

[The Guide's Forecast - volume 16 issue number 45](#)

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **November 7th – November 13th, 2014**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro – Gorge options are largely over for the year. Historically, there used to be a productive sturgeon fishery here, but not since the Stellar Sea Lions moved in. Trollers may still ply the gorge waters in pursuit of late season coho.

Willamette flows have started to drop and while coho counts are impressive, they too are on the wane. Visibility has improved although catch-and-release sturgeon fishing has held up for the very few trying it. One report indicated a fish on every cast. Multnomah Channel should once again produce some walleye as the water continues to drop and clear with a break in the weather.

Level and flow of the McKenzie River are on a steady drop. With little rain in the forecast over the coming week, this trend will continue. Fly fishing should be good.

With water flows about 5,000 cfs at Mehama, the North Santiam River is still higher than optimum but is predicted to drop into mid-November so it will just keep getting better. Coho are in the river.

With the Clackamas running at roughly 2,100 cfs on today, November 6th, it should continue to fish well over the coming week. Coho are scattered up to and into Eagle Creek.

The Sandy River started rising on November 3rd and was mostly high and muddy until mid-week when it started to drop. Coho fishing remains good but many fish are darkening.

Northwest – Tillamook is still putting out chinook and local area river systems are producing good chinook catches as well. The bay remains consistent at the Bay City Piling with the Ghost Hole taking second place. There were some fish in the upper bay on Thursday with fair numbers of fish taken from Cap Johnson's to the Oyster House Hole.

The Wilson has been producing chinook from Mills Bridge to the mouth and following the moderate river rise, water levels should be ideal by Friday. Fish will begin to hold in deeper water instead of moving, by the weekend. The Trask and Nestucca remain strong options into next week with plugs becoming more effective as flows drop.

Crabbing is a poor option on all estuaries this weekend, largely due to fresh water inundation and strong tidal exchanges. The lower Columbia still offers the best opportunity but be cognizant of stronger tides taking buoys under.

Razor clam diggers may see some good action over the weekend as a calming swell and a slowdown in rain could cause clams to come to the sand surface to feed.

Southwest- Offshore conditions should allow boats to get out on the ocean Friday and Saturday this week.

While ocean salmon fishing closed on October 31st, the month of November provides excellent opportunities for rockfish and lingcod without any limitations on the depth at which anglers might fish,

Crabbing has been good for boaters at Winchester Bay. Chinook and occasionally coho are being caught in the bay and up the Umpqua mainstem. Steelheading is fair on the North Umpqua.

Steelheading is slow in the low waters of the lower Rogue, fair in the middle river and improving on the upper Rogue where the flies-only regulation now allows lures and in some stretches, bait.

Bottom fishing is good out of Brookings. Chinook fishing has been good at times on the Chetco River. The upper river opened to Nook Creek on the 1st of November.

The Elk and Sixes Rivers are once again low and will remain that way for at least a week and possibly longer. When rains do come, Chinook will follow. This is a late season run which will still be bringing joy to salmon fishers as the holiday season approached.

Eastern – Steelheading is slow to fair on the lower Deschutes. Counts at Sherars Falls indicate decent numbers of fish heading upriver although catches in this area remain disappointing.

Steelhead have been taken daily on the Grande Ronde River although anglers have had to invest some time on locating and landing them.

Wickiup and Crane Prairie, both of which closed on November 1st, will not reopen until springtime.

SW Washington- The Cowlitz continues to put out impressive numbers of coho salmon for both bank and boat anglers. Drifted eggs and spinners are taking fish on a regular basis but the quality of fish should begin to degrade in the coming week.

The Kalama and Lewis witnessed a good rise this week but should fall back into shape quickly. Action on both systems but particularly the Lewis, should remain impressive.

Klickitat anglers continue to put the hurt on coho near the mouth. Fish are readily taking jigs but eggs have proven effective as well. This fishery should hold up for a while longer given the downstream dam counts.

Soapbox Update: Do you have your seats secured for the Association of NW Steelheaders 26th annual Hall of Fame Banquet on November 15th? This is the big one with lots of great auction items and a great program that highlights all the good things our association does for NW sports anglers. Go to the Steelheaders web site and secure your seats now. The Association would also LOVE to have any wonderful donations you're able to provide. You can contact us through the web site with all your creative ideas. Thank you!

<http://nwsteelheaders.org/events/hall-of-fame/>

Columbia River Fishing Report – With the onset of wet and windy weather, interests in pursuing what few salmon remain is waning on the Columbia River. Crabbers have largely taken over the real estate in the estuary with interest running fairly high, especially on weekends. Crabbing remains consistently good as we took numerous limits last weekend with fresh and recently frozen fall chinook carcasses for bait. An overnight soak proved to be highly successful. We had our best action downstream of the Desdemona Light Marker in 22 to 32 foot of water.

Bonneville passage is just a trickle now although strong coho returns continue to impress fishery managers. A recent run re-calculation indicates we may be nearing the one million mark for returning coho. For some reason, the Willamette isn't necessarily following suit though it remains obvious, it's an impressive return.

Sturgeon fishing, in what used to be an impressive fall fishery in the gorge, is relatively non-existent now; might have something to do with the high interception rates from Stellar Sea Lions in recent history.

The Guide's Forecast – Crabbing will remain the top option for weekenders on the lower Columbia. A fairly intensive tide exchange this weekend will make crabbing challenging. The best tide exchange will actually happen overnight with a short low slack opportunity around day-break.

Razor clam diggers will finally see a window of opportunity this weekend as weather begins to tame and the swell begins to quell. Digging could be productive over the weekend, especially if a predicted east wind continues to knock down a westerly swell by early next week.

With ample numbers of coho still present, trollers working the gorge still have an option using spinners or plugs. As we previously mentioned, this is a relatively new fishery so there will be some trial and error necessary. The gorge from Horsetail Falls to Camas is likely to produce the best results.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Willamette flows have started to drop and while coho counts are impressive, they, too are on the wane. Visibility has improved although catch-and-release sturgeon fishing has held up for the very few trying it. One report indicated a fish on every cast. Multnomah Channel should once again produce some walleye as the water continues to drop and clear with a break in the weather.

Level and flow of the McKenzie River are on a steady drop. With little rain in the forecast over the coming week, this trend will continue.

With water flows about 5,000 cfs at Mehama, the North Santiam river is still higher than optimum but is predicted to drop into mid-November so it will just keep getting better.

The Pacific Northwest Fly Tier's Rendezvous will be held at Jackson Armory at 6255 NE Cornfoot Rd. Portland 97218 on Saturday, November 8th. The Rendezvous will go from 9am to 4pm. Admission \$3.00 to learn from 40 expert tiers. Proceeds from the event will go directly toward fish habitat protection, conservation and educational programs in the Pacific Northwest. There will be silent auctions for flies and gear several times during the day.

The Guide's Forecast – On the Willamette above the Falls, it's coho fishing as there's little else of angler interest at this juncture of seasons. Unlike the Molalla and Santiam rivers, coho fishing is now closed in the Tualatin, Yamhill and South Yamhill rivers and Gales Creek. It's still legal to fish the Willamette at the mouths of any of these tributaries, however.

Fly fishers can enjoy decent results with the McKenzie on the drop in the absence of rain and wind. There will still be October Caddis around as well as Blue-Winged-Olives. Steelheaders will find some colorful late-season adversaries between the town of Leaburg and Leaburg Dam. The best chance to intercept coho on the North Santiam is between the mouth and Stayton. Try drifting eggs under a bobber to tempt them now that populations are high enough to make the pursuit worthwhile. As of the end of October, nearly 4,200 summer steelhead and over 600 coho had been counted at Bennett Dams on the North Santiam.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – With the Clackamas running at roughly 2,100 cfs on today, November 6th, it should continue to fish well over the coming week. Coho are scattered up to and into Eagle Creek.

The Sandy River started rising on November 3rd and was mostly high and muddy until mid-week when it started to drop.

ODFW sez, "The winter steelhead season is just around the corner, and ODFW is partnering with the Sandy Chapter of the NW Steelheaders to sponsor a winter steelhead fishing workshop on Nov. 8 at the Sandy River near Portland.

"The workshop will go from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Glenn Otto Park in Troutdale and will cover three of the most popular bank fishing techniques – plunking, drift fishing and bobber-jig fishing. Participants also will learn where to find steelhead in the river, how to identify native fish, and the best methods for releasing native fish quickly.

"The \$52 workshop fee covers instruction, program materials, use of ODFW equipment and a one-year membership in the Association of NW Steelheaders. Participants must have an Oregon fishing license, combine angling and tag and Columbia River Basin endorsement.

"To learn more about the workshop, and to register, visit the ODFW website at ODFW.com, and click on the Event Calendar button."

The Guide's Forecast – Coho have continued the trend of coming in as biters this year with some anglers reporting (almost to their surprise) landing three-fish limits this season. The North Fork Dam reported a record 6,900 wild coho which would indicate a higher-than-average number of hatchery fish in the Clackamas mainstem as well. Spinners have continued to account for hookups but fresh fish seem to be suckers for drifted roe. Eagle Creek has been kicking out a mix of bright and dark fish under a great deal of pressure lately. As of this writing mid-day on Thursday, November 6th, the Sandy is dropping and while there's still evidence of muddy conditions, it is starting to clear. If water conditions improve prior to the level getting too low, fishing should be decent.

In a recently revised estimate, the ODFW predicted the 2014 coho run in the Columbia should approach one million fish. The Sandy is certainly benefitting from the increased numbers this year but as the run winds down, bright fish will become harder to find amongst those turning dark. Spinners are always a good bet for coho as are corkies or yarn but if the water is showing color, try cured eggs for best results. The mouth of Cedar Creek is a productive and popular spot.

North Coast Fishing Report – Tillamook Bay anglers are still hard at it. Chinook seekers continue to work the bay when conditions allow. This week, heavy storms, turbid water and a bay inundated with dead and dying eelgrass has hampered success. Thankfully, a reprieve looks to be on the way. The most current reports indicate there remains fish to be taken but only small windows of opportunity have existed for the last several days. Low slack at daybreak and the middle of incoming tide through high slack seemed to remain the best options for herring trollers at Bay City and the Ghost Hole. Most other areas of the estuary have not drawn interest or produced much in the way of success.

The rivers remain a focus point for driftboaters in the upper reaches, and sleds in the tidewater section. The Wilson remains the popular one as it sees a larger return later into the season. Beginning with driftboaters, although the Wilson is getting most of the late season attention, the Trask continues to produce November results. Those floating are employing a variety of techniques with back-trolled plugs and shrimp and egg combinations as well as bobber and bait all producing well. The reach from Loren's Drift to Highway 101 offers the best chance for fresh fish. The higher the water volume, the more likely you are to find fresher fish.

The Wilson River driftboat fleet is largely targeting the reach from Mills Bridge to Sollie Smith. The recent high water should produce fresh fish well upstream of that but only as long as the river stays high.

Vanderzanden's to Mills Bridge holds potential as well; as long as the river level remains higher than 4.7 foot on the river gauge. Like the Trask, plugs and backrolled baits should produce equally well. Remember, highway 101 is the cutoff for retaining coho on most Tillamook systems. It appears as if there's as many adult coho returning as there is chinook this season. Be mindful of your fish identification. Anglers shouldn't overlook the Kilchis River as an option but it has likely produced its better catches by now. Dropping flows will concentrate fish into deeper areas. The Necanicum to the north is also a decent late season option but one TGF subscriber indicated the presence of navigational hazards in the way of logjams. This is always a volatile river system with high winds and high water events this time of year.

To the south, the Nestucca is also a good early November option. The river below 1st Bridge remains a viable stretch with fresh fish coming in through mid-month. Like most North Coast systems at mid-week, high water kept boats from floating but it's dropping into shape nicely right now.

Chum are present but it's clearly not going to be a spectacular return. When is the last time we witnessed more coho than chum in our catches this time of year?

Nobody is bothering to crab under these current conditions although Netarts can often produce as it lacks the freshwater input other estuaries receive from their respective river systems. A small window to ocean opportunity may be forthcoming but bottomfish may be the only option. Chinook season closed October 31st on the ocean.

The Guide's Forecast – With strong tides coming this weekend and river heights conducive to attracting returning adults, we could see another surge of chinook into Tillamook Bay. Largely destined to the Wilson and Kilchis Rivers, Bay City and the Ghost Hole will predictably be the best bets. I have had decent November results in the West Channel but that has produced poorly so far this year. You'll see most guides strictly fishing herring by this time as a larger flash and a scented bait should be the better option. Spinners have been a season surprise however. With commonly darker skies, the white/lemon line/greens have good history this time of year. Oh yeah, use green beads with that combination.

Anglers may want to exercise their arms via driftboat or run the sled in the tidewater reaches of these systems as water heights should clearly offer river options this weekend. Most of the larger systems such as the Trask and Wilson will be popular and productive. As the weekend crowd gets motivated, anglers will have to get innovative when competing with fellow savvy fishermen. Do expect a heavy crowd this weekend, with ideal water conditions and fair weather predicted.

As flows drop as competition increases, the lower reaches of these systems should provide the best possibilities. On the Wilson, Mills Bridge to the mouth should all be productive water while boaters working the Loren's Drift to the Highway 101 reach should fare the best on the Trask. Did I mention that you should prepare for crowds?

Smaller systems such as the Kilchis and Necanicum may actually be getting low by the weekend but you should be able to find hiding chinook in their deep water haunts. These rivers get only more technical as flows drop. With waters dropping early bird action will likely yield the best success stories. Plugs can be more effective, working on the territorial response from freshwater acclimated fish.

Don't bank on bay crabbing to be good. Between all the freshwater and an extreme tide series, success should be low. You may want to check out your clamming options along Clatsop Beaches this weekend however. This endeavor will require a lantern however.

If the ocean cooperates, there could be some good bottomfishing catches for the few willing to get their boats salty again. Nearshore reefs should be getting repopulated and deep reef anglers should have some good lingcod options as well.

Central & South Coast Reports – Recreational boaters, kept at bay over the last couple of weeks by rough seas and high winds, will at last have the opportunity to taste the salt this week on Friday and Saturday when conditions will be downright friendly.

While ocean salmon fishing closed on October 31st, the month of November provides excellent opportunities for rockfish and lingcod without any limitations on the depth at which anglers might fish. While ocean crabbing is closed until December 1st, this is one of the best months of the year for bay crabbing.

After a run that far exceeded the quota (thanks to contributed quota overages from other coastal locations) and expectations of anglers, the South Coast Halibut season finally closed on October 31st. Nearshore halibut also closed off the central coast at the end of October with 29% of the quota remaining.

Crabbing has been good for boaters at Winchester Bay where near limits have been reported for those dropping rings and traps at Half Moon Bay. Dock and pier crabbers are taking a few legals as well. Bank anglers throwing spinners have continued to land a few Chinook every day this week. One angler took a 30-pounder near the Winchester Creek Bridge on bobber and bait. There are still a few hatchery coho available in the Umpqua mainstem but the wild fishery has long since closed here. North Umpqua steelheaders are taking a few fish in the Narrows and Swiftwater areas. The South Umpqua is closed until December 1.

Bottom fishing is expected to be excellent for boats launching out of Coos Bay as a long-awaited break in the weather is forecast to be accompanied by calmer seas and milder ocean breezes. With ocean crabbing closed until December 1st, crabbing inside the bay has continued to produce limits. Boaters trolling between the Highway 101 Bridge and the mouth of the Millicoma River are still picking up good-sized Chinook daily although catch numbers have started to wane. Wild coho may be kept here through November 30th.

Skinny water conditions on the lower Rogue has slowed fishing for adult and half-pounder steelhead at Agness. Spinners and flies have been are taking a few. Flows are stable on the middle Rogue and forecast to remain that way. Steelheading has been fair to good for anglers using bait or throwing spinners. The flies-only regulation for the upper Rogue River was lifted on November 1st. Bait is allowed above the Shady Cove boat ramps where drifted roe has been effective for summer steelhead although egg flies are also hooking some fish. Steelheading has been good since the rule change although anglers can expect to release some wild fish to find those hatchery keepers. The river below Shady Cove disallows the use of bait but flies or lures can be used legally now.

When offshore boats are able to launch out of the Port of Brookings and may fish for rockfish and lingcod without depth restriction, few boaters to do so as nearshore bottom fishing remains quite rewarding. The Chetco flow was 3,000 cfs a week ago, too fast for conventional bobber techniques, yet bobbers were required at that time. Water conditions were excellent otherwise. The chatter about plugs under bobber to meet (beat?) the regulations sounded like a joke, but several anglers and some clever guides did so. Bobber and Kwikfish combos were responsible for the demise of quite a few Chinook. The rules Changed on Tuesday this week to allow for conventional fishing tactics and the river also opened above River Mile 2.2, clear up to the salmon deadline at Nook Creek. That said, following rain storms that pushed levels over 4,000 cfs at the end of October, the Chetco near Brookings is way low at 1,000 cfs and forecast to drop steadily through the coming week. Yep, the not-so-tasty irony is that anglers are reduced to bobber-fishing the deep holes and hoping that more precipitation is on the way.

The Elk and Sixes rivers are once again low and will remain that way for at least a week and possibly longer. When rains do come, Chinook will follow. This is a late season run which will still be bringing joy to salmon fishers as the holiday season approached.

Beginning Fly Tying Classes will begin at 4 PM on Sunday, November 16th, and continue each following Sunday for five weeks. Each class will build upon the previous session in complexity of flies tied. Locally important fly patterns are covered each evening. All equipment, tools and materials are included in the price of \$55 per student. Call The Caddis Fly Angling Shop in Eugene at 541-342-7005 for more information to sign up for classes.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Steelheading is slow to fair on the lower Deschutes. Counts at Sherars Falls indicate decent numbers of fish heading upriver although catches in this area remain disappointing.

Crooked River will usually fish well through November. Midges are on tap and expect to see mid-day hatches of Blue-Winged-Olives.

While trout fishing closed on the Wallowa River the last day of October, anglers can still enjoy catch and release as they target whitefish and just maybe catch as steelhead as there are a few early summers around.

Rainfall increased level and flow on the Imnaha River which should entice a few early summer steelhead into the system.

Steelhead have been taken daily on the Grande Ronde River although anglers have had to invest some time on locating and landing them.

Wickiup and Crane Prairie, both of which closed on November 1st, will not reopen until springtime.

Reader Emails: The Inbox

Once again this week we hear from Daniel O., who reports, "Fished on Siltcoos Fiddle Creek arm today (11/5)...trolled for maybe 10 minutes- hooked and landed a chrome bright 8lb hen and went home. Fish were rolling everywhere... Hot pink Brad's wiggler with a black bill. Going again sat or sun"

Thanks for the report, Dan! Keep `em comin.'

Write to the TGF staff:

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Random Links

ODFW to present new Tillamook, Netarts bay clam information at two public meetings:
<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2014/october/103114.asp>

How to Butcher and De-bone Whole Salmon:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2sR8WzPaXU>

Landslide covers Highway 224 near Estacada:

<http://www.kgw.com/story/news/local/2014/11/05/landslide-covers-highway-224-near-estacada/18561137/>

GOOD LUCK!