

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 30th – June 5th 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- Sturgeon fishing in the gorge has slowed since last week. Keepers that had been abundant have seemingly disappeared. Fresh shad is available for Bonneville anglers and small numbers of oversize sturgeon are taking these baits downstream of the current Marker 85 deadline.

Although temperatures remain cold and flows high, dam counts continue to worry biologists as the June 15th management date for spring chinook nears. It's likely the 2008 adult return will fall far short of the preseason prediction. Summer chinook and steelhead seasons are likely still weeks away.

Sturgeon fishing has been fair on the lower Willamette but the level, flow and debris require extreme caution. Herring, sand shrimp and anchovy have been effective although shakers have been making up the bulk of the catch. Those who try it should be prepared to use plenty of lead in the higher flows.

Many Willamette Valley rivers have finally started to recede. The Clackamas has come down a little but is forecast to rise later this week. The Sandy has been high and off color for a week but is beginning to drop. Chinook are being taken near Cedar Creek and at the mouth.

While the North Santiam is predicted to drop into shape the first week in June, it will still be too high and swift to fish.

Fly fishing is improving on the lower McKenzie with Caddis flies hatching. Fishing is expected to get even better as the weather warms.

Scheduled to be stocked with trout this week are Faraday Lake, Harriet Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, Timothy Meadows Reservoir, West Salish Pond, E. E. Wilson Pond, Foster Reservoir, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake and the McKenzie River above and below Leaburg Lake.

Northwest – Columbia River estuary sturgeon anglers witnessed poor catch results last weekend. Cold water from spring spill slowed the bite but by midweek, it was improving once again. Biters seem to be most prevalent in shallower water using sand shrimp as bait. Success has been equal both above and below the Astoria/Megler Bridge.

Spring chinook catches have become a bit more consistent this week on Tillamook Bay. Weak tides favor lower river herring trollers working the inside of the north jetty. Area rivers like the Wilson, Trask and Nestucca will remain low, concentrating fish in the deeper holes although large numbers have yet to show.

Rumors of sturgeon in Tillamook Bay are stirring effort in the west channel. Juvenile crabs

however are competing for bait making it challenging to fish effectively.

Friendly seas are forecasted to greet halibut fishers beginning on Thursday. It should be smooth motoring from northern ports and success rates have been high. Newport, Depoe Bay and Garibaldi should be bustling ports this weekend. Bottomfishing remains excellent as well but anglers are not allowed to retain both species on the same trip.

Herring jigging was worthwhile in Yaquina Bay over the past weekend.

Scheduled for planting with hatchery trout are Alder Lake, Big Creek Reservoir 1 & 2, Buck Lake, Cleawox Lake, Dune Lake, Georgia Lake, North Georgia Lake, Perkins Lake and Thissel Pond.

Southwest – The series of minus tides starting Sunday, June 1st, will again allow razor and bay clamming in the southwest. This series, along with another the first week of July, will be the lowest of the year.

With the exception of the early outflow from those minus tides, bottom fishing should be wide open this weekend if wind and wave forecasts hold true.

Crabbing prospects are dismal with fresh water flushing into bays and estuaries.

The Rogue has dropped about a foot at Agness over the past week. Chinook fishing is fair in the lower river and fair to good at the Hatchery Hole.

Chetco anglers enjoyed good fishing for sea-run cutthroat on the opener May 24th. Bait is legal in tidewater with the river upstream limited to artificials only.

South coast beaches continue to deliver limits of surf perch which appear to be ready to spawn.

Diamond Lake fished well over the long holiday weekend and results are expected to further improve when the lake experiences seasonal turnover. Another 6,000 trout in the 12-inch range will be stocked for the coming weekend.

Section 5 of the Rogue River, Faraday Lake, Harriet Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, Timothy Meadows Reservoir and West Salish Pond are scheduled to be stocked with trout.

Eastern – Salmonflies have started hatching on the lower Deschutes around Maupin. While trout are starting to key on them, if they're not looking up, try nymphs. The middle Deschutes experienced an increase in flow recently but should fish by the coming weekend. In high flows, fish tight to the bank.

Keep an eye out for spawning trout on the east side rivers. Trout redds should be given wide berth to allow these fish to complete their life cycle.

Green Peter is producing a mix of landlocked chinook and good-sized kokanee although fishing is only fair.

SW Washington – With low returns of hatchery spring chinook, regulation changes have taken place on some district streams. Anglers fishing the Cowlitz and Kalama Rivers must release spring chinook in some stretches so check regulations before heading out.

Drano Lake anglers are producing better results than the Wind River fishery. Action will likely begin to taper as dam counts drop.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Sturgeon is the only thing going on the Columbia River right now and anglers on both ends of the spectrum are in hot pursuit of keepers. Gorge anglers are still finding a few keepers downstream of Marker 85 but the bite has dropped off from the previous week. Flow from Bonneville Dam is likely the culprit and temperatures are fluctuating as well exacerbating the poor catch rates. Thankfully, it's good for smolt outmigration. The creel census went as follows:

Gorge Boats below Marker 85: Weekend checking showed 15 legal white sturgeon kept, plus one legal, 37 oversize, and 218 sublegal sturgeon released for 44 boats (complete trips).

Troutdale Boats: Weekend checking showed two legal and 14 sublegal sturgeon released for four boats (complete trips).

Fresh shad are readily available and anglers are picking up enough to satisfy their oversize sturgeon bait needs. It's clear however that it's not as easy as it normally is for this time of year. Boat anglers averaged over 10 shad per boat while bank anglers did just a bit better than 1 shad per angler. Could it be that even the shad have been hard hit by poor ocean conditions? Does anyone care?

Downriver, the estuary sturgeon fishing is inconsistent and like upriver, we can only point to two factors; flow and water temperature. It's not that cold water is all that bad for sturgeon but the quick drop in temperature equates to much the same as a quick drop in atmospheric pressure. Drastic changes affect fish activity. The water temperature dropped about 4 degrees over the holiday weekend and it clearly put the fish down. These are conditions we haven't had to worry about so much in recent years but with the unprecedented snowpack, we may be dealing with it for a while.

The fishery both upstream and downstream of Tongue Point have been producing similarly although neither is more consistent than the other. One thing is clear, the shallower water seems to be producing the best results. Shrimp dominates in the shallow water and the trash fish and crabs are far less of a worry in this water. The outgoing tide has been producing the best results as heavy upstream flow is keeping the incoming tide from actually flowing upstream. The one thing you need to be consistent for sturgeon is flow and without the aid of the incoming tide, we're limited to just one tide per day.

It looks like the summer steelhead and chinook season will be delayed until mid-June. We simply need more fish over Bonneville Dam to justify an earlier opener.

The Guide's Forecast – The focus will likely be in the estuary this weekend despite reports of inconsistent catches. It's really the best game in town from a short list of opportunities. The gorge fishery will likely continue to produce oversize fish and an occasional keeper but action in the estuary should continue to get better into June. A good minus tide series should keep flows moving in the downstream direction and hopefully give anglers some additional flow opportunities needed for good catches. Barring any further wild temperature fluctuations, action should improve in the coming week, especially with the minus tide that is slated to begin on Sunday. It's a big minus tide so water should move for a good period of the day. Stick with shallow water for best results as that is where the feeders seem to be. Shrimp will be a top bait although anchovies should also produce some decent results, particularly downstream of the Astoria/Megler Bridge.

Heavy flows should enable Marker 85 sturgeon anglers to effectively fish for oversize fish and shad should become more plentiful in the coming weeks. Shad can be choosy for color so bring a

variety of options depending on whether the skies are sunny or overcast. Stick with solid colors in overcast conditions and metallic colors in sunny skies.

The ocean out of the mouth of the Columbia River opens for chinook salmon beginning June 1st. The last time we had this fishery a few years ago, the chinook were cooperative and taking spoons trolled 20 to 40 feet deep. It's a wildcard fishery until we get reports from folks that plan on fishing here so standby for what could be a good option in coming weeks. Commercial boats targeting salmon out of Garibaldi (North of Cape Falcon) are starting to see fair catches offshore. Reports of some boats with their 50-fish weekly limit are becoming more frequent.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report –Water temperatures have been hovering in the 52 to 53-degree range at Willamette Falls. The flow has dropped significantly, from over 48,000 on May 33nd to 28,300 as of May 28th. Spring Chinook are crossing daily in low number with the YTD count fewer than 5,000. Summer steelhead counts continue to impress, however as the total approaches 6,000. Pressure is light for shad.

The level of the North Santiam has finally started to drop. The summer steelhead count at the Foster Dam trap is well over 700. Over 150 were recycled downstream on the South Santiam Wednesday this week.

High water continues to cause access problems on Sauvies Island this week although the situation is improving. Anglers may expect to find some gates locked and a few roads covered by water.

Free Fishing Weekend will be June 7th & 8th this year. During those days, no license or tag is required but anglers must still observe restrictions and bag limits.

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon fishing has been good to some who have taken multiple keepers in a day. Others have struggled, finding only shorts. It's important to find a pod of keeper-sized biters, then offer several different kinds of bait to discover which one will ring their dinner bell on that particular day. Shad fishing is slow but the run is showing the first signs of life.

UPDATE May29th, 1 PM: The Willamette above the Falls and its tributaries with the exception of the Molalla close at sunset Sunday, June 1st. This means no springer fishing in the Santiams this year. See details from Bill Monroe in **Random Links**, below.

While the level of the North Santiam is down a little, flow is still ferocious enough to urge extreme caution. Water color is excellent but the temperature remains low, making for a slow reaction from fish.

Trout will be looking up on the lower McKenzie with caddis flies hatching. Fishing should improve steadily over the coming week and, barring another round of inclement weather, beyond.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – The Clackamas River did not rise as expected at Estacada, but it's still high at nearly 15 feet as of Thursday, May 29th. As conditions improve and, most importantly, water temperatures climb above the mid-50s, fishing for steelhead and springers is expected to dramatically improve. As it is, angler interest here has been low.

While a few summer steelhead have been taken in the Sandy River, fishing is very slow. The high water level has changed very little over the last week and that water is cold. Water temps need

to increase 10 degrees for a spring Chinook fishery to fire up here. Biologists are predicting an extended fishery into summer with the delayed start. Let's hope they are correct.

The Sandy and Clackamas Rivers will remain open for spring Chinook, at least for now.

North Coast Fishing Report – Interest in Tillamook Bay springers is clearly on the down-low. With not much good news recently, it's understandable but action has picked up just like it did last year at this time. Softer tides have most of us targeting these quality fish along the jaws using herring right on the bottom. It paid dividends for California brothers Rich and Doug Slusher that make an annual pilgrimage each year about this time. The first day the brothers fished, they hooked and landed 3 springers between the two of them totaling 58 pounds of quality meat. In cold water, these fish have unparalleled fight and their quality is second to none. There are fish biting at first light but we did most of our damage on the last 3 hours of outgoing tide. It's just critical that you keep your baits fishing deep and oftentimes that requires a lot of lead. It's a simple fishery but with the large tides coming up, there won't be much opportunity in the near future.

The upper bay is not producing great catches but there is an occasional fish being taken on spinners and herring. The upcoming weekend tides should change that however. Rivers remain low in the area so driftboating would be more like drag-boating but there may be some springers keggered up in the deeper pockets.

Rumors of sturgeon in Tillamook Bay have not materialized from me personally but anglers targeting them in last weeks strong outgoing tides reported good catches in the west and middle channels. When I tried for them on Tuesday (5/27) we just got crabbed out with no bites in the upper and middle bay along with the upper west channel.

And as much trouble as we had with these crab, it's a wonder why we don't catch that many in our traps! Recent reports still indicate poor crabbing in Tillamook Bay, both inside and out. We did salvage a day on the bay on Tuesday after pursuing sturgeon and salmon and went back out to Dinner Reef for some rockfish. We took about 9 bass and 1 cabezon for about 1.5 hours of drifting. The fish were taken on Berkley Gulp! shrimp and whole rigged green label herring in about 90 feet of water.

The Guide's Forecast – Just a few more days of good lower bay tides for those that like to soak herring. Keep those baits fishing the bottom of the bay and target the last 3 hours of outgoing tide, first light or high tide in that order. For motivated anglers, the upper bay should start fishing good again by Sunday with a strong early morning outgoing while those that like to sleep in can opt for jetty fishing on the softer tide in the afternoon. It should be one of the more productive weekends for springs in Tillamook Bay!

Rivers are forecasted to remain low but tidewater anglers could find fair action in both the Wilson and Trask Rivers. A good bite was reported on the lower Nestucca River last week and it should improve this weekend as well.

The morning minus tides should prove effective for Tillamook Bay sturgeon but bring lots of bait as both sculpin and crabs will be competing for your baits.

The weekend ocean weather forecast looks very favorable for both halibut and bottomfishing efforts. Garibaldi will be a top port for those species of fish.

Central & South Coast Reports – This has been a crazy year weather-wise and many runs have been late, but historically this peak of the summer steelhead run on the Siletz occurs in June. It's definitely worth checking out this beautiful coastal river which will surprise and delight when the summers are in.

Boats launching out of Depoe Bay and Newport for the all-depth halibut fishery Thursday through Saturday this week. Catches are expected to be good in a flat ocean. According to ODFW checkers, eight out of 10 anglers too home fish during the last opener. Nearly 80% of the spring quota remains, assuring several additional opportunities through June and possibly into July. Quick limits on a flat ocean was the rule on the morning of May 29th.

Nearshore bottom fishers launching out of Newport did very well on Monday and Tuesday this week for rockfish and ling cod.

Fishing is allowed outside the 40-fathom line only on all-depth halibut openers and only for halibut.

Rockfish , ling cod, greenling, cabezon and other flatfish may be taken in water shallower than 240 feet seven days a week, but none of these species may be on board with halibut. No combo trips, fishers.

Spring Chinook fishing is slow to fair in Winchester Bay although fresh fish are continuing to enter. A strong tidal exchange the first week in June may boost catches. Sturgeon fishing has been slow. A few springers have been taken daily in the mainstem Umpqua but it's been spotty. Chinook fishing is improving on the North Umpqua. Shad have started moving into the lower Umpqua but catches are slow in high flows. The run is expected to start moving upriver over the next week or so with prospects improving as levels drop and flow moderates. Trout and smallmouth action has been slow in the high flows of the South Umpqua.

Clamming is expected to be worthwhile for razors and bay clams during the minus tidal series starting the 1st of June. Crabbing will remain poor in estuaries, however. While all bays and beaches were open at this writing {05/29/08}, call the Oregon Shellfish Hotline anytime at 1-800-448-2474 for last minute closures.

Surf perch fishing has been delivering limits with the fish showing signs they are very near spawning. Often these live-bearers are landed spewing little clones of themselves. Get these little guys back into the surf; their survival rate is good. Over the past week, perch of two pounds or better were common.

Although Rogue River water levels remain high, the level is dropping and that's always a positive in the pursuit of anadromous fishes. Spring Chinook catches have been fair to good with boat anglers averaging two per day and bank fishers scoring as well. Heavy flows have springers on the move through the Grants Pass stretch with anglers scoring a few at breaks and riffles. Fishing has been slow to spotty on the upper Rogue although the Hatchery Hole has produced a few early in the day. Fewer than 1,800 springers have crossed Gold Ray Dam with daily passage dropping off recently.

With the spring Chinook run on the Rogue River only 24 percent of average as of mid-May, the ODFW announced on May 28th an emergency closure on retention of wild springers. The season allowing non-adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon, scheduled to open June 1st, will be delayed uptil July 12th. At that time, two adult salmon or steelhead may be kept per day up to 20 per

year, 10 of which may be wild Chinook.

Chetco anglers have been taking sea-run cutthroat in tidewater on the Chetco which opened for trout on May 24th.

Brookings anglers are gearing up for bottom fishing with mild ocean conditions forecast for the weekend. Catches of various species of rockfish have been good and a decent number of ling cod continue to make up a significant portion of catches.

Diamond Lake is free of ice and fishing well for the tens of thousand of trout stocked this year and an estimated 10,000 holdovers from 2007. Rainbows to four pounds or better are available and limits are common.

Central and Eastern Oregon – As the water level of the Deschutes has dropped, spring Chinook catches have improved for plunkers working Shearers Falls. Angers may keep one hatchery Chinook per day through July 31st. The Salmonfly hatch has

started with good numbers of big bugs showing from Warm Springs down to Maupin.

While the Metolius is always a challenging river, it producing well this week for nymph fishers. Catches have consisted of good-sized rainbows and the occasional broad-shouldered bull trout. The water is a little off-color which does not seem to be having a negative effect on the action. Green Drakes are yet to show here.

Davis Lake is easily accessible now although the level is low despite snowmelt. Trout fishing is slow but fishing for big largemouth bass has been excellent at this flies-only location.

Odell produced decent catches of kokanee over the past weekend although fish are running small for the most part.

Big and Little Lava lakes are iced over and inaccessible. It is expected these will fish in a couple of weeks.

Northwest Trout – Trout stocking took place in the Willamette Valley this week at Faraday Lake, Harriet Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, Timothy Meadows Reservoir, West Salish Pond, E. E. Wilson Pond, Foster Reservoir, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake and the McKenzie River above and below Leaburg Lake.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will host a free youth fishing event at West Salish Pond in Fairview on Saturday, May 31 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event is part of ODFW's Youth Angling Enhancement Program, will stock approximately 3,000 legal-sized rainbow trout into West Salish Pond. ODFW will also purchase approximately 100 six-pounders from Island Springs Hatchery for the event. The department will provide rods, reels, tackle, bait and fish bags for use by young anglers who do not have their own fishing equipment. In addition, ODFW staff and volunteers will be on hand to help participants learn how to bait a hook, cast a rod and land the catch.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report **May 28 - June 10, 2008**

North Puget Sound

Spring fishing seasons are winding down in the region, but saltwater anglers still have their pick of **halibut**, **lingcod** or **shrimp** fisheries during the next few weeks. In the freshwater, anglers can cast for trout, and soon will have an opportunity to turn their attention to **chinook salmon**.

Portions of the Skagit, Cascade and Skykomish rivers open for **chinook salmon** fishing June 1, said Brett Barkdull, WDFW fish biologist. The Skagit will open to hatchery chinook retention from the Highway 530 bridge at Rockport to the Cascade River. On the Cascade, anglers will be allowed to fish from the mouth of the river to the Rockport-Cascade Road Bridge. Both stretches are open through July 15.

The daily limit on the Skagit and Cascade rivers will be four hatchery chinook, two of which may be adults (chinook salmon at least 24 inches in length). Barkdull reminds anglers that statewide rules require anglers to stop fishing for salmon once they have kept two adults.

On the Skykomish, hatchery chinook fishing is open from the Lewis Street Bridge in Monroe to the Wallace River through July 31. Anglers fishing the Skykomish will have a daily limit of two hatchery chinook salmon.

Trout fishing also will open at several of the region's rivers and streams beginning June 1. Under the statewide rule for trout, there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches in rivers and streams. However, some of the region's rivers and streams have a rule requiring trout to be at least 14 inches in length to keep. For more rules and details, anglers can check WDFW's *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

Out on the saltwater, the northern portion of Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) opens June 1 to catch-and-release fishing for **salmon**. Fishing will be allowed north of a line from Point Monroe to Meadow Point. Handling rules are in effect for this fishery.

Meanwhile, time is running out to hook a **lingcod**. The fishery runs through June 15 in the region, where fishing has been decent for lings recently. Catch counts at the Armeni ramp indicate 31 anglers hauled in nine lingcod May 24, and 13 anglers checked three lings the following day. Elsewhere, 42 anglers at the Everett ramp brought home seven lingcod May 25, while 69 anglers checked at the Coronet Bay public ramp caught nine. 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.

The **halibut** fishery is winding down as well. The season for the big flatfish is open through June 13. Until the fishery closes, anglers can fish five days a week, Thursday through Monday, with a daily limit of one halibut and no minimum size limit.

Rather drop a pot? The region's **spot shrimp** fishery is limited to the southern portion of Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) and is scheduled to close May 31. However, shrimpers can soon fish for **coonstripe** and **pink shrimp** in some marine areas, beginning June 1. For details on shrimp fisheries check WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/shrimpreg/shrimpindex.shtml>.

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

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

The ocean **salmon** season begins June 1 off the south coast, where fishing off Westport and Ilwaco will get under way a full month earlier than usual. Also that day, salmon fishing opens in Marine Area 11 (Tacoma-Vashon Island) in southern Puget Sound. Then, on June 3, the north coast opens to salmon fishing off LaPush and Neah Bay.

At the same time, fishers will have an array of other options to consider, including **halibut** fishing off the north coast, **shrimping** in Hood Canal and - starting June 18 - **crabbing** in the western Strait of Juan de Fuca.

"People definitely have plenty of options in terms of how they spend their free time over the next few weeks," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW biologist. "Regardless of where they live in the region, they shouldn't have to go far to catch fish or shellfish."

The early start for this year's ocean salmon season is designed to give anglers an opportunity to catch hatchery **chinook salmon** off the coast before the bulk of the coho run arrives, said Doug Milward, WDFW ocean salmon manager. With conservation measures in place for coho throughout the West Coast, the June opening will give anglers a chance to catch up to 20,000 chinook while minimizing impacts on coho, he said.

"We could actually have a pretty good chinook fishery in June," Milward said. "There will also be a season in July, but there's a good chance we'll have to close the fishery earlier than in previous years to meet conservation goals for coho salmon."

Salmon fishing in Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco) opens June 1, seven days per week. Marine Area 2 (Westport) also opens June 1, but fishing is restricted to Sundays through Thursdays. On the north coast, fishing opens June 3 in marine areas 3 and 4 (LaPush and Neah Bay) five days per week, Tuesdays through Saturdays.

In Puget Sound, Marine Area 11 (Tacoma-Vashon Island) also will open June 1 seven days a week, joining Marine Area 13 (South Puget Sound), which opened May 1.

Additional fishing regulations, including minimum size limits and area catch guidelines are described in WDFW's *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet, available online at http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regs_seasons.html.

Meanwhile, north coast **halibut** anglers will get two more days of fishing May 29 and 31 at La Push and Neah Bay (marine areas 3 and 4). These areas will reopen June 17 and 19 with fishing restricted to waters no more than 30 fathoms deep, as specified in the 2008-09 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet. Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) will remain open through July 21, Thursdays through Mondays only.

Farther east along the Strait of Juan de Fuca, sunny weather brought out hundreds of halibut fishers during the May 24 weekend where fishing was good until the seas got choppy. Nearly 800 participants in the 8th annual Port Angeles Halibut Derby caught more than 100 fish, with the first-prize winner earning \$5,000 for landing a 180-pounder. This area (Marina Area 6), as well as the rest of Puget Sound, will close to halibut fishing June 13. These fisheries are also open Thursdays through Mondays only.

For **shrimp** anglers, fishing will reopen in Hood Canal for two more days May 29 and 31. In the Tacoma area, Marine Area 11 will reopen for non-spot shrimp June 1, with a 150-foot maximum fishing depth restriction. For more information, anglers can check online at

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/shrimpreg/shrimpindex.shtml>, or call the Shellfish Hotline at 1-866-880-5431.

Looking forward to **crab** fishing? The popular recreational fishery opens June 18 seven days a week in the western Strait of Juan de Fuca (marine areas 4 and 5) and southern Puget Sound (Marine Area 13). Most other marine areas will open July 2 on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, although some waters north of Anacortes will not open until later in summer.

Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crabreg/crabindex> or <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

Poor visibility from snowmelt continues to limit the sport fishing opportunity for spring chinook in the Sol Duc River, said Mike Gross, WDFW fish biologist. Returns to the hatchery are trailing the numbers seen in recent years by this time, though it is still early. "Hopefully the fishing will pick up as we get into June." Gross said. He reminds anglers that all unmarked, wild fish must be released.

Southwest Washington:

Anglers are still picking up **spring chinook** in a number of area rivers, but interest in fisheries for **sturgeon, shad, hatchery steelhead, trout, and bass** is increasing. On May 24, an aerial survey team counted 411 boats fishing the Columbia River below Bonneville Dam for sturgeon and 275 bank anglers fishing for shad.

Boat anglers surveyed at the Deep River and Knappton ramps averaged one legal-size **sturgeon** for every six rods that week - up slightly from last year. According to those surveyed, half of the fish they hooked were keepers. Bank anglers also caught some legal-size sturgeon between Knappton and Chinook, as did boat and bank anglers fishing upriver to Marker 85 and in the Bonneville Pool.

"The water is warming up and the bite is improving," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "There's a good reason why more boats and anglers are fishing for sturgeon."

Hymer reminds anglers that a legal-size sturgeon caught between Buoy 10 and the Wauna powerlines must measure 45 to 60 inches from the tip of the fish's nose to the tip of its tail. From the Wauna powerlines upriver to Marker #85, sturgeon may be retained if they measure 42 to 60 inches - but only if they are caught Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

That size limit also applies from Bonneville Dam to The Dalles Dam, where sturgeon may be retained seven days per week.

Anglers fishing for **shad**, on the other hand, don't have to worry about either size limits or daily catch limits. Although this year's shad run has been slow to arrive, more than 10,000 passed Bonneville Dam on May 25, which Hymer sees as a sign of better fishing in the days ahead.

"Shad fishing should pick up in a couple of weeks," he said. "These fish weigh three to four pounds apiece and put up a good fight, so it's not surprising that more anglers are fishing for them." Tips on catching and preparing shad are posted on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/outreach/fishing/shad/shad.htm>.

Meanwhile, anglers continue to reel in **spring chinook salmon** and **hatchery steelhead** from tributaries to the Columbia River above and below Bonneville Dam. On the mainstem Columbia,

however, steelhead retention below the I-5 Bridge remains closed - as do all mainstem salmonid fisheries - to conserve upriver spring chinook.

The best bet for spring chinook in recent weeks has been Drano Lake, where boat anglers have been averaging a springer - including jacks - for every three rods. Also good is the Wind River, where boat anglers have been averaging a spring chinook salmon for every four rods. Bank anglers have also been catching some fish at the mouth of the Wind and in the gorge. Fishing in the upper river should continue to improve as more fish return to Carson National Fish Hatchery, Hymer said.

On the North Fork Lewis River, anglers fishing under a three-steelhead daily limit have been catching equal numbers of hatchery steelhead and spring chinook. Some are also finding steelhead on the Cowlitz River, where the limit switches June 1 from three hatchery steelhead per day to five trout - including three hatchery steelhead over 20 inches - from the Highway 4 Bridge at Kelso upstream to Mayfield Dam. All chinook salmon must be released on the Cowlitz River from the mouth upstream to the boundary markers below Mayfield Dam due to a shortfall in hatchery returns. The same is true from the mouth of the Kalama River upstream to the upper salmon hatchery.

Portions of several other rivers will open to fishing for hatchery steelhead June 1, including the Elochoman, Toutle and Green (in Cowlitz County) rivers, and bait may be used in the East Fork Lewis and Washougal rivers. In addition, Lake Scanewa (Cowlitz Falls Reservoir) will open for hatchery spring chinook and hatchery rainbow trout starting June 1. Anglers are advised to check the Fishing in Washington rule pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for more information about those fisheries.

Boat anglers fishing the Bonneville Pool averaged over 12 **bass** per rod, including fish released during the week ending May 25. **Trout** anglers should be aware that several lakes in the region were stocked that week. They include:

- *Merrill Lake in Cowlitz County (May 21) - 224 triploid rainbows, averaging 1.4 pounds each.*
- *Swift Reservoir (May 24) - 60,418 half-pound rainbows May 21.*
- *Battleground Lake (May 20) - 4,000 three-quarter pound rainbows.*

Eastern Washington:

Rivers and streams will open to fishing June 1 throughout the region, but Chris Donley, WDFW central district fish biologist, warns anglers that high water and flooding from recent snow pack melt makes it not only dangerous, but tough to fish.

"Some of the smaller streams and tributaries of larger rivers are probably okay to reach and be productive," Donley said. "But the best stream fishing is yet to come, when flows settle and slow a little more. It basically means there will be good fishing longer through the summer this year."

Donley noted that Spokane area **trout** lakes are "really rolling" now. "Badger has some nice west slope cutthroat," he said. "Amber and West Medical are producing nice rainbows. Fish Lake has tiger trout. Rock Lake has nice browns and rainbows. All of our trout-stocked waters in this district are producing."

WDFW enforcement officer Lenny Hahn's recent patrols revealed the same. "Most fishermen had three or four trout on their stringers at Badger, West Medical, and Fish lakes," Hahn reported. "Fishermen trolling leaded line with a fly are catching browns at Clear Lake. Fishtrap is good, too, but seemed a little slower."

Donley also noted Bonnie Lake's panfish coming on, as are Downs Lake's **perch** and **bass**. "Once Long Lake (Spokane River reservoir) stabilizes it will have good **crappie** fishing," he said.

"It's really just that time of year when you can't help but catch fish," Donley said.

North Central Washington:

WDFW District Fish Biologist Bob Jateff says fishing in Okanogan County has picked up in recent weeks due to warming water temperatures and increased fish productivity.

"Anglers can do well on Leader Lake for **bluegills** and **crappies** and on Patterson Lake for **perch**," Jateff said. "The Okanogan River and Palmer Lake are good bets for **smallmouth bass** and Whitestone Lake is a good producer of **largemouth bass**."

Jateff reminds anglers that new regulations for smallmouth bass went into effect May 1 - no minimum size, daily limit of 10, but only one over 14 inches may be retained.

Jateff also noted that **trout** waters such as Conconully Reservoir, Conconully Lake, Pearygin, Spectacle, Wannacut, and Alta lakes should continue to provide good fishing for rainbows in the 10- to 12-inch range with carryover fish up to 15 inches.

Selective gear waters, such as Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, Rat Lake near Brewster, and Davis Lake near Winthrop, are all providing good fishing for rainbow. Blue and Rat lakes are also producing catches of brown trout.

Kokanee fishing has also improved. Palmer and Bonaparte lakes are the best bets for anglers looking to hook fish in the 10- to 13-inch range.

South Central Washington:

River and stream flows remain high throughout the region, making some fishing slow and access potentially dangerous. Yakima River flow data is available from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation at <http://www.usbr.gov/pn/hydromet/yakima/>.

Yakima River **salmon** anglers can 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. Yakima River salmon fishing is scheduled to close May 31; if the season is extended, based on returning fish numbers and harvest to date, it will be posted at WDFW's Fishing Emergency Rule Updates and News webpage at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

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.

Lost, McDaniels, and Bear lakes in Yakima County were just stocked with trout. Dog and Leech lakes remain inaccessible for stocking. Clear Lake continues to produce trout catches. Lower elevation fishing waters also remain productive, with continued stocking of eight to 12-inch hatchery rainbows. For all trout stocking details, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg3/index.htm>.

Reader Email -

Irregular contributor Kapt'n Ken Johnsong writes, "This Coming Week!!! Clam Chowder anyone???"

This picture is from his take last week.



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

Upper Willamette will close to spring Chinook:

<http://blog.oregonlive.com/billmonroe/>

Trout Fishing Guide to Northeast Oregon:

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/Fishing%20Guide%20to%20NE%20Oregon%202007%20\(3\).pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/Fishing%20Guide%20to%20NE%20Oregon%202007%20(3).pdf)

Weekly Quote – "Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler." - Albert Einstein

GOOD LUCK!