

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 26th – November 1st, 2007**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Salmon counts at Bonneville Dam continue to dwindle and effort has switched to mainly sturgeon. Although catches took a bit of a hit last week, likely due to inclement weather, catches should continue to be good into early November. Keepers will likely begin to migrate downriver and into the Willamette as temperatures cool.

Water flow has tripled at Willamette Falls over the past week with the visibility and temperature dropping. Daily coho counts have been in the single digits. Sturgeon fishing is expected to pick up in the lower river.

Water levels in the North Santiam rose late last week but the water clarity is good above Mehema where some steelhead are being caught.

The Clackamas rose to 14 feet at Estacada last Friday and was over 27 feet Sunday, October 21st at Oregon City and slowly recovering.

Water at the Sandy River is off-color, as expected following recent rain. It should be clearing this week. In nearly 30 minutes, the coffer dam near the former Marmot site was notched Friday, October 19th to help it wash away the silt build-up more gradually. Sandy water levels rose to 10.5 feet overnight October 20th but have since returned to pre-storm levels. It is still muddy at this time.

Northwest – A larger than predicted deluge jump started the fall chinook run on most north coast streams. The Wilson River was likely the best producer with numerous fish falling to driftboaters on Sunday and Monday. Bright fish continue to be taken in tidewater.

The Trask River also produced fair results but earlier arriving fish meant that many fish were past their prime. The Nestucca also produced some chinook on Sunday and Monday but overall, disappointed many anglers that reported fish were more motivated to migrate than bite.

The Necanicum River near Seaside also receives hatchery plants and a wild run of chinook. It was the first to fish when the precipitation began late last week. River levels are dropping rapidly on all north coast streams with no new precipitation in the forecast.

The North Fork Nehalem continues to lag in coho returns this fall. The recent rain freshet did not produce the fish most had hoped for.

Pro guide Jim Nicol (503-550-3166) reports the Nestucca fishing well Monday and Tuesday this week for Chinook on sardine-wrapped Kwikfish.

Coastal systems close to trout fishing on October 31st. Check regulations on your favorite streams as many in the northwest section are catch and release only.

Tillamook Bay is producing consistent catches of chinook with the Ghost Hole producing and surprisingly, the west channel still holding up. A weak tide series challenged upper bay anglers but that will change as weekend tides are likely to wash fresh fish into the upper reaches of the estuary and tidewater sections of the Wilson, Kilchis and Trask Rivers.

Crabbing on the lower Columbia will be challenging on the weekends strong tides but clammers should take advantage of great razor clam digging on Clatsop County beaches. It's best to check toxicity levels in all shellfish before harvesting however by calling 1-800-448-2474.

Yaquina has been producing limits of large, hard Dungeness while salmon fishing has been slow. Crabbing out of Waldport has been fair to good with trollers doing well for chinook over the past weekend.

Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944) reports that the wild coho fishing has started improving in both Siltcoos and Tahkenitch.

Trollers were catching fish on the lower Siuslaw last week prior to the weather front hitting and chinook should be available as water levels recede.

Southwest – About 2.5 inches of rain fell on the Central coast and nearly four inches to the southwest.

Enough precipitation fell to kick off the chinook fishery on the Elk and Sixes rivers. Several salmon were taken on the Elk Saturday as the water level drops quickly here.

With the Rogue reaching flows of 25,000 cfs on October 19th, the salmon holding in the estuary have entered the river which will shut down bay fishing. Fly anglers should do well on the upper Rogue for steelhead.

Brookings Harbor was producing chinook on the troll prior to the deluge. The Chetco River level went over 16 feet and the flow to nearly 30,000 cfs near Brookings on October 19th. This volume of water should bring fresh chinook into the system and fishing is expected to be good as the water drops this week.

In an unscheduled stocking, Upper Empire, Lower Empire, Bradley Lake, and Powers Pond will be planted this week with trout averaging one pound. Each location will receive about 200 trout.

Fishing continues to reward at Diamond Lake anglers with pressure reported as light. The lake will close November 1st.

Eastern – Steelheading was good on the lower Deschutes late last week and into the past weekend.

Fishing on the Grande Ronde started picking up late last week with precipitation drawing in fresh steelhead.

SW Washington – Most tributaries remain only fair for coho and steelhead but the Klickitat River has been good for a mix of mostly coho but chinook and steelhead as well.

Razor clam digging should be good along Washington beaches on the upcoming minus tide series. Scheduled digs are:

Thursday, Oct. 25 (6:38 p.m. -1.1) Twin Harbors only
Friday, Oct. 26 (7:26 p.m. -1.7) all beaches (except Kalaloch)
Saturday, Oct. 27 (8:14 p.m. -1.9) all beaches (except Kalaloch)
Sunday, Oct. 28 (9:03 p.m. -1.8) Twin Harbors only

Columbia River Fishing Report – It's really a sturgeon show on the Columbia River right now. As **pro guide Joe Salvey (503-349-1411)** reports, salmon action has slowed. Joe got only 1 opportunity on Monday for chinook in the Bonneville area but didn't collect. He switched to sturgeon on the second half of the day landing 3 oversized fish, a couple of keepers and about 30 shakers. Smelt was the top bait for Joe with squid a close second. The flats produced the best results near Beacon Rock and with the lifting of the 4 day-week season restriction, effort is spread out much better making for more enjoyable fishing opportunities. ODF&W checks indicate a slight slow down from the previous weeks success. Certainly, foul weather played a role in angler effort and catch last week. Who really wanted to be outdoors anyway?

Action downriver, from Portland to Longview is steadily witnessing stronger catch rates. The ODF&W check only indicated one legal white sturgeon kept, 33 sublegal sturgeon released for 11 boats. Although action is likely to pick up here, it won't be in the very near future.

Steelhead catches also took a bit of a downturn in the John Day Pool and Arm but it is likely to quickly rebound as we begin to enter the peak season for this fishery. Weekend checks here showed two adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept and one unclipped steelhead released for 12 bank rods; and 10 adipose fin-clipped steelhead, one coho, and one Chinook jack kept, plus seven unclipped steelhead released for 36 boats.

In the estuary, crabbing was great again last week but large tide influxes have dropped the production period of the best part of the tide.

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon fishing will likely rebound along with effort this week with the gorge producing the best catches. Weather has a lot to do with it but many keepers have been culled from this fishery. It will likely overall, taper off but catches from both the bank and boat fisheries should justify a trip to the Bonneville area if sturgeon is on your mind. Bring a combination of baits but smelt and squid are likely to produce the best results. Oversized sturgeon are still in the area so prepare your gear accordingly. Oversized fish are more likely to be in closer to the deadline than down by Beacon Rock.

Although catches in the Portland to Longview stretch are likely to continue to improve, unless you really like this section of the river to fish in, you may want to focus upstream or get more motivated later in the season. Smelt will certainly be the best bait in this section.

If you are going to go crabbing in the lower Columbia, you'd almost be better off targeting low slack in the early morning than the super strong incoming tide of the afternoon. Don't get your pots caught in the sweeping incoming tide however or the buoys will go under just like a smokin' outgoing tide. Pay close attention to what the tide is doing and stay on top of your buoys. It should be good!

Trollers working the John Day Pool should continue to find steelhead success with plugs. Larger "B" run fish should continue to make up a fair percentage of the catch but fresh fish should still be available well into next month. It's an easy fishery and covering more water is the best way to produce better results. Anglers fishing the John Day Arm will want to bring bobbers and shrimp or jigs in pinks and purples.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Flows at Willamette Falls are starting to moderate and the water is clearing. The temperature has held steady at 53 degrees. Coho are trickling over the Falls and with low numbers available, there's little anglers interest in the stretch from the Clackamas mouth to Meldrum Bar. Sturgeon are being caught and may be

kept seven days a week.

North Santiam water is running high from weekend rainfall but is at optimum temperatures for steelheading.

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon is the fish to target in the lower Willamette with reason to be optimistic about hooking a keeper. As a plus, shakers can be entertaining while in search of the larger fish. Herring and sand shrimp have been effective baits near the Sellwood Bridge and the St. Johns Bridge to Portland Harbor. Sturgeon fishing will only improve into November as these fish will enter the lower river seeking warmer water.

Look for steelhead on the North Santiam at Stayton, Shelburn, Fishermen's Bend and Mehama but not above that area. There are good numbers of fish present which will move both upriver and down. Orange lures are historically effective here in the fall.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports –A few coho have been taken on the Clackamas with the best catches coming from Eagle Creek over the past few days although the water level is dropping this week. Another possibility would be above Barton where coho are being picked up. Three coho are allowed per day from the Clack and Eagle Creek. Anglers have continued to take summer steelhead recently although few are targeting them.

Although the Sandy remains off-color at this writing, the mouth of Cedar Creek has been a hotspot for coho at times this week. The water cleared a little on Sunday, October 21st and a few anglers have managed to take three-fish limits. In off-color water, cured salmon eggs will be more effective than lures for coho. While Cedar creek has produced coho, don't count on finding a parking spot at the hatchery. It's been beyond capacity every day recently. The removal of the coffer dam this past Friday was ahead of schedule but with high water conditions, officials decided it should occur under some control rather than unexpectedly. It did a good job of roiling the water downriver.

North Coast Fishing Report – It's still a good show here in Tillamook where even the most die-hard Nehalem anglers are taking advantage of a good run of fish. It's certainly been better on Tillamook Bay but as far as bright spots, particularly on the north coast, Tillamook seems to be the place to be! Consistent catches continue to come from the west channel but today, the seaweed was a nightmare on the early part of the tide. AND I mean a nightmare! Seaweed will continue to plague anglers this week as the incoming tides become stronger into the weekend. The good news is that these big incoming tides often bring good numbers of biting fish with them. We'll wait to see what happens but to date, the west channel has been the place to be.

Recently, the Ghost Hole was rumored to have good fishing on 10/21 and 10/22 on the incoming tide. That was in the morning and traditionally, this side of the bay produces good catches this time of year in the middle part of the incoming tide. Seaweed also plugged this side of the bay with high ocean swells not helping matters. I fished the Ghost Hole late in the afternoon on the outgoing tide- about half way into outgoing tide and in the 3 last passes of the day, we hooked 3 fish and landed 2 of them at the bottom end of the hole close to Hobsonville Point. More recently, Bay City and the Ghost Hole have not produced good catches during the middle part of the outgoing tide. We fished Bay City on 10/24 however during the middle part of the incoming tide and came up hooking 2 fish on 2 passes but lost them both. All of these fish took herring as I have not caught a fish on a spinner yet this year! (But I haven't used spinners much at all either). Side note: some fish are being taken in the south channel on spinners so if you have multiple rods in the boat and prefer to fish spinners, red/white blades have been producing some

fish but they seem to be more responsive in shallower water.

The ocean (when open) and the jaws have not been producing great catches and with the strong tide series we are currently on, are unlikely to produce good catches through this weekend. There may be a chance that the ocean swell will calm by the weekend but the jury is out on that one.

The North Coast river fisheries got off to a relatively early start late in the weekend when the much needed rain storm brought river levels up about a foot higher than hydrograph models had predicted. That gave driftboaters many different options and numerous boats took advantage of it. Boaters willing to take a bit of a risk and fish off-colored water did very well on the Trask on Sunday and Monday, the Nestucca fished fairly well also. **Fisherman's Marine and Outdoor manager Robert Campbell** reported good action for jacks and a few adults on the Trask using both eggs and Kwikfish. Robert reported the river from Loren's Drift to the Highway 101 takeout was plugged with boats and anchored anglers made it challenging to fish all the water. Robert fished the Nestucca on Sunday and reported that fish were present but seemed to be on the move and not so willing to bite. Later reports indicated that the fish did bite, and they bit quite well but only during the last 1.5 hours of daylight as they likely began to slow migration for the day.

Pro guide Jim Nicol (503-550-3166) adds this, "The Nestucca fished decent on 10-21 and 10-22. But most of the brighter fish were taken below Farmer's Creek. I fished from 4th bridge to Farmer's on 10-21. My guys went 2 for 5 and both fish landed were fish that had been in the system for awhile. All the action was done with Sardine wrapped K-15's.

"Today 10-22 . we only had two opportunities and capitalized on both. Both fish were quality table fare. I think fishing in the next few days on the Nestucca, one should focus on targeting the tide runners, being in the lower section of the river until we get our next big freshet. look for the Three river's to Cloverdale drift to be the best producer until we get the river above 6 ft. Remember to check in with Pat at Nestucca Valley Sporting Goods if you plan on taking out at Cloverdale ramp. There has been some changes in Ramp fee's for this take out."

Sunday and Monday went well for driftboaters on the Wilson. The fish moved rapidly through tidewater on the recent rain freshet as I only drew 2 strikes in tidewater on Saturday. By Sunday, driftboaters were reported excellent success from Mills Bridge to Sollie Smith as this must be the section they finally decided they could slow down in. Most fish caught were reported in excellent condition.

Not much to report from the Kilchis and Necanicum Rivers other than the fact fish are present. All the smaller streams and even the larger ones are on the recede and likely won't fish well for fresh fish until the next significant rain.

The North Fork Nehalem still showed poor returns of hatchery coho and the chinook of the mainstem seem to be non-existent. As a matter of fact, most Nehalem guides are working Tillamook Bay these days. I know they are reluctant to do so but you have to go where the fish are.

Crabbing remains poor in Tillamook Bay, fair in Nestucca bay and slow in Nehalem. Extreme tides this weekend will make matter worse. Great razor clam tides however this weekend and digging along Seaside beaches should be excellent provided the surf isn't too high to put the clams down. You'll have to bring a lantern however as the best part of the tides will be happening at night.

Coastal systems close to all trout fishing on October 31st. It's catch and release only on streams

north of the Salmon River.

The Guide's Forecast – Much to driftboaters dismay, rivers will be in poor shape for drifting until we come across another good deluge. There is nothing on the radar indicating that will happen anytime soon so it'll be a tidewater show for anglers restricted to driftboats this weekend. And that may not be such a bad option either. The strong incoming tides should bring some good catches to the lower Wilson and Kilchis Rivers and to some extent, the Trask and Tillamook Rivers as well. You can also count on the lower Miami getting some fish as well. It may be the late afternoon tides that bring the fish in but hopefully, they will be willing to bite in the softer outgoing of the following morning for bobber throwers in the lower reaches. It will be the Wilson that offers the best opportunities and the lower stretches from Jimmy Coon's dock to Mackinster's will produce the best results. Fish eggs with shrimp for the best chance at a fresh fish- they should be present and willing to bite close to low slack in these areas.

Sleds targeting chinook in the bay should also experience some good fishing this week although seaweed will likely impede success once again on the beginning part of the incoming tide. As we come into the weekend, there is a good chance that low slack along the jetties may produce some fish before it begins flooding in. Seaweed is typically not an issue as the tides slow down and low slack is traditionally a good bet no matter where in the bay you are fishing. Herring will be the ticket in the lower end of the bay and west channel but spinner trollers will have an advantage as they can whip their rod tips and rid themselves of the seaweed and get back to fishing. Herring trollers don't share the same luxury. I don't know if anyone will want to risk leaving the very consistent high tide bite in the upper end of the West Channel this weekend to go see if fish are present at high slack in the upper bay- particularly near the mouth of the Wilson River where the tug boat used to be. It has produced nicely in years past but this is when the West Channel hasn't been producing as well as it is this year. We may be culling out the biters before they ever reach the upper bay given the number of fish that are being taken in this section of the bay this year.

The Nehalem is what most would call a big bust this year. If it is going to produce any results, it better do so quickly. It may be a wash in this watershed this season.

The Nestucca River is still alive but most of the fish holding low in the system have moved up on the recent rain. The large tide exchange will likely push fish past the lower tidewater favorites like the Guard Rail Hole and Boat Ramp Hole but Woods may be a good option for fresh fish considering water levels will stabilize following the current drop. It will be challenging to take consistent numbers here this week.

For shellfish, it'll be a clam show but remember, area beaches remain closed to mussel harvest so be sure to call the phone number for Oregon Agriculture before heading out for a dig: 1-800-448-2474.

Central & South Coast Reports – A few Chinook and coho are being taken out of Winchester Bay but it has been slow. Crabbing has improved recently but tides this weekend won't be conducive for this activity. Chinook are scattered throughout the mainstem Umpqua and while numbers are low, they will continue to improve as fresh fish enter. With water temperatures dropping, catches of smallmouth bass are winding down. Steelhead fishing is very slow on the North Umpqua. The South Umpqua is closed until December 1st.

Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944) reports on the Florence area, "Fresh chinook are still showing up in tidewater, but the bite above Mapleton has slowed. Trollers are still picking up fish from Cushman all the way to Mapleton.

"Silvers are starting to show in the state's only wild coho fishery on Siltcoos and Tahkenitch lakes, south of Florence. Troll wiggle warts, hot shots and spinners for best results."

Chinook anglers on the Elk and Sixes were enjoying good catches in excellent water conditions earlier this week, but that changed more rapidly than anticipated. These small rivers dropped and cleared quickly, shutting down the fishery.

Chinook action on the Coos River has continued to slow with many darker fish present although coho catches have improved. The Chinook run on the Coquille is winding down.

The recent deluge brought the Chinook and coho fishery to a close on the Rogue estuary as torrents of water caused salmon to run upriver. Lower river conditions will improve this week making steelheading a possibility. Steelheading on the middle Rogue is slow to fair. Chinook may be taken from Whiskey Creek to Hog Creek Boat Landing but is closed to Chinook fishing above Hog Creek. Steelheading in the upper Rogue is slow.

The Chetco was very productive following the rainfall and was delivering good catches of Chinook. With water receding, fishing has slowed dramatically. Backbouncing eggs in the lower river will be about the only chance for a hookup until the next round of precipitation.

Dave Pitts, Field Editor Salmon for Trout and Steelhead reports, "North Coast California Rivers and Southern Oregon Rivers sky rocketed last week as two big storms slammed into the Coast dumping more than 4 inches of rain in less than a 24 hour period. The Chetco swelled from less than 800 cfs to more than 36,000 cfs.

"This huge water volume flushed out all of these stalled rivers giving them a good cleaning, less than 46 hours later the Chetco was fishable, great color and flow. Anglers should take a hard look at the Chetco and Smith.

"Brookings salmon anglers Stan Easley and Duayne McKinney of pro fishing's Team Shred says the most recent instantaneous value: 4,430 cfs is fishable. The magic numbers to watch for are 4,000 cfs and depending where you're fishing 2,000 and as low as 1800 cfs.

"The Chetco depending on the clarity has fished fair at 5,500 cfs.

"Anglers get those sardine wraps Sting Fish and Kwik Fish ready, the Kings are coming.

"The day before the last huge storm salmon were observed rolling at Loeb State Park which might be a good indicator that fish are throughout the system.

"Speaking with several commercial fisherman they stated before the storm salmon and a vast food source of bait fish were throughout the Pelican bay of Brookings, with the big sea's we had of some 18' to 22' feet crashing at the mouth of the Chetco if is a guess that the majority of kings weathered the storm in deep water rather than to burn energy fighting the swells and currents of the ocean and sea.

"Now that the storm has passed the mouth of the Chetco is stable and the flow is up I would bet Chinook are trickling into the Chetco as you read this report.

"Anglers targeting the Chetco should plan on one of two runs; the first would be the shorter Loeb to Social Security take out the longer would be from Redwood or Nook to Loeb or push on down

to Social Security.

"Bill wraps or body wrap your plugs, in fact two other methods go over looked as well, Large Spin N Glows with either a chunk of Sardine or roe or a plug cut herring depending on the area of the river, countless kings were taken on this method last season the spinner bait rig of the Rogue river is another one to look at. Both the Chetco and Smith are short coast rivers , these fish are still tasting the salt why wouldn't they eat.

"Note: If you're working a slot and kings are swirling 50 or more yards in front of you, do not pull up and push down on these fish, leave your plugs in and continue to work it slow, if you pull up they will shoot up past you. And you will miss them.

"Far too many anglers concern themselves with being first one on the river, the first to the slot, nothing could be further from the truth, let boats go ahead of you, simply watch where guides and other anglers work, work your boat to the side of that area, fish will push out to the sides and hold just remember:

""Always think like a Fish No Matter How Weird it gets""

Central and Eastern Oregon – Water and flow had increased somewhat on the Deschutes Wednesday this week. Steelhead are holding in softer current.

Odell produced Mackinaw on the troll over the past weekend.

Northwest Trout – Most tidewater, many lakes and those streams which are currently open will close to trout fishing at the end of the month. Take advantage of dry weather this week to pursue trout in these waters.

Trout fishing is good at Detroit where rainbows have been planted over the past few weeks. Boaters should be aware that with the reservoir low, only the Mongold Ramp is useable.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report - October 17 - 30, 2007

North Puget Sound

Anglers fishing several of the region's rivers and streams have had success catching **coho salmon** the past couple weeks. Meanwhile, in the marine areas - where the coho catch has tapered off - anglers are starting to find some **chum salmon** and will soon have more opportunities to hook **blackmouth**.

But until those saltwater fisheries start to pick up, anglers might want to focus on the freshwater. One hot spot has been the Cascade River, where anglers are finding some nice **silvers**, said Brett Barkdull, WDFW fish biologist. "Recent rains have increased the flow and added color to the river, and that usually makes for good fishing on the Cascade," he said.

But recent rains have made for spotty fishing on the Skagit River, said Barkdull. "The Skagit is usually at its best when flows are low and the water is clear, but some anglers who know the river have been doing really well," he said. "It's certainly not a slam dunk, though."

Anglers fishing the Skagit River have a daily limit of two salmon, but must release chinook and pink. Those fishing the Cascade, have a daily limit of four coho only.

Anglers also have reported hooking some nice-size silvers on the Snohomish River, as well as portions of the Skykomish and Stillaguamish rivers.

In the marine areas, anglers are turning their attention to **blackmouth** and chum salmon, said Steve Thiesfeld, another fish biologist with WDFW. Blackmouth fishing just got under way in Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), where anglers are allowed to keep one chinook as part of two-salmon daily limit. And, beginning Nov. 1, anglers will have an opportunity to catch chinook in Marine Area 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and hook hatchery chinook - chinook with a clipped adipose fin - in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner).

Thiesfeld reminds anglers that only a couple weeks remain to fish for salmon in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands). Salmon retention will close in that area Nov. 1.

Meanwhile, **chum salmon** are starting to show up in catches throughout the region. "There have been some scattered reports of chum being caught in Puget Sound," said Thiesfeld, who recommends trolling slow and using a flasher with a green coyote spoon, or a green, purple or pink mini hoochie. "The chum fishery should start to pick up in the next week or so."

Elsewhere, Lake Sammamish remains open for salmon through November. Anglers on the lake have a daily limit of two salmon measuring at least 12 inches. All sockeye must be released, and salmon fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek. Only a couple of weeks remain in the Lake Washington salmon fishery, which wraps up at the end of October. Before the fishery closes, anglers are allowed two coho per day (minimum size 12 inches) from waters north of the Highway 520 Bridge and east of the Montlake Bridge.

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

Salmon anglers are making the transition from **coho** to **blackmouth**, as more waters open to chum fishing around the region. Meanwhile, the first scheduled **razor-clam** dig of the fall season is drawing near. Digging will get under way Thursday, Oct. 25 if marine toxin tests show the clams are safe to eat.

Four evening **razor-clam** digs are tentatively scheduled at Twin Harbors Oct. 25-28, while two evening digs are scheduled Oct. 26 and 27 at Long Beach, Copalis and Mocrocks. Kalaloch Beach in Olympic National Park will be closed for the season due to a low abundance of razor clams. Scheduling extra days for Twin Harbors was based on results of the annual razor clam stock assessment, said Dan Ayres, coastal shellfish manager for WDFW. "Razor clam populations declined at Long Beach, Mocrocks and Kalaloch, but increased on the middle coast," Ayres said. "That means we can offer more digging opportunities at Twin Harbors and Copalis during the 2007-08 season."

The best time to start digging is an hour or two before low tide, said Ayres, adding that no digging will be allowed before noon. He also recommends taking a lantern for evening digs at all beaches.

Harvesters are allowed to take no more than 15 razor clams and must keep the first 15 they dig, regardless of size or condition. Each digger's clams must be kept in a separate container. A license is required for anyone age 15 or older. Any 2007 annual shellfish/seaweed license or combination license is still valid. Another option is a razor-clam only license available in annual or three-day only versions. Descriptions of the various licensing options are available on the WDFW website at <https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov>. Clam diggers are no longer required to display their licenses on outer clothing.

Tentative opening dates and evening low tides are:

- Thursday, Oct. 25 (6:38 p.m. -1.1) Twin Harbors only
- Friday, Oct. 26 (7:26 p.m. -1.7) all beaches (except Kalaloch)
- Saturday, Oct. 27 (8:14 p.m. -1.9) all beaches (except Kalaloch)
- Sunday, Oct. 28 (9:03 p.m. -1.8) Twin Harbors only

More digs are tentatively scheduled Nov. 23-26 and Dec. 21-23.

Anglers looking for salmon opportunities should get their rods ready for **chum** and **blackmouth**, as the coho season tails off in most marine areas, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "Anglers have some choices during this transition period," he said. "The fishing's been pretty good out of Port Angeles where folks still have some time to catch **coho**." When the salmon season ends Oct. 31 in Marine Area 6, a new **blackmouth** fishery starts Nov. 1 in Marine Area 5 (Sekiu).

In South Puget Sound, anglers have had some success catching blackmouth, Thiesfeld said. On the Oct. 13-14 weekend, anglers fishing near the Point Defiance Boathouse and the Narrows Ramp in Marine Area 11 averaged about one fish per rod.

As for **chum**, Thiesfeld recommends Kennedy Creek in Thurston County and the waters around Hoodspout in Hood Canal, which opened for chum and blackmouth retention Oct. 16. In addition, the Skokomish River just south of Hoodspout has been kicking out chum and coho, he said. On Nov. 1 the Dosewallips and Duckabush Rivers in Jefferson County, and Minter Creek in Pierce/Kitsap counties will also open for chum retention.

More area rivers also opened for fall fishing Oct. 16. A portion of the Dungeness River in Clallam County is open for **trout** and **coho** only. A section of the Hoh River from Willoughby Creek to Morgan's Crossing boat launch is also open for salmon fishing and, in Pacific County, anglers can fish for salmon in the Willapa River from the Highway 6 Bridge to Fork Creek. Anglers are advised to check WDFW's 2006/2007 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for details before fishing these waters.

For those heading to the coast, Westport is hosting its annual **Boat Basin Salmon Derby**, which runs seven days a week until Oct. 31. For a \$5 derby ticket, anglers can fish for chinook and coho from marina docks anywhere in the Westport boat basin. Successful anglers can win \$300 for the largest chinook and \$500 for coho, plus other prizes. All fish must be caught during daylight hours and validated with a derby ticket at the official weigh station at the marina between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. For more information, visit <http://www.anglercharters.net/>. In a few weeks, trout anglers looking for some late-season action should head to Black Lake in Thurston County where 3,500 one-pound rainbows will be stocked before the first weekend in November, said Larry Phillips, WDFW fish biologist. "Last year was the first time we offered this opportunity," Phillips said. "The goal is to provide some early-winter trout fishing in Thurston County after other lowland lakes close for the season." Other year-round lakes with good fishing in Thurston County include Offut, St. Clair and Lawrence, Phillips said.

Southwest Washington:

One in three boat anglers fishing right below Bonneville Dam has been taking home legal-size **white sturgeon** in recent days and bank anglers are also catching their share of keepers. Meanwhile, late-run **hatchery coho** salmon are moving up the Columbia River and several tributaries in increasing numbers as the run nears its peak.

"Late-run coho are moving in right on schedule," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist stationed in Vancouver. "These are nice, bright fish, promising good fishing in the days ahead." One good sign is that coho counts at Bonneville Dam had jumped to more than 1,000 fish per day by mid-October, he said. Another is that nearly 4,400 adult coho returned to the Cowlitz River Salmon Hatchery the previous week.

Bank anglers fishing the Cowlitz River near the Barrier Dam averaged nearly a coho per rod (counting fish released) during the week ending Oct. 14. Under the "bonus" bag limit now in effect on the Cowlitz, anglers may retain up to six hatchery adult coho a day but must release any chinook salmon, wild coho or any other salmon they encounter.

Anglers have also been catching hatchery coho in the Lewis and Kalama rivers, where the daily limit is four adult coho. The Elochoman and Washougal rivers are two other options with a daily limit of two hatchery adult coho per day.

Of the fish returning to the Cowlitz Hatchery, 853 adult coho and 253 coho jacks were released into Riffe Lake at the Taidnapam North boat launch. Tacoma Power employees released another 381 adult coho into Lake Scanewa at the Day Use Site, and 74 adult coho - plus 56 fall chinook jacks - into the Tilton River at Gust Backstrom Park in Morton.

On the mainstem Columbia, 60 anglers surveyed below Bonneville Dam had caught seven adult chinook and seven hatchery coho during the week ending Oct. 14. By permanent rule, waters from Beacon Rock upstream to Bonneville Dam will close to all salmon fishing beginning Nov. 1. Above the dam, 83 anglers fishing the Bonneville Pool had six **chinook** and 11 coho - most caught near the mouth of the Klickitat River. Bank anglers have been pulling a few fall chinook out of the Klickitat, itself, although all chinook must be released 400 feet upstream from the No. 5 fishway to the boundary markers below the salmon hatchery starting Nov. 1. Anglers have also been catching some coho on the White Salmon River, although effort there and at Drano Lake has been light.

But for **sturgeon**, the area just below Bonneville Dam is still the place to be. During creel surveys in mid-October, 436 bank anglers reported catching 70 legal-size fish and releasing three others. The 29 boat anglers fishing the same area had caught 11 keepers, measuring 42-60 inches. Boat anglers have also been catching some legal-size sturgeon between Kalama and Camas/Washougal - the latter also yielding an average of one **walleye** per rod.

Angling for some **trout**? Battle Ground Lake was planted with 792 rainbow averaging 1.5 pounds apiece - plus 528 others weighing 2.5 pounds each - on Oct. 5. Hymer also suggests fishing for sea-run cutthroat trout on the Cowlitz River near the trout hatchery. "They're aggressive, and they bite on flies, lures or bait," he said. Most average 12-14 inches, with a limit of five hatchery fish per day.

Eastern Washington:

Snake River **steelheading** in southeast Washington continues to be good, with the best catch rates above the Interstate bridge near Clarkston. That's where anglers are catching steelhead with every six hours or so of effort, and keeping a hatchery fish about every eight hours. Anglers on the Wallula section, from the Oregon state line to the mouth of the Walla Walla River, have

been averaging between 17 and 18 hours per steelhead caught. The most recent complete creel surveys are available on the Eastern region webpage at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/snake/index.htm>.

Glen Mendel, WDFW southeast district fish biologist, said two of the Tucannon River impoundments recently received surplus hatchery **rainbow trout**. Blue Lake and Spring Lake in Columbia County received 190 catchable-sized rainbows. "These fish were about eight inches and we hope anglers will target them before these lakes close to fishing on Oct. 31," Mendel said. Many other **trout**-stocked fishing lakes in the region also close Oct. 31, including Ferry County's Davis, Ellen, and Swan; Stevens County's Bayley, Black, Cedar, Deep, Deer, Jump-Off-Joe, Little Pend Oreille chain of lakes, Loon, McDowell, Mudget, Rocky, and Starvation; Pend Oreille County's Browns, Crescent, Davis, Diamond, Frater, Halfmoon, Horseshoe, Leo, Marshall, Mystic, Nile, No-Name, Petit, Sacheen, Skookum and Yokum; and Spokane County's Chapman and Clear lakes. Curt Vail, WDFW northeast district fish biologist, said some of the best fishing can be found at this time of year in these waters.

North Central Washington:

Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist, said **steelhead** fishing on the mainstem Columbia River above Wells Dam, including the Okanogan and Methow rivers, has been good. "Anglers are averaging a steelhead every eight to 10 hours of effort," he said. "Dark patterns seem to be working the best for both fly anglers and jig and bobber fishers."

Jateff reminds anglers that selective gear rules are in effect for both the Okanogan and Methow rivers, and some areas are closed to all fishing. Steelheaders are encouraged to retain adipose fin-clipped steelhead in order to allow a higher percentage of natural-origin steelhead on the spawning grounds. Steelhead with adipose fins must not be removed from the water when released.

Selective gear lowland **trout** lakes in Okanogan County, such as Big Twin near Winthrop and Blue on the Sinlahekin, will close to fishing at the end of October.

"Now is a good time to fish these lakes because the angling pressure is usually light and the fishing can be very good," Jateff said. "Blue Lake has both browns and rainbows from 12 to 20 inches and Big Twin has rainbows from 10 to 18 inches."

Jameson Lake in Douglas County continues to provide good fishing for nine- to 10-inch rainbows, with carryover fish up to 14 inches. Jameson also will close to all fishing on Oct. 31.

South Central Washington:

Paul Hoffarth, WDFW fish biologist, said that despite relatively low numbers of **fall chinook salmon** returning to the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River this year, fishing has been good. "Effort has been down from last year, but harvest is currently 10 percent above last year at this time," Hoffarth said.

The fall chinook fishery in the Hanford Reach (wooden powerline towers to Priest Rapids Dam) closes Oct. 22. It remains open from McNary Dam upstream to the wooden powerline towers through Dec. 31, but Hoffarth said few chinook are caught after Oct. 31.

Yakima River fall chinook salmon angler activity recently picked up. Hoffarth said that creel crews interviewed 218 anglers the week of Oct. 8-14, which represents about 22 percent of the angling effort. An estimated 82 adult chinook, 87 jacks, and eight coho were harvested. As of Oct. 14, a total of 186 adult chinook, 161 jacks, and eight coho had been harvested. Anglers averaged 11 hours per fish caught.

The fall chinook fishery in the lower Yakima River will remain open through Oct. 22. Hoffarth said the majority of the fall chinook return to the Yakima River in mid-October as water temperatures begin to cool.

The Ringold area of the Columbia River is open for **hatchery steelhead**. The area open is from the Highway 395 bridge at Pasco/Kennewick upstream to the wooden powerline towers at the old Hanford town site. Steelhead must have both the adipose and ventral fin clipped to be retained during the month of October. Beginning Nov.1 and through March 31, 2008, any hatchery steelhead can be retained.

"Steelhead fishing has been improving in the mid-Columbia and Snake rivers," Hoffarth said. "Most anglers are using a bobber and shrimp combination or trolling wiggle warts. Fall fishing for **walleye** can be terrific. The Columbia River below McNary Dam regularly produces good catches of walleye in October."

Eric Anderson, WDFW fish biologist, reminds trout anglers that many catchable-size **trout** are planted in Yakima and Kittitas county year-round lakes in the fall.

"Although these fish are smaller than our spring planted trout, they still provide good angling opportunity in our year-round lakes," Anderson said.

Reader Email -

Reader Bill F. wrote to ask, "I am a day sleeper due to work. I am interested in fishing on the Oregon north coast during the up coming full moon. I was looking to try our luck catching surf perch. Most articles seem to lean toward daytime fishing for salmon. What can you tell me about night fishing for surf perch on the north coast ?"

TGF co-editor Michael Teague replied, "Night fishing can be excellent - far better than by day, actually. While I've not heard of anyone surf fishing at night, however, it may be worth a try.

The most common surf rig is with a weight at the end of your line and pyramid sinkers are most often used as these help to hold in the sand. Often, two hooks are tied on the mainline although some perch fishers will buy pre-tied crappie rigs which are well suited to the purpose once the hooks are replaced. Those inexpensive, smelted hooks which come six to a package would also be fine. Your target quarry, striped or pinkfin surf perch, have a large mouth so a #1 or #2 hook will work well.

Sand shrimp are probably the best bait, but easy to cast off and the fish, which hit lightning fast, can steal baits. Alternates which will also catch fish include mussels, clams, bloodworms and even nightcrawlers.

It's best to investigate a beach during low tide to find a deeper depression or steeper beach where perch will most likely be found. Remember, too, that the highest tides will be during the full moon so plan accordingly.

Most commonly, night fishing is done off rocks and jetties for rockfish. It's possible to catch a limit and the fish will generally run larger than those taken during the day. The bait rig, above can be used (with a bank singer rather than a pyramid) but rockfish will also readily hit lures.

Get some 1/4 to 1 ounces jig heads (depending on depth and current) and curly-tail grubs three to five inches in length. Fish-body soft plastics are also used effectively. The goal is to keep the

jig setup working just above but very near the rocks. Be sure to take a lantern and watch your step. Felt-soled wading shoes will help with traction.

Whichever type of fishing you choose, the incoming tide will be most productive.

I hope this helps to get you started. If you have any other questions, let me know and be sure to share 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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Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Arlington angler reels in record-breaking pink salmon (with links to photos):

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/do/newreal/release.php?id=oct2307a>

Sandy River coffer dam breach (with links to video):

http://www.marmotdam.com/video8_files/marmot_dam_coffer_breach.html

Weekly Quote – "The years will bring their Anodyne, But I shall never quite forget. The fish that I had counted mine And lost before they reached the net." - Colin Ellis

GOOD LUCK!