

The Guide's Forecast - volume 15 issue number 29

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **July 12<sup>th</sup> – July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** The Columbia River below Bonneville Dam is still kicking out good numbers of shad. Sturgeon fishing is best described as average and fishing for summer steelhead, although there is some effort, has yet to take off.

A few straggler shad are still lingering below Willamette Falls. Fly fishermen are the primary pursuers this late in the game, looking for something to bend rods and to a lesser degree, stocking up on crab bait.

Approaching the sturgeon opener this week, a few devout anglers are preparing to catch and keep possibly their last keeper sturgeon. The open dates for the Willamette below the I-205 Bridge at Oregon City/West Linn are Thursday, Friday and Saturday, July 11th-13th. If the quota isn't caught, the ODFW will allow a second three day opener July 18-20th.

Smallmouth bass are the best available fish to target mid-summer on the Willamette River and it's rarely crowded. Rocky shorelines, back channels and behind Islands are the areas to target.

The lowest water levels seen in years combined with bright, hot days recently has slowed trout fishing on the upper McKenzie River. With a few Golden Stones lingering and trout responding to nymphs, there are still fish to be caught. Dries have been effective in the evenings.

Steelheading has been slow on the Santiams. The North Santiam water level is low and gradually dropping while the South Santiam is low but stable. The occasional spring chinook is being taken. Smallmouth are being caught in fair to good number at Foster Reservoir.

The Clackamas River has been busy with rafters, tubers and swimmers so far this month. This activity coupled with the warm weather and gin clear water make steelhead and salmon fishing tough at best. A few local anglers targeting summer steelhead and late spring chinook have been having minimal success. It's imperative to get on the water at first light, or fish the last couple of hours of daylight for any success.

On the Sandy River the same holds true as does on the Clack, but the water has some color to it due to the melting glacier. Slightly larger baits and presentations are called for in the silty water. A handful of anglers have been fishing the Oxbow Park area with marginal success, picking up the odd summer steelhead and rare late spring chinook.

**Northwest –** Salmon anglers continue to look to the ocean for the best opportunity in the district. The Columbia remains king as coho are showing with more regularity and chinook remain available to the north of the mouth of the Columbia. With the recent NW winds, temperatures have cooled and mackerel are more scarce. Anchovies remain abundant and if you can find actively feeding birds, there is likely feeding salmon below. This is your best bet at success.

Anglers targeting salmon out of Garibaldi are also finding success but have to work harder to achieve success. Chinook are not nearly as abundant as they are out of the Columbia but a good grade of coho are available for those that put in the time. Ocean crabbing is only fair with some starting to molt.

Catch and release sturgeon fishing on the lower Columbia is excellent. Sand shrimp is hard to find but anchovies make for an excellent bait in the deeper water. Most of the fish are in the keeper range or larger but juveniles seem largely scarce from the population; hence the concern by state fish and wildlife officials.

Beach plunking for summer steelhead is fair even though it should be peaking now. Passage at Bonneville continues to track less than half of last year's counts.

Bay crabbing, even in the lower Columbia is fair at best. The last of the razor clam tides is done; razor clam season closes on July 15<sup>th</sup>, to re-open on September 30<sup>th</sup>.

Also closing on July 15<sup>th</sup> is the expanded areas for bobber and bait fishing on the Trask River and Three Rivers. Outside of these boundaries, anglers may still target fin-clipped chinook and steelhead. Summer steelhead numbers are finally improving on the Wilson River although low water tactics are still required.

**Southwest**- Launching out of Oregon ports was not possible much of the time over the past week as high winds buffeted the coast. Offshore conditions are forecast to improve somewhat for the weekend. There have been discussions of an albacore hunt.

Surf perch fishing has been good coast-wide although catches fell off as the wind came up over the past week.

All depth halibut season is closed for now with the spring quota filled but will re-open for the summer season August 2 & 3.

Hatchery coho catches have been good out of Newport whenever boats have been able to get out. Herring are being successfully jigged up in Yaquina Bay.

With the Umpqua River mainstem running low and water temperatures high from summer weather, smallmouth bass fishing has been good. Better quality fish may be caught early mornings but action will hold up throughout the day on this easy-to-drift coastal river. Use caution above Yellow Creek, however.

The few chinook are being caught by trollers in Rogue Bay are either late springers or early fall fish. Those catching them don't really care which. A 40-pounder was taken over the past week. The lower Rogue is slow, as is the middle river. Upper Rogue anglers are still catching fish with a mix of chinook and summer steelhead available.

Boats launching early mornings out of the Port of Brookings have been experiencing chinook fishing from good to excellent. The window of opportunity has been small, however, with wind chasing boats inland in a couple of hours. Coho catches have been decent as have rockfish. Consequently, local bait supplies have been limited.

**Eastern** – The Metolius is running very clear but is producing decent catches of trout including browns and the occasional bull trout.

Wallowa River level and flow are excellent for fishing. Trout are responding to various nymph patterns in larger sizes.

Fishing has been good on the Williamson River with large Mayflies hatching recently.

Kokanee fishing has been worthwhile for good-sized fish with best results coming to trollers in the morning.

**SW Washington-** With summer steelhead number on the Columbia slight, opportunity in the district is limited. The Cowlitz will remain a top tributary option with the Lewis a distant second. Anglers are still about 6 weeks away from realizing any fall chinook options but that time period can't come soon enough.

Also challenging due to low summer returns, the Klickitat River is perplexing anglers and will likely continue to do for the rest of the season.

Trout fishing even becomes more challenging in the summer temperatures but district lakes still offer up some opportunity in the early morning and late afternoon for those in the know.

### **Soapbox Update:**

#### **Passage of SB830 ushers in new era of salmon conservation and fishing opportunity**

**Salem, Ore.** – The Oregon Senate passed Senate Bill 830 yesterday 18-12, and the Oregon House passed it this morning with a vote of 41-18. The measure creates the statutory framework and funding to move forward administrative changes passed earlier this year by the fish and wildlife commissions of both Oregon and Washington. Those policy changes include moving Lower Columbia River non-Tribal gillnets into off-channel areas, allowing the use of selective commercial fishing gear, and moving allocation of available fish for harvest to a sport fishing priority in the lower Columbia. Other changes implemented through this process include requiring anglers to use barbless hooks on these fisheries, and transferring some tributary hatchery releases to off-channel areas for more commercial fishing opportunity.

These historic votes usher in a new era of salmon harvest reform for the Lower Columbia River that seek to maximize the economic benefits of the river's fish runs and provide better protections for wild salmon and steelhead listed under the Endangered Species Act, while at the same time ensuring both sport and commercial fishermen have more opportunity to land fish.

The changes to Lower Columbia River fisheries are part of package brought forward by Governor Kitzhaber last year as a compromise to Measure 81, which would have made any use of gillnets illegal in Oregon. After Governor Kitzhaber introduced the plan and the commissions moved forward with implementing it, all members of the Stop Gillnetting Now coalition abandoned Measure 81 in favor of this process.

"For years, the commission and legislature failed to act to implement harvest reform on the Lower Columbia River," said Liz Hamilton, executive director of the Northwest Sportfishing Industry. "Kudos to Governor Kitzhaber. He realized that there is a way to maximize the economic and social benefits of our salmon runs, and worked with both sides of the aisle, his commission and the state of Washington to make it happen."

Use of selective commercial fishing gear, such as seine nets, has been illegal in Oregon for more than 60 years, but with the passage of SB 830, seine nets and other selective gear can be used again in Oregon by the commercial fishing industry. The state of Washington and some Tribal members have been test fishing seine nets, and those test fisheries have shown that seine nets have a much lower mortality than a gillnet on non-target species like wild salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon.

"We want to reduce mortality on wild fish, and this is a big win for our wild salmon and steelhead stocks that enter the Columbia," said Tom Wolf, Oregon Council of Trout Unlimited chair.

SB 830 also creates two new funding mechanisms to implement the changes, including the ability for ODFW to charge an angler permit fee to fund the transition, and the ability for counties to seek general fund monies to offset any hardships these changes may create for commercial fishermen seeking to switch gear.

"There's really only about 200 people who fish with gillnets in the Columbia and none of them make all of their income from this fishery," said Russell Bassett, executive director of the Association of Northwest Steelheaders. "We often hear from the opposition to these changes that it will harm rural coastal communities, but that's clearly not the case. The commercial industry as a whole and the consumers that purchase Columbia River salmon will actually get more fish out of it."

The changes will be implemented over a three-year transition period, and are scheduled to be fully implemented by 2017. The harvest reform should mean longer seasons and more catch for the hundreds of thousands of Pacific Northwest residents and tourists that fish these runs.

"We're really excited about what this means for stabilizing seasons and bringing tourists to the area," said Bob Rees, president of Northwest Guides and Anglers Association. "Right now we often have abrupt, early season closures that sour the attitudes of potential life-long customers. Also, with the long-term closure of Columbia River sturgeon, we have to make up for lost revenue to these rural Columbia River communities. The more people that take up the great sport of angling, the more money being pumped into the rural Oregon economy."

The main champions of SB830 were Sen. Fred Girod and Rep. Bill Kennemer, along with Governor Kitzhaber. In the past, similar measures have been split along party lines, but SB830 received bipartisan support.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Where did everybody go? The Lower Columbia has been largely absent of interested anglers. With a stiff northwest wind and a building swell salmon fishers offshore have been kept in port. Most anglers realize that fishing is very good when weather and bar conditions allow.

Salmon anglers that continue to pursue fish to the north have paid a heavy price recently. The northwest wind has greeted them full frontal with the most recent reports indicating people having to keep their rods in the rod holders to real fish in. Chinook salmon are still available up there but the Coho bite is better to the south.

Recent reports from the south indicate pretty easy limits coming from fin-clipped Coho. Most boats are Pursuing salmon to the south of Buoy two and the CR entrance Buoy. It has been pretty easy for those anglers trolling anchovies with some charter boats reporting limits as early as 9 AM in the morning. Furthermore, the advantages of fishing to the south is that the Columbia River and its plume knocks down a building northwest wind and swell; It is a much friendlier ocean to fish in.

**And here is a Thursday update:** after a sketchy bar crossing, we headed south to pursue Coho near the CR Buoy. Given the forecast and the bar conditions, we were pleasantly surprised that the ocean was quite calm. We stopped south of Buoy two in about 170 feet of water before

dropping our anchovies down 8 to 15 strips. We immediately found a good school of undersized chinook salmon in a rip that was forming. On the south side of that rip we finally started finding some Coho but they were very challenging to keep the hooks in. We spent a good deal of our time between 170 and 210 foot of water only to come up with two Hatchery Coho out of what was likely 22 to 26 opportunities. The strike to hook ratio was embarrassing. Other boats we were fishing nearby were also struggling for limits. Those that did stick it out found their fish but some of the best fishing was deeper in 260 foot of water. We got out of there before the northwest wind really started picking up in the late morning. Also frustrating, was a large presence of jellyfish. Once jellyfish hit your line and adhere to your Bait, it becomes a high maintenance situation. We ended the morning trying for sturgeon for a short period of time just out of Hammond. We ended up landing one medium-sized green sturgeon in about 8 feet of water. The fish took an anchovy. The bar crossing coming in was much more friendly than the one going out. Boaters always have to exercise extreme caution when crossing during the outgoing tide, especially on the Minus tide series.

After a consistent northwest wind, water temperatures have finally dropped down to favorable levels for salmon. Most anglers are experiencing temperatures in the 56° to 58° range.

Regardless of how good the fishing is, anglers have not been interested based on the ocean and bar forecasts. There is little change in sight but we will cover that in the forecast section.

In-river, catch and release sturgeon fishing remains excellent. Fresh anchovies remains the ticket with some of the most productive water directly out of Hammond. I have been fishing near the single piling in the slot catching numerous fish that are keeper size or better. Anglers pursuing fish from just above the Astoria bridge down to Hammond are reporting consistent results. The most productive time to pursue these fish is either right after low slack or right after high slack tide. The wind has made it challenging recently but fish have definitely been aggressive on anchovies. There has also been some instances of seaweed fouling lines, particularly on the first part of incoming tide. Anglers are more likely to catch keeper size or better fish; Shakers are not very common. Of course anglers know that consumptive opportunity is closed for the foreseeable future.

Further upriver, following the summer chinook closure, steelhead anglers are still in pursuit of hatchery fish. Results have been poor on the most recent minus tide series and if Bonneville Dam counts are any indicator, success is far from what it has been in previous years. Here is the ODF&W creel check from the weekend, pathetic, I might add:

**Gorge Bank:**

Weekend checking showed no catch for 7 salmonid anglers; and two shad kept for six anglers.

**Gorge Boats:**

Weekend checking showed one adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept for four boats (14 anglers) and zero shad for one boat (3 anglers).

**Troutdale Boats:**

Weekend checking showed 2 adult chinook released for 11 boats (18 anglers).

**Portland to Westport Bank:**

Weekend checking showed no catch for 35 bank anglers.

**Portland to Westport Boats:**

Weekend checking showed two adult chinook released, three adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus one unclipped steelhead released for 50 boats (113 anglers).

**Estuary Bank (Tongue Point to Westport):**

No report.

**Estuary Boats (Tongue Point to Westport):**

No report.

Also newsworthy, the departments recently reopened retention for sockeye Salmon. Counts continue to be impressive and a recent run size upgrade affords sport anglers additional opportunity. Here is the official press release:

**NEWS RELEASE**

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Contact: John North (971) 673-6029

July 10, 2013

**Columbia sockeye fishing re-opens below Bonneville Dam**

CLACKAMAS, Ore. – Oregon and Washington fishery managers today re-opened sockeye salmon fishing on the Columbia River below Bonneville Dam beginning July 13.

During a joint state hearing, fishery managers decided there were just enough fish remaining in the non-tribal harvest guideline to re-open the fishery until the end of the month. While an estimated 90 percent of the sockeye return has passed Bonneville Dam, anglers may occasionally catch a sockeye while fishing for summer steelhead.

Here are the details of the upcoming season:

- Open from Saturday, July 13 through Wednesday, July 31.
- From the Astoria-Megler Bridge upstream to Bonneville Dam.
- Daily bag limit is two adult sockeye/ adipose fin-clipped steelhead in combination. Sockeye count toward the adult bag limit regardless of size.
- Retention of adult chinook is prohibited. The daily bag limit for adipose fin-clipped jack chinook will remain five.

The Columbia River from the Bonneville Dam upstream to the OR/WA border will remain open to sockeye and adipose fin-clipped adult and jack chinook until July 31.

Crabbing both inside the river (Columbia) and outside in the ocean is less than fair but if you have enough pots and crab quality bait, you can catch keepers.

Razor clam digging closes on July 15<sup>th</sup>, not to reopen until September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Since most anglers will remain focused on offshore opportunity, especially for salmon, we'll start off our forecast with the weather forecast. It doesn't look all that favorable but keep in mind that if you travel to the south from the mouth, you'll have a harder time finding chinook but you'll likely have a much better ride. Here's the weather:

**FRI**

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT.  
NW SWELL 5 FT AT 8 SECONDS. PATCHY DRIZZLE.

**FRI NIGHT**

NW WIND 15 TO 20 KT...BECOMING N 10 TO 15 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 3 FT AT 8 SECONDS. PATCHY DRIZZLE.

**SAT**

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT AT 7 SECONDS. PATCHY DRIZZLE.

**SAT NIGHT**

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT...EASING TO 15 TO 20 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT.

**SUN**

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

**MON**

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

Although not the calmest of seas, these conditions may allow for some tolerable ocean fishing, especially if you head to the south for coho, out of the mouth of the Columbia. You will want to get an early start however, to try and take advantage of softer winds that typically greet anglers in the earlier morning hours. Be prepared to hump it back to port if the NW wind kicks up by mid-morning. Anchovies should provide the best action but fresh or frozen herring will also do well. You simply get the most for your money by purchasing a pound of anchovies versus a dozen herring and anchovies are clearly what the fish are feeding the most on.

Chinook will likely remain available to the north but you'll be facing some tougher fishing conditions when the wind goes to blowing. Use extreme caution when crossing the bar to the north, especially as you round Peacock Spit.

As you always hear us preach, fish shallow in the morning and if you're not limited early, drop the baits down deeper as the morning progresses. Also if you run through a patch of biters and then get out of them for several minutes, if you follow your GPS track back through that same area, you'll find that you will get back on the biters again, virtually in the same location when you first found them. Yes! It really works! Get those fish bled and filleted quickly however; they seem to almost digest themselves the longer they are kept in your fish-box and not on ice.

If the offshore weather keeps you bar-bound (inside), catch and release sturgeon fishing is a strong option. Target fish using anchovies from the Astoria/Megler Bridge downstream if you launch out of Hammond or Warrenton and from Tongue Point downstream to the bridge if you launch from the West End or East End Mooring Basins. On the upcoming softer tide series, the deeper water will likely produce the best results. Crab and sculpin have not been a problem but the seaweed can occasionally load you up, especially on the beginning of incoming tide.

If you're looking to take advantage of the sockeye opener or the peak of the summer steelhead run, this won't be a great week for you. The softer tide exchange doesn't concentrate fish close to the river bank like a minus tide does. Good luck however, you'll need it. If you are targeting sockeye, smaller spin-n-glos and tiny sand shrimp or coon shrimp will help your effort. Stick to the hot colors.

The upcoming tide series (a weak exchange) will be better for crabbing (it couldn't get any worse). Fresh salmon carcasses will likely be one of the better baits if you can get them for either river or ocean crabbing.

The razor clam tide is gone and so is the season. Check back with us after September 30<sup>th</sup> although you can still dig clams south of Tillamook Head; it's just that they aren't as dense as they are to the north of Tillamook Head.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "The Columbia River below Bonneville Dam is still kicking out good numbers of shad, although effort is down and the bite has become less consistent indicating the back half of the run. Catch and release sturgeon fishing is best described as average and fishing for summer steelhead, although there is some effort, has yet to take off like expected.

"Oregon and Washington fishery managers today decided on July 10 to re-open sockeye salmon fishing on the Columbia River below Bonneville Dam on July 13 to continue through July 31. They calculate that 90% of the return will have crossed Bonneville by the last day in July. The daily bag limit will be two adult sockeye or fin-clipped steelhead in combination. Sockeye will count toward the adult bag limit regardless of size. No Chinook may be taken although five Chinook jacks per day can be kept.

"The shad fishing below Willamette Falls is about done. Fly fishermen are the primary pursuers this late in the game, looking for something to bend rods and to a lesser degree, stocking up on crab bait.

"Devout sturgeon anglers are participating in what is likely the last opportunity to catch (and keep) their last keeper for who knows how long. The open dates for the Willamette below the I-205 Bridge at Oregon City/West Linn are Thursday, Friday and Saturday, July 11th-13th. If the quota isn't caught, the ODFW will allow a second three day opener July 18-20th. Reports are already coming in of a very crowded Portland Harbor, with boats anchored nearly on top of each other. Dan Pickthorn of D&G Bait in Clackamas stated that he was running more sand shrimp to all the bait retailers this week to accommodate the three day opener. Sand shrimp, along with roll mop herring, smelt, squid and worms are all sturgeon fare. Best action will come from the lower river and the deep holes below Oregon City.

"Smallmouth bass are the best available fish to target mid-summer on the Willamette River and it's rarely crowded. Rocky shorelines, back channels and behind Islands are the areas to target. This time of year, all bait (lure) types will pick up fish but plastics shine above all else. Top water fishing can be productive in the last couple hours of daylight."

Expect to find summer level low water on the McKenzie River as the level has been dropping since the beginning of July.

**Pro Guide Kyle Miller (541-971-6745)** reports, "River levels have finally dropped to summer levels at 871cfs. Fish counts have been decent with only 11689 fish over Willamette Falls. The foster hatchery has had 3587 return. With the numbers we have, they have recycled a total of 3210 steelhead so far this season. This increases our odds of landing fish. Bank anglers have been very successful while the boats have been finding an average of 1-3 fish per trip."

Alton Baker Canal, Breitenbush River, Clear Lake, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above and below Leaburg Lake, Quartzville Creek, Salt Creek, North Fork Santiam River above Detroit Lake and Trail Bridge Reservoir are scheduled to be stocked with hatchery trout.

**The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** predicts, "The continued warm weather will keep the Willamette River a playground for Portlanders. Any angling opportunity should be focused into the fringe hours of the day. During the Willamette's three day sturgeon opener, we here at the Guides Forecast predict a handful of keeper sturgeon to be caught and well short of an all-out blood bath. Most Willamette sturgeon have vacated the Willamette by now, looking for more feed in the Columbia, looking towards the estuary for its abundant schools of anchovies and shrimp beds.

"Bass anglers are still the group with the best opportunity, as they are in the middle of the six month bass window. Weather patterns are predicted to be more of the same and that translates to more of the same for the warmwater fishers here in NW Oregon."

Spring Chinook are being taken on the McKenzie with anglers backbouncing or running diver and bait. It seems the bite has been hot or cold here, however. Fishing is actually expected to improve as water temperatures increase a little. There are summer steelhead in the system but catches have been spotty. Trout fishing should be worthwhile on the upper Mac using nymphs during the day and dries in the evening.

Summer steelhead are migrating up the South Santiam now with well over 300 reported at Foster Dam on July 8th. The season total is around 3,600 thus far with the vast majority of these re-marked and transported back downstream to run again to provide anglers another chance at them.

**Pro Guide Kyle Miller (541-971-6745) adds this,** "Chinook have been found around the Stayton area. Numbers are not good but when you find them, multiple fish have been landed. Army Corps of Engineers has been fluctuating water levels which has not turned on the bite. I have seen pics of a 34 and 31 pound springers. Some large fish in rivers and these both were taken on blue fox spinners. As far as steelhead goes, the bite has been fair to good with many multiple fish days. With fluctuating water levels, the numbers returning to the hatchery are low; these fish are attracted to the water pouring out of the spillways."

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "A few local anglers targeting summer steelhead and late spring chinook have been having minimal success. It's imperative to get on the water at first light, or fish the last couple of hours of daylight for any success. Small baits of cured roe or sand shrimp fished under a bobber get the Chinook as do spinners and spoons fished in the deep, boulder patches. More summer steelhead are taken on subdued colored jigs than anything else. Black, purple and dark blue are favorite colors with a tiny red, pink or white accent. These color combos make up the Nightmare series and seasoned summer steelheaders are all too familiar with these jigs.

"On the Sandy River the same holds true as does on the Clack, but the water has some color to it due to the melting glacier. Slightly larger baits and presentations are called for in the silty water. A handful of anglers have been fishing the Oxbow Park area with marginal success, picking up the odd summer steelhead and rare late spring Chinook."

**The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** predicts, "The Clackamas River will continue to get the constant stream of rafters and tubers and any angling opportunity is best directed to the wee hours of the morning and evening. Summer steelhead are on the menu here and this late in the game, the very rare spring Chinook.

"On the Sandy River, the only difference is the sediment load. The glacier is melting and putting some chalky color into the water. If you must fish, use brighter and slightly larger baits and lures. All fishing pressure has been reduced to the early mornings and the last couple of hours before dark."

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Spring Chinook fishing in the district is largely over. Anglers continue to look to the salt Chuck for salmon opportunity. Coho fishing out of Garibaldi has been decent recently although limits are hard to achieve. It certainly has been better than in years past. Chinook remain largely elusive but that is not all that uncommon this time of year. Anglers continue to pursue fish from the north out of Tillamook Bay, working their way southwest so as to not get caught in the northwest wind that consistently starts to blow in the late morning.

The nearshore halibut quota continues to become compromised. Only 33% of the quota remains after the most recent account. When the weather is nice, effort ramps up. Most halibut anglers are going north towards Cape Falcon and working 90 to 120 feet of water between Manzanita and Nehalem. Slow trolled or drifted herring fished near the bottom produces the most consistent results. Try and fish over gravel bottom.

Offshore crabbing is fair at best but catches should improve as we near August. It is about time for adults to enter the molt so watch for soft-shells in your catch. Crabbing in the North Coast estuaries is challenging and effort is running high.

Inland, interest in spring Chinook is waning. The Trask River remains the top option but the best section is about to close as of July 15<sup>th</sup>. Bank anglers fishing the Hatchery hole have had a good season, especially since the mid-May rain freshet that funneled the majority of the run into the freshwater systems. Bobber and small clusters of eggs and shrimp will continue to take fish in the early morning hours up until the closure. Three Rivers also remains a decent option although it too closes on 15<sup>th</sup> of July.

Summer steelhead numbers seem to be improving on the Wilson River and it's highly likely that the Nestucca is starting to produce some results as well. Anglers will have to utilize low, clear water tactics including small baits, subtle colors and fish the swift broken surfaced or pocket water. Like spring Chinook the best action will take place under low light conditions, particularly in the early morning and early evening. Small spinners or spoons may also produce some strikes.

The Nehalem system may start to see some Summer Chinook enter the lower bay. Adults begin to show in better numbers by mid-July although early to mid-August seems to be the most recent peak for the early returning fish. The softer tide series we are about to enter often produces the best catches right on the bar or just outside of the mouth. Of course, this is one of the most treacherous reaches to pursue these fish. Only experienced boaters should fish this area as you need to pay extreme attention to the tides and the ocean conditions. It is a pretty convenient area to fish if you wish to combo your salmon trip up with halibut. Trolled green or blue label herring near the bottom seems to produce the most catches near high slack.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Anglers will be keeping a close eye on offshore conditions. With the exception of a late morning northwest wind, the ocean swell and forecast looks favorable. Bar crossings will be made easier on the upcoming soft outgoing tide. It would still be wise for anglers to pursue offshore Coho to the north so when the northwest wind does kick up it will be a much easier ride back to port. Target Coho by trolling green label plug cut herring or anchovies if you have them. Start shallow and work your way deep as the morning progresses.

Of course it would be wise to bring heavier gear for halibut, especially if you travel to the north. Target halibut between 90 and 120 feet of water from Manzanita and to the South. You will want to use larger herring or sardines to target these larger fish. You need to keep your offering fishing in the lower 10 feet from the bottom of the ocean.

Crabbing gear is also warranted but the fresher the crab bait and the longer you can make it last by caging it, the more productive your catch will be. Be prepared to sort through some soft-shells as they should begin to show in the coming weeks.

For freshwater anglers, some spring Chinook remain available as well as some summer steelhead and cutthroat trout.

Starting with chinook, the highest concentrations will be near the Trask River and Three Rivers hatcheries. Those sections of river close on July 15. After that, catches will become more challenging. The Nestucca River will also have spring salmon available in the deep, darker holes. Back bounced baits and hardware may produce some catches.

Summer steelhead fishing will likely be the best in the upper Wilson River but the Nestucca River should also produce fair catches. Like Chinook fishing, anglers should be using tiny baits if not single eggs in the swift broken surfaced water to pursue their quarry.

Although not many anglers do it anymore, trolling lake trolls with worms in Tidewater sections should start to produce catches of sea run cutthroat trout. Fly anglers can also take fish in the upper reaches of Tidewater. You should play the tides if fishing the tidally influenced systems. The last part of incoming tide through the first part of outgoing produces the best catches.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Offshore conditions are a mixed bag out of central Oregon ports this weekend according to forecasts. Boats were able to launch out of Depoe Bay on Wednesday this week, however.

Ocean salmon fishing has been rewarding when boats have been able to get out. About 80% of those targeting hatchery coho offshore out of Depoe Bay and Newport are getting fish, while about 20% are taking Chinook.

Tuna for sale on the Newport waterfront are said to have come from about 30 miles out. According to commercial fishers, finding albacore requires a trip of at least that distance or further and that the tuna are scattered. It's almost time and should be decent for the recreational fleet later this month.

Nearshore halibut remains open Thursdays through Saturdays every week with 33 % or about 7,600 pounds of the 23,038-pound quota remaining available as of the fishery period ending June 29th. It will close for the year on October 31st in the unlikely event that the quota isn't met first.

The 6th Annual Oregon Rockfish Classic will take place on Saturday, July 13th at Depoe Bay. This is a kayak fishing tournament and participants welcome gawkers. Weigh-in will take place in the park adjacent to the boat launch in the afternoon.

**Pro Guide Kyle Miller (541-971-6745) reports,** "Siletz has been slow, slow, slow; I have seen summer fish but not many takers, with rain it might turn the bite on."

On the Siletz River, being at the right place at the right time is critical at this time of year. Try from Moonshine Park upstream with best results often occurring at first light. Be prepared as steelhead are moving through in pods. The lower river has been productive for sea-run cuts.

Alsea Bay out of Waldport, which is often quite rewarding for crabbers, has been poor lately with mostly smalls showing in catches. The rare legal Dungeness is often a softshell which offers only marginal table quality. Sea-run cutthroat trout fishing is fair to good in the Alsea River.

A few pinkfin surfperch are being caught in Winchester Bay although this fishery never really heated up this season for most trying it. Crabbing is poor. The lower Umpqua mainstem has given up some bright springers to anglers using spinner/anchovy combos while bobber and bait has been effective upstream. Summer steelhead have started to enter the North Umpqua. Smallies have been the primary target for those fishing the low, warm water of the South Umpqua and results have been good.

Crabbing has been poor to fair in Coos Bay. Cutthroat fishing is fair in Coos River with numbers starting to increase at this time of year. Brightly colored flies or small spinners are effective for cuts, especially along shaded, brushy shorelines.

A few Chinook were caught in the lower Rogue this week as water temperatures dropped a little in the river. For the most part however, high river temps will keep salmon kegged up in the bay where trollers will have their way with them. Fishing has been slow in the middle river although a few Chinook and summer steelhead have been taken. With spring Chinook scattered throughout the upper Rogue, fishing has been fair to good over the past week. As more steelhead enter this stretch, catches have been improving.

Chinook fishing has been some of the best on the coast out of the Port of Brookings when offshore conditions have allowed boats to get out. The upper bay and lower Chetco River is giving up some sea-run cutthroat trout. Bait is allowed in the bay where trolling will often produce larger fish but it's lures only above tidewater.

An algae bloom is taking place at Diamond Lake and while a caution has been issued by the U.S. Forest Service, the bloom is not toxic. To prevent an off taste in the fish from the algae, skin them before cooking. Fishing has slowed as the water temperature has risen. Take and use your best insect repellent as mosquitoes are thick.

Rogue above Lost Creek is scheduled to be stocked with trout.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Many fly fishers try other rivers once the Salmonfly hatch ends each year. This means there are few people and more room to enjoy this beautiful productive east-side location. Try caddis patterns to tempt native trout at this time of year and check Random Links, below for a short video from Outside Bend Productions.

Crooked River flows are edging downward which is always a good sign here. It's a nymph show for the most part with a few bugs on the wing early and late in the day. Midge nymphs are taking some large trout.

Trolling has been very effective for kokanee at Odell Lake recently. While the kokes have not been particular about the lure with most offerings effective, it is important to target them at the depth they're holding. Start at first light to catch these fish as the bite has been shutting down once the day turns bright although there has been an evening bite on some days if the wind isn't fierce. Fish are averaging a foot long or a little better.

Wallowa Lake is producing good numbers of undersized kokanee. That's quite a change from a couple of years ago when this was a trophy koke fishery but that situation has reversed itself. There are also fair to good numbers of hatchery-reared trout available. On the upside, boat traffic has been light.

Wickiup is giving up fair to good numbers of fat kokanee which are running 14 to 16 inches. Dodgers trailing hoochies are the most common rig. Often, scented corn has made the difference between a couple and several in a day's fishing. Trolling has been far more effective than jigging here. As is often the case with kokes, finding their depth is critical to success.

The last chance to register for the kokanee derby on July 13th will be Friday, July 12th but entry forms must be hand-carried to Sunnyside Campground, Space 51A. Details here:

\*[http://kokaneepoweroregon.com/Derby\\_Flyers/GP2013-Web.pdf](http://kokaneepoweroregon.com/Derby_Flyers/GP2013-Web.pdf)

**Pro Guide Kyle Miller (541-971-6745)** reports, "Kokanne fishing has been great; some say best in years with limits of 25 more often than not. Large landlocked chinook have been taken with largest so far of 16.6#. ODFW states there are larger chinook to be taken. The chinook have been found in the arms looking to head up river."

Those tiger muskies we mentioned a few weeks ago have been plated at Phillips Reservoir. In the first such stocking in Oregon, the ODFW planted 25,000 of these extremely aggressive, voracious fish in an effort to control a population explosion of yellow perch which were illegally introduced by "bucket biologists" who thought it would be a great idea. None of these fish may be taken by recreational anglers ... yet. Washington State allows retention of these fishes which have to be 50 inches minimum to keep. That's about a 40 pounder. They're great eating, too. This is going to be fun.

## **Washington fishing reports:**

### ***From the WDF&W Weekender Report for July 2013***

#### **Fishing sizzles in July for salmon, steelhead, crab, trout, other gamefish**

Summer fishing seasons are now in full swing, requiring anglers to make some tough decisions about how to spend their time on the water. Salmon, steelhead, crab, trout, bass and walleye – all are now available for harvest in various waters around the state.

But for thousands of anglers, nothing beats the thrill of reeling in a big chinook salmon. Many are doing just that as waves of chinook move south along the Washington coast, then east into Puget Sound, coastal streams and the Columbia River.

"Fishing for both chinook salmon and hatchery coho should improve off the coast right through the month," said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "The same is true for Puget Sound and other inside waters."

Six marine areas of Puget Sound open to salmon fishing July 1, joining other salmon fisheries already in progress. Various westside rivers, including the Bogacheil, Calawah and Nisqually, also open for salmon fishing that day, and Baker Lake in Whatcom County opens for sockeye salmon July 10.

Summer steelhead are another option – notably in Columbia River and many of its tributaries – where 339,200 adult fish are expected to move upriver in the coming weeks. As always, anglers

are required to release any wild, unmarked steelhead they intercept in the fishery, which extends from the mouth of the Columbia to the Canadian Border.

Fishing regulations for these and other fisheries are described in WDFW's For additional information on fishing regulations, see WDFW's 2013-14 *Fishing in Washington* rule pamphlet, available from sporting goods stores and posted online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>.

Rather catch some crab? All but one marine area in Puget Sound will open for crab fishing July 1. The exception is Marine Area 7, where the crab fishery opens July 15 in the area's southern portion (San Juan Islands/Bellingham) and Aug. 15 in the northern portion (Gulf of Georgia).

The crab fishery in all marine areas of Puget Sound will be open Thursday through Monday of each week. The season will get under way with a one-day opening (July 1), and will be closed July 2-3 before reopening on its regular weekly schedule Thursday, July 4.

See <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/shellfish/crab/> for all crab-fishing rules.

Meanwhile, WDFW land managers are urging everyone planning to spend time outdoors this month to take care not to spark a wildfire. Unattended campfires, fireworks, hot vehicle mufflers, careless disposal of cigarettes and outdoor burning are all common causes of wildfires in the state.

Fireworks are prohibited at all 32 WDFW wildlife areas and 700 water access sites around the state. The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has also issued a summer burn ban that prohibits campfires in all WDFW forested areas.

Campfires are also prohibited on other WDFW lands, particularly on the east side of the Cascade Mountains. For example, no campfires of any kind are allowed at the four WDFW wildlife areas in Yakima and Kittitas counties until Oct. 15 due to the high risk of wildfires.

Current campfire restrictions are posted in campgrounds and at the gates of each wildlife area. More information on DNR's summer burn ban is available at <http://goo.gl/5jykD>

For more information about fishing, wildlife viewing and other outdoor activities available this month, see the Weekender Regional Reports posted on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/weekender/>. These reports are updated throughout the month to provide up-to-date information about recreational opportunities in six regions around the state.

#### North Puget Sound

(Island, King, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom counties)

Summer has arrived, and anglers have their pick of numerous fishing opportunities. Freshwater anglers can cast for chinook at some of the region's rivers, as well as trout and bass at local lakes. On Puget Sound, the crab season opens July 1 in most areas, and additional salmon openings are just around the corner.

"July really marks the start of the **salmon** fishing season in Puget Sound, where a variety of angling opportunities get under way in the region," said Ryan Lothrop, recreational salmon fishery manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Puget Sound salmon fishing opportunities in July include:

- **Marine Area 7** (San Juan Islands), which opens July 1. Anglers can keep one chinook as part of their two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon.
- **Marine areas 9** (Admiralty Inlet) **and 10** (Seattle-Bremerton), where anglers will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, beginning July 1. However, anglers must release all chinook through July 15. Beginning July 16, anglers can retain hatchery chinook – marked with a clipped adipose fin –

but wild chinook must be released. Anglers should note that chum must also be released in Marine Area 9 throughout July.

- **Sinclair** Inlet, a portion of Marine Area 10, opens July 1. Anglers fishing Sinclair will have a daily limit of three salmon, plus one additional pink salmon, but must release wild chinook. Anglers are allowed to use two fishing poles with the purchase of a two-pole endorsement.
- **Tulalip Bay "bubble" fishery**, a portion of Marine Area 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner), remains open each week from Friday through noon Monday through Sept. 2. Anglers fishing the bubble have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon, and are allowed to use two fishing poles with the purchase of a two-pole endorsement.

Check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) for details on salmon fishing opportunities.

Lothrop reminds anglers that they are responsible for correctly identifying their catch. In past years, some anglers were checked at the docks with undersized chinook they misidentified as pink salmon, he said.

"It's important that people take the time to learn the differences between each salmon species – both to protect the resource and to avoid a fine," Lothrop said. Descriptions of each salmon species can be found on the department's [recreational salmon fishing webpage](#) and in the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

Break out those **crab** pots. All but one marine area in Puget Sound will open for crab fishing July 1. The exception is Marine Area 7, where the crab fishery opens July 15 in the area's southern portion (San Juan Islands/Bellingham) and Aug. 15 in the northern portion (Gulf of Georgia).

The crab fishery in all marine areas of Puget Sound will be open Thursday through Monday of each week. The season will get under way with a one-day opening (July 1), and will be closed July 2-3 before reopening on its regular weekly schedule Thursday, July 4.

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6¼ inches. Fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across.

Rich Childers, shellfish policy lead for WDFW, said recent test fisheries indicate the crab population in Puget Sound remains abundant. "We continue to see healthy numbers of crab throughout Puget Sound," he said. "With such strong numbers, crabbing should be good from opening day all the way through the end of the summer season."

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

In freshwater, portions of the Skagit and Cascade rivers are open for hatchery **chinook salmon** fishing through July 15. The Skagit is open to hatchery chinook retention from the Highway 530 Bridge at Rockport to Cascade River Road. On the Cascade, anglers can fish for salmon from the mouth of the river to the Rockport-Cascade Road Bridge. The daily limit on the Skagit and Cascade rivers is four hatchery chinook, two of which may be adults (chinook salmon at least 24 inches in length).

Portions of the Skykomish River are also open for salmon fishing. Anglers fishing the Skykomish, from the mouth to the Wallace River, have a daily limit of four hatchery chinook, two of which may be adults.

Farther north, anglers will have an opportunity to hook **sockeye salmon at Baker Lake** beginning July 10. Anglers will have a daily limit of two adult sockeye salmon (minimum size 18 inches in length). All other salmon, as well as bull trout, must be released.

**Trout** fishing also is open at several of the region's rivers. Under the statewide rule for trout, there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches in rivers and streams. However, some of the region's rivers and streams have a rule requiring trout to be at least 14 inches in length to keep. For details on river fishing opportunities, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

Meanwhile, lake fishing for **bass, bluegill, perch**, and **crappie** is steadily improving as water temperatures increase and fish become more active.

Anglers interested in lake fishing opportunities are encouraged to check WDFW's new [Fish Washington](#) webpage. This online resource for anglers is designed to make it easier to find lake fishing opportunities throughout the state and includes interactive maps, detailed species information and basic "how-to" fishing videos.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

(Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason, Pierce, Thurston and Pacific counties)

Summer salmon fishing is in full swing along the coast, where anglers have been reeling in bright chinook since early June. In Puget Sound, fishing seasons will also expand for salmon and get under way for crab starting July 1.

Salmon fishing got off to a slow start off Westport in June when onshore winds moved the feed – and the fish – off course, but that situation has improved, said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"Fishing for both chinook salmon and hatchery coho should improve off the coast right through the month," Milward said. "The same is true for Puget Sound and other inside waters."

Anglers fishing marine areas 1 (Ilwaco) and 2 (Westport) can retain one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit, but are required to release wild coho. In areas 3 (LaPush) and 4 (Neah Bay), the daily limit is two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon. All wild coho salmon must be released.

Salmon fishing is open seven days a week in all coastal areas, except in Marine Area 2 where fishing is open Sundays through Thursdays.

**Halibut** fishing is also still an option in Marine Area 1. The season there is open Friday through Sunday each week until the early season quota is reached or Aug. 3, whichever occurs first. The fishery will reopen, with the late-season quota Aug. 3, and continue three days a week (Friday-Sunday), until the remaining quota is taken, or Sept. 30, whichever occurs first.

Meanwhile, six Puget Sound marine areas will open to salmon fishing July 1, joining fisheries already in progress in other areas. Bag limits in marine areas 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 13 include two bonus pink salmon. New this year, Sinclair Inlet in Marine Area 10 allows a three salmon limit plus one additional pink--and two pole fishing for those who have purchased the two-pole endorsement. No wild chinook may be retained in Marine Area 10.

Regulations regarding chinook retention in waters of Puget Sound vary by time and area. Anglers are advised to check the [Washington sport fishing rules pamphlet](#) and the [emergency rule website](#) before heading out.

Ryan Lothrop, Puget Sound recreational salmon manager points to strong forecasts of hatchery chinook returning to most of Puget Sound, including Hood Canal and South Sound. Anglers have also been consistently picking up fish in Marine Area 11 near Tacoma as of the end of June. In addition, nearly 6.2 million pink salmon are projected to return to the Sound this summer. "Given these factors, fishing inside much of Puget Sound could be very good," Lothrop said.

Lothrop reminds anglers that chum and wild chinook in most Puget Sound areas must be released. He also notes that anglers can check WDFW [creel reports](#) for information on catch and effort in Puget Sound. Recreational fishery samplers with WDFW collect the information each week at fishing access sites throughout Puget Sound.

Ready to catch some crab? The popular fishery for Dungeness crab gets underway July 1 in all but one marine area in Puget Sound. The exception is Marine Area 7, where the crab fishery opens July 15 in the area's southern portion (San Juan Islands/Bellingham) and Aug. 15 in the northern portion (Gulf of Georgia).

The Puget Sound crab fishery will be open Thursday through Monday of each week. Crabbers should note, however, that the season gets under way with a one-day opening (July 1), and will be closed July 2-3 before reopening on its regular weekly schedule Thursday, July 4.

Rich Childers, shellfish policy lead for WDFW, said recent test fisheries indicate the crab population in Puget Sound remains abundant. "We continue to see healthy numbers of crab throughout Puget Sound," Childers said. "With such strong numbers, crabbing should be good from opening day all the way through the end of the summer season."

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6¼ inches. Fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across.

Additional information on the crab fishery is available on [WDFW's crab fishing website](#). The page includes links to a printable "Crabbing in Puget Sound" brochure and a "Puget Sound Recreational Dungeness Crab Guide," both of which have information on crabbing regulations.

Freshwater anglers should be aware that several rivers on the north Coast – including the Hoh, Quillayute and Sol Duc – remain open for **salmon** fishing. The Bogachiel and Calawah join that list July 1. Also beginning in July, opportunities for salmon fishing open in some south Sound streams including Chamber and McAllister creeks and the Nisqually and Deschutes rivers. For details on river fishing, including catch limitations, gear limits, and allowable fishing days, check the [Washington sport fishing rules pamphlet](#).

Many of those rivers and streams are also open to trout fishing. Under the statewide rule for trout, there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches in rivers and streams. However, some of the region's rivers and streams have a rule requiring trout to be at least 14 inches in length to keep. Again, check the [rules pamphlet](#) and the [emergency rule website](#) to make sure.

Southwest Washington  
(Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Lewis, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties)

Anglers who fish the lower Columbia River are gearing up for hatchery steelhead now that most salmon-fishing opportunities are moving upstream. Summer steelhead are arriving to take up the slack after the close of the fishery for adult chinook and sockeye salmon below Bonneville Dam.

Based on current projections, 339,200 **adult upriver steelhead** will enter the Columbia this year along with thousands more bound for lower-river tributaries, said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). While the upriver run is slightly below the average since 2003, those fish should provide plenty of action in the weeks ahead, he said.

"These fish, which generally run four to eight pounds apiece, are fun to catch and great to eat," Hymer said. "Steelhead tend to run close to shore, so bank anglers should have some great fishing opportunities in the weeks ahead."

Anglers fishing downriver from Bonneville can take up to two hatchery steelhead per day as part of their six-fish catch limit, which can also include hatchery jack chinook salmon. All wild fish with an intact adipose fin must be released.

Above Bonneville Dam, fishing seasons are still open for **adult hatchery chinook** and **sockeye salmon**, as well as hatchery steelhead. For adult fish, the daily limit remains two salmon, two steelhead, or one of each.

Hymer suggests that anglers targeting hatchery steelhead consider fishing area tributaries as well as the mainstem Columbia River. As he sees it, the best bet is probably the Cowlitz River, where fish start arriving in larger numbers early in the month.

Other options below Bonneville include the Lewis (North and East forks), Kalama, Washougal, South Fork Toutle, Green, and Elochoman rivers. Anglers should check the *Fishing in Washington* rule pamphlet for regulations specific to those rivers.

Anglers might also want to try fishing Drano Lake or the lower Wind River, where salmon and steelhead historically dip in to beat the heat. The White Salmon River is another option, although it is still recovering from the removal of Condit Dam, which filled the mouth of the river with sediment.

Rather catch a **sturgeon**? Retention fishing is now closed in the Columbia River and its tributaries below John Day Dam, but anglers can still keep fish measuring 43 to 54 inches (fork length) above the dam in the John Day Pool. Both of those fisheries will close when respective catch limits are met, so anglers should keep an eye on the [WDFW website](#) for possible regulation changes.

A one-fish daily limit and two-fish annual limit for white sturgeon are in effect throughout the state.

For **trout** anglers, access to high mountain lakes continues to improve as the snow recedes. John Weinheimer, a WDFW fish biologist, recommends Takhlakh, Horseshoe, Walupt and Big Mosquito lakes in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest this time of year.

Goose Lake, a forest lake in Skamania County, was recently planted with thousands of good-sized brown and cutthroat trout, and rainbows have been biting at Swift Reservoir. For **kokanee**, Yale and Merwin reservoirs are a good bet, said Weinheimer, noting that Riffe Reservoir on the Cowlitz River has also been good for **landlocked coho**.

Fishing for **bass**, **walleye**, and **tiger musky** is also warming up in the summer sun, Weinheimer said. Anglers are catching bass and walleye in the Columbia River and tiger musky in the Merwin and Mayfield reservoirs.

Eastern Washington

(Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla and Whitman counties)

Cooler and wetter weather in spring has kept trout fishing lively in many of the region's lakes and rivers, while the action continues to pick up in warmwater fisheries.

In July, lakes in the northern third of the region are a good place to combine fishing with camping, since many are on public lands with campgrounds. In Stevens County, the Little Pend Oreille chain of lakes – Gillette, Heritage, Sherry, and Thomas – are producing fish, as are Pend Oreille County's Skookum and Yocum lakes and many others at higher elevations. Other northeast lakes that continue to see action include Cedar, Mudgett, Rocky, Starvation, and Waitts lakes in Stevens County; Diamond Lake in Pend Oreille County; and Ellen Lake in Ferry County.

Randy Osborne, a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) fish biologist based in Spokane, said cool water temperatures in many Spokane County lakes have been keeping rainbow trout biting.

"Fish Lake near Cheney is still producing catches of both **rainbow** and **brook trout**," Osborne said. "West Medical, Clear, and Williams lakes are also still producing good catches of rainbows."

Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir on the Lincoln-Stevens-Ferry county line, is still producing catches of **kokanee**, rainbows, and **walleye**, although Osborne says walleye fishing has been a little spotty. Early July is usually a good time to fish the upper portion of the reservoir, upriver from the town of Kettle Falls in Stevens County.

"Some of the central district's warmwater fisheries have been really good," Osborne said. "Anglers fishing Sprague Lake have been catching good numbers of **largemouth bass** up to six pounds. Anglers at Downs, Bonnie, and Long lakes have been catching decent numbers of **yellow perch** and **black crappie**. Silver and Newman lakes have been pretty consistent for catches of largemouth bass and yellow perch, although the perch are pretty small at Newman."

WDFW warmwater fish biologist Marc Divens added that fishery sampling just completed on Sprague Lake produced a 16-inch **channel catfish** from stocking of eight-inchers in 2011.

"The channel catfish we stocked in Sprague in 2008 should be even larger," Divens said. "This is another good fishing opportunity for anglers at Sprague Lake and these fish are excellent eating."

At the south end of the region, angler interest has shifted to **smallmouth bass** and **channel catfish** since spring chinook salmon fishing closed on the Snake River in late June.

The Tucannon River impoundments in the south end of the region are still providing good fishing for rainbow trout, reports Kari Dingman, WDFW Wooten Wildlife Area manager. The extended cool, rainy weather this spring has probably extended the life of those hatchery-stocked fisheries – Big Four, Blue, Deer, Rainbow, Spring and Watson lakes. Dingman notes fishing in the Tucannon River itself has also been good.

Northcentral Washington  
(Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Grant and Okanogan counties)

Angler can catch hatchery-marked **chinook salmon** starting July 1 on the mainstem Columbia River from Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster to Chief Joseph Dam, as well as the Okanogan and Similkameen rivers.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Okanogan district fish biologist Bob Jateff reminds anglers that new rules are in effect for this year requiring the use of barbless hooks when fishing for salmon. The daily limit includes six hatchery-marked (missing adipose fin and healed scar) chinook, of which only two may be adults measuring at least 24 inches. Minimum size for any chinook is 12 inches.

Also starting July 1 anglers can keep **sockeye salmon** on portions of the Columbia and Okanogan rivers, based on new and updated run estimates that allows limited harvest. The fishery is open from Priest Rapids to Wells dams, from Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster to Chief Joseph Dam, and from the mouth of the Okanogan River upstream to the first Highway 97 bridge.

On July 16, the stretch from Wells Dam to the Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster will also be open for sockeye retention. Of the daily catch limit of six salmon, only two adult sockeye (minimum size 12 inches). For details, see the [emergency rule change](#).

Jateff said many lakes in Okanogan County are still fishing well due to cool spring temperatures have helped to keep water temperatures lower than normal. Waters still providing good limits of **rainbow trout** include Conconully Reservoir/Lake and Pearrygin, Alta, Spectacle, and Wannacut lakes. Anglers can expect rainbow trout in the 10 to 12-inch range at these lakes with carryover fish up to 16 inches, Jateff said. **Kokanee** are also available at Conconully Reservoir/Lake and Patterson, Bonaparte, and Palmer lakes.

"Bass fishermen can try any one of many waters in the district for either **smallmouth** or **largemouth bass**," Jateff said. He suggests Whitestone, Palmer, Lake Osoyoos, Washburn Island Pond, Okanogan River, and the Columbia River from Wells Dam to Chief Joseph Dam.

Jateff recommends that anglers fishing with selective gear try Big Twin, Blue (Sinlahekin), Cougar, Campbell, Davis, and Big Green lakes for rainbow trout. Fly-fishing-only waters, such as Chopaka and Aeneas lakes, are also still producing good catches of rainbow in the 12 to 18-inch range.

Jateff offers this advice for catch-and-release anglers as lake water temperatures increase during the summer months: "Always keep fish in the water prior to release and play fish as quickly as possible to the net."

Jateff reports that the Methow River has been dropping and should provide good trout fishing during the catch-and-release fishery that started in May. Anglers can expect to catch resident rainbow and **cutthroat trout**, as well as **whitefish** in this popular fishery. Selective gear rules are in effect, with no bait allowed.

WDFW Columbia Basin district fish biologist Chad Jackson said warmwater fishing has been hot since late-May or early-June this year and should continue through the summer.

"**Smallmouth** and **largemouth bass** have been good in Moses Lake, Banks Lake and Potholes Reservoir," Jackson said. "**Walleye** has mostly been slow thus far, even though the fish are present in all three waters."

Jackson also noted that fishing for **yellow perch** has been good at Potholes Reservoir and Moses Lake, with large schools of perch observed by WDFW staff and reported by anglers.

All three lakes, open year-round, also have varying populations of **bluegill** and **crappie**, which can produce good catches through the summer. With late run-off this year, these big waterways are still at or near high pool, which has somewhat slowed normal shoreline or dockside action at some, like Potholes.

Lower Goose Lake, one of the Seep lakes south of Potholes Reservoir, has a good crappie and bluegill fishery. The catch limit at Lower Goose is 10 crappie per day with a minimum size limit of nine inches. For bluegill, there is no daily limit and no minimum size, but anglers are limited to five bluegill over six inches long.

Hutchinson and Shiner lakes on the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge has been good for largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie and perch since May. Jackson reports lots of 12 to 17-inch largemouth bass, many running to 20 inches on the two lakes, located seven miles north of Othello in Adams County. However, as summer progresses, both can be tough to fish because of excessive weed growth.

Southcentral Washington  
(Benton, Franklin, Kittitas and Yakima counties)

Area anglers have several good fishing opportunities in July, ranging from spring chinook salmon on a portion of the Yakima River to newly stocked jumbo trout in five popular "drive to" mountain lakes. On the Columbia River, the catch is running to walleye, shad and the occasional summer chinook salmon.

Eric Anderson, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), said **spring chinook** fishing has been good on the Yakima River this season, although a good portion of the run has moved past Roza Dam on its way to the spawning grounds.

The fishery closed June 30 upriver to the Grant Avenue Bridge in Prosser, but is expected to remain open through July 15 from the Interstate 82 Bridge in Union Gap to the Burlington Northern Railroad bridge 500 feet downstream of Roza Dam.

"Springers are still moving upstream below Roza Dam, but fishing has slowed considerably and anglers will have to put in some time to catch fish," Anderson said.

The daily limit is two adipose-fin-clipped hatchery chinook. The area is closed for steelhead, and terminal gear is restricted to one single-point, barbless hook with a hook gap (from point to shank) of three-quarters of an inch or less. Bait and knotted nets are allowed in the section of the river open to salmon fishing.

For more information, see the [fishing rule](#) for the Yakima River fishery on the WDFW website.

On the Columbia River, most anglers fishing below McNary Dam have been focusing on **sturgeon**, **walleye** and **shad**, said Paul Hoffarth, another WDFW fish biologist. Anglers have also been picking up a few **summer chinook** and sockeye, although the action has been slow.

The fishery for summer chinook and **sockeye** salmon on the Columbia River is open upstream to Priest Rapids Dam, under a daily limit of two adult hatchery chinook. Through July, only those chinook with a clipped adipose may be retained.

A Columbia River Salmon/Steelhead endorsement is required to participate in salmon fisheries on both the Yakima and Columbia Rivers. A two-pole endorsement is also available for anglers fishing the open section of the Yakima River and for salmon fisheries on some areas of the Columbia River. For additional rules on the salmon fishery, see the 2013-14 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet.

Rather catch **sturgeon**? Anglers can catch and keep sturgeon measuring 43 to 54 inches (fork length) through July 31 in Lake Wallula (McNary Dam to Priest Rapids and Ice Harbor dams). Fishing is not allowed in sturgeon spawning sanctuary areas below McNary Dam.

Meanwhile, fishing for stocked **rainbow trout** is still going strong on lowland lakes near Yakima, Ellensburg and Cle Elum. WDFW fish biologist Eric Anderson said he especially likes the prospects at Clear, Leech and Dog Lakes in Yakima County and Lost Lake and Cooper Lake in Kittitas County.

To spice things up, WDFW has also planted hundreds of 1.5-pound **jumbo** trout in popular "drive to" high-mountain lakes during June, Anderson said. Those lakes include Leech, Dog and Clear lakes near White Pass in Yakima County and Lost and Cooper lakes near Snoqualmie Pass in Kittitas County.

"All of these lakes also received thousands of catchable sized rainbows (11-13 inches) in June, and should provide excellent trout fishing right through summer," Anderson said.

**Kokanee** fishing has also been fast and furious at Rimrock Lake in Yakima County, Anderson said. Although the fish are small, anglers have been doing well fishing 10 to 30 feet deep trolling pop gear (gang trolls) just about everywhere on the lake.

"Trolling a two ounce trolling sinker and a wedding ring spinner baited with maggots or tuna-scented shoe peg corn 15-20-feet deep works great," Anderson said.

Other kokanee hotspots include Bumping Lake, Keechelus Reservoir and Kachess Reservoir. Anglers should be aware of a new slot limit for kokanee at Cle Elum and Cooper lakes in Kittitas County, where only kokanee measuring seven to 14 inches in length can be retained. Anderson also reminds anglers that all bull trout caught while fishing for other species must be released unharmed.

### **Write to the TGF staff:**

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**Random Links**

Surf Perch fishing how-to from the ODFW:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/docs/odfwoutdoorsurfperchflyerfinal.pdf>

Catching Large Kokanee: <http://www.kokaneepower.org/articles/3.pdf>

Deschutes summer fly fishing: <http://vimeo.com/69870995>

**GOOD LUCK!**