

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 19th, – May 25th, 2006**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- The latest Columbia River spring Chinook return on record continues to impress fishery managers- enough so that biologists agreed to re-open the entire lower Columbia, from Buoy 10 to Bonneville Dam to adipose fin-clipped Chinook. The run has been upgraded to 100,000 adults. The length of the salmon opener will be dictated on angler success and actual run size. The latest the season could go is June 15th. Steelhead and shad are also fair game to pursue in the same stretch of river and should remain open for the remainder of the year.

Salmon anglers fared ok on the May 17th opener although the fishing was not red hot by any means. Heavy flows kept most anglers at anchor in the shallower water or in the back channels near Bonneville and action will likely remain mediocre as the bulk of the run has certainly passed- or so we think.

Sturgeon fishing in the gorge remains excellent with smelt a top bait. Boat anglers averaged over 1 keeper per boat over the weekend and a few oversized sturgeon are being caught. Bank angler success is low due to the new deadline at Marker 85.

The opening of the estuary sturgeon fishery near Astoria was a disappointment on Saturday. Keepers were challenging to find and limits were extremely rare. Water temperatures may have something to do with the low success rates.

Spring Chinook counts at Willamette Falls remain low with the total nearing 13,000 fish though May 7th. The water temperature as of May 12th remained at 58 degrees. Springer action has been slow but steady with prawns and herring. Plain spinners are emerging as an effective favorite. Boaters trolling with the current are taking Chinook in Multnomah Channel. Springers are being boated from the lower Willamette at various locations from the Clackamas River to the mouth.

Pressure on the Willamette will moderate with the Columbia re-opening for Chinook.

The lower Willamette is turning on for smallmouth and largemouth bass. Bass are in pre-spawn stage in the Columbia and Willamette rivers and are likely to spawn in mid-June. The shad fishing is worthwhile and will continue to improve into June.

The Sandy is providing fair fishing for summer steelhead and slow but improving for springers. Chinook have fallen recently for bobber and egg combos.

A few springers have been taken in the lower Clackamas but steelheading has become challenging as smolts are taking baits and lures.

Many of the springers and steelhead crossing Willamette Falls are now in the North Santiam. Anglers are seeing fish above Mehema now.

Scheduled for planting this week are Timothy Meadows, Big Cliff Reservoir, Blue River Above Reservoir, Blue River Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Detroit Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Fall Creek, Foster Reservoir, Hills Creek, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River Upper, Middle Fork Willamette River, Salt Creek, Santiam River North Fork, Sunnyside Park Pond and Trail Bridge Reservoir

Northwest – Spring Chinook are being taken daily on Tillamook Bay. Spinner trollers in the upper bay are taking fish and some success is coming from Trask tidewater anglers. Trollers were able to fish in the calm ocean early this week and forecasted seas may allow for additional opportunity into the weekend.

Offshore halibut and bottomfishing opportunities should be great over the weekend. 2005 regulations prohibit the possession of bottomfish with halibut on board. Halibut success was good on the last opener out of Garibaldi but fish were running smaller than usual.

Area rivers remain low and are forecasted to remain that way but lower stretches are producing some results. The Nestucca below Three Rivers remains a hit-or-miss opportunity but the fish are of quality size reports **pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)**.

Cape Mears Lake, Coffenbury Lake, Hebo Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County) and Town Lake will be stocked with trout this week.

Southwest - The all-depth halibut fishery off the central Oregon coast was excellent during the last retention period. Most anglers are getting limits.

The ocean was smooth and bottom fishing remained excellent out of Newport and Reedsport over the weekend reports **pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411)**. Abundant rockfish and ling cod are available to anglers. The ODFW considers stocks of ling cod to be fully recovered, resulting in discussion to consider increasing the limit.

Anglers who are opting for sturgeon action in the lower Umpqua over the spotty springer fishing are being rewarded with fine results and oversized fish are present. Shad fishing is good around Sawyers Rapids and Elkton.

Perch fishing is excellent in bays and off beaches in many locations. The redbtail surf perch found in ocean breakers is the better table fare.

Weekend effort for spring Chinook on the Rogue River saw little improvement in catch rates. Success remains slow despite great water conditions.

Ocean Chinook salmon season South of Humbug Mountain opened May 15th daily through July 4th.

Boat and bank anglers are doing well at Diamond Lake. The limit was increased May 13th to 20 trout per day and 40 in possession.

Rainbows will be planted at Clearwater, Hemlock Lake, Lake of the Woods and Lemolo Reservoir this week.

Eastern - Fly fishing on the lower Deschutes on the Warm Springs stretch has improved now that the river level is stable. Nymphs are reliable and caddis are active. Golden Stone patterns are taking fish in the middle Deschutes.

Crooked River has come back into shape and the caddis hatch is on. The Crooked will offer fine fishing in the coming weeks.

Ana Reservoir, Bikini Pond, Duncan Reservoir and Mud Lake in the Deschutes watershed will be stocked this week.

Southwest Washington- Returning adults are at a fraction of last years run on the Cowlitz and

Kalama Rivers. The Lewis River, especially near the hatchery is producing excellent results for backbouncers.

The Wind River is still producing good catches although success is more sporadic recently. Drano Lake boat anglers averaged a fish for every 2 rods last week and bank anglers are taking some fish too.

Spring Chinook are present on the Klickitat and White Salmon Rivers.

Upriver, on the Columbia, **pro guide Jeff Knotts (509-366-4052)** reports steady action for spring Chinook near the mouth of the Umatilla River. "All the standard salmon gear is working including K-13 and K-15 Kwikfish. The action is good and the weather is beautiful!"

Soapbox Update – Our right to fish is under attack. Our salmon returns have drastically diminished because our dams are killing between 60%-90% of these salmon. And fishermen are unjustly taking the blame.

We need concerned river community citizens to speak out for our businesses and families. Please sign the petition to our members of Congress and governors urging them to implement real salmon solutions: <http://www.salmonsolutions.org/>

From Ilwaco, WA to Hood River, OR – this battle is about our communities, economies and livelihoods – no one is spared. The threat becomes more real everyday. This spring run is on course to be the worst ever – a recent count of chinook at the Bonneville Dam was 2,300 compared to an average of more than 80,000 at the same time over the past decade. We need to pressure our leaders to stop adopting short-term fixes that threaten our jobs and way of life and instead develop sustainable solutions for salmon recovery including:

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

We have the solutions, now we need the voices. Sign the petition to your representative and governor TODAY.

<http://www.salmonsolutions.org/>

Please remember to spread the word to family, friends, colleagues – everyone you can think of in your area – urging them to sign the petition and stand up for our communities.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Sturgeon fishers targeting keepers in the John Day area near Astoria were pleasantly disappointed to find poor returns for their investments in time on the May 13th opener. Guides reported better success prior to the May 1st closure. Only a rare limit came from this area and guides that explored upstream, as high as Aldrich Point, found enough fish for their customers. Shrimp is the best bait to use, hands down. Action downstream of the Astoria/Megler Bridge is poor although gillnets have been reporting fair catches of keepers in Young's Bay.

Sturgeon anglers near the new deadline in the gorge (Marker 85) continue to report great catches of quality keepers and numerous shakers. Smelt is the key bait and flows remain high so practice safe anchoring techniques and bring lots of lead. Oversized sturgeon are beginning to show in the catches.

Seasons are wide open for fin-clipped spring Chinook, steelhead and shad and success should be good. Guides fishing the opener scored results but most thought success should have been better. Most boats had opportunities but boats having 2 or 3 Chinook on board were in the higher end of the success scale. Most boats congregated at the shad rack using plugs to lure fish to bite. Spinners were also working and although flows have dropped somewhat, they remain high so backtrollers and anchor anglers fishing the shallower water will produce the best results. Flows are just too swift for backbouncing at the deadline. The backchannel behind Ives Island also produced some results as flows are slower there and fish are drawn to an easier upstream migration.

Anglers fishing for shad in the same area are having no trouble taking as many fish as they want. Most anglers targeting shad are using the fish for oversize sturgeon bait. Keep in mind the new sturgeon boundary at Marker 85 if you plan on targeting sturgeon.

The most recent commercial opener netted commercial fishermen about 600 Chinook and 180 white sturgeon. Another season is likely to be conducted on May 18th from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. About double the amount of salmon (1200 fish) are likely to be harvested from this 12-hour opener. The fishery will most likely take place from Kelley Point Park to the mouth.

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon fishing in the lower Columbia will likely remain slow but an anglers best chance will be out of the John Day ramp, upstream of Tongue Point. The best action will likely remain in the shallower water until larger schools of bait begin to show up. Sand shrimp will be the best bait and if you are not getting bites and have good flow, move, cause the fish aren't coming.

In the gorge however, fishing for keeper sturgeon will likely remain good for anglers soaking smelt. Be sure to check regulations regarding open areas for sturgeon and salmon. Shad fishing should be picking up as numbers jumped dramatically early in the week. Oversized fish should be available in decent numbers although the best action would be in the area above Marker 85- now closed to fishing.

Beach anglers will have a challenging time taking advantage of good outflow conditions as we come into a weaker tide series. Good flow still exists due to the high snow-melt this spring but look for the next minus tide series starting the 24th of May before fishing gets good again for plunkers. Early numbers are encouraging however as many anglers claim there are plenty of early fish around and since you can keep fin-clipped salmon too, why not make a trip of it?

The best area to intercept spring Chinook at this point will be in the gorge near Bonneville Dam. Anchor anglers using plugs or spinners will score the best results and fishing close to shore in the shallow water will likely produce higher catch rates. Adventuresome anglers may find some success backbouncing eggs towards the deadline but heavy lead will be required. This fishery will likely remain steady but since the bulk of the fish have passed Bonneville, multi-fish days are unlikely. But how nice is it to be able to keep a fin-clipped Chinook if you catch one shad fishing in this area?

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – The water temperature at Willamette Falls has crept back up to 60 degrees according to the latest data on March 16th. Daily counts remain fewer than 900 with the May 15th total 14,352.

Willamette anglers did the happy dance over the announcement of the Big river re-opening. Boats have been jammed into popular areas by the hundreds. Weekends have been particularly congested, making travel up-and-downriver a challenging game of weaving around watercraft.

On the fishing front, the Willamette has been slow but steady for Chinook anglers.

Sturgeon are being caught in fair to good numbers in the lower Willamette according to ODFW fish checkers.

Bass fishing is good and improving in the lower Willamette with both smallmouth and largemouth cooperating. Mornings and evenings are accounting for the best catches. Bass are in pre-spawn stage in the Columbia and lower Willamette rivers but these fish will spawn in mid-June. In the warmer water of shallow lakes and ponds, many bass have already spawned.

Many of the springers and steelhead which crossed Willamette Falls are now in the North Santiam. Anglers are seeing fish above Mehema now. Fishing is fair. Fishers below the Lebanon Dam are seeing very little action. Foster Dam saw a few more springers this week where numbers of summer steelhead are steady in daily counts at Foster Dam with the total for the season thus far reaching 825 but only 10 spring Chinook have been counted. Summers are being recycled every few days.

Steelheading remains fair on the McKenzie with cool water slowing the action. Trout anglers are looking forward to the upcoming Caddis hatch.

The Guide's Forecast – NOTE: A Family Fun Festival this weekend at Clackamette Park will have the boat ramp closed.

Bait fishing for springers is not an option in the lower Willamette with trash fish tearing into prawns and cured salmon eggs almost immediately. Try plain spinners which have been taking a good number of the fish lately in the warmer water but anglers are also using herring or wrapped Kwikfish to good effect.

The stretch from the mouth of the Clackamas to below Meldrum Bar is a promising anchor fishing area. Coon Island in Multnomah Channel is a popular spot with sports fishers and guides. St. Johns to the mouth will continue to producing a few daily. Those who stay with it doggedly will be the ones most likely to bag a springer.

Try for sturgeon at St. Johns or Oregon City. Smelt is the preferred bait but sturgeon will also eat a variety of baits including squid or nightcrawlers.

Shad fishing is well worth a trip to Oregon City now. It should be possible to catch a dozen or more in a few hours. This fishery will continue to improve into June when there will be millions of these fish present. While some eat these bony critters which share qualities of the herring to which they're related, shad are prized as excellent crab bait and are considered premium bait for oversized sturgeon. Numbers and action for shad will improve through June.

No specialized gear is required and shad are caught by both bank and boat fishers. Any small, shiny object will draw strikes with spoons and jigs popular. Some use a swivel or bead effectively. Sporty on light tackle, shad average three to five pounds.

Numbers of spring chinook and summer steelhead are improving daily on the North Santiam. As the water warms, the bite will improve. On any trip anglers will see fish rolling and jumping. Getting them to bite, aye, that's the trick.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Spring Chinook and summer steelhead fishing is improving in the lower Clackamas although smolts are annoying as they quickly nail baits and lures.

Warmer water in the Sandy is providing fair fishing for summer steelhead and improving prospects for springers with fish up into Cedar Creek. Chinook have been caught recently on bobber and egg

combos. Trollers at the mouth of the Sandy River on Wednesday, March 17th failed to score any chinook.

Pro guide Kent Anderson (503-550-6303) adds this, "Fished Sandy 3 days in the past week (Oxbow to Dabney) and landed 1 steelhead each trip. Today (Tues) the Sandy came up and started to get a little glacier color. All fish hit metallic plugs (wiggle warts and K11). Very little pressure on the river. Fished Clackamas yesterday, Barton to Riverside and never touched a fish. River is in great condition and light pressure. Water temp was 53 in the morning and rose to 55 by end of day. All we caught was a good eye full of bikini's."

The Guide's Forecast – The Clackamas from Barton to Carver should produce springer catches in the coming weeks for anglers that can keep smolts off their offerings. Plugs are certainly worth a try here.

As the water warms in the coming weeks, springer fishing will only get better on the Sandy River if the numbers show. In the meantime, summer steelheading should be worthwhile and will definitely be improving.

North Coast District Fishing Report – Consistency is growing on Tillamook Bay but this fishery has not quite reached its potential yet. Anglers in the upper bay fared the best this week with a guess of about 1 fish for every 4 or 5 boats this week. The tides have been favorable with extended outgoing tides in the morning with a significant low slack near noon. Activity picked up on Tuesday with several rolling fish witnessed. Rolling fish however didn't translate into biting fish. Spinners were taking the bulk of the bites but we hooked 2 springers on Kwikfish on Monday. As is often the case, both fish came off with the poor strike to hook ratios we often experience in the slower flows. The bite drops off significantly once low slack hits although fish can still be caught on the incoming tide. The NW wind has hampered effort lately and it is shaping up to be a typical May when these "Trade Winds" push many anglers off Tillamook once the tide changes.

Some guides have been pulling their boats and heading over to the lower bay fishing the inside of the North Jetty or in the ocean when seas permit. Fishing has been consistent over there as well but no hot bites have been witnessed. The south jetty has produced some good results lately but safety should be concern #1 before deciding to fish here. Sealions have been harassing some anglers near the jaws but hopefully, they are just migrating through for summer breeding in California. Whales have also been spotted the last few days at the mouth of Tillamook Bay and just outside. Too bad they are not Killer Whales.

Bay crabbing remains very poor with the ocean only slightly better.

The next halibut opener, May 18 – 20 should be productive again. Limits were the rule even though the ocean was a bit rough. The fish were a bit smaller than we are used to seeing out of Garibaldi but they still eat good. One boat scored a nice catch of halibut just off the mouth of Nehalem Bay when the all-depth season was closed. No, I don't have those coordinates but there can be some consistent halibut fishing out there.

Bottomfishing is sporadic at Dinner Reef just outside of the bay entrance and one boat made the run south to Three Arch Rocks off of Oceanside but didn't do so well. The spring/summer restriction is now in place to prevent anglers from disturbing the bird colonies.

Sturgeon effort remains light but keepers are still available. They are spread throughout the upper and middle estuary and will respond best to shrimp.

The Guide's Forecast – The waning tide series will suit lower bay herring trollers the most. A mid-afternoon low tide will allow anglers some opportunity for a barrage of techniques and targets into the weekend. A calm ocean will offer up another option for salmon just outside the bay.

Beginning with salmon, anglers will want to target springers in the lower bay using herring. The softer tides will produce best on the first part of the outgoing hugging the north jetty but should slow for the middle 2 hours until the peak flow passes. The last half of outgoing tide will produce the best results and we are coming into the peak season so catches should begin to pick up. The ocean should be a nice alternative when the outgoing tide is screaming too hard.

Anglers wanting to mix it up should pick up some shrimp and target sturgeon in the middle part of the outgoing tide. The middle bay and west channel should produce the best results and crab should not be a big issue in most areas.

Bottomfishing should also be an option for those familiar with productive areas just off of the mouth of Tillamook Bay.

There have been a few fish caught in the lower Wilson but the Trask will provide some of the better opportunity for bobber and bait anglers. Fish are beginning to congregate in good numbers but the low tide exchanges may make them more reluctant to bite. Bring your best game as fish are present but finicky.

Central & South Coast Reports – Coastal rivers are predictably low and clear, a situation which is unlikely to change for a while. As a consequence, steelheading is very slow. The exception is the Siletz which offers decent prospects for bright summers low on the river with acceptable water conditions.

Most of the mid- and South-coast streams are closed until May 27th.

Perch fishing is excellent in bays and off beaches in many locations. The redtail surf perch found in ocean breakers is the better table fare.

The all-depth halibut fishery off the central Oregon coast was great during the last retention period.

Pro guide Bill Kremers (541 754 6411) writes, "In addition to the opening of the Columbia for salmon the forecast is also for a calm ocean this coming weekend. This will make the halibut anglers smile as the ride to the Chicken Ranch out of Newport will be a lot smoother than last week. If halibut anglers want a shorter run out of Newport, the southeast corner of the Rockpile has produced well for me. Plus is this a third of the depth of the Chicken Ranch and fishing is a lot more fun, it just takes longer to catch your halibut.

"Went ling cod fishing out of Depoe Bay on Monday afternoon, we limited the boat with lings in less than two hours. We were using 6 oz jigs, chartreuse split tail worms and some Krill super gel from Pro-Cure.

"Ken Vaughn (left) and Don Wenzel with a limit of lings they caught on Monday."



The Umpqua spring Chinook have yet to show in substantial number. Salmon fishing is slow. Sturgeon fishing below Reedsport remains action-packed although keepers are getting thinned from the predominately oversized population. Sand shrimp is the most effective bait. Shad numbers are increasing as are catches and smallmouth bass angling is heating up as water temperatures rise. Offshore bottom fishing out of Winchester Bay is rewarding sport and charter boats with limits of rockfish and ling cod.

Long-term prospects look bright for the Rogue River through the summer of 2006. With plenty of water and snow pack upstream, water levels are predicted to remain good with temperatures cool enough to protect salmon from disease which has been a problem in low-water years.

Spring Chinook continue to be a no-show on the Rogue so far this season, however, with catch rates declining over the last week. With just over 700 Chinook counted through May 10th at Gold Ray Dam, hopes that the run will show late are dimming. The river is up a little this week due to runoff from the melting snow pack.

Ocean Chinook salmon season South of Humbug Mountain opened May 15th daily through July 4th. Initial efforts out of Brookings were nearly non-existent. This usually popular fishery was evidently a victim of high fuel costs. Only four fish were checked at the harbor.

Central and Eastern Oregon – spring chinook fishing on Umatilla River has closed.

Lower Deschutes long rodders are enjoying the fruits of an active stonefly hatch on the lower Deschutes. Golden Stones and Salmonflies are in abundance on the middle Deschutes and trout are receptive to the respective imitations.

Caddisflies are hatching on the Crooked River which recently dropped into shape and is providing good results for fly anglers. Flows are about 250 CFS.

The John Day is running over 7,000 CFS and is muddy. It'll be a while before smallmouth fishing is a possibility here.

Largemouth fishing is very good for at Crane Prairie and Davis Lake. Big bass are the rule at both locations with warm water motivating fish to make preparations to spawn. Clear water has the bass a bit spooky and is creating the associated challenges for anglers.

Incidentally, many trout fishers would as soon the largemouth were eradicated, particularly at Davis, but some, like Cascade Outfitters in Sunriver promotes it at a bonus fishery in this fly-angling-only lake. Some of the sponsors of this event do both:

http://www.photosnw.com/bass/bass_bash_color.pdf

Northwest Trout - The ODFW will stock 500 rainbow trout for a Youth Fishing event this Saturday, May 20th from 9 AM to 1 PM. at the Reinhart Volunteer Pond, formerly the All Sports Park Pond. The pond is located in Grant Pass off Lincoln Road. ODFW staff and volunteers from the Crater Bass Club will be available to provide some loaner fishing equipment and angling instruction.

Boat and bank anglers are doing well at Diamond Lake. The limit was increased May 13th to 20 trout per day and 40 in possession. The trout caught this week have ranged in size from eight to 26 inches. Trolling has been effective and Power Baiters are taking fish on the North Side.

Scheduled for planting this week in the Willamette Valley are Timothy Meadows, Big Cliff Reservoir, Blue River Above Reservoir, Blue River Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Detroit Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Fall Creek, Foster Reservoir, Hills Creek, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River Upper, Middle Fork Willamette River, Salt Creek, Santiam River North Fork, Sunnyside Park Pond and Trail Bridge Reservoir. Cape Mears Lake, Coffenbury Lake, Hebo Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County) and Town Lake will be stocked with trout this week in the Northwest Zone.

SW Washington - With 100,000 upriver **spring chinook salmon** now expected to return to the Columbia River this year, anglers have a chance to pick up where they left off in April – but with a lot more fish around. Up to 8,600 springers per day have been moving over Bonneville Dam since the first week of May, prompting fishery managers to reopen sections of the lower Columbia and above Bonneville Dam. In addition, catch rates have been picking up in tributaries stretching from the Kalama to the Klickitat rivers.

"This is the latest run in recorded history, but it came on strong once it got started," said Bill Tweit, WDFW policy leader for Columbia River fisheries. "Now that we have good numbers of fish upriver, we can finally reopen some areas to fishing."

For example, the mainstem Columbia River opened to spring chinook fishing today (May 17) below Bonneville Dam downriver to the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line about five miles east of the Megler-Astoria Bridge. The fishery will be open seven days per week until further notice. Anglers fishing on that section of the lower Columbia River can catch a total of six hatchery chinook, identified by a clipped adipose fin, only two of which can be adults. They can also keep two **hatchery steelhead**. All wild chinook, chum and sockeye salmon – as well as cutthroat trout and wild steelhead – must be released.

"A lot of spring chinook are still moving through that area, so the fishing should be good," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. As of May 16, anglers can also target **shad** from the river mouth to Bonneville Dam.

But Hymer suggests that those intent on catching a springer may have to change their tactics since last month, when the fishery closed due to lagging returns. "I'd suggest trying spinners rather than bait," he said. "The water has warmed up considerably since last month and the fish are more in 'attack mode' than 'feeding mode.'" He also recommends lighter gear – but not too light, since some "June hogs" (large summer chinook) have already been observed at Bonneville Dam.

Hymer also recommends that approach in the upper Bonneville Pool, where spring chinook fishing reopened May 13 from the Tower Island power lines below The Dalles Dam to McNary Dam. Anglers had caught fewer than 20 fish in that area when the fishery closed April 30, but are expected to do a

lot better in the weeks ahead. Spring chinook fishing is now open seven days per week through June 15 or until the catch guideline is reached. Catch regulations are the same as in the lower river. Spring chinook are clearly moving into the upper Bonneville Pool – and farther upriver. Anglers fishing The Dalles Pool have been catching nearly a fish per rod, while boat anglers fishing the John Day Pool are averaging about one fish for every two rods.

Catch rates for spring chinook are also picking up on tributaries up and down the Columbia, Hymer said. On the Klickitat River, bank anglers have been averaging one fish for every two rods below the Fisher Hill Bridge, and boat anglers fishing Drano Lake have been doing even better. Bank anglers are also catching some spring chinook in the White Salmon River. Anglers fishing these waters are advised to review selective fishing rules described in the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

Farther west, boat anglers fishing the Wind River have been average one spring chinook for every three rods, about the same success rate as those on the Lewis River. Through May 10, a total of 740 adult spring chinook had returned to the trap at Merwin Dam, compared to 550 on the same date last year. On the Kalama River, boat and bank anglers averaged one chinook for every three or five rods, respectively. Those catches were spread out from the river mouth to the deadline below the upper salmon hatchery. Bank and boat angling have both been slow on the Cowlitz River.

Spring chinook salmon aren't the only fish on anglers' radar. Sturgeon fishing has been good just below the Marker #85 deadline about six miles below Bonneville Dam. Fishing started out slow in the Deep River area of the estuary, but some fish have been caught around the Tongue Point. Shad fishing should improve rapidly in the days ahead, with Bonneville Dam daily counts already in the thousands of fish. Last year, a record six million shad returned to the Columbia.

Warmwater fisheries are heating up right along with the weather. Boat anglers fishing the John Day Pool have been averaging more than eight **bass** and one **walleye** per rod while those fishing the Bonneville Pool are catching 3.5 bass per rod. A good bet for **trout** is Mineral Lake, which was planted May 9 with 3,920 catchables up to a half-pound each. Mayfield Lake also received 5,965 trout plants on May 5.

Rather catch trout from a stream? Dozens of rivers throughout the region open to fishing June 1. With dozens of rivers to choose from, Hymer recommends those that have been stocked specifically for the opener, including Canyon Creek in Clark County; Bird, Blockhouse and Bloodgood creeks in Klickitat County; Skate Creek and the Tilton River in Lewis County; and the Little White Salmon River in Skamania County. The limit is five fish per day. For more details, see the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

North Central Washington – WDFW district fish biologist Bob Jateff of Omak reports Big Twin Lake near Winthrop and Blue Lake in the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area are starting to produce some nice **rainbow trout** up to 18 inches. Trout fishing at Pearygin Lake near Winthrop is picking up after a slow opener, he says, while the larger lakes such as the Conconullys, Spectacle and Wannacut continue to have good catch rates. Anglers who want to fish for multiple species in one lake can go to Leader Lake near Okanogan, Jateff said. "They're catching **bluegills** to eight inches, **crappie** to 10 inches, and rainbow trout to 15 inches," he said. May and June are good months to try for **kokanee** in both Palmer Lake near Loomis and Bonaparte Lake east of Tonasket. **Bass** fishing can be good in Palmer, Whitestone, and Washburn Island Pond, he says, as well as in the lower Okanogan River. "Remember to check the regulation pamphlet closely before you fish," he said, "especially in lakes listed under the special rules section."

WDFW district fish biologist Jeff Korth of Moses Lake reports "red hot" **walleye** fishing at Moses Lake. "Walleye fishing at Potholes Reservoir will probably pick up by Memorial Day, too," he said.

"Remember the new regulations for walleye – eight fish daily catch limit, 12-inch minimum, no more than one fish over 22 inches." Korth also noted that Banks Lake should be getting good this month for catches of 14-inch **kokanee**. More catchable-size rainbow trout have been stocked in Caliche and North Teal lakes. "Trout fishing is not so hot at Park and Blue lakes," Korth said, "but try **yellow perch** fishing at Blue Lake." He added that trout fishing at several selective gear rule lakes, like Dry Falls, Dusty, and Beda, is fair to good now.

Rivers and streams throughout the region open June 1 for trout and other game fish. Anglers should check the regulations pamphlet's "Special Rules" listings carefully for catch and size limits and gear restrictions, which are designed to keep river and stream fisheries sustainable in the future. This year the Methow River's catch-and-release area has been extended downstream to county road 1535 or lower Burma Road bridge. Another rule change this year that stream anglers need to keep in mind is that wherever selective gear is required, nets used to land fish must be knotless to minimize harm to fish that may be released. Regulation pamphlets are available at WDFW offices, fishing license vendors, and on WDFW's Internet website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>

South Central Washington - WDFW fish biologist Jim Cummins reports the Yakima River above Richland has good flows with "turbid but not too muddy water" and "fair" fishing for smallmouth bass. "I had to work for fish but managed to get enough action to make the fishing worthwhile," he said. "Most were on the small size, 10 to 13 inches. Other fishers on the river were also catching a few small fish. It looks like the river may be out of shape for a few days because the snow is melting fast with the heat wave. That water flow will probably put the Columbia River out for a few days, too, depending on how long the hot spell lasts. Fishing should be excellent the week of May 21, if flow and turbidity create the right conditions. Plastic grubs, lizards, tube jigs, and small plugs will take fish." Cummins cautioned anglers to be prepared for unseasonably intense heat – use sunscreen and sun-protective clothing and drink plenty of water.

Cummins notes that although high flows make for tough fishing, more water is an advantage to steelhead and salmon smolts that are migrating downstream. **Trout, steelhead and salmon** fishing remains closed through May 31 in most of the Yakima Basin to protect smolts. Although trout fishing opens at most rivers and streams on June 1, anglers should expect flows that could make fishing difficult. "We have a good snowpack this year," he explained, "so flows could remain relatively high until late June."

River and stream anglers preparing for that June 1 opener should check the regulations pamphlet's "Special Rules" listings carefully for catch and size limits and gear restrictions, which are designed to keep river and stream fisheries sustainable in the future. A rule change this year that stream anglers need to keep in mind is that wherever selective gear is required, nets used to land fish must be knotless to minimize harm to fish that may be released. Regulation pamphlets are available at WDFW offices, fishing license vendors, and on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

Thanks to an unexpected abundance of the upriver salmon run, **hatchery spring chinook salmon** fishing re-opened May 13 and runs through June 15 on the mainstem Columbia River from the Tower Island power lines about six miles below The Dalles Dam, upstream to McNary Dam. Daily catch limit is six adipose-fin-clipped fish, minimum size 12 inches, only two adults (24 inches or more). All chum and sockeye salmon and wild steelhead must be released, and kept in the water while releasing except when fishing from vessels that are a minimum of 30 feet in length. The fishery may close before June 15 if Endangered Species Act (ESA) impacts are reached earlier than anticipated.

WDFW regional fish program manager John Easterbrooks alerts anglers to a fishing regulation pamphlet error recently announced. The first salmon opening listed for the Columbia River from Hwy. 395 Bridge at Pasco to Old Hanford townsite wooden powerline towers should be June 16 instead of June 1, just like the catch-and-release reaches downstream and upstream.

Four lakes in the region are receiving 4,466 one-and-a-half-pound triploid **rainbow trout** this month to sweeten the fishing pot when access to the high country waters is available. Triploids are sterile rainbows that are voracious feeders with the potential to grow to trophy size if not harvested the first season and if sufficient forage is available. Kittitas County's Lost Lake gets 1,123 triploids, and Yakima County's Dog Lake gets 473, Leech Lake 802, and Clear Lake 2,068. Clear Lake was supposed to receive the big fish last month, but it wasn't accessible then, so the triploids were saved for a late May stocking. With the recent heat wave and subsequent snow melt, access is expected soon.

Puget Sound – Anglers have several spring-season fishing opportunities throughout the region. Out on the lakes, trout fishing continues, and some of the hot spots include Lake McMurray in Skagit County and Lakes Goodwin and Ki in Snohomish County. On saltchuck, anglers have their pick of lingcod, halibut and shrimp.

More **trout** will be added to some of the region's lakes this month. WDFW will be stocking triploid trout in several lakes including Green Lake in King County, Mountain Lake in San Juan County, Campbell Lake in Skagit County, Roesiger Lake in Snohomish County and Terrell Lake in Whatcom County. Averaging 1.5 pounds each, the trout are called "triploids" because they have three sets of chromosomes instead of the normal two, making them sterile. It also makes the fish voracious feeders with the potential to grow to trophy size.

"This last round of triploid plants will give anglers a chance to catch some large trout over the next few weeks," said Jon Anderson, WDFW resident trout manager.

Anglers have a daily limit of five trout. Released legal-sized trout, caught with bait, counts toward the daily bag limit. These and other rules are described in WDFW's *2006/2007 Fishing in Washington* pamphlet, available from license dealers and online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>. Anglers also can check the stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout online at (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>).

Beginning June 1, anglers can expand their pursuit of trout as river fishing opens statewide. Out on the saltwater, the **lingcod** harvest looks decent. Catch counts at the Coronet Bay public ramp indicate 145 anglers hauled in 33 lingcod May 13, and 60 anglers checked in 16 lings the following day. Elsewhere, 71 anglers at the Everett ramp accounted for 11 lingcod May 13, while 25 anglers checked in seven lings at the Mukilteo ramp the same day. During the lingcod hook-and-line season (May 1-June 15), there's a one-fish daily limit for lings, which must be a minimum size of 26 inches and a maximum size of 40 inches.

Saltwater anglers also can drop a line for **halibut**, **rockfish** and **cabezon**. The halibut-fishing season is open five days a week, Thursday through Monday, with a daily limit of one halibut and no minimum size limit. For rockfish, there is no minimum size and anglers must keep the first legal rockfish caught. Anglers fishing for cabezon have a daily limit of two fish, and there is no minimum size limit.

The **shrimp** season is going strong, although two areas – marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) – already have closed after reaching their quotas. In addition, marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) close today (May 17). The fishery remains open in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) daily and will close when

the quota is reached, or Oct. 15, whichever comes first. Details, such as the required minimum mesh size, are available on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crabreg/>.

Olympic Peninsula – While the troutfest continues throughout the region, some popular saltwater fisheries – including the spot shrimp season in Hood Canal and this month's halibut seasons in marine areas 2, 3 and 4 – have come to an end. Meanwhile, the Hoh River opens today (May 17) for spring chinook fishing.

With more than 4,000 additional **triploid trout** planted in area lakes this month, anglers should have a good chance of catching some large fish over the next few weeks. Averaging 1.5 pounds each, these trout are voracious feeders with the potential to grow to trophy size.

"We're continuing to plant and there's still lots of fish in the lakes," said Hal Michael, WDFW regional fish biologist. Kitsap Lake (Kitsap County) will get 785 triploids. Other lakes being stocked with more than 200 of these fish include Gibbs Lake (Jefferson County), Tee Lake (Mason County), Harts Lake (Pierce County), and Clear, Munn, Offut and Ward lakes (Thurston County). The complete triploid stocking plan can be found on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/triploid/index.htm>. Meanwhile, thousands of trout continue to be planted in area lakes around the region. Complete information on stocking schedules (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>) for rainbow, cutthroat and other trout species for lakes throughout the state is also available on the WDFW website.

"As the weather gets warmer, the trout will be most accessible when and where the waters are cool," said Michael. "Evenings and early mornings would be the best times and those in boats should have luck where the waters are deepest. Also trout don't like bright light, so on a sunny day, don't expect them to be working on their tans."

Young anglers will have a special opportunity to drop their lines for trout at Bradley Lake on Puyallup's South Hill in Pierce County on Saturday, May 20 from 7:00 a.m. until noon. The event is open to juvenile anglers only, age 14 and younger. Bradley Lake will be closed for public fishing all day May 19 while trout are stocked for the youth fishing event on Saturday. It will reopen to anglers age 15 and over at noon on May 20.

Coming up: River fishing for trout opens on June 1 statewide. Anglers are advised to check the *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for regulations that apply to specific rivers.

As usual, the spot shrimp season at Hood Canal was fast and furious this year. As of today (May 17), the fourth day of fishing, the catch was advancing quickly on the fishery's 60,000-pound quota, said Dave Sterritt, WDFW fish biologist. "It's a beautiful day on the water – virtually, no wind – and we counted 950 boats," he said. Shrimp fishers should check the WDFW website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/>) for possible news of a closure in the Marine Area 12 fishery.

Marine Area 11 (Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge) had a one-day shrimp season this year on May 10. While the shrimp weren't as abundant as last year, the day brought in a good catch for many boats, especially those on the Vashon side. Creel interviews with 74 boats mostly at Des Moines, Redondo and Point Defiance ramps counted an average of 9.5 pounds of prawns per boat. Still open for shrimping are the areas off Neah Bay, the Strait of Juan de Fuca (excluding shrimp districts), San Juan Islands, and South Puget Sound south of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Marine areas 4, 5, 6, 7, and 13 continue to be open daily beginning at 7 a.m. through Oct. 15 or until quota is attained, whichever comes first.

Shrimp districts in Port Townsend, Discovery Bay and Port Angeles remain closed for spot shrimp. However, non-spot shrimping opportunities in the Port Townsend Shrimp District will begin 7 a.m.

on June 1, south of a line running from Kala Point to Walan Point. Fishing for non-spot shrimp will also open June 1 in the southern portion of the Discovery Bay Shrimp District.

Anglers also set a record pace for Pacific **halibut** fisheries off the coast of Neah Bay, La Push and Westport this year. With catch totals nearing area quotas, the season in Marine Area 2 is scheduled to close today (May 17) and the May fishery in marine areas 3 and 4 is set to end tomorrow (May 18).

The five-day fishery on the north coast is the shortest on record, said Phil Anderson, WDFW special assistant. One reason was that halibut caught off the north coast weighed an average of 31 pounds, about 5 pounds heavier than last year, Anderson said. The record number of anglers has also been a factor. "We counted nearly 1,500 anglers on the water the one Saturday the fishery was open," Anderson said.

North coast anglers will get at least one more day of fishing on June 22, because a portion of the area's quota is set aside for a second opening. An extra day or two may also be possible, depending on the final catch estimate from this month, Anderson said.

The halibut fishery in Marine Area 2, which opened May 1, also reached its quota in record time. "The average halibut caught off Westport weighed around 34 pounds – the largest on record – and just about everybody who went halibut fishing caught a fish," he added.

Meanwhile, the halibut fishing off Ilwaco continues to be "constant and steady, with fish averaging 13 pounds," according to Michele Culver, WDFW fish biologist. This fishery, which runs seven days a week, is slated through July 16 or until the quota is met. And a new opportunity to catch halibut opens on May 25, when the fishery starts in Marine Area 5 in the western Strait of Juan de Fuca off Sekiu and Pillar Point. The fishery is open five days a week, Thursday through Monday. The daily bag limit is one fish per angler. The season runs through Aug. 5.

With luck, conditions on the Strait will improve soon. Minus tides and high winds have been frustrating halibut anglers off Port Angeles, where creel checks have been showing catch rates of one fish for every 12 to 21 rods. Dogfish have also become an issue, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish and wildlife biologist, "They eat your bait," he said. But he's heard there are still fish coming from some favorite spots, specifically Dungeness Bar, Dallas Bank, 31/36 and Whiskey Bank. Top prize in the 6th Annual Port Angeles Halibut Derby on May 27-28 is \$5,000. For more information, call the local Chamber of Commerce at 360-452-2363.

On the other hand, favorable weather and water conditions are making for good lingcod fishing off both Westport and Neah Bay, according to Michele Culver, WDFW fish biologist. "In Westport, anglers are having success in near-shore waters getting their bag limits of two per day," she said.

She reminded anglers that, beginning May 22, fishing is not allowed for lingcod or rockfish seaward of 20 fathoms in marine areas 3 or 4 (see WDFW's Fishing Rules webpage at https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/rules_current_order_by_date.j).

On the Olympic Peninsula, strong early returns of **spring chinook** for the Sol Duc Hatchery should translate to good numbers available for sport anglers fishing the Quillayute and Sol Duc Rivers, according to Mike Gross, WDFW fish biologist. "Some of these fish will also be available to anglers in the Hoh River because of their tendency to "dip in" to the lower Hoh as they migrate to the Quillayute system," said Gross. Springer season opens on the Hoh today (May 17), running Wednesdays through Sundays with a limit of one adult chinook per day. However, the unseasonably high temperatures this week have been pulling snow from the mountains and making the river milky with till, causing poor visibility and difficult fishing conditions. "Fishers will want to check conditions

before heading out," he said. Gross reminds anglers fishing the Quillayute and Sol Duc to release wild chinook.

Eastern Washington - Angling for **trout** in central district lakes just doesn't get any better than at this time of year, says WDFW district fish biologist Chris Donley of Spokane. "In May it's all good," he said. "There's no place with fish where you can't have a decent day of fishing right now." Recent patrols of Amber, Badger, Chapman, Clear, Fish, Fishtrap, Liberty, Medical, Silver, Sprague, West Medical and Williams lakes showed anglers doing well on rainbow, cutthroat, brown and eastern brook trout. If unseasonably hot weather continues, however, fishing could slow down as lake water temperatures rise and fish become less active. On the other hand, the heat wave could help fishing in the northeast district of the region, where it usually takes a little longer for waters to warm up.

Recent patrols at Ferry County's Ellen, Ferry, Fish, Long and Swan lakes, Stevens County's Deer, Loon, Pierre and Summit lakes and Pend Oreille County's Sacheen Lake showed generally slower fishing. Diamond Lake, near Newport in Pend Oreille County, is already "hot" for both boat and shore anglers, with recent reports of rainbow limits, including a few 18-inch two-pounders and many eight to ten-inchers. Anglers fishing the Tucannon River impoundments and other southeast district lakes stocked with jumbo rainbow trout from WDFW hatcheries are reminded that the daily catch limit of five fish now stipulates that only two can be over 13 inches so that the catch can be shared among more anglers.

WDFW southeast district Glen Mendel of Dayton alerts anglers to the new opportunity for **hatchery chinook salmon** on the Snake River that opens today (May 17) on a stretch about five miles around Little Goose Dam, just northeast of Starbuck. A very late and abundant salmon run coming upstream from the Columbia River's Bonneville Dam has provided the additional fishing season, which is scheduled to run through June 30 but could close earlier depending on harvest. Salmon anglers can fish from the Texas Rapids boat launch upstream to the Corps Of Engineers boat launch, which is about a mile upstream of Little Goose Dam on the south bank of the river. The daily limit is one hatchery chinook salmon – identified by a clipped adipose fin – with a minimum size of 12 inches. Anglers must release all unmarked chinook and all steelhead, and must keep those fish to be released in the water. Only single-point barbless hooks no larger than 5/8 inch from point to shank can be used. Fishing is allowed daily from one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset. Mendel noted that the run is the latest ever recorded, with numbers jumping dramatically. Only 2,573 spring chinook had been counted passing Bonneville Dam as of April 30, which is about half of the 10-year average. But by May 15, the total had jumped to nearly 77,000 fish.

The Spokane arm of Lake Roosevelt and tributaries of the big reservoir open June 1 to some of the best **walleye** fishing in the region. Lake Roosevelt water levels are currently down and not all National Recreation Area boat launches are useable. By the June 1 opener, however, the situation could and probably will change, based on past water use fluctuations. Check out the useable boat launch water level chart at <http://www.nps.gov/laro/boatLaunch.htm>, then look for the latest water level report at http://www.nwdwc.usace.army.mil/ftppub/project_data/daily/gcl.txt before heading for the water.

Other rivers and streams throughout the region open June 1 for trout and other game fish. Anglers should check the regulations pamphlet's "Special Rules" listings carefully for catch and size limits and gear restrictions, which are designed to keep river and stream fisheries sustainable in the future. This year the daily limit for eastern brook trout in Pend Oreille County streams, including Cedar and Sullivan creeks, is 10 fish, along with two trout of other species. Another rule change this year that stream anglers need to keep in mind is that, wherever selective gear is required, nets used to land fish must be knotless to minimize harm to fish that may be released. Regulation pamphlets are available at WDFW offices, fishing license vendors, and on WDFW's Internet website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>)

Reader Email

We were pleased this week to hear from an old friend, Louis G. Terkla, author of Hunting Black-Tailed Deer who writes, "Hi, Michael, It has been a long time since I have written to you. Between then and now, my wife and I have caught a shameful number of salmon, some in Oregon and some in British Columbia. She just had her 80th birthday, and I am past the age of 81, so I guess one can conclude that salmon fishing and eating them help to keep us healthy. It has been a fascinating spring salmon season, with surprises and mysteries and with sea lions creating the biggest dilemma. Nothing seems to work to keep them from decimating the run below Bonneville Dam, but I had a crazy thought this morning about trying something different. Orca whales like to eat sea lions, so do you think that a remote controlled life-sized replica of an Orca would scare them off?"

"Just sharing a thought and sending you folks at The Guides Forecast best wishes for continued success with the best fishing resource around. You have helped both beginners and veteran fisher folks to become more successful, and rarely do you err with your information. We all benefit from the shared and timely knowledge that is unselfISHly conveyed to us."

Michael replied, "It's delightful to hear from you, Mr. Terkla. Your letters stories are always most welcomed."

"The notion of a remote-controlled killer whale is a novel one. Like most fishermen, I just wish some effective measure could be taken as the problem seems only to get worse."

"Thank you, as always, for your kind words about TGF. We hope to hear from you again soon."

Pro guide Rick Arnold (541-480-1570) wrote to TGF to let us know he "put a bid in on one of the full Deschutes National Forest permits that are required to guide all over Central Oregon. They only trade hands when one of the 7 existing guides decides to sell out. They are pretty steep in price. If I get it, I will expand my guiding horizons. If I don't, then I will probably only guide for bulls half the year and continue to develop our website and do more filming."

Thanks and good luck, Rick!

Going fishing? Send us a report or a story! Got an opinion on something? Shoot us an Email!

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: drees@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: SailCat@SailCat.com

Random Links

Downloadable charts from the NOAA:

<http://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/mcd/Raster/download.htm>

Oregon State Marine Board Columbia and Willamette Guides:

<http://www.boatoregon.com/Library/ColumbiaGuide.pdf>

<http://www.boatoregon.com/Library/WillametteGuide.pdf>

Weekly Quote – No man can lose what he never had. - Izaak Walton in The Complete Angler

GOOD LUCK!