

Coastal wild salmon seasons open Sept. 15

SALEM — Wild coho seasons on many coastal rivers and bays will open beginning Sept. 15. This year rivers in 11 basins on Oregon's coast will be open for wild coho harvest including Tillamook Bay, Nestucca Bay, Siletz, Yaquina, Alsea, Beaver Creek, Siuslaw, Umpqua, Coos, Coquille and Floras Creek and New River.

In addition, Tenmile, Siltcoos and Tahkenitch lakes will have wild coho seasons.

Fishery managers are predicting there will be 206,600

adult wild coho in the ocean this summer, most of which will return to Oregon's coastal rivers and streams.

This is slightly below last year's predicted return, and significantly lower than the 2014 actual return of 359,624 fish.

"Unlike recent years, this year's projections are not as consistent up and down the coast, resulting in shorter seasons on some rivers, while others are very similar to last year," said Mike Gray, ODFW fish biologist in Charleston.

On the North Coast, there will be shortened seasons in the Tillamook and Nestucca basins and, due to poorer forecasted status, the Nehalem will not open for wild coho at all (though it remains open for hatchery coho).

"Our North Coast seasons are more conservative this year than 2013-2014, but we still have opportunity for harvest," said Chris Knutsen, ODFW fish biologist in Tillamook.

Seasons on the Alsea and Siuslaw also will be shortened

compared to 2014, while the Umpqua will join many other basins that have been moved away from specific harvest quotas. Instead biologists are implementing a fixed season length.

River-specific seasons, quotas, bag limits and closed areas can be found on the ODFW website at www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/coastal_salmon_seasons.asp.

While 2015 is the seventh year in a row that Oregon's coastal rivers will open to the

harvest of wild coho, fishery managers are sounding a cautionary note for the near future.

"We're coming off some very robust years for wild coho, but based on what we're seeing with ocean conditions, anglers should begin preparing for smaller wild coho returns and reduced harvest opportunities in upcoming years," said Chris Kern, ODFW fish division deputy administrator.

Fishing from 1B

fishery is fair in the mainstem and in some of the large tributaries. With the low and warm river conditions the best opportunities will be in the early morning when water temperatures are the coolest. Small spinners are typically productive as well as small spoons or fly fishing with nymphs or streamers.

SILETZ RIVER: *Steelhead,*

cutthroat trout

Summer steelhead fishing is fair in the upper river. Low flows and warming river temperatures are making new fish race up into the cooler holding waters of the gorge area. New fish will continually be moving into the river through the summer and early fall. River flows are much lower than normal for this time of year so think small and subtle presentations.

Typical steelhead tactics

apply such as bobber and jig / bait, or casting spoons or spinners. Cutthroat trout are now also open to harvest and can be found throughout the main stem river and many large tributaries.

WILSON RIVER: *Steelhead, Chinook, cutthroat*

Summer steelhead fishing is slow. Fishing for cutthroat trout should be fair. Use lighter gear for best results as the water is extremely low and clear. Spring Chinook fishing is closed. All angling is closed after 2 p.m. above tidewater until further notice.

YAQUINA RIVER: *Cutthroat trout*

Cutthroat trout fishing is slow to fair. The best opportunities are coming in the early mornings when river temperatures are the coolest. River conditions are very low and warm for this time of year. The mainstem Yaquina and Big Elk Creek are good places to try casting small spinners or spoons as well as bait fishing near the head of tide.

UMPQUA RIVER, SOUTH: *Steelhead*

The South Umpqua River, including all tributaries, is closed to fishing for trout, steelhead, and salmon from 2 p.m. until an hour before sun-

rise. The mainstem South Umpqua upstream to Jackson Creek Bridge is open to fishing, with trout fishing being strictly catch and release.

Catch and release trout fishing in South Umpqua tributaries below Jackson Creek Bridge is also open, with fishing restricted to the use of artificial flies and lures.

Smallmouth bass fishing, which remains open under normal rules, should be productive especially in the morning and late afternoon/early evening.

COOS COUNTY LAKES/PONDS: *Largemouth bass, bluegills*

Fishing for largemouth bass and bluegills has been good in many of the Coos County lakes. Fishing for bass will be best in the mornings and late evenings. Fish for bluegills around structure like submerged logs and weed lines.

TENMILE BASIN: *Trout, largemouth bass, yellow perch*

Streams in the Tenmile Basin are open for trout although there is a 2 p.m. fishing closure for trout, salmon and steelhead in streams above tidewater. Most of the larger rivers will be too warm for trout and the water level in many of the smaller streams is extremely low. Fishing is restricted to artificial flies and lures in streams above tidewater.

The water level in Tenmile Lakes is extremely low and boat anglers should use caution when boating in the lakes. Tenmile Lakes is open all year for trout but trout fishing has been slow.

Bass anglers have been catching several largemouth bass in Tenmile Lakes. Bass can be found this time of the year in shallow water near structure like logs or weed lines.

WINCHESTER BAY: *Bottomfish, perch*

Fishing for bottomfish in the Triangle and South jetty has been successful. Perch fishing has been productive in the bay, and it was reported that good size striped perch were being caught along the jetty.

Crabbing has been improving, and there have been reports of coho and Chinook being caught in the ocean off of Winchester Bay.

PACIFIC OCEAN and BEACHES: *Bottomfish, salmon, Dungeness crab, tuna*

The ocean is open for harvest of Dungeness crab and it's

been good outside of Coos Bay and Winchester Bay.

Recreational ocean salmon season from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. is open for Chinook salmon. The non-selective coho season opened Sept. 4. The bag limit is two salmon per day, and a minimum size for Chinook salmon at 24 inches or larger. Fishing for Chinook from Bandon to Winchester Bay has been slow.

Tuna fishing along the south coast was spotty. Some boats did very well with most fish caught 20-30 miles off shore.

The nearshore halibut season opened on July 1. The fishery is open 7 days per week inside the 40-fathom line. Anglers have been catching a few halibut near Bandon inside 40-fathoms.

The Summer All-Depth halibut season opened this past weekend and will be open every other Friday-Saturday until the quota of 43,908 pounds is met.

Fishing for bottom fish is restricted to inside the 30 fathom curve.

• SALMON

Much of the Oregon coast (Cape Falcon to the OR/CA border) is open for all salmon, including coho as of Sept. 4 for non-selective coho salmon season from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt.

North of Cape Falcon, the fin-clipped coho fishery remains open and has been very good to anglers. Anglers fishing in this area are reminded that no more than one Chinook is allowed in the daily limit of two salmon.

The Columbia River Control Zone is closed.

• PACIFIC HALIBUT

The Columbia River Subarea (Cape Falcon north to Leadbetter Point, Wash.) nearshore fishery is open daily until Sept. 30 or the quota has been met; fishing has been slow.

The all-depth Pacific halibut fishery in this subarea is closed for the remainder of 2015.

• TUNA

Recreational albacore catches picked up last week. South coast anglers averaged four per person, and landings elsewhere were good if perhaps spotty. By most accounts, fish were cruising 30-40 miles offshore.

• BAY CLAMS

Coos Bay, Yaquina Bay, Netarts Bay, and Tillamook Bay are four bays where bay clams, like gaper clams, butter clams and cockles, can be taken if not affected by shellfish safety closures. Recent stock assessments have revealed abundant populations and that current harvest levels are sustainable.

• CRABBING

Ocean crabbing is very good

Limits in places; Some animals still have soft shells. A soft shell indicates the meat will be watery and disappointing. Crabs with hard shells or that have not recently molted — look for barnacles on the shell — are a better option for the crab kettle.



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