

The Guide's Forecast - volume 12 issue number 44

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **November 5th – November 11th, 2010**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - Salmon fishing in the gorge has slowed dramatically as this fishery winds down for the year. Upstream anglers will continue to watch dam counts above Bonneville to target coho near tributary mouths.

Sturgeon anglers in the gorge are still pursuing keepers with boaters doing best. Fish are well distributed, putting bank anglers at an unusual disadvantage. Success rates will likely taper with a lowering snow level in the coming weeks.

The first retention sturgeon opportunity following the re-opening of the lower Willamette will be Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The Middle Fork will fish well for steelhead when the water drops and clears.

The McKenzie is dropping this week and should provide some late fall fishing for steelhead.

Steelheading has picked up on the Clackamas with the recent freshet.

A few coho have been taken on the Sandy but they're getting dark this late in the season.

Limits are being taken by trollers at Hagg Lake. Trout are scheduled to be planted at Walling Pond and Walter Wirth Lake.

Northwest – Brief flurries of success were witnessed late last week following the last rain freshet. Although the Wilson and Kilchis produced sub-par results, the west channel in Tillamook Bay produced good catches on Wednesday but slowed by the weekend. A new series of storms swelled rivers to a season high over the weekend, which should improve fishing once again for this weekend.

Despite low visibility, trollers working herring in the Bay City area as well as the west channel scored fair numbers of fish on Tuesday. With most rivers still out of shape, the few anglers fishing under sunny skies and 60 degree temperatures fared well on the first part of outgoing tide.

As rivers clear, driftboaters will come out in force with the Wilson and Kilchis primary targets. The Kilchis fished best by midweek but the Wilson and Trask will be primary targets over the weekend pending further bouts of torrential downpours.

Most driftable sections of the Nestucca and Nehalem are off limits to boaters this year but some fish may be available in downstream areas. An early winter steelhead may come from Three Rivers or the North Fork Nehalem or Necanicum Rivers but peak season will be later into December.

Heavy rains should clear out crab from most coastal estuaries, making them viable options for sturgeon seekers, especially on Tillamook Bay. Sport crabbing will remain best on Netarts Bay and the lower Columbia River out of Hammond.

Trout season has closed on north coast streams but some quality fish were taken during the consumptive opener.

Southwest – Offshore forecasts indicate difficult ocean conditions. Bottom fishers have successfully made early morning trips but use caution if doing so.

Trolled plugs are catching coho at Siltcoos Lake but the action is hot one day, cold the next.

Winchester Bay crabbing has continued to improve. Most of the Dungeness are hard now and even those trying from docks are getting them. Chinook and coho fishing has been good in the bay and lower Umpqua.

With the wild coho fishery over on the Coquille, chinook catches have remained good.

Concentrate chinook effort on the South Coos now with trolled herring.

A few chinook have been caught near the mouth of the Elk but more rain is needed to kick-start this fishery.

Rough seas out of Gold Beach coupled with high winds has kept boats off the ocean most of the week. Bottom fishing has yielded limits of rockfish when boats could get out. Chinook fishing is slow in the bay with the season nearly over here. Steelheading is fair in the middle river. Summer steelheading remains good on the upper Rogue. The flies-only restriction was lifted on November 1st.

Rain last week allowed the Chetco River to open a week early for chinook fishing. Catches have been slow to fair with best results at the mouth. Fronts passing through have caused Chetco levels to fluctuate, but the river has rarely been out of the optimal range to fish well. It will fish whenever the flow is 4,000 cfs or less providing the water isn't muddy. Winter steelhead will be available here in late November.

Snow was on the ground for the final weekend for Diamond Lake. Fishing was excellent as it will be in the spring next year.

Eastern – Steelheading improved over the past weekend on the lower Deschutes as the water cleared. Catches are mostly native fish, however.

Trollers working the John Day Pool reported good catches but the bulk of the catch were wild, which must be released. This fishery should become more consistent into the month.

Large Mackinaw are being taken by trollers using downriggers in chilly conditions at Crescent Lake.

SW Washington – Barrier Dam on the Cowlitz has been producing nice coho catches but the quality of fish is degrading. Winter steelhead should show soon and if they follow returns of coho like they normally do, it should be a good season.

A few coho are still being caught on the Lewis and Kalama Rivers but effort is waning.

The mouth of the Klickitat is producing good catches of coho for both bank and boat anglers. This fishery should stay strong for the next few weeks.

Columbia River Fishing Report – The salmon fishery on the Columbia below Bonneville is winding down. Catch rates sunk to a new low this week although inclement weather played a role in effort and catch as well.

Although it wasn't an exceptionally productive week for John Day Pool anglers, this fishery is beginning to pick up momentum. Trollers saw a high percentage of wild fish this week and that may continue through the season although hatchery fish surpassed wild fish passage at Bonneville Dam this year. With favorable weather this week, the bite may be further stimulated although dropping snow levels are in store for early next week.

Sturgeon catch and effort is still chugging along with fair catches still coming from the boat fishery on the Oregon side and the bank fishery from the Washington side. The ODF&W check went as follows:

Gorge Bank:

Weekly checking showed 11 legal white sturgeon kept, plus one legal, four oversize, and 28 sublegal sturgeon released for 267 bank anglers.

Gorge Boats:

Weekly checking showed 20 legal white sturgeon kept, plus three legal, 13 oversize and 760 sublegal sturgeon released for 38 boats (97 anglers).

Troutdale Boats:

Weekly checking showed three legal white sturgeon kept, plus 124 sublegal sturgeon released for 35 boats (68 anglers).

Portland to Longview Bank:

Weekly checking showed nine sublegal sturgeon released for 13 bank anglers.

Portland to Longview Boats:

Weekly checking showed one legal white sturgeon kept, plus 129 sublegal sturgeon released for 44 boats (104 anglers).

Although this fishery is likely past its peak, anglers can expect good catches for a while longer. The current stretch of warm weather may prolong the bite as dropping temperatures are often the cause for a lethargic bite later in the fall. The Portland to Longview stretch is becoming a poor option but anglers will begin to focus on the Willamette River in the near future.

In the estuary, crabbing remains quite productive although strong tide this week as well as inclement weather last weekend hampered effort.

The Guide's Forecast – With few exceptions, salmon fishing below Bonneville is done. There may still be some coho caught in lower river tributary mouths but most anglers will now focus on their salmon efforts above Bonneville. Coho will be the prime focus except for the steelhead fishery destined for good catches in the John Day Pool. Most of the coho fisheries will take place on the Washington side of the river; the Klickitat in particular.

Trollers should continue to take good numbers of steelhead in the John Day Pool and the John Day Arm itself should begin to pay dividends. John Day River anglers will employ bobber and jig or bait options with shrimp likely to produce the best results.

Sturgeon anglers will keep after it for another few weeks and with the recent warming trend, action should stay good for a prolonged period of time. The deadline will continue to be the

friendliest place for boaters and bank anglers with other small areas near Horsetail Falls and Cape Horn more productive for shakers. It's a beautiful time to be in the gorge!

Crabbers won't have the best tides to deal with until late next week. If you have enough traps fishing however, you should pull limits as you near high tide. Fresh salmon carcasses will produce the best results but with the number of crab in the estuary, it shouldn't make a big difference. The best tide exchanges begin on the weekend of the 13th.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – The lower Willamette opened to sturgeon retention on November 1st. Since this is a Thursday, Friday, Saturday fishery, no reports were available at this writing on November 4th

The water level on the McKenzie is dropping this week and the color is excellent for fishing.

Although counts at the Falls are dropping off, numbers of coho entering the Santiam system are increasing. Stay below the deadlines on the North and South Santiam through November. The water level is normal for this time of year and the flow is stable this week. Two coho per day may be kept, finclipped or not.

The ODFW will be planting 144 trout in the 12-pound range this week. These are intended to be bonus fish when the lake opens in March but may certainly be caught up until the facility closes on the weekend prior to Thanksgiving, November 21st this year. We've written about the habits of freshly planted trout in the past and these big boys will be no different. They'll stay out of seep water for a while since their previous habitat was a concrete pond. Entering deep water now causes discomfort to the fishes' air bladder. It takes about two weeks for them to acclimate. The water level at Hagg Lake is very low (as it always is in the fall) but boat ramps remain useable.

The Guide's Forecast – Optimism is high for the lower Willamette sturgeon opener as catch-and-release fishers have been doing well. This can be a very productive time of year as sturgeon like high, off-color water. Continue looking for coho at the mouths of the Clackamas, Tualatin, Molalla, Yamhill, and Santiam.. There will still be some bright fish although sorting may be required.

Anglers are enjoying good fall fishing for trout and summer steelhead are still available below Kleaburg Dam.

Over 300 coho have passed upper Bennett Dam to enter the North Santiam. Try throwing spinners for them. With summer steelhead still available, bobber and jigs seem most effective here.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Fishing hat the Clackamas has been slow despite the recent freshet. The river is dropping this week and the water color is very good. This time of year the level of Eagle Creek will usually remain fishable between showers. Over 1,500 coho have returned to the hatchery facility.

Cooler weather will keep the Sandy water condition decent as long as it doesn't roil from rainfall, the last of which brought in a few bright fish. It's getting late in the run to hope for much, though. Over 12,000 coho have been processed at the Cedar Creek hatchery.

The Guide's Forecast – Whenever it rains, crowds of fishers are jamming Eagle Creek. While there are still coho to be caught at this time of year, the majority will be past their expiration date.

At times, late season coho fishing can be fast and furious, as it has been frequently on the Sandy over the past week. To play this game, fish them as you would ordinarily with spinners, drifted, scented yarn and so on. The best place to concentrate efforts will be below Cedar Creek. There are a couple of differences from earlier in the season, however. Coho are biting and it's a catch-and-release fishery for darker fish. The chance of getting one to take home for dinner is too remote to be a consideration. Cedar Creek is producing fish but available parking fills early. Be certain your vehicle is parked legally.

North Coast Fishing Report – With all the stars aligning, where are all the fish? Although there have been some brief periods of good fishing, ideal conditions graced smaller Tillamook area streams by mid-week yet fishing was very challenging. Did we lose a batch of fish upstream on the last rain freshet? Although the last rain did produce some fair results, it clearly wasn't the mother lode that one would have expected for this time of year.

Fishing the lower Kilchis under ideal conditions, chinook were scarce although the 70 degree weather kept the complaining to a minimum. For a 6-rod effort in 3 foot or better visibility conditions, our grand total was 1 wild coho, 1 cutthroat trout and 1 other salmon slap. Driftboaters working the upper stretches reported good chum catches but only a rare chinook in the bunch. Very few chinook were caught under the ideal conditions on Wednesday in the Kilchis.

At the time of this writing, the Wilson, Nestucca and Trask were coming under ideal condition and although it appears they won't be laden with fish, there should be some fair catches coming from the Trask and Wilson Rivers. One guide reported good catches on the Nestucca the rain freshet before in the short driftable stretch on the lower Nestucca.

Reports from the Trask hatchery bode well for the future of this fishery. Abundant 3-year olds and jacks were taken into the hatchery this week, keeping pace with the number of adults returning, both coho and hatchery chinook. Most of the coho were too colored for good tablefare.

Tillamook Bay itself has been hot and cold. It fished pretty well for one guide on Tuesday as he went 4 for 5, landing all bucks between 20 and 32 pounds. Ironically, he got all his fish on the outgoing tide, bucking tradition when the bulk of the catch came on the incoming tide. Bay City and the west channel produced equally well for him although the west channel had significantly more eelgrass to deal with. All fish were taken on herring Tuesday. By Wednesday however, boats were out in hordes with few fish to speak of. Only 2 or 3 fish were reported from the Ghost Hole for over 40 boats while the west channel produced nothing. The fish were nowhere to be found on Wednesday.

The ocean is now closed to chinook fishing and was far from a highlight this season. Ocean crabbing re-opens on the 1st of December (can you believe that is less than a month away?).

The Nehalem remains too big and restricted for good action. Netting on this system indicates better times ahead as well. The North Fork Nehalem coho run is done and steelhead are still weeks away.

The Necanicum harbors chinook as well as some chum and wild coho. It's a great option when the river is running high but will have a mix of both a few bright fish and dark ones as well. It

remains dynamic however with shifting gravel bars and downed trees so be prepared for anything.

The Guide's Forecast – Although it's all shaping up to be an awesome week/weekend for chinook anglers in the Tillamook area, don't be surprised if you still don't get that fall chinook wish this week. There is an odd absence of fish this week but under these ideal conditions, you just can't help but go fishing this week or weekend.

It's hard to say how the week is going to pencil out. With disappointed catches early in the prime part of the river drop, it appears there aren't a lot of fish coming on this freshet. What's bewildering is that there weren't a lot of fish on the last rain freshet either. And it was a good early season on the bay. Most feel that even if they didn't show in good numbers this week, we still have some good weeks of fishing ahead.

Although most will gravitate to the river systems, the best action on these rivers will have likely taken place on Thursday and Friday of this week. The Trask and Wilson should be top producers, the Kilchis doesn't look to be this go-around. Conditions will be ideal prior to the weekend, including for boaters working the driftboatable water in the upper reaches. By the weekend, the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca should all be options but success rates will have likely tapered by then.

This should shift focus to the extreme lower ends of these rivers or back into the estuary for the later returning stock of fish. The Ghost Hole and Bay City should begin to produce more regular results but don't overlook the west channel as it has been a consistent producer all season. The jaws and upper bay will likely produce poorly as the bulk of these fish should be destined for the Wilson and Kilchis Rivers. Strong tides will make jetty fishing a poor option but mid-bay Ghost Hole, Bay City, west channel) herring trolling the best option, especially when river levels drop a bit lower. Whether these fish hit on the incoming tide as they normally do, or stick with the routine we witnessed on Tuesday with an exclusive outgoing tide bite, well, only time will tell.

Small streams like the Necanicum, Kilchis and North Fork Nehalem will quickly become a poor option by the weekend. Chum casters have until mid-month to target chum salmon for catch and release only. The fly anglers best option will be this weekend as many fish are already paired up on the spawning beds; please be contentious of this.

Sturgeon may be an option as stronger outgoing tides will make the west channel viable. Shrimp soaked high in the west channel should produce some fish as juvenile crab make their way back down-bay to more saline conditions. Bay crabbing will remain poor with the exception of Netarts Bay.

Central & South Coast Reports – Rough seas forecast for the coming weekend will prevent ocean forays. For hearty souls with the proper equipment, there will be minus tides which will allow clam digging but these will occur after dark. When boats have been able to get out, bottom fishing has been good as it usually is for this time of year. Boats are restricted to lees that 120-foot depths for the remainder of the year.

The majority of rivers and streams are closed now for trout fishing. Be sure to check you fishing regulations pamphlet.

Chinook are being taken on trolled. plug-cut herring on the Yaquina but catches are only fair at best. Quite a few coho are also being take,, mostly on spinners and plugs but they must be

released here. Be aware that only one rod per angler is allowed here, even for those who have purchased the second rod permit.

With the wild coho fishery open now at Tenmile Lake and the first fish entering the impoundment, a few are being caught. The season here will last through November or a quota of 500 fish. One native coho may be kept per day up to five for the season.

Chinook catches picked up on the Alsea and Siuslaw thanks to recent rain. Those rivers are currently on the drop but will get another bump with precipitation this coming weekend.

Trollers at Siltcoos have continued to pick up coho here and there on plugs and spinners. Those who'd like to try are advised to get there soon as the next good deluge is likely to leave the lake devoid of silvers.

With most of the Chinook upriver on the spawning run, catches at Winchester Bay have slowed significantly. Rockfishing has been good off the South Jetty and crabbing is fair to good in the bay. Chinook fishing has been fair to good on the mainstem and the flies-only stretch of the North Umpqua has been fair to good for steelhead. Fishing is closed on the South Umpqua through November.

Chinook catches have slowed in Coos Bay with most of the fish upriver now. Crabbing has been very good as is clamming with negative tides this week.

Despite rainfall at most Oregon locations, the Elk and Sixes have not received the freshet required to get the Chinook fishery underway yet this season. Commercial efforts have taken their quota at the mouth so the rest of the salmon will be available to recreational anglers. It remains to be seen if precipitation over the coming week will be sufficient to draw waiting Chinook up into the system.

There's little of interest in the Rogue estuary now. Half-pounder fishing has slowed in the Agness stretch. The middle Rogue is the best bet now to clean up on half-pounders with a few adults also being taken. Coho are being caught in this stretch but must be of hatchery origin to keep here. The upper river remains the best chance for adult steelhead and hardware may be used as the flies-only restriction ended at the 1st of November. Bait is allowed above the Shady Cove Boat Ramp to the deadline below the Cole Rivers Hatchery Diversion Dam.

With dry weather this week, Chetco level and flow is rapidly dropping. More rain is needed to put it back into fishable condition. There is a limited retention of wild Chinook here (up to 20 per year) and it's a good thing as there are very few hatchery fish available. Fishing was great at the opening of the Chetco above River Mile 2.2 on October 30th as water condition was good.. After rain raised the level at the end of the month, it fished well again when the water was dropping and some very large fish were caught. With enough water in the river, it will continue to deliver decent results through November.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Long-time TGF subscriber '**Dobe**' writes, "My old friend Bill and buddy Winston (they fished sturgeon with us a few years back) brought Bill's boat over and we fished Lake Billy Chinook for Kokanee on Mon, Tues and Wed, limiting out all three days. We fished the main body and not any of the arms using small lures tipped with shoepeg white corn. The fish were firm, fat and bright, but only about 10 inches long. The water is down some but we had no problem launching Bill's 22 footer. Loading was a 3 man job in the PM after the wind came up as only the end of the docks are in the water at The Cove. The lake is open all year,

except for the Metolius arm and sometimes the weather there is spring-like in the dead of winter. I'm going to try and make a few more trips before the snow flies."

The occasional steelhead is being hooked on the Deschutes near the mouth but fishing here has remained very slow. Counts at Shearars Falls have been dropping since mid-October.

Steelhead can be seen jumping in the Grande Ronde River but they've been non responsive to anglers. The water has dropped and flows are now stable to they should start biting soon.

The John Day has been producing fish for anglers using bobber and bait. Catches are fair to good but recently no one can seem to hook anything but native fish.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for November 2010

North Puget Sound

Anglers will continue to find some coho in the region's rivers and streams, while out on Puget Sound more areas are scheduled to open for chinook fishing, as well as late-season crab opportunities.

At 8 a.m. on Nov. 15, marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) and 12 (Hood Canal) will reopen for sport crabbing seven days a week through Jan. 2, 2011.

Crab fishing will also 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 June 18.

Sport crabbing will not reopen this year in marine areas 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 quota, said Rich Childers, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) shellfish policy coordinator.

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. In addition, fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/shellfish/crab/> .

While on the Sound, why not fish for blackmouth ? 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, as well as Marine Area 10, 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.

Saltwater anglers fishing for chum salmon may want to try waters around Point No Point (north end of the Kitsap Peninsula) and Possession Bar (southern portion of Whidbey Island). Those two areas of Marine Area 9 are often hotspots for chum salmon in early November.

Meanwhile, several rivers are open for salmon fishing, including the Snohomish, Skykomish, Stillaguamish, Snoqualmie and Wallace. Anglers fishing those rivers have a daily limit of two coho. 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/>.

For trout anglers, Beaver Lake near Issaquah could be the best place to cast for rainbows in November. About 2,300 hatchery rainbows - averaging 2 to 3 pounds each - are scheduled to be released into the lake Nov. 8. Beaver Lake, which is one of several westside lowland lakes open to fishing year-round, is best fished by small boat, although anglers also can be successful fishing from shore.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Nov. 1 Update: Coho retention on the Nisqually River closes Nov. 1.

Anglers fishing for salmon often turn their attention to chum in November, when the run usually peaks around the middle of the month. But shellfish also take center stage with more areas of Puget Sound re-open for sport crabbing and two razor clam openings on the calendar for November.

The first evening razor clam dig has been approved at Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks and Kalaloch. Opening dates and evening low tides are:

- Nov. 5, Fri. - 6:41 p.m., (-1.4 ft.), Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks, Kalaloch
- Nov. 6, Sat. - 7:26 p.m., (-1.6 ft.), Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks, Kalaloch
- Nov. 7, Sun. - 7:11 p.m., (-1.5 ft.), Twin Harbors
- Nov. 8, Mon. - 7:55 p.m., (-1.2 ft.), Twin Harbors

Later in the November, razor clammers will have another opportunity at Long Beach and Twin Harbors. Tentative opening dates and evening low tides for that dig are:

- Nov. 20, Sat. - 5:39 p.m., (-0.4 ft.), Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- Nov. 21, Sun. - 6:17 p.m., (-0.7 ft.), Long Beach, 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 Dec. 3-6 and Dec. 31-Jan. 2.

Rather catch crab ? At 8 a.m. on Nov. 15, marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) and 12 (Hood Canal) will reopen for sport crabbing seven days a week through Jan. 2, 2011.

Crab fishing will also 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 June 18.

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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. In addition, fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/shellfish/crab/>.

Recreationists on the Sound can also pursue blackmouth - resident chinook. Beginning Nov. 1, anglers fishing marine areas 5 (Sekiu), 11 (Tacoma-Vashon Island) and 13 (South Puget Sound) can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit. However, salmon fishing in Marine Area 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) is only open through Oct. 31.

Elsewhere, anglers fishing Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) have a daily limit of four salmon, but only one of those fish can be a chinook.

November is when the action heats up in the region for chum salmon. Popular fishing spots include the Hoodspout Hatchery area of Hood Canal and the mouth of Kennedy Creek in Totten Inlet. Other areas where anglers can find chum salmon include the Dosewallips and Duckabush rivers in Jefferson County and Minter Creek in Pierce/Kitsap Counties. Those three rivers open for salmon fishing Nov. 1.

Meanwhile, salmon fisheries remain open through Nov. 30 on the Bogachiel, Sol Duc, Calawah, Dickey, Clearwater and Hoh rivers. Also open for salmon fishing through November, are the Elk, Hoquiam and Johns rivers and Joe Creek in Grays Harbor County; and the Bear and Niawiakum rivers in Pacific County. In Mason County, the Skokomish River is open for salmon fishing through Dec. 15.

Anglers should be aware that the Nisqually River, from the mouth to the military tank crossing bridge (located one mile upstream of mouth of Muck Creek), closes to coho retention Nov. 1. For more information, see the rule change at <http://bit.ly/buK23R>.

Winter steelhead fisheries get under way in November on several rivers, including the Bogachiel, Calawah, Sol Duc, Quillayute and Hoh. Beginning Nov. 1, anglers fishing those rivers have a daily limit of three hatchery steelhead. "Traditionally, the winter steelhead fishery doesn't really get going until later in November," said Bob Leland, WDFW's steelhead program manager. "Anglers can certainly find some steelhead early in the month, but around Thanksgiving is when fishing usually starts to improve."

Grays Harbor-area rivers, such as the Satsop, Wynoochee and Humptulips, also are good bets for anglers once steelhead start to arrive, said Leland.

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

Thanksgiving Day traditionally marks the start of the popular winter steelhead fishery, although some anglers started working their favorite rivers well ahead of time. A number of area rivers have been open to fishing for hatchery steelhead for months, and catch totals have been rising since mid-October.

That tally will likely increase even faster now that the first big storm of the season has soaked the region with heavy rains, said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"Steelhead move upriver on pulses of water, and the storm really helped to prime the pump," Hymer said. "Now that the ground is good and wet, we can expect to see more and more fish move upstream every time the sky opens up and the rivers start to swell."

Major destinations for hatchery-reared steelhead moving up the Columbia River are the Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis (east and north forks), Washougal, Elochoman and Grays rivers, along with Salmon Creek in Clark County, he said. Other waters opening for steelhead fishing Nov. 1 are Abernathy, Coal and Germany creeks, the Coweeman River and Cedar Creek in Clark County and Mill Creek in Cowlitz County.

Only hatchery-reared steelhead, which have a clipped adipose fin, may be retained in regional waters. All wild, unmarked fish must be released unharmed.

But until Thanksgiving - or whenever steelhead begin to arrive en masse - late-run coho salmon may be the best target for anglers who want to catch fish. While the coho run has peaked, those fish should generate some action on the mainstem Columbia and many of its tributaries right through November, Hymer said.

"These are fairly large fish, some weighing up to 20 pounds apiece," he said. "The trick is getting them to bite. The best time is when they are moving upriver, drawn by high water. Otherwise, it can be hard to get their attention."

State regulations allow anglers to catch and keep up to six adult coho salmon per day on the Elochoman, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Kalama, Lewis and Washougal rivers, as well as the lower portion of the Grays River. Several rivers also remain open for chinook salmon, although some close Oct. 31.

Effective that day, the No. 5 fishway on the Klickitat River closes upstream to chinook fishing, the Wind River closes to all salmon fishing, and the stretch of the Columbia River from Beacon Rock to Bonneville Dam closes to all fishing for both salmon and steelhead. For additional information on fishing seasons, see the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>).

Other fishing options in the days before - and possibly after - Thanksgiving include:

- **Sturgeon:** Anglers reeled in nearly 1,500 legal-size sturgeon from the lower Columbia River above the Wauna powerlines during the first three weeks of October. As of Oct. 17, there were 841 fish available for harvest for the remainder of the year. The fishery is open Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays until the quota is met. Before heading out, anglers are advised to check the WDFW website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>) to make sure the fishery is still open for retention of white sturgeon.
- **Cowlitz cutthroats:** October is prime time to catch sea-run cutthroat trout on the Cowlitz River, but the fish usually keep biting through November, Hymer said. The best fishing is from Blue Creek near the trout hatchery on downriver, he said. "Sea-run cutthroat are aggressive, hard-fighting fish," he said. "They'll take flies, bait, lures - practically anything you throw at them." Anglers may retain up to five hatchery-reared cutthroats

per day as part of the daily trout limit on the lower Cowlitz River, where the fish generally range from 12 to 20 inches.

- Swift Reservoir: Anglers fishing the reservoir have continued to reel in some nice rainbows averaging 12-13 inches. The fishery is open through Nov. 30.

In addition, WDFW has approved one razor-clam dig set to begin Nov. 5 at all five coastal beaches and has tentatively scheduled another opening later in the month.

See the South Sound/Olympic Peninsula regional report above for tentative beach openings. Check the WDFW website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/>) or the toll-free Shellfish Hotline (866-880-5431) for final word on the scheduled dig.

Eastern Washington

Snake River steelheading was slow in October, but could pick up in the weeks ahead, said Joe Bumgarner, a WDFW fish biologist. Anglers have been averaging 30 to 50 hours per steelhead - a far cry from last year when steelheaders were catching fish in a fraction of that time.

Even the mouth of the Grand Ronde River, which traditionally provides some of the best fishing, has been slow. Catch rates for the fall chinook fishery, which tends to be incidental to steelhead fishing, have also been slow on the Snake River system.

Warmer temperatures through late October may be part of the problem, Bumgarner said.

"The good news is that there are lots of steelhead here and the weather is changing," he said. "At last count there were more than 190,000 steelhead over Lower Granite Dam, with 800 to 1,200 a day still coming up. With the rain and colder temperatures we're just starting to get now, November could be the month of steelheading here."

Although many of the region's top trout-fishing lakes are closed by November, there are a couple of exceptions and several year-round-open waters worth trying. Southwest Spokane County's Amber Lake remains open through the end of November for catch-and-release, selective gear fishing for rainbow and cutthroat trout . Waitts Lake in Stevens County is open through February and provides rainbow and brown trout, largemouth bass , and yellow perch .

Big net-pen-reared rainbow trout and some kokanee are available in Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir off Grand Coulee Dam, which is open year-round. Large rainbows continue to provide action at Sprague Lake, the big year-round waterway that sprawls across the Lincoln-Adams county line just south of Interstate 90.

Fly fishers have reported that rainbow trout are biting at year-round-open Z-Lake off Telford Road on the WDFW Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area in Lincoln County.

Rock Lake in Whitman County, open year-round, is still producing catches of rainbow and brown trout , along with some largemouth bass .

Trout, bass, crappie, perch , and other species are available at Spokane County's year-round-open Eloika, Newman and Silver lakes.

Northcentral Washington

The steelhead fishery on the upper Columbia River and its tributaries slowed a bit in late October, but anglers will have another river to try in the weeks ahead. Starting Nov. 1, the

Similkameen River will open to fishing for hatchery-reared steelhead from the mouth to 400 feet below Enloe Dam. Selective gear and night closure rules are in effect for the Similkameen River.

Above Wells Dam, anglers have been averaging one steelhead for every ten hours of fishing on the mainstem Columbia River and its tributaries, reports WDFW district fish biologist Bob Jateff of Twisp. "Remember there's mandatory retention of adipose-fin-clipped hatchery steelhead and a four-fish daily limit," he said. "All fish with adipose fins intact must be released and cannot be completely removed from the water prior to release."

Jateff also reported that a few lowland lakes are still open for catch-and-release trout fishing through the month of November - Big and Little Green lakes near Omak, and Rat Lake near Brewster. Selective gear rules are in effect for all three lakes.

Anglers interested in catching yellow perch could try Patterson Lake near Winthrop, said Jateff, noting that the fish average seven to eight inches. "There's no daily limit and no minimum size," he said. "We encouraged anglers to retain all perch caught regardless of size."

Several year-round waters in the region can provide decent fishing opportunity during the month of November. Banks Lake has a little bit of everything - smallmouth and largemouth bass, crappie, yellow perch, walleye, kokanee, even lake whitefish. Moses Lake and Potholes Reservoir have most of the same, plus net-pen-reared rainbow trout.

Southcentral Washington

Fresh from a record catch of fall chinook, anglers fishing the Hanford Reach in late October were having a tough time hooking up with hatchery steelhead. That doesn't bode well for fishing opportunities in November, when steelhead are the main attraction for anglers in that section of the Columbia River, said Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"Steelhead fishing has been unusually slow at a time when it should be ramping up," Hoffarth said. "We've been seeing 20 anglers come in with one fish among them."

While the forecast is below the 10-year average, it does not fully account for low number of hatchery steelhead in angler's creels in the Reach, Hoffarth said. Both creel surveys and counts at the Ringold Fish Hatchery indicate a dearth of one-salt fish returning from the ocean for the first time.

Although counts of two-salt fish are generally on track, one-salt fish generally make up about three-quarters of the catch, Hoffarth said. "I hope I'm wrong, but it looks like we could be in for another tough month of steelhead fishing in this area."

Starting Nov. 1, the daily catch limit is two hatchery steelhead, which can be identified by their clipped adipose fins. All unmarked steelhead must be released unharmed.

The slow start for steelhead in the Hanford Reach stands in stark contrast to the record catch of fall chinook from McNary Dam to Priest Rapids Dam this year. Through Oct. 22, when that fishery closed, anglers caught an estimated 10,000 adult chinook, along with 1,360 jacks and four coho, Hoffarth said. He estimates that approximately 90,000 fall chinook returned to the Reach this year.

Anglers fishing the Yakima River also caught an estimated 230 adult chinook, 25 jacks and 23 coho before that fishery closed Oct. 22.

Fisheries remain open for both salmon and hatchery steelhead in most areas of the Columbia River downstream from McNary Dam. For daily limits and other regulations, see WDFW's Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>).

Hoffarth said walleye fishing should also be productive through the end of November, before the cold sets in. He recommends trolling upstream at night.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

Subscriber Steve B. wrote to TGF co-editor Bob Rees, "What's the deal this weeks report (North Coast) is the same as last week with a new date put on it. I'm disappointed to get this right in the middle of the of the Tillamook salmon season your updated info is very important to me at this time of the year and is for the most part the reason I been a subscriber for the last 5+ years. I know it's elk season but it seems to me that your paying customers should get at least a up to date report.

"I'm very disappointed... : (Steve"

Bob replied, explaining that the Tillamook report Steve was looking for was inadvertently placed in the Columbia River section. It was corrected immediately.

Sorry to Steve and anyone else initially perplexed.

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

Razor clam digging video:

http://videos.oregonlive.com/oregonian/2008/01/clam_digging.html

Razor clam cleaning video:

<http://vimeo.com/1275578>

GOOD LUCK!