

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 18<sup>th</sup> – May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Warm water temperatures have Willamette River salmon on the move. Passage at the falls has surpassed 10,000 fish and daily passage will increase into early June. Spinners and spoons are favorites this time of year.

Shad fishing at Oregon City is well underway with the afternoon producing the best results lately. Small green rubber grubs and small spoons will offer anglers many opportunities.

Fishing for spring chinook reopened on the 16<sup>th</sup> as managers are confident sportfishers will not exceed impacts to listed wild Snake River salmon. Steelhead and shad seasons are also underway with shad the likely target until steelhead numbers climb at Bonneville. Despite the optimum tides for beach plunkers, steelhead fishing won't pick up until mid-June.

A few oversized sturgeon and keeper sturgeon are finally showing in the gorge. Spring spill should aid anglers fishing downstream of the Marker 85 deadline when westerly winds blow.

Clackamas steelheaders are catching summers but spring Chinook fishing has been slow with the water still cold. Boaters running the river are experiencing navigational hazards in the lower flows.

The spring Chinook troll fishery is underway on the lower Sandy but it has been very slow. Summer steelhead are being hooked on the upper river but fishing is only fair.

Improved water temperatures have resulted in a better summer steelhead bite on the North Santiam. Over 300 summer steelhead have been counted at Foster Dam on the South with many of those recycled downstream.

The McKenzie is offering fair to good trout fishing for fly anglers throwing nymphs.

Waters in the North Willamette Zone scheduled for trout stocking include Faraday Lake, Huddleston Pond, North Fork Reservoir, Sheridan Pond, Small Fry Lake and Timothy Meadows.

Scheduled for planting in the South Willamette Zone are Big Cliff Reservoir, Blue River above Reservoir, Blue River Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Detroit Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Foster Reservoir, Green Peter Reservoir, Hills Creek, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie below Leaburg Lake, McKenzie above Leaburg Lake, Quartzville Creek, Salt Creek, North Fork Santiam River above Detroit, Sunnyside Park Pond, Timber Linn Lake, Trail Bridge Reservoir and Waverly Lake.

**Northwest –** Spring chinook have yet to make a strong showing in Tillamook Bay but given the current minus tide series, the bite will be underway by the weekend. Spinner trollers in the upper bay will fare the best in the swifter currents and the best bite will take place close to low slack.

The continued dry spell will keep salmon in the lower tidewater sections and in the estuary. Coastal streams are at summer low levels.

Ocean crabbing picked up early in the week- Tillamook Bay remains slow. Bottomfishing was also fair and another 3-day all depth halibut fishery begins today. Ocean conditions are improving until a building swell begins on Saturday.

Tualatin Valley steelheaders will be helping ODF&W at a youth angling event in Hebo on May 19<sup>th</sup>. Kids can participate in a casting contest and additional rainbow trout will be stocked in Hebo Lake. The event goes from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Razor clam digging is best early in the outgoing tide as the clam set was high on the beach. Clatsop beaches are most productive but beaches further south should also produce fair results.

Scattered sturgeon are hard to find but both Tillamook and Nehalem Bays have fish present. Effort has been running high for perch near the Ghost Hole.

Coffenbury Lake, Lost Lake, Hebo Lake, Nehalem South Lake, Town Lake, Lorens Pond, Hebo Lake are scheduled for trout stocking.

**Southwest** – The all-depth halibut fishery will open May 17th - 19th off the central and southern Oregon coast.

Shad are in Umpqua in decent number and anglers are catching scores of them around Yellow Creek, often in very crowded conditions.

Springer fishing has been slow in the lower Rogue with the water temperature fluctuating.

Ocean salmon fishing out of Brookings has only been fair but is getting a lot of attention. On the opener May 5th, about 75 boats launched, two thirds of which were solely fishing for salmon. Offshore crabbing has been excellent when the ocean lies down.

Rockfish limits have been tougher to come by recently but ling cod are still in the mix. Surf perch fishing is good off ocean beaches.

Launching in pre-dawn hours can beat the strong, seasonal northwest winds, but head back to port before the breeze starts to blow.

With over 60,000 trout planted so far this year, Diamond Lake seems to be producing fish for everyone.

Scheduled for planting of hatchery trout are Willow Lake, Applegate Reservoir, Lost Creek Reservoir, Lost Creek Reservoir, Fish Lake and Lake Selmac.

**Eastern** – Salmonflies are on the hatch on the middle Deschutes. Nymphs remain most effective on the lower river for trout with mayflies hatching but the shift is on with stone flies starting. Shears Falls is producing a few Chinook.

Afternoons have been rewarding on the Metolius with Green drakes starting to hatch.

**SW Washington** – Although the Kalama and Lewis Rivers have slowed from previous weeks catches, they remain viable fisheries for spring chinook and a few summer steelhead. The Cowlitz remains slow.

The Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries continue to disappoint most anglers. Returns to the hatchery are down considerably from last year.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – A surprise re-opener for spring chinook on the Columbia has anglers excited but it's likely not much will come of it. According to biologists, the bulk of the run has passed. The re-opener spans from Tongue Point to the I-5 Bridge. The most productive place to fish

would likely be near Bonneville but this section remains closed. It's too early to get reliable reports but this fishery re-opened on Wednesday.

Chinook jack counts are considered to be an indicator of the salmon run in the following year. Jacks are crossing Bonneville in unprecedented numbers with over 10,000 counted as of May 15th. If this holds true, the spring Chinook run in 2008 should be a hum-dinger.

Steelhead season also opened on the lower Columbia Wednesday but like the salmon fishing, it's too early to get a read on how it's producing. A good minus tide is aiding beach anglers in this fishery but counts at Bonneville indicate we are still a ways away from good fishing for these fish.

Shad season is also open now and the first 5 digit day happened on the 15<sup>th</sup>. The timing is right for some great action and this fishery is just now getting underway. Small rubber grubs and spoons like Dick Nites will work well in this fishery.

Sturgeon fishing in the gorge is finally showing some signs of improvement. **Pro guide Dan Ponciano (360-607-8511)** reported a mix of 2 oversized fish, 3 keepers and numerous shakers on a recent outing. Although far from its potential, the fishery is improving.

In the estuary, guides remain challenged in their quest for keepers. On the opener, some guides did take limits of keepers but they had to work for them and they landed few other fish. Most of the guides were working the river above Tongue Point as this area seemed to have the largest number of fish and strong NW winds didn't hamper fishing here like it did below the Astoria/Megler Bridge. Sand shrimp was a top bait but one guide reported the presence of anchovies in the lower river in recent days.

The Northern Pikeminnow Sport-Reward Program started Monday this week, paying pre-registered Columbia River anglers \$4 for the first 100, \$5 for 101 to 400 fish and \$8 per fish thereafter. In addition, tagged fish are in the river which may be redeemed for \$500 each.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Anglers seeking spring chinook or summer steelhead should not expect much for their efforts. Although we have a great minus tide series to work with, the run timing for salmon is on the down-slide and has yet to pick up for steelhead. None-the-less, the opportunity to catch one of these fish is a privilege in itself and anglers couldn't pick a better tide to pursue them. Beach anglers should focus their efforts in the Westport area with Tenasillahe Island a fair option for boat anglers and Jones Beach, Dibble Beach and Sauvie's Island good choices for plunkers. Use hot colors if you are targeting steelhead and green or purple for salmon. Anglers are allowed to use up to 3 hooks so mix and match for the best opportunity. The stronger the flow, the closer to the beach the fish will run-remember, they're counting calories since they won't be aggressively feeding in freshwater.

Sturgeon anglers will want to seek keepers in the estuary but the Portland to Longview stretch and now even the gorge are also offering some fair opportunities. Shrimp will rule the roost in the estuary while smelt will be the key bait upriver. Upriver anglers may seek the advantage by tipping their smelt with shrimp also.

Fresh shad should be readily available for anglers wanting the best bait for targeting oversized fish. The Marker 85 deadline is in effect and swifter flows this year should keep anglers in the fish unless west winds pick up significantly. Shad will respond best to shiny hardware in the sunny afternoons but green spoons in the morning.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – Counts at Willamette Falls took a nosedive last week but have picked up recently. Over 1,100 spring Chinook crossed on May 11th with dwindling daily counts since that date. The YTD total was 11,837 as of the 14th which is roughly half

the total at this time of year in the last couple of years Totals had topped 65,000 as of May 15, 2004, an exceptional year when the run final was 95,795. Water temperature is 58 degrees at the Falls.

Anybody out there getting tired of reading that springer fishing is slow? We're getting tired of writing it but it's a fact. Sturgeon fishing has been worthwhile however, so planning a multi-species out might be the best idea.

California sea lions in the Columbia and Willamette continue to feast on both salmon and sturgeon, often from the end of angler's lines. It's worth repeating that when a fish is hooked in an area where sea lions are present, avoid tipping them off to the situation. Stay seated and keep the net down until the last possible moment. These voracious critters are smart and know what to look for to grab an easy meal.

Shad are in and early hopefuls are taking a few but the numbers are low enough that some anglers are blanking.

Boaters take note: The boat ramp at Clackamette Park will be closed through Sunday, May 20, while the park is being dedicated to the Pioneer Family Festival - Family Fun Days.

**Off topic:** A traveling exhibit called "Tricking Fish: How and Why Lures Work." has opened at the University of Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History located at 1680 E. 15th Ave. in Eugene. Originally produced by the Bell Museum of Natural History at the University of Minnesota. It uses photographs, illustrations and displays to help anglers understand how fish see, hear, feel, taste and smell. The museum hours are 11 AM to 5 PM Wednesdays through Sundays. For information, call 503-346-3024.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Want to catch a springer? Get out there! Slow or no, this is the peak of the season and the best plan is to get a line in the water. No hotspot has emerged in this spotty fishery with salmon coming from Oregon City to Sellwood and throughout Multnomah Channel. Just not many and not often. Despite the fact that most anglers switch to spoons or spinners when the water is above 55 degrees, the reports we're getting indicate that prawn spinners continue to draw the majority of strikes in the lower Willamette and herring is catching Chinook in Multnomah Channel. Pray for rain.

If Chinook jack counts are a reliable indication of next year's run, Willamette Falls count of 46 doesn't bode well. While prawn spinners are catching springers and a few trollers are still dragging herring, many are switching up to spinners in the warm water of the lower Willamette. Speaking of warm water, algae is rapidly increasing and starting to become a problem for anglers fishing spring Chinook above Falls. At this rate, it could be impossible to fish in a week or two.

Jigs, grubs, Dick Nite spoons and even a brass swivel with a shiny siwash hook will draw strikes from shad and that's all some anglers use, especially at the peak of the run. In a week or two they'll be thick as will the boats and bank anglers chasing them.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – Clackamas steelheading has been slow but steady with fish scattered. Spring Chinook catch rates have shown improvement over the past week with several salmon taken out of the lower river. Spinners have been effective of late in the low, crystal clear water. Boaters are advised to use caution in these conditions.

Between billowing sand and low, cold water, conditions at the Sandy River are tough and low catch rates reflect it. The troll fishery for spring Chinook was just getting started and a few were caught early on, but these situations have combined to stall fishing. Summer steelheading is slow as well. It's late in the year to hope for any further flushing rains, but even a little precipitation would help.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Tillamook Bay anglers are still awaiting the arrival of good numbers of spring chinook. Although it is likely this fishery will follow the fate of many of the other spring salmon fisheries this year, the run timing and optimum tides going on right now should trigger some significant catches this week. The upper bay is primed for productive spinner fishing but results have been poor. Some fish have fallen to herring trolled in the upper bay. The tidewater sections are not producing good catches.

In the lower bay and ocean, effort has been running high but like the upper bay, catches have been poor. The afternoon tides have been soft enough to fish along the jetty and the ocean has been friendly as well. None-the-less, results have been dismal. Some folks have been pursuing rockfish along the jetty and at dinner reef just offshore of the north jetty. Crabbing has also picked up outside where we took 25 quality keepers on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Crabbing in the bay remains poor.

The rivers remain too low for fish to be moving into them. Most north coast streams are at summer low levels. Some summer steelhead should be available in the upper reaches.

Sturgeon effort has dropped off significantly although a few sturgeon remain in the bay. The Nehalem system is also producing a few keepers for anglers using fresh sand or mud shrimp when available.

Clamming has been great along Clatsop Beaches. The set has been great and limits were common early in the week. Success will likely drop off as we hit the second half of the minus tide series.

**The Guide's Forecast** – The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Bounty on the Bay takes place on Tillamook Bay this Saturday. This will be the real gauge as to how the fishing is going to be this year. The tides are right and the run timing is great also. Last year, the event drew a record crowd and record catches took place. The upper bay will likely be the best place to target salmon with the minus tide and low slack happening later in the morning. The ocean may also be an option if the weather forecast holds tight. The rain in the forecast is not likely to rise river levels enough to produce any significant results.

The best deal going this weekend will be the detailed seminar on how to catch Tillamook Bay spring chinook on Friday night in Garibaldi. Call (503) 322-2222 to reserve seats and get a great dinner- all while supporting the Tillamook Estuaries Partnership ([www.tbnep.org](http://www.tbnep.org)) and the salmon restoration projects this organization does.

Crab the ocean if you get a chance and bottomfishing will be a super option if the weather cooperates.

Surf fishing for perch will also be a great option when the surf is calm. Sand shrimp is a top bait but clam necks is also a perch favorite.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – While the Siletz doesn't get a lot of spring Chinook, summer steelhead are available in fishable numbers now. The river above tidewater is very low and clear so prepare to use stealth tactics and long, light leaders. Fly gear is effective here for steelies as well.

High winds kept most vessels within the protected harbors during last week's all-depth halibut opener resulting in very low catch rates. The ocean off the central Oregon coast is open for halibut seven days a week inside the 40-fathom line. At this rate, the halibut quota will probably hold up for scheduled all-depth fishing on May 17th through 19th, 24th through 26, 31st, June 1st and 2nd, and 7th through 9th. The limit for all halibut fisheries is one per day.

A few hopefuls are trying for spring Chinook on the North and mainstem Umpqua, but fishing has

slowed over the past week. Over 850 springers have been counted at Winchester Dam along with over 50 summer steelhead. Smallmouth bass fishing is has improved as waters warm with larger fish on the prowl now. Shad are being taken in decent numbers around Yellow Creek. The South Umpqua will remain closed until May 26th.

Crabbing has been slow in bays and estuaries but good to excellent in the ocean when conditions allow sage bar crossing. It gets better the further south crabbers go.

Shad fishing is starting in the Coos and these odiferous critters are so to enter the Coquille, where anglers are taking a few striper form the lower river, mostly after sunset. Since there are far few striped bass now than in decades past, this is a tight-lipped fishery.

Rogue spring Chinook anglers have seen an improvement in catches over the last week, but numbers of salmon entering remain low. About 600 springers have crossed at Gold Ray Dam, so fish are being taken river-wide - just not many. The lower river offers the best prospect of a hookup with catches averaging nearly on fish per boat. Bank anglers aren't doing so well. Kwikfish are accounting for most of the fish in the lower and middle Rogue. While temperatures have nudged above 50 degrees, a little rain would get the Chinook moving.

Diamond lake has been fishing well with trout planting a weekly occurrence. Tens of thousands of trout varying in size is resulting in catches averaging over 12 inches and one reported at seven and a half pounds. Boat and bank anglers are all doing well.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Redsidies are providing decent fishing for fly casters on the lower Deschutes with some dry fly opportunities during warm afternoon hours, but stone fly nymphs remain the most reliable producers. Salmonflies are starting and could break loose any day.

According to the ODFW, rainbow trout populations at Crane Prairie are the best in years and that catches here reflect it. Also available are fine numbers of brook trout and kokanee. Largemouth bass draw the interest of many anglers and these illegally-introduced non-natives don't seem to be having a negative impact on the other fishes.

Odell is producing good catches of kokanee averaging 10 to 11 inches.

**Northwest Trout** – Tualatin Valley steelheaders will be helping ODFW at a youth angling event in Hebo on May 19th. Kids can participate in a casting contest and additional rainbow trout will be stocked in Hebo Lake. The event goes from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

A drawing for fishing-related items will be an unusual feature of an ODFW-hosted youth event this Saturday at West Salish Pond this Saturday from 9:30 AM and 2:00 PM. Anglers 13 and younger may enter. The pond has been stocked with about 1,500 legal sized trout and 400 larger rainbows.

Coffenbury Lake, Lost Lake, Hebo Lake, Nehalem South Lake, Town Lake, Lorens Pond, Hebo Lake are scheduled for trout stocking in the Northwest Zone.

Waters in the North Willamette Zone scheduled for trout stocking this week include Faraday Lake, Huddleston Pond, North Fork Reservoir, Sheridan Pond, Small Fry Lake and Timothy Meadows. Scheduled for planting in the South Willamette Zone are Big Cliff Reservoir, Blue River above Reservoir, Blue River Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Detroit Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Foster Reservoir, Green Peter Reservoir, Hills Creek, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie below Leaburg Lake, McKenzie above Leaburg Lake, Quartzville Creek, Salt Creek, North Fork Santiam River above Detroit, Sunnyside

Park Pond, Timber Linn Lake, Trail Bridge Reservoir and Waverly Lake.

**Northwest Bass & Panfish** - Temperate coastal lakes are kicking out largemouth bass now, but get out early as afternoon winds have been fierce.

With water temperature pushing 60 degrees on the Willamette, bass fishing has been quite good. Smallies are hanging around rocky structure where current breaks exist and are ready to ambush anything that looks like a meal. Soft plastics have been most productive. Largemouth bass will be in backwaters and sloughs and have been responding to various lures. Plastics, crankbaits and spinnerbaits have all taken fish at times, with the fish's preference often changing in the course of the day.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

**From the WDF&W Weekender Report May 16<sup>th</sup> – May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

#### **North Puget Sound**

Anglers have their pick of a number of spring-fishing opportunities throughout the region. On Puget Sound, halibut, rockfish and lingcod fisheries are under way, while out on the lakes, trout fishing continues.

More **trout** will be added this month to some of the region's lakes, including Green Lake in King County, Mountain Lake in San Juan County, Pass Lake in Skagit County, Roesiger Lake in Snohomish County and Terrell Lake in Whatcom County.

"Angler success has increased at several local lakes as water temperatures rise," said Kirt Hughes, regional fish program manager for WDFW. "Trout anglers should continue to do well over the next few weeks, especially after several of the region's lakes are stocked with some nice-size fish."

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, anglers are finding some **lingcod**. Catch counts at the Coronet Bay public ramp indicate 80 anglers hauled in 14 lingcod May 11, and 254 anglers checked 40 lings the following day. Elsewhere, 12 anglers at the Bellingham ramp brought home six lingcod May 13. 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.

Anglers also can drop a line for other bottomfish, such as **halibut, rockfish** and **cabezon**. The halibut 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.

**Shrimp** season started strong. So strong, in fact, that most of the region's marine areas have already reached their harvest quotas. Marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) and 9 (Admiralty Inlet) are closed, while Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) closes today (May 16). However, shrimpers can still drop a pot in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), which remains 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**

Harvest quotas for shrimp and halibut are going fast in some areas, although there's still time to bring home limits of both species from waters still open to fishing. Meanwhile, freshwater anglers have a good chance of catching spring chinook salmon in several Olympic Peninsula rivers, trout in area lakes and also - starting June 1 - in dozens of rivers throughout the region.

Today (May 16) is the fourth - and last - scheduled day of the Hood Canal **shrimp** season, although it appears shrimpers will get an additional day to fish the 60-mile-long fjord. "We don't expect to reach the available quota today, and may be able to announce a fifth day of fishing within a day or two," said Theresa Cain, WDFW shellfish biologist. She recommended that shrimpers check the WDFW Fishing Hotline (360-902-2500) or website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/>) for an update on the fishery.

Cain noted that calm weather and good fishing have brought out thousands of shrimpers during the past four days of shrimping on the canal. "We counted 1,407 boats on the water last Saturday, which was up from last year," Cain said.

Four other marine areas -- 4, 5, 6 (excluding the Discovery Bay Shrimp District) and 13 - remain open for shrimp fishing on a daily basis. Marine Area 11 (Vashon Island to the Narrows Bridge) had a one-day shrimp season on May 5. All areas still open for spot shrimp will close Sept. 15, or when the quota is reached.

**Halibut** fishers have also had to keep a sharp eye on area openings and closings in recent days.

The fishery off Westport and Ocean Shores set a record pace, prompting the closure of the Marine Area 2 halibut season after just six days of fishing. More people on the water, great weather and larger fish all contributed to anglers reaching the quota allocated for the area, said Carol Henry, WDFW fish biologist. The Westport fishery, which opened May 1, ran five days a week.

Meanwhile, halibut fishing in Marine Area 1 off Ilwaco is still holding steady seven days a week. "Anglers are generally catching their daily limit, with fish averaging 14 pounds," Henry said.

Father north, halibut anglers fishing off La Push and Neah Bay (marine areas 3 and 4) were on the water in force for opening day on May 15. "The little boats were blown around a bit, but after the wind died down, the weather was pretty nice and the fishing for both halibut and lingcod picked up," Henry said.

Halibut fishing in marine areas 3 and 4 will be open Tuesdays, Thursday and Saturdays until the May portion of the quota is reached. The fishery will then reopen on June 19 and 21 within certain boundaries. Coordinates are published in the 2007-08 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>. Henry reminds anglers that, starting May 21, recreational fishing for rockfish and lingcod in marine areas 3 and 4 is not allowed in waters deeper than 20 fathoms, except on days the halibut fishery is open. Coordinates can be found under Emergency Rule Updates at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

On the Strait of Juan de Fuca, anglers fishing near Port Angeles have been averaging one halibut for

every four rods. Halibut fishing opens May 24 in Marine Area 5 (Seiku) and runs five days a week - Thursday through Monday - through Aug. 3.

Feeling competitive? Top prize in the 7th annual Port Angeles Halibut Derby on May 27-28 is \$5,000. Ticket information is available at <http://www.swainsinc.com> or (360) 452-2357.

River fishing for **trout** opens June 1 statewide, with plenty of angling options throughout the region. Anglers are advised to check the 2007-08 Fishing in Washington pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> for regulations that apply to specific rivers.

Meanwhile, WDFW continues to stock area lakes with **rainbow** and **triploid trout**, giving anglers a good chance to catch some nice fish in the weeks ahead. The best fishing occurs between opening day and the end of May, said Hal Michael, WDFW district fish biologist.

"As the weather warms up, fish are feeding more and apt to bite," Michael said. "But when it gets too warm as summer comes on, they start to go deeper looking for cooler water. That's when you see fishing for warm-water species such as bass pick up."

Michael added that kokanee stocked in 2005 for this year's season are also showing up in area lakes. "Kokanee fishing at Summit and American lakes has come on early and should be good for the next few weeks," he said.

Michael reminds anglers that information on stocking schedules is available on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>.

May 19 is Kids' Fishing Day at American Lake, where youngsters can try for a trout or two. American Lake, which has produced good numbers of rainbow and kokanee this spring, will be stocked with some good-sized trout so everyone is sure to get a catch. Pre-registration for the popular event is required. Call (253) 798-4176.

On the Olympic Peninsula, **spring chinook** are returning to the Sol Duc hatchery and good numbers are anticipated through May and early June for anglers fishing the Quillayute and Sol Duc rivers, according to Mike Gross, WDFW fish biologist. Springer season also opens on the Hoh May 16, running Wednesdays through Sundays with a limit of one adult chinook per day.

Gross recommends fishers check conditions before heading out. "The snow melt is causing the river to run pretty milky right now, making for poor visibility and difficult fishing." Gross reminds anglers fishing the Quillayute and Sol Duc to release all unmarked wild chinook.

### **Southwest Washington:**

Areas of the lower Columbia River open May 16 for spring chinook salmon, summer steelhead and shad, but anglers may think twice about moving to the big river from the tributaries. "Catch rates for spring chinook have been pretty darned good on the Lewis, Kalama and several other rivers for the past couple of weeks," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "This is a good time to be out there."

Some of the best action has been on the North Fork Lewis River, where boat anglers have been averaging better than one hatchery **spring chinook** for every two rods. In all, 166 boat anglers reported catching 83 adult springers and releasing another 16 in a weeklong creel check ending May 13. Bank anglers caught 10 spring chinook and release five more on the north fork that week.

Next in line was the Kalama River, where 56 boat anglers averaged one springer for every three rods and bank anglers averaged one in five. Catch rates have been lower on the Cowlitz River, Hymer said.

Farther east, anglers have been averaging one adult spring chinook for every four rods at Drano Lake and one in six on the Wind River, where the bag limit was raised to two springers or **hatchery steelhead** (or one of each). The upper river has been open to fishing since May 5. But fishing has generally been slow on the White Salmon River and the Klickitat River.

"This year's spring chinook run has been a little late crossing Bonneville Dam," Hymer said. "Not as late as last year, but late enough to affect fisheries upriver."

Even so, fishery managers from Washington and Oregon have sufficient confidence in this year's upriver run to reopen the spring chinook fishery in the lower Columbia River starting May 16. Through May 31, anglers can catch and keep six hatchery salmon - including two adult fish - from the Interstate 5 bridge downstream to the Tongue Point/Rocky Point line. Wild chinook and steelhead, as well as all chum and sockeye salmon, must be released.

That fishery had been closed since April 16 while fishery managers watched the counts at Bonneville Dam to determine if the upriver run will reach the preseason forecast of 78,500 fish. "We're now fairly confident the run will be pretty close to that by the time the returns tail off in mid-June," said Cindy LeFleur, WDFW Columbia River policy coordinator. "The peak of the run is over, but there are still a lot of spring chinook available for harvest."

Other options include **summer-run steelhead** and **shad**, which also opened for fishing May 16 in the lower Columbia. The hatchery steelhead fishery overlaps the area open to spring chinook fishing, from Interstate 5 bridge downstream to the Tongue Point/Rocky Point line. The daily limit is two marked hatchery fish.

Shad fishing is open from Bonneville Dam to the mouth of the Columbia, with no bag limit and no minimum size. More than 17,000 shad were counted May 15 at Bonneville Dam. "The best time to hit them is when the counts start running to 20,000 to 50,000 per day," said Hymer, noting that information about catching and preparing shad is available on the WDFW website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/outreach/fishing/shad/shad.htm>).

**Sturgeon** opened to retention fishing May 12 downriver from the Wauna powerline crossing near Cathlamet and catch rates have been slowly improving in all areas. **Bass**, on the other hand, have practically been leaping into anglers' boats, especially in the John Day Pool. Sixteen boat anglers fishing there during the week ending May 13 reported catching a total of 232 bass and releasing 187 of them. Thirty-eight boat anglers fishing the same waters also reported catching 50 walleye and releasing 16.

With dozens of rivers around the region set to open June 1 for trout fishing, anglers continue to pull **rainbows, triploids** and **browns** from lakes throughout the area. At Kline Pond, bank anglers have been averaging over 1.5 trout per rod, mostly rainbows and browns. Mayfield Lake was stocked with 6,375 half-pound rainbows May 4, Sacajawea Lake was planted with 2,900 catchable-size rainbows May 7 and Fort Borst Park Pond got 3,000 catchables May 8.

Kress Lake will be closed to the public May 18-20 for a boating-safety event, involving more than 600 children and adults. The lake will reopen to public fish at 6 p.m. May 20.

A top prize of \$400 is up for grabs in the **kokanee derby** this Sunday, May 20th at Lake Merwin in southern Washington. Advanced registration is \$20 or \$25 the day of the derby. Call 360-619-8522 or Email [fishing.derby@hotmail.com](mailto:fishing.derby@hotmail.com) for information.

### **Eastern Washington:**

Hatchery **spring chinook salmon** fishing has been good since the special season opened May 9 in the Snake River, from Texas Rapids boat launch upstream to the Corps of Engineers boat launch (about a mile upstream of Little Goose Dam on the south bank). Glen Mendel, WDFW district fish biologist in Dayton, said catch rates initially were very good because of low water, "but stay tuned for how it goes."

The special season, which is not listed in the fishing rules pamphlet, is slated to run through June 30. The daily catch limit is one adipose-fin-clipped chinook of at least 12 inches; possession limit is two daily catch limits. All chinook with the adipose fin intact, and all steelhead, must be immediately released unharmed. Anglers fishing that portion of the Snake River must use barbless hooks no larger than 5/8 inch from point of hook to shank.

Mendel noted that this is the seventh consecutive special season for Snake River hatchery spring chinook salmon.

**Rainbow** and **cutthroat** trout fishing in the central district's well-stocked and good fish-growing lakes remains excellent. Chris Donley, WDFW central district fish biologist in Spokane, said Lincoln County's Fishtrap Lake and southwest Spokane County's Badger, West Medical, and Williams lakes are all maintaining at least four-trout-per-angler catch averages. Anglers at Spokane County's Clear Lake should be reaping the benefits of extra catchable-size rainbows recently stocked in the lake.

Two northeast district trout lakes that have been maintaining three-plus trout catch averages will shift to catch-and-release and selective gear rules on June 1: Starvation Lake, 10 miles southeast of Colville, and Rocky Lake, three-plus miles south of Colville.

June 1 is also when many streams and rivers open to fishing, including the Spokane, San Poil, and Kettle arms of the Columbia or Lake Roosevelt. These fisheries open later than lakes to allow fish to spawn. See the regulations pamphlet for all details at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

#### **North Central Washington:**

"Now's the time to fish **walleye** in the big waters of the Columbia Basin," said Jeff Korth, WDFW district fish biologist in Moses Lake. "That includes Potholes Reservoir, Sprague, Banks, and Moses Lake. The fish are done spawning and are back on the feed. Mid-May to early June is always the best walleye fishing of the year here."

Korth said this is also a good time to fish for **bass**, especially smallmouth. He said regulations were liberalized for smallmouth on Moses, Potholes, and Banks, with a 10-fish daily catch limit, but only one over 14 inches.

**Rainbow trout** fishing at Blue and Park lakes in Grant County is very good, Korth said. Both lakes are maintaining the catch rate of about two trout per angler.

Burke Lake, on the Quincy Wildlife Area southwest of the town of Quincy, is also still producing fair catch rates, Korth said. Burke is in its prime now, having been rehabilitated in 2005. Open since the first of March, it closes at the end of July.

#### **South Central Washington:**

Paul Hoffarth, WDFW fish biologist in Pasco, said the harvest picked up during the second week of the **spring chinook salmon** bank fishery on the Columbia River at Ringold. "I estimate 21 adult hatchery chinook and one jack were harvested," he said. "One wild chinook was caught and released. Total for the season is 23 adults, three jacks with four wild (non-clipped) chinook caught and released." Hoffarth noted the sampling is roughly 50 percent of the Ringold fishing effort.

**Walleye** and **bass** fishing on the Columbia is also picking up. A recent creel check at the John Day

Dam Pool, including fish released, showed boat anglers averaging 1.3 walleye and 14.5 bass per rod. Bank anglers were also catching bass.

"There's good fishing in all the region's lowland trout lakes," said Eric Anderson, WDFW district fish biologist in Yakima. He reminds **trout** anglers to check the latest hatchery fish stocking on WDFW's southcentral region website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/reg/region3.htm>.

The stocking includes the first this year for Wenas Lake - about six miles north of Naches - which recently reopened for public access. Anderson said 4,500 catchable rainbows went into Wenas on May 11 and another 4,400, including 400 jumbos, will be added in early June. Anderson noted that efforts are under way to work out a long-term public access agreement with the Wenas Irrigation District this fall.

Fishing at Clear Lake in upper Yakima County (off Highway 12 in the White Pass area) also has been hot. Anderson said Clear was recently stocked with 6,500 triploid (sterile) rainbow trout, ranging in size from 3/4 to 1.5 pounds. Clear was also stocked back in April with 8,500 catchable rainbow trout (1/3 pound each) and will receive another 10,000 catchable-sized rainbows before June 1.

### **Reader Email**

Kapt Ken Johnson, now of Nehalem, OR, reports from his new stomping grounds, "Kaptn Ken Johnson The Razor Clamming is absolutely fantastic.....Limits are usually done within and 1-1.5 hours and if you're really good, within the first half hour, or so. The Tide today, Wednesday 5/16, was -1.8 and you really didn't even have to get close to the surf to get your limit.....Friends of mine and I used clam "guns" about 25'-75' from the oceans edge. My die hard shovel digging cousin, Greg Johnson of Svenson, showed up late and had his limit treading in 6" of water, or so, within 35 minutes. He loves to tap the sandy bottom watching for the little hole the clams leave and was getting showings about every 3'-4', or so.....People on the beach were admiring his ability to drop to his knees about every 3-4 minutes pulling up a succulent Razor Clam about 6"-12" beneath the sandy surface...And, these are BIG clams too. The average we put in our "Goodie Bags" were about 5"-6"+. Because you're reading this on Thursday evening, I suggest you get on down to the beaches of your choice (Ours favorite is Seaside at the South end of the beach!!!) and dig to your hearts content for these absolutely delicious shellfish. Saturday is going to be a -2.1 tide so many, many clams that have never been exposed to human presence are going to be there for the taking. That being said, however, we got our limits in some pretty dry sand which means the next 2-4 days should be excellent clamming conditions.....And, after dinner tonight.....Oh man, they have to be the best tasting clam.....Ever!!! We'll be out there Thursday, Friday, Saturday AND Sunday too. See you out there!"

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

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### **Random Links**

Rare Megamouth Shark –

[http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=1e8\\_1179239603](http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=1e8_1179239603)

Who doesn't watch Deadliest Catch? Here's the game:

<http://dsc.discovery.com/fansites/deadliestcatch/game/game.html>

**Weekly Quote** – "...the sporting qualities of a fish are dependent neither on its size nor its weight, but on the efforts of concentration, the skill and mastery it demands from the fisherman." - Charles Ritz

**GOOD LUCK!**