

The Guide's Forecast - volume 6 issue number 51

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **June 24th – June 30th, 2005**

Fisheries Update: The sturgeon are beginning to show! Do you know how to fish them? The best advice we can give you is head to our technical reports page and check out report #3. This detailed report will give you the best clues on how to maximize your efforts while in pursuit of Columbia River estuary sturgeon. These reports and several more are available at:
<http://www.theguidesforecast.com/techrpt.shtml>.

Salmon and steelhead seasons continue, often overlapping with each other and other runs in Oregon. So it is with late-season spring chinook, summer steelhead and most recently, coho, which have been added to offshore salmon fishing opportunities. The shad run remains worthwhile in the Willamette and Columbia while sturgeon fishing is heating up in the estuary.

A citadel of opportunity exists on the Columbia this time of year. Sturgeon fishing in the gorge is still good (better on non-retention days) for keeper and oversized fish. The shad run is about mid-way through and fresh shad is surprisingly hard to come by in the morning- better in the afternoons.

Sturgeon fishing in the estuary continues to improve but only a little bit at a time. The action below the Astoria/Megler Bridge is picking up but crabs remain an issue. Bring lots of bait. There is a good number of large fish showing up and some of them have sea-lice on them. Tongue Point fishing remains consistent most days.

Lower Columbia River crabbing remains poor.

Salmon fishing in the lower Columbia above Tongue Point is primed for the weekend. The first part and the last part of outgoing tide is the best. Green spin-n-glos for salmon and hot colors for steelhead. The weekend tide series will be the first significant producer of steelhead for the summer season.

Salmon fishing in the gorge remains consistent as we near the peak of the run. The next two weeks will offer the best fishing.

Willamette chinook and steelhead numbers at the Falls have held steady for the first two weeks of June. Springer fishing is slow in the lower river. Shad are cooperating well.

Clackamas anglers are taking very few fish with pressure on the river light all week long. Sandy River steelheaders are finding fish this week.

The Tillamook season is winding down but this weekends tide series will offer the last opportunity of a good spring Chinook season. The upper bay will likely produce the best results as Chinook get trapped in the deeper holes in the heavy tidally influenced sections.

Trollers launching out of central and Southern Oregon ports are catching a few coho, but it's spotty for salmon averaging 10 pounds. Bottom fishing remains excellent.

An additional all-depth spring halibut fishery will take place July 30, June 1st and 2nd according to an announcement earlier this week.

The first tuna of the year was taken (plus 49 more) out of Brookings earlier this week. Expect

more tuna reports as the offshore waters warm.

The entire Oregon coast remains closed to the harvest of razor clams.

Bass fishing is good in several temperate coastal lakes. Smallmouth are being taken by the score on the Umpqua and John Day (East side) Rivers.

Locations stocked with trout this week include Cape Mears Lake, Coffenbury Lake, Hebo Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County), Town Lake, Estacada Lake, Faraday Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Silver Creek Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Clear Lake, Leaburg Lake, Upper and Lower McKenzie River, and Salt Creek.

Cowlitz River – Pro Guide Bob Barthlow (509.697.7125) fished **spring Chinook** Tuesday and Wednesday this week catching three a day at the mouth. There is a dredge parked across the mouth so caution must be used in the area.

Neah Bay – Charter Captain Mike Jamboretz (425.788.5955) has been out catching the boat's limit of halibut in Canadian waters daily.

Westport – Salmon season opens on Sunday and the season is expected to be good this year for **chinook salmon**, less so for **coho**.

Soapbox Update: Sportsmen's river rights are in jeopardy! Two senate bills, SB 1028 and SB 1066 threaten to keep us off waters that we now have use of. Find out more and how to fight it at: www.oregonriverrights.com

Columbia River Fishing Report – There are still lots of options on the mainstem Columbia- from salmon and steelhead to sturgeon of all sizes, anglers have options and can even put together a multi-species pursuit if they have their timing right.

Starting off with keeper sturgeon in the estuary, fishing remains consistent although limits are by no means the rule. Although I have been spending most of my time out of Tongue Point, fishing in the lower river below the bridge is becoming more consistent. The majority of the charter fleet and several of the guides are fishing out of Hammond as well. Crabs remain intense there so extra bait is advised. Some of the most productive areas to fish have been up the middle channel and along Desdemona Sands adjacent to the shipping channel. Lower Desdemona Sands and the Washington channel have also been productive when the tide begins to slow. Anchovies have been a good bait below the bridge except when fishing water shallower than 6 feet. Sand shrimp is the preferred bait in this water. One guide reported catching several sturgeon with sea-lice on them indicating a good batch of fish have entered the river from the ocean. His fish were exceptionally robust this day. Upriver, out of John Day (Tongue Point), the check was a little better than a fish/boat on 6/22. We caught 2 keepers just north of Tongue Point in 8 foot of water during peak ebb. The seaweed has been an issue on the extreme tides that we are witnessing now. This makes deep water fishing very challenging. By the weekend, we will be on the weaker side of the minus tide series offering anglers good opportunities in many different water types.

Also in the estuary, salmon fishing above Tongue Point seems to be keeping anglers interested. The large minus tide series brings out the wing jetty anglers and one angler reported to me that red Hot Shots have been working well as they hooked one Chinook on 6/22. He reported that a boat fishing in his area retained 2 Chinook the same day. The bad news.....a non-selective gillnet fishery begins on Thursday for the summer Chinook of the Columbia. I am being told that the run is managed for a goal of 29,000 escapement. It is hard for me to grasp that a run as

depleted (historically) as this one would have a targeted sport or commercial fishery for wild stock- I guess this is why I am a fishing guide and not a fisheries biologist.? Steelheaders in the same area are finally getting into some action. Bonneville counts have reached that critical 300+ steelhead a day to make it worth an anglers time. Numbers thus far have not been impressive and indications point to a downturn from previous years. None-the-less, this is peak season for summer steelhead plunkers and the current minus tide series offers some good opportunity. Checks from last week only showed an occasional take for mediocre effort.

In the gorge, action is good for sturgeon. **Pro guide Dan Ponciano (360-607-8511)** reported an easy 5 oversized fish using fresh shad on 6/22. Dan stated the lack of pressure has made for a pleasurable experience. The catch and release days are great for those seeking solitude. On top of a great day of oversize fishing, Dan reported 4 or 5 keeper sized fish in the last 2 days while targeting oversized fish with shad strips. Keeping to the swifter water is key to success in the gorge.

Dan also reported that shad fishing is getting to be tough. Afternoons seem to be the better time to target shad so keep a couple of fresh fish from the previous trip to tie you over for a.m. fishing.

Salmon fishing in the gorge remains fair to good. Guide boats are averaging between 3 to 5 chances per day, mostly using spinners in the deeper water near the Oak Tree Hole and the Shad Rack. Most anglers wait until fall to run the Kwikfish for Chinook. I don't really know the reasoning for this but with the concentration of oversized fish in the area, I would think the incidental catch would be troublesome.

ODFW sez: "Columbia River sub area: The Pacific halibut sport fishery in the Columbia River sub area is closed effective June 12, 2005, because the sub area quota has been attained. "

Retention season for keeper sturgeon is set to close in the Dalles Reservoir. Here is the official press release:

Sturgeon retention in The Dalles Reservoir set to close Friday
SALEM - Fishery managers from Oregon and Washington, meeting as the Columbia River Compact, moved Monday to close retention of sturgeon on the Columbia River between The Dalles Dam and John Day Dam, effective June 24 at 11:59 p.m.
The sturgeon fishery is managed for an annual harvest quota of 400 fish, which is expected to be met Friday. Anglers will be allowed to fish for sturgeon on a catch-and-release basis through the end of the year.

Further details are available on the Ocean Salmon Columbia River Program Web site at http://www.dfw.state.or.us/OSCRP/CRM/action_notes.html, under "Sport Fishing Updates."

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon fishing in the estuary seems to be behind previous years performance. The fish checker at John Day indicated this time last year, the count was closer to 1.5 or 2 fish/boat versus the 1 or 1.2 fish/boat. None-the-less, the season seems to be on track for an early July closure. With the action picking up in the estuary, catch and release season should be a barn burner. Weekend fishing should be productive for sturgeon, as a big outgoing tide will greet anglers all morning. You will want to put some thought into your starting area as the first part of the outgoing tide will produce the best results. If you are going to fish below the bridge, the general rule is to start close to the bridge and work your way downstream as the tide nears low slack. Don't be afraid to fish as low as Buoy 20 on the Washington or Oregon side but bring plenty of bait to combat the crab. Some quality fish were taken on smelt recently and it is a

strong alternative when fishing "crab country". If you plan on fishing the Tongue Point area, start in shallower water as keepers will be spilling off of the sand flats into the deeper water as the tide draws down. The outgoing tide bite has been rather slow this week so don't be too disappointed if you can't find them until the tide changes. Anchovies and sand shrimp have been working equally well near Tongue Point. There have been some good bites along the red line upstream of Tongue Point.

Salmon and steelhead fishing in the lower river (Jim Crow Sands, Altoona, Prescott Beach) should be prime for the weekend. An extended outgoing tide, and a minus at that, should produce some good results along the wing jetties and steep sloped beaches. Use plugs for salmon but don't rule out the effectiveness of spin-n-glos for Chinook in these areas. Green seems to be the preferred color for salmon while steelhead prefer the hotter colors- including pinks, reds and oranges. Anglers would be surprised how close to the beach these steelhead travel. You are effectively fishing as soon as you lose sight of your spin-n-glo just off of the beach. That could be water as shallow as 3 feet. Fish a double rig to increase your chances.

Upriver, sturgeon fishing will remain best on catch and release days although this does not seem to find favor with Oregonians. Oversize, keeper and shaker action should remain steady although action has dropped off from previous weeks. Pressure will increase significantly during retention days. Smelt or shad strips remain the top baits for keeper sized fish and although the oversize fish are stuffed with shad, fresh is the only bait that will produce the big creatures.

Salmon fishing should begin to enter into its prime early next week as the minus series that is now occurring will prime fish for the Bonneville area in a few short days. Keep your spinners fishing near the bottom using metallic blades when the sun is shining and solid colors- especially reds in the early morning or when the sky is overcast. Counts at Bonneville should begin to peak in the next two weeks.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Daily counts of salmon and steelhead at Willamette Falls have held fairly steady. Nearly 31,000 springers and over 8,000 summer steelhead had been counted at the Falls as of June 15th.

With the steelhead numbers improving on the lower Columbia, there may be a late-season flush on the Willamette. Sturgeon fishing has been slow with mostly shorts to show for angler's efforts.

The Guide's Forecast – Expect the occasional chinook to be landed in the coming week, but it's getting too late in the season to target these fish with high expectations. A dandy, bright springer was taken at Meldrum Bar on Monday so you just never know.

Shad fishing continues to hold up well in Oregon City with lots of boats on the river and plenty of bank fishermen at Clackamette Park taking advantage of the run. This is the only sure thing on the lower Willamette. Get yours while they're available. Fishing will be worthwhile for another two weeks, then taper off rapidly.

There are better places to try for sturgeon in the upcoming weeks.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Steelheaders on the Sandy River have been scoring with mint-bright summer fish on Cedar Creek this week. Spring chinook are being taken by trollers working the mouth.

Pressure is light on the Clackamas as anglers concentrate efforts elsewhere.

The Guide's Forecast – Expect crowds below the hatchery on the Sandy, but the fish are

coming in and for those who don't mind plenty of company, the fishing should be worthwhile. Early risers will reap the greatest rewards.

Spring chinook returns to the Clackamas Hatchery have been steady with 1,258 fish counted through Thursday, June 16. The lower Clackamas is worth a shot for a late-season springer or summer steelhead. Spinners will take either or both species.

North Coast District Fishing Report – Spring Chinook fishing on the north coast is about the only thing going. Recent reports have not been encouraging but the tides are just now getting to be favorable. This tide series will be the last big push of hatchery fish for the spring Chinook season.

Trollers fishing offshore out of Garibaldi and Nehalem are taking coho in the 10-pound-range. Offshore bottom fishing is worthwhile with yet another all-depth halibut opportunity announced for the area South of Tillamook Head.

Savvy estuary anglers can have a good time with sea-run cutthroat trout this time of year. The trout are busy feeding on juvenile chum fry so spinners and zonker patterns will work well over rocky shorelines.

Some summer steelhead should be available throughout the entire Wilson River and the Nestucca River below Three Rivers.

Crabbing in Tillamook and Netarts Bay is fair while Nehalem Bay is poor.

The Guide's Forecast – The minus tide series through the weekend should afford some good spinner fishing for upper bay trollers. By the weekend, anglers will have the whole morning to work over pooled up Chinook. Be sure you are fishing effectively as you draw close to low slack. Brass/green tipped spinners if conditions are sunny or white/green tip if cloudy. The red/white spinner is a great early morning blade.

Springers will also be taken by bobber fishermen on the lower Trask during the outgoing and low slack tides. Tidal exchanges conducive to this activity will continue mornings through the weekend.

Sturgeon fishing should also be productive if you feel comfortable running the bay in a minus tide. Mud shrimp should work well but be aware the crabs will be competing for your baits so bring plenty to share.

Central & South Coast Reports – Limits of Dungeness are being taken in Yaquina Bay. Offshore bottom fishing out of Newport and Depoe Bay is excellent for rockfish and ling cod when conditions allow.

UPDATE!

Central coast all-depth fishery: The all-depth halibut fishery between Cape Falcon and Humbug Mt. will be open June 30-July 2, 2005. Nearly 41,000 pounds of the spring quota remain available to the fishery. If sufficient spring quota remains after July 2, the central coast spring all-depth fishery may continue on additional days in July. The summer all-depth halibut fishery on the central coast is scheduled to begin August 5 under a separate summer quota.

Summer all-depth halibut opens August 5th through 7th for 57,791 pounds or October 30th, whichever comes first.

Supervising Biologist Eric Schindler (541-867-0300, ext. 252) sent this announcement to TGF, "The ocean recreational selective coho salmon fishery from Cape Falcon to the Oregon/California border opened on Saturday June 18. Weather conditions discouraged many anglers from participating, and catch rates were generally fair with a coast wide average of 0.35 salmon per angler trip.

"The preliminary estimate of total landings for the weekend include 417 adipose fin-clipped coho and 146 chinook salmon. The catch and effort estimates are available on-line at [*http://www.dfwstate.or.us/MRP/salmon/sofspt.html](http://www.dfwstate.or.us/MRP/salmon/sofspt.html)"

Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411) reports from the central coast, " ... just got in from coho fishing out of Depoe Bay. The fishing is slow and the coho are still on the small side. The water temperature ranged from 60.0 to 60.7 degrees as we fished from 140 feet of water out 220 feet. We also hooked a couple of Pacific Mackerel. Hopefully the water temperature will be dropping soon. The coho we need catch were on green and blue hoochies tipped with a small section of herring."

Salmon trolling out of Winchester Bay in 220 feet of water at 80 to 90 foot depths is yielding chinook in the 15 to 30 pound range along with the occasional coho.

Sturgeon fishing fair in lower Umpqua with keepers and oversized running about 50/50. Shad and smallmouth fishing is very productive upstream. Bank anglers are catching plenty of shad from the Yellow Creek Boat Ramp.

Spring chinook fishing remains good on the Rogue River thanks to recent rains. All of tidewater has been productive with both boat and bank anglers taking fish this week.

For knowledgeable, well-equipped skippers, tuna season has officially started off the Southern Oregon coast. See **Random Links**, below for a related story.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Fishing's good on the East side according to pro guide Mac Huff (800-940-3688) who sent this report on June 22nd: "Trout fishing in northeast Oregon this year during June has exceeded all expectations. June is always a productive month to fly fish local rivers and consistently produced fish over 15 inches, but this month more than half of the fish hooked have been 15 inches or larger.

"These results are not precisely predicable, but they are not a surprise either, they are simply what I always hope for. Our dry winter and thin snowpack did not produce any substantial runoff during May and June. For most of that period the rivers were at about half of average flow. The benefit is that many more of the anadromous strain of fish remain in the rivers as "trout" and predictably gives us great fishing, although the size of fish available during any given year varies considerably.

"Fishing results this month are a harbinger of excellent fishing through the remaining summer months.

"Coming up in July is the "Hopper Trip." It is unfortunate that there was no interest in the "Stonefly Trip" this month because other folks that were on the river late in June reported the same excellent fishing that I found. One friend said his daughter had never fly fished before and landed 16 inch rainbow on her third cast.

"Call soon if you are interested in reserving a place for the July "Hopper Trip." "

Washington Update – We have lost regular contributor Kevin Newell. This has slowed things up a bit but are starting to put things back together and have many willing and able contributors.

Cowlitz River – Pro Guide Bob Barthlow (509.697.7125) fished **spring Chinook** Tuesday and Wednesday this week catching three a day at the mouth. There is a dredge parked across the mouth so caution must be used in the area. Fishing 16 to 17 feet of water with red spinners or U20 flat fish was the ticket. Expect about 2 of every 3 to be keepers.

The Guide's Forecast – Fishing should remain consistent over the next week. Focus on the mouth of the river.

Mid-Columbia River – Near McNary, Pro Guide Jeff Knotts (509.366.4052) has been fishing for shad and sturgeon. Shad have been caught with orange and silver wobblers and the sturgeon fishing is improving. The early morning and evening bite has been better. Last Saturday was a great day, all day long.

When the spill is occurring the bite is improved. It is rough fishing during a spill and is also prime time to lose your anchor! Use a trailer float. Jeff has watched four or five boats lose their anchor in one day!

The Guide's Forecast – Fishing for sturgeon and shad should continue to be good through July 15th.

Neah Bay – Charter Captain Mike Jamboretz (425.788.5955) has been out catching the boat's limit of halibut in Canadian waters daily.

The Guide's Forecast – Halibut fishing should continue to be good in the Canadian water. July 1st brings salmon season and Mike believes that the year will be good.

Westport – Salmon season opens on Sunday and the season is expected to be good this year for **chinook salmon**, less so for **coho**.

Northwest Bass & Panfish - Smallmouth fishing at Hagg Lake has been steady but the bass have been running on the smallish side.

The John Day River (East side) has been providing 100+ days to smallmouth anglers. See **Reader Email**, below, for more.

Fishing for largemouth is good now at Tenmile Lake. Soft plastics in the early mornings have been most effective around shoreline structure.

Northwest Trout - Odell has been producing good catches of 12-inch kokanee along with the occasional jumbo mackinaw. Green Peter has been running hot and cold for kokes in the 12-inch range.

Locations stocked with trout this week include Cape Mears Lake, Coffenbury Lake, Hebo Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County) and Town Lake in the Northwest Zone.

In the Willamette Zone, Estacada Lake, Faraday Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Silver Creek Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Clear Lake, Leaburg Lake, Upper and Lower McKenzie River, and

Salt Creek have been planted.

Reader Email

Good Buddy Rich sent the photo below along with this note: "Ana catches the big one ... Papa does not ... mumble, mutter 18" Smallmouth Bass on the John Day River yesterday, Monday the 20th. We caught a total of 137 smalleys all tolled, catch and release only, had a great 10.1 mile drift down the river. Neither of us rowed."



Write to the TGF staff:

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Random Links

First albacore of season landed out of Brookings:

http://www.currypilot.com/news/story.cfm?story_no=10967

Rescued after 58 days at sea:

<http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/asiapcf/06/07/fishermen.rescued/index.html>

Largemouth and smallmouth bass eat these things! Keys to Your Senko Fishing Success:

<http://www.bassdozer.com/articles/senko-fishing.shtml>

Weekly Quote – "No truer words have been spoken - We all learn from each other. The

youngins keep us old farts honest, (well, sort of) - your questioning and curious minds bring on many new innovations and ideas; that gift both young and young at heart with more enjoyment from the sport." - Bob Haering

GOOD LUCK!