

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 20<sup>th</sup> – July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Steelhead continue to march over Bonneville Dam but with water temperatures climbing above 70 degrees, fish are reluctant to bite. Some steelhead are being taken in the early morning in faster flows near Bonneville Dam.

Effort and catch for Columbia River sturgeon is low and effective July 30<sup>th</sup>, retention of sturgeon from Bonneville Dam to The Dalles Dam will close as anglers will have attained the 700 fish harvest guideline.

On the Willamette, spring chinook and summer steelhead counts have dwindled to low single digits in 78 degree water. Sturgeon fishing has been very slow with mostly shakers to show for angler's efforts. The shad run is over at Oregon City.

A few summer steelhead have come out of the Clackamas River but fishing has nearly ground to a halt on the Sandy. Steelheaders on the Clackamas should watch for radio-tagged fish. Anglers are required to release these fish but are encouraged to record the tag number, location of catch and report this information to the Clackamas ODF&W.

The most productive location on the North Santiam is Fishermen's Bend once again this week although with waters warming, summer steelhead are as high as Packsaddle and Minto parks. Numbers of summer steelhead are quite good in the South Santiam and with water conditions improving, catch rates have also.

Waters scheduled for planting of hatchery trout include Faraday Lake, Harriet Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Detroit Reservoir, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Salt Creek, North Fork Santiam River Detroit and Trail Bridge Reservoir.

**Northwest –** Most anglers fished too deep over the weekend out of the Columbia. Successful anglers found ample numbers of coho in 150 to 180 foot of water offshore of Gearhart. Later in the week, better numbers were found closer to the CR Buoy. Most coho are averaging 5 to 6 pounds and chinook catches are rare.

A surprising number of quality hard-shelled crab are available south of the jetty outside of the Columbia River. Softer tides will greet weekend ocean goers but the seas are forecasted to ramp up.

Garibaldi has received more attention for tuna than salmon as of late. Some coho are being caught in 200 to 280 foot of water but hatchery fish seem hard to come by. Water temperatures are warming nearshore which affects the aggressiveness of these salmon.

Savvy steelheaders are taking a few fish from the Nestucca River reports **pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-4808)**. Small clusters of eggs or crawdad tails will take some quality fish in the fast water. Mornings remain the best option.

Tuna were about 30 miles out of Depoe Bay late last week but had moved within 20 miles of port by Saturday, July 14th. Many boats took advantage of the near-shore bounty with offshore salmon fishing slow.

**Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411)** reports spotty fishing for coho out of Newport and Winchester Bay with the best fishing over 150 to 220 feet of water directly north of the lighthouse.

With 36,000 pounds remaining in the spring all-depth halibut quota, fishing will be allowed off the central Oregon coast July 19th through 21st this week. The summer season opens August 3rd for a quota of 226,989 pounds.

**Southwest** – The ocean was friendly out of Winchester Bay over the past weekend, providing fair fishing for coho at 25 feet over 200 feet of water. Chinook have been mostly too small to keep. Tuna have come from 62-degree water 20 to 25 miles out of port. Ocean crabbing has been good.

Boats launching out of Coos Bay are catching coho with about 50% of those fin-clipped keepers. Chinook are being taken occasionally. Tuna are being taken outside at the 25 line. Bottom fishing and offshore crabbing have been rewarding.

Trollers are gearing up for Chinook on the Rogue River estuary. Several good catches were made over the past week and starting Saturday, July 14th, both clipped and unclipped kings may be retained. Steelhead fishing on the upper Rogue is providing an alternative to spring chinook frustration all season. It's pretty good and they're biting well.

**Dave Pitts of Salmon Trout and Steelhead** adds that tuna fishing is "on fire" along the South coast with up to 60 fish per boat.

Boats launching out of Brookings Harbor over the past week have been doing very well with coho moving within eight miles of port. Fishing seems to be on the upswing with coho showing rapid growth. Limits were the rule for rockfish and ling cod catches have also improved. Boats making tuna trips have been successful although albacore have been 50 miles offshore.

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

**Eastern** – Caddis are hatching in abundance on the lower Deschutes and trout are keyed on them. Mornings and evenings are best. Middle Deschutes anglers are experiencing fair to good fishing while the upper river has been fishing very well for small rainbow and the occasional large brook trout.

Crane Prairie has been improving as the water level drops although it takes persistence to hook the larger rainbows.

Devils Lake, East Lake, Spring Creek, Walton Lake, and Walton Lake are scheduled to be stocked with hatchery trout.

**SW Washington** – Melting glaciers are turning the Cowlitz River muddy below the Toutle River. Catches on the Cowlitz remain best above Blue Creek for backtrollers.

The mouth of the Cowlitz has changed dramatically, affecting the productivity of this location for salmon and steelhead.

The Drano Lake fishery should begin to ramp up soon with counts at Bonneville on the increase.

Warm weather has also impacted catch rates on the Klickitat River. The river is running turbid.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Oddly, wonderful boating weather and ample fish available, the Columbia remains racked with closures. Chinook and sturgeon fishing is closed in most areas and

unproductive in the Portland to Longview stretch where it is open for retention 4 days per week (Thursdays through Sundays). This leaves steelhead as the only viable option.

Numbers of steelhead at Bonneville Dam are looking good but water temperatures and fluctuating flows have most anglers seeking other opportunities. There is a small fleet of boats that are having consistent steelhead action near Bonneville Dam however. Small spinners fished close to the bottom are taking fair numbers of fish. Location is so key however as some admit the migration path is so finite, that it seems the fish are marching in single file! Sometimes, only 1 rod is getting hit! The action will come in the morning on one day, the evening on another. It seems to depend on what they are doing with the water flows on certain days. Ironically, even though the bulk of the fish are of hatchery origin, most days the catch of wild fish outweighs that of hatchery fish.

Sturgeon anglers will face yet another closure as the river section above Bonneville will close beginning July 30<sup>th</sup>. Anglers in that reach have attained the meager quota of 700 fish. Catch and release fishing in the estuary remains fair but with the warming water, sturgeon are not biting the baits as aggressively as they were in colder temperatures. Anchovies remain the best bet but leftover herring from your ocean fishing is another option although these baits have been small this year. The water closer to the bridge has been producing the best action.

Sturgeon anglers in the gorge are not finding much competition. Catch and effort remains light but some guides are still pursuing oversized sturgeon using floater shad for bait. Anglers targeting keepers on the open days closer to the lower deadline- Wauna are finding mediocre fishing at best.

Outside, the salmon fishing has been good some days, fair others. Fishing is far from consistent as temperatures fluctuate. Fish some days seem to be in 150 to 180 feet of water, the next day, they are back out at 280 feet. Last Saturday, boats did best fishing shallower water south of the river entrance but later in the week, guides had to fish the Columbia outflow near the CR Buoy to get their fish. With the herring being small, most folks are opting for anchovies for bait. It's really a no-brainer fishery but as the sun rises higher in the sky, don't be afraid to try deeper for the salmon as they seem to drop down deeper as the bait often does later in the morning. The crabbing for hard-shells is quite good on the south side.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Weak tides for most of the week will keep steelhead fishing focused in the gorge where tides don't effect flows so much. Action can be consistent at times but you definitely have to be in the right place. Both bank and boat anglers have a reasonable chance at fish.

Sturgeon anglers will be facing mostly catch and release options although there is still a chance at a keeper on the Thursday through Sunday option from the Wauna Powerlines to Bonneville Dam. This week will be one of the last remaining options however as even this fishery is due to close temporarily from August 1<sup>st</sup> – September 30<sup>th</sup>.

Ocean salmon seekers will continue to have to weed through wild coho and undersized chinook but action should only get better into August. Unfortunately, the ocean forecast does not look friendly to salmon anglers:

**FRI**

S WIND 20 TO 25 KT WITH GUSTS TO 30 KT. WIND WAVES 6 FT.  
SW SWELL 6 FT AT 6 SECONDS. RAIN.

**FRI NIGHT**

S WIND 15 TO 20 KT WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES  
4 FT...SUBSIDING TO 2 FT AFTER MIDNIGHT. SW SWELL 7 FT. SHOWERS  
LIKELY.

## **SAT**

S WIND 15 TO 20 KT WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 6 FT. CHANCE OF RAIN.

## **SAT NIGHT**

S WIND 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. SW SWELL 6 FT. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

## **SUN**

S WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 7 FT.

## **MON**

NW WIND 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 6 FT.

Not only do you need to consider your safety with a forecast like this but just how much fun can you really have when you're bouncing around in seas like this? Not a great way to introduce someone new to the fishery either.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – Daily spring Chinook counts which have been dwindling to low single digits fell to zero on July 17th at Willamette Falls at which time only a single summer steelhead crossed the Falls. Imagine reviewing that boring 24 hours of video; even fast-forwarding would be a yawn. Caution is urged boating below the Falls as the water level is way down.

Mayflies and caddis are hatching on the upper McKenzie where fly anglers are doing well for rainbows and cutthroat trout on dries.

Steelheading on the North Santiam is fair with Fishermen's Bend holding up as well as anyplace on this river. Over 3,300 summer steelhead and nearly 800 spring Chinook have been counted at the Foster Dam facility. A small percentage of these are recycled downstream to run again.

**The Guide's Forecast** – While sturgeon retention is allowed on the lower Willamette through Sunday this week, it's very slow and good luck finding one that's big enough to keep. Spring Chinook fishing is done. Let's call the shad run wrapped up for 2007.

While prolific hatches on the McKenzie will tempt anglers to throw dries, nymph fishing has been yielding larger trout.

Fish the Santiams early and late in the day. The South Santiam is actually producing slightly better.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – The better steelheading has been from Barton upstream on the Clackamas. Bank anglers are throwing spinners below Rivermill dam to Dog Creek with some success. Catch rates are fair. Over 3,000 spring Chinook have entered the trap at the hatchery facility with additional fish coming in daily. About 400 summer steelhead have been counted at the hatchery. Following recent problems with rowdy people, alcohol will no longer be allowed at Carver Park.

The ODFW is asking Clackamas steelheaders to release any radio-tagged fish but make note of the tag number and call the Clackamas Office any time at 971-673-6000. These steelhead will be found in the lower river below Rivermill Dam and were anesthetized for surgery to implant the radio tags and are not fit for human consumption.

Steelheading is slow in the low, off-color water of the Sandy River is slow although a couple were taken near the mouth of Cedar Creek earlier this week.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – It's all about the tuna on the north coast these days. Garibaldi anglers are scoring great catches anywhere from 28 to 30 miles offshore. I finally got to take advantage of this fishing and the action was awesome. Several doubles and triples and a rare quadruple greeted us in calm seas on Wednesday (7/18). Most of the tuna were caught trolling tuna clones that were green and blue. We also drew steady strikes on the same color swim bait. Once we slowed down on a trolled caught fish, we caught several fish jigging buzz-bomb looking units- can you tell how much I tuna fish? I don't even know the name of most of this equipment! Anyway, it seemed like as long as you had the right color, you were into fish. Although the seas were far from what I would call rough, the surface was a bit riffled making it harder to see jumpers for us to target fish. We still managed 40 albacore for 4 guys however.



With tuna within reach, who really wants to go for salmon? Anglers targeting salmon have been less than impressed. Motivated anglers have been fishing near the 200 foot line out of Garibaldi, taking an occasional hatchery coho. The bulk of the catch seems to be made up of wild fish- which no one likes to harm or see go to waste. Be careful with these fish- they are our future. Crabbing in the ocean out of Garibaldi is also still a good option.

For anglers seeking a more freshwater experience, **pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-4808)** offers this advice; Jesse writes, "Nestucca has some beautiful summer steelhead around. Choose every section of white water you see, and get after it. Nice fresh fish. They will bite most anything, but tiny baits of eggs, and crawdad meat works really well. Believe it or not, these are great table fare, and I recommend taking them just for the reason of really low and warm water. If you plan on releasing them, take great care and make sure they are well revived and swim away well. Crabbing in the bay is fair. Best time seems to be on the last of the out going and first part of in coming. Some are nice and some are soft. Take a few for supper and put the soft ones back, and get them in the fall. On another note, if on the beach, keep a look out for the fatal drowning victim. Should be in the area, just cannot find him. So, take care and be safe..."

The Wilson River is another option as steelhead are hunkered down in the warm, low flows. The stretch from Windy Bend to Lee's Camp will produce the best results. Shaded holes will hold the most fish.

Many anglers begin to ply the waters of Nehalem Bay in search of the elusive summer chinook. Well, reliable Rich Riley of Rockaway Beach has this detailed report for us; Rich writes, "I have fished the Wheeler area of Nehalem Bay, each a.m. during the past week with 2- 3 other boats and nothing to report at this time. First fish last year from this area of the Nehalem Bay was taken on July 9th in front of Kahrs Dock but we have not caught or even "marked" any fish to date. With the early low slack / minus tides this past week, the "outgoing" was like fishing Niagara Falls in a row boat. I was only able to "go with the flow" and then, at times, I think I resembled one of those "jet ski's". Even with out a single take down to report, I am still "Leading the life of Riley", able to fish each day in Nehalem Bay., or Tillamook Bay. The scenery alone makes each trip special."

**The Guide's Forecast** – The ocean forecast isn't all that great for those looking to recreate outside this weekend. Tuna and salmon anglers may want to consider other options. If you do venture out, the tuna are due west 28 to 30 miles out and my recommendation is to troll north or south once you reach that distance to the west. Salmon anglers should seek 54 to 60 degree water if you can find any. Coho will be close to the surface in the cloudy conditions. Frozen herring is really the only thing available out of Garibaldi. Bring your crab pots!

Steelheaders may want to consider plying the coastal waters for summer run fish on the Nestucca or Wilson Rivers. These area streams are forecasted to actually experience a moderate rise in river levels over the weekend- a welcome situation for both fish and angler. You'll still do yourself a favor by fishing small baits and using stealthy tactics but the cloud cover will help out immensely.

Coastal crabbing in the estuaries is not all that productive and razor clamming, although not a great option tide-wise this weekend, is closed north of Tillamook Head.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – According to the ODFW, "Tuna fishers had another record-breaking week. The tuna catch has already exceeded the total catch for all years for which the department has records. Anglers found them as close as 15 miles out in some places, but most seem to be about 25 miles offshore. The average catch per angler was between six and seven fish."

Offshore coho landings have consumed about 30% of the quota as of mid-July. Don't wait until the run is fully underway to explore this ocean fishery. That time is now. Those who wait will miss it entirely.

Tuna were found about 30 miles out of Depoe Bay mid-week. Fishing has been excellent whenever boaters find 61 degree water. The ocean was flat in the early morning hours but got lumpy when the wind came up mid-morning, sending most boats back to port. Limits of coho were taken out of Depoe Bay today, July 19th by boats trolling hoochies behind divers at the whistle buoy although rough conditions kept some boaters from trying it. The ocean is not predicted to be friendly for recreational boaters this weekend.

Crabbing has been productive in Yaquina Bay but the majority of the Dungeness are soft. Toss 'em back because these have little meat and an off flavor. Jiggers are still taking good numbers of herring in the bay.

**Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411)** reports, "Been fishing off the coast out Newport and Winchester. The coho fishing has been spotty off of Newport. Probably because of the warm water close to the coast. The best fishing seems to be in that 150 to 220 feet of water directly north of the lighthouse. This past weeks the deeper rods (forty pulls) were the ones getting the fish. Fish out of Winchester has been much better as there is cooler water there. We caught limits of coho anywhere

between 12 and forty pulls. Been fishing with either hoochies and chunk of herring, the Coyotes wonder bread and the watermelon Silver Hordes. The fish are still on the small side overall with an occasion fish in the eight to ten pound range."

**Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944)** reports, "I was on the ocean out of Florence yesterday [07/19, Ed.]. Not too flat at all. It took us awhile (about 5 1/2 hours) but managed to limit out on silvers. No monsters, but all between 5-9 lbs. Fishing has been pretty consistent for salmon down here. "Headed down to Gold Beach tonight, fishing on Friday. I'll be sure to give you a report when I get back"

Sawyer's Rapids is the only place producing shad on the Umpqua with the run nearly wrapped up. Smallmouth bass fishing is good on the South Umpqua where a variety of lures are taking fish. Summer steelheading remains slow on the North Umpqua, fair to good in the flies-only section. Tuna fishing has been excellent out of Winchester Bay but it was a 40 mile trip to find fish earlier this week. The ocean was friendly out of Winchester Bay over the past weekend, providing fair fishing for coho at 25 feet over 200 feet of water. Chinook have been mostly too small to keep. Boaters out of Winchester Bay are being challenged by deteriorating ocean conditions this week.

Night fishing has been most effective for stripes bass on the lower Coos and Coquille rivers, with local experts doing best for the limited numbers of fish available. Has anyone else noticed that there are no sculpin (bullheads) anywhere stripers congregate? Sea-run cutthroat trout fishing has been very good on the Coquille.

Now that unclipped Chinook are on anglers' menus once again on the lower Rogue, the estuary is again becoming most inviting. Wild Chinook may be kept as high as Whiskey Creek. Trollers have taken several late springers and early Fall fish in the bay over the last week, primarily on the classic Rogue spinner rig which places a spinner blade on the nose of an anchovy. The fall Chinook are large with some 40-pounders reported. This fishery is being embraced by anglers still bruised by the lackluster spring Chinook run here. Low water flows this year will add up to a good season for bay fishers as the Chinook will be slower to make the charge upriver. A few summer steelhead are being caught in the Grants Pass stretch, but effort is light. Hatchery steelhead catches on the upper Rogue is fair to good with the water temperature and conditions conducive to decent fishing. The hatchery hole is kicking out spring Chinook catches daily although only hatchery fish may be kept and all springer fishing is closed from Rogue Elk Boat Ramp to the hatchery.

**Dave Pitts of Salmon Trout and Steelhead** adds this, "Tuna!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! They are on fire down here along the South Coast.

"Fish are being taken at this time from 10 miles out up to 25 miles, Boats are coming back with 18, 30 and up to 60 fish per boat all sports fisherman. Clones in Purple in the early A.M. and Greens mid morning. Plai Cedar plugs single hook not double, the reason being the singles track in a more erratic pattern.

"The course is due West out of the Harbor.

"The Rogue is Poor due to very warm water.

"The Klamath river in California, lets just say it is worth the drive and cost to troll the Klamath mouth at this time. Gold or green spinners with anchovy, herring or sardines.

"This is all subject to change so please check weather and sea temps prior to heading out."

Brookings anglers have found tuna within 20 miles of port recently with salmon only four or five miles

out. Trollers are literally loading the boat with albacore. As good as it is, please take only what you can actually use.

Beaches and jetties are producing limits of pinkfin surf perch.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Most years, the nearly 16,000 summer steelhead which have crossed John Day and over 1,000 per day at The Dalles would indicate action on the Deschutes, but warm water in that Columbia tributary this year is holding them back. Even trolling at the mouth has been non-productive, but it's still early for this fishery. Action on the Deschutes will improve as temperatures moderate.

**Northwest Trout** – In the Willamette Valley, waters scheduled for planting of hatchery trout include Faraday Lake, Harriet Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Detroit Reservoir, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Salt Creek, North Fork Santiam River Detroit and Trail Bridge Reservoir.

**Northwest Bass & Panfish** - Bass fishing on the lower Willamette was very good over the weekend for mostly smallmouth but a few largemouth were also taken.

### **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/reg5/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**

Got a question, story to tell or information to share? Shoot us an Email!

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: [brees@pacifier.com](mailto:brees@pacifier.com)

Doug Rees: [doug@TheGuidesForecast.com](mailto:doug@TheGuidesForecast.com)

Michael Teague: [Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com](mailto:Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com)

### **Random Links**

Record-smashing smallie:

<http://sports.espn.go.com/outdoors/fishing/news/story?id=2931118>

Many fishing videos:

[http://www.talkabouthunting.com/fishing\\_videos/](http://www.talkabouthunting.com/fishing_videos/)

**Weekly Quote** – "Fishing is about more than catching fish. It is a way of life. It is the North Star that orients us. It is a natural way of life in an increasingly unnatural world. It is the mother lode, the touchstone, the bedrock of our being. It allows us to fulfill our predatory instincts that still smolder from the evolutionary fires of our hunter-gatherer past. It grounds us, roots us to who we are and why we are here. And it is more than that." - Tom Alkire

**GOOD LUCK!**