

Creel Survey

October 6, 2015

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Salmon/Steelhead

Mainstem Grays River from the Hwy. 4 Bridge to South Fork and West Fork Grays from mouth to boundary markers 300 yards below the hatchery road bridge – Under permanent rules, closes to all fishing from Oct. 16-Nov. 30. These areas will reopen for hatchery salmon and hatchery steelhead beginning December 1.

Cowlitz River – About the same as the past several weeks - fall Chinook are the prominent catch along with some coho, summer run steelhead, and sea run cutthroats. Over half the fall Chinook were wild and had to be released. Fall Chinook are being caught throughout the river while steelhead and sea run cutthroats are being taken near the trout hatchery. Coho catches are spotty.

During five days of operations at the Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery separator, last week Tacoma Power recovered: 98 summer-run steelhead, two spring Chinook adults, one jack, 727 fall Chinook adults, 91 jacks, 196 coho adults, 249 jacks and 10 cutthroat trout.

During the past week Tacoma Power employees released:

- 17 spring Chinook adults and eight coho adults into the Cispus River near the mouth of Yellow Jacket Creek;
- 337 fall Chinook adults, 49 jacks, with 30 coho adults, 213 jacks and two cutthroat trout into the Tilton River at Gust Backstrom Park in Morton.

River flows at Mayfield Dam are approximately 3,570 cubic feet per second on Monday, October 5.

Lewis River – Bank anglers near the salmon hatchery are catching some fall Chinook and coho. Flows at Merwin Dam are around 900 cfs, about 1/3 of the long term mean for this date.

Drano Lake – Including fish released, boat anglers averaged over one adult fall Chinook per rod. Some of the fish are getting dark and were released.

Drano Lake is closed to all fishing from 6 p.m. Tuesdays to 6 p.m. Wednesdays in October.

Klickitat River – Anglers on the lower river averaged over one adult Chinook per rod here too. At Pitt, river flows are around 600 cfs, about in the middle between the record low and long term mean for this date.

Yakima River – From Paul A. Hoffarth, WDFW District 4 Fish Biologist in Pasco - The salmon fishery in the lower Yakima River is holding steady. This past week WDFW staff interviewed 175 anglers with 62 adult Chinook. An estimated 775 anglers fished for salmon in the Yakima River harvesting 258 adult fall Chinook and 11 jacks. Anglers averaged 8 hours of fishing per Chinook. This season, 664 adult Chinook, 40 jacks, and 3 coho have been harvested. This fishery should continue to improve over the final two weeks of the season.

Buoy 10 – Still some light effort, both boats plus North jetty bank anglers. Some coho are being caught off the North Jetty.

Creel census programs are done for the year.

Lower Columbia mainstem below Bonneville Dam – During the first four days of October we sampled 664 salmonid anglers (including 190 boats) with 249 adult and 15 jack fall Chinook plus 5 adult coho but no steelhead. Though any Chinook could be kept, 6 of the adults and 2 of the jacks were released. Two (40%) of the adult coho were kept. Effort is still fairly heavy with over 550 boats and 150 bank anglers counted during last Saturday's flight. Heaviest boat effort was off Bachelor Island with 114 boats observed there.

Bonneville Pool – Boat anglers are catching fall Chinook off the mouth of the tributaries.

Bonneville Dam to McNary Dam – Effective Oct. 16, the anti-snagging rule is lifted. In addition, the night closure in Bonneville Pool is removed the same day.

Hanford Steelhead Fishery (from Paul Hoffarth) – On October 1, the lower Hanford Reach from the Highway 395 Bridge at Pasco upstream to the old Hanford townsite wooden powerline towers opened for steelhead fishing. Only Ringold Springs Hatchery origin steelhead can be harvested in October. Steelhead released from Ringold Springs Hatchery have both an adipose and right ventral fin clip. All other hatchery steelhead and wild steelhead must be released immediately and cannot be removed from the water. Daily limit is two adipose + right ventral fin-clipped hatchery steelhead.

Anglers continued to focus on salmon fishing in the Hanford Reach this past week. WDFW staff interviewed 10 boats (13 anglers) and 47 bank anglers fishing for steelhead. An estimated 111 anglers harvested 8 adipose + right ventral fin clipped hatchery steelhead and 21 unclipped steelhead were caught and released during the first four days of the fishery.

Hanford Reach Fall Chinook Sport Fishery (from Paul Hoffarth) – Fishing for fall Chinook in the Hanford Reach continues to be excellent. Harvest for the week was estimated at 6,419 fall Chinook (6,107 adults and 312 jacks). WDFW estimates there were 8,168 anglers fishing in the Hanford Reach this past week (3,000+ boats). To date, 19,950 adult Chinook and 1,029 jacks have been harvested in the Hanford Reach by the 33,398 anglers.

Fish were harvested throughout the Hanford Reach with the best catch per boat at White Bluffs, Ringold, and Vernita at 2.4 fish per boat. Anglers fishing in the Tri-cities averaged 1.4 Chinook per boat. Overall, anglers fishing in the Hanford Reach average 2.0 Chinook per boat, 7.8 angler hours per fish. Bank anglers are picking up a few fall Chinook each day at the Ringold Springs Access area. This past week 97 Chinook were harvested off the bank.

WDFW staff interviewed 2,297 anglers from 1,025 boats and 220 bank anglers fishing for fall Chinook in the Hanford Reach.

The in-season run update (Sept 30) for the Hanford Reach continues to predict a large return of Up-river brights - 200,567 adult Chinook based on the long term mean, (195,523 based on the 2014 return).

Sturgeon and Walleye

Lower Columbia mainstem below Bonneville Dam – Light effort though walleye are reported being caught.

