

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **August 28th – September 3rd, 2009**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

OPEN BOAT ALERT! Bob Rees' Saturday trip has cancelled at the last minute! This leaves room for up to 6 people to fish on Saturday, August 29th for the Buoy 10 EZ limit trips. Chinook and coho are both available and limits are the rule! Call Bob NOW at (503) 812-9036 to book your seats. A \$50/person, deposit is required.

Willamette Valley/Metro - Warm water temperatures have salmon and steelhead migrating at a fast pace in the mainstem Columbia. Huge numbers of steelhead are still passing Bonneville, which will continue to fuel upriver tributary fisheries that harbor resting steelhead seeking a reprieve from the warm waters of the mainstem.

Likewise, migrating chinook will continue to pass by anglers offerings until temperatures cool somewhat. Anchor anglers working the water near Longview have seen a recent improvement in chinook catches. Wobblers are taking the majority of chinook but anglers using smaller spinners and plugs were taking good numbers of steelhead last week. Chinook catches will continue to improve significantly in the coming weeks.

A handful of coho have been counted at Willamette Falls where water in the low 70s is likely to slow fish movement. Lower Willamette sturgeon fishing is catch-and-release only until October 1st.

The McKenzie has been productive for fly fishers using nymphs and offers dry fly action during hatches early and late in the day. A few steelhead are being caught below Leaburg Dam. Rain Monday night raised the flow considerably.

Fishermen's Bend is the best shot for a North Santiam steelhead but it has been quite slow. Steelheading has been tough on the South Santiam as the run winds down.

Steelhead are scattered on the Clackamas. While fishing is slow, there are some chrome bright fish available. The coho have not yet shown themselves but it won't be long before anglers have some good opportunity.

Nothing will be happening on the Sandy until the coho arrive. It's opaque now from glacial silt.

Estacada Lake, Faraday Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, Alton Baker Canal, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake and Salmon Creek are scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout.

Northwest – Anglers are still flocking to the Buoy 10 fishery where in-river limits of coho are common. Improving tides in the early morning this week should bolster chinook catches in the Astoria area. Chinook have been oddly absent this week despite a strong showing mid-month.

Bait is taking the majority of fish although some anglers are still swearing by spinners in red/white and metallic pink. Weaker tides this week should put the best action below the Astoria/Megler Bridge as water temperature dictates fishing success. Try and stay in the cooler ocean influenced temperatures ranging from 63 to 65 degrees.

Catches of ocean coho off of the mouth of the Columbia have cooled dramatically despite the ample numbers available in the lower river. Other northern ports such as Garibaldi and Depoe Bay also

report limited success.

Reports of coho in Tillamook and Nehalem Bays are likely accurate and numbers will build into mid-September. Barring any significant September precipitation, action should be excellent for hatchery coho into early October. A limited ocean harvest will be allowed for hatchery coho this September for anglers that are typically targeting chinook in local "bubble" fisheries out of Tillamook and Nehalem. Another new regulation proposed by Gary Kish of Scappoose is an extension of the ocean sport-crabbing season to the middle of October. Quality keepers should be easy to come by.

Southwest – Ocean chinook fishing opens August 29th south of Humbug Mountain to the California border and will run through Labor Day. Unfortunately, while tides are cooperative, forecasts indicate high winds and waves offshore, which are likely to prevent ocean fishing this coming weekend.

Mussel harvesting remains closed due to high levels of PSP, a naturally-occurring toxin.

Tuna fishing has been good out of southwest ports whenever the ocean has been calm.

Trollers out of Reedsport have endured slow fishing recently with blanks on some days. It's early yet. Smallmouth bass fishing remains very good around Elkton. Spinners have been taking summer steelhead below Rock Creek on the North Umpqua.

While a few chinook have entered Coos Bay, fishing is slow. A couple of coho have been taken just inside the bay.

Chinook catches in the Rogue estuary have remained good with better fishing on the outgoing tide. Trollers are dragging herring or anchovies, with or without a spinner on the nose. Chinook are averaging in the low 20 pound range but a handful in the high 30's have also been taken.

Boats launching out of the Port of Brookings have been taking mostly seven-fish limits of rockfish along with good catches of ling cod. California halibut are occasionally being taken just outside the jaws. Once again the winds will blow this coming weekend, keeping recreational craft inland.

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

Eastern – Warm Springs to Trout Creek continues to be the most productive stretch for trout with steelhead catches picking up a little on the lower river. The White blew out over the weekend and has roiled the water.

Smallmouth bass action on the John Day will remain productive for the next several weeks although flows are extremely low making for challenging boating conditions.

SW Washington – Boats working the mouths of district tributaries are finding good catches of salmon and steelhead. The Cowlitz is a favorite this time of year. The mainstem of these systems aren't producing much in the way of salmon or steelhead but coho are due to arrive in the coming weeks.

Effort is on the increase in the Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries. With Bonneville Dam counts still high, success rates are great where anglers on Drano Lake were averaging nearly 2 fish per rod (both wild and hatchery fish). Larger, "B" run steelhead are likely to show in greater numbers in the coming weeks.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Well, it's certainly looking like the Washington and Oregon Departments of Fish and Wildlife nailed the coho forecast. Action is as good as it gets in the Buoy 10 region of the lower Columbia. I finally switched my late start program over to an early morning start on Wednesday and it paid dividends. I keep a watchful eye on the high tide for the day, centering my fishing day around it. Like most years, the most productive time of the tide are these 3 key times in order of productivity: 1) JUST before high slack; the water is at it's coolest since the ocean influenced flush has inundated the estuary. Fish are more apt to bite at that time and the salt water keeps food on their mind. 2) The first part of outgoing tide; Fish are still fresh in from the ocean and getting oriented as to where they are supposed to go. The cold water is still around and anglers are presenting their baits into the faces of upstream facing salmon, which will most often turn and chase their baits or spinners down. 3) The last 30 minutes of outgoing tide; ocean-staging fish become motivated to move into the river as the current slows down. Keep in mind that these fish will theoretically cease feeding and therefore (as I have said time and time again) will begin to count their calories. They, like humans and other animals, will take the path of least resistance. They will still be oriented to their natal streams (facing into the current) and ride the saltwater wedge into the river system. My stern rods, the ones that are fishing the deepest, are always the first to go off until cold ocean water fills the estuary. Then, the middle and bow rods start popping in as shallow as 10 feet recently. Follow the cold water and you will score results.

The action has been fantastic but there is still an obvious absence of Chinook in the estuary. We're averaging about 2 Chinook per day but most of the big ones are gone. Of the 14 fish we harvested on Wednesday, only 2 were Chinook and one of those was a jack. They were both upriver brights but the larger fish cut a beautiful orange. The jack cut nice and orange too but the older the Chinook, the brighter the meat cuts. Tule Chinook jacks are not desirable and hatchery tules this year are all exhibiting an adipose fin-clip. This may be one of those years where the quality sized kings get harvested upstream and not in the Buoy 10 fishery. We're not doing anything different this season than we've done in the past for Chinook, they are just not biting if they are indeed present.

Recently, the coho have been averaging a little smaller than I recollect. Of the 14 fish we harvested on Wednesday, about 3 fish were around 5 pounds while only 2 fish were larger than 10 pounds. I am pretty sure our fish averaged around 7 pounds a piece. With the feed we have available now, we ought to have larger size fish hitting the deck right now. Of course we're dealing with lots of native fish right now too and some guides are reporting over half of their catch to be natives. I guess I need to quit using the term natives when in fact a large percentage of these fish are actually hatchery reared in tribal hatcheries but the fins are not clipped like the millions of other hatchery coho. They still need to be handled with care but it is frustrating landing all of these quality fish that may not be authentic wild fish that we end up having to release. I've felt pretty lucky having the hatchery roll on my bait.

And speaking of bait, what are you using for bait? Anglers are still reporting that spinners are key in their success but I have been finding that bait is out-producing hardware significantly on board my boat. So much so, that I am oftentimes only running bait with no spinners fishing. As the water warms however, I may find that the spinners are out-producing bait once again. It's always best to keep both weapons of choice on board.

Westward, ODF&W recently announced that the ocean fishery is scheduled to close on August 31st. The official press release reads:

8/26/09 ACTION NOTICE: The National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Fishery Management Council, states of Washington and Oregon, and ocean fishers have reviewed the status of the ocean recreational salmon fishery in the Columbia River Ocean Salmon Management Area from

Leadbetter Pt., Washington south to Cape Falcon, Oregon. The following action was taken relative to the recreational ocean salmon season in the Columbia River Ocean Salmon Management Area: ACTION TAKEN: Effective Monday, August 31, at 11:59PM, the recreational ocean salmon season between Leadbetter Point, Washington and Cape Falcon, Oregon will close to all salmon fishing. RATIONALE: The Columbia River ocean area is rapidly approaching their adjusted catch quota of 96,500 fin-clipped coho. Landings slowed last week and early this week with poor weather conditions, and allowed fishery managers to leave the season open through the weekend. Note: This closure does not include the ongoing recreational fishery inside the Columbia River upstream of Buoy 10.

As the notice reads, action has slowed dramatically in the ocean fishery and some charter boats came in well short of their limit recently. What's so odd about this is the fact that there are so many coho in the lower Columbia right now. Why would anyone even go out there is the question I might ask. To further discourage people, the ocean forecast is not looking good. See for yourself:

THU NIGHT S WIND 5 TO 10 KT. GUSTS UP TO 15 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 5 FT AT 10 SECONDS... BUILDING TO 7 FT AT 10 SECONDS AFTER MIDNIGHT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF SHOWERS AFTER MIDNIGHT.

FRI S WIND 5 TO 10 KT...BACKING TO SE IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 9 FT. CHANCE OF SHOWERS IN THE MORNING... THEN SLIGHT CHANCE OF SHOWERS IN THE AFTERNOON.

FRI NIGHT W WIND 5 KT...VEERING TO N AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 9 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

SAT N WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 7 FT.

SAT NIGHT N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 6 FT.

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

MON N WIND 15 TO 20 KT WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 7 FT.

As you can see, the wind waves don't look too bad but the swell is rather major and likely to make more than one person feel uneasy on the big pond over the weekend. There is really no reason to overlook the river this weekend.

Upriver, wobbler anglers are beginning to see their efforts pay off. The fishery from Longview to Portland is gaining momentum and anglers are finding more consistency in their catches. They are using a variety of colors to catch the Chinook in the 15 to 35 pound range with some anglers reporting 6 to 12 chances for a tides attempt. Anchor anglers are catching some steelhead as well but with the onset of higher numbers of Chinook appearing, larger lures will target larger fish. Weaker tides this week may not allow for the opportunity we had last week with the stronger tides.

Tuna chasers won't be looking too chummy this weekend but the action should continue to be good out of Astoria. Although other ports are producing some catches of tuna, the water west of the Columbia River seems to be some of the better water to fish. Captains are reporting fish at the 124.50 x 46.22 line with anchovy colored fish traps taking fish. Anglers reported the fish are plentiful but they are also easily spooked by the boats so proceed with caution. The action should stay good well into September.

Crabbing is also good with the ocean still producing good numbers of large keepers. The lower Columbia is also producing good catches of hardening crab and the soft tides this week should produce even better results. Catches will improve into the fall months.

The Guide's Forecast – Buoy 10 will be the focus of most anglers this week with peak season upon us. Coho will be the species of choice although anglers really want to get in on some Chinook action. The Chinook are clearly passing through the system but seem a bit reluctant to bite in the Buoy 10 area. I don't know any other specific way to target them other than the way I am already fishing. We're just catching many more coho than Chinook. We landed another 2 Chinook amongst our 14 fish limit on Thursday with other anglers only reporting an occasional Chinook.

You won't have to start at the crack of dawn but the best tides are in the early morning. High slack over the weekend will be mid-morning with the best time to keep your baits fishing from the last part of incoming through the first hour of outgoing tide. The best action will take place at the Astoria/Megler Bridge near high slack, and it will be good. The first part of outgoing tide will produce good from the Rest Area on the Washington side downstream to the Chinook wing jetties but try and stay in 15 to 30 foot of water. Although bait has been best for me, we did start to catch fish again on spinners including a 22-pound Chinook on Thursday. One guide commented that it does take longer to get all your fish with spinners but the fish are typically larger in size. The Chinook we caught came on a chartreuse/green dot Fatal Flash spinner with a pink hoochie. Red and white has also been producing well for other boats.

The Oregon side has been producing fair catches in front of Hammond mid-way through the incoming tide but the water above the bridge and along Desdemona Sands has not been all that consistent this season. It will likely turn on but the Washington side will likely continue to be the more consistent side of the two.

Softer tides may keep fish lower in the estuary than the larger tides we experienced last week. Don't be afraid to work the water downstream of the tunnel, especially as we near the second half of outgoing tide. Our best action is coming in water that is cooler than 66 degrees. Make sure you have bait fishing in the cooler water and spinners may be the more effective tool in warmer water conditions. Buoy 10 itself will likely produce best the last 45 minutes of outgoing tide and the first hour of incoming.

Bring your crab gear if you don't care about missing the hot bite above the bridge at high slack and the first part of outgoing tide. Crab should be of high quality but boat traffic may cause you to lose your gear, so be prepared for that. There's a lot of props out there, making it a bit likely that they'll chop your crab lines off headed for the Buoy.

Ocean salmon fishing north of Cape Falcon ends after Monday. It's been a good season but the fish seem scattered right now. They are putting on some pounds however, making for nice tablefare.

Tuna fishers may be able to get offshore but the swell may make for some slow going. Make sure to bring live bait if you're equipped but fish traps are a good option as well. On calm days, it should be easy to spot the jumpers but you'll have to glide into them to prevent them from sounding.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – With the water temperature 72

degrees at the Falls there is little fish movement. Only 25 coho have been counted so far this season. Trout fishing is fair to good on the McKenzie while steelheading is spotty.

The North Santiam level and flow have been stable but water temperatures are cold with the upper stretches never getting above 50 degrees. The lower river, conversely, gets too warm to fish during the afternoon.

A free coho clinic will take place Saturday, August 29th, from 10 AM to 2 PM at Glen Otto Perk in Troutdale. Sponsored by the Sandy River Chapter of the Northwest Steelheaders, they may share the tips you need to catch one (or more) of these challenging fish. Those who choose to join the Steelheaders at the clinic are eligible to join them for a fish-along on September 26th.

The Guide's Forecast – The Town Run on the upper Willamette holds promise for anglers targeting steelhead. Fishing is fair for smallmouth on the upper river with mornings and evenings most productive. The limit on coho in the upper Willamette goes from two per day to three on September 1st. Just add fish.

Concentrate efforts on the North Santiam to the stretch around fishermen's Bend for the best water temperatures and highest concentration of steelhead. Fishing is spotty but spinners have hooked a few recently.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – No coho have shown in the Clackamas as yet although a couple of jacks have been taken. There has been little action or evidence of fish at the mouth. It may take rain to get the silvers moving in.

Rain is definitely required to get the Sandy fishery underway. There are a few steelhead around but effort and interest is low.

North Coast Fishing Report – Although most would believe that ocean coho would still be grabbing the headlines in this section of the report, the action "outside" is not all that impressive. Easy limits of hatchery coho are not commonplace anymore and anglers are struggling to find any keepers at all. With the ocean being a little bigger this week, most anglers won't be too motivated to get after them in the salt. It may be worthwhile however to try inside the Tillamook and Nehalem estuaries as good numbers of those hatchery coho are due back to their respective systems anytime now. Tides this week are conducive to jetty fishing and with the run size up, that typically extends the length of return window that these fish will come back. In other words, not only will the season be better because of more fish, but there will be more fish earlier and later in the run, making now a good option for folks to try. More details in The Guide's Forecast section of the North Coast Report.

Ocean crabbing remains excellent and the crab are beginning to fill out nicely too. Bay crabbing in Tillamook, Nehalem, Netarts and Nestucca Bays is also picking up with fresh salmon carcasses likely to take good numbers of keepers on these smaller tides.

It's likely there are Chinook available in the north coast estuaries but anglers need to pay attention to new regulations this year as some systems, such as the Nehalem are closed to the taking of Chinook. The first fish to arrive in the Tillamook district are typically bound for the Trask and Tillamook Rivers although weak tides this week will be more conducive to lower bay herring trolling. Although on the weaker tides the middle to last half of the outgoing tide is usually the best producing, fish will cross the bar heaviest when the tide first starts to slow down. Just before low slack is traditionally the best time to target salmon on the bar but really, don't discount the tide halfway through outgoing either.

District rivers remain low for those seeking summer run steelhead. Action should actually pick up however as cooler water temperatures begin to dominate the early morning hours and the summer swim season begins to wind down. Not many people are taking advantage of the new sea-run cutthroat opportunity that now exists on many north coast tidewater areas. The "old-timers" used to troll Ford Fenders and worms this time of year and catch some nice cutthroat trout on some of these systems. It's a 2-fish bag limit but check regulations for the body of water you wish to fish.

Not much has been reported on for the summer sturgeon season on the Tillamook River. Sturgeon have been reported in Tillamook Bay however although they are typically very difficult to catch this time of year. November is when we start to see catches improve on some years.

The Guide's Forecast – For anglers not interested in fighting the crowds on the lower Columbia, you can choose to explore the Tillamook or Nehalem Bay option for salmon. Coho will be on tap as the species of choice and this just in.....a limited wild coho fishery just got OK'd for the Nehalem basin. Biologists (both state and federal) have assessed the wild population on the Nehalem and for the first time in over a decade, anglers will have the option to take a wild coho if they choose as part of their daily limit on the Nehalem system. Other systems to the south will also enjoy this option but you'll have to check local ODF&W regulations for your favorite system. There is a quota of 1,000 fish for the Nehalem Basin and with the closure of Chinook, it will be interesting to see how much interest this fishery draws. May I suggest that we take a strong look at whether we really need to harvest a wild fish or not. I hope anglers choose to release wild coho, especially hens, if they are not mortally wounded. We all know how these crazy coho act when they get hooked and lethal hooking oftentimes does happen but for the authentic meat hunters (such as myself) there are other fisheries we can participate in to catch all the coho a person ever needs. By all means, harvest all the hatchery coho you can but if you can release a wild hen or buck unharmed, I don't think you would regret it.

Chinook are still an option for Tillamook Bay anglers and soft tides will likely produce some catches of Chinook on the Tillamook Bay bar. Keep your blue label herring on the bottom and if a Chinook doesn't decide to grab it, it's likely that some coho (both hatchery and wild) will have no issues taking a taste. Wild coho on the Tillamook area streams and bay must be released unharmed. With the weak tide series we're now on, Trask and Tillamook fish likely won't make it to the upper bay in any great numbers. Spinner trolling won't be a great option this weekend. Bobber fishing may however but bring lots of bait for those egg robbing sculpin and salmon smolts. The Trask will be loaded with them.

A good time for crabbing along all coastal estuaries. It's time for the action to pick up and the crab are likely to be in good shape.

Leave the tuna fishing to the birds this weekend. There will be calmer seas ahead, just not this week.

Central & South Coast Reports – With catches of 69,283 coho through August 23rd, about 63% of the quota had been filled as of that date south of Cape Falcon.

Boats launching out of Newport to head offshore for tuna have been making excellent catches when they find the fish but runs have varied from 28 to 40 miles or more. Forecasts for ocean conditions this coming weekend will hamper efforts. Crabbing inside the bay has been spotty but it's quite good just outside.

About six Chinook per day are being taken on the lower Siuslaw as they move in and out with the tide. It's just starting here; numbers will improve in weeks to come. Fishing for searun cutthroat has been decent with bait, spinners and colorful flies all effective for these fish.

Crabbing has been good in Winchester Bay with limits coming even from the docks. Bank-bound crabbers are using folding cast nets to take good-sized Dungeness. Trollers at Osprey Point and Half Moon Bay are catching a few coho and Chinook fishers out of Reedsport are taking a fish here and there but the numbers aren't really in yet. Bank anglers have also landed a few Chinook and coho here by throwing spoons and spinners. The mainstem Umpqua has continued to produce excellent catches of smallmouth bass on soft plastics. Both the flies-only and bait areas are productive for summer steelhead on the North Umpqua.

Chinook are being caught from the jetties at Coos Bay on anchovies near the jaws. Use caution always but especially if the surf is up. Perch and rockfish are also being caught in the bay. While crabbing has been worthwhile, be sure to sort out softshells at this time of year.

Anglers are seeing improving catches of early fall Chinook on the lower Coquille.

News of Chinook fishing on the Elk and Sixes will appear in this space following the first fall rains. In the meantime, these ocean tributaries have been producing fair to good catches of sea-run cutthroat trout.

Trollers dragging anchovy-spinner combinations are making good catches of Chinook in Rogue Bay on both the incoming and outgoing tides. Credit must be given in large part for the remarkable numbers of Chinook to the sea lion patrols for preventing the loss of hooked fish to voracious pinnapeds. The Rogue River Salmon Derby on Saturday, August 29th will contribute to these ongoing efforts. Donations are also being accepted at local businesses. Above tidewater, Chinook are being taken around Agness and below the mouth of the Applegate River. The middle Rogue has been quite productive on wrapped Kwikfish. Two Chinook, fin-clipped or not, may be retained below Gold Ray Dam with a 10-fish-per-year limit of wild fish. Steelheaders are fairing well on the upper Rogue and when into them, are finding summers striking all manner of bait and lure.

While the ocean Chinook season opens on Saturday, August 29th south of Humbug Mountain to the California border, rough seas and high winds may limit effort to quick, early morning trips close to port. Two Chinook per day may be kept but be sure to use only barbless hooks and that retained fish are 24 inches or better.

Beach fishing has slowed for surf perch but many anglers still consider the effort worthwhile.

Trout fishing is fair at Diamond Lake with most anglers taking two or three fish but has been improving recently with cooler weather. Highway 138 has re-opened.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Visibility on the lower Deschutes is on the mend. Steelhead are moving with 35, 22 of which were hatchery, counted at Shearars Falls on August 25th. About a third of the plug-pullers at the mouth are getting a steelhead.

Kokanee action is decent at Wickiup for fish averaging 16 to 17 inches. Trolling is most effective but downriggers are required. Kokes are starting to show a little color but are still table-worthy.

Green Peter is producing good catches of kokanee to deep-water trollers.

Jigging has been more productive than trolling at Paulina. Most of the fish are averaging 12 inches or better and show no signs of the impending spawn.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report August 19-September 1, 2009

North Puget Sound

A big run of pink salmon continues to push its way into the region, and anglers are out on Puget Sound in large numbers trying to reel them in. "It's certainly not lights out fishing, like in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, but it's been pretty good in a few areas," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "It seems on some days its red hot for pink salmon, and on other days it's only lukewarm."

Anglers fishing the southern portion of the region - marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) - have had more success hooking **pink salmon** than those fishing elsewhere, Thiesfeld said.

Those fishing marine areas 9 and 10 have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release wild chinook and chum salmon. Beginning Sept. 1, anglers will be required to release all chinook in both marine areas.

"Fishing in marine areas 9 and 10 has been a little more consistent in terms of catch rates," he said. "Hopefully we'll see the pink run pick up steam and fishing in other parts of the region improve in the coming weeks."

At "**Humpy Hollow** ," a portion of Puget Sound stretching from Shipwreck north to Mukilteo, fishing has been hit and miss, Thiesfeld 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).

Thiesfeld said beach anglers on Whidbey Island also can find plenty of action for pink salmon - and the occasional **coho salmon** - at Bush Point, Fort Casey and Lagoon Point.

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 must release wild coho and chum.

Meanwhile, **crabbing** is still open in the region. The crab fishery runs through Sept. 7 in marine areas 8-1, 8-2, 9, and 10. However, the fishery will remain open through Sept. 30 in Marine Area 7. Crabbing is open in all areas 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.

It's still early, but pink salmon also are starting to show up in the rivers. There have been a few reports of anglers having success fishing for pink salmon on the Snohomish River. Portions of the Skagit and Skykomish rivers also are currently open for salmon, while a portion of the Green River opens Aug. 22.

Freshwater salmon fishing opportunities will increase Sept. 1, when the Stillaguamish River opens and anglers can fish additional stretches of the Skykomish and Green rivers. Thiesfeld reminds

anglers that there are special gear restrictions for the Green River. Anglers can check the rules and regulations for the Green - as well as all other fisheries - on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

It's a banner year for salmon anglers as the coho-fest continues on the coast. Meanwhile, anglers can try for pink salmon in Puget Sound or take advantage of two-pole fishing in most area lakes. A few more weeks remain to catch crab throughout the region.

Salmon anglers fishing near Ilwaco and Westport continue to enjoy a "phenomenal" season, said Wendy Beeghley, WDFW fish biologist. "This is one of the most successful fishing seasons I can remember," Beeghley said. "We've had good weather, great turnouts and some of the best catch rates we've seen in years."

Anglers have been equally successful at La Push and Neah Bay, said Scott Barbour, WDFW fish biologist for the north coast. "The fish are everywhere and folks are having a good time catching them," Barbour 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).

Wild coho must be released in all marine areas. Barbour advises anglers to check the 2009-2010 Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet at wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm for specific retention rules, limits and boundary guidelines.

If **tuna** strikes your fancy, the fishing's been good in recent weeks, especially off Ilwaco, Beeghley said. "August is the best month for catching tuna as long as people can get out deep enough and the weather cooperates." Tuna season is open year-round with no daily limit.

Anglers are required to release all **chinook** salmon in marine areas 5 and 6 (Sekiu and the eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), but both areas remain open for retention of **hatchery coho**, **pink** and **sockeye salmon**. Creel checks conducted near Sekiu during the Aug. 15-16 weekend showed 892 anglers catching 723 pink salmon and 462 coho. These areas are open seven days a week, with a two-fish daily limit. Anglers may also add two bonus pink salmon to their daily catch. All chum, chinook and wild coho must be released.

Meanwhile, it was all about **pink salmon** in Marine Area 11 (Tacoma/Vashon), where clear skies and warm weather greeted anglers during the Aug. 15-16 weekend. A creel check conducted near Point Defiance showed 585 anglers with 271 pink salmon, but few chinook or coho.

"It's a pink show right now in Puget Sound, but as August draws to a close, anglers should start targeting coho," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "We've had one of the best summers for coho at Sekiu since 2004, and hopefully that's a good indicator for September coho fishing in northern Hood Canal and the Sound," Thiesfeld said.

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.

Salmon fishing opens Sept. 1 north of Ayock Point in Hood Canal (Marine Area 12), where the daily limit is four **coho** only. All other salmon species must be released. The same rules apply to Dabob and Quilcene bays, which opened for salmon fishing Aug. 16.

In southern Hood Canal (Marine Area 12), where the **chinook** fishery is under way, a recent creel check at the Hoodsport Marina showed an average catch rate of one chinook for every three rods. Up to two chinook may be retained as part of the four-fish daily limit. All chum salmon must be released.

For those interested in winning a boat, some cash or just getting out on the water, two derbies in the Northwest Salmon Derby Series are coming up in the region. The Sinclair Inlet Salmon Derby, held near Bremerton on the Kitsap Peninsula, is scheduled Aug. 22-23. Contact Gramdiok@msn.com for more information. Anglers traveling to the coast can participate in the Tokeland Marina, Willapa Bay Salmon Derby, which will be held Sept. 5. For more information, contact VickieWilburn@comcast.net. Participants in both 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>.

Several rivers around the region open to salmon fishing Sept. 1, including the Carbon River in Pierce County; Copalis River, Van Winkle Creek and Joe Creek in Grays Harbor County; the Bear and Niawiakum rivers in Pacific County; and Clearwater River in Jefferson County. The Puyallup River opened Aug. 16.

Also beginning Sept. 1, anglers fishing in the Quillayute system - which includes the Bogachiel, Sol Duc, Calawah and Dickey rivers - can keep two adult salmon, plus two additional adult hatchery coho as part of the six-fish daily limit.

On the Hoh River, anglers will be able to fish for salmon seven days a week as of Sept. 1 and keep up to two adult fish as part of their six-fish daily limit.

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 specific regulations.

Recreational crabbers should be aware that the summer **Dungeness crab** fishery will close for a catch assessment in several areas of Puget Sound after the Labor Day weekend. Areas closing Sept. 7 one hour after sunset include marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 8-1 (Deception Pass to East Point), 8-2 (East Point to Possession Point), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) and 11 (Tacoma/Vashon). Crabbing will be open over Labor Day weekend, Sept. 5-7.

Crabbers are reminded that their summer catch record cards are due to WDFW by Sept. 15 and must be returned whether or not the cardholder caught or fished for crab during the season. Crabbers who fail to file catch reports for 2009 will face a \$10 fine, which will be imposed when they apply for a 2010 fishing license. Completed cards can be mailed in or recorded online. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/index.htm>.

Meanwhile, anglers can take advantage of the new **two-pole fishing option** now in effect on the majority of Washington's 8,000 fishing lakes, ponds and reservoirs. The total cost for the two-pole endorsement is \$24.50 (\$6.50 for seniors). Anglers must also have a valid state fishing license. Because approximately 145 lakes and ponds are excluded from the option, anglers are advised to check the regulations carefully before they go fishing. More information and a list of excluded lakes and ponds are available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/twopole/>. Endorsements are available from authorized license dealers, listed at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/lic/vendors/vendors.htm>, or from the WDFW at <http://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov/>. Saltwater fisheries and fisheries on rivers and streams are excluded from the option.

Due to ongoing dry conditions throughout the state, outdoor recreationists are reminded to take extra precaution to prevent fires. Many of WDFW's 900,000 acres in 32 wildlife area complexes

and over 150 water access sites across the state 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. 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

Hefty **chinook salmon** that recently lit up the Buoy 10 fishery near the mouth of the Columbia River are now biting from Longview upstream as strong tides push increasing numbers of **coho** in from the ocean. Meanwhile, **summer steelhead** broke the single-day record at Bonneville Dam several days in a row and bolstered catch rates for hatchery fish above and below the dam.

"Anglers are reeling in chinook salmon, hatchery coho and hatchery steelhead in good numbers, depending on what part of the river they're fishing," said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. "Steelhead are leading the charge up the river, but chinook and coho are moving up right behind them."

Fishing has also been good for hatchery steelhead at the mouths of several area tributaries, including the Cowlitz, Lewis and White Salmon rivers, plus Drano Lake, Hymer said. Boat anglers fishing at Drano Lake averaged 1.2 steelhead per rod and retained just over half of them, according to a creel survey conducted the second week of August.

At Buoy 10, anglers averaged a salmon for every one to two rods that same week. About one-third of those fish were chinook salmon, some weighing 40-plus pounds, but the tides literally shifted the following week, increasing the percentage of hatchery coho in the catch, Hymer said.

"A series of strong tides has brought more coho into the river," he said. "We could see another big surge of chinook, but these coho aren't exactly shakers. A growing number of these fish are running 14 to 16 pounds."

Through August, the daily catch limit in the Buoy 10 fishery is two salmon (but only one chinook) or hatchery steelhead or one of each. Minimum size limits are 24 inches for chinook and 16 inches for hatchery coho. All salmon other than chinook and adipose-fin-clipped hatchery coho must be released. Barbed hooks are allowed. Daily creel counts are available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regions/reg5/buoy10.htm>.

Starting Sept. 1, anglers must release chinook salmon at Buoy 10, but the combined limit for hatchery coho and hatchery steelhead will rise to three fish (including no more than two hatchery steelhead).

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.

Upriver from the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line, hatchery steelhead have been keeping anglers busy from Longview to the Bonneville Pool. (The all-time daily steelhead count at Bonneville - 34,053 - was set on Aug. 13.) But recent reports of anglers catching chinook between Longview and Vancouver suggests heavier gear may be in order, Hymer said.

"The chinook fishery above Rocky Point can ramp up quickly," he said. "Anglers may want to think about switching from spinners and bait to wobblers - and fishing deep - if they want to pick up some chinook."

Fishing deep isn't a bad idea in any case, said Hymer, noting that the weather forecast calls for another hot spell. Under those conditions, he recommends fishing to a depth of 50 feet and looking for fish at the mouths of tributaries, where the water is cooler.

"We're also expecting a return to low-water conditions, so boaters need to be especially cautious around sandbars and rocks," he said. "We've already seen at least one boat stranded on a sand bar this season."

Anglers fishing on tributaries to the Columbia River should also be aware of new rules adopted to protect wild salmon while providing greater access to hatchery fish:

- **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.

Anglers looking for a different kind of fishing experience may want to consider a trip to an alpine lake. Tips on fishing the state's "high lakes" and recommendations of good places to go are available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/outreach/fishing/highlake.htm>.

"Fishing one of the region's high lakes can be a terrific experience, and a great way to beat the heat," Hymer said. "Two words of caution: In the Indian Heaven Wilderness lakes, the daily limit for trout is three fish. Secondly, don't forget the mosquito repellent."

Eastern Washington

Despite summer's weather fluctuations, **rainbow trout** fishing remains excellent at Sprague Lake on the Lincoln-Adams county line. Lenny Hahn, WDFW enforcement officer from Spokane, recently checked anglers there, many with their daily catch limits of five trout. Hahn checked and photographed one 22-inch rainbow at Sprague that weighed nearly five pounds.

"I think fishermen have a good chance of catching similar sized rainbows at Sprague if they make the trip and put in the time," Hahn said.

Hahn said trout limits are still being caught at Williams Lake in southwest Spokane County. Fishing action on trout and warmwater species at Downs and Chapman lakes in the same area was slower at last check.

Upper Spokane River catch-and-release fishing for rainbows over 19 inches has been good, but Hahn reminds anglers they must use selective gear - artificial flies or lures with one single-point barbless hook, no bait, and only knotless nets (see definition on page 24 of the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

Steelhead are returning to the Snake River in large numbers this year, many already beginning to pass through fish ladders at the river's dams. The steelhead catch-and-keep season opens Sept. 1, and although currently warm water temperatures may slow the bite, the action should pick up with cooler weather ahead. The mouths of the Snake's tributaries like the Tucannon and Grande Ronde, and the confluence with the Clearwater on the Idaho border, are usually most productive at the start of the season.

Glen Mendel, WDFW southeast district fish biologist, reminds steelheaders that barbless hooks are required and the daily trout catch limit of six fish includes up to three hatchery-marked steelhead (healed scar at clipped adipose or ventral fin).

Anglers who like to camp on WDFW's Wooten Wildlife Area in Columbia County while trout fishing the Tucannon River impoundments there, will be glad to know the campfire ban is lifted. Area Manager Kari Dingman says that with recent rains, the wildfire danger is lower and campfires are again allowed in WDFW campgrounds.

Northcentral Washington

Art Viola, WDFW Chelan district fish biologist, reminds anglers that Lake Wenatchee **sockeye salmon** fishing closed Aug. 11. Unexpected and substantial sockeye mortality occurred during migration up the Wenatchee River due to high water temperatures, and insufficient numbers of sockeye were available to continue the season.

However, Lake Chelan land-locked **summer chinook salmon** fishing will continue because there are sufficient numbers of stocked sterile, triploid chinook. Viola reminds anglers there is no fishing allowed within 400 feet of the mouths of all Lake Chelan tributaries, minimum size is 15 inches, and the daily catch limit is one salmon. "WDFW is trying to maintain the abundance of chinook in Lake Chelan at a level that minimizes predation on kokanee and cutthroat trout but still provides fish for harvest," Viola said. The fishery will also help control the numbers of some naturally reproducing diploid chinook.

Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist, reminds anglers that adult **sockeye salmon** in Lake Osoyoos can be retained through Aug. 30. Sockeye salmon returns above Zosel Dam are predicted to be in excess of needs for wild fish to reach spawning grounds, so retention is allowable. Minimum size limit is 12 inches, and the daily catch limit is four sockeye salmon. All chinook salmon and all sockeye with colored anchor (floy) tag attached must be released.

The south entrance gate of the Quincy Lakes unit of the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area in Grant County will close indefinitely beginning Aug. 24 in response to gang-related graffiti tagging, garbage dumping and destruction of public property, including toilets, concrete walkways, parking areas and signs. The north entrance will remain open.

Closing one gate is expected to reduce unpermitted through-traffic on the north-south road through the unit. That road is traditionally closed to motor vehicles Oct. 1 through Feb. 28 during hunting season. Foot traffic is allowed year-round. Wildlife area users are encouraged to report vandalism and any other illegal activity to local law enforcement.

Southcentral Washington

Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist from Yakima, says this is a great time for hiking anglers to head for the high country and fish the mountain lakes. "The trails are maintained and the bugs are on the decline now," he said. "Fishing for **cutthroat**, **rainbow** and **eastern brook trout** can be rewarding now until the snow falls."

Cummins encourages anglers to check out the region's "Primer for High Lakes" for a partial list of lakes and the species of fish in each, available in printed form at WDFW's Yakima office and via the Internet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regions/reg3/highlakes.pdf>.

Paul Hoffarth, WDFW district fish biologist from Pasco, says the best current fishing in the Tri-Cities area is for warm water species. Walleye, bass, and perch fishing has been excellent in recent weeks, he reports, especially in Lake Umatilla, the John Day Dam pool on the Columbia River.

Hoffarth reminds Columbia River **fall chinook salmon** anglers that the anti-snagging rule is in effect for salmon and steelhead between Bonneville and McNary dams. See page 15 of the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

The fall chinook sport fishery in the Hanford Reach is under way and scheduled to continue through Oct. 22. Hoffarth says the catch is usually slow until mid-September. He reminds anglers to release all steelhead caught in the Columbia River above the Highway 395 bridge at Pasco.

The lower Yakima River will open Sept. 1 for salmon fishing, including all areas from Prosser Dam downstream to the Columbia River. The night closure and anti-snagging rules will be in effect for all species.

The Snake River opens for **hatchery steelhead** retention Sept. 1, and Hoffarth says the summer run steelhead are returning in large numbers this year.

"They are already beginning to pass through McNary and Snake River dam fish ladders in increasing numbers," Hoffarth said. "River temperatures are warm and will likely slow the bite. But as temperatures cool, the steelhead fishing will improve and Tri-Cities area anglers should be in for a terrific early fall fishery."

Hoffarth reminds anglers that barbless hooks are required when fishing in the Snake River for steelhead.

Eric Anderson, WDFW district fish biologist from Yakima, reminds anglers of the Sept. 1 - Oct. 22 closure of fall **chinook** and **coho salmon** fishing on the Yakima River from Hwy. 223 Bridge at Granger to Sunnyside (Parker) Dam, within the Yakama Reservation Boundary Reach. During that time period, the night closure and anti-snagging rule restrictions are lifted for all other game fish species since they are not necessary to protect salmon.

TGF Inbox – Reader Email

From a good friend and reliable source, Michael received this, "The North Fork Lewis is hot hot hot !

"We brought home two steelhead and two Coho this Wednesday with my buddy Darren Pierce. We lost three along the way. We launch at 10 am and pulled out at 5 pm. The weather was hot but we manage to hook a few on a very sunny day. The entire river is holding a good number of fish running in schools.

Spinners are the weapon of choice but they take black and red yarn alone.

Pictures will be available to see soon when Darren develops the film (we like to keep it old school)."

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

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

How to measure a sturgeon from now on:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/docs/sturgeon_angler_notice_flyer.pdf

Portland Boat Show info:

<http://otshows.com/PBS/>

New crabbing report from the ODFW:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/shellfish/crab/reports.asp>

"Today she met me at the door, said I would have to choose, if I picked that fishing pole today, she'd be packing all her things and she'd be gone by noon....well I'm gonna miss her when I get home tonight. Right now I'm on this lake shore, and I'm sitting in the sun! I'm sure it'll hit me when I walk thru that door tonight. Yeah, I'm gonna miss her. Oh lookie there, I gotta bite!"

- Brad Paisley

GOOD LUCK!