

The Guide's Forecast - volume 14 issue number 42

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 12th – October 18th, 2012**

Willamette Valley/Metro- Mediocre salmon fishing continues at Bonneville, although fish passage over the dam is dwindling. A few chinook and the occasional coho are caught by boaters and bank anglers alike. Bait-wrapped Kwikfish and spinners are getting fish for the boaters, while wobblers and spin n glows are preferred by fishermen working off the shore. The October opener for sturgeon has been cancelled due to the quota being caught but remains open for catch and release.

The Willamette River is producing a handful of smallmouth for anglers putting in some effort. Last week some coho were reported off the mouth of the Clackamas River, but the falls count dropped significantly earlier this week.

October caddis are hatching in the evening on the McKenzie River. Matching this hatch will yield large trout.

There are a few coho in the North Santiam which is open for them to the Stayton/Scio Bridge. It opens upstream on November 1.

The Clackamas has put out a few coho and almost an equal amount of late summer steelhead from Barton Park upstream to Rivermill Dam, but anglers are working hard for a few opportunities.

The Sandy River has been a disappointment to coho anglers as of yet, but some hold hope that there is still more to come. A few have been caught at the mouth and even fewer up at Cedar Creek but the forecasted rain for the weekend could bring a strong push.

Northwest – North coast anglers have enjoyed several days of flat calm seas. Most are pursuing chinook out of Tillamook and Nehalem but bottomfish remains another excellent option. Some lingcod and plentiful sea bass are providing good sport.

The small tide exchange and calm ocean yielded excellent catches early this week along the jetties and inside the jaws and adjacent ocean. That changes by tomorrow however with rough seas and high winds likely to close the ocean for several days. Ocean crabbing closes on October 15th and it has been excellent out of most north coast ports with crabs filling out nicely.

Forecasted rains should bring in wild coho that have been largely absent. Numbers should be building with few hatchery coho already in the system. The Trask River should be a strong option by the weekend if the rain event comes to fruition.

A few chum salmon have begun to show at the mouth of Tillamook Bay. Although they are legal to retain in the ocean, they don't make for high quality table fare. Chum must be released in all coastal estuaries and rivers but it looks to be another productive run for this rebounding specie.

Nehalem Bay is still producing fair catches of chinook and some coho. Chinook numbers should dwindle however but coho numbers should improve.

Netarts Bay is producing good catches of Dungeness crab and should continue to do so through the fall.

Southwest- Rockfish expeditions yielded limits for ocean anglers off the central coast early this

week although the ling bite slowed as did offshore crabbing results.

Wild coho are being taken at select south coast estuaries although some locations have emerged more productive than others. Siuslaw anglers are faring best with over 60% of the quota taken as of October 7th. Coos and Alsea systems are producing fair numbers.

Nearshore halibut remains open. At the last data update through the end of September, 89% of the quota remained available. This fishery will continue through October if the quota holds out.

Crabbing has been good in Winchester Bay. Chinook fishing has been good in the lower mainstem of the Umpqua River. Smallmouth fishing is worthwhile around Elkton and will remain so until the water temperature drops. On the North Umpqua, where chinook season is closed, steelheading is fair to good.

Coos Bay anglers are taking chinook on trolled anchovies or herring with coho responding to pink lures along the jetties.

Sporadic chinook catches are reported on the Coquille although wild coho fishing has picked up.

The salmon bite turned on in the Rogue estuary when the ocean calmed over the past week, providing trollers with plenty of action. Most hookups have been with wild silvers although hatchery coho and chinook have been plentiful as well. Half-pounders are being taken at Agness while catches of adults has been decent in the middle Rogue. Summer steelheading slowed in the upper Rogue due to low, cold water.

Chinook are stacking at the Chetco River jaws, providing decent action for bubble anglers and soon to trollers in Brookings Harbor. The Chetco Bubble fishery is open through October 14th. Some ocean anglers are limiting on rockfish once everyone has taken a chinook.

While fall rains are starting this week off the north coast and into the valley, it will be late in the weekend before precipitation comes to southwest Oregon, potentially to jump-start chinook fishing on the Elk and Sixes rivers.

Eastern – Lower Deschutes steelheaders enduring slow fishing are being rewarded with larger-than-average fish on occasion.

Fishing on the Crooked River has been good as this one produces in low water conditions. That will change with rainfall.

Small nymphs have fooled a few steelhead on the Imnaha, but with low water conditions and low dam counts, fishing has been tough.

Steelheading picked up over the past week on the Grande Ronde with active fish taking surface offerings.

SW Washington- District anglers remain challenged by good numbers of non-biting chinook and coho in the Cowlitz, Kalama and Lewis Rivers. Upcoming rains should dramatically improve results and fresh fish should enter each of these systems. Check regulations carefully as each watershed differs.

The mouths of the White Salmon and Klickitat are producing good catches of chinook and some coho. Anglers averaged about a chinook per rod counting jacks last week and that's not likely to change given the ratio of jacks to adults passing Bonneville Dam.

Columbia River Fishing Report – With the estuary fishery winding down near Astoria, anglers will have to look a bit further upriver to find something to recreate on. Bonneville chinook become a favorite this time of year but as **pro guide Chris Vertopoulos** mentions, action is not consistent for anglers working this water. Chris writes:

“Mediocre salmon fishing continues at Bonneville, although fish passage over the dam is dwindling. A few Chinook and the occasional coho are caught by boaters and bank anglers alike. Bait-wrapped Kwikfish and spinners are getting fish for the boaters, while wobblers and spin n glows are preferred by fishermen working off the shore. The October opener for sturgeon has been cancelled due to the quota being caught.”

Action in this area will continue to be sporadic and fish should begin to deteriorate after mid-month. Cooler temperatures often slow migration and more resident fish seem to respond better to plugs. You also have the unfortunate likelihood of hooking into an oversize sturgeon as well so guard your plugs accordingly.

In the estuary, action surprised many anglers well into late September and late run fish, despite a poor prediction, should continue to provide some action through mid-month. Historically, the mid-October strong tide series provided some good action for coho in the Buoy 10 fishery in previous years although most would agree; “good action” may be stretching it a bit for coho this year. None-the-less, a good incoming tide won’t hurt your chances for large, late season coho for those willing to brave the elements for what is supposed to be a sizeable series of storms this weekend.

The crabbing has been phenomenal recently with soft tides and awesome water conditions. That too will change but even though significant rain is a possibility over the weekend, crabbing will hold up for a long time to come.

The Guide’s Forecast – The exposed estuary may not be a place an angler will want to find themselves over the weekend. Strong winds are in the forecast and although one can get themselves out of the strong southerly winds by hugging the Oregon shore (for say, crabbing) most will want to fish the middle or north side of the river in pursuit of coho. The stronger tide series and the first wave of fall weather should certainly draw some fish in. Herring or spinners or best yet, fresh jigged anchovies if you can find them, should provide the best action but don’t risk life and limb in pursuit of lower Columbia River coho.

Upriver, Chris Vertopoulos has this to add:

“As the Columbia River fall salmon run winds down, anglers continue to catch quality kings up at Bonneville dam. Many of these Chinook will not ascend the ladders and are waiting to spawn in the water right below the dam. But **pro guide Dan Ponciano of www.ColumbiaRiverSportfishing.com** reports that almost all the fish he has been catching have been bright. Dan also says that there have been a healthy number of jacks in the mix, indicating good runs for the next couple of years. As stated last week, the anchor fishermen have been doing best, but backrollers are getting their share as well. K-14, 15 and 16 Kwikfish and T-50 and 55 flatfish are the preferred sizes. Some experienced salmon fishers say that “any color works as long as it is chartreuse”, but most seasoned anglers have had success with a wide variety of colors and patterns. Yes, chartreuse on a chrome body is by far the most commonly used color combination, but chartreuse on gold, copper or even black has duped many a salmon. Also, shades of red, green, pink, blue and orange have been used in about every color scheme imaginable when it comes to salmon plugs and they have all taken at least a fish or two. The fact

that many of my own plugs (some maybe almost 20 years old), which have little paint left on them still catch fish, tells me that action is far more important than color. This confirms that the color more often catches the fisherman in the tackle shop and if given a whirl, the plug will catch the fish regardless of color....**"IF"** ... it has the wiggle that the fish like. Tuning your plug so it dives straight is imperative, after a new bait-wrap is tied on and after every fish is boated. This is achieved by ever so slightly tuning the front eye screw to counter the direction the plug may be running. The object is to have a straight running, straight diving plug with a fresh bait-wrap.....this is most important, and then color is secondary."

Anglers targeting coho upriver of Buoy 10 may find that the tributary mouths can be a fine place to intercept fish. The mouths of the Kalama, Lewis and Cowlitz as well as the Sandy and Washougal all offer up some opportunity this time of year. Anglers working this water often use small clusters of eggs to entice fish.

Crabbing the lower estuary is likely to continue to be good but watch the weather to make sure it's going to be safe. You can hug the Oregon shore both upstream and downstream of Hammond and do just fine while avoiding a dangerous south wind.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "The Willamette river is producing a handful of smallmouth for anglers putting in some effort. Last week some coho were reported off the mouth of the Clackamas river, but the falls count dropped significantly earlier this week."

Coho counts at Willamette Falls has several days with Hough data but it's obvious by extrapolating available numbers that something over 4,000 have passed the Falls. This less-than-impressive number is similar to 2011 but over 10,000 fewer coho than at this time in 2010. Regardless, there are salmon upstream and are most likely to be found at the mouths of upstream tributaries. Some of these fish will enter the Tualatin Yamhill Molalla and Santiam rivers. A few spinner flingers have been trying for coho on the lower river with very limited success, often scoring smallies or trash fish for their efforts. The smallmouth bite seems to have slowed a bit recently on the lower Willamette, perhaps in response to lower water temperatures. On the other hand, the fewer fish being caught are running larger in size. It may be time to switch from reaction baits like cranks and spinnerbaits to soft plastics. Continue to concentrate efforts on rocky outcroppings, current breaks and ambush spots. Catch-and-release sturgeon fishing has been yielding larger fish as well with one angler taking several which would have been legal in season along with a dandy oversized fish. The sturgeon bite has been improving over the past week. Rainy weather, the inevitable muddy water and increased flow will only serve to further encourage sturgeon to seek baits of herring, and squid.

Steelheaders have been scoring on the Middle Willamette with spinners and spoons. Fly anglers have also taken fish. The catch-and-release fishery for native cutthroat trout has been rewarding recently. Fishing from 10 Am to mid-afternoon has been most productive with overnight temperatures dropping. Bugs abound on the upper McKenzie and trout are feasting on them. The water level has been optimum but that is about to change. On the other hand, this freshet may give new life to summer steelheading as fish move in more favorable flows. Steelhead are easier when they're on the move.

There have been approximately 3,800 summer steelhead counted which are now in the upper North Santiam. On the South Santiam, 6,572 summer steelhead have entered the ladder at Foster dam as of October 8th. Catches have been slow to fair.

Henry Hagg Lake was stocked with 16,000 of the State of Oregon's finest hatchery-reared

rainbows over the past two weeks. The water level is extremely low (Even more than is typical for this time of year) but there should be a fish or two to catch up there. Smallies and largemouth will be in the midst of their fall feeding binge as well although with rain creating muddy banks and water level low, this is best a boat fishery.

Detroit Reservoir, Walling Pond and Walter Wirth Lake are scheduled to be stocked with trout.

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "The Willamette river has given up a few silvers in Multnomah channel and below the mouth of the Clackamas, but with the falls count significantly dropping last week expect the catch to follow suit. For warm-water anglers, Indian summers can offer some good smallmouth fishing as the fish anticipate the cooling weather and decrease in available food. This triggers a robust feeding instinct that expert bass anglers like to take advantage of. Expect bass fishing to end soon after the rains arrive."

Upper Willamette coho efforts have been yielding some fish for anglers making the effort. It's getting late in the season to expect any additional surge of silvers over the Falls but those who know where and how are taking a few now. Spinners are generally most effective for upriver coho. Catches have been a mix of adults, of which anglers may retain three a day and jacks, of which five per day os are allowed.

On the upper McKenzie, caddises of various hue make up the primary insect constituent with BWOs in the mix. On the lower Mac, where there has been an above-average flow this season, expect conditions to change rapidly starting Friday this week. Look for Mayflies on the river with the weather change. Steelhead will respond to a variety of lures as they move upstream. Drifting egg imitations below spawning Chinook will produce both steelhead and large rainbows at this time of year.

Despite a little skepticism regarding this fact, there are a few coho in the lower North Santiam. Steelheaders stand a better chance at a late summer, however, in the North Santiam and odds are even better for a steelhead hookup on the South Santiam. Trout fishing on the Santiam North Fork above Detroit Lake should be worthwhile over the week to come.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "The Clackamas has put out a few coho and almost a equal amount of late summer steelhead from Barton park upstream to Rivermill dam, but anglers are working hard for a few opportunities.

"The Sandy river has been a disappointment to coho anglers as of yet, but some hold hope that there is still more to come. A few have been caught at the mouth and even fewer up at Cedar creek but the forecast rain for the weekend could bring a late push"

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "The Clackamas river has been disappointing this fall season and anglers aren't sure if its the lack of any rain or the lack of returning fish. Given that coho plants have decreased in recent years, bank on the latter as fish will eventually show themselves, rain or no rain. A smattering of summer steelhead are still being caught by anglers hoping for a silver. Casting spinners and bobber and jig are methods that both silvers and steelhead respond well to.

"The Sandy river coho run has also been a disappointment. Anglers are reminiscent of previous years that were "peaks on the graph", but 2012 wasn't predicted to be a big year for the silver salmon. Any amount of rain will help things and a few fresh fish will show on the day the rain

hits. Silver salmon are notorious for going on a white hot bite the moment the weather turns, but quickly turning a cheek to anything once the river starts to tick upwards. Tule's are most common here but some years the Sandy gets a handful of bright fall Chinook and anglers might do a little exploring a couple days after the first rise in water."

Coho, whether in coastal systems or inland tributaries, will migrate even in low water conditions. All they need is enough water to cover their backs and can sometimes be seen scooting through water even shallower. On the other hand, a freshet will draw them upstream en masse in theory. It still remains to be seen if we'll get much of a return this year as numbers seem to be down state-wide.

North Coast Fishing Report – Tillamook remains a bright spot for most anglers looking for fall chinook and that's not likely to change anytime soon. Anglers came across an unprecedented ocean for much of the week and it paid dividends for those seeking chinook and quality crabbing opportunities. That is scheduled to change however.

Most recently, anglers have joyfully been working the outside ocean and jaws during this low tide exchange which has bolstered good catches for Tillamook anglers. Trolled herring is always the bait of choice in this segment of the estuary and morning catches have been good followed up by a predictable low slack/first part of incoming tide bite in the afternoon. Although catches haven't been "epic", the action has been consistent with guide and experience anglers both happy with their results. By Wednesday, the south side of the south jetty had become unfishable due to a building swell with some swells coming in nearly 10 feet and breaking both in the middle grounds and along the sunken jetty on the south side. Anglers were happy to fish the north side of the jetty on Wednesday although action was just mediocre in the morning. There was a fair bite for the boats that stayed out late on Wednesday afternoon. Fish were caught both on the last part of the outgoing as well as the first part of the incoming, mostly coming from inside the bay entrance as Coast Guard officials had to temporarily close the bar down to vessels less than 26 feet until 2:00 p.m. that afternoon.

Higher in the estuary, there were a few fish taken on the last part of the incoming tide at Bay City with only a few anglers plying the waters of the Ghost Hole. The upper bay and the West Channel continue to disappoint.

There have been a few boats working the deep water out of Garibaldi in pursuit of feeder kings which seem to be present in good numbers well offshore. The commercial fleet has been producing fair to good catches and some sport boats have been targeting chinook in waters between 40 and 50 fathoms. The ocean has been very cooperative for those willing to explore other opportunities.

And what have those other opportunities been? Nearshore halibut, Three Arch Rocks bottomfishing and offshore chinook fishing, not to mention crabbing have all been unusual opportunities this week. All have been productive with halibut fishing the least impressive. There were a few sport caught halibut from two boats that I talked to fishing 140 to 160 foot of water off of Nehalem and Manzanita on Wednesday. One guide took his customers down to Three Arch Rocks on Monday, taking a slew of sea bass and a few lingcod to boot. Some boats have been heading out west to the deep reefs to take advantage of the offshore lingcod that are rarely available this time of year.

And crabbing? Well, for whatever reason (maybe a growing swell and a storm front moving onshore), the crabbing action dropped off on Wednesday with far fewer keepers in the pots than the previous days. We had 71 in the pots on Monday, 52 on Tuesday and only 16 on Wednesday,

al crabbing south of the south jetty along Bayocean spit in 25 to 30 foot of water. Be advised however, that the closer you crab to the south jetty, the more susceptible you are to an ocean swell taking your pots into the beach, and that's not a good thing....The ocean season closes on October 15th.

The other highlighted coastal gem is of course Nehalem Bay but action is slowing in this estuary. Guide boats that typically work this body of water are now being found on Tillamook Bay. Catchable numbers of chinook are still available but action is slowing after a fairly productive fall. Coho are starting to show in greater numbers and for that matter, numbers are building in Tillamook as well. Action may improve or take a dramatic downturn depending on how much precipitation falls in NW Oregon over the weekend.

The Nestucca and Salmon Rivers both have fair to good numbers of fish in their systems but most have lock-jaw, awaiting the forecasted rain which will stimulate their upstream migration and hopefully, their aggressive behavior. Anglers are reminded that fishing above First Bridge on the Nestucca is not allowed for fall chinook.

The Alsea has largely become a bobber show although another round of action near the mouth on the recent tide series was highly likely. Coho are beginning to show here with a large number of wild fish taken recently.

Crabbing remains fair in most coastal estuaries with Tillamook and Netarts a clear highlight and that shouldn't change until we get a real gully-washer that inundates these estuaries with fresh water. That may soon change with the stronger tide series coming on-line.

The Guide's Forecast – The fishing forecast will closely mirror the weather forecast. Unfortunately, we won't know how that's shaping up until we see how much precipitation will fall over the weekend. Regardless, it looks like we're in for a weather change.

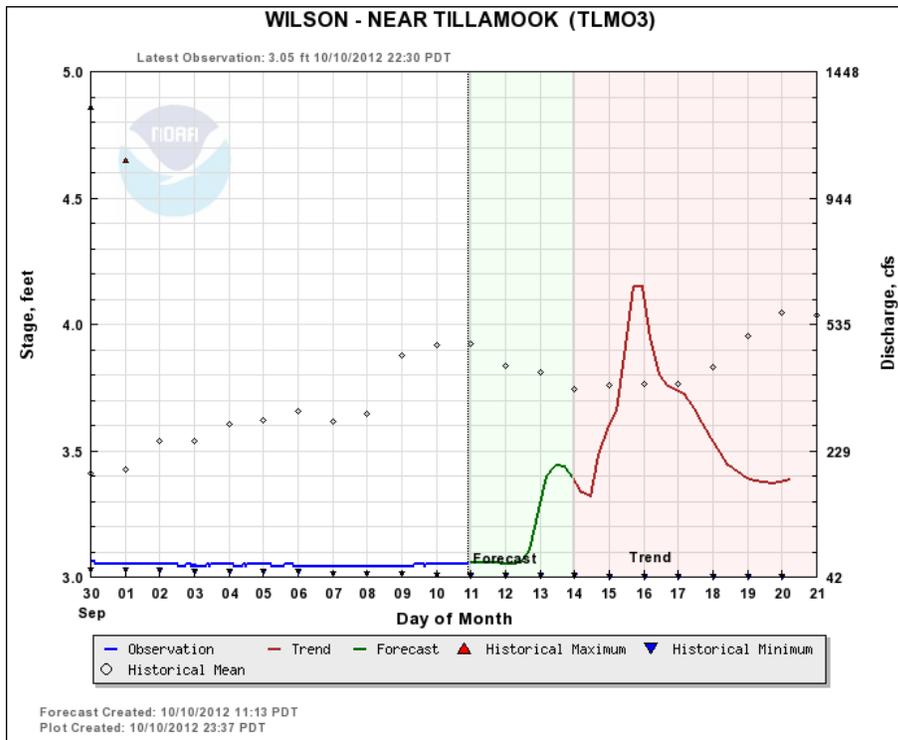
Whatever day the barometer begins to take a nose-dive, the action, albeit mediocre, will also likely nose-dive. This has been a long-awaited rain and with it, chrome should come. Until then, all we can do is follow the patterns we've seen all season and with the ocean swelling to un-boatable condition, it'll be a bay show and you had better be paying attention to the wind direction and strength.

Winds are currently forecasted from the south, which could make upper bay fishing a stronger option. Couple this with an intensifying tide series and a closed ocean where sport boats aren't culling all the biters from the jaws and adjacent ocean waters, and there could be some fair to good action in the estuary this weekend. That is, if you don't get blown off the water by wind and driving rain (not to mention unbearable seaweed).

So, anglers will still want to stay focused on the lower bay extremities with the Ghost Hole and Bay City some of the strongest options. Herring will likely remain king but I've witnessed some good fishing using spinners recently and one can more effectively fish spinners in seaweed laden channels. If the seaweed isn't a problem, anglers may want to go rogue and run plugs too. Of course herring will always work but everyone will be running one of those.....

As the tide progresses up Tillamook Bay, work your way up the bay as well. Ray's Place Piling should be putting out fish as well as the picket fence and eventually at high tide, the mouth of the Wilson River and "Grassy Knoll". If significant rains do hit the north coast, you can bank on these fish making a hard run for the rivers, in particular, the Trask and maybe the Wilson River to boot.

As it stands now, the river forecast doesn't call for a huge jump in water heights but it doesn't take a significant bump to get some excited fish moving:



As you can see, the most significant bump doesn't happen until after the weekend. That is, if this graph is accurate. It's likely to change by the weekend and keep in mind, our north coast lands are parched and therefore, a lot of the moisture is likely to quickly get swallowed up by the thirsty vegetation. It's going to take a lot of rain to stimulate these river rises. The Trask will be a prime candidate for action if it becomes boatable. Better plan on leaves however, have you seen the wind forecast?

FRI

S WIND 20 TO 25 KT WITH GUSTS TO 30 KT. WIND WAVES 6 FT.
W SWELL 5 FT...BUILDING TO 8 FT IN THE AFTERNOON. RAIN.

FRI NIGHT

S WIND 20 TO 25 KT WITH GUSTS TO 30 KT. WIND WAVES
5 FT. W SWELL 7 FT. RAIN.

SAT

S WIND 20 TO 25 KT WITH GUSTS TO 30 KT. WIND WAVES 6 FT.
W SWELL 7 FT. RAIN LIKELY.

SAT NIGHT

S WIND 20 TO 25 KT...RISING TO 25 TO 30 KT AFTER
MIDNIGHT. GUSTS TO 35 KT. WIND WAVES 7 FT. W SWELL 8 FT. CHANCE
OF RAIN.

SUN

S WIND 25 TO 30 KT. COMBINED SEAS 14 FT.

MON

SW WIND 30 TO 35 KT. COMBINED SEAS 17 FT.

Many of the other systems will follow suit with Tillamook. All of these systems should begin to see higher incidences of wild coho entering the estuaries. The Nehalem and Nestucca systems should also see a chinook bump and the Salmon River bank fishery should take off on the rise and even more-so on the decent.

The Siletz and Alsea Rivers should also get a nice bump of coho and chinook just before and just following the crest of the river system although the rain isn't expected to impact these more southerly systems. It may not even hit Tillamook County if the jet stream doesn't shift in the very near future.

Regardless, tides will be on the upswing and therefore, fish should move and bite with more aggression on the flood tide. Savvy anglers may want to stick around for the first half of outgoing, using plugs to take a more freshwater oriented (territorial) fish.

Crabbing may not be the best option this weekend as high winds can make for uncomfortable conditions. Ocean crabbing closes after October 15th and the ocean will be no place to be for the next week or better.

Evening razor clamming will be out as well with the high surf in the forecast.

Central & South Coast Reports – With depth restrictions lifted for offshore bottom fishers, boats exploring deeper water for large ling cod did well on Wednesday this week with a great bite early in the afternoon. Rockfish limits are also being taken.

About one-third of ocean anglers targeting halibut inside the 40-fathom line were successful. Some of these fish have exceeded 50 inches. This fishery, which re-opened September 24th, had 89% or 4,243 pounds of the quota remaining at the beginning of October and will continue through the end of the month unless the quota fills.

Crabbing remains good in the ocean but will close on October 15th to re-open on the 1st of December. Opportunities to get out are infrequent but winter crabbing can produce very good catches of excellent quality Dungeness.

Changes are in store for ocean anglers with the weekend offshore forecast looking less than friendly.

The wild coho fishery is ongoing in several south coast systems with over 50% of the quota filled on the Siuslaw as of October 7th. The Alsea and Coos systems have been productive as well. Most systems remain open through November although the Alsea, which opened October 1st up to Five Rivers, is scheduled through December 15th. This is contingent upon varying quotas for each system.

Tenmile Lakes is also open for wild coho although no catch reports have been forthcoming. Boaters here generally troll spinners or brightly-colored plugs to take fish. This fishery is scheduled to continue until December 31st or fulfillment of a 3,000-fish quota. Siltcoos and Tahkenitch lakes are also open for coho but it's early in the season to respect much from any of these locations.

Crabbing has been excellent in Winchester Bay for boaters and good for those trying of area docks. Results for salmon picked up this week for those trying at the bay entrance. Bank bound fishers have continued to score a few by tossing spinners. A few wild coho have been taken on the Umpqua but the bulk of the run has yet to arrive. Smallmouth bass fishing has been good around Elkton but will slow if precipitation over the coming weekend causes water temperatures to drop. Afternoon and early evenings have been most productive. North Umpqua summer steelheading has been worthwhile.

While Chinook fishing is reported as good on Coos Bay, the ODFW reports and average of 15 hours effort is required per angler to boat one. Trollers dragging herring behind a flasher are having the greatest success although the occasional Chinook has fallen for a spinner cast from the bank at various locations. Coho fishing has improved with hookups occurring from the bay entrance up to the mouth of the Coos River. Crabbing has been good.

Trollers fishing for Chinook on the lower Coquille are experiencing slow to fair results although coho catches have improved here as well. Crabbing has been good in the estuary.

Chinook fishers on Rogue Bay have been has fair to good success but the real source of action here has been the coho fishery. While the keeper ratio has only been about one in four as wild fish must be released, silvers have been keeping rods bent here. Results have been best on an incoming tide during days when the ocean has been fairly calm. Agness anglers continue to take decent numbers of half-pounders. Upriver, Chinook, steelhead and coho are responding to drifted eggs. Be aware that the Rogue is closed to Chinook fishing above the Hog Creek Boat Ramp. Results for fly fishers on the upper Rogue rebounded this week as anglers experienced multiple chances in skinny, cool water. It will be late in the weekend before precipitation has any effect this area.

Results for Chinook at the Chetco Bubble Fishery historically improve later in the short season. The window will close on this fishery at the end of day on Sunday, October 14th. This remains the best shot at a 40+ pound Chinook so get' em while you can. If the ocean kicks up, however, make other plans. Trolling for Chinook in Brookings Harbor has been fair but spotty. Results will improve over the coming weeks. Fishing for sea-run cutthroats has been good on the Chetco River up to the closure at River Mile 2.2. Even though the river is closed above that mark, upstream tributaries remain open for cutties.

ODFW sez, "During the first two weeks of October, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is stocking Rogue Valley lakes and ponds with nearly 7,000 legal and larger rainbow trout. Howard Prairie and Applegate reservoirs, Hyatt and Selmac lakes, and Expo and Reinhart Park ponds are all receiving a mix of one-pound trout and catchable trout. Howard Prairie will also get 16,000 fingerlings."

Upper and Middle Empire Lake, Powers Pond and Saunders Lake are scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Fishing off the mouth of the Deschutes has been productive at times over the past week although the majority of fish taken have been Chinook. Two Chinook and five jacks may be kept on the Deschutes from the I-84 Bridge to Sherars Falls though October 31st although bait is allowed only from Sherars Falls down to the upper railroad trestle. It seems as if there are fewer steelhead in the Deschutes than prior seasons for this time of year. That said, reports are of some extra-large fish over the past couple of weeks.

Owyhee River has been producing good numbers of large brown trout which are as colorful as the area foliage at this time of year. Small Callibaetis as well as caddis imitations were turning the trick although it's getting very near spawning time for trout here.

Ever challenging, the Metolius is beautiful at this time of year and hosting a variety of insect life. October caddis are coming on and are drawing the interest of resident trout. Fish are truly picky here but persistent, observant fly fishers can have a great time here in the fall.

What Brown trout fishing is lacking in numbers is making up with dandy sized fish at this time of year at Wickiup Reservoir.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for October 2012

North Puget Sound

Coho fishing has been some of the best in years, and that should continue during the early weeks of fall.

"Anglers have been doing very well for coho salmon, in freshwater and marine areas of Puget Sound," said John Long, statewide salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "There are still plenty of opportunities out there to hook coho, especially during early October."

Anglers fishing for coho should try Point No Point, Jefferson Head, Possession Bar and Shipwreck. Anglers fishing Marine Area 9 (Admiralty Inlet) will have a daily limit of two salmon, but must release all chinook. Those fishing Marine Area 10 (Seattle/ Bremerton) also have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook.

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

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

Some of the regions lakes are also open for salmon. Anglers fishing **Lake Sammamish** have a daily limit of four salmon, of which two may be chinook. All sockeye must be released, and fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek.

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

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Summer is over, but anglers still have numerous marine and freshwater opportunities to hook salmon in October.

"Fishing for coho salmon has been very good from the Strait of Juan de Fuca all the way down to south Puget Sound," said John Long, statewide salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "That should continue at least through mid-October."

In the Strait of Juan de Fuca, **salmon** anglers fishing marine areas 5 (Sekiu) and 6 (Port Angeles) can keep one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit beginning Oct. 1. Farther south, anglers fishing in marine areas 11 (Tacoma/Vashon Island) and 13 (South Puget Sound) will have a two-salmon daily limit beginning Oct. 1, and will no longer be required to release wild chinook. However, all wild coho caught in Marine Area 13 must be released.

In Hood Canal (Marine Area 12), salmon anglers fishing north of Ayock Point have a daily limit of four coho. All other salmon species must be released. Anglers fishing south of Ayock Point can retain two hatchery chinook as part of their four salmon daily limit. However, they must release wild chinook and chum salmon.

Fishing regulations in Hood Canal change Oct. 16, when anglers throughout the canal will have a daily limit of four salmon, but only two of which can be a chinook. All wild chinook must be released.

Grays Harbor (Marine Area 2-2) also is an option. Through Oct. 7, anglers fishing the harbor can retain one chinook as part of their three-salmon daily limit. Anglers are also limited to two wild coho, and must release chum salmon. Beginning Oct. 8, chinook salmon also must be released. Check the [sportfishing rules pamphlet](#) for details.

Farther south, anglers fishing Willapa Bay (Marine Area 2-1) have a daily limit of six salmon, including up to three adult fish. Chum and wild chinook salmon must be released. Salmon anglers can fish with two poles in Willapa Bay through Jan. 31 with the purchase of a two-pole endorsement.

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

Regulations are also changing on the Skokomish River in Mason County. Beginning Oct. 1, anglers fishing the Skokomish from the Highway 106 Bridge to the Highway 101 Bridge may keep up to four adult salmon as part of a six-fish daily limit, but must release all **chinook**. All **chum** must be released through Oct. 15.

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

Anglers should note that a portion of the fishing regulations for the Wynoochee River in the fishing pamphlet are incorrect. Anglers fishing the Wynoochee from the WDFW White Bridge Access Site to the 7400 Line Bridge above the mouth of Schafer Creek are **not** required to follow selective gear rules. Anglers are, however, required to use single-point barbless hooks from Aug. 16-Nov. 30, and bait is prohibited from Sept. 16-Nov.30. For more information on corrections to the pamphlet, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

Dig out those clam shovels. WDFW has tentatively scheduled a razor-clam dig in mid-October – the first of the fall season. The dig will get under way Oct. 13 at four ocean beaches, provided upcoming marine toxin tests show the clams are safe to eat.

WDFW will announce final approval of that plan about a week before the dig is set to start, said Dan Ayres, WDFW's coastal shellfish manager. "We're still in the process of determining additional fall and winter digging opportunities, but we wanted to give people a chance to start making plans for October," said Ayres, noting that WDFW will announce additional razor-clam digs later that month.

Proposed digging days and evening low tides for beaches tentatively scheduled to open in October are:

- Oct. 13 (Saturday), 5:41 pm, (+0.3 ft.); Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks
- Oct. 14 (Sunday), 6:26 pm, (-0.5 ft.); Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks
- Oct. 15 (Monday), 7:11 pm, (-1.1 ft.); Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- Oct. 16 (Tuesday), 7:57 pm, (-1.5 ft.); Twin Harbors
- Oct. 17 (Wednesday), 8:44 pm, (-1.6 ft.); Twin Harbors
- Oct. 18 (Thursday), 9:34 pm, (-1.4 ft.); Twin Harbors

"Low tides will occur relatively late in the day, so diggers need be prepared for darkness during evening digs in the fall," Ayres said.

All diggers age 15 or older must have an applicable 2012-13 fishing license to harvest razor clams on any beach. Licenses, ranging from a three-day razor clam license to an annual combination fishing license, are available on WDFW's website at <https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov> and from license vendors around the state.

Under state law, each digger can take 15 razor clams per day, and must keep the first 15 clams they dig to prevent wastage. Each digger's clams must be kept in a separate container.

Meanwhile, crabbers are reminded that their summer catch record cards are due to WDFW by Oct. 1 and must be returned whether or not the cardholder caught or fished for crab during the season. Crabbers who fail to file catch reports for 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 [WDFW's website](#).

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

Southwest Washington

Starting Oct. 1, the lower Columbia River will be open for retention of **chinook salmon** from Buoy 10 near the river's mouth to Bonneville Dam. The addition of chinook fishing below Warrior Rock, together with the continuing influx of coho entering the river, will give anglers more reasons to return to the mainstem Columbia in the weeks to come.

"This year's salmon fishery is far from over," said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Anglers can do well fishing the lower river and its

tributaries for chinook and coho right through the end of November, when the winter steelhead fishery starts to heat up.”

The daily limit for adult fish on the lower Columbia River is two salmon, two hatchery steelhead, or one of each. As in past years, only hatchery coho and steelhead with a clipped adipose fin may be retained.

Anglers fishing those waters have been catching all three species in recent weeks. While **coho** are returning in lower numbers than last year, they are still helping to round out catch limits in both the Columbia River and several of its tributaries, Hymer said.

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

Some of the best all-round salmon fishing has been in the Lewis and Klickitat rivers, where recent catch rates have been averaging a fish per rod, Hymer said. Starting Oct. 1, anglers fishing the mainstem Lewis may retain any chinook salmon – clipped or not – but North Fork Lewis waters from Colvin Creek to Merwin Dam will close to all fishing through Dec. 15. Retention of any chinook has been allowed on the North Fork Lewis since mid-September.

Fishing will be closed at Drano Lake throughout October from 6 p.m. Tuesdays to 6 p.m. Wednesdays. Salmon and steelhead fisheries above Bonneville Dam will continue through the end of the year under rules described in the [Fishing in Washington](#) rule pamphlet and emergency rules posted on the [WDFW website](#).

Meanwhile, sturgeon anglers should be aware that sturgeon retention will remain closed through the end of the year on the lower Columbia River and adjacent tributaries from the Wauna power lines upstream to Bonneville Dam. The gorge sturgeon fishery was originally scheduled to re-open to sturgeon retention three days per week beginning Oct. 20, but strong catch rates through summer did not leave enough fish available to support a fall retention fishery.

For **trout**, Sept. 30 is the last day to fish Mineral Lake, but Swift Reservoir remains a good bet for rainbows and landlocked coho. At Swift Reservoir, anglers may keep up to 10 trout (including landlocked coho) but must release all salmon larger than 15 inches in length. Increased daily limits are also in effect for hatchery rainbows at Lake Scanewa and kokanee at Merwin Reservoir.

The area around the Cowlitz Trout Hatchery is also productive for hatchery sea-run cutthroats in October. Those aggressive fish averaging a foot or more can be caught on a variety of gear including bait, flies, or lures. October is also a good time to hit other high mountain lakes when the fall foliage is in full color and the mosquitoes are dying down.

Eastern Washington

Snake River **hatchery steelhead** and **hatchery fall chinook salmon** fishing continues, although catch rates have been relatively slow in late September in most areas.

Creel checks in late September show the best steelhead fishing has been in the stretch between Lower Monumental and Little Goose dams, where anglers spent more than nine hours of fishing

per steelhead caught (and more than 26 hours of fishing per steelhead kept.) Other river sections averaged 22 to 24 hours of fishing per fish caught. Salmon fishing continued to be slow.

Anglers can retain daily up to three hatchery-marked steelhead – a sea-run rainbow trout at least 20 inches in length with a clipped adipose or ventral fin and a healed scar at the location of the clipped fin.

The salmon daily harvest limit 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 that can be retained in the Snake River is 12 inches.

Anglers must use barbless hooks when fishing for chinook or steelhead in the Snake River. All chinook and steelhead with unclipped adipose fins must be immediately released unharmed. Anglers cannot remove any chinook or steelhead from the water unless it is retained as part of the daily bag limit. Anglers should be sure to identify their catch because returning unmarked chinook salmon, coho salmon and steelhead are also in the Snake River during this fishery.

Anglers should refer to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) [sport fishing rules pamphlet](#) for other regulations, including possession limits and safety closures.

While the hatchery steelhead season on the Snake runs through March of next year, the fall chinook salmon fishery is scheduled to close Oct. 31 – unless monitored harvest rates and the run size warrant an earlier closure.

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

Many Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille county waters, most which are open through the month, produce good catches of **rainbow trout** and other species.

Some of Spokane County's best trout lakes closed Sept. 30, but there are enough exceptions to keep fishing productive. Randy Osborne, WDFW central district fish biologist, said Clear and Liberty lakes provide trout, **bass** and other fish through October. Amber Lake remains open through November for catch-and-release fishing. A number of year-round waters, including Eloika, Long and Newman lakes, have bass, **crappie**, **perch** and more.

Fishing harvest and size limits have been lifted on Fish Lake in Spokane County until Oct. 21 due to the upcoming rehabilitation of that fishery, scheduled for the week of Oct. 22. Osborne notes, however, that the motor restriction is still in place at Fish Lake.

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

Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir off Grand Coulee Dam, provides some of the best year-round fishing. Anglers should find good trolling action on big rainbows and **walleye**, mostly from the Daisy area north. Walleye anglers can also be successful casting jigs near the shoreline, using bottom bouncers, and other methods. Osborne reminds anglers and boaters to use life jackets and keep safety as a top priority while on the water, especially on big water like Roosevelt.

Northcentral Washington

A **steelhead** fishing season on portions of the upper Columbia River may be possible, depending on run sizes. Anglers should keep checking the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) [emergency rules webpage](#) for any announcement.

Meanwhile, the Lake Chelan Project Tailrace fishery for **chinook salmon** continues through Oct. 15. For details, check the [emergency rule change](#). A summer chinook selective fishery in portions of the Wenatchee River also continues through Oct. 15. For details on that fishery, check the [emergency rule change](#).

WDFW District Fish Biologist Travis Maitland notes that Douglas County's Jameson Lake fall season (Oct. 1-31) should provide some decent **rainbow trout** fishing.

"We plan to stock up to 10,000 catchable-size rainbows before this fall opener and we should have a fair carryover rate of catchable-size fish that were stocked this past spring," Maitland said. "Anglers will no doubt encounter smaller rainbows from our spring fingerling plant as well. That plant was designed to provide catchable-size fish the following spring. From what I saw, the larger fish were hanging on the thermocline at about 20 to 25 feet and the small guys were shallower, so anglers may have to refine their techniques to weed out the little guys."

Maitland said a few years ago the lake had some problems with excessive algae blooms that ended up killing fish. "But, in recent years this has not been the case and the rainbows that we stock appear to be surviving well," he said. "I conducted some recent water quality tests and plankton surveys on the lake, and things look good for this fall's season."

Little Beaver Lake in Okanogan County is open through Oct. 28 with no daily bag limit and no size limit for all game fish. It will be closed to fishing from Oct. 29 until further notice for rehabilitation work.

Southcentral Washington

Approximately 120,000 **chinook salmon** are expected to return to the Hanford Reach this year, and early October is generally the best time to catch them. Anglers fishing the Reach were averaging a chinook per boat in September and catch rates are expected to rise as water temperatures cool and more chinook move into the area, said Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Some of those fish have been tipping the scales at 40 pound a piece, he said.

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

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

Another good prospect for salmon is the Yakima River, where fishing for fall chinook and **coho** usually comes alive around the second week of the month. Best bets for catching fish include

waters downstream of Prosser Dam and Horn Rapids Dam, said Hoffarth, noting that fishing is closed within 400 feet downstream of those diversions.

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

Back at the Hanford Reach, many anglers are also feeling some pressure to switch over to **hatchery steelhead**, said Hoffarth, noting that the fishery runs through March 31. "October is a good time to start targeting hatchery steelhead," he said. "The water is cooling off and the fish are getting more aggressive."

During the month of October, anglers may only keep steelhead with *both* clipped adipose and ventral fins in the Columbia River between the Hwy 395 bridge at Kennewick and the wooden powerline towers at the old Hanford townsite. After October 31 any hatchery steelhead can be harvested in that area of the Columbia River.

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

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Random Links

Historical Perspective - Salmon and Steelhead on the Sandy River:
http://www.portlandgeneral.com/community_environment/initiatives/protecting_fish/sandy_river/docs/sandy_river_history_full.pdf

Sport Fishing Regulation Updates:
http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/reg_changes/index.asp

Fishing with Cured Eggs from the ODFW:
http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/cured_eggs.asp

Diamond Lake Data:
http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/local_fisheries/diamond_lake/index.asp

GOOD LUCK!