

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **October 26th – November 1st, 2012**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- The Columbia River below Bonneville Dam did put out a few chinook last week but few were of harvestable quality. Chalk this fishery up as over for the season. Catch and release fishing for sturgeon should provide good sport through November. The mouth of the Sandy gave up a handful of silvers to spinner casters and it might be worth a try this week as well.

The Willamette has had little to no angling effort and nothing noteworthy to mention. With rivers swelling, there is little reason for anglers to focus on fish that will only be moving through this area.

Late mornings and early afternoons will be most productive on the McKenzie as the days grow shorter and colder. Bugs are still abundant with Caddis and BWOs predominant.

There are summer steelhead and coho in the North Santiam River but catches have been spotty.

The Clackamas River has produced a few silvers and some straggler summer steelhead in the upper stretch from McIver to Barton Park. The mouth of Eagle Creek is a favorite haunt for anglers and silver salmon alike.

The Sandy River is the brightest spot in the metro area as the coho run is finally underway. The water from Oxbow Park to Cedar Creek should be the target area as the fish move through the lower river quickly. Over a thousand fish have entered the hatchery and anglers have been having average success in the immediate area below the creek. The water is reportedly on the dirty, but is expected to clean up before the weekend. Drifted roe, spinners and bobber/jig combo's have been scoring.

Northwest – Although action on Tillamook Bay has been less than stellar, there are still fish taken every day from the middle bay to the jetty. Most recently, Bay City has produced consistent catches just after high slack. The Ghost Hole has been barren for much of the week. A few fish were taken along the jetty close to low slack on the weak tides early in the week but that will likely change as tidal flows increase. Crabbing in Tillamook Bay is slowing but Netarts remains productive.

Tillamook area streams swelled slightly at mid-week but produced few biters, especially on the Wilson. The Trask remains one of the top options but flows will be too low for productive fishing by the weekend. Coho are largely back to the hatchery now but provided poor opportunity for anglers throughout the freshwater fishery. The wild coho season remains open with very few fish taken on the Tillamook system. Action and opportunity should improve this week however.

The Nehalem is largely done for chinook but some anglers continue to pursue coho with ample numbers left on the quota. Chinook are spawning in the upper reaches and adjacent tributaries that are closed to fishing. The North Fork Nehalem remains low and coho action at the hatchery is disappointing.

The Nestucca produced some chinook on the recent rain but remains only a fair prospect.

A chinook over 40 pounds was recently reported from the Necanicum River but the river needs

more rain for upriver areas to become productive. There are several trees reported down, making for hazardous boating conditions.

Southwest- The ocean is less friendly at this time of year so opportunities for offshore launches are few. Even charters have been challenged to get out this week.

With catches of wild coho very good over the past week, the Alsea closed as the quota filled on October 23rd. Chinook catches on the Alsea should be peaking for bobber casters this week. The Siuslaw quota was at 86% as of October 21st although the remaining wild coho fisheries remain in no danger of imminent closure. Fishing has yet to get started at Tahkenitch and Tenmile although Siltcoos has producing coho.

Chinook and coho are being caught in fair to good number on the lower Umpqua but smallmouth bass fishing is slowing upriver near Elkton as water temperatures drop. Steelheaders are taking fair numbers on the North Umpqua.

Crabbing remains excellent in Coos Bay. Although chinook catches are slowing seasonally in the bay and lower river. Coho fishing has been picking up.

Sporadic catches of chinook and coho are falling to trollers on the Coquille River.

While many chinook and coho moved upstream with the recent freshet on the Rogue, fresh fish have continued to enter the bay with trolled anchovies taking primarily coho. Steelheading has improved on the middle Rogue with drifted eggs or egg imitations by far the most effective methods to catch them. Flies that mimic salmon eggs are most effective on the upper river for summer steelhead as they're holding below spawning chinook.

Trollers using anchovies are making fair to good catches of chinook in the harbor out of Brookings while the majority of these fish have been in the teens, the occasional chinook has topped 30 pounds.

Fishing is fair at Diamond Lake with most anglers catching two or three trout. The limit here remains eight fish due to the excellent trout population.

Eastern – Trout fishing is good on the lower Deschutes with redsides falling for small nymphs. Try Prince Nymphs, Hare's Ears or Pheasant Tails. Steelhead are being caught but require some time to do so with the low returns this year. The river is currently blown out and may take some time to recover.

Fish the Metolius during the warmest part of the day for best results. Hatches can be sparse during typical cloudy days although insects will be active when it's sunny.

SW Washington- Although the Cowlitz and Kalama both have steelhead, coho and chinook available, most effort and success is coming from the North Fork of the Lewis River. The Lewis will likely be the highlight for the remainder of the year although the Cowlitz may produce fair coho catches into early November.

The mouths of the Klickitat and White Salmon will remain primary targets for coho anglers although chinook continue to fall on the Klickitat system. The coho fishery will last into mid-November but it's clear that the return this year isn't as strong as it has been in years past.

Columbia River Fishing Report – With only crab left as a viable option in the lower Columbia, there isn't much to report for this section of the river. With the coho gone for the remainder of the year, it will be a while before anglers take an interest in salmon in the waters of the lower Columbia.

Upriver, anglers are holding onto the last remaining opportunities from the Sandy River to Bonneville Dam.

"With the Columbia river salmon season coming to a close, following are the last remaining opportunities on the BIG river. A smattering of Chinook were caught below Bonneville dam last week but most were dark and many would be pulled right off their spawning bed. There is a large number of Chinook (and chum salmon too) that spawn right below the dam and those fish are now ripening for the last hurrah of their lives."

The other gorge fishery to consider is catch and release sturgeon fishing. With little effort and a historically good time to pursue these fish, action is likely to be good, especially with so few other anglers in pursuit. With smelt exceedingly more challenging to get a hold of, squid has become a favorite for anglers in this fishery.

The Guide's Forecast – Crabbing will become a priority for boaters in the lower reaches in the coming weeks. Although tides remain somewhat strong over the weekend, they begin to fade by Sunday, providing a nice window of opportunity for those wishing to partake in this bounty. Success rates should remain excellent through the commercial opener in early December.

Good clam tides begin early next week. If the ocean swell stays subdued and it's not raining, there could be some good fall digging after the sun sets along Clatsop area beaches.

"The gorge fishery is over for all sporting/harvesting purposes. Some opportunity still exists for coho at the mouth of the Sandy river and in the Camas slough at the mouth of the Washougal. At the Sandy's mouth, most anglers anchor their boats and cast and retrieve weighted spinners in to the shallow channel. Try the size 4 Blue Fox with the fluorescent red, orange or chartreuse body and the silver blade. With substantially more room in the Camas slough, trolling plugs and spinners is the ticket and trolling upstream "fast" gets the most bites. Red, orange or fire tiger wiggle warts are the lure de jour here. Some bank access is available right off Hwy 14 for bank bound anglers. With this week's rains, expect the fish to hurry up the tributaries and anglers should venture upstream to follow these fish."

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "Willamette has had little to no angling effort and nothing noteworthy to mention."

Water levels on the McKenzie have been rising over the past week but with a dry day in the forecast today, October 25th, and only showers predicted in the coming week, the river should be quite fishable.

The North Santiam, at optimum fishing levels at this writing on Thursday this week and forecast to remain so through the coming weekend, will rise sharply in the middle of the coming week. Expect to see about an additional 18 inches of water and flows over 8,600 cfs at Jefferson by Halloween. The South Santiam will be similarly impacted.

The Guide's Forecast – Stick to the warmest part of the day - think mid-morning to mid-

afternoon - for successful fall fishing on the McKenzie. Blue-Winged Olives, Caddis and Stoneflies will be the predominant patterns of interest.

With change coming to the Santiams in water level and flow next week, it appears this coming weekend will be the time to try it. Most anglers are trying for coho, so pitch a bobber and egg combo or try spinners or spoons worked deeply. Summer steelhead are also available but catches have been slow.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "The Clackamas river has produces a few silvers and some straggler summer steelhead in the upper stretch from McIver park to Barton park. The mouth of Eagle creek is a favorite haunt for anglers and silver salmon alike.

"The Sandy river is the brightest spot in the metro area as the coho run is finally underway. The water from Oxbow park to Cedar creek should be the target area as the fish move through the lower river quickly. Over a thousand fish have entered the hatchery and anglers have been having average success in the immediate area below the creek. The water is reportedly on the dirty side as of his writing, but is expected to clean up before the weekend. Drifted roe, spinners and bobber/jig combo's have been scoring."

The Guide's Forecast – Eagle Creek has been running clear but with pressure surprisingly light (particularly for this location) although a few coho and jacks are being caught. The Clackamas mainstem is still primarily a steelhead fishery with fish being caught a McIver, Barton and Carver.

The Sandy River dropped and cleared on Wednesday this week with coho on the move. The Hatchery Road to Cedar Creek, closed earlier this week, will be open by the coming weekend.

North Coast Fishing Report – Although it's been a subdued week for Tillamook area anglers, action has picked up lately, particularly in the Bay City area. Most anglers would agree that it has been a consistent fall chinook season on Tillamook but historically, the October run of chinook, most likely destined for the Wilson and Kilchis Rivers, has been quieter in recent years. Most veteran anglers that fish the Wilson and Kilchis in the later season would likely agree to that as well. We can't always have our cake and eat it too. One nice thing about fishing lately, the eel grass and seaweed has been quite tolerable.

Most anglers continue to focus on the Ghost Hole when in reality, Bay City has produced some of the better action lately. For whatever reason, biters seem to be bypassing Tillamook's most popular hole and fall to baits and spinners in front of Bay City. Although far from an impressive bite, action has seen steady improvement in recent days. On Tuesday, the action seemed to be best on the first part of outgoing tide while on Wednesday, action was better on the last trickle of incoming tide with still a few fish taken on outgoing. Every day seems different which will keep any angler on their toes.

Most other areas in the Tillamook estuary are quiet. There was some fish taken earlier in the week and over the weekend along the jetty. The last hour or so of outgoing tide produced a few biters for anglers willing to stick it out for the afternoon bite. The ocean has been open for brief periods of time this week although action was not very good as most guides didn't put in too much time out there. Ocean crabbing is now closed.

The west channel and upper bay remain challenging for trollers. Wild coho numbers remain surprisingly low but anglers remain hopeful they make a decent showing regardless of the opportunity that may exist for harvest.

District rivers have swollen enough to get area anglers excited but results were less than impressive for experienced driftboaters working the watersheds. Anglers fishing the Wilson River on Tuesday predictably were impeded in their backtrolling and back-bouncing techniques by leafy debris in the system. One experienced boat reported one wild coho from Donaldson's Ramp to the bay. There were likely fish in that stretch but leafy debris and a significant drop in water temperatures likely had fish less than motivated to bite. It's still a bit early to declare peak season on the Wilson but the Trask should be in full bloom right now.

Trask River reports have not been stellar despite the fact this should be peak season on this system. Most early to mid-October fish seem to be destined for the Trask River but many would agree that this river fishes best when it's higher and slightly off-color. We really haven't had the gully-washer that really stimulates fish in this system although fish are moving through it rapidly. The Trask hatchery is currently spawning the returning coho.

The Nestucca is much the same. It seems to fish best when it's flowing higher and more colored. We haven't seen that type of opportunity just yet on this system. There are certainly some fish available but it hasn't been a banner season here just yet.

To the north, the Nehalem system is clearly winding down. The chinook crew is catching fewer fish lately and guides that spend a better part of their early October over there are beginning to show in Tillamook. Coho are challenging too, which is what catch statistics showed for last year. Anglers this year are observing even more challenging catching conditions than last. The North Fork Nehalem hatchery reports that they are still taking bright fish in the hatchery trap but angling success is poor.

Crabbing has tapered in many north coast estuaries although Netarts is still a strong option for anglers using fresh crab bait in their traps. Most crabbers are targeting the last bit of outgoing tide to take their limits of crab in improving condition.

The Guide's Forecast – Tillamook will remain the hot-spot into early December and chinook should start to make a stronger showing, assuming the Wilson and Kilchis fish make a stronger showing in the coming weeks. Run timing alone should bolster excitement as early November can surely improve catch rates. With dropping flows forecasted for most of the area rivers, fish should once again, fill up the estuary in waiting for the next significant rainfall.

It's been cold down here, with snow even making an appearance in Tillamook's foothills. With that cold front has come a significant drop in water temperatures. This has certainly effected the bite. Fortunately, temperatures are forecasted to rise in the coming week, which should improve the bite system-wide.

Anglers targeting chinook in Tillamook Bay would be wise to work the incoming tide, particularly the later part of the incoming tide, at Bay City and hopefully the Ghost Hole. There has been some action in the corral (Ray's Place Piling) over the course of the week and that middle bay may still produce some action as that area is a staging area for fish moving up the Kilchis and lower Wilson arms. Herring seems to be a better producer in these colder waters, even well up into the estuary.

There is a chance that the ocean may fish over the weekend. Although chinook may be the prize target for most, offshore opportunities still knock for those that know the deep-reef areas for

prized lingcod and bass. The offshore chinook season remains open until October 31st and the last time I pursued these fish (and the only time this season) we took 4 chinook about 200 feet down over 350 foot of water. It was glass calm conditions however. Remember, crab season is closed offshore now.

Here is the offshore forecast through the weekend:

FRI

S WIND 15 TO 20 KT WITH GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT.
SW SWELL 3 FT AT 13 SECONDS...BUILDING TO 5 FT AT 13 SECONDS IN
THE AFTERNOON. CHANCE OF RAIN.

FRI NIGHT

SW WIND 10 TO 15 KT...EASING TO 5 TO 10 KT AFTER
MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. SW SWELL 7 FT AT 13 SECONDS. CHANCE
OF RAIN.

SAT

SW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. SW SWELL 6 FT AT
13 SECONDS. CHANCE OF RAIN.

SAT NIGHT

S WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES
3 FT. SW SWELL 6 FT AT 13 SECONDS. CHANCE OF RAIN.

SUN

S WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 7 FT.

MON

SW WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 8 FT.

Area rivers are on the drop but the Wilson did get higher than most had anticipated. Regardless, levels will drop to lower levels rapidly and fish will get skittish even though water temperatures should improve this week. Still, stealthy anglers stand a chance at a fish although these fish will be browning quickly, no matter what system you pursue them in. Anglers may want to focus their efforts in tidewater this week with the Wilson and Trask likely to produce the best results.

The Nehalem and Nestucca will only have a few fish available to anglers. Some fresh chinook should still stage in tidewater but anglers will be challenged to find some biters, especially with the waning numbers.

Anglers are still on the look-out for wild coho. Each north coast system may have a different set of regulations so check them accordingly. Most anglers have written off this year's coho run. It's clearly not what most had anticipated. It's getting too late to say, "they're just late.....".

Crabbing may improve when the tide cycle begins to fade. Netarts will remain a top bet but Tillamook Bay as well as the Nestucca should still boot out some quality keepers. The lower Columbia will be the place to be however and that won't change for the remainder of the fall season.

Central & South Coast Reports – The wild coho fishery at various locations remains open a for the most part at several southwest locations. While the Alsea closed at end of day Wednesday

this week, having fulfilled its 876 coho quota, the only other location approaching closure is the Siuslaw where less than 14% of its 1,700-fish quota remained as of October 21st.

Of the still water wild coho fisheries, only Siltcoos Lake, which has access for these fish during high tides, has started to produce and fishing has been fair to good over the past week.. Tenmile and Tahkenitch lakes will get underway in November. Trollers particularly enjoy these locations where wild coho are taken almost exclusively on spinners or plugs. It's worth mentioning that those holding a two-rod license are allowed only a single fishing rod on these lakes from October 1st through the end of the year.

Launches out of central Oregon ports have been challenging over the past week but conditions seem to be moderating into the coming weekend.

While offshore fishing opportunities are few at this time of year, when conditions do allow, fishing for ling cod in deep water will yield large fish in the fall. Lings will find a live kelp greenling on a heavy jig an irresistible offering.

Trollers are faring best on the lower Siletz River using spinners as these are out fishing herring or wrapped Kwikfish for both Chinook and coho.

Crabbing has continued to be good at Winchester Bay despite recent rainfall and should continue to be productive through November barring a torrential, prolonged deluge. Fair to good catches of Chinook are being made at Winchester Bay and in the lower Umpqua River although a surprising number of these fish are coming to bank anglers, most recently by bobber fishers near Winchester Creek. Chinook and coho are now well-distributed throughout the Umpqua mainstem as fresh salmon continue to enter the bay. The Umpqua system is open to wild coho from the ocean through the mainstem up to the Scottsburg Bridge but not above that point. While only one wild coho may be retained per day and only two for the year, the quota is a generous 3,000 fish, more than twice what was available in 2011. Steelheaders in the flies-only section of the North Umpqua are catching steelhead but the run this year is forecast as only fair.

Coos Bay has remained a very good location for crabbing although the bay and lower river have been slow to spotty for Chinook and coho fishing. Bank anglers have taken a few fish by throwing spinners.

Crabbing has been good out of Bandon. Chinook and coho fishing has been slow although the Coquille is one of the areas open for wild coho. Best results are reported from the mouth of the river up to Lamda Creek.

There's no wild coho fishery on the Rogue but many think it should be an option. Trollers are taking terrific number of fish, the vast majority of which must be released as only fin-clipped coho may be kept here. The hatchery effort on the Rogue produces only a small percentage of the fish returning to the bay; ODFW seining efforts put it at 10 to 30 percent finclipped component. This is reflected in catch rates of late. One couple trolling anchovies in the bay caught 17 silvers but had only one in the box. Despite the remarkable rebound of coho salmon since they were listed as an endangered species in 1997, retention remains limited to certain areas only and the Rogue isn't one of 'em. Chinook are also in the mix in the Rogue estuary and while results have been fair to good lately, with coho ruining into the mid-20-pound range at this time of year, be sure to make the distinction between the two species. In the stretch of the Rogue below the Hog Creek Boat Ramp where Chinook may still be kept, catches have been decent downstream to Whiskey Creek. The summer steelhead season is considered at its peak in the Grants Pass stretch and has been productive with a worthwhile return this year. On the upper river where fly flingers are using any method possible (except lead weight) to deliver their

offerings, catches have been fair but improving with a little more additional water available thanks to recent rainfall. Trout fishing is fair to good on the far upper Rogue above Lost Creek Reservoir. This stretch will remain open through the end of October.

Chinook fishing is fair but spotty on the Chetco although the season here is just getting started. The Chetco River will open above Mile Marker 2.2 on Saturday, November 3rd.

Now that rain has fallen on the far southwest corner of the state, the Elk River is up and Chinook are being caught from the mouth up to the Highway 101 Bridge.

Snow fell at Diamond Lake on Wednesday this week with temperatures frequently falling well below freezing overnight at this time of year. Fishing is fair, trout are large and it is beautiful up there, though. Diamond Lake closes the last day of October for the last time as it will be open year-around starting in 2013.

Central and Eastern Oregon – All the old standby nymphs are effective now for trout on the lower Deschutes. Keep offerings small to take redsides all day long. Counts at Sherars Falls have tapered off over the past 10 days for both Chinook and steelhead although fishing remained good here over the past weekend.

The Grande Ronde has been in great shape over the past week although fishing has been slow for most anglers here. Putting in two or three days for a single hookup is not uncommon.

Trollers on Green Peter took bright kokos in fair number over the past weekend. While these were on the small side (10 inches or a little less), most kokanee lakes are done for the season.

Crane Prairie has been producing a few eponymous rainbow trout recently ranging from 20 inches to six pounds.

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."

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Chris Vertopoulos: chrisv@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

See salmon spawn in local rivers

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2012/October/102212.asp>

Smart Thinking - Pete Heley's suggestions for the ODFW

<http://www.peteheley.com/1324/>

GOOD LUCK!