

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **April 11th – April 17th, 2008**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Salmon season is in full swing on the Columbia River with the highest catch rates of the season from Bonneville Dam to the I-5 Bridge. Trolled herring are taking the bulk of the fish downstream of the gorge while spinners and plugs are responsible for Bonneville area fish. Four-year old adults are making up the bulk of the catch averaging between 12 and 16 pounds. This fishery will peak in the next 2 weeks but increased spill to aid smolts downriver could curb angler success.

Summer steelhead are passing Willamette Falls in double digits as the water temperature continues to inch toward the 50-degree mark. Springers are being caught daily on the lower Willamette and at the head of the Multnomah Channel, but it is slow. Sturgeon fishing is good for those willing stay mobile to locate larger fish.

A mix of bright and dark steelhead are being hooked on the Clackamas River with a scattering of hatchery summer fish is available.

A few broodstock winters have been taken on the Sandy and summer steelhead are just starting to enter.

The North Santiam will be subject to fluctuations in level and flow but numbers of fish available is improving daily. A total of 16 summer steelhead had entered the trap at Foster Dam on the South Santiam as of April 3rd.

The March Brown hatch has been coming on reliably in the afternoons on the McKenzie and while fishing hasn't been as hot and heavy as the hatch, it has been good at times.

Scheduled for trout stocking are Creswell Pond, Detroit Reservoir, Dexter Reservoir, Dorena Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Foster Reservoir, Freeway Lake East, Green Peter Reservoir, Junction City Pond, Roaring River Park Pond, Timber Linn Lake, Walling Pond, Walter Wirth Lake and Waverly Lake.

Northwest – North coast anglers are still pursuing steelhead on the Wilson, Trask and Nestucca Rivers but the run is certainly coming to an end. Brian Barr and Josh Lowe of Eugene fished the Wilson on Friday from Mills Bridge to Sollie Smith landing 6 steelhead using Kwikfish. Five of the 6 landed were hatchery fish but 2 were released because they were dark.

The Nestucca has also been producing good catches but has lost some of its consistency as the season winds down reports **pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808) and Kent Anderson (503-550-6303)**. Anglers are targeting fish in the upper reaches with the recent high water.

Next on tap in the Tillamook area is spring chinook but numbers won't be substantial until the large minus tide series in mid-May. A few early fish are usually caught late this month however.

Calm seas are in the ocean forecast for the weekend. Limits of bottomfish should be easily attained for anglers knowing where to target these fish. Pressure has been light all season due to poor weather conditions. Ocean crabbing will also be a good option.

Crabbing in Yaquina Bay remains poor and the herring are yet to show.

Bay City Reservoir, Cape Meares Lake, Carter Lake, Cleawox Lake, Devils Lake, Hebo Lake, Lake Lytle, Lorens Pond, Smith Lake, South Lake, Tahoe Lake and Town Lake are scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout.

Southwest – Angers will be fishing the tail end of a mid-day minus tide series through the weekend.

Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411) reports fair fishing for ling cod, good results for rockfish and slow crabbing out of Depoe Bay this week

Although winter steelheading will continue even as it winds down on the North and South Umpqua through April, with the first spring chinook trickling in, angler's attention has been focused on the latter. The North Umpqua dropped to decent levels this week.

Spring chinook fishing has been only fair, but has remained steady from the mouth of the Rogue River to Agness. The problem so far has not been a lack of fish but water temperatures which have stubbornly remained in the 40s. The time of year is right to warm the river however, and catches are expected to continue to improve through April.

Limits of rockfish and ling cod are being taken out of Brookings with even inexperienced anglers returning to port with good catches.

Scheduled for trout planting are Bradley Lake, Eel Lake, Emigrant Lake, Applegate Reservoir, Lake Selmac, Howard Prairie Reservoir, Hyatt Reservoir and Libby Pond.

Eastern – Check river flows before heading over to the John Day River for bass. If the river is over 1000 CFS, fishing will be challenging reports **pro guide Steve Fleming at Mah-Hah Outfitters (1-888-624-9424)**. Quality sized fish are available however and are taking a variety of crankbaits and plastics.

Many streams and rivers on the east side remain roiled and some lakes, such as Little Lava, Wickiup and Davis Lake, remain iced over but warm weather this week is expected to improve conditions in the near future.

SW Washington – Spring chinook are starting to show in the Cowlitz River and Lewis Rivers and steelhead are available too.

Most Washington anglers are anxiously awaiting better passage at Bonneville Dam to target salmon at Wind River and Drano Lake. Effort remains light in these fisheries but an occasional spring chinook is being caught.

Silver and Horseshoe Lakes along with Swofford Pond were recently planted with catchable sized trout.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Spring salmon fishing is in full swing on the Columbia River and many-a-angler is reaping the rewards of a productive fishery. Effort has skyrocketed in the I-5 to I-205 stretch and herring trollers are taking good numbers of fish in 18 to 30 feet of water. It's no longer a secret, it's just a matter of putting your bait on the bottom and crossing enough fish faces to draw a strike. Catch rates are very impressive, rivaling those of the recent glory years we experienced in the early part of this decade.

The Bonneville area is also picking up momentum as well as fish begin to stage in preparation for passing the facilities impeding their upstream migration. Dam counts still are not very high with a total of 732 adults through the 8th of April. Daily passage is ramping up to over 100 fish per day. With this kind of activity, and the peak yet to come, it seems unlikely that the sportfishery will make it through the end of April as was the goal of the ODF&W. The impacts are going faster than modeled and it is showing no signs of slowing.

Spill is forecasted however as the BPA is required to produce flow targets to get juveniles downstream in a faster and safer manner. This may have an impact on catch rates in the river below Bonneville Dam. For the numbers, through April 6th, 8,900 chinook have been kept and 1,300 released. Expectations were for a kept catch of between 18,000 and 20,000 fish. The recreational fishery is 35% through its impacts leaving an estimated 11,600 to 13,800 fish remaining for retention by anglers as of April 7th.

Anglers fishing the Bonneville area are catching fish with all methods. Backtrollers working the Bradford Island stretch are taking fish as well as some coming from the backbouncers working the faster flows near the deadline. Anchor fishers are realizing sporadic action using plugs and spinners seem to be producing fair results as well. The bulk of the activity is taking place from Rooster Rock upstream.

Most anglers know that the river is now closed downstream of the powerlines at Hayden Island. Sturgeon fishing remains poor on the mainstem Columbia and most anglers are taking advantage of the salmon run.

While the sea lion issue is being addressed to reduce predation, it is predicted that cormorants will devour over 10 million salmon and steelhead smolts while terns will consume another 5 1/2 million or so. This has been a challenging problem with no legal solution in sight although a new breed of 'bucket biologist' has seeded some nesting islands with pigs which relish bird eggs.

The Guide's Forecast – This week is quite unpredictable with the likelihood of increased flow for downstream migrants. It's likely that the Bonneville area will taper during spill and river risings but the Portland area may remain more stable through this transition period. The increase will likely act as a rain freshet and get fish moving faster which often also dampens their motivation for biting. Bank angler effort is on the increase and this is the type of water conditions that bank anglers do well in. The Bonneville area could pick up nicely for this group of fishers.

In downriver fisheries, plugs may become more effective for moving fish so prep your gear accordingly. When fish are on the run, it sometimes pays bigger dividends to just let them come to you. Herring trollers should still continue to see good catches in the stretch from I-5 to I-205 but this stretch should definitely fish better in dropping water conditions versus rising.

For anglers set on trying their luck at Bonneville, you may want to target shallower water but most importantly, shorten up your dropper lines as these fish can also escape heavy flows by scraping their bellies on the bottom of the river. Plugs and spinners will rule the roost in this area but backtrollers and backbouncers should also pick up some fish. Unless something has changed, when flows increase in the Bonneville area, the action typically begins to slow dramatically.

Salmon is really the only game in town. Save the sturgeon effort for later when the bite picks up and the salmon season closes. That's really not all that far down the road I'm afraid to say.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Considering that temperatures at Willamette Falls have yet to reach 50 degrees this year, steelhead numbers are not too bad. It remains to be seen just how the season will come together in upstream tributaries (the Santiams

in particular) when the water warms, a situation most likely to occur this week.

As reported by the Associated Press, the jetboat races, historically held on Memorial Day weekend, have been cancelled this year, stating that "they were cancelled after a public outcry against the event." No races this year, therefore, no closure. Klamath Falls is being considered as an alternative.

Nymphs have been effective on the McKenzie this week despite impressive March Brown hatches. Sunny weather may turn this situation around and have trout keying on dries. Break-ins have been common at popular ramps and pullouts on the McKenzie. Take precautions.

The Guide's Forecast – Trollers at Oregon City, Milwaukee and around Sellwood have taken springers over the past week. Keeper sturgeon have been taken recently near the Willamette Mouth and in lower Multnomah Channel. Boaters fishing just below the Falls at Oregon City are taking keeper-sized sturgeon but should use caution, stay on the southeast side to avoid underwater rocks and avoid crowding the anglers on the wall or risk getting pelted with lead. Herring, smelt, sand shrimp and squid have been effective. Multnomah Channel should be productive with springers on the move. Troll plug-cut herring with a flasher for best results.

Dark-colored lures, both cranks and soft plastics, are taking smallmouth bass on the Willamette now. The bite is slow in the cool water, but fish have been of decent size with many of the smallies landed being females. This is early-pre-spawn fishing with the best fishing if the season right around the corner.

Water temperature of the McKenzie River is on the rise but has not yet reached the mid-40s at Vida. This slows the fishes metabolism and with it, fishing action. This week's weather will have a positive influence on the Mack as well as other valley rivers. Many smolts are present - use care in releasing them.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Hopefully, warm weather this week will put an end to the cold water woes which have slowed the steelhead bite. Despite mid-40 degree water, some anglers have scored some dandy, fresh summers this week. Fishing will only improve. Release of steelhead smolts from the hatchery will continue so spare these little fish by avoiding the use of bait.

Popular parking areas on the Clackamas have been targeted by vandals recently. While leaving no valuables in sight can help to reduce temptation, many of these hoodlums are stealing catalytic converters to sell the valuable metals within. No break-in is required since it's a quick outside job. Toyota pickups and SUVs are frequent targets.

The Sandy River has been a nice place to go to seek isolation recently with most anglers putting their attention on springers in the Columbia. Try the upper river for some late-season steelheading. A few broodstock winters have been taken on the Sandy and summer steelhead are just starting to enter. Springer fishing was good over the weekend off the mouth of the Sandy. The gill netting flotilla was in operation in that area en masse Tuesday this week.

North Coast Fishing Report – Steelheaders are still after keepers and wild fish in the district although recent rises in river levels has begun to challenge most anglers. I fished on Friday (4/4) with Brian Barr and Josh Lowe from Mills Bridge to Sollie Smith Bridge in low but perfectly green water conditions. The day started out witnessing a large buck, quite covered with fungus, milling around at the put-in. We fished plugs on the entire stretch finding fish throughout the drift. Our

best hole was the Duyck's drift where we took 3 steelhead although one was too dark to retain. We ended up hooking and landing 6 steelhead, releasing 2 hatchery fish (dark) and 1 wild buck. The three fish that we harvested were broodstock hens. By far, the most productive plug was chrome with pink dots, a K-11 Extreme Kwikfish. We put in late and only saw another 3 boats on the float. The river began to rise significantly on the 7th which put any holding fish on the run and hard to entice.

The Nestucca has also been producing some nice April catches as reported by **pro guide Kent Anderson (503-550-6303)**. Kent reported sporadic results and had his first skunk day of the season but this was just 2 days after having his best day of the season. Kent has been having most of his success driftfishing but fish have been taken side-drifting as well. With the increased flow, he has been fishing in the higher reaches, sometimes in his raft to negotiate the more challenging water. **Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)** provided this report that I neglected to include in last weeks report. It still has some application however. Jesse writes: "The Nestucca has slowed down a little. The river is beautiful, and there are little groups of fish around, not a ton, but they are here. We still have a bunch of seals working over the river from 4th bridge down, so they are taking their share I'm sure... Look for the lower river for the best results if you can get away from seals, and it won't be long until we see a good shot of summer runs. As of today (4/1), we have not heard nor seen a springer caught. Who will be the first??? On another note, due to the increased river pressure over the winter, there is a ton of trash up and down the banks. We are asking for your help to get some things picked up. If you could just pick up a small amount that would be great! This is our home, and we find the trash a little disturbing, so please keep our home clean. We have also spread bags around the ramps and pull offs for use as well...Have a great week and enjoy the SUN!!!"

Give something back to the river this weekend as the Tillamook Anglers holds its 19th annual Fin-Clipping Party at Whiskey Creek Hatchery, overlooking Netarts Bay southwest of Tillamook. There are 100,000 spring Chinook smolts that will be clipped. Hot chocolate will be served at 8 AM with a barbecue lunch mid-day. The project is expected to be complete around 2 PM. Take Highway 101 into Tillamook and follow the signs toward Cape Lookout State Park. The hatchery is on Whiskey Creek Road about a mile from the park entrance.

Most other north coast streams except the Trask have closed so check regulations if you have any intentions of hitting other rivers than those mentioned here.

Sturgeon effort has been light and foul ocean weather has kept the fleet off the water all week (and frankly, most of the winter).

The Guide's Forecast – It's really winding down for winter steelhead seekers on the north coast. There should be some continued action for steelhead on the Nestucca and Wilson Rivers and the upper Trask should also produce some fair catches, especially in higher flows. Hopefully, some summer steelhead begin to show as is commonly the case this time of year. Effort will continue to drop off so even though we're between runs of steelhead and salmon, your chances for action still remain good with the decrease in effort.

Calm seas in the forecast and a wide open ocean, for bottomfish anyway. Recent reports indicate good action is highly likely but crabbers still struggle for any decent catches. It will likely be that way coast wide but again, with effort low, catches should be great for fish and fair for crab. Boat safe but it should be a great week for ocean goers!

Central & South Coast Reports – The Siletz gets a few springers and those fish will start entering towards the end of April and into May. while this is a small run, it always seems to attract plenty of angler attention.

While a little early to count on prediction for wind and wave on the coast, as of the morning of Wednesday this week, Friday and Saturday forecasts look friendly enough to allow safe bar crossings. As always, check at the last minute to avoid disappointment or worse.

Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411) reports, "Made it out for a bottom fishing trip out of Depoe Bay. We fished the reefs off of the mouth of Siletz. The lings we caught were all mid size and fairly skinny, but tasty. Most of the keeper rock fish were the black rock cod and they nice size in the four to six pound range. We also several yellow eyes which have to be released. We dropped off four crab pots in eighty feet of water on the way out and when we returned four hours later we ended up six hard shell crabs. All and all a nice day for this early in the season. We were fishing with 6 oz jigs, chartreuse rubber worms and shrimp flies. The ocean forecast is looking for both Friday and Saturday on the central coast."

Offshore crabbing has been fair outside of Yaquina Bay and bottom fishing for ling cod and rockfish is always worth a shot at this time of year.

Spring Chinook are entering Winchester Bay and a few have been taken over the past week on the lower Umpqua. North Umpqua dropped to decent levels this week but count on encountering mostly wild fish at this time of year. Smallmouth bass fishing has started on the Umpqua and as might be expected this early in the season, catch numbers are low but large fish are being caught.

A few late winters may be found on the Coos and Coquille rivers but for the most part, anglers are writing this one off as over for the season.

Rogue anglers are seeing an increase in the numbers of spring Chinook entering the river although catch rates have slowed as the river has dropped and the water is clear. Catches are taking place from boat and bank on the lower Rogue from Agness downstream with cold water further slowing the bite. Warm weather this week will have a positive influence on the water temperature and time is on the side of anglers as the springer population - and catches - will only increase through April. Another round of spring showers would help the water conditions. Anchovies with a spinner blade on the nose - the so-called 'Rogue River Rig' - has accounted for many hookups with bank anglers plunking Spin 'n' Glos from outside bends of gravel banks. The majority of Chinook landed recently have been keepers of hatchery origin and some have been very large. Winter steelheading has been fair to good on the Grants Pass stretch as the run moves upriver. Drifting bait and pulling plugs have been effective techniques here.

While bottom fishing has been good all along the Oregon coast, as it usually is at this time of year, it has been stellar off southwest Oregon. Species are varied with blacks, blues and large vermillion common. To first-time fishers, cabezon appear to be huge sculpins and, judging from their appearance, not possibly on the list of edible fishes. On the contrary, cabezon, sporting have green-tinged flesh which turns white upon cooking, are fine, delicate table fare.

Along with the variety of species available from the bottom of the offshore ocean, some days ling cod seem to be everywhere and are often most willing to take a swipe at this simplest of offerings: a chunk of lead with a hook attached. Lings are fabulous at the table and more than one tale of fishing lore contains stories of anglers trading a bright steelhead for a homely ling cod.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Pro guide Steve Fleming, (1-888-624-9424) reports, "I've been out six of the last seven days, and fishing has been good for the big ones (18" +). The

last of the steelhead run must be going through, because we have been getting one about every other day (on bass tackle). The river has steadily dropping, but the basin is poised for heavy runoff if the rains come and take the mid level snow off. Some days the bass are only interested in crankbaits, some soft plastics fished on 1/8 jig heads, some on Carolina rigs, and some days on a little of each. Still slow in the morning, but usually picks up in the afternoon. Be sure and check the river flow before you come over, if it is rising fast (1000 CFS per day or more) it will be dirty and tough fishing."

Northwest Trout – With the water temperature approaching 50 degrees, trout fishing is slow but steady at Hagg Lake. Reports are mixed with some anglers taking a single fish while others reports limits. Bank fishers seem to be doing better than trollers. Think PowerBait. Bass fishing remains poor. Woody debris is still evident but the situation has improved and the water has not fully cleared but the lake is showing gradual improvement.

Fishing has been fair to good at Detroit where another 10,000 trout will be planted this week.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife alerts anglers with children: "ODFW will host free youth fishing event as part of the Youth Angling Enhancement Program on Saturday, April 12 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at McNary Channel Ponds near Hermiston. With easy access and a natural setting, the ponds are a great place to introduce young people to the fun of fishing. The ponds will be stocked for the event, and ODFW will supply rods and reels, tackle, bait, and fish bags for use by young anglers who do not have their own fishing equipment. In addition, ODFW staff and volunteers will be on hand to show beginning anglers how to bait the hook, cast the rod and land the fish. The McNary Channel Ponds are located just below McNary Dam off I-84. For more information about this event call the ODFW Pendleton District Office at (541) 276-2344."

Receiving a fresh fish injection from the ODFW tank trucks this week in the Willamette Valley are Creswell Pond, Detroit Reservoir, Dexter Reservoir, Dorena Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Foster Reservoir, Freeway Lake East, Green Peter Reservoir, Junction City Pond, Roaring River Park Pond, Timber Linn Lake, Walling Pond, Walter Wirth Lake and Waverly Lake.

In the Northwest Zone, Bay City Reservoir, Cape Meares Lake, Carter Lake, Cleawox Lake, Devils Lake, Hebo Lake, Lake Lytle, Lorens Pond, Smith Lake, South Lake, Tahoe Lake and Town Lake are scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report April 2nd – April 15th, 2008

North Puget Sound

The lowland lakes **trout** opener is coming up later this month, but most anglers in the region are still focused on the marine areas of Puget Sound, where **blackmouth salmon** fisheries remain open and the **halibut** season gets under way April 10.

"Only a few weeks remain in the **blackmouth** season, so now's the time to get out on the water," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "Fishing has been decent in some spots, and those anglers that made it out for the Anacortes Salmon Derby seemed to do pretty well."

Nearly 230 fish were weighed during the Anacortes Salmon Derby, which took place March 29-30. Nancy Cabe took home the \$10,000 grand prize with her 24-pound, 22-ounce fish. Keith

Olson's 19.64-pound salmon was good enough for a second-place finish and \$5,000, while Rod King was awarded \$2,500 for his third-place fish, which weighed in at 18.34 pounds.

Selective fisheries for hatchery blackmouth - resident chinook - continue through April in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner). However, April 15 is the last day to fish for blackmouth in Marine Area 9 (Admiralty Inlet). Anglers fishing in any of those areas can keep two hatchery blackmouth as part of their two-salmon daily limit and must release wild chinook, which have an intact adipose fin.

Thiesfeld reminds anglers that regulations are different for Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where anglers have a daily limit of one chinook salmon. That area is open for salmon through April 15.

Dust off those **halibut** rods. The fishing season for big flatfish starts up April 10 in marine waters throughout the region. Mutiny and Admiralty bays, as well as Eastern and Partridge banks usually are the best bets for halibut early in the season. The fishery will be open five days a week, Thursdays through Mondays, with a daily limit of one halibut. There is no minimum size limit.

Freshwater anglers looking to cast for **trout** will soon have numerous lakes to choose from. The lowland lakes trout season gets under way April 26, when many of the region's lakes - stocked with thousands of legal-sized trout - will open for anglers. Information on stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available on WDFW's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>).

Before heading out, anglers should check the rules and regulations for all freshwater and saltwater fisheries on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

[South Sound/Olympic Peninsula](#)

Saltwater anglers can look forward to halibut fishing in Puget Sound and the expansion of lingcod fishing on the north coast this month. Razor clam digs are tentatively scheduled April 6-9 and April 19-23 at various ocean beaches, and opening day of the statewide lowland lakes trout-fishing season is set to begin April 26.

Anglers should also be aware that the Hoh River will close to all recreational fishing effective April 3rd.

The recreational **halibut** season opens April 10 in marine areas 6-11 and 13 (Port Angeles and Puget Sound). These fisheries will be open five days a week - Thursday through Monday - with a daily limit of one halibut. There is no minimum size limit for halibut caught in any area. Additional openings will follow in May on the coast and the western Strait of Juan de Fuca.

For additional information, call the Fishing Hotline at (360) 902-2500 or check the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/halibut/>.

Meanwhile, **lingcod** fishing opened March 15 in coastal waters south of Cape Alava (marine areas 1, 2 and 3) and will open April 16 in Marine Area 4 (Neah Bay).

All four marine areas will be open seven days a week with the following restrictions:

- In Marine Area 2 (Westport Ocean Shores), recreational fishing for bottomfish or lingcod is not allowed in waters deeper than 30 fathoms from March 15 through June 15.
- In Marine Areas 3 and 4 (La Push and Neah Bay), recreational fishing for bottomfish or lingcod is not allowed in waters deeper than 20 fathoms from May 21 through Sept. 30, except on days the halibut fishery is open.

- In Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco), no bottomfish, with the exception of sablefish and Pacific cod, are allowed on any vessel with halibut on board from May 1 through Sept. 30.

Retention of canary and yelloweye rockfish is prohibited in all waters. The minimum size for lingcod in marine areas 1-3 is 22 inches. The minimum size for lingcod in Marine Area 4 is 24 inches.

Additional information about the lingcod fishery and other bottom fish is available on the WDFW Fishing Hotline (360-902-2500) and the department's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/reqs/fishregs.htm>).

Meanwhile, WDFW hatchery crews are stocking 99 lakes throughout the region with 550,000 legal-size trout to prepare for the April 26 lake-fishing opener. An additional 25,300 jumbo and broodstock trout will be stocked in 61 of these lakes and ponds. Thirty-six area lakes and ponds are also stocking up on 1.5 pound triploids. For a complete trout-stocking schedule for the region, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg6/index.htm>.

Youngsters ages 5-14 can attend a one-day fishing event at the Kids' Klassic Family Fish-in, held at the Woodland Creek Community Park on April 19 - a week before the season opener. Children must be pre-registered to participate. For Information, call Lacey Parks and Recreation, (360) 491-0857.

In river fishing on the north coast, anglers should note that the Hoh River and the South Fork Hoh River on the north coast of the Olympic Peninsula will close to all sport fishing April 3 to protect wild steelhead.

Meanwhile, other rivers in the Quillayute system will remain open to steelhead fishing through April 30. Recent creel surveys showed that 42 anglers on the Bogachiel caught 21 wild steelhead and released 16. On the Calawah, anglers averaged one fish per rod and 28 anglers on the Sol Duc released eight wild fish and kept four.

Anglers may want to put their rods aside and grab a shovel for a **razor clam** dig tentatively scheduled April 6-9 and April 19-23. If approved, Twin Harbors will be open on all days while Long Beach will be open April 6-8 and April 19-20. Copalis and Mocrocks will be open April 19-20. All digs will be held on morning tides.

With April 1 marking the beginning of the current license year, all diggers must have an applicable 2008-09 fishing license to dig razor clams on any beach. Anyone age 15 or older must have a license to dig razor clams. Licenses can be purchased at <http://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov>, by telephone (1-866-246-9453), or in person at more than 600 license vendors throughout the state. A list of vendors is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/lic/vendors/vendors.htm>.

Updates on the razor clam season are available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/razorclm/season.htm>.

No digging will be allowed after noon on any beach. Tentative early-April dates and low tides are:

- Sunday, April 6, 7:23 a.m., -0.7 ft: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only
- Monday, April 7, 8:09 a.m., -1.2 ft: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only
- Tuesday, April 8, 8:55 a.m., -1.5 ft: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only
- Wednesday, April 9, 9:43 a.m., -1.4 ft: Twin Harbors only

Tentative mid-April dates and low tides are:

- Saturday, April 19, 6:40 a.m., -0.1 ft: Long beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks
- Sunday, April 20, 7:18 a.m., -0.4 ft: Long beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks

- Monday, April 21, 7:55 a.m., -0.6 ft: Twin Harbors only
- Tuesday, April 22, 8:30 a.m., -0.6 ft: Twin Harbors only
- Wednesday, April 23, 9:06 a.m., -0.5 ft: Twin Harbors only

Southwest Washington:

Good fishing for **spring chinook salmon** has been drawing large numbers of anglers to the lower Columbia River in recent days. Nearly 1,550 boats were counted Saturday, March 29, downstream from Bonneville Dam during an aerial survey that also tallied 755 bank anglers on both sides of the river. In all, angler turnout was nearly twice as high as in the past two years on the same date.

A big part of the attraction is that catch rates for March were higher than in any year since 2002. Through March 31, anglers caught 4,400 chinook in the lower river, compared to 1,100 last year and 1,900 in 2006.

In a creel check conducted during the last full week of the month, 4,431 anglers reported catching 726 adult chinook and 10 steelhead below the dam. For boat anglers, that translated to one adult chinook kept or released for every 5.4 rods, compared to 12.5 rods in 2007, 5.6 rods in 2006, 17.1 rods in 2005, 6.4 rods in 2004, 7.1 rods in 2003 and 4.7 rods in 2002.

Bank anglers fishing below Bonneville Dam have been averaging one adult chinook for every 28.7 rods, about the same as in recent years.

"This fishery is definitely up and running, with catch rates running as high a chinook per boat in some areas," said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. "The preseason forecast called for a strong return of upriver chinook, and that's just what we're seeing on the fishing grounds." He noted that 88.5 percent of the fish sampled were identified as upriver stock.

As in past years, anglers may retain only hatchery chinook and steelhead, identified by a clipped adipose fin. All wild chinook and steelhead with an intact adipose fin must be released.

Hymer reminds anglers that Friday, April 4, is the last day to fish for spring chinook in waters downstream from the west power line towers on Hayden Island. From the west power lines upstream to Bonneville Dam, fishing will continue six days per week - closing from one hour after official sunset Mondays to one hour before official sunrise Wednesdays - through April 30. The limit is one hatchery chinook per day.

Above Bonneville Dam, chinook fishing was slow through the end of March, when only 173 fish had been counted moving through the fishways. But that is expected to change by April 10, if not before, Hymer said.

"Starting April 10, spills are planned at Bonneville Dam to help move juvenile salmon downriver," Hymer said. "Those spills should also spur more adult salmon to move upstream, and improve catch rates for bank anglers just below the dam."

Chinook fishing is currently open seven days per week on the Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Dam, as well as on the Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, Wind and White Salmon rivers, plus Drano Lake. The limit for those waters is two adult hatchery chinook per day. Anglers should note that Drano Lake is scheduled to be closed to fishing Wednesdays beginning April 9.

Another possibility is the Klickitat River, which opens today (April 2) for salmon and steelhead fishing Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays only. The daily limit is one hatchery salmon or one hatchery steelhead on the Klickitat from the Fisher Hill Bridge downstream. The fishery will likely be slow until more fish cross Bonneville Dam, Hymer said.

Hymer reminds anglers that the shoreline outside the mouth of Drano Lake will be open for bank fishing for the first time in 30 years. In all, this year's fishing regulations will open up 40 additional miles of bank fishing on the mainstem Columbia River from Bonneville Dam to the Tower Island power lines six miles below The Dalles Dam.

"I think the best bet will be at the mouth of Drano Lake," Hymer said. "Casting a plug or lure from shore is sure to produce fish." Anglers fishing the newly open bank are asked to follow three rules: Don't cross the highway, don't trespass over the railroad tracks and don't interfere with tribal fisheries.

Parking and access to the bank fishery at the mouth of Drano Lake will likely be best Wednesdays, when the rest of the lake is closed to recreational fishing, Hymer said.

Meanwhile, anglers have been catching some legal-size **sturgeon** in the Bonneville Pool, and the fishery is improving from Portland to Longview as the river warms. In the John Day Pool, sturgeon fishing is catch-and-release-only through the end of the year, although anglers have been taking home some **walleye**.

Trout anglers should be aware the bank anglers at Klineline Pond have been averaging nearly three browns per rod. The pond was planted with 1,500 half-pound brown trout March 24. Klineline Pond will be closed to public fishing from April 10 through 6 p.m. April 12 for the annual Kids Fishing Event on April 12.

Lacamas Lake in Camas also got 5,000 half-pound brown trout March 24, while Silver Lake near Castle Rock was planted with 6,760 catchable-size rainbows the following day.

Eastern Washington:

The Tucannon River impoundments in Columbia County continue to provide good fishing for hatchery-stocked **rainbow trout**. The seven small, man-made lakes along the river on the Wooten Wildlife Area opened last month and will be stocked repeatedly by Tucannon and Lyons Ferry fish hatchery crews throughout April, May and June. The season's total hatchery allotments of catchable-size rainbows by lake is as follows: Beaver, 1,000; Big Four, 3,300; Blue, 21,800; Deer, 3,300; Rainbow, 15,300; Spring, 11,300; Watson, 19,300. Among those total numbers, Blue, Rainbow, Spring and Watson each recently received 100 "jumbo-size" (14-inch-plus) rainbows.

Walla Walla County's Quarry Pond, which is open year-round, is receiving plants of catchable-size and "jumbo" rainbow trout from the hatcheries this week.

Anglers at Liberty Lake in eastern Spokane County continue to catch good-sized **rainbow** and **brown trout**. The 711-acre mixed-species lake opened March 1, a few weeks earlier than in previous years. Medical and Downs lakes in southwest Spokane County also opened earlier this year, although persistent winter-like conditions have slowed action.

Other lakes that opened March 1, such as Amber in southwest Spokane County, Coffeepot in Lincoln County, and Deer Lake in southern Stevens County, should be warming and also providing some decent fishing. Amber and Coffeepot are both under selective gear rule

restrictions. Amber is catch-and-release only for its **cutthroat** and **rainbow trout**, and Coffeepot has a minimum size of 18 inches and a daily catch limit of one trout.

Walleye fishing is starting to pick up on year-round Lake Roosevelt above Kettle Falls. Jim Ebel, WDFW Colville Fish Hatchery manager, said some anglers are catching 14- to 17-inch walleye in 50 to 100 feet of water.

Year-round Sprague Lake, straddling the Lincoln-Adams county line along Interstate 90, is being re-stocked after it was treated with rotenone in October to rehabilitate the declining fishery.

"The first fish we're putting back in Sprague are catchable-size **rainbow trout** from our hatcheries," said Chris Donley, WDFW district fish biologist in Spokane. "Later we'll stock **crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass** and **channel catfish** that will take a few years to grow and reproduce. The rainbows will provide good fishing now and over the next few years until the warmwater species are up and running in good numbers and size."

About 160,000 catchable-size rainbows are being stocked in Sprague this month and next, including about 91,000 one-third-pound trout from the Columbia Basin and Lyons Ferry hatcheries, about 65,000 one-fifth-pound trout from the Spokane Hatchery, and over 3,200 triploid rainbows up to one-and-a-half pounds each from the private hatchery Trout Lodge. Cow Lake, which was also treated last fall as part of the Sprague Lake watershed, is receiving about 6,000 one-third-pound rainbows from the Naches Hatchery. Later this spring, broodstock largemouth bass, bluegill and crappie captured from other Washington waters will be stocked. WDFW will also return about 4,000 black crappie and at least 60 channel catfish that were collected from Sprague Lake before last fall's treatment. Juvenile warmwater fish species from the Meseberg Hatchery - about 100,000 bluegill, 14,000 largemouth bass and 2,000 crappie - will also be stocked. WDFW will purchase and stock juvenile channel catfish when available.

WDFW fish hatchery crews are also busy adding catchable-size trout to many lakes that open April 26. The fisheries in most of those lakes in the region develop from last year's fry and fingerling plants, but some receive boosts of 8- to 12-inches, 1- to 1.5-pound triploids, and surplus broodstock.

North Central Washington:

WDFW regional fish program manager Joe Miller reports fishing was "fair" on the April 1 season opener on many Grant County waters. Persistent winter-like weather likely kept more some anglers home, but many of those who were out caught **rainbow trout** that averaged over 15 inches.

"Upper Hampton Lake provided the best fishing with anglers averaging 3.4 rainbow trout per rod," Miller said. "Lower Hampton saw an average of only 1.4 trout per rod. The Pillar Widgeon lakes had a low catch rate of half a fish per rod, but the fish caught averaged 17.4 inches. Dry Falls Lake, which is a selective fishery, produced about two fish per rod and averaged 15.6 inches. Several **brown** and **tiger trout** were reported in the catch at Dry Falls, too."

With rising temperatures in the forecast, Miller said catch rates should improve at these and many other Columbia Basin fisheries now open. Two selective-gear fisheries that opened March 1 - Lenice and Nunnally lakes on the Crab Creek Wildlife Area just east of Beverly - will be boosted with 1,100 one-and-a-half-pound rainbows each this month.

WDFW fish biologist Matt Polacek reports that catch rates for **walleye** are high on Banks Lake. "Anglers are commonly catching limits walleye at Barker Flats, the westside of Steamboat Rock,

and on the north end of the lake near the inlet canal," he said. "Cold air temperatures have caused water temperatures to remain cool, resulting in longer pre-spawn feeding."

Trout fishing on Roses Lake, just north of Manson in Chelan County, is also picking up, according to WDFW district fish biologist Art Viola of Wenatchee. "Many 10-to-12-inch **rainbows** and a few 14-to-16 inchers are being caught at Roses," he said. "The Rock Island Ponds are also producing trout catches. Pitt Lake, a kids-only pond among the Rock Island ponds, was recently stocked with 700 catchable-size rainbows and 50 larger ones. Once Fish Lake up north of Leavenworth is unfrozen it should also provide good fishing for trout."

WDFW district fish biologist Bob Jateff of Omak reports catch rates were slowed by cooler water temperatures at Spectacle Lake, northwest of Tonasket in Okanogan County, when it opened for fishing April 1. "But the fish were a good size, with **rainbows** averaging 11 to 12 inches," he said. "A few winter-carryover fish up to 15 inches were also caught. Spectacle should be very good fishing as the water continues to warm up."

Jateff said lakes in the Methow Valley area are still covered with ice, but anglers wanting to fish selective gear rules can try Rat Lake near Brewster for browns and rainbows that run 11 to 13 inches. Catch-and-release rules are in effect for Rat Lake, he noted, adding that access with concrete boat ramp is available.

Jateff also reminds anglers that **steelhead** and **whitefish** seasons on the Similkameen and Okanogan rivers are now closed.

WDFW fish hatchery crews are busy adding catchable-size trout to many lakes that open April 26. The fisheries in most of those lakes in this region are supported by fry and fingerlings planted last year, but some also benefit from plants of 8-12-inchers, one-to-one-and-a-half-pound triploids and surplus broodstock.

South Central Washington:

Mud Lake, Myron Lake, Rotary Lake, Tims Pond and the I-82 Ponds 1, 2 and 3 were recently stocked with **rainbow trout** ranging in size from a third of a pound to one pound each. Myron Lake and Tims Pond also received some three to seven-pound rainbow broodstock, which were surplus to hatchery needs.

"It should be good fishing in all of these areas, especially as the weather starts to warm up a bit," said Eric Anderson, WDFW district fish biologist from Yakima. "There will be many more lakes and ponds stocked in the next few weeks."

Dalton Pond, which is open year-round and located northeast of the Snake River's Ice Harbor Dam near the Tri-Cities in Franklin County, is receiving catchable-size rainbow trout plants the first week in April from Lyons Ferry Fish Hatchery.

Anglers can view the complete fish-stocking plan for south central Washington lakes along with weekly updates on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg3/index.htm>, or pick up a list at 1701 S. 24th Ave. in Yakima.

"If we don't get some warm weather soon," said Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist from Yakima, "lakes like Dog and Clear near White Pass may be planted later than expected, especially with the new snow in the mountains this week."

Cummins reminds anglers that rivers and streams are closed to fishing until June 1, unless listed as open in the fishing regulations pamphlet. Based on calls, some people don't understand the need to check the general regulations before looking for a specific river or stream under "special rules," Cummins said. "Not all waters are listed, because many fall under the general rules," he said.

Anglers with catch record cards for steelhead, salmon and sturgeon are required to submit them by the end of this month, either by mail to WDFW Olympia headquarters or via drop-off at the regional office.

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

Diamond Lake Trout Derby:

<http://www.salmontroutandsteelhead.com/tournaments.html>

Find camp or RV sites nationwide and make reservations online: **<http://www.recreation.gov/>**

Weekly Quote – "Fishing is not life – It's much more important than that" - Unknown

GOOD LUCK!