

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **April 17th – April 23rd, 2009**

Willamette Valley/Metro- Although most sport anglers would argue, fishery managers have an estimated catch of just over 14,000 fish for the sport fleet through April 11th. Catches were light on the last open day, Saturday, but anglers working the shallower water in the increased flows did take a few fish. Flows are clearly dictating success and spill is still a likely scenario through the closing date of April 22nd. Herring will take the lion's share of the sport catch but anchored anglers working plugs may find success when flow velocities are peaking.

Trolled herring are producing steady springer hookups on the lower Willamette. Sellwood and the Oregon City areas produced fantastic results last Thursday and Friday and should produce equally well this week too. The river closes to spring chinook fishing April 30th. Sturgeon catches have been fair to good with most fish too small to keep. Smelt and sand shrimp have been most effective.

Despite sparse but improving March Brown hatches, nymphing remains most effective on the McKenzie.

The Clackamas was a little high and off-color early this week but will be dropping and clearing with the current break in the weather.

Water color on the Sandy is good and following the recent freshet, should soon start producing springers.

Scheduled for trout stocking are Haldeman Pond, Harriet Lake, Mt Hood Pond, Salmonberry Lake, Trojan Ponds, Alton Baker Canal, Cottage Grove Reservoir, Dexter Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Foster Reservoir, Green Peter Reservoir, Junction City Pond, Timber Linn Lake and Waverly Lake.

Northwest – High flows put district streams out of shape for weekend anglers. A few steelhead should still be available but most anglers have spring chinook on the mind this time of year leaving north coast streams virtually barren of pressure. Summer steelhead should begin to show in the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers but returning adults number far fewer than the winter run on these rivers. A mix of late wild and hatchery winter runs is also likely in the catches. These fish will make poor tablefare.

Hatchery spring chinook should be available in the Wilson, Trask and Nestucca Rivers although peak catches are still a month away. Plugs are an effective lure in the early season with backbounced eggs more likely to produce results when temperatures begin to warm. The daily bag limit is 2 hatchery salmon per day and these coastal springers average larger in size than their Willamette Valley cousins.

A couple of unconfirmed spring chinook were reported from Tillamook Bay close to the April 1st opener but inclement weather didn't motivate anglers to pursue salmon, steelhead, sturgeon or bottomfish over the weekend despite a good tide series.

Weaker tides and a mild ocean forecast may motivate the offshore fleet to pursue plentiful bottomfish over the weekend. Ocean crabbing should be fair as well with Newport, Depoe Bay and Garibaldi the choice ports for bottom-fishing success.

Area lakes should still have good numbers of trout available and bass catches may improve with the warming trend.

Carter Lake, Cleawox Lake, Coffenbury Lake, Devil's Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County), Thissel Pond, Vernonia Pond and Woahink Lake are scheduled to be planted with trout.

Southwest – The North Umpqua is heating up for spring chinook on the mainstem. Bank anglers are enduring crowded conditions at Rock Creek but some are taking limits.

After one of the best March fisheries in years, spring chinook catches have been spotty over the past week on the Rogue River below Agness. Anchovies and small sardines just above tidewater have been most effective.

Early forecasts for offshore conditions indicate Friday as the best opportunity for Brookings bottom fish for those who can manage a weekday launch. The tides will be mild on the morning incoming.

Diamond Lake is expected to be iced over for the April 25th opener. The consensus is the lake will not open to boats until the second week in May. Last year, early-season ice fishing was productive.

Scheduled to be stocked with trout are Bradley Lake, Middle and Upper Empire Lake, Powers Pond, North and South Tenmile Lake, Emigrant Reservoir, Lost Creek Reservoir, Lake Selmac, Willow Lake and Marie Lake. Howard Prairie Reservoir and Hyatt Lake will be stocked this week but do not open until April 25th.

Eastern – The middle Deschutes is producing some nice brown trout with March Browns and Blue Winged Olives hatching now. Nymphing is most effective on the lower river despite similar hatches.

Lake Billy Chinook has improved and is fishing well for kokanee and Bull Trout.

SW Washington – Catches slowed in SW Washington tributaries this week; likely due to the cold front that often puts fish down. The Cowlitz remained the bright spot for steelheaders with boaters averaging about 1 fish for every 4 boats. Returns to the Cowlitz Salmon Hatchery are ahead of last year which is noteworthy given the colder water conditions witnessed this season.

The Kalama River is only fair for steelhead while the Lewis system remains poor. On both rivers, anglers may retain only 1 adult as part of the chinook daily limit.

Dam passage is not quite significant enough to warrant high effort in the Drano Lake and Wind River fisheries although a few anglers are fishing there. Numbers at Bonneville are expected to rise significantly this week which should stimulate catches in these fisheries.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Another disappointing opener for spring Chinook anglers on the lower Columbia River. Wednesday produced few opportunities and it was clearly visible from the relative lack of effort for a Wednesday opener that interest is waning as well.

Overall, the season has been a disappointment compared to last year when about half as many fish returned as was predicted to return this year. We are continually reminded by the Departments that we witnessed record catch rates last year and that this year is more of a typical season.

By Department estimates, sport anglers have harvested over 14,000 springers with the expected quota to be finished up by the April 22nd closure date. Record effort is certainly contributing to a higher than perceived catch. It just doesn't seem that this year could have produced these numbers to date although it's certainly statistically possible with the effort we witnessed in the early season.

Despite calls from the gillnet fleet and upriver Indian tribes for an immediate closure of the sport season, biologists remain confident enough that the run will show and we'll achieve our expectation of nearly 300,000 returning adults. None-the-less, Department modelers must be getting nervous about the lack of fish over Bonneville Dam about now. If the run is truly going to show, the lower river is about to really break loose.

With river flows up, we found our best success (best of the season actually) in the shallower water on Wednesday. Although over all action was poor, we lucked into 5 opportunities, hooking 3 and landing 2 hatchery fish. All our bites came in the shallower water above I-5 with 12 to 20 foot of depth producing the best action. Trolled herring was of course our bait of choice. Noting that the water was a bit more cloudy than normal, it seemed the larger blue label herring produced the most strikes. The Washington side of the river and the stretch below I-5 produced poorly.

Anglers working the Bonneville stretch found mixed results. The boat anglers anchored in the traditional hoglines did poorly, even in the best slots available. Backtrollers working the back channel along the Washington shoreline fared pretty well however with plugs and bait producing good results. It's pretty clear that the fish are using the softer water along the rivers edge to migrate upstream. Backbouncers aren't working the area all that hard and likely won't until fish begin to stage more readily in the fast water just upstream from Tanner Creek.

On Thursday, some of the better fishing took place along Davis Bar across from the mouth of the Willamette. Although only a rare springer was caught, it was one of the better bites on the lower Columbia. Most of the action was in the morning making for a long afternoon for those that stuck to it in the blue-bird weather.

Sturgeon fishing continues to challenge anglers in the mainstem Columbia as most gator hunters are still sticking with the lower Willamette or the Multnomah Channel. Water is warming up however, which should trigger a bite somewhere below the mouth of the Willamette River.

From the WDFW April 14, 2009:

Drano Lake outlet limited to bank fishing during spring chinook fishery

Action: The immediate area around the outlet of Drano Lake will be limited to bank fishing only.
Species affected: All species.

Effective dates: April 16 through June 30, 2009.

Location: The bank fishing only area will be west of a line projected from the eastern most pillar of the Highway 14 Bridge to a posted marker on the north shore.

Reason for action: Over the last several seasons, the department has received numerous concerns about bank and boat interactions near the outlet of Drano Lake during spring chinook fisheries. Bank fishing is limited in the lake and the outlet is a popular and productive area for both bank and boat anglers. In spring 2008, the department opened the adjacent mainstem Columbia to bank fishing only to provide additional opportunity and reduce conflicts just inside the lake. That effort had only minimal success as the result of limited access and prevalent windy conditions.

During the recent North of Falcon process, the department proposed a test to reduce the bank and boat conflicts by limiting the immediate area near the outlet of Drano Lake to bank fishing only during the spring chinook fishery. A similar bank fishing area at the mouth of the White Salmon River has been successful in reducing bank and boat conflicts. Based upon public response, the department will

move forward with the proposed test. If the test is successful in reducing conflicts, the department will propose making this rule permanent.

Other information: The remainder of Drano Lake will remain open to fishing from boats and the bank. The bank-only area will be in place during the spring chinook fishery but not during the summer steelhead and fall salmon fisheries. The adjacent mainstem Columbia from Bonneville Dam to the Tower Island power lines (located about 6 miles below The Dalles Dam) remains open to fishing for hatchery salmon, hatchery steelhead, and shad from the bank through April.

Information contact: (360) 696-6211. For latest information press *1010.

The Guide's Forecast – Although I said it last week, if we don't begin to see numbers this week, something is terribly wrong. If the Columbia actually realizes the predicted return and it comes in during the current opener, limits should be much more common this week than last. As a matter of fact, it should be great fishing.

All stretches should produce good catches but the caveat is water release from upstream impoundments. Water releases are sending our young to the ocean but releases are an artificial river condition that adults interpret as a rain freshet and begin migrating upstream in quick fashion. As I have said many a time, the fish are at a critical time in their lifecycle that requires them to count calories and take the path of least resistance. In other words, fish the shallower water in fast flows and deeper water in slower flows. Unfortunately, there aren't many low flow areas right now.

Herring do seem to be out-producing plugs at this time but that could change as water and air temperatures rise over the weekend. A raft of boats has begun backtrolling plugs and bait in the shallower water at the head of Hayden Island but the mini-fleet doesn't seem to be catching anything of significance.

Bonneville anglers are still struggling for consistent results but there was some good fishing on Wednesday in the side channel hugging the Washington shore. Backtrollers will likely take fish as they congregate there before bypassing Bonneville Dam. If flows subside, the backbouncing bite using eggs could heat up.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Willamette closing last day to fish is April 30th. It is unlikely to re-open as the forecast is for a low run this year.

While fishing has been fair to good on the McKenzie, look for a further improvement as the weather warms this weekend.

Santiam River steelheaders have been experiencing poor results with winter fish recently.

A free youth fishing event will take place on Saturday, April 18th from 8 AM to 2 PM at Junction City Pond. Tackle will be available and volunteers will be on hand to assist.

A 'Vernonia Lake Fish-In' will take place Saturday, April 25th, sponsored by the Oregon Bass and Panfish Club.

With the water warming, fishing is improving at Hagg Lake, which has been planted with trout several times this year. Holdover trout have been caught here occasionally which have weighed five pounds or better.

Boats are taking limits of trout at Detroit Reservoir. It was recently stocked with 10,000 legal-sized trout.

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon fishing should be worthwhile in the lower Willamette for those willing to move and move again in order to find larger fish. Don't expect great results by parking for the day with the masses. About a dozen springers were landed the morning of April 16th around Sellwood for 50 or 60 boats trying. It may not be hot & heavy, but with springer fishing closing in the lower Willamette on the last day of April, the only way to get yours is to get out there and drag a herring around. Some nice, chrome summer steelhead are available below Dexter Dam.

McKenzie fly anglers may expect to see good hatches of caddis early afternoons in the sunshine this weekend and beyond. Summers are showing up at Leaburg despite low numbers of Willamette Falls.

Summer steelhead are starting to show in catches on the Santiam system. The first summers steelhead of the year showed up in the trap at Foster Dam recently.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – While the Sandy River remains high from snowmelt this week, sunny, dry weather is expected to improve conditions and warm the water a little. As the river comes into shape, expect to find and improving number of summer steelhead and spring Chinook.

While summer steelhead and springers are present in the lower Clackamas, they have been mostly unresponsive to anglers efforts. While the river was high and off-color mid-week, clear, sunny weather should improve water conditions here as well.

North Coast Fishing Report – Flows will be on the drop as they were too high for productive weekend angling. Most anglers have been focused on the Willamette Valley for salmon as most systems are seeing a lull in activity until May rolls around or the ocean becomes more friendly to fish on.

Sturgeon effort has also lightened but nice weather this weekend could be an attitude changer.

Overall, it was a quiet week on the coast due to inclement weather but that is likely to change this weekend.

The Guide's Forecast – With dropping flows forecast for the weekend, motivated steelheaders may choose to drift the Wilson or Nestucca in pursuit of late run winter steelhead or an early summer run. The higher flows will be more conducive to side-drifting with plugs becoming more productive when fish begin to hold in more traditional water in lower water levels.

Bank anglers can expect scattered pods of steelhead throughout the upper watershed. Don't target spawning fish!

Tides are ripe on Tillamook Bay for a fair sturgeon and spring Chinook effort. Unfortunately, peak time for both species will happen as we near low slack. Sturgeon should be sought after in the south channel or middle bay. Motivated spring Chinook anglers may choose to troll spinners or herring in the upper bay with the last 2 hours of the tide the best time to pursue fish holding in the deeper holes in lower tidewater of the Trask or in the upper bay itself, at the Memaloose Boat Ramp.

Central & South Coast Reports – Offshore anglers can look forward to a most promising coho season this year. The season opens south of Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain starting June 20 through Aug. 31 or a quota of a remarkable 110,000 fin-clipped coho are caught. This is four times the allotment in the 2008 season. In addition, a first-time-ever three-fish-per-day bag limit will be allowed. From Cape Falcon to the Oregon-California border the coho season will run for the same generous 73 day period but only two hatchery coho may be retained.

As reported in this space a few weeks ago, an increase in the bottom fish daily bag limit is imminent. The limit is proposed to increase from six fish to seven per day.

While yet to be adopted, the spring all-depth halibut season will likely open May 14 through 16, 21st through 23rd, 28th through 30th and June 4th through 6th. If enough fish are left over, which is probable, additional days would be added. Summer all-depth halibut opens August 7th

The meeting at which the bottom fish bag limit as well as all-depth halibut seasons will be finalized will take place at 8 AM Friday in the McKenzie Suite at Salbasgeon Suites and Conference Center, 1730 NW Ninth St. in Salem.

The near-shore fishery in waters 240 feet (40 fathoms) or less opens seven days per week starting May 1st and will run through October 31st or a quota of 14,407 pounds, whichever comes first.

Although conditions this coming Saturday look marginal for crossing central Oregon bars, Friday and Sunday are predicted to allow offshore launches for boats seeking bottomfish. Results for rockfish, ling cod and cabezon have been good while ocean crab catches remain low.

While winter steelheading is unpredictable on the Siletz this late in the season, summers have started to be caught and the river will heat up in the next few weeks as better numbers enter the system.

Herring jigging has been spotty in Yaquina Bay with several dozen being taken one day while only a few the next.

Steelheaders are hitting mostly dark fish now with only the occasional bright fish showing in the mix on the Alsea.

Springers are being taken on the Umpqua with catches reported as high as Bunch Bar. Anglers around Scottsburg are taking spring Chinook on fresh anchovies and sardines. The run here is predicted to be about the same as the 2008 season.

Crabbing is reported as worthwhile at Bandon and has remained decent in the Charleston area.

It has been a waiting game for plunkers and anchor fishers on the lower Rogue, with a lot more waiting recently than catching. on the rare occasions when a pod moves through, they are rewarded with a flurry of action. Following the best March spring Chinook season in years, optimism is high for a good run this year. Even though action has been slow to fair recently for springers, many anglers feel it's worth putting in the time for the hardest-fighting, best-tasting salmon available anywhere. Both springers and steelhead have been caught in the Grants Pass stretch recently but it's spotty at best and many of the steelhead are spawned out.

Friday is predicted to be the best window for boats to cross into the ocean out of Brookings. Bottom fish catches have been good and, in addition to some large ling cod, some limits of Dungeness are being taken offshore.

No decision has yet been made regarding the Chetco bubble fishery this year. A discussion will take place at a meeting on April 30 from 7 PM to 9 PM at the Showcase Building in the Curry County Fairgrounds in Gold Beach. The ODFW will also address the Chetco's in-river fishery. Public comment is welcome and will effect the final decision to be made in May.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Blue-Winged Olives are of primary interest to fly anglers on the lower Deschutes near Maupin. Fishing has been good and is expected to improve.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report April 15 - 28, 2009

North Puget Sound

Blackmouth salmon are still the only game in town for the region's saltwater anglers. But the halibut season in Puget Sound is just around the corner and openings for other bottomfish are not far off. For freshwater anglers, one of the most anticipated fisheries occurs later this April, when the lowland lakes trout season kicks off.

Beginning April 25, anglers can cast a line in many of the region's lakes, where thousands of legal-sized **trout** have been planted. Information on stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available on WDFW's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>).

With waters in every county of the state well stocked before the big opening day, families can keep travel costs down with good fishing close to home, said Phil Anderson, interim director of WDFW. "This may be the best time ever for those who used to fish to get back into it with family and friends," he said. "Costs remain low and our hatchery stocking is at a peak."

Because the lowland lake trout opener traditionally draws the biggest crowds, it's especially important for everyone to be patient and safe at boat launches and docks, Anderson noted. "Everyone in boats, and all children on shore, should use personal flotation devices," he added.

During the first few weeks of the season, anglers should fish higher in the water column, where the stocked trout tend to remain after being placed in a lake, said Jon Anderson, WDFW resident trout manager. "Focus on the top 3 to 5 feet of water, where trout usually feed for a few weeks after they are planted," he said. "After several weeks, anglers likely will have better success fishing lower in the water column."

On the saltwater, selective fisheries for hatchery **blackmouth** - resident chinook - continue through today (April 15) in marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands) and 9 (Admiralty Inlet), while fisheries in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) run through April 30. Anglers fishing in any of those areas can keep two hatchery blackmouth as part of their two-salmon daily limit but must release wild chinook, which have an intact adipose fin.

Puget Sound's **halibut** season is fast approaching. The season gets under way April 23 in marine waters throughout the region, where fishing will be open five days a week, Thursdays through Mondays, with a daily limit of one halibut. There is no minimum size limit for halibut caught in any area. Mutiny and Admiralty bays, as well as Eastern and Partridge banks usually are the best bets for flatfish early in the season.

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

Shrimping opportunities in Puget Sound also soon will be available. The season opens throughout the region May 2. 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 all fisheries on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Anglers have been catching lingcod off the coast and an increasing number of spring chinook salmon on north coast rivers. Halibut season opens April 23 on Puget Sound, the lowland lake trout-fishing season opens April 25, followed by shrimp fishing May 2. Another item for the list - a razor clam dig tentatively scheduled April 25-27.

For many anglers, fishing season begins April 25 with the opening of the lowland lakes **trout** season. On the state's single biggest fishing day, anglers can choose from among 115 lakes in the region stocked with nearly 700,000 legal-size trout. More information and schedules are available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/>.

Regional lakes stocked with more than 5,000 trout include Sutherland Lake in Clallam County; Aberdeen and Sylvia lakes in Grays Harbor County; Leland Lake in Jefferson County; Kitsap and Wildcat lakes in Kitsap County; Benson, Devereaux and Nahwatzel lakes in Mason County; Clear, Kapowsin, Spanaway, Tanwax and Ohop lakes in Pierce County; and Clear, Hicks, Long and Pattison lakes in Thurston County. Information on WDFW stocking schedules is available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>. For tips on fishing options, by water and county, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/prospects/index.htm>

In Thurston County, youngsters ages 5-14 can attend a one-day fishing event at the Kids' Classic Family Fish-in, held at the Woodland Creek Community Park on April 18 - a week before the season opener. Children must be pre-registered to participate. For Information, call Lacey Parks and Recreation, (360) 491-0857.

On the saltwater, the recreational **halibut** season opens April 23 in marine areas 6-11 and 13 (Port Angeles and Puget Sound), followed by additional openings in May on the coast and the western Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Recreational halibut seasons for Washington's marine areas are:

- **Columbia River (Ilwaco):** Marine Area 1 will open May 1, three days a week, Thursday through Saturday until 70 percent of the quota is reached, or until July 18. The fishery will then reopen on Aug. 7 and continue three days a week (Friday through Sunday) until the remaining quota is reached, or Sept.30, whichever occurs first.
- **South Coast (Westport/Ocean Shores):** Marine Area 2 will open on May 3, two days a week, Sundays and Tuesdays, through May 12. Starting May 17, the fishery will be open on Sundays only until the quota is reached. In addition, the northern nearshore area will be open on Fridays and Saturdays until the quota is reached.
- **North Coast (La Push/Neah Bay):** Marine areas 3 and 4 will open on May 14, two days per week, Thursdays and Saturdays, through May 23. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will reopen June 4 and 6. If sufficient quota remains after that opener, the fishery will reopen starting June 18. If there is insufficient quota to open the fishery for one more day in the offshore area, the fishery will be open in the nearshore area only (Area 4B and shoreward of a line approximating 30 fathoms from the Bonilla-Tatoosh line south to the Queets River).

- **Strait of Juan de Fuca/Puget Sound:** Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) will be open May 21 through July 3. Marine areas 6-11 and 13 (Port Angeles and Puget Sound) will be open April 23 through June 5. These fisheries will be open five days a week, closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Marine Area 12 (Hood Canal) remains closed to fishing for halibut and a number of other species due to low dissolved-oxygen conditions.

All areas open to fishing have a one-fish daily catch limit, no minimum size and a possession limit of two fish in any form. In Marine Areas 1-4, seasons will continue until the subarea quotas are reached. For additional information, call the Fishing Hotline at (360) 902-2500 or check the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/halibut/>.

Anglers should note that the Hood Canal Bridge will close for six weeks starting May 1. The Washington State Department of Transportation is offering a number of transportation options to help drivers during this time. Information is available at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR104HoodCanalBridgeEast/2009closure.htm>

On the coast, the **lingcod** fishery in Marine Area 4 (Neah Bay) gets under way April 16, giving anglers a chance to land some of the abundant fish in the area, said Erica Crust, WDFW ocean port sampler. "Some really nice lings have been released out of Neah Bay, which indicates a good opener for anglers," Crust said. The lingcod fishery will be open seven days a week with a two-fish daily limit.

Meanwhile, more anglers are catching their daily limit of lingcod off Westport, where ocean conditions have improved since the March 14 opener, Crust said. Marine areas 1-3 are also open seven days a week with a two-fish daily limit.

Crust advises anglers to note the following restrictions:

- In Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco), no bottomfish - with the exception of sablefish and Pacific cod - are allowed on any vessel with halibut on board from May 1 through Sept. 30.
- In Marine Area 2 (Westport Ocean Shores), recreational fishing for bottomfish or lingcod is not allowed in waters deeper than 30 fathoms through June 15. Anglers may retain sablefish and Pacific cod in these waters from May 1 through June 15.
- In Marine Areas 3 and 4 (La Push and Neah Bay), recreational fishing for bottomfish or lingcod is not allowed in waters deeper than 20 fathoms from May 21 through Sept. 30, except on days the halibut fishery is open.

Anglers should be aware that the minimum size for lingcod in Marine Area 4 is 24 inches, rather than 22 inches in marine areas 1-3.

Lingcod fishing in marine areas 5-11 and 13 gets under way May 1 and will be open seven days a week through June 15. These areas have a daily limit of one fish. Retention of canary and yelloweye rockfish is prohibited in all waters.

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

Meanwhile, anglers are making the transition from **winter steelhead** to hatchery **spring chinook** on the north coast, where steelhead fishing on area rivers will wrap up April 30 (the Hoh River closes April 15). "Hatchery spring chinook are starting to enter the system and the run

should keep building on the Sol Duc and Quillayute rivers through mid-June," said Mike Gross, WDFW fish biologist.

Anglers are required to release all wild, unmarked chinook and coho, but can keep two fin-clipped adult chinook and up to six fish, counting jacks.

Rather dig **razor clams** ? WDFW is tentatively planning a late- April dig, provided marine toxin tests show the clams are safe to eat. Tentative dates and tides:

- Saturday, April 25 (7:27 a.m., -1.3 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks
- Sunday, April 26 (8:10 a.m., -1.6 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks
- Monday, April 27 (8:55 a.m., -1.7 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks

A license is required for anyone age 15 or older. Any 2009-10 Washington state annual shellfish/seaweed license or combination license is valid. Another option is a razor-clam only license available in annual or three-day only versions. Descriptions of the various licensing options are available on the WDFW website at <https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov>.

Another season opener starts May 2, when anglers will have an opportunity to catch shrimp throughout the region.

Fishing areas and schedules:

- Marine Areas 4 (east of the Bonilla Line), 5, 6 (excluding the Discovery Bay Shrimp District) and 13 open May 2 at 7 a.m. and will be open daily until the quota is reached, or through Sept. 15, whichever comes first.
 - Marine Area 7 will open May 2 at 7 a.m. and will be open Wednesdays through Saturdays only until the quota is reached.
 - Marine Areas 8, 9, and 10, will be open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays and Wednesdays only, starting May 2. They will remain open until quotas for those areas are reached, or until May 31, whichever comes first.
 - Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) will be open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 2, 6, 9 and 13, or until the quota is reached, whichever comes first.
- Additional dates and times may be announced if sufficient quota remains.

Anglers should note that Marine Area 11, extending from the northern tip of Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, will be open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 2 only. Also, the Discovery Bay Shrimp District in Marine Area 6 near Port Townsend will remain closed to both spot and non-spot shrimp fishing this year.

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

Southwest Washington

With the clock running down on the scheduled season, **spring chinook** fishing remained as erratic as the weather on the mainstem Columbia through mid-April. Catch rates have been up one week, down the next. Meanwhile, the number of spring chinook counted at Bonneville Dam was well below average through April 13, and about one-fifth of the count last year at the same time.

"Fishing was fairly good during the past week in the estuary and just below Bonneville Dam, but slower everywhere in between," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "Water levels have come up in the past week or so, which should benefit bank anglers. But, overall, it's been hard to draw a bead on this year's fishery."

Not that anglers haven't tried. During the first Saturday in April, an aerial survey tallied 3,300 boats and 1,100 bank anglers on the river - an all-time record for boats. While participation has waned a bit since then, the fishery has continued to draw plenty of anglers. Catch rates for boat anglers averaged just under one springer for every two boats during the week ending April 12. Bank anglers averaged a fish for every 14 rods.

Because of a disagreement over catch allocations, spring chinook seasons approved by the fish and wildlife commissions of Washington and Oregon will come to an end this month. Guy Norman, WDFW regional manager, said fishery managers and commissioners have been discussing various options for extending the season, both above and below Bonneville Dam. "At this point, it's still a work in progress," he said.

Below is a summary of the spring chinook seasons approved through April:

- **West power lines on Hayden Island downstream to Buoy 10:** Fishing is open through April 18 three days per week (Thursdays through Saturdays).
- **West power lines on Hayden Island to Bonneville Dam:** Fishing is open through April 22 four days per week (Wednesday through Saturday).
- **Bonneville Dam to McNary Dam:** Fishing is open seven days per week through April 30. The Washington and Oregon bank-only fishery will also be open from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Tower Island power lines located about six miles below The Dalles Dam.

Below Bonneville Dam the daily salmonid bag limit is six fin-clipped fish, no more than two adult salmon or steelhead or one of each. No more than one may be an adult chinook. Wild chinook and wild steelhead must be released.

From Bonneville Dam to McNary Dam the limit is two marked, hatchery-reared adult salmon or steelhead (or one of each) per day. The same daily limit is in effect for the bank-only fishery from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Tower Island power lines and on the Wind River and Drano Lake.

Hymer reminds Columbia River anglers that **shad** and fin-clipped **steelhead** may be retained only on days open to fishing for adipose fin-clipped chinook.

Meanwhile, anglers are beginning to catch some springers - along with hatchery steelhead - in several tributaries to the lower Columbia River. On the Cowlitz River, where 18 spring chinook had returned to the hatchery as of April 8, a recent survey turned up three springers and 30 late winter steelhead in the catch. On the Kalama River, anglers have been releasing dark hatchery steelhead as well as some wild fish.

Hymer reminds anglers that only one adult chinook salmon may be retained per day on the Kalama and Lewis rivers, due to low returns predicted for hatchery fish. He also notes that sections of two other rivers will open to fishing for hatchery steelhead April 16 under selective gear rules. No bait may be used in those fisheries, scheduled to open from the mouth of the East Fork Lewis River to the top boat ramp at Lewisville Park and from the mouth of the Washougal River to the Mt. Norway Bridge.

Anglers planning to fish Drano Lake or the Wind River should also be aware of two emergency rules recently approved by WDFW. One sets aside a small area around the outlet of Drano Lake for bank fishing only to minimize conflicts with boat anglers. That area is defined as westerly from a line projected from the eastern-most pillar of the Highway 14 Bridge to a posted marker on the north shore. In addition, Drano Lake is closed to all fishing each Wednesday through May.

The other new rule will exempt anglers fishing for spring chinook at Drano Lake and the lower Wind River from the new anti-snagging regulation from May 1 through June 30. That exemption will allow anglers to use single, double, or treble hooks on baits and lures on the lower Wind from the railroad bridge downstream and at Drano Lake during that time period. Those and other new fishing rules are available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

Just as soon catch **bass** or **walleye** ? Boat anglers fishing the Bonneville Pool have been averaging a dozen bass and a walleye per rod. Fishing for both species is also heating up in The Dalles and John Day pools.

Boat anglers also been reeling in some legal-size sturgeon from the Bonneville Pool, but fishing has been slow below Bonneville Dam. The retention fishery for sturgeon ended April 13 in the John Day Pool and closes April 19 in The Dalles Pool.

Trout anglers should know that three area lakes were recently stocked with 1.5-pound triploids: Kress (350 fish), Horseshoe (608 fish) and Battle Ground (256 fish). In addition, Lacamas Lake was recently stocked with 5,800 catchable-size brown trout and 1,650 rainbows.

Eastern Washington

More fishing lakes open in this region on the last Saturday of April - April 25 this year - than any other season opener. But the region's long, cold winter has left many waters with more ice than usual. Fish hatchery crews will be working up to the last minute to plant catchable-size trout before opening day.

WDFW northeast district fish biologist Bill Baker reports most of the lakes in Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties are still frozen, if not completely at least in part. "I'm thinking some of them in the higher elevations are still going to be inaccessible by the opener due to snow," Baker said. "As they thaw out, I think we can expect good fishing at Starvation and Rocky lakes near Colville. They'll both have lots of 10-to-11-inch and 12-to-14-inch rainbows from past fry plants." Baker said Lake Ellen, north of Inchelium on the Colville National Forest, should be decent, too. Ellen was treated last fall to get rid of sunfish and bass and is scheduled to receive 9,000 rainbow trout measuring 8-12-inches to provide a fishery this year until fry plants get bigger.

Frater Lake, southwest of Ione in Pend Oreille County, was also treated last fall to get rid of tench and sunfish. It is scheduled to receive cutthroat trout and some big triploid rainbows this spring, but Baker says it's questionable whether it will be thawed by the opener. When Frater does thaw and the fish are stocked, the fishing should be good. The other Little Pend Oreille chain of lakes, including Nile, Leo, Gillette and Sherry, are all frozen solid, too.

Diamond Lake, southwest of Newport, is scheduled to receive 982 triploid rainbows that average 1½ pounds each, but at last report the big lake was still frozen. Sacheen Lake, alongside Hwy. 211 just northwest of Diamond Lake, is scheduled to receive 6,500 eight to 12-inch rainbows, but it, too, is still frozen. Barring any severe weather changes, Baker believes both these popular waters will be thawed and stocked by the opener and will provide good fishing.

WDFW central district fish biologist Chris Donley says still-wintery conditions in Spokane, Lincoln and Whitman counties make it difficult to say at this point just how the opener will go. But he assumes some of the same fry-planted lakes that have produced good catches in past years will again be the best bets, once they thaw or warm up.

Williams Lake in southwest Spokane County is consistently a top producer on the opener, Donley noted. Last year, even after another long winter that chilled opening day action, anglers on

Williams averaged 4.2 fish each - near the five-trout daily catch limit. Williams is stocked with over 40,000 cutthroat and 92,000 rainbow fry in spring and fall that grow into catchable size fish by opening day. It just received almost 10,000 eight to 12-inch rainbows and 1,473 triploid rainbows (one-and-a-half pounds each), and is due to get another 400 surplus hatchery rainbow broodstock by the opener or soon after.

West Medical Lake, just west of the town of Medical Lake in southwest Spokane County, is another traditional hotspot. For most of the past decade, opening day catches averaged four trout per angler; in 2007, every angler checked had the daily limit of five trout. Last year was the exception, with less than one trout caught per angler on the opener, but that catch rate picked up as the season progressed, Donley said. West Medical received 180,000 rainbow fry last spring and another 7,700 last fall for this season's catchables. It just received 982 triploid rainbows and is scheduled to receive 400 broodstock rainbows soon.

Badger Lake, just northeast of Williams Lake, should also be good. During last year's chilly opener, anglers averaged two trout each and in past years the average has been near limits. Most of those catches come from spring and fall fry plants of over 30,000 cutthroat and 30,000 rainbows. The lake just received 982 triploid rainbows and is due to receive 400 broodstock and 7,500 catchable-size rainbows.

Clear Lake, two miles south of the town of Medical Lake, usually provides decent catches on the opener. Last year opening day anglers averaged two trout each. Clear is well-stocked with trout fry - 74,000 browns, 26,800 rainbows and 17,500 tiger trout. It just received 982 triploid rainbows and is scheduled for 30,000 catchable-size rainbows, 10,000 catchable browns and 400 surplus hatchery rainbow broodstock.

Fish Lake, northeast of Cheney off the Cheney-Spokane Road just west of Spokane, is the home of the state record tiger trout - a 14-plus-pound fish caught last spring. Fish Lake is stocked only with tiger trout fry (12,150 last fall), but is also slated to receive over 2,000 eastern brook broodstock. On last year's opener, Fish yielded an average of 3.2 fish per angler and it should be as good this year.

In Lincoln County, Fishtrap Lake is usually in the top five or 10 lakes for opening day catches. Fishtrap received 68,000 rainbow fry last spring that will make up the bulk of the catch in nine-to-12-inch trout this season. Just stocked to sweeten the pot were 14,443 catchable-size (eight to ten-inch) rainbows and 736 triploid rainbows (one-and-a-half pounds each.) Scheduled are 400 surplus hatchery rainbow broodstock before the opener.

For anglers who don't want to wait until April 25, Donley suggests several lakes in the central district that are already open and coming on strong now. Amber Lake, 11 miles southwest of Cheney off Mullinix Road, opened March 1 for catch-and-release fishing under selective gear rules for cutthroat and rainbow trout that are running 12 to 20 inches. On April 25, Amber switches to a catch-and-keep season under selective gear rules, but with a daily limit of two trout, minimum size 12 inches, and a requirement to release rainbows with clipped adipose fins.

Medical Lake, near the town of the same name, has also been open since March 1 under selective gear rules and two-trout daily limit. It's been producing similar-size brown, rainbow and tiger trout. Medical just received 500 eight-to-10-inch rainbows and 2,452 eight-to-10-inch brown trout.

Also open since March 1 is Coffeepot Lake, northeast of Odessa in Lincoln County, now producing catches of five to 15 rainbows of 12 to 20 inches per angler trip. Coffeepot is under selective gear

rules with a daily trout limit of one fish of at least 18 inches, so many of those fish are being released.

Downs Lake, on the Spokane-Lincoln county line east of Sprague, has warmed up since its March 1 opening and is good for rainbows, tiger trout, largemouth bass. "We've got a lot of productive lakes," Donley said, "but none as productive as year-round Sprague Lake. The rainbows are growing fast on all the good forage and catches of five to ten of them, from 14 to 22 inches, are common. The chironomid hatch under way now at Sprague is unreal, and it's why fly fishing has recently been better than bait fishing or trolling. The fish are onto the naturals."

Donley reminds Sprague Lake anglers that only two of their daily catch limit of five trout can be over 20 inches. That may shorten some fishing trips since Sprague just received 2,165 triploid rainbows, coupled with the tremendous growth rate on the 350,000 rainbow fry planted last year and 65,000 eight to ten-inchers stocked this spring.

In the south end of the region most fishing lakes have been open since March 1 or are open year-round, and continue to receive hatchery trout plants periodically. Two southeast waters that open on April 25 are Headgate Pond, a small impoundment off Asotin Creek in Headgate County Park in Asotin County, and Curl Lake off the Tucannon River on the Wooten Wildlife Area in Columbia County. WDFW Tucannon Fish Hatchery manager Doug Maxey reports both waters will be stocked before the opener.

Headgate, which is open to juveniles, seniors and disabled anglers only, receives a total of 2,000 ten to 12-inch rainbows for the season. Curl, which restricts the five-trout daily catch limit to just two over 13 inches, receives a total of 12,300 catchable-size rainbows.

April 24 is the deadline for registering 5 to 14-year-olds for the "Fishing Kids" event on May 2 at Clear Lake in southwest Spokane County. Cost is \$5 and includes a half-hour of fishing instruction, rod and reel, and t-shirt. Registration forms are available at WDFW's Spokane Valley office at 2315 N. Discovery Place, or printable from the Spokane County 4-H website at <http://www.spokane-county.wsu.edu/4h/index.html>.

Northcentral Washington

The April 25 fishing season opener promises to be productive in many waters throughout the north central region, from the Columbia Basin to Okanogan County.

This is the year to fish Blue and Park lakes in Sun Lakes State Park, north of the town of Soap Lake, said Jeff Korth, WDFW regional fish program manager.

"Both these lakes were rehabilitated three years ago so the 2009 fishery will be composed of both yearling and carryover rainbows," Korth explained. "These fish are running 12 to 15-plus inches now, with good growth on the fingerlings we've stocked. Fishing should be excellent and I expect most anglers will get limits of fat rainbows."

Korth said Blue Lake has received over 210,000 rainbow fingerlings and Park has received over 138,000 rainbow fingerlings. Both have also received brown and tiger trout fingerlings in the last two years that should begin to show in the catches this year. As an added bonus, Blue is scheduled to receive 295 triploid rainbows (one-and-a-half pounders) and Park will get 196 triploids before the opener.

Deep Lake, also in Sun Lakes State Park, usually provides four to five trout per angler on opening day, although Korth notes that last year's opener was poor. Besides the usual 5,000 rainbow fingerlings stocked last year in Deep, now running 13-14 inches, an additional 5,000 catchable-size (10-12 inches) rainbow trout and 98 triploid rainbows were stocked this spring.

Deep Lake also received 40,000 kokanee fingerlings, which will run 8-10 inches by late spring. "It's a good fishery for those who know how to target them, although the better kokanee fishing comes later in the summer, July and August," said Korth.

Another Sun Lakes State Park fishery, Perch Lake, is among the most consistent waters in the Basin, Korth says. Limits of 12-inch rainbows are generally the rule at this small, but popular lake. The plant is only 10,000 fingerlings, and the lake is fished out in a few weeks most years, so only an occasional 15-inch carryover will be seen. Perch is mostly a shore fishery, although hand-carried boats or float tubes can be used.

Vic Meyers is a relatively small lake connected to Park Lake, and it was also rehabilitated in 2006 to remove bullheads. It was stocked with 3,612 fingerling rainbows, 208 fingerling brown trout, and 1,200 fingerling brook trout. Korth says catch rates should be three to four fish per angler, mostly 12-inch fish and maybe a 10 percent carryover rate for 15-inchers. Vic Meyers is also mostly a shore fishery, although hand-carried boats or float tubes can be used.

Warden Lake, south of the town of Moses Lake about five miles east of O'Sullivan Dam on Potholes Reservoir, should produce two to three yearling rainbows per angler on the opener, Korth predicted.

"Warden was very good last year despite competition with spiny-rayed fishes, but the fingerling stocking rate was somewhat less for this year's fishery due to a shortage," Korth said. He said WDFW plans to add 10,000 catchable-sized (10-12-inch) rainbows to compensate. The catch should include 13-plus inch trout, with about 10-15 percent carryovers of 15-18 inches.

Warden also received 2,000 tiger trout fingerlings last year, with past plants of brown trout producing some very large fish.

Depending on access, weather and water conditions, opening-day lakes to check out farther north in the region include Pearrygin near Winthrop, Alta near Pateros, the Conconullys near Omak and Okanogan, Leader near Omak, Fish near Sinlahekin, Wannacut near Oroville, and Jameson near Mansfield in Douglas County, said Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist.

All received hefty plants of rainbow fry last year that have grown into this season's catches. Pearrygin received 60,000, Alta received 50,000, Conconully Lake received over 126,000, Conconully Reservoir received almost 69,000, Leader received over 15,000, Fish received over 35,000, Wannacut received over 62,000, and Jameson over 160,000. The Conconullys are also scheduled for plants of 8-12-inch rainbows this spring, plus 295 triploid rainbows for the lake and 393 triploids for the reservoir. Leader is also scheduled for 5,000 8-12-inch rainbows and 295 triploids this spring.

"Spring stocking of Jameson Lake with catchable-size fish is always dependent on water quality, and it looks good so far," Jateff said. Jameson is schedule to receive 30,000 eight to 12-inch rainbows and 1,437 triploid rainbows.

Jateff says good selective-gear rainbow trout waters that open April 25 include Blue on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, Big and Little Twin lakes near Winthrop, and Ell near Tonasket. The water level in Ell is very low, which might restrict some access to the lake, he noted.

Fly-fishing only waters that open April 25 include Aeneas Lake near Tonasket and Chopaka Lake near Loomis. Jateff says fishing for 12-18 inch rainbows should be good in both lakes. Since

Chopaka is located at a higher elevation, anglers should check first to make sure that the road into the lake is passable.

Several fisheries already open in the region are worth checking out now.

Dry Falls Lake, three miles west of Coulee City at Sun Lakes State Park, provided anglers with catches of two to 12 fish on its April 1 opener. Angling continues to be good for 14-inch yearling rainbow trout and a 20 percent or better carryover rate for fish 16 to 20-plus inches. Brown trout and tiger trout have also been stocked. Water levels continue to be somewhat low. Selective gear rules are in effect for all species plus a one-fish daily limit on trout.

Lenice and Nunnally lakes on the Crab Creek Wildlife Area just east of Beverly, have produced 10 or more fish per trip for some anglers since they opened March 1. Carryovers from past stocking of triploids should provide rainbow more than 20 inches long. Both have selective gear rules for all species, with a one-fish daily limit on trout.

Year-round Beda Lake, just south of Winchester Wasteway and east of Dodson Road, has recently provided eight to 10 fish per angler, with reportedly many 20-plus fish days. Selective gear rules and a one-fish daily limit are in effect.

Fingerling trout survival has been poor because of sunfish competition, so almost 2,000 large (two to three-pound) rainbows were stocked late last fall. Over-winter survival was very good, and brown and tiger trout are also available. Access is by foot only.

Fishing is picking up now at Lenore Lake, north of the town of Soap Lake. Two- to four-pound Lahontan cutthroat trout are abundant with some fish up to ten pounds. Selective gear rules apply for the entire open season. Fishing is catch-and-release only from March 1 through May 31, with a one-trout daily limit during the June 1 through November 30 season. Anglers should check the *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) and also note posted closed areas at the north and south ends.

Year-round Rocky Ford Creek, which is catch-and-release, fly-fishing-only, is especially good now with plentiful rainbows running two to ten-plus pounds. Korth says they can be finicky though, because "they're extremely well fed and educated."

Corral and Blythe lakes, just south of Potholes Reservoir, were rehabilitated two years ago, so 2009 is the premier year for their rainbow trout.

Canal, Windmill and Heart lakes, south of Potholes Reservoir, all were stocked with catchable-size rainbow last fall that are producing a very good spring fishery.

Spectacle Lake in Okanogan County opened April 1 with good catches of rainbow trout 11-13 inches.

Southcentral Washington

Although the south central region has mostly year-round fishing in lakes and ponds, rainbow trout stocking has "quadrupled" in the last few weeks, according to WDFW District Fish Biologist Eric Anderson.

"Warmer weather and improved lake access is driving people outdoors so our hatchery crews are working around the clock to keep fishing waters stocked," Anderson said. "We are putting out larger fish this year, with most catchable-size trout between 1/2 to 1/3 pound each. We're also spicing things up with some jumbo one-pounders, triploid trout that run one-and-a-half pounds each, and a few six- to eight-pound surplus hatchery broodstock rainbows."

Recently stocked lakes include Yakima County's Granger Pond, I-82 Ponds 1,2,3,4 and 6, Myron Lake, Rotary Lake, Sarge Hubbard Park Pond, Tims Pond, and Yakima Sportsmen Pond; and Kittitas County's FioRito lakes, Mattoon Lake, McCabe Pond, Naneum Pond, and Woodhouse Ponds.

"There are a lot more fish plants coming up in the next few weeks as more waters in the higher elevation, forested zones become snow free," Anderson said. "Right now we are still hampered by snowpack on the access roads into the shady, forested areas around Clear Lake, Lost Lake, Tieton Ranger Pond and Bear Lake. We can't get the big hatchery truck into those areas until warmer weather reduces the snowpack on access roads."

Anderson said that popular Mud Lake, off Hwy 410 west of Naches, may not be stocked with catchable-size trout at all, if access doesn't improve. "We are not holding out much hope that we will be able to plant the lake with any catchable trout at all, although we may try again in another month when road conditions are better," Anderson said. "If we can't get the larger trout in, we will plant small rainbow trout fry via backpack, similar to how we plant other higher elevation lakes in the Cascade Mountains. These fry will grow to a catchable size in about a year."

Anderson reminds anglers they can check to see which lakes have been recently stocked on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>.

The deadline is May 1 to register for the 10th Annual Kid's Fishing event at Reflection Pond (aka Sarge Hubbard Park Pond) in Yakima County on May 9.

Registration forms can be picked up at the WDFW office in Yakima (509-575-2740) or at the Yakima Greenway Foundation Office at Sarge Hubbard Park (509-453-8280). This event is for kids five to 14 years of age. For \$5, each child gets a "Fishing Kids" t-shirt, rod and reel, fishing instruction, and volunteer-cleaned and bagged fish.

The ninth annual Fishing Kids Event at Columbia Park Pond in the Tri-Cities is scheduled for May 2. Registration is with Kennewick Parks and Recreation at (509) 585-4293 or online at <http://www.ci.kennewick.wa.us>. Columbia Park Pond is a "juvenile only" water - only for anglers under 15 years of age or persons with a disability license - and has been stocked with catchable-size rainbow trout.

WDFW District Fish Biologist Paul Hoffarth of Pasco said **bass** fishing in the lower Yakima River is improving. Smallmouth bass typically migrate into the Yakima River in large numbers each spring to spawn, he said. WDFW maintains access sites at Snively Road, Hyde Road, and Duportail Road.

Hoffarth also notes Dalton Lake in Franklin County was recently stocked with more catchable and jumbo-size rainbow trout. In addition, Dalton, Columbia Park Pond, and Powerline Lake are scheduled to be stocked with large triploid trout soon.

Hoffarth reminds anglers that the Columbia River from John Day Dam to McNary Dam is now closed to the retention of **sturgeon**. The 2009 quota was reached on April 12. Anglers are permitted to fish "catch and release" for sturgeon for the remainder of the year with the exception of the area from the Interstate 82 bridge upstream to McNary Dam. This area is closed to all sturgeon angling from May 1 to July 31 to protect spawning sturgeon.

The Columbia River Ringold area bank fishery opens May 1 and continues through June 15 for **hatchery spring chinook salmon**. WDFW predicts that 200-plus hatchery spring chinook will return to the area this year. The permanent rule season (May 1-31) is being extended two weeks to adjust for a significant delay in the return of the upper Columbia spring chinook run and to allow anglers more time to catch as many hatchery chinook as possible.

Hoffarth noted that the new "anti-snagging rule," which replaces the "non-buoyant lure restriction" on May 1, 2009, is being removed for this bank fishery to allow "plunking" from shore with a plug-cut herring using two, single hooks.

Reader E-mail

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

How to measure a sturgeon from now on:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/fishing/docs/sturgeon_angler_notice_flyer.pdf

Portland Boat Show info: <http://otshows.com/PBS/>

New crabbing report from the ODFW:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/shellfish/crab/reports.asp>

Quote of the week

"Today she met me at the door, said I would have to choose, if I picked that fishing pole today, she'd be packing all her things and she'd be gone by noon....well I'm gonna miss her when I get home tonight. Right now I'm on this lake shore, and I'm sitting in the sun! I'm sure it'll hit me when I walk thru that door tonight. Yeah, I'm gonna miss her. Oh lookie there, I gotta bite!"

- Brad Paisley

GOOD LUCK!