

The Guide's Forecast - volume 14 issue number 35

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **August 24th – August 30th, 2012**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - Pro guide **Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "With the Buoy Ten estuary fishery at its peak right now, effort upstream has been light. Expect that to change by next week, when the bulk of the run has already passed above Tongue point. Chinook counts over Bonneville dam have started to ramp up while steelhead counts are falling off. Its apparent this year's summer steelhead return wasn't as good as predicted.

"Bass fishing has been disappointing this season on the lower Willamette. Some anglers speculate that cooler spring run-offs have been detrimental to the bass successfully spawning. However, now should be the peak of the best walleye fishing the Multnomah channel has to offer."

Steelheading and trout fishing has been summertime tough on the McKenzie with the best shot at a hookup coming at first light and again late in the afternoon,

On the North Santiam, summer steelhead are holding in four to six feet of water near ledges. Salmon will start spawning soon with activity increasing in September,

Water temperatures have warmed on the Clackamas and any summer steelhead that MIGHT be around will be difficult to catch.

You might find a few summer steelhead on the Sandy in the stretch from the mouth of the Salmon river down to Cedar creek. Go early to avoid spooked steelhead as August is the peak of the inner tube hatch.

Northwest – With the Buoy 10 fishery in full swing, anglers in the NW corner of the state are all eyes on the mainstem Columbia River. The Astoria region remains the prime target but with numbers at Bonneville on the rise, the mouth of the Cowlitz will quickly become popular this week. Anchor anglers will fish wobblers at depths between 35 and 50 feet with the best success coming on the outgoing tide.

Tides in the Astoria area continue to favor afternoon anglers but that will change by the weekend. Chinook action will peak this week in Astoria and coho should begin to show in better numbers as they have been sparse thus far. Spinners started to work with more regularity in recent days, particularly at high tide on either the Washington or Oregon side, above the Astoria/Megler Bridge. Tides begin to soften today, which should make the lower river most productive for the remainder of the week.

Crabbing the lower Columbia as well as Nehalem, Netarts or Nehalem estuaries should be productive this weekend but you'll have lots of competition too.

The Nehalem estuary continues to put out fair numbers of summer chinook with the fall run right on their heels. The fishery here could easily last through all of September.

Anglers looking for Tillamook chinook should start to see some activity in the coming days. Although still weeks away from any peak activity, they do start to make a showing by late August.

With little exception, friendly seas are forecast into the weekend, giving albacore chasers fine opportunity to pursue them 20 to 30 miles offshore. Action can vary by day but most boats are capable of posting double digit catches this time of year.

Fishery managers are still crunching numbers to determine if additional opportunity exists for another all-depth halibut opener off of the central coast.

Southwest- Tuna fishing has been improving as warm water moves ever closer to the coastline, allowing for shorter trips to find willing albacore.

Charters out of central Oregon ports have had spotty results for tuna but catches are generally improving when the ocean lays down. Bottom fishing has been good, yielding limits of rockfish and some large ling cod.

Crabbing is good in Winchester Bay. Smallmouth bass fishing is excellent in the upper mainstem and South Umpqua.

Late last week, with the ocean laying down and wind moderating, boats out of Coos bay took good numbers of albacore fewer than 20 mile offshore.

Chinook fishing has been good out of the ports of Charleston and Bandon.

In the Rogue estuary, where Chinook have been kegg up but difficult to hook, the bite finally turned on over the past week and catches have been decent. Half-pounders are being taken in good number at Huntly Park. Chinook catches are fair but improving on the middle Rogue while springers are being caught in the upper river below Dodge Park where it's still legal to fish for them. Upper river steelheading remains good with the water flow stable.

Chinook catches picked up for boaters launching out of the Port of Brookings over the last weekend with many returning to the cleaning station with limits or near limits. Anchovies behind a flasher trolled at 50 to 100-foot depths have accounted for most catches.

Trout fishing is slow to fair at Diamond Lake where fishing will be allowed year-around starting in 2013.

Eastern - Steelheading on the lower Deschutes has been slow to fair over the past week with numbers low.

Fish early in the day, take insect repellent and watch out for rattlesnakes. Redsides have been moderately responsive until mid-morning.

The Crooked River is fishing well early in the day and again in afternoons in shady areas.

Kokanee limits are being taken regularly from Paulina on jigs.

SW Washington- The Cowlitz remains the best option for summer steelhead but salmon will start to show in most district tributaries in the coming weeks. Most anglers will focus their efforts in the lower reaches and new regulations are coming into effect on September 1st so anglers should check their favorite streams before heading out.

The Wind River is producing some steelhead but most gorge anglers are focusing their efforts on Drano Lake where anglers are averaging about a steelhead per boat. Fall chinook catches should begin to climb with Bonneville counts.

The Klickitat River is often a good bet for summer steelhead this time of year but warm weather often creates silty water conditions, hampering success.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Of course it's still game on in the lower Columbia River. We're just now hitting out stride. Chinook are raining down on savvy anglers near Astoria where anglers that time the tides have a real chance at taking home some quality fish. It's been another good week at Buoy 10.

It seems someone is listening to us here at The Guide's Forecast. Anglers were taking advantage of the late start option this week with good fishing often not happening until well into the incoming tide in the afternoon. The best fishing has consistently been taking place on the second half of the incoming tide through the first hour of outgoing.

Most recently, the very early mornings has been producing a few biters but then it falls on its face for the second half of the outgoing tide. This leaves anglers perplexed for several hours until the tide change again in the afternoon. I've been waiting until the last trickle of outgoing tide and beginning my day close to Buoy 20 or 14, taking an occasional chinook that heads upstream once the peak ebb has passed. My theory as to why the last half of outgoing tide produces so poorly is multi-faceted. First, it's the warmest water of the day and salmon typically don't respond well to warm water (> 68 degrees), especially when coming from low 60 degree water in the ocean. Secondly, saline levels are lower, making fish even less motivated to bite. Lastly, the river is truckin'. You'll notice, even though it's just an hour or so after the tide has turned and starting to go out, the bite dies off dramatically. Baits and spinners are just moving too quickly to entice fish into biting. If they have to burn too many calories to catch their prey, it's not worth their time pursuing it.

The first trickle of incoming has produced some fair results along the red line on the Oregon side but on Tuesday, it produced fairly good on the Washington side by the Chinook wing jetties. About 2 hours into the incoming tide, the deep water in front of Hammond has been producing good catches using herring, anchovies or spinners fishing anywhere from 18 to 35 strips out (16 to 30 feet deep). One of the best bites Monday and Tuesday came along the 25 to 30 foot line on the Washington side from the tunnel to the church and further upstream as the tide kept rolling in. We dropped our spinners and baits on the bottom of the river during the middle 3 hours of incoming tide here and really went to town on the Chinook here. The red and white Fatal Flash spinner was especially productive during this time of the tide.

Here is a break-down of the spots (from west to east) we typically fish and how they have performed lately:

Buoy 10- produces a few fish on the last part of the outgoing tide. Some coho on the first strong push of the incoming but with so few hatchery coho coming back this year, it's not worth your time.

Chinook Wing Jetties- Has produced fairly consistently all week, good on Tuesday. Hold into the tide with gear deployed 18 to 30 feet down. Bait should work best here but chinook were responsive to spinners on Tuesday. This fishes best about an hour after low slack.

Buoys 20, 21, 22 and in front of Hammond – produces best 2 hours after low slack for chinook. Again, holding into the tide. It hasn't produced as well early this week as it did over the weekend. It could turn on again any day however.

The upstream troll, Washington side, from the tunnel to the bridge- Not a consistent producer year to year but it has been great early in the week. About 2.5 hours into the incoming tide, chinook have been willing participants for gear deployed on the bottom in 25 to 30 feet of water. The tide has been ripping through here and we often find ourselves trolling at speeds of 4 MPH or better. Keep your gear on the bottom here!

The "Tongue" troll- I call lower Desdemona Sands the tongue and we often start trolling upstream about 2 hours into the incoming tide here. The water starts off at 30 feet north of Buoy 21 and climbs uphill to 22 or 21 feet by the day marker or black and white checker board as some call the Desdemona Light Marker. What's kind of cool is that you'll notice the water velocity slows down on the uphill troll once you come up on the day marker. Some years, this produces exceptional catches but it's just been mediocre this year. There are some coho here however. Later in the tide, don't be afraid to troll in the even shallower stuff upstream of Hammond on this same uphill slide.

Hovering at the bridge- It may be old school but it's good school. Although it hasn't produced much in the last few days, it did produce late last week and into the weekend. Don't rule it out, even if no one else is doing it. This has been producing as early as half way into the incoming tide. Like Hammond, this is deep water. Fish your gear 18 to 30 foot deep here.

The Humps- Above the bridge on the Washington side has produced good catches for much of the season. It typically produces best close to the high tide but has gone off earlier in the tide most recently. We often start in about 30 feet of water just above the bridge (maybe ¼ of a mile) and troll upstream and onto the "humps" which crests about 22 to 24 feet consistently for quite a while. We used to do most of our damage right on the hump where it crests at about 22 foot but most of my fish this year have come from higher up, even as high as the shipwreck in this shallower stuff. This bite consistently dies once you've hit high slack. I did pretty well there Tuesday but found the water just a bit to the south of where I normally troll to be more productive. Some coho here as well.

The Mouth of Young's Bay- Has produced a few fish later in the tide, real close to high as a matter of fact but we're getting pretty late in the season to be hoping for a Rogue River strain of chinook. They're much more prevalent earlier in the season.....what? It's August 23rd already? We did get one Rogue River strain fish on Tuesday.

Above the Bridge on the Oregon side- pretty consistent all season, it remains a hit or miss on some days. It may be the best option on the river for the first part of outgoing tide however. Fish the 24 to 30 foot line and keep your gear on the bottom here.

And that about covers an entire tide cycle, at least the one that I fish. Of course there are numerous other spots to fish but either we haven't tried them yet or they haven't produced. Spinners have certainly taken off lately with these colors still producing the best results:

Fatal Flash Blades-

Red/white, red, green or blue beads. Size 6 or 7

Metallic Purple, red beads, yellow tubing

Copper, white beads

Two-tone green, blue tip, pink hoochies

Terry Mulkey Blade-

Black/white/red dot- red beads

Ocean fishing has been decent but not what one would think for this time of year. As we've mentioned before, the lack of coho has meant poor results for most ocean anglers. On Wednesday however, the chinook bite turned on off of the beach just north of the north jetty near the lighthouse. One charter boat operator stated "it was doubles pretty consistently." Although the coho fishing was still challenging, the beach bite for coho was decent too. Anglers fishing to the SW near the CR Buoy are not reporting good success. There are still lots of undersize chinook in the catches out there but one has to wonder, with the fishing as good as it is in the river, why go anywhere else? Boats fishing out there are still using anchovies for bait.

Ocean crabbing remains good although many still remain soft-shelled. River crabbing is good too although not many people are doing it. With all the boat traffic strewn throughout the lower river, it's pretty dangerous to keep your buoys fishing without getting a bunch of mooching rigs lost in them. Be careful when you pull your gear.

Upriver, action should start ramping up as the wobbler fishing begins to take hold. **Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos** reports, "With the Buoy Ten estuary fishery at its peak right now, effort upstream has been light. Expect that to change by next week, when the bulk of the run has already passed above Tongue point. Chinook counts over Bonneville dam have started to ramp up while steelhead counts are falling off. It's apparent this year's summer steelhead return wasn't as good as predicted and way short of the last three seasons. However, there are still some summer runs to be had as 1500-2000 a day are still passing through the viewing windows. The water has been running a bit higher than average as of late and bank anglers are seeing better success for both steelhead and Chinook. Downriver at the tributary mouths, Chinook Anglers will soon be out in force anchor fishing with spinners and wobblers. Sturgeon fishing from the deadline at Skamania Island downstream has been disappointing. Opportunities for smallmouth bass are good near Camas/Washougal upstream to Multnomah falls."

The Guide's Forecast – It'll be another big week for Buoy 10 anglers. For anglers in the know, it would be quite conceivable that limits will be easy to come by. Well, maybe nothing is easy as it can even be stressful when the fish are hitting the deck, to want to get everyone their fish before the bite dies off.

As of this writing, the bite will be switching to an a.m. show. It's been getting better since Tuesday morning and many anglers landed limits early on Wednesday. Anglers should take advantage of the early morning high tide above the bridge but by the weekend, the tide may still be pushing in enough to justify an upstream troll at daybreak on the Washington side. That stretch (from the upper wing jetty at Chinook to the church has been good on the afternoon tide. Most anglers however will be focusing their efforts upstream of the bridge. And that's a good strategy.

That said, there will still be an afternoon bite, well, even an early evening bite for that matter. Anglers will have a choice but as the intensity of the morning tides build, and the fact that it is an early morning tide, action should remain best for early risers.

And what's with the spinner bite this season. It isn't always this consistent but spinners are king right now so don't leave the dock without them. Some guides are still talking about not getting many takes on spinners but I can assure you, they're working better this year than they have in the last several years. As a staunch bait user for the last several years, I'll be running spinners

almost exclusively by Thursday. I still have to keep at least one bait rod fishing. We're still getting bites on herring but especially fresh jigged anchovies. The problem is, many of the bites don't actually materialize into boated fish. The same can't be said for spinners however. Most of those bites turn into fish in the box. So when spinners are working as effectively, if not more so than bait, why would you risk it? Of course it could always change back to a bait bite but typically, the spinner bite improves over time, it doesn't diminish.

Anglers that retain all of their chinook may choose to pursue coho and you can effectively do so by running smaller spinners. Smaller baits such as anchovies or herring will also work well for the few coho that are present. Their numbers are growing however. It's true, smaller baits produce smaller salmon and vice versa. Chinook will likely remain the top target however, as well as the most plentiful.

Be mindful of all the spots mentioned above as any of them will produce over the course of the week. Use the info detailed in that portion of the report to target where you will fish during what part of the tide. With the morning high tide over the weekend, you'll find most anglers targeting fish upstream of the bridge but as the tide winds down, hop-scotch the tide downstream as it goes out. By low slack, you should find yourself close to Buoy 12 or 14 for low slack and the beginning of incoming tide. It's also not a bad idea to get out of the fast flows during peak ebb, fishing behind the massive Desdemona Sands (close to the Desdemona Sands Marker) where the sandbar blocks the strong inertia of the outgoing flow. Hardware seems to become ever more effective closer to low slack. Several guides are running spinners exclusively, no matter what period of the tide it is.

Are you really thinking about going to the ocean? Let me repeat that.....are you really thinking about going to the ocean? (Do you get the hint?) You can still drop your crab pots in the river. The crab are even in better shape than ocean crab.

Of course with salmon on the minds of most, albacore fishing is taking a back seat. It should get a good look however as we are in peak season. Here is the offshore forecast through the weekend:

FRI

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.
PATCHY DRIZZLE AND FOG.

FRI NIGHT

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

SAT

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

SAT NIGHT

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

SUN

NW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

MON

SW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

Upriver, anglers will begin to see the wobbler fishery take off. As this is a favorite among many metro anglers, effort and catch should dramatically rise in the coming weeks. One aspect that

makes it so attractive is that it's a relatively easy fishery to find success in. As a general rule, use a 5 foot dropper and a 5-foot leader line, adjusting your wobbler accordingly. You want a slow side to side swing to your wobbler and of course this will vary according to the tide. Check the regulations carefully as they are quite dynamic these days. The stretch from the Cowlitz to Portland will see the most effort.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "Bass fishing has been disappointing this season on the lower Willamette. Some anglers speculate that cooler spring run-offs have been detrimental to the bass successfully spawning. However, now should be the peak of the best walleye fishing the Multnomah channel has to offer."

With the Willamette Falls water temperature fairly steady at 75 degrees, daily passage of steelhead has all but stalled. On brighter note, coho started appearing at the Falls August 11th and have been counted in ones and twos daily through the last available data on August 16th.

Snowmelt has actually been lowering the water temperature with the reading as of mid-day Thursday, August 23rd, down to 52.5 degrees from over 56 degrees just one week earlier.

Summer steelhead populations are very good in the Santiam system with water level and flow excellent in both the North and South Santiam.

Alton Baker Canal, Clear Lake, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River below Leaburg Lake. McKenzie River above Leaburg, Salmon Creek, North Fork Reservoir and Small Fry Lake are scheduled for trout planting.

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "Bass fishing has been slow but walleye fishing in the Multnomah channel could be a sleeper. Try bottom walkers with a work harness/night crawler rigs in 12-20 ft of water. Troll upstream for best success along shelves and drop offs."

Early mornings or late afternoons on the McKenzie will be enjoyable and fly fishers will find trout a little more cooperative as we hit a stretch of milder weather.

Results for summer steelhead have picked up this week on the North Santiam with some anglers bagging multiple fish. The limit is three fin-clipped fish above Willamette Falls and there's no reason not to take a limit of hatchery-reared steelhead.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "Water temperatures have warmed on the Clackamas and any summer steelhead that MIGHT be around will be difficult to catch. Top that off with the rafters and tubers trying to stay cool and your chances for a steelhead have slimmed to just about Nada. By mid-September, a few silver might be loitering around Cross Park in Gladstone and up to the mouth of Eagle creek.

"You might find a few summer steelhead in the stretch from the mouth of the Salmon river down to Cedar creek. Go early to avoid spooked steelhead as August is the peak of the inner tube hatch. Expect the first of the silvers to show up in three weeks."

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "Go early if you want a chance at a late summer steelhead on the Clackamas river, be home by 10am.

"See Clackamas river above and use same tactics."

North Coast Fishing Report – The Nehalem remains the best show in town, following the lower Columbia that is. Action has been reported as good throughout most of the estuary but most recently, action at the mouth has been good on the softening tide series. Herring parked on the bottom during the incoming and soft outgoing tides has produced well the last several days and likely will continue to do so into the weekend.

Higher in the Nehalem estuary, action remains good for herring and spinner trollers but will likely wane on the softer tide series. It appears however that this will be another good year for Nehalem returns. It's still early for coho.

Other than the Nehalem, other estuaries and offshore action for chinook remains a poor prospect. That will change in the coming weeks however as larger chinook are likely to show in the Tillamook and Nestucca systems in the near future.

Crabbing both inside the bay and outside in the ocean is excellent. The inside crab are in better shape than the outside ones but saltwater spiders will likely improve in the coming weeks.

Cutthroat remain a good prospect in most tidewater sections as well as the estuaries for most north coast systems.

The Guide's Forecast – For those not wanting to wait in the long lines of the lower Columbia fishery, the Nehalem should offer some solitude (relatively speaking) for herring trollers. Target Nehalem quarry near the river mouth and keep your baits on the bottom for the best action. Quality herring will be harder to come by so when you find some good ones, you had better stock up.

It won't be long before decent numbers of chinook show up in other coastal estuaries such as Tillamook Bay. It won't be too impressive this week however but there should be some fresh chinook available in the lower reaches such as the jaws this weekend. Like Nehalem, if you target these fish, slow troll herring on the bottom near the bay mouth.

Crabbing both in the ocean and in the estuaries should be good this weekend. The softer tide series will have a lot to do with that.

Offshore albacore should be productive out of most northerly ports. Don't expect easy action however. It seems to vary by day this time of year and I'm not sure anyone knows why.....?

Central & South Coast Reports – Bottom fishing out of Depoe Bay and Newport has been good though not white-hot (hi, guys!). Ling cod have been running large which, combined with excellent ocean crabbing, certainly makes the trip worthwhile.

The non-selective (hatchery or wild) offshore coho season opens September 1st which is just a week from this coming Saturday. Book it or prepare your own boat and tackle for three days of what should be productive fishing. The fishery will continue every Thursday through Saturday for a quota increased from 10,000 to 11,800 fish or until the scheduled closure on September 22nd.

This is a good time of year to target sea-run cutthroat trout in coastal rivers. They're plentiful and willing to take bait, lure or fly. Only artificial lures are allowed above tidewater through the end of August.

Crabbing has been fair to good in Alsea Bay with Dungeness in pretty good shape for this time of year. A couple of Chinook have been taken upriver although it's early for this fishery.

Fall Chinook have started entering the Siuslaw and a few are being taken daily. It's early for this fishery so results will improve in the coming weeks. Crabbing has been worthwhile although there have been reports of some thievery of contents and occasionally entire traps.

Tickets are just \$10 per angler or \$25 per boat for the annual S.T.E.P. Salmon Derby out of Reedsport over Labor Day Weekend. The contest will run Saturday and Sunday with a deadline of noon on Monday, September 3rd. Daily prizes and a top prize of \$500 for the largest Chinook landed.

Boats launching out of Reedsport have been making good catches of tuna with most finding fish about 30 miles out. Ocean Chinook fishing has been decent although anglers have had a challenge establishing a productive pattern for salmon. In typical fall Chinook fashion, there have been occasional flurries of action below Reedsport and along the jetties in Winchester Bay but catches have been spotty for the most part. Soft plastics and curly-tailed grubs are accounting for excellent catches of smallmouth bass on the South Umpqua. Poppers are effective early and late in the day. Summer steelheading is fair on the North Umpqua.

Chinook catches picked up a little in Coos Bay over the past week. Fishing remains consistent for greenling and rockfish from the jetties. Crabbing has been good in the bay.

Fresh Chinook continue to move into the Rogue estuary while warm water in the river discourages movement upstream. With numbers building in the bay, catches have been improving for trollers dragging anchovies. On calm days, the jaws have been productive. Half-pounders are being caught around Agness with catches expected to improve when the weather cools somewhat. Summer steelhead catches have been fair on the middle Rogue while Chinook landings are beginning to pick up. The upper Rogue remains reliable for summer steelhead as good numbers continue to return to the Cole Rivers Hatchery.

Boats haven't had to travel far outside Brookings Harbor to find Chinook with catches have been fair to good and the bite fairly steady. Cutthroat trout fishing has been very good in the Chetco River below the mile 2.2 deadline.

The Rogue River above Lost Creek will be planted with hatchery trout again this week. Results have been good here.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Steelheading has remained only fair this week in the lower Deschutes. Numbers of fish in the river aren't great and despite efforts to ameliorate water temperatures, it's still running warmer than optimum, a consequence of which is that steelhead seem lethargic and slow to respond to offerings. On a brighter note, water conditions are due to improve in weeks to come as will Deschutes steelheading. The consensus seems to be that summer steelhead are running late in the Columbia.

Wickiup is producing some brown trout to trollers with the occasional fish going over 20 inches.

Kokanee fishing was fair at Green Peter over the past weekend with jigs producing fish.

Paulina has been productive for kokanee with fish suspended and schools fairly thick. Trolling has been effective this week.

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.

Meanwhile, 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.

The crab fishery in all marine areas of Puget Sound 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 may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. Most marine areas will close the evening of Sept. 3 for a catch assessment. However, Marine Area 7 will remain open through Sept. 30.

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.wa.gov).

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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Random Links

Sandy River Map and information: <http://www.steelheaduniversity.com/sandy.html>

Clackamas River Map and Information: <http://www.steelheaduniversity.com/clack.html>

Monster-sized 83.3 pound king caught & released:

http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/realtimenorthwest/2018956244_monster-sized_833_pound_king_s.html

GOOD LUCK!