

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **June 20<sup>th</sup> – June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** The Columbia River will finally yield more opportunities for anglers this weekend with the June 16<sup>th</sup> opener for summer steelhead from Tongue Point upstream. A good minus tide series coupled with high run-off should produce good results for bank anglers from Sauvies Island to Rainier. Incidentally caught sockeye salmon must be released unharmed.

Also opening for a brief 7-days is Columbia River summer chinook from Tongue Point to Bonneville Dam. These prized salmon may attain weights in excess of 30 pounds and should challenge anglers in the high flows on the mainstem. After the June 28<sup>th</sup> closure below Bonneville, the river upstream will remain open until July 31<sup>st</sup> or until the season guideline is met.

There is no better time than now to view the Columbia River's biodiversity at the Bonneville Dam fish viewing window. Chinook and sockeye salmon, as well as steelhead, shad, lamprey and sturgeon are all on peak migratory runs right now.

Temperatures at Willamette Falls were 59 degrees on June 16th, and while the spring chinook run is a bust, summer steelhead are a bright spot with counts well over 10,000 as of mid-month. Shad fishing is picking up at Oregon City. Keeper sturgeon have been rare.

McKenzie fly anglers have seen an improvement in action over the last week.

Bobber and jigs have produced the occasional steelhead at McIver and a few spring chinook have been reported but overall it's slow on the Clackamas.

Water levels are coming down on the Sandy and the color looks very good. A few summer steelhead have been taken but few reports of springers.

Some drifts on the North Santiam are unsafe with the river too high to fish well. Snowmelt will have the South Santiam out of shape for fishing this weekend.

Scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout this week are Faraday Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Silver Creek Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Clear Lake, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Quartsville Creek, Salt Creek, the North Fork Santiam River and Trail Bridge Reservoir.

**Northwest –** The weekend weather forecast looks favorable for offshore salmon and bottomfishing. There are some chinook being taken in the Seaside area for anglers trolling spoons.

Although success has improved, estuary sturgeon anglers continue to struggle to find consistent results. Fair results are coming from both the Tongue Point area and out of Hammond. Lower than anticipated catch rates will likely result in a season extension.

The Tillamook district remains an option for spring chinook although opportunities are switching to the tidewater and upriver areas of the Wilson, Trask and Nestucca Rivers. River levels are dropping which will make for challenging conditions for bank anglers.

Productive razor clam tides will last through the weekend and Clatsop County Beaches will offer the best opportunities. Mussel harvest is currently restricted from the Columbia River to Gold Beach. Call 1-800-448-2474 for updated closure information.

Cape Meares Lake, Coffenbury Lake, Hebo Lake, Lost Lake, and Town Lake are scheduled to be planted with trout.

**Southwest** – Rough ocean conditions prevented many boats from accessing areas beyond the 40-fathom line over the past all depth opener. The next opportunity will be June 26th through 28th.

Offshore coho season opens on June 22nd. Two fin-clipped fish may be retained per day and combo trips for nearshore halibut and coho may be made, but only barbless hooks may be on any rigs once coho are on board. No chinook may be kept offshore.

Wind and wave action are predicted to allow boaters safe access to the ocean this weekend.

Anglers on the Umpqua mainstem are seeing an improvement in river conditions and shad catches. South Umpqua smallmouth fishers are experiencing better catches while the North Umpqua is still producing a few springers.

Boats launching out of Brookings are scoring limits of lingcod and rockfish just across the bar out of the harbor. Warm water offshore has local anglers talking about tuna season although rumors have the fish at 65 miles west of Newport.

Surf fishing continues to reward southwest beach anglers with limits of pinkfin and striped perch.

Fall chinook fishing starts early on the lower Rogue and while the spring fishery was nothing to shout about, a decent fall run is expected to reward trollers this season. Half-pounders are being taken on the upper Rogue and they're not picky, hitting a variety lures. A few springers have been taken up high as well.

Diamond Lake fished well over the past weekend and is expected to continue to reward anglers with limits of larger-than-average rainbows.

Section 5 of the Rogue River and Fish Lake are scheduled to be stocked with trout.

**Eastern** – Salmonflies and Stoneflies remain abundant on the lower Deschutes around Warm Springs, but are about done at Maupin. Big insects are largely being ignored by trout in many stretches. Try Stonefly nymphs.

Odell has been producing 50-fish kokanee limits to jig fishers over the past week.

**SW Washington** – Although flows remain high, steelhead fishing on the North Fork Lewis and Cowlitz Rivers remains good. Target fish along the riverbank where slower flows attract the calorie- counting upstream migrants.

The Wind and Klickitat River are still producing a few bright chinook and steelhead are due in better numbers later in the month.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Although additional opportunities on the mainstem Columbia should re-focus efforts away from sturgeon in the coming weeks, effort still remains high and catches light in a time of year when action should be at its best. Water temperatures are still low and upriver spill is still a factor as incoming tides are somewhat slighted when once, we could depend on good action with good incoming tide flow.

Success rates are highly variable with few people finding consistent success. Effort is running high in both the upriver (of the Astoria/Megler Bridge) and Hammond fisheries alike. Fish are well distributed throughout the estuary with deep water fish falling to anchovies and shallow water sturgeon most likely to take shrimp. Crab and sculpin are certainly a factor in the deeper water, especially below the bridge. Most recently, the outgoing tide, particularly the last 2 hours has been the most productive time of the morning. As the tide slows, jump out deeper along the green line to maintain your gear in flowing water. As the tide turns, the fish seem to be willing to hunt up in shallower water although they are rarely in the same trough as they were at the last part of outgoing tide. As always, you should be prepared to move if you are not in biting fish. The estuary is loaded with sturgeon, they just remain reluctant to bite with the water still cold and lack of availability of feed in their happy hunting grounds.

Offshore, Chinook salmon fishing remains fair for the few anglers participating in the fishery. With a bag limit of just one fish, it's pretty hard to justify the run down to Seaside and Gearhart for a 15 to 20 pound salmon. These are quality fish however and are taking spoons trolled deep in 45 to 80 feet of water. Some anglers are fishing south of Tillamook Head but be cautious of an afternoon NW wind that will beat you up badly if you have to run north to return to your launching point.

Steelhead fishing opened up this week and the tides are right for good action from Rainier to Portland. We have no reports of how the opener went but given the strong tides and upriver spill going on, fish should be well oriented to the shoreline making for great bankfishing opportunities. More on that in the forecast section of this newsletter.

Summer Chinook season will also open up on Saturday. See the forecast section of this report for more details.

Upriver, oversized sturgeon anglers are still having great success when pursuing the leviathans of the gorge using fresh shad for bait. Shad numbers are on the increase although it would surprise many if the run comes anywhere near to previous records. The count is still well below 1 million fish. Look for shad in the slower flows using nickel/chartreuse Dick Nite spoons. They are working the best on sunny days.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Anglers are starting to wonder how the rest of the sturgeon season will shape up to be. There's no doubt that we won't reach our approximately 13,500 fish guideline by the June 24<sup>th</sup> timeline so debate is beginning to stir as to how to shape the season after the proposed closure date. Regardless, it's pretty clear that we'll be getting some additional time to pursue sturgeon below the Wauna Powerlines into late June and even possibly early July.

And just how should we go about catching these keepers in the estuary? As previously mentioned anchovies have been working the best in the deeper water while sandshrimp work best in the shallow flats. With the minus tide series still upon us through the weekend, there will be a long lull in activity until flows slow down enough to drive sturgeon down to the bottom to feed. This weekend, the most productive time will be the bottom of the outgoing tide (low slack) and the first part of incoming tide. High slack has also been fairly productive for me in the late afternoon but those opportunities will be going away as the weekend progresses unless you plan

on fishing pretty late. For most anglers, they'll still start early in the morning and likely get discouraged by Sunday.

Steelheaders on the other hand will have some great tides to work with over the weekend. Morning minus tides and high flows should spell good results for bank anglers. A signature sign that this run is underway is when daily counts at Bonneville exceed 200 adults per day. That is clearly the case as over 500 adults passed the facility on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Cumulative counts have exceeded last years numbers but are in line with the 10-year average. Given the fact we still have high, cold water, it's pleasantly surprising that we have the numbers we do.

Bank plunkers do the best for steelhead with spin-n-glos taking the majority of fish. Hot colors such as pink, red and orange are favorites among steelheaders and there is no reason to believe that these colors won't work well this year. Higher success rates are certainly likely if an angler chooses to employ scent on a frequent basis. With the flows bank anglers are likely to experience this weekend, it would behoove one to fish very close to the bank. As a general rule, one of my guide buddies fishes a double-rig with the top spin-n-glo just out of sight after casting at the bank (from his boat), often fishing 2.5 to 3 foot of water. The faster the flow, the closer to the bank these fish will travel.

Finally, sockeye numbers at Bonneville Dam are indicating a much larger return than in years past. It's not out of the realm of possibility that steelheaders may encounter an incidental sockeye in their catch which must be released unharmed. They are easy to identify with no spots on their forked tail with a silver blue back to boot.

Anglers in the know should be pretty excited about the brier opener for summer Chinook beginning on Saturday. Passage at Bonneville Dam for Chinook is also excellent right now. It's twice the number as last year and above the 10-year average. Even more exciting is the fact that the jack counts are also tracking higher than in recent years.

To fish for these prized fish, most people target them in the Bonneville area using spinners and plugs. Red spinners fished near the bottom in the power water often produces good catches. It's already pretty clear that this run is under-predicted or the spring run is so late that they are just now beginning to show up. Needless to say, it's all great news. Anglers will want to take extra precaution this season as faster than normal flows have anchoring more hazardous than ever before. Be sure you know what you are doing before you go out.

The summer Chinook season only lasts one week so hit it hard this week and you are likely to be rewarded. Open dates are from June 21 through June 28 with a daily bag limit of two adult salmon or adipose fin-clipped steelhead and five jacks. Chinook adults and jacks may be fin-clipped or not.

Oversized sturgeons are another very viable option for gorge fishers with fresh shad as the only bait to use this time of year. Shad fishing is improving and should stay productive through the weekend and beyond.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – Water temperatures at Willamette Falls have been fluctuating in the high 50s with the flow moderating and visibility improving. With the entire Willamette system closed for spring Chinook fishing, it seems moot to mention an improvement in daily counts, but here it is. Over 1,000 were counted June 13th through 15th but the YTD count at 8,244 is far short of the prediction of 34,000. Anglers may fish only the Clackamas with Molalla tributaries for springers. Summer steelhead continue to cross in good number as the count approaching 11,000. Sturgeon fishing has been slow for

keepers but the shad fishery at Oregon City has been rewarding anglers with good catches of stinky baitfish.

The McKenzie River level is still a little high but dropping and is expected to fish well this weekend.

**The Guide's Forecast** – As the water in the lower Willamette nears the 60 degree mark, anglers may expect some improvement in results for sturgeon. Try the head of Multnomah Channel with a variety of baits and scents during the Thursday through Sunday retention period this week. Boaters will do better than bank fishers for shad in Oregon City, but with the run in, everybody should catch fish. Multnomah Channel has been spotty for shad but warm weather this week is expected to turn on the bite. Brightly-colored jigs and Dick Nite spoons are most frequently used and shad like sunny days!

The Middle Fork of the Willamette has been producing large trout and fair to good catches of summer steelhead. This weekend should be as good as it gets.

The Santiams will be too high to fish well this weekend. Anglers are better off seeking steelhead action elsewhere.

McKenzie fly fishers would do well to gear up for summer steelhead as a push this week has improved numbers and catches. Swing or drift flies to draw strikes.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – The Clackamas is coming into shape and is exhibiting very good color but catches remain low. Bobber and jig has produced the occasional summer and a few of the steelhead have been good-sized. Water temperatures have remained in the 50-degree range with action expected to improve when it warms a few degrees.

Effort has been light on the Sandy where a few springers have been taken. Fishing for summer steelhead has been improving but catches are spotty. The best steelheading will be just below the hatchery.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Spring Chinook and summer steelhead should begin to establish themselves throughout the north coast streams that have hatchery returns. For salmon, this would be the Trask, Wilson, Nestucca and Three Rivers. Anglers will have to employ stealthy tactics as fish will be hunkered down in the low flows. Fish bobber and bait in the deep water and lighten up the leader material and seriously think about using Berkley Big Game fluorocarbon line in the 20 to 25 pound range. Use lighter leaders for steelhead fishing.

Offshore anglers should have some opportunity this weekend for bottomfish or salmon north of Cape Falcon. The offshore forecast is as follows:

**FRI** S WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. SW SWELL 4 FT.

**FRI NIGHT** S WIND 10 KT...RISING TO 15 TO 20 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 2 FT...BUILDING TO 4 FT AFTER MIDNIGHT. SW SWELL 5 FT. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

**SAT** S WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. SW SWELL 6 FT. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

**SAT NIGHT** NW WIND 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. SW SWELL 6 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

**SUN** W WIND 10 KT WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 5 FT.

**MON** W WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. W SWELL 4 FT.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Effort for most species is likely to be light this weekend. Bottomfishing and offshore crabbing is likely the best option but choose your days if you plan on ocean fishing. Crabbing likely won't be all that good as many of the adults are headed into molting.

Bank anglers will begin to have the advantage throughout the summer months. For steelheaders, the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers will offer up the best opportunities driftfishing small baits or floating jigs in the deeper pools. If you want to target salmon, bobber fish the deeper water of the Wilson, Trask or Nestucca River and some fish should be available for drift fishermen on Three Rivers.

Clam diggers will want to take advantage of the minus tide series this weekend. Both razor clam diggers and bay clam diggers should score good results. Check the Department of Agriculture however for shellfish closures before heading out as mussel harvest was recently shut down due to high levels of PSP from the mouth of the Columbia River to Gold Beach. Call 1-800-448-2474 for updated closure information.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Crabbing in Yaquina Bay has improved recently, yielding decent numbers of nice, hard Dungeness. At last check mid-week, herring were available in good number as well which makes for a sweet combo trip.

Rough ocean conditions last weekend kept all-depth halibut fishers at home in port. As a consequence, the fishery will be open June 26th through 28th and continue on July 10th through 12th.

Smallmouth bass fishing has been fair but improving on the mainstem Umpqua and is very good on the South. The North Umpqua has continued to provide decent spring Chinook catches. With the water dropping, shad fishing has been heating up with anglers hammering them at Yellow Creek and Sawyer's Rapids.

With the spring Chinook count approaching the 6,000 mark at Gold Ray Dam and with the water level dropping, the upper Rogue has turned on for anglers. Most of the springers on the upper river are of hatchery origin allowing anglers to retain them unlike wild Chinook which must be released on the Rogue as of the first of June. Numbers of summer steelhead are improving, but good results with springers have most fishers chasing salmon. Fishing on the lower river has been spotty at best and the Grants Pass stretch is non-productive.

Boaters may fish ocean coho starting Sunday, June 22nd, but with the fuel crunch, effort is expected to be low, at least until the action gets hot. Fewer anglers are enjoying the excellent bottom fishing just outside Brookings Harbor due to the higher expense this year. For those who choose to do so, conditions this weekend are predicted to allow easy ocean access.

Surf fishing has continued to reward long-rodders casting from southwest beaches with limits of redbails and striped perch. Fishing was expected to slow by now as these fish spawn, but it shows no sign of doing so.

Diamond Lake should provide excellent fishing for large trout this weekend. Try the south end for the largest fish. Lures and bait have been equally effective.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – The trout are keyed on Salmonflies and Golden Stones on the Deschutes in the Warm Springs area and fishing has been good. Down near Maupin, expect to find Caddis and Pale Morning Duns hatching as the Salmonfly hatch winds down.

Kokanee fishing is fair at Odell with a few lake trout showing in catches. Fishing is slow at Green Peter for trout and kokanee.

**Northwest Trout** – In the Willamette Valley, hatchery trout have been planted this week at Faraday Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Silver Creek Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Clear Lake, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Quartzville Creek, Salt Creek, the North Fork Santiam River and Trail Bridge Reservoir. Cape Meares Lake, Coffenbury Lake, Hebo Lake, Lost Lake, and Town Lake are scheduled to be planted with trout in the Northwest Zone. Section 5 of the Rogue River and Fish Lake are scheduled to be stocked with trout.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

**From the WDF&W Weekender Report June 11<sup>th</sup> – June 24<sup>th</sup>, 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**

**UPDATE: (06/03/08) The Hood Canal shrimp season will open for one final day June 11 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.**

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](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.

News that this year's **shad** run is late to arrive (see above) may come as a surprise to anyone who has looked through the fish-viewing windows at Bonneville Dam lately. On May 25, nearly 11,000 of them - most weighing 3 to 5 pounds - were counted at the dam, far exceeding the number of all other species passing up the fish ladder combined. If the past is any indication, the parade of shad past the fish window will grow to 70,000 or 80,000 per day.

While sometimes considered the Rodney Dangerfield of fish ("they don't get no respect"), shad actually have a very colorful history. Averaging three to five pounds, shad are credited with sustaining General George Washington's troops at Valley Forge during the War of Independence. In 1871, an entrepreneur named Seth Green loaded 12,000 young shad from the Atlantic coast into milk cans and transported them to Sacramento to start a new fishery. The fish thrived and began showing up in the Columbia River a decade later.

Shad are the largest members of the herring family, which also includes Pacific sardines. Their backs are metallic blue to green in color, their bellies white with a saw-like serrated edge along the midline. Like salmon, shad are anadromous, entering freshwater rivers to spawn. Unlike salmon, they do not necessarily die after spawn and many return to spawn annually. Females bear more than 50,000 eggs, sometimes as many as several hundred thousand.

Shad will be on display through June at the Bonneville fish-viewing window at the Washington Shore Visitor Complex. To get there, take Washington State Highway 14 east to Milepost 40 (about 5 miles from Stevenson) and turn into the Bonneville Dam visitor center. The visitor center is the glass building at the end of the powerhouse.

### **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.

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, Pearrygin, 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](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 -**

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

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### **Random Links**

Proper treatment for rattlesnake bite:

**<http://www.wildernessutah.com/brain/snakebites.html>**

Hydrographic survey data for estuaries:

**<http://estuarinebathymetry.noaa.gov/welcome.html>**

**Weekly Quote** – "Most fisherman, including this one, cling to their pet stupidities as the would to a battered briar or an old jacket; and their dogged persistence in wrong methods and general wrong-headedness finally wins the a sort of grudging admiration, if not many fish." - Robert Traver

**GOOD LUCK!**