

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 8th – May 14th, 2009**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- It's becoming evident that the Columbia River spring chinook run was grossly over-predicted this spring as passage numbers continue to concern biologists. Spring chinook will continue to be tallied through mid-June but we should be seeing peak passage this week. There is next to no chance for another sport opener prior to the summer chinook fishery. Jack counts are nearly double the 10-year average and 5 times last years total for this same time but future season structure is likely to change dramatically if this years run is significantly off.

A select few realized good sturgeon catches in the gorge late last week. With the sanctuary deadline at Marker 85 now in place, keepers will be harder to come by but will fall to smelt in the softer water.

Spring chinook counts picked up again at Willamette Falls, pushing the total to 2,700 while only 1,350 summer steelhead have crossed. Water temperature is in the mid 50's. Sturgeon fishing in the lower river has been fair and a few steelhead have been caught in the lower river where chinook fishing has closed. Shad may begin to show in the coming week if water temperatures continue to warm.

Recent rainfall had the McKenzie out of shape at mid-week but it will be dropping as the weather moderates.

The North Santiam is high but with fishing expected to improve through May and into June.

The Clackamas and Sandy are just starting to produce the occasional summer steelhead and springer. Both rivers will be improving into May but are now high and off color.

A free youth fishing event will take place at McNary Channel Ponds near Hermiston on Saturday, May 9th from 9 AM to noon with Registration at 8:30 AM. The ODFW will provide tackle and bait for youth who don't have their own gear with staff and volunteers available to help where needed.

Bethany Pond, Canby Pond, Commonwealth Lake, Dorman Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Silver Creek Reservoir, Carmen Reservoir, Clear Lake, Detroit Reservoir, Dexter Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Fall Creek, Foster Reservoir, Freeway Lake East, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River, Salmon Creek and the Middle Fork Willamette River above Hills Creek Reservoir are scheduled for trout planting.

Northwest – With steelhead on the out, anglers will now focus efforts on spring chinook beginning to show in the district. Recent rains has driftboaters excited to hook into river salmon on the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Although still weeks away from peak fishing, hatchery springers should be present in all these river systems. With another system forecasted to hit mid-week, rivers could be out until the weekend.

The offshore halibut season south of Cape Falcon produced poorly for the few boats seeking nearshore halibut. Saltwater anglers fishing out of Astoria fared well but anglers had to weed through a lot of small fish before finding decent sized keepers.

Bottomfishing was good for those targeting the reefs with herring and shrimp flies producing the best.

Ocean crabbing was fair to good out of Garibaldi with keepers in prime shape for tablefare. When fresh shad become available, success rates should pick up.

The weekend tide series will produce good clamming and sturgeon anglers working Tillamook Bay may also find fair success.

Carter Lake, Munsel Lake and Sutton Lake are scheduled to be stocked with trout.

Southwest – The minus tide series will provide clamming opportunities this coming weekend.

ODFW officials are discussing the possibility of opening select coastal rivers to the harvest of wild coho as has been allowed on Siltcoos and Tahkenitch lakes over the past several years.

Boats launching out of Charleston over the past weekend made good catches of rockfish and ling cod and experienced decent ocean crabbing.

Rain through Thursday this week will keep the Rogue out of shape but a dry spell is forecast thereafter. Anglers are optimistic that there will be springers to be caught.

When the ocean last laid down, boats launching out of the Port of Brookings found rockfish near the surface in many places just outside the jaws. Surf perch fishing is excellent at area beaches.

Diamond Lake fished well on opening day, May 1st, although with 20 inches of ice and snow on the water, anglers may expect two more weeks of ice fishing here.

Scheduled for trout planting are Bluebill Lake, Bradley Lake, Eel Lake, Middle and Lower Empire Lake, Millicoma Pond, Powers Pond, Saunders Lake, Sru Lake, North and South Tenmile Lakes, Expo Pond, Reinhart Pond, Emigrant Reservoir, Medco Pond, Spaulding Pond, Burma Pond and Dutch Herman Pond.

Eastern – Pro guide Steve Fleming (888-624-9424) reports the John Day slow for numbers of smallmouth bass but good for size with some real jumbos being landed recently.

While fishing on the lower Deschutes has been worthwhile with Blue-Winged Olives hatching during cloudy periods, Trout Creek is spewing mud so the river is roiled below the mouth.

Bass fishing on the John Day will remain challenging with the flows up but large adults should be available for the next few weeks when flows subside. Last Thursday, Tom Nelson landed a huge 23.5" smallmouth bass on the river using a spinnerbait.

SW Washington – Historically, spring chinook begin to make a strong showing in district rivers but salmon fishing remains poor in most tributaries. The Kalama River however continues to produce fair catches of steelhead and should continue to do so into June.

The Cowlitz River should pick up for steelhead as well in the coming weeks and managers are optimistic about the spring chinook run coming in.

Wind River and Drano Lake anglers were averaging about a fish for every 6 or 7 rods including fish released last week. This fishery is highly dependent on fish passage at Bonneville Dam so watch the fish counts throughout the week.

Columbia River Fishing Report – With retention closed for salmon on the Columbia, all we can really get excited about is the number of fish passing by the fish viewing window these days. Adult passage continues to worry us but the jack counts look very exciting. Of course, we said that last year too. None-the-less, jack counts are off the charts and may be on par for surpassing the great jack count of 1999 which led to a huge harvest in the year 2000. Stand-by on that one but sorry, it's the only real exciting thing to report from the Columbia River.

Sturgeon anglers working the gorge last week found a few, and I do mean a few concentrated pockets of keeper sturgeon. Some quality keepers were caught but action won't stay like that for very long and a lot of quality sturgeon water is now in the restricted zone above Marker 85. Sturgeon fishing picked up in other parts of the Columbia however with the Portland to Longview stretch of the Columbia tallying 11 keepers and 127 shorts for 54 boats. Water temperatures are finally beginning to stimulate sturgeon activity. Smelt is the key bait and one angler reported using Winco smelt, cut in half as a big producer in his last week's catch.

Estuary sturgeon fishers have been next to non-existent, likely due to the closure to retention until May 8th. Look to the forecast section for what you can expect when it re-opens on the 9th.

Walleye anglers are after them but not getting results in big numbers. When flows subside, pressure and success should pick up a bit more.

Bottomfishers out of Astoria fared well on last weeks weaker tides. Anglers working the south jetty did really well for black seabass and some quality lingcod were also taken. All conditions have to come together for a harvest like this. Wind, current and ocean conditions have everything to do with angler success in this fishery.

Halibut anglers out of Astoria fared well for chickens with very few fish over 15 pounds reported. Anglers that were really willing to cull through the catches did bring in a few larger fish into the 30-pound range.

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon action should continue to pick up as the water warms. The cold front on us now however may chill the bite for another week. Smelt will certainly be a key bait and anglers will have to locate keepers downstream of Marker 85 if you are fishing in the gorge. Downstream, anglers in the Portland to Longview stretch should continue to see improving conditions and don't hesitate to fish shallower, slower running slots as keepers will be working freshwater clam beds in these areas.

Estuary anglers shouldn't expect much on the May 9th opener but knowledgeable anglers fishing upstream of Tongue Point should find a few fish if they work for them. Most keepers will be migrating into the area later into May if the flows remain high and the temperatures remain cool.

The ocean forecast alludes to small windows of opportunity on Friday and Sunday as well as early next week for bottomfishers and halibut chasers. The ocean weather of course is even more volatile than atmospheric weather so always check the last minute conditions. The ocean crabbing may also be good if you have good bait to chase them with.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – With the water temperature at Willamette Falls just over 55 degrees, spring Chinook passage is improving. Over 1,250 springers crossed on May 3rd alone, bringing the total as of that date to nearly 4,300. Summer steelhead

counts are picking up but the total thus far is only 1,554. While the lower Willamette is closed to springer fishing, the river above the Falls is open seven days a week.

With spring Chinook numbers picking up at Willamette Falls, anglers are looking forward to seeing them show up on the McKenzie.

The North Santiam is too high to fish and with Detroit high enough to require water release, it will be some time before the river is fishable. Just over 140 summer steelhead have been counted at Foster Dam, with spring Chinook yet to show.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is hosting a free youth angling events Saturday, May 9th at Commonwealth Pond in Cedar Hills near Beaverton and at Sunnyside Park Pond near Sweet Home. The Commonwealth activities will take place from 9 AM until 2 PM while fishing will take place from 8 AM until Noon at Sunnyside Park. These locations will be well-stocked for youngsters prior to the events. Tackle will be available to those who have none and volunteers will help and advise kids if necessary. Both events are free.

The Guide's Forecast – Anglers plying the upper and Middle Fork Willamette usually sit on anchor with spinners or prawn rigs. One confirmed upriver Chinook came on bobber and eggs, however, and a few others have been hooked recently on spinners. It's common to see springers rolling now and historically this fishery is best from mid-May through mid- June. In the lower river, as water rises and turns muddy, sturgeon will be the primary target. Fresh bait will catch more fish than frozen and sand shrimp have been successful recently. Try from St. Johns down to the Toyota Hole.

Give the McKenzie a few days to drop and clear. It's high and muddy with the rain that fell this week.

The Santiams may be fishable in a week or so.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Bank fishers are took fresh steelhead over the past weekend at riverside on drift rigs. The Clackamas is around 17 feet and swift but visibility is fair as of this writing on the afternoon of Thursday, May 7th. It is forecast to drop through Friday and should be fishable by the weekend. There are both springers and summer steelhead in the river.

As of the same date, the lower Sandy was high and muddy, Conditions improve upriver but the water is still murky, Fishing should be worthwhile when the water clears.

North Coast Fishing Report – It's still pretty quiet on the rivers and estuaries in Tillamook County but that should soon change. Recent weather has rivers high and colored but they should drop back into shape in short order. Just prior to the river rise on Wednesday, one lone angler reported hooking a spring chinook from his driftboat in the Trask River. It looks like it will be the weekend before driftboating becomes a viable option again.

The bay has been void of anglers for obvious reasons, the weather sucks! Prior to the cold front landing on shore, I fished the ocean for halibut on the May 1st opener. Results were poor for me (no bites) and from what I witnessed, pretty poor for other `butt chasers as well. We also targeted bottomfish in front of the Tillamook Bay entrance only landing one ling (27") and a nice black seabass. Our haul was in Dungeness crab however. We took 2 easy limits of hard shell crab using spring chinook carcasses and clam necks for bait. I am pretty sure we did better than most crabbing in the area.

Steelheaders may want to consider their options this week although we certainly don't appear to be in peak season as **pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)** reports, "There have been a few reports of new steelhead in the river. Both late winter fish as well as a few summer runs. We have not seen the proof, but there have also been a couple of springers hooked on the lower river. That is from a reliable source. We have a bad storm approaching at the moment. After the heavy wind and rain from this May storm, we should see some nice fresh fish in the river. However, that is yet to be seen. Look to the extreme lower river to the head of tide, to pick off the main river fish, as well as the Three Rivers group."

The Guide's Forecast – About the best option going over the weekend will be a return to the river in search of salmon and fresh steelhead. The first good shot of spring chinook should enter the Wilson, Trask and Nestucca Rivers over the weekend although numbers likely won't be great. Experienced anglers should have a fair chance at a salmon this weekend with the Trask the most likely candidate to produce results. Backrolled plugs or backbounced baits should do the trick but you'll have to cover a lot of water to find fish this early in the season. We just don't get ideal water conditions like we're likely to see this late in the season.

Steelheaders should target the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers for hatchery plants of summer run steelhead. Again, numbers won't be great but fish should be available. Bank anglers may try the upper runs on these systems as fish should be well distributed from the recent high water.

A good minus tide series should have clammers out in force in search of bay and beach clams. Razor clam diggers should find good results by the weekend when the surf is likely to lay down.

Sturgeon anglers can also target keepers in Tillamook Bay as they should be well concentrated in the deeper slots of the estuary. The west channel is likely to produce the best results using sand shrimp for bait.

Sporadic bottomfishing opportunities should exist through the weekend with Saturday looking to be the worst day for ocean weather. Fishing should be great for those that can get out. Use caution as this is the time of year when people make mistakes.

Central & South Coast Reports – While nearshore halibut fishing opened inside the 40-fathom line on May 1st, participation is usually light. This may change, however, as rockfish and ling cod may now be caught and kept on board with halibut south of Humbug Mountain. This allows anglers to limit on bottomfish, then try to fill out with halibut. This rule applies even on all depth openers which start May 14th and every Thursday, Friday and Saturday through May. Additional dates will be available if the quota of 124,281 pounds remains unfilled.

Currently unclipped coho may only be kept during the limited fishery at Siltcoos and Tahkenitch lakes. The ODFW has proposed opening the Coos, Coquille and Yaquina rivers to retention of wild coho thanks to a rebounding population of these fishes. The proposal is awaiting approval of the NOAA, however. Stay tuned; when we know, you'll know.

The Siletz River crested on Wednesday this week at about 8.5 at Siletz. It is forecast to be dropping through the weekend. Sea lions can be seen slaughtering salmon at the mouth so springers are trying to enter and a few summers are in the river.

Bottom fishing out of Newport has been worth the trip for rockfish, cabezon and ling cod. With a forecast this Sunday of three-foot swells at 16 second and a seven mph offshore breeze, that's the day to target.

The mainstem of the Umpqua is blown out, putting spring Chinook fishing on hold. High, muddy water is preferred by sturgeon, however. Recent rainfall has caused murky conditions in Winchester Bay and with it, an improvement in sturgeon catches. The water level of the North Umpqua rose but color has stayed good and springer catches have started picking up.

Coos and Coquille rivers are closed to all angling above tidewater.

The Rogue was hit hard by the recent deluge, forcing the level high and leaving the water roiled. The upper river will fish first and a few springers have been caught here recently. Flows will remain strong for a while, however, even as the water clears. The Grants Pass stretch will offer the better fishing once the water drops and clears. Wrapped Kwikfish are likely to be the most productive approach. The lower Rogue should fish by the weekend and anglers are looking forward to finding fresh springers present when it does.

"Watch for the birds" is the advice of local anglers who have been enjoying a phenomenon peculiar to this time of year: rockfish, normally bottom dwellers, are smacking baitfish right on the surface of the ocean out of the Port of Brookings. Birds dive on the areas where rockfish are feeding to get their share of baitfish leftovers. This is a memorable experience using surface lures on light tackle which provides fast and furious action. Seven-fish limits are common and once filled, drop lures to deep water to take ling cod. Stop by one of the cleaning stations before launching to stock up on bait in order to drop crab traps on the way out. Ocean crabbing has been producing decent numbers of hard Dungeness. Sunday will be the best chance to launch with the ocean and wind predicted to be mild. For those limited to bank fishing, enjoy the fine results from area beaches for extra-large surf perch, the limit of which is 15 per angler. The Chetco River re-opens May 23rd.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Pro guide Steve Fleming (888-624-9424) reports, "Last week was a slow week on numbers but we caught some very nice fish. Monday produced an 18" fish on a crankbait; Wednesday produced a 20 /18" smallmouth on a crankbait; Thursday also produced a 20 1/8" smallie on a crankbait, and a huge 23 1/2" X 15" on a spinnerbait; Friday produced a 21 1/2" on a crankbait. So big fish, but not lots of fish. The river has gone back up and a little dirtier, but fishable at this time. It should continue to kick out some big fish, as the temperature is 45 to 46 degrees first thing in the morning."



Davis Lake has been providing decent results for largemouth bass. This fly-fishing only location can really give tackle a workout.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report April 29th – May 12th, 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/shelfish/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 Pearygin 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 Pearygin 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

Subscriber **Roger K** wrote to ask, "I have done a little Springer fishing in TB in past years primarily out of Memaloose in upper bay ...I fish fall fish a lot in ghost hole and coast guard hole..can you tell me if ghost and coast guard would hold sprigners as well using same techniques as fall fish??? Thanx Also, when does the bay fisher begin typically."

TGF co-editor Michael Teague replied, "You are correct that the better spring Chinook fishing is in the upper bay. It's pretty much a spinner trolling show with best results on the outgoing tide. Use caution as the water gets shallow as the tide ebbs.

"Because spring Chinook are bound for the Trask while fall fish are Wilson-bound, they tend to take a different route through the bay. On the incoming tide, trollers work the jetty with herring.

"While there are fewer fish coming in than during the fall run, June is the month to target spring Chinook in Tillamook Bay.

"Let us know how you do and keep an eye on TGF for springer tech."

Good buddy and contributor Kapt Ken Johnson reports, "Razor Clamming seems to be picking up here on the NW Oregon Coast. Another good tide is happening 5/7 thru 5/12 and I highly recommend to anyone, if you have the time to get away, go to your favorite clamming beach and go for it. 1/2 of these Razor's in the photo took 30 minutes to get and the other half, from another beach, Gleneden Beach, took about 40 minutes as they weren't showing there quite as well. One thing noted by all "clammers" in our group. Not a single small 2"-3" clam was dug the whole time at any location. All were "average" size but everyone got 3-4 "HAWGS" in each limit. See you on the beach!"



Ken even sent along a tide chart to show the best times to go. You can find a similar table here: [http://www.oregoncoasttidetables.com/OregonTideTables/Tillamook Bay/Barview](http://www.oregoncoasttidetables.com/OregonTideTables/Tillamook_Bay/Barview)

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

Write to the TGF staff:

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Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Business loses power when bird loses fish:

<http://www.statesmanjournal.com/article/20090430/NEWS/904300345/1001>

It's on - The Northern Pikeminnow Sport-Reward Program:

<http://www.pikeminnow.org/>

GOOD LUCK!