

The Guide's Forecast - volume 15 issue number 39

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **September 20th – September 26th, 2013**

Oregon Fisheries 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 15th. Salmon and crab.....my favorite!

Go to: www.northwestguides.com/fishing or email Bob Rees at brees@pacifier.com or call (503) 812-9036

Willamette Valley/Metro - The Columbia River is kicking out good numbers of chinook below Bonneville Dam. Reports indicate the anchor fishermen are faring better than the backtrollers. Fishing should improve from already "good" to "excellent" as the water temperatures drops a few degrees from this week's cooler weather. Fish are also being taken at the mouths of the Sandy, Washougal, Lewis, Kalama and Cowlitz with wobbler's, spinners and plugs.

On the Willamette River, silvers have been spotted rolling and jumping off the mouth of the Clackamas. Boaters and bank anglers have taken a handful since the weekend at Meldrum Bar and at the blacktop, either backtrolling plugs or casting plugs and spinners. Bass anglers are looking forward to the cooler temps to bring the smallmouth back on the bite. Sturgeon fishers will get another catch and keep season on Saturday Oct 19th. This will likely be the last opportunity for keeping a sturgeon for quite some time.

With fall approaching, shadows are lengthening and showers are falling periodically. These conditions combine to create excellent fly fishing opportunities on the McKenzie River.

Pressure is light on the North Santiam at this time of year and while fishing remains slow, it's a great place for solitude or mushroom hunting.

The Clackamas is giving up a few silvers on the lower river, but better times are on the way with the onset of early fall. Hoards of anglers are lining the bank at the bowling alley and Cross Park. Few are taken legally in these spots. Reports have come in of a handful of late summer steelhead being taken between Rivermill Dam and Feldheimers.

The Sandy also started to kick out a few silvers in the lower river, but anglers have also spotted a few up as far as the Cedar Creek hatchery. Small baits of cured roe, spinners and jigs under a bobber will all draw bites.

Northwest – With the absence of hatchery coho in the lower Columbia River, interest and success has waned. Chinook catches were fair at best over the last weak tide series but anglers have largely dispersed to other fisheries. It's likely that the late season coho fishery in October will also be a bust. Crabbing is good however.

Angler focus has shifted to other coastal estuaries with Nehalem and Tillamook being the best prospects. The Ghost Hole in Tillamook has yielded consistent early morning catches on the incoming tide although few fish over 20 pounds are being taken. Spinners have also been working well in the middle and upper bay as we begin to enter peak season for Tillamook chinook. Bobber and bait tossers working the Trask and Tillamook tidewater sections have also

been tallying success. Tillamook's consumptive coho season kicks off on Friday and Saturday and fish are present in the estuary but not too willing to bite.

The Nehalem has been excellent for fall chinook with the current stronger tide series likely to produce good catches at Wheeler and Nehalem this weekend. Herring is most productive below the Highway 101 Bridge with spinners becoming a good tool upstream. Check the ODF&W web site for wild coho restrictions on this system but there is currently consumptive opportunity for these fish as well.

Although ocean crabbing is not as productive as it has been in years past, the quality of crab is excellent. Estuary crabbing is not nearly as productive and the stronger tide series this weekend won't help things.

Southwest- Boats out of Newport and Depoe Bay made fair to good catches of tuna earlier this week. Offshore trollers experienced an improvement in salmon catches. Ocean crabbing has yielded limits of good-sized, hard-shelled Dungeness. Rockfishing has been excellent.

Ocean coho fishing remains open seven days a week off the central coast through the end of September or fulfillment of the quota.

Bait fishers using bobbers have taken some nice chinook from the Siuslaw tidewater over the past week.

Rough seas prevented launches out of Gold Beach for much of the past week. Boats plying Rogue Bay made fair catches of chinook and coho. When offshore conditions settled down over the past weekend, fishing for rockfish and lingcod was good. Catches of adult steelhead and half-pounders have been good on a variety of bait, lures and flies around Agness. Chinook fishing has been steady on the Grants Pass stretch. It's flies only on the upper Rogue above Fishers Ferry boat ramp where summer steelhead have been cooperative with long-rodders.

Although boats out of the Port of Brookings are taking Pacific Halibut to 40 pounds and decent catches of rockfish and lingcod, ocean salmon fishing closed until the "bubble" fishery opens October 1. This situation has local anglers exploring Chetco tidewater for salmon, which has resulted in fair to good catches of jack salmon recently along with several adult chinook.

Eastern – The lower Deschutes has been unsettled but water conditions are improving. Summer steelheading has been fair but will pick up as water conditions improve. With outrageous numbers at Bonneville, steelheaders are waiting for the big numbers to hit. Trout fishing is fair with nymphs effective. Counts at Sherars Falls have improved with double-digit chinook and summer steelhead passing daily along with a few coho.

Suttle Lake has continued to produce near-limits of smallish kokanee to trollers. Anglers are allowed 25 fish per day here.

SW Washington- District streams are yielding fall chinook although most are dark or wild with anglers releasing them. Coho have yet to make a strong showing and likely won't give the catch statistics from the Buoy 10 fishery.

Drano Lake is producing both fall chinook and some steelhead and success rates will directly correlate with numbers passing Bonneville Dam.

Anglers fishing the lower Klickitat are scoring good results for fall chinook fishing eggs under a

bobber. This fishery should continue to produce for a few more weeks. The coho run will produce poor results however.

Columbia River Fishing Report – After such an impressive Astoria season, it's really an upriver show right now. Dam counts still reflect an impressive run still underway but they also reflect a lost opportunity that typically provides excellent results this time of year; hatchery coho.

As we've stated earlier, it's clearly a gross mis-prediction. Hatchery coho have yet to make a strong showing in the estuary and simply put, they're not coming. As a matter of opinion, I don't think we'll see many coho of any origin, whether they be wild or hatchery, coast-wide. The ocean fishery since July has been challenging and remains so today. As for the lower Columbia, it will be a crabbing show now with just an occasional coho showing in the catches for a long effort. Yeah, you can still catch a few fish for a good day's effort but most will opt for the good chinook opportunity that will exist in other fisheries inland and coast-wide.

Crabbing is good and will only improve as we move into the fall months and the tides get softer.

Upriver, anglers remain somewhat frustrated below Warrior Rock as most days, anglers are coming across some fair chinook fishing (definitely post peak season) but only the rare hatchery fish may be retained. WDF&W noted a mark rate of about 37% downstream of the Lewis River. Although fishing upstream of the Lewis isn't quite as productive, anglers can keep finned or fin-clipped fish in this reach. Action has certainly slowed from previous weeks but it can still certainly be worth your while. Most recent reports indicate that the best fishing remains from the mouth of the Kalama and downstream but anglers putting in a full tide above the Kalama are still taking fish, just not as many. Those trolling bait are getting "jack-attacked" on a pretty regular basis but hardware continues to take some of the larger fish here.

For those that didn't see last weeks' press release on the new 2 chinook bag limit, here it is:

September 12, 2013

CLACKAMAS, Ore. – With a possible record number of fall chinook heading up the Columbia River, anglers may now keep two fall chinook per day under new rules adopted today by Oregon and Washington fishery managers.

Effective Sept. 13 through Dec. 31 the daily bag limit will include two adult chinook (fin-clipped and non fin-clipped) from the Warrior Rock line upstream to Bonneville Dam.

In the area from Buoy 10 to Warrior Rock, the daily bag limit for Sept. 13 through Sept. 30 is two adult hatchery (adipose fin-clipped) salmon or steelhead. Beginning, Oct. 1, the bag limit remains at two salmon or steelhead but chinook no longer need to be fin-clipped.

The states also adopted "boat limit" regulations for the main stem Columbia River from Tongue Point upstream to the Hwy. 395 Bridge in Washington, allowing each angler aboard a vessel to continue to fish for salmon and steelhead until all anglers have achieved their daily bag limit.

The increased bag limit and season extensions are in response to a revised run update that predicts the number of upriver bright fall chinook returning to the Columbia River could be 664,000 to 835,00 fish, up from the a preseason forecast of 434,600 fish.

As of Sept. 11, 573,600 adult fall chinook have passed Bonneville Dam and there have been several record-setting days at the dam, including 63,870 adult chinook passing on Sept. 9.

Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "The Columbia River is kicking out good numbers of Chinook below Bonneville Dam. An average of 20K a day have been ascending the dam the last four days and the year to date count being 740K as of Wednesday. At this rate, the final tally will surpass the latest projected ceiling of 835K and a new upgrade to 1.2 million is forecast. Chalk this year up as the best return since the erection of Bonneville Dam. Recent

reports indicate the anchor fishermen are faring better than the backtrollers. Anchor fishermen commonly use spinners and wobblers, but the Kwikfish or flatfish will also get it done. With the Kwikfish, use the K-13,14,15 and 16 sizes in the extreme or standard series. With flatfish, U-20, T-50 and T-55 work well as do the new Maglips and Hognose versions. Regardless of which plug you pick, strap some meat to the belly for extra added attraction. Sardine, tuna belly and squid all work well. As for spinners, smaller is better for the anchor guys. I prefer the rounder blades when sitting on the hook, with the size 4, 5 and 6 vibro-backmore style blades being my favorite.

The Colorado, Indiana, CV and Skagit blades also work well on anchor. Choose your favorite color combos if you like, but RED is number one on the Columbia River and you better have some red in the mix. Chartreuse is another favorite and works even better if you combine it with some red or pink. Wobblers get it done too and the Simon and Alvin styles get the most fish.

Chrome, nickel or silver finishes with some blue prism tape are an old standby. Fishing should improve from already "good" to "excellent" as the water temp drops a few degrees from this week's cooler weather. Fish are also being taken at the mouths of the Sandy, Washougal, Lewis, Kalama and Cowlitz with wobblers, spinners and wigglers."

In other action, the states rescinded the previously adopted white sturgeon retention season scheduled for Oct. 19 – Dec. 31 in the Columbia River from Wauna power lines upstream to Bonneville Dam. The decision was based on catch data that showed harvest guidelines for the main stem Columbia were achieved earlier in the year.

In a separate action, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife announced that sturgeon retention will be allowed on the lower Willamette River on Saturday, Oct. 19, with a bag limit of one fish with a fork length of 38-54 inches. The open area for this season includes the Willamette River from Willamette Falls downstream to its confluence with the Columbia, plus Multnomah Channel and the Gilbert River. Oregon staff intends to monitor harvest and may schedule additional openings if possible within available harvest limits.

For more information, please refer to ODFW's regulation update page on the Internet at www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/reg_changes/index.asp.

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The Guide's Forecast – Don't look to the estuary for great results for salmon for the rest of the season. The coho are not coming, which is a huge disappointment given the prediction that was coming from the agencies. The estuary will now become a crab factory but crabbers won't get more serious until October or November.

Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "Get out there while the fish are still plowing up the lower river. The Chinook counts over Bonneville will drop off drastically in the next week or so and when that happens and the numbers are at a steady 1-3K a day, the water below the dam really lights up for the backtrollers."

As for upriver anglers, some good options remain but anglers still targeting chinook below the Lewis River will still have to be attentive to fin-clipped chinook. The action will certainly taper as we've now seen the first less than 20K day at Bonneville Dam now (9/17). Wobblers will still be largely responsible for the bulk of the catch but trolled herring and spinners should also take

some fish. You'll have a few more commercial seasons to contend with. At this writing, the seasons had just been adopted:

Season:

8 PM Thursday September 19 to 6 AM Friday September 20
(10 hours)

8 PM Sunday September 22 to 6 AM Monday September 23
(10 hours)

8 PM Tuesday September 24 to 6 AM Wednesday September 25
(10 hours)

Ocean fishing is largely over and with the upcoming offshore prediction, it won't be worth the effort. Last week may have been the last hurrah for albacore anglers. Most anglers didn't do all that well but a few boats produced double-digit catches. They are clearly becoming a bit finicky these fall days.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "On the Willamette River, silvers have been spotted rolling and jumping off the mouth of the Clackamas. Boaters and bank anglers have taken a handful since the weekend at Meldrum Bar and at the blacktop, either backtrolling plugs or casting plugs and spinners. A flame red or orange wiggle wart is money but the fire-tiger gets it done too. Many boaters are starting to troll upstream as opposed to backtrolling. This gets your plug down deeper and gives it a quicker action that silvers like. Monitor your speed so that your plug is getting down, but not digging in the rocks. Bass anglers are looking forward to the cooler temps to bring the smallmouth back on the bite, this coming week should see an upswing in the bass action. Sturgeon fishers will get another catch and keep season on Saturday Oct 19th. This will likely be the last opportunity for keeping a sturgeon for quite some time."

While counts at Willamette Falls are mostly unremarkable at this time of year, we take note of them to get an indication of movement into upriver tributaries, primarily the McKenzie and Santiams, but also the Molalla, Yamhill and others. While there has been nothing noteworthy regarding Chinook and steelhead counts, coho numbers are becoming significant. Counts moved from mostly single digits per day to 271 on September 9th, then 582 on the 10th. Appearing soon in an upriver trib near you.

McKenzie level and flow has been fairly stable over the past week which should bode well for weekend anglers.

Water conditions are excellent for fishing on the Santiams although there aren't as many steelhead in the system this year as in years past with low returns this season.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will host a Family Fishing event Saturday, Sept. 21 at St. Louis Ponds from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. This will be the last event for the year at this location. The event is free and open to the public. ODFW staff and volunteer instructors will be on site to hand out loaner rods, reels, tackle, and bait and provide instruction to youngsters who need assistance. St. Louis Ponds fishing park is located 13 miles north of Salem and west of Interstate 5. To get to there from I-5, take the Woodburn exit. Then go east to Hwy. 99E. At Hwy. 99E, head south to Gervais Road. Go west on Gervais Road through the town of Gervais. The road eventually changes to St Louis Road. Continue west on St Louis Road as it crosses over I-5 to Tesch Road. At the railroad crossing, go left on Tesch Road and follow the signs to the ponds.

Mt Hood Pond, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, Alton Baker Canal, Foster Reservoir and the McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake are scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout.

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "Things should remain fairly quiet on the Willamette River, but some action can be had off the mouth of the Clackamas for silvers. It's apparent that the coast-wide silver prediction for 2013 was off a bunch and that there likely won't be many running up the Clack and above Willamette Falls. Still a few will slam plugs either cast or trolled up stream. Bass fishers will start to have some action now that we are getting out of the summer doldrums and into early fall."

The McKenzie River is expected to fish well for trout through the coming weekend.

Although steelheading remains slow on the Santiam system, the best chance of a hookup is on the South Santiam. Well over 4,000 summers have been counted at Foster Dam and most have been recycled downstream to run again. North Santiam returns are far lower.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "The Clackamas is giving up a few silvers on the lower river, but better times are on the way with the onset of early fall. Hoards of anglers are lining the bank at the site of the old bowling alley and Cross Park. Few fish are taken legally here, with long leaders and small corkies adorning most terminal set-ups. Any day now the silver should start pushing their way up to Eagle Creek and beyond. Reports have come in of a handful of late summer steelhead being taken between Rivermill Dam and Feldheimers.

"The Sandy is has been kicking out a few silvers in the lower river, but anglers were also getting them up to the Cedar Creek hatchery. As of late the river is muddy and blown out, not due to glacial silt but more likely a landslide in the upper reaches. Once the river starts to clear a smidge, fish will bite eggs with reckless abandon. Small baits of cured roe, either drifted or under a bobber are a favorite method. And once the river clears up to a greenish color, size 3 and 4 blue fox spinners in red, pink, green, blue and chartreuse will start to produce. Pink, orange and "nightmare" jigs fished under a bobber will all draw bites in clear water as well."

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "Silvers are now making their way up the Clackamas River all the way up to Eagle Creek. The fishing should improve by the weekend as the fish know rain is heading this way.

"If the Sandy River clears up, fishing should be great over the weekend for silver salmon. Expect the fish to be spread from the mouth all the way up to Cedar Creek."

North Coast Fishing Report – Tillamook and to a lesser extent, Nehalem Bay remain focal points for north coast anglers. On Tillamook Bay, the fishing was quite good late last week and into the weekend but dropped off dramatically on Sunday as the ocean began to rough up. On Monday however, the Ghost Hole lit up with chinook on the early part of the incoming tide with multiple fish taken on the east side of the bay by herring trollers. The bite continued up the bay to Bay City where trollers there saw consistent chinook action later on in the tide. It was good again on Tuesday but not as good as Monday and by Wednesday, it was very quiet until late in the tide where a handful of chinook were taken once the seaweed passed through, and seaweed has been an issue lately.

Since the ocean has roughed up and the strong ebb tide is happening, the great salt chuck has not been safe to fish in the early morning. There has been a strong NW swell greeting anglers in

the morning and it simply hasn't been worth the effort looking for fish out there. That won't get any better over the weekend as the forecast section will attest to.

Upper Tillamook Bay has been fishing ok although traffic is certainly heavier on the lower end. There has been some fish stacking around the picket fence and in the "Grassy Knoll" across from the mouth of the Wilson River. Many are noting the smaller size of the fish this year. I can also attest to that as in the first 6 days of salmon fishing on Tillamook Bay, I have yet to land a fish over 20 pounds (although I've landed 19 chinook and 2 wild coho in those 6 days). As is usually the case, anglers working the upper bay are using spinners while lower bay trollers are working herring.

Tidewater anglers in the Trask and to a lesser extend the Tillamook (although "The Ditch" that runs from the handicap ramp on the Tillamook to an opening on the Trask just upstream of the 5th street ramp has been producing fair to good catches of chinook for bobber tossers. The last part of outgoing tide is often the most productive but high slack can be productive as well. DO tip your bait of eggs with sand shrimp for best results.

The Nehalem has also been flush with fish. Like other systems, not consistent every day but it's clear that the fall run on the Nehalem is going to closely mirror the summer run over there, which was quite prolific. The jaws was the place to be on the soft tide series last weekend but that has since shifted upstream a bit. Wheeler has also been producing on herring and fish are well established into the city of Nehalem as well. Spinners have been taking some fish upstream of the Highway 101 Bridge. Bobber fishing in tidewater should also be picking up this week as fish stage in that reach in anticipation of the next significant rain to draw them upstream.

The Nestucca and Salmon Rivers produced fair to good catches last weekend as herring trollers took advantage of perfect tides in the lower estuary and lower tidewater reaches. Spinners become more effective in tidewater when trolled but bobber and bait tossers also did well in the lower reaches of these two systems. The run is underway and both systems are top prospects in coming weeks.

Offshore, anglers have given up on trying to find easy coho limits out of Garibaldi. Like the Columbia run, it seems likely that numbers were over-predicted. There were a few wild coho taken in the jaws today (Wednesday) and we got one (and released it) along the north jetty today; it had to be better than 12 pounds. Although no sport anglers are pursuing offshore chinook, the commercial trollers are taking California bound fish at 70 fathoms and fair numbers of them. It would take some pretty good downrigger balls to access these fish, may be best to leave them to the commercial fleet.

Ocean crabbing is not nearly as productive as it was last fall. It used to be easy limits but we soaked 4 pots today (Wednesday), taking only 17 keepers. It's unlikely to get much better than that but also unlikely to get worse too. Bay crabbing is not all that good, no matter what estuary your crabbing.

Albacore chasers are losing their motivation. Single digit success at 35 to 60 miles just doesn't motivate most salty dawgs. Live bait is also hard to come by the farther you get away from Illwaco and live bait is king this time of year.

Although we had a small rain event earlier this week, it wasn't significant enough to get a bunch of fish into the river systems. If the river level had risen more significantly, it would have made for some pretty impressive river fishing, that's for sure. Maybe next week?

The Guide's Forecast – With no significant rainfall due to late into the weekend, our successes will be dependent on the tides this weekend. With a full moon on Thursday, we'll be on some of the strongest tides of the month this weekend. Of course on Tillamook and many of the coastal estuaries, that means seaweed in the forecast. There will be brief periods of time when you'll be able to avoid the vegetation but it will take up a part of your quality fishing time through the weekend. Here is the watershed by watershed breakdown on what's on the horizon this weekend:

Necanicum River- The tidewater section should have ample numbers of chinook cruising although not a destination watershed for many. Trollers working herring or spinners in tidewater may take a few fish, bobber tossers could find some willing biters in the upper reaches of tidewater on the last half of outgoing tide.

Nehalem River- This should be a top prospect this weekend. We're in the peak of what is usually an early season peak on this system. Trollers working from Wheeler to Nehalem should find some biters on the stronger tide series and bobber tossers should also find some willing fish in the tidewater holes upstream of Nehalem. The jaws will likely be weedy and although fish will likely be moving through there over the course of the tide, the bite won't last long. Some hatchery coho should start to show but don't bank on great coho fishing through the entire season this year.

Tillamook Bay – Anglers should focus their efforts from the lower bay on the first part of the tide, chasing the fish up into the estuary as the tide moves in. The stronger tides should push motivated biters into the upper bay and lower tidewater this weekend. Anglers may wish to employ hardware, such as spinners so you can do the "Tillamook Whip" to rid yourself of the seaweed and keep your gear fishing. Regardless of what gear you're fishing, you'll have to be prepared to deal with seaweed.

The Ghost Hole, Bay City, Ray's Place Piling and along the picket fence should all be good places to intercept chinook as the tide progresses into the bay. The West Channel is holding a few coho but seems largely barren for mid-September. Don't worry however, we have lots of time yet to make up for absent fish this time of year. Yes, it's still weedy over there.

Bobber fishers should also be in a good position, with low slack happening around mid-morning and a good incoming tide throughout the day. Don't hesitate to cast spinners throughout the day as that can often pay dividends when bobber fishing is slow.

The Nestucca and Salmon Rivers- It won't be an ideal tide series for lower bay trollers like last weekend but trolling the upper tidewater reaches should produce some fish. Spinner casters/bobber tossers will likely take the best catches in the upper reaches of tidewater. This is when you need to take good care of your baits, being sure to freshen them regularly and use sand shrimp with your egg offerings.

As far as an offshore option, things don't look all that peachy for the weekend:

FRI

S WIND 10 TO 15 KT...RISING TO 15 TO 20 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 8 FT AT 12 SECONDS... BUILDING TO 11 FT IN THE AFTERNOON. RAIN.

FRI NIGHT

S WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 11 FT AT 14 SECONDS. SHOWERS.

SAT

SW WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 10 FT AT 13 SECONDS.

SAT NIGHT

W WIND 10 TO 15 KT...BACKING TO SW AFTER MIDNIGHT. GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 10 FT. SHOWERS.

SUN

S WIND 25 TO 30 KT. COMBINED SEAS 12 FT.

MON

SW WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 12 FT. SECONDARY SWELL W 5 FT.

Hopefully, everyone will have brought in their crab gear before the weekend with the combined sea forecast being what it is. It won't be pretty and bay fishing will be challenging as well. It remains to be seen as to whether the forecasted weather will bring in fish ready to head upstream or not. Even if they do come into the estuary in force, will they bite? A lot depends on how much water we get and how much the river rises. The river forecast isn't calling for a gully-washer:



Keeping in mind that these hydrograph predictions are rarely correct, if the prediction does come to fruition, there shouldn't be a mad rush to the rivers by these chinook and coho. Note however that after a prolonged period of low water, it doesn't take much to stimulate a run upstream, especially for coho; unfortunately, they aren't known for being willing biters in freshwater. We're talking about the Trask by the way, the only Tillamook system to get any returns of hatchery coho. Wild coho fishing is open on Fridays and Saturdays on Tillamook Bay.

Crabbing won't be a great option this weekend for several reasons:

1. The ocean won't be crabbable (is that a word?)
2. Extreme tides won't be conducive for crab to be out and foraging
3. Bay crabbing isn't all that good

Tuna and bottomfishing also won't be a great option with the forecasted seas. Never mind offshore salmon trolling either. You'll have to work hard enough for your fish inside the estuaries.

Central & South Coast Reports – Bottom fishing has been only fair out of Depoe Bay this week but ocean crabbing has been producing limits of quality Dungeness. One cabezon may be kept as part of the seven-rockfish limit through September 30th.

According to offshore predictions, it's going to get a little sloppy offshore over the coming weekend with a south blow in the weather forecast.

The Alsea is giving up a few Chinook to tidewater trollers working the jaws and just outside but this is a potentially dangerous area so use extreme caution. The river is still too low to be an option.

Trollers in tidewater on the Siuslaw are picking up a mix of adult Chinook and jacks. Fishing is reported as fair. Catches of wild coho have been fair to good. A few of the coho taken recently have been of hatchery origin.

Boats launching out of Reedsport have been doing well for ocean Chinook. Most hookups are coming over depths of 140 to 150 feet. Winchester bay has been good for Chinook with the stretch below Highway 101 remaining most productive. Best results have been during the incoming tide. For the third year, the Umpqua River mainstem from the mouth to Scottsburg Bridge is open to wild coho salmon harvest from September 15th through November 30th. The bag limit is one wild coho daily and two season in aggregate with other rivers that have a two wild coho season limit which includes the Coos, Coquille, Floras Creek, New River, Siuslaw, Alsea, Beaver Creek, Yaquina and Siletz. The upper mainstem has continued to produce good smallmouth bass catches. North Umpqua summer steelhead catches have been fair to good with best results occurring in the early morning hours. The flies-only restriction begins October 1st. The South Umpqua closed to all fishing on September 16th and will not re-open until December 1st.

Chinook fishing in the Coos Bay estuary has been good. The wild coho season started on September 15th in the Coos and Coquille basins. Anglers are allowed one wild coho per day and two for the season. A few trollers have caught California halibut to 30 pounds while fishing the deep water channel for salmon. Bay crabbing has been slow.

While fishing is only fair, boats launching out of Florence are limiting on salmon. Trolling herring at whatever depths the fish show on a depth finder is the key to success. As a bonus, crab limits

are being returned to port. Trolling in Coquille River tidewater is slow although a few Chinook are being taken.

Bay trolling has been slow to fair for Chinook. A few coho are showing up in catches with results expected to improve through October. Fishing for steelhead and half-pounders at Agness has slowed over the past couple of days. Side-drifting and back-bouncing have been effective for Chinook on the lower river. On the middle Rogue, back-bouncing or drifting roe, pulling wrapped Kwikfish and side-drifting have all been effective for Chinook. Both adipose fin-clipped and non fin-clipped Chinook may be kept from Hog Creek boat landing to Fishers Ferry boat ramp until Chinook season closes on Sept. 30th. Steelhead catches on the middle Rogue has been fair. Only artificial flies may be used above Fishers Ferry boat ramp although summer steelhead catches have been good for fly fishers on the upper river. The upper river flow is forecast to increase overnight on Saturday, September 21st, then drop rapidly on Sunday, returning to previous flows in the coming week.

Without the option of an ocean salmon fishery, Chetco trollers have been taking a few inside the estuary. Chinook are also taken occasionally by casting off the fishing pier or south jetty.

Schools of trout located at the south end of Diamond Lake are spooky with the water very clear. Cast to fish on the outside of the school to catch them. Night crawlers have been most effective although fishing has been slow recently.

Fish Lake is scheduled for trout stocking.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Water conditions have continued to improve on the lower Deschutes which has, in turn, resulted in slightly better steelhead catches. With outrageous numbers at Bonneville, steelheaders are waiting for the big numbers to hit. Trout fishing is fair with nymphs effective. Counts at Sherars Falls have improved with double-digit Chinook and summer steelhead passing daily along with a few coho.

Wickiup has been producing a few rainbows and a number of brown trout in the 16- to 18-inch range for fly fishers.

Head to Gold Lake to catch brook trout. Matter of fact, catch all you want; there is no limit and numbers need to be thinned. A Prince Nymph may be the only pattern needed to take a mess of these tasty trout.

Crane Prairie should be producing some good-sized brook trout at this time of year. Casting spoons is often the best way to draw strikes from brookies.

South Twin Lake is producing big rainbow trout to anglers using various types of bait.

Early mornings have been most productive for trollers at Green Peter with pink or green hoochies effective this week in depths of 75 to 100 feet. While as many as half of the kokes landed showing signs of spawning, it's still possible to cull a 25-fish limit of table-quality fish before noon. Be aware that the dropping water level has made the Whitcomb launch accessible only to those using pontoon boats or kayak. Use the Thistle boat ramp for anything larger.

Trolling has been effective for kokanee at Odell with most fish in decent condition and a small percentage to colorful to qualify for the table.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for September 2013

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 rulespamphlet](#) and [emergency rules](#)

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.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

Subscriber Micah M. wrote this week to say, "Hey there. Your Columbia river forecast section (member) shows the regulations as being fin-clipped only, but ODFW has allowed non-fin clipped as well from Warrior rock to Bonneville. See:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2013/september/091213b.asp>

"Might want to update your forecast to reflect this.

"Have a wonderful weekend."

TGF co-editor and **pro guide Bob Rees** replied, "Yes, that's true, I will reflect that in my section now. Thanks."

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Michael Teague: TGFMichael@gmail.com

Chris Vertopoulos: chrisv@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Blue whales around 22 foot dory off Pacific City 09/14:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSq80XopPAQ&feature=youtu.be>

Albacore Guide for Private Boaters:

http://www.sffishing.com/Albacore/albacore_guide_for_private_boats.htm

How to plug-cut herring without a jig:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evkMYh39krs&playnext=1&list=PL9431FB82F9FBA0AE&feature=results_video

GOOD LUCK!