

The Guide's Forecast - volume 14 issue number 33

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **August 10<sup>th</sup> – August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "On the Columbia River, there are still plenty of steelhead being caught from the estuary up to Bonneville, with the best reports coming from just below the dam. The peak of the run has passed but there will be fish caught through the end of the month. Since the salmon opener on Aug 1, a small handful of chinook have been taken by anglers targeting steelhead but expect that number to increase as the week progresses.

"Sturgeon fishing remains fair to slow in the gorge but like last week, effort is minimal.

"On the Willamette, bass fishing remains the best option or try trolling worm harnesses upstream for walleye in the Multnomah Channel."

Snowmelt increased McKenzie flow this week but didn't effect mid-50-degree water temperatures. Fly fishing is fair to good.

Spinners and bobber & jigs are taking summer steelhead on the Santiams with good numbers of fish in the system.

The Clackamas River may offer up a steelhead in the early morning. The best action is likely to happen from River Mill Dam downstream to Barton Park.

On the Sandy River, a few steelhead have been caught in the reach from the Salmon River down to Cedar Creek. The warm weather has rendered the river silty from the melting glacier.

**Northwest –** Saltwater anglers are focusing much of their effort on offshore albacore tuna. The targeted coho season is closed and concentrations of chinook are hard to find. There will be no halibut fishing this week along the mid-coast.

Buoy 10 anglers are few but numbers will increase dramatically in the coming week. The first big push of lower Columbia chinook will hit the river this week with catches likely to be very good just after the weekend. Anglers working the mouth of Young's Bay are intercepting the Rogue River strain of Chinook, destined for the estuary's terminal fishery. Jim Martin of Mulino hooked 6 salmon on the Monday evening tide, landing 2. He was only able to take one fish home however as the other was taken by a sea lion as it was tied off to the back of the boat bleeding out.

Crabbing is picking up in the lower Columbia, after a long bout of fresh water releases kept crab in the ocean.

Saltwater fishing for coho and chinook out of the mouth of the Columbia remains only fair. Plan on spending a longer day offshore if you want to bag a limit of hatchery coho.

The Nehalem estuary is putting out fair numbers of summer chinook. Spinners and herring are taking biters from the mouth to the North Fork Nehalem River. This fishery should peak in the coming 3 weeks.

**Southwest-** Halibut fishing was decent for the summer all-depth opener off the central coast

although the ocean was rough. The next opportunity will be August 17th & 18th.

Tuna were more than 30 miles out of Newport over the past weekend with the bite good but not great. Ocean chinook fishing has been slow.

Bottom fishing has been good out of Depoe Bay and tuna charters are producing fine catches of albacore for their customers.

With warm water moving closer to the Oregon coast, exotic species are occasionally taken offshore. A large Opah, usually associated with waters off Hawaii, was landed by a tuna angler over the past week.

Tuna have been taken fewer than 15 miles out of Charleston although the bite has not been aggressive. Chinook fishing has been good offshore. Crabbing has been worthwhile in Coos Bay.

Despite good numbers of chinook in the Rogue estuary, the bite has been unreliable. When it turns on, the result is multiple hookups but it's been off again in an instant. Middle river fishing remains slow to fair but the upper Rogue is producing very good numbers of large, early summer steelhead as one of the best runs in years continues to improve.

While fishing has been good for ocean chinook out of Brookings Harbor, these fish are also entering the bay, resulting in several landings, a few on spoons cast from the local crabbing dock. When boats can get out, offshore chinook catches have been good with many limits taken.

Trout fishing is fair to good at Diamond Lake. Two tagged trout worth \$100 each were landed last week. There are still a couple of \$100 trout on which anglers may collect before October 31st.

**Eastern** – Summer steelhead numbers are building in the lower Deschutes, improving the number of hookups. Many of the fish landed have been wild. Redsides have been responding to caddis imitations with best results on days with little wind.

Paulina has been producing limits of kokanee and the bite has been on all day long.

Kokanee are being caught mornings in fair to good numbers on the troll at East Lake but the bite shuts down in the afternoon.

**SW Washington** – The Cowlitz River remains the best bet for summer steelhead anglers. The Lewis and Kalama also have fish but effort is tapering. Anglers working the mainstem Columbia beaches in the region are still taking steelhead and an occasional chinook. With the promising chinook return this year, effort will bump quicker than usual in the coming weeks.

As chinook numbers increase at Bonneville Dam, so will effort at Drano Lake. This fishery however, won't peak for another 3 weeks. New for 2012, any fall chinook and coho may be retained at Drano Lake beginning Aug. 1.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Effort is increasing for the Buoy 10 fishery and justifiably so. The chinook have made a strong showing for this early in the season although it remains inconsistent enough to still not have high expectations every time you go out. Young's Bay remains a top bet as fair numbers of Rogue fish destined for the terminal fishery can be intercepted by savvy sport anglers at the mouth. High tide and the first part of outgoing is the best time to target these fish but they haven't been running very large.

I've fished the last two tides (Tuesday night and Wednesday morning) with action coming from Young's Bay on both occasions. We started off our Tuesday afternoon trip on the lower tongue of Desdemona Sands, trolling upstream during the middle part of the incoming tide, only to get 2 quick opportunities and have nothing to show for it. Shortly after that, we caught a wild coho that we of course released. After picking the crab pots, which was surprisingly worth it, we headed for Young's Bay for the high tide to get 2 more bites over there, finally landing a fish worthy of the fish whacker. It was about a 12-pound Rogue strain chinook. Uncustomary of me, I ran 2 spinners and 3 herring for the afternoon effort, only to realize that by the end of the day, 4 of the 5 opportunities we had came on the same spinner. This outfit had a green fish flash ahead of it but it was Andy Betnar's new size 6 Fatal Flash blade which was two-toned green with a blue tip and red Swarovski beads. The only reason I tried these spinners is that Andy's son Tyler, took 3 chinook on a poor part of the tide earlier in the day. These spinners have only been fishing a few days and already they are a proven fish-getter. Before you run out and buy every one off of the shelf, you had better check with Andy or Tyler to see which ones are currently working and what they have in stock. Since Andy will be fishing, it's best to call Tyler at (503) 791-2364 at World Class Fishing and hope that he's not too busy cutting fish for people. Stop by their shop on the corner of the dock at the West End Mooring Basin. They are well stocked. There has been occasional bouts of seaweed at Young's Bay so if you see some near the surface, it may warrant frequent gear checks to make sure you are fishing effectively. Weeds were present last night but not so prevalent on the a.m. tide on Wednesday morning.

After hearing the day's report, and the fact most guides stated they couldn't get bit on spinners, I decided to go half and half. We only had 2 bites for the morning troll along Young's Bay, coming up with one fish, caught on a plug cut herring in 25 feet of water (no flasher). The other bite came on that same colored Fatal Flash blade with a fish flash (green). The bite was not that impressive for Young's Bay at high slack in the morning.

There have been some fish on the Washington side of the river, below the bridge. Angler effort has been low but quickly on the increase. It's not gangbuster fishing but that may very well change. Working the 21 to 24 foot line is most common and be sure to keep your baits on the bottom. Fish from the bridge to the Chinook wing-jetties. There has also been some reports of chinook taken at Buoy 10, likely on the first part of the incoming tide.

Offshore, action continues to disappoint for the simple fact, it's the ocean. "Big Blue" should be loaded with fish but hatchery coho continue to elude anglers. It's not all that surprising as the hatchery coho forecast is low this year. The nearshore chinook fishing has been good however but that all changed last week when we started having strong currents from the south that pushed the chinook more to the north. Boats heading far to the north are finding fair numbers of decent chinook and a rare hatchery coho.

Buoy 2 to the weather buoy has been producing some results as well. On occasion, when anglers can hit this spot at first light are finding some keeper coho with a rare quick limit taken. There are a lot of mackerel around too so not every bite is going to come from a salmon. Anchovies has been the favored bait and those mackerel do make for great crab bait.

And speaking of crabbing, ocean crabbing has been fair but river crabbing has been pretty good. As you read just a bit earlier, crabbing around Buoy 21 and on lower Desdemona Sands has been productive. We had 3 shellfish licenses on Tuesday, taking our limit rather easily and throwing back another limit of keepers too. I guess all that freshwater coming down the river is finally starting to subside. The crab were in good shape too.

Catch and release sturgeon fishing has taken a back seat now that salmon are a strong option in the estuary. Fish remain abundant however and the water just out of the East End Mooring basin is still the best bet. Use anchovies in 14 to 23 feet of water on either the incoming or outgoing tide. There have been a few days when the tides are more extreme, that seaweed has been an issue.

Upriver, anglers continue to seek steelhead along the beaches but action is tapering. Deep water boaters are getting surprised more often than one would think, with a nice chinook on the line. It's a good sign that there may indeed, be a good number of chinook coming to greet us this fall. Some guides and anglers are beginning to target these deep water travelers with more appropriate gear (read: wobblers). Bonneville remains the best place to intercept summer steelhead, especially with the flows continuing to subside.

**The Guide's Forecast** – It's going to be Buoy 10 on the minds of many and this will be the week when the first big wave of chinook hit the river. It's the time of year that most are anxious for with some of the larger chinook of the year coming in first. We commonly catch the season's biggest in the early part of the run. There's no way around it, this will be a good week for chinook catches on the lower Columbia.

With a morning high tide, it will be important to focus most of your intense effort around high tide. Keep in mind that the slowest part of the tide will be the last 3 hours of outgoing tide. Low slack can sometimes provide some nice chinook action near Buoy 10 but that is not consistent from year to year. As the high tide gets later into the morning, concentrate your early incoming tide on lower Desdemona Sands. Chinook should be available from Buoy 21 to the bridge on the middle of the incoming tide. You can either fish on the bottom if you're targeting fish in water less than 30 feet or fish suspended (staggering baits from 18 to 36 feet down) in the deeper channels. It appears both spinners and bait is working well but most guides will state that they are having more consistent luck with bait.

When high tide hits, be sure to target chinook above the bridge, most often on the Washington side. Look for areas where the water goes from deep to shallow and fish the rising hump. When the tide turns, be sure to do the opposite, fish from the high point down-slope to the deeper water. It seems to be pretty important to keep your baits/lures on the bottom on the first part of the outgoing tide. More will be revealed in next week's report when we see how the patterns of these fish are developing.

Offshore anglers will continue to struggle to find keeper coho. SW of the river mouth will remain the best bet but if the strong current on the north side of the river subsides, the action to the north along the Washington Beaches should improve. The question remains, will the current turn and head south instead of north? There should be AMPLE numbers of chinook available if the offshore weather cooperates. If not, anglers should focus their efforts in the river where good numbers of chinook will also be available.

And speaking of offshore, albacore tuna should remain a top target for saltwater anglers. If weather patterns persist, action will remain very good.

Crabbing will again remain open past August 15<sup>th</sup>. The crabbing will be good but there will likely be a lot of soft-shelled crab in the catch. It will be best to crab in the river where the soft tide series this week will be conducive to success. Crab in the river near Buoy 21.

Sure, you can catch and release sturgeon fish and it will likely remain good. You'll likely have the area all to yourself too as almost all anglers will be focusing on chinook at this time. Target the

water just out of the East End Mooring Basin (Oregon side of the shipping channel, just upstream of the mooring basin).

Upriver, with just a couple weeks of steelhead action left, anglers are now changing their focus to Chinook salmon. Just below Bonneville, spinners and coon shrimp/spin n glow combo's will take their share of fish. For either species, find moving water with a brisk walking pace. For steelhead, look for depths of 6-12 ft and for Chinook, 12-50 ft of water. Downstream from the Bonneville area, wobblers like Alvin's, Clancy's and Simon's will be more effective for Kings. Try a piece of blue prism tape on your wobbler for good results. Be prepared to use up to 24 ounces of lead in the deeper spots to hold your wobbler in place. Coon shrimp combo's and small Flatfish/Kwikfish are catching steelhead near the tributary mouths. Lighted Brad's wigglers (blinkies) are also popular at Rainier and the mouth of the Cowlitz for steelhead, usually fished in 35 ft + depths. Beach plunkers have been doing well for steelhead with spin n glow and shrimp or prawn combo's and they will soon start tossing wobblers further out for Chinook. In the lower river, expect the Chinook catch to increase dramatically by weeks end. Bonneville is still a month away from its fall Chinook bonanza, but a few late summer Chinook and more steelhead are still available. Sturgeon fishing in the gorge is a viable option, especially as we approach the fall months but few anglers take interest when there are steelhead and salmon available.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "Water skiing, wake and paddle boarding and bass fishing. Try trolling worm harnesses upstream for walleye in the Multnomah channel."

Water temperature at the Falls is just over the 72-degree mark and has been gradually on the upswing for over a week. Small wonder the passage of anadromous fish is tanking. Most recent daily counts are in low double digits for both Chinook and steelhead.

It's summertime, and the fishin' is easy ... and by easy, we mean pleasant, requiring only shirtsleeves and often, shorts. It's not, however, great. Oh, it's plenty good enough to go for a trip on the upper McKenzie, for instance, where mild weather and moderate success has made for delightful outings over the past week. Water levels, up somewhat as a results of snowmelt earlier this week, started dropping overnight August 8th and have returned to pre-rise levels as of today.

The year-to date totals at Foster Dam on the South Santiam as of August 7th were 5,734 for adults spring Chinook and 6,336 summer steelhead. Thousands of these fish have been trucked downstream to Pleasant Valley or Waterloo to run again. Recycled fish will have a hole punch in their gill plate.

Trail Bridge Reservoir, Alton Baker Canal and Leaburg Lake are scheduled for trout stocking.

**The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** predicts, "Urban swimming hole with a under fished smallmouth bass fishery. Some nice walleye are also available in the Multnomah channel."

Steelhead are being taken on the upper Willamette in the Town Run (Eugene to Springfield) although some are slanky at this time of year.

It will be mostly a nymph show on the upper McKenzie where fairly steady action will make a foray to this portion of the river well worthwhile. It's no surprise that in August, fishing early and late in the day will be most productive, although it's well worth plying those bubbly stretches

where oxygen levels are high during the day. A fish here and there will more than justify being on the river.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "Inner tubes, rafts, swimmers and NUDE sun bathers. A few steelhead have been caught in the reach from the Salmon river down to Cedar creek. The warm weather has rendered the river silty from the melting glacier."

**The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** predicts, "Try for steelhead early in the morning, bring your trunks and bikini's for the latter half of the day. Next month when the temps start to cool, silvers will make a showing but they typically aren't the best biters till we get the first fall freshet."

"Another favorite metro area swimming hole with the possibility of a summer steelhead at dawn before the splash and giggle crowd shows up. Silvers will start showing up middle of next month."

**North Coast Fishing Report –** With Buoy 10 on the minds of many, other north coast fisheries will get shunned under the intense spotlight of one this Oregon favorite. None-the-less, action remains steady on the Nehalem system. After many years of poor reports and adult return rates, action is quite consistent throughout the estuary. Anglers are reporting fair to good success from the mouth to the confluence of the North Fork Nehalem River. Trolled spinners higher in the bay or trolled herring in the lower is producing most consistently.

As we enter the meat of August, action for these fish may very well improve as the summer chinook run begins to peak. The soft tide series this week will put most interested anglers near the mouth of the estuary. Be sure to obey regulations as the ocean requires barbless hooks while you can fish barbed hooks in the estuary. There are reports of some early coho starting to show in the river system.

With the Nehalem the hot spot on the north coast, all other systems are largely ignored. No other system gets a summer run like the Nehalem does but there should be some fish available from the Tillamook and Nestucca Rivers. The bubble areas just outside of the estuary offer up the best opportunity and you'll largely have the area to yourselves. Don't get overly optimistic however, you're not likely to spank an early limit of chinook.

Area rivers remain low and clear, hampering success for summer steelhead. Spring chinook are too far gone to appreciate them at this point. The Nestucca and Wilson both have fair numbers of steelhead this year.

Crabbing is improving in all estuaries and Netarts crabbers have reported pretty good success lately. The fresher the bait, the better the results.

Quality herring were available in Newport for jigging. You really can't get a better bait. A simple change in wind direction could change estuary habits however so be prepared for a slow-down in action.

**The Guide's Forecast –** With a waning tide series, and the nearing of the peak migration time for summer chinook, this could be a good week for Nehalem Bay Bar anglers. Herring fished on the shallow bar near high tide will likely produce the best action. The first part of outgoing tide could produce a few bites as well. If you choose to fish higher in the estuary, try size 6 or 7

spinners on the flood tide as well. This will likely be the best opportunity for a Nehalem Bay chinook, possibly for the entire year.

Anglers can target chinook in the ocean but there are better options inland. If you do choose to fish a calm ocean, which doesn't seem to be in the foreseeable future, fish near the estuary mouths. You may produce an occasional chinook. Here is the ocean forecast:

**FRI**

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT.  
NW SWELL 4 FT.

**FRI NIGHT**

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 6 FT. NW SWELL  
3 FT.

**SAT**

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT...RISING TO 20 TO 25 KT IN THE  
AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 5 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

**SAT NIGHT**

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 6 FT. NW SWELL  
4 FT.

**SUN**

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT.

**MON**

NW WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

Not only does it look too rough for salmon, if this forecast is accurate (and it often isn't, at least not this many days in advance) albacore fishing won't be an option either; and its peak season for them as well.

Estuary crabbing should be good this week with Netarts, Tillamook and Nestucca the best candidates for keepers.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Is it just me (Michael), or is the 52,497-pound summer all-depth halibut quota nebulous this year? I've written it a number of times from various (although primarily ODFW-based) sources and it seems to me it's a bit different each time. In any event, that's the number from the ODFW data site as of today although there are no catch numbers from last weekend. The next opportunity for deep-water flatties will be August 17th & 18th, then each Friday and Saturday thereafter until something like the aforementioned figure is bagged by anglers or the season times out at the end of October.

Tuna fishers launching out of Depoe Bay on Wednesday this week took literally all they could carry back to port due to either running out of space or short of ice to cool down the albacore which heat up from fighting for their life.

Offshore bottom fishers are taking limits or near-limits of rockfish, good catches of ling cod and returning to central Oregon ports with limits of ocean Dungeness.

The offshore hatchery coho season wrapped up at the end of July with fewer than 2,500 fish bagged or just under 31% of the 8,000-fish quota. Ocean Chinook remains open with best results out of southern Oregon ports.

Offshore conditions over the coming weekend indicate that swells will come up a little with wind moderate out of the north-northwest, putting conditions once again into the marginal category.

Late July and early August efforts for Chinook on the Siletz has been sufficiently productive to produce frequent photo opportunities at Coyote Rock on the lower river, where anglers often stop for a grin 'n' Grab.

Winchester Bay is producing limits daily to boat crabbers although sorting is necessary as a few are soft due to the recent seasonal molt. A few Chinook have been taken this week in the jaws while the Reedsport area should start producing regularly as numbers build into August. As summer weather continues, the main quarry of interest on the mainstem Umpqua is the smallmouth bass, results for which have been improving throughout the river and up into the South Umpqua. Summer steelheading is fair on the North Umpqua.

Boats launching out of Charleston on Tuesday and Wednesday this week have taken fair numbers of albacore with hookups starting at 15 miles out of port. Coos Bay Chinook catches are gradually improving for trollers using herring. Crabbing has been good for those doing so from a boat.

The Chinook bite remains erratic in Rogue Bay despite strong numbers of fish. This week, it has been fair one day while you'd never know there were salmon in the estuary the next. Half-pounders are being taken around Agness with this fishery improving in weeks to come. Steelheading on the middle river has been slow to fair with spinners most effective recently. Upper Rogue summer steelheading is producing good numbers of fish with many, when referring to this fishery, use the term 'record-breaking run.' Regardless, there are certainly plenty of fish to be caught.

Good numbers of baitfish inside Brookings Harbor have continued to lure early Chinook into the Chetco Bay. Numbers will build in the coming weeks, creating opportunities for trollers as well as for boatless bankies who will continue to hookup occasionally on Krocodile, Little Cleo and Kastmaster spoons flung from docks and jetties. Chinook results for ocean trollers on the west side the bar have been subjectively reported as some of the best in years.

The Rogue above Lost Creek is scheduled to be planted with trout.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Hardware has been more effective than fly gear in fooling early summer steelhead on the lower Deschutes recently. Summers have been taken as high as Trout Creek which is surprising this early in the season. With redsides weary and wary after seeing myriad offerings, fly anglers have the edge with lower river trout.

Larger trout are showing up in catches on the Crooked River where fish are responding well to caddis and Pale Morning Dun imitations.

Lake Billy Chinook is fishing week for kokanee on jigs. As of Wednesday this week, there were no campfires allowed in area campgrounds due to high local risk as well as area wildfires.

The largemouth bass fishery at Davis Lake has been a little more challenging for fly fishers with the water level high. The ODFW is making efforts to return Davis to a trophy rainbow trout

fishery by transplanting largemouth taken by electro-shock and volunteer anglers to Prineville Reservoir.

Green Peter has been producing fair numbers of kokanee (considering the 50-fish limit) with about a third of those landed this week too small to keep. Recreational use by non-anglers is heavy, especially on weekends.

Paulina has been producing limits of kokanee on the troll although most of those trying here are jigging.

Limits of kokanee averaging 12 inches are being taken at Odell Lake.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

#### ***From the WDF&W Weekender Report for August 2012***

#### **North Puget Sound**

Anglers are reeling in chinook in Puget Sound, where crabbing is still an option and two additional marine areas open for salmon Aug. 1. Others are also having some success at Baker Lake, which opened for **sockeye salmon** July 1 and remains open through Sept 4.

Anglers fishing Baker Lake can retain up to three adult sockeye that exceed 18 inches in length from the log boom barrier at Baker Dam upstream to the mouth of the upper Baker River. In a recent rule modification, each angler aboard a vessel may continue to deploy angling gear until the daily limit of sockeye has been retained for all licensed and juvenile anglers onboard. See the [rule change](#) for details. All other salmon, as well as bull trout, must be released.

"I expect that fishing will only get better, as more sockeye are put into the lake," said Brett Barkdull, fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "The fish are biters — once you find them, get your gear at the right depth to catch them."

Barkdull reminds anglers to check for any [rule changes](#) on WDFW's website. Anglers also can check the number of sockeye released into the lake on [WDFW's website](#).

Meanwhile, the Skagit River, from the mouth to the mouth of Gilligan Creek, opens Sept. 1. The Skagit from the mouth of Gilligan Creek to the Dalles Bridge at Concrete opens for salmon fishing Sept. 16. Anglers fishing those sections have a two-salmon daily limit, all chinook and chum must be released.

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

On marine waters, "August is prime time for chinook in Puget Sound," says Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound salmon manager for WDFW.

"It's a chinook show now in marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands), 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton)," he said.

Those fishing Marine Area 7 can keep one chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit. They must, however, release wild coho and chum starting Aug. 1.

Anglers fishing marine areas 9 and 10 can keep hatchery chinook – marked with a clipped adipose fin – as part of a two-salmon daily limit. Wild chinook and chum must be released. August brings other opportunities to catch and keep salmon. Beginning Aug. 1, marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) open for salmon fishing. Anglers in those two areas have a daily limit of two salmon, but must release chinook. Check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) for details on current salmon fishing opportunities.

Prefer shellfish? The **Puget Sound crab fishery** is under way in most marine areas. The exception is the northern portion (Gulf of Georgia) of Marine Area 7, which opens for crab Aug. 16. In other Puget Sound marine areas, crabbing is open Thursday through Monday of each week.

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

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

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

Salmon fishing is king in the region, where anglers are hooking bright fish along the coast and in the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

On the coast, the daily catch limit is two salmon for all areas of the ocean fishery. Anglers fishing in marine areas 1 (Ilwaco), 2 (Westport) and 4 (Neah Bay) can retain one chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit. Those fishing in Marine Area 3 (LaPush) can retain two chinook per day. In all four marine areas, anglers must release wild coho salmon.

"Overall, salmon anglers have done well this summer," said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "I expect fishing to get even better in August, when more chinook and coho make their way along the coast toward the Columbia River."

Salmon fishing remains open seven days a week in all four marine areas. However, fisheries in those areas could close early if catch quotas are reached, said Milward. Anglers should check for any [rule changes](#) at WDFW's website.

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

Meanwhile, salmon fisheries are under way in marine areas 5 (Sekiu), 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 11 (Tacoma/Vashon), the southern portion of 12 (Hood Canal) and 13 (South Puget Sound).

A lot of anglers focus on fishing the Strait of Juan de Fuca and northern Puget Sound this time of year, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW's Puget Sound salmon manager. "But don't count out south Puget Sound, where we are expecting a return of more than 60,000 salmon this year," he said.

"The fish should be there, it's just a matter of putting some time in on the water and figuring out the fishery."

Before heading out, anglers also can check [creel reports](#) for information on catch and effort in Puget Sound. Recreational fishery samplers with WDFW collect the information each week at fishing access sites throughout Puget Sound.

Because salmon fishing rules vary depending on the marine area, anglers should check the [Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet](#) for more information.

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Additional information on the crab fishery is available on [WDFW's crab fishing webpage](#).

**Halibut** fishing is also still an option. The late season for halibut in Marine Area 1 opens Aug. 3. The fishery there will be open three days per week (Friday through Sunday) until the quota is taken or Sept. 30, whichever occurs first.

In freshwater, the recreational salmon fishery on the **Skokomish River** will get under way Aug. 10 from the mouth upstream to the Highway 101 Bridge. The daily bag limit on the Skokomish will be two salmon. Anglers must carefully release any chum and wild chinook salmon they catch. Anglers will be required to release any salmon not hooked inside the mouth, and retain the first two legal salmon they catch and stop fishing. In addition, single-point barbless hooks are required and a night closure and anti-snagging rule will be in effect.

The Skokomish River from the Highway 106 Bridge upstream to the Highway 101 Bridge will be closed to recreational fishing Monday through Thursday of each week, except Monday Sept. 3. The weekly closures on a portion of the Skokomish River are necessary to avoid potential gear conflicts with treaty tribal fishers, as well as limit impacts to wild chinook salmon, expected to return in low numbers this year.

Recreational fishing downstream of the Highway 106 Bridge will remain open seven days a week through Sept. 5.

Several other rivers are open for **salmon** fishing elsewhere in the region, including the Bogachiel, Calawah, Hoh, Nisqually, Quillayute and the Sol Duc.

Beginning Aug. 1, the Puyallup River, from the City of Puyallup outfall structure across the river from the junction of Freeman Road and North Levee Road to the Carbon River, also opens for salmon fishing. The lower section of the Puyallup, from the 11th Street Bridge to the City of Puyallup outfall structure, opens to salmon fishing Aug. 16. Anglers should be aware that the lower section of the river is closed Aug. 26 and Sept. 2, 3, 9, 10 and 11.

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

## Southwest Washington

This year's **fall chinook** fishery opens Aug. 1 on the Columbia River, where a strong run of upriver brights is expected to exceed both the 10-year average and last year's return. Of the 655,000 "falls" included in the pre-season forecast, about 350,000 are projected to be upriver brights – the fourth largest return since record keeping began in 1964.

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

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

Although the opener for the fall chinook will extend upriver as far as Priest Rapids Dam, most of the action during the first few weeks focuses on the popular **Buoy 10 fishery** in the lower 16 miles of the river. Fishery managers estimate that anglers will catch nearly 14,000 chinook salmon by Labor Day, after which the retention fishery for chinook in the Buoy 10 area will close for the remainder of September. Anglers are also expected to catch 8,000 coho in that area by the time that fishery closes at the end of the year.

The daily limit for the Buoy 10 fishery is two salmon, two hatchery steelhead, or one of each. But, through Sept. 3, only one of those salmon may be a chinook. In addition, only those steelhead and coho marked with a missing adipose fin and a healed scar may be retained. This requirement does not apply to fall chinook on the mainstem lower Columbia River, where chinook salmon may be retained whether or not they are marked.

Additional rules for the Buoy 10 area and waters farther upriver are described in WDFW's [Fishing in Washington](#) pamphlet. Bank anglers planning to fish near the mouth of the Columbia River should be aware they will need to purchase a Discover Pass to park on State Parks property near the North Jetty. The vehicle access pass anglers receive with their fishing license only substitutes for a Discover Pass on WDFW lands.

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

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

While 2012 is not expected to be a banner year for hatchery coho, those fish will help to round out anglers' daily limits. WDFW currently expects about 240,000 coho to return this year – slightly lower than the past couple years and down significantly from the exceptionally large run of three-quarters of a million fish in 2009. Hymer said coho salmon usually bite best at Buoy 10 on herring and spinners, and later on bait and lures in the tributaries.

Meanwhile, plenty of **hatchery steelhead** are still available for harvest, said Hymer, noting that the smaller "A-run" fish should keep biting through mid-August. By then, the larger "B-run" steelhead – many weighing in the teens – will start arriving to pick up the slack. Together, returns of both runs are expected to total about 365,000 fish, about the same size of last year's total run.

The procession of fall chinook, coho and hatchery steelhead, should also provide good fishing on area tributaries for months to come, Hymer said. Like the mainstem Columbia River, most tributaries open for fall chinook Aug. 1, although those fisheries usually don't take off until September. For steelhead, Drano Lake and the Wind River are good places to cast for migrating fish dipping into cooler waters.

The White Salmon River has historically been another productive dip-in fishery, but how the fish will respond after Condit Dam was breached last fall remains to be seen. That issue is part of a study funded by Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement fees, but fishery managers reported a good sign in late July: Both salmon and steelhead were observed in the river above where the dam used to be.

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

Unlike the mainstem Columbia River, chinook retention is limited to marked hatchery fish on those river systems, except on the Klickitat and Deep rivers where unmarked chinook can also be retained. Mark-selective fisheries also will be in effect on the Wind and White Salmon rivers.

New for 2012, any fall chinook and coho may be retained at Drano Lake beginning Aug. 1 and any chinook on the North Fork Lewis River beginning in mid-September. Anglers are advised to check the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet and any [emergency rules](#) applicable to specific waters before leaving home.

Of course, salmon and steelhead aren't the only fish available for harvest in August. **Walleye** fishing can be good in the Columbia River near Camas, as well as in The Dalles and John Day Pools. **Bass** fishing is also heating up from Bonneville Dam to McNary Dam. Anglers can also retain sturgeon measuring 43 to 54 inches in The Dalles Pool on a daily basis through Aug. 4, then Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays until further notice.

Hankering for **trout**? WDFW crews will plant 2,000 catchable cutthroat in Goose Lake just before the calendar flips to August. The timing of that plant, which normally occurs in fall, has been sped up this year due to a water-intake project at Skamania Hatchery.

On the Cowlitz system, Mayfield Lake will be planted with 65,000 catchable size rainbows, Lake Scanewa (Cowlitz Falls Reservoir) with 20,000, Skate Creek with 18,750 and the Tilton River with 18,750 by the end of August. Hatchery sea-run cutthroats should also provide some opportunity on the lower Cowlitz beginning in late August.

At the same time, the high wilderness lakes around Mount Adams and Mount St. Helens offer unparalleled fishing experiences for those willing to brave the mosquitoes. Riffe Lake in Lewis County is still giving up some nice landlocked coho, and Goose Lake north of Carson has received 1,000 brown trout and 6,000 cutthroats since mid-June. Council and Takhlakh lakes are also expected to receive 4,000 catchable size rainbows each.

### **Eastern Washington**

Randy Osborne, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) central district fish biologist, says the best fishing in August is usually during very early morning or late evening hours. But mid-day anglers under cloud cover can reel in a few nice catches, too.

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

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

Osborne reminds anglers that safety on and near the water should be a top priority. "Anyone recreating with watercraft should always have the correct number and size of personal flotation devices and use them while on the water," he said.

In the north end of the region, WDFW District Fish Biologist Bill Baker in Colville reports rainbow trout, **kokanee** and **walleye** fishing continues to be good at Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir off Grand Coulee Dam. Kokanee fishing is also productive at Stevens County's Loon Lake during evening hours.

Some of the high elevation lakes on U.S. Forest Service property in the northeast district that are stocked with rainbow and cutthroat trout may be good destinations for camping and fishing weekends. In Ferry County, try Davis, Ellen, Empire Swan and Trout lakes. In Stevens County, try Gillette, Heritage, Sherry, Summit, and Thomas lakes. In Pend Oreille County, try Carl's, Cook's, Frater, Halfmoon, Leo, Mystic, Nile, No-Name, Petit, South and North Skookums, and Yokum lakes.

**Catfish** and **sturgeon** fishing is usually productive in the Snake River system in the southeast part of the region in August, said Glen Mendel, WDFW district fish biologist in Dayton. Catfish are often landed in the backwaters and sloughs throughout the mainstem Snake, as well as in or near the mouths of tributaries like the Tucannon River. Catfish fishing is often much more productive at night, or at dawn and dusk.

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

Anglers heading for a weekend of camping near the Tucannon River, or its trout-stocked impoundments on WDFW's Wooten Wildlife Area in Columbia County, need to keep fire restrictions in mind. Wooten Manager Kari Dingman said that with hot, dry conditions, the Washington Department of Natural Resources has a campfire ban in effect.

"No campfires are allowed in any state campgrounds until further notice," Dingman said. "With the hot temps we've been having, the fishing in the lakes has really slowed down, but river fishing has picked up."

Dingman also reported an Aug. 17-27 closure of Wooten campgrounds 5 and 6 for a "large woody debris" project that involves placing full-size trees with rootballs into the river with a helicopter. There may also be some traffic delays that week due to temporary road closures while the helicopter is in operation.

## Northcentral Washington

Two salmon fisheries not listed in the rules pamphlet will open Aug. 4, thanks to good returns of fish to northcentral Washington.

Travis Maitland, Chelan district fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), says **hatchery summer chinook salmon** returns to the Wenatchee River are in excess of spawning escapement needs, so fishing for marked (adipose-fin clipped) chinook in the section of the river from the mouth to just below Dryden Dam will be open Aug. 4-Oct. 15. Another section of the Wenatchee, from the confluence of Peshastin Creek to a line above Dryden Dam and the Icicle Creek Road Bridge, will open Sept. 1. Check the [emergency rule change](#) for details.

Also opening Aug. 4 is the Lake Wenatchee **sockeye fishery**. More than 30,000 fish coming through Tumwater Canyon on the Wenatchee River are headed for Lake Wenatchee, said Maitland. At least 7,000 fish are estimated to be available for harvest above the natural spawning escapement goal of 23,000 fish. Selective gear rules and other restrictions are in effect, so check the details in the [emergency rule change](#) for this fishery, scheduled to run through Aug. 31.

Maitland notes that in addition to a fishing license, anglers participating in these special fisheries must have the Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement (CRSSE), which makes the seasons possible by funding enforcement, and monitoring.

Bob Jateff, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Okanogan district fish biologist in Twisp, says **sockeye salmon** fishing has picked up considerably in the Columbia River near Brewster. Angling effort has been high with catch rates of two to three fish per angler. **Chinook salmon** are also being caught along with sockeye, but in much smaller numbers.

Jateff also notes the section of the Columbia River from Wells Dam upstream to the Hwy. 173 Bridge in Brewster has been open to salmon fishing since July 16. Anglers are required to release any sockeye or chinook with a colored anchor (floy) tag located just below the dorsal fin.

"The sockeye are running three to five pounds and the chinook are averaging 10 to 12 pounds," Jateff said.

Jateff reports fishing in the Methow River has been hampered by higher water flows, but it should be in good shape soon for the catch-and-release **trout** fishery under way. Selective gear rules are in effect and no bait is allowed. The open area of the Methow extends from the Lower Burma Road Bridge (below the town of Methow) upstream to the Weeman Bridge (eight miles north of Winthrop).

Jateff also notes there are two sections of the Twisp and Chewuch rivers that are open to catch-and-release trout fishing. The Twisp is open from the mouth upstream to War Creek, and the Chewuch is open from the mouth upstream to Eight Mile Creek.

Anglers should check the current [sportfishing rules pamphlet](#) as all of these open areas have varying closure dates. Anglers can expect resident **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** in the 8-16 inch range.

As river and small creek flows recede, Jateff says it is a good time to fish the smaller tributaries within the Methow River drainage. Boulder, Falls, and Eightmile creeks are all within easy driving

distance from Winthrop and provide good fishing for eastern brook trout. Daily limit is five brook trout in Falls and Eightmile Creeks, no minimum size. In Boulder Creek the daily limit for brook trout is 10, no minimum size. In the Beaver Creek drainage, anglers can retain five brook trout, no minimum size.

Watershed Steward and Area Habitat Biologist Ken Bevis of Winthrop attests to the good fishing opportunity on small waterways.

"Northcentral Washington's small creeks are generally under-utilized," Bevis said. "These little creeks drop into beautiful fishing shape by late summer and most have an abundance of small trout that hit on bushy dry flies." Bevis recommends floating a size 12 Royal Coachman, a small stimulator, Adams, or other little bushy thing downstream from where you stand.

"Sneak up on the pool and cast around the rocks at the top, working your way down to the tailout," he said. "Keep your casts short, sometimes less than 10 feet. Be sure to hide a little or your silhouette will spook them. Wear dull clothes, even a camo shirt - definitely not anything white or bright. And pinch those barbs to make it easy to release fish where you might need to because of rules to protect other species."

Bevis calls the little rainbow, cutthroat and brook trout he catches "pocket trout" because he uses his pockets as a creel. "These little gems are really good, though," he said. "Fry them crisp and eat the whole thing."

### **Southcentral Washington**

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

As of late July, anglers were averaging more than three **walleye** per rod on Lake Umatilla, the 67-mile reservoir below McNary Dam on the Columbia River, according to Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) stationed in the Tri-Cities. "Fishing has been terrific at all the usual spots – Umatilla, County Line, Irrigon, Boardman and Paterson," Hoffarth said. "Walleye really put on the feed bag when the water heats up, so we can expect to see some more great fishing in the weeks ahead."

There is no minimum size limit for walleye at Lake Umatilla, although there is a daily limit of 10 fish, only five of which can measure over 18 inches and only one of which can be over 24 inches. There is also no minimum size for **smallmouth bass**, which are also showing up in the catch. Anglers have a daily limit of five smallmouth bass, only three of which can exceed 15 inches. **Sturgeon** are also stirring, but July 31 is the last day for retention fishing on Lake Wallula and the Snake River below Ice Harbor Dam, and Lake Umatilla switched to catch-and-release May 20.

On the other hand, there's still plenty of time to catch and keep up to two **hatchery steelhead** from the mouth of the Columbia River to the Highway 395 bridge at Kennewick/Pasco. Fishery managers are projecting a strong run of 380,000 summer-run steelhead this year, many bound for the Snake River and mid-to-upper Columbia River. Hatchery steelhead can be identified by a missing adipose fin and a healed scar near their tail.

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

Anglers can also look forward to good fishing for **fall chinook salmon** in the weeks ahead. A strong run of 655,000 "falls" is expected to return to the Columbia this year, including 353,000 upriver brights that are expected to cross McNary Dam – many headed for the Hanford Reach. While salmon fishing has been hot above Rocky Reach Dam since mid-July, fishing doesn't really catch fire below Priest Rapids Dam until fall chinook arrive in September, Hoffarth said.

"Most of the summer chinook and sockeye just sail right through below Priest Rapids Dam," he said. "But with a strong run of falls expected this year, salmon fishing in the Hanford Reach should pick up in about a month."

The daily limit on the Columbia River is six chinook, of which two may be adults. Anglers are not required to release chinook with intact adipose fins, but must stop fishing after they retain two adult chinook. See the current [Fishing in Washington](#) rules pamphlet for additional information. On the Yakima River, salmon fishing closes July 31 at the end of the day, but will reopen Sept. 1 for fall chinook in the lower river. Eric Anderson, a WDFW fish biologist in Yakima, said the spring chinook fishery in the upper section between Union Gap and Roza Dam finished strong, despite high flows in May and June.

"Catch rates for springers really picked up in July as water levels dropped and more fish moved into the area," Anderson said. "Now anglers are looking ahead to the fishery for fall chinook." Water levels are also dropping in streams flowing into the upper Yakima and Naches rivers, improving fishing conditions for wild **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout**, Anderson said. Anglers should be sure to check the regulations for those streams, and release all salmon, bull trout, and steelhead, Anderson said.

An increasing number of high lakes are also becoming accessible to trout fishing around White Pass, Chinook Pass and Snoqualmie Pass as the snow continues to melt under the summer sun. WDFW stocks some small, hike-in lakes with rainbow or cutthroat trout, and some also have naturally reproducing **eastern brook trout** populations.

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

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

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