

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 16th – May 22nd, 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- Bonneville Dam spring chinook counts are beginning to worry fishery managers. The joint-state management team opted to postpone the opening of the traditional May 16th opener for summer steelhead on the mainstem Columbia from Tongue Point to the I-5 Bridge. It should reopen later in the season after ample numbers of salmon have passed Bonneville Dam.

Shad fishing opens on May 16th from Buoy 10 to McNary Dam and it's expected to be another big run. These introduced fish are great crab bait but more importantly, recruit new anglers into the sport due to the success first time anglers experience in this fishery.

Sturgeon fishing in the area remains only fair but oversized sturgeon should begin to show in larger numbers to test an angler's ability. It's important to match your gear to your quarry so as not to excessively tire out fish you intend to release. Swifter flows this season will call for heavy rigging. **Pro guide Jim Nicol (503-550-3166)** suggests fishing the lower Columbia in the shallow water for some opening weekend Sturgeon.

It is interesting but predictable to see the daily counts at Willamette Falls increase and decrease with the water temperature. The most recent reading is 50 degrees. Only 2,500 spring chinook have crossed along with about 3,000 summer steelhead. The Willamette above the Falls remains open to springer fishing while only steelhead, shad and warmwater gamefish angling remains open on the lower river. Sturgeon fishing has been worthwhile and a few shad have been caught.

The North Santiam is high and flowing fast. Release of water in anticipation of snowmelt will keep the river high and too cold to be productive in the coming weeks.

Warm weather this week will also cause a rise of the McKenzie from snowmelt. It is unlikely to be fishable by the weekend.

The Clackamas water level has come down a little but is still considered high and is running cold. Fishing is slow.

While few fish are being landed on the Sandy, anglers encountered some bright steelhead over the past weekend.

Pro guide Kent Anderson (503-550-6303) reports fishing the Sandy for two days but taking only one steelhead in high water that had good color.

Scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout are Timothy Meadows Reservoir, Big Cliff Reservoir, Blue River above the Reservoir, Blue River Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Detroit Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Foster Reservoir, Hills Creek, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie below Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Salt Creek, North Fork Santiam River above Detroit. Timber

Linn Lake, Trail Bridge Reservoir and Waverly Lake.

Northwest – Although effort ran high for sturgeon anglers looking for keepers in the Astoria area, catch rates were poor. Anglers averaged almost one keeper for every 6 boats. Shaker action wasn't impressive either but action should pick up later in the month when water temperatures begin to increase. The minimum keeper size for this section of river is 45 inches.

Spring chinook are beginning to show in the Tillamook district. A handful have been caught on the Wilson, Trask and Tillamook Bay itself. Misty Bennett of Heppner landed a 15 pound salmon in the upper bay last Friday and finished off the family harvest with 2 rockfish, a lingcod and 7 crab from a calm ocean on the same day.

The 5th annual Bounty on the Bay tournament happens this weekend on Tillamook Bay with prime tides starting just in time. Entries are still being accepted into Friday evening. Call (503) 322-2222 for more info.

Halibut fishers enjoyed calm seas and bountiful catches on the all-depth opener last Thursday through Saturday out of Garibaldi. Another 3-day season greets anglers beginning today but the ocean forecast doesn't look too friendly for boaters. Near-shore catches of halibut were poor but bottomfishing was good.

Area rivers were forecasted to rise on Tuesday but it looks like a failed forecast. A rain freshet would stimulate salmon returns in the Wilson and Trask but as a general rule, the lower the flows, the lower in the river you should be targeting your effort. Plugs and eggs will be the most effective.

Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411) reports limiting his boat for three clients and himself with nice halibut out of Newport last week.

Cape Meares Lake, Coffenbury Lake, Eckman Lake, Hebo Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County), South Lake and Town Lake are scheduled to be stocked with trout.

Southwest – Umpqua anglers have been taking better numbers of spring chinook over the past week, so perhaps the run is finally underway here.

Spring chinook catch rates have improved in the lower Rogue with boat anglers having the edge over bank fishers. Evenings have been most productive for hookups on sardines or anchovies fished on a Rogue River Spinner rig.

Bottom fishing has continued at a frantic pace out of Brookings on those rare days which allow safe ocean access. Rockfish limits are available just a short distance out of port.

Surf fishing is yielding good catches of striped and pinkfin perch with some large specimens taken over the past week.

Bay and razor clamming has been excellent on the south coast during the last series of minus tides. Look for the next round of promising tides to start on Monday next week.

Lemolo Lake is now free of ice and has been planted with hatchery trout for weekend anglers. German Browns are also available at Lemolo.

Scheduled for trout stocking this week are Applegate Reservoir, Fish Lake, Lake Selmac and Lost Creek Reservoir.

Eastern – Warm weather this week should have March Browns hatching well on the lower Deschutes and anglers may expect to see the start of the Salmonfly hatch.

Bass fishing is good and improving on Davis Lake. Some good-sized trout have also been caught.

SW Washington – Most area streams remain a disappointment to salmon fishers with little hope for a large improvement. The Lewis River remains one of the better prospects and managers are hopeful the summer steelhead return is better than the salmon return.

The Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries should be well underway by now. Drano is kicking out fair catches of fish but effort remains high despite disappointing results. Plug trollers are taking most of the fish but prawn spinners are also effective.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Mainstem Columbia River fishers were hit with more bad news this week as steelhead season will remain closed until higher numbers of chinook begin passing Bonneville Dam. The steelhead fishery was slated to begin on May 16th but with lower than anticipated salmon numbers over the dam, sport anglers couldn't afford any more impacts to listed Snake River fish hence, the season postponement.

**For Immediate Release
Monday, May 12, 2008**

Fishery managers delay summer steelhead season on Columbia
Season to open no later than June 16

Salem, Ore. -- Due to a smaller than expected return of spring chinook, and the need to further reduce incidental impacts on returning fish, Oregon and Washington fishery managers decided Monday to delay the opening of summer steelhead season (including chinook jacks) on the Columbia River from Buoy 10 to the I-5 Bridge. The season was scheduled to open this Friday.

Last Friday, the US v. Oregon Technical Advisory Committee revised the estimated spring chinook return to the Columbia River downward from 269,000 to 180,000 fish. While it's too soon to say why the projected large run hasn't materialized, non-tribal fisheries have exceeded the impacts allowed under the Endangered Species Act and managers must now take additional measures to reduce additional incidental mortalities to the federally-listed spring chinook salmon run.

The summer steelhead season will re-open no later than June 16, which marks the end of the spring management season for chinook.

"By delaying the start of the steelhead season until after almost all spring chinook have passed through the main stem of the Columbia, we hope to minimize the number chinook incidentally caught by steelhead anglers," said Steve Williams, ODFW assistant administrator for Columbia River fisheries.

At the same time, fishery managers left in place the recreational shad fishing season that opens on May 16 below the I-5 Bridge because anglers targeting shad encounter fewer chinook, and use small hooks and light tackle that minimize their impact on chinook salmon.

Spring chinook numbers are showing an improvement recently but tens of thousands more will have to cross the dam prior to mid-June in order to salvage the run forecast managers started the season off with this year. All are hopeful for more 3,000 and 4,000 fish days and are

calculating just how many salmon these sea-lions are eating. A nice bump of over 5,000 springers passed the facility on 5/14. Jack counts are looking favorable and when jack counts start making up about 10% of the total run, it'll be time to get excited about next years opportunities.

So really, the only fishery underway on the mainstem Columbia is for sturgeon. The catch and keep fishery remains open from Marker 85 downstream of Bonneville to Buoy 10 with the estuary fishery just beginning to ramp up now. Be sure to check other local regulations for this fishery as size and days/week restrictions apply.

The estuary fishery that normally begins to take off this time of year has yet to show really positive signs of improving. Guides are having a tough time finding consistent results in the Tongue Point area. **Pro guide Jim Nicol (503-550-3166)** offers up this advice; "I fished the lower Columbia in the shallow water for some opening weekend Sturgeon. Saturday we were only able to find 3 fish. One was a nice 50 incher and we had another one that came unbuttoned near the boat that was pushing the 60 inch mark. We also landed and released a 61 inch fish. The area where we are fishing is pretty much a sand shrimp show and the fresh anchovies are hard to find. If you stay in the shallow water the sand shrimp will be the go to bait. However, on Sunday we landed 5 fish and kept 4. The action is very spotty. The fish have been the size you like to catch being in the slot limit. All the fish we caught were in small little schools of fish. If you are going to be down chasing these fish this weekend and you get into a little bite and then it slows. I would pull anchor and try to catch up to the school down the current line. Don't wait for another shot of fish. Try to stay with the school of fish as they travel down with the tide."

Sturgeon action upriver isn't much better. It's the estuary fishery that will get all the attention in coming weeks. There are a few keepers coming from the Portland to Longview stretch however. Anglers fishing the Columbia River Gorge must remain fishing below Marker 85 in order to protect broodstock sturgeon in the waters upstream.

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon will remain the focus for most Columbia River anglers with the bulk of the effort about to take place in the estuary fishery. With anchovies a harder bait to find, most anglers are targeting keepers with sand shrimp. It's a very effective bait when you can keep the trash fish away from it. The upper reaches of the estuary are typically the most productive for this early in the season but that's not always the case. Regardless of where you fish, expect to move around if you plan on doing well.

Shad are beginning to show at the passage facility at Bonneville Dam. This fishery should begin to ramp up in coming weeks with warming water temperatures.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – The temperature inched up to 51 degrees and with an increase in temperature, additional springers should cross. The counts rise and fall with water temps, but it's getting late to see any huge daily numbers. The best counts coincided on the two days it hit 54 degrees at about 400 per day but the YTD total is only 3,081. At nearly 4,500, summer steelhead counts are decent. While spring Chinook are now off limits to lower Willamette anglers, catches of summer steelhead are fair and shad have started trickling in.

The McKenzie was high mid-week, as expected, but strangely devoid of any sign of insect activity. Snowmelt this week will cause a further rise in the water level.

The Santiams are high swift and cold. Writing that phrase every week is just as tiring as reading it. Over 400 summer steelhead entered the trap at Foster Dam on the South Santiam with about

1/4 of these recycled downstream. No springers have been seen since one lone Chinook was counted on May 5th.

The Guide's Forecast – Try small plugs for steelhead with the emphasis on small to reduce inadvertent springer hookups as well as any question regarding your intent. Sturgeon fishers will crowd St. Johns this weekend but the head of Multnomah Channel should also produce a keeper or two with a little less pressure. While shad have started to enter Multnomah Channel, numbers are too low to offer hot fishing. That may change as soon as next week.

There are good numbers of fish in the North Santiam but they're slow to take bait or lure in these conditions. No improvement in water height, temperature or prospects is anticipated for another two weeks or so.

When the McKenzie becomes fishable, anglers may expect decent results for trout. In the absence of hatches, nymphs and soft hackles will produce well. Look for Green McKenzie caddis when the hatch is on.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – The Clackamas will be on the rise into the weekend. While a few summer steelhead were taken below McIver earlier this week, a combination of rising water and low water temperatures will pretty much stall fishing on the Clack this weekend. Hopefully, enduring warm weather will ultimately have a positive effect, but it'll be a while.

Fishing on the Sandy remains slow. A few summer steelhead are being taken with spring Chinook yet to show in numbers that would warrant anglers' attention. The Sandy is raising and may be too high to fish this weekend. The water temperature from snowmelt will be low. Use caution - high, swift, cold water can be lethal.

Pro guide Kent Anderson (503-550-6303) writes, "Not a lot to report. I was on the Sandy twice last week, water was a little high (@11') but decent color. I floated Oxbow to Dabney both trips. Very little pressure and seemed to be very few fish. We got 1 steelhead in the 2 trips. Drove by the Clackamas a couple days, water is running a good green color but high, near 14'. Very little pressure but that'll probably change with the Willamette closure."

North Coast Fishing Report – The weather in the coast is the big news lately. Hot temperatures are as much an anomaly as the snow we had visible in the clear-cuts here just a few days ago. With these warm temperatures often comes wind. It's forecasted and likely will show on the morning tide change well into the afternoon.

Now the fishing leaves a little bit to be desired. With the exception of a rare springer caught in the Wilson, Trask or Tillamook Bay, action has been slow. I often feel ok about this because these conditions usually don't last long. Hopefully, the fish are all saving themselves for the 5th annual Bounty on the Bay tournament beginning this Friday! Log onto: www.tbnep.org for more info.

Misty Bennett and her family took the first Tillamook Bay springer in my boat last Friday. It was a 15# hatchery fish that fell to a backrolled K-15 metallic blue Kwikfish with a sardine wrap in the upper bay. It was the only one we heard of that day but there were only about 4 other boats out. It was a beautiful day so we decided to head west into "Big-blue" for a chance at a near-shore halibut off of Nehalem Bay. We slow trolled whole herring right on the bottom but had no strikes. From there, we decided to hit dinner reef just off the tip of the north jetty about a mile

and got 2 nice seabass and a lingcod on the first pass. We were strikeless the next 2 passes. We ended the day pulling our crab pots that we dropped in about 30 feet of water off of the north tip of the north jetty getting just 7 keepers for 5 pots. It was a full day for a rather small take.

Rivers are low in the district even though the hydrograph predicted a nice 1 foot jump that would have stimulated the river fishery. Effort remains low but there are a few springers being taken in the lower reaches of the Wilson and Trask Rivers. Late run winter fish are still in the catch.

Halibut anglers did excellent last weekend. The fish that were brought in were the typical ones we see this time of year. Most averaged between 15 and 30 pounds. There is no reason to believe the fishing won't remain good in the coming openers.

Crabbing is still poor in the estuaries and fair at best in the ocean.

The Guide's Forecast – Another round of minus tides start on Saturday. This should draw the first good push of springers into Tillamook Bay and the lower reaches of the Trask and Wilson Rivers. It's an extended period of minus tides that could provide some good opportunity throughout the week. Although spinners are always good and herring is becoming more popular in the upper bay, don't overlook the benefits of backrolling plugs if you can do it without getting in trollers way.

The lower bay is also an option but with the more extreme tides, the action isn't typically as productive. Of course, as you get closer to the bottom end of the tide, that's when we typically start to see a few fish taken. It's a herring show down here. Keep in mind that the ocean is closed to salmon fishing so don't even think about it.

You may however want to take advantage of calm seas if you are interested in bottomfishing. There are some nearby reefs that should provide some good opportunity. Halibut anglers will be going about 24 miles offshore in search of flatties but you'll have to be prepared with the proper boat and gear if you plan on participating in that fishery. The ocean forecast is as follows:

FRI

NE WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT...SUBSIDING TO 2 FT IN THE AFTERNOON. W SWELL 10 FT AT 14 SECONDS.

FRI NIGHT

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT...EASING TO 5 TO 10 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. GUSTS UP TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 9 FT. AREAS OF FOG AFTER MIDNIGHT.

SAT

E WIND 5 TO 10 KT WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT... VEERING TO W IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 7 FT. AREAS OF FOG IN THE MORNING...THEN PATCHY FOG IN THE AFTERNOON.

SAT NIGHT

W WIND 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 7 FT. AREAS OF FOG.

SUN

NW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 6 FT.

MON

W WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT.
W SWELL 5 FT.

Central & South Coast Reports – The proposed dam on the Siletz River which would re-create Valsetz Lake is meeting with mixed (and mostly negative) opinion amongst the angling community. See story in Random links, below.

Halibut fishing was good over the past weekend with most boats taking limits. Ocean conditions were challenging at times, however, particularly on Saturday, May 10th. If the ocean cooperates, anglers may fish all-depth halibut this week Thursday through Sunday.

Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411) reports, "Last week Friday was only day calm enough for the halibut opener. We started off fishing the south end of Rock Pile out of Newport and the fishing was slow. After moving around we finally found some halibut. We ended up the day by getting four halibut for four anglers, they measured 32", 40", 45" and 48". The keys for us was using fresh herring injected with Garlic Plus from Pro Cure. All three of the forty inch plus halibut were on baits with the Garlic Plus. The ocean forecast this weekend halibut fishing is not very promising. If you are on the coast you might want to jig up some herring at Newport so you are ready when the ocean does calm down."



Above, Don Wenzel, Ken Harrel and myself with 4 halibut. Phil Pirone is not shown as he took the photograph.

Shad have started running in the Umpqua. A few springers have entered Winchester Bay and the occasional sturgeon has been taken.

Coos Bay produced limits to clam diggers during the last minus tides and will again be productive on the next round of clam tides which start getting good by Monday next week.

Wind and wave predictions for the weekend may allow fishing for those launching out of south coast ports. Conditions can change quickly at this time of year, however, and heat in the valley often means wind on the beach. Only halibut fishers may venture out beyond the 40-fathom line. Rockfish and ling cod catches have remained good.

Limits of razor clams were taken over the last series of minus tides at Bailey Beach and Myers Creek. The next series starts this weekend and will be significant next week. While there have been no closures recently, it's a good idea to place a last-minute telephone call to the shellfish hotline at 1-800-448-2474 to be certain the beaches remain open to clamming.

Rivers opening to trout fishing on May 24th include the Rogue below the hatchery, Applegate, Chetco, Coquille, Elk, Sixes, and Wingate.

Spring Chinook fishing finally heated up this week on the lower Rogue River. Both bank and boat anglers have been catching springers with most fish falling to spinner/anchovy combos with evenings most productive. A few Chinook are being taken in the Grants Pass stretch along with downrunner steelhead. About 400 springers have crossed Gold Ray Dam. The upper river has been spotty but will improve as numbers move upstream.

Dave Pitts of Salmon, Trout and Steelhead reports, "The Rogue river at this time has started to produce. According to my fishing diary more than 41 fish have been taken over last years total at this time in the lower river between Elephant Rock and the Fence line. Most of the success is coming to boat anchored up to the inside of a run. The single greatest key factor for success is these fish are coming in water between 5 to seven feet on an incoming tide and approximately 2 hours from the peak of a high tide.

"The clarity of the water at this time is 4 1/2 to 5 feet in seven feet of water, these fish are traveling just under this layer of light diffusion. 3 Ounce sinkers are working fine, the best bait at this time is 5 inch sardines combined with a size 3.5 gold hilderbrandt.

"The surf has been rough down this way but perch anglers are connecting on both Redtail and Poggies. Shrimp is still the number one bait out there for these great eating fish. The Winchuck River is one of three places anglers should concentrate on, The Beach out in front of the Best Western is another as is McVay rock.

"Bottom fishing is second to none out of Brookings but check swell conditions prior to heading out, it can get rough at times. Lings and rock fish are coming inside the 80 foot line, many anglers heading South are targeting the camel rock area and Akins Point. Shrimp Fly's and an 8 ounce jig head tipped with a Motor Oil twin tail seems to be the ticket here, if heading North take a good look in and around the Bird Island area, the North side of this Rock holds a very nice slot that holds many rock fish with out heading to deep waters.

"Kayak anglers are also seeing good days on the water while fishing the Chetco Cove and Harris beach area.

Surf perch fishing has been excellent and one of the top (and most durable) baits is the tip from a razor clam neck.

Ice is melting at Diamond Lake making it unsafe to walk on it. Unfortunately, it's still 99% covered and with ice fishing no longer a possibility, it'll be a few weeks until it fishes again. Diamond Lake Resort is banking on accessibility by Memorial Day weekend.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Steve Fleming (1-888-624-9424) reports from the John Day River, "I've been fishing most everyday, but the river blew out last Monday, May 6th, and I haven't been back to the river since. We have a Private Largemouth Lake that we go to, and use. The river is running about 8,000 CFS (high), but has enough clarity to fish. We will be fishing the banks, and doing longer sections trying to find enough no current holes. It is predicted to come back down this week, and will be marginally fishable. The high water is snow melt, so it hasn't warmed up much. This has been one of the best seasons for big fish we've ever had. Maybe we should be careful for what we wish for-now we have too much snow."

While the roads have been plowed at Paulina, it's likely to be a week or two until it's free of ice.

Kokanee fishing has been worthwhile at Wickiup this week with most of the fish on the smallish side.

Fishing has been very slow at Green Peter due to cold water conditions there. Trout that have been caught are running small. Fish shallow in the current conditions for best results.

Brownlee Reservoir is about 40 feet from full but is filling at a rate of two feet per day. Fishing has been fair to good for smallies, catfish and crappie although the latter have been running on the small side by Brownlee standards.

Northwest Trout – While the level of Detroit Reservoir is nearly low enough to prevent boaters from launching at the Mongold ramps, the reason for the drawdown is the enormous snowpack which is expected to melt rapidly with hot weather this week, bringing the water level up again. Detroit will be planted with yet another 10,000 hatchery trout this week, bringing the total stocked over the past six weeks to 50,000. A fishing derby is scheduled here for the coming weekend.

Other locations being planted with hatchery trout in the Willamette Valley include Timothy Meadows Reservoir, Big Cliff Reservoir, Blue River above the Reservoir, Blue River Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Detroit Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Foster Reservoir, Hills Creek, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie below Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Salt Creek, North Fork Santiam River above Detroit. Timber Linn Lake, Trail Bridge Reservoir and Waverly Lake.

In the Northwest Zone, Cape Meares Lake, Coffenbury Lake, Eckman Lake, Hebo Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County), South Lake and Town Lake have been stocked with trout.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report May 14th – May 27th, 2008 **[North Puget Sound](#)**

With spring fisheries in full swing, anglers have their pick of several different fishing opportunities. **Halibut** and **lingcod** seasons are open and **shrimping** is still an option in the San Juan Islands. In the freshwater, anglers can cast for **trout** at many of the region's lakes, where fishing should pick up in the next couple of weeks.

WDFW is adding more **trout** this month to several of those lakes, including Lone Lake in Island County; Green, Meridian and Shady lakes in King County; Egg and Mountain lakes in San Juan County; Pass and Vogler lakes in Skagit County; Ballinger, Goodwin and Shoecraft lakes in Snohomish County; and Squalicum and Terrell lakes in Whatcom County.

"After a chilly start to the lowland lake fishing season, water temperatures are finally starting to rise," said Jon Anderson, WDFW resident trout manager. "Increasing temperatures coupled with the addition of some nice-size fish to several of the region's lakes could equal good fishing in the next few weeks."

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 40 anglers hauled in three lingcod May 9, and 111 anglers checked 13 lings the following day. Elsewhere, 34 anglers at the Armeni ramp brought home eight lingcod May 10, while 77 anglers checked at the Everett ramp caught four. 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 hook for other bottomfish, such as **halibut**, **rockfish** and **cabezon**. The halibut season in the region 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 but 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. Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) also had closed, but reopened today (May 14) from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. for one more day of shrimping. Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), however, remains open Wednesdays through Saturdays until the quota is reached. 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

From saltwater to freshwater, recreational opportunities abound for anglers in the region. **Halibut**, lingcod and **shrimp** fisheries are still under way, with a final **razor clam** dig proposed for May 24. In addition, many rivers open for trout fishing June 1, and there are still plenty of rainbows, browns and cutthroat in area lakes.

Although May 14 (today) was the last scheduled day of the Hood Canal **shrimp** season, shrimpers will get two more days of fishing on the canal May 17 and 21. "Turnout was low and we didn't reach the available quota," said Therese Cain, WDFW shellfish biologist.

While windy weather and low tides contributed to the low effort, catch rates on Hood Canal were up by six percent from last year for those who made it out, Cain said. She also noted that high

fuel prices might have kept anglers away. "These boats take lots of fuel and if the weather wasn't good, people may have decided to stay home."

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 7 also is open, but shrimping is limited to Wednesdays through Saturdays only. Shrimping in Marine Area 11 (Vashon Island to the Narrows bridge) was limited to one-day - May 3 - to keep the recreational catch within the area's spot shrimp harvest quota. While the effort was similar to last year, catch rates were up, with anglers averaging 46 prawns per pot compared to 40 in 2007.

Anglers looking to catch some **lingcod** and **halibut** should keep a sharp eye on various openings and closures throughout the month. With many halibut anglers reaching their limits since the May 1 opening at Westport and Ocean Shores (Marine Area 2), the fishery is nearing its quota, said Wendy Beeghley, WDFW fish biologist.

"People are doing well, although the fish are somewhat smaller this year, averaging about 17 pounds," she said. The fishery opened May 1, two days a week, Sundays and Tuesdays. Meanwhile, halibut fishing off Ilwaco (Marine Area 1) has been hampered by bad weather, Beeghley said. "The fishing's good when the weather's OK, but there's been a lot of high winds and rough water," she said. This fishery, which runs seven days a week, is scheduled through July 20 or until 70 percent of the quota is reached. The fishery will then reopen on Aug. 1.

Hopefully, the weather will cooperate for anglers at La Push and Neah Bay (marine areas 3 and 4), where the halibut season got underway May 13. The fishery will be open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays until the May portion of the quota is reached, then reopen June 17 and 19 within certain boundaries. Coordinates are published in the 2008-09 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

A new opportunity to catch halibut starts May 22, when fishing begins in Marine Area 5 in the western Strait of Juan de Fuca off Sekiu and Pillar Point. The fishery is open five days a week, Thursday through Monday. The daily bag limit is one fish per angler. The season runs through July 21.

Along the Strait of Juan de Fuca, recreational halibut anglers in the Port Angeles area (Marine Area 6) 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.

Meanwhile, the **lingcod** fishery in marine areas 5-13 got under way May 1 and will run through June 15. During the hook-and-line season for lings (May 1- June 15), there's a one-fish daily limit with a minimum size of 26 inches and a maximum size of 40 inches. Spearfishing season for lingcod runs May 21-June 15 and has no size limits. Anglers can catch one fish per day.

Also 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 are published in the 2008-09 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

Those heading to the ocean over Memorial Day Weekend may be able to add a **razor clam** dig to their list of outdoor activities. The dig is tentatively scheduled for Saturday May 24 and if approved, will take place at Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks on the morning tide.

On the freshwater, there's still plenty of trout in local lakes. With more than 6,000 **triploid** trout planted in 32 lakes around the region, anglers should have a good chance of catching some large fish over the next few weeks. Averaging 1.5 pounds each, these trout are voracious feeders with the potential to grow to trophy size.

Lakes stocked with more than 200 triploids include Kitsap Lake (Kitsap County); Benson and Haven lakes (Mason County); Ohop, Spanaway and Tanwax lakes (Pierce County); and Lawrence, Munn and Offut lakes (Thurston County). Meanwhile, thousands of trout continue to be planted in lakes around the region. Complete information on stocking schedules is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/>.

River fishing for **trout** opens June 1 statewide, with plenty of angling options throughout the region. Anglers are advised to check the 2008-09 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> for regulations that apply to specific rivers.

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:

Anglers have had some success hooking up with **spring chinook salmon** on tributaries to the Columbia River and the **shad** fishery opens May 16 on the mainstem Columbia from Buoy 10 up to Bonneville Dam. But the option of fishing for **hatchery steelhead** on the lower Columbia River while waiting for the summer chinook season to begin has been delayed.

With returns of upriver spring chinook falling far short of expectations, fishery managers from Washington and Oregon have indefinitely postponed the opening for trout - including steelhead - and jack salmon below the Interstate 5 Bridge to avoid the incidental catch of protected springers. Unless returns of upriver chinook pick up, the steelhead opening could be delayed as late as June 16, said Cindy LeFleur, WDFW Columbia River policy coordinator.

"At this point, we need to do everything we can to conserve protected runs," LeFleur said. "That means some fisheries that have only an incidental impact on upriver chinook will be affected." The decision to delay the steelhead opener followed a decision the previous week to close the last remaining spring chinook fisheries on the Snake and mid-Columbia rivers a month early. Columbia River treaty tribes also agreed to close all mainstem spring chinook fisheries, effective May 11, in response to the run shortfall.

LeFleur said the closures were triggered by an updated spring chinook run forecast of 180,000 - down from 269,300 fish initially projected by fishery managers from Washington and Oregon. "Right now, the updated projection of 180,000 fish probably reflects the upper range of the run," said LeFleur, noting that fishery managers from both states continue to monitor fish counts at Bonneville Dam on a daily basis.

For updates on the lower Columbia River steelhead season, LeFleur recommends that steelhead anglers check WDFW's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/>) or call the Fishing Hotline (360-902-2500). Meanwhile, anglers fishing the Cowlitz, Kalama and Lewis rivers were catching a mixture of both spring chinook and steelhead during the first full week of May. Most of those rivers were running high, but fishing improved on the Lewis for a few days when flows dropped. Overall, catches of spring chinook have been light, but early **summer-run steelhead** returns have been looking good on the Cowlitz and Lewis. As always, anglers should check the WDFW website and Fishing Hotline message for possible regulation changes.

The best bet for spring chinook has been Drano Lake, where boat anglers have been averaging one keeper for every 4.7 rods. Bank angling has been slow at both Drano and the Wind River, where boat anglers' catch rates have picked up since the first week of May when they averaged a fish for every 11.5 rods. Fishing on the Wind, both above and below Shipherd Falls, should continue to improve as more fish move upstream. Creel checkers did not see any fish caught last week on the Klickitat River and high, turbid water may continue to limit angler success. John Weinheimer, WDFW fish biologist, has a special request for boat anglers fishing Drano Lake. "Please stay at least 100 feet from the shore and share the lake with the bank anglers - especially near the Highway 14 Bridge," he said. "We also ask that boat anglers go with the traffic flow, and watch their speed and wake. Everyone out there is there to make a memory, so let's make it a good one."

Shad fishing, which opens May 16 on the mainstem Columbia from Buoy 10 up to Bonneville Dam, should give everyone a chance to make a good memory. Averaging 3 to 4 pounds apiece, shad put up a good fight and make for good eating if filleted properly. Also, there's no daily limit in Washington.

"An experienced shad angler can catch several dozen fish per day," said Joe Hymer, another WDFW fish biologist. As of May 11, only 49 shad had passed Bonneville Dam, but many more are soon to follow, he said. For tips on fishing for - and preparing - shad, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/outreach/fishing/shad/shad.htm> on the WDFW website.

Sturgeon anglers have already had a chance to wet their lines fishing from Buoy 10 to the Wauna powerlines, where the season opened May 10. Boat anglers caught several legal-size fish - which must measure 45 to 60 inches - on a blustery opening weekend. Boat anglers also got some keepers between the powerlines and Marker 85, where the size limit is 42 to 60 inches. **Trout** anglers should be aware that Mayfield Lake was planted with 5,990 catchable-size rainbows from the Friends of the Cowlitz net pens May 2. In addition, Lake Sacajawea in Longview got 1,905 rainbows, Spearfish Lake near Dallesport got 1,700 and Maryhill Pond in Klickitat County got 513 this month.

Eastern Washington:

Fishing: The Snake River **hatchery chinook salmon** fishing season, which was scheduled to run through mid-June, closed May 12 because fish returns fell short of earlier forecasts. A new spring chinook forecast of 180,000 fish, down from the initial projection of 269,300 fish, forced the early closure to avoid additional incidental catch of protected wild fish. The Snake River stretches affected are from the railroad bridge crossing the mouth of the river upstream to just below Ice Harbor Dam, and from the Texas Rapids boat launch upstream seven miles to the boat launch about a mile upstream of Little Goose Dam.

Trout fishing continues to improve at many well-stocked lakes that opened in late April in the central and northeast districts of the region. Southwest Spokane County's Amber, Badger, Clear, Fish, West Medical and Williams lakes, and Lincoln County's Fishtrap Lake, are all good bets. In

Stevens County, Cedar, Jump-Off-Joe, Loon, Rocky Starvation, and Waitts lakes are improving since the opener. Pend Oreille County's Diamond Lake should also be picking up.

Earlier-opening and year-round waters also are producing well. Anglers at eastern Spokane County's Liberty Lake, which opened March 1 this year for the first time, are catching some nice browns and rainbows. Deer Lake in southern Stevens County also opened March 1 for the first time, and with warmer water and air temperatures is now producing catches of trout and kokanee. Coffeepot Lake in Lincoln County offers good fly-fishing for rainbows. Whitman County's Rock Lake continues to produce rainbows and browns. Recently stocked triploid rainbows and other catchable-size trout at year-round Sprague Lake are showing up in catches.

North Central Washington:

The Icicle River in Chelan County opens to spring **chinook salmon** fishing May 15 and is scheduled to run through July. The special season is available because 7,000 salmon are estimated to be en route to the Icicle River from the Wenatchee, which means there should be plenty of fish beyond the 1,000 needed for hatchery broodstock, said Art Viola, WDFW district biologist. Although Upper Columbia River spring chinook are federally listed as endangered, the salmon returning to the Icicle are not included in that listing protection. The daily catch limit for the season is two salmon of at least 12 inches. Night closure and non-buoyant lure restrictions are in effect.

Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist, reports **trout** and some warm-water species fishing have improved as warmer weather increases water temperatures and fish activity. In the Methow Valley, Pearrygin Lake is good for 11-12-inch rainbows; Patterson is fair for rainbow up to 15 inches, plus **yellow perch** eight to 10 inches; Alta is good for 11-inch rainbow trout, plus carryover fish to 15 inches; and Big and Little Twin lakes are fair for rainbows 10-12 inches.

In the Omak/Okanogan area, Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area is good for 12-16 inch rainbows, plus 18-inch brown trout; Fish Lake, also on the Sinlahekin, is good for 10-inch rainbows with some carryover fish to 14 inches; both Conconully lakes have been good for rainbows 11-12 inches, plus carryovers up to 15 inches; and Leader Lake is fair for rainbows to 12 inches, **bluegill** six to seven inches, and - as the water temperatures increase - **crappie** eight to nine inches.

In the Tonasket/Oroville area, Wannacut Lake is good for 10-inch rainbows; Spectacle is very good for rainbow 11-12 inches; Blue or Wannacut Lake has good fishing for **Lahontan cutthroat trout** to 18 inches; Palmer Lake should be picking up for both **smallmouth bass** and **kokanee** this month; and Chopaka Lake was recently stocked with a couple thousand rainbows 10-11 inches and 500 larger rainbows up to 14 inches.

Jateff reminds anglers of new regulations in effect for smallmouth bass - a daily limit of 10 fish, only one of which may be more than 14 inches. Largemouth bass regulations have not changed from last year.

South Central Washington:

The spring **chinook salmon** fishing season was closed May 12 on a portion of the Columbia River near WDFW's Ringold Springs Fish Rearing Facility in Franklin County. This bank fishery covers the waters of the Columbia from the WDFW markers one-quarter-mile downstream of the

Ringold irrigation wasteway outlet to the markers one-half-mile upstream of Ringold Springs Creek, the hatchery outlet.

Paul Hoffarth, WDFW district fish biologist, explained that the upriver run size was downgraded to 180,000 fish, compared to the pre-season forecast of 269,300. Incidental mortalities to the endangered upriver spring chinook by non-Indian fisheries are projected to be achieved at that run size. Although the Ringold sport fishery is mark-selective for adipose-fin-clipped chinook released from Ringold, and anglers handle very few of the fish listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the closure is necessary to comply with ESA limits.

Meanwhile, two reaches of the Yakima River have been open since May 1 to hatchery-marked **chinook salmon** fishing through the end of the month. The middle reach is from the Interstate 82 bridge at Union Gap upstream to 3,500 feet downstream of Roza Dam (to "closed water" boundary markers). The lower reach is from the Interstate 182 bridge in Richland upstream to the State Highway 224/225 bridge at Benton City. Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist, reports the WDFW Yakima office is receiving many phone calls about 224/225 highway bridge confusion. He explains the highway number changes at the bridge, which is a junction of 224 and 225, with the bridge crossing as the beginning of SR 225.

Cummins explained this special chinook fishery became available because of a forecasted return of over 10,000 fish, with about 48 percent of them hatchery salmon from the Yakima/Klickitat Fisheries Project research hatchery at Cle Elum. The daily limit is two hatchery chinook at least 12 inches, with a missing adipose fin and a healed scar in the location of the missing fin. Wild salmon (with adipose fin intact) cannot be removed from the water and must be immediately released unharmed.

A special gear restriction is in effect on these Yakima River stretches for all fishing, no matter the fish species, Cummins noted. Only one single-point, barbless hook with a hook gap from point to shank of 3/4 inch or less is permitted. During the spring chinook salmon season, this includes anglers fishing for **smallmouth bass, channel catfish** and other gamefish.

"We are getting a number of comments from bass anglers who don't understand why they need to use single barbless hooks," Cummins said. "That rule applies to everyone because it is very difficult to enforce if it only applies to one group of anglers. Bass fishing has been picking up on the Yakima, so more of those anglers are out and few seem to be aware of the single barbless hook rule, perhaps because they don't fish for salmon and don't read those rules."

There is also a night closure in effect for all species in the open salmon stretches of the Yakima, Cummins noted. Fishing for steelhead remains closed. All steelhead cannot be removed from the water and must be immediately released unharmed.

Cummins noted flows are high, and getting higher with warmer weather, in the Yakima, which could spell some "down time" for both salmon and bass anglers. Flow data is available from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation at: <http://www.usbr.gov/pn/hydromet/yakima/> .

Salmon anglers can also check Prosser and Roza Dam chinook counts at <http://www.cbr.washington.edu/dart/adult.html>, although posted counts are often a few days behind.

Information on water access sites for the lower Yakima River, including new or recently improved boat launches, are available at http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/salmon/when_where_best_area_yakima.htm.

Cummins also reported Clear Lake in Yakima County was stocked with one to 1.5 pound **triploid rainbow trout** this week to supplement the eight to 12-inch rainbows stocked earlier from Naches Hatchery. Higher elevation lakes - Lost, McDaniels and Bear lakes -- have not been stocked yet, but warm weather should melt snow and make them accessible soon.

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

Counties Considering New Dam In Coast Range:

<http://news.opb.org/article/counties-considering-new-dam-coast-range/>

"The Woodstock of Spey Casting Events" is May 17 and 18th at Oxbow Park on the Sandy River:

<http://www.flyfishusa.com/spey-clave.htm>

Escondido's world-famous bass found dead:

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/northcounty/20080510-9999-1n10bass.html>

Weekly Quote – "My bended hook shall pierce their slimy jaws" - William Shakespeare

GOOD LUCK!