

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 30th – November 5th, 2009**

Willamette Valley/Metro - Passage for all species at Bonneville Dam is on the decline but overall passage of coho and steelhead adults indicate great fishing ahead for upstream tributaries. Sturgeon fishing in the Bonneville area remains only fair.

Trollers working the Troutdale area have seen catches slow since recent rain freshets have sent fish on their upstream migration.

Water flow and temperature fluctuation at Willamette Falls is having little effect on coho passage with the total as of October 21st pushing 23,000. Adults are concentrating at the mouths of upper Willamette tributaries such as the Yamhill and Tualatin Rivers but are reluctant to bite.

Steelhead are being taken on the Middle Willamette but their quality should be deteriorating soon.

Recent rain and cool weather has the McKenzie level and flow up while the water temperature has dropped below 50 degrees. Action here has slowed.

Look for greatly increased level and flow on the North Santiam. It'll be a while before it's fishable again.

Coho fishing on the Clackamas remains slow despite recent precipitation. Eagle Creek is full of mostly dark fish.

The water level of the Sandy came up with the last rain and with it came fish. There's a mix of bright and dark coho in the river.

Huddleston Pond and Junction City Pond are scheduled to be planted with trout.

Northwest – North coast chinook anglers continue to struggle for consistent results although the Tillamook fishery has shown signs of life in the recent week. Low slack produced a fair catch along the inside of the jetty on Monday but action slowed dramatically by Tuesday. The Ghost Hole is becoming the best option at first light and near high tide. The upper bay is slow.

Significant but stable rain freshets have jumpstarted the coastal driftboat season on the north coast. Consistent storms should keep rivers in prime shape through the weekend but you'll have to pick the river that is in the best shape.

Although all north coast streams are options right now, the Tillamook area streams are likely the best options in a low-return year such as this. The Trask and Nestucca Rivers should be good options but the Wilson and Kilchis should have some fish available as well. The latter 2 systems typically get later returning fish with action peaking in mid-November and lasting into early December. Back-bounced eggs or backrolled Flatfish should produce some action but effort will likely far surpass success over the weekend.

The Nehalem remains closed to chinook but big numbers of hatchery coho were forecasted back

to the North Fork Nehalem. To date, only 1,125 have entered the trap; far fewer than most had anticipated.

Trout fishing closes on October 31st on all coastal river systems. Overall, effort was low for this once highly sought after species but the Necanicum and Nehalem basins produced good catches for the anglers that participated in the fishery.

A good minus tide series begins over the weekend and clamming along Clatsop Beaches becomes an option. High surf may keep clams from feeding on the surface however and create hazardous digging conditions for beach-goers.

Southwest – The wild coho fishery remains open on the Coquille River but recent action has been slow. The best fishing has been between Bandon and the Rocky Point Boat Ramp.

The wild coho fishery at Tahkenitch and Siltcoos has not yet started to produce. Anglers and the fish are waiting for an artificial freshet that comes when water is released from upstream impoundments.

Mussel harvest is once again closed coast-wide as levels of naturally occurring toxins have risen above safe levels.

Winchester Bay has been producing some limits of Dungeness.

Crabbers are doing well in Coos Bay. Bobber fishing has been decent at the top of tidewater for jack chinook and the occasional adult.

The Rogue estuary has continued to provide action for coho and some chinook to anglers on the troll. When the bar is rough, head upriver to intercept migrating fish. Heavy rain will put an end to Rogue Bay fishing. Fly anglers with low-water expertise are enjoying the upper Rogue action as the season draws to a close.

Trollers in the lower Chetco have experienced on and off action with rough ocean conditions hampering boaters. During periods of calm, some large chinook have been caught. Mild tides and early incoming tides won't offset rough offshore predictions for the coming weekend.

Productive late last week, the Elk and Sixes could use some rain although chinook were being taken at the mouth of the Elk as recently as Tuesday this week.

Diamond Lake should remain productive up to closure at the end of October. Fish the south end in windy weather.

Eastern – Pro guide Steve Fleming (888-624-9424) reports that John Day gear and fly anglers have been averaging two fish per day for a couple of weeks.

Steelheading has improved on the Warm Springs to Maupin stretch of the Deschutes following a high-water slowdown last week. Fishing pressure is also up. Counts have been steady at the Shearars Falls trap although it's been inoperative the last few days.

Odell produced some dandy lake trout over the past weekend. Those trying this fishery should dress for frigid conditions.

John Day Pool anglers averaged about 1 fish per boat over the last week with equal numbers of

wild and hatchery fish in the catch.

SW Washington – Effort and catch are up on most district rivers with the Cowlitz reporting an exceptional return of coho this year. The Lewis River remains a strong option as well although the area's rivers are likely to jump in flow in the coming week, which will temporarily put fish off the bite.

The Klickitat River is producing good catches of coho from the mouth and through the lower river.

Columbia River Fishing Report – The Columbia continues its slow slide into winter hibernation as sturgeon fishing continues to slow, the fall Chinook fishery is effectively over and trolling for coho at the mouths of mainstem tributaries downstream of Bonneville Dam takes a nosedive after a rain freshet draws adults upstream.

Starting with sturgeon fishing, both bank anglers and boaters realized a slight drop in success rates as that is to be expected as the catch and keep season wears on. Bank anglers still averaged nearly a keeper for every 10 rods with boaters only doing slightly better than that. The low flows still have anglers focused on the faster flows to take keepers but this fishery faded faster than what anglers are used to for the fall gorge fishery.

Smelt remains the top bait but some anglers are also going with shrimp this time of year. Squid can also be an effective bait but it's critical that you target these fish in faster water.

Salmon fishing in the area is still open but only a remnant fleet and bank angler effort remains. The fish have been poor quality for a few weeks now as they mature ever so quickly for an October/November spawn.

Further downstream at Troutdale, coho trollers working the mouth of the Sandy are still taking fish but catches began to drop off when the latest rain freshet drew fish into the Sandy itself or motivated them to move upstream to other tributaries. Plugs are still responsible for the lion's share of the catch but spinners are taking a few as well. Walleye is still a good option in this stretch of the river.

About the only thing left to report on in the Columbia, downstream of the John Day Pool, is the estuary crabbing. It's as good as one would expect for this time of year. The weak tide series we're just now coming off of allowed for great opportunity through early this week.

The John Day fishery is beginning to draw interest as creel checks indicated dozens of boats fishing over the last week in the reservoir upstream of the dam. Catch rates are beginning to increase with over a fish per boat registered in the check. The ratio of wild to hatchery was nearly 1:1. Trollers also work this area of the river using plugs behind the boat. With little flow in this area, boaters must troll at a fairly steady speed to get the plugs diving adequately. This fishery will gain momentum quickly, likely peaking in late November.

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon fishing may still be the best option for motivated anglers over the weekend. Boaters will want to hug the fast water near the deadline using smelt for bait. It's too early for the Willamette River to be productive but expect keeper catches to continue to taper with a dramatic slowdown likely in the month of November.

Coho anglers working the mouths of the Sandy and Washougal Rivers should continue to intercept fish but don't expect the same results you saw there just a few weeks ago. Troll hot

colored plugs with early morning producing some of the better catches. Experienced anglers can employ this technique upstream at the mouths of other tributaries in search of both coho and steelhead.

And that brings me to the John Day Pool, where anglers should see an up-tick in success in this gentlemen's fishery. Simply troll plugs in the reservoir above the dam varying your trolling depth by the amount of line you deploy. Steelhead are a little less predictable than coho in that different colors work better on different days. Bring a variety of options. Anglers comfortable running the lower John Day should find action using bobber and jigs or shrimp. It's a good alternative as mainstem trolling can get a bit monotonous.

Although crabbing in the estuary is always an option this time of year, a more extreme tide series may cause crabbers to lose gear in the swifter flows. Be sure to time your picking around the appropriate time of the tide as buoys may disappear when the tide is at full strength.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – The latest daily coho counts are tapering off but it's too early to determine whether or not this is a trend. Given the time of year, it is a possibility, however. The YTD total as of October 23rd was about 23,000, a remarkable number to say the least. Water temperature at the Falls was 54 degrees with flows increasing as of October 28th.

According to the new regulations this year, anglers can catch up to three fin-clipped steelhead or clipped or unclipped coho in any combination on the Santiam system. The North Santiam is running over 7,000 cfs at Mehama and will be a challenge to fish as well as hazardous to float.

The level and flow at the Vida gauge on the McKenzie has been up and down and currently show a 600 cfs increase since October 23rd. In addition, the temperature is declining with the most recent reading below 48 degrees.

Canby Pond, open to kids up to 17 years old, will be planted with 100 'trophy-sized' trout this week.

Most rivers and streams are closed to trout fishing on October 31st. Be sure to check the regulations to be certain.

The Guide's Forecast – Ply the lower Willamette for sturgeon. Anglers doing so and moving to find larger fish, are boating a few keepers. Squid has been a top bait with these bottom-dwellers also taking herring, sand shrimp and anchovies. Coho are rolling at in the tributaries of the upper Willamette and while few have been taken by anglers, they are there for the taking.

The chance of catching a steelhead in the North Santiam is fair at best with coho an even longer shot.

Water fluctuation and dropping temperature are never positive indications at this time of year. Fall can be great on the McKenzie but the river will need to stabilize before it begins to fish well once again.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – The Clackamas remains rose to over 12 feet at the Estacada gauge and is falling at this writing on the morning of October 29th. Coho are in the river in decent number with fish scattered primarily above Barton Park. Conditions are as good now as they have been at any other time this season. There are no guarantees, but hitting

is as the level drops is a best bet. Eagle Creek has turned brown and was washing out leaves and debris as of Wednesday this week. Coho are moving through en masse and the hatchery reported 3,000 entering the trap in just two days earlier this week.

Coho angling in the Sandy River is fair with fish scattered. The best results have come on spinners and cured eggs in the stretch between Oxbow Park and Cedar Creek. The vast majority of coho in the Sandy are of hatchery origin but watch for unclipped fish & return them gently to spawn. The river was slightly off-color at mid-week. Cedar Creek has been jammed with coho as well as spectators anxious to see the fish. Broodstock requirements have been met and officials are now processing as many as 2,000 coho for donation to the Oregon Food Bank.

Coho fishing everywhere at this time of year will involve catching fish of varying hue from bright to pink to crimson to charcoal. If a buck shows a little color, it is likely to cut well as little of its bodily resources are used in the preparation for spawn. Hens, on the other hand, are far more likely to cut pale even showing only a little color. This is due to a far more demanding bodily process to produce eggs which will deplete its resources and cause the flesh to lighten much earlier than the male of the species.

North Coast Fishing Report – Anglers are still looking for the Tillamook Chinook fishery to break loose but it just isn't going to happen. With the low survival rates of the 2004 and 2005 brood years of Chinook, we just don't have a lot to be thankful for this Thanksgiving (when it comes to this fishery, anyway).

There has been a few lucky anglers and even despite the poor adult return this year, if you do put in a big effort (we'll define that later), you can have a fair chance at a fish this fall. But admittedly, luck will play a role in your success. Anglers reported a fair bite along the jetty at the last part of the outgoing tide on Monday (10/26). Armed with that information, guides readied themselves for another good opportunity on Tuesday, only to come up disappointed (again) during that prime, low slack bite. There were a few fish taken in the Ghost Hole on that miserable morning however with first light often one of the better opportunities over the course of the day. There was also a brief high tide flurry as well in the Ghost Hole as is often the case.

Most recently, a good flurry of activity was witnessed in the Ghost Hole on Wednesday with a fair number of chinook taken on the incoming tide for herring trollers. About 25 boats were fishing in the area on Wednesday

Cold, wet weather has dampened motivation levels not to once again, mention the lack of quality opportunities this season. Tillamook Bay has seen a dramatic drop in effort lately. The upper and middle estuary has been performing mediocre at best and the most recent rain freshet has certainly sent some fish upstream. The ocean has simply not been an option as a 15 foot swell keeps recreational craft well inside of the bay.

Driftboaters saw their first opportunity for floating and the action was fair at best on the Trask and Nestucca Rivers. Since the flows never achieved very high levels, fish didn't move all that quickly and out of reach of boaters and inland bank anglers. The lower stretches produced the better results for those sitting ready to intercept with eggs and plugs. Many anglers reported dark fish in the catches indicating that the freshest of fish were likely still in the tidewater stretches. Overall, anglers were quite surprised just how slow the action was. Sunday produced well for bank anglers fishing near the hatchery on the Trask River.

Although a bit early for Wilson and Kilchis River fish, there was some action on the Wilson after the recent rain freshet. Fish still seemed somewhat reluctant with some dark fish in the system. Tidewater anglers had the best crack at a fresh fish but few seemed to be present.

Crabbing is slowly improving in coastal estuaries with good reports coming from Nehalem and Netarts Bays. Crabbers using quality baits reported limit catches but you had to put in some time to get them. Tillamook Bay is producing fair catches of keeper crab.

The Guide's Forecast – More fluctuating flows along coastal river systems should improve boating conditions on the Wilson, Trask and Nestucca Rivers. Despite some rises in river levels, there remains a few challenging tailouts to drift through on many systems. The lack of a real good rain freshet is bringing up mostly dark fish with fresher fish remaining in the tidewater sections of the rivers. Most rivers remained up but still pretty clear on Wednesday.

The Trask and Nestucca systems will harbor many darker fish as those systems typically receive earlier returns. Fish from those systems have been in tidewater for much of the month and are ready to spawn. Anglers are noting a high percentage of dark fish being retained. These fish make poor tablefare and should be left to spawn, particularly in a year with low returns like we're experiencing this season. Please be conscious of what you keep. A boot in the smoker still comes out as a smoked boot!

Leafy debris will also hamper success so if you backtroll, be prepared to deal with fouled gear.

An increasing tide this weekend may produce better catches in the bay fishery. Wilson and Kilchis fish are due in and coupling up another small rain freshet with an improved tide series and run timing, should produce some fair catches in the estuary this weekend. Keep in mind that the run isn't going to suddenly pop in but action should hopefully improve from the dismal season thus far.

Herring trolled on the east side of the estuary should produce the best but I've had fair fishing in the west channel this time of year as well. Most of the effort and likely the catch will take place in the Ghost Hole and at Bay City on the incoming tide. Be sure to be there at first light but the bulk of the catch will occur about half way through the incoming tide and through high slack. When low slack occurs after sunrise after the weekend, the jetties may produce a few fish for the last trickle of the tide.

Bay crabbing should continue to improve as crab filter in from the ocean. Be mindful of the larger tide swings as they will often pull your buoys under until the tide slows. Un-weighted rings or pots will easily travel out to sea if left unattended.

Another nice minus tide series begins on Sunday. Beach clamming along Clatsop County beaches should be productive when the surf calms. The surf may calm down by the time the tide series becomes favorable according to the long range marine forecast.

Central & South Coast Reports – High swells and strong wind will prevent recreational launches on the central Oregon coast. Try for Chinook and Dungeness in estuaries to fulfill that saltwater jones. Ocean crabbing remains closed until December 1st.

With naturally-occurring toxic domoic acid levels above safe levels, the entire coast is closed to mussel harvest although all beaches and bays are open to clamming.

The Siletz has been very slow for Chinook this season.

Yaquina has been very slow for Chinook but the catch-and-release fishery for wild coho has kept trollers fairly busy.

Crabbing has been fair to good considering the high number of nets and traps in evidence.

Chinook fishing has been very slow on the Siuslaw with mostly dark fish to show for efforts. There has been a good run of coho here but no open fishery for them.

The wild coho fishery on Tahkenitch and Siltcoos lakes are primed to start producing. Trolled plugs and spinners are productive here.

Trolling for Chinook is fair in Winchester Bay. Most of the fish population now is wild coho, offering a catch-and-release fishery while trying to sort out a hatchery fish or two to take home. Rain has drawn coho up into the mainstem Umpqua. Catches of mostly-wild coho and Chinook have been fair to good in the mainstem Umpqua.

Plug pullers working brightly-colored Wiggle Warts are finding action in Coos tidewater. It's just a matter of finding the right place and getting into some biters. Limits or near-limits are being taken by crabbers here.

Fresh Chinook moving in over the past weekend invigorated catches for spinner trollers in Coquille tidewater. The last river on the southwest coast to remain open for wild coho, catches have been slow. Fishing for unmarked silvers will end when the quota has filled.

Pressure for Chinook in Rogue Bay has dropped off with coho in the majority but fishing remains far, particularly when wave action on the bar is soft. Upriver, as Chinook return to the Indian Creek hatchery, there has been a hot or cold bite at the mouth of the creek. Most Chinook in the Agness stretch are turning dark although half-pounder catches have been good here. Steelheading in the middle Rogue is fair to good. Chinook fishing is closed from Gold Ray Dam to Hog Creek but with these fish spawning, targeting steelhead with single egg imitation just below the redds is very effective. With the flies-only restriction on the upper Rogue ending Sunday, November 1st, drifting roe should be very effective for summers. No bait is allowed below Shady Grove Boat Ramp. The no bait restriction also ends Sunday in the lower Rogue Canyon where half-pounders and adult steelhead catches are expected to be very good.

Boaters will be confined to inshore adventures with offshore conditions predicted to be rough this coming weekend. When it has been possible to cross the bar, rockfish and ling cod catches have been excellent. Anglers in the Chetco estuary are experiencing a periodic bite for fall Chinook. The Chetco River remains closed to all fishing above the Highway 101 Bridge until the 7th of November. Periodic rainfall has drawn Chinook upriver so there's a potential for worthwhile fishing when the river re-opens.

Chinook anglers at the Elk and Sixes will experience decent action following each rain storm as these rivers start to drop, which happens quickly as precipitation tapers off. Chinook catches have been best in the Elk as fish are moving in with the tide.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Pro guide Steve Fleming (888-624-9424) reports, "The John Day River has been kicking out some steelhead the last two weeks. It is averaging two fish per fishermen per day. Both the gear and fly fishermen are getting fish. The water is going down and now around 350 CFS, but it is floatable. The bank fishermen are walking up and down from the Cottonwood Bridge (River Conservancy property and open to foot traffic). They are doing

the same at Rock Creek, but there is Private Property on both sides and you need to stay in the high water mark to the river. I have heard about all kinds of techniques, and not heard of any not working. So, gear fishermen are using steelies, Blue Fox, especially Hot shots back trolled, Float and jig just to name a few. Covered with Smelly Jelly craw/anise or anchovy. The fly fishermen: gold demon, prism, comet, boss, big black bunny, conehead string leeches, purple perils, skunks, brats, bombers, general practioner, purple people eaters, skykomish sunrise, and my favorite the black articulated leeches. At this flow there is great Swing Fishing a fly. There may be some fast stripping top water, but not confirmed."

The Deschutes has continued to deliver decent steelheading since the water came up earlier this week. A few of the large, B-run steelhead are in the river now. With improved results comes additional pressure, however, so expect some company at this time of year. Incidentally, steelhead passage at The Dalles Dam is the highest since the dam was constructed in 1957. Warm Springs to Trout Creek closes along the reservation on October 31st.

Anglers have been anxiously waiting for the steelhead fishery to get underway on the Grande Ronde River. It appears the wait is over as catches in the Troy area picked up late last wee, delivering multiple hookups to fly and bait fishers alike.. Catches are expected to be good unless and until the water temperature drops.

Steelheading on the Wallowa and Imnaha rivers has been an on again, off again affair with multiple hookups reported when the fish are on the bite.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report October 28th – November 10th, 2009

North Puget Sound

Anglers are still hooking a few coho in the region's rivers and streams, but chum will soon be taking center stage. Meanwhile, some anglers fishing areas of Puget Sound have been reeling in blackmouth and will soon have the option of dropping a crab pot in select areas.

Starting Nov. 1 at sunrise, Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) and most of Marine Area 9 (Admiralty Inlet) will reopen for **sport crabbing** seven days a week through Jan. 2, 2010. The portion of Marine Area 9 south of a line from Foulweather Bluff to Olele Point will remain closed for the season.

Crab fishing also will remain open seven days a week through Jan. 2 in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south Puget Sound), where the fishery has continued uninterrupted since summer. Marine Area 12 (Hood Canal), currently open Wednesdays through Saturdays, will close for the season at 6 p.m. Oct. 31.

Sport crabbing will not reopen this year in marine areas 6 (Strait of Juan de Fuca), 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) and 11 (Tacoma/Vashon Island), where the summer catch reached the annual recreational quota.

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. For more information about recreational crabbing in Puget Sound, see WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab>.

While on the Sound, why not fish for **blackmouth** ? Effort has been low, but anglers have hooked a few of the resident chinook in central Puget Sound. Anglers fishing Marine Area 10 have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook.

Beginning Nov. 1, opportunities for blackmouth will increase, as marine areas 8-1, 8-2 and 9 open for chinook. Anglers fishing those marine areas will have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook salmon. Anglers are reminded that Marine Area 7 closes to salmon retention Nov. 1.

In the rivers, the **coho** season is winding down and **chum salmon** will soon be arriving in greater numbers. There are reports of anglers still catching a few coho in the region's streams but, overall, fishing has been slow.

Lake Sammamish is also an option for freshwater salmon anglers, who have a daily limit of four salmon, and can retain up to two chinook. 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, but only for a few more days. Anglers fishing the lake, which is open through Oct. 31, 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 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

Anglers targeting chum and coho in Puget Sound and area streams will soon have some other options to consider. A late-season Dungeness crab fishery will get under way Nov. 1 in select areas, and two razor clam digs are planned later in the month.

Starting Nov. 1 at sunrise, recreational **crab** fishing will reopen in Marine area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), and most of Marine Area 9 (Admiralty Inlet) seven days a week through Jan. 2, 2010. The portion of Marine Area 9 south of a line from Foulweather Bluff to Olele Point will remain closed for the season.

Crab fishing also will remain open seven days a week through Jan. 2 in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south Puget Sound). However, only a few more days remain to catch crab in Marine Area 12 (Hood Canal), which is open Wednesdays through Saturdays through Oct. 31.

Sport crabbing will not reopen this year in marine areas 6 (Strait of Juan de Fuca), 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1, 8-2 (east of Whidbey Island) and 11 (Tacoma/Vashon Island), where the summer catch reached the annual recreational quota.

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.

Recreational crabbers are required to send in a winter catch card or report their catch online by Jan. 15. People failing to submit their winter reports will receive a \$10 fine when they apply for a 2010 Puget Sound crab endorsement. For more information about recreational crabbing in Puget Sound, see WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab>.

Meanwhile, **chum** salmon are gathering in front of the Hoodport Hatchery facility in southern Hood Canal, where the fishery has been open since Oct. 16. Although it's the early part of the run, the numbers are building, said Mark Cylwik, WDFW hatchery specialist. "The run normally peaks just before Thanksgiving, so November is a good month to enjoy some chum fishing," Cylwik said. A recent creel check on the Hoodport shore showed 20 anglers with 10 chum. To

avoid competition with tribal beach nets, Cylwik recommends fishing on days other than Tuesdays and Thursdays, when the Skokomish Tribe has been conducting its fishery. Anglers can call (360) 877-5222 for a recorded message about Hoodspout fishing conditions.

The mouth of Kennedy Creek near Shelton also is known for attracting chum, but so far the run has been light. A creel check conducted Oct. 24 showed 39 anglers with seven fish. Other traditionally good November chum rivers are the Skokomish and Nisqually rivers, where salmon fishing is currently under way. Starting Nov. 1, anglers can target chum in several other streams, including the Dosewallips and Duckabush rivers in Jefferson County and Minter Creek in Pierce/Kitsap Counties.

Because retention rules and fishing regulations vary on the many rivers and streams throughout the region, anglers are advised to check the 2009-2010 *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> before heading out.

On the Chehalis River in Grays Harbor County, participation and catch rates have slowed as salmon head out of the mainstem and into the tributaries, said Scot Barbour, WDFW fish biologist. Twenty-four anglers recently checked at the Fuller Bridge on the river had five **hatchery coho**, while 11 anglers checked near Montesano had two.

"The Wishkah and Satsop rivers are good bets right now and lots of people have been fishing the Humptulips," Barbour said. "But this time of year, success depends on the weather and the height of the river. Anglers need to hit the rivers when they're high enough to bring in salmon, but not so high that they're unfishable."

Barbour reminds anglers that only hatchery coho with a clipped adipose fin and **jack chinook** and **coho** may be retained on a number of area rivers, including the Chehalis, Elk, Johns, Satsop, Wishkah and Wynoochee rivers in Grays Harbor County and the Skookumchuck River in Thurston County.

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. No wild coho may be retained.

In the South Sound, anglers fishing in marine areas 11 and 13 (Vashon Island to South Puget Sound) may retain **wild chinook** as part of their two-fish daily limit, but will be restricted to one chinook starting Nov. 1. Also starting that day, anglers may retain **wild coho** caught in Marine Area 13.

Anglers are advised to check the 2009-2010 *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> before heading out.

Meanwhile, anglers looking for some late-season **trout** fishing might consider a trip to Black Lake in Thurston County, where 2,500 one-pound rainbows will be stocked in time for the Oct. 31 weekend. "In the past this late fall plant has resulted in good catch and effort through the winter," said Larry Phillips, WDFW fish biologist. "In addition to these fish, anglers often encounter large hold-over fish from last spring's planting, as well as wild coastal cutthroat."

On the coast, many of the 30,250 **razor clam** diggers who participated in the Oct. 16-19 season opener on five ocean beaches took home their 15-clam limit. More digs are tentatively scheduled Nov. 4-7 and Nov. 14-17, subject to the results of marine toxin tests.

For a change of pace, anglers may want to venture out some evening and try jigging for **squid**, which generally make their way through Puget Sound in fall and winter. Good bets include the Les Davis Pier in Tacoma and the Elliott Bay pier in Seattle.

Squid fishing is open year-round with a daily limit of five quarts or 10 pounds. Best success usually occurs at night. Legal gear includes a baitfish jig, a maximum of four squid lures or a hand dip net. Each angler must have a separate container. Squid fishing is closed in Hood Canal (Marine Area 12). More information on squid fishing is available at

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/squid>. Information on fishing piers is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/piers/>.

Southwest Washington

Hatchery **coho** salmon are still providing most of the action on the lower Columbia River, although bank anglers fishing for sturgeon immediately below Bonneville Dam are also catching fish. About one in 10 took home a keeper during the week ending Oct. 26.

From the Wauna power lines near Cathlamet upstream, anglers can keep one **white sturgeon** daily measuring between 38 and 54 inches fork length on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays only. Anglers are reminded the statewide annual limit is five fish per license year (April through March).

Meanwhile, anglers looking for **hatchery coho** have several good options to choose from, both above and below Bonneville Dam. The hotspot is still the Klickitat River, where bank and boat anglers have been taking home an average of one fish apiece. Fishing pressure has been heavy throughout the lower river, and boat anglers have been doing well trolling prawn/spinner rigs just off the mouth.

Fishing also continues to be productive in the Cowlitz, North Fork Lewis and Kalama rivers, said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. The Elochoman and Washougal rivers would also be good bets, he said. As of Oct. 21, nearly 35,000 adult coho had returned to the Cowlitz salmon hatchery, the highest count by that date since at least 1990.

"We are now fairly confident that total coho returns to the Columbia River Basin will meet or exceed the pre-season forecast of 700,000 fish, making it the biggest run since 2001," Hymer said. "The great thing is that the fish are still biting fairly well. The rain has really recharged fishing throughout the system."

Anglers fishing the Cowlitz River have also been intercepting some **chinook, steelhead** and **sea-run cutthroat** (especially near the trout hatchery). Hymer noted, however, that all adult chinook salmon intercepted on the Cowlitz River from Blue Creek upstream to Mill Creek must be released. For other regulations in effect on the Columbia River and its tributaries, he recommends that anglers check the WDFW website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) before heading out.

One new emergency rule listed there allows Columbia River anglers to retain up to three adult coho salmon from the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line upriver to the Highway 395 Bridge in Pasco.

Those fishing the mainstem Columbia near the mouth of the Lewis River should also be aware that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will begin blasting and dredging the shipping channel around Warrior Rock on the north end of Sauvie Island on Nov. 1. All watercraft will be prohibited from entering a 1,500-yard safety zone around the site without permission. Boaters who wish to enter the safety zone can contact the Coast Guard at VHF 13 or VHF 16 for specific instructions. For additional information, see <http://www.crci-project.info>.

Ready for winter? Hymer noted that four **winter-run steelhead** recently turned up in the trap at the Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery, a portent of another fishing season ahead. That fishery usually starts to ramp up around Thanksgiving, he said. "Talk about a quick transition," he added. "I'm still trying to get used to the fact that summer's over and fall is here."

Anglers who want to make the most of the current season might want to try Swift Reservoir, which will remain open to fishing for **game fish** and **salmon** through Nov. 30. Fishing has been reported to be excellent for rainbows averaging 12-13 inches with some up to 20 inches. Hymer also suggests fishing Silver Lake near Castle Rock for **crappies**. Anglers have reportedly been doing well there too in recent days, he said.

Eastern Washington

Steelhead fishing on the Snake River continues to heat up as temperatures cool. Joe Bumgarner, a WDFW fish biologist, said limited creel checks indicate good catch rates in various river sections. Anglers who were recently checked in the Wallula area, from the Washington-Oregon state line to the mouth of the Walla Walla River, averaged just under 11 hours of fishing per steelhead caught. From Ice Harbor Dam to Lower Monumental Dam, anglers averaged just under 12 hours per catch, and from Lower Monumental to Little Goose Dam, slightly more than 11 hours per catch. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife recent creel checks on the Lower Grand Ronde River showed an average of just over nine hours of fishing per steelhead caught on the Washington section, from Bogans Oasis to state line.

Bumgarner reminds Snake River system steelheaders that barbless hooks must be used and all wild steelhead must be kept in the water and released immediately. Because of the abundant return of hatchery-marked steelhead (clipped adipose or ventral fin with healed scar), up to five can be retained daily.

Many streams, rivers and lakes throughout the region close to all fishing Nov. 1. Waters that remain open year-round and are currently providing good catches of **rainbow trout**, include Sprague Lake on the Lincoln-Adams county line and Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir off Grand Coulee Dam.

Northcentral Washington

Methow River hatchery **steelhead** fishing recently expanded, thanks to greater numbers of wild fish moving upriver. Now open is the section from the second powerline crossing upstream from Pateros to the first Hwy. 153 Bridge. The daily limit is four adipose fin-clipped, hatchery-origin steelhead, with a minimum size of 20 inches.

The regulations state that anglers must retain any of these fish they catch, since the open area expansion is intended to reduce the number of excess hatchery-origin steelhead on the spawning grounds. Increasing the proportion of naturally produced spawners is expected to improve genetic integrity and stock recruitment of upper Columbia River steelhead through perpetuation of steelhead stocks with the greatest natural-origin lineage, said Bob Jateff, WDFW district fish biologist.

Anglers are required to release all steelhead with an intact adipose fin. Any steelhead caught with an intact adipose fin may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately. Any steelhead with one or more round holes punched in the caudal (tail) fin must also be released.

Selective gear rules apply, no bait is allowed and a night closure is in effect. Boats with motors are not allowed.

Southcentral Washington

Paul Hoffarth, WDFW district fish biologist, reports Columbia River **steelhead** fishing in the Tri-Cities area has been picking up in the past week.

Although the steelhead and salmon sport fishery above the wooden powerline towers is closed, the steelhead fishery below the powerline towers is scheduled to continue through April 15, 2010.

"In the Ringold area this past week bank anglers averaged one steelhead for 6.6 hours of fishing and boat anglers averaged one steelhead for 4.8 pole hours, or 2.5 steelhead per boat," Hoffarth reported.

Hoffarth noted that through Oct. 25, an estimated 1,509 steelhead have been caught between the Highway 395 bridge at Pasco/Kennewick and the wooden powerline towers. Of these, 982 hatchery steelhead were harvested and 344 wild steelhead were caught and released.

The three-hatchery steelhead limit for the Columbia River from the Hwy 395 bridge at Pasco/Kennewick upstream to the old Hanford town site wooden powerline towers reverts back to a two hatchery steelhead limit Nov. 1.

Perry Harvester, WDFW regional habitat program manager, says some standard techniques are being used for the steelhead.

"Trolling lighted Brad's Wiggler plugs work at night, and using dyed shrimp with purple/pink/black jigs in various combinations under a float work day or night," he said. "Plugs and spinners can work during the day as well, but appear less effective than lighted plugs at night. In areas with faster moving water, drifted eggs or shrimp work, too."

Harvester also reports there are still bright **coho salmon** in the Klickitat River and in the Columbia River off the mouth of the Klickitat. The catch limit within that reach of the Columbia River was recently raised to three adults.

Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist, reports a few of the region's year-round lakes have recently been stocked with hatchery **rainbow trout**. He notes most rivers and streams are closed after Oct. 31. The exception is the Yakima River catch-and-release fishery, which should continue to provide opportunity this fall until colder weather sets in.

Reader E-mail

Reader Dan U. wrote this week, "I have been watching this because several people of the "Oregon Fishing Forum" told me you publish about the Siuslaw weekly. I don't think I have seen any reports on this river yet. There are tons of boats in the water, there must be some news, even if it's "nobody caught fish last week in the Siuslaw". Any chance of seeing it in the future?"

TGF co-editor Bob Rees responded "Thanks for your email. This report just came in from our reporting guide down there, Jeff Jackson. It was late so it didn't make this week's edition but he and I will likely become better put together for the coming weeks. Hope it helps and good luck this season!

"Jeff writes: "Fishing on the Siuslaw is slowing down in tidewater. Most of the catch over the last few days has been wild silvers by trollers. Anglers are reminded to treat these fish gently and avoid netting them or bringing them out of the water.

"The Coquille has been fishing well with a mix of hatchery and clipped chinook and silvers.

"Reports of a few fish at Siltcoos lake are encouraging. The fish ladder on Tahkenitch Creek (outlet of Tahkenitch Lake) is now cleared of debris and passable by coho. No report of fish caught.""

TGF co-editor Michael Teague adds, "Reports from the Siuslaw and everywhere else depends upon our receiving information from guides as well as recreational anglers like you. When we get reports, you get reports!

"As much as we'd like to fish all the rivers ourselves every week, we haven't figured out how to pull that off."

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

Take the ODFW survey regarding the McKenzie River:

http://tu678.org/docs/McKenzie_Angler_Survey_5_5_09.pdf

ODFW increases stocking in some lakes for fall fishing:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2009/october/102809.asp>

GOOD LUCK!