

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **June 26th – July 2nd, 2009**

Willamette Valley/Metro - The Monday summer chinook opener left much to be desired. Observers estimated about a fish for every other boat early in the week. Rumors of 2 fish around 45 pounds each are likely accurate as this race of chinook are nicknamed "June Hogs". Fish are taking both spinners and backtrolled plugs wrapped with sardines reports **pro guide Brandon Glass (503-260-8285)**.

Oversize sturgeon effort is waning as anglers are having a very difficult time finding fresh shad for bait. Shad numbers are dropping quickly at Bonneville Dam but sockeye numbers are on the increase. Sockeye are being intercepted by anglers targeting steelhead using spin-n-glos.

About 20,500 spring Chinook had been counted as of the latest data available on June 17th. Summer steelhead counts remain shy of the 10,000 mark. Shad fishing is slow, sturgeon fishing is fair.

The McKenzie is fishing well for redsides on nymphs on the Deerhorn drift. Spring chinook fishing, while spotty, is as good as it will get this season.

Steelheading and spring chinook fishing is fair high on the North Santiam. A few steelhead are being caught on the South Santiam.

Steelheading has been fair on the Clackamas with best results coming on spinners in the Barton and Riverside stretches.

Water color is variable on the Sandy as it periodically takes on a glacial color in warm weather. The river is getting too low to run powerboats on the lower stretch but driftboaters are still taking a few summer steelhead and a rare chinook.

Scheduled for trout stocking are Silver Creek Reservoir, Trillium Lake, Fall Creek, Leaburg Lake, the McKenzie River above and below Leaburg Lake, Salmon Creek, North Santiam above Detroit Lake, Middle Fork Willamette above Hills Creek Reservoir.

Northwest – Sturgeon anglers in the estuary are still struggling for consistent results. Action has shifted to the deeper water with the Washington side producing best on the tide change. Strong tides limit the amount of time anglers can effectively fish without using very heavy lead to keep baits on the bottom. Catch and keep season is slated to close on Monday but should reopen on July 3rd for a brief holiday weekend opportunity through the 5th.

Spring chinook were still being caught on Tillamook Bay but the hatchery season is winding down for bay and tidewater anglers. Stronger tides should have anglers focused on the upper bay. District rivers are low requiring stealth tactics to take salmon and steelhead on the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Three Rivers is also a viable option for early morning anglers.

Saturday marks the ocean coho opener for anglers fishing north of Cape Falcon. Action is expected to be good given good success rates along the central and south coasts. The CR Buoy to the south of the river entrance is a popular starting point. Northwest winds and a strong morning outgoing tide may pose a boating hazard to most watercraft however. Check bar conditions before heading out.

Most ocean and bay crab remain in a soft-shell state and should be returned until they achieve a

better body condition.

Southwest – Catch estimates are not yet in for last week's all-depth halibut fishery. If the spring quota didn't fill, the next opportunity will be July 2nd through the 4th.

Saturday, June 27th, looks best for a launch off the central Oregon coast for coho, bottomfish or both.

Results were fair to good for the coho opener over the past weekend. While rough seas kept many at bay, most who made it out caught fish and a few nailed three-fish limits. Some ports were better than others; anglers out of Coos Bay caught some coho with the majority of hatchery origin while results out of Winchester were very good although many were wild.

Shad fishing has been fair to good on the mainstem Umpqua with sunny days always most productive.

Crabbing has shown some improvement out of Bandon but the numbers of soft-shells is increasing. Limits of surf perch are being taken at the South Jetty and will soon be available inside the bay. When offshore conditions have allowed, rock fishing has been good with some opportunities for fish right on the surface. The Coquille has been providing worthwhile results for sea-run cutthroat. Shad fishing has been fair. Shad are yet to show at the Coquille, however.

Offshore winds prevented boats from launching out of the Port of Brookings over the past weekend, preventing access to the coho opener and the stellar bottom fishing. Long-range offshore forecasts lend no reason for optimism on the weekend to come.

Early and late in the day is producing good catches of trout to 20 inches at Tenmile Lake. Trolling has been the most productive method. Bass fishing is fair to good.

The Rogue River above Lost Creek is scheduled for trout planting.

Eastern – Odell has been slow for kokanee while Paulina has been good and is putting out some brown trout as well.

The coming weekend may be the last to catch the Stoneflies and Samonflies hatching on the Deschutes.

Good numbers of smallmouth bass are being taken at the John Day although few have been of bragging size.

SW Washington – District rivers remain slow or closed for spring chinook with the Cowlitz the bright spot for both species. Catches have been fair at best however.

Effort on other streams has been low although summer steelhead are available on the Lewis and Kalama systems.

Effort will shift to summer chinook on the mainstem Columbia below Bonneville until the season closes on July 5th.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Despite a good tide series, action remains challenging for sturgeon anglers in the estuary. The fish are clearly present in great numbers as they light up the fish finder and porpoise on the surface on both the Oregon and Washington sides of the river. The

problem is, they're not actively feeding and I have no answer as to why that is. The best action has switched to the deep water recently with the best catches coming from the deep water on the Washington side of the river (upstream of the Astoria/Megler Bridge) and in downtown Astoria in front of the old Englund Marine store and the Pier 11 restaurant.

This can be a frustrating fishery as bites are often times localized and hard to get into unless you are the first boat to a productive area and keying in the fish on your baits. We've all seen it more than once when one boat is getting all the action. Look at your fish-finder for sturgeon on the bottom (not suspended) and drop your baits down. Unfortunately, you still can't rely on getting steady action, at least not this year.

The fish have been running quality size however. It seems some of the larger keepers are coming from the deeper water and there are still lots of oversized fish present although they too are not biting as good this week as they have been in the early part of the season.

The crabs and trash fish have been horrific. Not only are the "bait pickers" to be expected in the deep water, but we're fishing some 3 and 4 foot stuff and having a hard time keeping our baits fishing. Using mostly anchovies for bait in the deep water, they don't last long and I'm going through about 1/2 pound per person for a full day trip.

I was wishing I had bait picker-proof smelt with me but I haven't bought those in years. **Avid angler Robert McLean** provided me with a pound size bag and we got a nice 51-inch keeper on smelt on Wednesday. Robert caught himself a nice keeper that day fishing near the mouth of the Skipanon River, it was 44 inches but he caught it on an anchovy. There has been some steady early morning action on the Stinkhouse Flats at the mouth of Young's Bay. Early risers have been getting the best action there.

Although action above Tongue Point cooled a bit, and certainly didn't pan out like I thought it would with the strong tide series, there are still some fish available for anglers working the shallows near marker 3 and Miller Island. Sand shrimp is the best bet for fish here but the shaker to keeper ratio isn't as good in these areas.

Upriver, the summer Chinook season was anything but a rip-snorter on the Monday opener. **Pro guide Brandon Glass (503-260-8285)** reported about 20 fish for 40 or 50 boats in the Bonneville area. Creel data won't be available until next week. Brandon clearly indicated that the action was much slower than most had anticipated. Dam counts have tapered in the last few days.

Beach plunkers along the lower Columbia did catch a few steelhead but it's clear that we're not into the peak season yet. Despite good tides, anglers in the Portland to Longview stretch showed five adipose fin-clipped steelhead, three jack chinook, and seven sockeye kept for 98 bank anglers.

Sturgeon fishers in the gorge are still targeting mostly oversize fish but fresh shad is becoming hard to come by. One guide even went to the Indian gillnet fleet seeking fresh shad but none were available. About 1 oversize fish for every other boat was the norm.

The Guide's Forecast – Although sturgeon will still likely be on the minds of most anglers on the north coast this weekend, we can't overlook the opening of what will likely be an epic coho run off of the Oregon coast this year. Action out of other coastal ports has been excellent with fish to 10 pounds reported. The ocean isn't forecasted to be all that friendly this weekend and couple that with the tail end of the minus tide series and the bar crossing, not to mention the ocean condition, may not be the most fun of experiences. Peak ebb will be taking place around mid-morning. The ocean forecast is as follows:

FRI N WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT...SUBSIDING TO 2 FT IN THE AFTERNOON. W SWELL 9 FT.

FRI NIGHT N WIND 15 TO 20 KT...EASING TO 10 TO 15 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 4 FT...SUBSIDING TO 2 FT AFTER MIDNIGHT. W SWELL 7 FT.

SAT NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT...INCREASING TO 15 TO 20 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 2 TO 3 FT. W SWELL 5 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

SAT NIGHT NW WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

SUN NW WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. W SWELL 8 FT.

MON NW WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 8 FT.

For motivated anglers (and you would have to be motivated), you'll likely find your best opportunities coming from the CR Buoy. Fishers that have been out to the jetty in recent weeks report ample numbers of salmon chasing bait to the surface near the entrance and to the south. We should be in for a banner season!

Upriver, expect action for summer Chinook to improve in the coming week. Although dam counts took a brief dip, it's likely that the current tide; the largest of the year, brought in good numbers of fish to jump start the upriver migration. Run timing alone is enough to justify the trip. Spinners will take the a good number of fish but adults will likely also be responsive to plugs. The problem with running plugs is that there are large sturgeon also willing to destroy a plug and you could end up losing one of your best performers. There aren't a lot of days to target these fish so if you're interested in pursuing a June Hog, this would be the week to try.

Beach steelheaders won't have favorable tides to work with by the weekend. Coming off a big tide series seems to damper a bite but we are entering peak season for summer steelhead in the coming weeks so by all means, go fish for them with bright colored spin-n-glos if you are motivated enough.

Sturgeon effort will likely continue to be high given the fact this is the last weekend of the season until a brief July 3 – 5 holiday opportunity. From what I've witnessed this season, tides do not play a significant role in angler success. There's no question that the fish are present. The only question remaining is will they decide to feed on the day you go fishing? If you are most confident in deep water, take lots of anchovies for bait and smelt won't hurt either. The lower in the river you fish, the more bait you will need. If you are a shallow water angler, sand shrimp is the obvious ticket. I often times double up on the shrimp so I'll go through 10 dozen shrimp for a 6-man crew. The water downstream and adjacent to Hammond has not be overly productive lately. Fish from Young's Bay to Miller Island and all the water in between. Patience is paying off this season versus the hunt and find technique that has worked so well in years past.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Spring Chinook counts were approaching 21,000 while summer steelhead topped 10,000 as of June 19th, the latest data available. Sturgeon and shad fishing has been slow.

Fishing has picked up a little on the Santiam system.

Results have been very good for fly anglers on the McKenzie. More good news: logs at Marten Rapids have been cleared out making passage here a breeze.

The Guide's Forecast – Try for sturgeon in the lower Willamette in the Gladstone/Oregon City area where catches have been best. Multnomah channel has been slow for shad and sturgeon but is producing a few walleye.

The best stretch to try on the North Santiam is the drift from Stayton to Greens Bridge although fishing is slow. The water is low below Shelburn, The South Santiam is slow for summer steelhead and slower for spring Chinook.

Evenings on the Mckenzie will be a good place to put in some time now that summer is here. Warmer weather means improving late-day hatches. Fishing here has been the best in years.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – The upper Clackamas above High Rocks is producing a few steelhead. Dark colored jigs and spinners are getting hit but there are only a few summers around. Fewer than 50 have returned to the hatchery trap.

Conditions are changing from one day to the next on the Sandy with the river running grey on warmer days due to the Sandy's glacial origins. A few steelhead are being caught here, however with best results in the stretch below Cedar Creek.

North Coast Fishing Report – Although angling for spring Chinook is quickly fading on the north coast, anglers are still in pursuit of fish on the Trask, Wilson, Nestucca and Three Rivers systems. This is the time of the bank angler as most of the north coast spring Chinook systems are in peak. There should be quality fresh fish available for bank anglers on all these rivers with eggs and shrimp producing the best results. Fish will most likely concentrate near the hatcheries that they'll be returning too or the liberation station they were released from. With the low flows, adults will be holding in deeper water making bobbers a necessary accessory.

Summer steelhead are also an option on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. They'll tend to hold in the deeper holes as well but not with spring Chinook. Steelhead will also be in shallow, broken surfaced runs that average 2 to 4 foot deep. No matter which specie you plan to pursue, early morning will produce the best results. Sea-run cutthroat are also an option this year but check local regulations for your own good.

Headlining the area is the ocean coho fishery taking place south of Cape Falcon. Action has been excellent with limits reported for many anglers. Rough weather prevented many folks from going out. For those that did go out, many reported great catches of larger than usual coho for this time of year. It's a simple procedure, troll herring at 6 to 20 strips down (deeper as the morning progresses) and catch fish. Bring lots of baits however as you'll get more "drive-by's" the later into the morning you fish.

Check the ocean forecast in the Columbia River section of this newsletter. It doesn't look too promising for ocean goers this weekend.

Crabbing remains challenging in the estuaries and ocean salmon fishers will likely start pursuing crab with more vigor. Many of the crab are in soft shell condition so prepare for that.

The Guide's Forecast – Ocean salmon will be the strongest option this weekend although a stiff wind wave forecast will likely keep anglers from enjoying their time on big blue. Check last minute conditions and be very cautious on bar crossings this week. Troll herring in the early morning for good action that's likely to last.

Spring Chinook anglers should focus efforts in larger bodies of water. Large, deep holes are likely to hold the best numbers of fish and you'll have to stealthily fish bobbers and bait to entice them to bite during the early morning. You'll be fishing under challenging conditions.

Better tides for crabbing but success rates will likely remain low and crab will need another few weeks before they gain back some of their body content following the molt.

Central & South Coast Reports – With 23% or 28,298 pounds remaining of the spring all-depth halibut quota, the season will continue on July 2nd, 3rd and 4th. As always, if there is sufficient tonnage after that, additional days will be added. Coho are averaging seven pounds but these fish grow fast, often putting on a couple of pounds a week when the offshore feed is good (as it is now).

Boats launching out of Newport and Depoe Bay have been fairing well for coho with reports indicating about half of the fish hooked have been of hatchery origin. Best catches have been coming to shallow trollers working 300-foot water. The coho may be safe this weekend if the rough ocean forecast is accurate.

Anglers out of Winchester Bay have experienced very good fishing for coho. This has been the hotspot on the coast so far. The Rock Creek area has produced springers on the Umpqua mainstem. More spring Chinook are being caught on the North Umpqua now than summer steelhead.

Coquille anglers report improving results for striped bass over the past week.

Boats launching out of Coos Bay report fair to good results for coho offshore with wild fish in the minority.

June can be good for springers on the Rogue but it's been slow on the lower river recently. The Grants Pass stretch has been fair. The upper Rogue will be the place to fish this weekend with over 9,000 springer over Gold Ray Dam. A lesser number of summer steelhead are available and some anglers have started picking up a few jacks.

Ocean trollers out of the Port of Brookings did best around Bird Island for the opener but strong wind kept most from getting into the game. When conditions allow crossing, bottom fishing for rockfish, cabezon and ling cod is excellent. Crabbing is improving out of Bandon and while their condition is deteriorating with ever greater soft Dungeness are showing.

The Rainbow \$1,000 trout fishing derby is this coming Saturday and a shot at the top prize costs only \$15. Anglers can register at Black Bird, at Diamond Lake Resort or at Waldron's Outdoor Sports in Grants Pass. For details, visit <http://www.blackbirdshoppingcenter.com>. Even though catches have slowed from earlier in the season, Diamond Lake has continued to produce good catches of very fat trout.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Fishing is slow to fair at Wickiup for kokanee running to 18 inches. This is the place to go in Oregon for larger kokes, however.

Wickiup is producing decent numbers of kokanee to anglers using jigs in deep water.

Fishing for kokanee at Apulina has been fair for trollers but good for those lying shallow to mid-

depths with jigs. Kokes average about 11 inches here.

Trolled flies have been tricking good numbers of trout averaging 12 inches at Trillium Lake.

Crane Prairie is under advisories for blue-green algae. Steer clear as this stuff is poisonous.

The first summer steelhead of the season are in the lower Deschutes now. The numbers, action and crowds will be greater in July.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report June 24 – July 7, 2009

North Puget Sound

Fishing has been slow for anglers on the saltwater, but catch numbers could rise as more marine areas open for salmon in July. On the rivers, anglers continue to cast for spring chinook, and some have recently hooked a few nice-size fish.

Meanwhile, the **crab** fishery opens July 1 in 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). Fisheries in those areas will be open on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, plus the entire Labor Day weekend.

The daily catch limit in Puget Sound is five Dungeness crab, males only, in hard-shell condition with a minimum carapace width of 6¼ inches. Fishers may catch six red rock crab of either sex per day, provided those crab measure at least 5 inches across. See WDFW's sport-crabbing website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>) for more information.

In Marine Area 8-2, the **Tulalip Bay "bubble" salmon fishery** is currently under way. The fishery got off to a slow start and the bite has yet to pick up, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "It's been quiet out there," he said. "But fishing tends to improve as we head into July."

The bubble is currently open each week from Friday through noon Monday. Anglers fishing the bubble have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon. Chinook must measure 22 inches in length to retain.

The catch-and-release salmon fishery in the northern portion of Marine Area 10 continues through June 30. However, beginning July 1, anglers fishing in the marine area will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, with no minimum size limit. Anglers must release chinook salmon.

"Marine Area 10 has been great for resident coho the last several years," Thiesfeld said. "Hopefully, anglers will find more of the same this year."

Another option is Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), which also opens July 1 for salmon. Anglers will have a daily limit of two salmon, plus two additional pink salmon, but can only keep one chinook.

In the freshwater, portions of the Skykomish, Skagit and Cascade rivers are open for hatchery **chinook salmon** fishing. On the Skykomish River, which is open from the Lewis Street Bridge in Monroe to the Wallace River through July 31, there have been recent reports of anglers hooking some nice-size hatchery chinook. Anglers fishing there have a daily limit of two hatchery chinook salmon.

The Skagit is open to hatchery chinook retention from the Highway 530 bridge at Rockport to the Cascade River. On the Cascade, anglers can fish from the mouth of the river to the Rockport-Cascade Road Bridge. Both stretches are open through July 15.

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

Anglers are reminded that gamefish regulations have changed on the Cascade River from the mouth to the Rockport-Cascade Road Bridge. From June 1 to July 15, anglers can retain up to two trout, including hatchery steelhead and bull trout. For details, anglers should check the rules and regulations pamphlet on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

Meanwhile, Skagit anglers are gearing up for an upcoming **summer chinook salmon** fishery. Beginning July 9, anglers will have the opportunity to hook a summer chinook on a portion of the lower Skagit for the first time in 16 years. The Skagit will be open from the mouth of the river to the mouth of Gilligan Creek from noon Thursday through Sunday each week. Anglers will have a daily limit of two chinook, only one of which may be an adult.

Before heading out to the rivers, lakes or Sound, 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

The much-anticipated coastal salmon fishery will open in late June with record returns of coho expected. Meanwhile, most areas of central Puget Sound will open for crab fishing July 1, and sport fishers will get one more day - June 28 - to catch halibut on the south coast.

Anglers looking forward to the ocean salmon fishery have reason to be optimistic, especially if they're targeting **coho salmon**, said Wendy Beeghley, WDFW fish biologist. "People are already encountering coho in other fisheries, so catch rates should be good right from the start," Beeghley said.

A projected 1.2 million hatchery coho are forecast to return to the Columbia River, which could make this year's ocean season the best since 2001. Most coastal **chinook** runs are expected to be similar to last year, with little change in the quota, Beeghley said. This year, anglers will be allowed to catch 176,400 hatchery coho and 20,500 chinook compared to 20,000 hatchery coho and 20,000 chinook last year.

The north coast (marine areas 3 and 4) will be open Tuesdays through Saturdays only beginning June 27, and daily starting July 18. Ilwaco (Marine Area 1) will be open daily for salmon fishing starting June 28. The salmon season in Westport (Marine Area 2) also starts June 28, but will be open Sundays through Thursdays only through July 23, and daily thereafter.

The daily limit in all marine areas is two salmon, but only one may be a chinook. All wild coho must be released. Westport anglers may add one pink salmon to their limit, while those fishing the north coast may add two.

Salmon fisheries off Sekiu/Pillar Point and the eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca and Hood Canal (marine areas 5 and 6) open July 1 on a daily basis for hatchery chinook and coho. All wild chinook, coho and chum must be released. Anglers may keep two pink salmon as part of their daily limit. Marine Area 12 (Hood Canal south of Ayock Point) also opens July 1 with a four-fish daily limit. Because rules vary in each area, anglers are advised to check the *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> before heading out.

Halibut fishing is now closed in most areas, but anglers have a unique chance to catch both halibut and salmon in Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) July 2 and 3 (the last day for halibut fishing), said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "The two-day overlap in fishing seasons is a sweet deal for anglers who can potentially come home with a fish in each hand," Thiesfeld said. The same is true for the coast where opening day of salmon season in Marine Area 2 (Westport) coincides with a one-day re-opening of the halibut fishery June 28.

Thiesfeld also advises salmon anglers in south Puget Sound to take advantage of the nice weather and long days. "Even though it's not the peak of the run, there's some nice fish around," Thiesfeld said. "People should get out and enjoy these bonus days on the water." The hatchery chinook fishery runs seven days a week, with a two-fish daily limit. The minimum size for chinook is 22 inches with no minimum limit for other species. All wild chinook must be released. The pink salmon bonus in Marine Area 11 takes effect July 1, when anglers may add two pink salmon to their daily limit. Commencement Bay is closed to salmon fishing until Aug. 1.

Salmon fishing also opens July 1 on several Olympic Peninsula rivers, including the Bogachiel, Calawah, Quinault and Nisqually.

Six areas of Puget Sound will open for crab fishing July 1, including marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 8-1 (Deception Pass to East Point), 8-2 (East Point to Possession Point), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) and 11 (Tacoma/Vashon). Those areas will be open Wednesdays through Saturdays only, plus Labor Day weekend, closing the evening of Sept. 7.

Crabbing is already underway in marine areas 4 (Neah Bay east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south Puget Sound), where the fishery is open seven days a week through Jan. 2, 2010.

Rich Childers, WDFW shellfish policy lead, reminds anglers that crabbing in Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) begins July 29 this year to help prevent the harvesting of mating female crabs. "Crab abundance in Hood Canal has dropped considerably since 2001 and we need as many crabs as possible for reproduction," Childers said. "Although it is already unlawful to harvest female crabs, WDFW and tribal co-managers are taking extra precautions to help stabilize and protect the crab population."

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

Southwest Washington

The fishery for adult **summer chinook salmon** got off to a good start June 22 on the lower Columbia River, where boat anglers fishing around Kalama are averaging one fish for every two boats. Bank anglers were also doing well below Bonneville Dam, according to opening-day creel surveys.

The chance to catch summer chinook - known as "June hogs" due to their size, is expected to draw a strong turnout in the days ahead, said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist.

"We just got a report of an angler catching a 45-pounder," Hymer said. "These are big, chrome-bright fish, so it's hardly surprising that this is such a popular fishery."

Anglers fishing below Bonneville Dam may retain any adult summer chinook - not just those with a clipped adipose fin - as part of their daily catch limit through July 5. Above Bonneville Dam, summer chinook may be retained upriver to the Hwy. 395 Bridge at Pasco from July 1-31. In

both areas, the salmonid daily limit is six fish, no more than two of which may be adult salmon or **hatchery steelhead** , or one of each. **Sockeye salmon** also count as part of the adult limit.

Fishery managers anticipate a run of 70,700 summer chinook to the Columbia River this year, up from 55,500 a year ago. While those fish are the big draw, anglers continue to reel in sockeye salmon and hatchery steelhead moving up the river. "One of the great things about this fishery is that if you don't catch a summer chinook, you can always target sockeye salmon or hatchery steelhead," Hymer said.

In the week prior to the summer chinook opening, 1,200 anglers fishing below Bonneville Dam reported catching 85 steelhead, 41 sockeye and 27 chinook jacks, while releasing 40 adults.. Hymer said some of the best catch rates for hatchery steelhead and sockeye were posted around the sandbars between Cathlamet and Longview.

Hymer noted that catching a spring hog requires a somewhat different approach than the one used for the other species. "While sockeye and steelhead generally stay close to the bank, summer chinook run in fairly deep water - at least 20 feet," he said. "Plunking works best for sockeye and steelhead, but you need to let out some line to find summer chinook," he said.

The summer steelhead run is still building and sockeye returns are peaking, but shad may be on the downhill side, Hymer said. Anglers looking for shad would do well to head upriver, where catch rates for boat anglers in the John Day Pool averaged nearly eight fish per rod during the week ending June 21. By comparison, catch rates ranged from 0.5 to 2.0 fish per rod that week among anglers fishing from Bonneville Dam downriver to Camas/Washougal.

Meanwhile, the **white sturgeon** fishery below the Wauna power lines is scheduled to close June 28 at the end of the day and reopen July 2-5. Staff will continue to monitor the fishery and will provide another catch update this week.

Catches improved during the week ending June 21, when charter boat anglers averaged one legal-size sturgeon for every two rods and private boaters averaged one for every 3.5 rods. Bank anglers were also catching some legals.

Fishing on Columbia River tributaries has been mixed. Cowlitz River bank anglers fishing at the barrier dam are still catching some **spring chinook** , while boat anglers near Blue Creek are mostly catching hatchery steelhead. Some hatchery steelhead are also being caught on other tributaries to the Columbia River including the Kalama, Lewis, Washougal and Klickitat rivers.

Trout anglers should know that WDFW planted Goose Lake with 4,500 good-sized brown trout and 869 even-larger cutthroat in mid-June. The browns averaged two-thirds of a pound apiece and the cutthroat averaged 1.5 pounds. Skate Creek and the Tilton River are also in line for trout plants in the coming days as is Mayfield Lake. Anglers fishing Riffe Lake have been catching a mixture of landlocked coho and landlocked steelhead.

Eastern Washington

Now is the time to fish the Spokane River arm of Lake Roosevelt for some of the tastiest freshwater fish - **walleye** . The daily catch limit is eight and there's no minimum size, although only one over 22 inches may be retained. The Seven Bays area and many other spots on the big reservoir are also good for **kokanee** and **rainbow trout** fishing now. There is a two-fish daily catch limit for kokanee. The limit on trout is five, but only two over 20 inches may be retained.

Anglers can combine fishing with holiday weekend camping at the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area's campgrounds at Evans, Fort Spokane, Gifford, Hunters, Keller Ferry, Kettle Falls and Spring Canyon; most are on a first-come, first-served basis, but groups need to reserve camp sites - for details see <http://www.nps.gov/laro/>.

Sprague Lake, on the Lincoln-Adams county line off I-90, continues to be the rainbow trout factory. Spokane County's Williams and Badger Lake, also continue to provide good catches of rainbow and **cutthroat trout**. Although there are no specific creel checks, rivers and streams throughout the region should be providing trout action, too.

Liberty and Newman lakes in eastern Spokane County and Eloika Lake in north Spokane County all have a mixed bag for anglers - trout, bass, crappie, perch - and all species are biting now. Coffeepot Lake in Lincoln County is also good for perch and bass, but remember that a no-bait rule is in effect. Also in Lincoln County, Twin and Deer Springs lakes are producing largemouth bass

Downs Lake, in the southwest corner of Spokane County, and Eloika Lake in north Spokane County, are good for **yellow perch, crappie**, and **largemouth bass**.

The Snake River in the southeast part of the region continues to be productive for **smallmouth bass** and **channel catfish**.

The fourth annual **Fish and Wildlife Night at Spokane Indians Baseball** is set for July 6, when any fishing or hunting license holder can receive a discount on tickets. The stadium vendor area will include fish and wildlife displays that night, with fish casting and elk bugling contests scheduled between innings. Call or stop by the ticket office (509-343-6886, Avista Stadium near the Spokane County Expo Center) for details and to reserve seats.

Northcentral Washington

Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist, said that as the weather warms in July, rivers and streams in Okanogan County will provide good trout fishing.

"The Methow River and selected tributaries opened for catch-and-release, selective-gear-only trout fishing in June and should provide good opportunities through September," Jateff said. "Anglers should check the regulation pamphlet closely because the Methow, Twisp, and Chewuch rivers are only open for fishing in certain areas. Some smaller Methow Basin tributaries open for standard gear angling are Boulder and Eight Mile creeks where liberal **brook trout** limits exist."

Jateff said fishing in Okanogan County lakes tends to slow down as water temperatures increase, but anglers willing to fish slow and deep can continue to have success catching trout. Spectacle, Alta, Pearygin, Wannacut, and Conconully lakes, plus Conconully Reservoir, all should provide rainbow trout ranging in size from 11 to 13 inches, however there are some 15-inch fish as well.

"Jameson Lake in Douglas County has been fishing pretty well and the fish are larger than last year at this time," Jateff said. "Reports of rainbow 10-12 inches with larger fish in the 15-inch range are coming in. Just remember that Jameson closes to fishing on July 5 and reopens on Oct 1."

Spiny-ray anglers can fish Leader Lake for **crappie** and **bluegill**, and Patterson Lake for **yellow perch**, Jateff noted. "These two lakes will provide good fishing throughout the summer for all three species," he said. "And even though they might be smaller in size than trout, they are very good eating."

In Grant County, Moses Lake recently received 500 nearly half-pound **rainbow trout** from WDFW's Columbia Basin Fish Hatchery. Just to the south in Potholes Reservoir, **walleye** fishing is reportedly good in the Crab Creek area of the sand dunes, the Goose Island area, and the Lind Coulee arm of the reservoir.

In the interest of wild fire prevention, WDFW officials remind Fourth of July holiday celebrants that fireworks are not allowed on any of WDFW's 900,000-some acres of water access sites and wildlife areas across the state. Campfires are restricted in many areas, too. For details by area, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/>.

Southcentral Washington

The middle reach of the Yakima River closes to **hatchery spring chinook salmon** fishing on June 30. The fishery, which opened in mid-May, is under a daily limit of two hatchery chinook, minimum size 12 inches. Hatchery salmon are identified by a missing adipose fin and a healed scar in the location of the missing fin. Wild salmon (adipose fin intact) must be immediately released unharmed and cannot be removed from the water prior to release. (Rules for this fishery are available at <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/erule.jsp?id=755>). WDFW fish biologist Jim Cummins reports poor fishing success during the last creel check (week ending June 21), when 108 salmon anglers caught and kept just two hatchery adult and seven hatchery jack chinook, and released three wild salmon.

"River flows are much better early in the season," Cummins said. "Fishing effort is heavy downstream of the Railroad Trestle at Roza Dam. Many fish have passed upstream of the fishery, but there should be fish available until the end of the season."

Rivers and streams continue dropping into condition and Cummins says they should provide increasingly productive opportunity for **cutthroat** and **rainbow trout** . "Good bets might be the Naches, Yakima, Little Naches and Teanway rivers, and Taneum, Naneum and Rattlesnake Creeks," he said.

Selective gear rules, closed reaches, and catch-and-release areas are in place at a number of rivers, so anglers should check the current Sport Fishing Rules pamphlet. With the exception of the middle reach of the Yakima, all rivers and streams are closed to salmon fishing and **bull trout** may not be harvested.

WDFW fish biologist Eric Anderson reports **Mackinaw** or **lake trout** are being caught at Cle Elum Reservoir. "This is also the time of year when **kokanee** really start biting at Rimrock, Bumping, Keechelus, and Kachess reservoirs," he said.

Anderson also noted snow is finally off the access areas for Dog and Leech lakes off Highway 12 in the White Pass area and at Lost Lake in the Snoqualmie Pass area. One-and-a-half pound **triploid rainbow trout** were recently stocked in all three lakes - 1,014 at Lost, 725 at Leech, and 427 at Dog Lake. Anderson reminds anglers that Leech is fly-fishing-only and all three lakes have a trout daily limit of five with no more than one over 14 inches.

"More hiking trails are opening up in the mountains so anglers can start planning high lake fishing trips," Anderson said, "but check trail conditions first. Not all trails are snow-free or accessible at the very remote, high elevation lakes. Check with the Forest Service District Ranger Station for the area you plan to visit."

Anglers can also find information about catchable-size trout plants in high lakes and all fishing waters in the region at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>. For high lake fish plants in the Yakima Basin see http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg3/r3_highlakes.htm.

Reader Feedback –

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

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Join the offshore coho party with the right lure - Deadly Hoochie Rigging Secrets:

<http://www.captaindownriggins.com/Rigging.htm>

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

GOOD LUCK!