

Fishing Journal

Information For The Serious Angler

by John Martinis

July 2017

Fishing Dates

These Seasons
and Limits
May Change

Area 6

July 1-August

Daily limit 2 Chinook release
wild Coho, wild Chum and
wild Chinook
see closure areas

Area 7

July 1-July 31

Daily limit 2 Chinook release
wild Coho, and wild Chinook
see closure areas

Area 8-1

Closed

Does not open for salmon
fishing this summer

Area 8-2

August 1-Sept 4

Limited shoreline fishing
only, Limit two Coho
see rule book for details

Area 9

July 16-August 15

Daily limit 2 salmon, only
one Chinook release wild
Coho and Chum. Release
wild Chinook

August 16-Sept 4

Shoreline fishing only
see rule book for details

Area 10

July 16-August 15

Daily limit 2 salmon, only
one Chinook release wild
Coho and Chum. Release
wild Chinook

Puget Sound Salmon 2017

Fact and Fiction

Fiction: It is false, Salmon fishing is not closed throughout Puget Sound this year. In fact, the 2017 Chinook quota is greater than the 2016 Chinook season quota.

Fact: Areas 9 and 10, Puget Sound Chinook opens July 16. The limit is two salmon, but only one may be a Chinook. Also, release wild Coho. You can keep one Chinook and one "hatchery" Coho or one Chinook and one Pink or one hatchery Coho and one Pink or two Pinks. Those are four possible salmon scenarios. The season is based on the Chinook quota. When the Chinook quota is reached for either Area all salmon fishing comes to an end.

Fiction: Again, this is false, Coho and Pink salmon fishing is not closed everywhere in Puget Sound this year.

Fact: Coho and Pink fishing is closed in Areas 8-1 and 8-2, except shoreline fishing at Possession Point (described on page 113 in the Rules Book). The limit is two Coho.

Fact: August 16 through September 4, Area 9 will be open only for shoreline salmon fishing (as described on page 115 in the Rules Book). Release wild Coho and all Chinook. Again, a likely scenario is: Keep two hatchery Coho or

one hatchery Coho and one Pink or two Pinks.

Fact: August 16 through October 31, Area 10 will be open for hatchery Coho and Pinks. Release wild Coho and all Chinook. Likely scenario: Keep two hatchery Coho or one hatchery Coho and one Pink or two Pinks.

Fiction: Area 10 is a long distance to go salmon fishing if you launch from the Everett Boat Launch, this is not true. Area 10 is only another 10 minutes from the outer Possession Bar.

Fact: Release wild and hatchery Coho in Area 7. Area 7 opens for Hatchery Chinook on July 1. The limit is 2 Chinook through July 31. Then, on August 1st Area 7 will go to a one hatchery or wild Chinook limit, release all Coho.

Fiction: All of Area 6 is open for salmon on July 1 – not true! The portions of Eastern Bank and Partridge Bank that are in Area 6 are clearly not open for salmon fishing on July 1st. Only the white Area on the Marine Area 6 map on page 106 in the Rules Book is open for salmon on July 1.

There it is. Hopefully I have not made any blunders in presenting the 2017 Puget Sound/San Juan Salmon season highlights. You bet, it is really complicated! If you have any other questions concerning the salmon seasons go to this link [Marine Area Rules and download a copy of the salmon rules](#). If there are any mistakes, email me and I will send out a correction

Just Fishing



on the John's Sporting Goods Facebook.

Marine Area 9 Chinook

During the 2016 Puget Sound Chinook season, the Chinook blew right past Mid Channel Bank at Port Townsend and were never seen again until they reached Possession Bar. That was strange because the Chinook population at Possession Bar seemed to be very robust. Will that happen again this year? Tough call! About two days into the Chinook season that opens July 16, 2017, I will have a good idea regarding the game plan. I will pass all information along to all via my John's Sporting Goods Facebook.

This is what I see going on so far. The Tulalip Bubble Chinook fishing has been consistently good. The Chinook at the Bubble are much larger than they were a year ago. Last year the Chinook at the Bubble averaged 8 to 12 pounds. This year the Chinook being caught at the Bubble are averaging 12 to 15 pounds. If the Bubble is any indication of the health of Puget Sound Hatchery Chinook stocks, all signs look favorable for Areas 9 and 10 opening on July 16.

There are two ideas I would like to recommend for fishing opening day on July 16. At 10:56 AM there is a high tide. That rules out Mid Channel Bank at Port Townsend. That tide is a great tide for fishing Chinook on the east Side of Possession Bar and fishing for Chinook at Kingston/Jeff Head. After

the high tide, it is time to move. I would head right back to Mid Channel Bank and spend the rest of the day fishing at Port Townsend. The low tide at Mid Channel Bank is at 3:38 PM.

Another likely fishing situation for July 16 is to stay at Possession Bar for the whole day. Fish the flood tide on the east side of Possession Bar and fish the Tin Shed Drift on the ebb tide.

How to fish for Chinook when Puget Sound opens is anyone's guess. Last year I typically fished in 175 to 200 feet of water and set my gear at only 150 to 175 feet. At this time, I was consistently fishing above the bottom. Why? Puget Sound was loaded with huge schools of 6 to 7-inch herring. Much of the time these schools of herring were 25 to 50 feet deep in a vertical depth and perhaps a half a mile in length. I located Chinook in the very top layer of these immense bait schools. Will it happen again? We really will not know until fishing starts on July 16th.

When you are fishing on opening day or thereafter, the first thing I would notice is the bait situation. If these immense bait schools are not present then fishing will be the typical "close to the bottom" fishing in 90 to 120 feet of water. If these large bait schools are present, go with the flow and follow the bait.

Puget Sound Chinook Fishing Gear List

Here are items that you should have in your boat before leaving the marina. Don't wait until you are away from the

dock and you hear about that "hot" fishing item. Time on the water is just too valuable. Have the correct gear and have it all tied-up before you shove off. The number one rule when we go salmon fishing in my boat is: Don't tie up any gear in the boat! Have multiple items rigged and ready to go. If you have a tackle failure pull another piece of rigged gear out and snap it on the end of the fishing line.

Gear List

5 Inch Tomic Plug 602 or 603 rigged with 5/0 Mustad Siwash Hook
3.0 Kingfisher Spoon Color Herring Aide rigged with a 3/0 Mustad Siwash Hook
#964 3.5 Kingfisher Spoon
Coho Killer Color Cookies n Cream Ace Hi Fly color chartreuse rigged with a glow skirt and two 5/0 hooks
Glow Skirt Inserts
Custom tied 5/0 squid hooks
Gibbs Red Racer Flasher
30 pound Pline Fluorocarbon leader
Sampo X3CB snap swivels or Sampo X4KB cork screw swivel

Rigging Gear

Tomic Plugs: Rig the plug with a 5/0 Stainless Mustad siwash hook. Tie a 24 to 30 inch 30-pound fluorocarbon leader to the plug and then tie a Sampo X3RB swivel to the other end of the leader. Never place a snap swivel directly to the plug.

Spoons: Tie a length of Pline 30-pound fluorocarbon leader material to the spoon. Cut the leader off at 46 inches. Tie the spoon to the flasher. Now the leader should be exactly 42 inches in length.

Just Fishing



Ace Hi Fly: Tie two Gamakatsu 5/0 black hooks close together. Slide a glow skirt insert down the leader. Now slide the Ace Hi Fly down the leader and over the top of the glow skirt insert. Cut the leader off at 40 inches. Tie the Ace Hi Fly to the flasher. Now the leader should be 36 inches in length.

Trolling Speed

The typical trolling speed for Chinook is 2.0 to 2.5 mph. A lot of times, this particular rule does not apply. If the current is running hard and you are trolling in the direction of the current then you must troll faster. The primary indicator of the correct trolling speed is the angle of the downrigger cable. The cable must be at least at a 45-degree angle. Slightly less or slightly more angle is OK because sometimes the correct angle is hard to maintain. If the cable angle begins to get vertical the fishing gear is doing exactly what the cable is doing. The gear is hanging straight up and down. No self-respecting Chinook is going to take a bite out of a piece of gear that does not look like a swimming bait fish. Keep that speed up!

Fishing Close to the Bottom

Fishing close to the bottom is an art form. It is easy to do but it takes a lot of work. If fish are close to the bottom and you begin to worry about losing a downrigger ball at that time then you have lost a lot of your potential for catching fish. I say that in all sincerity. My good friend August Berger who

was Chinook fishing with me at Partridge Bank in March exclaimed, "John, fishing with you is like going to work." That day produced well over twenty legal size Chinook caught and released. Fishing close to the bottom is work and it pays great dividends if done properly.

When Chinook fishing close to the bottom, the procedure goes like this: let the downrigger ball out until it hits the bottom and then bring it up a couple of feet. A few minutes later I let the ball back down to the bottom and check the correct depth. If you don't do the second check for the closeness to the bottom the downrigger ball and gear could be 10 to 20 feet off the bottom and out of range of feeding Chinook. The next time you go fishing look at anglers in other boats, most of them are sitting on their posteriors enjoying the day. That's just fine but it does not produce results on any consistent basis. Work your gear hard!

Fishing Suspended Chinook

If there are massive bait schools in Puget Sound most likely the Chinook are at the top layer of these bait schools. Let's say the top layer of the bait school is 150 feet deep. At 2.5 mph, you probably should let out 175 feet of cable to fish the top layer of the bait. Do not make the classic fishing mistake of trolling one mile in one direction and another mile in another direction and only occasionally pass through the bait school as you glide along your trolling path. Stay with the bait.

Letting the Tackle Out Behind the Downrigger

A proper length to let tackle out behind the downrigger is 25 feet. That includes all tackle. Have the gear set out behind both downriggers at precisely the same distance. This gives a hungry Chinook the choice between two different offerings. If you are fishing a Tomic plug use a flasher and spoon on the other downrigger. That flasher will be bringing fish in to both sets of gear. Maybe the salmon wants a hardy meal and strikes the plug. Maybe the same fish has been munching on 3 to 5-inch herring and it is prompted by a smaller bait. Give the fish a choice with the correct presentation and make it easy for the fish to choose between two distinctly different types of gear that are only approximately 8 to 10 feet apart. That's mighty smart Chinook fishing!

Chinook Fishing Maps

**Mid Channel Bank
Possession Bar
Possession Bar Tin Shed Drift
Kingston**

John's Thought for the Day: Yes, you might think salt water fishing is "up the creek" this year. However, remember the Snohomish River will be open for salmon fishing.



Tackle For The Serious Angler



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