

The Guide's Forecast - volume 12 issue number 19

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 7th – May 13th, 2010**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Great Fishing Opportunities ahead!

Tillamook Bay Spring Chinook- With a solid showing of spring chinook to the Columbia and Willamette Rivers, it's safe to assume we'll have a good year for quality spring chinook on Tillamook Bay this year. Tillamook area spring chinook average much larger than the Willamette Valley fish with most averaging between 15 and 24 pounds. Fresh from the salt, these fish are hard fighters with a flavor unparalleled with any other species. **Pro guide Bob Rees (503-812-9036)** will only put in a few weeks in this fishery before heading to Astoria for lower Columbia River sturgeon so look at these dates to catch your quarry: **May 18, 23, 24, 26 – 29**. If offshore conditions allow and the crabbing is good, we'll drop the pots for some bonus tablefare.



Call Bob Rees at (503) 812-9036 to book your Tillamook Bay trip today or visit his website at: http://www.tgfusa.com/fishing_season.asp

Also, do you want to help a wonderful non-profit improve north coast salmon and steelhead runs while having a load of fun and folly? Please consider participating in the 5th annual **BOUNTY ON THE BAY** fundraiser and fishing tournament by visiting the Tillamook Estuaries Partnership website at: <http://www.tbnep.org/events/bounty-on-the-bay>

Willamette Valley/Metro- Fishery managers met on Tuesday for a Columbia River run size update. Unsure as to whether peak passage has happened or not, number crunchers are leaning towards a smaller than predicted run size. Select area fisheries such as Young's Bay near Astoria will reopen to commercial netters only and are likely laden with spring chinook.

Sturgeon anglers in the gorge are beginning to pick up a few legal sized sturgeon. The Marker 82 to Bonneville sanctuary went into effect on May 1st.

The Willamette is dropping and clearing and water temperatures are reaching ideal levels. With only a temporary slow-down in fishing success, anglers in the Oregon City area are faring best using eggs, shrimp and prawns for bait. Fish passage reflects the higher water temperature as

about 13,000 springers had crossed the Falls as of April 26th. Trollers working the Portland Harbor and Multnomah Channel are still taking fish, even in the colored water. General observations point to a larger than predicted return.

The water level is high on the McKenzie but has started to drop. Water temperatures are in the upper 40's, trout fishing is fair to good and the occasional steelhead is being hooked.

Summer steelhead numbers are decent in the Clackamas and results have been good at times. A few winters remain as well. Spring chinook are present although only a handful have been caught.

Steelheading in the Sandy is slow to fair. Few spring chinook have been hooked.

Fishing on the North Santiam is slow. South Santiam steelheaders are taking a few summers.

Scheduled for trout planting are Henry Hagg Lake, Huddleston Pond, Sheridan Pond, St Louis Ponds, Dexter Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond and Junction City Pond.

A free youth fishing event will be held at Commonwealth Pond on Saturday, May 8th from 9:30 AM to 2 PM. Tackle and volunteer assistance will be available.

Northwest – River levels remained high for hopeful steelheaders on the north coast. Forecast models indicate ideal levels may be achievable by the weekend. A few summer steelhead should be available on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Dark winter run fish may also account for some of the action.

Early spring chinook are also a possibility on the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca Rivers but most anglers will focus their efforts in Tillamook Bay where tides this weekend will be conducive to lower bay herring trollers.

The first all-depth halibut season opens one week from today. Ocean weather has not been friendly to boaters but that may change in the coming days. Bottomfishing, crabbing and halibut fishing should be productive when conditions allow.

Estuary crabbing on the north coast is fair at best.

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

Southwest – Mild incoming tides and comparable ocean conditions will greet boaters launching for an ocean foray this weekend according to mid-week forecasts.

Crabbing is slow to fair in the ocean out of Winchester Bay when boats can get out. It is poor inside the bay, however.

While the Umpqua has suffered from high water recently, it is dropping and should fish by late this weekend or early next week. Smallmouth bass fishing should be starting here around Elkton if the water is warm enough. Summer steelhead are in the system but are slow to bite. Springers are being hooked around Scottsburg.

Boats of sufficient size launched out of Charleston over the past weekend to enjoy fair to good fishing for ling cod and rockfish.

High water, which shut down fishing on the Rogue last week, has passed and with the level dropping, results are expected to be good over the coming weekend. The freshet will have good numbers of springers in the middle Rogue and improved catches on the upper river.

Icy patches remain on the surface of the water at Diamond Lake and it is unlikely to be ice-free until mid month. Trout fishing has been slow to fair.

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

Eastern – A few caddis and March Browns are hatching on the lower Deschutes but nymph fishing remains the ticket for reddsides. The water is a little high but quite fishable.

Anglers are learning how to catch spring chinook in the John Day Pool. Bank anglers are faring well with boat anglers a close second.

The Umatilla River may provide some good salmon fishing this spring. It's a new fishery and has yet to reach its potential.

Many district lakes will remain cold and snowed in until warmer temperatures break roads and lakes free of ice. It may be late May before they reach a comfortable temperature.

SW Washington – Most district streams produced poorly this past week. The bright spot for spring chinook remains the Cowlitz but seems to be under-performing the expectation for a great run so far. Late winter steelhead are present in good numbers however.

The Lewis River has both steelhead and spring chinook present but reports are mixed.

The Kalama is also producing a few spring chinook and summer steelhead are starting to show in better numbers.

Anglers fishing Drano Lake noted good success last week with 40% of those sampled posting good results. Action was nearly as good at the Wind River and should continue to produce results well into May.

Columbia River Fishing Report – It's all about dam passage right now. Both anglers and fishery managers are watching Bonneville Dam for passage numbers that will influence future sport opportunity in the mainstem Columbia. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meet on a regular basis to discuss run size updates and the most recent update points to a run in the range of 310,000 to 370,000 fish. Once the run hits peak passage date (which should be any day now), the back end of the run forecast should be more predictable. What we really need is 2 or 3 days of 15,000 adults or more, indicating a true peak passage date so we can really get a grip on how many fish are coming back to the river this year.

At this point however, it doesn't look promising for any additional time on the mainstem, unless we get some pretty high numbers in the very near future. The states did meet by telephone on Tuesday however, taking action to reopen the Select Area Fisheries to commercial harvest only. Some additional sport harvest opportunity should come about once biologists ensure that few upriver chinook will be handled in this fishery.

So what do we have to fish for on the river that used to boast the largest salmon, steelhead and sturgeon populations on the planet.....? Well, we do have sturgeon opportunities but those options are fair at best with some boat anglers finding keepers in the gorge fishery. With the Marker 82 to Bonneville Deadline in place, that leaves only a small portion of productive water still open. Smelt has been the key bait but anglers are also tipping their offerings with fresh sand shrimp. This fishery should stay fair for another few weeks and oversize sturgeon may start to enter the area in preparation for the big shad feed in a few more short weeks. No sign of shad at Bonneville Dam as of Wednesday.

Upriver, anglers fishing from the bank in the John Day Pool are finding fair success. As this is a new fishery, we don't have a lot of information on what techniques anglers are using or just exactly where they are fishing. With numbers nearing peak passage however, this fishery should stay viable for another several weeks. Boaters are taking fish as well but on a per rod average, bank anglers have the edge.

The Guide's Forecast – Downstream of Bonneville, sturgeon are really the only game in town and action for this species is just fair. Boats from Troutdale to Marker 82 are catching an occasional keeper and shakers are making a fair show as well. The most productive stretches of sturgeon water closed recently and won't reopen again until the fall.

Keep your fingers crossed for more springers over Bonneville Dam but we're a long ways from additional sport opportunity on the mainstem. We'll need some glory days of passage at Bonneville to look at any additional opportunity.

Hopefully sport anglers will have some more opportunity in the SAFE area fisheries near Astoria. In the meantime, bank anglers looking for great opportunity can fish on Big Creek, Gnat Creek or the Klaskanine River for small stream spring chinook using bobbers and eggs or drifting bait. Those willing to make the drive are scoring pretty good results.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – With the lower Willamette water temperature in the low to mid 50s and the visibility having returned to pre-storm conditions. Spring Chinook are on the move with the year-to-date count 15,790 as of May 3rd. Summer steelhead numbers are very good this year with over 6,200 having been counted at the Falls. The occasional springer has been taken from the bank between the mouth of the Clackamas and Meldrum Bar. The Sellwood Bridge crowd have taken a few and occasionally there has been a flurry of action at the head of Multnomah Channel. The channel has also produced the occasional walleye but interest in targeting them (especially at the peak of springer season) is low.

The McKenzie is still a little high with the water temperature in the mid-40s. There are signs of Mackenzie Green Caddis on sunny days but the trout are yet to look up.

The Santiam system is running high but stable with the water temperature too low to encourage springers to enter. There are steelhead in the system, however.

The 28th annual Detroit Lake Fishing Derby is a fun and inexpensive family fishing experience which offers a myriad of prizes to participants. Taking place on May 14th through 16th, in addition to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place prizes for adult and junior entrants (\$15 for those 14 and older, \$8 for younger anglers), drawings will be held for ransom prizes. Tagged fish will be worth a \$100 bonus. You must be present at the drawing on May 27th at 3 PM in order to win. Email

mthigh97342@gmail.com. or call 503-854-3696 for information.

The Guide's Forecast – The lower Willamette flow remains fairly brisk and the fishing is slow to spotty but this is absolutely *the* time of year to be on the water trying for springers on the lower Willamette. It could turn on at any moment and guaranteed, if you're not there, it'll happen and you'll miss it. Go fishing! The Town Run as the upper Willamette is called near Eugene, has been producing summer steelhead but catches have been spotty. Local anglers who are 'in the know' predict very good fishing in the weeks to come.

Count on the lower McKenzie to deliver worthwhile fishing for redsides as the river drops back into shape. Nymphs will be the best bet for good results. When the water temperature warms, it should be 'on' for summer steelhead, particularly given the great numbers at the Falls this year.

There are a good number of steelhead in the Santiam system but they're slow to bite or strike in the cold water. Overall, fishing will improve as the water warms and given the density of summer steelhead, this could turn out to be a decent fishery this year.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – While the water is still high and fairly swift on the Clackamas, it will be dropping through the coming weekend. There are decent numbers of summer steelhead in the system while springers can be seen rolling near the mouth.

Water level and flow at the Sandy is rapidly dropping as clearing. It will be below the 10.5 foot level at Bull Run for the weekend. Target steelhead on the middle and upper river. There will be a few spring Chinook entering the lower Sandy now.

The Guide's Forecast - Despite recycling of steelhead from the hatchery, the steelhead bit on the Clackamas has been very slow. A few have been picked up at McIver and that's probable been the best fishing on the river.

Use bait on the South Santiam for best results. Both good quality cured eggs and sand shrimp have landed summer steelhead this week. As the water warms, spring Chinook will enter but for now, target steelhead.

North Coast Fishing Report – North coast streams maintained rather high levels for much of the week and little effort was witnessed on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. The bulk of the quality winter run fish are spawning now and would make poor tablefare for anyone interested in a consumptive experience.

Again, I have to emphasize how little effort has taken place for all species due to the poor weather conditions we have been experiencing lately. The rivers have been too high, the winds and wave chop has been bad for estuary and offshore anglers and folks remain focused on the good fishing in the Willamette River to come to the coast to try their luck, especially given it's prior to peak season. That will all change soon however.

The Guide's Forecast – There are however fresh summer run steelhead available and spring chinook should be making an appearance in the Wilson, Trask and Nestucca Rivers given the fact we've just come off a nice tide series and river levels have been ideal for fish interested in

heading upstream already. You'll have to work the river thoroughly but with so little competition on the river, you certainly stand a fair chance at a quality summer steelhead or spring chinook.

There has been little effort on Tillamook Bay itself as inclement weather has kept motivation levels low. Spring chinook have been caught in upper Tillamook Bay and the Trask River but no mention of springers on the Nestucca or Wilson yet but that doesn't mean it hasn't happened.

Anxious bottomfishers are still awaiting good offshore conditions to pursue lingcod and rockfish out of northern ports but a big swell coupled with a bad wind chop has kept most at bay. If models are correct, Thursday could be a good option but wind waves are expected to kick up again by Friday and subside once again by Saturday. This could be a good weekend to explore out west, targeting such species as nearshore halibut, bottomfish and crab.

The offshore forecast is as follows:

Fri...N wind 10 to 15 kt with gusts to 20 kt. Wind waves 5 ft. W swell 4 ft.

Fri Night...N wind 15 to 20 kt with gusts to 25 kt. Wind waves 5 ft. W swell 4 ft.

Sat...NW wind 10 kt with gusts to 15 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 4 ft.

Sat Night...NW wind 10 to 15 kt with gusts to 20 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 4 ft.

Sun...NW wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 3 ft. W swell 4 ft.

Mon...NW wind 20 to 25 kt. Wind waves 5 ft. W swell 5 ft.

Central & South Coast Reports – The ocean is uncharacteristically soft this week with day after day in forecasts showing easy swells at long intervals with afternoon winds only kicking into the low teens. Soft, incoming tides will also favor boats crossing the bar early mornings. Offshore crabbing has been worthwhile lately and bottom fishing is very rewarding for multi-colored rockfish, kelp greenling, cabezon and ling cod. Offshore anglers must fish within the 40-fathom line.

The first all-depth halibut fishery will take place May 13th through 15th from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain. Additional openings will be available on May 20th through 22nd and June 3rd through 5th with additional three-day openings in June and July until the 106,000 pound spring quota is filled. Unfortunately for some, Highway 20 will be closed from May 14th through the 17th: <http://www.us20pme.com/>

Fishing has been fair for ling cod off the north jetty at Yaquina Bay but should improve as the ocean lays down.

A proposal is on the ODFW table which will allow a limited number of wild Chinook to be taken on the south coast from the South Umpqua to the California border.

Spring Chinook fishing took a hit last week on the Umpqua in high water but action will improve along with water conditions. When the flow drops and the water temperature rises, smallmouth bass fishing will resume on the mainstem, shad fishing will begin with both fisheries getting good into the month of June. The North Umpqua is producing spring Chinook with the water level dropping but the South Umpqua closed to all fishing on May 1st. Commercial efforts resulted in

slow catches out of Winchester Bay over the past week with boats unable to find salmon in any number. Surf perch have been cooperative for anglers throwing offerings from area beaches when the ocean has laid down but they are yet to enter the bay to spawn. Jetty fishers are doing well for rockfish while crabbing is fair on the bay.

The south jetty at Coos Bay has been a productive spot for surf perch along with a few rockfish.

The only disagreement regarding fishing on the lower Rogue is how many years it's been since it was a good as it is now, and this with the historic peak of the season yet to come. Water conditions and results will remain good through the weekend as the river level drops with the majority of fish landed keepers of hatchery origin. Wild springers and steelhead must be released unharmed. Anchovies have become difficult to obtain locally so bring your own or substitute smaller-sized herring or sardines. Anglers in the Grants Pass stretch are targeting spring Chinook which moved upriver with the freshet resulting from the storm last week along with migrating winter steelhead. Flows on the upper Rogue continue to be restricted by the Army Corps of engineers in an effort to raise the level of Lost Lake.

As a result, the winter steelhead bite has slowed and while springers are crossing at Gold Ray Dame, there are still too few to offer a reason to target them. It appears the expense of maintenance was the primary motivation for Jackson County Board of Commissioners to vote in favor of the removal of Gold Ray Dam on Wednesday this week. The removal is expected to be completed by late summer this year.

Boats launching out of the Port of Brookings have a good shot at seven-rockfish and to ling cod limits fishing nearshore in easy ocean condition mornings this coming weekend. Just keep in mind that lings favor rockpiles and must measure 33 inches or better to keep.

About half of the water's surface was covered by ice as of mid week, as which time light snow was falling. Good sized trout are being caught, however, with even bank fishers taking limits.

Central and Eastern Oregon – There has been a lot of interest and many participants at Shearers Falls on the Deschutes but very few fish are being hooked.

Thief Valley Reservoir, located on the Powder River near Baker City, will temporarily raise daily trout limits to 15 with no size restriction. Low water conditions this year are expected to result in a fish kill this coming summer so ODFW officials hope that the public can catch these fish while they're available.

Smallmouth bass fishing has been fair to good on the John Day River with scented soft plastics most effective. With rain and snowmelt lowering the water temperature, it appears spawning won't take place here until mid-May or so.

Large Mackinaw are being caught by deep trollers at Crescent Lake. Fishing for brown trout has been fair.

With kokanee averaging 12 inches, trollers are making fair to good catches at Green Peter.

Kokanee are hitting trolled lures well at Wickiup Reservoir. Hoochies seem to be most effective here.

A kokanee tournament will take place at Lake Billy Chinook on May 15th with registration taking place during the day prior to the tournament and early in the morning on the day of the competition. Information is available by calling 541-973-4831.

Bonehead bucket biologists thought it's be a swell idea to plant goldfish in Mann Lake where Lahontan Cutthroat have been stocked and have provided a fishery since the 1950s. Now that the giant minnows have ruined this lake, the ODFW is asking for help from volunteers to catch as many of the remaining cutthroat as possible to be held in a pond nearby while Mann Lake is dosed with rotenone. to eliminate the prolific and now dominant goldfish population. Thereafter, the cutthroat will be re-planted into Mann and, hopefully, this fishery will recover. A meeting will begin at 5:30 PM. at the Oregon State Offices, 7809 W. Jackson, Suite 500, in Burns where ODFW staff will outline plans to and discuss volunteer duties.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will host a free youth fishing event at the McNary Channel Ponds near Hermiston on Saturday, May 8 from 9 AM to Noon with registration at 8:30 AM. Tackle will be available for thos without and volunteers will of help and guidance to new anglers.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for April 28, 2010

North Puget Sound

With the blackmouth season coming to a close, anglers are gearing up for other upcoming fishing opportunities in Puget Sound, where the halibut fishery and the popular shrimp season get started May 1. Meanwhile, freshwater anglers can cast for trout at numerous lowland lakes, which were recently stocked with fish.

Blustery weather kept some people away, but stalwart anglers who did make it out for the April 24 lowland lakes opener were rewarded with some nice **trout** . According to creel checks, the lake that produced the largest catch in the region was Whatcom County's Silver Lake, where 192 anglers took home 316 trout and released 113. In terms of the highest catch rates, King County's Geneva Lake tops the list. Fifteen anglers at Geneva caught and kept their limit of five trout on opening day.

Elsewhere, anglers in Skagit County averaged 4.7 trout per rod at Heart Lake and four trout per rod at Erie Lake. Anglers fishing Storm Lake in Snohomish County averaged 4.3 trout per rod, while those fishing King County's Steel Lake averaged nearly 3.9 trout per rod. At Deer Lake in Island County, anglers averaged 2.5 trout per rod.

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>).

Anglers should be aware that **Rattlesnake Lake** in King County, which opened to trout fishing April 24 with a five-fish limit, will switch to a year-round, catch-and-release

fishery when new sportfishing rules take effect May 1. Selective gear rules will still apply.

On Puget Sound, the **blackmouth salmon** fishery closes at the end of the day April 30 in marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner). Until then, anglers fishing in any of those areas have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook.

The **halibut** season, however, gets under way May 1 in the region. The season is scheduled to run through May 30 in marine areas 6-10, where fishing will be open three days a week - Thursday, Friday and Saturday - and closed Sunday through Wednesday except for Memorial Day weekend when those marine areas will be open Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The usual hot spots - Mutiny and Admiralty bays, as well as Eastern and Partridge banks - are the best bets for flatfish early in the season.

Beginning May 1, anglers in the region also will have an opportunity to fish for **lingcod**. 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 36 inches. Under a new rule designed to protect weak rockfish populations in Puget Sound, anglers in the region are prohibited from fishing for lingcod and other bottomfish in waters deeper than 120 feet.

Don't forget those shrimp pots. The shrimp season opens May 1 in Puget Sound. Here are the fishing schedules for the northern Puget Sound region:

- **Marine Area 7** opens May 1 at 7 a.m., and also will be open on May 5, 6, 7, 8, 21 and 22. Additional dates will be announced if sufficient quota remains.
- **Marine areas 8-1, 8-2, 9 and 10** will be open May 1 and 5 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Additional dates will be announced if sufficient quota remains.

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

Late April and early May bring us another **razor clam** dig on up to five ocean beaches, the opening of Puget Sound's **shrimp and halibut** seasons and, hopefully, better weather for the rest of the spring and summer long low-land lakes fishing season.

Several million **trout** still await anglers after wind, rain and the occasional snow flurry kept many anglers away from the April 24 opener. Many of those fish reside in freshly stocked Olympic Peninsula and South Sound lakes, which are teeming with trout this time of year; many of them jumbos and larger.

Those larger fish didn't wind up in area lakes by accident. Anglers told WDFW they wanted the opportunity to catch larger trout, and the agency's fishery managers and hatcheries responded by producing more jumbo rainbow trout for release this year. The goal, says WDFW's Hood Canal District fish biologist Thom Johnson, is to provide a quality fishing experience and spread the harvest of large rainbows among more anglers.

As part of that change, the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission in February adopted a new rule that limits anglers to two large trout (over 14 inches) as part of their daily limit. The new rule applies to select Hood Canal and South Sound lakes in Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason, Pierce and Thurston counties, as outlined in WDFW's **2010-11 Sport Fishing Rules pamphlet** .

The new pamphlet is available at stores that sell state fishing licenses, WDFW offices and on the web at http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regs_seasons.html .

Johnson says the new rule is designed to reduce the number of catchable fish that are caught and released by anglers who hope to catch a bigger fish.

"Under the former regulation, anglers were tempted to fish until they filled their five-fish bag limit with jumbos," said Johnson. "That means they hooked and released quite a few smaller but catchable rainbows, many of which died after they were put back in the water."

WDFW fish biologist Patricia Michael says that hatcheries will continue to stock lakes, and there will be plenty of fish through seasons that run into October.

Kids and their parents are reminded that the deadline for registering for the May 15 Kid's Fish-In event at American Lake Park in Lakewood is fast approaching. For \$10, kids 14 and under get a Zebco rod and reel, which they get to keep, and a Kids' Fish-In tee shirt. Registration is open through May 7. To download a registration form and learn more about the event click on this link to the Go Play Outside Washington website at (http://www.gopaw.org/kids_fish-in_program).

To view which lakes have been stocked by WDFW, or soon will be, click on (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>). For tips on fishing options by water and county go to (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/prospects/>)

For those who like nothing more than to go clamming, the April 27 to May 2 opening may be one of the last chances you get to dig razors this season. Typically, the season closes in early May, when quotas are reached and nature takes over and the clams degrade. But Dan Ayres, WDFW's coastal shellfish manager, says poor weather early in the season may have set the stage for one more opening before quotas are reached and the season closes. Stay tuned.

Beach openings and morning low tides for the late April early May dig are:

- Tuesday April 27, 6:21 a.m., -1.0: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only
- Wednesday, April 28, 7:06 a.m., -1.4: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only
- Thursday, April 29, 7:50 a.m., -1.6: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only
- Friday, April 30, 8:32 a.m., -1.5: Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Moco rocks
- Saturday May 1, 9:15 a.m., -1.0 : Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Moco rocks and Kalaloch
- Sunday, May 2, 9:58 a.m., -0.7: Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Moco rocks and Kalaloch

All of the openings begin at morning low tide and end at noon. The National Park Service scheduled the dig at Kalaloch Beach, which is located in Olympic National Park, to coincide with those at other coastal beaches.

Ayres reminds diggers that portions of the beach at Long Beach and Twin Harbors are closed to the public to protect nesting western snowy plovers, which are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

The closed portion at each beach includes the area above the mean high tide line. At Long Beach, the closed areas are located north of the Oysterville Road from the state park boundary north to Leadbetter Point. At Twin Harbors, the closed areas are located from just south of Midway Beach Road to the first beach-access trail at Grayland Beach State Park. Clam diggers are reminded that the entire northern section of Long Beach is closed to all driving starting at noon each day during this razor clam opener.

"Signs clearly mark the area and instruct people to stay on the hard-packed sand," Ayres said.

Prospective clammers should be forewarned that overnight and weekend repairs to Interstate 5 between Lacey and Tacoma will make it considerably more difficult to get to and from Washington's coast. For a schedule of closures go to the Department of Transportation's website at (<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/pavementrehab/i5martinwayto48thst/>)

May 1 also brings the opening of the Puget Sound shrimp season in all marine areas not open year round. For the first time since the season closed in 2005, **Discovery Bay** , located between Sequim and Port Townsend, will be open to shrimping. The two-day opening is scheduled for May 1 and May 5, but additional days could be added depending on availability.

While the May 1 opening is for all shrimp, spot shrimp are the big draw so long as they are available. After the spot shrimp season closes, several marine areas will reopen June 1 for the smaller **pink** and **coonstripe shrimp** . Any spot shrimp brought in during that season, which ends Oct. 15, must immediately be returned to the water.

The rules and dates for shrimping are published in the state's annual Sport Fishing Rules pamphlet, which will be out and available in stores that sell fishing licenses by May 1. The pamphlet is free and is also available at WDFW offices and on WDFW's web site at (http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regs_seasons.html). Information specific to shrimping is at (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/shrimpreg/shrimpindex.shtml>).

If all that didn't provide enough fun, the sport **halibut** season is set to open in May. This year's season is being cut a bit short, due largely to a 15 percent reduction in the Pacific coast halibut quota set by the International Pacific Halibut Commission.

"That reduction will really take a bite out of tribal and state fishing opportunities in Washington and other West Coast states," said Michele Culver, a WDFW regional director. "This year's quota reflects a reduction in halibut stocks from Alaska to California."

This year's quota for Washington, Oregon and California is 810,000 pounds, down from 950,000 pounds in 2009. In Washington, sport anglers will be allowed to catch 192,699 pounds of halibut compared to 214,110 pounds last year.

Constraints on fishing opportunities will be most apparent in Puget Sound, due to the combination of this year's reduced quota and an excessive catch last year. WDFW estimates that Puget Sound anglers caught more than 114,000 pounds of halibut in 2009 - well over the 57,393-pound quota.

Opening for Washington's marine areas are:

- **Columbia River (Ilwaco):** Marine Area 1 will open May 1, three days a week, Thursday through Saturday until 70 percent of the quota is reached, or through July 18. The fishery will then reopen on Aug. 6 and continue three days a week (Friday through Sunday) until the remaining quota is reached, or the end of the day on Sept. 26, whichever occurs first. The 2010 catch quota is 13,436 pounds.
- **South Coast (Westport/Ocean Shores):** Marine Area 2 will open on May 2, two days a week, Sundays and Tuesdays. During the fourth week in May the fishery will be open Sunday only (May 23). Beginning the following week the fishery will resume the Sunday, Tuesday structure until the quota is reached. The northern nearshore area will open May 2, seven days per week until the quota is reached. The 2010 catch quota is 35,887 pounds.
- **North Coast (La Push/Neah Bay):** Marine areas 3 and 4 will open on May 13, two days per week, Thursdays and Saturdays, through May 22. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will reopen June 3 and 5. If sufficient quota remains after that opener, the fishery will reopen starting June 17. The 2010 catch quota is 101,179 pounds.
- **Strait of Juan de Fuca/Puget Sound:** Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) will be open May 28 through June 19. Marine areas 6 through 10 (Strait, Port Angeles Admiralty Inlet and Everett) will be open May 1 through May 30. These fisheries will be open three days a week, Thursday, Friday and Saturday closed Sunday through

Wednesday except for Memorial Day weekend when they will be open Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The 2010 combined catch quota for these areas is 50,542 pounds.

There are a couple of changes that will be in effect for the first time this year in Marine Area 2 that anglers should be aware of. The retention of lingcod seaward of the 30 fathom line will be allowed on days that the primary halibut season is open. Also, the boundary of the northern nearshore area has changed so that it lines up with the coordinates of the 30-fathom line. The northern nearshore area will go from 47 31.70 N. lat south to 46 58.00 N. lat and east of the 30 fathom line.

As coastal weather has improved, fishing for lingcod is beginning to pick up, says Erica Crust, WDFW's ocean port sampler. Crust observes that while a large number of private boats aren't venturing out, there's been some improvement in the catch rates on charter boats.

"Fishing for lingcod has picked up, but right now everyone is gearing up for the halibut opens this weekend (May 1) in marine areas 1 and 2," she said. "In the upcoming weeks there should be some great fishing."

Crust reminds anglers that recreational fishing for bottomfish (excluding lingcod during halibut season) is not allowed in waters deeper than 30 fathoms in Marine Area 2 (Westport/Ocean Shores) from March 15 through June 15. However, anglers may retain **sablefish** and **Pacific cod** in these waters from May 1 through June 15. Retention of **canary** and **yelloweye rockfish** is prohibited in all areas.

The minimum size for lingcod in marine areas 1-3 is 22 inches, while the minimum size in Marine Area 4 is 24 inches. All areas are open seven days a week. Additional information about the lingcod fishery and other bottomfish is available on the WDFW Fishing Hotline (360) 902-2500 [begin_of_the_skype_highlighting \(360\) 902-2500 end_of_the_skype_highlighting](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm) or online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> .

Good thing there are plenty of fishing alternatives elsewhere because **salmon** fishing in Puget Sound has been slow.

That fact does not seem to have discouraged South Sound fishers. On April 25, off the Point Defiance boat ramp, 42 anglers and 21 boats were counted. Surveys indicated they brought in three chinooks and five **flatfish** . Fishing wasn't any better a little further north. On that same day, off the Everett boat ramp, the 71 anglers surveyed reported catching three chinooks and a few **rockfish** and flatfish.

Southwest Washington

Anglers are turning their attention to area tributaries and the mainstem Columbia above Bonneville Dam now that the lower Columbia is closed to fishing for **spring chinook**

salmon . While thousands await word about a possible reopening on the lower river, many are making good use of their time fishing the Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, Wind, and Klickitat rivers plus Drano Lake and Bonneville, The Dalles, and John Day pools.

"I'm telling people there are areas to fish and fish to catch," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "Spring chinook are moving past Bonneville Dam in good numbers, but we may not get word about a possible reopening for another week or two. Until then, there are plenty of other good places to catch fish."

As of April 25, a total of 95,512 upriver chinook had crossed Bonneville Dam - the highest count to date since 2003 and the third highest count since 1977.

But anglers looking to hook up with a spring chinook in the days ahead might also want to give some thought to the catch rate at Drano Lake. A recent creel check found that about 40 percent of the bank and boat anglers fishing there had caught a spring chinook. About 120 boats were observed fishing there Saturday, April 24. According to the pre-season forecast, 28,900 springers will return to Drano Lake this year.

Fishing has also been productive at the Wind River, where about one in three boat anglers have been landing hatchery spring chinook. Bank anglers have also been taking some fish at the mouth of the Wind and in the gorge. According to the pre-season forecast, 14,000 springers will return to the Wind River this year.

Conditions can get crowded on the Wind, but the stretch above Shipherd Falls will open for fishing May 1, helping to relieve some of the pressure. Fishing above the falls will be open upstream to within 800 yards of the Carson National Fish Hatchery, but will remain closed 400 feet below the coffer dam and 100 upstream of the coffer dam.

Anglers are also catching some fish on the Cowlitz River, although springers are only part of the story. In a recent creel check, 263 bank anglers had caught 26 spring chinook and 25 **steelhead** , while 51 boat anglers had taken four springers and 16 steelhead. Most of the springers were taken below the barrier dam at the salmon hatchery, while steelhead were primarily caught from there downstream to the trout hatchery. According to the pre-season forecast, 12,500 springers will return to the Cowlitz River this year.

During the week ending April 25, one in three bank anglers checked in The Dalles Pool had kept or released a spring chinook while about one in six boat anglers had caught a fish. Upriver at the John Day Pool, an estimated 549 adult hatchery chinook were harvested and 138 wild chinook were released. The majority of those fish were taken by bank anglers fishing the Oregon shore. Bonneville Pool bank anglers just outside Drano Lake were also catching some spring chinook.

On all rivers except the upper Wind, anglers are required to release any wild, unmarked spring chinook they intercept. For daily catch limits and other regulations for specific rivers, see the 2010-11 Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet, now available at all

WDFW offices, license vendors and online at (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

Sturgeon fishing has generally been slow on the lower Columbia River and anglers should be aware of pending rule changes above and below Bonneville Dam:

- **Lower Columbia downriver from Wauna powerlines:** The retention fishery closes April 30 at the end of the day, then reopens under a different size limit in May. The maximum fork-length size remains the same at 54 inches, but the current minimum size limit of 38 inches will increase to 41 inches when the fishery reopens for retention May 22. Catch-and-release fishing is allowed during non-retention days.
- **Expanded spawning sanctuary below Bonneville Dam:** Fishing is closed from May 1-Aug. 31 from Bonneville Dam downstream 9 miles to a line crossing the Columbia River from Navigation Marker 82 on the Oregon shore to the upstream exposed end of Skamania Island continuing in a straight line to the boundary marker on the Washington shore.
- **Closed waters in slough near Sand Island at Rooster Rock:** Effective Thursday April 29 through Saturday, July 31, 2010, angling for all species is prohibited from a line between the upstream end of Sand Island and a marker on the Oregon shoreline, downstream to a line between the lower end of Sand Island and a marker on the Oregon shoreline.
- **Spawning sanctuaries above Bonneville Dam:** Sturgeon fishing will be closed from May 1 to July 31 from John Day Dam downstream 5.4 miles to the west end of the grain silo at Rufus, Oregon and from McNary Dam downstream 1.5 miles to Hwy. 82 (Hwy. 395) Bridge.
- **The Dalles Pool:** Watch for news of a potential closure.

Meanwhile, opening day of the lowland lakes **trout** fishery has come and gone, but WDFW will continue to stock lakes throughout the summer season. Creel checks at lakes opening April 24 found that Swift Reservoir in Skamania County had the best catch rate in the region, giving up 3.8 fish per rod - including more than 100 naturally produced **coho** averaging 11 to 11.5 inches each and with nice pink colored flesh. Northwestern Reservoir followed with 3.1 fish per rod and Horsethief Lake with 2.8. Anglers fishing Mineral Lake in Lewis County averaged 1.68 fish per rod.

Trout anglers should be aware that Kline Pond in Vancouver will be closed two days for a kids "Hooked on Fishing" event. The pond will be closed to the general public April 30 and May 1, reopening May 2.

Ready for some warmwater fishing? Boat anglers fishing The Dalles Pool have been averaging 1.3 **walleye** per rod, while bank anglers are taking 2.6 **bass** apiece. The fishing will only improve as the water warms up.

Eastern Washington

Five to six more months of good lake fishing are ahead for the many anglers who didn't fight windy conditions across the region on the April 24 low-land lakes season opener.

"We estimated that in the Spokane area alone, where we had gust up to 30 miles an hour, the angler crowds were down by half," said WDFW regional fish program manager John Whalen. "But now, with calmer and warmer spring weather in the forecast, there are just that many more fish to be caught."

While overall average fish per angler harvest numbers were down on the opener, Whalen reported most anglers interviewed were satisfied with their catches. **Rainbow trout** in the 14 to 16 inch range were caught in several lakes, with some fish measuring 20 inches or more. Some of the best fishing in the region on the opener was measured at Cedar Lake in Stevens County where anglers averaged five fish, or a daily catch limit, each. Anglers at Stevens County's Rocky Lake averaged 4.4 fish each. Deep Lake saw 3.6 fish per angler, and Starvation Lake had 3.4 fish per angler.

The largest rainbow trout checked on the opener was a 23-incher from southwest Spokane County's Badger Lake, where anglers averaged just 1.7 fish each. Several 22-27-inch **tiger trout** were caught at Spokane County's Fish Lake, where anglers averaged just one fish each. Other central district waters check on the opener showed the following average catch rates: Clear, 0.6 fish per angler; Fishtrap, 2.2; West Medical, 2.2; and Williams, 2.3.

Opening day checks at Waitts Lake in Stevens County, where anglers averaged 2.4 fish each, included a 20-inch **brown trout**. Other northeast district lakes showed these average catch rates: Pend Oreille County's Big Meadow Lake, 2.75 fish per angler, and Yokum Lake, 2.5; Stevens County's Mudgett Lake, 2.5 fish per angler; and Ferry County's Trout Lake, 2.5 fish per angler.

Also opening on April 24 were three more sections of the Snake River in the south end of the region for **hatchery spring chinook salmon** fishing. WDFW district fish biologist Glen Mendel of Dayton says the chinook fisheries there are "ramping up" as more salmon pour into the Snake River.

"Catch has been pretty good below Ice Harbor Dam and Little Goose Dam," Mendel said. "We're checking over a dozen salmon per day at those sites and other salmon are being caught without being checked. On Sunday (April 25), over 50 boats were counted below Ice Harbor Dam. The numbers of salmon at Lower Granite have just begun to pick up to near 1,000 per day so catch should increase below Lower Granite Dam and in the Clarkston area this week."

The Ice Harbor section opened April 20, and all four sections are scheduled to remain open through June 30, unless catch rates warrant an earlier closure to conserve salmon. Only hatchery-marked (adipose-fin-clipped) spring chinook adults or jacks can be retained, minimum size 12 inches, with jacks being less than 24 inches. The daily catch

limit is two adults and four jacks per day, and fishing must cease as soon as the adult chinook daily limit is retained.

One exception is the area between the juvenile bypass return pipe and Little Goose Dam along the south shoreline, which includes the walkway area locally known as "the Wall." Only one jack and one adult can be retained there, and fishing must cease when one adult is retained. All chinook with the adipose fin intact, and all steelhead, must be immediately released unharmed.

See the all the rules for this special hatchery spring chinook fishery at <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/erule.jsp?id=877> .

Those fishing the year-round waters of the Pend Oreille River the week of May 3-7 will likely see several research gill nets with buoys marked "WDFW" or "Kalispel Tribe Natural Resource Department." WDFW fish biologist Marc Divens explains a survey for **northern pike** is underway in the section from Pioneer Park just north of Newport to the river bend just south of the LeClerc Creek Wildlife Area.

Northcentral Washington

Although the lake fishing season opener April 24 saw fewer anglers due to windy conditions, WDFW regional fish program manager Jeff Korth reports those that did brave the weather managed good catches of nice-sized **rainbow trout**.

The best catch rate recorded on the opener in the region was at Okanogan County's Pearrygin Lake where anglers averaged near the five-fish-daily-limit, with 4.4 fish each. Yearling rainbows at Pearrygin ran 10 inches, carryovers are 14 inches and triploid rainbows are running 15 to 17 inches.

Other Okanogan County waters that opened and were checked April 24 were Fish Lake with a 2.9 fish per angler average, Alta Lake with 2.6 fish per angler, and Conconully Lake and Reservoir, each with two fish per angler averages. Among the catch at the Conconullys were some 20 - 24-inch rainbows.

In Chelan County, Wapato Lake anglers averaged almost 3.7 fish each on the opener, including some large carryover rainbows. Clear Lake, also in Chelan County, saw a three-fish per angler average and a few 18-20-inch fish.

Anglers at Jameson Lake in Douglas County on the opener averaged about 2.5 fish each, mostly 10-inch yearlings and 14-inch carryovers.

The best Grant County fishing could be found on Warden Lake, where on opening day anglers averaged 3.6 rainbow and **tiger trout** each, including a half-dozen released fish. Park Lake saw a 3.4 rainbow, tiger and **brown trout** per angler average, including 10 released fish. Anglers at Blue Lake averaged 1.9 fish each, including four releases. Anglers at both Perch Lake and Vic Meyers Lake averaged 1.2 fish each. Deep Lake

shoreline anglers near the boat ramp fared well, but boat anglers were severely hampered by high winds; Including releases, overall average there on the opener was just over one fish each.

Starting May 1, the Columbia River from Priest Rapids Dam downstream 2.5 miles to the boundary marker on the river bank 400 feet downstream of the Priest Rapids Hatchery outlet channel (Jackson Creek) is closed to sturgeon fishing to protect spawning. The U.S. Geological Survey river flow gage towers and cableway that currently comprise the downstream sturgeon spawning sanctuary boundary line are being dismantled and removed, so the new boundary line is required for the sturgeon spawning sanctuary this year. The closure remains in effect through July 31.

Southcentral Washington

WDFW fish biologist Jim Cummins says that although river flows may still be too high for good fishing, the Yakima River **hatchery spring chinook salmon** fishery opens May 1.

The two sections of the Yakima that open are 1) from the Interstate 182 bridge in Richland (river mile 4.5) to 400 feet downstream of Horn Rapids (Wanawish) Dam (river mile 18.0), open through May 31; and 2) from the Interstate 82 bridge at Union Gap (river mile 107.1) to the BNRR bridge 500 feet downstream of Roza Dam (river mile 127.8), open through June 30.

The daily catch limit is two hatchery-marked (adipose-fin-clipped) chinook, minimum size 12 inches. Wild salmon (adipose fin intact) and all steelhead must be immediately released unharmed and cannot be removed from the water prior to release. The new Columbia River Salmon/Steelhead Endorsement is required to participate in this fishery. See <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/erule.jsp?id=884> for details on this fishery.

WDFW district fish biologist Paul Hoffarth of Pasco reports Columbia River hatchery spring chinook salmon fishing in the John Day Dam pool has recently been best for bank anglers.

"Our latest creel checks indicated an estimated 549 adult hatchery chinook harvested and 138 wild chinook were released," Hoffarth said. "The majority of the harvest was retained by bank anglers fishing the Oregon shore. We interviewed 336 salmon anglers this past week with 85 hatchery chinook. For the season, an estimated 748 adult hatchery chinook have been harvested and 154 wild chinook were released."

Hoffarth reminds anglers that starting May 1 the anti-snagging rule is rescinded and the season extended through June 30 for the Ringold area bank spring chinook fishery. The fishery is in the Columbia River adjacent to Ringold Springs Rearing Facility in Franklin County, from the WDFW markers one-fourth mile downstream of the Ringold irrigation

wasteway outlet to the markers one-half mile upstream of Ringold Springs Creek (hatchery outlet). Only the hatchery side of the river is open for bank fishing.

The anti-snagging rule is being removed for this bank fishery to allow anglers to use up to two, single-point hooks (barbed or barbless). Treble hooks are not permitted. The daily catch limit is two hatchery-marked (clipped adipose fin) Chinook salmon, 12-inch minimum size. All wild chinook (with an intact adipose fin) must be released immediately and may not be removed from the water. The new Columbia River Salmon/Steelhead Endorsement is required to participate in this fishery. See <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/erule.jsp?id=883> for more details.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

Cap'n Ken Johnson sent the picture below from an outing during the last mimus tidal series. His succinct report, "Today's catch, Seaside Beaches..."



Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com
Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com
Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Large triploid trout scheduled for stocking in area ponds:
<http://www.gazettetimes.com/news/local/ef3f5494-5822-11df-a770-001cc4c002e0.html>

GOOD LUCK!