

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 5th, – May 11th, 2006**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- The 2006 Columbia River spring Chinook run is finally underway. Passage at Bonneville has topped 10,000 fish but significantly more must pass before additional sport openers may be considered. A request for upriver sportfisheries has been made.

Sturgeon anglers in the gorge neared a keeper per boat in over the weekend although anglers will find greater challenge with the new Marker 85 deadline in effect on May 1st. Shaker action was great in the gorge and fair in the Portland to Longview stretch. Estuary anglers were closed off to the retention of keepers through May 12th but this fishery remains viable for catch and release opportunities.

Willamette Falls passage is finally underway with ideal crossing conditions for spring Chinook. Counts topped 1,000 fish plus per day beginning on April 26th and conditions warrant numbers like this for the next several weeks.

Angler success remains sporadic however with bait getting hammered by undesirable fish in the warmer water. Backbounced eggs are not a good option and even prawns are having a tough time maintaining integrity. Backrolled plugs remain a good option behind divers.

Multnomah Channel trollers found good success this week with herring producing the best results. Prawn spinners were also a favorite at the head of the channel and the lower Portland Harbor.

The upper Willamette near Newberg is producing a few steelhead and the occasional springer. McKenzie River steelheaders have taken summers over the last week.

Summer steelhead counts at Foster Dam was 362 on April 27th. Recycling continues on the South Santiam with anglers taking a few on the North Fork as well.

Summer steelhead is the primary target for anglers on the Clackamas with bobber and jig rigs or drifted corkies finding a few. Greater numbers of anglers should take some Chinook in the lower river in coming weeks by fishing salmon eggs beneath a float. The numerous smolts are currently taking any offerings.

The Sandy is slow to fair for steelhead- mostly for native fish. Spring Chinook fishing is very slow in the cold water here.

Trout have been stocked this week at Bethany Pond, Blue Lake, Commonwealth Lake, Dorman Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Huddleston Pond, Mt. Hood Pond, Roslyn Lake, Silver Creek Reservoir, Carmen Reservoir, Detroit Reservoir, Fall Creek, Foster Reservoir, Hills Creek, Leaburg Lake, the Upper McKenzie River, Salt Creek, Sunnyside Park Pond, Timber Linn Lake and Waverly Lake.

Northwest – Area rivers remain low as well as effort. Spring Chinook have been taken in the upper and lower Tillamook Bay as well as the Trask tidewater. North winds hampered success and effort for much of this weeks favorable tide series but early morning fishers did find limited success.

Late last week, anglers did take advantage of friendly seas in pursuit of offshore Chinook and nearshore bottomfish. Bottomfishing produced much better results as a kelpworm hatch kept many bass off the bottom out of Garibaldi.

Winds also kept sturgeon anglers from finding good success but fish remain present. Crabbing remains slow on most North Coast Estuaries.

Hebo, Sunset, Cullaby, and Lost Lakes are scheduled to be stocked with legal size rainbow trout the week of April 24th.

Southwest - The 2006 recreational Chinook salmon fishing season off the Oregon Coast from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain is official. It opened Friday, April 28th, seven days a week and is scheduled to remain open through October 31st. Hatchery coho may be taken offshore starting June 17th in this area with the quota reduced slightly to 20,000. There will be no commercial troll effort allowed South of Florence.

Offshore bottom fishing has been excellent, rewarding anglers with quick rockfish and easy ling cod limits. Surf and bay perch fishing is also very good.

Umpqua River temperatures have improved as have catches of spring Chinook.

Results remain spotty but May is expected to deliver decent catches.

Spring Chinook counts at Gold Ray Dam topped 50 as of the latest data on April 25th, a poor showing compared to previous years at this time. The best opportunity for a fresh springer will be mid-morning on the lower Rogue.

Bradley Lake, Lower Empire Lake, Upper Empire Lake Powers Pond and North and South Tenmile lakes were planted this week with hatchery trout.

Eastern - Deschutes anglers will find plenty of water with runoff and earlier precipitation keeping the level high. Fishing has been good for fly-rodders in the stretch along Warm Springs with nymphs drawing strikes when fished close to the bank. Flows in the middle Deschutes have dropped and Blue-Winged Olives and March Browns are hatching. The Crooked River will remain too high to fish this weekend.

Kokanee trollers at Lake Simtustus have been having a hard time targeting schools of salmon. Temperatures remain cold which is certainly a factor.

Metolius anglers will find Bull Trout and rainbows looking for a meal this weekend.

Ana Reservoir, Delintment Lake, Frog Lake, Hanel Pond, Kingsley Reservoir, Laurence Lake, Lost Lake, Pinehollow Reservoir, Rock Creek Reservoir, Thompson Valley and Yellow Jacket Reservoir are scheduled to be stocked with trout this week.

Southwest Washington- Spring Chinook catches have improved on most SW Washington tributaries. The Cowlitz River is putting out better catches although about half as many adults have returned when comparing this year to 2005.

Sealions are consistently taking angler's fish at the mouth of the Kalama and Lewis Rivers. Catches have improved on the mainstems of these rivers however. Lewis River anglers averaged about 1 fish for every 2 rods from the hatchery to the mouth last week.

Wind River angler effort is low but picking up. The catch has improved recently with adequate passage now happening at Bonneville Dam.

Soapbox Update - Meetings in four Oregon ports are scheduled to discuss sport

and commercial groundfish issues for 2007 and 2008.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council currently is setting harvest levels and management measures for the next two years of recreational and commercial groundfish fishing. Seven West Coast groundfish species are declared over-fished, and five of those species affect fisheries off Oregon's coast. These species drive management measures for all groundfish fisheries.

In April the PFMC adopted preferred harvest levels for both depleted and healthy stocks, as well as a range of management measures for all groundfish fisheries. At the next PFMC meeting, June 11-16 in Foster City, Calif., the council will take final action and adopt management measures that will be recommended to the National Marine Fisheries Service for implementation.

"It is important that fishers attend the ODFW meetings so they can let Oregon's representatives to the PFMC know what messages to give the council," said Gway Kirchner, ODFW Groundfish Management project leader.

The meetings will take place:

- * May 15 in Brookings at the Brookings Best Western Beachfront, 16008 Boat Basin Road, Harbor, Ore.
- * May 16 in Coos Bay at the Southwestern Oregon Community College, 1988 Newmark Ave., Coos Bay.
- * May 17 in Newport at the Best Western Agate Beach Inn, 3019 North Coast Highway, Newport.
- * May 18 in Astoria at the Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites, 204 West Marine Drive, Astoria.

The meetings in Brookings, Coos Bay and Astoria will run from 6 to 9 p.m. and consist of a general session to discuss harvest levels, then commercial and recreational breakout sessions to discuss specific management measures. In Newport commercial and recreational fishers will have separate meetings, with the commercial meeting from 1 to 4 p.m. and recreational from 6 to 9 p.m.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Columbia River- Prior to the implementation of the new Columbia River Gorge Deadline (Marker 85), sturgeon anglers in the gorge were scoring excellent results for keepers and shaker action was great as well. This

was a pattern experienced last year and action remained great for several weeks. With the new deadline, success will likely be curtailed and anglers will have to find new areas to pursue keeper fish downstream. The new deadline was put in place to address interaction concerns of the target oversized fishery. These oversized sturgeon come into the faster waters near Bonneville Dam to spawn with the increased flows and to take

advantage of the millions of shad that congregate here before negotiating the fish ladder. The Departments of Washington and Oregon decided with the sealion predation taking place in this area further restrictions were necessary to help prevent the minute hook related mortalities that take place in this fishery. Do you note any sarcasm in my tone?

There should still be ample opportunity for anglers seeking keepers in the gorge but flexibility will be necessary. Smelt will remain a top bait and it never hurts to tip your baits with sand shrimp.

With the cold, hard flows of the Columbia this spring, shad may be late like the salmon are. Even though oversized fish are beginning to show, they may be hard to target until fresh shad become available. Savvy anglers take advantage of the fact that Willamette shad come in first, catching enough for several opportunities by fishing them in the gorge fishery. No sign of Willamette shad either however, waters are beginning to warm enough to expect some soon.

Spring Chinook passage continues to march on with between 1200 and 2500 Chinook passing daily at Bonneville Dam. Typically by this time, nearly half of the run has passed the facility but cold water and a host of other theories has many biologists (and armchair bio's like myself) believing that the run is exceptionally late this year. With only 13,000 fish passed Bonneville at this time, we'll need another 60,000 plus fish to come into compliance with the sport impact of listed Snake River Chinook. Sportanglers need this to happen in order to look at possible additional opportunity and to maintain integrity in sportfisheries management on the Columbia.

Wind River anglers can now look to the fishery at the mouth for decent opportunity for catch. With numbers passing at Bonneville like they are, this is now a viable fishery. Trolled herring or prawns work well near the deadline and plugs in your favorite hot colors is a standard in this fishery.

Drano Lake is picking up as well. **Pro guide Kevin Newell (360-430-2521)** reported 3 fish on Drano Lake Thursday. He was trolling the M3 Flatfish and noted this was the best bite he had witnessed to date for this fishery. Effort remains light.

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon success will likely drop off with the implementation of the new deadline. Before too long, anglers should find spots that will produce both keepers and oversized sturgeon with some consistency. The best keeper action will remain close to the deadline and smelt will continue to be the best option for bait.

It's a bit early for good oversized fishing to take place but once fresh shad become available (it's likely the Willamette will produce the first catches of shad), action for oversized sturgeon should turn on quickly. Most professional believe they can still provide good opportunity with the new deadline in place. With this spring's flows, the west wind may not be a factor but that could change as the season progresses.

Salmon fishing on the Wind River and Drano Lake should go into full swing this week. Passage at Bonneville is consistent enough to believe these fisheries should begin to produce on a more regular basis. Prawn spinners, herring and plugs will all produce results and like most years, the best action takes place before 10 a.m. Oftentimes, an afternoon bite will occur for those patient enough to stick out the slow period.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Finally, Willamette Falls spring Chinook counts entered the triple digits then topped 1,000 fish plus per day beginning Friday, April 28th.

Willamette water levels have risen this week from a low of about 11.5 on at Oregon City (average between tides) to over 12.5 on Wednesday, May 3rd. Levels will drop slightly by this weekend. On a rain-free week this is attributable to upstream release of excess water due primarily to runoff.

While many baits are getting hammered by trash fish in the warmer water, choosing the right bait or lure and presenting it in the right place will ensure a reasonably good chance of drawing a strike.

On a trip to the lower Willamette Saturday, April 29th, we found that cured salmon eggs backbounced from our boat were demolished in seconds by trash fish. Wrapping the bait in Maline cloth extended the duration to two minutes before it was gone. Even prawns were being pecked to pieces in a matter of minutes.

Plugs, whether backrolled behind a diver or fished on anchor are a good option. Try a Kwikfish wrapped with either a sardine (preferable because of the high oil content and strong scent) or herring fillet. Optionally, an adhesive Velcro patch placed on the belly of the plug can be saturated with gel, paste or sticky liquid scent is more likely to tempt a Chinook than if fished bare.

While the new K-11X is the Hot New Plug (for the same old fish), we saw salmon landed last Saturday on Kwiks up to K-14 or so. The only factor which was consistent was color. All the plugs we saw drawing strikes were a combination of chrome and chartreuse. Nothing new about that.

Fishing that day was less than scorching; only five boats dropped out of the hogline in which we were anchored.

A memorable moment that day was when a lad aged 10 or 11 hooked a salmon three boats shoreward of our location. He held onto the fish which was objecting to the sting of the hook by heading towards the mouth of the Willamette against the resistance of the drag while the adults on board efficiently pulled the sea anchors and released the boat to drift downstream. Watching this youngster calmly fight the fish as if it were a daily occurrence was a delight. He was confident and handles the rod like a pro. The Chinook, which looked to be about the average 12-to15 pounder, was netted and dispatched with practiced teamwork.

Having started at 5:30 A.M., our crew was ready to write off a fishless day by 2 P.M., but not before a traditional (and always enjoyable) run to Willamette Falls. The old structures and new water are a sight of which we never tire. While ogling like tourists, one of the sea lions working the area surface within 20 feet of the bow of the boat. In it's maw was a bright spring chinook, or at least the front half thereof, as the tail of the salmon was flopping about the front of the pinnipeds face. A scramble for the digital camera ensued, but this Kodak moment was missed by seconds as the massive creature tipped its head back and slurped the salmonid down whole in a swift, single gulp. This is what resulted when we finally got off a shot.



Pro guide Bill Kremers (541 754 6411) reports, " ... fished the lower McKenzie a couple of times this week. Trout fishing was fairly good for stocked trout. The bug hatches were sporadic so catching the larger native trout was much tougher. Once again the best flies were the size 14 and 16 caddis emergers. We also landed a few fish on the coachman streamer and a rubber legs Prince nymph. The river flow was a little high, but very fishable."

McKenzie River steelheaders have taken a few summers over the last week. Fishing will improve here in May and June.

The Guide's Forecast – Water temperatures at the Falls reached 58 degrees April

28th, holding that temperature through May 2nd, then hit 60 degrees on May 3rd. These are the anticipated conditions that should encourage decent numbers to cross for the next several weeks. At least as decent as it's going to get this year.

The counters at Willamette Falls, who videotape fish passage then count from the tape, seem to be living up to the seasonal warning at their website which indicates they'll get behind when numbers are high May into June. The latest data available at this writing (mid-day Thursday, May 4th) shows 1434 crossed that day for a total of 1586. In these conditions, there's every reason to be anything but positive about the 2006 Chinook run peaking now. Get out and get yours.

In an ironic twist, a greater number of Chinook crossed at Willamette Falls on May 3rd than at Bonneville.

Trash fish are not so problematic for trollers working deeper water. Look for springers to be traveling over 50 feet or more at water, not the depth of those fish and troll herring or prawn spinners at that level. This technique has been responsible for a number of fish this week. Trollers have picked up a number of springers this week on Meldrum Bar with both the head and the mouth emerging as hotspots.

The sturgeon bite has also picked up in the lower Willamette with plenty of shakers and the occasional keeper being boated at Oregon City.

The upper Willamette near Newberg is producing a few steelhead and the occasional springer for boaters launching out of Rogers Landing or roughing it at Wheatland Ferry. It's pretty much a hardware show in this stretch with algae growth closing the curtain early on this fishery most seasons.

With summer steelhead continuing to enter the South Santiam in modest number, the hatchery recycled over 100 again this week to allow anglers an additional opportunity to catch them. Despite improving water temperatures and flows at Willamette Falls, the summer steelhead counts haven't taken off. There's still not much happening on the spring Chinook front in this system but with the counts accelerating downstream, springers will start up here in a week or two. North Santiam River levels remain high but quite fishable as the Corps of Engineers continues to release water from Detroit Reservoir at the headwaters. Look for the caddis to be out in force in a couple of weeks but be certain you can tell a smolt from a trout if you fly fish it.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Summer steelhead fishing kicked up over last weekend on the Clackamas with the lower river giving up some springers.

Sandy River steelheaders didn't see much improvement over the weekend. Spring chinook fishing is at a standstill though a few diehards can be seen daily trolling at the mouth, hoping for the best.

The Guide's Forecast – The Clackamas holds promise in the coming week with improved numbers of summer steelhead available and Chinook making their way into the river. Anglers have scored both on cured eggs under a float but those targeting steelhead continue to do well with jigs.

In addition to being cold, the level of the Sandy is now quite low. While rainfall may turn this system around, write it off in the coming weekend.

North Coast District Fishing Report – The spring Chinook run is underway on Tillamook Bay and will only build from here. **Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503) 349-1377** fished on the bay on 5/4 trolling herring in the lower bay. The soft tide series is making lower bay fishing the best option. Chris went 2 for 3, landing 2, 18-pound hatchery spring Chinook! There were only a few boats fishing and another boat went 3 for 5 in the late morning bite! The wind has hampered success for much of the week. We got blown off early on Monday but hooked one fish (briefly) in the upper bay using a hot-lips Kwikfish. Effort has been light overall. The run is getting underway and the next good tide series holds real promise on Tillamook Bay. Chris also stated that the ocean looked quite friendly and it seems the consistent North wind gave anglers a break mid-week.

Rivers remain low so any fish, albeit salmon or steelhead are low in the system, very wary and not heavily pursued. Tidewater fishing remains the best option on the lower Wilson and Trask Rivers.

Sturgeon fishing picked up again on Tillamook but tides are currently better for salmon fishing than sturgeon. The bite has shifted back to the west channel where most anglers are comfortable pursuing these fish.

Crabbing remains poor on North Coast Estuaries but the ocean has been more consistent.

Offshore bottomfishing remains excellent out of Garibaldi.

The Guide's Forecast – Although tides are not extreme, like the ones we like to see for upper bay spinner fishing, herring trollers working the jetty in the lower bay and ocean when it is friendly, have an opportunity to get into some good action this week. Softer tides allow anglers to work along the jetty with the proper slower roll or spin on the herring and fish are more likely to move for longer periods of time

with less flow in their face. Keep in mind that these fish are calorie counters now that they have entered fresh water so target the times when they can enter the bay in lesser velocities. (Hint: that would be this week). Keep your herring on the bottom but if you have several anglers on board, it may pay dividends to stagger your baits in the lower third of the water column. The blue label herring will work well plug cut this time of year but keep in mind that fish will be keyed into the size of fish most recently available to them. This makes green label herring a good option this time of year as well, as most baitfish this time of year are smaller in size.

The ocean forecast is calling for seas that could prove friendly for anglers. Be sure to check up to the minute reports but bottomfishing and ocean springer fishing out of Garibaldi may produce nicely if the weather permits. The ocean condition can be found here: <http://seaboard.ndbc.noaa.gov/data/Forecasts/FZUS56.KPQR.html>

Although the chance of showers is in the forecast, not enough will fall to produce any measurable results for coastal rivers. Tides are weak too so there shouldn't be much movement into the tidewater sections of the lower Wilson and Trask Rivers.

Coastal crabbing should not be overly productive but with the weak tides, anglers can place crab gear in areas that they normally can't utilize due to heavy currents. Be sure to monitor the weather however as spring systems can creep up on unsuspecting anglers.

Anglers should also prep themselves and their vessels for the halibut opener. For those with the proper boats and equipment, you will want to make sure everything is in working order for the all depth opener on May 11th. The fishing should be productive, weather permitting so make sure your safety gear is in working order.

Central & South Coast Reports – The lower Umpqua is giving up a few spring Chinook, but anglers here are still awaiting the start of the 'real' run. The North Umpqua is providing a few winter steelhead but the South Umpqua is closed to steelheading. Upriver springer fishing is too slow to deliberate target these fish at this time. The real fishery is below Reedsport where sturgeon fishing has improved from good to very good with more keepers showing amidst the oversized fish. Stripers are also being taken in the lower river to add to this smorgasbord.

Stripers are also showing in the Coos and Coquille rivers but few are yet pursuing them.

Anglers continue to hold out hope that the spring salmon run is late this year rather than the alternative, that numbers are down and the fabled Rogue run will be a only a memory in 2006. A decent flush of springers appeared early this week and

have been rewarding anglers recently, however. Whether this is a trend to watch remains to be seen. Rogue River Rigs fished with anchovies are accounting for catches. There have been fewer than 200 spring Chinook counted at Gold Ray Dam. Spring Chinook don't move at night as do Fall salmon and steelhead but rather with the rising of the sun. As a consequence, the best opportunity for a fresh springer is usually mid-morning on the lower Rogue. While the Grants Pass stretch still holds little of interest to anglers, steelhead continue to be taken on the upper river although many of those hooked now are spawned-out fish.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Wickiup Reservoir is producing good catches of kokanee on the troll. Commonly, the kokes here are larger than elsewhere, averaging about 14 inches with 16- and 18-inchers fairly common. Green Peter has been fair for foot-long kokanee while Odell remains slow.

The John Day River is high and out of shape for fishing. Usually, it's kicking out fine catches of large smallies in April but this year it'll be a week or two into May before it'll be fishable.

Davis Lake is a few feet below full bowl and is producing some fine catches of jumbo largemouth bass.

Lava Lake is scheduled to open on May 12th but is still frozen over at this writing. The road to Little Lava Lake is closed. Big Cultus holds promise for large lake trout this weekend.

Northwest Trout - Trout were stocked this week in the Willamette Zone at Bethany Pond, Blue Lake, Commonwealth Lake, Dorman Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Huddleston Pond, Mt. Hood Pond, Roslyn Lake, Silver Creek Reservoir, Carmen Reservoir, Detroit Reservoir, Fall Creek, Foster Reservoir, Hills Creek, Leaburg Lake, the Upper McKenzie River, Salt Creek, Sunnyside Park Pond, Timber Linn Lake and Waverly Lake.

Carter Lake, Cleawox Lake, Munsel Lake and Sutton Lake were planted in the Northwest Zone.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife announced a youth fishing event May 6 at Junction City Pond south of Junction City. ODFW will stock 1,500 trout in the pond for the event.

The event will take place from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Another such event will occur on the May 6th at Bikini Pond located in Mayer State

Park approximately ten miles west of The Dalles where the ODFW has stocked more than 1,000 legal and trophy size rainbow trout. They will provide fishing equipment, angling instruction, aquatic education, prizes, and a hot dog lunch for area youth from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Anglers 13-years-old and younger can fish for free. A juvenile license is required for anglers 14-17 years of age. All state fishing regulations continue to apply.

Reader Email

Subscriber Tom P. reported via the Contact Form at the TGF website, "I was lucky enough to catch a 21 lb springer in Sellwood on Saturday (first light - plug cut herring) and fished Hawthorne Bridge, flats in front of Spag Factory and all the way up just south of George Rogers Park (Lake Oswego) down stream to Sellwood. Did not see another fish caught when we quit at 12:00.

"The Fish & Wildlife checked in one other fish at 12:00 PM.. I would suspect that most of the fish moved up to Oregon City.

"Thanks for your fishing report - I really enjoy it."

Thank **you**, Tom. We really enjoy your reports, too!

Going fishing? 'Got an opinion on something? How 'bout an unusual, amusing or informative fishing story or report? Shoot us an Email!

Write to the TGF staff:

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Random Links

Henry Miller shares what it's like to write a fishing report:
<http://www.statesmanjournal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060504/COLUMN0401/605040351/1075/OUTDOORS>

Details on the 2006 offshore salmon fishery:
<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/salmon/>

Weekly Quote – "There is no use in your driving 200 miles to fish when you can be just as unsuccessful near home." - Mark Twain

GOOD LUCK!