

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 18th – July 24th 2008**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Look ahead to the Buoy 10 fishing in the lower Columbia River. Prepare yourself for this fishery by learning all you can about it. Log onto our technical report page at: <http://www.theguidesforecast.com/techrpt.shtml> and order the tech reports that will benefit your outing, today!

Willamette Valley/Metro- Summer steelhead dam counts are tracking well ahead of prediction causing excitement for tributary fisheries upstream of Bonneville Dam. Although most fish are destined for upriver systems, steelhead will often seek a cold water refuge such as the Deschutes River in the warming flows of the Columbia.

Beach anglers downstream of Bonneville should take advantage of good morning tides for shore-hugging summer steelhead. Sauvie's Island, on the river side, will offer up good opportunities this weekend.

Sturgeon anglers in the Columbia River Gorge continue to find success for oversized fish. Although shad are still present in the Columbia, some anglers are depending on the Willamette for fresh bait to target the behemoths.

Water in the lower Willamette has reached 70 degrees with the warm weather this week. Summer steelhead counts at Willamette Falls have dropped to double digits. Sturgeon fishing is slow and the shad run is about over.

Trout fishing on the McKenzie is fair to good. Steelhead are entering with a few being taken at first and last light.

Plenty of trout but few steelhead are being hooked on the North Santiam although water levels are fishable.

Clackamas flows are moderating with most of the snow upstream having melted. It should remain in decent shape until the fall rains. Spring chinook are around and summer steelhead are scattered from McIver down to Carver.

The Sandy is high but gradually dropping and has cleared. Summer steelhead are being caught as well as an occasional springer.

On the trout planting schedule this week are Faraday Lake, Harriet Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Detroit Reservoir, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Quartsville Creek, Salt Creek, North Fork Santiam River above Detroit and Trail Bridge Reservoir.

Northwest – Although several easy limits were taken in the Columbia River estuary over last weeks re-opener, by Saturday, weak tides slackened flows causing catch rates to slow. Good action was had by anglers both upstream and downstream of Tongue Point. Better tides for the next 3-day opener, today through Saturday, should bode well for fast action.

Although catch rates are on the increase, significant wind waves kept most ocean salmon fishers in port for most of last week. The ocean forecast calls for continued west winds into the

weekend, making for uncomfortable fishing conditions for the foreseeable future.

Although Tillamook district spring salmon fishing is on the decline, effort usually begins to ramp up for a Nehalem Bay summer chinook run this time of year. Wheeler is the likely spot to intercept these fish but in recent years, the action has been slow. It's likely to be another challenging year but trolled herring on the bottom often draws the most strikes.

Cutthroat trout are providing excellent sport on most coastal systems. Check regulations before heading out to your favorite stream system as north coast streams are catch and release only while some central coast rivers offer a consumptive opportunity.

Southwest – Smallmouth bass fishing is as good as it gets in the mainstem Umpqua around Elkton. The shad run, which was stalled by high water, is about wrapped up for the year. Spring chinook fishing is slowing as summer steelhead action heats up.

Coho fishing has been good out of Winchester Bay but fin-clipped fish are in the minority. Still, most boats are returning to port with a few for the barbecue.

Albacore anglers are still waiting for friendly seas in order to chase the offshore species. The fish are still reported to be offshore more than 50 miles.

Upper Rogue steelheaders have been making fair to good catches of a mix of wild and hatchery steelhead. Trollers in the bay are experiencing slow to fair chinook fishing.

Brookings anglers have scored good catches of coho and bottomfish over the past week whenever they could get out. Surf perch fishing remains great and the fish are large.

Most rivers and bays in Southwest Oregon open for chinook of wild or hatchery origin on August 1st. Exceptions are the lower Rogue up to Elephant Rock where wild chinook retention started July 12th and the Chetco which opens the 1st of November.

Fish Lake and Section 5 of the Rogue River are scheduled to be stocked with trout.

Eastern – The Deschutes is running a little high but has dropped a bit over the past week and, while early, is producing a fair summer steelhead bite. Several wildfires have occurred on the lower river over the past week.

The John Day is at a good level and flows for fishing are producing decent catches of smallmouth bass.

SW Washington – Although action has slowed from previous weeks, summer steelhead are still hitting well on the Cowlitz and North Fork Lewis Rivers. The action should remain consistent into August.

The Klickitat River is another viable summer steelhead option but river conditions are largely dictated by snowmelt from the Washington Cascades. Check flows before departing.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Although not the highlight of the Columbia, oversize sturgeon fishing remains good in the Columbia River Gorge. Fresh shad are increasingly harder to find and floater shad seemed to have fallen victim to dam operational changes and are seldom seem anymore. Some guides are getting their bait from the Willamette River and that is getting challenging as well.

Some of the best steelheading took place in the gorge over the weekend and although anglers had high interaction with fish, they weren't able to take many home. The check in the gorge was one jack Chinook and six adipose fin-clipped summer steelhead kept, plus six Chinook and 22 unclipped steelhead released for 11 boats. Most boats were taking fish on spinners in 6 to 12 feet of water.

Downstream anglers fared poorly which is not a surprise since the tides were so poor. Only a few fish were caught below the Longview Bridge.

The highlight was clearly the 3-day opener for sturgeon many boats participated in late last week. Catches were impressive on the opener but tapered with the effort and tides by Saturday. For the 2 days that I fished above Tongue Point, we landed 17 keepers and numerous shorts. All the fish we took were on sand shrimp in water shallower than 8 feet. Effort was lighter above Tongue Point and although catches were great on the opener out of Hammond, success quickly dipped by Friday with many anglers finding it hard to effectively fish with such poor flow due to weak tides.

Ocean effort has been light until mid-week when the wind waves finally subsided to a more comfortable stage. There were still anglers going out and the catch rate stayed virtually the same with close to .7 fish (a mix of both coho and chinook) per angler. More recently, anglers fishing on Wednesday found good fishing south of the CR Buoy with a mix of wild and hatchery coho to the boat. It's really just a matter of friendly seas, the fish are there. As of July 13th, about 21% of the quota has been gobbled up.

The Guide's Forecast – The gorge fishery should stay somewhat stable although success will largely be based on the availability of fresh shad for bait. Fresh shad is more critical than before because floater shad seem to be a thing of the past.

The big ticket item will be the second opener for estuary sturgeon retention. Beginning the 17th and running through Saturday, action should be good for keepers and shakers. Water temperatures are good, tides are good and the fish have had a 4-day break from exercising. Sand shrimp above Tongue Point and anchovies below, and in the deeper water should produce good results. If recent history repeats itself, action seems to slow by the weekend although tides this weekend are far better than last. Afternoon winds will again be a problem this week so bring your raingear if you plan on staying out late. It'll be a bumpy, wet ride home. This should be a great weekend for sturgeon in the estuary!

If you're headed to big blue in search of salmon, the fishing should be good when the weather cooperates. Be careful of the morning outgoing tide as it could be a rough bar when coupled up with the predicted NW swell. Troll herring shallow in the early morning and down deeper as the day progresses. Some anglers are reporting good success on hardware. Ocean forecast says.....

FRI

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT...RISING TO 20 TO 25 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 2 FT...BUILDING TO 5 FT IN THE AFTERNOON. NW SWELL 6 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF DRIZZLE IN THE MORNING.

FRI NIGHT

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT. PATCHY FOG AFTER MIDNIGHT.

SAT

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT WITH GUSTS TO 30 KT. WIND WAVES 6 FT.
NW SWELL 6 FT. PATCHY FOG IN THE MORNING.

SAT NIGHT

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT WITH GUSTS TO 30 KT. WIND WAVES
6 FT...SUBSIDING TO 4 FT AFTER MIDNIGHT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

SUN

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

MON

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

Summer steelhead plunking should be a priority for bank fishers this weekend. Tides are ripe for great fishing and the dam counts just keep going up and up! Find a strategic beach front to set up on and get your red, pink or orange spin-n-glos fishing. The stronger the tide, the closer to the beach the fish will be running. Don't be afraid to fish in 3 or 4 foot of water! Beaches from Sauvie Island to Westport and island beaches in between should all produce fair to good results.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Sturgeon fishing is slow to fair in the warm water of the lower Willamette and remains open for retention of keeper-sized fish Thursdays through Saturdays. Very few shad are being taken with the run about over.

The North Santiam is still unseasonably high but has gradually been dropping. Water conditions on the South Santiam are much better.

Fly anglers rule on the McKenzie River and the summer season is in full swing now with caddis flies actively hatching. The gauge at Vida indicates that water flow is half of what it was a month ago. It is still gradually moderating with the water temperature remaining in the low to mid 50-degree range. The upper McKenzie has been productive for reddsides too 20 inches.

The Guide's Forecast – Pickled or fresh squid has been getting bit by sturgeon in the lower Willamette. If you must try for shad with so few around, try near the bank at the Garbage Hole or around the mouth of the Clackamas.

Recycling of another 250 summer steelhead from the trap at Foster Dam on the South Santiam Wednesday this week brought the total of second-chance fish trucked downstream this year to nearly 3,100. Fishing has been fair for the most part, good at times, best at first light.

Whatever technique is employed, wild trout must be released on the McKenzie but hatchery trout are abundant and with the river in great condition, anglers may expect a productive weekend. Summer steelhead are still entering and prospects for a hookup are fair to good here. Fish early or late in the day for the best results.

The Molalla River, the only upper Willamette tributary open to Chinook, has produced some springers recently

Steelheading has picked up recently on the South Santiam and should be a productive destination.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Clackamas level have continued to drop - about six inches lower at Estacada over the past week - and with most of the snowmelt gone now, should remain on the mend from high-water conditions. The gauge reading about mid-day Thursday, July 17th was 11.7 feet. The most productive drift this weekend is expected to be from McIver to Barton but expect plenty of company from the happy-splashers and swimmers closer to the mouth. As the ODFW phrased it, "Angling on the lower river has been slow with the recreational raft hatch usually starting about 11 a.m" Spring Chinook are entering Cedar Creek but are of mixed quality.

While the Sandy River remains high, it'd been gradually dropping and producing some summer steelhead and a surprising number of spring Chinook. Concentrate on water that allows fish to hold but also has a decent oxygen level. Mornings have been most productive for anglers and the best fishing has been below Cedar Creek.

North Coast Fishing Report – With a rough ocean for most of the week, there isn't much to report here. Even if the ocean was more friendly, the action remains poor out of Garibaldi. Catch rates are still low for salmon and anglers targeting tuna are getting some but you have to venture 70 miles offshore to find the right water. Maybe it's a September show this year?

Summer steelhead and spring chinook remain an option but salmon are quickly turning and summer steelhead are quite wary in the low, clear water conditions of the coastal systems right now. It's an early morning show but use small baits in the fast riffles or bobbers and jigs in the deep, slow holes.

Anglers have yet to get excited about Nehalem River chinook. Effort is low, likely due to the recent catches of years past. It's been quite poor the last few years but we'll keep reporting on this once great summer chinook fishery.

Cutthroat action is great but you have to enjoy catch and release opportunities.

The Guide's Forecast – Don't look for any reprieve from the current conditions. The ocean is forecasted to remain rough and rivers low and clear. Clamming may be your best option in Tillamook County this weekend.

Bobber fishermen may find a rare quality spring chinook in tidewater this weekend.

Sturgeon anglers begin to see some action in the Tillamook River tidewater. There should be some fish available in the estuary as well. Juvenile crabs may be an ongoing issue however.

Central & South Coast Reports – Siletz steelheaders have been catching a few hatchery summers. Concentrate efforts at tailouts for best results.

The last spring offshore halibut opener will be July 24th through the 28th with the summer all-depth season opening August 1st. If any poundage remains uncaught in the spring quota, it will be rolled into the summer fishery which is scheduled to run through October 26th if anglers don't fill the 212,769 pound quota.

Anglers may fish the summer all-depth fishery every week on Fridays, Saturday and Sundays through October 26th or fulfillment of the quota.

While tuna are within range of well-equipped recreational anglers, effort and catches have been

light with winds kicking up offshore recently. When conditions moderate, boats will find big albacore about 40 to 60 miles west of Newport.

Crabbing has been fair and improving in Yaquina and Alsea bays. Herring jigging has been good in the bay out of Newport.

Summer steelheading will call for seasonal techniques with water levels down and fish hunkering down in deeper spots in the rivers. This means the better opportunities will be fishing tailouts at first and last light and scaling down leaders, baits and lures. Prospects are good.

Following lackluster results for shad action on the mainstem Umpqua due to high water this year, local anglers report the run to be nearly over. On the other hand, as warmer water temperatures draw the curtain on spring Chinook, anglers are steelheading successfully and smallmouth bass fishers are finding hundreds

of willing opponents. A few springers are being taken and summer steelheading is improving on the North Umpqua. Crabbing in Winchester Bay has improved and perch fishing has been worthwhile inside the bay.

Surf perch, which are live bearers, are being caught in Coos Bay now. The pinkfin and striped perch will head back into the ocean once they bear their young which should occur in the next week or two.

Bass anglers at Tenmile Lakes have been having good results for largemouth on topwater lures early and late in the day as summertime patterns emerge.

Coos bay sturgeon fishers have been doing well around the Highway 101 Bridge and perch fishing has been worthwhile in the bay.

As the fall Chinook season gets underway in Rogue Bay, trollers are finding a few fish but the guides are fairing better than recreational anglers fishing on their own, but overall, action is on the upswing this week. Pressure is light as most anglers are waiting to try for salmon in the estuary until catches further improve. A strong run of extra-large Chinook is expected for the 2008 season. The Grants Pass stretch has been slow. Springers and summer steelhead are being caught on the upper Rogue but fishing is only fair.

Windy conditions will keep boaters off the ocean in the Brookings area into the weekend if forecasts hold true. Anglers are anxious to get out for the excellent bottom fishing available. Five-fish limits have been

the rule with the 20-fathom restriction having no effect on anglers here who are enjoying hot and heavy action for rockfish whenever they can get out. Coho fishing has also been good out of Brookings Harbor with about 60% of those trying taking a hatchery fish averaging eight pounds and releasing many natives and a few Chinook in the process. About two thirds of the coho quota remains to be taken but conditions this week are likely to prevent anglers from making any kind of dent in it. Perch fishing at has been producing large pinkfin and striped perch averaging two pounds.

Although sea-run cutthroat are still available in tidewater on the Chetco, many of them have entered fresh water with the best fishing on the upper river. Only artificial flies and lures may be used above tidewater.

Diamond Lake continues to fish well, producing jumbo trout to Power-Baiters. In addition, fly

anglers have an opportunity to score here with Callibaetis actively hatching. Go get 'em.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Now that White River has cleared and the water level is down, conditions at the Deschutes are prime for steelheading on the lower river and, while early, several fish have been taken this week. Summers have been entering and results will be best near the mouth. Concentrate on the lower 20 miles for the best results. Fly anglers and lure fishers both stand a chance at a hookup and while most of the action catch-and-release for wild fish early in the run,

it will only get better as the season progresses and the percentage of hatchery fish improves. Trout anglers can expect to see caddis hatching at this time of year as well as Stones and May Flies.

The John Day remains in good shape and offers excellent smallmouth bass fishing as well as some pretty good prospects for channel cats.

Fishing for kokanee is good at Crescent, Paulina and Odell. Green Peter kokanee fishing is only fair but has recently shown signs of improvement.

Timothy Lake is putting out trout limits to anglers using Power Bait.

Northwest Trout – About 600 one-pound-plus trout will once again be planted in Alton Baker Park Canal today, July 17th. The McKenzie River upstream of Leaburg Lake will be stocked with 7,750 fin-clipped rainbow trout and 500 trout will be planted in Salt Creek near Oakridge. Trail Bridge Reservoir is to be planted with 2,000 trout this week, and Leaburg Lake is scheduled to receive 1,500.

Detroit Reservoir is providing good fishing to anglers using Power Bait all morning long.

There will be little stocking conducted in the Willamette Valley for the remainder of the summer season with water getting too warm to sustain trout.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report July 9th – June 22nd

North Puget Sound

With summer's arrival, anglers have their pick of a number of fishing opportunities throughout the region. **Crab** and **chinook** fisheries are under way in Puget Sound, with additional salmon openings around the corner. And in the rivers, anglers can cast for chinook, as well as **sockeye** and **steelhead**.

On the Skagit, salmon fishing had been "fair to good," but recent heavy flows knocked the river out of shape, said Brett Barkdull, WDFW fish biologist. "Right now the Skagit is still a bit high but it is fishable," he said, adding that the Cascade River is very fishable.

The Skagit River is open for hatchery chinook retention from the Highway 530 bridge at Rockport to the Cascade River. On the Cascade, anglers can fish from the mouth of the river to the Rockport-Cascade Road Bridge. Both stretches are open through July 15.

Anglers fishing the Skagit and Cascade rivers have a daily limit of four hatchery chinook, two of which may be adults (chinook salmon at least 24 inches in length). Barkdull reminds anglers that statewide rules require anglers to stop fishing for salmon once they have two adults in their possession.

Recent high water also slowed **sockeye** fisheries on the Skagit and Baker rivers, said Barkdull. "Sockeye are coming in, but fishing has been up and down depending on the flows," he said. Anglers on each river have a daily limit of two sockeye salmon at least 12 inches in length. On the Skagit, the sockeye fishery is open from the Dalles Bridge to 200 feet above the east bank of the Baker River.

The Skagit and Baker are open for sockeye through July 31, except both rivers will be closed from 12:01 a.m. July 9 to 2 p.m. July 11, said Barkdull who suggests checking WDFW's *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) before heading out on the rivers.

Elsewhere, a portion of the Samish River is open, with a daily limit of two salmon. Beginning this year anglers fishing the Samish must follow the stationary gear rule, which requires the line, weight, lure or bait to be moving (not stationary) while in the water. Farther south, anglers on the Skykomish River are finding nice-size chinook and hooking some hatchery **steelhead**.

Out on the saltwater, salmon fishing started strong in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where anglers can keep one chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit. Catch counts on opening day (July 1) in the San Juans indicate 22 anglers at the Bellingham ramp checked seven chinook, while 36 at the Washington Park ramp brought home 13 chinook.

Beginning July 16, anglers will have other options as marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) open for hatchery chinook salmon retention. Anglers in those two areas will be allowed to keep hatchery chinook - marked with a clipped adipose fin - as part of a two salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook. Those fishing Marine Area 9 also must release wild coho and chum salmon, said Steve Thiesfeld, another WDFW fish biologist.

The chinook selective fisheries in marine areas 9 and 10 run through Aug. 15, or until the quota is reached. Thiesfeld reminds anglers that regulations vary for inner Elliott Bay, Sinclair Inlet and public fishing piers in those marine areas. Check the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for more information.

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:

- Look for the adipose fin while playing the fish, and use polarized sunglasses to reduce glare.
- Avoid the use of light tackle and play the fish quickly to reduce exhausting the fish.
- Modify tackle to reduce potential injury to the fish. For example, use circle hooks when mooching and only one hook on hoochies and bucktails.
- Use a de-hooker to remove the hook.
- Cut the leader if the fish has swallowed the hook.
- Avoid touching or handling the fish, especially around the eyes and gills.
- 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.

- 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/>.

Meanwhile, the **crab** fishery is going strong in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner), 9, 10, and the southern portion of 7. Fisheries in those areas - as well as the eastern portion of Marine Area 7, which opens July 16 - 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.

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

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

While **salmon** fishing has been slow in most areas along the coast, catch rates have been decent for anglers fishing along the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Elsewhere in the region, anglers can put a pot down for **crab** in Puget Sound or head to the Olympic Peninsula for **summer steelhead**.

On the coast, the **salmon** fishery got off to a hot start the first few days of July, but it dropped off later in the week, said Wendy Beeghley, WDFW fish biologist.

"Angler effort was highest out of Westport and most people were catching their two-fish daily limit on opening day of the coho season," Beeghley said. "Then success rates started going down mid-week and anglers were averaging about one fish a piece."

This situation is not uncommon on the ocean and while it's somewhat slower now, the fishing could pick up over the next few weeks, Beeghley said.

Success also depends on the weather, she said. "Even though it's sunny and pleasant on land, conditions on the water are often windy, making it tough for people to get out."

Meanwhile, the fishing has been fair off Ilwaco where anglers are catching about one chinook for every two coho. Farther north at La Push and Neah Bay, angler effort has been low and those going out are averaging less than one fish for every two people, Beeghley said.

Coastal fishing for all salmon species opened June 29 in marine areas 1 and 2 (Ilwaco and Westport) and July 1 in marine areas 3 and 4 (La Push and Neah Bay). Ilwaco and Westport are open Sundays through Thursdays; La Push and Neah Bay are open Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Anglers fishing these areas may keep two chinook, two coho or a combination of both as part of their two-fish daily limit. The minimum size for chinook is 24 inches and 16 inches for coho. All wild coho must be released.

On the Strait of Juan de Fuca, creel checks off Sekiu (Marine Area 5) showed 341 anglers catching 103 **chinook** salmon over the July 5 weekend, while 48 anglers fishing off Ediz Hook (Marine Area 6) caught 16 chinook salmon. Also, anglers fishing off Sekiu caught 25 **halibut** over the same weekend. Halibut fishing will remain open in Marine Area 5 through July 21 on Thursdays and Mondays only.

The salmon fisheries in marine areas 5 and 6 are open daily with a two-fish daily limit. All chum, wild chinook, and wild coho west of Ediz Hook must be released; all chum, all chinook and wild coho east of Ediz Hook must be released. Handling rules are in effect.

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 area will have a daily limit of two salmon, but must release all wild chinook. The chinook selective fisheries run through Aug. 15, or until the quota is reached.

"This fishery was very popular last year and we expect it to be good this year," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. Thiesfeld recommended fishing the mid-channel, Point No Point and Jefferson Head. He also advised anglers to get out early before the quota is met.

Anglers are advised to check the 2008-09 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> for more information on regulations and handling rules.

Salmon fishing remains sluggish in Marine Area 11 (Tacoma/Vashon Island), where effort was high over the July 5 weekend but creel checks at the Point Defiance ramp showed 343 anglers catching only 23 **chinook** and six **coho**.

Eight additional recreational **Dungeness crab** areas opened July 2, including marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 7 South (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception pass to East Point), 8-2 (East Point to Possession Point), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 12 (Hood Canal). Those areas are open Wednesdays through Saturdays only, plus Labor Day Weekend, closing the evening of Sept. 1.

Opening week catch results were mixed throughout Puget Sound, said Rich Childers, WDFW shellfish policy coordinator. "Participation was good overall and preliminary reports show that people were catching their limits in eastern and northern Puget Sound while catch rates were lower in southern Puget Sound," Childers said.

Crabbing is also 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, 2009.

Marine Area 7 East (Bellingham and Samish bays) will open for crab July 16 and Marine Area 7 North (Lummi Island/Blaine) will open Aug. 13. Both areas will be open Wednesdays through Saturdays only, plus the entire Labor Day weekend.

Crab fishers may take only male Dungeness crabs with shells measuring at least 6¼ inches. All undersized crab, female Dungeness crab and all soft-shell crab of either sex must be returned to the water.

Like last year, Puget Sound crab fishers are required to record their Dungeness crab catch on two separate catch record cards - one for the summer season and one for the fall/winter season. They also have the option of mailing in their catch cards or reporting on the Internet. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crabreg/crabindex>.

On the Olympic Peninsula, rivers in the Quillayute system are benefiting from plenty of rain this year, which is keeping the water high and fishable, said David Low, WDFW fish biologist. "While **salmon** anglers on the Sol Duc had some success earlier in the season, chinook catches have

dropped off lately," Low said. **Steelhead** fishing may produce better results for anglers on the river, where a fair number of fish have started to show up since the July 1 opener, Low said.

Anglers may keep up to six salmon per day, but only two can be adults. All wild adult chinook and wild adult coho must be released through Aug. 31. Steelhead anglers may keep two hatchery steelhead per day. All wild fish must be released.

Meanwhile snow melt on the Hoh River is causing poor visibility for anglers and effort has been slow so far, Low said. Anglers on the Hoh may keep up to two hatchery steelhead per day. Salmon fishing is open Wednesdays through Sundays only with a limit of six fish per day. Only one adult may be retained and all wild chinook must be released. Low reminded anglers that selective gear rules are in effect July 1 through Aug. 31.

Southwest Washington:

Columbia River anglers have turned their attention to **white sturgeon** and **hatchery steelhead** now that the fisheries for adult summer chinook and sockeye salmon are over for the year. Sturgeon anglers can look forward to three added openings this month in the Columbia River estuary, as catch rates for hatchery steelhead continue to improve throughout the lower river.

With 4,200 **white sturgeon** still available for harvest in the estuary, fishery managers scheduled three additional openings from the Wauna powerlines downstream to the mouth of the Columbia River. The retention fishery in that area, which closed June 25, will reopen July 10-12, July 17-19 and July 26-27. As during the regular season, the daily limit is one legal-size sturgeon, measuring 45 to 60 inches.

"We're expecting a fairly large turnout for those openings," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "Sturgeon fishing was very good in the estuary last month, and it's likely to be good this month as well."

Catch rates have also been high for sturgeon in the Bonneville Pool - so high that the fishery is now scheduled to close at the end of the day July 11. During the first week of July, boat anglers averaged a legal-size fish for every two rods, racing through the remainder of the 700-fish quota for that area, Hymer said. "It goes pretty fast at that rate," he said.

In addition to the openings coming up in the estuary, anglers still have an opportunity to catch and retain sturgeon Thursdays through Sundays from the Wauna powerlines upriver to Marker 85 below Bonneville Dam. The catch limit for that fishery - which is expected to remain open at least through July - is one white sturgeon, measuring 42 to 60 inches, per day.

Anglers fishing for **hatchery steelhead** have also been doing well on the lower Columbia River and several tributaries. During the first week of July, boat anglers fishing below Bonneville Dam averaged half a steelhead per rod, while bank anglers took home a fish for every 4.6 rods. Those fishing near the trout hatchery on the Cowlitz River did even better, reeling in a hatchery fish per rod.

"We're nearing prime time for hatchery steelhead fishing below Bonneville," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "The catch is increasing and shifting to upriver fish, which are a little smaller but bright as a chrome hubcap."

Hymer reminds anglers that the catch limit for steelhead has been increased to six hatchery fish per day on the Cowlitz and North Fork Lewis rivers, where hatcheries have met their broodstock

requirements. Three rivers - the Cowlitz, Kalama, and Lewis - have also reopened for retention of hatchery-reared chinook salmon, although steelhead now make up the majority of the catch in those rivers. For more information on the new regulations for those rivers, see the WDFW rule change website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

Hymer reminds anglers that wild steelhead - identifiable by an intact adipose fin - must be released throughout the Columbia River Basin. "Some anglers have asked why there is a box for wild steelhead on their catch record card if they can't retain them," Hymer said. "The answer is that wild steelhead can be retained on a dozen rivers in Washington - most of them on the Olympic Peninsula - but none of them are in this region of the state."

Both catch and effort above Bonneville Dam were light for hatchery steelhead through the first week of July, but that is likely to change in the next few weeks, Hymer said. He noted that a third of a million upriver steelhead are expected to return to the Columbia River this year, and the tally at Bonneville Dam has been increasing day by day.

"The water has been fairly high and cold, which might slow the fish from turning into the Bonneville Pool tributaries to cool off," Hymer said. "But with more than 2,000 fish now passing Bonneville in a day, the action should start picking up soon."

Boat anglers fishing the Bonneville Pool have been averaging five **bass** per rod, while bank anglers have been averaging a bass apiece. Some **shad** are still being taken below Bonneville Dam, but the run - and the catch - is tapering off. Through July 6, just over two million shad had been counted at the dam, compared to 2.5 million last year.

For **trout** anglers, Hymer suggests Goose Lake in Skamania County, which was planted July 2 with 2,290 cutthroat weighing more than half a pound each. Anglers may also encounter some even bigger trout planted last year, he said. Bank anglers fishing Riffe Lake are catching mainly landlocked **coho** while those at Mayfield are catching primarily rainbows. Hatchery rainbows will continue to be planted throughout the summer in the Tilton River, Skate Creek, and Lake Scanewa (Cowlitz Falls Reservoir).

Snake River water levels are finally down and that means **sturgeon** fishing is picking up. WDFW Regional Fish Program Manager John Whalen reminds sturgeon anglers that it's catch-and-release only above Lower Granite Dam. Minimum size is 48 inches, maximum size is 60 inches, and the daily catch limit is one sturgeon.

Whalen also notes **kokanee** fishing is very good now at Loon Lake in southern Stevens County and Chapman Lake in southwest Spokane County. Deer Lake, just northeast of Loon, may be slow for kokanee but it's not bad for **smallmouth bass**, he said.

Chris Donley, WDFW central district fish biologist, said Sprague Lake continues to provide good catches of **rainbow trout** and an occasional big **channel catfish**. The catfish are 10-pounders that were returned to Sprague after last fall's lake rehabilitation treatment. Donley reminds Sprague anglers that the thousands of warmwater species that were recently stocked in the lake, such as **crappie**, **bluegill** and **largemouth bass**, are for future fishing and won't be in the catch this year.

Rainbow and **cutthroat trout** are still good bets very early and very late in the day at Amber, Badger and Williams lakes in southwest Spokane County. Donley reminds anglers that Amber is under selective gear rules with a two trout daily catch limit and a requirement to release all trout marked with a missing adipose fin. Other good trout fishing relatively close to Spokane can be

found at Clear, Fish, Medical, and West Medical lakes in southwest Spokane County, Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County, and Rock lake in Whitman County.

Wherever anglers go at this time of year, WDFW officials urge caution with campfires and anything else that might inadvertently start a wildfire in vegetation that is drying out with summer heat.

Bob Jateff, WDFW district fish biologist from Omak, reported that fishing for **summer chinook salmon** on the mainstem Columbia River above the Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster has been slow. "The fishery opened on July 1 with a few fish in the 15-20-pound range caught on trolled herring," he said. "Fishing should improve considerably as more fish pass Wells Dam and move into the area off the mouth of the Okanogan River."

Jateff reminded anglers that **sockeye salmon** can also be retained this year and count as part of the daily two adult salmon catch limit. He also noted that starting July 16, an additional section of the river will be open for fishing, from Wells Dam upstream to the Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster. A night closure and non-buoyant rule restriction is in place for the Okanogan River from the mouth upstream to the first Highway 97 Bridge. Angler information signs will be posted at all boat launches.

Rainbow trout fishing in the Methow River Valley has also been slow, Jateff reported, as river levels continue to be somewhat high due to runoff and recent rains. Selective gear rules are in effect as well as catch-and-release-only rules. Anglers should check the regulation pamphlet carefully because the Methow, Twisp and Chewuch rivers have certain areas that are closed to all fishing.

Lake fishing in the Okanogan has been good, Jateff noted, with reports of trout being caught in the 14-inch range at most of the selective gear lakes, such as Little and Big Twin lakes near Winthrop, Big and Little Green lakes near Omak, and Rat Lake near Brewster. Aeneas Lake, a fly-fishing only water, received a plant of 500 triploid rainbow trout that run up to two pounds each and should provide good angling opportunity. Chopaka Lake, rehabilitated in fall 2007, received catchable-size rainbows this spring and is now producing good catches of 14-15-inch fish.

Jateff also reported fishermen are having good luck with **bluegill** and **crappie** in Leader Lake near Okanogan and with **yellow perch** in Patterson Lake near Winthrop. **Smallmouth bass** anglers are doing well in Palmer Lake near Loomis and in the Okanogan River. **Largemouth bass** are the main species in Whitestone Lake near Tonasket.

Wherever anglers go at this time of year, WDFW officials urge caution with picnic or campfires, and anything else that might inadvertently start a wildfire in vegetation that is lush from spring rains but drying out with summer heat.

South Central Washington:

Eric Anderson, WDFW fish biologist from Yakima, reported Lost Lake in Kittitas County was finally planted with over 1,000 triploid **rainbow trout** that run about one-and-a-half pounds each. "Our fish planting was delayed due to snow blocking access to this popular back country lake near Snoqualmie Pass," Anderson said.

Anderson noted that more trails are opening up in the mountains so anglers can finally start planning high lake fishing trips. "But check trail conditions first," he said. "Not all trails are accessible at the very remote, high elevation lakes. Check with the Forest Service District Ranger Station for the area you plan to visit."

For other information about catchable-size trout plants in lowland and high lakes check the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>. For high lake fish plants in the Yakima basin see http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg3/r3_highlakes.htm.

Anderson also noted stream fishing conditions continue to improve as water levels drop and the water clears. He recommended checking the fishing regulations pamphlet for special stream rules.

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

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Another on bites the dust - Farewell, Gold Hill diversion dam:

<http://www.mailtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080713/NEWS/807130326>

ODFW Asks: Report Turtle Sightings: <http://www.oregonzoo.org/Turtles/>

Weekly Quote – "If people concentrated on the really important things in life, there'd be a shortage of fishing poles." - Doug Larson

GOOD LUCK!