

The Guide's Forecast - volume 13 issue number 30

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 29<sup>th</sup> – August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Columbia River Gorge anglers lit up the summer steelhead over the weekend with some boats reporting double digit opportunities. On average, boaters working the swift water took a whopping 2.4 steelhead per boat with the bulk of those fish of wild origin. The action is good but be prepared to release fish; only steelhead and adipose fin-clipped chinook jacks may be retained through August 1<sup>st</sup>.

August 1<sup>st</sup> marks the opener of the mainstem for chinook with or without an adipose fin-clip. Although action won't heat up for several more weeks, steelheaders that incidentally hook an adult chinook will be allowed to retain it. Steelhead action, particularly in the gorge, is likely to remain excellent as peak passage at Bonneville is still to come.

Chinook and steelhead numbers at Willamette Falls have moderated to a little over 100 per day for each species. Over 41,000 springers and about 20,000 summers have been counted this season. Fly fishers are doing well on the Middle Fork for trout and steelhead.

The entire McKenzie River is in excellent shape and fishing well. Results are best on days with cloud cover or early and late when it's sunny.

The North Santiam is expected to show a marked improvement in steelhead results in late July and early August.

Clackamas anglers are taking a few summers with first light fishing most productive.

A few steelhead and springers are being hooked at first light on the Sandy. The upper reaches between Dodge Park and Cedar Creek are producing the best for anglers using small baits or spinners.

**Northwest –** Boaters taking advantage of calm seas out of Garibaldi are coming up empty in pursuit of coho. Action was good several days ago but quickly dropped off when water temperatures cooled. Clear, blue water in the mid-50's exists offshore but seems barren of life. Offshore crabbing is productive however although many of the large keepers are only half full.

Tuna action was good several days ago too but the temperature shift has them far offshore. Some anglers are reporting going as far west as 70 miles to find consistent fishing. Temperature fingers are always changing however so don't expect that run to be a staple in the coming weeks. We're entering the prime albacore season.

Salmon boats out of Astoria are finding the same results. Action is slow although a few fish are available to the north of the mouth of the Columbia. Reports of excellent catches Columbia River bound chinook off of Vancouver Island indicate the huge Columbia run is likely to come to fruition.

Sturgeon fishing remains open in the lower Columbia below Wauna through Sunday. After that, catch and release is still an option and action should continue to be good. Quality keepers are still falling to sand shrimp in the Taylor Sands area but softer tides may produce better results in the deeper water.

The famed Buoy 10 fishery will open on August 1<sup>st</sup> and although there likely won't be many coho around, anglers targeting chinook near the mouth of Young's Bay should catch a few Rogue River strain chinook destined for the terminal fishery just upstream. Trolled herring took fair numbers on the opener last year. This fishery likely won't get more consistent for another few weeks. Crabbing remains slow in the lower river.

**Southwest** – Boats launching out of central Oregon ports are reporting an improvement in coho catches but wild fish predominate. Bottom fishing has produced good catches of rockfish and a few lings even with the recent 20-fathom restriction.

Ocean beaches are providing good results for surf perch, particularly near the mouths of coastal rivers.

Fishing for chinook and coho out of Winchester Bay has remained very slow but is due to improve in the next few weeks. Summer steelheading is worthwhile on the North Umpqua while smallmouth bass anglers are enjoying an increase in catches on the South Umpqua as the water drops and warms.

Ocean trips out of Gold Beach have been productive for rockfish and lingcod. The lower Rogue produced limits of chinook in the middle of last week; water temperatures were cool. As the water warmed, action shut down on the river and boats were again fishing the bay. Upper Rogue anglers are catching a mix of springers and summer steelhead.

Albacore anglers have taken fish inside 20 miles of shore out of the Port of Brookings over the past week. Some good-sized halibut have also been landed as these fish may be taken south of Humbug Mountain through October.

Chinook catches are improving offshore. Sea-run cutthroat catches have been good in Chetco River tidewater for those drifting bait.

**Eastern** – Few summer steelhead are being taken on the lower Deschutes but with the water temperatures high, early and late day fishing will yield the best results. Trout anglers are doing well matching the caddis hatch. Upper Deschutes fly fishers are doing well using duns, caddis patterns and terrestrials.

Good catches of chinook over the past weekend caused an abrupt July 23rd closure of the fishery on the Imnaha.

The Wallowa River will remain open for chinook until further notice. Fishing for rainbows and bull trout has been quite good here.

**SW Washington** – The Cowlitz remains the best option for inland steelheaders. Good numbers of summer runs have been handled at the Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery Separator. Early morning anglers will produce the best results.

The Kalama and North Fork remain very slow.

WDF&W is reporting the likelihood of record numbers of summer steelhead handled in the month of July. Unfortunately, the department can't be credited for the good success rates as the bulk of these fish are destined for Idaho and Oregon tributaries.

New salmon regulations go into effect on many district streams beginning August 1<sup>st</sup>. Be sure to check local listings.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Steelhead are starting to pique interests as the run is really starting to ramp up on the lower Columbia River. After a slow start, likely due to higher and colder than normal water conditions, steelheaders really hit their stride last week, even though the tides were less than ideal.

Checks were best in the gorge where wild fish were rabid and hitting anglers offerings nearly 5 to 1 over the weekend. **Pro guide Dan Ponciano (360-607-8511)** backed up these reports stating that fishing, particularly for wild fish, "is as good as it gets!" Dan reported double digit opportunities but fish were surprisingly in deeper than expected water. With the water warming surprisingly fast, Dan suggested looking to the 18 to 20 foot water for the best action. Spinners tipped with coon shrimp are the sure winner as has been the case for the last several years. Dan also reported the fish aren't all that big as most "A" run fish aren't but there aren't many anglers fishing in the area either, making for a very pleasant fishing experience. Dan landed 9 steelhead the other day, of which he was able to take 3 of them. They are a fine eating and fighting fish so you don't need to take home a boatload of keepers to call it a successful day. The water temperature in over early in the week was 66 degrees.

Here is the report from the ODF&W creel survey. Pay particular attention to the wild fish counts in the gorge check:

**Gorge Bank:**

Weekend checking showed six adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus 10 unclipped steelhead and one summer chinook released for 78 bank anglers; and no shad caught for one shad angler.

**Gorge Boats:**

Weekend checking showed 11 adipose fin-clipped steelhead, and one adipose fin-clipped chinook jack kept, plus 49 unclipped steelhead and four summer chinook released for 25 boats (78 anglers).

Downriver, anglers are faring well too although not as good as gorge anglers. This is also not a surprise but with the run forecast and the water still up, it's surprising that bank anglers working the lower river beaches aren't catching more fish. Checks were still respectable however with ODF&W supplying this information:

**Portland to Longview Bank:**

Weekend checking showed eight adipose fin-clipped steelhead, and one adipose fin-clipped chinook jack kept, plus seven unclipped steelhead and one summer chinook released for 69 bank anglers.

**Portland to Longview Boats:**

Weekend checking showed 11 adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus 16 unclipped steelhead and one summer chinook released for 53 boats (130 anglers).

Washington state creel checks indicate a steelhead handle record could be broken for the month of July. Dam counts at Bonneville have reached phenomenal with numbers fast approaching 10,000 adults per day passing. It looks like the run is going to come in after all.

Salmon season remains closed until Monday but don't bank on any great fishing in the upper river for several more weeks. You can however, keep chinook whether they have an adipose fin or not beginning August 1<sup>st</sup>. Legal fin-clipped jacks are still showing up in the catches but are a rare catch.

Downriver, sturgeon remains the focal point for most estuary anglers but steelheaders are

certainly having some fair fishing themselves along lower river wing-jetties and sandbars. Anglers are more likely to run spin-n-glos here and it's still a great idea to run coon shrimp with your offering too. If you don't use shrimp, certainly apply loads of scent to attract your quarry. Small plugs will also take fish with some consistency, use hot colors however.

As far as sturgeon fishing goes, sand shrimp remains the best bait and has throughout the season. Although anchovies should be making their way into the lower reaches, keepers seem to remain focused on shrimp in the shallow areas. Taylor Sands remains the best option but anglers recently found success at Miller Sands and the water above Tongue Point remains popular but not as productive as the "middle grounds" of Taylor Sands. The Washington side of Taylor Sands seems to be the best spot, targeting water just out of a ditch. Fish either side of the ditch but the incoming tide is particularly most productive in this water. It should be an excellent finish to a great late season opportunity.

Sturgeon action below the bridge should be a bit more spotty but anglers should have some fair opportunity if they have a favorite hot spot that produces on the incoming tide. There are a greater number of competing sources for your bait however so do plan on bringing more bait if you fish this area.

Offshore, anglers aren't that impressed with what's going on. Salmon fishing is off after a great run last week and tuna have marched back offshore as water temperatures fluctuate. Although north of the Columbia remains a good bet for coho and a rare chinook, the CR Buoy is producing some fair results from time to time. The weather hasn't been all that great either and smooth seas are not ahead if you trust the forecast. Like most places along the coast, crabbing is picking up but crab are in a softshell state and not full of meat.

Bottomfishing has been challenging with the recent weather and tide series we're now coming into. Remember, sport anglers are restricted to waters inside of 20 fathoms and cabezon must be released unharmed.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Let's get the bad news out of the way first. Between upcoming bar conditions, recent stories of success (or lack of really) and this offshore weather forecast:

**Fri...**N wind 15 to 20 kt. Wind waves 4 ft. W swell 6 ft.

**Fri Night...**N wind 20 to 25 kt...easing to 15 to 20 kt after midnight. Wind waves 5 ft. W swell 6 ft.

**Sat...**N wind 15 to 20 kt...easing to 10 to 15 kt in the afternoon. Wind waves 4 ft. W swell 6 ft.

**Sat Night...**N wind 15 to 20 kt...easing to 10 to 15 kt after midnight. Wind waves 4 ft...subsiding to 2 ft after midnight. W swell 6 ft.

**Sun...**N wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 5 ft.

**Mon...**NW wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 3 ft. W swell 5 ft.

Nobody is really going to have fun pursuing offshore salmon, tuna, bottomfish or crab this weekend. This is a forecast to pay attention to. Get your gear ready for Buoy 10.

Now, in-river, prepare for a great end to a good sturgeon season. Keepers are still falling in good numbers with oversize and shakers also abundant. Target fish using sand shrimp in the shallow water as long as temperatures remain moderate. Taylor Sands from the Astoria Bridge to Tongue

Point will be the best bet and although fish are well distributed along Taylor, the Washington side seems to be producing the best results. Fish will be active in the deeper water (>16 feet) on the outgoing tide, which really won't occur until later in the day unless you do an early morning start. The end of the outgoing isn't really the best time to target biting fish.

Steelheaders should have good opportunity anywhere downstream of Bonneville Dam. The gorge will likely continue to be the hotspot as fish congregate there in greatest numbers but beach goers working the lower reaches will get to take advantage of another great tide series. Fish your bright, hot-colored spin-n-glos close to the beach on the screaming outgoing tide and don't overlook plugs either. Gorge anglers should be using small spinners tipped with coon shrimp. The way it goes these days, if you're not fishing coon shrimp, you're not fishing. Plan on catching more natives than hatchery fish but you should have a great time.

Gorge sturgeon fishing, especially for oversize fish is still fair but most anglers (and there aren't many of them relatively speaking) are focusing their efforts on summer steelhead. There aren't any shad left for bait unless you're on the lookout for a floater that comes by once in a while.

The Buoy 10 opener should produce some results for chinook anglers working the mouth of Young's Bay. Last year on the August 1<sup>st</sup> opener, trollers took fair numbers of Rogue River strain chinook using herring right on the bottom, staying around 14 to 22 foot of water. This area will fish best close to high slack and the first part of outgoing tide. There should be some fair fishing for the afternoon angler in this area. Don't overlook this fishery!

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – Spring Chinook and summer steelhead daily counts have dwindled at Willamette Falls from hundreds in the first week of July to roughly 50 for each species on July 27th. This slowdown is certainly seasonal but the near-70-degree water temperatures are certainly a contributing factor. The good news for upstream anglers would be that the 40-some-thousand springers and 20-some-thousand summers are upstream now, many entering tributaries, the majority in the Santiam system.

McKenzie River anglers are blessed this year from a long, wet spring season and heavy snowfall in the mountains which will combine to maintain the river in eminently fishable condition into the summer season.

North and South Santiam rivers are at good level and flow for fishing. Decent numbers of summer steelhead and spring Chinook in the system and improving catches in combination with great water conditions provide reason for optimism.

Alton Baker Canal, Breitenbush River, Clear Lake, Quartzville Creek and the North Fork Santiam River above Detroit Lake are scheduled for trout planting.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Some lower river anglers got into shad this week but their results are the exception to the rule this late in a run which was lackluster anyway. A few may be seen trying for springers but trying isn't catching (at least in this case, for the most part). The better fishing on the Willamette is above the Falls for trout and steelhead on the Middle Fork with the Coast Fork also offering plenty of opportunity to trout fishers, particularly those equipped with fly rods.

Caddis remain the predominate pattern of interest on the McKenzie where results for fly fishers have held up well.

Carry nymphs for early and mid-day results as well as PMD patterns to cover most possibilities. Steelhead are available with many coming from below Leaburg Dam for those who don't mind very crowded conditions, The steelhead bite on the North Santiam turned on as the river level dropping on July 24th and has been fair to good since. Fish can be seen around rocks and ledges in remarkable number. Use caution drifting the river in the lower flows, be safe and have fun!

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – Clackamas water levels have continued to drop and have gotten a little skinny in laces, making passage challenging for larger craft. Spring Chinook are in the lower river but catches have been slow. Springer return rates are nearing the 1,000-mark at the McIver hatchery facility. Summer steelhead are being trucked downstream to re-run.

Water conditions have held up on the Sandy River with no sign of milky, glacial runoff so far this year. There are springers and steelhead in the system and the fish hat have been taken recently are in excellent condition.

**The Guide's Forecast** – As long as there is warm, sunny weather, there will be an inflatable plastics hatch on the Clackamas. Early mornings offer the best opportunities for fishers although there is another window of opportunity in the evening hours. Eagle Creek is a decent flow and while there are some springers in the water, very few are trying for them.

Slow to fair results are expected on the Sandy River although there are fewer fishers crowding the water near the mouth of Cedar Creek.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – With all the bounty most north coast anglers typically expect this time of year, there isn't a lot to write home about. The recent temperature shift has sent coho running (somewhere) and tuna have gone further out of reach in recent days.

Coho fishing had been good prior to the weekend with good numbers of hatchery and wild fish available to many anglers fishing NW of the jetty tips out of Garibaldi. Action dropped to next to nil for trollers dragging herring and hoochies although avid angler and dedicated member of the Association of NW Steelheader Norm Ritchie found some action on Tuesday. Norm had a small handful of bites and took home at least 2 keeper coho for the first half of his day. Most anglers were pretty disappointed with their results.

After getting skunked offshore, we came in closer to the mouth of the Nehalem River where we did get one bite by what I believe was a lost coho. It didn't stick however so we'll never know. There have been a few chinook intercepted near the tip of the south jetty but a boat dumped there last week; it's an area anglers have to have a lot of respect for and get kind of lucky not to get into trouble. There are fair numbers of fish however and they should be available through the months of August and September. **DON'T RISK YOUR LIFE FOR A SALMON!**

In Nehalem Bay, action has been slow as has been expected. The summer chinook run should start to ramp up but effort and success rates remain low. Most motivated anglers are fishing around Wheeler and even though water conditions are fair, action is not.

Inland, waters remain low, clear and are warming. This does not make for anywhere near ideal conditions but summer steelhead are available but not biting very well on the Nestucca and Wilson Rivers. Although fish should be well distributed throughout the system, the more motivated biters will likely be in the lower reaches of these rivers. Target water that has a broken

surface and use small baits with as little of lead as you can get away with. The more natural drift you get on your bait, the better your chances will be.

Sea-run cutthroat fishing should be fair to good in most estuaries and tidewater sections. Quality fish should fall to flies and small spoons and the bite will be tidal dependent. Action for cutthroat will likely improve in August before fish stage to come into the rivers to take advantage of spawning salmon.

**The Guide's Forecast** – There isn't much to look forward to. With rough weather in the forecast (available in the Columbia River forecast section) and less than impressive catches, there really isn't much reason to head west. That doesn't leave much in the way of an alternative.

Tillamook Bay does open up on August 1<sup>st</sup> to any chinook (they don't have to be fin-clipped) but there shouldn't be many fish around. If you do choose to fish for a rare chinook, the upper bay may hold some promise with the extreme tide series we're about to come into.

Crabbing both in and outside of north coast estuaries will be very challenging this weekend. Bar crossings will be ugly!

It might be a fun weekend to explore sea-run cutthroat fishing. Good high tides over the weekend will open up a lot of habitat for fish to feed in. The problem may be an afternoon NW wind however that could rough things up. Take this into consideration when planning your destination.

Summer steelhead fishing will remain challenging on the north coast but some fish are being recycled on the Nestucca River. Even though they'll run the gauntlet again, they aren't in any better of a mood to bite the second time around anyway.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Depoe Bay charter boats are catching coho daily although some days are better than ever. Results for bottom fish have been spotty with some boats returning with limits of rockfish and ling cod. Offshore bottom fishing has been more challenging since the depth restriction was rolled back to 120 feet (20 fathoms).

Despite limiting the cabezon bag limit to a single fish per angler this year in an effort to expand the fishery a little longer, the ODFW determined that sufficient fish had met their demise to merit disallowing retention by boat fishers for the remainder of the year. Bank-bound fishers are still allowed to bonk cabbies.

Wind and wave predictions for the coming weekend are fair but mixed with a launch on the morning of Sunday, July 31st predicted to be easy going.

Most rivers and streams have sea-run cutthroat trout available although warming water temperatures will slow catch rates. These fish will readily take bait, lure or fly with best summer results coming to early- and late-day anglers.

South coast beaches have been fair but steady for surf perch with the area near river mouths most productive.

Boats launching out of Winchester Bay have made consistent catches of albacore any time ocean conditions have been reasonably friendly. While most action has come at 30 or more miles out, fair results have been reported at 20 or fewer miles from port. Offshore salmon fishing has been slow out of Winchester Bay. It may be worth a try for those living in the area but for others who

must drive from elsewhere, not so much. It's sure to pick up but it doesn't seem to be happening quite yet even though a few Chinook have been taken in the lower Umpqua mainstem. The troll fishery at Reedsport will get underway in the coming weeks. South jetty rock fishers have been doing well for rockfish and greenling. Steelheading has been fair to good at times on the North Umpqua where Chinook will be off limits starting August 1st. Smallmouth bass fishing on the South Umpqua is good but not as good as it can be. The water still has a ways to go, warming in the summer sun to the magic temperatures which produce world-class fishing and 100-bass days.

Tuna have been taken in fair to good number out of Charleston when ocean conditions have allowed safe crossing and

the long trip out and back. A few Chinook have been taken in the jaws at Coos Bay again this week but this fishery has yet to heat up. Crabbing in the bay is slow to fair with few trying.

Although Chinook fishing historically fires up in July on the lower Coquille, there have been no reports of any catches.

Recently, snowmelt and runoff have kept lower Rogue water temperatures cool which had a mix of spring and fall Chinook taking advantage of it and anglers taking advantage of the Chinook. Now the lower river is warming somewhat. Chinook aren't comfortable in water temperatures over 52 degrees. When the lower Rogue heats up, often to 60 degrees or more, those fish keg up in the bay creating the fall troll fishery - and fall comes early to Rogue Bay. Trolling the estuary will be moderately productive this coming weekend and is the best bet for fresh

Chinook. While there are summer steelhead and a few springers in the middle river, fishing is slow with the most recent water temperature at Grants Pass 63 degrees. Spring Chinook remain available in the upper Rogue and results are fair but catch rates are dropping off. Summer steelhead catches are good and should remain so along with decent water flows and temperatures. With halibut open through October south of Humbug Mountain, boats have been catching them with some regularity out of the Port of Brookings and some large ones have been landed. Dock crabbers in Brookings Harbor are doing quite well for Dungeness.

Summer pressure is moderate at Diamond Lake. Anglers who are getting into the fish are limiting out with little effort and limits here are often include at least one fish that measures in pounds rather than inches.

The Rogue above Lost Creek is scheduled for trout stocking.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Try the lower Deschutes for summer steelhead early mornings and as sunlight wanes for best results. Fishing will only improve in the coming weeks and, if all goes well, should be well worth the trip in mid-August (but there is far less pressure now). Chinook and/or summer steelhead have been in the trap at Sherars Falls nearly every day.

Fly anglers throwing stonefly nymphs have been doing well for trout on the Wallowa River. fishing for spring Chinook remains open here until the ODFW announces otherwise.

Although the Imnaha closed for springers earlier this week due to good results earlier this month, early-arriving summer steelhead will be entertaining anglers for a while.

The Grande Ronde near Bogans has been productive for smallmouth bass this week. Surface lures are taking fish in the evening.

With the water temperature in the high 60s and lower 70s, John Day smallmouth bass fishing has been very good.

Although fishing has been a little slow, kokanee are running 15 inches at Green Peter with patient trollers scoring limits.

Kokanee fishing is very slow at Paulina with neither jigging or trolling producing many fish.

Timothy Lake is producing lots of kokanee averaging seven inches for those who enjoy cleaning 'em just as much as catching 'em.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

***From the WDF&W Weekender Report for August 2011***

#### **North Puget Sound**

Anglers are reeling in chinook and coho in Puget Sound, where crabbing is still an option and two additional marine areas open for salmon Aug. 1. Others are also having some success at Baker Lake, which recently opened for sockeye salmon.

Anglers fishing Baker Lake can retain up to three adult **sockeye salmon** that exceed 18 inches in length from the log boom barrier at Baker Dam upstream to the mouth of the upper Baker River. All other salmon, as well as bull trout, must be released.

"The fish are biting, it's just a matter of finding them," said Brett Barkdull, fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Most anglers have done well once they get over them, and I expect that to continue into August as more sockeye make it into the lake."

The sockeye salmon fishery at Baker Lake is open until further notice, said Barkdull, who reminds anglers to check for any [rule changes](#) at WDFW's website.

Meanwhile, freshwater anglers are gearing up for upcoming salmon openers on select rivers. Those rivers include:

- **Skagit River:** Opens Aug. 1 from the mouth of the river to the mouth of Gilligan Creek. The Skagit from the mouth of Gilligan Creek to the Dalles Bridge at Concrete opens for salmon fishing Aug. 16. Anglers fishing those sections have a three-salmon daily limit, plus one additional pink salmon. All chinook and chum must be released.
- **Snohomish River:** Opens Aug. 16 with a three-salmon daily limit, plus one additional pink salmon. Chinook and chum must be released.
- **Green River:** Opens Aug. 20 from the 1st Ave. South Bridge to Interstate 405. Anglers fishing the Green have a daily limit of six salmon; up to three adult coho and chum (combined) may be retained. Chinook must be released.

Beginning Aug. 16, **Lake Sammamish** will also be an option for freshwater salmon anglers, who will have a daily limit of four salmon, and can retain up to two **chinook**. All sockeye must be released, and fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek.

On Puget Sound, anglers can fish for **salmon** in marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands), 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton). Those fishing Marine Area 7 can keep one chinook as part of

their two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon. They must, however, release wild coho and chum starting Aug. 1.

Anglers fishing marine areas 9 and 10 can keep hatchery chinook – marked with a clipped adipose fin – as part of a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon. Wild chinook must be released. Anglers fishing Marine Area 9 also must release chum salmon, and – effective Aug. 1 – so will those fishing Marine Area 10.

August brings other opportunities in the region to catch and keep salmon. Beginning Aug. 1, marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) open for salmon. Anglers fishing those two areas will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release chinook.

Check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) for details on current salmon fishing opportunities.

Prefer shellfish? The **Puget Sound crab fishery** is under way in most marine areas. The exception is the northern portion (Gulf of Georgia) of Marine Area 7, which opens for crab 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.

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.

**Hunting:** The general hunting season for **black bear** opens Aug. 1 in most of the region. Hunters are allowed two bear during the general season, but only one bear can be taken in eastern Washington. Check the [Big Game Hunting Seasons and Rules pamphlet](#) for details.

Successful black bear hunters must submit a bear tooth to WDFW for age data collection and report their hunting activity over the phone (1-877-945-3492) or [on-line](#). Successful bear hunters who report their harvest are entered in a drawing for special hunting permits.

Hunting opportunities on tap for next month include early archery seasons for **elk**, early archery and muzzleloader seasons for **deer**, and the general hunting season for **cougar** that gets under way with a statewide archery-only season followed by a muzzleloader hunt.

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

Summer salmon fishing is in full swing along the coast, where anglers are hooking bright chinook and nice-size coho.

"Fishing has been good for both **chinook** and **coho** in all marine areas," said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "In the coming weeks, I expect fishing to get even better as more salmon return to our coastal waters."

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. Marine areas 1, 3 and 4 are open to salmon fishing seven days a week, while Marine Area 2 is open Sundays through Thursdays each week.

Salmon fishing is scheduled to continue through Sept. 18 in marine areas 2, 3 and 4, and through Sept. 30 in Marine Area 1. However, fisheries in those areas could close early if catch quotas are reached. Milward reminds anglers to check for any [rule changes](#) at WDFW's website.

Anglers are reminded that regulations in Marine Area 4, east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line, change beginning Aug. 1. Anglers fishing that area will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus one additional pink salmon. But they must release chinook, chum and wild coho.

Elsewhere in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, anglers are still having some success hooking salmon in marine areas 5 (Sekiu) and 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), as salmon fisheries in marine areas 11 (Tacoma/Vashon), the southern portion of 12 (Hood Canal) and 13 (South Puget Sound) continue to gain momentum.

Because salmon fishing rules vary depending on the marine area, anglers should check the [Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet](#) before heading out on the water.

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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. Fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across.

**Halibut** fishing is also still an option. The late season for halibut in Marine Area 1 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 currently open in the northern nearshore area seven days per week until the quota is reached or Sept. 30, whichever occurs first.

In freshwater, the recreational salmon fishery on the **Skokomish River** will get under way Aug. 1 downstream of the Highway 106 Bridge and Aug. 2 upstream of the bridge to the Highway 101 Bridge under regulations similar to last year. The daily bag limit on the Skokomish will be two salmon for anglers fishing from the mouth of the river to the Highway 101 Bridge through Sept. 30. Anglers must carefully release any wild chinook salmon they catch. They also must release chum salmon through Oct. 15.

Anglers will be required to release any salmon not hooked inside the mouth, and retain the first two legal salmon they catch. In addition, single-point barbless hooks are required and a night closure and anti-snagging rule will be in effect.

The Skokomish River from the Highway 106 Bridge upstream to the Highway 101 Bridge will be closed to recreational fishing on designated Mondays and Tuesdays to avoid potential gear conflicts with treaty tribal fishers. Those closures are scheduled for Aug. 1, 8-9, 15-16, 22-23, 29-30 and Sept. 6.

Recreational fishing downstream of the Highway 106 Bridge will remain open seven days a week through the fishing season. For more information, see the [fishing rule change](#) on the WDFW website.

Several other rivers are open for **salmon** fishing elsewhere in the region, including the Bogachiel, Calawah, Hoh, Nisqually, Quillayute and the Sol Duc. Beginning Aug. 1, the Puyallup River, from the City of Puyallup outfall structure across the river from the junction of Freeman Road and North Levee Road to the Carbon River, also opens for salmon fishing.

The lower section of the Puyallup, from the 11th Street Bridge to the City of Puyallup outfall structure, opens to salmon fishing Aug. 16. Anglers should be aware that the lower section of the river is closed Aug. 28, 29 and Sept. 4, 5, 6, 11, 12 and 13.

For more information on the Puyallup River regulations, as well as rules for other fisheries open in August, check the [Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet](#).

### **Southwest Washington**

This year's **fall chinook** fishery opens Aug. 1 on the Columbia River, where a strong run of upriver brights is expected to push the total return well above the 10-year average. Of the 776,300 "falls" included in the pre-season forecast, nearly 400,000 are projected to be upriver brights – the highest number since 1987.

Those fish, together with **hatchery coho** and **summer steelhead**, should make August a very good time to fish the lower Columbia River, said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"We're definitely expecting a big turnout by anglers for these fisheries," Hymer said. "The fall chinook fishery usually starts slow, then accelerates quickly through the month of August. The great thing about upriver brights is they tend to keep biting as they move upriver."

While the fall chinook season opens upriver to Priest Rapids Dam, most of the action during the first few weeks focuses on the popular **Buoy 10 fishery** in the lower 16 miles of the river. Fishery managers estimate that anglers will catch nearly 11,000 chinook salmon by Aug. 28, when the retention fishery for chinook closes in the Buoy 10 area. They also estimate anglers will catch 7,000 coho in that area by the time that fishery closes at the end of the year.

The daily limit for the Buoy 10 fishery is two salmon, two hatchery steelhead, or one of each. However, anglers may retain only one chinook salmon (minimum size, 24 inches) per day as part of their daily limit through Aug. 28. Only those steelhead and coho marked with a missing adipose fin and a healed scar may be retained. This requirement does not, however, apply to fall chinook, which may be retained whether marked or unmarked.

Additional rules for the Buoy 10 area and other waters upriver are described in WDFW's [Fishing in Washington](#) pamphlet.

Bank anglers planning to fish near the mouth of the Columbia River should be aware they will need to purchase a Discover Pass to park on State Parks property near the North Jetty. With some exceptions, the pass is now required to park a vehicle on lands managed by State Parks, WDFW and the state Department of Natural Resources. The Discover Pass was created by the Legislature earlier this year to keep recreation lands open to the public in the wake of steep budget cuts.

An annual Discover Pass costs \$35 and a one-day pass is \$11.50, when purchased online from WDFW (<https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov/>), by phone, or from retail license vendors. However, holders of most annual fishing and hunting licenses are not required to purchase a pass to use

WDFW lands and water-access sites. For more information, see the Discover Pass website (<http://www.discoverpass.wa.gov/>) or call 1-866-320-9933.

By mid-to-late August, the bulk of the chinook run usually begins to move upstream while increasing numbers of coho move into the Columbia River behind them. For anglers following upriver brights upstream, Hymer recommends fishing deep, between 40 and 50 feet down. For a lure, he suggests a wobbler anchored with a heavy weight.

"Chinook go deep when water temperatures are high so that's a good place to find them," Hymer said. "At the same time, anglers should take care not to drop anchor in the shipping channel. That can lead to real trouble."

While 2011 is not expected to be a banner year for hatchery coho, those fish will help to round out anglers' daily limits at Buoy 10, Hymer said. WDFW currently expects about 270,000 coho to return this year – similar to 2010 but down significantly from the exceptionally large run of three-quarters of a million fish two years ago.

"Coho will still contribute to the fishery," Hymer said. "At Buoy 10, they usually bite best on herring and spinners, and then bait and lures later in the tributaries."

Meanwhile, plenty of **hatchery steelhead** are still available for harvest, said Hymer, noting that the smaller "A-run" fish should keep biting through mid-August. By then, the larger "B-run" steelhead – many weighing in the teens – will start arriving to pick up the slack. Together, returns of both runs are expected to total about 367,000 fish, about the same size of last year's total run.

The succession of hatchery steelhead, fall chinook and coho salmon should also provide good fishing on area tributaries for months to come, Hymer said. Like the mainstem Columbia River, most tributaries open for fall chinook Aug. 1, although fishery usually doesn't take off until September. Meanwhile, Drano Lake and the White Salmon River are good places to try for steelhead looking for cooler waters.

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

Chinook retention is limited to marked, hatchery fish on these river systems, except on the Klickitat and Deep rivers where unmarked chinook can also be retained. Mark-selective runs will also be in effect on the Wind and White Salmon rivers, plus Drano Lake. Anglers are advised to check the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet and any [emergency rules](#) applicable to specific waters before leaving home.

Of course, salmon and steelhead aren't the only fish available for harvest in August. **Walleye** fishing can be good in the Columbia River near Camas, as well as in The Dalles and John Day Pools. **Bass** fishing is also heating up from Bonneville Dam to McNary Dam.

For **trout**, the high wilderness lakes around Mount Adams and Mount St. Helens offer unparalleled fishing experiences for those willing to brave the mosquitoes. Riffe Lake in Lewis County is still giving up some nice landlocked coho, and Goose Lake north of Carson has received 6,200 brown trout, 6,000 cutthroat and 500 rainbow since the end of June. Hatchery sea-run cutthroats should also provide some opportunity on the lower Cowlitz beginning in late August.

Anglers planning to fish **Northwest Lake** in Klickitat County should be aware that all boat access will be closed as of Aug. 15, when PacifiCorp will start drawing water from the lake in

preparation for decommissioning Condit Dam. Boat ramps at the campground and off Powerhouse Road will also be closed, effective July 29. Bank fishing will still be allowed, but PacifiCorp representatives caution anglers to be careful of mucky shoreline conditions. Crews are scheduled to breach the 123-foot dam in late October, opening up miles of salmon and steelhead habitat.

### **Eastern Washington**

The month of August usually means a slow-down in fishing throughout the region, but this summer's cooler and wetter conditions are keeping the action decent on both trout and warmwater fish species.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) district fish biologist Chris Donley said the most successful trout fishing is still during very early morning or late evening hours. But mid-day anglers under cloud cover are also reeling in nice catches.

Some of the best **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** lakes close to Spokane are Amber, Badger, Clear, Fish, Williams, and West Medical lakes in Spokane County, and Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County. The lower Spokane River has nice rainbows and browns, but river anglers need to be aware of catch limits, gear restrictions, and other rules listed in the fishing pamphlet.

Mixed species waters are also a good bet. Along with some trout, **yellow perch**, **largemouth** and **smallmouth bass**, and **crappie** can usually be caught at Coffeepot Lake in Lincoln County, Downs and Chapman lakes in southwest Spokane County, Newman and Liberty lakes in eastern Spokane County, Eloika Lake in north Spokane County, and the Spokane River reservoir of Long Lake and Deer and Waitts lakes in Stevens County.

In the north end of the region, rainbow trout, **kokanee** and **walleye** fishing continues to be good at Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir off Grand Coulee Dam. Kokanee fishing is also productive at Stevens County's Loon Lake during night time hours.

Some of the high elevation lakes on U.S. Forest Service property in the northeast district that are stocked with rainbow and cutthroat trout may be good destinations for camping and fishing weekends. In Ferry County, try Davis, Ellen, Empire, Swan and Trout lakes. In Stevens County, try Gillette, Heritage, Sherry, Summit, and Thomas lakes. In Pend Oreille County, try Carl's, Cook's, Frater, Halfmoon, Leo, Mystic, Nile, No-Name, Petit, South and North Skookums, and Yokum lakes. Find specific locations and more about these mostly small fishing lakes in [WDFW's 2011 Fishing Prospects](#).

**Catfish** and **sturgeon** fishing is usually productive in the Snake River system in the southeast part of the region in August. Catfish are often landed in the backwaters and sloughs throughout the mainstem Snake, as well as in or near the mouths of tributaries like the Tucannon River.

Sturgeon fishers are reminded of the minimum 43-inch and maximum 54-inch tail fork length and daily catch limit of one sturgeon. The Snake and its tributaries upstream of Lower Granite Dam are catch-and-release only for sturgeon. The section of the Snake just east of the Tri-Cities, from the mouth to Ice Harbor Dam, is also catch-and-release for sturgeon starting Aug. 1.

On the W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area along the Tucannon River in Columbia County, anglers are still catching lots of hatchery-stocked rainbow trout in several of the area's man-made lakes. WDFW area manager Kari Dingman reports that cooler temperatures this summer have helped keep those fisheries productive longer than normal.

"Anglers who camp on the Wooten are reminded there are no campfires allowed at this time," Dingman said. "Even though it's still relatively green for this time of year here, especially on the

south end of the wildlife area, it's drying out fast and the grass is quite tall and thick. We recently had several campfires left unattended when the campers packed up and left."

Wherever anglers go, they are reminded to be extra careful with anything that could start wildfires. Outing plans should include a check on campfire restrictions on state or federal public lands.

The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has a burn ban in effect through Sept. 30 on all forest lands under Department of Natural Resources jurisdiction. That means all outdoor burning is banned with the exception of recreational fires in approved fire pits within designated state, county, municipal or other campgrounds. The use of gas and propane barbecues and self contained stoves are allowed. Visit DNR's website for [fire information by county](#).

### **Northcentral Washington**

Anglers fishing for **chinook** and **sockeye salmon** are starting to pick up fish on the mainstem Columbia River from Priest Rapids Dam upstream to below Chief Joseph Dam. Sockeye running three to four pounds and chinook up to 20 pounds are being taken in that area, reports Bob Jateff, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"Chinook are best caught on trolled plugs or cut herring," he said. "Sockeye are caught primarily with prawn spinners."

Jateff reminds salmon anglers of the night closure and anti-snagging rule in effect in three areas – from Rocky Reach Dam to the most upriver point of Turtle Rock, the Okanogan River from the mouth upstream to Highway 97 Bridge in Oroville, and the Similkameen River from the mouth to 400 feet below Enloe Dam.

Beginning Aug. 1, anglers can retain adipose-fin-clipped adult and jack summer **chinook salmon** in the lower mainstem Wenatchee River, where summer chinook returns are predicted to exceed spawning escapement needs. The daily limit is two adipose-fin-clipped summer chinook (adult or jack). All other fish must be released and selective gear rules and night closure are in effect.

The section of the Wenatchee River opening for chinook fishing Aug. 1 extends from the mouth (confluence with the Columbia River) to a point 400 feet below Dryden Dam is open through Oct. 15. From Sept. 1 through Oct. 15, the fishery will expand to include waters stretching from the confluence of Peshastin Creek to a line perpendicular to the river at a marker on the opposite shore, (approximately 1,000 feet above Dryden Dam) to the Icicle Creek road bridge on the west end of Leavenworth. All chinook with a floy (anchor) tag attached and/or caudal punch must be released.

On the Methow River, an increasing number of trout anglers are starting to show up as water levels start to recede after a prolonged period of high flows, Jateff said. "At this time of the year, weighted nymphs will be the choice for fly anglers, but large dry flies will also produce fish," he said, adding that anglers should still be extremely cautious when wading or floating the river.

Resident **rainbow, cutthroat, and whitefish** are the main species available in the Methow. All bull trout must be released and must not be removed from the water. Selective gear rules are in effect in this catch-and-release only. Jateff advises checking the current sportfishing pamphlet carefully as there certain sections on the Methow that are closed to all fishing.

WDFW habitat biologist Ken Bevis of Winthrop confirms that fly fishing can be highly productive as rivers and streams in Okanogan County drop into shape. "Try skittering a bushy dry fly across tail-outs of deep pools in the crystal clear streams," he said. "The action can be fast and furious,

even if the fish are only eight inches or so. But be sure you know the difference between trout, so you can follow the regulations.”

As water temperatures warm, some lowland lakes will provide angling opportunities for spiny ray fishermen, Jateff said. He notes that Patterson Lake, near Winthrop, has **yellow perch** as well as **smallmouth bass**. Spectacle Lake, southwest of Tonasket, has yellow perch in the 10 inch range as well as a sizeable rainbow trout population.

Leader Lake, near the town of Okanogan, has **bluegill** in good numbers, but yellow perch were illegally introduced there and are now threatening that fishery, Jateff said. “We are urging anglers to remove as many perch as possible from Leader Lake – regardless of size – to maintain the current quality bluegill fishery there.”

### **Southcentral Washington**

Walleye fishing has been very good on Lake Umatilla this summer – and will likely heat up even more as water temperatures rise through August. Meanwhile, the summer heat is also clearing a way through the snow to trout fishing opportunities on dozens of alpine lakes.

As of late July, anglers were averaging more than three walleye per rod on Lake Umatilla, the 67-mile reservoir below McNary Dam on the Columbia River, according to Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) stationed in the Tri-Cities.

“Fishing has been terrific at all the usual spots – Umatilla, County Line, Irrigon, Boardman and Paterson,” Hoffarth said. “Walleye really put on the feed bag when the water heats up, so we can expect to see some more great fishing in the weeks ahead.”

There is no minimum size limit for walleye at Lake Umatilla, although there is a daily limit of 10 fish, only five of which can measure over 18 inches and only one of which can be over 24 inches. There is also no minimum size for **smallmouth bass**, which are also showing up in the catch. There is a five-fish daily limit for smallmouth bass, only three of which can exceed 15 inches.

Still fishing for **sturgeon**? Be aware that sturgeon fisheries switch to catch-and-release rules Aug. 1 at Lake Wallula (the McNary Pool of the Columbia River) and the Snake River below Ice Harbor Dam.

On the other hand, anglers can catch and keep up to two **hatchery steelhead** – identified by a clipped adipose fin – from the mouth of the Columbia River to the Highway 395 bridge at Kennewick/Pasco. Fishery managers are projecting a strong run of 390,900 summer-run steelhead this year, many bound for the Snake River and mid-to-upper Columbia River.

The Snake River will open for hatchery steelhead fishing Sept. 1, and WDFW expects to open sections of the Columbia River above the Highway 395 bridge later this summer or early fall. Look for announcements at the [WDFW website](#).

Anglers can also look forward to good fishing for **fall chinook salmon** in the weeks ahead. A strong run of 760,000 “falls” are expected to return to the Columbia this year, including 175,000 upriver brights that are expected to cross McNary Dam -- many headed for the Hanford Reach.

“The fishery officially kicks off Aug.1 up to Priest Rapids Dam, but fishing doesn’t really catch fire in our area until September,” Hoffarth said. “With so many fish expected this year, fishing should be good once it gets going.”

The daily limit on the Columbia River is six chinook, of which two may be adults. Anglers are not required to release chinook with intact adipose fins, but must stop fishing after they retain two adult chinook. See the current [Fishing in Washington](#) rules pamphlet for additional information.

On the Yakima River, salmon fishing closes July 31 at the end of the day, but will reopen Sept. 1 for fall chinook in the lower river. Eric Anderson, a WDFW fish biologist in Yakima, said the spring chinook fishery in the upper section between Union Gap and Roza Dam finished strong, despite high flows in May and June.

"Catch rates for springers really picked up in July as water levels dropped and more fish moved into the area," Anderson said. "Now anglers are looking ahead to the fishery for fall chinook."

Water levels are also dropping in streams flowing into the upper Yakima and Naches rivers, improving fishing conditions for wild **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout**, Anderson said. Anglers should be sure to check the regulations for those streams, and release all salmon, bull trout, and steelhead, he said.

An increasing number of high lakes are also becoming accessible to trout fishing around White Pass, Chinook Pass and Snoqualmie Pass as the snow continues to melt under the summer sun. WDFW stocks some small, hike-in lakes with rainbow or cutthroat trout, and some also have naturally reproducing **eastern brook trout** populations. Specific information on trout stocking in area lakes is posted on the [WDFW website](#).

"Good fishing is now available for planted trout at Clear and Dog lakes in the White Pass area, and for **kokanee** averaging nine inches at Rimrock Lake off Highway 12," Anderson said. "Kokanee is also available at Kachess and Keechelus lakes off Highway 90, and fishing is good for both kokanee and cutthroat at Bumping Lake off Highway 410."

Anderson notes that all of those waters are closed to the taking of bull trout, "so anglers need to release any bull trout they intercept," he said. Anderson adds that hikers and anglers should check trail conditions before heading out, because some are still covered in snow. Information about current trail conditions is available from the U.S. Forest Service office in Naches and the Forest Ranger office in Cle Elum.

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

In a Email (which was supposed to have run last week), **Subscriber Donald L.** wrote to ask about the perch fishing in Winchester Bay and went on to add, "I was there and the bite was nonexistent. What I was asking was had it magically turned on. I was there the 12th."

TGF co-editor Michael Teague responded, " ... yes, the bay perch fishing has been up and down. During those periods when the bite has been off in the bay, surf fishing from local beaches has been quite good for males of the same species.

"When you were there (and you may well have heard this at the time) the perch were in the bay but not biting. Every year female pinkfin surf perch enter Winchester Bay to spawn. As these fish are live-bearers, it's not unusual to land one (or more) which are a literal fountain of miniature perch.

"The TGF report to which you are referring would be the July 7th issue (as TGF comes out every Thursday. That issue came out following some really great catches which occurred the previous week. Bay surf perch catches had been lackluster up to that point but of that week/s catches as early morning fishers took limits Pete Heley of the Umpqua Post wrote (also on the 7th),

"surfperch angling over the last weekend was about as good as it has ever been." Who knew it would tank a few days later? Not us, obviously.

"We do our best but given that fishing results were good and improving, I would have bet that it would've held up through the 12th. 'Sorry that wasn't the cast for you.

"We'll continue trying to predict where and when there's a better chance to catch fish as our track record for being more often correct than not is pretty good.

"Thanks for reading!"

**Write to the TGF staff:**

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**Random Links**

2011 Oregon Ocean Salmon Seasons (map):

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/salmon/Regulations/docs/2011\\_Ocean\\_Sport\\_Season\\_Regulation\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/salmon/Regulations/docs/2011_Ocean_Sport_Season_Regulation_Summary.pdf)

Heads up tuna fishers - Reward for tag is now \$1,000:

<http://afrf.org/tagging/taginstructions0709.pdf>

Idaho trout record shattered by 15 pounds:

<http://www.katu.com/outdoors/featured/126263123.html>

**GOOD LUCK!**