

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 7<sup>th</sup> – September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro- Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "The Columbia River anchor fishery is well underway with chinook being caught from Tongue Pt. to Bonneville Dam. The mouths of the Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, Washougal and Sandy Rivers are popular with anchor fishermen and in some cases bank anglers as well. Although it is peak season, the bite can still be very volatile at times. The Kalama, Washougal and Sandy have some access for the bank angler to cast spinners to the staging salmon. Chinook counts over Bonneville have bumped substantially, while although still present, the steelhead count has dwindled.

"On the Willamette, there have been no reports of silvers off the mouth of the Clackamas yet but it could be as little as a week away."

Cool overnight temperatures have continued to improve prospects for trout on the McKenzie River. It's mostly a caddis show but include nymphs in your arsenal.

Trout fishing is fair on the North Santiam while summer steelheading is slow.

Although there might still be a few summer steelhead present on the Clackamas, fishing for them will be slow at best. Look for the first of the silvers to show up by mid-month, especially if we get any precipitation at all.

It wouldn't be unheard of for a savvy angler to pick up an early silver at Cedar Creek on the Sandy, or even a late summer steelhead, but the summers are all but over and the silvers are likely a couple weeks off.

**Northwest –** Good numbers of salmon still remain in the Buoy 10 fishery. Bob Keerins and his group from Portland took a 6 chinook and 6 coho limit from the area on Sunday. Although this section of river closed to the retention of chinook on Tuesday, ample numbers of hatchery coho remain and chinook catches should improve above Tongue Point prior to the weekend. Jack salmon may also be kept in this area and numbers are plentiful this year.

The ocean north of Cape Falcon (Manzanita) opened up for the taking of any salmon, including wild coho on Monday. Catches are good but anglers should fish closer to the river mouth instead of the traditional coho grounds SW of the Columbia River Buoy.

South of Cape Falcon, the ocean opens up for any salmon for several 3-day per week seasons beginning tomorrow through Saturday. Wild coho should be plentiful, especially near the mouths of Tillamook and Nehalem Estuaries. Some hatchery coho should begin to show in these same estuaries and limited wild coho take will be allowed on many north coast systems. Check regulations for more detail.

Chinook fishing continues to improve on the Tillamook and Nehalem systems. Softer tides this weekend should make lower bay fishing and the adjacent ocean waters productive. Ocean crabbing is excellent with crab finally filling out nicely. Crabbing should also be good in most north coast bays.

Albacore fishing should be excellent when the ocean allows. Tuna are responding best to live bait versus clones or jigs. This is common for this time of year.

**Southwest**- Coho fishing out of central Oregon ports has been excellent with mostly limits reported. Best fishing has been in the morning. Wild or hatchery coho may be kept every Thursday, Friday and Saturday through September 22nd unless the quota of 11,800 fish is taken.

Limits of pinkfin surf perch are being taken off south coast beaches. Fishing is best on the incoming tide in a moderate surf.

Trollers using plug-cut herring around Reedsport are taking a few chinook. Better results are coming from the jaws and coho fishing, when open, has been good just outside the bay entrance. Bay crabbing has been good.

Boats out of Charleston have been taking good numbers of tuna over the past week, often within 20 miles of port. Bay crabbing remains excellent. The 13th Annual Coos Basin Salmon Derby will take place September 8-9 in from the Empire Boat Ramp to the head of tidewater. The derby begins at 5 a.m. Saturday and ends at 3 p.m. Sunday.

Chinook fishing was slow on the lower Coquille over the past weekend.

The charter report out of Gold Beach included early-day limits of chinook over the past week along with plenty of rockfish and very large lingcod to bottom fishers. Trolling results in Rogue Bay should improve as river temperatures rise, keeping chinook in the estuary. Results upriver for steelhead, half-pounders and fall chinook have been good.

Chinook fishing out of the Port of Brookings has been good but with coho retention disallowed on this stretch of the coast, anglers need to be certain of the species of salmon they keep. Halibut fishing is allowed south of Humbug Mountain through October and boats have been making fair to good catches.

**Eastern** – Fishing for steelhead on the lower Deschutes will improve through September. Warm water has slowed movement in the Columbia as well as the Deschutes. Trout fishing is fair but should improve with cooler weather.

Green Peter is producing good numbers of kokanee on the troll at roughly 60 feet deep.

The ODFW announced recently that it will suspend fishing in several Lahontan cutthroat trout streams in southeast Oregon due to severe habitat damage from the recent Holloway fire. The specific streams are here: <http://bit.ly/R3ni5t>

**SW Washington**- Efforts in the SW district tributaries should start to bump this week. Chinook will be entering the lower Lewis, Kalama and Cowlitz Rivers with savvy boaters working the lower stretches of these systems using small baits and light lines. Eggs will take the lion's share of the catch. Bank anglers will use bobbers and bait in well-defined holes. The mouths of these systems should also produce well for anglers using hardware fished near the bottom.

With Bonneville counts on the climb, the Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries should start to see significant bumps in chinook production. Although these fish often have lock-jaw at these popular destinations, there should still be fair opportunity for harvest.

Numerous new regulations take effect this month so be sure to check regulations before heading out.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – While it may be beneficial for me, as a TGF writer, for Buoy 10 to have closed on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, it's not good for me as a fishing guide or Oregon's Northwesterly most rural community. The ironic situation to it all is that the fishery could have been designed a different way to accommodate the take of hatchery (fin-clipped) chinook in the Buoy 10 fishery leaving it open during a week when we're catching the heck out of both "wild" and hatchery chinook. This decision is made in Washington every spring and hopefully our sportfishing community can rally around a better way for the 2013 season. We'll keep you posted.

And is it loaded with chinook. Although the Buoy 10 fishery is closed to the taking of all chinook, they are plentiful downstream of the Astoria/Megler Bridge and they are snapping. At least they were on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Our expectations were running high for the Tongue Point fishery to take off, as of Wednesday, it just hasn't happened. On both Tuesday and Wednesday, we headed up above Tongue Point and put in about an hour each morning only to come up short of any quality fish. On Wednesday, there were plenty of fish to be had, but they were all jack chinook. There has been a rare adult chinook taken in the past two days but not what one would expect for the time of year we're at and the fact that there are a LOT of fish in the river; your fish finder will verify that. We keep expecting the Tongue Point fishery to take off but more on that in the forecast section of this newsletter.

With coho the only game in town downstream of Tongue Point, you can imagine, with the predicted low returns of both the "A" and "B" runs of coho, pressure has been light. The windy weather hasn't inspired all that many either however. On Tuesday afternoon, I was the ONLY boat above the bridge on the Washington side and I didn't see anyone below the bridge either. We had high tide to ourselves on the sand flats up there but it also made me the only target for those furry friends that would even make Father Flannigan's blood boil. Needless to say, it was like dodging land-mines up there and we didn't win many battles that day. Coho fishing remains a viable option however as fish will continue to enter the river in good numbers through next week before the "A" run peters out. The Astoria Bridge to Chinook wing jetty has been the most productive drift by far recently. It yielded numerous coho on Wednesday but far more chinook, both jacks and adults. Wild coho were plentiful for some as well. On the flood, some boats have been hovering at the bridge and doing well for coho and chinook starting about half-way through the flood. Beware however, this is sea-lion country. The sand humps above the bridge have been producing fair near high slack but that bite is about to fade past sunset. It'll be a morning show. There have been some fish in the incoming tide flood near the Desdemona Light Marker. This has been fishing best during the middle 2 hours of incoming tide. It could be a fair option into the weekend.

The ocean north of Cape Falcon (mouth of the Columbia) opened up for the retention of wild coho on Monday. There were reports of good fishing for boats fishing close to the mouth of the river. Those that fished the traditional coho grounds near the CR Buoy didn't fare too well. There were some boats that went out on the opener that did not come in with their limits which is surprising since you were able to keep both wild and hatchery coho. Overall, it seems coho fishing north of Cape Falcon (Manzanita) is much slower than it is to the south of Cape Falcon.

There is still not many people crabbing in the river but crab are available and the weak tide series that we're on right now should produce good catches. Next to no one is crabbing the ocean.

Rough weather has kept many albacore anglers fishing in-river salmon but those making it out are doing very well. Tuna chasers are all agreeing, it's become a live-bait show.

Upriver, **pro guide Chris Vertopoulos** reports, "The Columbia River anchor fishery is well underway with Chinook being caught from Tongue Pt. to Bonneville Dam. The tributary mouths are your best bets as they leave the salmon a plume of cooler water to rest in before they continue their trek upriver. The mouths of the Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, Washougal and Sandy rivers are popular with anchor fishermen and in some cases bank anglers as well. The Kalama, Washougal and Sandy have some access for the bank angler to cast spinners to the staging salmon. Chinook counts over Bonneville have bumped substantially, while still present, the steelhead count has dwindled."

You can see how the upper river break-down went according to ODF&W creel checks:

**Gorge Bank:**

Weekend checking showed 11 adult fall chinook, three jack chinook, and four adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus two unclipped steelhead released for 77 bank anglers.

**Gorge Boats:**

Weekend checking showed 19 adult fall chinook, and one jack chinook kept, plus one jack chinook and one unclipped coho released for 13 boats (38 anglers).

**Troutdale Boats:**

Weekend checking showed seven adult fall chinook, one adipose fin-clipped coho, and three adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept for 48 boats (115 anglers).

**Portland to Longview Bank:**

Weekly checking showed one adult fall chinook and one unclipped steelhead released for 45 bank anglers.

**Portland to Longview Boats:**

Weekend checking showed 165 adult fall chinook, nine jack chinook, one adipose fin-clipped coho and six adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus four adult fall chinook, four jack chinook, four unclipped coho and one unclipped steelhead released for 306 boats (761 anglers).

This river fishery is peaking right now but new regulations are important to pay attention to. Here is the detail that requires your special attention as violators can wreck it for the entire fleet if regulations aren't adhered to (sorry if you're not a lawyer):

**COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, TONGUE POINT/ROCKY POINT LINE UPSTREAM TO A LINE PROJECTED FROM WARRIOR ROCK LIGHTHOUSE ON SAUVIE ISLAND THROUGH RED BUOY #4 TO A MARKER ON THE LOWER END OF BACHELOR ISLAND:**

- **August 1 through September 9**, this area is open to the retention of fall chinook, adipose fin-clipped coho and adipose fin-clipped steelhead. The daily bag limit is two adult salmon/steelhead in combination, only one of which may be a chinook, and five jack salmon. Jack salmon are chinook less than or equal to 24 inches and coho less than or equal to 20 inches. It is unlawful to angle for jack salmon after the adult daily bag limit has been reached. The retention of chum and sockeye is prohibited.
- **September 10 through September 16**, this area is open for **adipose fin-clipped fall chinook**, adipose fin-clipped summer steelhead and adipose fin-clipped coho. The daily bag limit is two adults, only one of which may be a chinook, and five jack salmon. Jack salmon are chinook less than or equal to 24 inches or coho less than or equal to 20 inches. It is unlawful to angle for jack salmon after the adult daily bag limit has been reached. The retention of unclipped chinook, chum and sockeye is prohibited.

- **September 17 through September 30**, this area is open adipose fin-clipped summer steelhead and adipose fin-clipped coho. The daily bag limit is two adult coho and/or steelhead in combination plus five coho jacks. Coho jacks are less than or equal to 20 inches. It is unlawful to angle for coho jacks after the adult daily bag limit has been reached. The retention of **chinook**, chum and sockeye is prohibited.
- **October 1 through December 31**, this area is open for fall chinook, adipose fin-clipped coho, and adipose fin-clipped steelhead. The daily bag limit is two adult salmon/steelhead in combination and five jacks. Jack salmon are chinook less than or equal to 24 inches and coho less than or equal to 20 inches. It is unlawful to angle for jack salmon after the adult daily bag limit has been reached. The retention of chum and sockeye is prohibited.
- **Seasons may be subject to in-season modifications.**
- **COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, A LINE PROJECTED FROM WARRIOR ROCK LIGHTHOUSE ON SAUVIE ISLAND THROUGH RED BUOY #4 TO A MARKER ON THE LOWER END OF BACHELOR ISLAND LINE UPSTREAM TO BONNEVILLE DAM:**
  - **August 1 through September 9**, this area is open to the retention of fall chinook, adipose fin-clipped coho and adipose fin-clipped steelhead. The daily bag limit is two adult salmon/steelhead in combination, only one of which may be a chinook, and five jack salmon. Jack salmon are chinook less than or equal to 24 inches and coho less than or equal to 20 inches. It is unlawful to angle for jack salmon after the adult daily bag limit has been reached. The retention of chum and sockeye is prohibited.
  - **September 10 through December 31**, this area is open to the retention of fall chinook, adipose fin-clipped coho and adipose fin-clipped steelhead. The daily bag limit is two adult salmon/steelhead in combination and five jack salmon. Jack salmon are chinook less than or equal to 24 inches and coho less than or equal to 20 inches. It is unlawful to angle for jack salmon after the adult daily bag limit has been reached. The retention of chum and sockeye is prohibited.
  - **Seasons may be subject to in-season modifications.**

**The Guide's Forecast** – Although the coho season still has a ways to go and anglers can expect some fair catches in the weeks to come, we'll once again reiterate, there aren't a lot of hatchery coho coming back to the Columbia system this year, if they come in as predicted. The fishing we see now, may be as good as it gets. As to where to target them, with the weaker tide series, fishing lower in the system, as in downstream of the Astoria/Megler Bridge or just upstream, will likely pay the greatest dividends. Keep in mind however, the fewer the boats, the bigger the target you will be for the sea-lions that are working that area.....hard.

The best bet for weekend anglers will be the Tongue Point fishery. There's clearly a lot of chinook in the area and they just have to, they just HAVE to, start hitting at Tongue Point any day. The tides are ripening and the run timing and magnitude of its size dictate a white hot bite that should go off (but it may not...). Maybe we'll have a late-breaking update.....? The jack fishing is pretty good in this reach right now. Coho are not surprisingly, absent from the catches. Spinners have the best history here but bait can oftentimes work really well too. The last time (and the only day) the Tongue Point fishery fished well this season, we were doing better suspending our offerings 4 to 6 cranks off of the bottom versus "putting them on the deck", meaning the bottom of the river where I normally fish. It may pay to vary depths if you're not finding good success with where you're at.

Red/white Fatal Flash blades have been producing well all season and as a common rule, whites and reds have been working well in the early a.m. Solid colors seem to perform best under cloudy skies or early mornings while the metallic colors produce best under sunny conditions.

If you're into crabbing, this will be a good weekend to do it. The lower estuary off of Desdemona Sands or Buoy 20 should produce nice catches. Of course so will the ocean.

As for the ocean, do you really want to go there? Coho are scattered, chinook are in the river, why go anywhere else? Now if you're targeting tuna, that's a different story. Plan on heading west 28 to 32 miles. Here's the ocean forecast:

#### **FRI**

E WIND TO 5 KT...BACKING TO N IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 1 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT. PATCHY FOG.

#### **FRI NIGHT**

W WIND 5 TO 10 KT...BACKING TO S AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 1 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

#### **SAT**

SW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

#### **SAT NIGHT**

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

#### **SUN**

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

#### **MON**

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

For upriver wobbler anglers, it's full steam ahead. This fishery will be peaking over the next few days so here's some advice from **pro guide Chris Vertopoulos**:

From Tongue Point to Bonneville Dam, Chinook salmon are ever present and being caught at all the popular haunts. The river mouths like the Cowlitz, Kalama and Sandy provide cooler temperatures where the salmon will stage and cool off before continuing up river. Here the Chinook and coho are more likely to bite your offering, as they are less stressed by the 70 degree Columbia River water. Anchor fishing with wobblers is the preferred method and accounts for the bulk of the fish. Alvins, Simons, Clancy's and Brads wobblers will all take their share but the Simon and Alvin have long been my favorites. The chrome plated Alvin with a strip of blue prism tape accounted for my first wobbler salmon, as well as many more after that. Also pearl white with a chartreuse tip and green or blue tipped rainbow work well on the darker days or early in the AM, or late in the evening. The stainless steel Simon wobbler has more recently become a favorite. Simon colors are all by the number and the SW-53 has been a top seller with 9, 17 and 30 also being very popular. Choose bright fluorescent painted finishes for dark overcast days and low light conditions and pick the metallic and polished metal finishes on bright days when the sun is up.

These lures work well when used with a 5'x5' (leader to dropper length) set-up. Sliding droppers of 15 or 20lb test are most common but a fixed dropper with a spreader or three way swivel is still used by some. Either way, use a 30-50 lb leader with a lighter weight dropper of half the test

of your leader. Keep your wobblers polished and clean, scrubbing them with lemon joy detergent and warm water or polishing them up with a clean rag and WD-40. When applying scents, use pastes or gels and only rub a dab on the hook, a little goes a long way when you are talking about a salmon's incredible olfactory sense of smell. Sardine, anchovy, herring, anise are among the more popular flavors.

When you are finally on the water and fishing and the magical moment happens when a fish decides to grab your lure and crush it, try your best to be patient and wait a few seconds till your rod is completely buried and line is coming off the reel before pulling it out of the rod holder. It's my opinion that the longer you wait the better the hook-up is. Waiting till the fish is moving downstream with your lure ensures a solid hook-up in the corner of the fish's mouth.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "Mediocre bass fishing is about all that's available. No reports of silvers off the mouth of the Clackamas yet but it could be as little as a week away."

With the flow low and the water temperature high (still 70 degrees) at Willamette Falls, fish passage of Chinook and steelhead is unremarkable. Coho numbers are starting to ramp up, however, which will be good news for upstream tributaries once they're moving upstream en masse.

Water level and flow have been stable this week on the McKenzie. This is good news for anglers who have dealt with fluctuations here recently. And it's good for fishing, too.

Water is being released from Detroit Reservoir in preparation for use aid flood control over the winter months. As a result, the North Santiam is on the rise this week with flow forecast to increase through September 10th at Jefferson although it is predicted to stabilize today, September 6th, at Mehama. A similar situation is occurring on the South Santiam as water is released from Foster Reservoir although the level and flow are supposed to stabilize by Saturday, September 8th. Fish counts totaled about 6,400 spring Chinook and a like number of summer steelhead as of the end of August on the South Santiam. The vast majority of these fish were punched through the gill to mark them plate and recycled downriver to Pleasant Valley and Waterloo.

Henry Hagg Lake is scheduled to be stocked this week with 200 one-pound rainbow trout according to the ODFW.

**The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** predicts, "Other than average smallmouth bass fishing, the Willamette will soon have a few silvers staging below the mouth of the Clackamas. Angler who have fished here in years past troll or anchor with small plugs but in more recent seasons, a few sharp anglers have tried side drifting small baits of eggs with good success right along the island and across from Meldrum Bar."

With fall approaching, smallmouth bass are feeding heavily on the lower Willamette in anticipation of the change of seasons. Crawfish crankbaits and light-colored spinnerbaits will produce decent numbers of fish now. While mornings and evenings will be most productive, it's possible to hook a couple of smallies and hour on the lower river. Bass fishing is also productive on the Willamette above the Falls and into the tributaries. Wherever you fish for smallies, stick to rocky bottom or points. Results will only improve through September. Steelheading is ramping up on the Willamette on the Town Run and above. Trout fishing is good and improving on the upper Middle Fork Willamette. Native rainbow and wild cutthroat are responding well to a variety of fly-rod offerings.

As the season gradually evolves into fall, results for summer steelhead on the McKenzie have shown some improvement. While more than a couple of chances in a day can be considered a great day now, hookups will increase as days grow shorter and cooler.

Fishing is likely to be slow on the Santiam system with water levels rising but should provide worthwhile steelheading once things settle down. The scenic North Fork Santiam River above Detroit should offer decent prospects for trout anglers.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "Although there might still be a few summer steelhead present, the fishing for them will be slow at best. Look for the first of the silvers to show up by mid-month, especially if we get any precipitation at all.

"Little going on the Sandy River other than inner tubers and rafters floating the river. It wouldn't be unheard of for a savvy angler to pick up an early silver at Cedar Creek, or even a late summer steelhead, but the summers are all but over and the silvers are likely a couple weeks off."

Over 1,100 steelhead have been recycled from the Clackamas Hatchery Facility to Riverside Park to give anglers another shot at them.

Please note that while the temporary rules closure of the Sandy above the confluence of the Salmon River ended August 31st, the area will remain closed under permanent regulations.

**The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** predicts, "A couple summer steelhead might still be lingering around on the Clack but local anglers are anticipating the arrival of the silver salmon. The standard methods of casing spinners, drifting corkies and bait and bobber and jig will all take their share of fish but one might consider drifting small thin blade spoons on a 24-36 inch leader. The one inch Dick Nite in half brass, half nickel is killer if you can find them, but other finishes and colors will all work at any given time.

"A few angler have started casting spinners at the mouth [of the Sandy, Ed.] and its likely a handful of both silvers and Chinook have already been caught. Up in the river, a few early silvers usually start flopping around up at Cedar Creek by now and will soon start drawing a crowd. There is likely still a handful of late summer steelhead hanging around in the upper stretch between the mouth of the Salmon River and Dodge park. A back 1/8th ounce jig fished under a clear float or a size 3 brass or black Blue Fox spinner would be the lures of choice."

On the Clackamas, while spinner flingers have yet to show up at the Bowling Alley Hole, Riverside and McIver parks have given up a couple of summer steelhead over the past week while High Rocks is getting a little pressure (if not results) from bobber fishers when the hole is devoid of swimmers.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – North coast anglers are beaming with excitement with all sorts of possibilities for the coming weekend. As anglers look at the ocean forecast ahead, there's reason to be excited. Check the Columbia River forecast section for that information.

Last weeks all salmon ocean season went off with a bang with hordes of fish coming back to port. Angler participation was high and so was success. Preliminary counts indicate that nearly half of the quota has been taken in this fishery. It gives one an idea how explosive this action can be and that's what most people indicated. It didn't seem to matter what you used for bait,

hoochies/chunk bait or just straight herring or plug cut, the fish were anxious. As explosive as the action was, some of the better averages just indicated about a fish per angler. If the weather prediction holds, most folks should be able to count on some good action this weekend as well.

Chinook is on the minds of many as well and they are starting to show in good numbers on many north coast estuaries. The Tillamook and Nehalem are certainly highlights but the Nestucca, Necanicum and Alsea estuaries should also be heating up very soon. Don't overlook the Siletz as well. Reports of consistent catches from the bar at Nehalem and along the south jetty out of Tillamook are reliable and likely accurate. Larger trolled herring fished on the bottom are producing good catches. Chinook are also showing in fair numbers in the offshore catches although these offshore chinook typically are smaller in size; they are more than likely just feeder kings.

Catches inside the bay are reported as good for the few people partaking in the exercise. Both Tillamook and Nehalem Bays are stand-outs right now but action should get considerably better in the coming weeks. The low tide series we're currently on however should keep the best action near the estuary mouths or the adjacent saltwater fishing areas such as the south jetty of Tillamook or right on the bar, assuming it's safe to fish, on the Nehalem. Save your spinners and upper bay effort for when the tide exchanges are stronger. Some hatchery coho are just starting to enter these systems but most are not counting on a high hatchery return this year.

Crabbing in the bay is also good. Tillamook, Nehalem, Netarts and Nestucca Bays are all producing good numbers however the quality of crab is reported fair as several have yet to fill out to their full fall potential.

**The Guide's Forecast** – With favorable ocean conditions anticipated, the offshore all salmon fishery will likely once again be a highlight for folks to participate in. Any coho or chinook, as long as it meets minimum size, is legal to take. Chinook action for larger fish should be best nearshore, as in the mouth of Nehalem Bay or the adjacent areas, the south jetty in particular, of Tillamook Bay. Large, blue label herring should produce opportunities. Wild coho may be retained here as well.

Although many guides and anglers believe that high tide is best to target fish in these areas, the entire outgoing tide, especially just after the peak ebb, is typically the best time to target chinook along the jetty inside the bay. These soft tides will allow chinook to cross the bar all tide long although the stronger the flow, the closer to the bottom the fish are likely to be.

If you plan on fishing inside the bay for salmon, be sure to check regulations for each estuary on the north coast here:

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/docs/2012\\_Coastal\\_Coho\\_Salmon\\_Sport\\_Regulations.pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/docs/2012_Coastal_Coho_Salmon_Sport_Regulations.pdf)

Crabbing should be good in all coastal estuaries this weekend, that is, with the weak tide series we're currently on.

Albacore fishing should be excellent, especially for anglers that have access to live bait.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Ocean coho may be taken of either wild or hatchery origin every Thursday, Friday and Saturday. However, following the Saturday through Monday opener over Labor Day weekend, over 38% of the 11,800-fish quota was taken. At this rate, it seems unlikely that the quota will hold through September 22nd as scheduled. Newport was the top south coast port for coho catches with 2,670 fish counted during the initial opener.

Tuna fishing isn't over yet but warm water is far enough offshore to discourage most recreational boaters, As an example, on Wednesday this week, it would have required a trip of about 28 miles or more out of Charleston to find 60-degree water and albacore - maybe.

While high wind has kept boats at bay on the central coast this week, when they have been able to launch, rockfishing has yielded limits, ling cod catches have been good and ocean crabbing has been excellent.

Beaches, particularly those near river mouths or bay entrances, are producing limits of surf perch. Best results will come during the last two hours of the incoming tide and often the first hour or so of the outgoing. It's a good idea to scout potential fishing spots for low spots where pinkfin will gather to feed after covered with water. Otherwise, look for areas where the outermost wave breaks nearer shore which will indicate a depression or trough.

Our best advice to those considering a trip to the Siuslaw for Chinook is to head for the Umpqua instead. It has been very slow here.

**ODFW sez,** " During the Labor Day Salmon Derby hosted by Gardiner-Reedsport-Winchester Bay STEP, 63 percent of the 440 people entered in the derby checked a chinook in at the weigh station. The biggest chinook caught during the weekend was 38.3 pounds, with other chinook of 28.5 to 29 pounds also being caught."

Winchester Bay crabbing has been good and is providing limits to many, particularly in the area near the jaws, but use caution. Boats fishing just outside have had some banner days recently for Chinook running from 25 to 40 pounds. Chinook fishing in the bay has been productive but unpredictable. Down low near the bay entrance may produce limits one day while the hotspot could be up at the Highway 101 Bridge the next. Stay flexible and drag herring for best results. Boat traffic will be lighter now that Labor Day and the holiday derbies are over. With Chinook scattered throughout the mainstem Umpqua now, bobber and bait fishers are making good catches at times. Summer steelhead are being taken on the North Umpqua and the flies-only stretch has been productive although the return this year is predicted to be only fair. Smallmouth bass fishing remains very good on the upper mainstem and South Umpqua and should remain so until water temperatures drop.

Although Chinook catches slowed at Coos Bay over the past week, fishing is still fair but steady for a mix of adults and jacks. Trolled herring has been most productive with the upper bay and lower Coos River most productive. Crabbing remains good in the bay. Crabbers taking tagged red rock crab should call the ODFW Charleston office at 541-888-5515 with tag numbers. The wild coho fishery will take place on Coos Bay starting September 15th and continue through November 30th or until the quota of 1,200 fish is taken. Fishing is allowed from the tips of the jetties upstream to the Dellwood trap on the South Coos River and the confluence of the East Fork and West Fork Millicoma. The daily bag limit is one per day and five wild coho for the year.

Chinook are being taken by herring trollers on the lower Coquille with best results from the Highway 101 Bridge up to Rocky Point. A few Chinook are also being caught upstream in the Coquille River.

Despite numbers of Chinook increasing in the Rogue estuary and warm river temperatures keeping them there, trollers report slow to spotty results in the bay. Steelheading is good and half-pounders are being taken around Agness. Chinook fishing has continued to improve on the middle Rogue with many boats getting several chances a day. Plugs have been most effective. Fish that moved upstream during rainfall about a week ago are starting to look a little bronze but

are still decent table fare. Rogue fishers are reminded that Chinook may no longer be taken on the Rogue above the old Gold Ray Dam site on the upper Rogue. In addition, steelheading between Gold Ray and Cole Rivers Hatchery is limited to artificial flies only, although any type rod and reel may be used. Coles River Hatchery is seeing strong return of summer steelhead this season and upper river fishing is expected to be excellent through September.

Chinook fishing has been rewarding for boats launching out of the Port of Brookings but with Chinook many sub-20-pound Kings amidst large late-season coho offshore, fishers are advised to be careful with fish identification lest they get socked with a hefty fine upon return to the dock. Ocean coho is closed south of Humbug Mountain.

The Rogue above Lost Creek is scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout for the last time this season.

Worth repeating: **Oregon State Police TIP (Turn in Poachers) Hotline 800-452-7888.**

**Central and Eastern Oregon** - The lower Deschutes has been very slow for steelheaders. Counts of Chinook and summer steelhead at Sherars Falls remained steady but unremarkable through August and into the first week of September. When the trap has been operational, daily numbers have been in the low single digits. Try small caddis patterns for trout.

Odell has been producing fair to good numbers of kokanee, only a few of which are showing signs of the upcoming spawn with the majority still bright. The occasional lake and bull trout are being landed.

Green Peter produced good catches of kokanee in decent condition over the past weekend to trollers using hoochies behind flashers at the 70-foot level.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

***From the WDF&W Weekender Report for September 2012***

#### **North Puget Sound**

Anglers are hooking some bright **ocean coho** in portions of Puget Sound, where more ocean salmon are expected to arrive in September.

Point No Point, Jefferson Head, Possession Bar and Shipwreck should be good spots to catch ocean coho, said Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Anglers fishing those areas – or other waters of marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) – have a daily limit of two salmon, but must release chinook. In Marine Area 10, anglers also must release chum salmon through Sept. 15, while those fishing in Marine Area 9 must release chum through Sept. 30.

“We’ve seen tremendous coho fishing the last two weeks of August in central Puget Sound,” Thiesfeld said. “Fishing should continue to be good as more of those ocean coho make their way into the area.”

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

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

Thiesfeld said the best bet for **freshwater anglers fishing for coho** salmon in the region might be the Nooksack, Snohomish and Green rivers. Other options for coho include the Skagit and Stillaguamish rivers.

Meanwhile, most areas of Puget Sound close to **recreational crab fishing** at sunset on Labor Day (Sept. 3). However, Marine Area 7-North (Gulf of Georgia) and 7-South (San Juan Islands/Bellingham) will remain open through Sept. 30.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The ocean salmon fishing season is in its final stretch, but anglers should continue to hook bright fish into late September.

"As we move into the final weeks of the season, fishing should continue to be good," said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "That's especially true for coho, which tend to be larger later in the fishery."

Anglers have a two-salmon daily limit in all four marine areas off the Washington coast. Up to two chinook may be retained in all areas.

Milward reminds anglers that regulations for coho change in early September in Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco) and Marine Area 2 (Westport). Anglers will be allowed to retain both hatchery and wild coho salmon beginning Saturday, Sept. 1, in ocean waters off Westport and Monday, Sept. 3, off Ilwaco.

In addition, anglers fishing off Westport will be allowed to retain only one coho as part of their two-salmon daily limit beginning Sept. 1, while the coho catch limit in Ilwaco will remain two fish. Those changes do not affect ocean salmon fisheries off LaPush (Marine Area 3) and Neah Bay (Marine Area 4), where anglers can continue to retain hatchery coho but must release wild coho.

All ocean areas (marine areas 1-4) are open to salmon fishing seven days a week.

Ocean salmon fisheries are currently scheduled to continue through Sept. 23 in marine areas 2, 3 and 4, and through Sept. 30 in Marine Area 1. However, salmon fisheries in those areas could close early if catch quotas are reached. Milward reminds anglers to check for any rule changes at [WDFW's website](#).

In the Strait of Juan de Fuca, anglers fishing marine areas 5 (Sekiu) and 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release chum, chinook and wild coho. Regulations change in Marine Area 5 on Sept. 15, when anglers will be allowed to retain wild coho.

Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound salmon manager for WDFW, said fishing for hatchery coho has been good in the Strait and expects that to continue in early September. "Effort typically drops off after Labor Day and then picks up again the middle of September, when anglers fishing off Sekiu can retain any coho," he said. "But anglers might not want to wait until then because fishing for hatchery coho has been pretty darn good."

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

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

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

Because salmon fishing rules vary depending on the marine area, anglers should check the [Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet](#) before heading out on the water.

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

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

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

Crabbers are reminded that their summer catch record cards are due to WDFW by Oct. 1 and must be returned whether or not the cardholder caught or fished for crab during the season. Crabbers who fail to file catch reports for 2012 will face a \$10 fine, which will be imposed when they apply for a 2013 Puget Sound crab endorsement. Completed cards can be mailed in or recorded online. Additional information is available on the [WDFW website](#).

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

In freshwater, the popular salmon fishery on the **Puyallup River** is in full swing. Anglers are reminded that the Puyallup River is closed to fishing Sept. 2, 3, 9, 10 and 11 from the 11th Street Bridge to the City of Puyallup outfall structure across the river from the junction of Freeman Road and North Levee Road.

Thiesfeld reminds anglers that the salmon fishery on the Skokomish River, from the Highway 106 Bridge to the Highway 101 Bridge, closes at the end of the day Sept. 3. Although, the salmon fishery for the lower Skokomish River, from the mouth to the Highway 106 Bridge, runs through Sept. 5 and then reopens Sept. 16. Check the [Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet](#) for details.

Elsewhere, **several rivers** around the region open to salmon fishing Sept. 1, including the Carbon River in Pierce County; Copalis River, Van Winkle Creek and Joe Creek in Grays Harbor County; and the Bear and Niawiakum rivers in Pacific County. Salmon fishing on the Nisqually River is already under way.

Recreationists should be aware that WDFW's access site at Ward Lake in Thurston County will be closed beginning Sept. 1 due to poor water quality at the lake. Recent tests conducted by the City of Olympia and Thurston County show fecal coliform bacteria levels that are unsafe for swimming and water recreation. Once water quality improves, WDFW will reopen the access site. For more information, check Thurston County's [website](#).

### **Southwest Washington**

September is prime time for salmon fishing in the Columbia River Basin, as large numbers of fish move upriver and into tributaries on both sides of Bonneville Dam. At the Buoy 10 fishery near the mouth of the river, the catch of **chinook salmon** is expected to be the highest in more than two decades. Although that chinook fishery ends there Sept. 3 at the end of the day, anglers still have a lot of options to catch both chinook and **coho salmon** upriver from the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line.

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

Of the 655,000 fall chinook 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. This year's coho salmon run is fairly modest, but will help to round out the catch, Hymer said.

Through Sept. 9, the daily limit is six fish per day – including two adult salmon, two adult steelhead or one of each – from the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line to the deadline below Bonneville Dam. Only one of the adult salmon may be a chinook. Anglers may keep any chinook, but must release any coho salmon or steelhead that is not marked with a clipped adipose fin.

Starting Sept. 10, rules for adult chinook retention in those waters will change in at least two ways.

- Anglers can retain two adult chinook as part of their daily limit from a line from the Warrior Rock lighthouse through Red Buoy #4 to the orange marker atop the dolphin on the Washington shore at Bachelor Island upstream to Bonneville Dam.
- Below this line, permanent rules require anglers to release chinook salmon through Sept. 30 – although there may be an exception to this rule. Fishery managers have agreed to allow a pilot mark-selective fishery for chinook Sept. 10-16 from Rocky Point/Tongue Point line to the Warrior Rock line – *if all other sport fisheries can meet their management objectives*. That question has not yet been answered because those sport fisheries are still under way. In any case, anglers will be allowed to retain two adult chinook in that area beginning Oct. 1.

WDFW will update this report and issue a news release about the proposed selective fishery once that decision is final.

“Our hope is that we can move forward with the weeklong mark-selective fishery below the Warrior Rock line, but first we have to make sure enough chinook are available for harvest in the regular fisheries on the lower Columbia River,” said Cindy LeFleur, WDFW Columbia River policy manager. “We’re still waiting to see how that turns out.”

In the meantime, Hymer has a couple of tips for anglers fishing for chinook salmon in the Columbia River.

“Anglers targeting chinook do best in fairly deep water – 40 to 50 feet down,” he said. “Some of the best fishing for both salmon and steelhead will be at the mouth of tributaries, where the fish hold up before heading upstream. When anchoring in deeper water, anglers should be alert for ship traffic.”

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

- **Release wild chinook** – Anglers must release all wild chinook on the Tilton River from mouth to West Fork; the Cispus River from mouth to North Fork; the Cowlitz River from posted signs on Peters Road to mouth of Ohanepecosh and Muddy Fork; plus Mayfield Lake and Lake Scanewa (Cowlitz Falls Reservoir). However, anglers may keep up to 10 hatchery rainbows at Lake Scanewa starting Sept. 1.
- **North Fork Lewis River from mouth of East Fork to the overhead powerlines below Merwin Dam** – Wild chinook may be kept beginning Sept. 15.
- **Drano Lake** – Any chinook or coho salmon, with or without a clipped adipose fin, may be retained. Effective Sept. 15, anglers with a two-pole endorsement can put it to use.
- **Klickitat River from mouth to Fisher Hill Bridge** (located about 3 miles upstream from the mouth) – Night closure and anti-snagging rules are in effect. Only fish hooked inside the mouth may be retained.
- **Washougal River** – Fishing is closed from 200 feet (or posted markers) below to 200 feet above the temporary weir (when in place).

Like last year, anglers may retain up to six hatchery adult coho on all tributaries to the lower Columbia River with hatchery programs. Those rivers include the Cowlitz, Deep, Elochoman, Grays (including West Fork), Kalama, Klickitat, Lewis (including North Fork), Toutle (including Green and North Fork) and Washougal. Regulations for these and other fisheries are described in WDFW's [Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet](#).

Apart from salmon, anglers are still catching **walleye** above and below Bonneville Dam. **Trout** fishing is also still an option at a number of lowland lakes, including Swift and Merwin reservoirs where anglers can take advantage of increased catch limits for rainbow and kokanee approved in early August. At Swift Reservoir, anglers must release all salmon larger than 15 inches in length. For anglers who don't mind a hike, September is also a great time to head for the **high wilderness lakes** around Mount Adams and Mount St. Helens. Hymer recommends three such lakes – Goose, Council and Takhlakh – that all offer drive-in access.

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

### **Eastern Washington**

Sept. 1 is the traditional opening of the catch-and-keep season for hatchery-marked Snake River **steelhead**. For a second consecutive year, hatchery-marked **fall chinook salmon** are also fair game then.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) district fish biologist Glen Mendel says the steelhead run appears to be coming in weak this year. As of late August, the A-run of upriver summer steelhead was about 61 percent of the preseason forecast. The B-run steelhead passage was also tracking less than expected so far.

However, a large run of upriver bright hatchery fall chinook is expected to return to the Snake River, so anglers should have good opportunities, said Mendel.

Up to three hatchery-marked steelhead (those with clipped adipose or ventral fins and a healed scar at the clipped fin location) can be retained daily. The salmon daily harvest limit in the Washington portion of the Snake River is three adipose fin-clipped fall chinook adults (24 inches in length and larger), and three adipose fin-clipped jack fall chinook (less than 24 inches). Minimum size for chinook is 12 inches.

Barbless hooks are required when fishing for steelhead or salmon. All wild steelhead and chinook, which are protected under the Endangered Species Act, must be released immediately without removing them from the water. Once anglers have retained three hatchery steelhead, they must cease fishing for salmon and steelhead for the day, regardless of whether the salmon daily limit has been retained.

Mendel reminds salmon and steelhead anglers of the change in the Snake River boundaries for catch record card codes for zones 648 and 650 near Clarkston. The upper end of code 648, and the lower end of 650, was the interstate bridge. But that was moved to the state line, from the Greenbelt boat launch to the state line sign on the north shore, as relayed in the current fishing rules pamphlet. Mendel said this change allows separation of harvest data for the boundary waters with Idaho.

The steelhead season runs through March 31, but the chinook season closes Oct. 31, or earlier, depending on monitored harvest rates and run size.

This month is the last chance to fish several of the region's best **rainbow** and/or **cutthroat trout** fishing lakes. Closing Sept. 30 is Badger, West Medical, and Williams lakes in southwest Spokane County, and Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County. Two other southwest Spokane County lakes change seasons soon -- Amber Lake shifts to catch-and-release-only on Oct. 1 and North Silver Lake switches to catch-and-release-only on Nov. 1.

Randy Osborne, WDFW central district fish biologist, said that if conditions are right, September fishing at these lakes can almost rival the first weeks of the season in the spring. "Air and water temperature changes during this month can trigger late summer/early fall insect hatches, which can equate to some pretty productive fishing conditions all month long," he said.

Spokane County's Downs Lake and Lincoln County's Coffeepot Lake also close at the end of the month but can yield good catches of **yellow perch, black crappie, and rainbow trout** during September.

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

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 (DNR) has a campfire ban in effect until further notice.

The 63,000-plus-acre, lightning-caused Cache Creek wildfire, adjacent to the Snake River on the Washington-Oregon stateline, was still burning in late August, with expected containment sometime in early September. Most of the fire is in Oregon, but anyone recreating in Washington's southeast corner may want to check out possible road closures [online](#).

### **Northcentral Washington**

A **chinook salmon** fishery opens Sept. 1 in the Lake Chelan Project Tailrace area near Chelan Falls and runs through Oct. 15. Up to three chinook may be kept daily (only one of which can be a wild adult fish), and fishing is allowed from the railroad bridge to the Chelan Public Utilities District (PUD) safety barrier below the powerhouse.

WDFW Chelan District Fish Biologist Travis Maitland said up to 3,000 adult chinook salmon—released as juveniles from net pens just below the Chelan PUD powerhouse—are expected to return to the waterway.

"Last year when we were able to open this area for the first time, fishing pressure was very light, due to the fishery being new and confusion over fishing access," said Maitland. "Chelan County ordinance prohibits the use of internal combustion engines, so last year we did not allow fishing from a floating device of any kind. This year floating will be allowed, so this could be a great little fishery for the angler with a kayak or a small pontoon boat."

This year there's also some bank fishing on the north shore, although anglers must stay downstream of Chelan PUD boundary signs on that shoreline. Fishing along the southwest shoreline is limited to wading only with no fishing from the bank.

Anglers planning to participate in this fishery must have WDFW's Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement and should check other [specific rules](#) for the fishery.

The Lake Wenatchee **sockeye salmon** fishery that has provided great opportunities since early August closes on Labor Day (Sept. 3). The daily limit was increased from three to five fish in mid-August and since then limits have been taken by many happy anglers.

The Wenatchee River hatchery summer **chinook salmon** fishery—open from the river mouth to below Dryden Dam—continues through Oct. 15. Angling pressure has been relatively light, Maitland said, but there have been a few nice hatchery chinook harvested. As of Sept. 1 the fishery extends upriver to the Icicle River road bridge that crosses the Wenatchee River. Check [fishery rules](#) on the WDFW website.

Chinook fishing in the Columbia River from Priest Rapids to Wells Dam is still producing, although anglers need to work a lot harder now to get the fish to bite, Maitland said. Chinook also are still being caught off the mouth of the Okanogan River, WDFW Okanogan District Fish Biologist Bob Jateff reports.

“Catch rates are lower than anglers experienced earlier this summer, but the fish are continuing to average 12 to 15 pounds,” Jateff said. “As water temperatures cool in the tributaries, fish will start to move upstream and out of the mainstem Columbia River. During September, reduced numbers of chinook will continue to be caught in upstream areas just below Chief Joseph Dam.” Anglers are reminded that the salmon fishing section of the mainstem Columbia River—from Wells Dam to the Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster—closed Aug. 31 to protect steelhead.

Meanwhile, **trout** fishing on the Methow River can be at its best in September, when other river users start to thin out and only anglers are left, Jateff said.

“At this time anglers can do well with surface flies, lures and nymph patterns,” he said.

Trout anglers are reminded that the section from Lower Burma Road Bridge to the Highway 153 Bridge at McFarland Creek closes at midnight on Sept. 15. The rest of the river upstream to Foghorn Dam closes at midnight on Sept. 30.

The Methow River trout fishery is conducted under a permit with NOAA Fisheries and can close at any time if limits on incidental encounters with steelhead are reached.

Okanogan County’s Davis, Campbell, and Cougar lakes in the Winthrop area open Sept. 1 for catch-and-keep fishing for rainbow trout.

“These lakes provide a nice fall fishery to mix things up between fishing the Methow River for trout and fishing the mainstem Columbia for salmon,” Jateff said.

### **Southcentral Washington**

September is prime time to fish for **trout** on one of the many high-elevation lakes or rivers in the region, said Eric Anderson, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) based in Yakima. As temperatures begin to drop, waters ranging from the Yakima River to Taneum Creek come alive with fish eager to feed.

“After months of high water, the conditions are perfect for fishing many area lakes and streams,” Anderson said. “Most of the mosquitoes burned off in the summer heat, and it’s just a great time to be out catching fish.”

Anderson noted that most rivers and creeks have statewide trout catch limits of two trout with an 8-inch minimum size. Most also have special regulations, including selective gear rules that prohibit bait. Rules for specific waters are described in the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet, available [online](#) and from license vendors throughout the state.

Meanwhile, counts of **chinook salmon** and **steelhead** passing McNary Dam have been climbing day by day, setting the stage for popular fisheries throughout the region. While those fisheries often start out slow, they can ramp up quickly by mid-September as more fish move past the dam, said Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist based in Pasco.

"There's a lot of anticipation out there right now," Hoffarth said. "Anglers are catching fish here and there, but they know a lot more are headed our way. By the middle of the month, we could have several thousand upriver brights in the Hanford Reach."

According to the preseason forecast, 650,000 fall chinook salmon will enter the Columbia River this year, and about two-thirds of them will keep moving past Bonneville Dam. Most areas of the Columbia River have been open for salmon fishing since Aug. 1, and two major tributaries will open in September.

The Yakima River opens for salmon fishing Sept. 1 from the Columbia River upstream to Prosser Dam, although the area around the Chandler Powerhouse will remain closed, as in previous years. "The best fishing on the Yakima is in October, but some fish will start moving in this month," Hoffarth said.

Anglers have also been catching some **hatchery steelhead** both above and below McNary Dam, and the harvest should pick up throughout the month, he said. Anglers can retain two **hatchery** steelhead per day, identifiable by a missing adipose fin with the healed scar, measuring at least 20 inches. Steelhead fishing above the Highway 395 Bridge at Kennewick is not scheduled to open until Oct. 1, but could open earlier if the numbers pick up, Hoffarth said.

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

"As with salmon, look for steelhead fishing to improve as the water cools and more fish move upriver," Hoffarth said. "Steelhead move fast. They don't stay in one spot very long, so anglers have to be there when they are passing through."

**Walleye** fisheries are already in full swing, producing nice catches in the Columbia River below McNary Dam as well as in the Snake River. **Sturgeon** fishing is restricted to catch and release in most of the Columbia River, including Lake Wallula and the Hanford Reach.

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

Loyal reader and occasional reporter Kpt'n Ken Johnson wrote this week with a cautionary tale, "Let this be a lesson you don't want to repeat...We Won't! Lorri just brought the rigging she was using into the boat as we were finishing fishing on the Nehalem. She was unsnapping her weight when the "bait" flopped on the floor...Max wasn't even close when she retrieved her gear...BUT, in an instant, Max was there and did a double gulp...One to get the small herring in his mouth and the second, to SWALLOW IT! With hooks still attached. We immediately had to go into emergency mode which I have to say, was SCARY to say the least. I now know my "new" boat will go 47mph at nearly Full Throttle! Long story short, we got him to the vet in plenty of time, he was operated on about an hour after we got him there. Long story short, he has now recovered and is fine.

"The vet, and this is just one clinic in Tillamook, says they remove hooks like this, especially this time of year when everyone is fishing, 6-12 times per season. And, that's just one vet out of 3-4 clinics in the area. That really doesn't make me feel better about not being more vigilant about the bait still with hooks in it. Dog eating a herring...fine. Eating a herring with hooks still attached? NO!"

**Write to the TGF staff:**

Bob Rees: [brees@pacifier.com](mailto:brees@pacifier.com)

Michael Teague: [Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com](mailto:Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com)

Chris Vertopoulos: [chrisv@pacifier.com](mailto:chrisv@pacifier.com)

Doug Rees: [doug@TheGuidesForecast.com](mailto:doug@TheGuidesForecast.com)

**Random Links**

Two Tsunami Debris Cleanup Days for Oregon Coast in September:

[http://www.beachconnection.net/news/debrisc1082912\\_411.php](http://www.beachconnection.net/news/debrisc1082912_411.php)

Pacific City Dory Fly Fishing for Albacore:

<http://oregonflyfishingblog.com/2012/09/04/pacific-city-dory-fly-fishing-for-albacore/>

Brookings girl victim of voracious beach 'bugs':

<http://www.currypilot.com/News/Local-News/Brookings-girl-victim-of-voracious-beach-bugs>

**GOOD LUCK!**