

The Guide's Forecast - volume 12 issue number 36

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 3<sup>rd</sup> – September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro** - With the wobbler fishery well underway in the lower Columbia, anglers are flocking in force from Bonneville to Longview using hardware and plugs in pursuit of upriver bright chinook. Reports of inconsistent success are coming from this entire section of river but the action should continue to improve in the coming weeks. Wobblers need to be perfectly tuned to match the velocity of the river with the early part of the outgoing and the last hour producing the best catches. Trolled spinners may work when the tide slows for anchor fishermen.

Coho counts are increasing at Willamette Falls. Steelhead continue to be taken on the upper Willamette between Eugene and Springfield.

McKenzie water temperature is holding in the low 50s which bodes well for late summer fishing prospects.

From here on, rainfall will dictate Santiam levels. The water is clear and fishing conditions are good this week. As of September 1st, coho may be taken on the mainstem Santiam River, the North Fork up to the Stayton-Scio Bridge in Stayton, and the South Fork up to the Grant Street Bridge in Lebanon. Coho numbers will ramp up into fall.

Coho fishing will start on the Clackamas with the first round of fall rain. Only a rare fish has been reported from the lower river but fish should be present in fair numbers by this week.

The Sandy remains murky and is likely to stay that way until temperatures fall. Coho should become available in the lower stretches this week; falling to spinners in the early part of the season.

**Northwest** – Chinook season is now closed from Tongue Point to Buoy 10. Although the chinook take was less than anticipated, lower river wild stocks of fish made up a larger than expected percentage of the catch, prompting a closure. Chinook are still available in the Tongue Point area but catches were poor early in the week. Improving tides may change that this week however.

Coho numbers remain strong downstream of Tongue Point and the fish are running large. Bobby Keerins of Portland tallied a 14-fish limit by noon for his party on Monday. All fish were taken on fresh anchovies or plug cut herring in about 30 foot of water on the Washington side, downstream of the Astoria bridge.

Strong southwest winds whipped up the ocean early in the week, keeping salmon fishers in-river on the lower Columbia. This weather pattern should bring tuna closer to shore where live-bait anglers should score big numbers when seas tame. Ocean crabbing is picking up nicely although a fair percentage have yet to fill out.

The Nehalem is putting out a few chinook but check regulations as area closures are in effect. The Nestucca River remains closed until September 15<sup>th</sup> as a smaller return is forecasted for that watershed.

Tillamook Bay is already putting out a few chinook as reports of adults in the upper bay are

already coming in. Trolled herring or spinners can produce fair results in the upper bay where Trask and Tillamook River fish congregate here before migrating to their respective rivers on the first rainfall of the season. Only a slight rise in river levels is forecasted from the current weather pattern but it should be enough to move coho into the Trask and North Fork Nehalem Rivers.

Crabbing is picking up in north coast estuaries and in the nearshore. Ocean crabbing will remain open for sport crabbing until October 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Southwest** – Trollers have continued to pick up chinook around Reedsport.

Chinook fishing is slow in lower Coos Bay, slow to fair in the Coquille. One wild coho may be retained daily on the lower Coquille, up to five for the year.

Rogue Bay continued to frustrate trollers with chinook lock-jawed over the past week. Once those fish started upriver, however, the bite has been on. Half-pounder catches are improving around Agness. Offshore bottom fishing has been good. Good numbers of summer steelhead are available on the upper Rogue.

Catches of ling cod improved for offshore bottom fishers out of Brookings Harbor over the past week, sometimes latched onto rockfish hooked moments earlier. Tuna are 40 or more miles offshore but catches are good. Ocean crabbing has been worthwhile. Boaters will be launching on incoming tides this coming weekend. Chinook fishing will start soon in the Chetco estuary but anglers must stay below river mile 2.2.

Diamond Lake is fishing well for nice, fat trout.

**Eastern** – Pressure is increasing along with the steelhead population on the lower Deschutes. Fishing is good from Mack's Canyon downstream.

Green Peter is producing decent catches of kokanee although some are showing a little color.

Limits of kokanee are being taken on jigs at Paulina. Fish are averaging 13 inches but a depth finder is required to locate schools.

**SW Washington** – District streams are starting to see an influx of coho and chinook salmon. The North Fork of the Lewis is offering a multitude of species including summer steelhead.

Anglers should be aware of new regulations this year requiring the release of native chinook on the Cowlitz, Toutle, Green, Washougal, Wind and White Salmon rivers, plus Drano Lake.

Drano Lake should remain a strong bet for steelhead the next several weeks but anglers are reporting less action than last years catch. The recent weather change may improve fishing.

Tributary mouths above Bonneville may produce some decent chinook fishing in the coming weeks. With Bonneville counts peaking right now, success rates should be too.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – It's as good as it gets on the lower Columbia right now. And just in time for the Chinook closure in the Buoy 10 fishery. Although the season ended on a sour note with gale force winds bucking Washington side anglers right in the face, the action was good for the last week for anglers in the know.

A mix of Chinook and coho came in but coho likely made up the bulk of the catch. They were easy targets on Monday with a 14-fish boat limit attained by noon with 7 licensed anglers on board. The majority of keepers took fresh anchovies or fresh plug cut herring fished on or near the bottom. The hot bite took place just downstream of the Astoria Bridge on the Washington side of the river. Although bait worked best for me, there were plenty of folks that found success using spinners to entice strikes. One thing was for sure, if you kept your offerings near the bottom of the river, you would be catching fish.

More recently, the Washington side bite kept going on Wednesday but what few anglers fishing the Tongue Point area targeting Chinook did well using spinners or bait for adults. There were some coho in the Tongue Point mix but several boats got their 1 Chinook limit fishing the area. The action took place from Rice Island to Tongue Point but one guide remarked the better action took place further upstream.

Although the Chinook closure came earlier than most of us would have liked, coho numbers should continue strong despite the fact the run size is a fraction of what it was last year. It's still quite feasible to attain a 2-fish limit if you're persistent enough. Stay on the water around the bridge, especially near high tide.

The ocean fishery continues to perform much like it did all season. Spotty with a fair number of fish showing up with too many fins on board. What few anglers still fishing the ocean are still going south, well south of the CR Buoy.

Tuna are certainly available for Columbia River anglers although plan on still doing some traveling with most success coming outside of 25 miles west of the mouth. September can be easy fishing for tuna in Oregon's offshore fishery. Live bait and swim baits are taking the lions share of the catch.

Crabbing is picking up both inside and outside of the mouth of the Columbia River. Although keeper crab are plentiful outside, several remain in the softshell state.

Upriver, anchor anglers remain somewhat perplexed that URB (Upriver Bright) action isn't better, especially given the number of adult Chinook passing by Bonneville right now. Wobbler plunkers are reporting some action but for the number of fish migrating through the system, hopeful anglers have higher expectations. Each day seem sporadic with little consistency throughout the season. Anglers fishing the Bonneville area are equally perplexed as action is even slower there as tens of thousands of fish trek by. The better action typically takes place in October when fish slow down in the Bonneville area and the water temperatures cool.

Steelheaders are becoming a scarce breed with all the salmon now present on the mainstem. Although the bulk of the summer steelhead have crossed Bonneville Dam, some of the larger "B" run fish are due back to the system over the next several weeks. A relatively large run is in the forecast with some of these fish running over 20 pounds. Anglers are likely to only incidentally harvest one of these fish but a good fishery does exist for this run of fish in the Drano Lake (Washington) fishery.

Sturgeon fishing remains catch and release only until early October. Very few people are pursuing sturgeon but walleye action is heating up for those in pursuit of warmwater species.

**The Guide's Forecast** – it should be another productive week of salmon fishing on the lower Columbia. Anglers will have to ask themselves what they want to pursue however. Despite a mediocre coho prediction this year, there are clearly a lot of hatchery coho present and prospects

remain good this week. The tides will cooperate with morning high tides and early afternoon outgoing tides.

If you want to go for numbers, you'll want to stick to targeting coho. Fish the Washington side of the river near the bridge, targeting fish beginning the later half of incoming tide. Start off around the Desdemona Light Marker either in the flats or in 30 foot of water keeping your offerings fishing near the bottom of the river. Although I recommend bait, spinners have been taking fish with some regularity. Whole anchovies are a strong option for coho anglers but fresh, plug cut herring works almost as well on some days. Be sure to read the tide book, knowing that stronger tides will push fish higher up into the estuary. On weaker tides, like what we'll have this weekend, don't fish as high in the estuary, working mostly downstream of the Astoria/Megler Bridge. Two of the most important factors in success: keep your offerings near the bottom and keep them spinning! It will be the key to your success!

Anglers looking for quality should target Chinook above Tongue Point. These tides are lining up perfectly for this fishery with softer tides producing better fishing in this area. It's already underway and should improve thorough the long weekend. Upriver brights make up a strong percentage of the catch in this area and this should not be any exception. Spinners do work best this high up in the estuary but reports of bait caught Chinook were coming in by noon time on September 1<sup>st</sup>. Trolled wobblers may also entice strikes. The best time to fish this area is the entire outgoing tide.

Ocean fishing is a bit of a wasted effort unless you have much higher confidence in big blue than the river. The ocean should be for tuna only from now on. Crabbing is worth the effort however, especially if you have fresh tuna carcasses for crab bait. Crabbing should be excellent in the river this weekend, especially with the soft tide series we're currently on. Also, less boat traffic headed to the ocean means fewer crab pot lines chopped off near the buoy!

Upriver, anchor anglers should continue to see their success rates go up but the fishery is a bit overdue to really start ramping up. Target URB's in 35 to 50 foot of water using 5 foot of leader and 5 foot of dropper line with wobblers as the lure of choice. Trolled spinners will work when the tide isn't running hard enough to anchor fish.

Steelheaders are best off targeting the "B" run fish in Drano Lake but some of these brutes are falling to spinners in hoglines or in the Bonneville fishery. They are more of an incidental take than a targeted specie right now. They should be running fairly strong through the middle of the month.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – Fish counts at Willamette Falls are not yet updated online to mid0August. There was an indication at that time the coho numbers were increasing and it would seem logical that fish are crossing in ever-increasing number now. Sturgeon fishing will resume in the lower Willamette starting November 1st.

North Santiam level and flow are excellent for fishing although the water is warm in the lower stretches. Trout were planted this week in the river above Detroit Reservoir.

Water conditions remain conducive to fishing at the McKenzie.

Harriet, Trillium and West Salish Pond will be stocked with 'trophy-sized' trout this week.

**The Guide's Forecast** – The Middle Fork Willamette and Town Run are productive possibilities for steelhead, rainbows and native cutthroat trout.

Fish either the lower or upper McKenzie with expectations of fair to good results for trout.

Try the upper stretches of the North Santiam for a decent shot at summer steelhead. Jigs and bobbers will usually turn the trick here. Some large native rainbows are available to fly casters with evenings most productive.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – Water at the Clackamas remains at summer level lows. Showers this week had no significant impact on level or flows and did nothing to ameliorate warm water temperatures.

Sandy waters are very low and continue to run milky from glacial runoff upstream. With little to interest anglers at this time, pressure here is nil.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Although coho the next fish of interest on the Clackamas, it's still too early to consider targeting the Clackamas for them. There are a few rolling a the mouth and anglers are showing at ethen Bowling Alley Hole. It won't be long.

The Sandy will fish when the water temperature drops and the water clears. Fall rains will certainly help.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Although it's early, action is picking up on Tillamook Bay already. Reports of spinner and herring caught Chinook are coming from the upper bay although it's far from wide open fishing. It's not uncommon for fish to be caught this early in the season but this does boast well for the predicted "above average" forecast for the basin this season.

Coho should also be present in the bay but numbers aren't likely to be huge this year. The south channel is likely to harbor such a specie and spinners are likely to take a few.

Recent rains likely inspired both some Chinook and coho to migrate up some district streams such as the Trask and North Fork Nehalem systems. Hatchery coho only are allowed for retention this season. Rivers will drop back down fast, not enabling driftboaters to take advantage of the flash rain freshet early this week. Bank anglers may have a rare early September opportunity for Chinook and coho on these systems.

Crabbing in and out of north coast estuaries is picking up nicely as it did last year. Nice keeper sized crab are in the process of filling out and should peak in the near future. The better crabbing should take place outside when weather allows. The ocean forecast isn't all that promising for outside recreation this weekend but Sunday and Monday may be possibilities:

**FRI** NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

**FRI NIGHT** N WIND 5 TO 10 KT. GUSTS UP TO 15 KT IN THE EVENING. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF RAIN AFTER MIDNIGHT.

**SAT** NW WIND 10 KT WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF RAIN IN THE MORNING. SLIGHT CHANCE OF SHOWERS IN THE AFTERNOON.

**SAT NIGHT** NW WIND 10 KT WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

**SUN** NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 7 FT.

**MON** W WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

**The Guide's Forecast** – If you're going to target Chinook on the north coast, fish near the jetty tips as the soft tide series should produce the best for herring anglers near the mouths of the estuaries. Work the entire outgoing tide as fish should move across the bar at all times over the course of the out-flowing tide. It should be a good weekend for estuary crabbing or just offshore if weather cooperates. Upper bay fishing will likely be poor with the soft tide series at hand.

The Nehalem is the other option but you'll need to know specific details for this intricate fishery. Those details are posted here: <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/index.asp>. The Nestucca remains closed until mid-September.

Sea run cutthroat trout should be plentiful in some systems as they prep for a fall feeding frenzy when coastal salmon begin to spawn. Some large fish have been reported in the Nehalem system.

Coho should be available in the tidewater sections of the Trask and North Fork Nehalem with the peak coming later on this month.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Albacore have required a run of 20 to 30 miles off the central Oregon coast. Ocean coho catches have been good out of Newport with the majority of boats returning to port with fish. Catch rates drop off dramatically for ports further to the south. The offshore Chinook season runs through Labor Day with the hatchery coho fishery cutting off September 26th of the fulfillment of a 26,000-fish quota.

Reedsport trollers are hooking up with Chinook and while catches have been steady, rates have only been fair. Coho started showing in catches during the last week of August with numbers building since then. Crabbing has been worthwhile in Winchester Bay. Steelheading is slow to fair on the North Umpqua. Smallmouth bass fishing is good on the South Umpqua but steer clear of the Lawson Bar area which has been confirmed as containing toxic blue-green algae. Chinook fishing has started up at the mouth of the Coos River and crabbing has improved in the bay. Tuna fishing was very good earlier this week out of Charleston.

Trollers dragging plug-cut herring experienced an improvement in Chinook catches on the lower Coquille. Wild coho may be taken up to the Highway 42S Bridge near Sturtevant Park through November 30th or a quota of 1,200 fish. One unclipped coho may be kept per day up to five for the season.

Boaters frustrated by lock-jawed Chinook in the estuary have only to move upriver to backbounce the Agness area in order to find biters. In addition, half pounder catches have continued to pick up here. While half-pounders are not particularly selective about what they hit, snapping at various baits and lures, be sure your five-fish limit consists of steelhead 16 inches or less. Over that length they are considered adults. Boaters in the middle Rogue are doing quite well for Chinook with bait or plugs and fish in this stretch have been running large. It's flies-only now on the upper Rogue from Foster Bar to Whiskey Creek where steelheading has been fair. Chinook may no longer be taken or even targeted on this stretch. Bottomfish anglers must remain in 120 feet of water or less but this restriction hasn't prevented the majority from taking seven-fish limits of rockfish although ling cod catches have slowed. Following a lull in rockfish catches last week, the action has once again picked up. Predictions for offshore swells aren't too daunting this coming weekend but once again winds will be problematic.

Fishing has been good for sea-run cutthroat trout on the lower Chetco but be aware of the closure at River Mile 2.2.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – It's worth a trip to the Deschutes for steelhead now. While it's possible to fish deep to draw strikes during the course of the day, Early and late are the most productive periods. Chinook are hanging off the mouth of the Deschutes and while some are being caught, pressure is light on most days.

Green Peter has continued to produce good catches of kokanee this week and the fish are still in decent shape. They will be less appealing for the table as they get closer to spawning. A few males are showing some color and a little hook to the jaw.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

***From the WDF&W Weekender Report for September 2010***

September 2010

Contact: (Fish) 360-902-2700

(Wildlife) 360-902-2515

### **North Puget Sound**

Coho salmon are moving into Puget Sound in increasing numbers, with the bulk of the run expected to arrive from the ocean later this month. Anglers can also expect good fishing in several rivers and lakes.

"After Labor Day is when we usually see a big push of ocean coho move into Puget Sound," said Steve Thiesfeld, a WDFW fish biologist. "We should see more and more of those ocean fish make their way into the Sound as the month progresses."

Once those fish arrive, Point No Point, Jefferson Head, Possession Bar and Shipwreck should be good spots to hook ocean coho, Thiesfeld said. Anglers fishing those areas - or other waters of marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) - have a daily limit of two salmon but must release chinook. In Marine Area 10, anglers also must release chum salmon through Sept. 15, while those fishing in Marine Area 9 must release chum through Sept. 30.

Marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) also are open for salmon fishing. Anglers fishing Marine Area 7 can keep one chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild coho and chum. Those fishing marine areas 8-1 and 8-2 also have a daily limit of two salmon but must release chinook.

Meanwhile, recreational **crab** fishing will close for a catch assessment in most areas of Puget Sound on Labor Day. Areas closing one hour after sunset Sept. 6 include Marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10, 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 12 (Hood Canal)

Marine Area 7 remains open on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, plus the entire Labor Day weekend, through Sept. 30. Marine areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (South Puget Sound) remain open for crabbing through Jan. 2, seven days a week.

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

Crabbers are reminded that their summer catch record cards are due to WDFW by Oct. 10 and must be returned whether or not the cardholder caught or fished for crab during the season. Crabbers who fail to file catch reports for 2010 will face a \$10 fine, which will be imposed when they apply for a 2011 Puget Sound crab endorsement. Completed cards can be mailed in or recorded online. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/shellfish/crab/crc.html> . Crabbers who continue to fish in an open area after Sept. 6 should record their catch on their winter catch card.

In freshwater, Thiesfeld said the best bet for anglers fishing for coho salmon in the region might be the Stillaguamish and Skagit rivers, where abundant runs are expected to return this year. The Stillaguamish and Skagit, as well as the Snohomish, Skykomish, Snoqualmie and Green (Duwamish) rivers open for salmon fishing Sept. 1.

Thiesfeld reminds anglers fishing the Green River that chinook salmon must be released. Elsewhere, Lake Sammamish is open for salmon fishing, with a daily limit of four salmon, of which two may be chinook. All sockeye must be released, and fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek. Sammamish Lake's larger neighbor, Lake Washington, opens Sept. 16 to coho fishing. Anglers will be allowed four coho per day (minimum size 12 inches) from waters north of the Highway 520 Bridge and east of the Montlake Bridge.

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

Salmon anglers on the coast are still catching fish as the ocean fishery enters the home stretch. Coho fishing is expected to peak in mid-September, as the bulk of the run moves through the Strait of Juan de Fuca into Puget Sound.

During the last week of August, anglers on the coast were still finding some bright chinook as the coho catch began to climb, said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for WDFW. "I expect fishing to continue to be good for chinook and coho as we move into the final weeks of the fishery," he said.

Salmon fishing is scheduled to continue through Sept. 18 in marine areas 3 (LaPush) and 4 (Neah Bay), through Sept. 19 in Marine Area 2 (Westport-Ocean Shores) and through Sept. 30 in Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco). However, salmon fisheries in those areas could close early if catch quotas are reached. Milward reminds anglers to check for any rule changes at WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations> .

Anglers fishing marine areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 can keep up to two chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit, but must release any chinook measuring less than 24 inches and hatchery coho less than 16 inches. Wild coho must be released unharmed. All four ocean marine areas are open to salmon fishing seven days a week

In the Strait of Juan de Fuca, anglers fishing in late August were picking up a few ocean coho but the big push of silvers into Puget Sound isn't expected until after Labor Day, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "By the middle of September, coho fishing should pick up in the Strait, as well as in areas of northern and central Puget Sound," he said.

Anglers fishing marine areas 5 (Sekiu) and 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) have a two-salmon daily limit but must release chum, chinook and wild coho. However, anglers fishing Marine Area 5 will be allowed to retain wild coho beginning Sept. 16.

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

In the southern portion of Puget Sound, anglers fishing Marine Area 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook. Anglers fishing Marine Area 13 (South Puget Sound), have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook and wild coho.

Because salmon fishing rules vary depending on the marine area, anglers should check the Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>) before heading out on the water.

Meanwhile, recreational **crab** fishing will close for a catch assessment in most areas of Puget Sound on Labor Day. Areas closing one hour after sunset Sept. 6 include Marine areas 6, 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton), 11 and 12.

Marine Area 7 remains open on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, plus the entire Labor Day weekend, through Sept. 30. Marine areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (South Puget Sound) remain open for crabbing through Jan. 2, seven days a week.

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

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Several **rivers** around the region open to salmon fishing Sept. 1, including the Carbon River in Pierce County; Copalis River, Van Winkle Creek and Joe Creek in Grays Harbor County; the Bear and Niawiakum rivers in Pacific County; and Clearwater River in Jefferson County. Salmon fisheries on the Skokomish, Puyallup and Nisqually rivers are already under way.

On a portion of the Hoh River, anglers can now fish for salmon seven days a week and keep up to two adult salmon as part of their six-fish daily limit.

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

## Southwest Washington

September is prime time for salmon fishing in the Columbia River Basin, as large numbers of fish move upriver and into tributaries on both sides of Bonneville Dam. Anglers fishing the lower river below the dam are expected to reel in nearly 30,000 **fall chinook** and 13,000 **hatchery coho** this season - most of which will be taken this month.

"Prospects are good for salmon fishing this month, but it's important to remember these fish are on the move," said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "As the month goes on, successful anglers will follow the fish upriver and into the tributaries."

The retention fishery for chinook salmon ended Aug. 31 at Buoy 10, but hatchery coho should remain strong below Rocky Point throughout the month. Even so, the prospect of catching a hefty chinook salmon is drawing most anglers farther upstream.

Through Sept. 12, anglers may take one chinook per day as part of their limit from Rocky Point upriver to Bonneville Dam. Anglers fishing those waters have a daily limit of six fish, including two adult salmon or steelhead or one of each. The retention fishery for chinook ends Sept. 12 below the Lewis River, but that section will remain open to fishing for hatchery coho, hatchery steelhead and hatchery **sea-run cutthroats** .

"Anglers targeting chinook do best in fairly deep water - 40 to 50 feet down," Hymer said. "Some of the best fishing for both salmon and steelhead will be at the mouths of tributaries, where the fish hold up before heading upstream."

As the month progresses, salmon fishing will heat up farther upstream in tributaries ranging from the Cowlitz to the White Salmon rivers, Hymer said. He reminds anglers of several new rules that will be in effect on those rivers this year:

- **Wild chinook release:** New this year, all unmarked chinook (adults and jacks) must be released on the Cowlitz, Toutle, Green, Washougal, Wind and White Salmon rivers, plus Drano Lake and Camas Slough. Like last year, anglers must also release unmarked chinook on the Grays, Elochoman and Kalama rivers.
- **Lewis River rule:** Hatchery fall chinook may be retained through September on the Lewis River, including the North Fork. Beginning Oct.1, all chinook must be released and fishing from any floating device will be prohibited on the North Fork Lewis River from Johnson Creek upstream to Colvin Creek.
- **Fishing closures:** Cedar Creek, a tributary of the North Fork Lewis River, is closed to all fishing in September and October. Lower Lacamas Creek, a tributary of the Washougal River, will also close to all fishing in September.

Like last year, anglers can retain up to **six hatchery adult coho** on all tributaries to the lower Columbia River with hatchery programs. Those rivers include the Cowlitz, Deep, Elochoman, Grays (including West Fork), Kalama, Klickitat, Lewis (including North Fork), Toutle (including Green and North Fork) and Washougal.

Regulations for these and other fisheries are described in WDFW's Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet, available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>.

There are, of course, a variety of other fishing opportunities besides salmon available to area anglers this month. **Smallmouth bass** are coming on strong above John Day Dam, and **trout fishing** is still an option at Skate Creek, Tilton River and a number of lowland lakes, including Swift Reservoir.

But for anglers who don't mind a hike, September is a great time to head for the **high wilderness lakes** around Mount Adams and Mount St. Helens. Hymer points to three such lakes - Goose, Council and Tahkalkh - that even offer drive-in access.

"The mosquitoes should die down around the high mountain lakes after the first frost arrives," Hymer said. "Sure, the fish are usually small, but the leaves are beginning to turn, the air is crisp and you can really experience the change of season."

### **Eastern Washington**

The Snake River **steelhead** catch-and-keep season opens Sept. 1 and it promises to be another good one. "Steelhead are returning to the Snake in large numbers again this year," said Glen Mendel, WDFW's southeast district fish biologist. "We have seen very strong early returns throughout the summer so far."

Mendel said about 375,000 fish are expected to return this year - not as many as last year, when about 600,000 entered the Columbia River. But this year's projected return is still large enough to provide good fishing opportunities, said Mendel. "Snake River water temperatures are currently warm and that may slow the bite when the steelhead retention season opens Sept. 1," Mendel said. "But water temperatures should drop soon with cooler weather ahead, and then the action should pick up."

Mendel notes that the mouths of the Snake's tributaries, such as the Tucannon and Grande Ronde, and the confluence with the Clearwater River on the Idaho border, are usually most productive at the start of the season. He reminds steelheaders that barbless hooks are required and the daily trout catch limit of six fish includes up to three hatchery-marked steelhead (healed scar at clipped adipose or ventral fin).

**Trout** fishing throughout the region usually picks up as fall approaches, said Chris Donley, WDFW district fish biologist, who reminds anglers that several of the best-producing trout lakes near Spokane close Sept. 30. "This is the final month for fishing Badger, Williams, and Fish lakes in southwest Spokane County and Coffeepot Lake in Lincoln County," Donley said. "Badger and Williams have both cutthroat and rainbow trout, Fish Lake has brook and tiger trout, and Coffeepot has rainbows plus **yellow perch** and **black crappie** ."

Donley said September can also be good for yellow perch fishing at southwest Spokane County's Downs Lake, which also closes Sept. 30. Amber Lake, near Badger and Williams, is also good for cutthroat and rainbow trout fishing, Donley said. Selective gear rules are in effect at Amber Lake through September.

Clear Lake, near the town of Medical Lake, has **brown trout** and usually produces good catches of crappie and **largemouth bass** in late fall. Like a number of other waters throughout the region, Clear Lake remains open through October.

Year-round waters that produce well in the fall include Lake Roosevelt and Sprague Lake, both of which offer good-size rainbows.

In the north end of the region, access to the Boundary Dam reservoir on the Pend Oreille River is limited this month because of a drawdown for maintenance of the Seattle City Light dam. Beginning Sept. 1 and lasting up to 11 days, the reservoir will slowly be drawn down 40 feet to an elevation of 1,950 feet.

The low water condition is expected to prevent access at all boat launch facilities Sept. 9-16 on the Boundary reservoir, including the Boundary Forebay, Metaline Park, and Campbell Park immediately below Box Canyon Dam. The Boundary Dam campground and boat launch will be closed Sept. 11-19 to accommodate the maintenance project. For more information about this project, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/regions/region1/>.

### **Northcentral Washington**

Several popular Okanogan County **trout** lakes that have been under catch-and-release rules in past years will open Sept. 1 for a new "catch-and-keep" season. Those waters include Davis, Cougar, and Campbell lakes in the Winthrop area, where anglers will have a five-fish daily trout limit and bait will be allowed.

**Rainbow trout** are the predominant species, Jateff said, and anglers should expect fish in the 10- to 12-inch range, with carryovers up to 15 inches, said WDFW Okanogan District Fish Biologist Bob Jateff. Anglers should also note that, effective this year, there will be no gas-powered motors allowed on Davis Lake due to a new county ordinance.

Jateff said trout fishing has been good at the Methow River, where catch-and-release and selective-gear rules are in effect. The Methow River from Lower Burma Road bridge upstream to the McFarland Creek bridge will close Sept. 15. The rest of the river upstream to Foghorn Dam (Winthrop area) will close Sept. 30.

"September is also a good time to hike up to one of many alpine lakes in Okanogan County," Jateff said. "There are many waters with predominately **cutthroat trout**, which can be a good change of pace from lowland lake fisheries during the fall. Just be aware of fire restrictions this time of year."

Jateff also said **salmon** fishing on the Columbia River near Brewster/Bridgeport has been fair, with a few more chinook starting to show up in the catch. "Most of the fish are being picked up in the 40- to 50-foot depth while trolling with spinners tipped with a whole shrimp," he said. "**Sockeye** are still being caught as well."

The salmon fishery from Wells Dam to the Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster closed Aug. 31, but other portions of the Columbia, Okanogan and Similkameen rivers remain open through Sept. 15 or into October. For all rules, see the special regulation online at <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/erule.jsp?id=925>.

Anglers looking for information about **steelhead** fishing on the upper Columbia River and its tributaries should watch the WDFW website for any special openings that are not in the sportfishing regulations pamphlet.

### **Southcentral Washington**

Counts of **chinook salmon** and **steelhead** passing McNary Dam have been climbing day by day, setting the stage for popular fisheries throughout the region. While those fisheries often start out slow, they can ramp up quickly by mid-September as more fish pass the dam.

"There's a lot of anticipation out there right now," said Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Anglers are catching fish here and there, but they know there are a lot more headed our way. By the middle of the month, we could have a couple thousand upriver brights in the Hanford Reach."

According to the preseason forecast, 664,900 fall chinook salmon will enter the Columbia River this year, and about two-thirds of them are headed past Bonneville Dam.

Most of the Columbia River is open for salmon fishing, and the Yakima River opened for salmon fishing on Sept. 1 from the Columbia River upstream to Prosser Dam. The area around the Chandler Powerhouse will remain closed as in previous years. "The best fishing on the Yakima is in October, but some fish will start moving in this month," Hoffarth said.

Fishing for **hatchery steelhead** should also pick up throughout the month, he said. Catches were slow in late August on the Columbia River, which is open for steelhead fishing from the Highway 395 Bridge (Blue Bridge) downstream. Effective Sept. 1, the Snake River opened for hatchery steelhead fishing with barbless hooks.

"As with salmon, look for fishing to improve as the water cools and more fish move upriver," Hoffarth said. "Steelhead move fast. They don't stay in one spot very long, so anglers have to be there when they arrive."

Meanwhile, the month began with **walleye** fisheries in full swing, producing nice catches in the Columbia River above and below McNary Dam, as well as in the Snake River. **Sturgeon** fishing is restricted to catch and release in most of the Columbia River, including Lake Wallula and the Hanford Reach.

**Trout** fishing remains available in many southcentral region rivers and streams, including the Yakima, Naches, Little Naches, and Bumping rivers in Yakima County, and the upper reaches of Taneum Creek, Naneum Creek, Manastash Creek, and the forks of the Teanaway in Kittitas County. Most rivers and creeks have special regulations like selective gear rules that prohibit bait. Most also have statewide trout catch limits of two trout with an 8-inch minimum size. Anglers should check the regulation pamphlet for all details.

Thinking about catching **kokanee** in Rimrock Reservoir? Sooner is better than later, advises Perry Harvester, regional WDFW habitat manager. Water drawdowns began at the reservoir in late August and will likely render the launch ramps useless for larger boats by mid-September. "Car-top boat should still be fine, but it's going to be tough to get larger boats in the water with the ramp high and dry."

### **TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail**

**Reader Russ K.** wrote to ask via the Contact Form at the TGF website, "Have you heard if there is any salmon coming up the Siuslaw river yet? There was no info in last week's report"

TGF co-editor Michael Teague replied, "We report on various fisheries as we're able to get information. If this sounds like a hint to you for a report after you fish the Siuslaw (or elsewhere), it certainly is!

"Chinook fishing has been slow on the Siuslaw lately but the first fish of the year usually won't be hooked here until the last week of August. Several Chinook were checked over the past weekend but the run doesn't really get underway here until mid- September and will continue into mid-October. Currently, a couple of Chinook are being landed per day along with a few coho but the latter are all natives here and may not be kept.

Now, do shoot us a report if you go fishing, Russ!

**Subscriber Dennis B.** wrote to TGF co-editor and pro guide Bob Rees, "Really enjoy your columns. How many upriver Chinook can you retain in the Portland area?"

Bob responded, "Thanks for being a subscriber Dennis!

"The limit is still just 1/day but check detailed regulations on this fishery here:

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/reg\\_changes/columbia.asp](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/reg_changes/columbia.asp)

"They are quite detailed. Good luck this fall!"

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

**Write to the TGF staff:**

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

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

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

**Random Links**

Article on Rogue Half-Pounders:

<http://www.mailtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080825/NEWS/808250309>

**GOOD LUCK!**