

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **August 14<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro** - Steelhead counts are picking back up again at Bonneville Dam where anglers are catching an occasional adult. The larger "B" run steelhead will soon dominate the return, providing an opportunity for anglers to catch a fish of a lifetime. These Idaho bound fish can occasionally top the 20-pound mark.

Chinook season is open from Buoy 10 to Bonneville Dam with only an occasional adult being taken. Catches should ramp up toward the end of the month however as anchor anglers hogline using wobblers to take fish to 40 pounds. There are sanctuaries set up however, so check regulations before anchoring up.

There was no fish passage at Willamette Falls during the first week of August with the water in the high 70s. Water temperatures dropped to 72 on Monday this week.

The McKenzie is producing fair catches of reddsides and summer steelhead.

Steelheading has been slow on the North Santiam with fish scattered. The level and flow are stabilizing.

Both the Clackamas and Sandy rivers are low and clear making for tough steelheading. The Clackamas is the better bet, though. Coho will be arriving in a few weeks and should provide some action.

Alton Baker Canal, Carmen Reservoir, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake and Salmon Creek are scheduled to be planted with trout.

**Northwest** – Anglers fishing the Astoria area are still finding the best fishing just offshore from green Buoy 1 to the CR Buoy to the SW of the river entrance. Rod Brobeck of Portland took his limit on Sunday with one chinook tipping the scale at 30 pounds.

The lower Columbia River is producing a few chinook on the Oregon side but this is traditionally the week when chinook catches begin to ramp up. Warmer water temperatures may keep adults close to the estuary where they will react to spinners from low slack through the first few hours of outgoing tide. Coho are still making up the bulk of the catch in the Buoy 10 fishery.

Tuna were available within 35 miles last weekend with live bait anglers faring considerably better than those using artificials. This will likely be the trend for the remainder of the season.

Crabbing in the lower Columbia and outside remains excellent but soft-shelled adults still dominate the catches. River crab should begin to improve later this month.

Offshore coho catches remained excellent for boats fishing north of Newport. Anglers averaged nearly 1.9 fish per rod from these ports. Larger chinook are starting to show but must be released if you are fishing south of Cape Falcon near Manzanita.

Coho may begin to show along the jetties of the Nehalem and Tillamook estuaries. Jig casters are likely to encounter quality fish into early October so watch for bait balls for the best

opportunities.

A slight rise in north coast rivers may inspire summer steelheaders on the Nestucca, Wilson and Three Rivers. Mornings will still be the best time to pursue these fish and don't overlook sea-run cutthroat either as they should be plentiful in many north coast streams.

**Southwest** – Tides will be mild this weekend and incoming for morning launches. Coho catches have been very good out of most ports with about 60% of the hatchery coho quota taken so far this season. Anglers are averaging nearly 5 tuna per rod.

Boaters enjoyed good bar conditions for all-depth halibut over the past weekend. The next opportunity will be August 21st through 23rd.

Catches of chinook on the lower Umpqua have picked up and weekend fishing was reported as good. Smallmouth bass fishing is good around Elkton and in the South Umpqua.

While tuna catches slowed over the past weekend with fish scattered, the ODFW checkers estimate that about 8,000 albacore have been caught out of Charleston so far this year. Visit <http://oregontunaclassic.org/> for information on the Oregon Tuna classic being held here August 15th.

An ODFW-sponsored clam and crab seminar will take place at the Charleston RV Recreational Center from 8 to 9 AM on August 24<sup>th</sup>

Anglers launching out of Bandon have done particularly well for tuna with charters regularly bringing in a 100 or more on a single trip.

Trollers on the Rogue estuary continue to do well for fall chinook. Following several years of less than stellar numbers, it appears better fishing has returned. Fine numbers of half-pounders are entering the river as well. Steelheading is fair to good below Gold Ray Dam.

Warm water and tuna have been found near shore out of Brookings recently. In addition to albacore, some bluefin and yellowtail have been taken. Coho fishing has been good four to eight miles out and bottom fishing remains excellent but sea lions have been problematic.

The Rogue above Lost Creek is scheduled to be stocked with trout.

**Eastern** – Trollers working the mouth of the Deschutes River have fared well in recent days. Anglers working the lower 15 miles of the Deschutes itself have found excellent steelheading as cooler waters have drawn significant numbers of Idaho bound fish into the river. Plugs and spinners are working best.

Kokanee fishing has been fair to good at Green Peter at depths of 40 to 70 feet.

A flash flood killed an estimated 8,000 smallmouth bass on the John Day River last week according to the ODFW. While other warmwater species were affected, apparently channel cats, steelhead and salmon were spared.

**SW Washington** – With nearly a 20 degree difference between the Cowlitz and mainstem Columbia, large numbers of steelhead are nosing into the lower stretches and are falling to anglers working hardware and bait.

The Lewis and Kalama Rivers are producing an occasional steelhead. Chinook will begin entering

district streams in the coming weeks and anglers should check local listings for what species are legal to take and their respective bag limits.

Trollers working Drano Lake are catching betters than a steelhead per rod in this fishery. About half of the catch are of hatchery origin.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – With Buoy 10 largely on the minds of most, it makes the most sense to give this fishery the most ink. Well, it's underway! The Chinook catch on Wednesday was good for some but only fair for others. And that's the way this fishery works. It's hard to stay consistent but the Chinook are in and anglers are taking a variety of tules, upriver brights and Rogue River strain Chinook near and downstream of the Astoria/Megler Bridge.

Most recently, boats have been starting their day at the mouth of Young's Bay, targeting returning Chinook for the first hour of the morning. Young's Bay has a nice terminal Chinook program and the fish have been present around high tide on the flats just downstream and in front of the Skipanon River. The action doesn't seem to last long however as boats are quick to boogie out of there after just an hour or so. This area fishes best around high tide.

From there, guides have been crossing the river to the Washington side and hitting more Chinook on the first part of the outgoing tide in 20 to 30 foot of water. With the warmer water, Chinook have been reluctant to migrate upstream making for good fishing conditions for anglers downstream. The warmer water has also allowed for a good hardware bite with Fatal Flash Spinners the new hot ticket. Although these blades came on the market this year, the manufacturer has come up with a plethora of new colors and combinations that are really producing results. Check out the "candy-back" blades now available by contacting Andy at (503) 791-4094. Andy has a dockside shop at the Red Lion facility that showcases all his new colors. He may even be able to twist up a custom spinner for you!

Coho have been making up a large portion of the catch as well and even with the onset of peak Chinook fishing, coho should continue to make up a large portion of the catch given this years run forecast. Once you have your Chinook, you can target coho more readily by switching to smaller spinners and don't fish them as deep as you would Chinook. It won't be long before the estuary is inundated with coho salmon. More on how to target these fish in the next section.

As the week wears on, the tides get better but we'll address that in The Guide's Forecast section of this segment.

Meanwhile, the ocean remains a favorable place to fish with mostly coho but a few quality sized Chinook coming from boats fishing in the big pond. I fished out there on Sunday, finding a dozen hatchery coho and a 30-pound Chinook for the Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation's Rod Brobeck. Our best action came from green Buoy 1 west by southwest from 170 to 300 foot of water. It took a while to complete our limit but we did end up with some quality fish. We used mostly anchovies but herring were working equally well. There was still some effort to the north but boats working the CR Buoy were not doing as well although that's likely changed by now. I also saw boats catching fish around Buoy 2 and we should start to see good catches in closer as late August approaches.

Effort has increased for crab but the catch remains great. Traditionally, the ocean has closed to recreational crabbing on August 15<sup>th</sup> but NW Guides and Anglers member Gary Kish went through the public process to keep crabbing open into October so go utilize the fruits of his labor as it will only get better from here. Crabbing in the lower Columbia is also picking up but with the onslaught of anglers coming to the region in the coming weeks, competition will be fierce.

Besides that, with all the boat traffic on the water, you stand a real chance on getting your buoy lines severed by vessels underway, headed to the ocean or the Buoy 10 line itself.

Tuna fishers, armed with the right stuff (live bait) did good last weekend. The problem was, not many anglers were armed with live bait. Trollers did take a few fish but if you have live anchovies, you were in 'em. Live bait fishers came back with between 30 and 50 fish for a days effort telling stories of staying on a school for 2 hours or more. That's good action. It all took place about 30 miles out from the mouth of the Columbia River.

Upstream, anglers were floored by the recent record set at Bonneville Dam with a 1-day steelhead count of over 18,000 fish. Adults have been keggering up in lower river tributaries that are considerably colder than the mainstem Columbia. Anglers that know how to fish these areas have been scoring easy limits of summer steelhead. Anglers targeting these fish in the upriver tributaries are in for a real surprise over the next week although tribal gillnets will go into the river upstream of Bonneville Dam and severely curtail success for these fisheries. The Deschutes has been on fire recently but that too will come to an end although fair action is likely to continue. The best action has been upriver but trollers working the mouth are finding fair success several days of the week.

Although Chinook passage numbers are building, action will remain somewhat slow with fish motivated to keep moving until they find cooler water to bask in. Passage numbers will jump considerably in the coming weeks but anglers will remain frustrated that they can't get these fish to bite. The exception however will be the anchor fleet from Longview to Portland. Boaters working wobblers on the outgoing tide will have some great days of fishing ahead and it's likely to start kicking in late in this reporting period. There have been Chinook taken in the Cowlitz confluence already.

**Late report:** The offshore coho fishing was hot out of the Columbia while catches of Chinook were very good Tuesday this week near the Astoria-Megler Bridge on the Washington side.

**The Guide's Forecast** – This week, there should be a significant improvement in the Chinook numbers we'll witness on the lower Columbia. The first good catches occurred on Wednesday and with the tides only improving, the action should be great by the weekend. Although each year is different, usually by mid-month, Chinook numbers are great in the estuary to where experienced anglers can expect multiple opportunities for a day's effort. With a warm mainstem, adults are likely to be holding in the cooler waters of the lower river; at least until they acclimate to a nearly 20 degree temperature shift when they hit the lower river.

Last year, we didn't have such warm water and a lot of the action came on herring for bait. This year, with the exceptionally warm temperatures, hardware will be an important tool in an anglers arsenal with spinners being a real threat. Wobblers can also take fair numbers of fish but it's important to use the tides to your advantage as temperatures play a large role in your success. The least productive time of the tide will be the last 3 hours of outgoing tide. That is the period of time when the water temperature is at its greatest.

The biters will follow the cold water. Starting in the extreme lower end at low slack, work your way upstream as the tide does. Also note, the tide starts in on the Washington side first, making it's way over to the Oregon side nearly an hour later. Anglers targeting salmon in front of Hammond or the sawdust pile need not begin until the tide has run for at least 1½ hours from low slack. Turn and face the incoming tide with your favorite lure or bait, staggering your offerings between 22 and 40 feet when targeting Chinook and 12 to 40 feet for coho. The coho will show stronger later so focus on Chinook this week.

Or, utilize the good ocean conditions (see ocean weather forecast below) and spank a quick limit of coho with a fair chance at a Chinook too. As I have been stating the whole season, the earlier you get out, the better the fishing will be. Target fish from the green buoy 1 to the CR Buoy but watch for boats taking fish at Buoy 2 on your run out. The fish should be getting closer every day.

Crabbers working the ocean or bay will likely go home happy unless you get your gear run over by boats headed for the ocean. I give it a 50/50 chance you go home with all the gear you came with. The river has a better ratio of hard-shelled crabs, they are just not as plentiful.

Salmon fishers upstream of Tongue Point may find challenging conditions with temperatures still running quite warm although dropping. Wobbler anglers certainly stand a chance at getting into fish but this peak season is still weeks away. The "thermal block" should effectively keep biters in the estuary for a few key weeks before migrating hard upstream.

Beach plunkers will have a hard time finding consistent results with the temperatures being the way that they are. Larger "B" run fish are becoming available however and it's likely there are still tens of thousands of "A" run fish yet to come as well.

Steelheaders are more likely to do well in the Bonneville area where flows are swifter and the water may be a bit cooler. Although the tribal netters will impact this weeks catches above Bonneville, action should still be good for those targeting the cooler tributaries of the mainstem Columbia. The trolling show at the mouth of the Deschutes should begin to really pick up steam in the coming weeks.

If you decide to go offshore for tuna, bring live bait or you won't need much cooler space. Flat out, this is the time of year when live bait rules and only the dumb ones fall to trolled lures. It takes a bit more to prep for a trip but the rewards will be ten-fold. Expect at least a 25 mile run to the west.

Here is the ocean forecast:

**FRI** NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 3 FT.

**FRI NIGHT** NW WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

**SAT** NW WIND 5 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

**SAT NIGHT** N WIND 15 TO 25 KT...EASING TO 10 TO 15 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 2 TO 4 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT.

**SUN** N WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT. **MON** N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 7 FT.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – With the water temperature dropping to 70 degrees at Willamette Falls, a few Chinook have been counted but daily numbers remain very low. Chinook will be counted as fall fish as of August 16th.

McKenzie water temperature, level and flow remain very conducive to good results for anglers.

The North Santiam has stabilized and cleared after silt roiled the water last week from Big Cliff Reservoir while the spillway was repaired. This week the water is also much colder - mid 40s to low 50s in most places.

**The Guide's Forecast** – The Oakbridge stretch of the Middle Fork Willamette has been fishing well for fly anglers targeting trout. Cloudy days are better than sunny. Steelhead are being caught below Dexter Dam and on the town run.

Try the upper McKenzie for reddsides. Evenings are best as hatches have been good. Steelheading is fair from the town of Leaburg up to the dam.

Steelheading is slow to spotty on the North Santiam. There are still a few bright spring Chinook to be had but try for them soon. The Santiam closes to salmon on August 15th.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – The Clackamas is low and clear with recent rain having little effect on the river. A few steelhead are being taken on spinners but soon coho will be available. Stay tuned.

Fishing in the Sandy is very slow. As of mid-week, the water had turned milky with poor visibility.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Coho are still stealing the show in the Garibaldi area. Offshore anglers are raking in the fish but wild fish still dominate the catches. Effort and success has really ramped up in recent weeks with unprecedented good weather conditions. As of August 9<sup>th</sup>, nearly 60 percent of the coho quota has been taken. We may not realize the full quota but it's been a great run so far this year!

Boats working the 170 to 200 foot water line have been producing consistent results with 2 to 3 fish per rod common. Trolling green label baits has been the key but really, a key would probably work on these aggressive biters. Effort will likely wane at many coastal ports as effort will shift to the lower Columbia as the Chinook begin to make their appearance. Numbers of hatchery keepers should continue to ramp up as they head for the Columbia River into early September.

Ocean crabbing remains excellent with crab beginning to fill out a bit more. The majority of keepers are still in a soft shelled state but that will improve in the coming weeks. Most of the keepers we caught recently, didn't even require a measurement because they were so large.

With Nehalem Bay closed to Chinook, focus will be on Tillamook in the coming weeks. Effort is next to nil on the estuary but Chinook and coho should become available in the next few weeks. Jetty casters working blue and silver jigs over diving birds should find some degree of success as hatchery coho make their way back into their respective watersheds. The Nehalem and Tillamook are expected to have great returns of hatchery coho this year so be prepared to target them as they are likely to arrive in the next 2 weeks with a late September peak assuming we don't get a significant rise in the river levels.

And speaking of river rises, steelheaders working the Wilson, Nestucca and Three Rivers found new opportunities under cloudy skies and rainy conditions to target summer runs in the pockets of these systems this week. Although it's unlikely that it was red-hot fishing, some of the better opportunity in the last month should have occurred this week. Quality fish should be available into early September. Sea-run cutthroat trout are also an option for ultra light spin gear fishers as well as fly fishermen.

**The Guide's Forecast** – It should be another good week of coho fishing out of Garibaldi and most northern ports. Coho should begin to congregate in good numbers as they head to the Columbia for their final destination. Fish in the early morning..... where have you heard that before? The tides are right for good bar crossings but ALWAYS check the bar conditions and adhere to all coast guard requirements before considering a bar crossing. We've had pretty good luck so far so strongly consider wearing your life jackets while recreating on the water.

Bring your crab pots and the next time you see Gary Kish, thank him for getting the recreational crab season extended into October! It's only going to get better from here!

Tuna chasers should also do well out of Garibaldi but live bait will be key to your success so prepare yourself with the necessities or expect mediocre results at best.

Although you may find an occasional coho inside the jaws of Tillamook and Nehalem Bays, it may be a few more weeks before you can expect better results. Trolled herring or anchovies or metal jigs like the mega-bait should work excellent when the fish do appear. Bottomfishing has slowed but most anglers are focused on salmon right now anyway.

North coast rivers are still low and clear despite the recent ½ foot rise at mid-week. None-the-less, steelhead should be a little easier to catch with a batch of new fresh water running over their faces. Stealth techniques are still required.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Lots of tuna returned to port over the past weekend courtesy of recreational boats filled with albacore enthusiasts. As warm water moved closer to the beach, anglers traveled as many as 30 miles out of Brookings to as little as seven or eight miles out of Newport.

Anglers launching out of Newport for the first summer all-depth halibut opportunity did very well over the past weekend. Boats out of Newport alone returned with 41,000 pounds. Matter of fact, off the central Oregon coast, they caught 'em all, exceeding the quota by a jaw-dropping 21%. Don't take our word for it, look here:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/finfish/halibut/estimates/halcatch2009.asp>

Despite anglers reporting having to release 50% or more of coho taken in order to retain only hatchery fish, catches have been good enough that nearly half the quota of 110,000 had been taken as of the latest data through August 10th. Out of Depoe Bay, as many as 80% of the fish being caught have been wild. It has been 60/40 out of Newport.

Chinook fishing in the lower Umpqua has been fair to good but is improving as more fish enter the system. Smallmouth bass fishing is red hot and rollin' on the mainstem Umpqua on the Elkton stretch as well as the lower South Umpqua. Most spring Chinook have run up into the North Umpqua where catches are fair. Steelheading has picked up once again on the North Umpqua where bait is allowed.

Boats launching out of Charleston found albacore at the 14-mile mark over the past weekend. On Tuesday this week, it was still only a 16-17 mile run.

When the Rogue River water temperature dropped below the 70-degree mark last week, fall Chinook took the opportunity to vacate the bay to charge upstream. Consequently, Chinook catches are being made at below Quosatana Creek while trolling the estuary has slowed. That doesn't mean the Rogue Bay is slow; quite the contrary. As many as 80 to 100 Chinook have been taken some days by a similar number of boats. The anchovy/green spinner combo is

responsible for most fish coming over the gunwales. The lower river is producing decent catches of half-pounders which are not too particular about what the bite or strike. Plugs, spinners bait or flies, it's all good. When pods of Chinook have passed through the Grants Pass stretch, catches have been fair to good. There are summer steelhead in this stretch as well which average 18 inches. Over 13,000 springers and nearly 3,400 summer steelhead have been counted at Gold Ray Dam. Steelheading on the upper Rogue has been worthwhile with the summer no fussier about what they engulf than those half-pounders.

High winds offshore may prevent launching out of the Port of Brookings this weekend. During the past weekend, it was business as usual with great tuna catches for those equipped to travel 30 miles or so offshore with excellent bottom fishing just outside. Bottom fish were available just outside with some dandy black rockfish coming out of depths of only 20 or 30 feet. Ling cod catches also picked up. All that find fishing will still be available when offshore conditions settle down. Try for cutthroat in the Chetco but keep in mind that no bait is allowed above tidewater.

A woman caught a Diamond Lake rainbow that taped out at 27 inches and scaled seven pounds. The same day a local guide had an unseen fish strip nearly 200 yards of line from his reel to spool him. While fishing here is fair, at Diamond Lake, you just never know. The biggest trout of your life may be in there but you'll never know if you don't get out there. The bugs which often plague anglers here are thinning out.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Steelheaders experienced fair to good results on the lower Deschutes over the past weekend. The river is fishing best from Shearers to Mack's Canyon. With 18,671 over Bonneville on Wednesday this week, fishing will be very good later this season.

Green Peter has continued to provide good kokanee fishing with many anglers taking 25-fish limits.

Most fish are showing early signs of the upcoming spawn

Wickiup is the latest body of water to experience a toxic blue-green algae bloom. Track algae warnings here: <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/hab/>

### **Washington fishing reports:**

**From the WDF&W Weekender Report August 5-18, 2009**

#### **North Puget Sound**

For the most part, salmon fishing in the region has tapered off recently. But the bite could pick up again in the coming weeks as a parade of pink salmon begins to make its way into Puget Sound.

"We're starting to see **pink salmon** show up in the catch throughout north Puget Sound," said Steve Thiesfeld, a fish biologist for WDFW. "In the next couple of weeks, I expect we'll see more and more pink salmon push into the region."

"Humpy Hollow," a portion of Puget Sound stretching from Shipwreck to Mukilteo, should be a good bet in the next few weeks for anglers who want to catch pink salmon, Thiesfeld said. Fish biologists are predicting that 5.1 million pink salmon - also known as "humpies" - will enter Puget Sound this year and a good portion of them will pass through those waters, he said.

Anglers fishing Humpy Hollow, or other waters of Marine Area 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner), have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon. All chinook salmon must be released. The regulations are the same for neighboring Marine Area 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay).

Elsewhere, fishing has "cooled" recently in marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), Thiesfeld said. "Fishing has been pretty slow, except in inner Elliott Bay, where the bite has shown some improvement," he said.

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 and **chum salmon**. Those fishing inner Elliott Bay - which is open Fridays through Mondays only - have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release chum.

Another option is Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where anglers have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but can only keep one chinook. Anglers in Marine Area 7 also must release wild coho and chum.

"Fishing has been great at Neah Bay and Sekiu the last couple weeks," Thiesfeld said. "Hopefully those fish are heading into the region, and fishing will get better in the coming days."

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 northern portion of Marine Area 7 opens for crab Aug. 12, under the same regulations.

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.

For freshwater anglers, only a few days remain to catch and keep chinook on the Skagit River. The Skagit is open through Aug. 9 from the mouth of the river to the mouth of Gilligan Creek from noon Thursday through Sunday. Anglers have a daily limit of two salmon, only one of which may be an adult chinook, but must release coho and chum.

However, a portion of the Skagit River re-opens Aug. 16 for salmon fishing. The Skagit will be open from the mouth of the river to the Dalles Bridge at Concrete. Anglers will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release chinook and chum.

The Snohomish and a portion of the Skykomish River also open for salmon Aug. 16. Anglers fishing those rivers will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release chinook.

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**

Salmon fishing continues to clip along off the coast where anglers may now keep up to two chinook as part of their daily limit. Meanwhile, pink salmon are making their way from the ocean to Puget Sound, where Hood Canal recently opened to crab fishing.

From Ilwaco to Neah Bay, anglers are consistently catching their limits due to good weather and a slug of coho salmon, said Erica Crust, WDFW ocean port sampler.

"Folks are mainly catching coho, but some **chinook** in the 30-pound range have been caught off Westport with the coho weighing about six pounds," Crust said. In Ilwaco, the catch makeup has

been about one chinook for every nine coho, while anglers fishing off La Push and Neah Bay are catching a mix of coho and **pink salmon** .

Crust reminds anglers that the limit for chinook is now two fish per day in all ocean areas. "There was enough fish remaining in the quota to ease the one-chinook limit, which is good because we're still in the midst of some primetime fishing," Crust said

All coastal areas are 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 - two chinook, or two hatchery coho or a combination of both. 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. As of Aug. 1, all chum and chinook must be released east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line in Marine Area 4 (Neah Bay).

On the Strait of Juan de Fuca, anglers will be required to release all chinook salmon in marine areas 5 and 6 (Sekiu and the eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) after the end of the day Thursday, Aug. 6, which is earlier than scheduled. The decision to end the fishery was based on conservation concerns for wild chinook, which must be released if encountered by anglers, said Pat Pattillo, salmon policy coordinator for WDFW.

Pattillo reminds anglers that fishing opportunities for **pink salmon, hatchery coho** and **sockeye** still abound on the Strait. "The fishing has been excellent and anglers should enjoy a good season through September," Pattillo said.

Creel checks conducted during the Aug. 1-2 weekend near Sekiu (Marine Area 5) showed 762 anglers catching 406 pink salmon and 328 coho. The salmon fisheries in marine areas 5 and 6 are open seven days a week, with a two-fish daily limit. All chum, chinook and wild coho must be released. In addition, anglers may add two pink salmon to their daily catch.

Pink salmon heading for the Puyallup River basin should help boost fishing success near Tacoma (Marine Area 11), where a creel check taken Aug. 2 at the Dash Point Dock showed 94 anglers with 20 pink salmon. Salmon fishing in Commencement Bay got under way Aug. 1.

The salmon fishery in Marine Area 11 runs seven days a week, with a two-fish daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon. The minimum size for chinook is 22 inches with no minimum limit for other species. All wild chinook must be released.

Area rivers may also be an option for salmon anglers. The Skokomish River in southern Hood canal is now open and anglers can fish from the mouth of the river to the Hwy. 101 bridge. The daily limit is one salmon; all chum must be released. In northern Hood Canal the Quilcene River opens Aug. 16 from Rodgers Street to the to the Hwy. 101 bridge. The fishery is open seven days a week through Oct. 31. The daily limit is four coho only, with a minimum size of 12 inches.

The Puyallup River, which empties into Commencement Bay, also opens Aug. 16. Before heading out, anglers are advised to check the 2009-2010 Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> for details on size and catch limits.

For those interested in winning a boat, some cash or just getting out on the water, three derbies in the Northwest Salmon Derby Series are coming up in Puget Sound. On Aug. 8, participants in the **Gig Harbor Salmon Derby** can try for the \$1,000 first prize for catching the largest chinook or coho salmon. For more information, contact [psa-gh07derby@earthlink.net](mailto:psa-gh07derby@earthlink.net) .

The ninth annual Hood Canal Salmon Derby will be held on Aug. 15 and 16. Tickets are \$25 and participants can try for a first prize of \$1,000. Weigh-ins will be at the Port Dock near Hoodport. Contact Clint Muns at 360-490-8482. Coming up Aug. 22-23 is the Sinclair Inlet Salmon Derby, located near Bremerton on the Kitsap Peninsula. Contact [Gramdiok@msn.com](mailto:Gramdiok@msn.com) for more information.

Participants in all of these derbies will be entered in a raffle for a 20-foot Stabi-Craft fishing boat, motor and trailer. For more information, visit <http://www.discovernorthwestfishing.com> .

In other derby news, The Westport/Grayland Chamber of Commerce is hosting a **Summer Beach Perch Fishing Derby** Aug. 15 along the beaches around Westport. The event starts is sponsored by Angler Charters at 2401 Westhaven Drive, across from Float 8 at the Westport Marina. Participants can register for the derby by calling 1-800-422-0425, or visit [www.anglercharters.net](http://www.anglercharters.net) .

Meanwhile, the Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) **Dungeness crab** fishery is now under way and will run through Jan. 2. Marine Area 7 North (Lummi Island/Blaine) will be open Aug. 12-Sept. 30. Both are open Wednesdays through Saturdays only, plus the entire Labor Day weekend. 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.

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> .

### **Southwest Washington**

The Buoy 10 salmon fishery near the mouth of the Columbia River got off to a characteristically slow start Aug. 1, but is expected to pick up in the days ahead. Meanwhile, anglers fishing for hatchery steelhead are changing tactics to adapt to high water temperatures on the big river.

Salmon were scarce during the first few days of fishing at Buoy 10, but that's not uncommon for the popular fishery in the Columbia River estuary, said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. "Buoy 10 often starts slow, then ramps up quickly and peaks in mid-to-late August," he said. "The fishery can come alive in a single tide, so it's important to keep track of what's going on."

To track the fishery's progress anglers can check daily catch-sampling reports posted on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regions/reg5/buoy10.htm> . The site also includes links to area web cameras, along with marine forecasts and information on water temperatures and salinity.

The Buoy 10 fishery takes place in the last 16 miles of the Columbia River, where fishery managers are predicting the largest run of coho salmon since 2001. Based on that forecast, they are planning for a catch of 119,100 **hatchery coho** and 10,700 **chinook** in the Buoy 10 fishery alone.

The daily catch limit in August is two salmon (but only one chinook) or hatchery steelhead or one of each. All salmon other than chinook and adipose-fin-clipped hatchery coho must be released. Barbed hooks are 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 limit and minimum size limits for the north jetty follow the most liberal regulations of either area.

The catch limit for adult fish at Buoy 10 is the same as that 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 at (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs> ).

Anglers fishing for hatchery steelhead in those waters might want to focus their efforts near the mouths of major tributaries, where the water is cooler, Hymer said. After a near-record catch of summer steelhead in July, the bite dropped off quickly when water temperatures below Bonneville Dam climbed into the low to mid-70s, he said.

"The situation will improve once we get some rain or a heavier cloud cover, but fishing near the mouths of tributaries is a good tactic in the meantime," Hymer said. Good bets are the mouth of the Cowlitz, Lewis, Wind or White Salmon rivers, plus Drano Lake, he said.

Anglers are also catching increasing numbers of hatchery steelhead farther upstream in many of those rivers. At Drano Lake, boat anglers averaged nearly a fish per rod during a recent creel check. Boat anglers have also been reeling in fish at Wind River, while catch rates for hatchery steelhead continue to improve around Blue Creek on the Cowlitz River.

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 now in effect on various tributaries to the Columbia River:

- **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 wild 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 opened Aug. 1:** The starting date for fall salmon fisheries was moved up to allow anglers to catch early arriving fish, particularly Select Area Bright fall chinook that stray into the Grays River.

While high water temperatures may not suit salmon and steelhead, they don't seem to be a problem for **walleye, bass** and other **warmwater fish** . In the John Day Pool, boat anglers have been averaging 1.5 walleye and four bass per rod. Below Bonneville Dam walleye fishing is also heating up in the Gorge and in the Camas/Washougal area.

Meanwhile, **trout** anglers should be aware that Council Lake was recently stocked with 3,760 catchable-size rainbows, while Takhlakh Lake got 4,025. Skate Creek and the Tilton River were each scheduled to get 2,000 catchable-size rainbows during the first week in August. For more information about trout-stocking schedules, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/> on the WDFW website.

### **Eastern Washington**

Fishing for some species is heating up with air and water temperatures. Debbie Milks, WDFW fish biologist, said **catfish** and **sturgeon** fishing has been productive in the Snake River system in the southeast part of the region.

"Fish have been landed near Lyons Ferry Hatchery as well as upstream by the railroad bridge," she said. "Catfish have also been caught up the Palouse River and near the mouth of the Tucannon River."

Sturgeon fishers are reminded of the minimum 43-inch and maximum 54-inch tail fork length, and daily catch limit of one sturgeon. The Snake and its tributaries upstream of Lower Granite Dam are catch-and-release only for sturgeon.

In the central district of the region, **largemouth** and **smallmouth bass** fishing continues to be productive during early and late hours at many mixed species fisheries, including Downs and Chapman lakes in southwest Spokane County. Long Lake, the reservoir off the Spokane River in northwest Spokane County continues to be good for both bass species, along with **crappie** and **perch** .

**Kokanee** fishing continues to be good at Lake Roosevelt and Stevens County's Loon Lake during evening hours.

Some of the high elevation lakes on U.S. Forest Service property in the northeast district that are stocked with **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** may be good destinations to beat the heat. In Ferry County, try Davis, Ellen, Empire Swan and Trout lakes. In Stevens County, try Gillette, Heritage, Sherry, Summit, and Thomas lakes. In Pend Oreille County, try Carl's, Cook's, Frater, Halfmoon, Leo, Mystic, Nile, No-Name, Petit, South and North Skookums, and Yokum lakes. Find out specific locations and more about these fishing lakes in WDFW's 2009 Fishing Prospects webpage at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/prospects/index.htm> .

Wherever anglers go, they are reminded to be extra careful with anything that could start a wildfire in the region. Plans should include a check on campfire and even road restrictions on

public lands. For fire information by county, see the Washington Department of Natural Resources website at <http://fortress.wa.gov/dnr/firedanger/BurnRisk.aspx> . Current wildfire conditions from the National Interagency Fire Center are available at <http://www.inciweb.org/> .

### **Northcentral Washington**

Lake Wenatchee in Chelan County opened Aug. 5 for **sockeye** salmon fishing, which will remain open until harvestable fish numbers have been caught. WDFW district fish biologist Art Viola said the 2009 return of sockeye is sufficient to meet spawning escapement goals and allow this special (not listed in the fishing pamphlet) sport fishing opportunity. "The sockeye run is late throughout the Columbia River, but we have a very robust Lake Wenatchee run," Viola said.

The daily limit per angler at Lake Wenatchee is two sockeye, 12 inches in length or greater. Single-point barbless hooks are required, and no more than three hooks may be used. The hooks may not be baited or scented and knotless nets are required. Legal angling hours are one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset. Bull trout, steelhead, and chinook salmon must be released unharmed without removing the fish from the water.

Viola also notes that Lake Wenatchee anglers are required to release sockeye marked with one or more round, quarter-inch holes punched in the tail or caudal fin. These fish are part of a study and have been anesthetized, resulting in a 21-day ban on consumption by humans.

The special season comes just in time to provide some action when other local salmon-fishing options are dwindling. "Sockeye fishing in the upper Columbia River is almost done now, because most of the fish have migrated out of the area," Viola said. "Fishing for upper Columbia **chinook salmon** is very hard right now. The fish seem to have 'lock-jaw,' due to high water temperatures. They just aren't biting."

But in Okanogan County, salmon fishing in the mainstem Columbia River above Wells Dam continues to be good. WDFW district fish biologist Bob Jateff reports near limits of sockeye in the two- to five-pound range, and chinook averaging 15-18 pounds, with larger fish running around 25 pounds. Jateff reminds anglers the daily catch limit is six salmon, only four of which may be adults and of those four adults only two may be chinook. Anglers who intend to release salmon are also reminded the fish must be kept in the water at all times during release.

Starting Aug. 7, anglers will be able to retain adult sockeye salmon in the Washington portion of Lake Osoyoos, 300 yards south of the US-Canadian border (marked with large fluorescent orange signs). Sockeye salmon returns above Zosel Dam are predicted to be in excess of needs for wild fish escapement to the spawning grounds. Minimum size is 12 inches and the daily catch limit is four sockeye salmon. All chinook salmon, and sockeye with colored anchor (floy) tag attached, must be released. The fishery is scheduled to run through Aug. 30.

Jateff says fishing on the Methow River for resident **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** has been good recently with reported catches of fish in the 10-16 inch range. Selective gear rules with catch-and-release requirements are in effect for the Methow and selected tributaries (Twisp and Chewuch). "Water temperatures are starting to rise in the river," Jateff said, "so anglers should bring fish to hand as quickly as possible and avoid taking any fish out of the water for any purpose."

Fishing is also good for **yellow perch** at Patterson Lake and for **bluegill** at Leader Lake, Jateff said. There are no bag limits and no minimum size requirements for either of these species in Okanogan County lakes.

Wherever anglers go, they are reminded to be extra careful with anything that could start another wildfire in the region's extremely hot and dry conditions. Outing plans should include a check on campfire and even road restrictions on public lands. Information by county is available at <http://fortress.wa.gov/dnr/firedanger/BurnRisk.aspx> on the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) website. See current wildfire conditions from the National Interagency Fire Center at <http://www.inciweb.org/> .

### **Southcentral Washington**

Paul Hoffarth, WDFW district fish biologist from Pasco, reports recent creel checks on the Columbia River below the Tri-Cities showed the majority of the effort was focused on **walleye** . Creel staff interviewed 23 walleye-fishing boats with 51 anglers who had 80 walleye. That averages out to one walleye caught for every 3.6 hours of fishing.

Hoffarth noted the **sturgeon** sanctuary below McNary Dam on the Columbia was lifted Aug. 1 and numerous boats began fishing catch-and-release over the Aug 1-2 weekend. Creel staff interviewed seven sturgeon-fishing boats with 23 anglers who had caught 31 sturgeon at a rate of one sturgeon for every four hours of fishing.

No boats were sampled for **salmon** or **steelhead** in the John Day Pool, but boat activity is picking up in the McNary Dam forebay. One steelhead boat was interviewed above the dam with no catch.

Hoffarth reminds anglers the anti-snagging rule went into effect for the John Day Pool Aug.1 for all salmon and steelhead fishing.

The maximum size limit for **kokanee** , or land-locked sockeye salmon, is now 14 inches in Kittitas County's Cle Elum Lake. The change is due to WDFW's effort with the Yakama Nation to reintroduce anadromous sockeye salmon into the upper Cle Elum Basin. A thousand adult sockeye trapped at Priest Rapids Dam on the Columbia River will be transferred to Cle Elum Lake. Some will be radio-tagged for tracking to learn pre-spawning behavior and fall migration.

Few anadromous sockeye are smaller than 16 inches, and few landlocked kokanee are greater than 12 inches. Therefore, a 14-inch size threshold will allow the kokanee fishery to proceed this summer without inadvertently harvesting valuable sockeye dedicated to the reintroduction effort. The kokanee daily catch limit remains the same at 16 kokanee, with no minimum size.

Wherever anglers go, they are reminded to be extra careful with anything that could start another wildfire in the region, which is experiencing extremely hot and dry conditions. Outing plans should include a check on campfire and even road restrictions on public lands. See Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) fire information by county at <http://fortress.wa.gov/dnr/firedanger/BurnRisk.aspx> . See current wildfire conditions from the National Interagency Fire Center at <http://www.inciweb.org/> .

### **TGF Inbox – Reader Email**

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

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: [brees@pacifier.com](mailto:brees@pacifier.com)

Doug Rees: [doug@TheGuidesForecast.com](mailto:doug@TheGuidesForecast.com)

Michael Teague: [Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com](mailto:Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com)

**Random Links**

Water level and flow at most Oregon locations:

<http://americanwhitewater.org/content/River/state-summary/state/OR/>

Live, Streaming High-Definition Fly-Fishing Videos and HD Fish Photos:

<http://www.bcextremehd.tv/>

Oregon Coast Trail Maps:

[http://www.oregon.gov/OPRD/PARKS/OCT\\_main.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/OPRD/PARKS/OCT_main.shtml)

**GOOD LUCK!**