

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 26th, – June 1st, 2006**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Columbia River fishers have not been too impressed with the re-opener of the spring Chinook season on the lower river. Bonneville is the likely point of interception but spill continues to increase putting salmon off the bite. With the re-calculation of returning adults reaching 125,000 adults, opportunity should be good but flows need to subside in order to achieve results.

Pro guide Jeff Knott (509-366-4052) reports that salmon fishing below McNary dam remains a fair bet for those working around the mouth of the Umatilla river.

Shad fishing remains excellent with small chartreuse, white backed spoons producing the best results. It's best to fish 10 to 12 foot of water along Ives Island.

Fresh shad remains the top bait for anglers pursuing oversized sturgeon in the gorge. The fishing has improved over the last week but heavy lead and deep pockets are producing the best results. Anchor safety is imperative.

Keeper fishing also remains good in the gorge where limits can be reached for the persistent angler.

Keepers are a bit harder to come by in the estuary but some quality fish are coming from the Tongue Point area and upstream using shrimp for bait. Anchovies are only available on the weekends but are also a productive option.

The Willamette Falls water temperature was unchanged at 62 degrees earlier this week. Visibility is likely to decline with rain showers. Daily counts were improving with the total 18,960 as of May 18th. Summer steelhead daily counts are picking up with the total topping 4,400 on the same date.

The level of the Columbia is so high it's backing up into the Willamette. The spring Chinook bite fell off of in the lower Willamette over the last week. Shad fishing is fair to good at Oregon City and in the Multnomah Channel.

The occasional spring Chinook has been taken in the Clackamas River where summer steelheading is fair.

Snowmelt contributing to North Santiam levels is nearly complete so the river is

expected to stabilize in a week or so. Springer fishing has been good below Bennet Dam, below Stayton and around Green's Bridge. Back-bounced eggs or plugs are effective. Over 1,000 summer steelhead have been counted at Foster Dam on the South Santiam. High water levels here are expected to start coming down in June.

A couple of springers a day are coming to trollers at the mouth of the Sandy on an early morning bite. The mainstem Sandy remains fair at best.

Scheduled for trout stocking this week are Faraday Lake, Henry Hagg Lake, Huddleston Pond, North Fork Reservoir, Silver Creek Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, Timothy Meadows, Trillium Lake, Leaburg Lake, upper and lower McKenzie River, Quartzville Creek, Salmon Creek, Santiam River North Fork, and Smith Reservoir.

Northwest – The spring Chinook bite, although underway, remains sporadic for Tillamook Bay anglers. The 3rd annual Bounty on the Bay event netted competing anglers 18 hatchery spring Chinook with the largest going 25 pounds. The bite slowed on Sunday but Monday brought good fishing in the upper bay for hardware and herring trollers. The upcoming minus tide series should bode well for bay anglers through the weekend.

Despite unsettled weather, Tillamook streams remain low and clear but salmon are on the ready for any rise in river levels. This makes tidewater fishing the best alternative and anglers fishing light lines are producing the best results.

Tillamook Bay sturgeon fishing continues to be steady with shrimp producing the best catch. Crabbing has picked up slightly but fresh bait and persistence is necessary.

Offshore halibut anglers continue to produce good catches but seas are forecasted to be unsettled at mid-week and possibly subsiding slightly by the weekend.

Another good minus tide series began on Wednesday and should reward Clatsop area razor clam diggers handsomely if the surf isn't too rough.

Big Creek Reservoir #1 & # 2 along with Olalla Creek Reservoir will be stocked with trout this week.

Southwest - Statewide season modifications outside the 40-fathom line effect anglers targeting bottomfish. Check local regulations. The exception is the ongoing all-depth halibut fishery.

The many South coast rivers that have been closed to trout and steelhead fishing re-open on May 27th.

Offshore salmon trollers have started scoring out of Winchester Bay. Deep-water halibut fishing produced limits for most anglers last Thursday through Saturday. Sturgeon fishing below Reedsport continues to produce the occasional keeper amidst oversized fish. Shad and smallmouth bass fishing is improving.

Springer fishing is very slow in the lower Rogue. Following a flurry of action late last week up near the hatchery, action died off over the weekend and rain has raised the river level. The Memorial Weekend Boat Races from Grants Pass downstream will shut down fishing in that stretch.

Ocean crabbing has been delivering limits of large, full Dungeness in 80 feet of water.

Limits of surf perch are being taken daily on South coast beaches and jetties to the California border daily when the ocean is calm.

Rogue River(Section 5), Spaulding Pond, Applegate Lake and Willow Lake will be planted this week.

Eastern - Upper Deschutes anglers are looking forward to the opener this weekend. Trout are starting to key on Salmon and Stone flies on the lower Deschutes. Fly fishing for reddsides will be good with the next dry weather.

Cold water has slowed angling at Crane Prairie. Wickiup offers decent prospects for some of the larger kokanee available in Oregon. Odell has been fair for kokanee on jigs, Paulina and Green Peter are slow.

Anglers may pursue spring Chinook on the Upper Snake River as of May 20th, Friday through Monday each week between Dug Bar and the deadline at Hells Canyon Dam through June 19th.

Southwest Washington- Chinook began to return in greater numbers on the Cowlitz River and the North Fork of the Lewis. Compared to last year, returns are tracking lower on the Cowlitz and Kalama Rivers.

Drano Lake continues to produce sporadic catches but Wind River angler catch has slowed. Upriver on the Wind, catches are improving but public access can be challenging.

The Klickitat remains too high for good fishing but fish are present.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Historically, this section of the newsletter was much easier to write- given that salmon fishing on the Columbia was closed and

upper river sturgeon fishing wasn't so good. Well, I am happy to report that things can change in short order on a river so heavily regulated.

Since salmon fishing this time of year is such a rare treat, we'll start with that. Although springer fishing isn't much to write home about, opportunity exists and when the flows do drop down to fishable levels, action should improve. Guides taking 1 or 2 salmon per trip consider themselves lucky so thankfully, other gorge fisheries are going great to supplement the effort. Most of the effort is taking place at the Shad Rack and backtrollers are taking an occasional fish along the Oak Tree. With dam passage a fraction of what it was just over a week ago, anglers shouldn't expect much for results. The water remains way too high for backbouncing and many anglers don't have the proper anchor to hold in water where many Chinook will be found.

From higher in the river, **pro guide Jeff Knott (509-366-4052)** reports, "Salmon fishing below McNary dam remains a fair bet for those working around the mouth of the Umatilla river. Kwiks fished both off divers or balls are taking fish. Some guys have found eggs behind spin-gloves will work too. The majority of boats are anchoring up but a few are getting fish back-trolling. The fishery isn't awesome but at least it is viable fishery that can boat you a nice springer or two if you keep at it and find yourself in the right place at the right time."

Some of the better salmon angling took place downstream for beach plunkers targeting both steelhead and salmon. High flows favor beach plunkers as fish travel close to shore in the swifter water.

Anglers targeting salmon in the John Day Pool produced good catches last week. Backtrollers are doing the best and fishing should remain fair into the weekend. The bulk of the spring run is in this section of river.

Shad anglers are having great fun taking as many of the invasive species as they want. The run will likely be huge again this year so do your part to thin these things out! Chartreuse/white backed Dick Nites with gold sparkles are taking the majority of fish. Boaters are scoring the majority but with the high flows, bank anglers are also taking numerous fish. This run is just getting started and it's a great fishery to get kids going on.

Sturgeon anglers working the gorge averaged 1 keeper per boat and lots of shakers over the weekend. Smelt remains the ticket but is in short supply this year. Marker 85 remains the upper deadline and higher numbers of boats are beginning to target the oversized fish. Action for oversized fish remains steady with fresh shad leading the charge.

Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754 6411) comments, "High water on the

Columbia has made for tough sturgeon fishing. There seems to be a lot more snags on the river and on my last trip I spent a lot of time replacing bent hooks and untangling other fish gear that got tangled in our lines."

Sturgeon anglers working the lower Columbia River estuary are also taking good numbers of keepers. The keepers are not easy to find but persistent anglers are taking fish. A halt in the action was noticed when gillnetters targeted sturgeon in the John Day area as their trip limit bumped up to 15/boat. Not all boats took their sturgeon limit but they will fish at least one more time on the eve of May 25th. Shrimp remain the bait of choice and trash fish are not a common nuisance above Tongue Point but crabs are a problem out of Hammond. Some sturgeon are present in the lower river below the bridge but they are well scattered. The stink hole has produced some fish however.

The Guide's Forecast – Salmon fishers may have the best results bank fishing in the lower river. The upcoming minus tide series coupled with high flows may bode well for beach plunkers downstream of Longview and at Sauvies Island. Spin-n-Glos plunked close to shore should produce some results for the masses working area beaches. The hot colors work best for steelhead while greens seem to produce best for salmon. If flows begin to subside in the gorge, boaters can expect action to pick up on spinners and plugs. Twelve to 20 feet of water should produce the best results for salmon but be prepared to get frustrated if you don't have the proper anchor to hold. Safety should be priority one!

Shad anglers in the gorge should have a hey-day with all the action. Use Dick Nite spoons for best results and anchor in 10 to 12 foot of water. If you are motivated and have the right gear, oversized sturgeon will be a prime target downstream of Marker 85 in the gorge as long as you are using fresh shad.

Sturgeon anglers in the estuary are most likely to find keepers in the John Day area. The shallow flats upstream of Tongue Point will produce the best although the recent 2 "salmon" openers will certainly take a toll on estuary sturgeon numbers. The higher upstream you go into Woody Island Channel, the harder it will be to find keepers but the shaker action is great!

Upstream, bass, salmon, sturgeon and some walleye are still available in the Dalles and John Day Pools. Although salmon passage is beginning to wane, action should remain best in the upstream impoundments. With the high flows and colder water temps, the bass spawn is happening a bit later this year. Action should begin to pick up good in the coming weeks.

Clam diggers will have optimum morning minus tides this weekend and providing the surf remains relatively calm, diggers should do well. As of Friday, May 26th, the coast is open from north of the Umpqua River jetty near Reedsport to the mouth of

the Columbia River and from Otter Point near Gold Beach south to the California border. Clatsop area beaches will produce the best results. Diggers are reminded that they need to keep the first 15 clams they dig as wastage has been high. If digging is easy and you just want to target the bigger clams, look for the larger holes to produce the bigger ones.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – The Willamette Falls water temperature remains unchanged at 62 degrees. Daily counts were improving but have declined recently. The total of 22,091 as of May 22nd is similar to that on the same date last year but about 53,000 shy of 2004 counts.

Projecting the figures through the week or so in which they lag behind in online data updates, about half the forecasted run of 46,500 springers have crossed the Falls. Since actual run numbers historically exceed the prediction and with the Columbia upgrade, we may see a better total than has been forecast. Whether or not this coincides with improved catch rates hinges on weather and river conditions.

Summer steelhead daily counts are picking up with the total topping 5,200 on the 22nd. Counts of winter steelhead wrapped up on May 15th with a total of 6,342, a number likely to change slightly as counters catch up on a few days missed earlier in the month. That figure tops the 2005 total by 350 or so but falls short of the 11,843 tallied in 2004.

Regarding the shad fishing, **pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754 6411)** gives up some inside info: "The shad are starting to show up in Willamette River in fishable numbers with the hot spot just above the Clackamas River. Chartreuse was the best color for us as we caught several on a small chartreuse crappie jig with a small chartreuse rubber worm (Big Gulp)."

Very few keeper sturgeon have been taken recently although catch-and-release shaker fishing has been good.

Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808) writes, "The Santiam has some nice fish available. The most biters are steelhead, with an occasional springer. Most of the Chinooks are staging around Jefferson, and heading up the South. There have been some good days reported from the South, all the way to the dam. The North is fair, but mostly steelhead. We have been doing best with small baits of eggs. Typically, sand shrimp work very well, and as we see more chinooks, they will take them often, with some added colors of pinks and greens."

While the McKenzie River is running a little high, the color is very good.

The Guide's Forecast – The level of the Columbia is so high it's backing up into

the Willamette. As a consequence, the spring Chinook bite fell off in the lower Willamette over the last several days. Shad fishing was fair to good at Oregon City and in Multnomah Channel, but the high water seems to have negatively effected even the shad bite especially for bank anglers as the fish seem to be moving away from shore.

Traditionally, lower Willamette spring Chinook anglers are fishing hardware in warmer water at this time of year as Chinook inhale spinners, wobblers and plugs. Concentrate efforts below St. Johns or in the Oregon City area for the best chance to entice a springer.

Algae is starting to be a problem in the upper Willamette. It's likely to shut down the fishery in a few weeks as anchor fishermen become unable to keep lines and lures free of gunk.

Follow Zalonis' lead for the weekend: hit the North Santiam for a chance at a fresh summer steelhead, the South for better odds of hooking into a spring Chinook.

Mackenzie River fly fishers will do well with Caddis and Stonefly patterns. Steelheading is expected to be fair here for the weekend.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – The occasional spring Chinook has been taken in the Clackamas River where summer steelheading is fair.

Other than the occasional hookup of a chinook at the mouth of the Sandy, fishing has been slow.

The Guide's Forecast – The Clackamas River should offer fair summer steelhead and springer possibilities with the chance of a Chinook encounter improving the closer one fishes to the mouth.

Chinook prospects on the Sandy are fair for the weekend. Fish have been seen clear up to Cedar Creek but the chances, such as they are for hooking one, are better on the lower river. Hardware seems to be out-producing bait. While catching steelhead here requires persistence, the ones being caught are good-sized and brilliant.

North Coast District Fishing Report – The third annual Bounty on the Bay tournament on Tillamook Bay produced the best results since its inception. Eighteen hatchery spring Chinook were harvested along with 6 or 7 wild fish from the ocean to the upper bay. One steelhead was even taken along the jetty on a herring! Overall, the event was a huge success that benefits Tillamook Basin salmon and

steelhead runs by improving habitat. Check out the Tillamook Estuary Partnership's web site at www.tbnep.org to get all the information!

Action for the weekend's springers was mixed between the upper and lower bay. Both areas produced well and herring seemed to be the ticket no matter where you fished. Spinners were responsible for many of the fish however and the ocean produced some quality fish as well. By Sunday, we must have fished all the biters out of the bay as action had dropped off. Monday once again produced good fishing- especially in the upper bay where **pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** went 4 for 6 over the course of the day. Chris boated 3 springers by 9 a.m. and got a 4th- a 30 pounder just before quitting time. The ocean once again picked up by mid-week making it a bad option for fishing.

Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808) adds this, "The Nestucca is fishing fair, with fish caught every day. There are groups of fish coming through, you just have to find them, and then get them to bite. They are coastal springers, what can you say. Most of the action has been at the mouth of Three Rivers, and down. If you fish this spot, expect some company. There has also been some issues here, so be as kind as you can. There are just some people here that think they own that spot. Bottom line here is to have fun, and enjoy the outdoors. Both the springers and the steelhead have been taking bait well. We have actually been doing best on smaller baits under floats, or back bounced. The river is still getting low, but the color is great on the lower end. If is still clear, and be stealthy, and you will get bit."

Sturgeon are still present in the estuary and anglers are taking some keepers in the West Channel, middle channel and mid-bay. Shrimp is the bait of choice and smaller crabs are becoming a small issue. Crabbing for keepers in Tillamook Bay did pick up a bit prior to the weekend but maximum pots and quality bait are essential.

Ocean bottomfishing remains very consistent when conditions permit. The limit remains 6 bottomfish and 2 ling cod over 24 inches. The last spring opener for all depth halibut is this weekend (Thursday – Saturday) and weather looks to be best on Thursday and Friday. The action should be a slam dunk if the drift isn't too bad. But really, how does bouncing 3 pounds of lead sound in 800 feet of water?

The Guide's Forecast – Great tides for spring Chinook will greet upper bay spinner trollers over the weekend. The tides are early however and salmon action dramatically drops off on incoming tide. There has been some great action close to high slack in the upper bay so maybe a new trend is developing.....

Chartreuse/green dot spinners are a springer favorite but don't discount the red/white blade in the early a.m. Plugs will be an effective alternative in the faster flows but the bay may be crowded so be aware of where you are working your

plugs.

Lower bay herring trollers will have their best opportunity on incoming tide as the screaming outgoing will be difficult to keep baits where they belong and intact in the tide. The ocean may be an option but safety and comfort should be considered. The Garibaldi Boat Basin will also be a busy port with the halibut effort.

Bobber tossers working tidewater will have to drop down to light line to expect any real results. Fish are present but wary and river forecasts aren't calling for measurable precipitation so driftboating is not a great option. Bank anglers are catching some springers in the Trask and Wilson Rivers however but you have to fish the deep, dark holes with quality bait and light lines to entice strikes.

Crabbing will likely remain best in the ocean when weather permits but bay crabbers should try crab harbor and the lower South Channel.

Central & South Coast Reports – Every Thursday through Sunday when the ocean allows, boaters are making the trek across the bar at Yaquina and Depoe bays to catch halibuts. The vast majority of these trips are yielding limits.

This is what **pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754 6411)** did and upon his return wrote that he "had a halibut trip out of Newport where we fished the south east corner of the Rockpile. It only took us ninety minutes to limit the boat with three halibut between 38 and 56 inches. The key was using fresh shad that I cut up into thirds. This kept the smaller fish way and attracted the bigger halibut. The ocean forecast for this coming week halibut opening is marginal for the smaller boats. The Coast Guard is recommending that if you are thinking of head out for some halibut or bottom fishing that you call ahead before you take off. There are also some big minus tides this weekend so clamming should be good in the coastal bays, but you will have to get up early as the low tides are early in the morning. Also bring a change of clothes because if you clam the way I do, you will be cover in mud."

Here are the happy anglers from Kremers' halibut trip:



For those considering a trip to the central Oregon coast, the Newport Coast Guard Station telephone number is 541-265-5511.

Summer steelhead fishing is very slow now with the river flow far below optimum. Long and light might entice one with first light offering the best odds. Or better yet, following the next significant precipitation.

Chinook angling remains very slow on the North Umpqua and the South Umpqua remains still closed. A better bet here would be the Shad and smallmouth action which is good and getting better with warmer water temperatures. Early morning minus tides will have the sturgeon biting below Reedsport but the catches are mostly oversized. Offshore salmon fishing may be worthwhile but Saturday in particular will be rough on the Big Pond.

Striped bass are being taken on the Coos River where the shad season is ramping up as well.

The only stretch that holds hope for a spring chinook this weekend on the Rogue is up high. Fresh chinook are simply not entering the river. Counts at Gold Ray show a disappointing trifle over 2,000. Anglers at the Hatchery Hole who are fishing very long and hard will be rewarded periodically. The upper Rogue is high this week from runoff and upstream release out of Lost Lake. Trout fishing opens Saturday, May 27th, for which stocking has taken place.

Surf perch fishing has rewarded many anglers with limits again this week with fish are abundant off most all Southern Oregon beaches. This is a pursuit best left to another day when the surf is heavy, however.

According to a May 23rd ODFW release, trout fishing has been popular and rewarding at Diamond Lake. The daily limit was raised to 20 trout per day with two limits allowed in possession. Creel checks since the limit was raised has indicated few 20-trout limits but many anglers are scoring 15 in a day with many of these 18 inchers and a few have scaled at three or four pounds.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Deschutes flows were up to 5,540 at Madras on May 24th due to runoff from melting snow. The White River is putting some color into the Deschutes but the river below the mouth remains fishable. Fish nymphs near the bottom for best results until the level moderates. When the conditions improve and the weather warms, Stoneflies will be hatching for several weeks. Summer steelheading will kick into gear towards the end of June.

Scratch the Owyhee River off list of weekend fishing plans. Silt washing downstream has the water opaque.

Big and Little Lava lakes are open and free of ice. Fishing will be slow until the water warms but when it does, the game will be on.

Northwest Trout - Northwest and Southwest Zone streams and rivers in Oregon will open to trout on May 27th. This is a catch-and-release fishery in Neskowin Creek and North. In the Salmon River and South, two trout may be retained per day. As always, check the regulations for specific waters.

Snow in them that hills? If the weather forecast comes to pass, freezing levels this coming Friday and Saturday will drop to 4,000 feet. Those planning a high lake outing for Memorial Day weekend should take note and appropriate precautions. Sheesh, it's almost June.

According to the ODFW, Huddleston Pond, scheduled for stocking this week, will not be planted with trout and will not be stocked for the remainder of the season. The shallow waters cannot sustain trout when the water warms. Trout scheduled for Huddleston will instead go to Sheridan Pond South of Highway 18 West of Sheridan.

Scheduled for trout stocking this week in the Willamette Valley are Faraday Lake, Henry Hagg Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Silver Creek Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, Timothy Meadows, Trillium Lake, Leaburg Lake, upper and lower McKenzie River, Quartzville Creek, Salmon Creek, Santiam River North Fork, and Smith Reservoir. In the Northwest Zone, Big Creek Reservoir #1 & # 2 along with Olalla Creek Reservoir will be stocked with trout this week.

Reader Email

Subscriber Steve B., who wrote last week regarding the perch die-off at Hagg Lake, wrote again this week, saying, "I just got an email back from Hagg Lake saying they did toxicology screens on the dead fish and they came up negative. Here is the response from the lake..."

"Thanks for your concern, and I am pleased to report back to you with the toxicology report, as being negative. All males tested, were spawned out the result of a cold winter as they usually spawn in March and April. The cold weather in a lack of sufficient food supplies contributed to the demise of the perch. As they were the only, fish affected trout are plentiful and safe to catch and eat. I hope this information helps in some way."

Steve went on to thank TGF for our response to him as well!

Arriving too late to make the last issue, regular contributor Kap'n Ken Johnson wrote, "Fishing on the Willamette was pretty HOT this last weekend and most likely going to be hotter still this coming weekend. Not so much for Salmon, that I could see, but several boats were keeping busy catching and netting Shad. I personally did not see to many Chinook caught but Shad are the order of the day and this week, that is where fishing pressure seems to be. Today, there were few anglers on the water, but quite a few Shad being caught, "If" you were, that is, in the right slot. That is the ticket for Shad fishing...I've fished on days where NOTHING is happening in my boat, but the boat 20' away is knocking them dead. Shad tend to come up the river in "ribbons" or schools...Duh! On those kinds of days, I've picked up anchor and moved as little as 25-50 feet and got into the run. Sometimes I have been known to move 4-5 times or more, much to the chagrin of whoever is dubbed "Anchor Boy" that day. But, I usually ALWAYS get fish. The Columbia is producing too, as you have seen in another report. Boat Ramps are quite busy and don't forget, the boat ramp at Clackamette Park is closed this weekend because the festival going on there in the park. See you out there..."

Write to the TGF staff:

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Random Links

FREE DEVICE HELPS SAVE ROCKFISH LIVES:
http://www.currypilot.com/news/story.cfm?story_no=12851

Offshore Salmon and Halibut regulations:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/Ocean-Regs.pdf>

Salem Fire Department will give away free life jackets on June 1st to Salem residents who cannot afford them:

<http://www.statesmanjournal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2006605210317>

Shark caught off Boca Grande may set world record:

<http://www.news-press.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060512/ENT20/60512011/1075>



Weekly Quote – "I am a fishwife - or so it seems after being married over twenty years to a fishin' fool. I married one and raised two and claim to know more about fishermen than a salmon does, which is saying a lot, for fish are smarter than high school girls. I've shared a fisherman's life and therefore know the extremes of unreasonable exaltation or blackest despair." - Beatrice Cook in "The Armchair Angler"

GOOD LUCK!