

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **June 2<sup>nd</sup>, – June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Angling for Columbia River spring Chinook continues to be a disappointment. High flows have slowed catch rates and migration-even for the prolific shad run. As flows subside, the fishing should improve, particularly in the gorge.

Although shad migration has slowed, success rates are still high. A quality fishery for beginner anglers, anglers anchoring safely in 10 to 12 feet of water continue to experience great action on small spoons and shad darts. Shad make great bait for the oversize sturgeon in the area but anglers need to respect the new deadline at Marker 85.

Success rates have slightly fallen on oversized and keeper sturgeon in the gorge but action for shakers remains great.

Estuary sturgeon fishers are still finding the best success upstream of Tongue Point but pockets of quality keepers are being taken downstream of the Astoria/Megler Bridge. Small crab remain a nuisance for sturgeon anglers in the lower river out of Hammond.

As of May 24th, counts of spring Chinook at Willamette Falls hit 23,337 with summer steelhead approaching 6,000. The water temperature had dropped to 56 degrees at the Falls on May 30th. High water combined with low temperatures has stalled Chinook action in the lower river and Multnomah Channel.

Shad fishing has been hit or miss on the lower Willamette but in the right slot with the right lure, it's possible to catch scores of them.

The Clackamas is getting heavy angling pressure, particularly at the parks where bank access is available. Steelhead fishing has been very slow, however. A handful of springers are being taken daily.

Sandy River springer anglers were picking up fish in the upper river late last week before the level rose and water roiled over the weekend. Action had been fair to good on bait from Cedar Creek downstream. Conditions have shown improvement this week.

The South Santiam came up several inches over the weekend but had fallen back to low levels the first of the week. Springer fishing has improved. The North Santiam is finally dropping into fishable shape this week. Combined with a rise in water temperatures, fishing should finally pick up here.

Chinook fishing on the McKenzie has improved.

Faraday Lake, Harriet Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, Timothy Meadows, Detroit Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake and upper McKenzie River will be stocked with trout this week.

**Northwest –** Despite the great tides, spring salmon action on Tillamook Bay was fair at best over the weekend. The low front that greeted holiday campers didn't help matters. The upper bay high slack bite is no longer but most fish are being found closer to low slack tide. The tide series shifts this week however making lower bay herring trolling a better option.

Seas were very calm early this week and ocean crabbers fishing fresh bait were rewarded with fair catches. Salmon action in the ocean remained slow but bottomfishers were rewarded with easy limits.

Sturgeon fishing remains an option on Tillamook Bay but effort has dropped with the opportunities on the Columbia. Sand shrimp remains the best bait but small crab robbing anglers of more baits in the upper bay as the spring progresses.

Locations scheduled to be stocked with trout this week include Alder Lake, Big Creek Reservoir # 1 and #2, Buck Lake, Cleawox Lake, Dune Lake, Erhart Lake, Georgia Lake, North Georgia Lake, Olalla Creek Reservoir, Perkins Lake and Thissel Pond.

**Southwest** - Springer fishing is still spotty on the North Umpqua but is expected to improve as the water warms. Shad have entered the river in good numbers. Smallmouth bass fishing is heating up.

Shad fishing was good on the Coos River over the weekend. A few stripers were taken in the Coos and the Coquille.

The only reliable springer action on the Rogue is the crowded hatchery hole where scores are being caught daily. The lower river, flowing fast with water in the mid-50s, is slow and the Grants Pass stretch is dead.

Several streams and rivers opened for trout on Saturday, May 27th. Fishing for sea-run cutthroat has been fair to good. Bait may be used for these fish only in tidewater. Above tidewater, only artificial lures and flies may be used.

South coast waters scheduled for trout stocking this week are Rogue River (Section 5), Willow Lake, and Fish Lake.

**Eastern** - On the Deschutes, flyfishing is improving with Golden Stones and Salmon flies in abundance now. These will be the dominant patterns through June.

Snow was common on the high lakes last weekend. Odell delivered kokanee to deep jiggers while Crane Prairie is slow but offers fine trout action. Fishing is good for kokanee at Paulina where a few brown trout are also being taken. Green Peter water is very low and at last report, getting lower.

Scheduled to be planted with rainbows this week in the Deschutes watershed week are Badger Lake, Clear Lake, Frog Lake, Lawrence Lake, Olallie Lake, Smock Prairie Reservoir and Spring Creek.

**Southwest Washington-** The Cowlitz River remains only fair for spring Chinook with the North Fork of the Lewis remaining the best bet.

The Wind River is most productive in the canyon but public access is a problem for most. With dam passage slowing, success at the mouth of the Wind and Drano Lake is dropped off.

Summer steelhead are beginning to show in the Washougal River with a run of nearly 1,000 adults likely due back to the Skamania Hatchery. Bait will be allowed starting June 1<sup>st</sup> but anglers should check regulations for further regulations.

**Soapbox Update** – Those unable to afford personal flotation devices for themselves or their children may stop by two Salem fire departments to receive life jackets for free. The program starts June 1st with PFDs available at station No. 5 on Glen Creek Road NW in West Salem and at fire station No. 1 on Trade Street SE in downtown Salem.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Many anglers got discouraged with the high flows being experienced in the lower Columbia River. Salmon effort has waned as success rates weren't as high as most had hoped or anticipated. Catch rates were best for bank anglers from Sauvies Island to Westport as minus tides drew fish close to shore. Success rates improved for summer steelhead and slowed for spring Chinook. Many of the Chinook now showing are wild and must be released.

In the Gorge, dam passage has slowed, likely due to the increase in flow and spill. Even shad passage has dropped way off with millions more likely to come. Shad fishing remains steady however for anglers working Dick Nite spoons in green and gold. The Shad Rack is still the place to be but anglers can certainly find fish along other gravel bars.

Sturgeon anglers are taking advantage of the plentiful fresh shad to use as oversized sturgeon bait. Catches of oversized fish far outnumber the keeper catch in the gorge and the recent gillnet opener (with a 15 fish/boat limit) didn't help motivate anglers this week. The commercial fleet has just a few hundred sturgeon left on their "winter" quota so trip limits have shrunk to just 3 fish/boat which should take some of the pressure off of these fish.

Estuary sturgeon anglers also felt the pain of the May sturgeon opener as success rates dropped for anglers fishing near Astoria. Sturgeon did begin to show in the lower river out of Hammond however and gillnet effort was lighter downstream of the Astoria/Megler Bridge. Anchovies are more readily available but shrimp continues to be the best bait.

Calm seas gave bottomfishers some great opportunity at mid-week. For the few participating in the fishery, action was good but the tides were a bit strong.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Salmon and steelhead action on the lower Columbia will likely slow with a dwindling run and continued high flows. Flows should moderate however bringing into motion better passage at Bonneville and a slight improvement in catch rates. We are coming into a weaker tide series so lower river beach plunking won't be a strong option this week. An anglers best chance at a salmon will be in the gorge- particularly if flows subside.

Sturgeon success rates should improve in the gorge and in the estuary this week. Anglers in the gorge will likely remain focused on oversized fish using fresh shad as bait. Shad strips or smelt will likely take keepers for those putting forth the effort.

Sturgeon anglers in the estuary should focus efforts above Tongue Point or below the Astoria/Megler Bridge. There are quality keepers available and if you put forth the effort, sand shrimp should pay dividends but limits are still challenging to find. Although sculpin are not a big issue, crabs can wreak havoc with baits in the deeper water. Plan on moving a bunch to find the best fishing.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – With only a couple of hundred spring chinook crossing Willamette Falls daily, counts have crept only to 23,775, about half the projected total for the year. Daily summer steelhead passage is slightly better with just of 6,400 crossing so far this season. The water temperature had not risen above 56 degrees as of the last day in May.

Sturgeon fishing has been slow although a few keepers were checked from the Oregon City/Gladstone area.

Shad fishing slowed somewhat mid-week, but with persistence in location the path of the fish then

finding out what tiny lure appeals on that particular day, catching several will be possible.

Springer fishing continues to improve on the South Santiam although fewer than 20 have been seen at Foster Dam. The summer steelhead count, however, is pushing the 1,400 mark. The North Santiam is finally dropping in level this week. North Santiam water conditions continue to look better as does the steelheading. Fishing should be worthwhile this weekend.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Spring chinook fishing in the lower Willamette will be slow but steady with trolled spinners or plug-cur herring being the best options. Until the water release from Bonneville is curtailed, the Columbia will continue to back up into the Willamette. Combined with soft tides for the next week or so, it is likely that there will be sufficient current to allow for anchor fishing.

Use caution boating as there were deadheads and snags galore mid-week throughout the lower river and into the Channel.

Sturgeon fishing has been very slow in the light current. If sturgeon is the target, the Columbia will offer much better chance of bagging a keeper this week.

Every year about now, the question comes up about shad availability above Willamette Falls, or rather why there are none upriver. The fish ladder at Willamette Falls is an enclosed design. Salmon and steelhead have no problem passing through it but shad won't swim through a "pipe."

The mainstem and South Santiam hold fair to good promise for spring Chinook this weekend with the North Santiam the best option for summer steelhead.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – Summer steelheading on the Clackamas remains a tough nut to crack although springer fishing has been fair in the lower river.

The Sandy was muddy over last weekend which condition put the skids to fishing. Monday this week it was showing some improvement and as recently as Tuesday the Sandy had achieved decent color and was kicking out a few fish as well.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Chinook fishing will be a better option the steelheading on the Clack this weekend. Plug pullers should be able to entice a few from the lower river.

And just like that, the Sandy River seemed to shut down. Recent reports indicate that the fish which were upstream and in Cedar creek are gone. Fishing this week is at a standstill but with rain falling again and a drying trend over the weekend it should pick up again.

**North Coast District Fishing Report** – Although only a slight rise in river levels was detected with the holiday precipitation, it was enough to move some fish out of tidewater and into the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. In conditions like we have witnessed this spring, even a small rain freshet can have profound effects for in-river anglers. I honestly don't have any reliable reports from driftboaters in the Tillamook area but stealth tactics should have taken fish for anglers that foresaw the opportunity. The Nestucca River rose over a half of foot!

Bay conditions continue to be fairly productive with decent catches coming from the upper bay. I fished the upper bay on Monday (Memorial Day) and the Oyster House was quite crowded. I didn't see many fish taken but we managed one at about 8:30 and another at about 10:30. Both fish came on spinners- one was chartreuse/green dot while the other was half brass, half chartreuse with a green dot. This has been a springer favorite since the beginning of time. The extreme tides seem to

concentrate better numbers of fish in the upper bay while lower bay anglers did not fare so well. The ocean was especially friendly earlier in the week but action was light. There were quite a few fish taken on Wednesday, May 31<sup>st</sup> in the upper bay. We had 2 bites but only landed one 20 pound fish. There were a few boats that had 2 springers and several boats had a single fish. Crowds thinned somewhat which allowed ample room to work desired areas.

Sturgeon fishing has dropped off a bit on Tillamook although we got one 42 inch keeper on Monday. The fish was clearly feeding on sand shrimp and that's what we caught our fish on. Crabs are becoming an issue in the middle bay so bait is hard to keep fishing. I even tried our herring but that didn't last long. Too bad the bay crabbing isn't better.

Ocean crabbing was fair on Sunday with 5 of our pots taking in 15 keepers. The crab are in good shape and there were some keepers coming from the lower estuary. The crabs are in better shape in the salt however. Shad was a good bait- guess where you can get some of that.....?

**The Guide's Forecast** – The upcoming weaker tide series will put lower bay herring trollers at an advantage. Early morning high tide along with a morning outgoing will work well for those willing to stick it out along the north jetty (inside the bay) with herring on the bottom. The ocean may be an option but the forecast is calling for mixed seas. Check bar conditions before venturing out.

Spinner trollers certainly still have an option in the upper bay with the last 2 hours of outgoing and the high slack the best options. Anglers trolling herring- particularly near high slack, are taking decent numbers of fish in the upper bay.

Tidewater trollers in the Trask and bobber and bait pitchers in the Trask and Wilson are taking fish but persistence is necessary. The lower tidewater is producing the best results.

Sturgeon fishing should go downhill from here. With the higher saltwater intrusion, crabs and sculpin will likely become a bit more of a problem. You can get lucky and land on a pod of cooperating sturgeon but you should be prepared to move to find them. Many of the sturgeon begin to head up the Tillamook tidewater in pursuit of a food source.

Bottomfishers may get some more calm water opportunities this week. Action should be great if the weather cooperates. Crabbing will remain the best in the ocean so bring pots and set them to the north of the entrance for best luck. Fresh shad will pay dividends.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – A friendly ocean early this week allowed crabbers to ply the salt with fair result. Bottom fishers reported quick limits offshore.

The ocean is open to Chinook fishing although catches and effort have been light. Offshore fishing for finclipped coho opens on June 17th.

Halibut fishing has been very good during the Thursday through Saturday all depth effort. There are two such fisheries remaining scheduled in the spring season. The last day to try is June 10th unless the generous quota is not met in which case additional days will be set.

Sturgeon fishing has been very good in the estuary on the Umpqua River for oversize with a few legal fish being harvested. June will see the peak for a strong shad run here. One pleasant aspect of shad fishing is that it's best on sunny afternoons when angling for other species is slowest. Smallmouth bass fishing continues to improve with water warming in the mainstem and lower stretches of the South Umpqua. Spring Chinook catches at the Umpqua are low.

Shad fishing has been good and improving in the Coos and Coquille rivers.

The latest springer count at Gold Ray Dam on the Rogue River as of May 26th was 2,848, the lowest return in over 20 years. Most years at this time, hundreds of Chinook are being counted daily. Not so with the 2006 run. Catches are light and further hampered by heavy flows of water which remains cooler than normal. An early closure or limiting catches are options being considered with the first week in June historically the peak of the season.

The upper Rogue remains the best option for anglers although catches are logically very light. Despite the Corps of Engineers curtailing flows out of Lost Creek, the water is still over 3,000 cfs at Gold Ray. Hit the Hatchery Hole early in the day for the best shot at a legendary Rogue River spring Chinook. Getting one this year will be an accomplishment.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Fly fishing is improving on the Deschutes with Golden Stones and Salmon flies in abundance now. These will be the dominant patterns through June.

Crooked River remains in fine, fishable condition with Caddis and Pale Morning Duns hatching now.

### **North Puget Sound**

With only a few weeks left in spring, anglers have an assortment of fishing opportunities, ranging from trout and chinook to shrimp and lingcod.

On the freshwater, **trout** fishing continues on the lakes and will expand into several of the region's rivers and streams June 1. Under the statewide rule for trout, there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches in rivers and streams. However, some of the region's rivers and streams have a rule requiring trout to be at least 14 inches in length to retain. For more rules and details on trout fishing, anglers can check out WDFW's 2006/2007 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

Portions of the Skagit and Skykomish rivers also open for **spring chinook** fishing June 1. The Skagit is open to hatchery springer retention from the Highway 530 bridge at Rockport to the Cascade River. The daily limit is two hatchery chinook at least 12 inches in length. On the Skykomish, hatchery springer fishing is open from the Lewis Street Bridge in Monroe to the Wallace River. The Skykomish fishery also has a daily limit of two hatchery chinook at least 12 inches in length.

Out on the saltwater, the Tulalip Bay "bubble" fishery begins June 2 and runs through Sept. 25, except for a one-day closure on June 17. The fishery is open each week from Friday through noon Monday. There is a two-salmon daily limit and chinook must be 22 inches in length to retain.

The northern portion of Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) opens June 1 to catch-and-release fishing for **salmon**. Fishing will be allowed north of a line from Point Monroe to Meadow Point. Handling rules are in effect for this fishery.

Meanwhile, anglers are still picking up **lingcod, halibut, rockfish** and **cabezon** in waters throughout north Puget Sound. 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. 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.

Shrimpers have done well in the region this spring, and the opportunities continue as the **coonstripe** and **pink shrimp** season opens June 1 in marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) and a portion of 9 (Admiralty Inlet). The daily limit in all of these fisheries is 10 pounds, heads and tails, of all shrimp species combined. Shrimp heads can be removed, but the heads must be retained while in the field. Details, such as the required minimum mesh size and maximum fishing depths, are available on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crabreg/>. As for **spot shrimp**, the fishery is closed throughout the region except in the southern portion of Marine Area 7 (Iceberg Point and Salmon Bank areas).

As summer approaches, so does the **crab** season. Crab fishing opens July 1 in marine areas 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10, and the southern portion of 7. Fisheries in those areas will generally be open on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, although the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission recently added extra fishing days around the Fourth of July. See WDFW's sport-crabbing website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>) for more information.

### **South Sound/Olympic Peninsula**

Most rivers in the region open to **trout** fishing June 1, when additional angling opportunities open for hatchery **steelhead** and spring **chinook salmon**. Many areas of Puget Sound are now closed to spot **shrimp** fishing, but shellfish lovers can still look forward to non-spot shrimp and **crab**.

The opening of river fishing on June 1 adds even more variety to summer fishing options. Searun and resident cutthroat are available in most local rivers and resident rainbow in some of them, said Bill Freymond, WDFW fish biologist. "June is a great time to go out fishing," he said. "There's so many different opportunities and you don't have to travel very far to find one." Freymond advises anglers to check the *Fishing in Washington* (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) pamphlet for specific regulations on the rivers before going out. For example, a section of the Nisqually River, beginning at the military tank crossing bridge, will be closed until July 1. Anglers should also consult the pamphlet for the size limit rules that apply to the water they plan to fish.

Don't forget trout are still waiting to be caught in area lakes as well. "We've done echo-sounding and we know the fish are out there," said Hal Michael, WDFW fish biologist. The longer the stocked fish live in the lake, the more in tune they get with natural foods, Michael noted. "They don't stay they same level of stupid all the time," he said. "After a while, they may be more attracted to a mayfly than to Power Bait."

Anglers anxious to catch hatchery summer **steelhead** might want to consider the Wynoochee River, where "nothing is stopping the steelhead from stacking up," according to Freymond. Other spots to try for summer hatchery steelhead include the Chehalis River in Grays Harbor County and the Lyre, Bogachiel, Sol Duc and Hoh rivers on the northern Olympic Peninsula. The Quillayute, Sol Duc and Hoh rivers are also still running strong with **spring chinook salmon**. Freymond advises anglers to check river conditions and use caution on the Hoh since the warm weather has brought down lots of glacial melt, raising and discoloring the water considerably.

Salmon fishing also opens on June 1 in Marine Area 11, from the north tip of Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. "Lot's of people are looking forward to this opener," said Steve Theisfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "And the fishing should be pretty good from the start. Last year was very good on the opening." While there may be some resident coho, most anglers will be targeting chinook, he said. The fishery runs seven days a week, with a limit of two fish a day. Popular fishing spots include Point Defiance, Dalco Point and Clay Banks.

For now, all ocean areas are closed for **Pacific halibut** fishing since Ilwaco (Marine Area 1) closed on May 27. But anglers will get two more days in June to fish for halibut off the state's north coast. Marine areas 3 (La Push) and 4 (Neah Bay) will be open for halibut fishing Thursday, June 22 and

again Saturday, June 24. "A portion of the quota was previously set aside for at least one additional day of fishing in June," said Phil Anderson, a WDFW special assistant. "Because the final catch count came in under what was projected, we are able to provide a second day of fishing as well."

A 20-fathom depth restriction in place in marine areas 3 and 4 will not apply on June 22 and 24, Anderson said. The restriction, which runs through Sept. 30, 2006, applies only on days when halibut fishing is closed. On those days, anglers may not fish for, retain, possess or land any rockfish or lingcod caught seaward of a line approximately 20 fathoms offshore. The coordinates for the 20-fathom line are available on WDFW's website ([http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/bottomfish/20fathoms\\_may06.htm](http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/bottomfish/20fathoms_may06.htm)) and on the recreational hotline (360-902-2500).

**Lingcod** off the coast continues to be hot. "The fishing out of Westport has been particularly good, with lots of boats limiting," said Wendy Beeghley, WDFW fish biologist. Anglers are also catching some lingcod in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, where the fishery in marine areas 5 and 6 is open daily through June 15. Halibut fishing in Marine Area 6 closes June 18, but remains open through Aug. 5 in Marine Area 5.

Still looking for shrimp? Fishing for coonstripe and other non-spot shrimp will open June 1 in several areas of Puget Sound including marine areas 11 (Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge) and 9 (Admiralty Inlet). There is a 150-foot depth restriction in these areas. The fishing is open daily. While most waters have now closed to spot shrimp fishing, those still open include marine areas 4, 5, 6, and 13.

As summer approaches, so does the **crab** season. The earliest opportunity for catching crab is June 18 on the north coast of the Olympic Peninsula and South Puget Sound. Recreational crab fishing opens in marine areas 4, 5 and 13 seven days a week through Feb. 28. Other areas opening July 1 in Puget Sound include marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 11 (Tacoma/Vashon Island), and 12 (Hood Canal). Fisheries in those areas will generally be open on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, although the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission recently added extra fishing days around the Fourth of July. See WDFW's sport-crabbing website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>) for more information.

### **Southwest Washington:**

Summer **steelhead** and **shad** have been competing for anglers' attention as fishing for **spring chinook salmon** continues to drop off on the lower Columbia River. Meanwhile, a variety of rivers and streams open to **trout** anglers June 1, expanding fishing opportunities throughout the region.

Rivers opening to **trout** fishing fall into two main categories: stocked and wild. By the June 3-4 weekend, WDFW plans to finish planting thousands of 9-to-12-inch fish in several rivers and streams around the region, said John Weinheimer, a fish manager for the department. Plants include 5,500 rainbows in Canyon Creek, 3,500 in the Little White Salmon River, 1,200 in Skate Creek near Packwood and 500 in the Tilton River. Stocking will continue throughout the summer, per the stocking schedule on the WDFW website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>). Other anglers may prefer rivers that are managed for wild trout, such as the Big White Salmon River and the north fork of the Lewis River.

"Wherever you go, I'd strongly advise that anglers exercise caution," Weinheimer said. "Almost all of the rivers are running high with snow runoff right now, so people should keep an eye on their kids - and put them in lifejackets. People catch fish in high water, but it's important to be aware of the conditions."

WDFW still plans to stock a number of high-elevation lakes, but not until the snow melts down a ways, Weinheimer said. "We won't get to a number of high lakes, like Goose Lake in Skamania

County, for a few weeks," he said. "There's still so much snow in the higher elevations we just can't get in there yet."

Also on June 1:

The Elochoman River opens for hatchery **spring chinook** and hatchery steelhead from its mouth to the salmon hatchery bridge.

The Grays River opens for both hatchery chinook and **hatchery steelhead** from its mouth to the south fork, and from the mouth of the west fork to the hatchery intake.

The Washougal River opens for hatchery steelhead upriver to the Salmon Falls Bridge with the use of bait allowed.

The East Fork of the Lewis River opens for hatchery steelhead upriver to the boundary below Horseshoe Falls with the use of bait allowed.

Lake Scanewa opens for hatchery spring chinook along with hatchery rainbow trout.

Anglers should check for fishing regulations specific to those rivers in the 2006-07 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) on the WDFW website.

While anglers were gearing up for those and other new fishing opportunities, the spring chinook fishery on the lower Columbia River mainstem was winding down. Catch rates have also been on the wane on the lower Columbia and Bonneville Pool tributaries, said Joe Hymer, another WDFW fish biologist.

"Anglers are still catching some spring chinook below Bonneville, but a lot of people are switching over to summer steelhead," he said. And for good reason. Catch rates for hatchery steelhead have been "ramping up" below Longview, where bank anglers kept 21 adipose-clipped steelies for 57 rods during the last weekend in May. "Both the number of steelhead and anglers should keep growing in the days ahead," said Hymer, noting that fishing for summer steelhead generally remains good through Labor Day.

Want to improve your catch rate? Try fishing for **shad**, which are now moving into the lower Columbia River in large numbers, Hymer said. During the last week of May, creel checkers found that 186 bank anglers had caught 709 shad fishing just downriver from Bonneville Dam. Near Camas, 25 anglers were checked with 51 shad, most weighing 3 to 5 pounds.

"Shad are boney, no doubt about it, but they put up a good fight and there is no limit on how many you can catch in Washington," Hymer said. "And you don't need a lot of fancy gear - a lot of anglers do just fine fishing a bead and a hook." A record 6 million shad returned to the Columbia River in 2005 and Hymer predicts another strong return this year. For shad recipes, see the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/outreach/fishing/shad/shad.htm>.

**Sturgeon** anglers might also want to try some new recipes. Those fishing in the estuary are picking up an increasing number of legal-size fish. Charter fishers checked at the ports of Ilwaco and Chinook were averaging one legal-size sturgeon for every 2.4 rods during the last full week in May. Anglers in private boats average one keeper for every 6.3 rods. Approximately 300 private boats and 17 charter boats were counted fishing for sturgeon in the lower during a flyover May 28.

### Eastern Washington:

Recent heavy rains and snow melt left waterways out of shape and kept some anglers at home. WDFW enforcement officers patrolling the special **spring chinook salmon** season, which recently opened on a portion of the Snake River near Little Goose Dam, reported high, muddy, debris-filled

waters and few anglers. Now that conditions are settling, salmon fishing should pick up as the season continues through June. Be sure to follow gear restrictions, including barbless hooks. Contrary to the first announcement of the season, the use of double or treble hooks is allowed.

Many **trout** lakes throughout the region - even those with nearby campgrounds traditionally popular over the holiday weekend - were lightly used during stormy weather. Curt Vail, WDFW district fish biologist in Colville, notes that from Ferry County's Lake Ellen to Pend Oreille County's Sullivan Lake, camps were full but shorelines and fishing boats were not. "There was water running out of Lake Ellen and most folks at Sullivan Lake were gathered around campfires," he said. There are lots of fish left to be caught at those and other local waters, Vail noted. "Curlew Lake is really doing well this year with our fry plants and net-pen releases of rainbows," he said.

The June 1 river and stream fishing opener could be a little slow with waters still high, Vail said. The Kettle and Little Pend Oreille rivers should be productive for trout once conditions return to normal, but check the rules about selective gear, size and catch limits. Stream anglers are reminded that wherever selective gear is required, nets used to land fish must be knotless to minimize harm to fish that may be released.

Recent WDFW enforcement patrols on Lake Roosevelt showed that **walleye** catches are increasing in the main body of the big reservoir. Some daily limits of eight walleye were being taken near Barney's Junction near Kettle Falls.

The June 10-11 Free Fishing Weekend is a good time to introduce family and friends to the sport without having to buy a license. The region's well-stocked **trout** lakes are a good bet for newcomers to the sport. Check out where the latest have been stocked at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg1/index.htm>.

### **North Central Washington:**

Cool rainy weather and flooding in some areas made for a quiet holiday weekend around northcentral Washington's many popular fishing waters. WDFW enforcement officers reported that the catch was slow -- probably due to high, muddy waters - for anglers braving the weather to fish. With a temporary road closure due to flooding on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area in Okanogan County, some recreationists were determined to travel cross-country, and some illegal off-road-vehicle activity citations were issued.

Art Viola, WDFW district fish biologist in Wenatchee, said the special fishing season for spring **chinook salmon**, which just opened on a section of the Icicle River in Chelan County, has been slow so far. "Only one fish was caught during the opener on May 26," he said. "The run is very late this year. I expect at least 3,000 fish but more likely up to 6,000 will eventually enter the Icicle. As in the past. I expect anglers will be more successful as the season advances." The area open through July 31 begins 500 feet downstream of the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery rack and stops 500 feet short of the confluence of the Icicle and Wenatchee rivers. The daily catch limit is two salmon, measuring at least 12 inches. Night closure and non-buoyant lure restrictions are in effect.

Bob Jateff, WDFW district fish biologist in Omak, reports good fishing for **bluegill**, **crappie**, and **rainbow trout** at Leader Lake near Okanogan. "Big Twin Lake near Winthrop also continues to produce some nice triploid rainbow measuring 18 to 20 inches," he said.

Portions of the Methow, Twisp, and Chewuch Rivers open for catch-and-release trout fishing on June 1, but Jateff said that due to high spring flows, they may not be fishable until mid-month. "Remember when fishing these rivers to check the regulation pamphlet closely as there are some areas closed to fishing," he said.

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.

The June 10-11 Free Fishing Weekend is a good time to introduce family and friends to the sport without having to buy a license. The region's well-stocked **trout** lakes are a good bet for newcomers to the sport. Check out where the latest have been stocked at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg2/index.htm>.

### **South Central Washington:**

Although **trout** fishing opens on most rivers and streams in the region on June 1, WDFW Fish Biologist Jim Cummins says anglers should expect flows that could make fishing difficult. "We have a good snowpack this year, and with recent rains, our flows could remain high through June," he said. Cummins reminds river and stream anglers to check the regulation pamphlet's "Special Rules" listings carefully for catch and size limits and gear restrictions. 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>.

Hatchery **spring chinook salmon** fishing is scheduled to continue 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). Anglers must keep all chum and sockeye salmon and wild steelhead in the water while releasing them, except when fishing from vessels that are a minimum of 30 feet in length.

The June 10-11 Free Fishing Weekend is a good time to introduce family and friends to the sport without having to buy a license. The region's well-stocked, year-round **trout** lakes and ponds are a good bet for newcomers to the sport. Check out where the latest have been stocked at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg3/index.htm>.

**Northwest Trout** - Snow was common at the high lakes last weekend. Odell delivered kokanee to deep jiggers while Crane Prairie is slow for kokes but offers fine trout action. Fishing is good for kokanee at Paulina where a few brown trout are also being taken. Green Peter water is very low and at last report, getting lower.

Expect trout to be planted at all locations next week as Free Fishing Weekend is June 10th & 11th. No license is required to fish those days.

It has been decided that Huddleston Pond in Willamina will no longer be planted with trout as the ODFW is considering converting it to a warm-water fishery. That particular body of water is certainly better suited for bass and panfish than salmonids. The next scheduled release was to be the week of June 5 but these trout will now be released into Sheridan Pond.

In the Willamette Valley, Faraday Lake, Harriet Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, Timothy Meadows, Detroit Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake and upper McKenzie River will be stocked with trout this week. Locations scheduled to be stocked with trout in the Northwest Zone include Alder Lake, Big Creek Reservoir # 1 and #2, Buck Lake, Cleawox Lake, Dune Lake, Erhart Lake, Georgia Lake, North Georgia Lake, Olalla Creek Reservoir, Perkins Lake and Thissel Pond.

## Reader Email

Regular contributor Kapt'n Ken Johnson writes this week, "Went Shad fishing today. Took my 6 year old grandson, Carter. He has never caught a single fish in his entire 6 years...Hey, it was NOT because I'm a lousy grandfather...It's because we haven't had the chance. Those who know me will understand. Now, I think I have a converted 6 year old. Carter was totally CRAZY when the first Shad hit the Dick Nite. I think the words "Screamingly Crazy" is appropriate. It brought a LOT of attention from boats all around us. My first thought was these people are going to think I'm killing my grandson. I kept holding one finger up, no not that one, as in "It's his first fish, EVER!" Funny, they all seemed to understand! He actually horsed the fish to the boat quite quickly and I netted it, where the screaming began all over again. He was yelling that is was his first fish to everyone who would listen. He got a lot of support from a couple of the boats 20'-30' away. I was so proud. It brought a tear to my eye as it is right now...Gawwwwwd, I'm so damned weepy sometimes. I did the old guilt trip, to myself, asking myself "why haven't I tried harder..." to do these things more with my grandchildren. Oh, I have, don't get me wrong. I've taken my other grandchildren shad fishing several times. But my thought was this. It seems that just yesterday, this little 6 year old was a pain in the arse, whiny little child. Now, he's 6.....And, I could have missed it. I've been guilty of NOT taking the kids fishing when I really could have. I know, there are ton's of mom's and dad's who are out there all the time fishing with their grandchildren and regular kids too. I see them. Most of the time I feel guilty...Mine are not there with me. Got selfish. Too busy. Not enough time. They won't sit still long enough. To whiney.....OK, I'm getting better at it, but I made a commitment today. Hopefully, if things go "my way" for a change, I'll be moving to Coos County soon and I'll be able to fish the lakes, rivers and bays just about as much as I can in this last chapter of my life. I plan on making a HUGE effort to getting my grandchildren, and my kids too, down there as much as possible to fish, crab, dig clams and maybe go out on the big pond too. My point is, I had a "Light Bulb Moment" today. We only caught 3 shad. Only 3. To 6 year old Carter, however, we caught what seemed to him to be 300! He even netted the 3rd shad all by himself. Yeah, he didn't do a great job but I didn't let him know it. It was the best netting job in the whole world, to him...Me too! It was a \$6 net and if he dropped it overboard, it was OK with me...I had a plan, somewhat, and was going to build him up on whatever happened with the damned net. Win some, lose some! I still have a lot to learn. I have a lot of making up to do! I'm 56.....My advise...Take a kid fishing this weekend! Or very very soon. If not fishing, camping or something outdoors. Leave the X-Box and GameCube at home! It will do you all a bit of good!"

It's always great to take a kid fishing!

This is a good time to mention once again the Free Fishing Weekend is June 10th & 11th this year. It's an excellent opportunity to turn on a youngster to out sport of choice or show a friend or neighbor what all the excitement is about. No license is required on those two days.

Write to the TGF staff:

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## Random Links

Salem Fire Department provides free PFDs:

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

Learn the River trips on the North Santiam: <http://www.nwsteelheaders.org/chap/salem.htm#ltr>

Willamette River Guide: \*[http://www.oregonstateparks.org/images/pdf/will\\_river\\_guide.pdf](http://www.oregonstateparks.org/images/pdf/will_river_guide.pdf)

**Weekly Quote** – "There is nothing in all sport equal to the glory of success in salmon fishing, but the supreme moment is undoubtedly the actual hooking of the fish. However great my expectation and keenness, the feel of the fish when it hooks itself comes upon me with a shock of surprise and delight, and there is a sudden thrill in having to do with the weight and strength of a salmon." - Lord Grey of Fallodon

**GOOD LUCK!**