

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 1<sup>st</sup> – May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** With the Columbia River now closed to salmon fishing, effort will shift to the Willamette River for salmon. Sturgeon fishing on the mainstem Columbia will soon become a focus when water temperatures begin to warm up. Historically, the gorge can be a productive place to fish but recent regulations have anglers fishing downstream of Marker 85 beginning May 1<sup>st</sup> to avoid interception of oversized sturgeon near the Bonneville deadline.

Today is the last day of spring chinook fishing on the lower Willamette River below Willamette Falls. The Thursday openers have been very productive. The upper Willamette remains open. Chinook counts jumped over the past week with the total approaching 2,000 while summer steelhead counts topped 1,000.

The McKenzie river water level has been dropping while the temperature has increased slightly to 45 degrees at Vida. Best results are coming on nymphs fished in the lower river.

Boat anglers are hooking a few springers on the Clackamas as well as fresh, bright summer steelhead.

Sandy River anglers are taking a rare springer but spawned out wild winter steelhead made up the bulk of the catch last week. Recent rains should draw in more salmon and summer steelhead when flows subside.

North Santiam steelheading continues to be slow but will improve as summer steelhead move up the Willamette.

Scheduled for planting of trout are Haldeman Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Mt Hood Pond, Salmonberry Lake, Trojan Ponds, Detroit Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Foster Reservoir, Hills Creek, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River below Leaburg Lake, Salt Creek, Sunnyside Park Pond, Timber Linn Lake, Walling Pond, Walter Wirth Lake and Waverly Lake.

**Northwest –** A few estuary fishers are in pursuit of Tillamook Bay's spring chinook but most are coming up empty. Tides were favorable for an upper bay showing with trollers using herring, plugs and spinners to no avail. The bay is rumored to have given up 5 spring chinook to date and catches should increase substantially by mid-May.

Clam diggers did well along north coast estuaries for a variety of species but the main focus on the north coast has been the razor clams of Clatsop County. Diggers scored excellent results over the weekend with good tides and a mild surf.

Sturgeon effort was light as most have given up hope for a late season fishery. Sturgeon typically migrate to the Columbia River in search of summer forage leaving most coastal estuaries void of opportunity.

Area rivers are once again low and clear with a slight possibility for a weekend system. Low water tactics may take an occasional steelhead or spring chinook but anglers will have to concentrate in the extreme lower stretches of the Wilson, Trask or Nestucca Rivers to expect a reasonable chance.

Seas have been very friendly for vessels pursuing rockfish. Seabass and lingcod are falling along offshore reefs and the outlook is friendly into the weekend. Ocean crabbing is likely to be fair as well. The nearshore halibut season begins on May 1<sup>st</sup> along with an all-depth season north of Cape Falcon.

Scheduled to be stocked with trout are Coffenbury Lake, Cullaby Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County), Sunset Lake, and Vernonia Pond.

**Southwest** – Anglers plying the depths off the central and southern Oregon coast may keep an additional rockfish for a total of seven per day in addition to two ling cod starting May 1st.

The halibut season opens May 1 inside the 40-fathom line South of Cape Falcon and is open seven days a week through Oct. 31. All-depth will be allowed Thursday through Saturday starting May 14<sup>th</sup>.

Following a flurry of tickets issued for angling violations over the past week in the southwest, OSP officers are urging fishers to read the regulations booklet.

Still too cold for smallmouth, the waters of the Umpqua have been slow for steelhead and spring chinook.

Spring chinook fishing remains slow on the lower Rogue but will improve when the flow and water temperature increase. The fish ladder at Savage Rapids is once again operational, allowing springers to head for the upper stretches. Trout fishing has been fair on the upper river.

When the ocean has allowed, bottom-fishers out of the Port of Brookings have landed some very large rockfish and nice ling cod. Crabbing remains worthwhile in the ocean and bait for them is plentiful at the local cleaning stations. Surf perch fishing action off area beaches will be peaking in May.

Ice fishers experienced fair to good results at the opener of Diamond Lake on April 25th. A good year ahead is expected.

Powers Pond is scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout.

**Eastern** – Caddis and March Brown hatches are predominate on the lower Deschutes where fishing is fair to good although the trout are running on the small side. Fishing on the stretch from the northern boundary of Warm Springs Reservation to Pelton Dam which opened April 25th was spotty, windy and crowded.

**Central and Eastern Oregon – Pro guide Steve Fleming (1-888-624-9424)** reports that the John Day is a little high but dropping. Spinnerbaits have been taking smallmouth with the action improving daily as the water recedes.

Odell was fishing well in windy conditions for opening day. Some large Mackinaw were taken on the troll.

Davis Lake, which has recently become accessible, is reported as fishing well.

**Pro guide Steve Fleming (1-888-624-9424)** reports, John Day River smallmouth anglers will find challenging conditions during snowmelt. Don't expect big numbers but the fish are of quality size.

**SW Washington –** Spring chinook catches are still light in most district rivers but steelhead are still a viable option on the Cowlitz. Salmon catches should show improvement this week with warming temperatures but returns are expected to be low on some streams and regulation modifications are in place on some. Check regulations before heading out.

With Bonneville Dam passage finally showing improvement, the Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries have been jumpstarted. Trollers should expect fair action, depending on the number of passing adults, into the next 2 weeks.

**Columbia River Fishing Report –** With the shut-down of the Columbia and frankly the continued disappointing returns reflected at the Bonneville fish passage window, we don't have much fun to report about on the mainstem Columbia. As of 4/29, passage at Bonneville has nearly reached 17,000 adults. That's compared to nearly 30,000 by this time last year. Oddly, jack counts are about 5 times as large already this year as last but it's still way too early to be calling for a great jack return which translates into a good adult return in 2010. Looked what happened when we predicted good adult returns for this year.....

It is odd to mis-model the 4-year old adult returns with such a strong jack count from last year. Once chinook reach jack size in the ocean, mortality goes way down since they are not small little silvery fish that everything feeds on in the ocean. Must have been those Humboldt squid that have been so prevalent off our coast the last few years. Those things suck, they eat everything!

Upriver of Bonneville, the fishery is open just until the 30<sup>th</sup> but anglers have been catching chinook in the wind and Drano Lake fisheries. Also, ODF&W creel checks indicate a good catch from bank anglers above The Dalles Dam for adult chinook; 35 keepers for 199 bank rods and 5 hatchery fish for 15 boats in the same stretch. Sorry, we honestly don't have any more information on this fishery, we just gleaned it from the ODF&W creel report.

Sturgeon effort was on the rise with the closing of the salmon season. A few keepers were taken by boats in the gorge (2 keepers for 6 boats) but with flows still high and temperatures still on the cold side, it may still be a few weeks before the bite picks up. As we stated in the abbreviated version of the newsletter, the sanctuary goes into effect on May 1<sup>st</sup> so anglers are not allowed to fish above Marker 85 in the gorge for sturgeon.

Anglers are reminded that a short closure for sturgeon exists downstream of the Wauna Powerlines to Buoy 10 from May 1 – 8.

Walleye anglers are in pursuit of keepers but it appears most successful walleye fishers released more than they retained last week. The creel check indicated 6 kept, 9 released for 9 boats over the weekend.

**The Guide's Forecast –** There isn't a lot to look forward to on the Columbia this week. High, cold water will keep the sturgeon down and with salmon season closed with no sign of a re-opener, well, how about those walleye?

Smallmouth bass fishing can get pretty good in The Dalles Pool this time of year but again, with the high, cold water coming down the river, that fishery is likely to be slow as well. How about that, in the height of the spring chinook run, we only get to highlight a frickin' bass fishery?

Just to add insult to injury, House Bill 2734, the SAFE 4 Salmon bill in the Oregon State legislature bit the dust the other day. Sportanglers had high hopes of changing the fish management policy on the mainstem Columbia but apparently, the status quo is good enough for some of our legislators.....I guess it's more reports on the Columbia River bass fishery.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – Thursday, April 30th, the last day for spring Chinook fishing on the lower Willamette was rewarding for many anglers. An average of nearly 150 springers per day have crossed the Falls over the past 10 days pushing the year-to-date total over the 2,500 mark. Upper river anchor fishers have reported little success with springers so far this season, but the algae has yet to show, the river is in decent condition and numbers of Chinook are improving.

McKenzie flows have dropped below 4,000 cfs with the water temperature fairly stable in the mid 40s.

Fishing on the Santiam system remains slow to fair but will improve as summer steelhead and spring Chinook work their way up the Willamette.

**The Guide's Forecast** – While a few boats and bank anglers are trying for steelhead in the lower river, there is more interest in surgeon fishing. Have a variety of baits available and remain mobile to find larger fish. Despite the fact it's getting late for March Brown hatches, trout have been actively rising to them on the Middle Willamette. Smallmouth bass fishing is been good in the lower and middle Willamette and will improve as the water warms.

Fly fishers are doing well on the McKenzie with the water in excellent shape. March Browns continue to be the predominate hatches in the afternoon.

A few summer steelhead have been taken on the South Santiam by anglers using bobber & jig. No reports of springers yet but with the numbers that have crossed at the Falls recently, it won't be long. Counts at Foster Dam on the South Santiam indicate 89 winter steelhead and 33 summers has entered the trap. The majority of summer fish are being recycled downstream.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – The Clackamas is at good level and flow but fishing has been slow. Be aware that, with the Willamette closed for spring Chinook, the deadline for fishing them on the Clack is the Highway 99 Bridge.

Spring Chinook angling has been slow to fair on the Sandy River with catches expected to improve as we move into the month of May.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – It's still transition time on the north coast with much of our waterways a bit deserted these days. A few spring chinook anglers were working the upper bay this weekend, including yours truly. Of the 4 boats fishing on Saturday, one boat reported a possible bite on herring. We didn't touch anything on plugs or spinners that day. There are now reports of as many as 5 spring chinook taken from Tillamook Bay. That's both in the upper and lower reaches.

Sturgeon effort has also dropped off even further. It's probably a good thing since most keepers are likely to exit the estuary in favor of more productive feeding grounds in the lower Columbia River this time of year. We just need the temperature to rise a bit more to expect anything good to come from it.

Only a rare driftboat rows the rivers these days but catches are rare with an occasional spawned out winter steelhead hitting plugs or drifted baits. Summer steelhead should start showing in better numbers although overall plants have been tapering in the recent years. Spring chinook should also become available on the Wilson, Trask and Nestucca Rivers and will likely be holding in only the deepest, darkest holes in the lower stretches of these rivers. Backbounced baits will draw an occasional strike but plenty of smolts will also be competing for your baits as well. The good news is, you shouldn't have much competition these days.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Weak tides should put angler interest in the lower reaches of Tillamook Bay over the weekend. Although we're still a few weeks away from higher expectations, there should be a few salmon willing to sacrifice themselves this time of year. Persistence should pay off and the fish are generally of quality size. Use herring along the jetty and if you have the proper sized vessel, offshore bottomfishing should be productive as well. Last year at this time, we used Berkley Gulp! shrimp and took great numbers of black seabass on dinner reef out of Garibaldi.

Sturgeon fishing is not a great option with the poor tide series we're coming into.

Ocean crabbing should be improving both north and south of Tillamook Bay. Nearshore halibut season opens on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Drifting the river will likely be a waste of time this week. Low flows will certainly put salmon and steelhead in the deepest of holes which will concentrate their numbers but they will be pretty line shy in the low, clear water conditions now existent on the north coast.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Offshore conditions are predicted to be very friendly on Friday this week off the central Oregon coast for those who can slip out on a weekday to cross the bar. Nearshore halibut will be open and while rockfish and lingcod angling will be good, the latter species may not be on board with halibut. Rock and jetty fishing will also be worthwhile but conditions are forecast to deteriorate into the weekend.

Starting Friday, May 1st, anglers may retain seven rockfish per day but the ling cod limit remains two per day 24 inches or better in length. Steelheading has been slow in the upper river with most of the fish present spawned out. All steelhead must be released starting May 1st.

Talks are underway to rebuild the dam at Valsetz on the Siletz River. If you have an opinion one way or the other, it would be a good idea to make your voice heard at the meeting on May 7th from 7:00 to 8:30 PM at the Monmouth Library, 168 S. Ecols, Monmouth. Free and open to the public, a discussion will be held and comments heard following a brief presentation.

Crabbing has been very slow in Yaquina Bay for Dungeness, fair to good for red rock crab.

Spring Chinook fishing has been fair on the Umpqua mainstem below Yellow Creek with best results on days when the water temperature is rising. Shad are being caught around Elkton and at Yellow Creek. Steelheading has been slow in the North Umpqua although there are a few springers around. The South Umpqua reopens to bass and trout fishing on May 23rd. A few anglers trying are reporting an improvement in sturgeon fishing at Winchester Bay. Crabbing has been slow to fair.

The Coos and Coquille rivers close to winter steelhead angling on May 1st.

While the lower Rogue showed slight improvement in spring Chinook catches recently, rain is needed to improve the flow and add some color to the clear water. Precipitation in the coming weekend

should improve prospects and possibly put bank anglers, who have been idle in these conditions, back in the game. The fish ladder at Savage Rapids, out of commission for three weeks due to construction in the process of removing the dam here, is back in operation so fish are once again passing through the Gold Hill stretch of the Rogue.

Some of the best bottom fishing of the year is available to anglers launching out of the Port of Brookings with fish available near shore at this time of year. Boaters would be wise to get an early start, nab an early limit of rockfish and possibly lings as well, then duck back into port while the seas are still fairly calm. The Chetco River is closed to all fishing until May 23rd.

Ice fishers did fairly well over opening weekend at Diamond Lake. The lake is expected to remain frozen for another two weeks or so.

A youth fishing event will be held on Saturday, May 2 at Reinhart Pond in Grant Pass from 9 AM. to 1 PM The pond will be stocked and the Crater Bass Club and ODFW staff will provide fishing equipment and angling instruction.

**Central and Eastern Oregon – Pro guide Steve Fleming (1-888-624-9424)** reports from the John Day, "Been fishing everyday but Sunday. the river blew out last Wednesday was 10,000 CFS, 50 degree water, and went to 13,000 during the day. We still sent and caught 2 fish (17" and 20 1/2"), by throwing spinnerbaits at the bank where the semi-clean water was. Went back to the river Saturday and caught a couple of fish and lost a big one at the boat. Went yesterday at 6000 CFS, 45 degree water, and caught 6 with one 18" in the bunch. The river will continue to stay around 5000 CFS, and will produce good fish for the next week. But probably not many, 3-5 per person."

Davis Lake has been accessible but snow is still possible off and on so checking with ODOT regarding road conditions is a good idea. Fishing for bass has been good with the water temperature in the mid-50s.

Lake Billy Chinook has continued to produce bull trout to 10 pounds and Mackinaw pushing 20pounds to trollers running swim baits. Odell has also been good for large Macks.

Lake Simtustus has been fair to good for trout and kokanee with catches running about half and half.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

**From the WDF&W Weekender Report April 29<sup>th</sup> – May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

### **North Puget Sound**

With the blackmouth season coming to a close, anglers are turning their attention to other fishing opportunities in Puget Sound, where the halibut fishery is under way and the popular shrimp season gets started May 2. Meanwhile, freshwater anglers can cast for trout at numerous lowland lakes, which were recently stocked with fish.

The **lowland lakes trout** season opened April 25, and stalwart anglers did well at several lakes throughout the region. "The blustery weather kept some people hunkered down, so the boat ramps were not as busy for this opener," said Jon Anderson, a WDFW fish biologist, who compiled results from creel checks across the state. "But there were some pretty good catch rates and nice-sized fish caught."

According to creel checks, the lake that produced the largest catch in the region was Whatcom County's Silver Lake, where 136 anglers took home 550 trout and released 151. In terms of the highest catch rates, Skagit County's Erie Lake tops the list. Sixty anglers averaged nearly 4.8 trout on opening day.

Elsewhere, anglers in King County averaged 4.5 trout per rod at Steel Lake, while those at North Lake averaged 3.4 fish per rod. Anglers fishing Snohomish County's Howard Lake averaged 4.2 trout per rod and those at Riley Lake averaged 3.1 fish per rod. At Skagit County's Heart Lake, anglers averaged nearly 3.7 fish per rod, while those fishing Cain Lake in Whatcom County averaged 3.6 trout per rod.

For a rundown of catch numbers throughout the state, visit WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/do/newreal/release.php?id=apr2709a>.

Under statewide rules, anglers have a daily limit of five trout on most lakes. Released legal-sized trout, caught with bait, count toward the daily bag limit. Complete information on stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available on WDFW's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>).

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

Beginning May 1, anglers in the region also will have an opportunity to drop a line for other bottomfish, such as **lingcod** and **cabezon**. 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. For cabezon, anglers will have a daily limit of two fish and there is no minimum size limit.

Don't forget those shrimp pots. The shrimp season opens May 2 in Puget Sound. Here are the fishing schedules for the northern Puget Sound region:

- Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) will open at 7 a.m. and will be open Wednesdays through Saturdays until the quota is reached.
- Marine Areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner), 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) will be open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays and Wednesdays. They will remain open until quotas for those areas are reached, or until May 31, whichever comes first.

More details on the shrimp fishery 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**

**Hood Canal Bridge closure:** People heading to the northern Olympic Peninsula in upcoming weeks should note that starting May 1, the Hood Canal Bridge will be closed through mid-June. The Washington State Department of Transportation offers a number of transportation options to help drivers during this time. Information is available at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR104HoodCanalBridgeEast/2009closure.htm>

The weather was cool, but anglers still caught a fair number of fish on trout season's opening day. In the weeks ahead, shrimp season will get under way May 2 in most areas of Puget Sound, and halibut and lingcod fisheries are expanding to more areas.

If results from opening day are any indication, trout anglers in the region should have a successful fishing season. According to reports, Horseshoe and Island lakes in Kitsap County produced nearly five fish per angler, while Rapjohn Lake in Pierce County, Munn Lake in Thurston County, Wildcat Lake in Kitsap County, and Clara (Don) and Stump lakes in Mason County yielded more than three fish per rod. The fishing effort was down somewhat in Grays Harbor due to off-and-on rainy conditions, but the Vance Creek Ponds and Aberdeen and Failor lakes produced some nice-sized fish, with an average length of 24 inches.

Weekly reports and information on WDFW trout-stocking are 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>

On the saltwater, recreational **shrimp** fishing opens Saturday, May 2 in most areas of Puget Sound. An exception is the Discovery Bay Shrimp District near Port Townsend, which will remain closed to both spot and non-spot shrimp fishing this year.

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.
- 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.
- Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) will be open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays - 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.

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/shellfish/shrimpreg>

Along the Strait of Juan de Fuca, recreational **halibut** anglers in the Port Angeles area (Marine Area 6) reeled in 28 of the flatfish over the April 25-26 weekend. In May, those with a competitive streak can try for a \$5,000 first prize at the 9th Annual Halibut Derby sponsored by the Port Angeles Salmon Club. The two-day derby will be held May 23-24 near the Dungeness Spit. Ticket information is available at <http://www.swainsinc.com/> or (360) 452-2357.

Halibut fishing in marine areas 6-11 and 13 is open five days a week Thursday through Monday and will close June 5. In the weeks ahead, halibut fishing will expand to the following areas:

- **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 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/>.

On the coast, the **lingcod** fishery in Marine Area 4 (Neah Bay) got under way April 16 and most people are catching their two-fish daily limit, said Scott Barbour, WDFW fish biologist. "The fishing's been very good at Neah Bay and La Push, with lots of limits and some big fish," Barbour said. One ling caught off Neah Bay weighed in at 38 pounds and many have been in the 20s, he said.

Anglers will have more opportunities to fish for lingcod - as well as **rockfish** and **cabezon** - when the fishery gets under way May 1 in marine areas 5-13. The hook-and-line season for lingcod runs May 1 through June 15 with a daily limit of one fish. For rockfish, anglers must keep the first legal rockfish caught.

Barbour 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.

The minimum length for lingcod is 22 inches in marine areas 1-3 and 24 inches in Marine Area 4. The minimum length for lingcod in marine areas 5-13 is 26 inches with a maximum length of 40 inches. Retention of canary and yelloweye rockfish is prohibited in all waters. For more information on regulations and restrictions, anglers are advised to call the Fishing Hotline at (360) 902-2500 or check the 2009-10 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

On the Olympic Peninsula, the Hoh River below the mouth of Willoughby Creek will open for **salmon** fishing May 16 through Aug. 31, Wednesdays through Sundays only. Anglers are limited to six fish per day; only one adult may be retained. All wild chinook must be released.

Anglers should note that the statewide opening date for stream fishing has changed from June 1 to the first Saturday of the month, which falls on June 6 this year. Many popular regional streams and rivers are affected by this regulation, including the Bogachiel, Chehalis, Hoh, Sol Duc, Wishkah and Wynoochee rivers. Other fishing rule changes that go into effect this year are available on p.15 of the new 2009-10 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet, which is available at WDFW offices and license dealers across the state and online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>

## Southwest Washington

Anglers are turning their attention to area tributaries now that all sections of the Columbia River below McNary Dam are either closed or set to close for spring chinook fishing. The mainstem fisheries below Bonneville Dam closed in mid-April, and the last day of fishing upriver to McNary Dam is April 30.

"We're definitely seeing an increase in angler effort and catch on the tributaries now that the season on the mainstem is at an end," said Pat Frazier, WDFW regional fishery manager. "Fishing is better on some rivers than others, but catch rates for **spring chinook** should pick up overall in the next few weeks."

Creel surveys conducted during the week ending April 26 found 30 boat anglers with eight adult springers and 116 bank anglers with three. On the Wind River, 90 boat anglers had 15 fish and 103 anglers on Drano Lake had six. Frazier noted that spring chinook fishing has been slow on the Kalama River, although anglers are still picking up some hatchery **steelhead**. Only one adult chinook salmon may be retained per day on the Kalama and Lewis rivers, due to low returns predicted for hatchery fish.

While those fisheries gather steam, fishery managers from Washington and Oregon are keeping a close eye on spring chinook counts at Bonneville Dam to determine whether any additional openings may be possible. As of April 27, a total of 15,477 adult spring chinook had been counted crossing the dam, compared to the recent five-year average of 34,730 fish.

"Right now, the numbers are well below expectations," said Cindy LeFleur, WDFW Columbia River Policy Coordinator. "But we've seen late runs in the recent past, and we'll have a better idea of this year's return within the next couple of weeks."

Meanwhile, anglers planning to fish for spring chinook at Drano Lake or the Wind River should 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 with bait 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 a mess of **trout**? The lowland lakes trout season is off and running after a cold, blustery opening day. Rowland Lake in Klickitat County had the highest average catch in the southwest region, producing 3.14 fish per angler. Swift Reservoir in Skamania County was a close second, with 3.04 fish per angler. At Plummer Lake in Lewis County, anglers averaged three trout apiece.

"It's safe to say that there are still lots of big rainbows and other trout left in lakes throughout the region," said John Weinheimer, a WDFW fish biologist. "And we plan to keep planting more as the season goes on."

Fish stocking details, by county and lake, are available in the Hatchery Trout Stocking Plan on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>.

**Sturgeon** are also still an option. Boat and bank anglers are catching legal-sized fish in the Bonneville Pool. However, the retention fishery for sturgeon is now closed in The Dalles Pool and the John Day Pool.

## Eastern Washington

The only lake in the state to produce catch limits for all anglers on the April 25 lowland lake opener was southwest Spokane County's Williams Lake. "I expected **cutthroat trout** fishing at Williams to be excellent and **rainbow trout** fishing to be pretty good, and it was," said WDFW District Fish Biologist Chris Donley.

Donley said the largest rainbow checked at Williams on the opener was 23-1/2 inches and the largest cutthroat was 15-1/2 inches. The fishery should hold up throughout most of the five-month season, because it has been well-stocked, mostly with fry that grow well in the lake, he noted. A total of 92,000 rainbow fry and 45,000 cutthroat fry went in last year. This spring Williams also received 10,000 catchable-size rainbows, 1,473 triploid rainbows, and 400 excess hatchery rainbow broodstock.

WDFW Regional Fish Program Manager John Whalen said anglers who braved cool, windy, and sometimes rainy conditions during the opener did well at several other lakes in the region.

Anglers at Cedar Lake in Stevens County averaged almost four rainbow trout each, with most running about 11 inches and some up to 18 inches. Cedar is well-stocked each year with over 18,000 rainbow trout fry that grow well and keep fishing productive through October.

Anglers at Badger Lake in southwest Spokane County averaged almost four trout each, with rainbows up to 22 inches and cutthroat 11 to 13 inches. Badger is also heavily stocked with fry (47,500 rainbows and 30,000 cutthroat last year and 7,500 catchables, 982 triploids, and 400 broodstock this spring).

Deep Lake in Stevens County produced an average of 3.7 rainbow trout per angler on the opener, with most fish running 10 to 11 inches. Fish Lake in Spokane County (site of the state record 14-pound tiger trout caught last spring) saw a 3.6-fish average catch, and the largest landed was a 24-inch tiger trout.

Anglers at Rocky Lake in Stevens County averaged 2.7 fish on the opener, most 10-1/2-inch rainbows with the largest measured at 15 inches. Spokane County's Clear Lake produced a 2-1/2 fish average catch, including rainbow, brown and tiger trout.

Opening day anglers averaged a little more than two fish each at Diamond Lake in Pend Oreille County, where most rainbows are 14 inches and the largest measured was almost 22 inches. Brown trout at Diamond Lake average just under 10 inches and run up to 18 inches. Waitts Lake in Stevens County had a 1.7-fish average catch, with the largest rainbow at 23 inches and the largest brown trout at 21 inches.

Lincoln County's Fishtrap Lake produced 1.5 fish per angler on the opener, with the largest rainbow measured at 23 inches. Ellen Lake in Ferry County saw a 1.4-fish average catch, mostly nine- to 10-inch rainbows.

Donley said the most disappointing fishery this opening day was a long-time favorite - West Medical Lake in Spokane County. Just two years ago almost all opening day anglers caught catch limits there, but this year anglers averaged less than one trout each.

"West Medical is a candidate for rehabilitation this fall," he said. "Pumpkinseed sunfish have established a dense population that appears to be limiting trout growth and we might even have some goldfish infestation. I knew this year's fishery would not be on par with past seasons, but I didn't think it would be this poor."

**Spring chinook salmon** fishing opened April 24 in the south end of the region on a portion of the Snake River from the Texas Rapids boat launch upstream to the Corps of Engineers boat launch about a mile upstream of Little Goose Dam. However, the chinook run is very late, said WDFW District Fish Biologist Glen Mendel.

"The highest Little Goose dam count so far has been just 26 fish a day," Mendel said. "They're starting to show up lower in the river, but they're very late compared to past years and few in number so far. The highest Ice Harbor Dam count to date was just over 100 fish."

Mendel still hopes to be able to expand the chinook fishery to other portions of the Snake through emergency rule, but if the late run also ends up short of fish, it may not happen. Mendel suggests salmon fishers should keep watching the Snake River dam counts, available at the Columbia River Data Access in Real Time website at <http://www.cbr.washington.edu/dart/adult.html>. The daily catch limit is just one hatchery-marked chinook.

### **Northcentral Washington**

Despite what WDFW district fish biologist Bob Jateff calls "a little unsettled weather," Okanogan County's Pearrygin Lake produced an average catch rate of almost a limit of trout for anglers on the April 25 fishing season opener. Out of 44 anglers checked that morning, 151 **rainbow trout** were kept and 63 were released, making for a 4.86 trout per angler average. Rainbows at Pearrygin are currently running 11 to 14 inches.

Other Okanogan County lakes also produced well on the opener and will continue to provide good catches. Conconully Lake anglers averaged 3.76 fish each, with yearling rainbows running 10 to 12 inches, carryovers up to 15 inches, and triploids up to 16 inches. Leader Lake averaged 3.5 fish per angler, mostly 11-to-13-inch rainbows with triploids to 16 inches. Fish Lake averaged 2.7 fish per angler when the released rainbows are included in the count; a higher than usual percentage of the fish were small, in the eight to nine-inch range. Conconully Reservoir anglers averaged about two trout each, most 10-to-12-inch yearlings with some triploids up to 16 inches. Alta Lake also averaged almost two fish per angler, when released rainbows are included; the yearlings there average nine to 11 inches, with carryovers up to 15 inches and a few larger fish up to 17 inches.

Two Okanogan County waters under selective gear rules and a one-fish daily catch limit also provided good action, "at least for those who could stand the wind and occasional rain," Jateff reported. Big Twin Lake anglers caught and released an average of five 12-to-16-inch rainbows, and the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area's Blue Lake yielded a little over three 12-to-15-inch rainbows per angler, almost all caught and released. Blue has a few rainbows running up to 18 inches.

One Okanogan County lake that was not checked by WDFW on opening day because of few anglers is Wannacut, four miles southwest of Oroville. Jateff says Wannacut gets better as the season progresses and fishing success should pick up considerably from mid-May through the month of July.

Opening day turnout and catch rates were down at Jameson Lake in Douglas County, but Jateff says it, too, should pick up in the coming weeks. Fifty anglers were checked on April 25 with 27 rainbows, most nine-to-11-inch yearlings and a few triploids up to 16 inches.

In Chelan County, WDFW district fish biologist Art Viola reported persistent cold weather, snow, muddy roads and still-ice-covered lakes on the opener. Some lakes, including Beehive and Spring Hill reservoirs, didn't get stocked with hatchery catchable fish yet.

"Early morning effort at Wapato Lake was similar to the past six years but many anglers left early because of cold, windy conditions," Viola said. "The catch per angler rate of 2.5 fish was much improved from last year and all fish were healthy and robust; with 13-14-inch yearlings and a few 18-inchers."

Viola said angler effort at Clear Lake was up about 20 percent compared to past years, but there, too, windy conditions drove many fishermen off the lake early. Anglers at Clear averaged almost three fish each, most pretty small at nine to 10 inches with some 18-inch triploids. Year-round

Roses Lake north of Manson in Chelan County just received 1,000 one-and-a-half-pound triploid rainbows.

Columbia Basin lakes that opened April 25 saw increased participation, at least among shore anglers. WDFW regional fish program manager Jeff Korth reported windy conditions kept boat anglers off more waters than not, and probably depressed overall catch rates at the larger waters checked.

Korth also noted that typical Basin sunshine throughout opening day drew, as usual, more western Washington anglers than eastsiders. Warden, Park and Blue lakes all averaged nearly three trout per angler. Blue and Park catches were mostly 12-inch rainbows from last year's fingerling plants, with about 10 percent of the catch in 15-inch carryovers. Warden Lake catches were mostly 13-inch rainbows from last year's fingerling plants, with about eight percent in 15-inch carryovers and a couple of 17-to-20-inch tiger trout.

Other lakes in the region that opened earlier are still providing good fishing.

Three catch-and-release waters under selective gear rules (but electric motors allowed) in Okanogan County - Big Green near Omak, Rat near Brewster, and Davis near Winthrop - are yielding 11-13-inch rainbow trout with carryover fish to 15 inches. Brown trout can also be caught in Rat Lake. Spectacle Lake near Loomis continues to provide good fishing for rainbow trout 11-13 inches with carryover fish to 15 inches.

Jateff reports recent plants of catchable-size rainbow trout in year-round Sidley Lake near the Canada border should provide good fishing during May and June. Sidley has a two fish daily limit and when using bait, the first two fish caught are counted as part of the daily limit, whether kept or released.

"Fishing at Rufus Woods Lake should improve considerably as water temperatures continue to warm," Jateff said. "Triploid rainbow are the predominant species and there is a two fish daily limit. Recent plants of rainbow by the Colville Tribe should boost catch rates. These fish are marked with a green-colored floy tag, just below the dorsal fin and it's important that fishermen who retain tagged fish contact the Colville Tribe to relay information about location, date, and tag numbers."

### **Southcentral Washington**

The region's many year-round **trout** fisheries continue to provide good action and are periodically re-stocked with catchable-size rainbows from WDFW fish hatcheries. Most recently, Naches Hatchery crews stocked Kittitas County's Kiwanis Pond with 611 one-half to one-third-pound rainbows and Woodhouse Ponds with 1,404 similar-sized rainbows. In Yakima County, Granger Pond just received 598 one-third pound rainbows and Tieton Ranger Pond got 520.

Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist from Yakima, relayed recent reports of good **crappie** fishing at several of the I-82 Ponds in Yakima County.

"Crappie are being caught on small crappie jigs at Ponds 4, 5 and 7, and they're running mostly six to eight inches," Cummins said. "I also hear a few **largemouth bass** and **bluegills** are being caught in those three ponds. Bass fishing should pick up as the weather warms. Ponds 1, 2 and 6 also hold some nice bass."

Depending on run counts, a Yakima River **spring chinook salmon** fishing season could be announced any day. Anglers should watch for that emergency rule change at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

### **Reader E-mail**

Good buddy Ken Johnson reports from the northwest Oregon coast during the recent minus tidal

series earlier this week, "Super tides and the beaches are producing.

"Weather has been perfect and clear, so far!?"

"This "is" a great place to live, I just have to say!"



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

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### **Random Links**

Spring fishing forecast highlights some new opportunities 2009 Zone-by-Zone Oregon spring fishing forecast: <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2009/april/042109c.asp>

A list of upcoming Youth Fishing Events from the ODFW:

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/outdoor\\_skills/youth\\_events.asp](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/outdoor_skills/youth_events.asp)

**GOOD LUCK!**