

The Guide's Forecast - volume 12 issue number 43

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 29th – November 4th, 2010**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - Salmon fishing still an option for Bonneville area anglers, few quality fish remain however. Sturgeon anglers continue to produce only fair catches with bank anglers doing best closest to the deadline and boat anglers tallied a keeper for every other boat over the weekend. Success rates will likely begin to slow.

Sturgeon retention will resume on the lower Willamette Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays starting in November. Once the upper Willamette water level starts to drop, steelheading should remain reliable from Dexter Dam downstream to the Town Run.

McKenzie River level and flow is high but dropping this week. The last day to fish the upper McKenzie for trout is Sunday, October 31st.

The North Santiam will be closed from Niagara to Packsaddle Park starting in January 2011 due to the construction of a new fish collection facility.

The Clackamas and Sandy Rivers were high and muddy at this writing but are expected to be dropping this week. The Clackamas below River Mill Dam remains open for fin-clipped coho but will close upstream after October 31st. The Sandy River remains open for fin-clipped coho year around when historically, it has closed on October 31st.

Northwest – Tillamook Bay has been blustery most recently, keeping anglers at home and waiting for the next opportunity. Prior to the barrage of storm systems, chinook fishing had slowed with only an occasional fish being taken in the west channel and Ghost Hole areas. The Wilson and Kilchis fish are now overdue.

The storm system provided the optimum opportunity for river anglers with flows dropping into perfect shape by Tuesday on the Trask, Wilson and Kilchis Rivers. Traffic was light on all systems but bank anglers were scoring a combination of chum, wild coho and an occasional chinook at the logger bridge on the Kilchis River. The coho continue to run large, making them easy to misidentify, as they look similar to a fresh run chinook. Be cautious in your harvest.

The bay had calmed by Wednesday, providing good opportunity for anglers in the lower bay. If better numbers of Wilson and Kilchis fish don't show on this freshet, it will signal a problem with the remainder of the season. Herring should take fair numbers of fish in the Ghost Hole and Bay City. Lower stretches of these rivers should also produce results today and tomorrow.

Most of the river accessible to driftboats is closed to chinook fishing on the Nehalem and Nestucca Rivers. Check the ODF&W web site for what limited opportunities exist in these watersheds.

The Necanicum River was also an option earlier in the week but windfall and shifting gravel bars can make this a hazard to navigate. The North Fork Nehalem did get a few more hatchery coho but most of the fish are dark. The first hatchery winter steelhead will likely come in around the first or second week of November.

Sturgeon fishing may improve on Tillamook Bay after the recent rains, sending crab to the ocean and away from anchored baits in the west channel, where most of the sturgeon effort takes

place. Bay crabbing should slow on most north coast estuaries with the lower Columbia being the exception.

Southwest – Rain over the weekend raised water levels and muddied the rivers on the south coast. Fishing should improve as waters drop and clear.

Trollers took chinook on the lower Umpqua last week and more fish will be entering this week with the freshet.

Coos Bay anglers are taking good numbers of chinook although pressure is light. The South Coos was particularly productive.

Chinook catches have been good this season on the Coquille with the action yet to show signs of slowing down.

Offshore boaters out of Gold Beach caught a break at the middle of last week, at which time rockfish were taken but ling cod catches were slow. Chinook results are slow in the bay and rain has roiled much of the river. Steelheading remains good on the upper Rogue above the old Gold Ray Dam site.

The Chetco is experiencing a very good return of adult chinook as well as a high number of jacks as recent ODFW test netting revealed. The river is dropping this week after swelling to nearly 7,000 cfs on October 24th.

Rain doubled the volume of the Elk River earlier this week, causing muddy conditions and filling the river with leaves. It will bring in fish, however, and results should be good when water conditions improve.

Opening November 6th, catches of chinook are expected to be very good at the Winchuck River, located just north of the California border.

Eastern – Steelheading has been challenging on the lower Deschutes. Trout fishing has been decent but most anglers are more interested in steelhead.

The John Day Pool troll fishery is heating up and is likely to peak close to Thanksgiving.

Many east side locations will close to fishing at the end of October. Be sure to check the Oregon fishing regulations before hitting eastside destinations.

Crescent Lake is producing Mackinaw to trollers.

SW Washington – The Cowlitz is producing a mix of salmon but the quality of fish has taken a turn downhill. Early run steelhead are still a few weeks away.

The Kalama remains an option for coho but the Lewis is better. Many coho are starting to turn dark.

The Klickitat should produce fair coho catches well into November, especially with the good adult passage at Bonneville this year.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Although the Gorge salmon fishery should be well on its way out (the quality of fish is anyway), action remains strong for the salmon fishers still

participating. With an average of 2.2 salmon caught per boat over the weekend, it shows the kind of run we experienced this season. Only a few hundred Chinook a day are still passing Bonneville and anglers are mostly targeting more residual fish in the area. With the recent opening of the Tanner Creek area, more opportunity exists but again, fish are failing in quality. Bank anglers aren't exactly out of the game but catch success is just a fraction of what the boat anglers are doing. Coho passage numbers are also dwindling. Backtrolled plugs continue to produce the best results.

Sturgeon anglers working the gorge are still not posting success rates like we've witnessed in years past but persistent anglers are finding keepers close to the deadline. Oddly, boat anglers did considerably better than bank anglers this week indicating that keepers are on the move instead of stacked up at the deadline. There are some keepers being taken in the Portland to Longview stretch and action seems to be better than in recent years.

Walleye anglers are still doing well in the Troutdale area but success rates have dropped from last week, likely due to inclement weather in the recent week. Winds have hampered success on some days.

The John Day Pool steelhead show is getting underway and given the number of adult steelhead passing lower Columbia River facilities, this fall fishery should be productive. Some quality 3-salt fish are being taken and checkers tallied about 1 keeper steelhead for every 3 boats with nearly as many wild fish being released in this troll fishery. It's early to be peaking but in a few weeks, catch rates should improve even more. Small plugs are trolled near the surface in this fishery.

Lower Columbia River crabbers didn't have favorable tides or weather conditions to work with near Astoria this week but keepers-a-plenty were there for the taking. Tides should improve in the coming week. The commercial fleet won't enter the fishery until late, late November.

The Guide's Forecast – Bonneville salmon action will continue to fade and quality fish are hard to come by. The action could still be good enough to justify a trip but be prepared to fish catch and release. Backtrollers will do best and are still occasionally intercepting oversized sturgeon.

Sturgeon anglers should focus on the gorge but may need to move around a bit to find willing biters. Metro anglers should also look at the Willamette as a viable option as opportunity resumes again beginning November 1st and the first retention day being November 4th and running the usual Thursday through Saturday schedule.

Walleye remain a good option too but may become lethargic if temperatures continue to drop. The Multnomah Channel can be a good option this time of year as well.

Anglers may want to take a good look at the John Day troll fishery prior to peak season in order to dial this fishery in before all the good action takes place. Troll your favorite steelhead plug, varying speed and depth until you find consistent success. As a general rule, dark colors work best on dark days and metallic colors work well on clear days.

Late afternoon tides over the weekend should provide some fair crabbing opportunities in the lower Columbia although windy conditions are in the forecast with Sunday winds topping 35 knots. This is not the time of year to be taking any kind of risks!

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – The lower Willamette opens for sturgeon retention on November 1st. Sturgeon may be kept on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays through the end of the year and must measure 38 inches to 54 inches from the nose to the tail

fork. Coho passage at Willamette Falls is winding down with over 21,000 adults and jacks upstream now.

The McKenzie remains high and is full of leaves from rainfall last weekend. It's gradually recovering but probably won't fish by the coming weekend. For info on flow and water temperature, click here: <http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/nwp/teacup/willamette/vido.pdf>

There are new and different channels on the Shelburn to Green's Bridge drift on the North Santiam. This stretch is also hazardous due to new trees which have come down in the river. The river is expected to remain stable for the next week or so.

The Guide's Forecast – Fall and winter sturgeon fishing can be quite good at time, particularly when the water level is high and the conditions are muddy. Those are conditions sturgeon seem to like and being scent feeders, they're not effected by low water visibility. Recent rainfall should have a positive effect on coho catches in the upper Willamette. While some fish are coloring up, bright fish should be available for a couple of weeks. Try the mouths of the Tualatin, Molalla and Yamhill rivers for the best chance of a hookup.

Fly anglers will see October Caddis and should enjoy decent redbside fishing once the river falls into shape. Steelhead will remain available below Leaburg Dam and will remain so for some time.

There are good numbers of summers steelhead in the upper Santiam system and with a very good passage of coho this year, there should be a few of those around as well. Target steelhead between Minto and Mehama on the North Santiam with egg imitations, bobber and jig or fresh sand shrimp.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Coho fishing has been slow on the Clackamas for the entire season. Anglers hope that recent precipitation may turn things around.

Coho fishing has been fair to good at times on the Sandy with recent rain only serving to improve prospects. Blown out over the past weekend, water conditions have improved over the course of the week. As with other valley rivers, up to three coho per day may be retained here although they must be of hatchery origin. This limit can be a combination of fin-clipped Chinook, hatchery steelhead as well as the coho.

The Guide's Forecast – Rain may improve coho fishing in the Clackamas but the number of dark fish in the mix is increasing and it won't be long until fishing a bright fish will be a challenge. About 1,000 coho have returned to the hatchery facility on Eagle Creek. Water conditions are good here, fish are moving up and hopefuls are jamming the banks.

Coho are moving through the Sandy in good number now with fish available from the mouth up to Cedar Creek. Spinners are most effective here. Cedar Creek has been producing fish but there are many more anglers here than fish. Thousands of coho were processed at the hatchery over the past weekend.

North Coast Fishing Report – As if it was on schedule, Tillamook Bay turned on after a lackluster week prior to the weather systems. Anglers were sparse over the weekend due to inclement weather and recent poor reports. Once the weather settled however, the game was on as long as you were in the right place at the right time, of course. That "place" was the west channel on Wednesday where good numbers of chinook were caught around low slack. Although I was not purvey to the action on the east side of the bay on Wednesday, rumors circulated after

the day was done that there was also a good bite near low slack (~10:00 a.m.) in the Ghost Hole as well. None-the-less, the action was pretty good for those out during mid-week. The upper bay has been rather slow lately.

One guide reported a late-run hatchery coho in the west channel too! We ended up with 4 chinook and a hatchery coho for 7 rods on Wednesday morning and then headed up the Wilson for what I had thought was going to be an easy finish to our day. Strategically anchoring in the higher water, we only had 2 opportunities, capitalizing on one of them, a chum salmon on a K-16 Extreme Kwikfish (chartreuse head/chrome body) in about 12 foot of water in the lower tidewater section of the river. The chum were clearly in the river but I couldn't say I felt that the river was laden with chinook as I had anticipated. Of course, that could change any day as those fish on the west channel have to go somewhere, and soon.

River reports from the Tillamook area came in on Wednesday and aren't necessarily reflected in the short version of this newsletter. The Kilchis fished fair for chum, an occasional wild coho and a rare chinook on Tuesday with excellent water conditions present. The Trask fished good on Wednesday although some leafy debris was still present. Rumor was every boat that was checked by OSP reported fish and many had multiple fish. The Wilson was still colored on Wednesday but in my opinion, was fishable. No one reported good results however. That is likely to change before the weekend. Gear had to be cleaned fairly regularly but was still quite tolerable.

The Nehalem was still out but it doesn't really matter as regulations don't allow for much driftboating this season. The Nestucca is an option but not very high up into the watershed. A large portion of the river is closed to chinook angling.

The North Fork Nehalem does still have coho present and a fair number of them are hatchery but entering the fish trap. These fish are mostly dark. The Necanicum likely produced fair results after the river crested but is now too low to safely float.

Although no one is sturgeon fishing yet, they should begin to show in the west channel after this rain. Pesky crab often accused of stealing bait will likely be flushed to sea. This will obviously make crabbing a poor option in the coming week with Netarts Bay the possible exception.

The Guide's Forecast – With the onslaught of storms expected to keep river levels consistently high, the beginning of the Wilson/Kilchis run should get underway. It may be hard to argue it's not already underway with the fair numbers of fish caught on Wednesday. Both the West channel and east side (Bay City/Ghost Hole) produced fair numbers and should continue to do so through the weekend. After a strong showing of 3-year old fish, larger 4-year olds have been making up the bulk of our catches lately. I'll continue to say that overall, it's been a better year than most this season. Keep your herring close to the bottom. The bay has been a bit turbid recently due to all the high water and the salt water wedge on the bottom should offer a better look for willing chinook.

Troll herring very near the bottom. Low slack ironically produced the best action on Wednesday when typically, it's the last half of incoming tide that produces the best. The heavy rain didn't take out all the eelgrass as a fair amount still inundated the west channel on the peak incoming tide. Spinners are a poor choice in the colored water. Tides are weakening but fish should be on the move so the jaws, which typically produce the best on soft tide exchanges, likely won't produce what we usually see on series like this one. Bay City, the Ghost Hole and the west channel should remain top bets although don't necessarily look for great action like what we witnessed at mid-week.

It's driftboat week! Rivers are forecasted to remain in good condition through the weekend making the Trask, Wilson and to a lesser extent, the Kilchis Rivers a good option for a variety of species. Hopefully chinook tops that list but chum and coho will be caught on some of these said tributaries as well. The lower portions of these systems are likely to produce the best results as the big push of fish likely came on the initial river drop at mid-week. Plugs and eggs will be most effective, depending on your skill and confidence level. Don't waste your time on the Nestucca or Nehalem Rivers. The North Fork Nehalem and Necanicum may not be very good options as well.

Motivated anglers may want to try for sturgeon in the west channel. Fish should be present although numbers are more likely to build next month. Shrimp should fish well there and crab should not be such a problem. Sport crabbing likely won't be very good this week.

Central & South Coast Reports – Streams and rivers in the Southwest Zone close for trout fishing on November 1st.

Chinook are in Alsea tidewater and above but bobber and egg fishers are having a tough time finding biters.

It's gotta turn on sometime and it'll be those with a line in the water who will reap the rewards. It's fall Chinook, after all. Be sure to stay below the deadline at Drift Creek.

Bobber and eggs have been producing some Chinook on the Siuslaw. Action has been coming at deeper holes upriver as the fish are moving with the recent freshet.

Trolled plugs are taking coho at Siltcoos Lake. Prospects improved slightly here following rain earlier this week. Coho are running in the mid-teens so it's well worth putting in your time here.

Trollers in Winchester Bay and the lower Umpqua are experiencing spotty results as Chinook and coho have started moving upstream. Chinook fishing has been fair to good in the mainstem up to the confluence. Steelheading in the flies-only stretch of the North Umpqua is fair to good but wild fish must be released and the number of hatchery steelhead is down this year. Fishing will remain closed on the South Umpqua through November.

Don't let the light boat traffic at Coos Bay lead you to think that fishing is anything other than very good. It seems that many local anglers have filled their tags for this year which has resulted in open water for the rest of us. As a bonus, bay crabbing has been very good here. South Coos anglers have done well for Chinook at times.

Action for Chinook and coho is about wrapped up in the Rogue estuary. Half-pounder catches have slowed on the Agness stretch although the fish are running large. Water levels came up over the past weekend but have been coming down since Monday this week. The Grants Pass stretch has been showing improvement for steelhead fishing. Muddy water has been problematic at times but conditions have been improving over the past few days. The Rogue above the old Gold Ray Dan site remains flies-only through the end of October. Steelheading in this stretch has been quite good with fairly light pressure.

Although recent rainfall was encouraging for anglers keeping an eye on south coast rivers, levels remain insufficient at the Elk and Sixes rivers to kickoff Chinook fishing here, even to the point that the hatchery has suspended reports until there's more water in the river. The next round of solid precipitation should do it.

While the mainstem Chetco was originally scheduled to open for steelhead and fall Chinook on November 6th, higher water flows and a promising early return, the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife announced this week that the opening will be October 30th. The ODFW is projecting a banner year for Chetco Chinook, predicting a return 186% based on the average over the past 20 years. This estimation was confirmed during test nettings over the past week with hundreds of Chinook found swimming in the waters of the Chetco River. About half of these were jacks, another promising observation as a strong jack component is a bellwether for adult returns next season. Keep an eye on river flow here. The Chetco fishes best between 1,100 and 4,000 cfs. Above or below those numbers and it won't be worth the trip. Here's the link:
http://waterdata.usgs.gov/or/nwis/uv?site_no=14400000

In another projection, the Winchuck River is forecast to receive over twice the 20 year average return of fall Chinook. The Winchuck opens for salmon fishing on November 6th.

Diamond Lake has continued to fish well but the opportunity to do so is drawing to a close. This coming weekend will be the last chance to fish here as it will be closed for the season on Monday, November 1st.

Central and Eastern Oregon – The Deschutes was muddy below White River on Wednesday this week and it looked like it would stay that way for a while. Steelheading has been slow.

The Grande Ronde River is expected to be fishing well now for steelhead following the recent freshet and recovery.

Don't let snowy condition tempt you into mounting those studded tires this weekend. They won't be legal until Monday, November 1st.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for October 2010

North Puget Sound

October is usually primetime for anglers fishing for coho salmon in the region, where some fish will be hooked in the marine areas but the best action likely will be in the rivers.

"The coho fishery started slow in Puget Sound, but we could see more fish move into area waters and make for some decent fishing in October," said Steve Thiesfeld, a fish biologist with WDFW.

"If that happens, those fish will continue to make their way into the rivers, providing anglers a great fishing opportunity throughout the month."

Several rivers are open for salmon, including the Snohomish, Skykomish, Stillaguamish, Snoqualmie and Wallace. Anglers fishing those rivers have a daily limit of two coho only. The Skagit, Cascade, Green (Duwamish) and Nooksack also are open for salmon but regulations vary for each river. For details, check WDFW's sportfishing regulations pamphlet at
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>.

In the marine areas, anglers fishing for ocean coho should try 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 also might want to

head to Marine Area 10, said Thiesfeld. Another option for blackmouth anglers is Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where anglers can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit beginning Oct. 1.

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 will 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 will have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release chinook.

Later in October, some saltwater anglers will turn their attention to chum salmon, said Thiesfeld, who recommends trolling slow for chum and using a flasher with a green coyote spoon or a green, purple or pink mini hoochie.

Meanwhile, **crabbing** closes one hour past sunset 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/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 continued to fish in an open area after Sept. 6 should record their catch on their winter catch card.

Anglers should be aware that salmon fisheries at **Lake Washington** and **Lake Sammamish** will close Oct. 2 because of low coho returns to the area. For more information, check the emergency rule changes at <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/>.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Oct. 4 Update: Razor-clam digging will be allowed Oct. 7-10 at Twin Harbors beach and Oct. 8-9 at Copalis, Mocrocks, Kalaloch and Long Beach.

With salmon moving into the bays and rivers, anglers have several options to consider in planning a fishing trip 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 scheduled in early October.

WDFW approved the digs at Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks and Kalaloch after marine toxin tests confirmed the clams were safe to eat. Opening dates and evening low tides in October are:

- Oct. 7, Thurs. - 6:55 p.m. (-1.0 ft.), Twin Harbors
- Oct. 8, Fri. - 7:42 p.m. (-1.4 ft.), Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks, Kalaloch
- Oct. 9, Sat. - 8:28 p.m. (-1.5 ft.), Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks, Kalaloch
- Oct. 10, Sun. - 9:15 p.m. (-1.3 ft.), Twin Harbors

Clam diggers are reminded that they should take lights or lanterns for the nighttime digs and to check weather and surf forecasts before heading out. No digging will be allowed before noon on

any of the five razor-clam beaches. 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.

All diggers age 15 or older must have an applicable 2010-11 fishing license to harvest razor clams on any beach. Licenses, ranging from a three-day razor clam license to an annual combination fishing license, are available on WDFW's website at <https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov> and from license vendors around the state.

More razor clam digs are tentatively scheduled Nov. 5-8, Nov. 20-21, Dec. 3-6 and Dec. 31-Jan. 2.

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). The daily limit in Marine Area 6 will be two salmon, except that only one fish may be a chinook. In non-selective fisheries, anglers may retain fish whether or not they have a clipped adipose fin. Anglers are reminded that marine areas 1 (Ilwaco) and 5 (Sekiu) are only open for salmon fishing through Sept. 30.

But beginning 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-salmon daily limit. However, all **wild coho** caught in Marine Area 13 must be released.

In Hood Canal (Marine Area 12), fishing regulations change Oct. 16, when anglers will have a daily limit of four salmon, but only one of which can be a chinook.

Grays Harbor (Marine Area 2-2) also is an option for salmon anglers. The harbor remains open through Nov. 30 with a daily limit of two salmon, but **chinook** and **chum** must be released. Crabbing in Puget Sound is still open in a few areas. Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) closes Sept. 30, but marine areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 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, area rivers that open for salmon Oct. 1 include the Elk, Hoquiam, Humptulips, Johns, Satsop and Wishkah rivers in Grays Harbor County; and Kennedy Creek in Thurston County. Anglers should check the rules pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/> for specific regulations on these rivers.

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

Elsewhere, 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. In Clallam County, the Dungeness River opens to salmon fishing Oct. 16 with a daily limit of four coho only.

Anglers should be aware that salmon fisheries on the **lower Quilcene River** and at **Quilcene/Dabob Bay** will close Oct. 2 because of low coho returns to the area. For more information, check the emergency rule changes at <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/>

Southwest Washington

Coho salmon are moving up the Columbia River and into area tributaries, where anglers can still reel in bright chinook on 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 fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "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. The catch limit is one sturgeon per day, with a statewide annual limit of five fish. James said about 2,300 fish are still available for harvest in the mainstem Columbia River under the annual 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 outmigrating past the dam."

Meanwhile, the catch of early stock **hatchery coho** was decent on the lower Columbia in September, with more late-stock fish scheduled to enter the fishery in October and into November, said Joe Hymer, another WDFW fish biologist. In all, about 98,000 late-run fish are expected this year compared to 188,000 early run fish.

Although the run predicted this year is only about 40 percent the size of last year's return, Hymer said anglers can still expect at least a month of good fishing. "Last year's run was above average, but this year's fishery should still be fairly decent if the forecasts prove out," he said.

The best fishing for bright late-run coho is on the Cowlitz, Klickitat, Kalama and Washougal rivers, Hymer said. The Lewis River also attracts late-run coho, but chinook fishing closes there Oct. 1, as does fishing from floating devices around the salmon hatchery and all fishing above the hatchery. The Kalama River remains closed for chinook retention through the end of the year. The Grays River closes for salmon fishing Oct. 15 to conserve chum salmon but the lower river re-opens in mid-November for late stock hatchery coho and hatchery winter-run steelhead.

As in past years, anglers are required to release any wild coho - which have an intact adipose fin - intercepted on the mainstem Columbia River and its tributaries from the Hood River Bridge downstream. For catch limits and other rules applicable to salmon fisheries on the big river or its tributaries, see the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet, available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>.

Although the focus of the salmon fishery switches to coho in October, **chinook** should continue biting through the month on a number of rivers. The Klickitat River was a hotspot in late

September, as was Drano Lake. Fishing will be closed at Drano Lake throughout October from 6 p.m. Tuesdays to 6 p.m. Wednesdays.

Anglers planning to fish for salmon on the Cowlitz River should be aware they may now retain **one wild chinook** as part of their two-chinook limit on that river. In addition, the daily chinook limit has been increased to two adult chinook salmon on the Columbia River from the mouth of the Lewis River to Bonneville Dam.

For **trout**, Sept. 30 is the last day to fish Mineral Lake, but Swift Reservoir remains a good bet for rainbows. The area around the Cowlitz Trout Hatchery is also a good bet for hatchery sea-run cutthroats in October. Those aggressive fish averaging a foot or more can be caught on a variety of gear including bait, flies, or lures.

Eastern Washington

October is the last month - and often a very good time - to fish many of the region's popular trout-stocked lakes and some rivers and streams. Fall insect hatches are providing trout food, so anglers who use flies or lures that mimic that forage can be successful.

Many Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille county waters produce good catches of **rainbow trout** and other species. Bill Baker, WDFW northeast district fish biologist, reminds anglers to check the regulations before heading out because some waters, such as Bayley and Rocky lakes, have shifted to catch-and-release.

Some of Spokane County's best trout lakes closed Sept. 30, but there are still plenty of opportunities. Chris Donley, WDFW central district fish biologist, said Clear, Chapman and Liberty lakes provide trout, bass and other fish through October. Amber Lake remains open through November for catch-and-release fishing. A number of year-round waters, including Eloika, Long and Newman lakes, have trout, bass, crappie and perch.

Most rivers and streams in the region close Oct. 31, but sections of some major waterways, like the Spokane River, remain open year-round or into next spring, some with specific restrictions listed in the rules pamphlet. In mid- to late October, WDFW fish biologists will be electrofishing at night the urban Spokane River stretch between the Maple Street and Ft. George Wright Drive bridges, catching and tagging wild redband rainbow trout to learn more about the population. Anglers are reminded that tagged trout must be released if caught by anglers.

Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir off Grand Coulee Dam, provides some of the best year-round fishing. Baker reports good trolling action on big rainbows and **walleye**, mostly from the Daisy area north. Walleye fishers have also been successful casting jigs near the shoreline, using bottom bouncers, and other methods. Several **smallmouth bass**, running 10 to 12 inches, were recently caught by Roosevelt shore anglers near Ft. Spokane and Hawk Creek.

Snake River **steelhead** action slowed the last week of September, but fishing should improve when the water cools down, said WDFW Enforcement Sgt. Dan Rahn. "There are lots of steelhead in the river but they just aren't biting," he said. "Steelhead were rolling on the surface just above Little Goose Dam, but they would not bite."

Rahn reminds steelhead and salmon fishers to use only barbless hooks. Anglers 15 years of age and over are required to possess a Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement when fishing for these species on the Snake River.

Northcentral Washington

Oct. 1 is the start of a special rules hatchery **steelhead** fishing season on a portion of Okanogan County's Okanogan River from the mouth upstream to the Highway 97 Bridge in Oroville. Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist, said the fishery, like those on other upper Columbia River tributaries, will reduce the number of excess hatchery-origin steelhead and increase the proportion of natural-origin steelhead on the spawning grounds.

Jateff reminds steelheaders heading for the Okanogan of the rules in effect: selective gear, night closure, no bait rules, 20-inch minimum size, and regardless of the fishing area above Wells Dam, a requirement to retain any adipose-fin-clipped hatchery-origin steelhead caught up to the daily limit of four fish. Anglers are also required to possess a Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement as part of their valid fishing license.

Jateff reports that steelhead fishing picked up the last week of September in the Methow River as fish continued to move into the river. The fishing area on the Methow, which has been open since Sept. 8, starts at the mouth and goes upstream to the confluence with the Chewuch River at Winthrop. Selective gear rules, night closure, and no bait allowed are currently in effect for the steelhead fishery on the Methow.

Jateff reminds anglers that **summer chinook salmon** fishing in the mainstem Columbia River from Wells Dam to the Highway 17 Bridge in Bridgeport will close one hour after sunset on Oct. 15. He says a few salmon are still being caught above Wells Dam and also upstream in the Bridgeport area. Selective gear rules and a night closure are in effect for this fishery, but bait is allowed.

WDFW Enforcement Captain Chris Anderson said salmon fishing on the Columbia River from White Bluffs up to Priest Rapids Dam - a stretch that closes Oct. 22 - was good during the last week of September. "Normally there's a pretty good morning bite that lasts about two hours," he said. Anderson reminds anglers that the mouth of Hatchery Creek below Priest Rapids Dam is closed to fishing to protect fish that are pooled up at the mouth of the creek leading into the hatchery.

Jateff said fishing **rainbow trout** lakes in October can be very good as water temperatures cool and trout become more active. Some good bets would be Big Twin near Winthrop, Blue on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, Aeneas near Tonasket, and Chopaka near Loomis. All of these lakes stay open for fishing through Oct. 31. Chopaka and Aeneas are fly-fishing only, and Blue and Big Twin are selective gear waters. There is a one fish daily limit for all of these lakes.

Other Okanogan County trout waters Jateff recommends during the month of October are both Conconully Lake and Reservoir and Wannacut Lake. All three produce good-size rainbow trout, including some triploids, and they are open through Oct. 31.

Jameson Lake in Douglas County, which closed July 4, re-opens for an Oct. 1-31 season on a hatchery plant of approximately 7,500 half-pound rainbows.

Bass fishing on year-round Potholes Reservoir, Moses Lake and other waters that are open in the Columbia Basin usually improves as fall advances.

Southcentral Washington

Steelhead are still moving into the Hanford Reach in large numbers, although most anglers are expected to continue focusing on fall chinook salmon through mid-October. Up to 77,000 adult fall chinook are expected to return to the Reach this year, more than double last year's final count. Through Sept. 26, anglers fishing that area had caught a record 3,075 of those fish, along with 404 jacks.

Plenty of bright **chinook salmon** , some tipping the scales at 40 pounds, remain to be caught through the first half of October, said Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"Anglers have a great opportunity to catch bright, good-eating fish through the first half of the month," Hoffarth said. "But these fish come to the Reach ready to spawn and they start turning dark later in the month."

The salmon fishery is open through Oct. 22 from the Highway 395 Bridge to Wells, but closes Oct. 15 upriver from the dam. Anglers are advised to check the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>) for daily catch limits and other regulations that apply to specific sections of the Columbia River.

The question for many anglers, Hoffarth said, is when to switch over to **hatchery steelhead** . The steelhead fishery, which opened a month early due to unusually large returns, runs through March 31 from Highway 395 to the old Hanford wooden powerline towers and through Oct. 22 from the powerline towers upriver to Priest Rapids Dam.

"October is a good time to start targeting hatchery steelhead," Hoffarth said. "The water is cooling off and the fish are getting more aggressive."

Another good prospect for salmon is the Yakima River, where fishing for fall chinook and hatchery coho usually comes alive around the second week of the month. Best bets for catching fish include waters below Prosser Dam and Horn Rapids Dam, Hoffarth said.

"The salmon start moving into the Yakima, then all of a sudden they're stacked like cordwood," he said. "I think we're going to see a dramatic improvement in that fishery in the weeks ahead." Rather catch some **walleye** ? October is also a good time to hook some of these toothy fish below McNary Dam, Hoffarth said. "Fall fishing for walleye is dynamite between Umatilla and Boardman," he said. "Those fish are putting on the feedbag for winter and are eager to strike big lures, night and day."

Trout fishing is available in many southcentral region rivers and streams, including the Yakima, Naches, Little Naches, and Bumping rivers in Yakima County. Anglers can also catch trout on 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. Regulations for these and other fisheries are described in the Fishing in Washington regulation pamphlet, available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/> .

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