring Chinook jacks, The fishery, which opens July 14th, will be from Hughes Lane Bridge near Baker City to Mason Dam with a daily bag limit of five per angler. With a surplus this year at the Imnaha River from where the jacks were taken, additional stocking may take place.

**Northwest Trout** – Trollers are taking good numbers of rainbows at Detroit and Foster reservoirs.

Fishing for sea-run cutthroat trout has been fair to good on the lower stretches of most coastal rivers. It's catch-and-release for this Oregon native from the Salmon River north. Two per day may be retained in most rivers to the south.

**Northwest Bass & Panfish - Pro guide Brandon Glass (503-260-8285)** reports, "I have been in the lower Columbia Walleye fishing and the bit has been slow during the big 4th week. I hope to see it pick up this week. "

### **Washington fishing reports:**

## From the WDF&W Weekender Report July 11<sup>th</sup> – July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007

### North Puget Sound

Mark-selective **chinook** fisheries should lure some anglers to the waters of central Puget Sound in mid-July. But until those fisheries start up, anglers in the region have other opportunities, including **sockeye** on the Skagit and Baker rivers, **crab** in the Sound and **coho salmon** in Marine Area 10.

"The resident coho fishery is not as hot as it was last year, but I've heard reports of anglers picking up some real nice fish," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "This fishery is a good opportunity for saltwater anglers before those selective fisheries for hatchery chinook salmon get going."

Beginning July 16, anglers will be allowed to keep **hatchery chinook** - marked with a clipped adipose fin - in marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton). Anglers in each marine area will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional **pink salmon**, but must release wild chinook. The chinook selective fisheries run through Aug. 15, or until the quota is reached.

Thiesfeld reminds anglers to double-check WDFW's *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) before heading out. "We will be closely monitoring and sampling these mark-selective fisheries," he said. "Our hope is to continue, and even expand, these fisheries. But that can only happen if anglers follow the rules and properly release wild fish."

When releasing salmon, anglers should keep the fish in the water and avoid using a net, Thiesfeld said. If a net is needed, use a rubber net or a soft knotless nylon or cotton net.

Thiesfeld also suggests that anglers:

1. Look for the adipose fin while playing the fish, and use polarized sunglasses to reduce glare.
2. Avoid the use of light tackle and play the fish quickly to reduce exhausting the fish.
3. Modify tackle to reduce potential injury to the fish. For example, use circle hooks when mooching and only one hook on hoochies and bucktails.
4. Use a dehooker to remove the hook.
5. Cut the leader if the fish has swallowed the hook.
6. Avoid touching or handling the fish, especially around the eyes and gills.
7. Support the entire length of the fish if it must be lifted out of the water. Do not lift the fish by the tail or jaw.
8. Gently place the fish back in the water.

Anglers can find information on selective fishing and selective fishing techniques, as well as streaming video on how to properly release salmon, on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/selective/techniques/>.

Elsewhere, the inner Elliott Bay salmon fishery got off to a slow start. "But it should pick up in the coming weeks," Thiesfeld said. Farther north, salmon fishing in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) has been hit-and-miss.

Meanwhile, the **crab** fishery is under way in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner), 9, 10, and the southern and eastern portion of 7. Fisheries in those areas are 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.

Prefer shrimp? The **coonstripe** and **pink shrimp** fisheries are open 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/shrimpindex.shtml>.

In the rivers, the Skagit and Baker **sockeye** fisheries have been spotty, said Brett Barkdull, another WDFW fish biologist. "Fishing has been a little on the slow side," 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 at Concrete. The daily limit on each river is two sockeye at least 12 inches in length.

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

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

Anglers enjoyed a successful kick-off as the coastal **salmon** season got under way during the first week in July. Meanwhile, **crab** fishers dropped pots in Puget Sound, **rockfish** anglers have been catching limits along the Strait of Juan de Fuca and **halibut** anglers can take advantage of one more day of fishing off the north coast July 22.

Coastal salmon fishing got off to a fast start with anglers nearing their two-fish limit during the first days, but then dropped off a bit later in the week when the wind kicked up, said Wendy Beeghley, WDFW fish biologist.

"So far, anglers are enjoying a more successful season than 2006," she said. "We expected bigger coho returns to the lower Columbia River this year, which directly affect the ocean fisheries. Plus, the weather was great for the opener."

Beeghley said anglers off Ilwaco (Marine Area 1) were catching their limit of mostly coho, while the catch at Westport (Marine Area 2) was about two-thirds coho and one-third chinook. "The chinook are averaging about 18 pounds and the coho are about five pounds," she said. On the north coast (marine areas 3 and 4), anglers were catching a majority of coho and averaging one fish per person in La Push and nearly one fish per person in Neah Bay.

Still, it's all about the weather. "When the wind kicked up this past weekend, it was tough for anglers to get out," she said. "The forecast through July 12 isn't that great, but hopefully it will clear up soon so people can get back on the water."

Ilwaco is open daily for salmon fishing; Westport is open Sundays through Thursdays; and La Push and Neah Bay are open Tuesdays through Saturdays. Beeghley reminds anglers that coastal salmon fishing will remain as specified in the *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>), or until quotas are met.

On the Strait of Juan de Fuca, creel checks off Sekiu (Marine Area 5) over the July 7 weekend revealed a mix of salmon. At Van Riper's Resort 165 anglers caught 23 **chinook**, 31 **coho** and 53 **pinks**. Near Olson's Resort in the same area, 183 anglers averaged one salmon for every three rods and pulled in 100 **rockfish**. Meanwhile, 11 anglers checked at the Coho Resort in Sekiu each caught their one-fish limit during the one-day re-opening of the **halibut** fishery July 7. With enough halibut remaining in the quota, anglers will get one more day of fishing off the north coast this month. On July 22, fishing will be open on all waters in marine areas 3 (La Push) and 4 (Neah Bay).

While results have been sporadic over the past week in Marine Area 11 (Vashon to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge), anglers switching between the Point Defiance Ramp and Boat House over the July 7 weekend averaged nearly a salmon per rod depending on time and location. All fish caught were **chinook**. Success has been more consistent for those fishing near the Vaughn Public Ramp, 20 miles north of Olympia in Case Inlet where anglers averaged about one fish for every two rods during the first week of July. On July 8, 32 anglers in the area caught 12 chinook and one coho.

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

Four additional recreational **Dungeness crab** areas opened July Fourth, including marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 12 (Hood Canal). These areas, including marine area 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), are open Wednesdays through Saturdays through Sept. 3.

Crabbing is open seven days a week in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge) through Jan. 2.

"Preliminary reports from the eastern Strait, which opened June 27, are good, said Brad Sele, WDFW shellfish resource manager. "But it's still too early to tell how the new areas are doing."

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five male Dungeness crab with a shell width measuring at least 6¼ inches, plus six red rock crab of either sex with a shell width of at least 5 inches. All undersized crab, female Dungeness crab and all softshell crab of either sex must be returned to the water.

Several new catch-reporting requirements are in effect this year:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. No coastal reporting: Catch record cards are no longer required to fish for Dungeness crab on the Washington coast (marine areas 1-4).

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/shelfish/crab/index.htm>.

### **Southwest Washington:**

The ocean **salmon** fishery got off to a fast start earlier this month, seizing the spotlight from fisheries for hatchery **steelhead** and other freshwater fish in the Columbia River Basin. Starting July 1, anglers fishing out of Ilwaco were limiting on coho, and those further north also did well. (*See the South Sound/Olympic Peninsula report for more information on the ocean fishery.*)

But with water temperatures rising into the upper 60s at Bonneville Dam, fishing for hatchery steelhead on the Columbia River and its tributaries was generally slow during the first week of July.

"Anglers have been working pretty hard for their fish," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "With a couple of scorchers in the forecast, it could get worse before it gets better."

During the week ending July 8, boat anglers averaged about one **summer-run steelhead** for every six rods in creel checks conducted below Bonneville Dam. Bank anglers averaged one fish for every 12.6 rods. Steelhead fishing also was slow in tributaries to the lower Columbia and in the Bonneville Pool, Hymer said.

But Hymer does expect fishing to pick up in the weeks ahead as more upper river fish move into the fishery. Nearly 1,200 summer steelhead were counted July 8 at Bonneville Dam, the highest number this year. Hymer also noted that cumulative totals are keeping pace with the count last year, when a total of 330,000 upriver fish returned to the Columbia River.

"Fishing for hatchery steelhead should improve throughout July and well into August," Hymer said. "We're still on track for a good fishery."

"Bank anglers can do pretty well plunking in the mainstem Columbia," Hymer said. "Unlike salmon, steelhead can often be found in less than 10 feet of water. They'll often hold at the edge of a drop-off, but they usually don't go very deep. Boat anglers have some advantages in terms of maneuverability, but steelhead are still basically a shallow-water fishery."

As in past years, only steelhead with a clipped adipose or ventral fin and a healed scar at the location of the clipped fin may be retained. All adult salmon intercepted on the Columbia River downriver from Priest Rapids Dam must be released. Anglers fishing the Columbia River and its tributaries are advised to check the Fish Hotline (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regions/reg5/hotline.htm>) or the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for additional regulations.

Hymer said most steelhead counted at Bonneville are "one-salt" fish, weighing four to six pounds. By contrast, steelhead returning to tributaries of the lower Columbia River generally run upwards of eight pounds and have generally two or three summers in the ocean. For reasons that are still unknown, returns of those fish to the Cowlitz, Kalama and Lewis river hatchery are down by two-thirds from last year, Hymer said.

But with warm weather in the forecast, Hymer suggests that anglers look for steelhead in the cooler waters at the mouth of the Cowlitz, Lewis and White Salmon rivers - as well as Drano Lake - where fish go to beat the heat.

Meanwhile, **sturgeon** anglers fishing the lower Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines upstream to Marker 85 have been catching some legal-size fish around Longview. That area is open to sturgeon retention Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through July 31. All other areas of the Columbia River downstream of the Wauna powerlines are closed to retention of sturgeon until next year.

Anglers hoping to tie into a good-size **trout** might want to stop by Mayfield Lake sometime soon. More than 12,000 half-pound rainbows were released from the Friends of the Cowlitz net pens into the impoundment June 30. WDFW also planted 2,000 catchable-size rainbows in the lake July 2. Mineral Lake got 3,000 rainbows the next day.

Wolf Dammers, another WDFW fish biologist, also recommends a number of other area waters including Riffe Lake, Skate Creek near Packwood, the Tilton River, and Lake Scanewa. "Ocean fishing can be a lot of fun, but anglers can actually catch landlocked coho at Riffe Lake," Dammers said. "Those looking to catch some trout have lots of options right now."

### **Eastern Washington:**

Summertime heat is driving anglers to higher elevations and fish deeper. The north end of the region includes many small, deep lakes at higher elevation with somewhat cooler air temperatures that make

for more comfortable fishing. "But you still need to fish very early in the day or late in the evening," said Curt Vail, WDFW district fish biologist in Colville. "The water is still warm and fish hide in deep, shaded water during the heat of the day. They're more actively feeding at night and into the early hours of morning when they can see better. So some of the best fishing is at night or just before dawn, when the skies are clear."

Davis Lake in Ferry County and Yocum Lake in Pend Oreille County are usually good **cutthroat trout** fisheries this time of year. Summit Lake in Stevens County has nice **rainbow trout** and Elbow Lake just to the west has **eastern brook trout**. Elbow Lake, at just 48 acres, is best suited for float tube or shore fishing. At about 4,300 feet elevation, Big Meadow Lake west of Ione in Pend Oreille County is usually a good bet for reeling in 12-inch and better rainbows. The Little Pend Oreille chain of lakes, from Frater and Leo lakes in Pend Oreille County to Heritage, Thomas, Gillette and Sherry lakes in Stevens County, offer rainbows in the 10-inch range and **tiger trout** up to 14 inches.

Catch-and-release fishing for rainbows over a pound is usually good in the evenings and early mornings at Starvation Lake near the Little Pend Oreille Wildlife Refuge southeast of Colville. In addition to being catch-and-release only, Starvation has selective gear regulations, which includes no motorized boats.

Many of the northeast district's fishing lakes within the Colville National Forest have U.S. Forest Service campgrounds and other facilities. For more information see <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/colville/forest/maps/>.

The Pend Oreille River produces catches of large **northern pike**. The river is also a good bet for **largemouth bass**, especially from Ione to Box Canyon Dam, and **smallmouth bass** in the Metaline Falls area.

Although not at high elevation, Waitts Lake in southern Stevens County continues to be a good evening spot to catch rainbows and **brown trout**, plus some **largemouth bass** and **yellow perch**. Loon Lake, also in southern Stevens County, is producing limits of **kokanee** mostly in the evening.

Anglers are catching **crappie** and big **channel catfish** at Sprague Lake on the Lincoln-Adams county line. Crappie have also been caught at Coffeepot Lake, northeast of Odessa in Lincoln County, along with rainbows and perch. Virtually all fishing in the central district of the region is only productive early mornings and late evenings, said Chris Donley, WDFW district fish biologist. "The usual good trout spots in Spokane County - Amber, Badger, Williams, West Medical - are all still producing catches, but only mornings and evenings in this heat."

Anglers can get a little extra out of their fishing license on July 16 at "Fish and Wildlife Night" at the Spokane Indians Baseball Club game against the Yakima Bears. All fishing or hunting license holders get a discount on game seats that night and fish and wildlife-related information and giveaways between innings. See <http://www.spokaneindiansbaseball.com/> for more information.

### **North Central Washington:**

Art Viola, WDFW district fish biologist in Wenatchee, said the Columbia River **summer chinook salmon** fishing season that opened July 1 has been slow. "The run this year is about two-thirds what it has been in the past three years," he said. "It appears that the fish are very late in reaching the upper Columbia. On the opener not one fish was caught at Brewster. Now anglers have been catching a moderate number of fish below Wells Dam and in the Wenatchee area and fishing should pick up when more of the run moves into the area."

Bob Jateff, Okanogan district fish biologist, said that summer chinook fishing in the Brewster/Bridgeport area of the Columbia has started to pick up a bit in recent days. "Average size of the adults has been 15

to 18 pounds, and a good number of jack salmon are being caught as well," he said. "As the fish counts continue to increase at Wells Dam, fishing should improve considerably."

Jateff also said the Methow River continues to run a little high, but anglers can still expect to catch both **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** from 14 to 16 inches. "Drift boats are a good way to fish the Methow now, but wading fishermen can get some good action on the two open tributaries - the Twisp and the Chewuch," he said. Jateff reminds anglers that selective gear rules and catch-and-release are in effect, and some areas in the Methow drainage are closed to all fishing. "Check the regulations first," he said.

Anglers are still catching trout at the Okanogan district lakes - both Conconullys, Spectacle, Wannacut, Alta, and Pearrygin. Early morning and evening are the best times to fish once the warmer weather starts to increase water temperatures at the lowland lakes.

**Bluegill** and **crappie** fishing continues to be good at Leader Lake and **yellow perch** are being caught at Patterson Lake.

### **South Central Washington:**

Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist, said access is good now to alpine fishing lakes in the South Cascades. **Rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** from last year's fry plants are available at Dog and Leech Lakes in the White Pass area of Yakima County and at Lost Lake near Snoqualmie Pass in Kittitas County. Anglers can check out what's been stocked at [http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regions/reg3/reg3\\_archive.htm](http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regions/reg3/reg3_archive.htm). All catchable-size trout stocking numbers at lakes throughout the region are also available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg3/index.htm>.

Fishing is good for triploid and catchable size **rainbow trout** at Clear Lake and **kokanee** at Rimrock Lake in Yakima County. Cummins said that Rimrock had been muddy and fishing was slow, but now it's clear and the kokanee are biting. Anglers need to follow the rules on the waterway that connects the two lakes - the North Fork of the Tieton River - because protected **bull trout** are in the area. Anglers must learn how to identify bull trout and release them unharmed if they inadvertently catch them.

Cummins said that streams and rivers are in better shape for fishing now as water levels continue to drop, especially in upper stretches and in smaller to medium-size waters.

A new regulation on part of the American River goes into effect July 16 through Sept.15: fishing waters are closed from the Highway 410 bridge at RM 5.4 (0.7 mile east, downstream of the USFS Hells Crossing campground main entrance) upstream to the Mesatchee Creek Trail (USFS trail 969) river crossing at RM 15.8. Cummins said the closure is needed to protect ESA-listed bull trout and wild spring chinook that spawn and stage in these areas.

### **Reader Email**

Subscriber Dave R. provided a pleasant Email exchange over the last week or so. He first wrote, "Michael, I'm confused about the salmon season. This is on the ODFW website:

Salmon, Steelhead, and Shad:

COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, Tongue Point to Bonneville Dam:

This section of the Columbia River is currently open to the retention of summer Chinook. The daily bag limit is two adult summer Chinook salmon or adipose fin-clipped steelhead plus five Chinook jacks. It is unlawful to angle for jack salmon after the adult bag limit has been reached. Effective July 1, this

section of the Columbia River will be closed to the retention of adult summer Chinook but will remain open for adipose fin-clipped summer steelhead and adipose fin-clipped Chinook jacks (24 inches or less).

"It appears this (underlining mine) suggests that salmon summer season for Chinook is NOT open now. Several of my fishing buddies thought the same but when I was on the river yesterday near Columbia City, a couple of regulars told me the season is NOT closing. The report on TGF did not mention a closure in this week's news. What can you tell me?"

Michael responded, "The decision to close the river on July 1st (as well as allowing sturgeon retention through July 4th in the estuary) was made in a meeting of WDFW and ODFW officials on Thursday, June 29th. While I don't write the Columbia section myself, as Bob Rees wrote in last night's TGF, "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."

"So yeah, it is closed, and sorry for any confusion.

"On a bright note, the Buoy 10 season should be killer come August although historically it gets off to a slow start."

Dave wrote again, "Michael, thanks much for the reply. Guess I'll have to mosey on down to the coast, Depoe Bay or something."

To which Michael responded, "Not a bad idea, Dave. Boats out of Depoe Bay and Newport have been doing well for coho ... and it'll only get better in the coming weeks."

Please let us know how you do out there.

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**

Over 30,000 Species, 25,4600 Common names, 44,200 Pictures, 39,700 References, 1,450

Collaborators - Fishbase: \*<http://www.fishbase.org/search.php>

Solunar predictions tailored to your Zip Code: \*<http://www.solunarforecast.com/>

**Weekly Quote** – "Calvin Coolidge's exploits as a fisherman are well known. One of his favorite angling places was the River Brule. Once a newspaper reporter asked him how many fish approximately were in the Brule, and the President answered that the waters were estimated to contain about 45,000 fish. 'I haven't caught them all yet,' he said, 'but I've intimidated them.'" - John McKee

**GOOD LUCK!**