

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 4th – May 10th, 2007**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- With the Willamette River water temperature on the rise, fish are likely beginning to pass the falls in better numbers. Catch success remains sporadic however anglers working the Oregon City area have found better success using eggs this past week. Forecasted precipitation should keep water temperatures optimum but hardware will still be a strong option this time of year. Sturgeon fishing also showed signs of improvement this week as anglers working the lower Portland Harbor near Swan Island did fairly well for keepers using smelt. Smallmouth bass fishing is improving in the upper Willamette.

Pro guide David Johnson (503-201-4292) reports an egg bite for springers in the lower Willamette.

Dam passage at Bonneville is well underway however not enough fish are returning to justify a fishery extension to the May 3rd closure date above Bonneville Dam. Fishery managers will look at it again on May 7th. The run is tracking well ahead of last year but behind the 10-year average.

Sturgeon anglers fishing in the Columbia River Gorge have witnessed improved catches for sturgeon using smelt. New regulations however took place May 1st so check the booklet for the Marker 85 deadline now in effect. Oversized sturgeon are slow to show.

Steelheading has been slow to fair on the Clackamas with the springer bite off due to cold water temperatures. Monday temps were low 40s.

Spring Chinook fishing is expected to pick up in the next couple of weeks for spinner trollers in the Sandy when the water temp rises above the current mid 40s. With the sand accumulations in the lower river, salmon and steelhead do not seem to be holding for very long before heading for deeper water upstream reports **pro guide Brandon Glass (503-260-8285)**. **Pro guide Brandon Glass (503-666-5370)** reports the fishing is slow but the sand is starting to clear out.

Cold water is stalling the bite on the North Santiam as well. The better fishing will be in the lower river. **Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)** reports that summer steelhead numbers are low but improving.

Scheduled for stocking this week are Bethany Pond, Commonwealth Lake, Dorman Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Mt. Hood Pond, Roslyn Lake, Silver Creek Reservoir, Detroit Reservoir, Freeway Lake East, Hills Creek, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie below Leaburg Lake and Salt Creek.

Northwest – Sturgeon anglers in the Portland to Longview stretch had mediocre results but the Bugby Hole near Wauna has some quality fish in it along with a sturgeon chomping stellar sea-lion. Estuary anglers continue to fare poorly and the stretch downstream of the Wauna powerlines is now closed for catch and keep until May 12th.

A few more spring chinook are being reported from the Tillamook district and weekend tides are ideal for a good indication for how the season will shape up this season. The minus tides will draw spinner trollers to the upper bay but weak tides in the afternoon will allow herring trollers along the jetty to fish effectively. Sturgeon fishing in the bay remains slow.

A small rain freshet may draw some spring chinook into the Nestucca, Trask and Wilson Rivers although driftboaters will still struggle to get their boats downriver. The salmon will be holding up in the deep, slow water. Backbounced eggs will entice them best reports **pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)**.

Razor clam digging along Clatsop Beaches was good early in the week and barring rough surf conditions, diggers should do best into the weekend.

Carter Lake, Cleawox Lake, Cullaby Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County), Sunset Lake and Vernonia Pond are scheduled to be stocked. Vernonia Pond will host a youth angling event on Saturday with gear and assistance on hand from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Southwest – Shad are starting to enter the Umpqua and have been seen moving through the Yellow Creek stretch. Spring Chinook fishing has been fair in the lower river. Smallmouth bass fishing has been slow but will improve as the water warms.

Anglers are taking a few striped bass in the Coquille estuary.

Water temperatures and conditions are conducive for good spring Chinook fishing on the lower Rogue. Unfortunately, the springers aren't showing up for anglers. Daily catches are in the low single digits. Steelheading on the upper Rogue is slowing. Sturgeon fishing is slow in the estuary but is expected to improve in coming weeks.

Surf perch fishing for specimens up to two pounds or larger has been very good with many anglers taking limits off Southwest beaches.

Crabbing remains slow in bays and estuaries, good in the ocean.

Bradley Lake, Bluebill Lake, Eel Lake, Upper and Lower Empire Lake, Millicoma Pond, Powers Pond, Saunders Lake, North Tenmile Lake and South Tenmile Lake are scheduled for trout planting.

Eastern – The waters on the lower Deschutes adjacent to Warm Springs opened over the past weekend. With sunny weather, anglers found March Browns and blue-winged olives coming off the water but nymphing remained the most reliable technique for trout.

Walleye anglers working the John Day Pool posted excellent results for walleye. Flows remain high but warming temperatures will likely impact catch rates in this area.

John Day bass anglers are facing fast flows. Bigger bass are falling to spinner baits while smaller bass are willingly taking rubber worms retrieved slowly on the bottom.

Scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout are South Fork Crooked River, Delintment Lake, Frog Lake, Irrigon Transfer, Kingsley Reservoir Laurence Lake, Lost Lake, Pinehollow Reservoir, Pinehollow Reservoir, Rock Creek Reservoir, and Yellow Jacket Reservoir.

SW Washington – Driftboaters scored excellent results last week on the Kalama River with the North Fork Lewis a close second. Backbounced eggs took the bulk of the fish but the bite has since slowed.

Cowlitz River anglers aren't faring quite as well but summer steelhead are due soon.

Despite good passage, the Wind River and Drano Lakes fisheries are not producing great results. Pressure is down however.

Anglers participating in the many trout opportunities tallied excellent results on the opener. Fishing should remain good in the coming weeks with the kokanee bite to pick up as well.

Twin Harbors will open for digging on morning tides May 4, joined by Long Beach May 5 and 6. Each days dig on those beaches must be completed by noon.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Fishery managers decided on a May 2nd telephone conference that the fishery above Bonneville Dam will close after May 3rd. Although catches weren't great and effort was low, passage is beginning to pick up momentum and anglers are beginning to figure out the keys to success here. After the May 3rd closure, sportfishing in the terminal areas like Young's Bay near Astoria and Blind Slough will remain open for selective fishing only (fin-clipped). Another meeting will take place on May 7th to determine if additional sportfishing time is allowable.

Meanwhile, sturgeon fishing in the gorge had begun to pick up momentum when the deadline was modified on May 1st through permanent regulation. Keeper and shaker action has picked up with a great creel check over the previous weekend. Guides looking for the oversized fish expected to stage before the shad begin to show had hard hunting. Maybe these fish now realize the danger these Stellar Sea-lions pose to their existence? Where will they spawn now?

The Wauna Powerlines to Buoy 10 section is now closed until May 12th. The fishing right below the deadline was picking up nicely before the closure but the estuary fishing remained slow. Cold water temperatures had a lot to do with it but it's anyone's guess as to when the bite will pick up in this fishery. There is likely to be low effort this week with catch and release regulations in effect.

John Day walleye anglers posted excellent results on the last creel check. Weekly checking showed 120 walleye kept and 26 walleye released for 25 boats.

The Guide's Forecast – Not a whole lot to look forward to on the Columbia River this week. With additional fishery closures, options are not great for the Northwest's premier river. Sturgeon in the estuary and steelhead in the rest of the river will open soon. Is your boat and gear ready?

Salmon fishing in the Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries have not been all that impressive but trollers are taking a few fish.

Walleye fishing is remaining surprisingly strong for this late in the spring. It may just hold up for another week or so and the warming waters should trigger a good bass bite in the John Day and The Dalles Pool as well. Crankbaits, spinnerbaits and rubber worms slowly retrieved on the bottom should perform nicely this week.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – In previous springer seasons, a disclaimer has been posted on the web page which displays fish counts at Willamette Falls regarding the fact that information is delayed when fish are crossing at a high rate due to peak-season numbers. As suspected, the improved temperature triggered the run which had fish counters reviewing recordings as they scrambled to update online counts. It appears the floodgates have opened with very good water temperatures. Rain this week could stall the passage for a few days but it's time for these fish to madly migrate. On May 25th, 278 crossed and on the 26th the counters saw 555 Chinook. Data skips a couple of days, then counts jump to 1,188 - a good day, indeed - but the YTD total is unknown due to the missing days.. Chances are that thousands have crossed since that date. Water temps at the Falls hit 58 on April 30th, dropping to 56 on May 3rd. Visibility on that date was 5.8 feet at the Falls. Over 1,000 summer steelhead have been counted. While boaters in the lower Willamette are marking good numbers of spring Chinook on depth finders, finding biters has been tough. It's a trolling show in

the lower river even on an outgoing tide with the waters of the Columbia backing into the river, slowing the flow and frustrating anchor fishers. Boaters can find enough current to sit on anchor around Oregon City but sea lions are problematic here.

Pro guide David Johnson (503-201-4292) writes, "The egg bite picked up pretty good in OC this week and all the guides there were taking multiple fish. If the water warms up though the chubs will get too active and we'll have to switch to prawns. Hopefully the cooler weather will keep the water temp down.

"It would be wise to carry both prawns and eggs for the next week."

Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411) reports that he's "been fishing the lower Willamette for springers and also run a trout trip on the lower McKenzie River this past week. I would rate the trout fishing as fair, as we did not have any major hatches. Most of the trout were hatchery fish, with a couple of nice native cutthroats. There was no hot fly that we found. We caught most of fish on the standard Prince nymphs or hare ears. Springer chinook fishing on lower Willamette (launching at Cedar Oaks) has been hit and miss. You can fish a spot that is good one day and next day, nothing. So you might want to move around and check an another spot and keep a lookout to where the action is. I did limit a client out on Monday, as he caught two hatchery chinook between 2 and 3 in the afternoon at the tide swing. One springer was on a pink prawn and the other on K-15 Kwikfish with a tuna wrap. Had clients lose about 3 or 4 fish on Friday as they keep grabbing the rod too quick (in spite of repeated advice) and trying to set the hook. The salmon right now are just picking at the prawns. It is difficult to waiting, but if you want to land a salmon, wait until that rod goes down and the line is peeling off the reel."

"It would be wise to carry both prawns and eggs for the next week."

With the winter steelhead run well on the decline, angler effort and catches are nil on Eagle Creek.

Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808) reports, "The Santiam is also quite slow. Some of the channels have changed from the winter storms, so use some caution on the first run of the season. There has been no real good push of fish as of yet. But, look for a little batch of summer runs any day."

The summer steelhead count was 178 at Foster Dam, exceeding the winter steelhead count of 164 as of the last day of April. Summers are being recycled downstream on the South Santiam.

The Guide's Forecast – Springer catches remain low with the most productive areas Multnomah Channel, both down low and at the head, and at Oregon City. About a dozen to 15 fish are being taken daily from each area. Prawn spinners have been at cause for the most hookups over the past week although historically trollers switch to spinners when the water hits 55 degrees.

Sturgeon fishing is fair to good in the lower Willamette with the edge going to more experienced anglers who know where to fish and when. Sand shrimp are out fishing everything else for sturgeon but anglers are taking a few on smelt, squid and herring. Lower Portland harbor near Swan Island has been productive.

A few springers have been taken above the Falls, but it's been a crap shoot. With good numbers crossing now, odds of hooking an upstream Chinook will improve. It's a blessing that the fish are beating the algae problem this year but with a string of sunny days, that situation will begin the process of reversing. Anchor fishing Kwikfish is the routine here, parked in fish lanes near the bank.

North Santiam hopefuls should try from Green's Bride downstream where warmer water offers the best

chance of a hookup with a fresh hatchery summer steelhead.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Cold water in the Clackamas has prevented any kind of consistent action for steelhead. While a few springers have entered, catch rates are low. Water color has been decent as levels dropped over than last week but the temperature remains below 50 degrees.

Pro guide Brandon Glass (503-666-5370) reports, "The Sandy is low and clear, with the sand starting to clear out of the upper river. The Summer Steelhead have been moving through the lower river all the way to the hatchery, but catches have been low. The Springers are showing up in low numbers also, but due to the sand they are flying through the lower river. The catching will only get better!"

The same event that frustrates anchor fishers on the low end of the lower Willamette - that of the Columbia backing up into the lower river, turning it into a virtual lake - often signals the start of the spring Chinook fishery on the Sandy. Trollers, start your engines. That backup is occurring now. Traditionally, rainbow spinners are the lure du jour on the Sandy. Steelhead fishing for summers has been fair with few winter steelhead in the system now although catches of natives has been fair to good below Marmot Dam.

North Coast Fishing Report – Effort is slowly on the increase for Tillamook Bay spring chinook. Reports of fish from both the lower and upper bay are coming in and although the run size is not all that big for this basin, fish should be arriving soon in this and other coastal basins.

Small afternoon tides make herring trolling in the lower bay ideal in the afternoon while bigger minus tides make spinner fishing in the upper bay a strong option. We fished the upper bay on 5/2 only to witness one boat taking 2 fish and reportedly losing another on herring. We fished spinners in a variety of colors (mostly greens/whites) but nary a strike. Only a few boats were fishing. Seas were calm on May Day (5/1) and one guide boat reported 3 opportunities trolling herring near the bottom that day. The ocean didn't stay calm for long- which is too bad since bottomfishing is likely to be good.

Sturgeon effort has tapered with recent poor results and crabbing remains poor as well.

Rivers remain too low to float even though a predicted rain freshet was scheduled to cause a rise. **Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)** reports this from the Nestucca River: "The Nestucca is very slow. There are a few, very few, summer steelhead around. Winter steelhead are done! We have not seen any chinooks over the last week or more. We are going to get some rain, so we will see what is going to happen toward the end of this week, or early next week." Jesse goes on to report on crabbing in the area. Jesse writes, "Crabbing has started to pick up. Some good limits are coming from the Siletz, as well as the Alsea. It is still a little slow on the Tucker, but should get better here soon."

Despite the theft earlier this year of native steelhead from the holding tank at Cedar Creek Hatchery, late-season angler response has provided sufficient numbers of fish for a successful completion of the broodstock program again this year.

Clam digging along Clatsop Beaches was pretty good on May 1st. A higher surf and south winds tapered success by mid-week.

The Guide's Forecast – Good tides through the weekend should give Tillamook Bay trollers some fair opportunity for salmon over the weekend. This is the first good tide series of the springer season and a few nice fish should be around. Boaters should be aware that the ever dynamic Tillamook Bay

experienced shifting sands again this winter so be prepared for grounding if you don't know where you are going. Herring or spinners in the upper bay for morning anglers and herring trolled on the bottom on the lower estuary for the late risers.

The ocean is forecasted to get friendly over the weekend but it's also too far out to really trust the ocean prediction. If however it does calm down, crabbing and bottomfishing as well as near-shore salmon fishing could be a great option this weekend. Keep in mind that a minus tide will effect bar crossings in the morning and it is always best to check the coast guard report out of Garibaldi by calling (503) 322-3234. It will tell you in advance if the bar is open to recreational craft.

The rivers will remain low making bobber fishing in tidewater the best option in the coming week. There are likely still a lot of smolts around so bring lots of bait.

Central & South Coast Reports – Summer steelhead entered the Siletz this week with precipitation and have been caught from Moonshine Park upstream.

Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808) reports, "Crabbing has started to pick up. Some good limits are coming from the Siletz, as well as the Alsea"

Crabbing has improved but is still only fair in Yaquina Bay.

Nearshore halibut opened May 1st with the first all-depth fishery of 2007 on may 10th through 12th for one halibut per day, three in possession.

The Umpqua is has slowed for all species of fish, although a few springers have been taken in the lower mainstem. A few summer steelhead have been taken on the North Umpqua as numbers of winter steelhead decline. The South Fork closed to steelheading on May 1st. The water has yet to warm sufficiently to revive the smallmouth bass fishery. Shad have been spotted passing through the Yellow Creek stretch, so perhaps that will provide an interim distraction until the Chinook, summer steelhead and smallmouth fisheries takes off. Sturgeon fishing in the estuary is expected to improve in weeks to come.

Stripers are being caught in the lower Smith River but fishing is only fair.

Spring Chinook over Gold Ray Dam number only 220, a discouraging early-season count. The winter steelhead count, over 13,000, is impressive but that run is winding down. Water in the lower Rogue is very clear and Chinook fishing just hasn't gotten off the mark. Daily catches are consistently in the single digits. Many anglers continue to chase diminishing numbers of steelhead on the upper river; it's the best fishery on the river, even though many fish are in poor condition and as of May 1st wild steelhead may no longer be retained. A few springers have been taken in the Grants Pass stretch but with level and flows up again, few are even trying for them.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Avid angler and regular contributor 'Dobe' wrote this week, "Thursday I hooked up with friends Rod Mayfield and Pro Guide Howard Abshere (541) 383-5108 for a Bass fishing trip to Davis Lake. That's " fly fishing only " Davis Lake near Wicikiup Res. We hit the water about noon, putting in at the lava flow which is no easy task if you don't have a low slung trailer. We headed South, working the shadow edges of the weed beds with Howard's special hand tied " Davis Lake bass flies" which are 100% legal and 12 weight fly rods. Howard has developed a certain way of fishing this lake for bass that works better than any method I have ever heard of. Wasn't long before we started hooking up and these bass are big and mean. All the bass we caught were about the same size. (See Pictures) The bite quit around 3 PM so we loaded out and headed home after what I

consider to be one of the most exciting days bass fishing I have ever had. Later this week we will go back or possibly fish Big Lava or Ococho Res. I tell you Bob, it is tough being retired. When I worked I knew every morning where I was going and what I was going to be doing. Now , every day I have to decide which lake to fish."

See **Bass and Panfish**, below, for more on Davis Lake.

A few fish are being taken daily at Shearer's Falls in the Deschutes, but it has been slow. Anglers are seeing salmonflies on the middle Deschutes. Trout fishing has been fair to good. This hatch should peak next week with warm weather. Smolts are thick - handle them gently.

Chickahominy Reservoir has been treating anglers very well, putting out numbers of large trout.

Wickiup is producing good numbers of husky kokanee to trollers. Jigging has been less effective.

Crescent Lake is producing decent catches of brown trout to five pounds and lake trout to 10 pounds or better on trolled plugs. Snow is blocking access to Springs Campground so plan on launching at Crescent Lake Campground. Trout and kokanee catches have been fair to good for trollers at Odell, but anglers should expect crushing crowds on the weekends.

Northwest Trout – A free youth fishing event will take place from 9:30 AM until 2 PM on Saturday May 5th at Sheridan Pond. ODFW volunteers will have all necessary tackle and how-to tips and will be giving away Zebco Ready Tackle Spincast Fishkits to three lucky kids. Over 2,000 legal size rainbows and 375 larger size trout will be planted for the event.

Another youth event will take place this Saturday from 9:00 AM until 2 PM at Vernonia pond for which 800 trout will be planted in addition to the 2,000 stocked last week. Tackle and volunteer help from the Tualatin Valley Chapter of the Northwest Steelheaders will be available.

Carter Lake, Cleawox Lake, Cullaby Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County), Sunset Lake and Vernonia Pond are scheduled to be stocked in the Northwest Zone. Scheduled for stocking this week in the Willamette Valley are Bethany Pond, Commonwealth Lake, Dorman Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Mt. Hood Pond, Roslyn Lake, Silver Creek Reservoir, Detroit Reservoir, Freeway Lake East, Hills Creek, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie below Leaburg Lake and Salt Creek.

Northwest Bass & Panfish - Henry Hagg Lake has been producing fair catches of large- and smallmouth bass. Good numbers of yellow perch are being taken but they're running very small.

With procreation the driving force at this time of year, smallmouth bass action has improved this week and should be a good as it gets in the next couple of this week in both the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. Action will slow after these fish spawn. Practicing catch and release on all bass is the best idea but if some must be kept, make it the pounders, leaving the large fish for broodstock.

The Davis Lake Bass Roundup will be May 19th and 20th this year. The purpose of this annual ODFW event is twofold: to determine bass population and to transport catches to a location where they'll be welcome. Bass were illegally stocked here, threatening native populations of trout and whitefish. Davis is a fly-fishing only lake, so break out those long rods. The potluck dinner Saturday night will feature a raffle for fly fishing gear.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report **May 2nd – May 15th, 2007**

North Puget Sound

Now that the blackmouth salmon fishery has come to a close, saltwater anglers have shifted their attention to halibut and other bottom fish while they await the popular upcoming shrimp season. Out on the freshwater, steelhead fishing is no longer an option in area rivers, but anglers can participate in the lowland lake trout season, which recently got under way throughout the region.

Overall, **trout** anglers did well opening day (April 28) of the lowland lake season. According to creel checks, the lake that produced the largest catch in the region was King County's Wilderness Lake, where 152 anglers took home 328 trout. In terms of the highest catch rates, King County's Cottage Lake and Snohomish County's Wagner Lake top the list. Seven anglers at Cottage and two at Wagner caught their limit of five trout on opening day.

Elsewhere, anglers at Cascade Lake in San Juan County averaged 4.7 trout per rod, while those at Island County's Goss Lake average 4.5 fish per rod. In Whatcom County, anglers at Toad Lake averaged 4.4 trout per rod, while those at Cain Lake averaged 4.3. Anglers at Armstrong Lake in Snohomish County also did well, averaging 4.3 trout per rod. In Skagit County, anglers at Heart and McMurray lakes averaged 4.2 fish per rod while those at Erie Lake averaged 4.1 trout.

"Effort was slightly down throughout the region, but anglers who got out on the water opening day did well at a number of lakes," said Kirt Hughes, regional fish program manager for WDFW. "We heard from several anglers that fishing at some lakes was much better than last year."

Under statewide rules, anglers have a daily limit of five trout on most lakes. Released legal-sized trout, caught with bait, count toward the daily bag limit. Complete information on stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available on WDFW's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>).

Out on the saltwater, the **halibut** fishery is in full swing. The season is open five days a week, Thursday through Monday, with a daily limit of one halibut and no minimum size limit.

Anglers also can drop a line for other bottomfish, such as **lingcod**, **rockfish** and **cabezon**. During the hook-and-line season (May 1-June 15), there's a one-fish daily limit for lings, with a minimum size of 26 inches and a maximum size of 40 inches. 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.

Meanwhile, the **shrimp** season is set to open throughout the region May 5. In marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner), 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) the fishery is open Saturdays and Wednesdays only from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., and will close when the quota is reached, or May 31, whichever comes first. In Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), the fishery is open Wednesdays through Saturdays until the quota is reached. Details are available on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crabreg/>.

Before heading out, anglers should check the rules and regulations for freshwater and saltwater fisheries in WDFW's 2007/2008 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

There's still a lot of trout remaining after an opening day generally marked by sunny skies and good fishing. In addition, a final season razor clam dig is set for May 4-6, shrimp season gets under way May 5 in most areas of Puget Sound, the halibut season is expanding to the north coast and anglers continue to reel in lingcod and spring chinook salmon.

According to opening-day reports, Anderson Lake in Jefferson County gave up better than four fish kept per angler, while Clear Lake in Pierce County and Munn and Ward lakes in Thurston County yielded three fish per rod. While the fishing effort was down somewhat in Grays Harbor due to off-and-on rainy conditions, Vance Creek Pond and Aberdeen and Failor lakes produced some of the largest fish of the opener, averaging 28 inches.

The winner of the Kid's Derby at Aberdeen Lake landed a 28.5-inch rainbow, weighing 12.3 pounds, and an angler won the derby at Failor Lake with an 11-pound, 27 inch rainbow. "The youngsters at Vance Creek were catching quality rainbows up to 28 inches," reported Rick Ereth, WDFW fish biologist. "A 13-year-old girl caught the largest fish-a 29 inch, 13.3 pound steelhead."

Weekly reports and information on WDFW trout-stocking plans are available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>.

Meanwhile, recreational **shrimp** fishing opens Saturday, May 5 in most areas of Puget Sound. The exception is the Discovery Bay Shrimp District near Port Townsend, which will remain closed to both spot and non-spot shrimp fishing due to extremely low catches in pre-season testing, said Mark O'Toole, WDFW fish biologist.

"Each year before the season opens we monitor the catch rates and conduct an assessment of several popular shrimp-fishing areas," O'Toole said. "The number of shrimp in Discovery Bay was too low to open the fishery this year."

Another change this year occurs in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where shrimping will be open four days a week rather than daily in order to extend the season. In addition, Marine Area 11-extending from the northern tip of Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge-will be open on Saturday, May 5 only, to keep the recreational catch within the area's spot shrimp harvest quota.

Various fishing schedules will be in effect in the following areas:

- Marine Areas 4 (east of the Bonilla Line), 5, 6 (excluding the Discovery Bay Shrimp District) and 13 will be open daily beginning May 5 at 7 a.m. until the quota is reached, or through Oct. 15, whichever comes first.
- Marine Area 7 will open May 5 at 7 a.m. and will be open Wednesdays through Saturdays only until the quota is reached.
- Marine Areas 8, 9, and 10, will be open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays and Wednesdays only, until quotas for those areas are reached, or until May 31, whichever comes first.
- Marine Area 11 will be open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 5 only.

Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) will be open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays and Wednesdays through May 16, or until the quota is reached, whichever comes first. Additional dates and times may be announced if sufficient quota is remaining.

A strong tidal exchange expected on opening day will mean more challenging fishing conditions, O'Toole said. "It's the luck of the draw on the tides, and this year we're not so lucky on the Saturday opener, although the tides will be more favorable by the next week," he said. More information on shrimp seasons and rules is available on the WDFW shellfish hotline at 1-866-880-5431, or online at <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/fishcorn>.

While the tides may test shrimpers on opening day, they're a boon for **razor clam** diggers heading out

May 4-6 for the final dig of the season, said Dan Ayres, WDFW fish biologist. "The low tides will offer excellent digging opportunities, especially with the favorable weather and surf that is forecast for the weekend," Ayres said.

Digging will take place on two ocean beaches. Twin Harbors will open for digging on morning tides May 4, joined by Long Beach May 5 and 6. Each day's dig on those beaches must be completed by noon. "We're pleased to have clams available on these two beaches for a final dig in May," said Ayres. "We've had a great season this year. Even in April, individuals were averaging about 14 clams a trip. This last dig is the icing on the cake."

Ayres advises those who don't have a 2007-08 license, to buy one before heading out. Fishing and hunting licenses are available on-line (<https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov/>), via WDFW's toll-free phone line (1-866-246-9453) and from retail dealers throughout the state (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/lic/vendors/vendors.htm>).

Clam enthusiasts should start digging at least one hour before low tide. Low tides during the planned dig are as follows:

- Friday, May 4, 8:35 a.m., -0.9 ft: Twin Harbors only
- Saturday, May 5, 9:12 a.m., -0.8 ft: Twin Harbors, Long Beach
- Sunday, May 6, 9:50 a.m., -0.6 ft: Twin Harbors, Long Beach

Under WDFW rules, harvesters may take no more than 15 razor clams and must keep the first 15 taken, regardless of size or condition. Each digger's limit must be kept in a separate container. After conducting the annual stock assessment this summer, WDFW will announce the annual razor clam public meetings, which are scheduled for September. The 2007-08 season will likely begin sometime in October 2007.

Recreational **halibut** anglers with a competitive streak can head up north later this month to try for a \$5,000 first prize at the 7th Annual Halibut Derby sponsored by the Port Angeles Salmon Club. The two-day derby will be held May 26-27 near the Dungeness Spit. Ticket information is available at <http://www.swainsinc.com> or (360) 452-2357.

Halibut fishing in Marine areas 6-11 and 13 will continue to run five days a week Thursday through Monday until June 16. Anglers can also cast their lines wider this month as the following fisheries open:

- **Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco)** opened May 1, seven days a week until 70 percent of the quota is reached, or until July 15, whichever comes first. The fishery will reopen on Aug. 3 and continue three days a week, Friday through Sunday, until the remaining quota is reached, or Sept. 30, whichever comes first. It is unlawful to fish for, retain, or possess any bottom fish, except Pacific cod and sable fish with halibut on board.
- **Marine Area 2 (Westport/Ocean Shores)** opened May 1, five days a week, Sunday through Thursday, until 95 percent of the quota is reached. During this time, fishing will be open seven days a week in the northern nearshore area south of the Queets River. Once the catch reaches 95 percent of the quota, fishing in the nearshore area will be limited to Fridays and Saturdays until the remaining quota is taken - or Sept. 30, whichever occurs first.
- **Marine areas 3 and 4 (Neah Bay and LaPush)** will open May 15, three days a week, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, until the May quota is reached. The fishery in that area will then reopen on selected dates in June within certain boundaries.
- **Marine Area 5 (Seiku)** will be open May 24 through Aug. 3, five days a week, Thursday through Monday.

Marine Area 12 (Hood Canal) is closed to fishing for halibut and a number of other species due to low

dissolved-oxygen conditions.

All areas open to fishing have a one-fish daily catch limit and two-halibut possession limit, regardless of whether those fish are fresh or frozen. There is no minimum size limit for halibut caught in any area. For additional information, call the Fishing Hotline at (360) 902-2500 or check the WDFW website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/halibut/>).

Fishing for lingcod - as well as **rockfish** and **cabezon** - also got under way May 1 in several areas around Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan De Fuca. Inside waters now open for fishing include marine areas 5 (Sekiu, Pillar Point), 6 (East Juan De Fuca), 11 (Tacoma, Vashon Island) and 13 (South Puget Sound).

During the hook-and-line season for lings (May 1-June 15), there's a one-fish daily limit, which must be a minimum size of 26 inches and a maximum size of 40 inches. 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. Before heading out to try and hook these fish, anglers should check the new *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

On the coast, **lingcod** and **rockfish** fishing off Westport and Neah Bay has generally been good the past few weeks, according to Wendy Beeghley, WDFW fish biologist. But much depends on the unpredictable nature of spring weather in the Pacific Northwest. "A few weeks ago people had trouble getting their limit because of the weather was rough," Beegley said. "Since then, people have enjoyed both the weather and the catch."

On the Olympic Peninsula, warm sunny days and rising rivers seem to be helping anglers hook up with **spring chinook salmon**, said David Low, WDFW fish biologist. "I hear people are catching some nice springers in the Sol Duc."

Southwest Washington:

The lowland lakes **trout** season is now off and running after an opening day full of sunshine and good fishing. Northwestern Reservoir in Skamania County, Horsethief Lake in Klickitat County and Fort Borst Park Pond, a juvenile-only fishing spot in Lewis County, were regional hotspots, yielding better than three fish kept, per rod. At Mineral Lake in Lewis County, anglers released lots of fish but checked in several trout over nine pounds, said John Weinheimer, a regional WDFW fish biologist. He noted that fishing was also good at Swift Reservoir, particularly in the upper reservoir from the boat launch upstream.

"It's safe to say that there are still lots of big rainbows and other trout left in lakes throughout the region," Weinheimer said. "And we plan to keep planting more as the season goes on."

Fish stocking details, by county and lake, are available in the Hatchery Trout Stocking Plan on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>. A report on catch rates posted opening day is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/do/newreal/release.php?id=apr3007b>.

But some anglers have bigger fish to fry. The first two weeks of May are historically the best time to catch a hatchery **spring chinook salmon** on tributaries to the Columbia River, and some anglers are getting a head start, Joe Hymer, another regional WDFW fish biologist, said.

On the Kalama River, boat anglers averaged one chinook for every three rods in creel checks conducted during the last week of April. Bank anglers averaged a fish for every six rods. On the Lewis River, boat anglers averaged a chinook for every four rods, while bank anglers landed one per every six rods during the same week. Some spring chinook are also being caught on the Cowlitz River.

Catch rates have been slower at Drano Lake and the Wind River, where both boat and bank anglers have been running about one chinook for every six rods, Hymer said.

"The run hasn't been building as fast as usual in the tributaries above Bonneville Dam," he said. "The next few weeks should tell the tale."

With nearly 31,000 spring chinook past the dam through April, the Columbia River mainstem is scheduled to close for salmon angling above Bonneville Dam to McNary Dam on May 3. Fishery managers from Washington and Oregon are scheduled to review the catches and upriver run size later today (May 2); any updates on the fishery will be posted on the WDFW website.

Below Bonneville, the mainstem Columbia River remains closed to fishing for salmon and steelhead, but will open for **hatchery steelhead** and **hatchery chinook jacks** from the I-5 Bridge to the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line May 16. Shad angling from Bonneville Dam downstream also will open that same day. Hymer noted that the first shad was counted at the dam in late April, along with a total of 1,300 spring chinook jacks through April - the highest count for that period since 2003. "That bodes well for next year's spring chinook fishery," he said.

Meanwhile, anglers are still catching some legal-size **sturgeon** both above and below Bonneville Dam. From May 1-11, all sturgeon intercepted downstream from the Wauna powerline crossing near Cathlamet must be released. But starting May 12, anglers may retain sturgeon seven days per week in that area. The minimum size increases to 45 inches and the maximum length will remain at 60 inches. The fishery will remain open through July 4 or when the quota is met.

To provide sturgeon sanctuaries to spawn, the following areas are closed to fishing for sturgeon from May 1 to July 31:

- Bonneville Dam downstream to Navigation Marker 85.
- John Day Dam downstream 2.4 miles to the west end of the grain silo at Rufus Oregon.
- McNary Dam downstream 1.5 miles to the Hwy. 82 (Hwy. 395) Bridge.

Casting for **bass** and **walleye**? Boat anglers fishing the John Day Pool averaged more than nine bass and two walleyes per rod during the last week of April. Those fishing the Bonneville Pool also reeled in seven bass per rod along with some walleye.

Rather dig **razor clams**? Two ocean beaches will open for the last razor clam dig of the spring season starting May 4. See the South Sound/Olympic Peninsula report for details.

Eastern Washington:

Fishing began April 28 on more **trout** lakes in this region than any other season opener, and the creel check results from that day are good indications of what's available in the weeks and months to come. WDFW northeast district fish biologist Curt Vail of Colville reported some of the best fishing in the state at two Stevens County waters - Cedar and Deep lakes both saw averages of the five-trout daily catch limit per angler checked. The catches at Cedar Lake, just north of Leadpoint near the U.S.-Canada border, are mostly 12-inch rainbows from fry plants, with many carryovers from 17 to 25 inches. Deep Lake, nine miles southeast of Northport, has rainbows averaging 11.5 inches and cutthroat averaging 11 inches.

Other Stevens County lakes produced well on the opener, too. Mudgett Lake, a couple miles south of Fruitland, averaged 4.4 trout per angler with rainbow fry plants running 12 inches and carryovers up to 15 inches. Starvation Lake, 10 miles southeast of Colville, averaged 3.7 trout per angler, most 12-inch

rainbows with some 15 to 17.5 inches. Rocky Lake, three-plus miles south of Colville, averaged 3.2 trout per angler, most eight to 10-inchers with carryovers running 11 to 15 inches. Waitts Lake, four miles west of Valley, was a little slower with an average of 1.5 trout per angler, but the rainbows averaged 14.5 inches, the brown trout averaged 16.4 inches and 21-inchers of both species were caught on the opener.

In Pend Oreille County, opening day checks at Diamond Lake, seven miles southwest of Newport, showed a 3.2 trout-per-angler average with most rainbows a little over 12 inches and most browns just under 11 inches. The largest trout caught was a 24.5-inch rainbow. At Marshall Lake, about six miles northwest of Newport, anglers averaged 2.8 trout each, with 11-inch cutthroat trout from fry plants and carryovers up to 14-inches. Yocum Lake, six miles north of Ruby up LeClerc Creek Road, averaged 2.2 trout per angler with cutthroat fry running 10 inches and carryovers up to 13 inches.

Ellen Lake, 14 miles north of Inchelium, was the only Ferry County fishery checked on the opener. The catch rate there averaged 1.6 trout per angler, with nine-inch rainbows from fry plants and some 12-inch carryovers.

WDFW central district fish biologist Chris Donley of Spokane also reported some of the best fishing in the state during the opener at one lake in Lincoln County and two in southwest Spokane County. Fishtrap, West Medical and Williams lakes all saw averages of at least the five-trout daily catch limit per angler, including lots of catch-and-release action. Fishtrap Lake, six-plus miles east of Sprague, produced 12-inch rainbows from fry plants, 16-inchers from carryovers and some recently stocked whopper triploids and surplus broodstock. West Medical rainbows ran from 10-inchers to recently stocked five-pound surplus hatchery broodstock. Williams Lake trout ranged from 11 to 20 inches, including westslope cutthroat.

Lots of limits were also caught at Badger Lake, also in southwest Spokane County, where the opener average was 4.7 rainbow or cutthroat trout per angler. Other Spokane County lakes checked were Fish Lake, two miles northeast of Cheney, with an average of 2.4 trout per angler, and Clear Lake, two miles south of the town of Medical Lake, with an average of 1.8 trout per angler.

Curl Lake in Columbia County opened April 28, joining the other Tucannon River impoundments that opened March 1 in providing a rainbow trout-stocked fishery. Although no creel checks are conducted, catches should be eight to 12-inch and some 14-inch-plus rainbows. All eight of the impoundments are under a no-more-than-two-fish-over-13-inch rule to help spread out the fishery among anglers and over time.

WDFW regional fish program manager John Whalen noted that most of the lakes that just opened will remain so through at least September. "Near-normal winter precipitation is helping maintain water levels at lakes throughout the Spokane area and northern portions of the region," he said. "So fishing and boat launching should be good through the summer."

Whalen also noted that fishing rule changes that went into effect May 1 include Stevens County's Deer Lake where biologists are trying to restore and maintain an historic kokanee fishery. Now at Deer Lake there is a separate daily limit for smallmouth bass of 10 fish, with no minimum size and no more than one over 14 inches may be retained, and the trout daily limit of five includes no more than two trout over 30 inches.

[North Central Washington:](#)

The lowland lakes opener April 28 produced some "solid catches" in Okanogan County lakes, according to WDFW fish biologist Bob Jateff, who said fishing should be good well into the summer at many of them.

Jateff reports that Blue Lake, on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, probably had the best catch rates on the opener, with a catch-and-release average of 10 trout per angler. The daily catch-and-keep limit at Blue is one fish, and the few **brown** and **rainbow trout** kept by anglers were running 12 to 20 inches. Conconully Lake and Reservoir both posted catch averages of over four trout per angler on the opener, mostly in 12-inch yearling trout with some carryovers to 16 inches. Spectacle Lake, northwest of Tonasket, produced nearly four trout per angler on the opener, mostly 11-inch rainbows.

Pearrygin Lake, on the Methow Wildlife Area near Winthrop, averaged 3.6 trout per angler, including 12-inch rainbows and some whopper triploids. Alta Lake, southwest of Pateros, averaged 3.4 trout per angler, mostly in 11-inch yearlings with some 15-inch carryovers. Wannacut Lake, southwest of Oroville, averaged 3.2 trout per angler, with carryovers up to 18 inches. Leader Lake, west of Okanogan, averaged 2.8 trout per angler, mostly 12-inch rainbows with carryovers to 15 inches and some 8-inch **bluegill**. Fish Lake, on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area northeast of Conconully, averaged 2.3 trout per angler with carryovers to 15 inches.

Jameson Lake in Douglas County also had good fishing on the April 28 opener, with limits of rainbows being taken by both shore and boat anglers. The average size of yearling rainbows was nine inches, with carryover fish to 14 inches.

Jateff said there are also some good selective gear fisheries in the Okanogan that opened April 1. Rat Lake near Brewster, Green Lakes near Omak, and Davis Lake near Winthrop, all have good catch-and-release summer fishing for rainbow trout.

In Chelan County, WDFW fish biologist Art Viola reported excellent fishing on the opener at Beehive Reservoir, where the average catch matched the five-trout daily catch limit. "Catch rates were outstanding at Beehive," Viola said. "However, most fish caught were only 10 to 11 inches long, so many were released." A fall plant of **cutthroat trout** made up about 70 percent of the catch, with the rest in 11-inch rainbows stocked this spring and a few larger fish up to 18 inches.

Clear Lake, eight miles south of Wenatchee, also tallied an average catch of five trout per angler, with rainbows running from 11 to 17 inches. But compared to last year, angling effort was down about 30 percent at both Clear and Lilly lakes, Viola said. Lilly Lake, just down the road from Clear, averaged a little over three trout per angler, most in the 11-inch range. Viola said it would have been better, but the lake winterkilled and this year's stocking allotment was cut in half for the second year. "We hope anglers will remove all or at least most of the fish from Lilly prior to this winter," he said.

Fishing at Wapato Lake, about two miles north of Manson, was also excellent with an overall average of 4.4 trout per angler on the opener. Almost half of the fish harvested were over two years old, while others were directly stocked from the Chelan Hatchery a few weeks ago or carryovers from last year, Viola said. Triploid rainbows over 16 inches were also caught.

WDFW fish biologist Jeff Korth of Moses Lake reported great fishing at Perch and Deep lakes in Grant County. Both averaged over four trout per angler on opening day with 10 to 14-inch rainbows. Warden Lake also produced well with an average of 2.5 trout per angler on 13.5-inch rainbows.

Korth also reported good catches of catchable-size and triploid rainbow trout at Blue, Park and Vic Meyers or Rainbow lakes in Grant County. All three were rehabilitated last year, and the fisheries were considerably improved over the last couple of years. Blue and Park measured catch rates of about two trout per angler on the opener, and Vic Meyers averaged slightly less than one trout per angler.

South Central Washington:

Trout-stocked waters in the southcentral region are open year-round, with hatchery stocking continuing through the spring. Anglers can check stocking schedules at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg3/index.htm> and updates on weekly plants at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>.

WDFW fish biologist Paul Hoffarth reminds anglers that Columbia Park Pond in Kennewick is closed to fishing May 4-5 to prepare for and conduct the 8th annual "Fishing Kids" event May 5, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hatchery crews will be stocking the pond with rainbow trout on July 4th for more than 1,200 pre-registered event participants. The pond, which is only open to fishing by juvenile anglers (under 15 years old) and persons with disability licenses, will re-open to the public at 4 p.m., May 5.

Hoffarth also notes the Columbia River **sturgeon** sanctuary is now in effect through July 31 from the Interstate 82 bridge at Umatilla upstream to McNary Dam. No fishing for sturgeon is allowed in this area during this time period.

The Ringold bank fishery re-opened May 1 for **spring chinook** through May 31. Fishing is restricted to bank angling only on the hatchery side of the river from the WDFW markers ¼ mile downstream of the Ringold irrigation wasteway outlet to the markers ½ mile upstream of Ringold Springs Creek (hatchery outlet). The daily limit is two hatchery salmon, 12-inch minimum size. Only chinook with a clipped adipose fin and having a healed scar at the location of the fin may be retained. Night closure and non-buoyant lure restrictions are in effect. All wild chinook (with an intact adipose fin) must be released immediately and may not be removed from the water.

WDFW fish biologist Jim Cummins of Yakima reminds anglers that most rivers and streams are closed until June 1 to protect salmon and steelhead smolts that are migrating downstream and to protect spawning steelhead, rainbow and cutthroat trout. "The catch-and-release area on the Yakima River is an exception," he said. "The reach of the Yakima is open year-round, but anglers should check the Sport Fishing Rules pamphlet before fishing."

Smallmouth bass fishing should be good through at least the end of May in the lower Yakima River, Cummins said. "Fishing can be difficult when spring flows are high, but there is some great smallmouth fishing from Benton City down," he said. The recent cool weather in the mountains has resulted in a steady decline in river flows, so now is the time to get the bass gear out and fish the river." Cummins said that although the majority of fish are in the one to two-pound class, a number of fish five pounds and larger are caught every spring. **Channel catfish** are another good bet in the Yakima as water temperatures increase. Anglers can check Yakima River flows at <http://www.usbr.gov/pn/hydromet/yakima/>, where "Daily Data" is the best tab to check. The Yakima River at Kiona is the best flow to check, and water temperatures are also posted.

Reader Email

Got a question, story to tell or information to share? Shoot us an Email!

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Slide, flash flood takes out Pamela Lake Trail:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/willamette/general/conditions/pamelia/index.html>

Laminated bottom fish ID cards are available from the Oregon Coalition for Educating Anglers:
<http://www.oceaned.org/orders.htm>

Weekly Quote – "You can't say enough about fishing. Though the sport of kings, it's just what the deadbeat ordered." - Thomas McGuane

GOOD LUCK!