

SALT-WATER FISHING

THE COLUMBIA RIVER AND PACIFIC OCEAN

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othing compares to the exhilaration of boating over waters where the Columbia River, having reached journey's end, rushes into the Pacific Ocean. Add the thrill of catching large game fish and the experience will be imprinted in memory forever.

Fortunately, these excursions are available to anyone, thanks to charter boats berthed at the Port of Ilwaco. Charters provide outings ranging from sightseeing to bottom- and deep-sea fishing. Everything is provided except personal clothing and favorite refreshments.

Many anglers also fish from private boats, a great option if you're prepared for the conditions.

The view of the land from the seaward side — lighthouses, Astoria, Saddle Mountain and Tillamook Head — is often breathtaking. Crossing the bar, where river and ocean meet, is an exciting time as the skipper skillfully maneuvers the boat through often-turbulent

waters to reach open sea.

Sea lions bask on jetty rocks. Seals' heads pop out of the water here and there, and seagulls fly overhead hoping for a handout.

How can you catch a trophy-sized salmon if you don't have a boat? Simple, head for the Chinook River shoreline east of the Chinook tunnel and get ready for a fun day of sports fishing on a budget.

You will need a stout 9- or 10-foot rod and a spinning reel large and strong enough to crank up at least 200 yards of 40-pound test line. A sliding swivel that can accommodate six to 16 ounces of pyramid sinker goes above the Dacron leader and a 2/0 or 3/0 hook.

Bait of choice seems to be sand shrimp, but anchovy or smelt or anything else a scavenging sturgeon will engulf will do the trick. Cast toward Astoria, sit back to enjoy the comfort of your own rock, and wait for a bite.

But be careful when you rear back to set the hook, jetty rocks can be slippery. If you fish east of the Chinook tunnel, the highway is only inches from your back and trucks, cars, and RVs zip past at 50 miles per hour.



Sturgeon, albacore tuna, salmon, halibut, surf perch — the list of game fish species available in Pacific County just goes on and on. — NATALIE ST. JOHN PHOTO



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FRESHWATER FISHING

Steelhead and trout are abundant in Pacific County including numerous rivers, streams and lakes that are perfect for family outings.

Between Ilwaco and Seaview lies Black Lake, for which offers trout fishing to all ages.

Island Lake is perfect for canoeing and fishing.

Another popular fishing hole is Loomis Lake.

Traveling from the Peninsula, in addition to trout fishing, salmon fishing is allowed in several areas of the Naselle River in season. The same is true on the Willapa River near Raymond and South Bend and the Nemah on the east side of Willapa Bay.



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