

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 9th – October 15th, 2009**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - The sturgeon opener in the gorge was not as productive as was expected but anglers found about a keeper for every other boat last weekend. Bank anglers landed about a keeper for every 10 rods. Action should stay steady throughout the month.

Salmon anglers near Bonneville are still producing good catches but the action is not consistent day to day. The season should remain open for the remainder of the year but quality fish will become harder to find in the coming weeks. Coho counts at Bonneville are really starting to ramp up right now.

As the flow at Willamette Falls moderates, seasonal weather has the water temperature down to 59 degrees. Coho have continued to cross in record number. Trout fishing is good on the Middle Fork with the occasional steelhead hookup.

The entire length of the McKenzie is fishing well for trout and steelheading remains worthwhile.

Neither anglers nor biologists can locate summer steelhead on the North Santiam in numbers relative to those which have crossed the Falls.

Coho on the Clackamas remain difficult to locate and even harder to get to bite.

Plenty of coho are moving on the Sandy but it appears they're not slowing down until they reach the upper river. Anglers targeting fish at the mouth are taking fair numbers of coho while anchor anglers targeting chinook are only taking an occasional fish.

Northwest – Good numbers of coho are again being intercepted by sport anglers fishing near Astoria. Two more 12-hour gillnet seasons are slated for upriver (gorge) on October 7th and river-wide (Buoy 10 to Bonneville Dam) on October 8th. Larger mesh sizes are likely to leave ample numbers of coho in the river for a weekend sport harvest. Red spinners in size 5 were working well last weekend.

Chinook are starting to show in better numbers in Tillamook Bay. The ocean has been the best option for most of the week although wild coho are still making up a significant portion of the catch. One boat landed 5 chinook in the ocean using herring on Tuesday however. Many of the chinook being caught are smaller 3-year old fish that can easily be mistaken for a large wild coho. Be sure of your species identification before you net a fish.

Deep reef bottomfishing has been good with sizable ling cod coming up from 300 to 400 foot of water. A favorable ocean should continue to produce good catches over the weekend.

Ocean crabbing closes on October 15th but catches have been very impressive with the new sport extension. Crabbing in Tillamook, Netarts and Nehalem Bays is fair at best.

As long as the ocean remains calm enough to pursue chinook, biters will be culled before they reach tidewater areas on the lower Trask and Tillamook Rivers. Only an occasional fish is being landed by bobber throwers. Wilson and Kilchis River chinook won't begin to show for another few

weeks.

Southwest – Razor clamming and mussel harvest is closed coast-wide due to naturally occurring toxic algae. Bay clamming, crabbing and scallop harvesting are not affected.

The Siltcoos remains too low to start fishing for coho but that will change with the next rainfall.

Coos Bay has been producing some chinook to trollers but it has been slow.

Despite dropping river temperatures, trollers in Rogue Bay continue to take chinook and coho daily. Action is expected to slow in mid-October. Above tidewater, plug-pullers and side drifters are doing well. There are plenty of half-pounders available in the low water of the Wild and Scenic stretch.

Chinook fishing has picked up in Chetco tidewater with a few 50-pounders landed over the past week. Boats have been kept inside the Port of Brookings due to high seas recently but good bottom fishing awaits outside when conditions allow. This coming weekend looks promising but use caution and common sense. Limits of rockfish are common when boats can get out although ling cod are getting tough.

Bradley Lake, Middle and Upper Empire Lake, Powers Pond and Saunders Lake

Eastern – Snow in Bend on Sunday had little effect on visibility of the Deschutes. The lower river is fishing well for steelhead. Federal and state officials are warning boaters to be cautious of a sandy shoal building at the mouth.

The Metolius is fishing well with mayflies hatching.

Steelheading is starting up on the Grande Ronde with catches reported recently at Troy.

SW Washington – With the absence of a gillnet fleet that has traditionally fished this time of year, adult coho numbers in the district's rivers are impressive. The Cowlitz, Lewis and Kalama Rivers are all producing good catches of adults. Wild fish are making up a considerable portion of the catch and must be released unharmed. The action will only get better as the month wears on.

The White Salmon and Klickitat River mouths should begin to produce fair catches of coho into November. Counts at Bonneville Dam indicate that there will be good action ahead.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Although it appears that things may finally be starting to wind down on the lower Columbia, it's likely that there are still good numbers of fish to come into the system. Recent reports from **pro guide Dave Johnson (503-201-4292)** indicate that success for hatchery fish has certainly slowed this week. Last weekend was pretty good on the lower river with several boats reporting double digit hatchery fish catches. Dave reported that his total take on 10/6 was 12 fish, of which 5 were of hatchery origin. Spinners were largely responsible for all the action over the weekend as fresh bait has become nearly impossible to find. Green label herring should be a good substitute but guides were reporting better success on small spinners, particularly #5 blades, fluorescent red or nickel in color. Worden's Flash Go spinners have been consistent producers. More on what to look for this week in the next section.

Crabbing in the lower Columbia has been typical of seasons past. Limits are easy if you are willing to bring good bait and work your gear. A lot of times, you don't even need to work hard

for them. Just crab lower Desdemona Sands or near Buoys 20 or 22. It's really easy this time of year. Seal-proof your baits however.

Upriver, anglers targeting coho at the mouth of the Sandy have been hitting fish in good numbers recently. **Pro guide Trevor Storlie (503-307-5601)** reported good action for coho at the mouth for spinner and plug trollers. The mouths of many of the Columbia's tributaries are ideal places to pick off coho this time of year. The Washougal as well as the mouths of SW Washington streams are producing fair numbers of fish right now and should continue to do so into November. In the low flows of most major river systems that we're experiencing now, fish will stage here until the next rain freshet or low light conditions to move upriver. It's an ideal time to target these fish now. Anglers should still expect to intercept a fair number of wild fish as well however.

Trevor also reported that hogliners at the mouth are still targeting chinook but having little luck. Adults are still being taken but dam counts would indicate that the catch is light and sporadic.

Even further upstream, the Bonneville fishery remains sporadic as well. With passage numbers falling below 1,000 fish/day more frequently, action is likely to taper although more residual fish become easier targets in the cooler temperatures this time of year. Reports of 2 to 3 fish/day on the good days are coming from backtrollers while bank anglers are also having their way with adults in the open areas. Regulations are complex in this area this time of year so check listings carefully before venturing out.

Sturgeon fishing is typically more productive this time of year, especially after the re-opening of the above Wauna fishery. Opening day was fairly productive but action tapered quickly indicating that there may not be a lot of fish holding in the area right now. The month of October is typically one of the most productive in this stretch, particularly for bank anglers. The lower stretches from Portland to Longview can also produce fair catches of sturgeon this time of year but that is not the case this year. We'll know more when we get another week of fishing under our belt. Sometimes it takes a short bit for people to find a bigger pod of biters.

The Guide's Forecast – Although the season to target keeper coho should continue on until mid-month, the "B" run of coho is a little less than half of what the "A" run was supposed to be. We still have over 200,000 coho to work with during this time and action in the Astoria area should continue to be good this weekend and beyond. It seems fish are becoming more attuned to spinners but green label herring should be a consistent producer as well. Fresh anchovies, my staple for the season doesn't seem to be an option right now. Weak tides over the weekend may make for challenging conditions for anglers but it may be worthwhile to spend a good part of your time targeting coho in the lower river closer to Chinook than upstream of the bridge. There should be fish in both areas and the cooler water we're experiencing right now in the area may promote a better bite than earlier in the season. Regardless of where you fish, coho aren't likely to be moving anywhere too fast with the low tide exchanges during daylight hours this weekend. Tongue Point may also be an option as the weaker tide series have traditionally been productive above Tongue Point.

The weak tides will also produce good catches of crab in the lower river and the nicer weather will likely bring out the crab gear so you won't be alone. Easy limits are likely.

Trollers working plugs or spinners at the mouths of both Oregon and Washington tributaries should continue to find good success in these fisheries. Early morning will be best and cloud-cover can be your friend this time of year. Be prepared to release a fair number of natives this time of year and keep in mind that a good portion of the fish entering the river this time of year are destined for Washington State hatcheries.

Backtrollers at Bonneville will likely continue to struggle on some days in search of chinook. Action should be quite possible for another week but quality fish will become harder to find after this week. Plugs will take the lion's share of the catch but anglers may look at backcontrolled baits such as eggs as a viable alternative. A late season chinook surge is not unheard of in recent history.

Sturgeon fishing in the gorge will likely remain mediocre given the slow start this season. Smelt will be the key bait of course but anglers may have to search hard to find a boat limit. This is really the time of year when bank anglers have a good shot at fish in the keeper range. Although the bank fishery is also under-performing it appears, it will still be one of the prime opportunities for a bank angler to tag a keeper. The swifter flows near the deadline will always produce some of the nicer fish. Shaker action is typically good at Cape Horn this time of year.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – With the daily coho counts running six days behind at Willamette Falls and an average of 600 or more per day crossing, one can only speculate as to how many are actually upstream. It's happening so fast and in such fine numbers, a conservative estimate might be in the 16,000 range as of October 8th. The coho limit above the Falls and in Willamette tributaries is three per day, fin-clipped or not as ODFW biologists believe these non-clipped coho pre progeny of hatchery fish. Sturgeon retention is allowed Thursdays through Saturdays on the lower Willamette and Multnomah Channel through the end of the year.

McKenzie flow, level and water temperature has remained optimum for trout and steelhead fishing.

The North Santiam remains slow for steelhead. The numbers of summers don't reflect those which have crossed Willamette Falls and no one is offering a good explanation.

Fishing at Detroit has been fair to good for trout to 20 inches.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has stocked 2,000 rainbow trout in pond #6 at St Louis Ponds in anticipation of hosting a free youth angling event on Saturday, October 10th from 9 AM to 2 PM. Staff and volunteers will be on hand to help less experienced youngsters.

The Guide's Forecast – It's a great year for coho on the upper Willamette but anglers targeting them above the Falls are having only marginal success. The mouths of tributaries (Yamhill, Molalla, Santiam) are logical places to try. With rain in the forecast next week, these fish would start moving into the tribs and should respond better to bait and lure. The Newberg area of the upper Willamette has been productive for smallmouth.

Try Prince or Pheasant Tail nymphs and October Caddis on the McKenzie to tempt reddsides. The trout are starting to key on caddis at this time of year. The Hatchery Hole on the McKenzie has produced a few steelhead.

A few coho have entered the North Santiam but too few to create a fishery for them. Nothing is happening on the South Santiam; there's not enough water there to fish it.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Low, warm water continues to create tough conditions on the Clackamas for coho anglers although flows improved slightly and dropped the water temperature over the past week, improving catches. Fish are staging below Eagle Creek with the water too low for coho to travel up into the creek. Although fish are scattered

throughout the Clack, the middle river holds the better chance of finding biters. Try spinners or drifting eggs. Jigs have been very effective in slots at times. Up to three hatchery coho may be retained per day.

The Sandy River is low and green in places, clear in others but has continued to produce fair catches of coho at Oxbow and Dodge parks as well as near the mouth of Cedar Creek. There are good numbers of fish in the Sandy but they're fickle. Throw a variety of bait and lure to see what rings their bell on any particular day or even any particular time of day. Cedar Creek has been on the decline and is now very slow. Expect to see an extension of the coho season through the end of the year here and possibly elsewhere to be announced soon.

ODFW sez: "October 10, 11, 17 & 18 – Salmon Homecoming at Oxbow Regional Park, 1 – 2:30 p.m. Take a walk along the edge of the Sandy River with a Metro naturalist to help spot spawning salmon and interpret their behavior and life cycle. Special salmon-viewing glasses are available on loan. Walks proceed rain or shine; dress for the weather. The trail is unpaved and fairly level; wear good walking shoes. Inquire at the park entry booth for starting location of the walks and location of the salmon-viewing station then follow the signs to the salmon. Suitable for all ages. 3010 SE Oxbow Parkway, Gresham, OR 97080."

Last Minute Update!

Coho season extended on Clackamas, Sandy and Eagle Creek

CLACKAMAS, Ore. – Anglers will have some extra time to take advantage of the new three-fish coho bag limit on the Clackamas and Sandy rivers and Eagle Creek.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife announced this week that it is extending the coho season on these streams through the remainder of the year. Prior to the rule change, the coho season had been set to expire Oct. 31 on the Clackamas and Sandy rivers and Nov. 30 on Eagle Creek.

"With the large coho run this year area hatcheries will easily meet brood stock needs and there will be plenty of fish for anglers to take advantage of," said Todd Alsbury, district fish biologist for ODFW's North Willamette Watershed. "This is a good year to get out and try to catch a coho."

The larger run, coupled with the late arrival of fall rains means the coho will be holed up in watershed longer than usual this year, according to Alsbury, who noted that in most years the coho migration winds down by the end of October. This year biologists believe the run may last well into November.

Coho in the Sandy River are reared at ODFW's Sandy fish hatchery on Cedar Creek near the town of Sandy. Coho are also reared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the Eagle Creek National Fish Hatchery east of Estacada.

The decision to extend the coho season comes on top of an earlier decision by ODFW to increase the bag limit. On Sept. 1, the department adopted a daily "bonus bag" limit, allowing anglers to retain a third salmon, provided the extra fish is a fin-clipped hatchery coho. Under permanent rules anglers were already allowed to keep a total of two fin-clipped salmon or fin-clipped steelhead per day in any combination. Adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon and steelhead may be retained through the end of the year on the Clackamas River and Eagle Creek. Adipose fin-flipped steelhead may be kept through the end of the year on the Sandy as well, although retention of chinook closes Oct. 31 to protect late spawning fall chinook.

For additional details, seasons and gear restrictions, anglers are advised to consult the 2009 Oregon Sport Fishing Regulations or visit the ODFW Web site at www.dfw.state.or.us.

North Coast Fishing Report – With Tillamook chinook headlining this week, anglers remain anxious for the run to really kick in. Well, as expected, it doesn't look like it will be a gangbuster season but consistent fishing is becoming more the norm around here. But let me clarify, by "consistent", I mean that we are seeing fish taken every day but you do have to work pretty hard and be pretty in-step in order to catch fish every day.

Tuesday was our best day of the season going 5 for 5 with all fish legal chinook. It's clear that we have had a recent good brood year as 3 of the 5 fish we caught were 3 year-olds, all under 13 pounds. There has been several of these smaller fish in the creel this season as ODF&W predicted. By Wednesday, our luck had run out as we only had one bite that day. The ocean kicked up Wednesday after being such a beautiful day on Tuesday. We crabbed on Wednesday, taking 50 keepers for 6 pots. I soaked my pots to the south of the bay entrance but those crabbing north also did well.

Without exception, some of the best fishing of the day is taking place the last few hours of outgoing tide along the inside of the north jetty. Boats flock there for outgoing tide, fighting seaweed until low slack. Although the action is far from stellar, it is one of the more consistent bites over the course of the day. Herring fished right on the bottom is the only option.

The ocean conditions have been sporadic with Tuesday being nice, Wednesday being crappy but the rest of the week through the weekend holds good promise for ocean recreation. You'll want to take your crab pots. Did I mention that already?

Upper bay fishing is nothing to write home about either. A few fish are being taken by the spinner fishermen but overall, it's slow up there too. After the first few fish are fished over, the action is pretty much over until high tide rolls back in. Tidewater is much the same for the bobber tossers. Slow fishing! The south channel is producing a few wild coho but overall, the action has slowed from previous weeks.

The Nehalem is closed to chinook and slow for hatchery coho although the district biologists still believe that there is a slug of hatchery fish to come in. I don't believe it as it's getting awful late to have high expectations.

The Nestucca River does have a few chinook present but the bulk of the fish being caught are wild coho and must be released unharmed. Many of the coho are large enough to make people think they have a chinook so check your identification carefully before you harvest a fish.

Tuna are still an option but anglers aren't going to post any big numbers this time of year. You'll also want to check conditions carefully as you don't want to get caught far out this time of year. Effort is way down from other time of the year so you won't have much company out there.

The Guide's Forecast – Weak tide this weekend should make for some good opportunity along the jetty on the north side. Expect action to come from first light and seaweed should become less of a problem on this weaker tide series. Keep your herring fresh and on the bottom but most importantly, keep it seaweed free and you may have to check it often to accomplish that. Once the tide changes, you may have the ocean as an option (and the better one!) or you can chase the bar crossers up the bay intercepting them in the Ghost Hole, Bay City and the upper bay by high tide.

We're coming into peak season on Tillamook Bay and we should start seeing improved catches. There are still lots of wild coho in the system but they should begin to taper in the coming weeks. Spinner fishermen may not find too much action coming their way on the softer set but if you do fish spinners, plan on spending a good part of your day fishing near Bay City. The upper bay may produce a few fish on the morning outgoing tide but nothing like the jetty fishing will.

If you do fish the ocean, bring your crab pots, you won't be disappointed but the farther away from the mouth that you crab, the better results you will see. Fresh bait is always best but frozen bait will work well too.

Bottomfishers will likely have more offshore, deep reef fishing into the weekend. The ling cod fishing has been good out there. Here is the National Weather Service forecast:

FRI

NW WIND 5 TO 15 KT...BECOMING N IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT. PATCHY DRIZZLE IN THE MORNING.

FRI NIGHT

NE WIND 5 TO 10 KT...BECOMING E 10 TO 15 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT.

SAT

E WIND 15 KT. LOCAL GUSTS TO 25 KT POSSIBLE BELOW GAPS AND COASTAL CANYONS...ESPECIALLY IN THE MORNING. WIND WAVES 2 TO 4 FT. W SWELL 3 FT.

SAT NIGHT

E WIND 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 TO 3 FT. W SWELL 2 FT.

SUN

E WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT...BECOMING SE DURING THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

MON

S TO SE WIND 20 TO 30 KT. COMBINED SEAS BUILDING 8 TO 12 FT.

Don't expect tidewater fishing to pick up either until we get a better tide series to motivate fish into the upper reaches. Rain is not coming in the near future but next weeks models indicate a steady rain may be in order.

Despite a fair amount of effort on the Nestucca River, not many legal salmon are being caught on the system. The Nehalem remains slow for hatchery coho as well.

Crabbing in most of the local estuaries is slow. The ocean is the place to be.

Central & South Coast Reports – Finally, the offshore forecast which has seemed, ironically, to turn negative each weekend for some time, is predicted to favor the boater from Newport to Brookings this coming weekend. Swells of five feet or less at periods of seven seconds or more along with manageable wind should greet anglers heading out for fish and ocean Dungeness. That said, be certain to check last minute to be certain these conditions actually come to pass.

Boats launching for bottomfish are no longer required to stay within the 40-fathom line. With deeper water open now, some of the charter boats are offering combination bottom fish/Humboldt squid fishing trips. While opinions vary on the table quality, these squid can be great eating if properly cared for immediately following capture and at four or five feet long, offer a decent gastronomical return.

Offshore anglers continue to make tuna trips and hookup with albacore. With the forecast for this coming weekend, boats are planning forays out of Newport and Charleston. Earlier this week it was a very long run to find jumpers. The fish are skittish at this time of year so count on drifting towards a school and casting to the, Trolling through them will put them down.

Mussel and razor clam harvesting remains closed coast-wide due to toxic algae but bay clams are unaffected and may be taken in accordance to regulations.

The Yaquina River has been mostly fruitless for trollers plying the water in hopes of a Chinook hookup. Coho is closed here so return 'em all, hatchery or not. Crabbing has been fair to good in Yaquina Bay although it has been very slow out of Waldport.

Catches of Chinook have picked up in Siuslaw tidewater with the stretch above the bridge particularly productive. The Alsea is producing a few Chinook daily but as there are no hatchery coho, no coho fishing allowed here.

Coho fishing in the bay out of Reedsport has been good although hatchery keepers are in the minority. Be sure to drop crab nets or traps in Winchester Bay for worthwhile results. The Umpqua mainstem is fishing well for coho to Elkton and above although, as with many locations, most are wild which must be released unharmed. The North Umpqua continues to produce good catches of summer steelhead.

Crabbing in Coos Bay has been good, producing limits or near limits for all although catches of fall Chinook have slowed.

Coquille trollers are taking decent numbers of Chinook on spinners.

Trollers are catching Chinook to 30 pounds daily on anchovy/spinner rigs in the Rogue estuary. The best days will be when the ocean is flat as salmon won't cross in rough bar conditions. Coho are reliably in the mix but be sure to check for a fin-clip which can be missed in the excitement. With the water temperature dropping in the river, Chinook are moving upstream where anglers back-bouncing eggs are scoring good catches. Chinook and steelhead are being taken but few are as high as Agness where half-pounder fishing has been good. Half-pounder and adult steelhead catches are good in the lower Rogue Canyon where no bait is allowed. Plugs and flies are effective here. In the middle river, a variety of bait and lures have been effective for steelhead and Chinook catches are good but be aware the river is closed to retention above the Hog Creek Boat Ramp. The upper Rogue is low and the water is cold, resulting in a slowing of metabolism although a few summers are still being hooked. Savage Rapids Dam, constructed in 1921, will enter the final stages of removal Friday this week. Officials are not releasing a completion date, anglers are anxious to fish the rapids which replace the dam.

The burgeoning Chinook season is underway in Chetco tidewater with the better catches coming on spinnerbaits near the mouth. While most catches are in the teens, an occasional larger fish has been taken while Brookings resident Carl Johnson picked up a jaw-dropping 58-pound Chinook a week ago Wednesday and catches are improving daily. Considering the really big Chinook historically enter in the last two weeks in October, this may turn out to be a really great

season following a late start. The Chetco will remain closed above the Highway 101 Bridge until the water level comes up but is scheduled to open November 7th.

While fishing for cutthroat trout has been good on the Elk and Sixes, trollers aren't having much luck with Chinook. This will change when the fall rains begin.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Trout on the Warm Springs to Trout Creek stretch of the Deschutes are responding to Prince Nymphs and October Caddis patterns now and fishing is good. Steelhead numbers have continued to improve. The Deschutes closes for Chinook salmon retention on October 31st. Spinners will remain effective right up to the closure. Fishing remains slow for trollers at the mouth.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report *September 30 - October 13, 2009*

North Puget Sound

Fishing for coho salmon has improved in Puget Sound, and saltwater anglers should continue to do well over the next couple weeks as the run pushes into the region's rivers and streams.

"**Coho** fishing has been pretty good recently in North Sound," said Steve Thiesfeld, a fish biologist with WDFW. "Anglers could have a couple more weeks of decent fishing before we start to see a transition in the marine areas from coho to **blackmouth** and **chum salmon** ."

Anglers who took part in the recent **Everett Coho Derby** benefited from the good bite. A total of 1,101 coho were weighed in during the two-day event. Jay Kemp turned out to be the derby's big winner. Kemp hauled in a 16.72-pound coho, taking home the \$3,000 first prize in the adult division. Pat Flynn, who weighed in a 16.52-pound coho, finished second and pocketed \$2,000, while John Stone's 15.74-pound silver was good enough for third place and \$1,000. In the kids' division, Sean McCauley took first with a 14.64-pound coho.

Thiesfeld said anglers looking to hook ocean coho should try fishing Point No Point, Jefferson Head, Possession Bar and Shipwreck. Fishing regulations for those areas, and other waters of marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), change in October. Beginning Oct. 1, anglers fishing Marine Area 9 will have a daily limit of two salmon, but must release all chinook. Those fishing Marine Area 10 will have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook.

Anglers looking to get an early start on the region's **blackmouth** season might also want to head to Marine Area 10, said Thiesfeld. Another option for blackmouth anglers is Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where beginning Oct. 1 anglers can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit.

Thiesfeld reminds anglers that beginning Oct. 1 only portions of marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) will be open for salmon fishing. Salmon fishing in Marine Area 8-1 will be restricted to the Oak Harbor area, west of a line from Forbes Point to Blowers Bluff. Anglers fishing Oak Harbor have a daily limit of two coho only.

In Marine Area 8-2, salmon fishing will be limited to the south end of the area, south of a line from Randall Point to the south end of the Everett Naval Station dock. Anglers in that area have a two salmon daily limit, but must release chinook.

Meanwhile, **crabbing** closes one hour past sunset today (Sept. 30) in Marine Area 7 - the only area in the region currently open for crab. The region's other marine areas are already closed for a catch assessment. See WDFW's sport-crabbing website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab>) for more information.

In the freshwater, several rivers are open for salmon, including the Snohomish, where there have been several reports of anglers hooking some bright coho salmon. Anglers fishing the Snohomish have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release chinook.

Elsewhere, Lake Sammamish is open for salmon fishing, with a daily limit of four salmon, up to two chinook may be retained. All sockeye must be released, and fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek.

Lake Washington also is open for salmon. Anglers are allowed four coho per day (minimum size 12 inches) from waters north of the Highway 520 Bridge and east of the Montlake Bridge.

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

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

With salmon moving from the coast to area bays and rivers, anglers have some new options to consider in the region. Or, they might want to trade in their fishing rods for clam shovels. The first razor-clam dig of the fall season is tentatively scheduled in mid-October, provided test results show the clams are safe to eat.

If tests are favorable, WDFW will proceed with evening **razor clam** digs at Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks and Kalaloch Beach, which is scheduled to open for clam digging for the first time since spring 2007.

Tentative opening dates and evening low tides in October are:

- Friday, Oct. 16 (5:50 p.m. -0.5 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis
- Saturday, Oct. 17 (6:38 p.m. -0.8 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks, Kalaloch
- Sunday, Oct. 18 (7:23 p.m. -1.1 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks, Kalaloch
- Monday, Oct. 19 (8:06 p.m. -1.1 ft.) Twin Harbors

Dan Ayres, WDFW coastal shellfish manager, recommends that clam diggers take lights or lanterns for the nighttime digs and to check weather and surf forecasts before heading out.

Digging is restricted to the hours between noon and midnight. Harvesters are allowed to take no more than 15 razor clams and must keep the first 15 they dig, regardless of size or condition. Each digger's clams must be kept in a separate container.

A license is required for anyone age 15 or older. Any 2009 annual shellfish/seaweed license or combination fishing license is valid. Another option is a razor-clam only license available in annual or three-day only versions. Descriptions of the various options are available on the WDFW website at <https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov> .

More digs are tentatively scheduled Nov. 4-7, Nov. 14-17, Dec. 2-5, Dec. 31-Jan.3.

Meanwhile, anglers looking for salmon fishing opportunities might consider heading to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, where a non-selective fishery for **coho** and **chinook** gets under way Oct. 1 in

Marine Area 6 (Port Angeles). A non-selective chinook fishery also gets under way Oct. 1 in Marine Area 5 (Sekiu), where anglers have been able to retain wild coho since Sept. 19. In non-selective fisheries, anglers may retain fish whether or not they have a clipped adipose fin.

Having Marine Area 5 open in October is a new opportunity for anglers, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. In past years, anglers had to wait until November for the chinook fishery to open. "The coho season has been exceptional this year and hopefully anglers will have some fun catching blackmouth as well," Thiesfeld said. A creel check conducted in the area during the Sept. 26-27 weekend showed anglers averaging one coho per rod.

The daily limit in both marine areas is two salmon of any species, except that only one fish may be a chinook. Thiesfeld reminds anglers that the salmon fishery in Marine Area 5 closes Oct. 15, while Marine Area 6 closes Oct. 31. Freshwater Bay, Port Angeles Harbor and Sequim Bay remain closed to salmon fishing, but anglers may fish for coho salmon in Dungeness Bay Oct. 1-31.

Also as of Oct. 1, anglers fishing in marine areas 11 and 13 (Vashon Island to South Puget Sound) will be allowed to retain **wild chinook** as part of their two-fish daily limit. However, all **wild coho** caught in Marine Area 13 must be released. Other fishing opportunities coming up in Puget Sound include **chum** and **blackmouth** retention in Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) beginning Oct. 16.

A new wheelchair-accessible fishing site is now available at the **Hoodsport Hatchery** for person with disabilities. The site includes an ADA-compliant ramp, grated walkways, and a new fishing platform with a gate, fencing, handrails and fishing slots. Only persons with disabilities who permanently use a wheelchair and/or those who have a designated harvest card are allowed to use the site and to fish adjacent waters inshore from the yellow marker buoys to the mouth of Finch Creek. More information is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/do/newreal/release.php?id=sep2509a>.

Closer to the coast, salmon anglers fishing Grays Harbor (Marine Area 2-2) and the lower Chehalis River have been doing quite well since the Sept. 16 opening, said Erica Crust, WDFW ocean port sampler. "These are popular areas and folks are catching some nice fish," she said.

In Marine Area 2-2, which is open through Nov. 30, the daily limit is two fish, one of which may be a **wild adult coho**. All adult **chinook** and **chum** must be released.

Crust reminds anglers the upper Chehalis River above Porter Bridge opens to salmon fishing Oct. 1. Through Oct. 15, anglers on the river may retain two adult salmon as part of their six-fish daily limit. One of those may be a wild adult coho, but all adult chinook and chum must be released.

Other area rivers opening Oct. 1 include the Elk, Hoquiam, Humptulips, Johns, Satsop, Wishkah and Wynoochee rivers in Grays Harbor County, Kennedy Creek in Thurston County and the Nemah River in Pacific County. Crust advises anglers to check the 2009-2010 *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> for specific regulations and retention rules on these rivers.

Regulations are also changing on the Skokomish River in Mason County as of Oct. 1. Anglers may keep up to four adult salmon as part of a six-fish daily limit, but must release all **chinook** through Oct. 15. All **chum** must be released.

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.

Southwest Washington

Large numbers of **coho salmon** are moving up the lower Columbia River into area tributaries and **chinook** are still biting in some rivers. But starting Oct. 1, anglers have another option to

consider: **Sturgeon fishing** in the mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines upstream to Bonneville Dam.

"This is a great fishing opportunity for fall, especially for anglers who don't have boats," said Brad James, a WDFW fish biologist. "Bank anglers have done very well, historically, fishing for sturgeon just below Bonneville Dam."

Anglers may retain legal-size sturgeon Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays only until the area quota is met. White sturgeon must measure 38 to 54 inches from their nose to the fork in their tail to meet the legal size limit. James said about 5,000 fish are still available for harvest in the mainstem Columbia River under the quota for the area.

"I wouldn't be surprised if the fishery starts out strong," James said. "Sturgeon have moved out of the estuary and have been chasing juvenile shad that are out-migrating past the dam."

Thousands of **late-run coho salmon** have also been moving up the mainstem Columbia River, and should provide good fishing in the tributaries throughout the month of October, said Wolf Dammers, another WDFW fish biologist. Fishing for hatchery coho was slow in most rivers through September, although anglers averaged a legal fish for every three rods on the North Fork Lewis during one recent creel check.

"What we need now is some heavy rain to get the coho moving up tributaries throughout the region," Dammers said.

Best bets for hatchery coho in the coming weeks are the Cowlitz, Lewis, Kalama, Elochoman, Grays and the Klickitat rivers, he said. During the last week of September, anglers were catching both hatchery coho and some bright chinook salmon on the Cowlitz River below Interstate 5. Dammers said some nice, foot-long cutthroat are also biting near the trout hatchery.

Anglers may retain up to six hatchery-reared 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. Except on the Klickitat River, only those fish with a clipped adipose fin and healed scar may be retained.

Starting Oct. 1, new rules will take effect on several of those rivers to protect spawning **chinook salmon** :

- All chinook salmon must be released on the Lewis River, including the North Fork. In addition, fishing from any floating device will be prohibited on the North Fork Lewis from Johnson Creek to Colvin Creek. On the North Fork, fishing will close from Colvin Creek upstream to protect naturally spawning fish.
- All chinook must be released on the North Fork Toutle River from the Kidd Valley Bridge near Highway 504 upstream.
- Adult chinook - but not hatchery jacks - must be released on the Green, Washougal (from Little Washougal River upstream) and the

White Salmon River (from ½ mile above the Hwy. 14 Bridge upstream). Marked, hatchery fall chinook - both adults and jacks - may still be retained on the Grays, Elochoman and Kalama rivers.

In addition, Drano Lake is scheduled to be closed to all fishing from 6 p.m. Tuesdays through 6 p.m. Wednesdays throughout the month of October.

Miss those days of August when anglers reeled in a record number of **hatchery steelhead** from the lower Columbia River? Some fish from that run have been taking their time moving upriver and "laying in" near the mouth of the White Salmon River, Dammers said. "Anglers have been doing pretty well fishing for summer steelhead there in the last quarter of a mile of the Big White Salmon."

Eastern Washington

Glen Mendel, WDFW southeast district fish biologist, said fishing for **fall chinook salmon** remains slow on the two portions of the Snake River that are open through Oct. 15. "Hopefully catch rates will increase with colder weather ahead, when water temperatures decrease and fish are more active," Mendel said.

The two stretches open for fall chinook are from the Highway 12 Bridge (near the mouth of the Snake River) upstream to the no-fishing zone below Ice Harbor Dam, and from the Highway 261 Bridge crossing on the Snake River (about one-half mile upstream from Lyons Ferry Hatchery) upstream to the no-fishing zone below Little Goose Dam.

Snake River **steelhead** fishing continues to pick up and Mendel notes discussions are under way to possibly liberalize the daily catch limit. Steelheaders should stay tuned for such fishing rule changes at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>, or sign up to receive notices through <http://wdfw.wa.gov/lists>.

Many **trout** fisheries in the northeast district's Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties remain open through October and could provide nice catches for fall family outings. Ellen Lake, north of Inchelium with a Colville National Forest campground, could be productive because it was rehabilitated last year. Gillette Lake, northeast of Colville with a Colville National Forest campground, has both rainbow and tiger trout. Browns Lake, northeast of Cusick with a Kaniksu National Forest campground, is usually best for fall cutthroat, although it's fly-fishing only with no motor boats allowed. Check out all the options at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/prospects>.

In southwest Spokane County, Clear Lake remains open through October and usually produces good catches of **brown trout, crappie** and **largemouth bass** in late fall. Amber Lake, with **cutthroat** and **rainbow trout**, is open through November, but the last two months are catch-and-release with selective gear rules.

Catch and size limits have been lifted temporarily for some trout fisheries scheduled for rotenone treatments this month to improve future fishing. Lincoln County's Fishtrap Lake and Spokane County's Hog Canyon Lake and Creek have no size or catch limits through Oct. 11, but they will close to fishing Oct. 12 until further notice. Spokane County's West Medical Lake has no size or catch limits through Oct. 25 and will close to fishing Oct. 26 until further notice.

Northcentral Washington

Hatchery **steelhead** fishing opened Sept. 29 on the upper Columbia River, and on the Wenatchee, Icicle, Entiat, Methow and Okanogan rivers, thanks to a strong run of both wild and hatchery-produced steelhead. WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist Bob Jateff of Twisp reminds anglers that this year's special fishery includes mandatory retention - anglers must keep any adipose-fin-clipped hatchery origin steelhead of at least 20 inches until the daily catch limit of four fish is reached. After they have retained four fish, anglers must stop fishing for hatchery steelhead.

Any wild steelhead caught - those with an intact adipose fin - must be immediately released unharmed without being removed from the water. Anglers also must release any steelhead with one or more round holes punched in the tail fin. "This fishery helps remove hatchery-origin steelhead and increases the proportion of wild natural-origin steelhead returning to spawning areas," Jateff said.

The Icicle River will be open through Nov.15 from the mouth to 500 feet downstream of the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery Barrier Dam. Anglers fishing the Icicle also will be allowed to retain three coho (minimum size 12 inches) per day, but must release coho equipped with an

anchor tag. Fisheries on the other rivers are scheduled to remain open through March 31, 2010 unless the allowable incidental impact to wild steelhead is reached before then. They include:

- **Mainstem Columbia River:** From Rock Island Dam to 400 feet below Chief Joseph Dam. Night closure and selective gear rules apply, except fishing from a motorized vessel and bait are allowed.
- **Wenatchee River:** From the mouth to a sign about 800 feet below the most downstream side of Tumwater Dam. Night closure and selective gear rules apply.
- **Entiat River:** Upstream from the Alternate Highway 97 Bridge near the mouth of the Entiat River to 800 feet downstream of the Entiat National Fish Hatchery outfall. Night closure and selective gear rules apply, except fishing from a motorized vessel is allowed.
- **Methow River:** From the Highway 97 Bridge in Pateros upstream to the second powerline crossing, and from the first Highway 153 Bridge north of Pateros to the confluence with the Chewuch River in Winthrop. The second powerline crossing upstream to the first Highway 153 Bridge is closed to fishing. Night closure and selective gear rules apply, except fishing from a motorized vessel is allowed.
- **Okanogan River:** From the mouth upstream except closed waters from the Lake Osoyoos Control Dam (Zosel Dam) downstream to the first Highway 97 Bridge below Oroville. Night closure and selective gear rules apply, except fishing from a motorized vessel is allowed.

Jateff also noted that Okanogan County lakes are fishing well now, including Big and Little Twin near Winthrop, Blue on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, and Chopaka near Loomis. "Good numbers of **rainbow trout** from 12 to 16 inches can be found in all these lakes," he said. "Remember that Chopaka is fly-fishing only, and the other three lakes are selective-gear only."

Catch and size limits have been lifted temporarily for Okanogan County's Buck Lake, scheduled for rotenone treatment this month to improve future fishing. No size or catch limits are in effect through Oct. 25 and then Buck Lake will be closed to fishing Oct. 26 until further notice.

Southcentral Washington

Salmon fishing in the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River near the Tri-Cities has been very productive, reports Paul Hoffarth, WDFW district fish biologist from Pasco. "Harvest is well ahead of last year and will likely get better as water temperatures cool," Hoffarth said. "So far this season, 2,508 adult fall chinook and 874 jacks have been harvested - 20 percent above last year at this time. Angler effort, measured in angler trips, has increased 7 percent from the 2008 fishery."

An estimated 1,872 fall chinook (1,389 adults and 483 jacks) were harvested in the Hanford Reach the week ending Sept. 27. Anglers averaged 1.2 chinook per boat.

The Hanford Reach, from the Hwy. 395 Bridge in the Tri-Cities upstream to Priest Rapids Dam, also opened Sept. 22 for the retention of **hatchery steelhead**. The daily limit is three hatchery steelhead. An estimated 287 steelhead were recently caught, of which 193 were harvested. Bank anglers averaged 11 hours per steelhead.

WDFW staff interviewed 94 boats (199 anglers) with 15 steelhead at Ringold. Steelhead catch rates for boat anglers were low because the majority of the boat anglers interviewed at Ringold were targeting chinook. In the upper Reach, from the wooden powerline towers to Priest Rapids, 10 boats (20 anglers) specifically targeting steelhead were sampled. They reported 20 steelhead caught (10 hatchery and 10 wild) - slightly better than one steelhead for each five hours of fishing.

Hoffarth also noted the Yakima River is open for salmon fishing below Prosser Dam but has been fairly slow to date. "The number of anglers fishing for salmon in the Yakima River remains slow

and steady, but catch remains extremely low," he said. "Only eight adult chinook were harvested this past week and 20 overall for the fishery. Yakima River fishing tends to improve in October."

Both the Yakima River and the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River will close for salmon fishing Oct. 22. In addition, the Hanford Reach from the wooden power line towers at the old Hanford town site to Priest Rapids Dam will close for steelhead fishing Oct. 22. The Columbia River downstream of the wooden power line towers will remain open for steelhead fishing after Oct. 22, but the daily catch limit for hatchery steelhead will be reduced to two fish.

Jonathan Kohr, WDFW fish biologist, reports good **smallmouth bass** fishing in the Columbia River above the Vernita Bridge. "Throw any bottom type of plastic - worms, grubs, tube jigs - and you'll catch them," Kohr said. "They're scrappy and fun to catch and good eating. Dip them in batter and make fish tacos."

Kohr notes that removing smallmouth from the river helps save salmon. He also cautioned boat anglers to be careful of shallow rocks or bars because water levels have been extremely low.

Reader E-mail

Reader Ralph S. writes to suggest, "You should find someone to give you accurate reports on Bass and warm water species in the area and out of the area as well. It might take some of the pressure off the salmon and steelhead fishing. And anyone who spent any time at all fishing in the 70s and early 80s knows the returns and Runs today aren't even worth the effort anymore."

Co-editor Michael Teague responds, Thank you for your suggestion and we would enjoy writing additional reports and predictions regarding warm water fishing. This is contingent upon receiving reports from recreational anglers (there are few warm water guides in this part of the country). Readers ... can you help?

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

Fishing Reel Schematics are available at this commercial website:

<http://www.mikesreelrepair.com/>

Technical Fishing Bulletins:

<http://www.luhrjensen.com/techbulletins.cfm>

GOOD LUCK!