

The Guide's Forecast - volume 13 issue number 32

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **August 12th – August 18th, 2011**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

If you really want all the juicy details on how to nail lower Columbia River salmon, pick up a PDF copy of tech report 4, available here:

<http://www.theguidesforecast.com/store/cart.php?cat=Tech+Reports>

Willamette Valley/Metro- Although not consistent every day, summer steelheading in the gorge remains excellent. Bank anglers witnessed an unprecedented ½ fish per rod average over the weekend with half of those fish needing to be released because of their wild origin. Boaters did well for steelhead too with the seasons first fall chinook showing in the catches. Steelhead will remain the main focus for another week but with the strong return of salmon in the forecast, fishing should pick up earlier than normal for the chinook fishery above Tongue Point.

With daily counts dwindling, roughly 44,000 spring Chinook and 21,000 summer steelhead are now upstream from Willamette Falls, the majority of which are in the tributaries. Lower river temperatures are approaching the mid-70s. Smallmouth bass fishing is good in the upper Willamette.

Water conditions remains good with the McKenzie stable. Trout fishing has been fair to good.

Steelhead are available in the North Santiam with best results early in the day around Mehama. Spinner fishers landed a few springers on the South Santiam over the past weekend.

First light steelheading has produced a few on the Clackamas recently. Try the upper river with bobber & jig.

Fishing has been very slow on the Sandy over the past week.

Northwest – Fishing on the lower Columbia is picking up for chinook. Coho catches remain light in the river but chinook anglers are targeting their quarry at the mouth of Young's Bay. The Rogue River strain of chinook are plentiful right now, indicated by a modified left ventral clip. These are high quality fish raised in net-pens in Young's Bay, primarily for the terminal gillnet fishery inside Young's Bay. Action here should be strong through this week when mainstem fish make a stronger showing.

Although trolled herring are a staple on the lower river, the new size 8 Flash Glo spinner has been responsible for several chinook this week near Young's Bay. Troll spinners about 30 inches behind a chartreuse fish flash in 19 to 22 foot of water for a good chance at a chinook.

Offshore salmon fishers out of the mouth of the Columbia are finding more consistent catches of chinook in close and coho in about 260 feet of water NW of the river entrance. Fishing should continue to pick up off of the mouth with both coho and chinook staging and feeding heavily over the next few weeks.

Although effort increased this week for offshore coho, catches remained subdued out of Garibaldi. The offshore fishery is slated to close after August 13th but will remain open to chinook. Nearly 60% of the coho quota is likely to remain underutilized although many of those fish are destined for the Columbia fishery.

Chinook catches remain fair in the Wheeler area on Nehalem Bay. Some chinook are being caught just outside of the jaws of the Nehalem although this is a dangerous place to fish. Fishing inside the estuary is likely to pick up later this month but you have to be knowledgeable of the changing regulations in this area.

Tillamook Bay is likely to see their first chinook closer to the end of the month. A stronger return is predicted from the last 2 years. Wild coho returns are expected to be higher as well.

Tuna remain far offshore but anglers willing to travel are taking fair numbers of fish. Trolling success will likely continue to wane as live bait and jigging become more popular this month. The weekend offshore forecast looks favorable for a run to the tuna grounds.

Southwest – A few chinook have been taken at the Winchester Bay jaws contingent upon ocean conditions. Bay crabbing has been slow to fair with sorting of softshells required. A few chinook have been caught at Reedsport but it's early for this fishery although the occasional fish has been caught in the lower mainstem. Steelheading remains good in the North Umpqua with smallmouth bass fishing only fair in the South Umpqua due to lower than normal water temperatures.

Charleston coho anglers experienced an improvement in catches offshore over the past week. Ocean crabbing has been fair although some are soft. Check regulations for upcoming closures.

Boats out of Gold Beach have been scoring limits of rockfish and lingcod when offshore conditions have allowed safe crossing. Trollers in Rogue Bay have done well on some days although chinook have been going off the bite periodically. Fall chinook are upriver in higher than normal water conditions with boaters using plugs to take them as high as Galice. Summer steelhead and half-pounder catches are improving in the lower river. While chinook fishing is over in the upper Rogue, summer steelheading has been good and should hold up for a while.

Ocean chinook fishing has picked up out of the Port of Brookings over the past week. As salmon appeared only a few miles offshore and offshore conditions moderated, the bite was actually good at times. Bottomfishers reaped offshore rewards of rockfish, lingcod and the occasional pacific halibut. Tropical ocean water temperatures have been far offshore, preventing recreational tuna fishers from pursuing them but that situation may soon change. Surf perch fishers have been taking limits casting from area beaches. The Chetco River is closed to all fishing above River Mile 2.2.

The blue-green algae advisory remains in place at Diamond Lake. Fishing has been worthwhile but trout should be skinned before cooking.

Eastern – Warm water in the lower Deschutes has kept summer steelhead numbers low although counts at Sherars Falls picked up a little in the first week of August. Trout fishing is best early and late in the day on the lower river.

Wallowa River fly fishers are doing well on nymphs for smaller fish during the day with large trout hitting attractor patterns in the evening. Wallowa Lake has been productive for stocked trout.

SW Washington – The Cowlitz, especially the lower reaches, is a fair option for summer steelhead.

Anglers should start to see chinook penetrating several district streams but regulations vary so study them carefully before venturing out.

Good steelhead counts at Bonneville should continue to fuel fisheries on the Klickitat River and Drano Lake. Action should stay favorable until fall chinook arrive in the coming weeks.

Columbia River Fishing Report – It's Buoy 10 time and effort along with success rates are ramping up. There's been sporadic catches for most of the week with the highest effort taking place at the mouth of Young's Bay, targeting the Rogue River strain of Chinook destined for the Young's Bay gillnet fleet this month. These are a high quality fish and catches of this strain have dominated the creel for much of the week.

It's a simple fishery really. You simply troll in a diagonal pattern, sticking to 19 to 24 feet of water with you gear either slightly suspended or as close to the bottom as you can get. The best part of the tide has clearly been near high slack, which is getting later into the afternoon each day. Our best day this week was going 3 for 5 on Monday the 8th, fishing with Buzz Ramsey, Grant McOmie and 2 gentlemen (Kyle and Bob McDougal) from New Mexico. Three of the 5 bites came on herring but that is what we used for much of the day. After Buzz landed his nice 22 pound Rogue fish, he put on a new size 8 Flash Glo spinner (½ chartreuse, ½ brass with a florescent pink dot) UV spinner and got one almost instantly. We took another Rogue fish later that day on the same spinner and again on the following day.



Herring has been a staple for many but don't overlook the spinner option. **Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** went 2 for 7 on Wednesday with several bites coming off of spinners that just didn't stick. He was using the size 7 Fatal Flash blade. Spinners should be a staple in your toolbox with the warmer temperatures we're experiencing on the lower Columbia.

Although the mouth of Young's Bay produced the best results for the early part of this week, other areas of the river should begin to pick up as well. We brought one of our 3 biters to the

boat on lower Desdemona Sands in the first hour of outgoing tide. That fish took a herring in about 30 foot of water just north of Buoy 20.

After high slack, there was a fair bite for upriver running Chinook along the green line on Wednesday. A sure sign that the bulk of the run is about to arrive. Most fish were taken on herring but spinners certainly have application here as well. Most guides were working the 28 to 35 foot line and taking fish near the bottom with divers. The fishing will only ramp up from here.

Offshore, ocean fishing has picked up significantly in recent days. The ocean was FLAT calm on Wednesday although action was less than impressive for the amount of effort offshore. Most boats were fishing to the north and did catch a nice mix of Chinook and coho in 70 to 90 feet of water. Do check your baits fairly often however as jellyfish can be a problem on occasion. Salmon will not take your bait if it has any jellyfish tentacles on it, which can be a frequent occurrence.

Some boats reported off-the-hook fishing further offshore on Tuesday with easy limits coming from 280 foot of water NW of the river entrance. That area was jellyfish infested on Wednesday however.

Offshore crabbing is fair with a majority of keepers still in a softshell state. It may not be until late September before they fill out again.

Despite calm seas, tuna anglers out of the Columbia have to travel far to get into tuna. Runs of 50 to 60 miles offshore are not uncommon and that's quite a run, even in flat seas. There isn't a lot of effort right now but fair catches can be expected for those willing to make the run.

Upriver, after a great previous week of steelheading river-wide, lower river beaches that depend on strong tides to push fish close to shore anglers were not prevalent this week. This made upriver areas more desirable, especially in the Bonneville area where both bank and boat anglers are scoring good catches of summer chrome. Spinners are still taking the biggest number of fish but spinners should be tipped with coon shrimp for the best results. Plugs are also taking fish in fair numbers. Fish counts over Bonneville are peaking and should continue to do so for a few more weeks. There are tens of thousands more due back to the river.

Even further upriver, trollers working the mouth of the Deschutes River are taking good numbers of steelhead on plugs and some spinners. Early morning seems to always produce the best results and anglers working the lower reaches tossing spinners and working side planers are doing just fine too.

The Guide's Forecast – This is the break-out week for the Buoy 10 fishery. Action for Chinook should really break loose this week with a strong showing of fish on the increasing tides already underway. One important detail most anglers won't pay attention to is the fact there is a screaming outgoing tide for much of the morning; this happens to be the time when the fishing is the poorest. The last 3 hours of outgoing tide is the worst time to target salmon on the lower river. Action will be poor for most trying their hand at it.

Heed these words of wisdom from a professional that has done this for 15 years; center your effort around high tide, working the 6 or 7 hours on both sides of the high slack. You won't regret this information and thanks to those that don't, that's more fish for those of us that do!

Although herring will likely be my favorite go-to option, spinners should be a good option as well. Blades both big and small should produce fair catches but to target larger Chinook, use larger spinners. The standard red/white and chartreuse/green tip or green dot should produce results.

I've also had some great luck with the purple tipped black blade on some years. Switching colors can pay dividends.

I've been using frozen green label herring but the fresh or blue label should also produce results. One thing is quite important however, keep your baits fishing deep. I tend to target water that I know I can keep my baits fishing close to the bottom. That's water that is usually shallower than 35 feet deep although I'm comfortable in 40 foot of water as well.

For those too motivated not to fish early, the best chance you have at an early tide Chinook will be trolling from Buoy 11 to Buoy 10 on the last 20 minutes of outgoing tide. Be sure to mind your boundary manners and don't fish over the line. Outgoing tide can do strange things to you in that area. Bait or spinners have good history for me here.

Although it's early, salmon are being caught by anchor anglers near the mouth of the Cowlitz. Don't expect the fishing to be red-hot by any means but if you have confidence fishing this technique, it may be worth your while as it's clear, there are some fish in this stretch. Steelhead is a great option for those in the know from the mouth of the Cowlitz to Bonneville Dam. Spinners and plugs will work best and early morning outgoing tides should produce good catches this week. Water temperatures are rising however and that could put steelhead off the bite.

Offshore, the forecast looks tolerable but the minus tide series could make bar crossings hazardous. Check bar restrictions before heading out. The phone number for Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment is (360) 642-3565.

The offshore forecast is as follows:

FRI...N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. SW SWELL 5 FT.
PATCHY FOG IN THE MORNING.

.FRI NIGHT...N WIND 10 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

.SAT...N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

.SAT NIGHT...NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL
4 FT.

.SUN...NW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 4 FT.

.MON...N WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 4 FT.

Fishing should remain good for the next 2 weeks but the bulk of the Chinook run should be just offshore right now. These big fish should be staging as you're reading this report. Really, it's going to break loose in the river this week. Since most Chinook out of the mouth of the Columbia are north turning, heading north out of the mouth of the river just makes sense. The coho have been present there and fair numbers of Chinook are present too. And remember, it's a 2 fish bag limit on Chinook now in the ocean but remember, you can't fish the river if you have too many Chinook on board from the ocean. Pay attention to this rule and check local regulations.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – As summer finally kinks in and valley rivers heat up (and not in the nest way), counts at Willamette Falls have fallen to low double digits daily. Lower river spring Chinook and chad fishing is a memory for 2011, better for some than others. Let's hope the shad return this season was an anomaly rather than a premonition. Water temperatures are in the low to mid-70s below the Falls.

Although the level has been dropping slightly over the past week, the McKenzie remains in excellent shape for fishing in the coming weekend. Water temperatures are hovering around the mid-50s and that's a great range.

The North Santiam has dropped, the water is clear and water temperatures tend to fluctuate throughout the day. As a consequence, steelhead will be in different stretches of the river depending on the time of day. South Santiam conditions are somewhat more conducive to fishing.

Alton Baker Canal, Carmen Reservoir, and the McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake are scheduled for planting with hatchery trout.

The Guide's Forecast – For Willamette anglers, opportunities lie only above the Falls at this time of year. Many areas will offer smallmouth bass opportunities and catches have been good at times. Look for rocky areas and particularly ledges and current breaks where smallies can hold out of strong current yet be able to ambush prey. Soft plastics will close the deal. Hatchery trout are available above Hills Creek Reservoir on the Middle Fork Willamette.

Cutthroat and rainbow trout fishing is expected to be good on the McKenzie this coming weekend and improving next week with cooler weather and additional cloud cover/ Easy fishing is available between Greenwood and Hendricks Bridge as well; as the stretch above Leaburg where hatchery trout have been planted.

Expect to put in some time on the North Santiam at this time of year. Those who do so and are in the place at the right time will find a few fish with which to tussle. Springers and steelhead are being taken in modest number but with some regularity on the South Santiam.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – It's worth mentioning again that with warm summer temperatures, the opportunity for summers on the Clack is first thing in the morning as it transforms into a water park later in the day.

The Sandy River has been on a slow and steady, albeit slight, drop over the past 10 days. While a dropping river is generally considered a good thing, it doesn't seem to have done anything for fishing results here. Add to this the warm weather triggering glacial runoff which means milky, gray-green water conditions.

The Guide's Forecast – Spinners, jigs and yarn/corky combos have been tempting summer steelhead on the Clackamas with anglers doing better in the upper stretches of the river.

The few hopeful anglers who have ventured out on the clear waters of the Sandy River have, for the most part, returned empty-handed. There have been some reports of hookups upriver from Cedar Creek but fish are showing some color that high.

North Coast Fishing Report – With the August 13th closure looming for offshore coho, action should pick up significantly in the very near future (Murphy's Law). But really, anglers will have to find other ways to satisfy their disorder; that will primarily be the lower Columbia.

Chinook should start to make a better showing in Nehalem Bay and with the bar likely being dangerous in the morning, Wheeler to Nehalem should be a fair option. Trolled herring or spinners may take some fish but don't be expecting easy fishing.

It may still be a bit early for Tillamook Bay but some fish may make an appearance. With a blossoming return, they could come in early this year. Target fish in the upper bay, especially in the morning.

Tuna may be a better option if temperature fingers bring albacore closer to shore. Prepare to do best on live bait but jigging can also be effective as the troll bite slows during this time.

Offshore crabbing seems to be a bit better south of Cape Falcon and should improve in the coming weeks.

Sea-run cutthroat fishing should be peaking in the coming weeks. Cutthroat should be staging in tidewater taking small baitfish and crustaceans before the early fall rain freshets send them upstream in pursuit of loose eggs off of redds. Trolling has traditionally been the best method for catching these fish this time of year.

It will be a subdued couple of weeks on the north coast until better numbers of fall Chinook make a showing later on in the fall.

The Guide's Forecast – Oddly, the Nehalem may be the best option this week as early run fall Chinook begin to nose their way into the watershed. Early sampling indicate there are fair numbers of fish present. Troll herring or spinners in the Wheeler to Nehalem stretch targeting low slack and the second half of incoming tide.

Upper Tillamook Bay should be void of any anglers but a lucky angler may take an early fall Chinook on this minus tide series. I recommend using plugs, backtrolled and wrapped for your best chance. Admittedly, it's a shot in the dark however.

Chinook are still available offshore but do be careful of bar conditions on the current minus tide series. If you do get over, target Chinook close to shore as they begin to stage near their respective estuaries.

Drag trout troll and bait on any north coast stream that legally allows it. You'll need to check regulations carefully as they do change by watershed. High tide should produce the best results.

Offshore coho season closes after August 13th.

Central & South Coast Reports – Coho fishing out of central Oregon ports tanked mid-week with very few boats hooking up. Bottom fishing was somewhat better but not the good results reported over the past weekend. Crabbing has been worthwhile with sufficient numbers of hard-shells to bring home a meal.

The first two days of summer all-depth halibut fishing over the past weekend was rewarding for most. So much so that further openings remain up in the air. If an announcement regarding additional opportunities is forthcoming before deadline today, it will appear here. With nearshore halibut closed due to better-than-average catches, another deep water opening would be a last-chance fishery. Our prediction: it's done for 2011.

Albacore fishing was slow but steady out of Newport mid-week. It's been scratch fishing out of Depoe Bay with some boats returning to port with a dozen or so fish without seeing any blue water.

Crabbing picked up a slightly in Winchester Bay over the past week with reports of greater numbers of legal-sized Dungeness. Chinook have been caught in the jaws, along the South Jetty and into the lower Umpqua but numbers of available fish is still fairly low.

Boats launching out of Charleston have been taking tuna 20 to 25 miles out of port and at that it has been only a couple per angler. Offshore forecasts indicate a decent possibility of improving conditions by the coming weekend. Pressure has been light for crab in Coos Bay although results have been fair to good for a mix of hard and soft Dungeness.

Chinook are being caught by deep-fishing herring on the bar but results have been hot or cold. Salmon will be more willing to move into the upper bay as water temperatures moderate.

A few Chinook have been caught in the lower Coquille between Bandon and Rocky Point. Crabbing has been fair below the Highway 101 Bridge.

Fall Chinook are well into Rogue Bay and have been entering the lower river where anglers have been intercepting them. Results in the lower Rogue have been best early in the day while bay trolling picking up mid-day. A few Chinook are being taken on the middle river where fishing for steelhead has been fair. Best results for summer are coming on the upper Rogue, however.

Crabbing from the public pier in Brookings Harbor has been decent over the past week but just as with the rest of the coast, it's much better in the ocean. With the mainstem Chetco closed above River Mile 2.2, the only option for river fishing is for sea-run cutthroat. Fortunately, results have been pretty good and bait may be used in tidewater but not above.

The blue-green algae advisory has been lifted at Diamond Lake. Fishing has been good although clear water will have depths of 20 or so feet most effective. Power Bait has been catching fish although trollers and fly fishers are taking their share.

The Rogue River above Lost Creek will be planted with trout again this week.

Central and Eastern Oregon – With Deschutes water temperatures still a little high, try the lower river for summers at first light when the

waters have dropped into the low 60s. Dedicated steelheaders are taking fish daily. Rattlesnakes are thick this year so use caution when on foot.

Trolling has been the most productive technique for kokanee at Paulina. The fish are in good condition and averaging 12 inches.

Fishing for kokanee has been fair to good at Wallowa. Deep trolling has been most effective. Trout fishing has also been productive with the majority of catches rainbows although a lake trout just over 20 pounds was landed here recently.

Odell has been fair for kokanee, slow to fair for lake trout with the latter biting better early mornings.

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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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.

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Write to the TGF staff:

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GOOD LUCK!