

The Guide's Forecast - volume 13 issue number 36

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 9th – September 15th, 2011**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Anchor fishing from Longview to Bonneville Dam is ramping up with wobbler anglers reporting good success, although inconsistent from 30 to 45 foot of water. Anglers must be cognizant of where they anchor as ship traffic has the right-of-way. The next two weeks should be peak fishing in the Portland to Longview stretch.

Bonneville counts are impressive now. It would be worth your time to take kids to the fish-viewing window just to see the magnitude of this run. Summer steelhead numbers are dropping but mid-river action, especially near the mouth of the Deschutes should continually be improving. Sturgeon retention in the Bonneville stretch won't open for another month.

Fall chinook and coho are crossing Willamette Falls in modest number. Bass fishing is good on the Willamette and will only get better as fall approaches.

The McKenzie remains in decent shape thanks to a wet spring and good snow pack. Trout and steelhead are being caught.

Santiam flows should remain steady until fall rains. Fishing is slow on the North Santiam, fair on the South Santiam.

A few steelhead have been caught on the Clackamas. Remaining spring chinook are dark. Coho should start showing up in fair numbers this week but often are reluctant biters.

Jigs & spinners are taking the occasional steelhead on the murky Sandy River but overall it's slow. Coho will be the target here soon.

Northwest – Hatchery coho showed in force on the Washington side just above the Astoria Bridge on Labor Day. Although limits are not consistent, it is the best hatchery coho fishing of the season. Coinciding with this fishery, the Tongue Point chinook bite turned on the next day. Chinook limits were common on Tuesday and Wednesday with many jacks legally retained as well. This fishery closes after September 9th but will remain open above Warrior Rock near St. Helens and increase to a two chinook bag limit until further notice.

Ocean fishers out of the Columbia are still catching coho and chinook but river action is much better.

The all-salmon ocean fishery closed to wild and hatchery coho salmon last night. Higher than anticipated angler effort and very successful catch rates allowed anglers to attain the quota faster than what was modeled. The ocean will remain open to chinook salmon however and action should pick up near estuary mouths, particularly Tillamook Bay.

The Tillamook, Nestucca, Salmon River, Siletz River and Alsea River estuaries should all be good options for lower bay herring trolling this weekend. Estuary mouths can be a dangerous place to fish so be sure your safety equipment is in good working order. Soft tides this weekend should produce fair catches for this early in the season.

Tuna anglers are struggling to find consistent success but they are averaging large right now. Interest is waning with most enthusiasts already looking forward to next summer.

Ocean crabbing is picking up and should stay good with the extended recreational fishery lasting through mid-October.

Southwest – The ocean coho fishery which allows retention of either wild or hatchery fish, closed Wednesday night. This section of the ocean will remain open to chinook however.

Tuna fishing has been hit or miss off the central coast but decent for those who locate schools of albacore and use live bait or jigs. Keeping one fish hooked up at all times keeps the school of fish interested.

Crabbing is fair to good at Winchester Bay. Smallmouth catches are excellent on the South Umpqua while steelheading on the North Umpqua has been slow.

Chinook fishing was fair to good on Coos Bay over the Labor Day weekend with very heavy boat traffic.

Boats launching out of Port Orford have done well for albacore over the past week.

Charters out of Gold Beach have been doing well for bottom fish despite the 20-fathom depth restriction. Limits of rockfish were taken recently along with good catches of lingcod to 30 pounds or better. Offshore salmon fishing also improved over the past week. Trollers using anchovies have continued to take chinook in Rogue Bay. Wrapped Kwikfish are taking fair to good numbers of chinook on the middle Rogue. Steelheading is good on the upper Rogue, which is flies-only through October.

Eastern – With the waters of the Deschutes markedly cooler than the Columbia, summer steelhead are entering in good numbers now, creating a fishery described by some as the best in 20 years.

Green Peter is producing good catches of kokanee averaging 14 inches.

Paulina has been very slow while nearby East Lake is producing good numbers of smallish kokanee

Fishing has been slow at Crane Prairie over the past week.

SW Washington – Most effort is taking place near the mouths of district tributaries. Cooler temperatures are drawing in a mixed bag of chinook, coho and steelhead. Trollers near the mouth of the Cowlitz are doing well, waiting for the tide to ebb to sit on anchor for the wobbler show.

Heavy restrictions will be in place for most rivers with coho the primary allowable focus through October.

Drano Lake anglers are scoring excellent catches of steelhead with an occasional chinook in the catch.

The Klickitat River is picking up for chinook and some steelhead. Coho catches should begin to increase in the coming weeks.

Columbia River Fishing Report – It's been the epic week we've been waiting for in the Tongue Point Chinook fishery. Hopefully TGF readers heeded the advice we gave last week and were able to take advantage of the ample Chinook opportunities on the lower Columbia. Yes, the Chinook are still chomping just above the bridge on the Washington side and yes, you still have to release them. Fortunately, the coho are present here however with good numbers of hatchery fish available too.

The small tides were predictably good for Tongue Point fishers and although we've seen better bites in the area, it was quite feasible to catch you 1 Chinook limit if you put in your time. The Chinook were still finicky at times with bait producing the most bites but spinners working well on the larger Chinook. Jack Chinook started showing in force (or not showing as they were hard to hook on many occasions) on Tuesday (9/5). We are having several jacks hit the deck above Tongue Point on a daily basis. The better fishing in the morning was just upstream of the deadline before the tide starting running hard. The bite did slow on the hard part of the incoming but picked back up again close to high slack. Action could easily heat up again on the first part of the outgoing with Chinook falling pretty easily to spinners and bait at this time of the tide.

Hatchery coho made a strong showing on Sunday (9/4). Action was fast and furious with a good percentage of hatchery fish finally showing. We took a 12 fish limit by about 2:00 p.m. that day and at least 8 released Chinook (not counting any sea lion action). The sea lions are getting more aggressive by the day. With the Tongue Point bite going off, not many boats have been targeting the coho on the Washington side so sea lions have gone to just following what few boats are over there, not giving an angler a chance once a hook up occurs. It's absolutely ridiculous, but I don't need to tell you that.

Coho fishing has also been good below the bridge on the Washington side with occasional flurries of activity on the Oregon side as well. There hasn't been much effort downstream of the Astoria Bridge although fish are likely ready and willing in that stretch. With the lower river Chinook closure, what little effort remains for the Astoria area will be focused primarily on hatchery coho. More on the details of this opportunity in the forecast section.

There are still folks going out side for ocean coho. Why that is, I don't know. Action is better in the river if you ask me. Hatchery coho limits are quite possible but you still have to weed through large numbers of wild fish and undersize Chinook. Chinook retention also re-opened on the ocean and anglers are reporting an occasional fish. Early mornings will continue to be best.

Upstream, anglers working wobblers for upriver brights are scoring good numbers of fish between Longview and Portland. Reports of consistent action and success are coming from Longview to the mouth of the Sandy with some sections of the river yielding better than a fish for every other boat. Here is the ODF&W breakdown for the weekend creel check:

On the lower Columbia this past weekend there were 1,625 salmonid boats and 166 Oregon bank anglers counted from Bonneville Dam downstream to Tongue Point on Saturday's (9/3) flight. Salmonid anglers had fair to good catch rates for fall chinook on the lower Columbia River this past weekend. In the Portland to Longview area boat anglers averaged 0.64 fall chinook and 0.03 coho caught per boat, while anglers fishing in Troutdale averaged 0.15 fall chinook and 0.05 coho caught per boat. Bank angling has been slow on the lower Columbia.

Gorge Bank:

Weekend checking showed four fall chinook adults kept for 39 bank anglers.

Gorge Boats:

Weekend checking showed no catch for one boat (two anglers).

Troutdale Boats:

Weekend checking showed six fall chinook adults, one adipose fin-clipped coho, and one adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus one unclipped coho released for 41 boats (91 anglers).

Portland to Longview Bank:

Weekend checking showed two fall chinook adults and one adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept for 33 bank anglers.

Portland to Longview Boats:

Weekend checking showed 152 fall chinook adults, five fall chinook jacks, six adipose fin-clipped coho adults, and seven adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus four fall chinook adults, one unclipped coho, and one unclipped steelhead released for 234 boats (589 anglers).

That's pretty good fishing and consistent with what goes on every year on the lower Columbia. Counts at Bonneville are on the up-tick with tens of thousands crossing every day and hundreds of thousands left to come if the run comes to fruition. There is a lot of good season left for the wobbler dunkers on the lower river and the bag limit increases to 2 fish per person on Saturday. Most anglers are using the 5 X 5 set up; defined as a 5-foot dropper lead line with a 5-foot leader to your wobbler. You need the tide to work your gear and although some anglers are using plugs to tempt fish, the hardware is working the best. Also, spinners are taking fish with some anglers quite successful trolling spinners on the incoming tide, particularly at the mouth of the Cowlitz River.

Bonneville anglers are taking a few fish backtrolling plugs but overall, the action is predictably slow for the numbers of fish crossing the dam. This section of river will pick up significantly later into September. The mouth of the Deschutes should begin to see some fair numbers of Chinook in the coming days. Steelhead action is good here too, especially in the early morning hours.

The Guide's Forecast – If you're going to keep fishing the estuary, it'll be a coho show only. Chinook up to Warrior Rock have to be released and anglers will likely continue to catch them for about another week. Coho fishing should stay steady for about the same time period.

Although there are good numbers of coho in the estuary now, that likely won't last long as the predicted return for Columbia River hatchery fish is relatively low. The overall run was predicted to be around 300,000 fish with those numbers split between the early "A" run returning now and the "B" run, returning in October. These numbers are lower than the last several years but should still provide some opportunity for the angler in the know.

Spinners are working well for coho and should continue to do so. It's still hard to beat bait however with a good response for anglers using fresh jigged anchovies lately. Fresh or frozen herring are working just fine too. Keep your gear near the bottom on the outgoing tide but do fish some offerings 12 to 20 strips on the flood tide. We've taken some nice fish well off of the bottom on the flood tide.

We repeat: Chinook retention closes after Friday, September 9th from Buoy 10 to Warrior Rock near St. Helens. This is to protect a sensitive strain of wild (tule) Chinook, destined for mostly SW Washington rivers.

Offshore out of the Columbia, action should still be fair for hatchery coho and fair at best for Chinook. Fish should be available both to the north and south of the river mouth. The weather doesn't look all that favorable through the weekend however. Here is the forecast:

FRI...N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 8 FT.
PATCHY FOG IN THE MORNING.

.FRI NIGHT...N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES
3 FT. W SWELL 8 FT. PATCHY FOG AFTER MIDNIGHT.

.SAT...N WIND 10 KT...BECOMING 10 TO 15 KT IN THE AFTERNOON.
GUSTS UP TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 8 FT. PATCHY FOG IN
THE MORNING.

.SAT NIGHT...NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT...BECOMING N 5 TO 10 KT AFTER
MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 6 FT.

.SUN...SW WIND 5 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 5 FT.

.MON...W WIND 5 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 5 FT.

That looks like a nice ocean in the early part of next week. Bring your crab pots, it's well worth the effort! Fresh salmon carcasses should not be hard to come by.

Anglers targeting upriver brights above Warrior Rock should continue to do good this week with peak catches likely to happen this week. The numbers of Chinook in the lower river are swelling and although anglers are catching ample numbers right now, if only 10% of the fish that are showing on your fish finder actually bit, how easy would it be to limit out? Yeah, easy. Use the 5 X 5 rule (see above) to fish for the biters that are traveling just above the bottom of the river. Also, remember, plunking, whether from a boat or the beach, is the only technique where the fish have to come to you to bite. You may want to employ scent as an attractor although not many anglers feel it's necessary to catch Chinook in this section.

Bonneville anglers will likely continue to be frustrated but their day will soon come. As water temperatures cool and more resident fish populate the area, more biters will fall to plugs in the fast water near the dam. Anglers certainly will have a few good days in this stretch at any given time but it becomes much more consistent later into the fall.

The sturgeon sanctuary is now open for oversize opportunity but most folks are concentrating on salmon, understandably. Catch and keep season re-opens in early October.

The mouth of the Deschutes should provide some opportunity for trollers, taking good numbers of summer steelhead and some fall Chinook. Ample numbers are certainly present. Trollers working plugs are likely to do the best.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Despite water temperatures in the upper 60s, fall Chinook and coho counts at Willamette Falls continue to pick up. The change of seasons is just around the corner.

McKenzie levels have risen this week at Vida from about 2,400 cfs to 2,800 cfs. Overall, though, the flows have been steady and reasonably fishable for this time of the year. Thousands of hatchery trout have been stocked below Leaburg Dam with the latest planting late in August and another truckload being delivered this week above the dam in the upper river.

Water conditions are good on the North Santiam but levels have dropped on the South.

Estacada Lake, Faraday Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake and the McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake are scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout.

The Guide's Forecast – Fishing for smallmouth bass remains the best bet on the Willamette with results fair below the Falls, good above.

Fishing for hatchery trout has been very good on the McKenzie with dry flies, attractors, terrestrials and nymphs all working at times.

North Santiam fly anglers are experiencing fair to good results for trout using primarily terrestrials and nymphs.

While spring Chinook may no longer be taken, summer steelhead are available in decent number with the best shot at a keeper on the South Santiam.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Dog days are solidly in place on the Clackamas as low, slow, clear water is hampering the light effort here. The good news is that coho are on the way.

The Sandy will remain murky as long as hot weather remains with us as glacial runoff will roil the water, reducing visibility to varying degrees.

The Guide's Forecast – Steelheading has slowed to a crawl on the Clackamas. It may well be time to take this one off the list until coho start to show.

A few springers have been taken on the Sandy recently but they have not been worth keeping. Effort has fallen off along with hookups and as fish quality tanks. There are rumors of coho hookups but no confirmed catches. They're on their way and will entertain those who can crack the code and beat lockjaw which typically frustrates anglers on the Sandy. When the coho fishery does begin, use caution crossing Cedar Creek as the depths changed during the last high water event. It will be crowded here in a couple of weeks and remain so into October.

North Coast Fishing Report – Action is gearing up on some north coast systems as fall Chinook begin to make their showing on many of Oregon's favored estuaries. Catches of Chinook have been reported on Tillamook and Nehalem with most serious Chinook fishers still looking at the Columbia as their main source of protein right now. This is leaving these systems under-utilized and quite enjoyable, especially if it weren't for the seaweed.

Tillamook and Nehalem Bays will be the best areas to target but with different regulations by watershed, study them closely as a ticket will ruin your outing. Most anglers are focusing this weeks efforts on the lower bay where soft tides have promoted fair opportunity for fresh run fish. Some effort for coho is taking place in the west channel of Tillamook Bay where the run is just getting underway.

Although reports from the Nestucca, Salmon and Alsea estuaries are sparse, catches are likely occurring. The tides are just too right for action not to be happening.

Crabbing has been good in the lower estuaries with crab finally beginning to fill in after a long summer molt. There are still softshells out there however. It's only going to get better.

The best wild coho fishing opportunities open up on September 15th on many Oregon coastal systems. More on that next week but it is a rare opportunity that sportanglers haven't been able to take advantage of for nearly 2 decades. Anglers may want to consider letting non-mortally wounded females go while keeping the better eating males out of the population.

The Guide's Forecast – Although tides are just starting on the increase, they are still not all that big. Early morning low tides are fairly significant, making for some good opportunity for anglers willing to work spinners and plugs in upper Tillamook Bay. There should be some Trask and Tillamook fish available where there won't be many people working the same water as you, at least not for another week or so. Hatchery coho should begin to show.

The Nestucca and Salmon Rivers should also be fair possibilities with bobber fishing a good option in the tidewater sections of these rivers. Some of the season's largest fish begin to show at this time which could lead to fame and fortune. The Necanicum is often overlooked but this system gets a small run of wild and hatchery Chinook. The tidewater section will produce the best.

The Alsea River and estuary can be a good surprise this time of year. It's due to heat up and an excellent run is in the forecast.

The ocean looks like a strong possibility early next week. Ocean crabbing should be excellent and Chinook fishing near the mouth should be good as well. It can often times be a place to get away from the seaweed before that program drives you out of your mind.

Tuna interest is waning. Although there is a rare report for a good catch, it's inconsistent consistently! Live bay becomes a good option this time of year.

Central & South Coast Reports – The non-selective (wild or hatchery) coho season ended midnight on Wednesday, September 8th with the 5,900-fish quota expected to be filled. This occurred prior to the scheduled September 10th closure as catches have been very good offshore. The ocean Chinook season remains open.

Ocean conditions have not been cooperative for tuna fishers this week out of central Oregon ports. While there is some moderation in forecasts over the weekend to come, next week looks positively friendly if predictions remain accurate. Albacore action isn't over by any means and October tuna catches aren't unusual.

The wild Coho starts September 15th on the Siletz, Yaquina, Alsea, Siuslaw, Umpqua, Coos and Coquille rivers. Later this fall, wild coho fisheries will commence at Siltcoos and Tahkenitch lakes. Daily and seasonal bag limits vary so be sure to check the regulations on any particular fishery or see Random Links, below, for details.

Halibut fishing remains open inside the 40-fathom line. While salmon may also be taken, rockfish, ling cod and other species are off limits. There is a quota to be filled although that number has not been revealed by the ODFW. For those targeting groundfish, the depth limit is 20 fathoms (240 feet).

While there are still softshells in evidence which require sorting, ocean crabbing has been excellent off the central Oregon coast and the condition of Dungeness is improving as fall approaches.

Sea-run cutthroat are entering most coastal streams and rivers now with action improving over the coming weeks. These trout are suckers for spinners or brightly-colored flies.

Chinook fishers on the lower Siuslaw are seeing slow but steady results. First light has been productive as has the period right around high tide.

Boats are advised to keep an eye out for gill nets on the lower Umpqua and steer clear of them. The ODFW has contracted to have green sturgeon captured in order to implant tracking devices, then be released for an ongoing study of the species. The Chinook bite has been sporadic around Reedsport. Some days it's on, others, despite fish showing on depth finders, nothing will draw a strike. Tournament participants over the past weekend had little to show for their efforts. The excellent crabbing took a nose dive toward the end of Labor Day weekend as crushing crowds impacted catches but results are expected to rebound now that the rush is over. Steelheading is fair on the North Umpqua. While smallmouth bass fishing is excellent on the South Umpqua, get a piece of the action while you can as the South will be closed as of September 16th to protect spawning Chinook.

Coos Bay trollers are making fair to good catches of Chinook amidst very heavy boat traffic. Hookups improved over the past week but the ODFW still estimates 16 hours of fishing time is required per Chinook. Not many are trying for crab although results have been pretty good. Coos Bay opens for wild coho September 15th through November 30th for a quota of 1,200 fish with one per day up to five allowed for the season.

The 12th Annual Coos Basin Amateur Salmon Derby will be held on the Coos River, September 10th and 11th as a fundraiser for Salmon Trout Enhancement Program (STEP). The largest weight fish wins a grand prize of \$500. Second and third place fish will win \$250 and \$100 respectively with prizes to 10th place. Tickets are \$20 for both days. The derbies will begin on Saturday morning and run until Sunday 3 PM. You don't have to fish to be eligible for a \$500 drawing along with other prizes. Preregistration, Ticket validation and Kick off BBQ will be held Friday the 9th at the North Bend Community Center 2222 Broadway Avenue in North Bend. Tickets can be purchased Friday night at the BBQ. Call 541-759-2709 for information.

Trollers have been experiencing reliable results with herring from Bandon To Rocky Point dueling incoming tide on the lower Coquille. Crabbing has been decent here. A wild coho season similar to the Coos opens here September 15th.

Chinook catches in Rogue Bay have been spotty as fish continue to move upriver in higher-than normal flows. Summer steelhead and half-pounder catches are fair at best in the lower Rogue. Back-bouncers and plug-pullers are taking fair to good numbers of Chinook in the Grants Pass stretch where some steelhead are also available. Upper Rogue long-rodgers are doing well since this stretch went flies-only on September 1st. Spinning rods may be used with a plastic bubble but nothing else - no weights or even swivels are legal now.

The Elk River area has gone over six weeks without any rain whatsoever. It remains to be seen what will become of the fall fishery here.

Fishing usually improves at Diamond Lake as fall approaches and this season is no exception. Eight-fish limits are common with Power Bait most effective. Best results are coming early mornings as the water is very clear.

Lost Creek Reservoir and Fish Lake are scheduled for trout planting

Central and Eastern Oregon – While caddis is the pattern of primary interest for trout on the lower Deschutes, results have slowed in hot weather. Steelheading, on the other hand, is only improving as are numbers in the lower river.

Fly anglers with a lock on the tricky Metolius are doing very well now. Take a variety of patterns and catch the hatches starting mid to late afternoon.

Odell is fishing very well for kokanee 12 inches or better. Trolling is effective at 50 feet or a little more and the fish are in excellent condition.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for September 2011

North Puget Sound

Anglers fishing the marine areas of Puget Sound should still find some pink salmon in early September. But the bulk of the pink run will have made its way into the region's rivers by the middle of the month.

"**Pink salmon** fishing is starting to pick up in the rivers as we move into September," said Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Freshwater fishing opportunities for pink salmon should be good early in the month." In northern Puget Sound, Thiesfeld recommends fishing for pink salmon in the Snohomish, Stillaguamish, Skagit and Snoqualmie rivers.

Back on the saltwater, anglers are hooking some bright **ocean coho** in portions of Puget Sound, said Thiesfeld. "We should see more and more of those ocean fish make their way into the Sound as the month progresses," he said.

Point No Point, Jefferson Head, Possession Bar and Shipwreck should be good spots to hook ocean coho, Thiesfeld said. Anglers fishing those areas – or other waters of marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) – have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release chinook. In Marine Area 10, anglers also must release chum salmon through Sept. 15, while those fishing in Marine Area 9 must release chum through Sept. 30.

Marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) are also open for salmon. Anglers fishing those two marine areas have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release chinook salmon.

Another option is Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where anglers have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but can keep only one chinook. Anglers in Marine Area 7 must release chum and wild coho.

Thiesfeld said the best bet for **freshwater anglers fishing for coho** salmon in the region might be the Snohomish, Skykomish and Snoqualmie rivers, where abundant runs are expected to return this year. Other options for coho include the Nooksack, Skagit and Stillaguamish rivers.

Meanwhile, most areas of Puget Sound will close to **recreational crab fishing** at sunset on Labor Day. The only two areas of the Sound that will remain open to crab fishing after Labor Day are marine areas 7-North (Gulf of Georgia) and 7-South (San Juan Islands/Bellingham). Crabbing in those two areas is open through Sept. 30.

Sport fishers who crab in marine areas 7-North and 7-South after Labor Day must record their catch on winter catch record cards. Winter cards are now available at sporting good stores and other license vendors across the state.

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6¼ inches. Fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. See WDFW's [sport-crabbing website](#) for more information.

Crabbers are reminded that their summer catch record cards are due to WDFW by Oct. 1 and must be returned whether or not the cardholder caught or fished for crab during the season. Crabbers who fail to file catch reports for 2011 will face a \$10 fine, which will be imposed when they apply for a 2012 Puget Sound crab endorsement. Completed cards can be mailed in or recorded online. Additional information is available on [WDFW's website](#).

WDFW will announce winter crab seasons for Puget Sound in early October, after completing its assessment of the summer fishery.

Elsewhere, **Lake Sammamish** is open for salmon fishing, with a daily limit of four salmon, of which two may be chinook. All sockeye must be released, and fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek. Sammamish Lake's larger neighbor, **Lake Washington**, opens Sept. 16 to coho fishing. Anglers will be allowed four coho per day (minimum size 12 inches) from waters north of the Highway 520 Bridge and east of the Montlake Bridge.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Starting Labor Day, anglers fishing off the Washington coast can again catch and keep one chinook salmon per day as part of their daily catch limit.

Fishery managers for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) approved the change a week after announcing that anglers would be required to release any chinook salmon they catch in coastal waters.

Pat Pattillo, salmon policy coordinator for WDFW, said updated harvest data show that ocean catch rates slowed enough prior to the chinook closure on Monday (Aug. 29) to allow anglers to resume catching chinook salmon Sept. 5.

"When we announced the chinook closure, harvest rates were at record levels," Pattillo said. "Since then, the catch has slowed substantially and we're confident that we can keep the fishery open through the end of the season."

Anglers fishing in all ocean areas can currently catch up to two marked, hatchery coho salmon per day, and those fishing in marine areas 3 and 4 can also catch one additional pink salmon per day. Starting on Labor Day, they will again be able to substitute a chinook salmon for one coho salmon in their daily catch.

Salmon fishing is scheduled to continue through Sept. 18 in marine areas 2 (Westport-Ocean Shores), 3 (LaPush) and 4 (Neah Bay), and through Sept. 30 in Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco). However, salmon 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](#).

In the **Strait of Juan de Fuca**, anglers fishing in late August were having some success catching ocean coho, said Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound salmon manager for WDFW. "The pink

run is moving into the rivers, so anglers are turning their attention to coho salmon," he said. "Labor Day weekend is usually the peak of the hatchery coho run in the Strait."

Anglers fishing marine areas 5 (Sekiu) and 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release chum, chinook and wild coho. Regulations change in Marine Area 5 on Sept. 19, when anglers will no longer have a bonus bag limit for pink salmon but they will be allowed to retain wild coho.

"Fishing for coho salmon should get even better in the middle of the month, when anglers fishing Marine Area 5 can retain any coho salmon," Thiesfeld said.

Farther south, salmon fishing opens Sept. 1 north of Ayock Point in Hood Canal (Marine Area 12), where the daily limit is four coho. All other salmon species must be released. The same rules apply to the Quilcene/Dabob bay fishery, which opened for salmon fishing Aug. 16.

Salmon fishing is currently open south of Ayock Point, where anglers can retain two chinook as part of their four salmon daily limit. However, they must release chum salmon.

In the **southern portion of Puget Sound**, anglers fishing Marine Area 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release wild chinook. Anglers fishing Marine Area 13 (South Puget Sound) have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook and wild coho.

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. See WDFW's [sport-crabbing website](#) for more information.

Crabbers are reminded that their summer catch record cards are due to WDFW by Oct. 1 and must be returned whether or not the cardholder caught or fished for crab during the season. Crabbers who fail to file catch reports for 2011 will face a \$10 fine, which will be imposed when they apply for a 2012 Puget Sound crab endorsement. Completed cards can be mailed in or recorded online. Additional information is available on the [WDFW website](#).

WDFW will announce winter crab seasons for Puget Sound in early October, after completing its assessment of the summer fishery.

In freshwater, the popular salmon fishery on the **Puyallup River** is in full swing. Anglers fishing the Puyallup should continue to hook pink salmon through the middle of September, when the focus will shift to coho. Anglers are reminded that the Puyallup River is closed to fishing Sept. 4,

5, 6, 11, 12 and 13 from the 11th Street Bridge to the City of Puyallup outfall structure across the river from the junction of Freeman Road and North Levee Road.

Elsewhere, **several rivers** around the region open to salmon fishing Sept. 1, including the Carbon River in Pierce County; Copalis River, Van Winkle Creek and Joe Creek in Grays Harbor County; the Bear and Niawiakum rivers in Pacific County; and Clearwater River in Jefferson County. Salmon fisheries on the Skokomish and Nisqually rivers are already under way. Before heading out, anglers should check the [Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet](#) for all rules and regulations.

Southwest Washington

September is prime time for salmon fishing in the Columbia River Basin, as large numbers of fish move upriver and into tributaries on both sides of Bonneville Dam. Anglers fishing the lower river from Buoy 10 to the dam this season are expected to reel in nearly 32,000 **fall chinook** and 8,000 **hatchery coho** – most of them, this month.

"Prospects are good for salmon fishing this month, but it's important to remember these fish are on the move," said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "As the month goes on, successful anglers will follow the fish upriver and into the tributaries."

The retention fishery for chinook salmon ended Aug. 28 at Buoy 10, but hatchery coho should remain strong below Rocky Point throughout the month. Even so, the prospect of catching a hefty chinook salmon is drawing most anglers farther upstream.

Through Sept. 9, anglers can keep one adult chinook per day as part of their limit from Rocky Point upriver to Bonneville Dam. Anglers fishing those waters have a daily limit of six fish, including two adult salmon (chinook or hatchery coho) or hatchery steelhead, or one of each. Beginning Sept. 10, chinook retention will close from the Lewis River downstream but increase to a maximum of two adult chinook per day upriver to Bonneville Dam. Starting Oct. 1, when most wild tules have passed, the stretch of the Columbia River below the Lewis River will also open to retention of two adult chinook per day.

"Anglers targeting chinook do best in fairly deep water – 40 to 50 feet down," Hymer said. "Some of the best fishing for both salmon and steelhead will be at the mouth of tributaries, where the fish hold up before heading upstream."

As the month progresses, salmon fishing will heat up farther upstream in the tributaries, Hymer said. He reminds anglers of several new rules that will be in effect on various rivers this season:

- **Grays, Elochoman, and Washougal rivers** – Waters will be closed to fishing immediately above and below the racks/weirs (when they're in place).
- **Cowlitz and Tilton rivers** – Starting Sept. 1, night closure and anti-snagging rules will be in effect on the Cowlitz River from the posted PUD markers on Peters Road to the mouth of Ohanepecosh and Muddy Fork and on the Tilton River from the mouth to West Fork. When the anti-snagging rule is in effect, only fish hooked inside the mouth may be retained. This hooking rule has been in effect from Mill Creek to Barrier Dam on the Cowlitz River since April and runs through November.
- **Kalama River** – A stationary gear restriction will be in effect from Sept. 1 through Oct. 31 from the railroad bridge below I-5 upstream to the natural gas pipeline. (Historically, the markers at the mouth of the river were the lower boundary for this rule.) The railroad bridge now marks the lower boundary for the stationary gear restriction, the night closure and anti-snagging rule.

- **Wind and White Salmon rivers** – The daily limit is based on the most liberal regulation in effect on those two rivers or the adjacent section of the mainstem Columbia River. This rule effectively allows anglers to keep an unmarked fall chinook near the mouth of those two rivers.

Like last year, anglers can retain up to **six hatchery adult 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. Regulations for these and other fisheries are described in WDFW's [Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet](#).

Anglers planning to fish the North Fork Lewis River should be aware that the Yale Park boat ramp will be closed from Sept. 5 through October. PacifiCorp will be making upgrades include resurfacing the parking lot, adding parking lines and providing a wheelchair-accessible route through the day-use area. The Beaver Bay boat ramp at the upper end of Yale Reservoir will remain open.

There are, of course, a variety of other fishing opportunities besides salmon available to area anglers this month. Anglers are still catching **walleye** below Bonneville Dam and **trout fishing** is still an option at Tilton River and a number of lowland lakes, including Swift Reservoir and Mayfield Lake.

But for anglers who don't mind a hike, September is a great time to head for the **high wilderness lakes** around Mount Adams and Mount St. Helens. Hymer recommends three such lakes – Goose, Council and Tahkalkh – that offer drive-in access.

"The mosquitoes should die down around the high mountain lakes after the first frost arrives," Hymer said. "Sure, the fish are usually small, but the leaves are beginning to turn, the air is crisp and you can really experience the change of season."

Eastern Washington

September fishing can be very productive throughout the eastern region, with cooling lake water for trout and growing runs of steelhead and salmon in rivers.

The Snake River hatchery **steelhead** season is open Sept. 1 through March 31, when up to three hatchery marked (adipose-fin-clipped) steelhead can be kept. For the first time in recent history, the entire Snake River also opened Sept. 1 to retention of hatchery **chinook salmon**.

Glen Mendel, WDFW southeast district fish biologist, said the fishery is possible because of the large run of upriver bright hatchery fall chinook expected to return to the Snake River this year. Those fish are making their way up the Columbia to the Snake and should start to make up some of the catch by mid-September. The season could remain open through Oct. 31, unless catch rates exceed or run size fails to meet expectations.

As with steelhead, all wild chinook – which are protected under the Endangered Species Act – must be released immediately without removing them from the water. But anglers can keep three hatchery marked (adipose fin-clipped) fall chinook adults (24 inches in length and larger), and three adipose fin-clipped jack fall chinook (less than 24 inches, but at least 12 inches). The rule is consistent with Idaho regulations allowing harvest of hatchery fall chinook in the Idaho boundary waters of the Snake River.

Anglers must use barbless hooks when fishing for chinook or steelhead in the Snake, and they must stop fishing for salmon and steelhead for the day once they have retained three hatchery steelhead, regardless of whether the salmon daily limit has been retained.

Several of the region's best **rainbow** and/or **cutthroat trout** fishing lakes close at the end of September. This month is the last chance to fish Badger, Fish, West Medical and Williams lakes in southwest Spokane County; Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County; and Fan Lake in Pend Oreille County. Amber and North Silver lakes in Spokane County shift to catch-and-release only on Oct. 1.

Chris Donley, WDFW central district fish biologist, said that depending on air and water temperature changes and fall insect hatches, those lakes can be almost as productive as the first weeks of the season in the spring.

Two other lakes in the central district – Lincoln County's Coffeepot Lake and Spokane County's Downs Lake – close at the end of the month, but are usually good bets in September for **yellow perch** fishing. Coffeepot also yields rainbows and **black crappie**.

Plenty of lakes throughout the region remain open through October or year-round, and can provide good fishing in September. Clear Lake, near the town of Medical Lake, has **brown trout** biting during the month and usually produces good catches of crappie and **largemouth bass** as fall advances. Stevens County's Deer and Loon lakes continue to provide a variety of fish, from bass to **kokanee**. Lake Roosevelt and Sprague Lake both offer good-size rainbows.

Fishing at hatchery-trout-stocked Tucannon River impoundments in the southeast district slowed in the heat of the summer, but should pick up this month with cooling water temperatures. Three of the seven – Beaver, Deer and Watson lakes – have had low water levels for the past month and are likely not fishable. But Big Four, Blue, Curl and Rainbow lakes may be worth trying. The Tucannon fishing lakes are on WDFW's Wooten Wildlife Area, where manager Kari Dingman reports extremely dry conditions. She reminds fishers who plan to use the area's campgrounds that there is a ban on campfires through September, by order of the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Northcentral Washington

Some popular **rainbow trout** lakes in Okanogan County that have been under catch-and-release rules all spring and summer are shifting to "catch and keep" fishing. Starting Sept. 1, anglers will be allowed to catch five trout a day on Campbell, Cougar and Davis lakes in the Winthrop area. WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist Bob Jateff says anglers at these lakes can expect fish in the 10-12- inch range, with carryovers up to 15 inches. Bait is allowed on all three lakes, but last year's new county ordinance prohibits gas-powered motors on Davis Lake.

September is also a good time to hike up to one of many alpine lakes in Okanogan County and cast for **cutthroat trout**, Jateff said. With dry conditions and some wildfires already burning, anglers should watch for burning restrictions on public lands.

Jateff also notes that anglers should watch for an announcement about an opportunity to fish without limits at three Okanogan County trout lakes that are scheduled to be treated this fall to get rid of undesirable fish species. Alta Lake near Pateros, along with Fish Lake and Schallow Pond near Conconully, will have catch limits lifted later this month, so that anglers can remove as many fish as possible before rehabilitation next month.

Starting Sept. 1, the fishery for hatchery **summer chinook salmon** that opened on the lower Wenatchee River will expand to include the stretch from Peshastin Creek to above Dryden Dam

and the Icicle Creek road bridge west of Leavenworth. Anglers can retain two adipose-fin-clipped adult or jack summer chinook salmon, but all other fish must be released. Selective gear rules and night closure are in effect. The season is scheduled to run through Oct. 15.

For all the rules on these and other seasons, anglers should check the fishing pamphlet or emergency rule updates at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/> .

Southcentral Washington

Counts of **chinook salmon** and **steelhead** passing McNary Dam have been climbing day by day, setting the stage for popular fisheries throughout the region. While those fisheries often start out slow, they can ramp up quickly by mid-September as more fish move past the dam. "There's a lot of anticipation out there right now," said Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Anglers are catching fish here and there, but they know a lot more are headed our way. By the middle of the month, we could have several thousand upriver brights in the Hanford Reach."

According to the preseason forecast, 760,600 **fall chinook salmon** will enter the Columbia River this year, and about two-thirds of them will move past Bonneville Dam.

Most areas of the Columbia River have been open for salmon fishing since Aug. 1, and two major tributaries will open in September. The Yakima River opens for salmon fishing Sept. 1 from the Columbia River upstream to Prosser Dam, although the area around the Chandler Powerhouse will remain closed as in previous years. "The best fishing on the Yakima is in October, but some fish will start moving in this month," Hoffarth said.

Farther east, the Snake River also opened Sept. 1 for hatchery fall chinook above the Highway 12 Bridge. Anglers must use barbless hooks when fishing for salmon and steelhead in the Snake River. Anglers are advised to check the *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet and [emergency rules](#) for all waters before heading out.

Anglers are also catching some **hatchery steelhead**, and the harvest should pick up throughout the month, Hoffarth said. Catches were above normal – but still slow – in late August on the Columbia River from the Highway 395 Bridge (Blue Bridge) downstream. Hoffarth noted that steelhead fishing above the Highway 395 Bridge is not scheduled to open until Oct. 1, but could open earlier if the numbers pick up.

Effective Sept. 1, the Snake River opens for hatchery steelhead fishing with barbless hooks. "As with salmon, look for fishing to improve as the water cools and more fish move upriver," Hoffarth said. "Steelhead move fast. They don't stay in one spot very long, so anglers have to be there when they arrive."

Meanwhile, **walleye** fisheries are in full swing, producing nice catches in the Columbia River above and below McNary Dam, as well as in the Snake River. **Sturgeon** fishing is restricted to catch and release in most of the Columbia River, including Lake Wallula and the Hanford Reach. **Trout** fishing is also still an option in many southcentral region rivers and streams, including the Yakima, Naches, Little Naches, and Bumping rivers in Yakima County, and the upper reaches of Taneum Creek, Naneum Creek, Manastash Creek, and the forks of the Teanaway in Kittitas County. Most rivers and creeks have special regulations like selective gear rules that prohibit bait. Most also have statewide trout catch limits of two trout with an 8-inch minimum size. Anglers should check the rules pamphlet for all details.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

Subscriber Bob G. writes, "I was wondering about the annual forecasts for Tillamook Bay and where to find them? Also about forecasts for each river(Wilson, Trask and Tillamook)? Is there a forecast for returning chinook to the Trask river hatchery? I am planning several trips to Tillamook bay and like to compare forecasts for previous years.

"Any help would be greatly appreciated"

TGF co-editor and pro guide Bob Rees responds, "The forecasts may not be that detailed, that is, broke down by river. The best way to get this info is to call ODF&W in Tillamook and talk to Chris Knutsen. The number there is: (503) 842-2741. I'm sure they have this info electronically and should be able to send it over to you. Should be a good season!

"Good luck!"

Subscriber Mark B. wrote to ask, "I'm brand new to fishing from a boat and I'm not familiar with good spots to fish in the Portland Metro area. We plan on heading out on a weekday sometime next week, do you have any suggestions on where we should focus our efforts?

"Any advice you can offer would be greatly appreciate"

TGF co-editor Michal Teague responded, "We're always delighted to hear from readers and offer whatever advice we can to help them catch more fish. If you're thinking of fishing Multnomah Channel (or any part of the lower Willamette), there's not much fishing to be had, however.

"You didn't mention what sort of boat you have but your best bet at this time is the Columbia. Please let us know about the size of your craft so we can provide detailed information."

Mark responded, "Thanks for getting back to me. We are in a 18 ft Striper with a 120 horse outboard and 6 horse trolling motor, should handle the Columbia alright."

And Michael replied, "I agree, Mark. You should be good to go. Check today's TGF for details on the Columbia fishery and keep your eye on the wild coho fishery starting up at many location on the Oregon coast on September 15th.

"Please let us know how you do!"

Write to the TGF staff:

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Random Links

Tiger on the Clackamas:

http://www.oregonlive.com/oregon-city/index.ssf/2011/09/high_rocks_daredevil_caretaker_craig_tiger_hasty_helps_improve_oregon_city_side_of_swimming_hole.html

Bill Monroe on the smokin' Deschutes:

http://www.oregonlive.com/sports/oregonian/bill_monroe/index.ssf/2011/09/post_7.html

2011 Coastal Fall Chinook and Coho Salmon Sport Regulations:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/docs/2011_Coastal_Fall_Chinook_Seasons_table.pdf

Southern Oregon - September Coastal Fishing Preview:

<http://www.southernoregonfishingreports.com/2011/08/september-fishing-preview.html>

GOOD LUCK!