

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 25<sup>th</sup> – July 31<sup>st</sup> 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-** Bonneville Dam counts of summer steelhead are headed for an unprecedented high. Well ahead of the 10-year average, anglers should be excited about the opportunities that exist on the mainstem above and below Bonneville Dam. Anglers plunking small orange #4 spinners are producing multiple opportunities in the Columbia River Gorge in the early morning. Poor tides this week will make beach fishing for steelhead a low priority.

Fair numbers of walleye are also showing in the Columbia River Gorge for those targeting them. The keepers are averaging in the 18 to 21-inch range reports **Jack and Brandon Glass of Team Hook-up Guide Service (503-666-5370 and 503-260-8285 respectively).**

Oversized sturgeon are still available and some anglers are having luck finding "floater" shad for bait. Sturgeon are keyed in on these baits as the majority of the adults have recently spawned.

The latest data available shows the Willamette river water temperature at 72 degrees. Mostly shaker sturgeon are being caught although keeper-sized fish have come from below St. Johns Bridge. Numbers of summer steelhead crossing the Falls are dwindling as the run winds down.

The McKenzie is fishing well early and late in the day for fly anglers using dry caddis imitations. Nymphs will produce during the daylight hours.

Water and flow at the North Santiam are optimum for fishing and summer steelhead catches have improved.

Sandy River anglers have continued to take a few spring chinook on spinners. Cedar Creek is getting pressure and a few steelhead are being taken here and downriver.

Steelheading on the Clackamas has been fair with fish scattered throughout the system.

Limits of trout have come out of Detroit Reservoir recently.

The Breitenbush River, Carmen Reservoir, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Salmon Creek and the North Fork Santiam River above Detroit are scheduled to be planted with trout this week

**Northwest –** The last of the 3-part opener for estuary sturgeon is scheduled for this Saturday and Sunday. Fishery managers will meet by phone this afternoon to discuss remaining options for sportfisheries below Bonneville Dam. Managers decided to allow for just one more day of retention before closing on Sunday morning (12:01 a.m.) for the remainder of the year. Check recent regulation updates before heading out this weekend.

If managers do keep the fishery open, poor tides will keep the sport catch in check. Deeper water will

be the best option where flows are more likely to influence feeding sturgeon.

Ocean salmon fishing remains good for anglers willing to fight the wind chop. Catches of both chinook and coho are coming from just south of the Columbia River. Calm seas may once again greet ocean goers by Sunday, when the season resumes following the weekly Friday and Saturday closure. Herring has been the best bait.

Although Garibaldi has been the port recording the poorest catches of ocean salmon, that is due to change in coming weeks as coho begin migrating from the south coast to the Columbia River this time of year. Catches should improve in coming weeks. Ocean crabbing remains fair.

**Southwest** – Wind kept many recreational boats in the bays or on the trailer through the past weekend. As of Tuesday this week, it was calming nicely and the forecast for the coming weekend looks promising. If the wind shifts to the south, it should bring warmer water and draw tuna closer to shore.

The lower Rogue has been fishing well for fall chinook, producing fish in the 18 to 30-pound range and a few over 40. Trollers using plain spinners or spinner/anchovy combos are getting strikes with about half the boats landing a fish. Trout fishing on the far upper Rogue has been very good.

It looks as if boaters will be able to fish out of the Port of Brookings this week and into the coming weekend. Bottom fishing has been unparalleled here although ling catches have recently dropped off. Brookings is the top port for ocean coho catches.

Because of windy conditions, there has been little effort over the past week for offshore coho. The percentage of the quota taken as of July 13th was about 35%, so anglers will have more time to try for them.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission is planning to implement a plan to reintroduce salmon, absent for nearly 100 years, to Klamath Lake and its tributaries. The cause of the runs demise was the Copco Dam in California, but a re-licensing process created the opportunity to re-introduce anadromous runs.

The Williamson River out of Chiloquin (Klamath Basin) is fishing great for fly anglers who are throwing nymphs to hook rainbows 20 inches or better.

Section 5 of the Rogue River will be planted with hatchery trout again this week.

**Eastern** – Fishing for reddsides is good in the lower Deschutes with caddis hatches in full swing. While early, a few summer steelhead are being hooked every day, most of which are natives. Spinners and plugs are taking the bulk of the catch. The lower stretches are producing the best as adults nose into cooler waters taking a reprieve from warmer Columbia River temperatures.

Paulina is producing limits of fat kokanee averaging 12 inches or better to anglers using jigs.

Trollers at Green Peter are making good catches of kokanee along with a few chinook and rainbow trout.

**SW Washington** – The North Fork of the Lewis and Cowlitz Rivers continue to produce good catches of summer steelhead, particularly for boaters. Norm Ritchie of Portland landed 2 summer steelhead on 7/22 sidedrifting eggs on the North Fork Lewis.

Drano Lake and the White Salmon River are also producing sporadic but good catches of steelhead

for both boat and bank anglers. This fishery should continue to produce as long as Bonneville Counts remain stable.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Bonneville Dam counts of summer steelhead are stealing the headlines for Columbia River fishers this week. As numbers continue to climb, people are eyeing one of the best returns in history. Although the returns are nothing less than impressive, fishing has been good but not epic, like some might expect given the return rates we're seeing. Boat anglers working the Columbia River Gorge are seeing some of the better action. **Pro guide Dave Johnson (503-201-4292)** reports, "Talk about a lot of steelhead! The counts seem to be twice as good as they usually are at this time of year. I recently ran two guided trips on the Columbia and we hooked over thirty fish for those two days. Landed ten steelhead the first day and eleven the second. We were anchor fishing blades in ten to twelve feet of water. Orange, gold, silver and rainbow were the colors that were working best for us. I plan on hitting these fish through the first ten days of August and we should see some great fishing. There are some good minus tides that first week that are going to be great."

From the WDF&W website, the following creel report was cut and pasted:

**Last week we sampled 557 anglers (including 43 boats) with 173 steelhead kept/released and 8 adult summer chinook released and 1 jack summer chinook kept. Including fish released, boat anglers averaged a steelhead per every 2.3 rods while bank anglers averaged one per every 3.5 rod based mainly on completed and incomplete trips, respectively. Overall, 57% of the steelhead caught were kept.**

The bank angling catch rate seems high to me but it's important to keep in mind that this is for wild and hatchery steelhead. Noteworthy is the stat that just over 50% of the fish caught are hatchery and allowed to be retained. Oddly, the wild fish are making up only a little over 25% of the fish passage at Bonneville Dam. Clearly, a case that wild fish are more likely to bite than hatchery fish.

Downstream of the swift water in the Columbia River Gorge, bank anglers are more likely to use spin-n-glo's than spinners. The brightly colored drift bobbers work well in the slower flows and are responsible for the majority of fish taken in the bank fishery below the I-5 Bridge. Motivated anglers will boat out to secluded islands (like Tenasillahe Island near Westport, Oregon) and fish from the bank. Find the right beach conditions and you can be in for some great fishing!

**Team Hook-up's Jack (503-666-5370) and Brandon Glass (503-260-8285)** report on the walleye fishing. The team reports, "Time for Walleye we have been catching 4-6 of them each day they have been in the 20" range we expect to start catching larger ones over the next couple of weeks. We are also fishing for steelhead as they are coming through in high numbers. The most common technique is to anchor fish in 12'-25' of water using spinners and small flatfish. We do a lot of side drifting for them in the Columbia which is not very common but effective." **Brandon contributes**, "Well right now the walleye are on the bite in the lower Columbia with some good numbers. The effort is low but most of the fish are smaller like in the 18 to 21 inch range. Most of the effort has been from I-5 Bridge to Skamania Island below Bonneville. Good luck."

Sturgeon fishers still have opportunity in the Columbia River Gorge as some floater shad are available for those that are still pursuing oversize fish. Effort continues to drop but catches are still good. Fresh shad are still passing at Bonneville Dam but in relatively small numbers making floaters the best option for bait.

Happy customers holding summer Steelhead caught on the Cowlitz River with Pro Guide Brandon

McGavran (360) 607-1327. The crew was 6 for 9 side drifting eggs.



Downriver, well, how we've got ourselves into quite a pickle here. Managers decided today to allow for just one more day of retention for keepers in the Wauna to Buoy 10 section of the river. Effective at 12:01 a.m. on Sunday, the estuary will close for retention for the remainder of the year. The last opener was scheduled for both Saturday and Sunday but the fear of going over our allotted quota will force the fishery to close after Saturday's catch.

The fishing in the estuary remains fair to good with results differing in the above Tongue Point and below Tongue Point fisheries. I found challenging fishing for catch and release sturgeon on 7/23 out of Warrenton with few fish available on the green line but a few keeper sized fish coming from the single piling out of Hammond and lower Desdemona Sands. Water temperatures have warmed to 65 degrees but fish are still willing to bite. Anchovies were working best out of Warrenton and Hammond. There is very little effort taking place during the catch and release times.

Ocean fishing took a nose-dive on Wednesday as well. With few exceptions, salmon fishing was very poor on Wednesday despite friendly seas and good water temperatures. One guide reported very tough fishing to the south of the mouth of the Columbia and down to The Cove near Seaside. His total catch for 5 or 6 rods was one 26-inch chinook and a handful of wild coho. Previously, salmon fishing was reportedly fairly good but this is really no surprise for this time of year and the fishing is likely to get good again.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Steelhead fishing should remain good but beach plunkers won't have ideal tides to work with this weekend. The best fishing will remain in the Columbia River Gorge with boats producing better catches than bank anglers. Bank fishing however should be some of the most productive in years.

Sturgeon and walleye anglers will also have good water conditions this weekend. Although these are two different fisheries, both are good options for anglers well versed in technique and locations in the Columbia River Gorge this weekend.

Anglers fishing the estuary for sturgeon should target fish in the lower river (downstream of the Astoria/Megler Bridge) using fresh anchovies for bait. The tides will be weak with very little flow

coming on the incoming tide in the afternoon. The outgoing tide itself will not be all that impressive but fish should be available on both the lower flats of Desdemona Sands and in the deeper water above the bridge on the Washington side. Above Tongue Point, fishing should be fair in the shallow water for anglers using sand shrimp for bait. Be prepared with a stern anchor as any amount of wind will keep your boat spinning in what little current we'll have this weekend.

Hope is all we have to count on for an improvement in ocean salmon fishing. It seems quite random when the fish will be present out there this time of year and we may be seeing a slight slow-down in action in the coming weeks as chinook move south and most Columbia River coho are still on the south and central coast. Seas are forecasted to be friendly and the weak tides may make bottomfishing a good alternative if the salmon fishing is slow.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** –Willamette water temps have been holding in the low 70s as the flow has continued to drop over the past week.

Steelhead recycling back downstream to allow anglers a second opportunity to hook them is ongoing at both the North and South Santiam rivers. Both rivers are higher than normal for this time of year but are quite fishable.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Sturgeon fishing will be good for shakers but keeper sized fish will be tough to score. Try Oregon City, St. Johns or down low near Kelly Point. The lower Willamette has been fishing fairly well for smallmouth bass. Try crankbaits or soft plastics.

Steelheading will be spotty on the North Santiam with the South Santiam fishing somewhat better. Try a smaller-sized spinner just below Foster Dam as anglers have been hooking fish on them here lately. Bobber and jig rigs have been effective just below the hatchery. As with most streams at this time of year, first light will be most productive for steelhead.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – The Clack has dropped about three inches at Estacada over the past week. Steelhead fishing has been slow to fair. Eagle Creek has produced a handful of springers but pressure is low.

The Sandy is fishing somewhat better with steelhead and a few springers being taken. The stretch below Cedar Creek has been the most productive. A cool spring and late snowmelt will serve to extend the fishery here.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Rough seas once again prevented anglers from heading out to the ocean this week. Catches remained low out of Garibaldi and with the spring run passing on, the port of Garibaldi has been a rather quiet place these days. Tuna are still far offshore and ocean crabbing is mediocre at best. Estuary crabbing remains challenging.

Low water is keeping effort on area rivers low although summer steelhead and spring chinook are still available. Only the stealthiest of anglers will find success under these conditions but early mornings are best with small offerings the key to success.

Some sturgeon are available in Tillamook Bay and bank anglers typically get some keepers in the Tillamook River itself this time of year.

**Avid angler Rich Riley** reports that Nehalem Bay chinook fishing is slow but there have been some nice fish tallied on the board at Wheeler Marina. In recent years, this fishery has taken a downturn

but we never know when it might rebound. The majority of the fish are coming from the jaws of Nehalem Bay on trolled herring.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Weak tides and friendly seas may entice anglers to head west this weekend. Salmon fishing may remain a poor option but the coho do have to show sometime this summer. Traditionally, this time of year produces fair catches of coho out of Garibaldi but I wouldn't hold high hopes for this weekend if recent history is any indicator. Bottomfishing may be the best option.

Bank anglers will have good access to pooled up salmon and steelhead on the Wilson, Trask and Nestucca Rivers. First light will really be your only hope for action but plan on using very small baits with light lead for any chance at a fish. It takes real skill to entice a fish in these conditions!

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Siletz anglers are hooking up with hatchery summer steelhead. Fishing has been fair to good recently. Check the **Random Links**, below, for a fishing map of the Siletz River.

While high wind has kept boaters off the ocean over the past week, the weather is settling down with moderate temperatures and offshore angling looks like a 'go' for the coming weekend. Nearly two-thirds of the hatchery coho quota remains to be caught with the better fishing out of Winchester Bay and Brookings Harbor. If the quota doesn't fill, retention of hatchery coho in the ocean will remain open through August.

Wind and wave predictions look friendliest Friday and Saturday this week. If the prediction holds true, there will be boats launched out of Depoe Bay, Newport and Charleston that will be searching for albacore, and possibly doing tuna/halibut combo trips.

Crabbing has been fair to good in the bay out of Newport, but is excellent when boats have been able to cross the bar to drop pots in the ocean off the North Jetty. Limits are being taken but expect to find about a third softshells at this time of year. Herring jigging remains good and is an economical way to acquire bait for sturgeon or fall Chinook fishing.

The last all-depth fishery of the spring season is Thursday, Friday and Saturday this week with the summer season opening August 1st. The remaining spring quota will be rolled into the summer quota of 212,769 pounds and with 45% of the spring poundage remaining, the summer numbers should be generous.

Smallmouth bass fishing continues to reward in the mainstem and South Umpqua. The mainstem Umpqua is closed to steelhead fishing but North Umpqua anglers are catching spring Chinook and summer steelhead at a decent clip. Steelhead are entering the fly-fishing-only section of the river and a few have been taken. This stretch will only improve into August.

Surf perch fishing is good on south coast beaches but is tapering of in bays and estuaries as these live-bearers give birth and return to the ocean.

Boaters launching out of the Port of Brookings may look forward to good fishing for coho this week, although they'll be sorting through wild fish to take limits of fin-clipped keepers. The 20-fathom restriction on rockfish and ling cod has not bothered anglers here as they have been able to take limits fairly easily.

Only five rockfish may be kept now but there has been no change in bag limits on other species nor is there any depth restriction on tune, halibut or coho salmon.



It's shaping up to be a big fish season for trollers on the lower Rogue. Several Chinook in the 30-pound range and a few over 40 have been taken over the past couple of weeks and it's still early. Herring and anchovy rigs, straight of plug-cut, as well as plain spinners are all getting bit at times although an anchovy with a blade on its nose remains the favorite. Concentrate on tidewater below the Highway 101 Bridge. Mornings will be best this weekend. Most areas of water eight feet or deeper are worth a pass. The Grants Pass stretch has been slow for anglers, but the upper Rogue has been fishing well for spring Chinook and even better for summer steelhead. Early mornings have been most productive, although evening steelhead fishing picked up over the past week.

Routine trap-netting on Diamond Lake revealed an unexpected take. Several golden shiners and an unidentified non-native fish were caught and the news has anglers concerned - and angry. Diamond Lake was supposed to be free of trash fish as of September, 2006 when the lake was treated with rotenone and officials have strived to keep the waters pristine.

Diamond Lake has continued to fish well for trout averaging 15 to 16 inches with some going 20 inches. Fly anglers are doing well using Callibaetis imitations. The bugs of concern are gnats, however, which are unbelievably thick. Be sure to take a repellent.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Spring Chinook fishing has been fair to good below Sherars Falls with plunkers seeing an increase in hookups over the past week despite higher-than-normal water levels. It will only get better as the river drops. Although very early in the Deschutes summer steelhead season, a few are being taken daily in the lower river. This year is expected to be good once the run hits the river en masse. Trout anglers are experiencing typical Deschutes summertime conditions. This means caddis hatches and lots of 'em. Often the river will offer dry fly opportunities all day long.

**Northwest Trout** – Alton Baker Canal has been stocked with 600 one pound rainbow trout this week. This is the last stocking for the year.

The McKenzie River above Leaburg Dam has received 1775 rainbows and the North Santiam above Detroit got 3,000. Trail Bridge Reservoir was planted with 2,000 legal-sized trout.

Detroit Reservoir, at full bowl, has been producing well. With the water temperatures remaining cool at the surface, bank fishing has been decent. Hagg Lake has been offering fair trout fishing with most anglers taking a few.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

**From the WDF&W Weekender Report July 23<sup>rd</sup> - August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

#### **North Puget Sound**

Several summer fisheries are open, including **crab** and **sockeye**, but the biggest draw to the region is the popular mark-selective fisheries for hatchery **chinook salmon** in the marine areas of central Puget Sound.

Selective fisheries in marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) started much slower than last year, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "Catch rates are definitely down in both areas this year," he said. "But anglers are still finding bright fish in some areas."

Anglers fishing the northern end of Admiralty Inlet - the Port Townsend area - have had the best results, said Thiesfeld. During the first opening weekend of the fishery (July 19-20), anglers in marine area 9 averaged about one legal chinook for every six rods, while those fishing Marine Area 10 averaged one keeper for every 20 rods.

Anglers in marine areas 9 and 10 are 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. Beginning Aug. 1, anglers fishing in Marine Area 10 must release chum.

The chinook selective fisheries in those two marine areas are open through Aug. 15, or until the quota is reached. "At the current catch rate, it looks like the selective fisheries will continue into August," he said. "But this is a quota fishery, so I've been encouraging anglers to get out on the water while they still have the opportunity."

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 dehooker 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/>.

Elsewhere, Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) is open for salmon. Anglers can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit. Beginning Aug. 1, anglers in Marine Area 7 must release wild coho and chum salmon.

Farther south, salmon fisheries in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) get under way Aug. 1. Once those fisheries open, anglers in the two marine areas must release all chinook.

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 eastern and southern 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.



In the rivers, salmon opportunities on the Skykomish, as well as the Skagit and Baker, are winding down. The chinook fishery on the Skykomish and **sockeye** fisheries on the Skagit and Baker come to a close at the end of the day July 31.

Before heading out on the water, 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/regs/fishregs.htm>).

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

**Salmon** catch rates have been fair along the coast and eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca, but the season has yet to take off in south Puget Sound. On the other hand, **crab** fishers have been getting their limits in almost every area and **halibut** anglers will get a few more days of fishing along the coast.

Anglers fishing for salmon have been doing fairly well off Ilwaco and Westport (marine areas 1 and 2) where recently the average has been about one fish per person, said Doug Milward, WDFW ocean salmon manager. "In Ilwaco, people are mainly catching **coho**, while the catch at Westport is about half **chinook** and half coho," Milward said.

Along the north coast (marine areas 3 and 4) recent effort has been light with catch rates ranging from fair to poor, Milward said. "There hasn't been much action, and people going out are averaging about one fish per rod off La Push and one fish for every two rods in Neah Bay." In both areas, anglers are landing about one coho salmon for every two chinook, Milward said.

Ilwaco and Westport are open for salmon fishing 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. Starting Aug. 1, anglers fishing east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line in Marine Area 4B (Neah Bay) may retain hatchery coho only. All chinook, all wild coho and chum must be released.

Anglers planning to launch their boats in South Bend are advised of an error in the Willapa River listing in the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet. The boat launch referenced as the downstream boundary for the Willapa River fishery is operated by Pacific County, not WDFW. For that reason, anglers using that facility should be prepared to pay a launch fee.

On the Strait of Juan de Fuca, recent creel checks at Sekiu (Marine Area 5) showed 456 anglers catching 65 chinook salmon over the July 19 weekend, while 84 anglers fishing near Port Angeles (Marine Area 6) caught 20 chinook. Anglers fared better further east near Port Townsend (Marine Area 9) where the average was about one fish for every 2.5 rods.

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.

Fishing has improved along the west coast of Vancouver Island and the San Juan Islands and Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist, is hopeful that the **salmon** fishing will soon pick up in south Puget Sound, where catch rates have remained low since the July 1 opener. Recent creel checks taken near Point Defiance (Marine Area 11) showed one in ten anglers landing a fish.

"The numbers show anglers getting half the catch rate as they were last year," Thiesfeld said. "Hopefully the fish coming in through northern Puget Sound will start showing up down south, but

we're definitely having a slow start."

Anglers will get at least one more day to catch **halibut** on the north coast when marine areas 3 and 4 (La Push and Neah Bay) reopen July 26. The nearshore area will be open shoreward of 30 fathoms deep and anglers may fish at all depths in area 4B (Cape Flattery to the Sekiu River). The fishery may reopen Aug. 1, if enough quota remains, said Heather Reed, WDFW coastal policy coordinator.

"There's a small chance we could offer another nearshore fishing day after the 26th," Reed said. "Once we get that day's catch data, we'll announce it as soon as possible."

In Marine Area 1, the halibut fishery off Ilwaco will reopen Friday, Aug. 1 and Saturday, Aug. 2. The rules for that area prohibit fishing for, retaining or possessing bottomfish, except sablefish and Pacific cod while halibut is on board.

The only recreational halibut fishery remaining open on an ongoing basis is the nearshore fishery in Marine Area 2 (Westport), which is open Fridays and Saturdays.

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.

Meanwhile, the **Dungeness crab** fishery appears to be going well in all marine areas except Hood Canal (Marine Area 12), said Rich Childers, WDFW shellfish policy coordinator. "There's a high abundance of crab in many areas of Puget Sound and people are easily getting their limits," Childers said. "The exception is Hood Canal where the numbers are low even compared to last year."

Crab fisheries in marine areas 6,7-South/East, 8-1, 8-2, 9, 11, and 12 are open on a Wednesday-through-Saturdays schedule, plus Labor Day Weekend. 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, 2009.

Marine Area 7 North (Lummi Island/Blaine) will open Aug. 13, Wednesdays through Saturdays, plus Labor Day weekend.

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 are running low and clear and fishing has been intermittent on area rivers, said Rick Erath, WDFW fish biologist. "Summer **steelhead** have been showing up in the north ponds of the Calawah River, but many streams have dropped down and could use some rain."

Several area rivers will open for salmon fishing in the coming weeks, with the Skokomish River in Mason County and the Naselle and Willapa rivers in Pacific County opening Aug. 1. The Puyallup River in Pierce County and the Quilcene River in Jefferson County open Aug. 16.

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 boundaries and regulations.

### **Southwest Washington:**

Anglers are catching limits of **hatchery steelhead** from the Cowlitz River to the White Salmon River, as others prepare for the fall salmon season that opens Aug. 1 at Buoy 10 and other waters around the Columbia River Basin. But a more immediate issue is the sturgeon opening set for the

weekend of July 26-27 in the lower Columbia below the Wauna powerlines.

Faced with heavy fishing effort and high catch rates below Wauna, fishery managers from Washington and Oregon are concerned that the catch during that weekend could exceed the area catch guideline. Fishery managers from both states have scheduled a joint hearing July 24 at 9 a.m. to discuss fishing seasons for sturgeon both below and above the powerlines.

"Anglers planning to fish for sturgeon in the lower Columbia River during the July 26-27 weekend should check on the outcome of that meeting before they head out," said Brad James, a WDFW fish biologist. Anglers can check for updates on the WDFW website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/>) or by calling the Fishing Hotline at (360) 902-2500.

Meanwhile, anglers continue to reel in summer-run hatchery steelhead on the Columbia River and several tributaries. Fishing remained good around the trout hatchery on the Cowlitz River, where 78 boat anglers were checked with 63 hatchery steelhead in their creels during the week ending July 20. On the mainstem Columbia River below Bonneville Dam, boat anglers averaged one fish for every 2.3 rods while bank anglers caught a fish for every 3.5 rods.

But with approximately 6,000 steelhead now moving past the dam each day, a lot of the action has been moving upriver to Drano Lake and the White Salmon River, said Joe Hymer, another WDFW fish biologist.

"With water levels dropping and temperatures rising, success rates have started to cool off in the lower river and more fish are moving upriver," Hymer said. "But we're just nearing the peak of the upriver run, so there should still be plenty of good steelhead fishing throughout the river."

Not to mention salmon fishing. Starting Aug. 1, fall salmon seasons will open on the Columbia River and area tributaries with some notable differences from last year, said Cindy LeFleur, WDFW Columbia River policy coordinator.

In all, 376,800 adult fall chinook are expected to return to the Columbia River this year, compared to 219,600 last year, LeFleur said. But to protect weak runs, including those listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), fishery managers adopted new conservation measures for some areas, while providing more fishing time in others.

Like the Buoy 10 fishery, for example. Under this year's rules, anglers fishing will have the entire month of August - plus Labor Day - to catch and keep chinook salmon during the Buoy 10 fishery near the mouth of the Columbia River. That compares to just 12 days last year. On the other hand, anglers will be required to release all chinook salmon intercepted from Rocky Point/Tongue Point to Bonneville Dam, except during a retention fishery set for September 1-16.

These fishing seasons in the lower Columbia River are designed to conserve ESA-listed chinook salmon bound for the Lewis and Snake rivers, while focusing the fishery on abundant upriver brights returning to hatcheries above Bonneville and wild fish headed for the Hanford Reach, LeFleur said.

"The goal is to target those healthy upriver hatchery stocks, which tend to bite well when they first enter the river," LeFleur said. "We're also expecting a strong return of chinook reared in net pens in select areas throughout the lower river."

Chinook fisheries in several tributaries to the Columbia River will also be affected by new measures adopted during the annual North of Falcon season-setting process. For the first time, for example, mark-selective fishing rules will be in effect for chinook jacks on eight rivers, requiring anglers to release chinook salmon less than 24 inches long that are not adipose fin clipped hatchery fish.

Columbia River tributaries affected by new fishing rules that take effect Aug. 1 include:

- **Lewis River and fall chinook sanctuary:** Anglers will be required to release all chinook salmon intercepted on the Lewis River, where wild chinook returns are expected to reach only about half of the 5,700-fish escapement goal. The requirement to release chinook will be in effect in the Lewis River, the North Fork Lewis River and in an eight-mile area of the Columbia River near the mouth of the river that is defined in the fishing rule pamphlet. Fishing for hatchery coho and hatchery steelhead will remain open, but fishing from boats will be prohibited on the North Fork Lewis from Johnson Creek upstream to Merwin Dam to minimize chinook handling.
- **Cowlitz and Toutle Rivers:** Anglers must continue to release all chinook - except marked, hatchery-reared jacks - because hatchery returns are not expected to meet management goals. Anglers may still retain hatchery steelhead and hatchery coho caught in both rivers.
- **Kalama, Washougal, Wind and White Salmon rivers, plus Drano Lake:** Anglers may retain any adult chinook salmon, but must release any wild, unmarked chinook jacks they encounter.

"All of the new rules are included in the 2008-09 *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet," said Pat Frazier, regional WDFW fish manager. "Anglers should make a point to check them out before they hit the water."

Frazier noted that the new mark-selective fisheries for chinook jacks reflect the fact that - for the first time - all chinook jacks returning to hatcheries in the Columbia River Basin are marked with a clipped adipose fin.

"The immediate benefit is that anglers will have a opportunity to catch and retain marked chinook jacks on a number of rivers," he said. "In so doing, they'll actually benefit wild chinook by getting hatchery fish off the spawning grounds." Within a few years, all hatchery-reared fall chinook salmon - including adults - returning to the Columbia River will be identifiable through mass marking, Frazier said.

For now, anglers should be aware that July 31 is the last day to fish for hatchery spring chinook on the Grays and Elochoman rivers - and for hatchery steelhead on the Grays. Both are scheduled to open for fall salmon fishing Sept. 1.

### **Eastern Washington:**

Warm weather usually means good fishing for warmwater species, and that includes tasty **yellow perch**. Chris Donley, WDFW central district fish biologist in Spokane, said perch are abundant at many waters throughout the region. Anglers can find good perch fishing at Coffeepot Lake in Lincoln County and Downs Lake in southwest Spokane County, he said. The Spokane River reservoir of Long Lake and Deer and Waitts lakes in Stevens County also are good sites to fish for perch. "Fish deep for them this time of year," Donley said. "They're not along the shorelines like they were during spring spawning. You have to jig for them to 25 feet or more."

Donley also recommends **trout** fishing during early morning hours or in the evening at almost any trout water in the region. "Rainbows are really active now at night," he said. "Lake Roosevelt continues to produce them, and a lot of the smaller lakes up north and around Spokane are still a good bet." The lower Spokane River has nice rainbows and browns, and is much better fishing this year. Donley reminds river anglers to comply with the catch and gear restrictions listed in the fishing rules pamphlet.

Nighttime fishing for **kokanee** at Loon Lake in Stevens County has been very good, mostly for those anglers fishing from boats with glo-hooks and maggots or corn in 30 to 40 feet of water, Donley said.

"Use your fish finder to locate and then anchor over the top and fish for them," he said.

Wherever anglers go this time of year, WDFW officials urge caution with campfires and anything else that might inadvertently start a wildfire in the region's dry vegetation.

#### **North Central Washington:**

**Chinook** fishing has picked up on the mainstem Columbia River above Wells Dam, where anglers have been catching some good-sized chinook in the 20 pounds-plus range, along with some sockeye running 3 to 5 pounds. Anglers are reminded that the daily limit is two adult salmon. Meanwhile, a new section of the river opened from Wells Dam to the Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster through Aug 31. The section from the Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster to the Highway 17 Bridge at Bridgeport, including the mouth of the Okanogan River will remain open until Oct. 15th.

The Methow River has dropped into good fishing shape with fly fishermen reporting catches of **rainbow** to 15 inches and cutthroat to 16 inches. Larger dry flies, as well as nymphs under strike indicators are both good methods. Anglers should check the fishing pamphlet closely, as sections of the Methow are closed to all fishing, including the mouth to the Lower Burma Road Bridge.

**Spiny ray** anglers can expect good catches of perch in Patterson Lake (Winthrop) and bluegill/crappie in Leader Lake (Omak). There is no minimum size and daily bag limit on these species in Okanogan County.

#### **South Central Washington:**

Recent hot weather has encouraged anglers to head for the mountains. Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist in Yakima, said mountain trails are snow free, except at the very highest elevations. "But bugs are abundant," he said. "So in most areas insect repellent is a necessity." Cummins said alpine lakes should provide good fishing for **cutthroat**, **rainbow** and **eastern brook trout** "until the snow flies this fall." For general high lake fishing information and potential hike-in and higher elevation fishing destinations, anglers can look at the "Trout Fishing in Washington's High Lakes" publication at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/outreach/fishing/highlake.htm> or the southcentral region's high lakes fish stocking records on the Region 3 website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/reg/region3.htm>. "Just remember that many lakes have natural reproduction and do not require stocking, so don't limit your fishing choices to the stocking list alone," he said.

#### **Reader Email -**

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

Write to the TGF staff:

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#### **Random Links**

Siletz River fishing map: <http://www.oregonh2o.com/images/mapsiletz.jpg>

The top 10 products that changed fly fishing forever:

<http://singlebarbed.com/2008/07/17/transformed-fishing-forever-that-would-have-to-be-the-pop-top-beer-can-what-were-they-thinking/>

**Weekly Quote** – "Few elements of this whole we call nature bring us into more intimate contact with its beauty, with our wonder, than the creatures we call trout, or the activity we call angling. To see the glow, to smell the wood, to hear the water - to feel the heft of a good fish - is to be alive." - Steven J Meyers

**GOOD LUCK!**