

The Guide's Forecast - volume 13 issue number 42

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 28<sup>th</sup> – November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Recent creel checks for boaters working the Gorge near Bonneville still show willing chinook falling to backrolled plugs and boats on anchor. Although the quality of fish is quickly degrading, a late showing of bright fish at the mouth a few weeks ago could keep this fishery going into early November. Fish of any quality however will be increasingly more challenging to find.

Sturgeon action in the gorge continues to decline with bank anglers tallying just a keeper for every 10 rods. Boat anglers aren't even producing that. The mainstem Columbia will slowly go to sleep over the next few weeks.

With little change in the water temperature or flow at Willamette Falls, fish passage has nearly ceased. Catch and release fishing in the lower Willamette has been very good reports **pro guide Frank Russum (503-804-1622)**. Frank suggests for the purposes of good action, fish the lower Willamette versus the Columbia River Gorge.

Trout fishing has been very good on the McKenzie for a mix of rainbows and cutthroat. Fly anglers are occasionally surprised by steelhead hookups.

Trout fishing is fair on the North Santiam but closes after October 31st.

Fishing has been very slow in the low, clear water of the Clackamas.

A few coho are being hooked on the Sandy but many have been dark. Anglers are advised to stay clear of spawning chinook.

**Northwest –** Anglers on Tillamook Bay continue to produce reliable results for chinook throughout the estuary. With the strong tide series through the weekend, action should remain the best in the lower bay early on the incoming tide and move to the upper estuary as high slack occurs. The west channel is hit or miss but some chinook are still being taken there.

Lenora Lawrence of Oceanside took a 24-pound buck in the Ghost Hole on Tuesday. The fish took a whole herring in 12 feet of water on the early part of the incoming tide.

Spinner fishers on Tillamook are taking a mix of wild coho, which must be released, and chinook in the middle and upper bay. Tidewater bobber fishers on the Trask and Wilson Rivers should start to see improved catches this weekend. Precipitation is in the forecast but measureable rainfall will likely not be significant enough to jump-start the driftboat season.

The Nehalem remains an option for both chinook and coho although coho catch rates have dropped dramatically. Chinook fishing should be best from Wheeler upstream as strong tides should push fish well into the estuary. Only a few hundred fish remain on the wild coho quota but it is the only remaining wild coho fishery open on the north coast.

The Nestucca tidewater still holds fish but many are turning dark. Fresh fish may arrive on the current tide series however. The Salmon River run is about over but bobber fishers may see another batch of wild fish too.

Although effort is light and reports sparse, some late run coho may make a showing in the lower Columbia. These same coho should be available at SW Washington tributaries this week for anglers casting spinners or plunking eggs.

Trout season closes in many north coast basins after October 31<sup>st</sup>. Check regulations before heading out.

Crabbing will remain good in most estuaries but extreme tides will keep most keepers buried until the water velocity slows.

**Southwest** – The wild coho fishery is over in rivers on the southwest coast although the troll fishery at Tenmile Lake has yet to start producing.

Offshore bottomfish trips were postponed off the central coast early this week due to unfavorable ocean conditions but tuna remain on the radar with fish reported within 30 miles of port. October 31st is the last day nearshore halibut may be taken.

Winchester Bay has been rewarding to trollers targeting chinook and crab catches have improved over the past week. Crabbing has been excellent for boaters in Coos Bay around Charleston where chinook fishing has been good for trollers.

Fishing slowed in Rogue Bay and the lower river late into the past weekend. At last report, only a few coho, most of which were wild requiring release, and the occasional jack were taken. Steelheading remains worthwhile in the Flies-only upper Rogue.

While chinook fishing has been slow to get underway in the Chetco estuary, a 50-pounder was landed on Friday last week during a guided trip. Rain will energize this fishery, predicted to be about 35% greater than the 20-year average. The Chetco River is closed above mile 2.2 until November 5th.

Anglers awaiting rain are gathering at the mouth of the Elk although fishing has been slow with only a few jacks to show for their effort.

Trout fishing remains good at Diamond Lake for those fishing Power Bait in 15 to 20 feet of water. This coming weekend is the last chance to fish it.

**Eastern** – With steelhead scattered on the Deschutes, the better opportunity for the coming weekend is above Maupin. Expect to fish hard between hookups. Trout fishers are doing well by throwing nymphs.

Metolius fly fishers have been doing well for late-season bull trout.

Despite good water conditions, success on the Grande Ronde was limited until last week. With temperatures dropping and steelhead more receptive, action on the Grande Ronde, Imnaha and Umatilla should heat up. Although the fish are not large, their numbers can provide all day action for an angler versed in small stream tactics.

**SW Washington** – Coho remain available in the Cowlitz, Kalama and Lewis Rivers. Fishing has tapered but fresh fish should be available into early November. There are still some chinook being taken on the Lewis River but most are dark.

Two winter steelhead have already entered the fish trap on the Cowlitz River. Action is more likely to pick up around Thanksgiving.

The White Salmon and Klickitat Rivers are still good options for coho and an occasional chinook. The White Salmon will close to fishing early next week as the Condit Dam is slated for blasting. Be prepared for a quick closure notice.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Catch rates for sturgeon continue to slow in what historically used to be an excellent time to target sturgeon near the deadline. Keepers are becoming more scarce for both bank and boat anglers in the area. **Pro guide Frank Russum (503-804-1622)** reports that fat, fresh ocean keepers have been absent in this fishery this year. It's not always the case but these fish clearly over-summered in the gorge this year. Frank has been fishing in the lower Willamette and having excellent success for sturgeon recently. Sand shrimp has been one of the better baits but squid can make for good action as well.

Anglers still looking for catch and keep opportunities should still look to the gorge for a fair chance at a keeper but the Longview to Kalama area has also been producing a few fish. ODF&W creel checks for the weekend went as follows:

**Gorge Bank:**

Weekend checking showed six legal white sturgeon kept, plus three oversize and 16 sublegal sturgeon released for 62 bank anglers.

**Gorge Boats:**

Weekend checking showed two legal white sturgeon kept, plus one legal, two oversize and 65 sublegal sturgeon released for 16 boats (49 anglers).

**Troutdale Boats:**

Weekend checking showed one legal white sturgeon kept, plus 69 sublegal sturgeon released for 40 boats (94 anglers).

**Portland to Longview Bank:**

Weekend checking showed eight sublegal sturgeon released for 35 bank anglers.

**Portland to Longview Boats:**

Weekend checking showed six legal white sturgeon kept, plus 51 sublegal sturgeon released for 58 boats (144 anglers).

As for salmon, action remains good for anglers still trying at Bonneville. The weekend check was quite impressive although effort continues to dwindle. Anchor anglers have done well this season but backtrollers are taking their toll as well. This fishery has gone well for a surprisingly long time this year although I expect it to drop off dramatically at any time. With exception of the Washington tributary mouths, salmon action throughout the lower river (downstream of Bonneville) is slow and won't get any better until February. Here are the creel checks for the lower Columbia from the weekend:

**Gorge Bank:**

Weekend checking showed three fall chinook adults and one fall chinook jack kept, plus one fall chinook adult released for 12 bank anglers.

**Gorge Boats:**

Weekend checking showed 14 fall chinook adults, four fall chinook jacks, two adipose fin-clipped coho adults, and one adipose fin-clipped coho jack kept, plus two fall chinook adults released for seven boats (22 anglers).

**Troutdale Boats:**

Weekend checking showed one fall chinook adult, and one fall chinook jack kept, plus two fall chinook adults released for 25 boats (49 anglers).

**Portland to Longview Bank:**

Weekend checking showed no catch for seven bank anglers.

**Portland to Longview Boats:**

No report.

The John Day fishery is beginning to take off with steelhead dominating the catch although there are clearly still some salmon around. Here is the creel check:

**John Day Pool (Columbia River above John Day Dam and John Day Arm):**

Weekly checking showed four adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus one unclipped steelhead released for 11 bank anglers; and three fall chinook adults, one fall chinook jack, and nine adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus 18 unclipped steelhead released for 46 boats.

This fishery will continue to build for steelhead with the peak coming later into November. With a good summer steelhead passage year, expect this fishery to be as good as it ever has, and that's pretty good. Trolled plugs take the majority of steelhead in this fishery and that's not likely to change anytime soon.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Look for salmon and sturgeon fishing to continue to drop off as temperatures drop, keepers get culled and run timing wanes. Salmon are still an option but the quality of fish and quantity should drop off dramatically in the coming weeks. Plugs will remain the best attractant with both power water anchor anglers and backtrollers producing results. Don't be surprised if an oversize sturgeon grabs your plug however. Adjust your rigging accordingly, especially if you value your best producing plugs.

Sturgeon action will remain a toss-up between the gorge and the Portland to Longview stretch. It's evident that the higher quality keepers are coming from the downstream areas and shaker action is good enough to provide a quality day. Use smelt, squid, shrimp or a combination thereof. Keepers will be hard to come by but the gorge will likely remain the best option for a keeper for the next few weeks.

The lower river may have some late coho available but don't count on limit fishing. It may be worthwhile however to troll on the incoming tide while you wait for crab to fill your crab traps. Crabbing should continue to produce strong results but with the more extreme tide series we're currently on, you have to be careful when and where you plant your crab pots. The strong incoming or outgoing tide will certainly drag your buoy's underwater until the water slacks up. Limits of crab should still be quite feasible.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – Summer steelhead, coho and, with a few exceptions, Chinook, continue to trickle over Willamette Falls in low single digits. Some comment has been made regarding low coho numbers this year (3,242 as of October 26th this year, over 19,000 on that date in 2010, over 23,000 in 2009) but this year's numbers are closer to an average run as the last couple of seasons were unusually large. With flows changing little over the past week, there's little reason to expect to see much of a change in fish activity until seasonal precipitation begins.

McKenzie water levels and flows are at optimum following a spike earlier this week. Redsidies and large cuts await long-rodders on a river awash in brilliant fall colors.

The North Santiam is still high with the safest run for drift boats below Stayton. The river is resplendent with fall foliage.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Opportunities for trout and steelhead remain available to those fishing above the Falls in the Middle Fork Willamette. Smallmouth bass are also active in the upper mainstem as are largemouth in backwaters and sloughs.

McKenzie fly rodders are keeping offerings wet and hooking steelhead periodically. When (and many days, if) hatches occur, there is some dry action but wise heads are waiting for the bugs to show before changing tactics.

There are a few coho in the North Santiam where anglers have had the occasional hookup around Green's Bridge but numbers coming upriver are too low this year to get anyone excited. Trout fishing will close on the North Santiam at sundown on October 31st.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – Without rainfall, conditions on the Clackamas are virtually unchanged. Low, clear water has kept fishing at a near-standstill. Coho have been slow to enter with only a couple of hookups reported over the past week and no particular area more productive than another.

Despite a slight increase in flows on the Sandy over the past week, results for coho fishers have remains spotty at best.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Showers in the forecast over the next few days will do little to improve water conditions on the Clackamas. With better options available, we can only urge those who'd like to actually catch a fish to take advantage of them. In lousy water conditions, Eagle Creek will not be an option over the coming week.

Without significant rainfall in the forecast, there will be little to improve water conditions on the Sandy. Coho are being taken daily on spinners, plugs and cured eggs, but not many. Recent catches have been a mix of bright and dark fish. Unfortunately, the Sandy is still the best bet in the valley for a coho hookup even as slow as it is.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Salmon fishing continues to march on in the most reliable fishery on the north coast. Tillamook Bay continues to produce good catches of salmon in what most guides are deeming one of the better seasons in recent history. Although we've seen better, not by much. A skunk day is a rare occasion this year although it has likely happened to many of us. Regardless, some form of action is likely over the course of a full day of fishing. On Wednesday, we had just 4 bites but got 2 chinook, one tipping the scales at 26 pounds. I do however have to count the dogfish shark we brought to the boat before it sawed through the leader. This phenomenon happened on the west channel. It was the highlight of the day in the west channel as I didn't hear of any salmon taken over there on Wednesday. It has been slow over there recently.

As is to be expected, most of the action took place on the east side of the bay; the Ghost Hole and Bay City, on the first part of the incoming tide. There has been a consistent bite on the early part of the incoming tide in the Ghost Hole and shortly thereafter, at Bay City for anglers trolling

herring. It's been notably crowded too however. This is a place where it pays to have a stand-out bait. That would be a different roll or scented baits. The fish have plenty of baits to choose from. On Tuesday, I worked 5 rods with herring; 2 rigged with whole baits and 3 rigged plug-cut. All three chinook we caught that day were taken on whole rigged herring. The plug cut bait did take a wild coho (promptly released) and had another bite which I believe may have been a coho as well. Make no mistake, plug-cut herring will take fish (just ask everyone else out there fishing) but doing something different when everyone else is trolling plug cut baits may pay dividends. Ironically, our 2 chinook on Wednesday took plug-cut baits.

Spinners have been taking a fair number of fish, including in the lower bay where very few are trolling blades, at Bay City for example. Most anglers working the upper bay are trolling spinners and having good luck. As a matter of fact, there has been a good bite half way into the incoming tide at Ray's Place piling in the middle bay. Many of those fish are falling to spinners. Some anglers are finding success with plugs as well. Backtrollers holding on the incoming tide are taking fish with some regularity in the upper bay and occasionally in the lower bay as well. The extreme incoming tide has made this a good option lately.

Upper bay fishing has been good at times with the early morning low slack producing the best results. Action doesn't pick back up again until well into the incoming tide and although there hasn't been an outstanding bite at high slack, there have been some fish taken at this magical moment on some days. Spinners and herring work well at high slack in the upper bay.

Tidewater anglers are finding some fish as strong tides are pushing fresh fish into the lower reaches of the Trask, Tillamook and Wilson Rivers. Fish are available in all of these systems. The Wilson should become a better option in the coming weeks. Low slack remains the best time to catch fish and there should be many available during this tide series.

The Nehalem remains an option for chinook and coho although the wild coho fishery is underperforming expectations. This doesn't worry district biologists however as all the other watersheds are meeting expectations for wild coho. The Nehalem remains the only north coast option still open for consumptive opportunity. It could close at any time for wild fish however so do watch the ODF&W updates by going to:  
[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/wild\\_coho.asp](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/wild_coho.asp).

The chinook bite on the Nehalem is hit or miss but there has been some fairly good fishing in recent days albeit inconsistent. Herring in the Wheeler to Nehalem stretch is a good option but some anglers have reported good success from Nehalem Bay State Park to Wheeler as well. It's clearly a better year for chinook on the Nehalem but what's really good news is that the ODF&W spawning ground checkers are finding lots of spawning summer chinook as well as their spawned out carcasses in the Vernonia area.

The Nestucca is another nice surprise this season with a fair number of hatchery fish in the mix. Tidewater is producing some fair results with one guide reporting a 4-fish limit on Tuesday trolling herring in tidewater. He admitted losing lots of gear to snags but likely did better than most in this section of tidewater dominated by bobber and bait fishers. It's been a good season on this system as well although not quite up to the good 'ol days. Thankfully, it's rebounding.

The Salmon is still an option but on the way out as hatchery fish clearly supplement this fishery and most often return in late September and early October. There is still some reportable effort taking place but it is finally winding down. There is likely to be a last spurt of fish on this big tide series however.

The less-mentioned Necanicum River has chinook available in tidewater, staging until the first significant rainfall sends them upstream. Blue Fox spinner casters are catching a few in tidewater where effort is low, surprisingly so.

Crabbing in north coast estuaries remains good although the big tide series we're currently on limits the window of opportunity for productive crabbing. Crabs tend to bury themselves on the strong flows but if you maximize your soak times near the slack periods (both incoming and outgoing), you should produce good catches. It may be best to wait until a softer tide series for the best results. Netarts, Tillamook, Nehalem and Nestucca Bays (in that order) should produce the best results.

Bay clamming as well as beach razor clamming should provide good opportunity on the late afternoon/ early evening minus tide series we're currently on. You can still catch the best part of the tide before sunset hits but that likely won't be the case by Sunday.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Tillamook Bay will still offer up the best chance for a fall chinook and now it seems evident that the November Wilson and Kilchis fish will be showing up this year. In the previous 2 years, the October/November component of the run has been relatively non-existent. That hasn't been the case as of late, which is certainly good news.

The pattern likely won't change in the coming days with the most productive period on the first part of the incoming tide on the east side of the bay (Ghost Hole, Bay City) in the early morning. Start fishing the Ghost Hole first and when you see the action slow, about 2/3 of the way into the incoming tide, consider moving up to Bay City where you have a chance to work over the same bunch of fish, just a little later into the tide. You can also consider Ray's Place Piling for the middle part of the incoming tide. Herring or spinners should both take fish on this part of the tide.

The last part of outgoing tide in the upper bay should also be productive. The Oyster House Hole as well as the Grassy Noll (between the Oyster House and the three houses on the west side of the bay) should also produce fair to good catches if fair numbers of fish continue to enter the bay. There should be a consistent bite through the weekend in these areas. Ray's Place piling should also produce some biters on the last part of the outgoing tide but more likely on the middle part of the incoming.

The west channel is likely to remain hit or miss but don't rule it out as a viable possibility. It has been producing best near high slack.

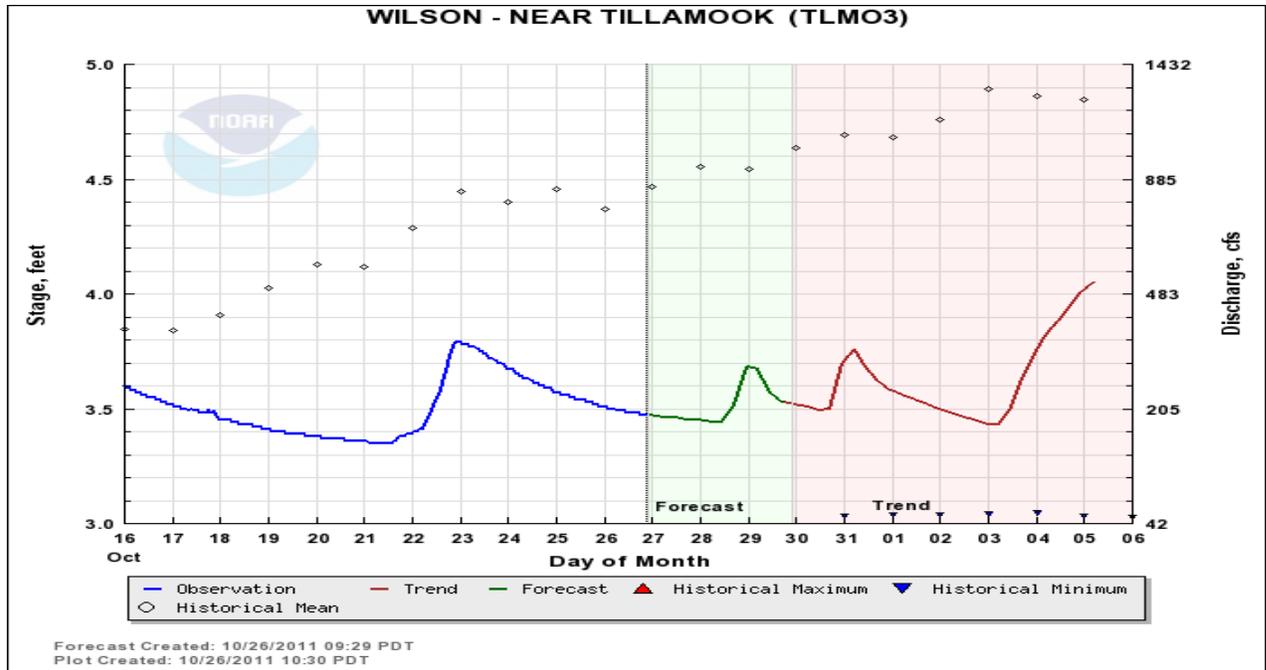
There are some coho and chum are beginning to show in the catches. Know your fish before you bonk! Only hatchery and wild chinook as well as hatchery coho are legal to take. Hatchery coho fishing closes on October 31<sup>st</sup> in the Tillamook district. There aren't many left around.

The Nehalem may remain open to wild coho through the weekend but do check recent regulation updates on the website (listed above). It could close at any time but effort and success has begun to drop off. Chinook should be available through this weekend and the upper bay should produce the best catches, that would be Wheeler to Nehalem.

The Nestucca should start to wane, especially given the fact that a fair component of the catch has been of hatchery origin. Tidewater should remain the best option as fish have not been holding well at the Boat Ramp or Guard Rail Holes. Bobbers and bait or trolled herring or spinners may produce equally well.

Don't count on the Salmon River to hold on for much longer although it's been a good season here. Bobber fishing the upper tidewater will likely produce the best opportunities.

For driftboaters, a couple of spikes are likely in the coming days but not the significant rise in river levels that get this group of folks excited. After a prolonged period of low water conditions however, even a small rise in river levels can inspire chinook to move upstream. Boaters will likely have to employ low water techniques and target the deepest of holes to have any success however. The Wilson is most likely to have the highest quality fish available. Here is the Wilson River forecast:



As we hinted before, shellfish could be a good option over the weekend. Clammers will have some good opportunity on the current minus tide series. Razor clams and bay clams should come easy this weekend.

As for crabbing, it will be best close to high tide but low slack will also be an option. You'll want to pay attention to the peak part of the outgoing and incoming tides. I see crab traps floating out to sea on a very regular basis this time of year. The more you know about the strength of these tides, the better you'll keep ahold of your crab gear!

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Rockfish and ling cod have been cooperative when boats have been able to get out on the ocean. Windows of opportunity become sporadic as the seasons change but bottom fishing is historically excellent at this time of year. Tuna are not yet out of the question with the latest reports putting albacore at 35 miles out of port. Ocean crabbing will remain closed through November.

Tuna were located offshore earlier this week between 35 and 40 miles out of the port of Newport and catches were good. It's officially late in the season to still be catching albacore but when the fish are out there, it's difficult to resist. Crabbing has been excellent inside Yaquina Bay.

Alsea bank and boat fishers have been hooking up with Chinook which have been moving in and out with tidal flow. Spinners have accounted for several fish this week.

A few Chinook have been tempted with bobber and bait in tidewater on the Siuslaw but the river has been too low for best results. A few large sea-run cutthroat have been taken by anglers targeting salmon with spinners.

With the wild coho fishery at Tenmile awaiting rain to get the fish moving, a few anglers are taking some in the Siltcoos River above the Highway 101 Bridge.

When boats have been able to cross the bar at Winchester Bay, the ocean has been producing limits of ling cod, some of which have been over 30 pounds. Trolling effort has been dropping off in Winchester Bay with boat traffic thinning out but Chinook are responding to the bobber and bait crowd with best results at first light. Spinners have also accounted for a few over the past week. Rock fishing has been good from the South Jetty. Crabbing has improved in the bay. A few Chinook are being taken on the Umpqua mainstem but catches are spotty. Steelheading is slow in the flies-only stretch of the North Umpqua.

Crabbing has been producing limits for boats in Coos Bay. Chinook catches have slowed with catches scattered. Trolled spinners have been about equally as effective as herring with bank fishers catching fish near Daniels Creek.

Coquille Chinook catches dropped off over the past week with bobber and bait fishers getting bit and spinners effective at times. Crabbing has been good for boats plying the estuary below the Highway 101 Bridge and fair for those dropping nets and traps off the dock at Bandon.

Results for Chinook have slowed in Rogue Bay and on the lower river with salmon scattered although a few fish are still holding near the mouth of Indian Creek. Steelheading is slow on the middle river with Chinook off limits everywhere upstream of the Hog Creek Boat Ramp below Grants Pass. The flies-only section of the upper Rogue above the old Gold Ray Dam site has been spotty but worthwhile on egg patterns for steelhead feeding below spawning Chinook.

Chinook catches in the Chetco estuary have been steady and have shown some improvement over the past week. A 50-pounder was taken on October 21st by a troller using whole herring. Several fish over 40 pounds have been landed. Fishing should be worthwhile as long as the river level is low and fish stay kegged in tidewater. Once precipitation puts water in the Chetco system, the Chinook will high-tail it upstream. The Chetco is scheduled open above Milepost 2.2 on November 5th although this opener has been delayed in the past due to low water conditions.

Despite a few reports elsewhere to the contrary, look for the Chinook fishery at the Elk and Sixes to pick up and deliver good catches as soon as fall rains start. Results will be good this season.

This will be the last weekend for trout fishing at Diamond Lake as this fishery closes at the end of day on Halloween. The limit changes from eight fish per day to five from October 28th through October 31st. No one seems to fathom the logic but hopefully this last minute, oddball limit change at Diamond Lake has been publicized sufficiently that none will get nabbed as the season closes.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – About three-quarters of the boats at the mouth of the Deschutes are taking Chinook even though the peak of the season has passed. A few over 30 pounds have been landed. Fly anglers targeting redsides with nymphs on the lower Deschutes

are doing fairly well. October Caddis are still in evidence but fish aren't looking up for the most part although there has been some surface activity evenings. Steelheading has been slow to spotty with fish widely scattered now. Counts at the Sherars Falls trap have been falling off.

A few steelhead have been taken by plug-pullers above the dam on the John Day but this fishery is just getting started.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

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

#### **North Puget Sound**

October is usually primetime for coho fishing in the region, where anglers should continue to find fish in the marine areas. However, the best action for coho likely will be in the rivers later in the month.

"Anglers can still find **coho** in the marine areas in early October, but fishing in the rivers will steadily improve as the month progresses," said John Long, statewide salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Several rivers are open in October for salmon fishing, including the Nooksack, Skagit, Cascade, Stillaguamish, Snohomish, Skykomish, Wallace, Snoqualmie and Green. Because regulations vary for each river, anglers should check [WDFW's sportfishing regulations pamphlet](#) before heading out.

In the marine areas, anglers fishing for coho should try Point No Point, Jefferson Head, Possession Bar and Shipwreck. Fishing regulations for those areas – and other waters of marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) – change in October. Beginning Oct. 1, anglers fishing Marine Area 9 will have a daily limit of two salmon, but must release all chinook. Those fishing Marine Area 10 will have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook.

Anglers looking to get an early start on the region's **blackmouth** season might also want to head to Marine Area 10, said Long. Another option for blackmouth anglers is Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where anglers can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit beginning Oct. 1. However, anglers fishing Marine Area 10 must release wild coho.

Other salmon fishing options include marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner). Anglers fishing those marine areas in October have a daily limit of two salmon but must release chinook.

Later in October, some saltwater anglers will turn their attention to chum salmon, said Long, who recommends trolling slow for chum and using a flasher with a green coyote spoon or a green, purple or pink mini-hoochie.

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.

**Lake Washington** also is open to salmon fishing. Anglers are allowed four coho per day (minimum size 12 inches) from waters north of the Highway 520 Bridge and east of the Montlake Bridge.

Meanwhile, **crabbing** closes one hour past sunset Sept. 30 in marine areas 7-North (Gulf of Georgia) and 7-South (San Juan Islands/Bellingham) – the only areas in the region currently open for crab. The region's other marine areas are already closed for a catch assessment.

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.

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.

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

Summer has come to a close, but salmon fishing is still going strong in the region, where marine and freshwater opportunities continue throughout October.

In the Strait of Juan de Fuca, anglers fishing Marine Area 6 (Port Angeles) can keep one **chinook** as part of a two-salmon daily limit beginning Oct. 1. Anglers are reminded that Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) is only open for salmon fishing through Sept. 30.

Farther south, anglers fishing in marine areas 11 (Tacoma/Vashon Island) and 13 (South Puget Sound) will have a two-salmon daily limit beginning Oct. 1. Note, however, all **wild coho** caught in Marine Area 13 must be released.

In Hood Canal (Marine Area 12), fishing regulations change Oct. 16, when anglers will have a daily limit of four salmon, but only one of which can be a chinook.

Grays Harbor (Marine Area 2-2) also is an option for salmon anglers. The harbor remains open through Nov. 30 with a daily limit of two salmon, but chinook and **chum** must be released.

In freshwater, area rivers that open for salmon Oct. 1 include the Elk, Hoquiam, Johns, Satsop and Wishkah rivers in Grays Harbor County; and Kennedy Creek in Thurston County. Anglers should check the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) [sportfishing rules pamphlet](#) for specific regulations on these rivers.

Regulations are also changing on the Skokomish River in Mason County. Beginning Oct. 1, anglers may keep up to four adult salmon as part of a six-fish daily limit, but must release all **chinook**. All **chum** must be released through Oct. 15.

Elsewhere, anglers fishing in the Quillayute system – which includes the Bogachiel, Calawah, Dickey and Sol Duc rivers – can keep two adult salmon, plus two additional **adult hatchery coho** as part of the six-fish daily limit. In Clallam County, the Dungeness River opens to salmon fishing Oct. 16 with a daily limit of four coho only.

Don't forget to dig out those clam shovels. Tentative dates for **razor clam** digs will likely be announced this month. Keep checking [WDFW's razor clam webpage](#) for details.

Meanwhile, 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.

### **Southwest Washington**

Coho salmon are moving up the Columbia River and into area tributaries, where bright chinook are also still striking at lures and bait on some rivers.

But starting Oct. 1, anglers have another option to consider: **Sturgeon** fishing in the mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines upstream to Bonneville Dam. The fishery was originally scheduled to open Oct. 8, but fishery managers added three additional days – Oct. 1, Oct. 6 and Oct. 7 – to help reach the area harvest guideline.

"This is a great fishing opportunity for fall, especially for anglers who don't have boats," said Brad James, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Bank anglers have done very well, historically, fishing for sturgeon just below Bonneville Dam."

Anglers may retain legal-size white sturgeon Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays only until the area quota is met. The daily limit is one legal-size fish, measuring 38 to 54 inches from its nose to the fork in its tail. There is also a limit of five sturgeon per year.

James said 2,626 white sturgeon are still available for harvest in the mainstem Columbia River under the annual quota for the area. "I wouldn't be surprised if the fishery starts out strong," he said. "Sturgeon have moved out of the estuary and have been chasing juvenile shad that are out-migrating past the dam."

Meanwhile, anglers fishing in the lower Columbia River and area tributaries have been catching respectable numbers of early stock **hatchery coho**, which will be reinforced by late-stock fish in the months ahead. In all, about 102,300 late-stock coho are expected to return this year on the heels of 168,500 early-stock fish, said WDFW fish biologist Joe Hymer.

"Like last year, this year's run is about average, but it should provide some good fishing if the forecast proves out," he said.

All areas the Columbia River below Bonneville Dam will be open for chinook fishing as of Oct. 1, including the stretch from the Lewis River down to Rocky Point. The daily limit for adult fish below the dam is two chinook or hatchery coho, two steelhead or one of each.

As in past years, anglers must release all wild steelhead, which can be identified by an intact adipose fin. The same is true for coho intercepted on the Columbia River and its tributaries from the Hood River Bridge downstream. For catch limits and other rules applicable to salmon fisheries on the big river or its tributaries, see the [Fishing in Washington](#) rules pamphlet.

For bright late-run coho, Hymer recommends the Cowlitz, Lewis, Grays, Klickitat, Kalama and Washougal rivers. He noted, however, that the Grays River will close to all fishing between Highway 4 and the South Fork on Oct. 16, when the West Fork will also close from the mouth to 300 yards below the hatchery road.

Although the focus of the salmon fishery switches to coho in October, **chinook** should continue biting through the month on a number of rivers. The Lewis and Klickitat rivers were hotspots in late September, as was Drano Lake. Anglers may retain any chinook salmon, clipped or not, on the North Fork Lewis, but Colvin Creek (upstream from the salmon hatchery) will close to all fishing Oct. 1 up to Merwin Dam. Fishing will be closed at Drano Lake throughout October from 6 p.m. Tuesdays to 6 p.m. Wednesdays.

For **trout**, Sept. 30 is the last day to fish Mineral Lake, but Swift Reservoir remains a good bet for rainbows. The area around the Cowlitz Trout Hatchery is also productive for hatchery sea-run cutthroats in October. Those aggressive fish averaging a foot or more can be caught on a variety of gear including bait, flies, or lures.

Anglers should also be aware that Goose Lake north of Carson was planted with 2,832 cutthroats averaging nearly a pound each in late September. It might also be a good time to hit other high mountain lakes when the fall foliage is in full color and the mosquitoes are dying down.

Silver Lake near Castle Rock can also be good for crappie. There is a 9-inch minimum size limit and a daily limit of 10 fish.

### **Eastern Washington**

Snake River anglers continue to reel in good numbers of hatchery steelhead and hatchery fall chinook salmon, especially near the confluence with Idaho's Clearwater River. On the downside, WDFW enforcement officers report low compliance with regulations for those fisheries, and have issued a significant number of citations during recent patrols.

Under current rules, the daily limit for steelhead is three hatchery-marked fish measuring at least 20 inches in length with a clipped adipose or ventral fin and a healed scar at the location of the clipped fin. For salmon, the daily limit is three adipose fin-clipped adult chinook (24 inches in length and larger), and three adipose fin-clipped jack fall chinook (less than 24 inches). Minimum size for chinook that can be retained in the Snake River is 12 inches.

Barbless hooks are required when fishing for chinook or steelhead in the Snake River. All chinook and steelhead with unclipped adipose fins must be immediately released unharmed. Anglers are prohibited from removing any chinook or steelhead from the water unless it is retained as part of the daily bag limit. It is important that anglers accurately identify their catch, because unmarked chinook salmon, coho salmon and steelhead are also present in the Snake River during this fishery.

Anglers should refer to the current sport fishing rules pamphlet (available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>) for other regulations, including possession limits and safety closures. The hatchery steelhead season on the Snake runs through March of next year, but the fall chinook salmon fishery will close Oct. 31 – unless circumstances merit an extension.

October is the last month – and often a very good time – to fish the region's popular trout-stocked lakes, as well as some rivers and streams. Fall insect hatches are providing trout food, so anglers who use flies or lures that mimic that forage often do well.

Many waters in Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties produce good catches of **rainbow trout** and other species at this time. Some of Spokane County's best trout lakes closed Sept. 30, but there are enough exceptions to keep fishing productive. WDFW central district fish biologist Chris Donley of Spokane notes Clear, Chapman and Liberty lakes provide trout, **bass** and other fish through October. Amber Lake remains open through November for catch-and-release

fishing. A number of year-round waters – including Eloika, Long and Newman lakes – have trout, bass, **crappie**, **perch** and more.

Most rivers and streams in the region close Oct. 31, but sections of some major waterways, including the Spokane River, remain open year-round or into next spring, some with specific restrictions listed in the rules pamphlet.

Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir off Grand Coulee Dam, provides some of the best year-round fishing. Anglers trolling for big rainbows and walleye should find plenty of action, especially from the Daisy area north. Walleye fishers can also be successful casting jigs near the shoreline or using bottom bouncers.

In the south end of the region, the Tucannon River impoundments on WDFW's Wooten Wildlife Area remain open through Oct. 31, but three of the seven trout-stocked fisheries are currently not fishable. WDFW area manager Kari Dingman reports Watson and Beaver lakes are dry because the rising river blew out the inlets, and Curl Lake has been drained for maintenance. Rainbow, Blue, Spring and Big Four lakes are still fishable and catches should pick up during this last month with cooler weather.

Dingman also notes that conditions in the Blue Mountains in general are still very dry so anglers and others passing through the area need to be very careful with anything that could start a wildfire.

### **Northcentral Washington**

Since the fishery opened Sept. 28, anglers have an opportunity to catch **hatchery steelhead** on the upper Columbia River above Rock Island Dam, and on the Wenatchee, Icicle, Entiat, Methow, and Okanogan rivers. **Salmon** fishing on the Columbia River from Wells Dam to Brewster also re-opened Sept. 28 and will run through Oct. 15.

WDFW regional fish manager Jeff Korth said about 18,000 adult steelhead are expected to return to the upper Columbia River this year – enough to allow the steelhead fisheries for the eighth straight season. However, both wild and hatchery-reared fish are expected to return in significantly lower numbers than in the past two years, requiring additional constraints on those fisheries.

"Allowable impacts on wild steelhead will be tighter this year, so we may have to close earlier than in the past two seasons," Korth said. Three areas of the Columbia River – Vernita, Priest Rapids and Wanapum – will not open at all for steelhead fishing this fall.

Steelhead fisheries are carefully managed to protect naturally spawning steelhead listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Korth said the fisheries will be closely monitored and fishing rules enforced to protect wild steelhead.

The daily limit on all rivers is two hatchery steelhead, marked with a clipped adipose fin and measuring at least 20 inches in length. Any steelhead with an intact adipose fin must be released unharmed and must not be removed from the water. Anglers must also release any steelhead with one or more round holes punched in their tail fin.

Like last year, anglers must retain any legal hatchery steelhead they catch until they reach their daily limit of two fish. Once they have retained two fish, they must stop fishing for steelhead.

"These selective steelhead fisheries are specifically designed to help maintain a high proportion of wild steelhead on the spawning grounds and enhance recovery of the region's wild steelhead,"

Korth said. "Anglers can play an important role in that effort by removing hatchery fish above the number needed to meet spawning goals."

Retention of hatchery steelhead on the Similkameen River opens Nov 1. As with the other fisheries, anglers are required to possess a Columbia River Salmon/Steelhead Endorsement as part of their valid fishing license. For all the rules, see WDFW's [Rule Change](#) webpage.

Meanwhile, time is running out for two fisheries set to close Oct. 15:

- **Lake Chelan tailrace:** A new fishery for **hatchery summer chinook salmon** has been open since Sept. 14 in the tailrace of the hydroelectric powerhouse operated by the Chelan County Public Utility District in Chelan. The experimental fishery – designed to give anglers a shot at the hatchery fish moving through – is restricted to the outfall area extending one-third of a mile downstream from the safety barrier near the powerhouse to the railroad bridge at the Columbia River. No fishing is allowed in the Chelan River between the tailrace and Lake Chelan. See the Rule Change webpage noted above for current regulations.
- **Lower Wenatchee River:** Also closing Oct. 15 is the fishery for hatchery summer chinook salmon that opened on the lower Wenatchee River in August and expanded in September to include the stretch from Peshastin Creek to above Dryden Dam and the Icycle 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.

Some popular **rainbow trout** lakes in Okanogan County remain open through the winter for daily catches of up to five trout. Campbell, Cougar and Davis lakes in the Winthrop area are all open through March 31. 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.

This is also a good time to hike up to one of many alpine lakes in Okanogan County and cast for **cutthroat trout**, Jateff said.

### **Southcentral Washington**

Steelhead are moving into the Hanford Reach, but most anglers will likely stay focused on **fall chinook salmon** through mid-October. Approximately 90,000 chinook – some tipping the scales at 40 pounds apiece – are expected to return to the Reach this year, and early October is the best time to catch some, said Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Anglers were averaging a half a chinook per boat in early September, but that should pick up as more fish move into the Reach and water temperatures cool, Hoffarth said.

"Folks have a great opportunity to catch bright, good-eating fish through the first half of the month," Hoffarth said. "But these fish come to the Reach ready to spawn and they start turning dark later in the month."

The salmon fishery is open through Oct. 22 from the Highway 395 Bridge in the Tri-cities to Wanapum Dam, but closes Oct. 15 upriver from Wanapum Dam. Anglers are advised to check the [Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet](#) for daily catch limits and other regulations that apply to specific sections of the Columbia River.

Meanwhile, pressure is growing to switch over to **hatchery steelhead**. Based on a moderately strong forecast, state fishery managers opened the steelhead fishery two weeks early from Highway 395 to the old Hanford wooden powerline towers.

"October is a good time to start targeting hatchery steelhead," said Hoffarth, noting that the fishery runs through March 31. "The water is cooling off and the fish are getting more aggressive."

Another good prospect for salmon is the Yakima River, where fishing for fall chinook and coho usually comes alive around the second week of the month. Best bets for catching fish include waters downstream of Prosser Dam and Horn Rapids Dam, said Hoffarth, noting that fishing is closed within 400 feet downstream of those diversions.

"The salmon start moving slowly into the Yakima, then all of a sudden they're stacked like cordwood," he said. "I think we're going to see a dramatic improvement in that fishery in the weeks ahead."

Rather catch some **walleye**? October is also a great time to hook some of these toothy game-fish below McNary Dam, Hoffarth said. "Fall fishing for walleye is dynamite between Umatilla and Boardman," he said. "Those fish are putting on the feedbag for winter and are eager to strike big lures, night and day."

Meanwhile, **trout** fishing is still an option at many rivers and streams, including the Yakima, Naches, Little Naches, and Bumping rivers in Yakima County. Other possibilities include the upper reaches of Taneum Creek, Naneum Creek, Manastash Creek; the forks of the Teanaway in Kittitas County; or any of a number of [high lakes](#).

Most rivers and creeks have statewide trout catch limits of two trout with an 8-inch minimum size. Many, however, also have special regulations, including like selective gear rules that prohibit bait. Regulations for these and other fisheries are described in the [Fishing in Washington regulation pamphlet](#).

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

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## **Random Links**

Coho on poppers (commercial site):

<http://oregonflyfishingblog.com/2011/10/22/jay-nicholas-oregon-silvers-fishing-poppers-10212011/>

Kokanee are spawning at this time of year:

<http://vimeo.com/31125424>

Incoming - 20 million tons of debris:

<http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/envoy/20-million-tons-debris-japan-tsunami-moving-toward-143640503.html>

Oregon Surfer Stands on Great White Shark:

<http://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/weird/Surfer-Stood-on-back-of-Great-White-Shark-and-Lived-131784473.html>

**GOOD LUCK!**