

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 9th – May 15th, 2008**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Look ahead to the sturgeon fishing in the lower Columbia River. Prepare yourself for this fishery by learning all you can about it. Log onto our technical report page at: <http://www.theguidesforecast.com/techrpt.shtml> and order the tech reports that will benefit your outing today!

Willamette Valley/Metro - Salmon migration at Bonneville Dam is at its peak; an awesome sight to witness whether you recreationally fish or not. Despite good numbers of fish passing Bonneville Dam, mainstem sportfishing remains closed downstream and only open through Saturday upstream to McNary Dam. Bank and boat anglers are catching some salmon near the John Day Dam.

The most productive section of the Columbia River, near Bonneville Dam, closed to sturgeon fishing on May 1st. There are a few keepers being taken from the Portland to Longview stretch.

The ideal temperature for spring chinook success is considered to be 52 degrees. It hit 53 at Willamette Falls on May 5th. It's extremely late, but if springers are coming, it'll happen now. Catch rates of springers and steelhead in the lower Willamette and the Multnomah Channel have improved recently. Sturgeon fishing has remained worthwhile around St. Johns.

Fishing for summer steelhead is gradually improving on the North Santiam. With better weather, warmer water and fish crossing at Willamette Falls, it will continue to pick up in weeks to come.

Although the water temperature is rising on the McKenzie, hatches have not been sufficient to trigger rising fish. It will improve as temperatures rise.

Fishing is slow on the Clackamas but a few summers have been taken and a couple of spring chinook were been landed over the past week.

Wild steelhead, summers and the rare spring chinook have been hooked on the Sandy over the past week.

Youth angling events are being held at Junction City Pond and Sunnyside Park south of Portland on Saturday beginning at 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. respectively.

Scheduled for trout planting are Benson Lake, Hartman Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Sheridan Pond, West Salish Pond, Alton Baker Canal, Carmen Reservoir, Clear Lake, Detroit Reservoir, Dexter Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Fall Creek, Foster Reservoir, Freeway Lake East, Green Peter Reservoir, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Salmon Creek, Sunnyside Park Pond, Walling Pond, Walter Wirth Lake and the Willamette River Middle Fork above Hills Cr Reservoir.

Northwest – Beginning on May 10th, retention for sturgeon from the Wauna Powerlines to Buoy 10 reopens for keepers in the 45 to 60 inch range. Catch rates may be slow to start given the cold water conditions and high flows from dam spills.

There has been a confirmed spring chinook from the Tillamook district but the current minus tide

series should benefit the estuary fishery in the upper reaches this weekend. Sturgeon may also be an option although success for these fish has dropped off since winter.

River flows continue to drop on north coast streams with effort light. Dark winter steelhead are making up the bulk of the catch but spring chinook are sure to arrive soon.

The extended ocean forecast may allow for fishable conditions for those in pursuit of rockfish over the weekend. The ocean will be the best chance for keeper crab.

Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411) reports taking limits of gaper clams recently then jigging a decent number of herring for the first time this year.

From Cape Falcon near Manzanita to Humbug Mountain, the season's first all-depth halibut fishery opens today. It is the first of several 3-day seasons that will run this year and catches are likely to be good out of Newport, Depoe Bay and Garibaldi.

Carter Lake, Cleawox Lake, Munsel Lake and Sutton Lake are scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout.

Southwest – Spring Chinook fishing has been slow on the Umpqua but anglers are hopeful that more fish are on their way. Fewer than 20 springers have been counted at Winchester Dam.

Steelheading improved on the upper Rogue with the water warming. Over 7,800 winter steelhead and a handful of springers have crossed at Gold Ray Dam.

Bottom fishing out of Gold Beach and Brookings has continued to deliver limits consisting of several colorful species of rockfish. Catches of ling cod have continued to be good as well. Forecasts look favorable for safe bar crossings this weekend, but conditions can change quickly. Be sure to check local wind and wave before making the trip.

Ice fishers continued to score at Diamond Lake over the past weekend with many taking limits of trout averaging 17 inches. These are all holdovers as planting won't take place this year until ice-out. As of Tuesday, May 6th, it was still solid ice but it's starting to soften so caution is urged.

Scheduled for trout stocking this week are Bluebill Lake, Bradley Lake, Eel Lake, Powers Pond, Saunders Lake, Sru Lake, Fish Lake, Expo Pond, Reinhart Park Pond, Emigrant Lake, Medco Pond, Willow Lake, Lost Creek Reservoir, Spaulding Pond, Burma Pond, Dutch Herman, Howard Prairie, Hyatt Reservoir.

Eastern – **Pro guide Rick Arnold (541-480-1570)** reports ice still covering most of our lakes. Wickiup, LBC and Odell have been the only open waters that are getting any attention.

Pat Schatz of Crane Prairie Resort (541-480-9696) reports that camping will be available starting May 15th.

Fly anglers are doing well on the lower Deschutes although with hatches occurring sporadically, nymphing has been most productive. Water conditions and fishing remain decent on the middle Deschutes with some stoneflies showing. The middle stretch is producing good sized browns and redsides.

Crane Prairie Resort reports the ice is off the lake and roads will be plowed by the 15th of April. Some central and eastern Oregon lakes will be snowbound for a while longer so research your destination before leaving the house.

Young anglers will receive special attention at the youth angling event being held at McNary Channel Ponds near Hermiston from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 on Saturday.

SW Washington – Washington anglers are in full pursuit of Wind River and Drano Lake chinook. Catch rates are down significantly but sporadic afternoon bites are being reported on some days.

On the Cowlitz, Lewis and Kalama Rivers, catch rates among anglers and return rates at local hatcheries are far below this years expectations. Cold water may be to blame and anglers are hopeful that the coming weeks produce the results that are more typical for this time of year.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Anglers are carefully watching the Bonneville Dam counts to see if any more time will be granted to the recreational sport fishery below Bonneville Dam. Counts have been sporadic ranging from over 9,600 on 5/4 down to about 2,800 on the 6th. It's a sea-saw of activity that is likely to continue on throughout the month of May. To date, over 70,000 springers have crossed and we're all hopeful that the adult and jack counts continue to ramp up. It's highly likely we won't be seeing another 9,000+ fish day indicating the peak has likely passed. Recently the run forecast was downgraded to 200,000 fish.

Sportanglers working the fast water downstream of the John Day Dam are really one of the few games in town. Fishing has been fair but will be closed beginning this Sunday. Anglers are taking advantage of the Wind River fishery but action there has also been sporadic. There has been a few good bites in the Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries in the afternoon but given the number of fish crossing the dam, many are wondering why the fishing isn't any better.

Sturgeon interest is picking up but angler opportunity was dealt another closure with the Marker 85 to Bonneville Dam section shut down until mid-summer. Catches were ramping up but this section closes to protect the spawning adults that are staging in this area prepping for their yearly ritual. Some effort remains in the Portland to Longview stretch but success rates seemed to have dropped from the previous weeks. Smelt will remain a top bait here.

It'll be another week before the Portland to Tongue Point fishery opens up again for steelhead.

The Guide's Forecast – When the Columbia closes to salmon above Bonneville Dam beginning Mother's Day, anglers will likely be forced to remain focused on sturgeon for the next several weeks. The sturgeon fishery from the Wauna Powerlines to Buoy 10 will re-open to retention beginning May 10th but action will likely be slow due to high and cold water conditions. Sand shrimp and smelt will likely be top baits and it's not known yet whether anchovies will be available but they traditionally are. The opener is always a crap shoot and with little effort during the brief catch and release season, we just don't know how it will perform. Certainly, more next week.

Meanwhile, the Portland to Longview stretch will likely continue to put out a few keepers and fair shaker action. This fishery should remain consistent through the spring months but once the action starts in the estuary, a significant effort shift will likely take place.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Warmer weather this week should begin to alleviate cold water woes which have slowed fishing in the Willamette Valley. Daily spring Chinook counts at Willamette Falls have gone from low double digits to a few hundred, but with the total fewer than 2,000 for the season thus far, it's too little and too late to

inspire optimism regarding upper Willamette numbers. Water temperatures in the mid-50s are responsible for the improvement in fish movement. Summer steelhead number 2,671 so far this year. The springer bite has been on and off, frequently in the same day but has improved recently with the warmer water.

Steelheading is slow in the high, fast, clear waters of the North Santiam. A few springers have been spotted but no catches have been reported. Over 100 summer steelhead were recycled from the Foster Dam trap on the South Santiam Monday this week.

Lower McKenzie anglers are taking good numbers of cutthroat to 12 inches along with a few rainbows. The stretch below Hayden Bridge has been most productive. Very few trout are looking up, however, and the water level remains high.

The Guide's Forecast – Now that the water is warmer, trollers are switching to spinners with good effect. Keep the hardware close to the bottom for best effect. Whether you choose herring or spinners,, after midnight on Sunday, May 18th it will be academic as that's when the lower Willamette and Multnomah Channel will close to spring Chinook angling. The Willamette will remain open for springers above the Falls. Herring is holding up as a top sturgeon bait as it seems they're still keyed on the baitfish.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports –

Steelheading on the Clackamas remains slow and will probably stay that way until the water warms a few degrees. The water temperature has been increasing and a good season is expected this season when conditions improve. Smolts are abundant, handle with care and thanks to all who are eschewing the use of bait.

Steelheading has been slow on the Sandy River with no additional spring Chinook catches reported over the past week. Between snowmelt and the drawdown of Roslyn Lake, expect the level to remain higher than normal - over 10 feet at Bull Run - for a while although it's fishable at the current level. Summer steelhead are in but scattered.

North Coast Fishing Report – With a late start for spring chinook in recent years, it may be a short while before fishers get excited about returning to Tillamook area waters. We're on a good tide series right now however and I'll be testing the waters over the weekend.

Meanwhile, steelhead still inhabit the Wilson River as we floated on 5/2 with next to no other boat traffic. We fished both the salmon and steelhead water but only came up with a few dark winter run fish. We fished plugs exclusively with both K-11 and K-15's taking steelhead in the deeper holes.

The river is forecasted to continue to drop which will pool up salmon and steelhead even more but also make them more skittish and unresponsive to an anglers offering.

The sturgeon tides are good right now but no one is pursuing these fish to find out if they are really in the bay or not. The tides will last though the weekend.

For motivated bottomfishers, pay attention to the ocean and bar forecasts as opportunity may arise in the coming days. If you can get out, the fishing should be excellent.

Crabbing remains poor in most coastal estuaries.

The Guide's Forecast – There isn't a whole lot to get excited about this weekend on the north coast. The winter steelhead are spawning and the springers have yet to show up in any numbers and some would say, if at all. The tides are right however to justify a trip to the upper bay to troll spinners or backtroll plugs. There should be some fish in the system but they seem to be making a later show in recent years.

You may want to bring your sturgeon gear too however as the minus tides should offer up some opportunity for that species as well.

Go to: <http://seaboard.ndbc.noaa.gov/data/Forecasts/FZUS56.KPQR.html> for updated ocean conditions but the upcoming ocean forecast as of 5/7 reads:

THU

NW WIND 10 TO 20 KT...STRONGEST NORTHERN AND OUTER WATERS.
WIND WAVES 2 TO 4 FT. NW SWELL 7 FT AT 8 SECONDS. AREAS OF DRIZZLE.

THU NIGHT

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT.
NW SWELL 6 FT AT 8 SECONDS.

FRI

NW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

FRI NIGHT

W WIND 5 KT...BACKING TO S AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND
WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 4 FT.

SAT

S WIND 10 KT...SHIFTING NW 10 TO 15 KT DURING THE AFTERNOON.
WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 3 FT. CHANCE OF RAIN.

SAT NIGHT

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND
WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 6 FT. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

SUN

NW WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 8 FT.

MON

W WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 7 FT.

Central & South Coast Reports – Bottom fishers are taking limits of rockfish out of Newport when conditions have been safe for bar crossing but keeper-sized lings have been scarce. A few nearshore halibut have been caught but the all depth fishery May 8th through 10th should be worthwhile. Crabbing in Yaquina Bay has been reliably dismal and just slightly better offshore. Herring are being taken by jiggers in the bay.

Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411) reports "With a large minus tide, we went clamming in the bay and had our limit of gaper clams in less than an hour. Then we headed off shore and fished for a limit of bottom fish. On our return we noticed one boat catching herring between the Green Can and the Coast Guard station. So we joined in the fun and ended with 6 dozen

herring in about 45 minutes. This was first time this year that the herring have showed up in any numbers, hopefully they will be hanging around for awhile."

The Applegate, Chetco, Coos, Millicoma and Coquille rivers are closed until May 24th to protect smolts. Trout fishing is closed on the Umpqua, Smith River, South Umpqua, North Umpqua and Cow Creek basins until May 24th.

A few spring Chinook have been taken over the past week from the Umpqua mainstem. Steelheading has been fair on the North and South Umpqua.

Spring Chinook angling has been very slow on the lower Rogue. A few springers are being taken daily but darn few. Catches by all trying have been in the low single digits. The Grants Pass stretch is producing fair catches of mostly dark winter steelhead and a few springers.

Halibut season is wide open south of Humbug Mountain, allowing all depth fishing seven days a week to the California border. This includes ports of Gold Beach and Brookings where few halibut are taken annually. Bottom fishing for rockfish and ling cod has been another matter, however. The quality and quantity of rockfish has been as good as anyone could anticipate and catches are coming only a short distance out. Any day the wind and wave action allows safe crossing will be a good day for anglers. Long-range forecasts look decent for the coming weekend with Saturday predicted to offer the mildest conditions.

Surf perch fishing remains hot off most of the southwest ocean beaches.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Pro guide Rick Arnold (541-480-1570) reports "We have been locked down with ice still covering most of our lakes. Wickiup, LBC and Odell have been the only open waters that are getting any attention.

"With a bigger winter than we have had in years, fishing opportunities this opening have been pretty limited. Unplowed snow on some of the roads and ice cover all of our high lakes. Even Crescent Lake is still covered in ice.

"Wickiup has been slow but a few nice browns to 7 Lb. have been caught. I got word from Scott Robertson that he caught and released a really big native bow of 10 LB.+ out of the reservoir this past weekend.

"I got word from Shelter Cover Resort that the mackinaw fishing was been really hot with 35-40 legals posted since the opening. A 24 Lb. male is one of the biggest to be weighed in. Kokanee has been slow but should be improving with warming water. The surface temps are just starting to hit 40.

"LBC has been slow and I have discontinued guiding for bulls this spring. It was a tough spring season up there this year and I really feel fortunate that we caught a few big bulls (10, 10 and 13 LB.) when we did. The redd count this fall will give us a good take on where the adult bull trout population stands."

Pat Schatz of Crane Prairie Resort reports, "Wanted to give you an update on Crane. As of May 15th there will be camping available, boat launch and day use area, the resort will be open for business. The Ice is off the lake at this time. This is a guarantee not a forecast. Any questions call me at 541-480-9696. The snow is melting and we are plowing on the 12th if not maybe before.

"When do I get to retire?????"

Anglers heading to eastern Oregon are reminded that the Snake River from the deadline below Hells Canyon Dam to the Dug Bar Boat Ramp is open for spring Chinook with a bag limit of three hatchery adults and two jacks per day. Six adult springers per angler may be in possession.

Lake Billy Chinook produced several five-fish limits of foot-long kokanee over the past weekend. The limit remains 25 on Suttle Lake with a few anglers filling limits or coming close recently on jigs. Suttle Lake has continued to produce good numbers of kokanee this week to jig fishers at first light. Later in the day the bite gets tough.

Wickiup has been producing well for trollers early in the day but not the consistently larger fish normally associated with this body of water.

Memorial Day outings in the Cascades will be challenged by snow in many locations.

Northwest Trout – Detroit Reservoir has been fishing very well for stocked trout. It was planted with 10,000 legal-sized fish last week and another 10,000 this week. In addition, holdover trout, kokanee and landlocked Chinook are available. The Fishing Derby is May 16th, 17th & 18th this year. While no specifics are available on this year's derby, in 2007, a Smokercraft bait and \$7500 in prizes were awarded. Not bad for a 400-angler contest with a \$10 entry fee!

Trollers at Devils Lake are doing well and scoring a few large holdovers in addition to this year's stocked trout.

The ODFW in conjunction with other organizations are planning several fishing events for youngsters this Saturday, May 17th. Tackle and bait will be available for those without and plenty of helpful volunteers will be on hand at every location.

Northwest Steelheaders and Linn County Parks Department will co- host a free youth fishing event at Sunnyside Park Pond near Sweet Home this Saturday from 9 AM to 1 PM. The pond will be planted with 1,650 legal-sized rainbow trout, and 150 fish weighing between one and 1 1/2 pounds.

Junction City Moose Lodge will co-host a free youth fishing derby at the Junction City Pond on Saturday from 8 AM to 2 PM. Over 1,200 legal-sized trout will be stocked for the event.

US Army Corps of Engineers is co-hosting the event at the McNary Channel Ponds near Hermiston on from 9 AM to 12 PM. The ponds will be stocked with legal- and trophy-sized fish for the event, and there will be prizes for the biggest fish caught in several age groups.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report April 30 - May 13, 2008

North Puget Sound

The **blackmouth** season in the region comes to a close at the end of today (April 30), but saltwater anglers still have good reason to get out on Puget Sound, where **halibut** fisheries are under way and the popular **shrimp** season gets started in just a few days. In the freshwater, the

lowland lake fishing season recently opened and anglers can cast for **trout** at numerous lakes throughout the region.

The weather was good for the lowland-lakes opener, but catch rates for **trout** anglers were slightly down this year, said Jon Anderson, WDFW resident trout manager. According to creel checks, the lake that produced the largest catch in the region was King County's Pine Lake, where 92 anglers took home 247 trout and released 365. In terms of the highest catch rates, Island County's Goss Lake tops the list. Two anglers at Goss caught their limit of five trout on opening day.

Elsewhere, anglers in Skagit County averaged 4.4 trout per rod at Heart and McMurray lakes, while those at Sixteen Lake averaged 4.3 fish per rod. Anglers fishing Snohomish County's Howard Lake and San Juan County's Cascade Lake also did well. Anglers at those two lakes averaged four trout per rod. In Whatcom County, anglers at Toad Lake averaged 3.8 fish per rod, the same average as those fishing King County's Steel Lake.

"We couldn't have asked for nicer weather for the lowland lake opener," said Anderson. "Anglers of all ages caught lots of nice trout, including several real lunkers, but because waters remained cool so long into spring, catch rates tended to be lower in many lakes. However, the fish will still be there later in this five-to six-month season."

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 Puget Sound, the **blackmouth** season closes at the end of the day April 30, but **halibut** fisheries continue in the region. The usual hot spots - Mutiny and Admiralty bays, as well as Eastern and Partridge banks - are the best bets for flatfish early in the season. Halibut fishing is open five days a week, Thursday through Monday, with a daily limit of one halibut and no minimum size limit.

Beginning May 1, anglers in the region also will have an opportunity to drop a line for other bottom dwellers, such as **lingcod**, **rockfish** and **cabezon**.

While out on the Sound, bring some **shrimp** pots. The popular shrimp season opens throughout the region May 3. Details are available on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/shrimpreg/shrimpindex.shtml>.

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

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Plenty of trout remain after cold lake temperatures lowered catch rates for anglers on the opening day of **trout** season. Meanwhile, a final spring **razor clam** dig is set for May 3-7, **shrimp** season gets under way May 3 in most areas of Puget Sound, and **halibut** and **lingcod** seasons expand to more areas.

Greeted by sunny skies, anglers of all ages came out for the opening day of **trout** season, but the fish were slow to bite in many lakes, said Jon Anderson, WDFW fish biologist. "The boat

ramps were busy and people caught some nice trout, but the water's still a bit too cold to get many of the fish to bite," Anderson said. "Once it warms up, people should be getting their limits."

According to opening-day reports, Anderson Lake in Jefferson County gave up 3.75 fish per angler, while Clear Lake in Pierce County yielded 3.5 fish per rod. Anglers at Stump Lake in Mason County averaged about 2.8 fish per rod. In Grays Harbor County, the winner of the Kid's Derby at Aberdeen Lake landed a rainbow trout weighing 14.2 pounds, and an angler won the derby at Failor Lake with an 11-pound, 11-ounce rainbow.

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

On the saltwater, recreational **shrimp** fishing opens Saturday, May 3 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 this year.

Marine Area 11-extending from the northern tip of Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge-will be open on Saturday, May 3 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 3 at 7 a.m. until the quota is reached, or through Sept. 15, whichever comes first. Marine Area 13 closes for spot shrimp May 31. Coon strip and pink shrimp season closes Oct. 15.
- Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) will be open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 3, 7, 10 and 14, or until the quota is reached, whichever comes first. Additional dates and times may be announced if sufficient quota is remaining.

More information on shrimp seasons and rules is available on the WDFW shellfish hotline at 1-866-880-5431, or online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/>.

Still hankering for clams? If so, good tides should help **razor clam** diggers get their last limits of the season May 3-7, said Dan Ayres, WDFW fish biologist. "The low tides should offer excellent digging opportunities, especially if the weather cooperates," Ayres said.

Long Beach and Twin Harbors will open for morning digs May 3-7, while Copalis and Mocrocks are scheduled to open May 4-5 only. Each day's dig on those beaches must be completed by noon.

Ayres reminds diggers that portions of the beaches at Long Beach and Twin Harbors are closed to protect nesting **western snowy plovers**, which are endangered. At Long Beach, the closed area is located north of the Oysterville Road from the state park boundary north to Leadbetter Point. At Twin Harbors, the closed area is located from just south of Midway Beach Road to the first beach-access trail at Grayland Beach State Park. The closed portion at each beach includes the area beyond the mean high tide line.

"Signs clearly mark the area and instruct people to stay on the hard-packed sand," Ayres said.

Dates and low tides for the dig are:

- Saturday, May 3, 5:27 a.m., -0.3 ft: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only
- Sunday, May 4, 6:16 a.m., -1.2 ft: Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks
- Monday, May 5, 7:04 a.m., -1.9 ft: Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks
- Tuesday, May 6, 7:51 a.m., -2.3 ft: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only
- Wednesday, May 7, 8:39 a.m., -2.4 ft: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only

All diggers must have an applicable 2008-09 fishing license to dig razor clams on any beach. A license is required for anyone age 15 or older. 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>.

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.

Meanwhile, along the Strait of Juan de Fuca, recreational **halibut** anglers in the Port Angeles area (Marine Area 6) pulled in 60 of the flatfish over the April 26-27 weekend. Next month, those with a competitive streak can try for a \$5,000 first prize at the 8th Annual Halibut Derby sponsored by the Port Angeles Salmon Club. The two-day derby will be held May 24-25 near the Dungeness Spit. Ticket information is available at <http://www.swainsinc.com> or (360) 452-2363.

Halibut fishing in marine areas 6-11 and 13 will continue to run five days a week Thursday through Monday through June 13.

Anglers looking for more opportunity can soon cast their lines wider as the following halibut fisheries open:

- **Columbia River (Ilwaco):** Marine Area 1 will open May 1, and continue seven days a week until 70 percent of the quota is reached, or until July 20, whichever occurs first. The fishery will then reopen on Aug. 1 and continue three days a week (Friday-Sunday) until the remaining quota is reached, or Sept. 30, whichever occurs first.
- **South Coast (Westport/Ocean Shores):** Marine Area 2 will open on May 1, and then continue two days a week, Sundays and Tuesdays until the quota is reached, or Sept. 30, whichever occurs first. The northern nearshore area will open May 1 and will be open four days a week, Friday through Sunday and Tuesdays, until the quota is reached.
- **North Coast (La Push/Neah Bay):** Marine areas 3 and 4 will open on May 13, and continue on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays until the quota is reached. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will reopen on June 17 and 19 (Tuesday and Thursday) in Area 4B and shoreward of a line approximating 30 fm from the Bonilla-Tatoosh line south to the Queets River. All recreational fishing in Marine Areas 3 and 4 outside of these areas will be closed on those dates. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will reopen in all areas of marine areas 3 and 4 on Saturday, June 21.
- **Strait of Juan de Fuca/Puget Sound:** Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) will be open May 22 through July 21, 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. All catch must be recorded on a WDFW catch-record card. For additional information on specific regulations for each marine area, call the Fishing Hotline at (360) 902-2500 or check the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/halibut/>.

The **lingcod** fishery in Neah Bay (Marine Area 4) got underway April 16 and people are generally doing pretty well, especially when the wind is in their favor, said Scott Barbour, WDFW fish biologist. "There were at least 30 boats out there this past weekend," Barbour said. "People did much better on Sunday when the wind shifted from the east to the west."

Anglers will have more opportunity to fish for lingcod - as well as **rockfish** and **cabezon** - when the fishery gets under way May 1 in marine areas 5-13. 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. Because specific regulations and restrictions apply to these fisheries, anglers are advised to check the 2008-09 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet for more information (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/reggs/fishregs.htm>).

On the Olympic Peninsula, the Hoh River below the mouth of Willoughby Creek, will open for **salmon** fishing May 16 through Aug. 31, Wednesdays through Sundays only. Anglers are limited to six fish per day; only one adult may be retained. All wild chinook must be released. Before heading out, anglers should check the 2008-09 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet for boundaries and regulations.

Southwest Washington:

After providing several weeks of good fishing in the lower Columbia River, the **spring chinook** run suddenly stalled out in mid-April, leaving anglers and fishery managers watching and waiting. By month's end, the count of fish passing Bonneville Dam jumped above 3,500 per day, but questions remain whether the run is late or lower than expected.

"We're in kind of a holding pattern right now," said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. "It should be prime time for the next couple of weeks, and hopefully - with water temperatures warming - the fish will begin to move in the mainstem and into tributaries."

Some of the best fishing during the last week of April was just below John Day Dam, where bank anglers were averaging a springer for every 5.6 rods, and boat anglers were reeling in a fish for every 9.3 rods. A total of 45 boats were counted in the three-mile stretch of the river there April 25.

Some of those anglers moved upriver from Drano Lake, where boat anglers averaged just one fish for every 12.8 rods that week. On the Wind River, boat anglers averaged a fish for every 14.6 rods and bank fishing was slow.

One positive sign is that increasing numbers of spring chinook tagged with passive integrated transponders (PIT) and bound for the Wind River have been counted at Bonneville Dam. Up to 10,000 spring chinook - more than double last year's return - are predicted to enter the Wind River, according to the pre-season forecast.

Hymer reminds anglers planning to fish the Wind River and Drano Lake that Skamania County is now charging a fee to park or launch a boat in those areas. The one-day cost is \$5, although annual passes can also be purchased. "A ticket will cost you \$75, so I'd recommend paying the parking and launch fee," Hymer said.

Boat anglers are also catching some **bass** in the Bonneville Pool and some **walleye** in The Dalles Pool.

Below Bonneville Dam, the mainstem Columbia River remains closed to fishing for **chinook** and **steelhead**, although anglers are catching some of both species in the Cowlitz, Kalama and Lewis rivers. On the Lewis, almost as many summer-run steelhead were trapped at Merwin Dam as spring chinook through April 23.

"Spring chinook have been slow to move into those rivers, but summer steelhead appear to be right on time," Hymer said. Skamania Hatchery on the Washougal River has also reported taking in the first summer-run steelhead of the year.

STURGEON on the other hand, are available for the catching right now from the dam downriver to the I-5 Bridge. Rising water temperatures are helping to improve the bite, especially in the stretch between Vancouver and Woodland, Hymer said. Fish may be retained Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays only.

To protect spawning fish, the area from Navigation Marker 85 upstream to Bonneville Dam closes to fishing for sturgeon from May through July. Also closing to sturgeon fishing during that period is the stretch from John Day Dam downstream 2.4 miles to the west end of the grain silo at Rufus Oregon and from McNary Dam downstream 1.5 miles to the Highway 82 Bridge.

Starting May 10, sturgeon retention will reopen in the estuary below the Wauna powerlines. After May 10, only sturgeon measuring 45 to 60 inches may be retained daily in that stretch of the Columbia River. The season for this area is scheduled to remain open through June 24 though the actual ending date depends on the 13,143 fish quota being met.

Northwestern Reservoir on the White Salmon River was the area hotspot on the April 26 lowland lakes **trout** opener and it should continue to provide good fishing in the weeks ahead. WDFW sampled 25 anglers with 94 trout, a 3.76 per rod average at the 97-acre reservoir behind Condit Dam. The daily limit for trout in Washington is five.

At Kidney Lake near North Bonneville, 57 anglers were sampled with 72 trout, a 1.26 average. In Klickitat County, the numbers were: Rowland Lake, 59 rods, 130 trout, 2.2 average; Spearfish Lake, 33 rods, 70 trout, 2.1 average; and Horsethief Lake, 14 rods with 14 trout, 1.0 average. For information on weekly trout plants see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>.

Eastern Washington:

Trout fishing on opening weekend at many lakes across the region proved a little slower than usual, mostly due to lingering winter-like conditions, according to Eastern Region Fish Program Manager John Whalen. Cold water and ice cover on some northern lakes kept catch rates lower this year, he explained.

"The weather for anglers was the best we have seen in weeks with clear, sunny skies and little if any wind," Whalen said. "Lots of folks were out, but some of the traditional best bets for opening day were off substantially."

Whalen noted, for example, that creel checks at southwest Spokane County's West Medical Lake and at Stevens County's Cedar Lake indicated an average harvest of less than one fish per angler. Other lakes that often produce lots of five-trout limits on the opener fared better, but

were still slow. Starvation Lake in Stevens County had an average harvest of less than three fish per angler and Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County averaged slightly more than three fish per angler.

"On the other hand, Williams Lake in southwest Spokane County and Rocky Lake in Stevens County actually did pretty well, each with a harvest average of about four fish per angler," Whalen said. "Fishing will definitely pick up at many more of these lakes as the water temperatures warm. And since these fisheries are open for five or six months, this slow, cold start should extend good catch rates through the summer."

WDFW fish hatchery crews will continue stocking lakes that could not be reached due to snow and ice before the opener. All details of fish stocking are available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>.

In the south end of the region, catch rates have varied during the special Snake River hatchery spring **chinook salmon** fishing season.

Glen Mendel, WDFW district fish biologist in Dayton, said in three days of creel checks on the river portion below Ice Harbor Dam, which opened April 22, catch rates have been measured from 2.5 to 6.5 hours of effort per chinook from shore during weekdays, and up to 37.7 hours per fish during the weekend.

"Angler participation has been low in the Ice Harbor stretch, but some of those who are out are catching spring chinook up to 42 inches," Mendel said. "We don't currently have catch rates for boats there, but we estimate that about 75 chinook have been harvested since the season opened."

Mendel has just two days of creel checks on the Little Goose Dam stretch that opened April 24. "So far Little Goose has also been slow for numbers of anglers, but they are catching a few fish there as well," he said. "Catch rates that we do have vary from 8.6 to 53.4 hours of effort per fish, depending on the day and location, or angler type."

Fish counts at Bonneville have risen to about 4,000 per day, Mendel noted. "So the run is coming and fishing should improve over the next week or two," he said.

North Central Washington:

Relatively low pressure and few bites on the April 26 fishing season opener in the Columbia Basin only means there are plenty of **trout** left and great days of fishing ahead, said Jeff Korth, WDFW district fish biologist from Moses Lake.

"I recommend Park, Blue, and Vic Meyers lakes," Korth said. "We rehabilitated these Grant County waters in 2006 and the fisheries there have improved considerably."

Park and Blue averaged nearly four trout per angler on the opener. Vic Meyers averaged less than two fish per angler. Perch Lake, another Grant County fishery that opened April 26, averaged 3.6 trout per angler. Korth also recommends Perch for improved fishing as spring advances.

Korth also noted that several March 1-opening fisheries in the Basin are continuing to produce good catches, including Quincy, Burke, Dusty and the Caliche lakes. Dry Falls Lake, which is a selective gear fishery that opened April 1, has also been very good.

In the Chelan County district of the region, Art Viola, WDFW fish biologist, reports a similarly slow April 26 fishing season opener, mostly due to persistent cold weather, snow-covered roads and even ice-covered lakes.

"Little or no fish stocking was even possible at Beehive Reservoir and Lilly Lake," Viola said, "but as spring finally arrives we should be able to get those fisheries up to speed."

Chelan County's Wapato Lake provided very slow fishing on the opener, compared to past years, Viola said, with only a one-trout-per-angler average harvest measured. Most of those were the big triploid rainbows stocked just prior to the opener.

In the Okanogan district, Bob Jateff, WDFW fish biologist, also reported a slower than usual season opener due to more winter-like than spring conditions. He expects that when access and water temperatures improve, fishing should be good in traditionally popular waters like Conconully, Spectacle, Wannacut, Pearrygin and Alta lakes in Okanogan County and Jameson Lake in Douglas County.

Jim Brown, WDFW enforcement sergeant, reported that despite overall lower participation and catch rates, the Conconully lakes on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area were among the most popular spots on the opener. "I think some of the best fishing, and largest fish we saw caught, were on Upper Conconully Lake," Brown said. "Ross and Linnell Green of Ellensburg, for example, caught their limits, including an 18-inch, 2-1/2-pound rainbow. They were pretty happy."

While anglers wait for access to improve, Jateff suggested sampling some of the earlier-opening, catch-and-release fisheries in the area. "Davis Lake near Winthrop is producing 10-11-inch rainbows, plus a few carryovers up to 15 inches," he said. "Big and Little Green are two lakes near Omak/Okanogan that are good for rainbows 11 to 12 inches. Rat Lake near Brewster has both rainbow and brown trout to 13 inches. All of these waters are catch-and-release with selective gear rules and only electric motors allowed."

Korth also noted **walleye** fishing should be picking up, with the spawn about over, at Moses Lake, Potholes Reservoir and Banks Lake. A walleye tournament at Potholes is scheduled May 3-4; see <http://www.mardonresort.com/index3.html> for more information.

Smallmouth bass fishing on the Basin's big waters should also be good now, Korth said, but anglers must remember to follow the new regulations that go into effect May 1. There's a 10-bass limit, with no minimum size, but only one over 14".

South Central Washington:

The region's many lakes that are open year-round continue to be stocked with catchable-size trout to keep up with fishing demand. Eric Anderson, WDFW district fish biologist from Yakima, notes big **triploid rainbow trout** have been planted in Mud, Myron, Fio Rito and Mattoon lakes in Yakima County. Clear, Dog, Leech and Lost lakes should be planted with triploids soon. Hatchery surplus broodstock rainbows, that run seven to eight pounds each, recently went into I-82 Ponds 1 and 2, and Tim's Pond. All details of how and where fish have been stocked are available on WDFW's South Central Region webpage at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg3/index.htm>.

Anderson also reminds young fishers and their parents to register for the eighth annual "Fishing Kids" event at Sarg Hubbard Pond in Yakima, scheduled this year on May 10. More than 800 five- to 14-year-old fishers will receive fishing instruction, a rod and reel, and a t-shirt for just \$5 each. Registration deadline is May 2; contact the Yakima Parks and Recreation Department at 509-575-

6020.

Reader Email -

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

Write to the TGF staff:

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Two busted in pikeminnow scam:

<http://www.kptv.com/news/16178039/detail.html>

Weekly Quote – "Doubt not but angling will prove to be so pleasant that it will prove to be, like virtue, a reward to itself." - Izaak Walton

GOOD LUCK!