

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 24<sup>th</sup> – July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro -** Steelhead fishing is in full swing in the gorge but boat anglers have to be anchored in the right spot to produce results. Steelhead will travel in one migration lane one day and move inside or outside the next. A few feet either way can make a big difference. Passage is peaking right now which should stimulate upstream fisheries like the Deschutes River, both at the mouth and in the lower 20 miles.

Oversize sturgeon fishers are still struggling for quality bait but the fishery is still producing good catches below Marker 85. Serious anglers are buying shad for bait from the Indian tribes above Bonneville Dam.

Water at Willamette Falls is 72 degrees which has daily fish passage dropping off. Sturgeon fishing below Willamette Falls is slow while the Middle Fork remains good for trout.

Steelheading is slow on the McKenzie but a few are being taken.

The Mill City stretch of the North Santiam has been producing steelhead. The South has been producing a few at Waterloo Park.

Spinners are taking a few steelhead on the Clackamas. Fish high on the river at this time of year.

A few summer steelhead and the occasional springer are being taken at first light on the Sandy at the mouth of Cedar creek.

Breitenbush River, Carmen Reservoir, Leaburg Lake, the McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Quartzville Creek, Salmon Creek and the North Fork Santiam River above Detroit Lake are scheduled for trout planting.

**Northwest –** Fishery managers granted another 3-day sturgeon retention season beginning July 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>. That will likely be the last opener although keepers may be left in the quota for anglers downstream of the Wauna powerlines. Catches are expected to be fair.

A current minus tide series is underway which should provide bank anglers from Portland to Astoria with fair catches if summer steelhead from low gradient beaches. Hot colored spin-n-glos in red, pink and orange will produce the most strikes but shallow diving plugs will also produce fish. Don't cast too far from shore as calorie counting adults will be within 5 to 8 feet from the shore on the strong outgoing tide.

Offshore anglers have had to deal with poor ocean conditions for much of the week although those that did make it out, found good success. The mouth of the Columbia has been producing best with most anglers turning south from the mouth. The fishing will only get better as coho feeding along the central and south coast migrate north to enter the lower Columbia River in August.

Garibaldi anglers have also fared well with good catches coming from 220 feet on Tuesday. Windy weather and a significant swell will make ocean conditions unfavorable until Sunday if the forecast is accurate. This fishery should also build into early August and with a little more than 30% of the quota taken, this fishery should last for a while longer.

Crabbing remains good in the ocean and is improving in Tillamook and Netarts Bays although effort will play a role in success.

Summer steelheaders are taking a rare adult on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Anglers must apply stealth techniques to entice biters but small baits fished in the broken surfaced, faster flows will take fish for persistent anglers. The quality of spring chinook is fading and anglers shouldn't harass adults that are pooled up until spawning season later in the summer.

**Southwest** – Offshore coho catches remain very good although fewer than half of the fish boated have been of hatchery origin. Tuna fishing has been excellent with many boats returning to port plugged with albacore.

The entire Oregon coast is now closed to the harvest of mussels due to a naturally-occurring toxin.

Winchester Bay has been the top port for coho catches with fish coming shallow over 300 to 350 feet of water and plenty of crab in the pots. It may be too rough to allow recreational boats to launch this weekend, however.

Coho fishing has been good out of Florence, fair out of Coos Bay. Ocean crabbing has been good.

Trollers plying the Rogue estuary have been connecting with early fall chinook in decent numbers over the past week. This fishery is officially underway.

Brookings anglers are connecting with coho starting at six miles out of port. Coho move closer to shore as the water warms. Tuna, rockfish and ling cod fishing have all been good. Long-range offshore forecasts aren't optimistic for launches this coming weekend.

Diamond Lake offers fair fishing for large trout with most anglers taking three in a morning's effort.

Scheduled to be stocked with trout are Fish Lake and the Rogue above Lost Creek.

**Eastern** – Target trout on the Deschutes during the evening caddis hatches for maximum action.

Green Peter has been fishing well for kokanee early mornings with the bite picking up again afternoons.

Sunday, July 19th. was a good day for Jerry Logusz, who caught the new state record kokanee at Wallowa Lake. It was a 27-inch specimen, which weighed seven pounds.

**SW Washington** – Anglers continue to struggle for summer steelhead on most district streams but the Cowlitz is producing some fish.

The Wind River is heating up for summer steelhead with a fish for every other anglers. This fishery will peak in the next 2 weeks.

The Klickitat is producing fair catches of steelhead.

New rules go into effect for many SW Washington streams with changes in both chinook and coho bag limits. Check local regulations before you venture out.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Until the Buoy 10 fishery begins, anglers will continue to lackluster about the quality fisheries that are still going on in this district. Recently however, action for coho salmon out of the mouth of the Columbia River has ironically slowed. Rough weather certainly has something to do with the success as anglers aren't as willing to stay out as long and find the fish as is necessary when they scatter under conditions such as these. Up until early this week, fishing had remained excellent with fish putting on poundage by the week. Anglers had been focusing on the Buoy 4 to CR stretch and action had been quite steady. This has not been the case more recently where one experienced angler relayed, he stated he only had 2 strikes for a good effort on Tuesday. He limited quickly just a few days prior.

This isn't uncommon, even in a big coho year like this one. No question however, the action will switch back to lights out when the weather stabilizes, maybe before the weekend for that matter.

Fishery managers will allow another 3-day opener for sturgeon beginning this Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup> through Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup>. It's likely that even if sportanglers don't attain their full quota, Washington is advocating for a closure of the fishery. That likely won't be the case for anglers upstream of the Wauna powerlines or the gillnet fleet, which could very well be allowed to harvest their entire quota. Stand by for the news next week when I divulge who you should call to tell them how this makes you feel. Of course, it's not bad to advocate for a more conservative approach but why should this burden be placed on just one user group? More next week.....

Most observers would say that the sturgeon sure seem to be present in the estuary but they also seem quite reluctant to bite. Like with other observed species this year, food abundance in the ocean and estuary seems at a near all time high. With so much competition for bait, why would our bait be the choice over other bait that is also easily captured? With the bait only getting more abundant, fishing will likely continue to be challenging.

Although we're in the thick of the tuna season, effort has been down due to the poor weather conditions offshore anglers have fallen victim to this week. With a consistent offshore breeze all week, anglers savvy to the ways of big blue have garaged their vessels in hopes of better weather. No relief in sight however as this long period of typical summer flow hits our coast. When you begin to notice a more equal balance between temperatures at the coast and those in the Willamette Valley, then it's time to examine some offshore options such as tuna. Stay tuned but don't have high hopes for this weekend.

With the extreme tides we're experiencing this week, crabbing hasn't been the best option for folks but it remains productive on the incoming tide in the lower Columbia River. Ocean crabbing is also fair but river crabbing seems to be better. Tides improve for crabbing after the weekend.

Upriver, anglers fishing for steelhead along the lower Columbia (from Portland to Astoria) have done relatively well for steelhead. Boat anglers were averaging a steelhead for every other rod (WDF&W creel census) while bank anglers landed one for every 4 rods (WDF&W creel census). Although Washington seems to average higher catch rates than anglers on the Oregon side, this kind of action should still spell out good catches for both Oregon boat and bank anglers. This was a great tide series in the peak of the season and the catch rates confirmed this.

In the gorge, action was also very good but you had to be in the right travel lane to experience good action. This is often the case as adults can be very particular as to what path they take to get themselves upstream. It's all related to flow and where the path of least resistance lies. Don't be afraid to move around until you find the right lane. If you're not producing strikes early, you won't be producing them late either. Anglers in the gorge have gone to using prawns for bait. Success rates have clearly risen for bait anglers in the recent week.

Dam counts continue to climb as we've had some 7,000 and 8,000+ fish passage days at Bonneville recently. The Deschutes fishery is likely to heat up this week; both at the mouth and in the river. These are the smaller "A" run fish but provide excellent sport on light gear.

**The Guide's Forecast** – It's getting close to Buoy 10 time but we have just a few more days to wait. Until then, the fishing off the mouth of the Columbia should be excellent when the weather cooperates. Fish should begin to congregate in good numbers again by the weekend although action was tough at mid-week. Good bar crossing conditions exist for much of next week with a good weak tide to aid navigators. The swell is expected to be a bit big through the weekend so caution is still very necessary. Here's the ocean forecast as of Wednesday morning:

**FRI**

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 7 FT. PATCHY FOG IN THE MORNING.

**FRI NIGHT**

N WIND 20 KT...EASING TO 15 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT.  
A FEW GUSTS UP TO 25 KT IN THE EVENING. WIND WAVES 4 FT...  
SUBSIDING TO 2 FT AFTER MIDNIGHT. NW SWELL 7 FT. PATCHY FOG AFTER  
MIDNIGHT.

**SAT**

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES  
2 FT...BUILDING TO 4 FT IN THE AFTERNOON. NW SWELL 8 FT. PATCHY  
FOG IN THE MORNING.

**SAT NIGHT**

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 7 FT.

**SUN**

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. NW SWELL 8 FT.

**MON**

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. NW SWELL 7 FT.

The NW swell may be an issue but hopefully the frequency of the swell will be far enough apart that it won't create issues for salmon fishers. Wind waves may not be a factor after the weekend but anglers may still want to consider starting off to the NW of your home port so you can ride the wind waves back home after you get your fish.

Tuna anglers may want to rethink their weekend strategy. It could be a long rough ride with a swell that big, better off waiting for better conditions unless you're not friends with your kidney. If you do go deciding to go tuna chasing, the action should be pretty good.

Crabbing is also a strong option, especially in the lower Columbia River.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – The water temperature at Willamette Falls is 73 with the water clearing, flow is slowing. Sturgeon fishing has been slow with keeper-sized fish a rarity. It's the dog days of summer.

The McKenzie is in exceptional shape for mid-summer.

Steelheading on the North Santiam has been an exercise in frustration. The fish are there, often visible, but slow to bite. A few springers are being taken at first light in the Mill City stretch.

**The Guide's Forecast** – The lower Willamette is too warm to be of interest to any except bass fishermen. Try fly fishing the Middle Fork for trout. Nymphs will catch fish all day long with dry flies effective during evening hatches.

Steady catches are the rule for fly anglers on the McKenzie with hatchery and wild trout responding to offerings.

The better steelheading on the North Santiam has been above Mehama recently. Steelhead are being recycled from the trap at Foster downstream on the South Santiam to give anglers an additional opportunity for them.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – Considering how spotty the fishing has been, Milo McIver Park has been quite crowded much of the time lately. A few springers have been taken recently of respectable size.

The occasional steelhead and spring Chinook are being taken on the Sandy between glacial gray-outs but overall it is slow. Few are even making any effort to catch fish here. The area where Cedar Creek dumps into the Sandy is the only place reported to have produced any action recently. Watch out for nettles here.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Like the northern port, anglers have been stymied by rough weather conditions when we just know the fishing would be good out of Garibaldi, Nehalem and Pacific City for coho salmon. Recent reports indicate the fish were out a bit further but action remained good for those anglers willing to stomach some bigger swells and wind waves. The fish are growing nicely in size. One guide reported his best action in 220 to 250 feet of water west of Garibaldi and Twin Rocks. It should be pretty easy fishing when the bar and ocean permits safe and fun navigation.

Not many folks out tuna fishing this week and rightfully so. Did I mention anything about the ocean weather? It's for the birds.

Crabbers continue to produce the best results in the ocean although bay crabbing is also fair in Tillamook Bay. Nehalem and Netarts are also producing some keepers but likely not as productive as Tillamook.

We're coming off of a big minus tide series but tides should remain low enough to harvest clams in coastal estuaries this weekend. Razor clam digging on the Clatsop County Beaches is closed until September 30<sup>th</sup>.

It's mainly a steelheader show on rivers like the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Although anglers have to be especially stealthy in their technique, fish are present in fair numbers with a few anglers finding fair success. Small baits are necessary and there aren't many safe resting areas for adults. With the water at it's summer low levels, anywhere it's dark, could hold steelhead or a willing cutthroat trout.

Sturgeon fishing remains poor in Tillamook Bay and with a strong saltwater wedge clear into the upper estuary, juvenile crab are very willing to take your bait before a sturgeon could ever get to it. It may be fall before we see productive sturgeon fishing again in this estuary.

**The Guide's Forecast** – For coho and tuna chasers, it's really all about the ocean weather. For weekend warriors, it doesn't look all that great but Saturday and Sunday should be tolerable with only a swell to keep your eye on. If the frequency of the swell is anything above 10 second intervals, than the ocean shouldn't be a big problem. The wind wave prediction over the weekend does look favorable.

For those willing to cross the bar under safe conditions, the fishing should be excellent at of most northern ports. You shouldn't have to go very far out to find the biters and action should become more consistent as the population begins a northern migration to the Columbia River. The bulk of the hatchery fish in the ocean are destined for the Columbia River and as we near August, they'll begin to stage in good numbers along the north coast. Bait will be a good choice but if the water is above 54 degrees, hardware is a strong alternative. Stay safe but there are great numbers of fish to catch.

You might as well bring the crab pots as the harvest should be bountiful. Fresh bait will produce the best and bait does make a difference. The crab are beginning to fill out although there are still fair numbers of softshells in the mix. Bay crabbing should be good as well.

District rivers will remain very low so early mornings will produce the best results. It's really a steelhead show now so use small baits and fish the pocket water of the Nestucca, Wilson and Three Rivers.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Coho catch rates were down last week as was effort with rough ocean conditions keeping most boats inshore. numbers were lowest on the south coast as few were able to launch. As of July 19th, about 30,000 of the 110,000 coho quota have been taken off the central and southern Oregon coast. Forecasts as of today (Thursday, July 23rd) provide no reason for optimism for the south coast this coming weekend. the ports of Newport and Depoe Bay may allow some ocean forays. There are sometimes windows of opportunity early mornings before the double-digit winds come up but use caution if you try a first light launch.

Tuna runs over the past week have produced few fish and nothing close to the record-breaking catches of the prior week. When boats could launch, a run of roughly 50 miles was required to find the warm, blue water preferred by albacore.

Boats launching out of Newport have been making multi-species catches of rockfish, ling cod and coho.

Tuna have been a long ways offshore over the past week. Limits of coho were common late last week but then the water cooled nearshore requiring 20 to 30 mile runs to find temperatures over 50 degrees. That's a long run for coho.

The Umpqua mainstem is producing good catches of smallmouth bass as is the South Umpqua. North Umpqua anglers are enjoying fair to good catches of summer steelhead. Summers may be seen in the viewing window at Winchester Dam.

Sturgeon and striped bass fishing is fair on the lower Coquille River. Shad fishing is slow on both the Coos and Coquille rivers.

Every year around this time, the water temperature of the lower Rogue reaches 70 degrees due to hot weather on the south coast. Simultaneously, early fall Chinook enter the estuary but the warm river temperatures keeps them kegged up in the bay. This is good news for trollers who take advantage of the situation by dragging herring or anchovies, often preceded by a small,

propeller-like spinner on the nose of the baitfish nose. Fishing in this manner is currently producing fair to good catches of Chinook with some topping 30 pounds and a few into the forties. Despite good catches, oats are not yet thick on the lower river but with fishing as good as it has been, it won't be long. Summer steelhead fishing has been fair in the Grants Pass stretch while the upper Rogue is producing a mix of springers and summers.

Coho catches have been good out of Brookings as have bottom fish and ling cod numbers but rough seas have hampered efforts. High seas have also reduced takes of surf perch in the area.

Trout fishing has been slow at Diamond Lake' Power Bait remains the most popular approach with trolling effective in the last hours of daylight. Most anglers think it's worth it to cat two or three as these fish average 15 inches or better and very fat.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Davis Lake is thought primarily a bass Lake and while that's true, some very nice rainbows have been taken there recently.

With the water level low at Green Peter, trollers using downriggers are making very good catches of kokanee. Get on the water early for best results.

A blue-green algae alert was issued Wednesday this week for Odell. Steer clear of this stuff; even getting on exposed skin can sicken people or pets.

Wallowa Lake is producing decent catches of very large kokanee. With news of the new state record earlier this week (see Fisheries Forecast, above) there's likely to be additional interest in this location for a while.

**Washington fishing reports:  
From the WDF&W Weekender Report July 22-August 4, 2009**

**North Puget Sound**

The Skagit River chinook salmon fishery got off to a slow start in early July, but the bite has picked up a bit recently. Meanwhile, saltwater anglers have had some success fishing for chinook and coho salmon in Puget Sound, where crabbing also is open.

"Overall, **salmon** fishing has been fair out on the Sound," said John Long, WDFW's statewide salmon manager. "I've heard recent reports of anglers in the region landing some nice chinook, particularly in marine areas 9 and 10."

Some of those anglers were competing in the Elliott Bay Salmon Derby, which took place July 18. Antonios Henry took home the event's \$5,000 top prize after landing a 29.9-pound chinook. Colton Chandler captured second place and was awarded \$2,000 for his 28-pound chinook, while Richard Devine finished third and earned \$1,000 for his 24.1-pound salmon.

Anglers fishing marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional **pink salmon**, but must release wild chinook. Those fishing Marine Area 9 also must release **chum salmon**, while anglers in Marine Area 10 are required to release chum beginning Aug. 1.

Anglers also can fish in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where salmon fishing has been good recently. Those fishing Marine Area 7 have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink

salmon, but can only keep one chinook. Beginning Aug. 1, anglers fishing Marine Area 7 must release wild coho and chum.

Long said anglers will soon have more options when marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) open for salmon Aug. 1. Anglers fishing those two areas will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release chinook.

Meanwhile, the **crab** fishery is under way in marine areas 8-1, 8-2, 9, and 10, as well as the eastern and southern portions of Marine Area 7. Fisheries in those areas are open on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, plus the entire Labor Day weekend.

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6¼ inches. Fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. See WDFW's sport-crabbing website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>) for more information.

In the freshwater, the **summer chinook salmon** fishery on the lower Skagit River has picked up a bit, said Brett Barkdull, WDFW fish biologist. "Fishing has slightly improved, but it certainly isn't red hot," he said.

The Skagit is open through Aug. 9 from the mouth of the river to the mouth of Gilligan Creek from noon Thursday through Sunday each week. Anglers have a daily limit of two chinook, only one of which may be an adult.

Elsewhere, the Reiter Ponds section of the Skykomish River has opened for gamefish, including steelhead. That section of the river (1,500 feet upstream to 1,000 feet downstream of the Reiter Ponds Hatchery outlet) opened July 18 after the hatchery collected enough steelhead broodstock to meet egg-take goals.

Anglers in the region are reminded that the **Lewis Street boat launch** in Monroe is closed as crews install a new boat ramp and make other improvements to the site. The water access site, which is located near the Skykomish River Bridge on Highway 203 in Monroe, will be closed through July 30, said Kye Iris, WDFW regional lands supervisor.

Funded with a grant from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office, the improvement project includes paving a portion of the access site and adding ADA parking. Iris said two alternative boat launches are nearby. Those sites are located in Sultan off Highway 2, and off First Street in Snohomish.

Before heading out for a day of fishing, anglers should check the rules and regulations for all fisheries on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> .

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

Ocean fishing continues to clip along for salmon anglers who can now drop a line for coho and salmon seven days a week in all coastal waters. The biennial pink salmon migration has begun in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, while Puget Sound crab anglers are catching limits in most areas that are open. The popular Hood Canal crab fishery opens July 29.

Salmon fishing is requiring a little more effort than in the early days of the summer season, but anglers are still catching their limits in all areas of the coast, said Erica Crust, WDFW ocean port sampler. "Westport has really picked up and people are finding some nice **chinook** in the 20-30 pound range," Crust said. "Anglers fishing near Willapa Harbor during the July 18 weekend were doing especially well, limiting on coho and some hatchery chinook."

There was also some fast fishing farther north, where anglers at La Push and Neah Bay encountered good numbers of coho and some chinook as well, Crust said.

All coastal areas are now open seven days a week including Ilwaco and Westport (marine areas 1 and 2) and La Push and Neah Bay (marine areas 3 and 4).

The daily limit in all marine areas is two salmon, but only one may be a chinook. All wild coho must be released. Westport anglers may add one pink salmon to their limit, while those fishing the north coast may add two.

On the Strait of Juan de Fuca, creel checks conducted July 19 at Ediz Hook near Port Angeles (Marine Area 6) showed 22 anglers catching three chinook. That same day 303 anglers near Sekiu (Marine Area 5) brought in 44 chinook and 24 coho. Checkers in the area also counted 44 **pink salmon**, which bodes well for south Puget Sound anglers who have been struggling since the July 1 opener, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist.

"It should be a banner year for pink salmon, with more than five million forecast to return to the major basins in Puget Sound," Thiesfeld said. About 3,400 pink salmon are expected to return to the Hoodspoint hatchery, but the majority of the fish are wild. Because of their two-year life cycle (they return in odd-numbered years), pink salmon are smaller than most salmon, averaging four to five pounds. "But they are easy and fun to catch, which is especially good for kids," Thiesfeld said. "The run should last from August through mid-September."

Thiesfeld reminds anglers to clean all pink salmon immediately and keep them cold to protect their flesh, which is soft and easily bruised.

Pink salmon heading for the Puyallup River basin should help boost fishing success near Tacoma (Marine Area 11), where a creel check taken near Point Defiance during the July 18 weekend showed 731 anglers with 77 chinook and 17 coho. More opportunities will be available in the area when Commencement Bay opens to salmon fishing Aug. 1.

The salmon fishery there runs seven days a week, with a two-fish daily limit. The minimum size for chinook is 22 inches with no minimum limit for other species. All wild chinook must be released. Anglers may add two pink salmon to their daily limit.

Meanwhile, the **Dungeness crab** fishery appears to be going well in marine areas now open for crabbing, said Rich Childers, WDFW shellfish manager. "There's a high abundance of crab in many areas of Puget Sound and people are easily getting their limits," Childers said. "WDFW enforcement officers are also finding that most anglers they've checked have catch cards with them and are following size, gender and limit rules."

Crab fishers may retain male Dungeness crabs only with shells measuring at least 6¼ inches. The daily limit is five crabs. All undersized crabs, female Dungeness crabs and softshell crabs of either sex must be returned to the water. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/> or <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>. Crab fisheries in marine areas 6, 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10 and 11 are open on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, plus Labor Day weekend, closing the evening of Sept. 7. Crabbing is open seven days a week in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 and 13 through Jan. 2.

The Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) crab fishery was delayed this year to avoid disrupting the mating season and will open on July 29. Recent test fisheries conducted by WDFW in Hood Canal indicate that crab abundance has increased this year compared to 2008, Childers said. Marine Area 7 North (Lummi Island/Blaine) will open Aug. 12, Wednesdays through Saturdays only, plus the entire Labor Day weekend, closing the evening of Sept. 30.

Anglers are reminded that the **halibut** fishery in Marine Area 1 will re-open Aug. 7 on a Friday-through-Sunday schedule until the 4,219-pound quota is reached. "It could go quick, but we won't know for sure until we see how many people go fishing for halibut and how big the fish are," said Heather Reed, WDFW coastal policy coordinator.

Several regional rivers will open for **salmon** fishing in the coming weeks, with the Skokomish River in Mason County and portions of the Naselle, Nemah 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.

The state continues to experience ongoing dry conditions and outdoor recreationists are reminded to take extra precaution to prevent fires. Fireworks are not allowed on any of WDFW's 900,000 acres in 32 wildlife area complexes and over 150 water access sites across the state and many do not allow camp fires or any other kinds of open fires. Where campfires are allowed, they are usually restricted to metal fire rings and must be kept to less than three feet in height and diameter. Specific rules by property can be found at [http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife\\_areas/index.html](http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/index.html) . To report a wildfire or unattended or escaped campfire, call the state's wildfire fighters, the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), at 1-800-562-6010 or call 911. To obtain information on fire danger levels or burn bans by county, see <http://www2.wadnr.gov/burn-risk/index.html> .

### **Southwest Washington**

Anglers with constraints on their time will have to choose their fishing days carefully in the weeks ahead. Those ready to go right now will find good - and improving - fishing for **hatchery steelhead** from the lower Columbia River to the Bonneville Pool tributaries. They might want to consider, though, that the sturgeon fishery in the estuary has been extended for three more days, July 24-26. Then again, those who wait until Aug. 1 can fish for salmon at Buoy 10 and any number of other waters opening for **fall salmon** fishing that day.

"Now is the time to make plans about where to go, where to stay and where to moor your boat," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "A lot of fishing opportunities will be opening up in the coming days, and a lot of anglers will want to get in on the action."

Summer **steelhead** fishing has continued to heat up - along with water temperatures - on the mainstem Columbia River and tributaries stretching upstream to the Bonneville Pool. Boat anglers fishing between Rocky Point and Bonneville Dam averaged one fish for every two rods during the week ending July 19. Bank anglers netted a fish for every four rods. The best catch rates were observed from Kalama downstream and in the gorge, where 178 bank anglers pulled in 53 steelhead and released 56 others July 21.

On the Cowlitz River, boat anglers have been reeling in hatchery steelhead from Mission Bar to Blue Creek. As daily steelhead counts continue to climb at Bonneville Dam, success rates have also picked up at Drano Lake and on the White Salmon River.

In all areas, anglers may retain only hatchery steelhead with a clipped adipose or ventral fin and a healed scar. "The good news there is that the proportion of marked, hatchery fish below Bonneville has increased in recent days," Hymer said.

Rather hold out for **sturgeon** ? With 2,400 more fish available for harvest under the area guideline, the sturgeon fishery in the Columbia River estuary has been extended for another three days. In a joint action July 21, fishery managers in Washington and Oregon agreed to reopen the fishery Friday through Sunday from July 24-26 between the mouth of the Columbia and the Wauna powerlines near Cathlamet.

That action follows a similar six-day extension approved for mid-July. "Fishing was generally good, but we didn't get the turnout we expected because a lot of anglers decided to fish for salmon off the coast," said Brad James, another WDFW fish biologist. "That left room for some extra fishing days."

**Salmon** will no doubt loom even larger in anglers' minds by the time that fishery wraps up. Starting Aug. 1, the fall salmon season will open on the Columbia River from Buoy 10 to the Hwy. 395 Bridge in Pasco and on a lot of tributaries in between. More than 700,000 coho are expected to enter the Columbia River this year along with nearly 533,000 chinook, generating high hopes for the upcoming fall salmon fishery.

"This year's coho return to the Columbia is expected to be largest since 2001," Hymer said. "Add an above-average chinook return to that and you have a pretty favorable outlook for fall salmon fisheries."

A major focus of anticipation is the Buoy 10 fishery near the mouth of the Columbia River, where fishery managers are planning for a catch of 10,700 chinook and 119,100 hatchery coho. During the month of August, the daily limit will be two salmon (but only one chinook) or hatchery steelhead or one of each. All salmon other than chinook and hatchery coho must be released. Barbed hooks will be allowed.

The north jetty is open for fishing seven days per week when the Buoy 10 area or Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco) are open for salmon fishing.

The daily adult catch limits are the same for anglers fishing from the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line to Bonneville Dam, where fishery managers are planning for a catch of 15,100 chinook and 1,900 coho. Fishing rules for these and other areas are described in WDFW's Fishing in Washington pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs> ).

Hymer said fall fishing rules for area tributaries, also described in the pamphlet, reflect both the expected size of this year's coho return and the transition to mark-selective chinook fishing in those rivers. "The rules are basically designed to protect wild chinook, while giving anglers a chance to remove as many excess hatchery fish from spawning areas as possible," he said. "Rules regarding release of wild adult chinook and jacks vary, because some hatcheries began fin-clipping fish earlier than others. So we're still a year or two away from the day when all returning chinook will be marked."

Below is a summary of the new rules that will be in effect on various tributaries to the Columbia River starting Aug. 1:

- **Bonus hatchery coho retention:** Anglers may retain up to six hatchery adult coho on all lower Columbia tributaries with hatchery programs, including the Cowlitz, Deep, Elochoman, Grays (including West Fork), Kalama, Klickitat, Lewis (including North Fork), Toutle (including Green and North Fork) and Washougal rivers. Last year, the Cowlitz River was the only system with a daily limit of six hatchery adult coho.
- **Release all wild chinook:** Anglers must release all chinook (adults and jacks) on the Elochoman and Kalama rivers, where mass-marked fall chinook that are two, three and four

years old will be returning this year. Very few five and six year-olds are expected, so this regulation provides additional protection for wild chinook adults with a minimal loss of sportfishing opportunity for older unmarked hatchery fish.

- **Release wild chinook jacks:** This rule will be in effect on the Cowlitz, Toutle (including Green and North Fork), Washougal, Wind and White Salmon rivers, plus Drano Lake. Two and three year-old mass-marked fall chinook will be returning to the Cowlitz, Toutle and Washougal rivers, while two, three, and four year-olds will return to the Little White Salmon National Fish Hatchery. Some strays from various hatcheries also can be found in the Washington tributaries above Bonneville Dam.
- **Hatchery chinook strays on the Lewis River:** Anglers may retain stray hatchery chinook on the Lewis River and North Fork Lewis through September. While no fall chinook are released from Lewis River hatcheries, some stray tules are found in the system.
- **Boat angling restriction on the North Fork Lewis River:** This regulation, which applies to the Cedar Creek area, will be delayed until October to give anglers greater access to the large number of hatchery coho expected to return to the river. The restriction on boats will still take effect in time to protect wild fall chinook, which are expected to return in improved numbers but just above the minimum escapement goal.
- **Grays and Elochoman rivers open Aug. 1:** The starting date for fall salmon fisheries has been moved up to allow anglers to catch early arriving fish, particularly Select Area Bright fall chinook that stray into the Grays River.

Meanwhile, **sturgeon** fishing has been slow from the Wauna powerlines to Bonneville Dam, and will switch to catch-and-release during August and September. Catch-and-release fishing will open Aug. 1 in the area from Marker 85 to the deadlines below the dam, which has been closed to protect spawning sturgeon.

Farther upriver, boat anglers have been catching **walleye** and **bass** in the John Day Pool. Those fishing The Dalles Pool have mostly been catching bass.

At Riffe Lake, bank anglers have been catching a mixture of **landlocked coho**, chinook, steelhead and a few bass. Those fishing Mayfield Lake have been catching rainbows around the hatchery. WDFW stocked Chambers, Knuppenburg and Long lakes in Lewis County with 510 catchable-size brown trout apiece from July 9-14.

### **Eastern Washington**

Despite the heat, anglers can still find fish in the cool early morning and late evening hours. But if you're looking for something really different, WDFW central district Fish Biologist Chris Donley suggests going after **crawfish**.

Whether you call them crayfish, crawdads, or freshwater lobsterettes, the Signal Crawfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) is one of Washington's most under-used resource. Growing to six inches or more, it's the largest native species in the country and just as tasty as any shellfish. "Crawfish seem to be in good numbers in many of our lakes that have rocky shorelines and bottoms," Donley said. "Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County and Amber, Badger and Williams lakes in Spokane County have crawfish. So does Lake Roosevelt, Loon Lake in Stevens County and Bead Lake in Pend Oreille County."

Crawfish are caught in traps or pots similar to those used for crab and shrimp on the coast. Donley said some sporting goods stores in eastern Washington sell traps designed for crawfish. Trap or pot marking rules, including the use of some type of flotation device on the surface of the water above the pot, are similar to those for crab and shrimp - found on page 133 of the fishing regulations pamphlet.

"Crawfish are active at night, so set traps for overnight soaks using something oily or smelly for bait, such as fish-cleaning leftovers, chicken gizzards or even a punched-out can of cat food," Donley said. "The best spots to sink traps are where there's 15 to 40 feet of water and rocks or woody debris."

No sport fishing license is required to catch crawfish, but there is a season, which runs from May through October. Rules include: five pots per person; crawfish must be a minimum size of 3-1/4 inches; and the daily limit is 10 pounds in the shell. Check all regulation details on page 128 of the fishing pamphlet.

Donley said **largemouth** and **smallmouth bass** fishing continues to be productive during early and late hours at many fisheries throughout the region, including Downs and Chapman lakes in southwest Spokane County.

Bill Baker, WDFW northeast district fish biologist, said **kokanee** fishing has been productive at Lake Roosevelt and is picking up at Loon Lake during evening hours. Some of the high elevation trout lakes on U.S. Forest Service property in Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties may be good bets to escape the heat for camping and fishing weekends.

### **Northcentral Washington**

**Salmon** fishing has picked up considerably on the mainstem upper Columbia River above Wells Dam in Okanogan County. Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist of Omak, says chinook up to 20 pounds and sockeye up to five pounds are being caught in the river section from Wells Dam upstream to the Highway 17 Bridge just below Chief Joseph Dam near Bridgeport.

The daily catch limit for salmon is six fish, only four of which may be adults and up to two of the adult salmon may be chinook. "All salmon with an anchor or floy tag attached must be released, which includes both chinook and sockeye," Jateff said.

Jateff says **trout** fishing on the Methow River and selected tributaries has also picked up, with both rainbows and cutthroat up to 16 inches being caught. Selective gear rules and catch-and-release are in effect for this fishery. Consult WDFW's Fishing in Washington pamphlet at [wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm](http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm) for areas closed to fishing on the Methow, Chewuch, and Twisp rivers.

"Surface water temperatures are increasing in local lakes, but anglers willing to fish slow and deep, like 15 to 25 feet deep, are doing well for rainbow trout," Jateff said. "Big Twin Lake near Winthrop and Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area are two selective gear lakes with a one-fish limit that continue to produce trout, even in the heat of the summer."

Water levels on Potholes Reservoir are dropping rapidly with summer's heat, and that can make it easier fishing for some species. **Yellow perch, crappie** and **bluegill** catches are reported being caught from the dunes area of the big waterway. Early morning top water largemouth bass fishing is also productive.

### **Southcentral Washington**

Paul Hoffarth, WDFW district fish biologist from Pasco, reports that during the most recent creel checks on the Columbia River west of the Tri-Cities, no one was even fishing for **salmon**. Since the season opened last month, anglers have retained four adult chinook, 56 jack chinook, and eight sockeye.

"Anglers continue to pick up a few **walleye** ," Hoffarth said. "In our last check, 25 anglers had 21 walleye. Based on the fishing effort reported, that averaged out to one walleye for every six and a half hours of fishing."

Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist from Yakima, says rivers and streams are now low and clear so they should be producing rainbow and cutthroat trout catches. He reminds anglers to know the rules - selective gear requirements, catch limits, size minimums and maximums - all available in the Fishing in Washington regulations pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> .

"Our low elevation lakes are likely slow due to the hot weather," Cummins said. "It's almost too hot to even try fishing them. A better bet would be the high elevation lakes, those above 3,500 feet. There are both drive-to and hike-to waters with decent trout fishing in Yakima and Kittitas counties. If you're not familiar with them, check out our 'High Lakes Primer' available on the region's webpage." (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/regions/region3/> )

### **TGF Inbox**

Dave C. wrote via the Contact Form at the TGF website: "You noted in your July 16th mailing that our fishing licenses were going to go up and you mentioned a \$5 Permit for boats over 10'. Is that only on lakes and reservoirs or is that on all waters? I have a Clackacraft Drift Boat so that is why I am wondering."

TGF co-editor Michael Teague responded, "This new fee came through the legislators quickly and at the last minute. Since this was without advance knowledge of the Marine Board, they don't have any answers. At this point it is any boat powered manually or by mechanically on any and all waters in Oregon.

"If there's any change before it goes into effect in 2010, you'll read about it in TGF.

"Thanks for writing and good luck out there."

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

Write to the TGF staff:

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### **Random Links**

Warmwater opportunities in the North Willamette Valley:

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/warm\\_water\\_fishing/printable\\_maps/north\\_willamette.pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/warm_water_fishing/printable_maps/north_willamette.pdf)

50 places to fish within 60 minutes of Portland:

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&msa=0&msid=100468822378695498082.00046243b03f2bb953685&t=p&ll=45.531365,-122.687073&spn=0.89466,1.760559&z=9>

**GOOD LUCK!**