

The Guide's Forecast - volume 15 issue number 37

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 6<sup>th</sup> – September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro** - Smallmouth Bass fishing on the Willamette River is on the upswing with the recent rains and slightly cooling water. Walleye fishing should also pick up with the dip in temperature. Silvers are still absent at the mouth of the Clackamas but are expected any time.

Though the calendar would indicate it's early yet, it's time to think fall on the McKenzie River. Nymphs remain effective but with daylight conditions improving, dry flies are often the better choice. Steelheading is slow with the low return this season.

Water conditions are good on the Santiam system. Trout fishing is good, particularly higher in the system. Steelheading is slow and expected to remain so.

The Clackamas River is a virtual ghost town when it comes to summer steelhead. The first early silvers are due within the next couple of freshets.

Silvers are also due to show anytime on the lower Sandy River. Any precipitation in the forecast should stir the pot and get things rolling in the lower river.

**Northwest** – After an epic chinook season on the lower Columbia, the stretch between Tongue Point and Buoy 10 is now closed to chinook retention. Anglers may still retain 2 coho but good numbers have yet to show; expect them any day however. Anglers are finding tremendous success just above Tongue Point as witnessed by Bob Keerins from Portland and his group of 7 on Saturday. They took 7 adult chinook, 1 hatchery coho and 2 jacks above Tongue Point by 9:15 a.m. One of the chinook literally jumped in the boat shortly after being hooked. The best action has come on herring throughout the incoming tide, trolling near the bottom in 45 to 50 foot of water. Starting September 6<sup>th</sup>, from Tongue Point to Warrior Rock near the mouth of the Lewis River, only adipose fin-clipped chinook may be retained.

Wide open opportunity still exists for ocean anglers outside of the mouth of the Columbia River. Effort for the offshore fishery remains low due to success rates inside the river. The offshore weather forecast looks very favorable for salmon and tuna into the weekend but is certainly subject to change.

Upriver, anchor anglers remain frustrated due to the inconsistency of the wobbler fishery. Most anglers report low success rates, laying blame on the warm water temperatures. Anglers fishing the mouth of the Cowlitz seem to be producing some of the best results.

The Columbia River below Bonneville Dam is thick with Chinook salmon, but the bite has been a bit off due to drastically reduced flow and 71+ degree water temps. Fishing for salmon will improve as the water cools and normal flows resume. Sturgeon fishing below the dam is also on the slow side likely also due to the low flow.

Tillamook Bay is yielding good catches of chinook, especially when anglers can get outside and away from the seaweed. Those that pursued wild coho over the weekend largely came up empty. Water temperatures offshore have topped 62 degrees and coho are hard to find.

The Nehalem, Nestucca, Salmon, Siletz and Alsea all now have chinook available but that doesn't mean they will fall easy. Peak season is still weeks away.

Crabbing in most estuaries and adjacent ocean waters is productive although soft-shells are still making up a fair portion of the catch.

**Southwest**- Offshore chinook salmon fishing out of Depoe Bay slowed on Labor Day following fair to good results over the weekend.

The non-selective (wild or hatchery) coho season continues offshore each Thursday through Saturday from September 5th through September 30th or the 19,580 coho quota. Two salmon per day may be kept.

It's not too late in the year for tuna fishing. Over the past weekend, boats traveling 30 to 40 miles out of Newport made good catches on cedar plugs and clones. The trick has been finding schools of albacore.

If the long-range offshore forecast holds up, launches should be possible this week.

Sea-run cutthroat trout fishing is good and improving on coastal rivers. The best results have been coming on days when it's showery.

Salmon fishing was fair and ocean crabbing good out of Florence over the past weekend.

Winchester Bay salmon trollers experienced a moderation in chinook hookups over the past weekend but it's still quite good. Bass fishing is holding up on the upper Umpqua mainstem. Steelheaders in the flies-only section of the North Umpqua are taking wild steelhead but they are working for them.

Offshore fishing out of Gold Beach has been productive if unpredictable. When the ocean and offshore winds allowed launches, bottom fishing produced well for lings one day, rockfish another. When the wind came up late last week, boats stayed in port. Bay trolling has stalled with chinook heading straight upriver. Half pounder fishing is picking up on the lower Rogue and they are running larger this season. Fishing for steelhead is good in the Grants Pass to Galice stretch with chinook closed from Fisher's Ferry to Cole Rivers Hatchery through October, Upper Rogue waters are flies only with prospects good for summer steelhead.

While most offshore waters are closed to halibut, it remains open through October from Humbug Mountain to the California border. Anglers willing to fish a couple of pounds of lead in nearly 250 feet of water are occasionally rewarded with halibut to 60 pounds. Bottom fishing for lingcod and rockfish is excellent. The 10th annual Slam'n Salmon Ocean Derby took place out of the Port of Brookings over the Labor Day weekend. Over 300 participants were vying for prizes. Sprits were high and the fishing was good if not hot although final results were unavailable at deadline for this report.

**Eastern** – Conditions on the Deschutes have been variable lately, from great to poor, but there are plenty of steelhead in the river when level, flow and clarity come together.

The upper Snake River is open to hatchery fall chinook fishing from the Oregon–Washington border to the deadline below Hells Canyon Dam through October 31 or until a closure is announced. The daily bag limit will be six adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon. Anglers can also keep an unlimited number of fin-clipped jack Chinook between 15 and 24-inches long.

**SW Washington**- September 1<sup>st</sup> initiates a slew of regulations changes for district rivers. Check

the WDF&W web site carefully before venturing out.

Fall chinook should start showing in good numbers on many tributaries. Low and warm water conditions will make fishing challenging however, be prepared for disappointment.

Upstream of Bonneville Dam, the mouths of Wind River, Drano Lake and the Klickitat River should turn on for fall chinook and summer steelhead. With dam counts being as they are, this will likely be peak week.

### **Soapbox Update:**

After a successful Buoy 10 season, I'm moving my operation to Tillamook; my home port!

With Tillamook Bay off to a strong start, you'll want to book your September or October trips now for the north coast's largest and hardest fighting salmon. I have some quality dates still available with an ocean crabbing option available through October 15<sup>th</sup>. Salmon and crab.....my favorite! Go to: [www.northwestguides.com/fishing](http://www.northwestguides.com/fishing) or email Bob Rees at [brees@pacifier.com](mailto:brees@pacifier.com) or call (503) 812-9036

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Despite the Chinook closure at Buoy 10, the game is still on in the above Tongue Point fishery. What is unusual is that typically on the stronger tide series that we are now witnessing, action often slows in this fishery. Although it is not as productive as the weak tide series fishing, limits are still quite common for Chinook above Tongue Point.

Guides have taken to the technique like what we do at the bridge on the Washington side. We have been hovering during the peak incoming part of the tide right at the deadline. This has been productive but it seems pretty critical to still fish close to the bottom during this time of the tide. On Wednesday, we had good success with the rods using heavier lead. My bow rods had 16 ounces and my middle rods had 12. My back rods were only fishing 8 ounces of lead but I instructed all my guests to put out 35 strips of line. On a consistent basis, the bow rods and the middle rods produced the most strikes. I made sure that my back rods were fishing near the bottom yet they produced poorly during peak incoming tide. I was using fresh anchovies for bait with NO flashers, NO divers and NO snubbers; fish naked in other words, that's what has worked best for me. Fresh herring are not available on a regular basis although frozen herring have been working ok lately, frozen green labels that is.

After the peak incoming, when we start creeping forward toward the deadline, many of us turn and start trolling upstream, with the tide, keeping our baits near the bottom and consistently taking fish, especially close to the deadline near Tongue Point. It seems the further you get away from the deadline during this scenario, the fewer bites you get. What didn't seem to make sense (as if fishing ever did) is that you could go to the top of Rice Island and start a downstream troll in the shipping channel and expect to get multiple opportunities on the first part of outgoing tide. There remains a lot of fish in the river and more to come.

For anglers wanting to buck the trend, coho are finally starting to become an option in the lower river. You can have some pretty good fishing if you're willing to release wild coho and all chinook downstream of Tongue Point. Some describe the action as epic as you have a large population of fish with little competition targeting them. It may be a good thing that not many people are participating in the fishery as mortality related issues could become serious if everybody was doing it. Hopefully as hatchery coho numbers climb, quicker limits will be attained. With the chinook run still coming on strong however, they will be around for a while longer. One boat

reported very consistent action starting out at the Chinook wing jetties and working his way to the Astoria Bridge by high tide. When I last talked to him, he had landed approximately 19 fish, releasing mostly wild coho and chinook, while retaining 3 hatchery coho. It certainly was an epic day. The fishing above the bridge would likely be like nothing you've ever witnessed but the release rate would break your heart. I'm also not sure how the sea lions are up there, they were bad, real bad, last year but with few people fishing it, we don't know how it's performing. After filleting my chinook limit at the dock on Wednesday, we went back out in pursuit of coho on the green line after the tide changed at about 3:30, getting into immediate action in the ship anchorage down to the condo's at Hammond. In just about 45 minutes, we had about 8 bites, bringing just 3 to the boat but keeping none of them. Did I mention that there are a lot of fish around?

There remain very few anglers interested in the ocean despite its unprecedented opportunity for wild or hatchery, chinook or coho salmon. The weather is unbeatable as well but who can knock the river success? Charter boats that went about 40 miles offshore on Wednesday did well for albacore, especially if they had live bait fishing.

Upriver, anchor anglers remain perplexed as to why more chinook aren't falling in the wobbler fishery. Despite impressive numbers passing Bonneville Dam, sporadic results are happening for those on anchor in the fishery between Tongue Point to the Lewis River. Some days are clearly better than others and some hog lines clearly produce better than others, not matter what their historical record. This fishery will go to fin-clipped only beginning Friday, September 6<sup>th</sup>. The Tongue Point fishery will likely be the only reach where attaining a boat limit of fin-clipped fish is possible with any regularity.

**Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports,** "The Columbia River below Bonneville Dam is thick with Chinook salmon, but the bite has been a bit off due to drastically reduced flow and 71+ degree water temps. The bite has improved the last couple of days and boat anglers are picking up fish backtrolling larger size kwikfish and flatfish with jumbo jet divers. Anchor fishermen do better with wobblers and spinners but it's no secret the backtrollers have the edge. Due to low turn-out, catch and release sturgeon fishing below the dam is likely slow, but a few oversize and the rare keeper size fish should be available."

**The Guide's Forecast** – OK, really, it's time for the coho to show. Fortunately, anglers working the Buoy 10 stretch have been able to maintain some quality opportunity in recent days as chinook fishing above Tongue Point remains a viable option. Boats are still encouraged to wait out incoming tide by starting later in the morning (I'm starting at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday and maybe Friday) to target the entire incoming tide and first part of outgoing. It should continue to produce well into the weekend and through the closure. Keep your baits fishing deep as both fresh herring and/or anchovies should produce good results. Spinners have not been working all that well during this late season bite.

The coho will show! I don't know if they will show in the preseason predicted manner but they are over-due for a strong showing in the lower Columbia right now. It WILL break loose any day now and I really think it will be before the weekend. This will give anglers a good choice as to whether to pursue fin-clipped chinook above Tongue Point or hatchery coho below the bridge; both should be fair to good options by the weekend with coho likely the better producer for limits of salmon. Action will also be fast and furious below the bridge (and just above) as wild coho and chinook will also likely be readily available for your release. Trolled anchovies or herring will produce the best results but coho action using spinners may soon come on strong. It's best to downsize your spinners for coho and use the hot colors (pink, red or orange) for best success. You may soon find yourself amongst thieves however as it's likely that the sea lions will quickly

learn their way around to intercept any fish that you hook in this fishery, especially above the bridge on the Washington side.

With the weather forecast, you may be tempted to go outside into the ocean but I don't think that's such a wise decision. Of course there is great opportunity out there but you can save gas and likely have higher success fishing in the lower Columbia. If you do go outside, try targeting chinook to the north, along the Long Beach Peninsula in 25 to 35 feet of water if it's safe. DO watch out for Peacock Spit to the west of the north jetty. It can be tricky, even in the calmest of days. Anglers are allowed to retain any salmon in the ocean, 2 fish daily bag limit (yes, that's wild or hatchery).

Lower river crabbing continues to pick up and the next weak tide series around 9/10 should prove a productive one for both salmon and crab. I expect boat traffic to remain light as anglers will continue chasing chinook further upstream.

Here is the updated offshore forecast:

**FRI**

W WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT.  
W SWELL 5 FT AT 13 SECONDS. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

**FRI NIGHT**

W WIND 10 TO 15 KT...BECOMING NW 5 TO 10 KT AFTER  
MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 6 FT AT 12 SECONDS.

**SAT**

N WIND 5 TO 10 KT...RISING TO 10 TO 15 KT IN THE  
AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

**SAT NIGHT**

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES  
2 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

**SUN**

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

**MON**

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

Albacore fishing is really good this time of year, live bait will rule but you will still have to go out 35 to 40 miles to take advantage of interested schools of fish.

Upstream, wobbler plunkers may find themselves a bit frustrated with the inability to catch a fish on a consistent basis. Top that with the fin-clipped only rule and there is going to be a lot of disappointed anglers this weekend in the Longview reach that will still likely pursue chinook. There is a lot of river traffic now so watch where you anchor.

**Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts,** "On the Columbia River below Bonneville Dam, fishing for fall Chinook will improve as the water temperature drops a few degrees. This is not to say that fish aren't already getting caught because they are. Bigger catches and faster action will ensue as late summer transitions into early fall."

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "Smallmouth Bass fishing on the Willamette River is on the upswing with the recent rains and slightly cooling water. Fish are responding to the cooler evenings and shorter days and are becoming more active. Early fall is a great time for Willamette smallmouth and some big numbers can be posted for seasoned small fisher-people. Walleye fishing in the Multnomah Channel should also pick up with the dip in temperature. The fattest walleye of the season are there for the catching. Little effort for catch and release sturgeon leaves little to report. September is usually a transition time, as a few sturgeon will migrate from the Columbia back into the Willamette on their never ending search for food. For the sake of accuracy, silvers are still absent at the mouth of the Clackamas, but rumors are starting to circulate. Mid-week rains and a falling barometer is likely to stir things and the valley's first silvers will show here first. Backtrolling and foreword trolling K-11X Kwikfish, 3.5 Maglips and Wiggle Warts in flame red, pink and orange tones will get it done but a few foreword thinking guides have been doing well free-drifting eggs the last few years."

McKenzie River flows have been gradually moderating since the rapid increase on August 24th. The most recent reading at Vida on September 5th was just under 2,500 cfs.

North and South Santiam water levels are on the increase this week due to release from upriver impoundments.

Estacada Lake, Faraday Lake, North Fork Reservoir and Small Fry Lake are scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout.

**The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** predicts, "On the Willamette River, expect the focus to move from bass and walleye, to silvers as the first fall rains of the season arrive. Meldrum Bar and the mouth of the Clackamas will greet the pilot run of silver salmon by this weekend. Silvers are very "barometric pressure oriented" and almost always arrive and start flip-flopping around as the weather turns south with the first fall freshets."

Fly anglers should look forward to decent results from the McKenzie over the coming weekend with fairly steady water flows and caddis hatching periodically. October caddis will be in the mix soon.

Santiam steelheading has been slow and rising water levels on the entire system will do nothing to improve this situation. There are better destinations.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "Clackamas River is a virtual ghost town when it comes to summer steelhead, but at least one local angler is claiming to have caught a silver under the 99 bridge on Tuesday. With this week's rain and barometer dip, the odds are that the fish will start to show themselves within the next day or two. Casting spinners, wiggle warts and drifting small baits of eggs are standard techniques. But drifting thin blade spoons like tiny F.S.T.'s and the 1 inch Dick Nites is a secret ninja method of anglers in the know.

"Silvers are also expected any time on the lower Sandy River. Talk of a few milling around is starting to surface. Any precipitation in the forecast should stir the pot and get things rolling in the lower river. Just as quick as they show in the lower river, there will be a handful showing up at Cedar Creek."

**The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** predicts, "On the

Clackamas River, expect the numbers of silver salmon to go from "rumors of" to "a few spotted" to "fish harvested" in the next few days. Rain and a falling barometer is the catalyst that triggers the arrival of silver salmon.

"If you haven't picked up on a theme here, we reiterate that RAIN is the necessary enviro-factor that brings the silvers in. The same hold true for the Sandy River and this is likely the week that the action will begin. Also, expect a few Tule and bright Chinook to show in the deeper runs. Some years, the Sandy gets a solid run of lower river bright kings in late September and October."

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Salmon fishing out of Tillamook remains an option as chinook have made a strong early season showing recently. Anglers have been reporting frequent issues with seaweed however; often the bane of our fishing time on Tillamook this time of year. Warm ocean waters certainly don't help with this issue and anglers are trying to avoid the vegetation by targeting chinook in the ocean. Of course, early morning is best out there and bar crossings have been friendly despite a minus tide series. The south side of the south jetty is often a productive place to start but depending on what the tide is doing, the bay entrance or just to the north off the north jetty is also a strong option. Not all of these areas are safe to fish, depending on which direction the swell is coming from. You can view current bar conditions from this helpful web site: <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/pgr/marine/BarObs.php>. Yes, we all troll herring out there; most often plug cut blue label to be exact.

Anglers can certainly score chinook in Tillamook Bay this time of year. It's already been done with some regularity. The Trask and Tillamook River fish are often the first ones to enter the estuary and there was some good action at Memaloose 2 weekends ago. A stronger tide series this time of year will often push fish up into the upper bay and west channel. Spinners can take fish with regularity this time of year but herring seem to dominate most often. The tidewater sections of both the Trask and Tillamook Rivers should also be productive for those versed in pursuing salmon there. With river levels remaining low, there isn't much of a chance that fish will scoot upriver anytime soon. Bobber fishing can be pretty good on these mediocre tides right now. Crowds aren't too bad either, one could find some pretty memorable experiences in tidewater right now.

Looking back offshore, the much anticipated all coho season south of Cape Falcon went off like a fart in church. Simply put, it wasn't productive and anglers are pointing the finger at warm water temperatures. It didn't seem to matter where you went; coho seemed to be absent or at least unwilling to bite. It almost seemed as if more chinook were caught in the offshore fishery, without even targeting them. It seems likely that we'll have ample opportunity in the other upcoming all coho seasons.

Tuna chasers are talking about how close the tuna are now that the water temperatures have warmed up. There's got to be some benefit to this anomaly. Although it's live bait time, trollers are still reporting fair success using clones and cedar plugs. It seems pretty consistent however that the albacore are much more willing to take live bait this time of year. You still have to plan on a 30 mile trip it seems but that can change at any time.

Crabbers are reporting great catches out of Garibaldi. It seems that they might even been in better shape than in previous years too. Hopefully the hard shell trend continues. Crabbing in the estuaries is picking up as well.

Nehalem Bay trollers are reporting just fair but inconsistent results. This run is in the process of building again after a great summer return this year. Although fish are being taken daily, there

should be some pretty good fishing starting up in the next 2 weeks. Hopefully, the coho begin showing up soon as offshore numbers and the Columbia River performance has some people a bit anxious about the predicted returns this year.

The Nestucca, Salmon, Siletz and Alsea are starting to see some results as well. Like many coastal estuaries, seaweed has been a bit of a factor in trolling success. Some days are worse than others but the softer tides are certainly more tolerable. Most of these systems are still weeks away from peak but some of these early fish can be the most aggressive biters. Herring will be a staple in these fisheries and it seems like bigger is better this time of year.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Although it's still early for limit fishing on chinook in most coastal estuaries, it becomes a real possibility this time of year, especially with the lower number of participating anglers. Tillamook Bay will be a primary target but the Nehalem, Nestucca and Salmon Rivers should also be viewed as options too.

On Tillamook, one strategy that can't be overlooked is that if the ocean is open and anglers are targeting salmon in and around the bay entrance, not many biters will make their way into the estuary where smaller boats in the upper bay as well as middle bay will get after them. It's pretty clear that the lower bay and bay entrance boat traffic can effectively cull out the aggressive biters before they ever make it into the estuary. With the upcoming weather forecast, anglers should take a serious look at fishing in the nearshore, especially along the jetty tips and along the south side of the south jetty. OF COURSE, you need to watch the swell in the back corner as this seems to swallow boats almost every year. Here is the offshore forecast just to make you lick your lips:

**FRI**

W WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

**SAT**

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

**SUN**

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

Bring your crab pots out there. With fresh bait, you're sure to take a limit of Dungeness.

Bottomfishing is fair, halibut is closed.

Tuna is a fair option, especially if we continue to get a southerly influence. That appears to be changing by the weekend however, which might mean good things for ocean coho trollers, not to mention nearshore chinook seekers. The coho should be there, hopefully, they're just foraging other places until the water temperatures cool. If you do go tuna fishing, it's best to consider the live bait option although trolled cedar plugs and clones could still reward anglers that hit the right spots.

Stronger tides this weekend won't make for great crabbing in the estuaries. This is the time of year when you'll want to weigh down your gear if you crab in the estuaries. Every year, almost on a daily basis, I see crab gear working its way westward (on the outgoing tide) due to improper rigging/weighting when the tide swings are more intense, as will be the case this weekend. NO! Your gear didn't get stolen, it just migrated to the sea because you didn't know how to rig your gear. News at 11.....

If you're focused on targeting chinook, the Nehalem, Salmon, Alsea, Nestucca and Siletz should all produce results, maybe even in that order. Although most will want to troll herring at the entrances of these estuaries, they will likely be a bit choked with seaweed, which will make for some tough fishing. Anglers may want to look at targeting salmon upstream, the lower reaches of tidewater. Trolling spinners or herring could do the trick and setting up with plugs on the strong outgoing tide could also produce action in the morning hours in these systems. The next weak tide series (the following weekend) will be one to prepare for however. Maybe you should be saving your "sick days" for that weekend?

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Predictions for offshore conditions look favorable for ocean launches over the weekend to come with Sunday looking best at this time.

One cabezon per day may be included through the end of September in the seven-per-day limit for offshore rockfish. Fishing remains restricted to 30 fathoms or shallower.

Some coastal estuaries and rivers will open for wild coho on September 15th, including the Siletz, Yaquina, Alsea and more. Restrictions apply as does a collective seasonal bag limit. See **Random Links**, below, for details.

While crabbing is improving in coastal bays and estuaries, it is still better in the ocean. Bay crabbing will get better in the fall and winter months.

Plans for tuna trips are being made this weekend although chloro and temp charts are not well defined and it appears trips of 30 or more miles will once again be required. Decent numbers of albacore were taken out of Depoe Bay on Wednesday this week. Boats out of Newport have had some success as have those launching out of Winchester and Coos Bay.

Yaquina Bay crabbing has picked up somewhat and is producing fair to good numbers. A percentage of the Dungeness are not yet filled out with meat from the summer molt.

Chinook have been in the Siuslaw for a few weeks although the season will generally show improvement in late September. Early season fishers are trolling the jaws and, of conditions allow, just outside. Troll the Cushman Hole with herring or spinners from the trestle up to the corner. The Dairy Hole is a bobber hole while the Power Line Hole is a another troll fishery.

Winchester Bay has been producing Chinook for a few weeks. Recently, it's been hit or miss but the mainstem Umpqua has been reliably putting out fish from the forks to Elkton. While rain is falling today, September 5th, it remains to be seen if the Umpqua will get enough precipitation to move more fish upstream. North Umpqua steelheading is slow to fair. Smallmouth bass are being caught in good number on the South Umpqua but be aware that it will close to all fishing at the end of day September 15th.

Chinook catches have been good at times in Coos Bay over the past week. This is primarily a troll fishery and at this time of year that would mean a plug-cut herring fished behind a flasher very near the bottom. Additionally, results for those crabbing the bay have continued to improve. Rockfish are being taken in good number inside the North Jetty. Chinook fishing has been good in the Coos River over the past week.

Try the Coquille on the last week of September and the first week of October for the best chance of a Chinook hookup.

Trolling for Chinook has been slow in Rogue Bay this week although the lower river has been fair to good for half-pounders with this fishery continuing to improve through September. Chinook fishing on the middle Rogue has been spotty at time but it's still producing large fish every day. Backtrolling roe or Kwikfish has been productive over the past week. Most of the salmon in this stretch of the river will be showing some color, usually a bronze hue, so if you're fishing for the table, keep the bucks (which will cut better) and return the hens to ensure future progeny. Summer steelhead catches have been fair to good on the upper Rogue. Water levels will be dropping through the weekend and into the week to come. Only artificial flies have been allowed as of September 1st between Fishers Ferry Boat Ramp and Cole Rivers Fish Hatchery. No weights, metal-core lines, floats or "bubbles" may be used although this fishery is not restricted to type of tackle otherwise. Wait ... what?

Halibut may be kept through October south of Humbug Mountain and fish to 60 pounds have come into Brookings Harbor recently. The 10th annual Slam'n Salmon Ocean Derby took place over the past weekend with top honors and a \$6,000 grand prize going to Kevin Newell of Brookings for a Chinook weighing 38.1 pounds. Second place took \$2,500 for Ron Webster and a delighted 15-year-old Holly West of Marysville, Washington took third.

Diamond Lake is reported as slow to fair but those who are fishing it are doing somewhat better. Fishing Power Bait is a good idea and doing so in about 20 feet of water using long leaders and a slip weight will ensure a degree of success. Trout are running 14 to 16 inches with the occasional fish over 20.

Lemolo, Hemlock, Clearwater Forebay #2 and Lake in the Woods were planted with 14-inch or larger trout for Labor Day weekend. There should still be some around this week.

The Rogue River above Lost Creek will once again receive hatchery trout this week.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Following muddy, blowout conditions over much of the past week, steelheaders hit the lower Deschutes in hopes of good action following several days of angling inattention. This was not the case, however as reports from earlier this week indicate fishing for summers was only fair at best. Redsides are responding well and the weekend is looking promising following rain showers this week and with caddis hatching. As of Thursday this week, the White River is spewing and the Deschutes downstream from that tributary mouth is off-color. IT is expected to clear by the weekend.

The Crooked River continues to fish well with flows dropping slightly over the past week to just under 220 cfs. Nymphs have been effective for most of the day. Whitefish are also abundant and are running 12 inches or larger. Try dark-colored patterns to target them.

Fly fishers on the Owyhee River are picking up large brown trout occasionally. This fishery will improve into the fall months.

Crane Prairie is slow but is expected to improve for rainbow trout in a few weeks.

Trollers at Odell have been taking scores of kokanee over the past week. East Lake has been consistently productive for trout and kokanee.

A number of eastside lakes and reservoirs are at record low water levels this year. Be certain to check before traveling. Irrigation will continue for another month.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

## **North Puget Sound**

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

Anglers fishing the marine areas of Puget Sound should still find some pink salmon in early September. But the bulk of the pink run will have made its way into the region's rivers by the middle of the month.

"**Pink salmon** fishing is starting to pick up in the rivers as we move into September," said Ryan Lothrop, Puget Sound recreational salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Freshwater fishing opportunities for pink salmon should be good early in the month."

In northern Puget Sound, Lothrop recommends fishing for pink salmon in the Snohomish, Stillaguamish, Skagit and Snoqualmie rivers.

Back on the saltwater, anglers are hooking some bright **ocean coho** in portions of Puget Sound, said Lothrop. "We should see more of those ocean fish make their way into the Sound throughout the month," he said.

Anglers fishing marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but must release all chinook. In Marine Area 10, anglers must release hatchery chinook starting in September, and must release chum salmon through Sept. 15. Those fishing Marine Area 9 must release chum through Sept. 30.

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

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

Lothrop said the best bet for **freshwater anglers fishing for coho** salmon in the region might be the Snohomish and Skagit rivers, where abundant runs are expected to return this year. Other options for coho include the Nooksack, Skykomish, Snoqualmie, and Stillaguamish rivers.

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

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

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

Crabbers are reminded that their summer catch record cards are due to WDFW by midnight 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 2013 will face a \$10 fine, which will be imposed when they apply for a 2014 Puget Sound crab endorsement. Completed summer cards can be mailed in or submitted online after Labor Day. Additional information is available on [WDFW's website](#).

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

Elsewhere, **Lake Sammamish** is open for salmon fishing, with a daily limit of four salmon, of which two may be chinook. All sockeye must be released, and fishing is closed within 100 yards of the mouth of Issaquah Creek. Sammamish Lake's larger neighbor, **Lake Washington**, opens Sept. 16 to coho fishing. Anglers will be 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**

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

So far, salmon season 2013 has been very good in salt and freshwater around the region, and fisheries managers indicate that will continue in September. Large numbers of chinook, coho, and pink salmon have entered or are entering fresh water, while other chrome-sided salmon remain in saltwater.

"Fishing should remain good through the end of the season in marine areas 1-4, especially for **coho salmon**," said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "They grow rapidly in advance of their spawn and remain in saltwater a little longer than their cousins."

Ocean salmon fisheries are currently scheduled to continue through Sept. 30 in marine areas 1 (Ilwaco) and 2 (Westport) and through Sept. 22 in marine areas 3 (La Push) and 4 (Neah Bay).

Anglers are allowed to keep two **chinook salmon** per day as part of their two-salmon daily limit in all four ocean marine areas, and those fishing in marine areas 3 and 4 are also allowed two bonus pink salmon. All wild coho must be released in marine areas 1-4.

Milward reminds anglers to check for any rule changes at [WDFW's website](#).

**Albacore tuna** fishing typically peaks in September for these lightning-fast visitors to offshore waters. Tuna fishing was inconsistent in August, but began to stabilize and improve moving into

September. No daily bag limit applies to albacore, so successful anglers often go home with large quantities of delicious tuna loins.

Closer to shore, **black rockfish** and **lingcod** fisheries have remained strong all summer in the four ocean marine areas. Rockfish are open year round in the ocean, and lingcod are available throughout September and into October.

Anglers will be allowed to catch salmon in Grays Harbor (Marine Area 2-2) for the second consecutive year after a five-year moratorium on fishing the large bay west of Aberdeen. The initial season runs Sept. 16-22, with a daily limit of three salmon, only one of which may be a chinook. A second season runs from Sept. 23-Nov. 30, during which anglers may also keep three salmon but must release all chinook.

Down the coast in Willapa Bay (Marine Area 2-1), salmon fishing is already under way, and early September is prime time for the bay's large chinook. Coho show in strong numbers later in the month.

Up to six salmon may be retained in Willapa Bay, but only three adults may be kept. All wild chinook and chum salmon must be released. Anglers may fish Willapa Bay with two fishing rods so long as they have purchased a Two-Pole Endorsement.

In the Strait of Juan de Fuca, anglers fishing marine areas 5 (Sekiu) and 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca) have a two-salmon daily limit (plus two additional pink salmon), but must release chum, chinook and wild coho through Sept. 14. Regulations change in Marine Area 5 on Sept. 15, when anglers will be allowed to retain wild coho as part of their two-salmon daily limit. Fisheries managers expect salmon fishing to be very good in these waters throughout September.

Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) opportunities expand Sept. 1, when the area north of Ayrock Point opens with a daily limit of four coho salmon. The area south of Ayrock Point has been open for salmon since July 1 with a daily limit of four salmon, two of which may be marked chinook. Anglers must release all wild chinook and chum salmon. Hood Canal's Skokomish River has been very popular for chinook salmon, and that action should carry well into September. See current regulations on the stream [here](#).

September often marks the peak of salmon fishing in the South Puget Sound. Marine areas 11 (Tacoma-Vashon Island) and 13 (South Puget Sound) should offer good opportunities to catch chinook, coho, and especially pink salmon. Anglers are allowed two salmon as their daily limit, plus a bonus of two pinks. In Marine Area 11, all wild chinook must be released, and in Marine Area 13 wild coho and wild chinook must be set free.

Late-arriving **pink salmon** to the Nisqually River should offer some extraordinary fishing in the saltwater as these fish make their way to the river over the first couple weeks of September. Pink salmon are usually best as table fare when they are taken in saltwater, but don't overlook the Nisqually River. Almost one million pinks are expected back to the small river north of Olympia, and the fish stay in good shape for several days as they enter freshwater. Be certain to check WDFW's fishing regulations pamphlet before hitting the water.

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

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

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

Crabbers are reminded that their summer catch record cards are due to WDFW by Oct.1 and must be returned whether or not the cardholder caught or fished for crab during the season. Crabbers who fail to file catch reports for 2013 will face a \$10 fine, which will be imposed when they apply for a 2014 Puget Sound crab endorsement. Completed summer cards can be mailed in or submitted online after Labor Day. 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.

In freshwater, September marks the end of kokanee fishing for the season as the fish prepare to spawn, but cooler temperatures in September typically re-ignite the **trout** bite. Check out lakes like Offut, Clear, Ward, Summit, Saint Clair, and many more lakes with strong trout populations in the region; see lake stocking information [here](#).

Spiny rays like **bass**, **panfish**, and **tiger musky** also come alive as water temperatures cool, triggering their instinct to feed heavily to carry these warmwater fish through winter. For panfish and bass, try Kapowsin, Tanwax, Ohop, Summit, Long, Pattison, Black, Hicks, and Munn lakes. Munn is a selective fishery with excellent and overlooked bass and **bluegill** fishing.

Cowlitz River impoundment Mayfield Lake offers some of the state's best tiger musky fishing and is also an overlooked gem for trout anglers.

### **Southwest Washington**

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

September is prime time for salmon fishing in the Columbia River Basin, as large numbers of fish move upriver and into tributaries on both sides of Bonneville Dam. Chinook fishing at Buoy 10 near the mouth of the river closes Sept. 1 at the end of the day, but anglers will still have plenty of options to catch chinook salmon, coho and steelhead throughout the Columbia River Basin. This is also a great time to hook some trout in the high wilderness lakes.

After three weeks of high catch rates, fishery managers from Washington and Oregon required anglers fishing at Buoy 10 to release all unmarked chinook salmon. That decision allowed the fishery to remain open through Sept. 1, with a total catch (including release mortalities) of about 25,000 chinook.

But many more **chinook** – as well as **coho** and **steelhead** – will be available for harvest on the mainstem Columbia and its tributaries in the weeks ahead, said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Approximately 678,000 fall chinook are expected to enter the big river this year, including about 434,000 upriver brights – the highest number since record keeping began in 1964. WDFW has also projected a return of 434,000 coho – three times more than last year – although steelhead are running behind pre-season projections this year.

“September is a great time to fish the Columbia River Basin, but it’s important to remember these fish are on the move,” Hymer said. “As the month goes on, successful anglers will follow the fish upriver and into the tributaries.”

Hymer reminds anglers that barbless hooks are required when fishing for salmon or steelhead anywhere on the Columbia River and on most of its tributaries. He also has some advice for anglers fishing the mainstem Columbia River.

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

Fishing will remain open at Buoy 10 for hatchery coho and hatchery steelhead after the chinook fishery closes, but Hymer expects the action to move above the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line to Bonneville Dam in September. Chinook retention is allowed there at some times and places, but anglers should be aware of when and where:

- Through Sept. 5, the daily catch limit is six fish per day – including two adult salmon, two adult steelhead or one of each. Barbless hooks are required and only one adult salmon may be a chinook. Anglers may keep either marked or unmarked chinook, but must release any coho salmon or steelhead that is not marked with a clipped adipose fin.
- Starting Sept. 6, anglers must release all wild chinook intercepted downstream from a projected line from the Warrior Rock lighthouse through Red Buoy No. 4 to the orange marker atop the orange dolphin on the Washington shore.
- From Sept. 13 through Sept. 30, all chinook intercepted downstream from the Warrior Rock line must be released.

Hymer said this year’s fall chinook run appears to be moving upriver sooner than usual, producing early catches in tributaries above and below Bonneville Dam. By the end of August,

anglers were reeling in salmon and steelhead from the Cowlitz River to the Klickitat River , he said. Fishing should be good there and on other area rivers throughout September, he said.

Like last year, anglers will be allowed to retain up to six adult hatchery coho on all tributaries to the lower Columbia River with hatchery programs. Those rivers include the Cowlitz, Deep, Elochoman, Grays (including West Fork), Kalama, Klickitat, Lewis (including North Fork), Toutle (including Green and North Fork) and Washougal.

Chinook retention is limited to marked hatchery fish on those river systems, except on the Klickitat River, Deep River and Drano Lake, where anglers can also retain unmarked chinook. Mark-selective fisheries also will be in effect on the Wind and White Salmon rivers.

On the Lewis River (including the North Fork), only hatchery chinook may be retained through September. At Drano Lake, anglers may keep any coho (adipose fin clipped or not) throughout the season.

Meanwhile, anglers are still catching **walleye** above and below Bonneville Dam. **Trout** fishing is also still an option at a number of lowland lakes, including Swift and Merwin reservoirs on the Lewis system, where anglers can take advantage of increased catch limits for rainbow and kokanee. At Swift Reservoir, anglers must release all salmon larger than 15 inches in length and any bull trout or steelhead they intercept. Also, anglers can keep 10 hatchery rainbows per day at Lake Scanewa on the Cowlitz River.

For anglers who don't mind a hike, September is also a great time to head for the **high wilderness lakes** around Mount Adams and Mount St. Helens. Hymer recommends three such lakes – Goose, Council and Takhlakh – that all offer drive-in access.

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

### **Eastern Washington**

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

The catch-and-keep season for hatchery steelhead on the Snake River has been open since mid-June, but angler effort is expected to grow this month as the run passing the Snake River dams increases.

In addition, for a third consecutive year, fishing for hatchery-marked **fall chinook salmon** starts Sept. 1 and is scheduled to run through Oct. 31, but could close earlier depending on harvest rates and run size.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) District Fish Biologist Glen Mendel says the steelhead run appears to be coming in weak this year. As of late August, the A-run of upriver

summer steelhead was about 61 percent of the preseason forecast. The B-run steelhead passage was also tracking less than expected so far, but it is still early in the return timing for these fish. The steelhead season runs through March 31.

A large run of upriver bright hatchery fall chinook is expected to return to the Snake River, so anglers should have good opportunities, Mendel said. An estimated return of about 40,000 adults and another 15,000-20,000 jacks are expected in the Snake River at Lower Granite Dam. This is well above the annual returns to the Snake River in the past several decades and continues the upward trend for the past several years.

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

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

Mendel also reminds anglers to check their catch carefully, because coho salmon are also returning to the Snake River this time of year and those fish must be released. Check the fishing pamphlet (page 96) on how to identify coho; one indicator is that chinook have a black gum line and coho have white.

On the Tucannon River, a tributary of the Snake, critically low levels of wild steelhead have prompted a change in the fishing rules, starting Sept. 1. An **emergency rule change** reduces area of the Tucannon River open to steelhead fishing as well as the daily catch limit and the length of the fishing season. Also under that rule, anglers are required to keep hatchery-marked steelhead they intercept.

This month is the last chance to fish several of the region's best **rainbow** and/or **cutthroat trout** fishing lakes. Closing Sept. 30 is West Medical and Williams lakes in southwest Spokane County, and Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County.

Fish Lake in Spokane County also provides anglers the unique opportunity to catch **eastern brook trout** until Sept. 30. Anglers are reminded that Amber Lake shifts to catch-and-release-only on Oct. 1.

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

Spokane County's Downs Lake and Lincoln County's Coffeepot Lake also close at the end of the month but can yield good catches of **yellow perch**, **black crappie**, and **rainbow trout** during September. Badger Lake in Spokane County, which also closes Sept. 30, has become infested with **largemouth** and **smallmouth bass**, and **pumpkinseed sunfish**, and Osborne encourages anglers to harvest limits of those fish that are of legal size (only largemouth less than 12 inches except one over 17 inches; only one smallmouth over 14 inches.)

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

The WDFW access site on the northeast shore of Sacheen Lake, 11 miles southwest of Newport along Highway 211 in Pend Oreille County, will be closed Sept. 9-30 to reconstruct the boat ramp. Sacheen Lake, which has rainbow, tiger, and eastern brook trout, remains open to fishing through Oct. 31.

Sept. 28 is the 40th annual National Hunting and Fishing Day and the 20th annual National Public Lands Day, both of which will be celebrated at WDFW's Eastern Regional office grounds in Spokane Valley with an afternoon fair of local sportsmen clubs. The Inland Northwest Wildlife Council's "virtual reality" fishing and shooting booths and introductory information and demonstrations on fishing and hunting will be featured. For more information, contact WDFW Eastern Regional office at 509-892-1001.

### **Northcentral Washington**

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

The upper Wenatchee River, from the confluence with Peshastin Creek (above Dryden Dam) to the Highway 2 Bridge at Leavenworth, opens Sept. 1 for **hatchery chinook salmon** fishing. The daily catch limit is four, of which only two can be adult fish (24 inches or more). Selective gear rules and a night closure are in effect. Some of the best opportunities should be near Leavenworth.

Columbia River fisheries in the region are still open, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Regional Fish Program Manager Jeff Korth says there should be some **summer chinook salmon** milling around the mouth of the Chelan River.

During the month of September, fishing for resident **rainbow trout** and **cutthroat trout** up to 16 inches can be good in the Methow River, said Okanogan District Fish Biologist Bob Jateff, who reminds anglers that this fishery is under catch-and-release and no-bait-allowed rules.

"Remember, too, that the lower section of the Methow, from Lower Burma Road Bridge upstream to Gold Creek, will close on Sept. 15," Jateff said. "The remaining area, from Gold Creek upstream to Foghorn Dam near Winthrop, is scheduled to close on Sept. 30. Anglers should not

target steelhead during September on the Methow River, because that can lead to early closures for this very popular catch and release trout fishery.”

Jateff also notes that as lake temperatures cool a bit this month, other fishing waters can be good for trout when the fish become more active. These include Big Twin Lake near Winthrop, Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, and Chopaka Lake near Loomis.

“For the warmwater angler, lakes such as Leader, Patterson, and Palmer can provide good opportunities for **yellow perch, crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass** and **smallmouth bass**,” Jateff said.

Starting Sept. 1, Davis, Campbell, and Cougar lakes, all near Winthrop, shift from a catch-and-release to a catch-and-keep season on trout. The daily catch limit is five fish, and bait is allowed. Jateff reminds anglers who use bait that the first five fish caught count towards the daily limit whether kept or released.

### **Southcentral Washington**

(Benton, Franklin, Kittitas and Yakima counties)

The cooler weather of September signals a transition from the blazing southcentral Washington summer to cooler autumn temperatures that spur fish and wildlife activity across the region. Big game become more active, bass bite better, and salmon and steelhead shoot upstream to spawn.

This year, a whole lot of salmon are shooting upstream.

According to the preseason forecast, 678,000 **fall chinook salmon** will enter the Columbia River this year, and about two-thirds of them will keep moving past Bonneville Dam on route to the mid-Columbia and Snake Rivers.

An anticipated 146,000 fish will return to the Hanford Reach this year, including 90,000 wild fish returning to spawn in the only remaining free-flowing stretch of the Columbia River in the United States. Fisheries managers also predict a large return of 45,000 chinook to Priest Rapids Hatchery and another 11,000 to the Ringold-Meseberg Hatchery.

While the September salmon fishery in the Columbia often starts out slow, fishing usually ramps up quickly by mid-September as more fish move past the dam and water temperatures drop, said Paul Hoffarth, a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) fish biologist based in Pasco.

“There's a lot of anticipation out there right now,” Hoffarth said. “Anglers are catching fish here and there, especially very experienced anglers, but they know a lot more are headed our way, and earlier than normal. By the middle of the month, we should have plenty of upriver brights in the Hanford Reach for good fishing.”

Most areas of the Columbia River have been open for salmon fishing since Aug. 1, and two major

tributaries will open in September.

The Yakima River opens for salmon fishing Sept. 1 from the Columbia River upstream to Prosser Dam, although the area around the Chandler Powerhouse will remain closed, as in previous years. "Most fish move into the Yakima after water temperatures drop to a comfortable level, usually sometime in late September or early October." Most of the Yakima's chinook hold in the cooler Columbia before their run up their natal river.

The Snake River also opens Sept. 1 for hatchery fall chinook. State fishery managers predict another strong return of upriver bright chinook salmon to the Snake this year and have again set the daily catch limit to include three adult hatchery chinook, plus six hatchery jack chinook under 24 inches in length. The Snake River is open from the Highway 12 bridge near Tri-Cities upstream to the Oregon state line above Heller Bar, and only hatchery (adipose-clipped) chinook can be harvested.

Anglers must use barbless hooks when fishing for salmon and steelhead in the Columbia and Snake Rivers and cannot remove any chinook or steelhead from the water unless it is retained as part of the daily bag limit. Anglers are advised to check the [sportfishing rules pamphlet](#) and emergency for all waters before heading out.

Anglers have also been catching some **hatchery steelhead** both above and below McNary Dam, and the harvest should pick up throughout the month, said Hoffarth. For a second year, steelhead appear to be returning in numbers well below pre-season estimates, but enough fish have entered the river system to meet conservation objectives and provide good fishing opportunities throughout the season.

September is sometimes slow for these ocean-going rainbow trout due to warm water temperatures, especially in the Snake River, but anglers have success fishing very early in the morning, at dusk, and in the dark of night. Shrimp fished under lighted bobbers and trolled lighted plugs account for most of the fish at night, and the same offerings along with spinners and traditional plugs take fish during daylight hours.

Anglers can retain two hatchery steelhead per day in the Columbia River and three hatchery steelhead per day in the Snake River. Hatchery fish must measure 20 inches and are identifiable by a missing adipose fin with a healed scar.

"WDFW is expecting several thousand steelhead to return to Ringold-Meseberg Hatchery this fall, but steelhead fishing in the Columbia River above the Highway 395 Bridge at Kennewick is not scheduled to open until Oct. 1." Hoffarth indicates an early opening is unlikely this year due to lagging steelhead returns.

**Walleye** will also garner attention from the region's anglers this September. These toothy fish are considered by many to be the best table fare, and they bite aggressively in September and throughout much of the fall in anticipation of leaner months ahead. The Snake River below Ice Harbor Dam is one of the region's best walleye fisheries, as is the Columbia River below McNary Dam.

Good walleye fishing can be found almost anywhere on the big river, but the stretch from McNary downstream to Crow Butte is considered by many to be Washington's crown jewel walleye fishery for large fish. Popular tactics include trolling worm harnesses and spinners behind bottom-bouncing sinkers, trolling deep-diving plugs, and jigging blade baits or plastic baits on jig heads.

**Smallmouth bass** share habitat with walleye and sometimes spend the summer even deeper than their toothy neighbors, as deep as 50 feet. They move in shallower as waters cool and food sources come available. Fishing tends to improve for these hard-fighters in September and carries on through October until cold water sends them back to great depths to spend the winter.

**Sturgeon** fishing is restricted to catch and release in most areas of the Columbia River, including Lake Wallula and Lake Umatilla.

Meanwhile, in the White Pass and Yakima areas, fishing picks up again in September for **rainbow and cutthroat trout** as water temperatures become more favorable in the lakes and streams in the northern part of the region. Leech, Dog, and Clear lakes near White Pass offer great access, stunning scenery, and good opportunities to catch trout.

Popular moving-water trout fishing destinations include the Yakima, Naches, Little Naches, Teanaway, and Bumping rivers, as well as Taneum, Naneum, and Manashtash creeks. Most rivers and creeks have special regulations like selective gear rules that prohibit bait. Anglers should check the regulation pamphlet for all details.

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

Bob Rees: [brees@pacifier.com](mailto:brees@pacifier.com)  
Michael Teague: [TGFMichael@gmail.com](mailto:TGFMichael@gmail.com)  
Chris Vertopoulos: [chrisv@pacifier.com](mailto:chrisv@pacifier.com)  
Doug Rees: [doug@TheGuidesForecast.com](mailto:doug@TheGuidesForecast.com)

#### **Random Links**

2013 Coastal Coho Salmon Sport Regulations:

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/docs/2013\\_coho\\_fisheries.pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/docs/2013_coho_fisheries.pdf)

THE LAST DAYS OF STEALHEAD JOE:

<http://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-adventure/water-activities/fishing/fly-fishing/The-One-That-Got-Away-Stealhead-Joe.html?page=all>

**GOOD LUCK!**