

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **March 17th, – March 23rd, 2006**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- The greatest amount of effort is being deployed for spring Chinook on the mainstem Columbia. Although success rates have been low for salmon anglers, the sturgeon bite is even worse. Sealions are experiencing the best catch rates with high concentrations of the marine mammals reported in the river below Longview. Plugs are taking an occasional hatchery Chinook from the mouth of the Willamette and downstream. Water temperatures remain near 42 degrees which significantly slows upstream migration. Catch statistics indicate nearly 80% of the salmon are fin-clipped and almost 90% of them are the "snow-belly" variety (white undersides) which indicates they are destined for the Willamette River.

Recent precipitation has decreased visibility and lowered water temperatures on the lower Willamette River. Winter steelhead counts are over the 4,000 mark but there have been no additional spring chinook to accompany the three which crossed last week.

Fishing for steelhead and the few spring chinook present is slow in the Willamette. If spring chinook is the target, the best chance at taking one is by trolling herring with the current in the mainstem below Multnomah Channel.

Sturgeon fishing is also slow but most productive in the lower portion where a few keepers and lots of shakers have been taken in the Kelly Point area.

The only place Chinook have been reported recently on the Clackamas is at the mouth where hog lines trying for springers are forming daily. Steelheaders have been having consistent action and fair numbers of broodstock hatchery fish are showing in the mix. Summer steelhead have been taken on the Clackamas River.

Sandy River steelheaders picked up a few hatchery fish over the last week on bobber and jigs. Summer steelhead plants have decreased, so should the spring catch of these fish.

Fishing is very slow in the Santiam River where the water is frigid from snowmelt. Those who would like to try should start low on the system for best results, working upstream in the weeks to come as the water warms.

The following waters will be stocked with trout this week in the Willamette Zone in anticipation of Spring Break: Benson Lake, Bethany Pond, Blue Lake, Commonwealth Lake, Dorman Pond, Huddleston Pond, Mt. Hood Pond, Roslyn Lake, Sheridan Pond, Alton Baker Pond, Cottage Grove Pond, Cottage Grove Reservoir, Creswell Pond, Dorena Reservoir, East Freeway Lake, E. E. Wilson Pond, Junction City Pond, Walling Pond, Walter Wirth Lake and Waverly Lake.

Small catches of sturgeon are being taken in the mainstem Columbia reservoirs above Bonneville Dam. The best walleye fishing is taking place in The Dalles Pool where boats are averaging a little better than 2 keepers per boat.

Northwest – Fishing guides participating in last weeks North Coast Rendezvous netted nearly 150 steelhead for the 2 day tournament. Most anglers concentrated their efforts on Tillamook area streams with the smaller rivers producing the best results late in the week. Fishing on the Wilson, upper Trask and Kilchis Rivers was excellent on Friday. The Nestucca fished well over the weekend

but heavy pressure limits the success. Quality keepers are coming from this river however. Most anglers agree, it has been an excellent steelhead year- especially for the wild run.

Later next week, the tides shape up for some decent sturgeon fishing on Tillamook Bay. Fish are scattered throughout the estuary and sand shrimp is working the best. Crabbing remains fair on Tillamook and Netarts Bays.

Siletz River steelheaders continue to enjoy fair to good fishing. Some boats are dialing up double digits and almost half of the catch is broodstock keepers. Sidedrifters are producing the best results but anglers shouldn't rule out alternative methods that give biting fish a different option.

The Alsea and the Siuslaw rivers have been reliable if not great for winter steelhead.

Evening tides produced good results for clam diggers on Clatsop County beaches over the weekend. Favorable tides won't return until the 23rd of this month.

Trout planting this week in the Northwest Zone is extensive, so take a breath if you're reading this aloud: Alder Lake, Big Creek Reservoir #1 and #2, Buck Lake, Carter Lake, Cleawox Lake, Devil's Lake, Dune Lake, Eckman Lake, Elbow Lake, Erhart Lake, Georgia Lake, Lost Lake (in Lane County), Mercer Lake, Munsel Lake, North Georgia Lake, Olalla Creek Reservoir, Perkins Lake, Siltcoos Lake, Thissel Pond and Woahink Lake.

Southwest - No significant change in South Coast water levels is projected for the weekend. If this holds true, it means many rivers will be getting low and clear again unless another storm front moves through.

Results on the Coquille River have been largely flow-dependent. At a decent level and color, the steelheading has been very good this year.

Several spring chinook have been taken on the Umpqua in the Scottsburg area as the season gets underway here. Look for steelhead from Rock creek downstream although results have been unpredictable here even when conditions are ideal.

The Rogue River crested on the 9th and has been dropping steadily since that date. Anglers may expect to find decent steelheading and increasing numbers of spring chinook.

Trout planting in this region will take place at Eel Lake, Johnson Mill Pond, Ben Irving Reservoir Cooper Creek Reservoir, Galesville Reservoir, Loon Lake, Marie Lake and Plat I Reservoir.

Eastern - **Pro guide Mac Huff (800-940-3688)** reports steelheaders in the Eastern region of the state are scoring catches of steelhead at an average of 2 hours per fish. In order of productivity, the Imnaha, Umatilla and Grande Ronde Rivers are producing great results.

Trout fishing remains closed on all streams and some lakes however McNary, Hat Rock and Tatone Ponds will be stocked with legal-sized rainbow trout and fishing is expected to be good.

Southwest Washington- Some spring Chinook are being taken in the Cowlitz and Lewis River although catches are not significant. A mix of late winter steelhead and a few Chinook are being caught on the Kalama River.

There was no sign of smelt for sport dippers in the Cowlitz River although recent bird activity near St. Helens may indicate the presence of small schools still in the mainstem.

Soapbox Update – Hello TGF Subscribers!

I've been a fishing guide for over 20 years on the Columbia and Sandy Rivers.

I've seen first hand that from Ilwaco, WA to Hood River, OR, our salmon are disappearing and with them go our hopes for restoring our economies, protecting our families, and securing the future of our river communities. **We need to act now.**

[Click here to join me in signing a letter urging our members of Congress and Governors to stand with us for real salmon solutions.](#)

Have you read the papers? Spring Chinook returns on the lower Columbia are the lowest they have been in years and fishermen, commercial and recreational, are getting the blame.

Dams are killing 60-90% of our salmon while all fishing combined account for less than 10%- but fishermen are still getting the blame for low returns. Our leaders should direct the big utilities to make dams more fish friendly by:

- * **Washing more water over the dams**
- * **Increasing the flow and speed of our rivers**
- * **Retiring obsolete dams**

Now government officials are threatening our right to fish. Finger pointing is doing little to return salmon to our rivers and good paying jobs to our towns.

[Please click here to sign a letter to your representative and governor urging them to stand with us to protect our way of life.](#)

Thanks so much for your help.

Jack Glass
Fishing Guide,
Sandy River, OR

Another important item of note::

Congressman David Wu and our own **pro guide Bob Rees** among others will speak at the **FISHERMEN'S RALLY FOR SALMON SOLUTIONS** on Thursday, March 23rd at 1 pm. In Astoria at the Columbia River Maritime Museum located at 1792 Marine Drive.

Join them to convince federal government to step up and address the main causes of salmon decline, including the lethal impact of dams and habitat destruction, and focus on real solutions to protect our livelihoods, our communities and our Northwest way of life.

Your community needs you! Join us on the waterfront in Astoria for the Fishermen's Rally for Salmon Solutions to stand up for the future for our coastal communities. This is our opportunity to speak up and be heard. The larger the crowd, the stronger our message to the region and the federal government.

JOIN US!

WARNING

Boaters who are approached by North America Insurance Co. (actually doing business out of Panima City) are warned to just say no. These guys are trying to peddle coverage to Oregon boat owners, but the Oregon Insurance Division says they're not licensed to do so anywhere in the U.S. nor do they have an Oregon business license.

And Finally: From a news release the morning of March 16th:

Federal scientists filed a lawsuit today against the Bonneville Power Administration.

They want to force the government to keep open the office that tracks the number of fish in the Columbia River.

The complaint was by the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility. It claims that Idaho Senator Larry Craig and B-P-A Administrator Stephen Wright retaliated against the Northwest Fish Passage Center.

The lawsuit says they were upset because a federal judge relied on data from the center to order more water spilled from dams this summer to aid salmon migration. The move will reduce Bonneville electricity sales.

The Fish Center monitors the river to protect salmon, steelhead, bull trout and other fish.

Bonneville officials declined comment.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Spring chinook are on the mind of most NW anglers right now. Salmon fishing remains poor for most but a few fish are being caught. The same old story.....the sealions don't seem to be having much trouble catching salmon as they are now a frequent sight on the lower Columbia. Some guides are spending time out of Westport, OR but most days their efforts go fruitless. Creel checks from the Washington side found similar results last week to the 2004 creel census in the same week- one indication that the run may be shaping up nicely. However.....

Commercial catches indicate there are decent numbers of fish present but as predicted, it doesn't look to be a big year. The commercial nets may be at bay for a short while as a larger percentage of fish being taken in the nets are of upper river, protected stocks. The gillnet is an a quandary as a matter of fact as there are too many upriver fish (black faced Chinook) for the fleet to fish the larger, 9" mesh nets and too many steelhead in the river for them to fish the smaller, tooth tangle nets. How long they will remain sidelined depends on how the test fishing goes. To date, about 1,025 springers have been harvested in the gillnet fishery.

Sturgeon fishing remains a bust below Bonneville Dam with next to no keepers reported this week from the gorge to Longview. Effort has shifted to much more salmon oriented however but if the sturgeon were present, people would be fishing for them.

Sturgeon fishing in the reservoirs above Bonneville Dam remains slow as well but some keepers are coming from the Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day Pools. Walleye fishing is the highlight upstream however with creel checks indicating better than 1 walleye per boat in the Bonneville Pool. Boat anglers in The Dalles Pool landed better than 2 walleye per boat while John Day Pool anglers too 18 fish, releasing 20 for 52 boats.

Active birds have been witnessed in the St. Helens area indicating there may still be schools of smelt

around. There is very little commercial effort for these fish and sport dippers on the Cowlitz remain catchless. The water remains cold at about 42 degrees which is a good reason for salmon to stay at sea.

While the 2006 pikeminnow season doesn't open 'til May 1st, those who'd like to try making a few bucks while fishing might want to attend a free seminar on the subject at G.I. Joes on Mill Plain in Vancouver on Saturday. April 8th at 2 PM. Hey, it pays from \$4 to \$8 per fish this year with tagged fish netting anglers \$500 each. Last year, nearly a quarter million of the smolt-eating trash fish were removed from the ecosystem and 170 of bore the bonus tags. Call (360)253-2420 or 1-800-858-9015 for info on the seminar.

The Guide's Forecast – Besides the run timing, A.M. tides are looking favorable for sportanglers to have some good opportunity for salmon catches on the mainstem Columbia. With the nets sidelined until better numbers of the target species enter the river, fishing could be improving over the week. Temperatures have moderated as well which will only improve the catch rates.

Anchor anglers working the lower Columbia from Longview downstream should stand the best chances for taking spring Chinook. Plugs will work well but with the cooler water temperatures, spinning herring should be a good option as well. Just put a long enough dropper lead line on so your herring isn't digging into the bottom of the river. You'll need a place where the current is running hard enough to spin the herring as well. The best tides won't happen until the following week but this will be a good week to get the kinks out of your fishing program. The next meeting for a potential opener is going to be March 21st.

Don't waste your time sturgeon fishing. There are some shakers available just upstream of Longview but if you are going to put in a day of fishing, you might as well go with an early, very tasty spring Chinook.

If the weather continues to moderate, the walleye fishing should continue to improve. Walleye fishing is best in The Dalles Pool and should continue into this week. Small spinners or spin-n-gloss tipped with worms should produce good results but location is key to success. Admittedly, it's a fishery I don't have figured out but for the people that are dialed in, results are good right now!

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Winter steelhead counts, which topped the 4,000 mark on Saturday, March 11th, have continued to dribble over the Falls in modest numbers due to low water temperatures.

The North Santiam is low, clear and colder than even most of Oregon's chilled waters due to the snowmelt which contributes to much of it's flow. This situation will be slow to change, and it isn't likely to warm up significantly over the next couple of weeks.

Cold water has stalled trout fishing on the McKenzie.

The Guide's Forecast – Warmer weather or even mild spring showers will improve the chilly water conditions in the lower Willamette, encouraging steelhead and chinook to run in decent numbers. A rise in water temps will also put whatever fish are present on a solid bite.

Sturgeon fishing is likely to remain slow but steady but a viable option as there are keepers available albeit outnumbered by shorts. Smelt is best, but a variety of alternative will work. Try squid, herring (either pickled or frozen), sand shrimp or even night crawlers which can be effective.

Spring is coming. Matter of fact, the first day of spring is Monday, March 20th, which is forecast to

be sunny and 60 degrees. It remains to be seen if that holds true, but it'd be a treat 'cause that'd be one of the nicest days so far this year. Ah, spring. As in springers.

Over half the native steelhead which have crossed at Willamette Falls are destined for (or have already arrived at) the North Santiam. This means scores of metalheads in every mile of the river, but prospects are best for catch-and-release action in the easy drift below Greens Bridge.

The stretch of the North Santiam from Shellburne Ramp to Greens Bridge is littered with trees and stumps brought down by storms this year. It's dangerous and should be avoided by all but the most experienced and skilled of boaters until clearing has been accomplished. Hopefully, that will have occurred by April 1st, the date scheduled for the next Learn the River trip sponsored by North Santiam River Guides and Salem Chapter of the Northwest Steelheaders Association which will be on that very stretch.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – One of the best things to happen to steelheading in Oregon is the broodstock program. As mentioned last week, these are the first-generation progeny of wild fish which are then fin clipped and released in various rivers. Since broodstocks run at the same time the native component, these hatchery steelhead return with the wild steelhead, stretching the winter season well into spring.

Rivers which benefit from broodstock steelhead include the Wilson, Nestucca and Siletz in the Northwest Zone and the Clackamas and Sandy rivers inland.

The Guide's Forecast – Clackamas steelheaders have reason for optimism. While not offering red-hot fishing, metalheads are being taken and then there's the possibility of sunshine, a warming trend and soon, spring chinook will be up into the Clack.

Steelheading on the Sandy will remain slow until there's some warming of the water. It's too early for springers here, so prospects are dim for a while.

North Coast District Fishing Report – It was another good week of steelhead fishing on the North Coast. River conditions were ideal over the weekend and many people took advantage of the conditions despite the cool mornings and icy road conditions. Sorry if you didn't make it down here without bumping into a guardrail- it wasn't an uncommon experience last weekend.

The Wilson and Nestucca fished well into the week and some quality broodstock and wild fish were landed. Smaller streams like the Kilchis and Necanicum produced fabulous results on Thursday and Friday. The fish were clearly on the run. The mainstem Nehalem is just now becoming an option as it is the last river to clear on the North Coast. It may again go out as more precipitation is forecasted to fall on the coast through the weekend.

Here is a photo of **pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** with a quality steelhead taken on the Nestucca River on 3/15.



The North Coast Rendezvous was another success prior to the weekend. Over 150 steelhead were landed and although the final tally isn't calculated, nearly \$45,000 was raised for fish enhancement projects on the north coast. Thanks to all that participated and volunteered for the event.

Sturgeon anglers remained a bit idle this week as effort and catch has dropped off. The fish are well scattered however so once you find them, don't go hunting for better results.

Crabbing has slowed somewhat too as commercial gear has been set closer to the shorelines and bay entrances. Netarts and Tillamook Bays have tapered off.

Razor clam diggers found good success along Clatsop Beaches last week and tides will continue favorable into the weekend. Early morning will be the time to dig but watch the surf heights. Lower surfs mean better (and safer) digging.

The Guide's Forecast – Another moderate rise in river levels is forecasted for late this week which if it comes to fruition, could put the Wilson, Trask and Kilchis Rivers back into action. These rivers are running a bit too clear for good action right now. The forecasted peak on the Wilson is around 5.5 foot but it looks like we may not get the rain forecasted. Keep your eye on the Wilson gauge and if it remains near 5.0 foot, the Wilson itself along with the Trask and Nestucca Rivers will remain the best options.

With the lower flows, smaller offering will be key to anglers success over the weekend. Small, subtle colors drift-fished in the faster, broken surfaced flows will produce the best results. Anglers equipped to fish small jigs under bobbers should also witness good results. No matter what offering you are fishing, a stealth approach will produce the best results. Most anglers will be fishing pink jigs so if you are fishing behind other boats, it will behoove you to try different colors or different tactics. Innovation will pay in crowded conditions.

Sturgeon anglers will have some options with fair tides through the weekend. Better tides will be coming in the following week but motivated anglers could target sturgeon early in the morning on Tillamook Bay while crabbing the afternoon flood tide. Fresh bait for the sturgeon (sand shrimp) and crab (turkey or fresh fish carcasses) will produce some of the best results.

Razor clamming could produce fair results but like the sturgeon tides, the following week should be the best if the surf cooperates with diggers.

Central & South Coast Reports – Offshore bottom fishing will be an option of the weather break occurs as predicted and it's accompanied by calmer seas. Results have been good with six-rockfish-limits consisting primarily of black rockfish but ling cod are often a bonus in the mix coming ashore.

It's getting a little late in the year for lings to be found commonly in catches from rocks and jetties. Ling cod enter shallow water to spawn in January and February, so this is when larger specimens are often taken. A few seem to hang out at rocky areas year 'round, however.. Ocean fishers will find rockfish and kelp greenling readily available and willing to take their near-shore offerings. Speaking of which, the most common error made by novice to jetty and rock fishing is overcasting. The target quarry is present due entirely to the rocky cover. Beyond the shelter and food source offered by the rocks one might conceivably catch a flounder or a sculpin, but that's about it.

The Siletz River has been providing good, steady action for winter steelhead of hatchery origin and is expected to continue doing so through March. Even though nobody talks about it.

The latest projection shows that South coast rivers will rise, but only slightly. Whether this will improve water temps to low to motivate a bite remains to be seen.

Steelheaders on the Coos River may expect to find a mix of bright and dark fish. Both the Coos and Coquille rivers are slow due to low, clear cold water. A similar situation is stalling steelhead action on the Elk and Sixes rivers.

Several spring chinook have been taken on the Umpqua over the last week in the Scottsburg area as the season gets underway here. Look for steelhead from Rock creek downstream although results have been unpredictable here even when conditions are ideal. The South Umpqua will offer decent steelhead prospects now that the water has started to drop and clear, if, that is, the weather improves and raises the water temps a bit. Sturgeon fishing has been good below Reedsport with the majority of fish too large to keep legally, but persistence is rewarding most with one for the table.

Spring chinook fishing slowed on the lower Rogue for both boat and bank anglers recently. Cold water has put off the steelhead bite in lower river, making the stretch around Grants Pass the most likely to produce. Low water temperatures hasn't stalled the bite in the middle river to the degree it has elsewhere. While plunkers below Adness continue to take the occasional winter steelhead, the spring chinook have not yet arrived en masse. If the weather improves as expected, so should the fishing. Over 2,300 winter steelhead have been counted at Gold Ray Dam. The first spring chinook was counted at the Dam on March 8th, over three weeks earlier than normal. Chinook fishing usually cranks up in May, continuing in the upper river through closure at the end of July.

Winter floods have reconfigured the lower Rogue potentially creating hazards for jet boats and making launching and landing hazardous at normal river levels. A solution has not yet been proposed.

Chetco steelheaders report downrunner (spawned out) fish in the mix here, where cold water has also put off the bite although the water level should be good for the weekend.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Pro guide Mac (800-940-3688) Huff reports, "The Grande Ronde and Wallowa rivers in northeast Oregon continue to produce excellent steelhead fishing results this week as the Grande Ronde in Oregon and Washington each turned in catch rates less than 2 hours per fish. The Wallowa River lags slightly with a respectable 8 hours per fish. Currently water levels in the Grande Ronde are slightly below average flow, in an excellent range for gear or flies. The Wallowa River is unusually low for mid March, which may be contributing to the slight increase in time required to catch a fish.

"A month remains in another excellent spring steelhead season in northeast Oregon."

Pro guide Rick Arnold (541-480-1570) adds this, "Just started guiding after the show schedule this last weekend. Fishing has been fair for bulls at Bill Chinook with several bulls landed up to 9.75 Lb. Most of the fish are at the upper end of the Metolius Arm and we are catching them on plugs and flasher/herring rigs on downriggers. Trolling deep for kokanee has been producing as well. Should improve when the as the weather does."

Northwest Trout - The complete and extensive listing of trout stocking this week in anticipation of the upcoming Spring Break is on the TGF home page for those who may be interested.

Also, for Eugene-area fishers looking to entertain the kids to perhaps introduce them to fishing, the ODFW sent this earlier this week: "Young people interested in angling can find a great fishing opportunity Saturday, March 25 at Garden Lake, Creswell Pond. Garden Lake is in Garden Lake Park east of Interstate 5 at the Creswell exit.

"Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is stocking 1,000 rainbow trout into Garden Lake as part of the Youth Angling Enhancement Program, now in its third year. ODFW staff and volunteers will be available from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. to provide access to some fishing equipment and angling instruction. Contact the Springfield ODFW office at 541-726-3515 for more information."

Every year around this time, I (Michael Teague) get questions about fishing Power Bait. I've demonstrated it's effectiveness when fished properly at youth events, so have made it an annual routine to post the following. Those not interested in this technique or long time readers thinking, "He's running that *again?*" should skip ahead. <G>

The PowerBait System

As with any other system, omit any part and the method will be less effective. Try this as described and it's as near a 'sure-fire' method for catching those State-raised rainbows as you'll find.

This system doesn't require any sophisticated tackle, but be aware that spinning (or spincast) reels must be full (to within an eighth of an inch of the outside of the spool) with fairly fresh line to cast properly.

All of the terminal tackle is widely available. In addition to the PowerBait ('Rainbow' which is mixed chartreuse, orange and yellow is a good one to start with), all you need is hooks, weights and swivels.

While there are regional color preferences (like fluorescent red for Devil's Lake), that preference is often the fishermen's, not necessarily that of the fish.

Get some egg sinkers (the ones with the hole through the center) in whatever size might be appropriate to cast easily with your tackle. With spinning gear, this is usually one-quarter ounce, but the fish won't feel it in any case. Run the main line (from the rod) through the slip sinker and tie on a swivel. Whatever you have on hand will work; if you have to buy some, get 'em on the smallish side.

Trout are one of those fish which are actually a little leader shy, so you want to use a light-weight leader, but four pound is about right for smaller kids. They get excited and will break a leader of any lighter test. Tie 24 to 30 inches of leader to the swivel. on the end of the leader, tie on a size 16 treble hook. These usually come four or six to a package in a gold color. Trout prefer a small bait and I've seen a 10-pound trout landed on one of these diminutive hooks.

Now you're ready to fish. Take a pinch of PowerBait and roll it between your palms. The result

should be about the size of a pea. Not the petite peas, the regular ones. Mold this around the treble hook so that it's vaguely teardrop-shaped. At this point, you should drop just the baited hook in the water at your feet to be certain that it floats because trout (like all salmonids) can't see downward. This is why you see their tails when they feed in the shallows; they have to tip their bodies to see the bottom.

When using this system, the length of the cast from shore is the depth control. Keep in mind that freshly-planted trout won't venture deeper than six feet (the depth of the tanks in which they're raised) for about two weeks after they're stocked due to discomfort in their air bladder. It takes about that length of time to acclimate to deeper water. Trout that have acclimated may be in different depths, frequently shallower early and late, deeper mid-day.

Cast this rig out, allow it to sink and then close the bail. Gradually take up slack 'til you can feel the weight of the lead. Then (this is important) set down the rod. Use a forked stick or lean it against your cooler or tackle box. This will put a foot or two of slack in the line and that's what you want.

Here's what happens that you can't see: The weight lays on the bottom with the colorful, floating bait wafting a scent trail to attract the fish. When the trout follows the trail and takes the bait, there's no resistance (because the line is slack), so the fish takes it with complete abandon, swims off and hooks itself. Here's what you see: The rod starts jumping, your youngster (or adult) gets excited and reels in the pre-hooked fish. This system really works, but is not particularly conducive to catch and release.

Enjoy yourself. There's nothing quite like watching kids catch fish.

SW Washington - "Springer fever" is starting to set in on the lower Columbia River. During an aerial survey the first Saturday in March, biologists counted 219 boats and 184 bank anglers fishing for **spring chinook salmon** from Cathlamet to Vancouver. Nearly 100 more rods were counted that week on the Cowlitz and Lewis rivers. The result: A total of five springers - all hatchery fish - turned up in creel checks that week.

That's about par for the course this time of year, said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "The leading edge of the run is showing up at almost exactly the same time as last year," Hymer said. "As a rule, the catch starts out slow, then picks up quickly once the bulk of the run arrives."

The run usually peaks in the mainstem Columbia in early to mid- April, and a few weeks later in the tributaries, Hymer said. But that doesn't mean time spent on the water now is time wasted. "Hey, this season is just getting started," Hymer said. "The weather's been pretty nice lately and people are shaking down their gear. Occasionally they're catching a nice fish as a bonus."

As previously reported, the projected return of 88,400 upriver spring chinook to the Columbia River system is down significantly from last year's actual return of 106,900 fish. But returns to some specific areas are up. Drano Lake, for example, is expected to see a return of 12,500 spring chinook this year compared to 4,000 last year. The forecast also calls for the return of another 7,400 fish to the Wind River; a total of 3,800 returned there in 2005.

But to Hymer, the Cowlitz River looks like the place to be when the action begins. "A lot of anglers have left the Cowlitz in recent years to fish the mainstem," he said. "But, with an expected return of 8,700 springers this year, the Cowlitz looks underutilized to me." By comparison, the Lewis River is expected to see a return of 4,400 fish and the Kalama River 2,100.

Anglers planning to fish for spring chinook in tributaries that feed the Bonneville Pool should be aware of several new rules approved for the coming season. On the Wind River and Drano Lake, the

season opens March 16. For the Klickitat and White Salmon rivers, the fishery begins April 1. On all those waters, anglers will be required to release wild spring chinook salmon, although the upper portion of the Wind River opens to retention of any chinook salmon May 1. In addition, fishing on the Klickitat River will be limited to three days per week - Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays - through May 31 with a bag limit of one hatchery chinook or steelhead per day.

All of those changes are designed to conserve wild chinook salmon in the Columbia River basin, said Craig Burley, WDFW regional fish manager. "This year, for the first time, all age classes of hatchery chinook salmon returning to tributaries of the Bonneville Pool have been marked for identification," Burley said. "That will allow us to have a selective fishery that maximizes fishing opportunities for hatchery chinook, while conserving wild stocks."

Meanwhile, steelhead fishing has been good on the Kalama River, said Chris Wagemann, WDFW fish biologist. "Most are bright fish," he said, noting that about 85 percent of those fish are wild fish, which must be released. Bank anglers casting for steelies have also had some luck on the Cowlitz in recent days, while those fishing for sturgeon in the Columbia have mostly been catching - and releasing - undersized fish.

Still hungering for **smelt**? There's still a chance the run could show up on the Cowlitz River before the season ends March 31, Hymer said. "They've reappeared in the commercial catch on the Columbia River, but we still don't have reports of any significant catches on the Cowlitz," he said. "The next few weeks will tell the tale."

North Central Washington – Columbia Basin lakes opened to fishing March 1, mostly ice-free but with cold air and water temperatures, said WDFW district fish biologist Jeff Korth of Moses Lake. **Rainbow trout** catch rates were very slow, Korth said. "But that's improving as everything warms up," he added. Martha, Quincy, and Burke lakes in Grant County are particularly worth a trip, he said, and Dusty and Lenore will also be good as the season continues.

On opening day, the best catch rate was measured at Burke Lake, where anglers averaged just over three trout apiece at a rate of about one hour per fish. Burke Lake's rainbows were all 12-inch yearlings, with no carryovers from last year's hatchery stocking counted in the catch. Quincy Lake saw anglers averaging 2.4 fish per angler at about an hour per fish during the opener. Quincy's catch was mostly 10-inch yearlings with about five percent measuring 20- to 24-inches. Martha Lake's opener creel check showed an average of 1.5 fish per angler at just over half-a-fish per hour. Martha's fish were 12- to 13-inch yearlings with about ten percent in 14- to 15-inch carryovers. Upper Caliche Lake had very poor fingerling rainbow survival, Korth said, probably due to the trout fishery being overrun by **perch** and maybe **bass**.

Most of the catch at Upper Caliche on the opener was in 16- to 19-inch carryovers, but anglers averaged less than half a fish apiece. Several selective gear rule lakes with daily catch limits of just one fish also opened March 1, and a few anglers who ventured out to those lakes were checked by Korth and other WDFW staff. Dusty Lake averaged about 4 to 5 fish caught and released per angler, with 2 to 3 fish caught per hour, mostly 14 to 16 inches, with some up to 22 inches. Lenice saw about three fish per angler at the same catch rate, with most fish in the 16- to 18-inch range and a few up to 21 inches. Lake Lenore, which is open for catch-and-release only at this time, had an average of about two 18- to 20-inch **Lahontan cutthroat trout** per angler, at a rate of about one fish per hour. "The fishing is only going to get better at these and many other Columbia Basin lakes," Korth said.

Steelhead fishing is starting to pick up on both the Methow and Okanogan river systems in Okanogan County. WDFW district fish biologist Bob Jateff said fishing should only improve as the

water temperature warms up and fish start to become more active. "We encourage anglers to retain hatchery adipose-clipped steelhead, since one of the reasons for this fishery is to remove hatchery fish," Jateff said. The season is scheduled to close March 31, but anglers should be aware that due to wild fish impacts, closures could come at any time. If early closures are needed, they will be posted on the WDFW website at [Emergency Fishing Rules](#) and at WDFW access points along the rivers.

Due to colder than usual temperatures in February, Jateff also reports there are still ice fishing opportunities in Okanogan County. Davis Lake, near Winthrop, is producing 11- to 12-inch **rainbow trout**; Sidley Lake, near Oroville, is providing good fishing for rainbows up to 14 inches; and Bonaparte Lake, east of Tonasket, provides fishing through the ice for **Eastern brook trout**.

Spectacle Lake, which opened March 1, was treated last fall to remove undesirable fish species and will not be re-stocked with trout until mid-April. So even though the lake is technically open, Jateff said there's nothing to catch until the trout go in. Spectacle is due to receive 30,000 catchable-size rainbows and 1,000 larger triploid trout. In May, it will also be planted with 150,000 fingerling rainbows, which should provide an excellent fishery in Spring 2007.

South Central Washington - The Yakima River from Roza Dam to the base of Keechelus Dam reverted to selective gear rules March 1. That stretch of the river closed Feb. 28 to fishing for whitefish with bait, said WDFW fish biologist Jim Cummins. "March is generally a favorite time for many **trout** fly anglers on the Yakima," Cummins said. "Fishing should pick up as water temperatures rise. Flows in March are generally low unless rain on snow events in the higher elevations cause freshets."

The Naches, Bumping and Tieton rivers remain open for whitefish through March 31, but are closed for trout and steelhead. Most rivers and streams remain closed until June 1.

"All of these selective-gear waters will see a change on May 1 that anglers should be thinking about now as they gear up for spring and summer fishing," Cummins said. "All will require that anglers use knotless nets to reduce abrasion and scale loss and therefore increase survival of released fish." Cummins said most fly fishers already use knotless nets, but others will need to gear up.

WDFW fish biologist Eric Anderson reports the first round of hatchery **rainbow trout** stocking in Yakima and Kittitas County lakes is complete and more anglers are starting to get out on those waters as the weather improves. Anglers can check the weekly stocking report for the latest information at [Catchable Trout Plant Weekly Reports](#).

"One lake that was reported to be stocked, Denmark Pond in Kittitas County near the community of Kittitas, will no longer be available for fishing as the access owners have closed it to public fishing due to development going on around the pond," Anderson noted. "So we have revised our list and taken Denmark Pond off the list. It is small, less than two acres, and the fish will be distributed into the other listed lakes and ponds in the area."

Puget Sound – Anglers continue to have some success hooking **blackmouth** in the area's fisheries. The catch in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) has slowed recently, but anglers in marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands) and 9 (Admiralty Inlet) are finding some nice fish. "I'm hearing reports of some larger fish - 10- to 15-pounders - in area 7, and some decent size fish in area 9, particularly around Useless Bay and Mutiny Bay," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW Puget Sound recreational salmon manager. Overall, the blackmouth season has been fairly good, said Thiesfeld. "This time of year, folks need to decide whether to go spring chinook fishing on the Columbia River or blackmouth fishing in Puget Sound," Thiesfeld said. "With the success some fishers are having with blackmouth, I would stick with Puget

Sound and wait a few weeks before heading out to the Columbia River."

The Everett Ramp has been the busiest in the region, with 41 anglers checking in seven chinook on March 3, and 117 fishers hauling in 16 blackmouth on March 4. Elsewhere, 23 anglers accounted for six chinook at the Bellingham Ramp on March 4, while 62 fishers checked in six blackmouth at the Washington Park Launch the following day.

Anglers fishing in marine areas 7 and 9 have a daily bag limit of one salmon in both areas. Those fishing in marine areas 8-1 and 8-2 have a daily limit of two salmon, but wild chinook must be released. Unlike hatchery fish, wild chinook have an intact adipose fin.

For **steelhead** anglers in northern Puget Sound, the Skagit and Sauk rivers are about the only rivers open for fishing. Most areas of the Skagit River remain open for the harvest of hatchery steelhead through March 15, then switch to catch-and-release from March 16 through April 30. The catch-and-release fishery on the Sauk River started March 1. Wild steelhead are distinguished from hatchery fish by their intact adipose and ventral fins. Anglers planning to fish for steelhead in northern Puget Sound should check the 2005/2006 [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) and WDFW's Emergency Rule Changes, which are posted on the same website.

Anglers interested in Puget Sound salmon fisheries might want to attend a public meeting March 9 at WDFW's Mill Creek office, 16018 Mill Creek Blvd. The meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m.-9 p.m., and is part of the state's salmon season-setting process. Two additional public North of Falcon meetings, which involve planning for the numerous fishing seasons on Washington's waters - including Puget Sound - are also scheduled for March 15 and March 30. Both meetings will be at the Lynnwood Embassy Suites Hotel and are scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. on both days.

Olympic Peninsula – A recent update by **pro guide Brad Shride (877-483-0047)**. Brad writes, "I had a chance to fish out on the Olympic Peninsula coast rivers again this last week and Steelhead were in all the river systems but the cold water and the low water hindered the bite again. Steelhead came in with close to perfect conditions at the beginning of the week into the Bogachiel River, and the Sol-Duc River. We did not get a report from the Hoh River. The rivers came up with a freshet this past week and a flood of fresh fish came in once it started dropping back into shape. These conditions gave some very lucky or savvy anglers the conditions they needed for multiple fish days until the rivers dropped back down to clear and cold conditions once again and we had to change our fishing strategy again for those conditions. Longer leaders, light pinks, black and I used purple for some good bites. Hit the rivers after the freshet and dropping into shape for some fresh fish in all coastal rivers and the surprise of a Spring King?"

We are fishing the Cowlitz river this whole next week for Steelhead and maybe a surprise Spring King. We are booking Spring King trips on the Columbia River from about March 23rd until the closure on about April 19th. If you would like a lower Columbia River Spring King trip you had better call soon as dates are filling pretty fast now with anticipation. Call me at 206-463-9230 or e-mail me at info@oncosportfishing.com. Also booking lower Columbia Sturgeon trips and South Puget Sound Salmon at this time. Thanks and good fishing, Brad Shride, Onco Sportfishing, GI Joe's Pro Staff.

This is a very happy JR with a Bogachiel Trophy Steelhead. This nice Trophy was JR's first and was caught on a Tadpole plug in low water and clear conditions using a 7'-6" 8-12# Hot Shot rod with an Ambassador 5500 reel filled with yellow Hi-Vis Izorline and a 7' clear leader. This beautiful buck weighed in at about 14#-15#'s.



After a winter marked by periods of record rainfall, **steelhead** anglers are once again routing for a bit more liquid sunshine. Rain is in the forecast for the second week of March, the antidote to the low-water conditions that have hindered fishing since the last week in February. That could mean good news for the weekend of March 12-13, said Mike Gross, WDFW fish biologist.

"Steelhead fishing could get pretty hot this weekend," Gross said. "Often, a good time to hit it is when the flows peak and start to drop. That's when the fish move."

Despite low flows, creel checks conducted March 3-5 found that anglers have been finding steelhead - especially wild steelhead - on several north coast rivers. On the lower Hoh River, 95 anglers interviewed caught 50 wild steelhead and one hatchery fish, the only one kept during that period. A similar story played out on the upper Hoh above the Oxbow Campground, where 81 anglers caught 42 wild steelhead and one hatchery fish.

On the Bogachiel River, 141 anglers caught 49 steelhead, divided fairly evenly between wild and hatchery fish. Five anglers were checked on the Calawah River with seven fish, the best catch rate of any surveyed. "There are definitely steelhead in the Calawah, but that river is hard to access - especially during low flows," Gross said.

Gross reminds anglers that selective gear rules will take effect on the Hoh starting March 1, when anglers will be required to release any wild steelhead they catch. Gross also reminds anglers that the Hoh will close to all steelhead fishing April 1 - rather than the usual April 16 end date - because of low run returns.

Farther south, steelhead fishing has also been good to fair on rivers such as the Chehalis, Humptulips and Skookumchuck, said Hal Michael, another WDFW fish biologist. "But they, too, could benefit from a little rain," he said.

On the saltwater, creel checks for blackmouth salmon during the first week of March were heavily weighted toward Hood Canal, where 113 chinook salmon were entered in the 24th annual Geoduck Restaurant Salmon Derby. An 18 pound, 9-ounce fish took first prize, worth \$600. "Hood Canal may be the best place in the region right now to catch a blackmouth salmon," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW Puget Sound recreational salmon manager. He noted that Coyote Banks in Marine Area 6 has also been producing some nice fish lately, as has the middle part of Marine Area 9. Anglers fishing off Ediz Hook near Port Angeles have also been logging consistent catch rates.

Razor-clam enthusiasts should note that WDFW has tentatively scheduled a **razor-clam** dig on ocean beaches March 25-28, followed by another dig April 28-May 1. If marine toxin tests are favorable, razor-clam beaches at Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks, Copalis and Kalaloch will all open for digging on evening tides March 25-27. Two of those beaches - Twin Harbors and Mocrocks

- are also tentatively scheduled to open for a fourth day of digging March 28. As during previous digs this season, no digging will be allowed before noon at any of those beaches.

The dig tentatively scheduled in late April, on the other hand, is the first of the season scheduled on morning tides. Any digging done during that opening must be completed by noon. Provided toxin tests are favorable, four - and possibly all five - razor clam beaches will open for digging in late April. Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks and Copalis are all tentatively scheduled to open April 28-30 on morning tides, followed by a one-day dig May 1 at Twin Harbors and Mocrocks.

An April opening at Kalaloch is in question, however, because the clam harvest on that beach has been unusually low during recent digs. Final word on digs tentatively scheduled this month and next will be announced once marine toxin tests determine whether clams on those beaches are safe to eat. Diggers are required to carry a valid 2005-06 fishing license and keep their clams in a separate container.

Anglers looking ahead to **halibut** season might want to check out [opening dates](#) and other information on the WDFW website. Seasons for most waters are similar to last year, although most areas of Puget Sound will open April 9 - five days earlier than last year. In addition, halibut fishing in marine areas 3 (La Push) and 4 (Neah Bay) will be limited to three days per week to help extend the length of the popular fishery. Starting May 9, those areas will be open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays until the first area quota is taken.

Eastern Washington - The March 1 fishing opener got off to a cold, slow start at the Tucannon River impoundments in Columbia County and at other fishing waters in the region. But the action is starting to heat up as temperatures rise. WDFW Tucannon Fish Hatchery manager Doug Maxey said all seven man-made lakes - Beaver, Big Four, Blue, Deer, Rainbow, Spring, and Watson - are finally stocked with **rainbow trout** and are accessible.

WDFW district fish biologist Glen Mendel of Dayton reminds anglers that when fishing with bait, the first five trout caught must be kept, no matter what size. When fishing with artificial flies or lures, anglers can catch-and-release until they retain the five-trout limit. The reason for the difference, explains Mendel, is that about half the fish caught on bait die because they tend to swallow bait, and less than five percent of fish caught on artificial flies or lures die. "When bait fishermen sort their catch for size, it's a waste of hatchery time and money to raise those fish and stock them in the lakes," Mendel said.

Mendel noted that when the new fishing regulations go into effect May 1, the Tucannon lakes and other year-round waters in southeast Washington will shift to a new rule that only two of the daily catch limit of five trout can be over 13 inches. Mendel says that should reduce the number of dead released fish and distribute the larger trout among more anglers. Travel to the Tucannon lakes has been better than expected, with only minimal traffic delays on the Tucannon River Road during the Wooten Wildlife Area helicopter logging operation.

In Lincoln County, Coffeepot Lake opened March 1 with some ice, but a good number of anglers were out and doing fairly well. The ice is dwindling now and WDFW district fish biologist Chris Donley said that Coffeepot's rainbow trout are averaging 14 to 20 inches with the occasional 22-inch and better fish. Spokane County's Amber Lake opened for catch-and-release fishing on March 1, and despite some lingering ice, Donley reports anglers have been doing well on similarly sized trout. "Catch rates at both these lakes should only improve as the season advances," Donley said.

Winter season lakes in the region - Fourth of July on the Lincoln-Adams county line, Hog Canyon in Spokane County, and Williams in Stevens County - should provide good rainbow fishing till the end of the season, March 31. Several year-round waters in the region have been stocked with hatchery

trout, most notably Sprague Lake, which also has a good number of carryover rainbows from last year's stocking. "Now is the time to go after Sprague's rainbows," Donley said.

It's not too early to start seeking panfish in other year-round waters, Donley noted, especially **yellow perch** in Bonnie, Eloika, and Long lakes. **Largemouth bass** can also be active on east and southeast facing shorelines of lakes like Rock, Silver, Eloika, Sprague, and Bonnie on the warmer days of March, he said.

Water levels are plummeting on Lake Roosevelt, but shore anglers are doing well on rainbows. **Kokanee** catches, on the other hand, seem to be few and far between now. Anglers heading to Roosevelt should check the National Park Service [Lake Roosevelt](#) website for the latest information on water levels and boat ramp access.

For fishers who want to explore the outdoors while indoors, the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council's annual Bighorn Outdoor Adventure Show runs March 16-19 at the Spokane Interstate Fairgrounds. The show features hundreds of fishing, hunting, and outdoor recreation goods and services vendors, along with information from organizations and natural resource government agencies, including WDFW. See [Bighorn Outdoor Adventure Show](#) for details.

Reader Email

One thing we enjoy at TGF is quelling rumors (or, in rare instances, confirming if true). So it is as subscriber Greg B. wrote to Bob Rees this week to ask, "I have to ask is there any truth to the rumors I have been hearing about no salmon fishing this year? "

To which Bob replied. "There is truth to that rumor **BUT**.....the commercial fleet will be effected the most. The closures are going to happen in the ocean- far offshore in some cases. The only run of fish that are depressed enough to warrant such a closure are the Klamath River Chinook. That is Central California. But since these stocks intermix with other stocks off the Oregon Coast, state managers close a few more fisheries to protect the sensitive Klamath stocks.

"The result.....there will be fewer Chinook of other stocks (i.e. Columbia River, Tillamook Bay and Rogue River stocks) that will be harvested at sea and this should actually make other sport fisheries MORE productive than normal. These commercial fisheries take hundreds of thousands of fish each year so with conservation measure like this, there will be some strong benefit to other user groups.

"The media has once again mis-represented what is really happening here in Oregon. It will cost our coastal communities dearly and we must do something to make sure these folks get the right information into their hands.

"Thanks for asking this question. Hopefully, it helps clarify the situation that we are in."

Subscriber Dan S. wrote this week regarding an ongoing and ever-increasing problem. "I was up sturgeon fishing (2/23) out of the fishery (Bonneville) and witness the same sea lion killing not one but two oversize sturgeon. I am sure that this is now happening on a daily basis, Ask the guides.

"Our game commission should be up there monitoring this issue. They are not it seems or maybe I should ask, "what are they doing". At this rate the oversize spawners will be greatly reduced if not gone by summer.

"Remember, this is only one sea lion, by the end of April there will be over 300 below the dam. This issue has to be put in the Oregonian weekly. Make sure that the people know that this could be the start of the end of sturgeon population on the Columbia as we know it. It will take a quarter century

to replace these spawners and 50 to 75 years to replace the 12 to 14 footers. Over the last three years I have witnessed the seals not only kill salmon, which we can regenerate in a short time, but also killing sturgeon at an increasing rate, which we cannot regenerate. They are getting much better at it and now targeting our oversize which we have protected so carefully throughout the years knowing what would happen if we did not. It's our responsibility to not let this happen. An animal that is really not an endangered specie is going to create an endangered specie to say nothing of the economical impact that all of this will have on the Northwest. What is being done?

"I will be writing to Senator Widen and Smith bringing issue to their attention. Please keep your readers informed on this issue. Also question the guides that work this area as to what they see and have them report ALL killings. We have to document, the ODFW does not seem to be doing this and without it we will never know there is a problem until it is too late. And make no mistake about it, there is a serious problem developing. "

Our resident guide and TGF co writer, Bob Rees responded, "Thanks for your comment regarding sealions Dan-

"We are talking to the state agencies about this issue but they are well aware of what is going on. Hopefully, we have some movement on this issue in the very near future.

"Thanks also for being a subscriber!"

Subscriber Rick K. wrote to ask, "Is the Willamette River open for sturgeon retention 7 days per week. It's unclear in the regulations."

Bob Rees wrote back, "To quote the ODF&W website Rick,

""Please note that the Willamette River , including Multnomah Channel, will remain open for the retention of sturgeon on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of each week for the period running from January 1, 2006 through July 31, 2006 . Please also note that anglers are limited to the use of only one single-point barbless hook while angling for sturgeon."

"I hope your fishing is going well."

And here's the weekly **Meldrum Bar Report** from regular-as-clockwork contributor **Kaptn Ken Johnson**: "There are fish in the river! Most everyone knows that, but I fished today and watched them being hooked and netted. A guide, of unverified origin, was seen catching two bright "Summer" Steelhead this morning just above the mouth of the Clackamas in the Willamette River at about 7:00am...I got to "The Blacktop" about 9am, and watched the same boat drift downriver with a fish on the line....Again! When they got it into the net, it appeared to be a Chinook of about 15 pounds, or so. The Clack Hog Line was quiet today with 6 boats working the entrance and no fish on by 12 Noon. Yesterday, 3/13, three Steelies were caught there by that time. At "The Point" as of about Noon today, there were three Steelhead caught on various offerings. Blacktop folks were battling ZERO at Noon, and that is when I had to take off. The Clackamas is a beautiful Emerald Green today and action is picking up...It could be about 2-3 feet deeper however, but we'll take the fishable water any way we can get it. The Willamette, below Oregon City Falls, appeared a bit on the muddy side yet fish were being taken. With the rains still coming, but coming lightly, it will just get better and better unless there is a downpour that washes things out...Again! Fish are being caught at Sellwood and most are on being taken on Herring. Throughout the Willamette River System, rumors of fish being caught from Oregon City to the mouth are now circulating all over the place. A couple of Chinook were caught Sunday at Sellwood and in the harbor using Rainbow Spinner and

Prawn offerings. Oregon Tackle makes a really good one called a "Whizzer" that you can find at Fisherman's and other fine tackle shops...It seems to work very well. It comes in a couple of different configurations but I personally think it is the easiest to fish with a Prawn. The one I like has a quick change PERMANENT clevis that you can change blades on in about 2-3 seconds. Go from a "Rainbow Colorado Spinner" to a "Cop Car" in no time at all. Oregon Tackle also has a simple but effective short Prawn rig with a Prawn wire just long enough to skewer your prawn on. It doesn't leave an extra 2"-3" of wire sticking out like some do. It is designed to load your favorite Spin-n-Glo or Cheater on your line with a couple of bead ahead of your Prawn, the beads then keep the spinning action clean working properly. Some of the bank guys are starting to use it with a cork ahead of it to float it up off the bottom a foot or so . With what has been happening just today, and on prior days too, I'm envisioning a bunch of boats and fisherfolks on the river this weekend. Not to mention bankers filling the beach pretty quickly. Rod Holder Spots are going to fill up fast and it's first come, first served in this business. If the Willamette clears, just a touch more, and if today's action that I observed is any indication of how fishing is going to be, it's going to HOT! Very very Hot! See you out there!"

And finally this week recreational angler and TGF co writer **Michael Teague** Emailed **pro guide Bob Rees** with a question, "I just returned from three days of relaxing, overeating and periodically wielding a rod in the general direction of the Wilson River. As usual, no fish were harmed in this process although we did see a few caught.

One thing I thought about while gazing over the water was your advice that the in wintertime, fishing will often improve once the air temperature warms to that of the water. I know this sounds like a question from one of our readers, but how could the fish possibly be aware of the air temperature?"

To which Bob responded, "How did they find their way back from the Bering Sea? These fish are much more aware of their surroundings than we like to think. But actually, I am pretty sure the water temperature warms with the air temperature. Besides, I don't have to get up so early in the morning if I talk my customers into that theory."

Isn't it great to be a TGF member and be privileged to this kind of inside information?

Going fishing? Write to us when you get back!. Have a question? Ask us! Got an opinion on something? Share it! Outraged by the ocean salmon situation, seal populations or smelt no-show? Shoot us an Email!

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: drees@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: SailCat@SailCat.com

Random Links

The 12th Annual Hawgs N Dogs Spring Chinook Salmon Classic taking place on Friday, April 14th:
*<http://www.nsiافishing.org/PDF/Registration%20Form.pdf>

Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation 2006 Willamette Salmon Quest is Saturday, April 22:
*<http://images.wolfpk.com/owhf/pdf/2006willamettesalmonquest.pdf>

Kings for Kids scheduled for May 5th benefits abused and neglected children:
*<http://www.kingsforkids.org/>

Weekly Quote – "The fisherman fishes. It is at once an act of humility and a small rebellion. And it is something more. To him his fishing is an island of reality in a world of dreams and shadow. " - Robert Traver

GOOD LUCK!