

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **November 7th – November 13th, 2008**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Sturgeon anglers in the Columbia River gorge are still taking some quality keepers with boat and bank anglers having a fair chance. Action here will continue to taper as temperatures drop and fish migrate to the Willamette for winter time foraging.

Coho numbers at Bonneville are dropping off dramatically and the troll fishery near Washougal will likely slow as well.

Once the water temperature of the Willamette is higher than that of the Columbia, the fall/winter sturgeon fishing will heat up. There has been a little improvement recently.

With the river level up and run numbers down this year, steelheading is slow on the North Santiam.

Although the Sandy and Clackamas closed to coho angling at the end of October, Eagle Creek will remain open through November for close-quarter angling.

Water flow of the McKenzie is rising while the temperature falls. The river is still in the high 40's which shouldn't negatively effect results.

Northwest – In recent years, the first week of November has been an excellent time to fish the north coast rivers and estuaries. This year however, the run is significantly down and anglers will have to fish hard to expect positive results. The Ghost Hole and Bay City begin to fish better this time of year.

Driftboaters took advantage of higher flows in recent days but wind and rain storms littered the waterways with leaves and debris. Couple this with low returns and anglers will be challenged to find success. Another rise in river levels is expected before the weekend making driftboating an ideal option by Saturday. Leafy debris however will likely continue to frustrate anglers.

Following the next rise in river levels, the Trask, Kilchis, Wilson, Nestucca and Nehalem should all have some fish available. Anchor fishing with plugs or bait will only be effective in higher flows while backrolling plugs or backbouncing eggs will produce better when the water begins to clear.

Sturgeon anglers could see some positive results after the fresh water flushing that is predicted for early next week. The fresh water will wash juvenile crabs to the ocean as they are often responsible for picking baits before sturgeon have a chance.

Crabbing in Tillamook Bay is fair at best but the crabs are of quality size and condition. Weaker tides this weekend should produce even better results.

Southwest – Forecast for offshore conditions look unfriendly once again this coming weekend.

Siltcoos trollers report the coho scattered with recent rain. Fishing has been worthwhile however with plugs taking the majority of fish. Tahkenitch Lake is another favored fishery where native coho are the target species.

Winchester Bay has been fair for quality Dungeness. Soft tides this weekend favor crabbing. The mainstem Umpqua has a mix of steelhead, chinook and jacks.

While fall chinook are being caught on the Elk and Sixes Rivers now, it's been so stormy that participation has been very light. Rain this week should serve to improve conditions and these rivers will deliver during breaks in the weather.

The upper Rogue, a flies-only area until the end of October, allowed the use of bait as of November 1st but fishing has only been fair. The Wild and Scenic stretch is producing good catches of half-pounders.

Due to extremely low flows, poor chinook returns last year and to protect fall chinook from snaggers, the ODFW delayed the opening of the Chetco River until further notice. The bay and lower tidewater is open below the Harbor water intake tower at roughly River Mile 3, where sand shrimp has been effective. Once the remainder of the river opens, wrapped Kwikfish will take fish.

When the ocean has cooperated recently, boats launching out of the Port of Brookings enjoyed stellar results bottom fishing and about one in four rods hooked up with ling cod. This is an improvement over previous weeks.

Diamond Lake, closed as of November 1st, will re-open on April 25th, 2009. Excellent late season action will likely translate into a very productive spring.

Eastern – Chinook may no longer be retained on the Deschutes and steelheading has been slow to fair. Spinners have been most effective and the fish which have been landed have been large.

Steelheading at the John Day is poor to slow. Plug-pullers have been blanking while bobber fishers are taking a few.

Crescent Lake is fishing well for brown trout 20 inches or better in length. Trollers are employing downriggers to dredge them from the deep water.

SW Washington – The Toutle and Cowlitz Rivers has slowed recently for coho. Good catches of sea-run cutthroat trout are taking place on the Cowlitz River near the trout hatchery however. Winter steelhead may make a stronger than normal early showing this year as the returns often parallel coho returns.

The Kalama and Lewis Rivers also remain fair late season bets for coho although catches have slowed recently.

The Klickitat River is typically picking up this time of year but catches seem to be on the slide.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Mixed reports are coming in from the Columbia River with state creel checks indicating fair action for sturgeon in the gorge but guides reporting slightly less success. No doubt, effort is beginning to wane as the weather turns south but the Columbia River creel report went as follows:

Gorge Bank:

Weekend checking showed 29 legal white sturgeon kept, plus five oversize and 17 sublegal sturgeon released for 123 bank anglers.

Gorge Boats:

Weekend checking showed 15 legal white sturgeon kept, plus one legal, five oversize, and 165 sublegal sturgeon released for 18 boats (complete trips).

Troutdale Boats:

Weekend checking showed one oversize and 29 sublegal sturgeon released for eight boats (complete trips).

Portland to Longview Boats:

Weekend checking showed five legal white sturgeon kept, plus one oversize and 150 sublegal sturgeon released for 41 boats (incomplete trips).

Although water levels seem to be making launching out of Rooster Rock a bit challenging, one guide reported having fair success at "the wall" which is near Cape Horn in the Columbia River Gorge. Shakers obviously make up the bulk of the catch but some keepers are still coming from the area. Smelt will continue to be a great bait but sturgeon seem to be responding well to sand shrimp as well.

Although salmon fishing is winding down sooner than some years, effort still exists for coho in the Washougal/Troutdale area for anglers trolling plugs. As success continues to drop with declining fish counts, we'll be reporting more on the steelhead fishing in the John Day Pool and John Day Arm. Creel work for that area gives the impression that fishing was better than some eye-witnesses reported. Creel checks for the area indicate the following:

John Day Pool (Columbia River above John Day Dam and John Day Arm):

Weekly checking showed two adipose fin-clipped steelhead and one coho jack kept, plus two unclipped steelhead released for 23 bank anglers; and 14 adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus 11 unclipped steelhead released for 40 boats.

Although this fishery typically really starts to ramp up this time of year, it does not appear to be heading that way. Dam counts indicate there aren't a lot of fish sticking around in the reservoirs that positively affect this fishery.

Crabbers on the Columbia have been pulling excellent numbers of keepers from the Hammond area. The crab are starting to fill out nicely but several people reported missing pots or rings from the large tide swing last weekend. Better tides this weekend should alleviate this problem but the weather likely won't be too fun to crab in.

The Guide's Forecast – The Columbia River Gorge should remain one of the better options for sturgeon fishers this weekend. Although weather will likely keep many anglers from getting motivated, the changing weather conditions could prove beneficial for anglers that have been fishing unusually warm water for this time of year. This weather change could activate fish before the long winter sets in. Smelt and shrimp will continue to take fish and although keepers are available from Cape Horn to the deadline, larger fish are typically found in the faster flows near the deadline this time of year.

The John Day fishery should have been well underway by now but creel checks are far less impressive than they have been in years past. It seems these fish just made tracks for their upriver destinations and action is not going to pick up anytime soon. Trollers will still make the effort and quality fish can still be taken but don't have overly high expectations for this fishery.

Consider crabbing the lower Columbia River this weekend. The tides are good, although early but keepers should be numerous and the quality should be excellent.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Steelhead crossing at Willamette Falls are being counted as winters now but numbers have been insignificant. Sturgeon fishing remains slow for keepers, fair to good for undersized. It will improve into fall and winter. Yeah, I know ... we keep saying that. But it's true. Coho retention in the lower Willamette closed on November 1st.

Rain has caused an increase in water level and flow at the McKenzie. Over the past seven days, flow has increased from 3,200 to over 5,500 cfs at Vida.

The high, swift waters of the upper North Santiam are challenging for experienced boaters, dangerous for those less so. Launching from Fishermen's Bend should give most boaters all the thrills they require.

The Guide's Forecast –While the lower Willamette sturgeon fishing has improved slightly, it has a ways to go to be worthwhile. Sturgeon like high, muddy water of moderate temperature and at this point, while rain has increased flow slightly, the water is actually clearer than a week ago. Try squid or frozen smelt.

High water on the McKenzie will be challenging for anglers for a while.

Expect to find fair results with summers on the North Santiam although stellar catch and release fishing for winters is just around the corner.

Off Topic: Over 3,000 rods will be available at the Lamiglas Factory Sale in Woodland Washington. This is a one-day event on Saturday, November 22nd from 8 AM to 4 PM

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – With the Clackamas closed for coho as of November 1st, anglers will be waiting a while for winter steelhead. Eagle Creek remains open through November for a three hatchery coho limit. The water level is up and coho are on the move though not biting well. Consequently, fishing is only fair but is expected to improve. Over 2,000 coho have already returned to the hatchery facility on the creek.

The sandy closed for salmon on November 1st and due to the broodstock program implemented some years ago, winter fish will return on a schedule similar to that of their native parentage rather than early as do hatchery steelhead.

North Coast Fishing Report – It's the same 'ol same 'ol here in Tillamook County. Just when you thought fishing couldn't get any slower, the action on the bay seemed to have slowed in recent days. Bay effort is next to nil although some boats are still looking for a prayer fish in the Ghost Hole and at Bay City. Foul weather will likely continue to keep anglers off of the bay but the poor catch won't help either. There were a few fish taken in the upper bay early in the week but I do stress FEW.

Most anglers have been excited to get the driftboat season underway as many district streams have finally swollen to go from DRAGboating to DRIFTboating. It has been a welcome change and many boats just started to hit the river at mid-week. It's too early for accurate reports but although river levels were approaching a great stage, leafy debris has anglers challenged to keep lures working efficiently. As the weather continues to change, that will likely continue to be the case.

The Wilson, Nestucca and Trask Rivers are all options but we'll discuss that in greater detail in the next section.

A rare angler has been seen on the Nehalem River but like most district waterways, success has been hard to come by. Reports from anglers working the Cook Creek to Roy Creek drifts have been dismal although due to the low effort, anglers are able to fish plenty of virgin water. Bait has been working best in the lower flows but like most area rivers, runs are clearly down. Coho are still present with almost all of the fish of native origin.

Anglers are anxious to put this season behind them but maybe sturgeon will begin to show in Tillamook Bay in the coming weeks. November is typically the kick-off month for good action in the bay and some rolling fish have been reported already. The south channel is often the best place to intercept a high portion of keepers using shrimp for bait but we often have to wait out the competing juvenile crab so we can get our baits to soak for an adequate amount of time.

Crabbing remains hit-or-miss in Tillamook Bay with Netarts faring only slightly better.

The Guide's Forecast – If you haven't heard this enough this season, sorry to reiterate. Don't have high expectations for great success even though the river levels will be at near ideal level by the weekend- that is, if the river forecast holds true.

There simply aren't a lot of salmon around but the Wilson, Kilchis, Trask and Nestucca should all be in fine form for salmon production by the weekend. Rivers are now not forecasted to rise too high but a nice crest on Friday and dropping conditions by the weekend should produce some results. Winds and rain recently will also recruit a lot of leafy debris into area rivers further hampering success.

The lower portions of these rivers will offer up the best chances for success and tidewaters of these rivers should also be an option if there is enough flow on an outgoing tide. More than anything, debris from upstream will be the greatest challenge followed up by the lack of returning adults this year.

Both plugs and bait should work well under these conditions but under more ideal conditions, a higher tide series would have helped the situation.

Some anglers will stick to the bay and fish may be available in limited numbers on the east side of Tillamook Bay. Bay City and the Ghost Hole are obvious areas to intercept this time of year. Herring will produce the best results this time of year but chartreuse/green tipped spinners can also be effective.

Weak tides won't offer up the best chance for sturgeon anglers but crabbers can take advantage of the tides in the lower portions of the estuaries. Although fresh water will be coming down from district rivers, it shouldn't have a huge impact on recreational crabbing.

Central & South Coast Reports – It will be challenging from now until springtime to find conditions that allow for crossing into the ocean. For the last couple of weeks and the weekend coming, forecasts show wind and wave building then backing off on weekdays. Mother Nature has an ironic sense of humor.

Trollers at Siltcoos and Tahkenitch are reporting good results in the wild coho fishery with fresh fish entering the lakes and scattering with recent rains. Anglers throwing spinners from docks

have also taken a few of these native fish. Siltcoos is the more productive location of the two with the Maple and the Fiddle Creek arms good spots to try. Troll appropriately-sized plugs or spinners.

The Siletz and Alsea have risen about a foot and a half over the past week while the Siuslaw is up over two and half feet. All are poor for Chinook fishing and it's getting pretty into the season to maintain that they're late in arriving.

Rain should not have affected as large an inland estuary as Yaquina Bay so it should be good this weekend for limits of Dungeness. Check for softshells but the majority will be hard now,

Water level is up at the Umpqua with precipitation, drawing steelhead upriver. The upper mainstem has continued to produce coho on spinners but this opportunity will soon pass as rain entices them upstream. The Half Moon area if Winchester Bay has been providing fair to good cramming for large Dungeness but if rains persist, the fresh water will shut down this activity until saline levels return to normal. The South Umpqua opens December 1st for winter steelheading.

Crabbing has been good in Coos Bay with most of the Dungeness hard following molting over the summer. Crabbers dropping nets off the docks are even doing pretty well. Clamming has been good when tides are conducive.

Rain has scattered Chinook at the Coquille with anglers reporting hookups at various locations from the mouth up to the deadline. Pressure is light, most of the fish are on their spawning redds and only a few fresh fish are entering. Conditions are similar on the Coquille which is also offering decent crabbing in lower tidewater.

Chinook fishing has been good at the Elk and Sixes with both bait and plugs taking fish. Without moderation is the rainfall, both rivers could blow out, however the Elk was over four feet and the water remained clear as of Wednesday this week.

Predictably, rain over the past week sucked salmon out of the lower Rogue as they began seasonal migration upstream. The Grants Pass stretch has continued to be productive for adult steelhead and half pounders but catches of Chinook and coho have been light. Action above Gold Ray is usually hot at this time of year and while it's been worthwhile, it is slower than usual. Bait is still illegal in this upper stretch but lures may now be used in addition to flies. Bait may be used above the Shady Cove Boat Ramp.

While the coming weekend looks like it will be rough offshore, when the ocean has cooperated, boaters launching out of Brookings have been limiting on rockfish just outside and many have taken their daily bag of ling cod. Chinook catches on the lower Chetco have been as good as predicted and the entire river opened up on November 5th. All but the lower three miles were closed at the scheduled November 1st opener due to low water and snagging concerns but recent rains have reversed the situation. Bobber fishing with sand shrimp has been responsible for the majority of hookups in tidewater. Upstream, wrapped Kwikfish will take fall Chinook.

Most of the lakes in the Southwest Zone closed at the end of October but many remain open year 'round. Check the fishing regs to find out which are open to enjoy fall angling trout and even warmwater gamefish which are binging to prepare for winter.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Be aware that winter is coming on at Eastside locations. It was snowing in Bend on Tuesday this week. Watch out for slick roads when traveling and be

particularly cautious trailering a boat. At 10 AM on November 4th, ODOT Oregon 242, the McKenzie Pass Highway, for the season due to snow accumulation. For more information: Joe Harwood 541-726-2442 (west side) or Peter Murphy 541-388-6224 (east side)'

The Grande Ronde has been fishing well for steelhead. First light fishing has been best, offering the opportunity for multiple hookups. Fishing for hatchery steelhead as of November 1st requires barbless hooks.

Steelheading is slow to fair on the Deschutes with the few being hooked running large. Trout continued to take dries over the past weekend offering fair to good results to fly anglers.

Fishing has been very slow at the John Day over the past week.

Northwest Trout - Orange tags are attached to Leaburg Hatchery steelhead which were planted recently at Junction City Pond. While no tag is required to fish for them, such stocking in the future may depend on anglers willingness to call the hatchery at 503-896-3294 when they catch one.

Detroit Reservoir is fishing well for stocked trout although the water level is low, making only the Mongold Ramp useable.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report October 29 - November 11, 2008

North Puget Sound

Anglers are finding a mix of **chum** and **coho** in the region's rivers and streams. Meanwhile, anglers out on Puget Sound are reeling in some **blackmouth** and will soon have the option of also dropping a pot, as the **crab** fishery re-opens in select areas in November.

Starting Nov. 1 at sunrise, marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) and 12 (Hood Canal) will reopen for **sport crabbing** seven days a week through Jan. 2. Crab fishing will also remain open seven days a week through Jan. 2 in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu), and 13 (south Puget Sound), where the fishery has continued uninterrupted since June 18.

Sport crabbing will not reopen this year in marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) and 11 (Tacoma/Vashon Island), where the summer catch reached the annual quota, said Rich Childers, WDFW shellfish policy coordinator.

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6 1/4 inches. In addition, fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/index.htm>.

Puget Sound's **blackmouth** - resident chinook - fishery is under way but fishing has been poor, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "Marine Area 10 has been slow, but hopefully fishing will improve in the coming weeks," he said.

Anglers fishing Marine Area 10 can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit. Beginning Nov. 1, anglers in Marine Area 9 will have a two-salmon daily limit and can keep up to two hatchery chinook per day. Wild chinook salmon, which have an intact adipose fin, cannot be brought aboard the boat in Marine Area 9.

Anglers are reminded that Marine Area 7 and the open areas of marine areas 8-1 and 8-2 close to salmon fishing Nov. 1.

Thiesfeld said anglers should be aware that there are a number of shakers out there. "Anglers should use larger spoons and plugs in order to minimize their catch of those juvenile chinook," he said. "It's tough to catch legal-size fish if you are always reeling in your line to release shakers."

In the freshwater, anglers are hooking **chum salmon** and are still finding some **coho**, especially in the Skykomish and Skagit rivers.

For a change of pace, anglers might want to consider casting for **trout** at Beaver Lake. The lake near Issaquah will be stocked the week of Nov. 3 with about 1,800 hatchery rainbows weighing between 3 to 5 pounds each. The lake, which is open to fishing year-round, is best fished by small boat, although anglers also can be successful fishing from shore, said Chad Jackson, inland fish biologist for WDFW. Internal combustion boat engines are prohibited on the lake. All anglers 15 years of age and older are required to have a valid fishing license. The daily bag limit is five fish, and bait anglers must keep the first five trout they catch.

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

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

As anglers target **chum** and **coho** in Puget Sound and area streams, they can look forward to dropping a crab pot when the late-season Dungeness crab fishery gets under way in select areas in November.

Starting Nov. 1 at sunrise, recreational **crab** fishing will reopen in four marine areas of Puget Sound, including marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) and 12 (Hood Canal). Crab fishing in those areas will be open seven days a week through Jan. 2.

Crab fishing will also remain open seven days a week through Jan. 2 in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu), and 13 (south Puget Sound), where the fishery has continued uninterrupted since June 18.

Sport crabbing will not reopen this year in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), marine areas 8-1 and 8-2 east of Whidbey Island and Marine Area 11 (Tacoma/Vashon Island), where the summer catch reached annual quotas.

Those fishing for crab in Puget Sound this fall and winter are required to fill out a winter catch card to record their catch. These winter cards are valid until Jan. 2 and due to WDFW by Jan. 15,

2009. Crabbers can mail in their cards or report their catch on the WDFW website, which will be available Jan. 2, 2009.

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6 1/4 inches. In addition, fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/index.htm>.

Meanwhile, with 486,990 chum salmon expected to return to southern Puget Sound this year, anglers trolling the waters in Hammersley and Totten inlets near Shelton (Marine Area 13) are starting to reel in fish destined for Kennedy, Skookum, Mill and Johns creeks, said Larry Phillips, WDFW fish biologist.

"We're at the front end of the chum migration and the fishing's picking up," Phillips said. "However, some much-needed rain would help move more fish from the estuaries into the streams and spawning areas." So far, chum anglers are finding success using a herring placed just underneath the bobber, Phillips said.

Phillips reminds anglers that starting Nov. 1, wild coho may be retained in Marine Area 13, but only one chinook may be retained as part of the two-fish daily limit. A portion of Kennedy Creek, which flows into Totten Inlet, is open to salmon fishing through Nov. 30 (from the mouth to the northbound Hwy. 101 Bridge). Up to two adults may be retained as part of the six-fish daily limit, but all wild coho must be released and barbless hooks are required.

Anglers will have more opportunity to target chum when the Dosewallips and Duckabush rivers in Jefferson County, and Minter Creek in Pierce/Kitsap counties open for fishing Nov. 1.

Rain is also a factor for anglers hoping to catch **hatchery coho** in Grays Harbor rivers, said Scott Barbour, WDFW fish biologist. "There are fish in the rivers, but they're pretty dark and most people are catching wild coho, which must be released," Barbour said. "We need some rain to move the brighter fish into the rivers." Barbour reminds anglers that only hatchery coho salmon with a clipped adipose fin may be retained on the Chehalis, Elk, Satsop, Humptulips, Wishkah and Wynoochee rivers. All other salmon must be released.

Anglers are advised to check WDFW's 2008/2009 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for regulations on specific rivers.

Anglers fishing in the Quillayute system — which includes the Bogachiel, Sol Duc, Calawah and Dickey rivers, can keep chinook as part of their limit of three adult fish. The total daily limit is six fish; all wild adult coho must be released until Nov. 1.

Along the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the salmon season ends Oct. 31 in Marine Area 6 (Port Angeles), but a new **blackmouth** fishery starts Nov. 1 in Marine Area 5 (Sekiu), where the daily limit is two salmon (combined) and one chinook may be retained. The one-chinook retention rule also applies in Marine Area 11 (Tacoma/Vashon Island) starting Nov. 1.

Meanwhile, anglers looking for some late-season **trout** fishing, should head to Black Lake in Thurston County, where 3,500 one-half pound rainbows are being planted in preparation for the Nov. 1 weekend.

On the coast, many of the 13,500 **razor clam** diggers who participated in the Oct. 16-18 season opener on four ocean beaches took home their 15-clam limit. The next dig is tentatively scheduled Nov. 13-16, subject to the results of marine toxin tests.

Southwest Washington:

Hatchery **coho** salmon are providing most of the action on the lower Columbia River, although bank anglers fishing for **sturgeon** immediately below Bonneville Dam also continue to find fish.

The best bet for hatchery **coho** has been the Cowlitz River, where anglers have been reeling in lots of bright fish weighing up to 20 pounds, said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. Recent survey crews have counted up to 300 anglers fishing just below the barrier dam, which remains the hotspot on the river.

"Sometimes coho arrive with lockjaw, but these fish are biting on everything from lures to nightcrawlers," Hymer said. "Local tackle shops report selling loads of nightcrawlers."

The daily limit on most of the Cowlitz River is six adult salmon, only one of which may be a **chinook** (clipped or unclipped). However, all adult chinook must be released from Blue Creek to Mill Creek and unmarked jacks must be released throughout the river. The night closure rule and non-buoyant lure restriction from Mill Creek to the barrier dam has been extended through November.

Hymer noted that other rivers are also giving up some nice fish. Bank anglers fishing the Lewis River have been catching nearly one hatchery coho for every two rods, while those fishing the Kalama have been averaging one for three. "If we get some rain, we should see more coho moving into the Elochoman, Washougal and Klickitat rivers, too," he said.

On the mainstem Columbia River, anglers have been averaging about one coho salmon per boat in the Camas/Washougal area below Bonneville Dam. Of the 84 boats counted during a recent aerial survey, 38 were fishing in that area. Salmon fishing closes Nov. 1 from Beacon Rock upstream to the dam.

Boat anglers fishing the Bonneville Pool have been averaging about one salmon for every two rods, with most of the action concentrated around the mouth of Klickitat River. About 90 percent of the catch has been made up of bright, late-stock hatchery coho.

Fishing effort has been light on Drano Lake, although anglers are catching some chinook and coho. The last day to fish for salmon on the Wind River is Oct. 31, but Drano Lake reopens to fishing seven days per week the next day. On the Klickitat River, all chinook salmon must be released starting Nov. 1 upstream from the Fisher Hill Bridge, about three miles above the mouth.

The bank fishery for **sturgeon** just below Bonneville Dam continues to draw plenty of anglers, who averaged one legal-size fish for every seven rods during the week ending Oct. 26. Boat anglers averaged a sturgeon for every six rods, with most of the fishing concentrated in the gorge. That fishery is starting to cool down - along with water temperatures in the Columbia River - as more fish move into the warmer waters of the Willamette River, Hymer said.

Despite good coho fishing, an increasing number of Cowlitz River anglers are turning their attention to the **cutthroat trout** crowding into the river. "The river is black with them right now just below the Cowlitz Trout Hatchery," Hymer said. That's a prime location for anglers who

permanently use a wheelchair, because there is a fishing site developed specially for them by Tacoma Power at the hatchery outfall. "Anglers who use wheelchairs have limited options to go fishing, so this run of cutthroat is a great opportunity to catch some fish," said Wolf Dammers, another WDFW fish biologist.

The daily trout limit is five fish per day, with a minimum length of 12 inches. "Most of the cutthroat we're seeing average about 14 inches long," Dammers said. Although anglers are required to release any wild, unmarked cutts they catch, the vast majority of those caught below the trout hatchery are marked with a clipped adipose fin, he said.

Trout fishing has also been good at Swift Reservoir, which will remain open through November. Lots of 12-14 inch **rainbow trout** are being caught at the upper end of the reservoir. Anglers should also be aware that WDFW is again stocking Kress Lake near Kalama with hatchery **summer-run steelhead**. Ten fish were released there Oct. 20 and more steelhead - and possibly coho - are expected to follow.

Planning for the winter fishery? The first winter-run steelhead arrived at the Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery in recent days.

Eastern Washington:

The most recent Snake River **steelhead** fishing creel checks show the best catch rates have been measured in the stretch from Lower Monumental to Little Goose dams. Steelheaders there have averaged about 17 hours of effort per fish caught. Just slightly slower catch rates have been measured near the mouth of the Grand Ronde River to the Oregon state line. For all of the latest southeast Washington steelhead creel results, see the eastern region webpage at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/snake/index.htm>.

Sprague Lake, on the Lincoln-Adams county line, has recently been a **rainbow trout** fishing hot spot. Hatchery trout stocked in the year-round fishing lake last spring have grown tremendously and are now at least 16 inches, average about 1½ pounds apiece. Cooler water and air temperatures seem to have put these fat fish on the bite, said WDFW district fish biologist Chris Donley, who recently watched anglers catch their five-trout daily limits in less than an hour. Word of good fishing has evidently spread, as both public and private access sites on Sprague have been crowded. Donley reminds anglers to follow the rules and pick up after themselves.

These are the last days of trout fishing at most of the region's managed lakes, which close Oct. 31. WDFW northeast district fish biologist Bill Baker reminds anglers that neither Lake Ellen in Ferry County nor Frater Lake in Pend Oreille County have any fish left, since both were recently treated to remove infestations of non-trout species. WDFW southeast district fish biologist Glen Mendel said anglers have been catching hatchery-stocked rainbows in the Tucannon River impoundments in Columbia County - Beaver, Big Four, Blue, Deer, Rainbow, Spring and Watson lakes.

Donley reminds anglers that southwest Spokane County's Amber Lake remains open for catch-and-release-only fishing through November.

North Central Washington:

Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist from Omak, reported that **steelhead** fishing within the mainstem Columbia River above Wells Dam, the Okanogan River, and the Methow River has been good in recent weeks. Mainstem Columbia and Okanogan river anglers are averaging a fish for every 10 hours of fishing time, while the catch rate in the Methow River is 15 hours per fish.

Jateff encourages anglers to retain adipose-clipped steelhead in all fishery areas to allow a higher percentage of natural-origin fish on the spawning grounds. Selective gear rules are in effect for the steelhead season, except that bait can be used within the mainstem Columbia River from Wells Dam upstream to 400 feet below Chief Joseph Dam. All steelhead with an anchor (floy) tag attached must be released.

Through Nov 12, Douglas County Public Utilities District (PUD) will lower the water level up to 10 feet in the reservoir behind Wells Dam on the Columbia River to make dam repairs and improvements to boat launching facilities. Anglers fishing the mainstem are advised that some areas for both shore and boat access may be difficult to use during this time.

Jateff also reported Rufus Woods reservoir continues to provide good fishing for **triploid rainbow trout**. Boats can be launched at Bridgeport State Park or at the Army Corps of Engineer's site just above Chief Joseph Dam. Shore anglers can fish just above the dam or drive up to Brandt's Landing. Jateff reminds anglers that when using bait, the first two fish caught are part of the two-fish daily limit, whether kept or released.

"Okanogan County also has a couple of smaller lakes with very good fishing for rainbow trout at this time of the year," Jateff said. "Both Rat Lake near Brewster and the Green Lakes near Omak are under selective gear rules until Dec. 1, but they can provide very good catch-and-release fishing for 11 to 13-inch fish. We have boat launching facilities at each of these lakes."

Art Viola, WDFW Chelan district fish biologist, said there are still insufficient numbers of wild **steelhead** entering the Wenatchee River to allow a fall/winter fishery. "We're monitoring the run closely, and a fishing season will open if or when we are sure adequate numbers of wild fish are returning," Viola said. "We must comply with a NOAA fisheries permit that requires a return of at least 600 wild fish before any season can be opened."

South Central Washington:

The Ringold area of the Columbia River opens for **hatchery steelhead** Nov. 1 with a daily limit of two hatchery steelhead, identifiable by a clipped adipose fin. The area will be open to steelhead fishing through March 31 from the Highway 395 bridge at Pasco/Kennewick upstream to the wooden powerline towers at the old Hanford town site.

The Yakima fall **salmon** fishery closed Oct. 22 after an estimated catch of 502 adult fall chinook, 64 chinook jacks, 35 adult coho and 47 coho jacks harvested, said WDFW fish biologist Paul Hoffarth of Pasco. Hoffarth says a final report detailing the results of the sport fishery and stream surveys for the lower Yakima River will be prepared and available in Spring 2009.

WDFW fish biologist Eric Anderson of Yakima reminds **rainbow trout** anglers that many year-round lakes in Yakima and Kittitas counties are well stocked with catchable-size trout in the fall. "Although these fish are smaller than the trout planted in spring, they still provide good angling opportunity in our year-round lakes," Anderson said. Some of these fish carry over through the winter and get bigger in the lake without tying up rearing space in the hatchery."

Reader Email -

Irregular contributor Kap'n Ken Johnson writes, "Hey Michael...The fishing down here on the Nehalem River is pretty spotty. A few fish are being caught but they're mostly Coho. Bright as they are, they all have their adipose fin and have to be returned. Honestly, I think ODFW and other agencies should let us keep ONE non-adipose fin clipped Coho on any given fishing day.

First off, the other day while trolling in front of Wheeler, we spotted two Coho floating downstream several minutes apart, which meant two fish were hooked upstream. One was still quivering and the other was dead with a seagull standing on its carcass picking away. This brought back "bad" memories of a few years ago when a buddy of mine and I stopped counting at 35 the number of dead or dying Coho floating down the Columbia River during a Buoy 10 fishery. Now, what is more wasteful? Keeping one or two of the 20-25+ Coho you catch 'each' on any given day, some with gill damage, and releasing these injured fish, most of which will die to be consumed by seagulls, sea lions and seals?

Or, should we just be allowed to keep one fish (or two) and going home HAPPY!? I think we should be able to keep one or two and let the other 20-25 live out their lives. Back to the Nehalem. The water is picking up in volume with the recent rains. It was 52 degrees yesterday and very fishable. As of today, the water is still fairly clear but has muddied up a touch from heavy rains especially the last two nights. The Chinook that still haven't shown up are most likely to make a run for it with the raising water in the Nehalem.

Personally, I think that by the end of the week, give or take, what Chinook are out there will be done and gone upriver in just a few short days. I caught a nice 17 pound Chinook a couple of days ago and my neighbor came home yesterday telling me he caught three Coho, 100% "Natives." Still some fishing left, but I'm thinking it is going to slow down to a dead STOP very soon. Not much fishing pressure here.

Crabbing here isn't that good yet either. What's up with that??? Another neighbor worked 6 traps for 4 hours a couple of days ago, and came home with 5 keepers. Not much crab for that much effort and gas! That seems to be the general consensus around here lately. Krappy Krabbin'. Time to head for Ocean Krabs and maybe a Sturgeon or two too...Happy Fishin! Your seat is still waiting for you!"

Thanks, as always, Ken. Here's a photo of the contented Kap'n with his 17 pounder:



Alert reader Joseph B. asked the same question we did until we did a closer inspection: "I was looking at Kelly's summer Steelhead she had caught and is that really an adipose I see in the photo?"

Webmaster Doug Rees responded, "Thank you for your note, we appreciate the attention to detail and willingness to take time to write in. I have the original sized photos and re-looked at them and am happy to say that it is not. "

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

Online Fly-fishing photo magazine: <http://www.catchmagazine.net/>

New online steelhead magazine: http://www.steelheadquarters.com/log_in.htm

Weekly Quote – "Salmon are crazy fish, and once they get into a man's blood he's never quite the same." - Lee Wulff

GOOD LUCK!