

The Guide's Forecast - volume 13 issue number 28

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 15th – July 21st, 2011**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Surprisingly, the summer chinook run passing Bonneville Dam is winding down. After such a late run of other salmonids on the mainstem, it seems the summer run of chinook is about on target. As chinook numbers wane, steelhead numbers are increasing daily but only boats in the lower section of the river are recording decent catches. Anglers are more likely to target steelhead in the gorge as flows continue to drop and salmon numbers fade.

An excellent state-run online resource now exists for anglers wishing to learn more about the summer steelhead opportunities going on right now. Go to www.steelheadsummer.com for more details.

Lower Willamette level, flow and clarity is stable. Fish passage remains good as hundreds of chinook and steelhead are crossing daily. About 40,000 springers and 18,000 summers had been counted as of the first week in July but success rates are finally dropping off in the Multnomah Channel after a great spring catch.

McKenzie water levels are a little above seasonal average but the river is fishing well for fly anglers matching daily hatches.

Water temperatures and levels dropped on the South Santiam over the past week, improving results for summer steelhead. Trout fishing is good on the North Santiam with attractor pattern flies.

The Clackamas should have summer steelhead available at this time of year but results have been slow.

The ODFW assured anglers this week that a "strong" late return of spring chinook is expected to the Sandy and that anglers will start reaping rewards' of this run in July, continuing through the summer months. Adults are most likely to hold in the upper reaches, from Dodge Park to the mouth of the Salmon River. Only fin-clipped fish may be retained.

Northwest – Anglers remain focused on coho salmon out of the north coast with Pacific City and Garibaldi producing the best catches per anglers in recent days. The average remains less than a keeper per angler however with wild coho dominating the catch. A rare chinook is being taken.

Out of the mouth of the Columbia, anglers turning north are having the best success although catches in this quadrant are also averaging less than a keeper per rod. Lots of undersize chinook are showing in the catch. Anchovies are producing the best catches.

Sturgeon anglers working the lower Columbia are producing good catches of keepers fishing between Tongue Point and the Astoria Bridge on Taylor Sands. Sand shrimp remains a top bait but anchovies should begin producing as schools make their way into the estuary this month.

The season's first successful tuna reports are coming in from Garibaldi. After many days of a rough ocean, calm seas allowed anglers to head west between 35 and 50 miles taking consistent numbers of albacore. It's likely runs to nearly 40 miles will be the norm in the coming weeks. Tuna have also been taken out of the mouth of the Columbia as well.

Ocean crabbing is improving, but only slightly.

Razor clam digging will close from Tillamook Head to the mouth of the Columbia River beginning July 15th. The annual closure has been in effect for over 40 years with the scheduled reopening date of September 30th.

Southwest – Ocean coho results have improved as boats returned to Oregon ports earlier this week with some taking limits. Fishing will improve through July and into August.

Albacore catches have been fair to good when ocean conditions have allowed boats to make the trip of 50 or more miles out of port.

Crabbing has improved a little in Winchester Bay but is still slow. Now that the bite has turned on, anglers targeting pinkfin perch are taking limits on the lower Umpqua from Marker 12 to Marker 15. Spring chinook catches are fair on the mainstem Umpqua while North Umpqua steelhead is quite good. With the water level dropping, smallmouth bass fishing is picking up on the South Umpqua.

Ocean fishing out of Charleston has resulted in very good catches of ling cod and good numbers of Dungeness. Salmon fishing, however, has been poor.

As the water temperature in the lower Rogue topped 60 degrees, bay trollers results improved for chinook and this fishery should remain viable into early fall. Fishing is poor on the middle Rogue. Spring chinook results are still good on the upper Rogue with water temperatures remaining in the 50s although algae is becoming problematic for plug pullers. Summer steelheading is fair but will be improving in the next couple of weeks.

Bottom fishing has been excellent out of the port of Brookings. Chinook fishing has slowed with most fish coming at 100 to 150 feet although hookups have occurred recently in as little as 60 feet. Cutthroat trout are responding to drifted bait in tidewater on the Chetco River.

Eastern – With caddis hatches wide open late in the day on the lower Deschutes, it follows that evenings have been most productive. Fish nymphs during the day for steady results. Although the water level remains high on the middle Deschutes, it is fishing well.

Wickiup Reservoir has been producing good catches of kokanee to jiggers and trollers with action likely to last later this year with the late season cool weather.

SW Washington – With low returns of salmon and steelhead to most tributary systems this year, anglers remain focused on the mainstem Columbia for what is expected to be an excellent summer steelhead return. Beaches from the mouth of the Kalama to the mouth of the Cowlitz will likely continue to produce the best results for plunkers working spin-n-glos in the fast current. Tip your lures with coon shrimp for best results.

Improving numbers of steelhead over Bonneville Dam has Drano Lake steelheaders ramping up effort. Numbers will only improve in the coming weeks with night time anglers likely to produce the best results. Persistent cool, high water however may keep fish from moving into these tributaries like they do most years at this time.

Columbia River Fishing Report – After a surprising strong early run of summer Chinook, passage at Bonneville has slowed and catches have too. There isn't any particular hot spot for summer Chinook right now but the gorge remains the best opportunity on a catch per unit of effort basis. Boaters were catching about .8 fish per boat in the gorge. Only 1 bank angler in the gorge (out of 24) got lucky enough to land a salmon on the weekend check.

Downstream, anglers working the beaches haven't been doing as well as they were when flows were higher. Successful anglers are reporting that the bulk of the fish are coming a little farther offshore versus in 6 to 8 foot of water when flows were smokin' in the mainstem. Fish are being found in the 12 to 16 foot range and still falling to plugs. Spinners typically work well this time of year but flows are typically lower and temperatures typically higher.

Estuary anglers working downstream of Westport, Oregon found some success with 3 boats reporting two adipose fin-clipped summer chinook adults, and five adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus one unclipped summer chinook, and two unclipped steelhead released for three boats (14 anglers).

Success for summer Chinook will continue to drop as summer steelhead stream into the mainstem on a more regular basis. The run is clearly ramping up as passage at Bonneville has surpassed 1,000 fish per day for over a week now. The numbers will only continue to rise as a return of over 400,000 fish is due back to the system. The peak will certainly come later this season (maybe this month), with an unprecedented cool water opportunity this late in the season.

Sticking with salmon, anglers offshore have had a rare opportunity lately, taking advantage of calming seas out of the mouth of the Columbia. Catches of coho have been good but anglers have had to travel several miles north to take part in the good fishing. Some are reportedly going about 20 miles north of the mouth of the Columbia but bringing home limits of fair sized coho for this time of year. Some Chinook are in the mix but most anglers fishing near the Columbia River entrance are reporting many short Chinook in the catch. Trolled anchovies are producing some of the best results but herring are working well also.

Those anglers headed south to the CR Buoy have not been doing well. And that's all I have to say about that....

Speaking of offshore, tuna trollers working clones 40 to 50 miles to the SW of the mouth of the Columbia have been doing fair for albacore. Tuna are responding well to clones and should for the remainder of the month. It's not a big number year yet and it's not likely to be but action should keep anglers busy with some reporting better success later in the afternoon.

Back inland, sturgeon anglers had a nice run over the weekend with good catches and numerous boat limits coming over the weekend for anglers working Taylor Sands in the middle of the river right in front of the town of Astoria. Taylor Sands is extensive but successful anglers found better action on the Washington side of the sands but fish should be well distributed throughout the shallow sand flats. As long as the water remains cool, fish should frequent the more shallow water with shrimp producing the best results. Most recently, the action dramatically slowed down but that's not likely to be the case as temperatures and flows remain nearly ideal; a rare case for mid-July.

Sturgeon anglers upstream, especially in the Bonneville area are taking an occasional keeper. Big fish anglers are looking more at oversize fish, which are readily taking fresh caught shad below Marker 82. There is a fair number of anglers incidentally catching oversize fish on salmon gear closer to the deadline at Bonneville.

Crabbers working the lower river are not producing good catches. Despite a long, productive run into early spring, success has dropped off and will likely remain poor for another few months or as long as flows remain high.

Razor clam digging closes on July 15th. Here is the official press release:

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Contact: Brandon Ford (541) 867-4741
Internet: www.dfw.state.or.us Fax: (541) 867-0311
For Immediate Release Tuesday, July 12, 2011

Forty-four years later some diggers still show up

NEWPORT – More than four decades after the first conservation closure, some clam diggers still show up in late July to dig razor clams on the Clatsop beaches.

Since 1967 the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife close the 18 miles of beaches in Clatsop County to razor clam digging on July 15. The closure is to protect newly-set young clams that are establishing themselves on the beach during this time of the year.

“It has been a consistent problem in past years and this year it begins in the middle of a minus tide series,” said Matthew Hunter, ODFW’s Shellfish and Phytoplankton Project Leader. “It’s been in place long enough so there is no reason anyone should claim ignorance.”

Other beaches in the state remain open for razor clams during the closure, but the Clatsop beaches are the most productive razor clam beaches in the state, accounting for more than 90 percent of the total harvest.

Clam diggers can also harvest bay clams, which are plentiful in most Oregon bays and estuaries.

This period is a busy one for ODFW shellfish biologists who conduct razor clam stock assessments to determine the health of the population.

The Guide’s Forecast – Salmon fishing on the mainstem won’t be what it was even just a few weeks ago. As numbers fall, so will effort. It wasn’t a great season due to high water but with unprecedented opportunity and higher than normal catch rates because high water kept fish close to shore, we certainly don’t have anything to complain about. The spinner fishery at Bonneville may begin to turn on as flows are forecasted to continue to drop and temperatures are likely to increase. Bonneville will likely remain the best spot to target summer Chinook.

As steelhead pour into the Columbia, another productive minus tide series should keep steelhead migrating close to shore where anglers have a good chance at them. Beach anglers should continue to produce fair to good results, especially this week. Plunk hot colored spin-n-glos close to shore (water shallower than 6 feet deep) and use scent liberally. Beaches from Sauvies Island to Rainier and Westport should produce good catches. That’s not normally the case but high, cooler water and building numbers should bode well for bank anglers this week.

It may be another few weeks before Bonneville area success rates climb but that should happen later in the month. Spinners work well here but anglers fishing the shad rack should stand a reasonable chance at a steelhead using small plugs, spinners or spin-n-glos.

In river sturgeon anglers should also continue to produce good results in both shallow and deep water. Shallow water may be more feasible this week as strong outgoing tides may make it challenging to fish deeper water until the tidal influence slows. Shrimp will remain a favorite in both deep and shallow water but anchovies should begin making their way into the lower river making them a viable option as well. Taylor Sands and the marker 3 area should continue to produce the best results but motivated anglers willing to burn through a lot of baits may find the water out of Hammond an option for a higher quality keeper. Did I mention you should bring a lot of bait if you fish this area?

Offshore, salmon fishing should remain good if anglers can get out before the afternoon wind hits. Anglers should be willing to run to the north for best results on Chinook and coho salmon. Anchovies are a better bet, especially since you get more baits for your bucks versus a dozen herring. Offshore forecasts are:

.FRI...SW WIND 5 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 5 FT AT 10 SECONDS. SLIGHT CHANCE OF RAIN AND DRIZZLE.

.FRI NIGHT...SW WIND 5 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT AT 10 SECONDS. CHANCE OF SHOWERS IN THE EVENING...THEN SHOWERS LIKELY AFTER MIDNIGHT.

.SAT...W WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT. SHOWERS LIKELY IN THE MORNING...THEN SLIGHT CHANCE OF SHOWERS IN THE AFTERNOON.

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.MON...N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

.TUE...NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

Salmon should become more available in the coming weeks around the CR Buoy as coho schools migrate up from the south coast for the next several weeks.

Ocean crabbing will likely continue to pick up but many of the legal males will be in the softshell state. River crabbing will also likely be fair at best for keeper crab, juveniles will dominate the catch.

It will be a challenging week for bottomfishing with the strong tide series we are now coming upon. You can target bass and an occasional ling near tide change off of the sunken jetty.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Counts at Willamette Falls haven't been updated for a week but unless something drastic has occurred, it's safe to say hundreds of springers and summer steelhead are heading upstream daily. Upstream plunkers and anchor fishers have continued to hook Chinook but algae will soon curtail this activity, pushing angler effort into the tributaries exclusively. Shad fishing in the lower river has not materialized to the hot 'n' heavy action of seasons past.

A slow, steady drop in the water level combined with water temperatures holding in the low 50s has the McKenzie in great shape for fishing in the coming weekend.

Steelhead are being trucked downstream from the Hatchery facility at Foster on the South Santiam.

Alton Baker Canal, Breitenbush River, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above and below Leaburg Lake, Quartzville Creek, Salmon Creek, Salt Creek, Santiam River NF above Detroit Lake and Trail Bridge Reservoir are on the sticking schedule this week.

The Guide's Forecast – A few boats may be seen here or there on the lower Willamette, diehards trying for that last spring Chinook of the season, but catches are very few and far between in the near-70-degree waters of the lower Willamette. Salmonids are unwilling to bite or strike in high water temperatures. Shad hopefuls should concentrate efforts at Oregon City or Coon Island in Multnomah Channel. Be prepared to put in some hours in pursuit and lower expectations to avoid disappointment. Trout fishing has been good on the Middle Fork Willamette with fly anglers reaping the rewards here.

In addition to the gorgeous native rainbows and cutthroat available in the McKenzie River, thousands of hatchery trout have been dumped in the river above and below Leaburg Lake. Summer steelhead are also in the system with best results coming at first light. North Santiam fishers are hooking up throughout the system as high as Packsaddle while Chinook and steelhead are being taken up to Wiley Creek. Cured eggs have been effective recently although many anglers are sticking to the ubiquitous bobber and jig to good effect.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Clackamas water levels have been gradually dropping and the trend is forecast to continue. A decent return of springers to the hatchery is ongoing and sufficient summer steelhead have returned to begin the process of recycling downstream to allow steelheaders another shot at them. Here's the summertime reminder to fish early in order to avoid the thick hatch of plastic inflatables accompanied by happy-splashers which inevitably occurs on the Clack when air temps are above 70 degrees.

Snowmelt is maintaining a good level and flow on the Sandy River with little sign of glacial runoff so far this season. The water level has been on a very slight decline which is likely to continue in the absence of significant precipitation. The ODFW estimated a return of 6,000 spring Chinook this season with "many yet to arrive." Let's hope so.

The Guide's Forecast – Spring Chinook are in the Clackamas system and fish are being taken daily although boat fishers have a distinct advantage of those who are bank-bound. While results from Estacada Lake have been worthwhile for Chinook and steelhead as they pass through, be aware that the keeper of the gate, tiring of anglers arriving at the wee hours of the morning and over-staying into the night-time, is restricting access to the actual posted hours of 7AM to 10 PM. Eagle Creek has springers in the system but effort has been very light.

Springers are where you'd expect to find them on the Sandy: Dodge Park, around the mouth of Cedar Creek and below the old dam site but they have been off the bite, resulting in slow fishing. The best bet seems to be the upper Sandy where steelhead are hitting spinners.

North Coast Fishing Report – With the main focus of salmon anglers in the great salt chuck, effort and success will continue to be largely dictated by ocean weather. Offshore conditions

have been favorable recently and although this isn't a bad thing, wild coho continue to dominate the catches. While frustrating for anglers wanting to take a limit of hatchery fish, the action is quite good for those looking to enhance their sportsman ethic. Please be sure to handle these fish with care. I've discovered the tool put together by the Association of NW Steelheaders to be an invaluable tool. That tool is simply a wood dowel with a coffee mug hook on the end that one can use to quickly turn a barbless hook out of a fish without netting it. It helps of course if you don't have a high sided boat.

While coho fishing, particularly wild coho fishing is quite good off of the coast, anglers traditionally have a hard time finding Chinook while fishing offshore out of Garibaldi and Astoria this time of year. That won't change either.

Like the north, most crab in the area are in a softshell state. They should be plentiful however. Crabbing in the estuaries is picking up but strong tides this week won't make for a productive haul.

Remember, razor clam digging north of Tillamook Head is now closed. It will re-open in late September.

In river fishing on most north coast streams is pretty challenging right now with the low, clear conditions. Trout and steelhead fishing offer some of the best opportunities but sneak tactics and early mornings will be the best option for serious anglers. Small baits and subtle colors will also be necessary.

Be sure to check local regulations as far as bait restrictions on certain waterways. Bait is often allowed on systems that have hatchery runs of salmon or steelhead this time of year but for systems like the Nehalem, bait isn't allowed in all sections. There's some good fishing to be had, you just have to check your local regulations.

There are still some spring Chinook around but they'll be quite reluctant to bite. They'll be holding in the deep pools for the next several months.

The Nehalem system may start to get better for summer Chinook but action hasn't been wide open by any means in the last 6 to 8 years. The run is rebuilding but anglers still shouldn't expect great things for the effort they'll have to put in to get a chance at one. Trolled herring in Wheeler is the traditional fish getter'.

Although albacore are still pretty far offshore, action is picking up nicely for a fish quickly becoming an Oregon favorite. Tuna coordinates are pretty easy to find on most fishing web sites but anglers out of Garibaldi were running 35 to 50 miles NW of the tips of the jetty. Sixty-two or sixty-three degree blue water is what most trollers are seeking.

The Guide's Forecast – Most anglers will remain focused on offshore opportunities with salmon garnering the most attention and tuna a close second. The offshore forecast looks favorable but morning bar crossings will be dangerous depending on ocean swell. Pay close attention to coast guard bar and ocean reports.

Salmon anglers may find anchovies hard to find but frozen herring in the green label size should provide good results. Be prepared to weed through lots of wild coho and some undersize Chinook before you have a chance at a limit of hatchery fish. For convenience sake, we've re-posted the offshore forecast here: (It's also published in the Columbia River Forecast section).

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Do drop your crab pots but also be prepared for softshell crab. It's up to you if you take the near meatless trophies but it's typically not encouraged. In estuary crabbing won't produce too many keepers this weekend but they may be in a better state than their saltwater brethren.

Tuna anglers should see some good results this week. It all depends on how far you're willing to travel for them and how long you want to spend "carckin" 'em.

Freshwater anglers have the choice between trout, steelhead and salmon. The Wilson and Nestucca for steelhead, Trask for salmon and any north coast stream, particularly in the lower stretches, tidewater preferred, for trout. There are good numbers of trout present.

Small baits and cloudy conditions will produce the best results for all species. Small spinners may take any one of these three also.

Central & South Coast Reports – Proof is the numbers as someone must have said, and so it is that nearshore halibut fishing provided remarkable catches which resulted in an unusual closure with the quota filling on July 6th. Whether due to additional effort or higher incidental hookups, there will be no halibut fishing until the summer all-depth season opens on August 5th.

Morning minus tides this week will favor clamming but hamper offshore launches.

While albacore have been taken recently as close as 20 miles to port, those with the urge to try should count on a round trip more in the realistic realm of 80 to 100 miles. Warm water will move closer to shore as the weeks pass but just how close remains to be seen.

Surf fishing for pinkfin has been good on south coast beaches with results particularly good near Coos Bay and Gold Beach.

Charter boats out of Depoe Bay have been encountering remarkable catches of coho for this early in the season. While the majority of the fish caught have been unclipped, numbers have been good enough for some boats to limit the boat.

Boats launching out of Winchester Bay have successfully returned with tuna this week. Offshore salmon forays, while falling short of catches made by boats launching further north, are reporting an improvement in results over the past week. Bay crabbing has been slow although perch fishing has remained good. A few springers are being caught on the Umpqua mainstem and lower North Umpqua. Summer steelheading has been fair on the North while smallmouth bass anglers are waiting for the South Umpqua water temperatures to rise to seasonal norms at which time catches will dramatically improve.

Crabbing is fair in Coos Bay although few are trying for them. Minus tides this coming weekend will offer opportunities to take advantage of excellent clamming in the bay.

Historically, Chinook start moving into the Coquille River in July. While no catches have yet been reported, it shouldn't be too long unless this run is late as many have been this year.

Boats were unable to launch out of Gold Beach on most days over the past week due to high offshore wind. Conditions improved late in the week when charter and recreational boats got out to catch limits of rockfish and many good-sized ling cod. While the springer fishery is normally considered a wrap on the lower Rogue in mid-July, this year has been one of late runs and this is no exception. Spring Chinook continue to be taken and while the chance of success is slimmer than it was in June, fish are being caught daily. Call them summer or fall Chinook, by any name, fish are entering the estuary where trollers have begun to reap the rewards. The bay fishery heats up along with water temperatures in the lower Rogue. Results for spring Chinook and summer steelhead on the middle river have been pretty dismal, causing many anglers to seek brighter prospects on the upper Rogue. Since they're no longer counted at Gold Ray Dam (since there is no Gold Ray Dam now), determining the number of summer steelhead in the upper Rogue comes down to the inexact science of estimation. Just as accurate as a scientific guess, however, is the experience of anglers who are catching the feisty, willing summer fish. Catches have been good for late-day fishers.

Boats out of the Port of Brookings have been slaying limits of rockfish and making fair to good catches of lingcod when offshore conditions have allowed safe launches (or at least quick, early morning jaunts before the wind came up). Fishing is good on the Chetco River for sea-run cutthroat trout.

The Rogue above Lost Creek is scheduled for trout planting.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Lower Deschutes trout fishing has been good early and late in the day with caddis dries and nymphs effective.

Both trout and bass fishing have been worthwhile at Crane Prairie.

According to an ODFW bulletin date July 11, 2011, anglers may keep four adult hatchery Chinook on the Willowa and Imnaha rivers effective immediately and until further notice. In addition to this generous limit, anglers may also keep up to five fin-clipped Chinook jacks. Be sure to record all catches on your harvest card.

The water level at Wickiup is good for the second week in July and trollers are finding decent numbers of willing kokanee. A derby will take place here July 23rd.

Green Peter trollers are making good catches of kokanee around the 60-foot level during the day, shallower in the evenings.

Lookingglass Creek on the other hand will lose some opportunity. Here is the official press release:

Spring chinook fishing to close on Lookingglass Creek

LA GRANDE, Ore. — The Oregon Department of fish and Wildlife announced today that the fishing season for spring chinook salmon on Lookingglass Creek on will close, effective 12:01 a.m. July 16, 2011.

Lookingglass Creek, a tributary to the Grande Ronde River, opened to fishing for hatchery spring chinook on May 28 for the first time in a decade. Fish managers estimate the harvest quota will be met this week, signaling the end of the fishery.

Tim Bailey, ODFW district fish biologist, estimates 150 adult and 270 jack spring chinook will have been harvested by the closure.

"Overall anglers have had a very successful season on Lookingglass Creek," Bailey said. As a bonus, the chinook run included a very large return of jacks, which could be harvested without counting toward the harvest quota.

For more information about the fishery, contact the ODFW Northeast Region Office in La Grande at (541) 963-2138.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for July 2011

Discover Pass: Now that summer has finally arrived, hundreds of thousands of Washingtonians will be packing up tents, lanterns, binoculars and fishing poles to spend time with family and friends outdoors. Starting July 1, many will also need to purchase a Discover Pass for vehicle access to state parks, campgrounds, boat launches and wildlife areas.

The new pass, approved this year by the state Legislature, is designed to help keep 7 million acres of state recreational lands open after steep budget cuts. An annual Discover Pass costs \$35, and a one-day pass \$11.50, when purchased from [WDFW online](#) by phone or from retail [license vendors](#).

State Parks will also sell the passes July 1-3 at its Olympia headquarters and regional offices in Burlington and East Wenatchee, in preparation for the Fourth of July weekend. The passes also will be sold at state park sites where staff is available.

"The Discover Pass allows state natural-resource agencies to maintain public access to millions of acres of state recreation lands," said Phil Anderson, WDFW director. "Sport fishers and hunters have traditionally supported WDFW wildlife areas and water access sites through their license fees; now all who enjoy these lands will share in their support."

The pass is required for vehicle access to recreation lands and water-access sites managed by WDFW, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission and the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The fine for not displaying the pass is \$99.

However, some exemptions to the requirement apply. For example, holders of most annual fishing and hunting licenses are not required to purchase a Discover Pass to use WDFW lands and water-access sites. For a list of these exemptions and other information, see the [Discover Pass website](#) or call 1-866-320-9933.

North Puget Sound

Summer has arrived, and anglers have their pick of numerous fishing opportunities. Freshwater anglers can cast for chinook at some of the region's rivers, as well as trout and bass at local lakes. On Puget Sound, the crab season opens July 1 in most areas, and additional salmon openings are just around the corner.

"The **salmon** fishing season really gets going in July, when more marine areas open in Puget Sound," said Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "And with the high cost of fuel these days, anglers in the region might want to take advantage of these opportunities to hook a salmon close to home."

Puget Sound salmon fishing opportunities in July include:

- **Marine Area 7** (San Juan Islands), which opens July 1. Anglers can keep one chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon.
- **Marine Area 10** (Seattle-Bremerton), where anglers will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, beginning July 1. However, anglers must release all chinook through July 15. Beginning July 16, anglers can retain hatchery chinook – marked with a clipped adipose fin – but wild chinook must be released.
- **Tulalip Bay "bubble" fishery** remains open each week from Friday through noon Monday through Sept. 5. Anglers fishing the bubble have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon.
- **Marine Area 9** (Admiralty Inlet) opens for hatchery chinook retention July 16. Anglers will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release wild chinook and chum.

Thiesfeld said anglers should be aware that the inner Elliott Bay salmon fishery is closed in July this year to protect Green River naturally spawning chinook, which are expected to return in low numbers. Check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) for details on salmon fishing opportunities.

Tara Livingood, Puget Sound recreational salmon fishery manager for WDFW, reminds anglers that they are responsible for correctly identifying their catch. In past years, some anglers were checked at the docks with undersized chinook they misidentified as pink salmon, she said.

"It's important that people take the time to learn the differences between each salmon species – both to protect the resource and to avoid a fine," Livingood said. Descriptions of each salmon species can be found on the department's [recreational salmon fishing webpage](#) and in the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#). Anglers also can ask WDFW's dockside fish samplers for a salmon identification card before heading out on the water.

Break out those crab pots. The **Puget Sound crab fishery** gets under way July 1 in most areas. The exception is Marine Area 7, where the southern portion (San Juan Islands/Bellingham) opens July 15 and the northern portion (Gulf of Georgia) opens Aug. 15.

Under new rules adopted earlier this year by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission, all marine areas of Puget Sound will be open for crabbing Thursday through Monday of each week.

Mike Cenci, WDFW's deputy chief of enforcement, said all crabbers should review the rules of the fishery before heading out on the water. "We've found that in the past a significant number of violations occur because people don't take the time to fully understand the rules of the fishery," Cenci said. "Those rules, such as properly measuring and identifying crabs, are important tools designed to protect the health of the crab population."

Information on the rules, including how to properly record and report catch information is available on [WDFW's crab fishing webpage](#). The page includes links to a printable "Crabbing in Puget Sound" brochure and a "Puget Sound Recreational Crab Guide," both of which have information on crabbing regulations.

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.

In freshwater, portions of the Skagit and Cascade rivers are open for hatchery **chinook salmon** fishing through July 15. The Skagit is open to hatchery chinook retention from the Highway 530 Bridge at Rockport to Cascade River Road. On the Cascade, anglers can fish for salmon from the mouth of the river to the Rockport-Cascade Road Bridge. The daily limit on the Skagit and Cascade rivers is four hatchery chinook, two of which may be adults (chinook salmon at least 24 inches in length).

Portions of the Skykomish River are also open for salmon fishing. Anglers fishing the Skykomish, from the mouth to the Wallace River, have a daily limit of two hatchery chinook only.

The Reiter Ponds section of the Skykomish River opens June 29 for game fish, including **hatchery steelhead**. For more on that fishery, check the [fishing rule change](#).

Trout fishing also is open at several of the region's rivers and streams. Under the statewide rule for trout, there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches in rivers and streams. However, some of the region's rivers and streams have a rule requiring trout to be at least 14 inches in length to keep. For details on river fishing opportunities, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

Meanwhile, lake fishing for **bass, bluegill, perch, and crappie** is steadily improving as water temperatures increase and fish become more active. "Early summer can be a tricky time for anglers, given the abundance of natural food and unstable weather patterns," said Danny Garrett, WDFW fisheries biologist. "As we move into summer and temperatures rise, fish tend to feed in shallow water - about 2 to 5 feet - early in the morning and late in the evening." When fishing for lunker bass, Garrett recommends topwater baits, such as buzzbaits, frogs, and poppers, and soft plastic twitch baits, including stick baits and flukes.

During the heat of the day, bass often move to deeper water near structures or other cover, Garrett said. In clear, deep lakes, such as Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish, anglers should focus on the outside edge of boat docks and along the weed line in 15 to 20 feet of water, he said, noting that a drop-shot technique with plastic bait is a good approach.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

The summer salmon fishing season is under way along the coast, where anglers are hooking some bright chinook and coho.

Fishing was good during the selective fishery (June 18-25) for hatchery chinook and that has carried over to the traditional season, said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"Anglers are doing well for **chinook**, as well as **hatchery coho**, which we are seeing more of this year," Milward said. "It's still early in the season, but signs are pointing to a good July for salmon anglers out on the coast."

Anglers fishing marine areas 1 (Ilwaco), 2 (Westport-Ocean Shores), 3 (LaPush) and 4 (Neah Bay) can keep up to one 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. Those fishing marine areas 3 and 4 also are allowed one additional **pink salmon** each day.

Salmon fishing is open seven days a week, except in Marine Area 2 where anglers can fish for salmon Sundays through Thursdays. Salmon fishing is scheduled to continue through Sept. 18 in marine areas 2, 3 and 4, and through Sept. 30 in Marine Area 1, although those areas could close early if catch quotas are reached. Milward reminds anglers to check for any rule changes at WDFW's website.

In Puget Sound, salmon fishing seasons open July 1 in marine areas 5 (Sekiu), 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) and 12 (Hood Canal), while salmon fisheries in marine areas 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 13 (South Puget Sound) are already under way. Because salmon fishing rules vary depending on the marine area, anglers should check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) for all regulations before heading out on the water.

Tara Livingood, Puget Sound recreational salmon fishery manager for WDFW, reminds anglers that they are responsible for correctly identifying their catch. In past years, some anglers were checked at the docks with undersized chinook they misidentified as pink salmon, she said.

"It's important that people take the time to learn the differences between each salmon species – both to protect the resource and to avoid a fine," Livingood said. Descriptions of each salmon species can be found on the department's [recreational salmon fishing webpage](#) and in the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#). Anglers also can ask WDFW's dockside fish samplers for a salmon identification card before heading out on the water.

Prefer shellfish? The **Puget Sound crab** fishery gets under way July 1 in most areas. The exception is Marine Area 7, where the southern portion (San Juan Islands and Bellingham) opens July 15 and the northern portion (Gulf of Georgia) opens Aug. 15.

Under new rules adopted earlier this year by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission, all marine areas of Puget Sound will be open for crabbing Thursday through Monday of each week.

Mike Cenci, WDFW's deputy chief of enforcement, said all crabbers should review the rules of the fishery before heading out on the water. "We've found that in the past a significant number of violations occur because people don't take the time to fully understand the rules of the fishery," Cenci said. "Those rules, such as properly measuring and identifying crabs, are important tools designed to protect the health of the crab population."

Information on the rules, including how to properly record and report catch information is available on [WDFW's crab fishing webpage](#). The page includes links to a printable "Crabbing in

Puget Sound” brochure and a “Puget Sound Recreational Crab Guide,” both of which have information on crabbing regulations.

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.

Anglers still hoping to land a big flatfish will have one more day in marine areas 3 and 4, where **halibut** fishing will be open June 30 only. In Marine Area 1, the late season for halibut opens Aug. 5. The fishery there will be open three days per week (Friday through Sunday) until the quota is taken or Sept. 30, whichever occurs first. Halibut fishing in Marine Area 2 (Westport/Ocean Shores) is only open in the northern nearshore area.

Meanwhile, a few of rivers are open for **salmon** fishing, including the Hoh, Quillayute and a portion of the Sol Duc. Beginning July 1, a few other rivers open for salmon fishing, including the Bogachiel, Calawah and Nisqually.

Trout fishing also is open at several of the region's rivers and streams. Under the statewide rule for trout, there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches in rivers and streams. However, some of the region's rivers and streams have a rule requiring trout to be at least 14 inches in length to keep. For details on river fishing opportunities, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

Southwest Washington

Summer chinook salmon will continue moving up the lower Columbia River in July in large numbers, joined by an even larger return of summer steelhead later in the month. Sockeye salmon, sturgeon and shad are also “in season” on the big river, and salmon fishing is open on the coast.

Although the Columbia River is still running high and cold, anglers have plenty of options for catching fish in July, said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

“Anglers may need to change their tactics to match the conditions, but fishing should be good throughout the month,” Hymer said. “Sometimes the biggest challenge is figuring out which option to pursue on a given day.”

Summer **chinook salmon** are a good bet, especially during the first two-to-three weeks of July, Hymer said. According to the season forecast, 92,000 summer chinook – some weighing up to 40 pounds – are expected to enter the Columbia River this year, which would be the largest number since 1980.

Like last year, the six-week fishery for hatchery-reared summer chinook was made possible by the additional revenue produced by the new Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement fee.

“With water temperatures below normal, anglers will likely have the greatest success fishing closer to shore,” Hymer said. “Spinners work well under those conditions, although wobblers might be in order if the water temperature rises and the fish go deeper.”

The fishery runs through July 31 from the Megler Astoria Bridge up to Priest Rapids Dam. Anglers may retain up two adult chinook salmon with clipped adipose fins per day. All wild, unclipped chinook salmon must be released.

During the summer chinook fishery, anglers can retain hatchery steelhead and sockeye salmon to reach their daily limit of two adult fish. Under a total daily limit of six fish, the limit for adult fish may include two salmon, two **hatchery steelhead**, or one of each.

Based on preseason forecasts, 400,000 summer steelhead and 162,000 sockeye salmon will move into the Columbia River and its tributaries this year. Steelhead usually start coming on strong in late July, just as the summer chinook run starts to taper off, Hymer said. Anglers fishing for hatchery steelhead near the shore of the Columbia River are most likely to hook a **sockeye**.

"Sockeye are pretty single-minded about moving upriver, so anglers should really consider them a 'bonus fish' if they catch one," Hymer said. "But bank anglers should do pretty well with the combination of hatchery steelhead and sockeye salmon this month."

A lot of those steelhead will be heading up area tributaries, including the Lewis, Kalama and Washougal rivers – and particularly the Cowlitz River. Once the weather warms up, many will also dip into the White Salmon River and Drano Lake, where fishing usually heats up in late July.

Out in the ocean, salmon fishing is open through Sept. 30 off the coast of Ilwaco (Marine Area 1) and through Sept. 18 in ocean areas farther north. For more information, see the regional Weekender report for [Region 6](#).

Rather catch a **sturgeon**? Fishery managers from Washington and Oregon have extended retention fishing through July 31 below the Wauna powerlines near Cathlamet and added fishing days June 30-July 2 and July 7-9 from Bonneville Dam upriver to The Dalles Dam. In the estuary fishery, the daily limit is one white sturgeon with a fork-length measurement of 41 inches to 54 inches. Anglers fishing the Bonneville Pool will have a daily catch limit of one white sturgeon, with a fork-length measurement of 38 inches to 54 inches.

As before, the area from the Wauna powerlines upriver to Marker 82 nine miles below Bonneville Dam will be open to retention fishing Thursday, Fridays and Saturdays through July 31. The Dalles Pool is also open to retention fishing until the annual catch reaches the 300-fish guideline. In those and other areas of the Columbia River, all green sturgeon must be released.

And don't forget **shad**. While not as highly prized as salmon or sturgeon, they can put up a good fight and make for good eating, Hymer said. While their numbers appear to be down this year, more than a million of them will likely mount a charge up the Columbia this month. There are no daily limits or size limits for shad, the largest member of the herring family.

Fishing for **walleye** usually slows down at this time of year, but **bass** fishing tends to pick up in the summer heat. The McNary Pool is generally the best bet for bass.

The good news for **trout** anglers is that this year's heavy snowpack is holding down water temperatures in most lakes and reservoirs, which should keep the fish biting well into summer, said John Weinheimer, another WDFW fish biologist.

"Cool water should prolong active fisheries in Swift Reservoir, Riffe Lake and a lot of other lakes and reservoirs throughout the region," Weinheimer said. Two of those reservoirs, Lake Scanewa and Mayfield Reservoir in Lewis County, will each be planted with about 6,000 catchable-size trout in July, he said.

The bad news is that the snowpack has also delayed stocking a number of high lakes. WDFW usually stocks Goose Lake, a popular fishing lake in Skamania County, by early June, but the road there was still inaccessible to a tanker truck at the end of the month, Weinheimer said.

"We're hoping the road will clear enough that we can get in there by the Fourth of July," he said. "It's a super-popular fishery and we know that a lot of people are waiting for word that it's been stocked. The same is true of several other high lakes in the region."

Meanwhile, Weinheimer suggests that angler cast a line at Northwestern Reservoir on the White Salmon River. "With the recent announcement that work to demolish Condit Dam will begin in October, this will be the last year to fish Northwestern, because it simply won't exist after the dam is removed."

Rainbow trout planted in Northwestern Reservoir range from 10-inch catchables to 5-8-pound broodstock.

Eastern Washington

As water temperatures warm, fishing success shifts from coldwater trout to warmwater or "spiny ray" species like bass and bluegill.

"These fish are just more active in warmer water and are easier to catch now," said Marc Divens, explains WDFW warmwater fish biologist. "There are some waters in the region that are specifically managed for warmwater species and others that are mixed waters, where trout fishing slows at this time and warmwater fishing picks up."

With a "slot limit" on largemouth bass, Divens encourages anglers to keep and use the smaller fish caught. As explained under the statewide freshwater rules on page 27 of the fishing rules pamphlet, only largemouth bass less than 12 inches may be retained, except that one over 17 inches may be kept. Up to five largemouth bass may be kept each day.

Smallmouth bass also have a size restriction – only one over 14 inches may be retained, with a daily limit of 10 fish. As with largemouth, anglers are encouraged to keep smaller bass. Overpopulation of these species can reduce the quality of fisheries.

Eloika Lake, seven miles north of Chattaroy off Highway 2 in north Spokane County, has **largemouth bass, yellow perch** and **black crappie**. Eloika is open to fishing year-round and has a WDFW access site, along with a resort.

Downs Lake, seven miles east of Sprague in southwest Spokane County, also has largemouth bass, yellow perch and black crappie. This quality crappie water is managed under a nine-inch minimum size and 10-fish limit on crappie. Downs is open March through September and has a resort with a small boat launch.

Silver Lake, one mile east of the town of Medical Lake in Spokane County, has largemouth bass, black crappie, **bluegill** and **pumpkinseed sunfish**. There's a nine-inch minimum size and 10-fish limit on crappie there. Silver is open year-round and has both WDFW access and a resort.

Newman Lake, 12 miles northeast of Spokane in eastern Spokane County, has largemouth and **smallmouth bass**, bluegill, black crappie, yellow perch, and **bullhead catfish**. Newman is open year-round and has two resorts, plus WDFW access.

Liberty Lake, about a mile from the Idaho border in eastern Spokane County, is a mixed species fishery where **rainbow** and **brown trout** rule at the outset of the season, from March through May, but the spiny rays come on through the summer. Liberty has virtually all of the warmwater species, including **walleye**, but both species of bass and yellow perch dominate. There's a WDFW boat launch available.

Sprague Lake, on the Lincoln-Adams county line, is a mixed-species water where Divens says fall surveys showed an abundant population of small largemouth bass. "There are a few up to five pounds, but most are 10 to 12 inches," he said. "There's also a developing panfish population – bluegill and crappie – but in general they're still small and growing in size." Sprague is open year round and has two resorts and a WDFW access.

Coffeepot Lake, 12 miles northeast of Odessa in Lincoln County, can be excellent for yellow perch, black crappie and largemouth bass, but it's under selective gear rules. That means only unscented artificial flies or lures with one single-point, barbless hook are allowed.

The Twin lakes, in the Lake Creek drainage upstream of Coffeepot, have largemouth bass, perch, crappie, and other panfish. Upper Twin can be particularly good for bass. Both are open year-round and have Bureau of Land Management (BLM) access.

Deer and Loon lakes in Stevens County shift at this time of year from trout fishing to largemouth and smallmouth bass and other warmwater fish, especially at Deer Lake, 14 miles southeast of Chewelah. (Loon is a few miles further south, on the west side of Hwy. 395.) Both are open through October and have WDFW access and resorts.

Lake Roosevelt is famous for its walleye, but there's a good population of smallmouth bass in the big Columbia River reservoir, too.

The Snake River in the south end of the region is also a good bet for summertime smallmouth bass plus nice **channel catfish**.

Good **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** fishing can still be had these days, says WDFW Regional Fish Program Manager John Whalen, it just takes a shift in either place or time of day to fish. Lowland trout lakes are better in very early morning or late evening hours. Trout lakes at higher elevation, mostly in the northeast district of the region, remain productive longer in the summer.

Those afield on the Fourth of July and throughout the month are asked to exercise caution against sparking a wildfire. Despite the delayed arrival of summer weather, wildfire danger is growing with warmer, drier weather, especially in eastern Washington.

DNR has banned burning from July through September in forested areas of the state. That means that campfires are allowed only in approved fire pits within designated state, county, municipal or other campgrounds. The use of gas and propane self-contained stoves and barbeques is allowed. For more information, see DNR's website at <http://1.usa.gov/jpjiZO>.

WDFW's own public conduct rules for wildlife areas and water access sites prohibit discharging of fireworks at any time.

Meanwhile, anglers (and hunters) have an opportunity on July 5 to get a little more out of their fishing (or hunting) license – discounts on Spokane Indians Baseball game seats during the 6th annual Fish and Wildlife Night at Avista Stadium in Spokane. The stadium concourse that night will feature fish and wildlife displays and activities between innings will include some casting and other demonstrations or competitions. For more information, visit the [Spokane Indians website](#).

Northcentral Washington

Anglers have been catching an assortment of trout and chinook salmon around the region, while warmwater fishing is finally heating up after a slow start to traditional summer weather.

"The Basin's big three for good **walleye** and **largemouth** and **smallmouth bass** at this time are Moses Lake, Banks Lake, and Potholes Reservoir," said Chad Jackson, a district fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). All three year-round-open waters

also have populations of **bluegill, crappie** and **yellow perch** that can produce good catches through the summer. With the late run-off this year, these big waterways are still at or near high pool, which has slowed normal shoreline action at some reservoirs, such as Potholes.

Evergreen Reservoir on the Quincy Wildlife Area in Grant County is another good July fishery in the Basin, with walleye, largemouth bass, bluegill and other species.

Lower Goose Lake, one of the Seep lakes south of Potholes Reservoir, has a good crappie and bluegill fishery. For crappie, Lower Goose has a minimum size of nine inches and a daily catch limit of 10 fish. It also has a restriction that only five bluegill over six inches can be kept, although there is no daily limit on smaller fish.

Hutchinson and Shiner lakes, on the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge seven miles north of Othello in Adams County, should be heating up this month for largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie and perch.

Meanwhile, fishing for **spring chinook salmon** on the Icicle River should continue to be good as more fish move through the system, said WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist Bob Jateff. The season continues on the Icicle through July 31, from the closure signs located 800 feet upstream of the mouth to 500 feet downstream of the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery barrier dam. The daily limit is three salmon, with a minimum size of 12 inches. A night closure is in effect.

Summer chinook salmon fishing starts July 1 on the mainstem Columbia River and some tributaries above Priest Rapids Dam. The daily limit is six chinook salmon, minimum size 12 inches. Up to three adults may be retained, of which only one may be an unmarked wild fish. Anglers need to consult the current sportfishing regulations for specifics on the area they would like to fish. All salmon fitted with a colored floy (anchor) tag must be released as these fish are part of ongoing studies being conducted by the Yakama Nation and WDFW.

Jateff reports Pearrygin, Wannacut, Wapato, Spectacle, and Conconully lakes and Conconully Reservoir are all producing good catches of **rainbow trout** in the 10-12 inch range, with carryover fish up to 15 inches.

"Water temperatures are starting to rise a bit, but anglers can still catch some nice fish at a number of selective gear lakes," Jateff said. "Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, Big Twin near Winthrop, and Blue Lake near Oroville can be productive during July if you use different fishing methods than earlier in the season. Fast-sinking lines are the norm, which allow the fly or lure to get to the proper depth. Anglers should play the fish as quickly as possible and not remove them from the water to help in recovery during these hotter months."

The Sinlahekin's Blue Lake, along with Okanogan County's Bonaparte and Lost lakes, are under a new rule this year to help protect the common loon, a sensitive species in Washington that is likely to become threatened or endangered without improved survival rates. The rule prohibits the use of lead weights and jigs that measure 1½ inches or less along the longest axis. Ingestion of this small lead fishing tackle is a leading cause of fatal lead poisoning of loons, which have been known to nest on Blue Lake in the past and are currently nesting at Bonaparte and Lost lakes.

"The Methow River is currently running high, so serious trout fishing is probably delayed until the first week or two of July," Jateff said. The Methow and selected tributaries are restricted to catch-and-release fishing under selective gear rules. A number of tributaries are closed to all fishing, so anglers need to consult current regulations before they head out. Any bull trout caught must be released unharmed and can't be taken out of the water.

Those afield on the Fourth of July and throughout the month are asked to exercise caution against sparking a wildfire. Despite the delayed arrival of summer weather, wildfire danger is growing with warmer, drier weather, especially in eastern Washington.

The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has banned open burning from July through September in forested areas of the state. That means that campfires are allowed only in approved fire pits within designated state, county, municipal or other campgrounds. The use of gas and propane self-contained stoves and barbecues is allowed. For more information, see [DNR's website](#).

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The risk of wildfire isn't restricted to forested areas of the region, said Greg Fitzgerald, WDFW Columbia Wildlife Area manager. He said the wet spring has led to abundant weed growth, including dense patches of 12 to 16-inch cheat grass that is drying fast with hotter, windy weather.

Southcentral Washington

Area anglers have several good fishing opportunities in July, ranging from an extended spring chinook season on a portion of the Yakima River to newly stocked jumbo trout in three popular high-mountain lakes. On the Columbia River, the catch is running to walleye, shad and the occasional summer chinook salmon.

Citing the late arrival of this year's run, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) extended **spring chinook** fishing through July 31 on the 20-mile stretch of the Yakima River between the Interstate 82 Bridge in Union Gap to the Burlington Northern Railroad bridge 500 feet downstream from Roza Dam. The daily limit remains two hatchery chinook, with clipped adipose fins.

"Fishing has been very good for springers, especially in that stretch of the Yakima River," said Eric Anderson, a WDFW fish biologist in Yakima. "We expect to have hatchery fish available for harvest well into July."

Anderson noted that fishing is closed for steelhead, and that terminal gear in the spring chinook fishery is restricted to one single-point, barbless hook with a hook gap (from point to shank) of three-quarters of an inch or less. Bait and knotted nets are allowed in the section of the river open to salmon fishing.

A Columbia River Salmon/Steelhead endorsement is required to participate in the fishery. For additional regulations, see the [Rule Change](#) notice on the WDFW website.

On the Columbia River, most anglers fishing below the Tri-Cities have been focusing on **walleye**. Creel checks conducted during the last days of June included 51 anglers aboard 22 boats with 50 walleye. Catches of **shad** are also picking up. Shad counts at McNary Dam topped 5,000 fish per day in late June, and are expected to keep rising through mid-July.

Anglers have also been picking up a few **summer chinook** below McNary Dam, but the action has been slow upstream of the dam, said Paul Hoffarth, a WDFW district fish biologist in Pasco. Summer chinook and **sockeye** can be harvested in the Columbia River below the Highway 395 Bridge (blue bridge), but only chinook with a clipped adipose may be retained. The Hanford Reach area of the Columbia River is also open to fishing for hatchery chinook salmon with clipped adipose fins.

Anglers also should be aware that **sturgeon** sanctuaries are in effect in many areas of the Columbia and Snake rivers. These sanctuary areas below Ice Harbor, McNary and Priest Rapids Dams are closed to all fishing for sturgeon through July 31.

Meanwhile, fishing for stocked **rainbow trout** is still going strong on lowland lakes near Yakima, Ellensburg and Cle Elum, said Anderson, the fish biologist based in Yakima. He especially likes the prospects at Bear Lake and Clear Lakes in Yakima County and Easton Ponds in Kittitas County. Also, WDFW is planting hundreds of 1.5-pound **jumbo** trout in three popular "drive to" high-mountain lakes the last week of June. Those lakes include Leech and Dog lakes near White Pass, and Lost Lake near Snoqualmie Pass.

"These lakes will provide some outstanding fishing opportunities for the Fourth of July weekend," Anderson said.

Mountain streams were still running high in late June, but fishing conditions should improve there and in high lakes through July, Anderson said. For **kokanee**, he recommends Bumping Lake, Rimrock Lake and Keecheus and Kachess reservoirs.

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