

The Guide's Forecast - volume 12 issue number 21

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 21th – May 27th, 2010**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Are you wondering how the coastal fall chinook seasons are shaping up? It's time to voice your concerns or support for 2010 regulations for the Tillamook, Nehalem and Nestucca systems. Staff recommendations are now in the Fish and Wildlife Commission's hands and are available.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission will consider the 2010 coastal fall chinook and coho fishing seasons at its upcoming meeting on Friday, June 4 at ODFW Headquarters in Salem. To see the staff recommendations to be considered by the Commission [click here](#). Public comment on the upcoming seasons must be received by June 4. Members of the public can send comments to the Commission at odfw.commission@state.or.us, or they can attend and speak at the June 4 Commission meeting.

**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- Although opportunity for mainstem Columbia steelhead was largely concentrated downstream of the I-5 Bridge, bank anglers fared relatively well with the favorable tide series along lower Columbia beaches. A strong forecast should continue to provide opportunity through early July with strong minus tides and current keeping fish close to shore where bank anglers have good access to them.

Water upstream of I-5 to Bonneville Dam will open for steelhead beginning June 16th and the fishing should be excellent this year. Shad fishing in this stretch is open and numbers are starting to reach fishable levels. This is an excellent fishery to introduce youth to.

Boaters targeting sturgeon did well below Marker 82 in the gorge, averaging a keeper for every 3rd rod. Anglers in the Portland to Longview stretch averaged a keeper for every 10 rods.

With the lower Willamette about 60 degrees, springer fishing has slowed although it has been fair in the Multnomah Channel. Shad fishing is fair to good and will continue to improve. About 30,000 springers and 10,000 summer steelhead are upstream, the best run in years.

Redsides have been cooperative with fly anglers on the McKenzie with a few cutthroat in the mix.

Clackamas steelheading has been fair with most catches coming above Barton. Springers will soon be making an appearance on Eagle Creek.

There's not much happening on the Sandy although there should be springers in the river at this time of year.

A few steelhead and springers are being taken on the Santiam system with fishing improving here as the water warms.

Northwest – Spring chinook are making one of the stronger showings on Tillamook Bay than seen in recent years. Upper Tillamook Bay produced consistent catches with a few fish per day coming from the Oyster House Hole during the morning outgoing tide. Shannon Hardie of Maywood Park landed his first spring Chinook at 21-pounds on a chrome Flatfish with red dots in 4 foot of water.

Soft tides will favor lower bay fishing with the jetty producing the best catches on the morning outgoing tide. There are only a few days left to register with the Tillamook Estuaries Partnership for the 7th annual Bounty on the Bay salmon tournament. Call (503) 322-2222 for details.

If the weather forecast comes to fruition, driftboat fishing should be productive by the weekend. Tillamook streams are forecasted to rise nearly 1-foot which should stimulate action on the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca systems. As an added bonus, summer steelhead should be available on the Nestucca and Wilson Rivers.

Razor clam digging was excellent last week but tides won't be conducive for more opportunity for another week.

Halibut anglers out of Garibaldi did well on the first two days of the May 13th opener. Persistent anglers still found success on Saturday too but halibut will continue to get culled from the fishery in the upcoming all-depth openers. Those targeting bottomfish species also did well.

Ocean crabbing produced the best catches but catches averaged about 2 keepers per pot in last weeks calm seas.

Southwest – Keep an eye on offshore conditions as long-range forecasts are varying. Mild morning incoming tides will occur this coming weekend.

The all-depth halibut opener was rewarding for anglers once the ocean laid down. While numbers aren't yet available, count on fishing the next 3-day opener, May 20th through 22nd.

Anglers are scoring springers on the mainstem and lower North Umpqua. Plugs have been effective downstream from Elkton recently.

Boats launching out of Port Orford scored halibut limits during the opener. Good catches of rockfish and lingcod inside the 40-fathom line were made on Sunday this week when the ocean was friendly.

Spring chinook fishing has been worthwhile on the lower Rogue, best between tide changes. Water visibility is good which indicates the better opportunities will come early and late in the day, particularly when tides changes coincide. Beginning Saturday, anglers will be able to take wild spring chinook from the mouth to Gold Ray Dam. The limit remains 2 adult fish.

Bait and fly anglers had equally good results at Diamond Lake over the past weekend with the water free of ice and trout responding very well.

Eastern – Look for hatches of Golden Stones on the Deschutes above Maupin with salmon flies showing in good number and redsides responding in kind. Steer clear of spawning steelhead and trout.

With the water temperature of the John Day in the high 50s, smallmouth bass fishing has been worthwhile with a few larger specimens in the mix.

SW Washington – Although success rates for boat and bank anglers remains subdued for most district streams, early hatchery returns indicate predicted run sizes to most river systems remains accurate.

The Cowlitz looks to be the best option for spring chinook and steelhead catches have been favorable too. The Barrier Dam is producing some of the better catches.

Action at the Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries has slowed at the mouths but anglers fishing upstream in these respective watersheds are doing well from the bank.

Columbia River Fishing Report – The May 16th steelhead opener was a welcome opportunity for anglers remembering the action from 2009. Beach plunkers dominate the opportunity for the below I-5 fishery only. The upstream area will open in mid-June.

Strong tides worked in the favor of beach anglers where fish focus their migration along the shoreline to conserve calories for the long trek upstream Plunkers using spin-n-glos did well for this early in the season, indicating that another good steelhead year is on tap.

Sturgeon anglers continue to report good success for keepers in the Marker 82 fishery and the action should last a while longer. Here is the creel breakdown from the ODF&W report from last week:

Gorge Bank (below Marker 82):

Weekend checking showed no catch for seven bank anglers.

Gorge Boats (below Marker 82):

Weekend checking showed six legal white sturgeon kept, plus two oversize, and 55 sublegal sturgeon released for 11 boats (31 anglers).

Troutdale Boats:

No report.

Portland to Longview Bank:

Weekend checking showed one legal white sturgeon kept for six bank anglers.

Portland to Longview Boats:

Weekend checking showed 14 legal white sturgeon kept, plus two legal, one oversize, and 118 sublegal sturgeon released for 57 boats (142 anglers).

Estuary Bank:

Closed for retention. No report.

Estuary Boats:

Closed for retention. No report.

Meanwhile, it's clear that the peak spring chinook passage has come and gone and we'll spend another year with an over-prediction on our hands that may have consequences for our future. These fish are just too unpredictable to accurately forecast the future ahead. Not particularly good news is the low jack return we're currently witnessing. It points towards a much smaller run in 2011 but the Willamette is sure showing positive signs as it looks more like an under-prediction on that watershed.

Shad numbers are starting to pass at Bonneville in decent numbers with back to back days of over 2,000+ shad passing. Although far from the peak, fishable numbers seem present now and will only build in the coming days. Shad make excellent oversize sturgeon bait as well as crab bait and are great fun for a beginning angler.

The Guide's Forecast – Steelhead fishing won't be such a great option as tides will soften and fish will not gravitate to the shoreline like they would in stronger currents. If however spill continues at Bonneville and the above impoundments, bank fishing could remain fair. Use hot colored spin-n-glos with ample scent to draw strikes.

Sturgeon fishing should remain fair to good with the best action taking place in the Columbia River Gorge near the Marker 82 deadline. Although smelt and shrimp are the go-to baits, fresh shad strips will likely take quality fish as well if you can catch them. Oversize sturgeon should respond really well to fresh shad throughout the gorge.

Estuary sturgeon fishing will open this Saturday but don't expect great results as cold water and heavy spill often times effects the bite. They're likely present but will they bite is the big question. Shrimp in the shallows is a sure way to find out. Most fish will likely be upstream of Tongue Point in the early season and action from Portland to Longview indicates fish may be in the area.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Chinook and steelhead have continued to cross Willamette Falls in remarkable number. Over 3,000 springers were counted on May 15th with numbers averaging 2,000 a day for a week. The latest year-to-date totals are 34,347 springers, 10,438 summer steelhead. Chinook fishing has been slow in the warm water of the lower river recently with minor flurries of activity where four or five will be landed but rain this week is causing a sight drop in the lower Willamette water temperature. Upriver hopefuls are encountering algae (frequently referred to a 'moss' by anchor fishers) which will soon make fishing above the Falls prohibitive.

Expect to see the McKenzie water level and flow up a little from rain storms this week. A few summer steelhead have been landed but it has been spotty.

Water temperatures at the North Santiam remain too low to encourage much of a bite despite decent numbers of summer steelhead and spring Chinook available. A report earlier this week indicates it is still unsafe to drift from Shelburn and Green's Bridge due to underwater obstacles.

An ODFW bulletin issued May 14th stated incorrectly that there is no minimum size limit on trout caught from the South Yamhill River. In a corrected bulletin issued May 17th, the minimum size for retention is correctly stated as eight inches. Wild cutthroat may be retained here and in the Tualatin River starting May 22nd. See story in **Random Links**, below.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is sponsoring a free youth fishing event at Mt. Hood Pond from 9 AM to 2 PM. Rods, reels, tackle and bait will be provided for youngsters who do not have their own and instructors will be on hand to show youngsters the basics of fishing including how to clean a fish.

With 90% of boating fatalities occurring to those who were not wearing personal flotation devices, including the three so far this year, play it smart out there. Wear those life jackets.

The Guide's Forecast – Shad fishing is becoming the best bet for fishing in the lower Willamette although the season is just getting started. Trollers are split on the use of hardware

or herring for springers as both have resulted in few hookups. Various places have produced the occasional keeper periodically including the head of Multnomah Channel and Coon Island but overall, springer fishing is slow. Fly fishers will be rewarded on the upper Willamette below Hills Creek Dam with myriad hatches occurring now. A few steelhead are being taken on the Town Run. To target springers before the algae makes it an impossible task, try spinners or plugs.

With the Green McKenzie Caddis hatch ongoing, trout fishing will be good on the lower McKenzie. Match the hatch here and you can't go wrong. The chance of a steelhead hookup is fair to good but will improve daily with fresh fish entering the system daily.

With decent numbers of both summer and winter steelhead available, fishing at the North Santiam is fair and will improve in weeks to come. A few spring Chinook are being taken with most of this action taking place on the South Santiam.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Fishing has been slow on the Clackamas. Recent rains have not had much of an impact on the level and flow.

The water clarity has been good on the Sandy River this week and a few springers have been taken.

The Guide's Forecast - Until the water temperature rises (and we're as tired of writing that phrase as you are of reading it), fishing is likely to remain slow on the Clackamas.

The Sandy has a mix of summer and winter steelhead with the former increasing as the latter decreases. Fish darker lures when it's overcast, throwing bright-colored lures on brighter days. A few spring Chinook are in the mix which will occasionally provide a pleasant surprise to anglers targeting steelhead.

North Coast Fishing Report – Spring chinook are on the minds of many and for good reason; the season is off to a good start. Catches have been some of the more consistent in recent years with fish coming from both the upper and lower estuary over the past week. With a good minus tide recently, action in the upper bay was decent for trollers working the main Oyster House Hole and those fishing in more solitary waters downstream of the Oyster House. Spinners and herring accounted for much of the catch but backrolled plugs took fish on the strong outgoing tide.

Fish were also caught in the Trask River both in tidewater and in a rarer occurrence, at the Hatchery Hole up Chance Road. Hatchery manager Jim Skaar took a nice 18-pounder on hardware on Tuesday and effort has been high in the popular drift. So high in fact that pigs that call themselves anglers are littering the banks with line, hooks and bait containers, all while vandalizing garbage cans that were left out there for people to use. It's up to us to call people on their bad manners, otherwise, they'll continue to trash the place and it will certainly close to public use like so many other places have.

Although the bubble is NOT open to fishing for recreational use, it is open for commercial trollers and they are catching a few fish out there. Flat seas for most of last week motivated halibut, bottomfishers and crabbers to the salt and the haul was pretty good. Nearshore halibut has been spotty but the all-depth anglers fared well, especially on the first 2 days of the season. Ocean crabbing was fair-at-best with my best day for 6 pots with good bait being 13 keepers. They were quality keepers however.

Sturgeon have been in Tillamook Bay but they are moving around so much that it's hard to pinpoint them with any consistency. The few anglers targeting them have been doing fair. I spotted a large pod of rolling sturgeon last weekend in the upper bay but was using plugs to target salmon. I don't get the feeling that they were particularly interested in biting but since I didn't target them, who knows?

Crabbing inside the bay has been slower than ocean crabbing (and you already got that report above).

Razor clam digging was epic on the north coast last week. Calm seas and low tides made for easy limits for those in the know. Seaside and Gearhart produced the best digs. Another good tide series won't happen until early next week (May 24th and 25th). Be ready for it.

The Guide's Forecast – Good spring chinook tides will fade for upper Tillamook Bay fishers but lower bay anglers should find favorable tides through the weekend for trolling herring along the jetties. Target the last part of incoming and the entire outgoing tide with your herring close to the bottom where the biters are. Blue label herring plug-cut and green label herring rigged whole should provide some fair action over the next several days.

About a foot rise in river levels is forecasted for district rivers just prior to the weekend. This will make for some unique drift fishing opportunities for boaters working the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Action should be fair for backbouncers and plug fishers through the weekend. The Trask will offer up the best option as more plants are put in that river than any other district stream. Plugs backrolled or plunked will produce strikes but anglers working eggs should also fare well.

Sturgeon remains an option but will likely be hard to find. Sand shrimp will take keepers if they're willing to bite. The lower you go in the estuary, the more likely you are to find bait stealers but this weeks fresh water influx may change all of that.

The offshore forecast doesn't look all that promising this week so halibut seekers as well as bottomfishers and crabbers won't have a good time out there. You'll earn your fish if you go. Gear up for next weeks clam tides. Good digs will likely begin on Monday if the surf calms downy then.

Central & South Coast Reports – Despite a lumpy ocean on the first day of the spring all-depth halibut opener, 38 % of the quota was taken by anglers. Many of those trying indicated that overall halibut size fell short of expectations. The next all-depth opportunities will be May 20th, 21st and 22nd, June 3rd, 4th and 5th. If quota remains, additional days will be added.

Crabbing is slow in Winchester Bay, fair in the ocean. Although sturgeon are evident in the lower Umpqua, very few are being hooked. Shad fishing is spotty on the Umpqua with the popular Yellow Creek stretch producing a few and slightly better results coming at Sawyer's Rapids. Results will improve as the water level drops. Smallmouth bass fishing is slow to fair but will improve dramatically as the water warms. Spring Chinook fishing is worthwhile on the upper mainstem and on the North Umpqua at many locations below Rock Creek.

Halibut fishing was good out of Bandon with limits taken by most anglers and many fish reported over 40 pounds.

While not a precedent, it is the first time in years that wild spring Chinook may be kept on the Rogue River below Gold Ray Dam starting May 22nd. The limit remains two per day, either or both of which may be wild. This decision came as counts over Gold Ray Dam have exceeded 250

per day and resulted in a run forecast of 43,000 for 2010. This number should be more the three times the totals for any of the last four years. Spring Chinook catches have been slow in the lower Rogue over the past week as warm weather pushed water temperatures over 60 degrees but rain this week will have a positive effect on water temps as well as springer hookups. The weekend looks very good for Chinook fishing on the lower Rogue. Anchovies remain the most effective bait, but there's still a shortage in the area. Make every effort to obtain some before making the trip. Boaters on the Grants Pass stretch are scoring springers on plugs, spinners and by backbouncing. The reservoir above Lost Creek Dam is finally full and releases will increase, alleviating low water issues on the upper Rogue which should also further increase spring Chinook counts at Gold Ray. Steelhead cannot be kept on the Rogue above the dam.

Boats launching out of the Port of Brookings had a field day with rockfish and ling cod over the past weekend. Many lings were caught inadvertently as they latched onto greenling which were hooked first. Rock fishers have also done well recently. Surf perch fishing has been yielding some larger fish to long rodders on beaches south of Brookings.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Fly rodders look forward to the salmonfly hatch on the Deschutes all year. That time is now. Large trout are just starting to key on the big bugs so nymphing will be most effective early in the day. Throw a Golden Stone along brush lines and overhanging trees in the afternoon with a good chance It'll get sucked in by an opportunistic redbside. Anglers targeting springers are hooking a few but most have been natives which required release. The pressure is building. As of today (Thursday, May 20th), the White River is spewing mud and the Deschutes downstream is murky.

Kokanee limits are being taken by trollers early mornings at Green Peter.

Odell jig fishers are taking limits of kokanee with morning results best.

A few fish are being taken by trollers at Paulina but it is very slow.

Lake Simtustus has been providing decent catches of trout to trollers although kokanee fishing has been slow.

Trout fishing is fair to good on Lava Lake.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report May 12th through May 26th, 2010

North Puget Sound

Spring fisheries are under way and anglers have their pick of several fishing opportunities in the region. Halibut and lingcod seasons are open, shrimping is still an option in one marine area and hungry trout are biting at many of the region's lakes.

WDFW is adding more **trout** this month to several of those lakes, including Lone Lake in Island County; Green, Meridian and Sawyer lakes in King County; Mountain Lake in San Juan County; Pass, Campbell and Vogler lakes in Skagit County; Gissburg Lake in Snohomish County; and Squalicum and Toad lakes in Whatcom County.

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 at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/>

Anglers should be aware that **Rattlesnake Lake** in King County, which opened to trout fishing April 24 with a five-fish limit, switched to a year-round, catch-and-release fishery May 1. Selective gear rules still apply.

On Puget Sound, anglers are hooking some nice **lingcod**. Catch counts at the Armeni Ramp indicate 15 anglers caught nine lingcod May 8 and seven anglers checked five lings the following day. Elsewhere, seven anglers at the Edmonds sling brought home six lingcod May 5, while 39 anglers checked at the Everett ramp caught seven lings May 9. 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.

The **halibut** season also is under way. 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. Anglers have a daily limit of one halibut and there is no minimum size limit.

Shrimping is still an option in the north Sound, but only in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), which will be open May 21 and 22. Shrimp fisheries 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) are closed. More details on the shrimp fishery are available on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/shrimpreg/>.

Before heading out, anglers should check the rules and regulations for all fisheries on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations>.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Halibut, shrimp, lingcod, clams and trout dominated fishing in the first half of May and - with rivers set to open the first Saturday in June - the good times are just beginning.

Bad weather and nasty ocean conditions during parts of the **razor-clam** season last fall and winter will pay dividends May 15-16 when up to four ocean beaches will open for one last dig. Normally the diggers have met the annual beach harvest quotas by now, but this season's slow start left enough clams for another May outing. The openings will begin on morning tides on the following beaches and end both days at noon:

- Saturday, May 15, 8:15 a.m., -1.6 ft.: Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks
- Sunday, May 16, 8:58 a.m., -1.6 ft.: Long Beach, Twin Harbors only

Kalaloch beach in Olympic National Park will remain closed to clam digging both days. Diggers should be aware 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.

Dan Ayres, WDFW's coastal shellfish manager, estimates that by the time this dig closes 4 million razor-clams will have been harvested from Washington beaches. That is up considerably from the 2.9 million average for the past 10 years. So, too, is the number of diggers. Since the season opened last October, approximately 300,000 trips were made to dig clams, well over the 10-year average of 239,000 digger trips.

Shrimpers will also get another crack at a daily limit this month in Discovery Bay and in Marine Area 11 (Tacoma/Vashon). After the catch for the initial openings in those areas, WDFW extended the season on the following days:

- **Discovery Bay Shrimp District** : 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday, May 20, and Saturday, May 22.
- **Marine Area 11** : 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday, May 20

Discovery Bay opened to shrimping May 1 and May 5 for the first time since the season closed in 2005. However, shrimping was fairly slow, allowing shrimpers additional time on the water. The best shrimping earlier this month was on Hood Canal where Mark O'Toole, WDFW's Puget Sound shrimp management biologist, described the season this way: "Last Wednesday 85 percent of the boats limited. Shrimping just doesn't get any better than that."

In the three days it was open nearly 68,000 lbs. of shrimp were hauled in from Hood Canal, so it looks like Wednesday, May 12 will be the final day of the fishery. The abundance of shrimp wasn't unexpected. When test pots were hauled up from Hood Canal in April they contained more shrimp than had been seen in pots there for the past decade.

Shrimping rules are published in the state's annual *Sport Fishing Rules* pamphlet, which is available in stores that sell fishing licenses. That information is also available on WDFW's web site at (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations>).

On the coast, **halibut** fishing also proved productive, once the weather improved. "Rough weather delayed the openings at Ilwaco, but once the weather improved the fishing was pretty good," said Heather Reed, WDFW's coastal marine resources policy coordinator. "At Ilwaco they averaged a half a fish per person, and the halibut were good size, averaging 23 lbs. There was great fishing out of Westport, but the fish were smaller - about 14 lbs. Neah Bay opens Thursday (May 13) and Port Angeles is going gangbusters."

At the end of this month, the Port Angeles Salmon Club will hold its annual Halibut Derby over Memorial Day weekend, May 29-30. The entry fee is \$40, with \$20,000 in prizes. To learn more go to <http://www.olympicpeninsula.org/event/halibut-derby>.) Halibut openings for Washington's marine areas are:

- **Columbia River (Ilwaco)**: Marine Area 1 opened May 1, and will remain open 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 through Sept. 26, whichever occurs first. The 2010 catch quota is 13,436 pounds.
- **South Coast (Westport/Ocean Shores)**: Marine Area 2 opened 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 opened May 2, seven days per week and will remain open 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.

Anglers should be aware of a couple of changes in effect for the first time this year in Marine Area 2. 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.

In the Strait and Puget Sound, the halibut and **lingcod** fishing was best up north. Creel counts at the Ediz Hook boat launch in Port Angeles had 258 anglers catching 147 halibut on May 7. The following day, at the same boat launch, creel counts showed 210 anglers with 68 halibut.

In the north Sound, anglers were having luck catching Pacific halibut, lingcod and **kelp greenling** off the Coronet Bay public ramp. In south and central Puget Sound, fishing was slow to non-existent.

With better weather, fishing for lingcod continues to improve off the coast, says Erica Crust, WDFW's ocean port sampler. Crust observes that private boats have begun venturing out, and the catch rate on charter boats continues to be good.

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 or online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations>.

On Saturday (May 15), hundreds of kids will show up at American Lake Park in Lakewood for this year's **Kid's Fish-In** event. For \$10, kids 14 and under get a Zebco rod and reel, which they get to keep, a Kids' Fish-In tee shirt and time on American Lake to catch a couple of good size trout. Pre-registration was required, but in the days leading up to the fish-in there were still time slots available. To learn more, or to sign up for the event, go to (http://www.gopaw.org/kids_fish-in_program) or call (253) 983-7887. Or, say Lakewood Parks and Recreation officials, just show up Saturday.

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

Southwest Washington

The **spring chinook** fishery is now closed on the mainstem Columbia River from the mouth to McNary Dam, but anglers are still catching springers on a number of tributaries to the big river. In addition, sport fishing opens May 16 for **hatchery steelhead** and **hatchery jack chinook** below the Interstate 5 Bridge and for **shad** below Bonneville Dam.

Anglers will be allowed to catch and keep up to two hatchery steelhead as part of their six-salmonid daily limit in the mainstem Columbia. Shad don't count, since there's no daily limit or minimum size.

Meanwhile, there's still a chance that the sport fishery could reopen for spring chinook on the Columbia, but only if the number of fish counted at Bonneville Dam significantly exceeds current expectations, said Guy Norman, WDFW regional manager for southwest Washington.

"Given the catch to date, it doesn't look like there's room for more sport opportunity," Norman said. "The run will have to bust out of the range on the high side to provide more opportunity." Norman's comments were based on a new run-size forecast of 350,000 upriver spring chinook, with a range of 330,000 to 370,000 fish. The update is down from the pre-season forecast of 470,000, but would still represent the second or third-largest upriver run since at least 1938. The record is 440,000 fish in 2001 followed by the next year with nearly 335,000 fish.

Lower river anglers caught 23,533 upriver spring chinook by the time fishing ended April 18. The catch above Bonneville Dam was expected to reach 3,400 fish by May 10, when fishing came to a close.

Among the tributaries, Drano Lake was still the hotspot during the week ending May 9, when creel checks found that just over half of the boat anglers took home a spring chinook under crowded conditions. Bank anglers averaged a fish for every 3.5 rods. Anglers are reminded the lake is closed to all fishing on Wednesdays through May.

Bank angling was slow on the Wind River last week, but just over 40 percent of the boat anglers caught a spring chinook. Conditions can also get crowded on the Wind, although fishing is now open above Shipherd Falls, helping to relieve some of the pressure. Fishing above the falls is open upstream to within 800 yards of the Carson National Fish Hatchery, but is closed 400 feet below the coffer dam and 100 feet upstream of the coffer dam.

Elsewhere, anglers have been catching a mix of hatchery spring chinook and hatchery summer-run steelhead on the Kalama, Lewis, Cowlitz and Klickitat rivers. Deep River recently re-opened from the mouth to town bridge, providing additional fishing opportunities for both species. Lake Scanewa, on the upper Cowlitz River, is also now open for hatchery spring chinook fishing. The lower East Fork Lewis and Washougal rivers are open to fishing for hatchery summer run steelhead under selective gear rules (no bait) until the general season begins in early June.

Daily limits for anglers fishing the Cowlitz, Lewis and Kalama rivers include up to two marked adult chinook, plus two marked adult steelhead. Anglers can take two hatchery chinook or two hatchery steelhead or one of each at the Wind River, Klickitat River or Drano Lake. In all cases (except the upper Wind River), unmarked wild fish must be released.

Mark-selective fishing rules will also be in place during the **summer chinook** fishery, which opens June 16 from the mouth of the Columbia River to Priest Rapids Dam. Anglers will be allowed to keep up to two marked hatchery fish but will be required to release any wild summer chinook they intercept.

With 89,000 summer chinook expected this year, fishery managers hope to keep the fishery open from mid-June through July, said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. Moving to a selective fishery will help ensure a full season, while preserving wild broodstock for the new Chief Joseph Hatchery, scheduled to open in 2012, he said.

Starting May 22, fishing for **white sturgeon** will open seven days per week through late June below the Wauna powerlines on the mainstem Columbia River. The daily limit is one fish with a minimum fork length of 41 inches and a maximum of 54 inches. Hymer said sturgeon fishing has been picking up above the Wauna powerlines, where more than a hundred boats and 62 bank anglers were counted during a recent overflight.

Above Wauna, anglers may retain one white sturgeon per day between 38 inches and 54 inches in fork length on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Anglers are reminded Bonneville Dam downstream 9 miles to Marker 82 is closed to fishing for sturgeon and Sand Island Slough near Rooster Rock is closed to fishing for all species including sturgeon.

In The Dalles Pool, boat anglers have been catching **bass** and **walleye**, while those fishing Merwin and Yale reservoirs have been reeling in **kokanee**. Anglers with an appetite for **trout** should be aware that the following waters were stocked during the first week of May:

- Fort Borst Park Pond near Centralia: 2,019 catchable size rainbows.
- Lewis Co. Park Pond near Toledo: 580 triploid trout averaging 1.5 pounds each.
- Lake Sacajawea in Longview: 2,222 catchable size rainbows.

Eastern Washington

Glen Mendel, WDFW district fish biologist in Dayton, said the latest creel checks show **hatchery spring chinook salmon** fishing on the Snake River is starting to pick up in the Clarkston area.

The last check in the Ice Harbor Dam area shows 11 shore anglers with one harvested hatchery chinook for an average catch rate of 66 hours per fish, and nine boat anglers with two harvested hatchery chinook and one released wild chinook for an average catch rate of 42 hours per kept fish. About 300 chinook have been harvested in the fishery since it opened April 20.

Creel checks in the Little Goose Dam area show 44 anglers on the "wall" (walkway area in front of the juvenile fish collection facility near the dam) with seven harvested hatchery chinook and one released wild chinook for an average catch rate of 29 hours per fish kept; 71 shore anglers with 13 harvested hatchery chinook and eight released wild chinook for an average catch rate of 33 hours per kept fish; and 16 boat anglers with no fish.

Meanwhile, creel checks in the Lower Granite Dam area show seven shore anglers with no fish and three boat anglers with one released wild chinook. The Clarkston area fishery check showed five shore anglers with one harvested hatchery chinook for an average catch rate of about nine hours per fish kept, and 23 boat anglers with three harvested hatchery chinook for an average catch rate of 36 hours per fish kept.

Mendel notes that updates on run numbers are expected soon. Anglers should check WDFW's website for any changes in the fishery.

Only hatchery-marked (adipose-fin-clipped) chinook of at least 12 inches can be retained in these fisheries, with a daily catch limit of two adults and four jacks (less than 24 inches). One exception on the catch limit is in the area near Little Goose Dam, including the "wall," where only one jack and one adult can be retained. All steelhead and all wild chinook must be released immediately. Barbless hooks no larger than 5/8-inch from point to shank are required for all species except sturgeon. See all the rule details at <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/erule.jsp?id=887>.

Rainbow trout fishing continues to be productive at many of the region's well-stocked waters. WDFW Spokane Fish Hatchery Manager Ace Trump recently reported seeing five-fish limits reeled in within three to four hours by a couple of anglers at southern Stevens County's Deer Lake. "They were pulling plugs and fishing between four and 12 feet down and staying in around 15 feet of water," Trump said. "They picked up most of their fish in the narrows. I was pulling plugs at around 18 to 20 feet down in 22 to 30 feet of water and picked up one rainbow and two fairly nice **lake trout** ."

WDFW Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Manager Juli Anderson said rainbows are biting at the area's walk-in-only Z-Lake. Anderson reminds anglers that rattlesnakes and ticks are out now with warmer weather, so be prepared.

Northcentral Washington

With an expectation of about 11,000 **spring chinook salmon** on their way to the Icicle River in Chelan County, a fishery will begin May 13 on a section of that waterway. WDFW Northcentral region fish program manager Jeff Korth says up to two salmon of 12-inch minimum size can be harvested daily in the Icicle River from the closure signs located 800 feet upstream of the mouth to 500 feet downstream of the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery Barrier Dam.

Korth says that although upper Columbia River spring chinook have been listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the salmon returning to the Icicle River are not listed under the ESA. With about 1,000 salmon needed for hatchery broodstock, the size of this year's run means remaining fish will be available for harvest. A night closure will be in effect. Anglers must release fish with one or more round holes punched in the tail of the fish (caudal fin). These fish are part of a study and have been anesthetized so there is a 21-day ban on consumption of these fish.

The Icicle salmon fishery is expected to run through July 31.

WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist Bob Jateff of Twisp reports that despite recent cooler weather, Pearrygin Lake, Conconully Reservoir and Conconully Lake continue to provide good fishing for rainbow trout. Most fish coming out of those waters are running 10-12 inches with winter-carryover fish up to 15 inches. WDFW Enforcement Officer Cal Treser recently checked shore fishermen on Pearrygin who averaged two fish each.

Jateff also reports selective-gear-rule lakes such as Big Twin and the Sinlahekin's Blue are producing good catches of rainbows in the 12-16 inch range. Rat Lake, near the town of Brewster, is catch-and-release-only under selective gear rules and can provide some very fast fishing for rainbows 10-14 inches, plus a few **brown trout** . Aeneas is a fly fishing only lake, but

is producing excellent catches of rainbow in the 14-16 inch range in addition to brown trout up to 18 inches.

Treser also reported shore anglers at year-round Patterson Lake, west of Winthrop, were recently using Powerbait to catch trout. A boat angler on Patterson was catching a lot of **yellow perch** .

"Fishermen need to remember to pick up their waste fishing line and lure wrappers," Treser said. "I have had a couple of birds recently entangled by fishing line, including one loon."

Southcentral Washington

Fishing for **spring chinook salmon** is closed from the mouth of the Columbia River to McNary Dam, but anglers are catching an increasing number of springers in the Yakima River.

Paul Hoffarth, WDFW district fish biologist from Pasco, reports that an estimated 20 hatchery spring chinooks were harvested in the lower Yakima River during the week ending May 9. In addition, eight wild chinook were caught and released. Anglers averaged 39 hours per chinook, up slightly from a year ago.

Creel reports indicate an estimated 225 adult hatchery marked (clipped fin) spring chinook were harvested at Ringold for the week of May 3-9. An estimated 44 wild chinook were caught and released. WDFW staff interviewed 166 anglers, 18 percent of the effort during the week. Anglers averaged one chinook for 17 hours of fishing, eight hours better than a year ago. For the season, 301 **hatchery steelhead** have been harvested.

Hoffarth reminds anglers that, because of budget cuts, this will be the last spring chinook fishery at the Ringold. It will remain open for hatchery steelhead and other species.

The daily limit is two hatchery-marked chinook (clipped and healed adipose fin) of at least 12 inches. Wild salmon (adipose fin intact) must be immediately released unharmed and cannot be removed from the water prior to release. Gear is restricted to one, single-point, barbless hook with a hook gap from point to shank of 3/4 inch or less. Use of bait is allowed. Fishing for steelhead remains closed. All steelhead must be immediately released unharmed and cannot be removed from the water prior to release. For all rule details, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations> .

Eric Anderson, WDFW's district fish biologist for Yakima and Kittitas counties says there have been lots of anglers on the Yakima River, and that fishing has begun to pick up after a slow start. "We're seeing more fish in the river," said Anderson. "Just yesterday (May 11) anglers kept six hatchery fish and released seven wild salmon. The hatchery is continuing to stock catchable-size trout in area lakes and ponds."

Many of the region's lakes are open and stocked year-round. A schedule of all lake trout stocking can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/stocking/weekly/> .

Anderson and Hoffarth remind anglers that many streams in central and eastern Washington will remain closed until the June 5 opener to protect downstream migrating salmon and steelhead smolts and spawning trout and steelhead.

Anderson and Hoffarth note that the Yakima Greenway Path and several boat launches provide excellent access to the Yakima River from Selah to Union Gap. Maps can be found at <http://www.yakimagreenway.org/map.html> .

There is also access at Harrison Road and from the Yakima Canyon Highway above Harrison Road. Boaters should be aware that the river can be a challenge to float, particularly from the Terrace Heights Bridge down to Century Landing at Union Gap. For the lower reach of the Yakima, access maps are posted at http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/salmon/when_where_best_area-yakima.htm.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

This week, subscriber Lucy M. wrote to ask, "Will you report on shad fishing when they show up in the Umpqua?"

TGF co-editor Michael Teague replied, "We will, are and do when there are shad to be caught!

"See tonight's (5/21) TGF newsletter for details.

"We appreciate hearing from readers and encourage you to write again any time. If you have any specific questions, we'll do our best to address them."

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

New rule allows wild trout retention on Tualatin, Yamhill rivers:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2010/may/051410.asp>

Listen to Gary Loomis' Podcast here:

<http://www.itinerantangler.com/podcasts/podcast66.mp3>

GOOD LUCK!