

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **June 4th – June 10th, 2010**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Dam counts at Bonneville have experienced an unexpected jump in chinook counts. These are likely a mix of late spring chinook and early summer run fish. This bodes well for the summer chinook fishery set to start around mid-month.

Sturgeon anglers working the gorge are still catching fair numbers of keepers and oversize fish using fresh shad, either whole or in strips to entice strikes. Keeper success will likely fade from this fishery however as mature fish migrate towards more fertile grounds in the lower Columbia River.

Shad counts are improving but have clearly not peaked yet. Early indications point to a less than average return. Sockeye salmon are beginning to pass at Bonneville as well but incidentally caught sockeye, most often encountered in the steelhead bank fishery, must be released.

Spring chinook passage has picked up again at Willamette Falls. Over 43,000 springers and 13,000 summer steelhead have crossed. Lower Willamette trollers have continued to take chinook. Willamette passage coupled with Willamette kept catch has already surpassed the preseason prediction for returning adults. It's a much better return than originally predicted. Shad fishing is fair to good.

Steelheading is fair to good below Leaburg Dam on the McKenzie while trout fishing is good river-wide.

A few springers have been taken on the North Santiam while steelhead are being caught on the South Santiam on spinners and jigs.

Backtrollers are taking a combination of springers and steelhead on the Sandy from Oxbow to Dabney but steelhead remains the main focus for most avid anglers.

The Clackamas is producing a few springers and is expected to improve this month. Steelheading has been slow to fair although summer fish are beginning to show in better numbers.

Northwest – A good tide series rewarded upper Tillamook Bay salmon fishers with steady catches throughout the week. Effort was higher given the better returns but it still hasn't been a wide open bite by any means. A softer upcoming tide series will favor lower bay anglers but a forecasted significant rise in river levels may send opportunistic adults upriver in a hurry and out of reach of bay trollers.

North Coast rivers are scheduled to crest on the weekend and may not fish until early next week. The Trask will be the go-to river but the Wilson, Nestucca and Three Rivers will also receive a good shot of adults and should be well distributed throughout the systems. Bank anglers fishing at the hatchery on the Trask will certainly benefit from the healthy returns but are in jeopardy of losing the quality public access due to a high incidence of littering and poor angling practices.

A calm ocean last week allowed anglers to target salmon in the Tillamook Bay bubble with some success. Nearshore bottomfishers and halibut anglers fared well however and more success is likely when seas calm again. Crabbing for keeper males remains fair at best however with the best success by far, coming from the ocean.

Fair numbers of sea-run cutthroat trout are showing in the estuary and lower stretches of north coast streams. A consumptive fishery is now underway on many coastal streams and local area lakes will be stocked next week with catchable rainbows in preparation for Free Fishing Weekend June 12th and 13th. A complete list of Free Fishing events can be found on the ODF&W website.

Sturgeon fishing near Astoria picked up downstream of the Astoria Bridge late last week with sporadic catches coming from the green buoy line on the Oregon side. Anchovies are the best bait in the deeper water while anglers working shallower water find better results using sand shrimp for bait.

Southwest – Soft tides but marginal ocean conditions are predicted for the coming weekend.

Boats launching out of Winchester Bay caught very few ocean chinook as predicted. Catches will improve a few weeks into the season. Springers continue to be caught on the upper mainstem and North Umpqua. Shad fishing has been slow this week.

Lower Rogue spring chinook anglers are experiencing off-and-on action. Better results are coming to plug pullers on the middle river with wrapped Kwikfish. With over 7,000 springers counted at Gold Ray Dam, upper river anglers have seen some decent action although only hatchery salmon may be kept above the dam until July 1st.

Sea run cutthroat are being caught in fair to good number on the Chetco. Only artificial lures and flies may be used above tidewater. Out of Brookings, rockfish catches are excellent while ling cod and crab catches have been fair.

A free kids fishing derby will take place on June 12th from 6:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Diamond Lake.

The Rogue above Lost Creek and Fish Lake are scheduled to be planted with trout.

Eastern – Fly anglers made some memories over the past weekend on the Deschutes with the early stonefly and salmon fly hatches in full swing. Nymphing is effective in the morning with dries drawing redbreast grabs all afternoon. Fishing is best when the weather is warm.

Crane Prairie has been fishing well with an apparent resurgence in the trout population.

SW Washington – Salmon and steelhead remain viable options for SW Washington anglers will the Cowlitz remaining a top prospect for salmon anglers working the Barrier Dam area. Summer steelhead should begin to show in greater numbers over the next few weeks.

Increased bag limits for spring chinook remain for the Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries although catch success has shifted to areas higher in the watershed. Eggs drifted under a bobber or on the bottom will likely produce the best. Summer steelhead action should begin to pick up for trollers in the lower reaches.

Columbia River Fishing Report – In the gorge, shad anglers from both the bank and boats are scoring good numbers of fish. Sunny days are producing the best catches but those have been hard to come by lately. Small spoons such as the Dick Nite will produce the best results.

Dam counts continue to shoot up with a mix of spring and summer chinook passing right now. The boost in numbers is a good indicator that the summer chinook fishery scheduled to open on

June 16th, should be a good one. The fishery has gone to a selective one, which will allow a longer season for anglers willing to release fish that have all of their fins intact. More on that fishery as we near the opener.

Steelhead anglers didn't fare all that well in the waning tide series. Only a few fish were tallied in the downstream fisheries from Westport to Sauvie's Island.

Sturgeon action is slowing in the gorge but anglers in the Portland to Longview stretch still did fair for the effort that was out. Gorge anglers are picking up oversized sturgeon with some regularity using fresh shad for bait.

Downriver, anglers targeting sturgeon in the estuary are having sporadic success with one day producing good catches and the next becoming a struggle to find keepers. Although action did pick up briefly downstream of the Astoria/Megler Bridge, the fish seemed to go off the bite or move out of the area by mid-week. Anchovies were the bait of choice in the deep water but even boats that moved around frequently came up disappointed with the results. There remained fair effort upstream of Tongue Point but anglers in that reach also struggled to find consistent keeper action. Unsettled weather certainly played a role in angler success and once warmer water and weather shows, action should be on the improve. The weekend check for estuary anglers revealed a keeper for about every 10 rods.

The Guide's Forecast – Warmer, sunnier weather should improve the shad bite in the gorge but the run should continue to improve although this years return is tracking way, way below last years and the 10-year average. What's up with that?

Sturgeon fishing in the gorge will likely continue to taper as fish are likely to head west in search of better forage options. Shad strips are still likely to take a few quality keepers however and those seeking oversize action should use whole shad for bait.

Steelheaders won't have the best tides to work with but action should remain fair for bank anglers between Rainier and Portland. This fishery usually peaks in late June through mid-July.

Estuary sturgeon anglers will likely have to continue to work for their fish but fresh batches should be coming into the lower river over the next few weeks. It may be best to prepare for both shallow and deep water fishing as you may have to move around to find willing biters. Shrimp and fresh anchovies will be top baits, keeping in mind shrimp in the shallows and baitfish in the deep.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Rivers in the Willamette Valley have been hammered by rainfall this week, giving local anglers the opportunity to fill & lunge reels. Prepare tackle for the weeks to come or bond with the kids trout fishing at one of the local lakes or ponds.

The morning of Thursday, June 3rd, over 56 degrees with the level rising as the visibility drops. Water conditions in the lower Willamette are poor and will get worse as muddy water upstream starts coming over the Falls.

Record rainfall on Wednesday this week has the lower McKenzie running high and muddy.

The entire Santiam system is blown out and will be too high to fish this weekend.

ODFW sez: "During Free Fishing Weekend, June 12-13, Oregonian's can fish, crab and clam for free. Events throughout Oregon can help parents introduce their children to the joy of fishing with help from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists and volunteers." See **Random Links**, below, for some sources.

The Guide's Forecast – Shad and Chinook fishing is expected to be poor this weekend with the flow increasing as the visibility deteriorates. Expect to see water levels very high in the first week of June with recovery a week or more..

Try the upper McKenzie where the water, while still swift, has reasonably good color. There are fish to be caught.

First to fish as the water levels come down on the Santiams will be the Little North Fork. Because of the raging water here, the Learn The River trip from Mehama to Stayton has been moved to June 19th which bumped the next trip from Fishermen's Bend to Mehama to June 28th and the following run from Packsaddle to Fishermen's Bend up to July 10th.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Water at the Clackamas will be too high and muddy to fish well over the coming weekend.

The Sandy has risen from 11.5 to 13.5 (the latter reading as of mid-day Thursday this week) so may offer weekend fishing opportunities.

The Guide's Forecast - Throw spinners for the best shot at summer steelhead and spring Chinook once the level returns to normal on the Clackamas. Start fishing high on the system. Try this tactic in the evening for the best results.

Spring Chinook and summer steelhead results were improving prior to the latest deluge. It is expected to fish well as it drops and clears.

North Coast Fishing Report – Although action for spring chinook certainly slowed in recent days, ample numbers of fish were still clearly present for upper bay anglers to take advantage of. Strong tides favored plug fishermen but spinner and herring trollers did fair as well. Heavy rains hit the north coast on Wednesday however and with a weak tide series and strong flow from the Trask, Wilson and Kilchis Rivers, estuary fishing should see a significant slow down in the coming days. Migration conditions are ideal right now and the bulk of the early returning fish will certainly be drawn upstream on this rain freshet.

Fishing in the upper bay showed signs of slowing by Tuesday but fish were still being taken on plugs by anglers anchoring downstream of the main oyster house hole. The drop in barometric pressure certainly put the fish down a bit too. We scraped out 2 fish for 3 bites fishing half days between Monday and Tuesday. All our bites came on the chartreuse green head/chrome body Kwikfish stand-by that all anglers have on standby in their arsenal. K-15 and K-14's were going down close to low slack in 4 to 5 foot of water. We were just flat-lining our plugs but many folks were using dropper lines and fishing them closer to the boat.

Lower bay anglers were still getting some action along the jetty but the tides weren't ideal for that fishery. Some fish were being taken in the bubble fishery that opened up on the 29th. Anglers need to be informed that this fishery is also a selective one so wild fish must be released. Outside of the bubble, finned or fin-less chinook may be retained but commercial trollers have yet to find the mother lode of fish in big blue.

Last Sunday, anglers fishing near the Hatchery Hole on the Trask reported great success for spring chinook. The large school of adults that graced the bay the previous week finally made their way up to the hatchery and bobbers were burying for many egg floaters up there. This most recent rain freshet will breathe new life into the river fishery but bank anglers on the Trask have already had a good season.

Three Rivers has springers in it as well with bank anglers taking fair numbers of fish to the hatchery. The mainstem Nestucca was fair but may need a drop in river levels to come back into shape.

Anglers fishing for nearshore halibut were scoring some fish north of the entrance of Tillamook Bay. There are some pretty random places to intercept halibut out there as they migrate this time of year, especially in the nearshore. The all depth halibut anglers are still catching fish when ocean conditions allow but the fish are getting smaller.

Ocean crabbing only improved slightly while bay crabbing in most north coast estuaries remains good for females and slow for keeper male crab.

The Guide's Forecast – Despite good tides for lower bay trolling, most of the action on the north coast will shift to the rivers when flows begin to recede. There may be some brief flurries of activity for bay trollers but adult chinook will be pretty motivated to get themselves upstream while the conditions allow. Don't look for great catches anywhere in the estuary through the weekend.

The Trask will be an anglers best bet, either by bank or by boat. A good portion of the springers will be close to the hatchery but hatchery fish will also bypass the hatchery and make their way upstream as well. Fish should be well distributed throughout the river and should fall to drifted eggs and shrimp in the higher flows. Bobber and bait seem to perform better in lower flows, which we may not see for several days after another weather system is scheduled to hit beginning tonight.

All this rain will make Three Rivers a strong bet as a large percentage of the salmon due back to the Nestucca system are destined for the Cedar Creek hatchery on Three Rivers. Being a smaller watershed, the river should be one of the first to clear and may be fishing quite well by the weekend. The Nestucca itself may be a challenge to catch fish in until after the weekend.

The Wilson should also get a look but like the other larger systems, may not fish until early next week. No matter what system you're talking about, fish should be well distributed throughout the river systems with the battering of storms we're seeing right now.

As flows subside, plugs will become increasingly more effective but anglers are advised to stick to bait in the meantime. The one exception may be to anchor fish with plugs in higher flows. And when I mean higher, I mean just prior to the steelhead green that we all like to fish. Anchoring in slots keeps other anglers from fishing and by the time we hit "green" water, fish are not moving as fast upriver so anchoring isn't nearly as effective as fish begin to settle.

This is an unprecedented opportunity to catch spring chinook in our coastal watersheds. June rains of this magnitude are not common so anglers should take advantage of it, especially given the larger than usual returns we're witnessing to our north coast streams this season.

Fresh water inundation to the estuary may also spark a sturgeon bite as well. Crabs and trash fish may seek higher salt water concentrations and some remnant numbers of sturgeon should still be around in Tillamook and maybe Nehalem Bay.

Crabbing really couldn't get any worse but it's likely to as the fresh water makes its way to the lower bay crab grounds. Even Netarts Bay likely won't produce quality catches.

Good razor clam tides will once again hit north coast beaches. Begin to target clams when the surf subsides with the best tides beginning next Tuesday and Wednesday.

There may be some more ocean opportunity for halibut and bottomfish as well as crab by late in the weekend. The offshore forecast is as follows:

Fri...S wind 25 to 30 kt with gusts to 35 kt... Becoming W 20 to 25 kt in the afternoon. Combined seas 12 ft. Rain likely in the morning.

Fri Night...SW wind 5 to 10 kt. Wind waves 1 foot. W swell 10 ft.

Sat...E wind 5 kt...backing to NE in the afternoon. Wind waves 1 foot. W swell 8 ft.

Sat Night...NW wind 10 kt...becoming W after midnight. Wind waves 1 foot. W swell 8 ft.

Sun...NW wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 7 ft.

Mon...N wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 6 ft.

Central & South Coast Reports – Ocean Chinook fishing is ongoing and with nothing much to show for angler effort but action will improve as the season wears on. Just be sure to fish barbless and keep nothing smaller than 24 inches.

While pinkfin surf perch are in Winchester Bay now, keep in mind that these are pregnant females stuffed with young fish as these fish are live-bearers. It would be a kinder gesture to fish the surf for males, considering catches have been quite good and there would be less impact on the future of this fishery. Alternately, try for rockfish or greenling for the South Jetty where results have been very good. Although the Umpqua system is running very high at this writing, spring Chinook fishing had been slowing this week seasonally. Shad were being taken on small, brightly-colored jigs and shiny lures with the Yellow Creek stretch most productive and this fishery should be worthwhile when the water drops and clears.

While this is the time of year to expect spring Chinook catches to wind down, fish are still being caught with anchovies fished either straight or with a spinner blade remaining the go-to bait. A local anchovy shortage endures so bring some with you if traveling from outside the area. If the waters of the lower Rogue continue to warm and clear, action is likely to slow.

Chinook hopefuls launching out of the Port of Brookings have not been scoring salmon but are landing limits of bottom fish. If a Chinook is landed, however, only barbless hooks may be used for rockfish, cabezon and lings (not that anyone has had to be concerned about that regulation lately). Commercial boats have finally scored some Chinook by seeking them at 240-foot depths. Limits of rocks and half-limits of lings are being taken regularly by recreational and charter boats. Limits of large surf perch are being taken from many of the beaches in the southwest corner of Oregon. The surf is forecast to lay down again starting early next week.

Central and Eastern Oregon – The White River went from 400 cfs to nearly 1,200 cfs the morning of June 3rd due to rain and snowmelt. This will muddy the Deschutes below the mouth of the White. Earlier this week, reports of a downturn in results for big dries with nymphs continuing to produce large redsides.

Kokanee fishing has been slow for trollers at Green Peter.

Add the John Day River to the list of rivers which are blown out from rain this week. It will be a while 'til this one fishes.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report updated on May 28th, 2010

North Puget Sound

Spring fishing seasons are winding down in the marine areas, but saltwater anglers are still catching halibut and lingcod. In the freshwater, anglers are having some success at lakes around the region, where numerous rivers will soon open for trout and - in a few waters - salmon.

Portions of the Skagit and Cascade rivers open for **chinook salmon** fishing June 1. The Skagit will open to hatchery chinook retention from the Highway 530 Bridge at Rockport to the Cascade River, said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. On the Cascade, anglers will be allowed to fish for salmon from the mouth of the river to the Rockport-Cascade Road Bridge. Both stretches are open through July 15. The daily limit on the Skagit and Cascade rivers will be four hatchery chinook, two of which may be adults (chinook salmon at least 24 inches in length).

Fishing for salmon, as well as **trout** and other **gamefish**, also will open June 1 on portions of the **Skykomish River**. Salmon fishing will be allowed from the mouth to the Wallace River, Thiesfeld said. For salmon, anglers will have a daily limit of two hatchery chinook.

The **Stillaguamish River** below Marine Drive also will re-open June 1 for trout and other gamefish. Thiesfeld said anglers should be aware that a section of the **South Fork Stillaguamish River** was mistakenly omitted from the new sportfishing rules pamphlet. That section of the Stillaguamish, from Mountain Loop Highway Bridge upstream, will open for gamefish June 5. For more information on the South Fork Stillaguamish regulations, as well as the Stillaguamish River opener, check WDFW's emergency rules website at <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/>.

Elsewhere, **trout** fishing will open at several of the region's other rivers and streams beginning June 5. Under the statewide rule for trout, there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches in rivers and streams. However, some of the region's rivers and streams have a rule requiring trout to be at least 14 inches in length to keep.

Meanwhile, lake fishing for **bass, bluegill, perch** , and **crappie** is steadily improving as water temperatures increase and fish become more active, said Danny Garrett, WDFW fisheries biologist. When fishing for these species, focus on areas where there are bridge pilings, boat docks, rock, submerged trees and bushes, grass beds, lily pads, and flooded vegetation along the shoreline, he said.

"Smallmouth bass use many of the same habitats as largemouth bass, but smallmouth are often more abundant around rocky points, riprap, and offshore rock piles," Garrett said. "Both species are highly adaptive to specific lake conditions, and habitat use will vary from lake to lake." For smallmouth and largemouth bass, Garrett recommends using spinnerbaits, jerkbaits, crankbaits, jigs, and plastic baits that include worms, tubes, and creature baits.

Perch and bluegill can also be caught with an assortment of artificial jigs, spinners, and flies, although many people prefer to use live worms under a bobber, he said. Anglers fishing for perch and bluegill should try fishing around several different pieces of cover in the lake until a group of fish is found. "Generally, a single, small area will produce many individuals, since both species tend to congregate in large groups," he said.

Lakes where anglers can find quality bass and panfish fishing include Lakes Whatcom and Terrell in Whatcom County; Lake Goodwin in Snohomish County; Big Lake in Skagit County; Lakes Washington, Union and Sammamish in King County.

On Puget Sound, the northern portion of Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) opens June 1 to catch-and-release fishing for salmon. Fishing will be allowed north of a line from Point Monroe to Meadow Point.

Farther north, the **Tulalip Bay "bubble" fishery** begins June 4. Except for a one-day closure on June 19, the fishery is open each week from Friday through noon Monday through Sept. 6. The fishery will reopen Sept. 11 on a Saturday and Sunday-only schedule through Sept. 26. Anglers fishing the bubble will have a two-salmon daily limit. Chinook must measure 22 inches in length to retain.

Fishing for **lingcod** is still an option. The fishery runs through June 15 in the region. 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.

Time is running out to hook a **halibut** . The last opener of the season in marine areas 6-10 is scheduled for May 28-30. Anglers have a daily limit of one halibut and there is no minimum size limit.

The region's **spot shrimp** fishery is closed, but shrimpers can soon fish for **coonstripe** and **pink shrimp** in some marine areas beginning June 1. For details on shrimp fisheries check 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/fishing/regulations/> .

Washingtonians who are interested in fishing but haven't actually given it a try have a perfect chance to do so during **Free Fishing Weekend** , scheduled June 12-13. During those two days, no license will be required to fish or gather shellfish in any waters open to fishing in Washington state. Also, no vehicle use permit will be required during Free Fishing Weekend to park at any of the water-access sites maintained by WDFW.

In addition, anglers will not need a Two Pole Endorsement to fish with two poles on thousands of lakes statewide, nor will they need a Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement, otherwise required to fish for salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River and its tributaries.

While no licenses are required on Free Fishing Weekend, other rules such as size limits, bag limits and season closures will still be in effect. Anglers will also be required to complete a catch record card for any salmon, steelhead, sturgeon or halibut they catch. Catch record cards and WDFW's Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet are available free at hundreds of sporting goods stores and other license dealers throughout the state.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Anglers fishing for **halibut, lingcod, steelhead** and **lake trout** will soon have some other options to consider. Starting June 5, dozens of area rivers will open for trout fishing and all four marine areas off the Washington coast will open to fishing for hatchery chinook salmon June 12.

In addition, the first three areas of Puget Sound - marine areas 4, 5 and 13 - will open for **crab** fishing June 18.

"People have been looking forward to these fisheries all year long," said Ron Warren, regional WDFW fish manager. "Fishing really shifts into high gear as we move into the summer season."

Anyone interested in getting a sneak preview of what's to come can do so during **Free Fishing Weekend** , scheduled June 12-13 this year. During those two days, no license will be required to fish or gather shellfish in any waters open to fishing in Washington state. Also, no vehicle use permit will be required during Free Fishing Weekend to park at any of the 600 water-access sites maintained by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

While no licenses are required on Free Fishing Weekend, other rules such as size limits, bag limits and season closures will still be in effect. (For that reason, no crab fishing will be allowed in Puget Sound during Free Fishing Weekend, because no areas will be open to crabbing at that time.) Anglers will also be required to complete a catch record card for any salmon, steelhead, sturgeon or halibut they catch that weekend.

Catch record cards and WDFW's *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet are available free at hundreds of sporting goods stores and other license dealers throughout the state. The

pamphlet is also available on WDFW's website at (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>).

Meanwhile, anglers continue to reel in **halibut** in a number of coastal areas - weather and ocean conditions permitting. WDFW recently announced that marine areas 3 (La Push) and 4 (Neah Bay) off the north coast will reopen June 3 and 5, after low catches due to rough weather left 43,367 pounds of the big flatfish available for harvest.

"Halibut fishing has been great when the weather cooperates," says Erica Crust, a WDFW ocean port sampler. "The first week of the north coast opener yielded great success rates and fish averaging just over 20 pounds. But the second week saw lower success rates due to the poor weather, when anglers couldn't get out to the more popular fishing grounds." Here's a status report on other coastal halibut fisheries:

- **Columbia River (Ilwaco):** Marine Area 1 remains 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):** In Marine Area 2 the recreational halibut fishery closed May 25 with the exception that halibut fishing is allowed in the northern nearshore area seven days a week until further notice.
- **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 28-30. The 2010 combined catch quota for these areas is 50,542 pounds.

"Time is running out to catch halibut in Puget Sound," Crust said. While fishing has generally been slow, an exception is the area around Port Angeles, where anglers have had some success with landing halibut along with a few **greenlings, lingcod** and **cabezon**.

Coming up the weekend of May 29-30 is the Port Angeles Salmon Club's annual halibut derby. The entry fee is \$40, with \$20,000 in prizes. To learn more go to <http://www.olympicpeninsula.org/event/halibut-derby> .

The **lingcod** season in Puget Sound continues through June 15 in marine areas 5-13. Lingcod season on the coast (marine areas 1-4) is open through mid-October.

But the main event for many Washington anglers is the **salmon fishery** that opens off the Washington coast June 12. The first part of the season, targeting hatchery chinook, runs seven days a week through June 30 in marine areas 1-4. Anglers will be required to release wild chinook (which can be identified by an intact adipose fin) and all coho. Nearly 653,000 fall chinook are forecasted to return to the Columbia River this season, about 234,000 more chinook than the number returning last year. This year's coastwide chinook quota is 61,000 fish, compared to 20,500 last year.

"This is the first season we will have a selective fishery for hatchery chinook in the ocean," said WDFW Director Phil Anderson. "By using this management tool we can meet our conservation goals and give anglers an additional opportunity to fish for hatchery chinook in the ocean."

Anglers also will be allowed to catch and keep hatchery coho during the second part of the season, which is scheduled to run from early July through mid September. For more information on ocean salmon season, see the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet, available free from license dealers and posted online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>.

Southwest Washington

The mainstem Columbia River is closed to fishing for adult spring chinook salmon and the summer chinook fishery doesn't open until June 16. Still, anglers are finding plenty to do as salmon and steelhead continue moving up the tributaries, retention of white sturgeon in the Columbia River estuary has reopened, and the **shad** season is now under way below Bonneville Dam.

Anglers fishing between the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line and the Interstate 5 bridge have also been catching **hatchery steelhead** and hatchery chinook jacks, although turnout has been relatively light since the season opened May 16.

"There's no obvious standout right now, but anglers have a lot of opportunities to catch fish if they are willing spend some time at it," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "Some of these fisheries are just getting started, and will only get better in the weeks ahead."

Whatever fishery they choose, veteran anglers can expect some company during **Free Fishing Weekend**, scheduled June 12-13. During those two days, no license will be required to fish or gather shellfish in any waters open to fishing in Washington state. Nor will a Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement be required to fish for salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River and its tributaries.

"Free Fishing Weekend is a great time to revive an old hobby or to introduce friends and family to fishing," said Craig Burley, fish division manager for WDFW. "Adults can introduce kids to fishing on a wide variety of waters around the state."

Meanwhile, anglers continue to catch **spring chinook salmon** - and an increasing number of **hatchery steelhead** - on tributaries to the Columbia River both above and below Bonneville Dam.

Drano Lake and the Wind River may still offer the best chance of catching hatchery spring chinook, although catch rates have dropped off in recent days as more fish move upriver, Hymer said. At Drano Lake, catch rates have dropped to one fish for every 4.3 boat anglers and one for every six bank anglers at Drano. On the Wind, anglers have followed the fish upstream to the stretch between the coffer dam and the hatchery.

But early-arriving summer steelhead are breathing new life into fisheries on the

Washougal, Cowlitz and Klickitat rivers, Hymer said. The barrier dam is still the focus of the spring chinook fishery on the Cowlitz River, but anglers are catching incoming summer steelhead throughout the river.

"The fishery for hatchery summer steelhead should heat up in all of these rivers in the next few weeks," Hymer said.

Under permanent regulations, the fishery on the Klickitat River will expand upstream to the boundary markers below the salmon hatchery June 1. In addition, WDFW has adopted a number of new rules that reflect strong returns of hatchery steelhead and spring chinook to other rivers.

- **Cowlitz River:** Anglers may now retain up to three hatchery steelhead per day from the Hwy. 4 bridge at Kelso upstream to Mayfield Dam. As before, all game fish except hatchery steelhead must be released through June 4. Beginning June 5, the daily limit for trout will be five fish, of which up to three may be hatchery steelhead. Anglers fishing from the mouth to Mayfield Dam are reminded they may retain steelhead with a clipped right ventral fin and a healed scar at the location of the clipped fin.
- **Lake Scanewa:** The lake, also known as Cowlitz Falls Reservoir, is currently open to fishing for hatchery spring chinook. Lake Scanewa will revert to permanent fishing regulations beginning June 1.
- **Washougal River:** Anglers fishing from the Mt. Norway Bridge downstream may now retain up to three hatchery steelhead. That limit will also be in effect from the Mt. Norway Bridge upstream and in the West (North) Fork when those waters open for hatchery steelhead fishing June 5. Selective gear rules are in effect on the lower river, where bait is prohibited through June 4.
- **Toutle River tributaries:** The lower portions of the South Fork Toutle and Green rivers opened for hatchery steelhead fishing May 22 - two weeks early - by emergency regulation. Early-opening waters include the stretch of the South Fork Toutle River from the mouth to the 4700 Road Bridge and the Green River, from the mouth to 400 feet below the water intake at the upper end of the hatchery. Through June 4, selective gear rules are in effect; no bait may be used. Other rules remain the same as noted in the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet.
- **Wind River:** The daily catch limit for hatchery origin spring chinook salmon has been increased to four fish in the area open to fishing, and anglers can substitute hatchery steelhead for up to two of those fish. Jack chinook also count toward the daily four-fish limit. Release wild chinook downstream from Shipherd Falls. The anti-snag rule has been rescinded from the mouth to the Burlington Northern Railroad Bridge, but remains in effect from the bridge upstream where only fish hooked inside the mouth may be retained. Other rules remain the same as noted in the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet.
- **Drano Lake:** The daily catch limit for hatchery spring chinook salmon has been increased to four fish, and anglers can substitute hatchery steelhead for up to two of those fish. Hatchery jack chinook also count toward the daily four-fish limit. The sport fishery will be closed June 2 and June 9 and the bank-fishing only area

near the outlet of Drano Lake will remain in effect through June. The anti-s snag rule has been rescinded through June.

Rather catch a **sturgeon** ? The retention season for white sturgeon opened May 22 from Buoy 10 to the Wauna powerlines seven days a week. The daily limit is one sturgeon between 41 and 54 inches (fork length), with a statewide annual limit of five fish. Approximately 160 private boats and 14 charter boats turned out for opening day, with private boaters averaging about one legal-size fish for every 11 rods on the Washington side of the river. Catch rates were somewhat better on the Oregon side, where boat anglers caught a legal-size sturgeon for every seven rods. Bank fishing was slow on both sides of the river.

"The opener wasn't a barn-burner, but it was a respectable start," Hymer said. "Both in the estuary and farther upriver, fishing should pick up once water temperatures warm up."

Farther upstream, a creel survey turned up three legal-size sturgeon among 41 boat anglers between the Wauna powerlines and Bonneville Dam, where the retention fishery has been open Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays since Jan. 1. The daily limit there is one sturgeon between 38 and 54 inches (fork length). All sturgeon angling is prohibited from Marker 82 upstream to Bonneville Dam through August to protect spawning sturgeon. Many Columbia River anglers also have been busy reeling in **shad** . Fifty-one anglers fishing from the Oregon bank in the gorge caught or released 148 shad, according to a weekend creel survey. Eight boat anglers were also surveyed with 53 shad, the largest member of the herring family.

Shad fishing opened May 16 on the mainstem Columbia River below Bonneville Dam, with no daily limits or size limits. While not as highly prized as sturgeon or salmon, they can put up a good fight and make for good eating, Hymer said.

"Shad fishing will continue to improve in the weeks ahead," he said. "Right now, about 2,000 a day are crossing Bonneville Dam. I'd recommend that anglers who want to target shad wait until the dam counts reach 10,000 - or 100,000 - fish per day if they really want to catch some fish."

Daily counts of fish passing Bonneville and other Columbia River dams are available on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers website at <http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/op/fishdata/home.asp> .

What kind of rig works best for shad? Wil Morrison, administrative assistant for the WDFW regional office in Vancouver, has developed a set-up that has attracted quite a following, including at least one local outdoor columnist. Here's how he does it: Start with a No. 6 open-eye siwash hook. Slide on a No. 7 gold barrel swivel on the hook and pinch the eye closed. Tie this to a 58-inch leader of 12-pound test fishing line. Slide on a 7/32 solid brass bead, then tie it all to a three-way swivel. From the center point of the three-way swivel, tie a 10-to-15-pound drop line with a 20-inch dropper and 4-to-6 ounce weight. Then tie the other end of the three-way swivel to the main line of your

favorite light-to-medium fishing pole. This lure is most effective when fished from a boat anchored in 10-to-20 feet of rushing water.

For more information on shad, including fishing tips and recipes, see the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/outreach/fishing/shad/shad.htm> .

Here's the report for **trout** anglers:

- **Mayfield Lake** - Boat anglers are catching some rainbows. The lake is scheduled to receive another 20,000 catchable-size rainbows in May, after being stocked with 25,000 fish in April.
- **Riffe Lake** - Bank anglers are catching some landlocked coho.
- **Battleground Lake** - Stocked with 6,500 rainbows weighing up to two-thirds of a pound each in mid-May.
- **Little Klickitat River** - The juvenile only waters were stocked with 495 catchable-size rainbows May 19.
- **Maryhill Pond (Klickitat Co.)** - Stocked with 504 catchable-size rainbows May 19.

Eastern Washington

The Snake River's **hatchery spring chinook salmon** season came to an earlier-than-expected end May 22 because of the size of the run and catch rates. The fishery, open on four sections of the Snake, was scheduled to run through June 30. But as WDFW regional fish program manager John Whalen said, "the run leveled off at 340,000 chinook, instead of the forecasted 470,000, coming upstream."

Whalen noted that despite the early closure, the run was still one of best in decades. WDFW district fish biologist Glen Mendel of Dayton reported harvest rates ranged from 15 to 36 hours per fish at Little Goose Dam during the last week of fishing, with over 500 fish harvested in that stretch. At Ice Harbor Dam, the harvest rates were 15 to 68 hours per fish kept with a total harvest of more than 700 fish. Catch rates around the Lower Granite Dam and Clarkston were significantly lower than the other areas.

Trout fishing in rivers and streams opens June 1 - or June 5 in waterways where trout spawn and need the protection of a later opener. That includes some sections of tributaries to the Pend Oreille River, like Cedar, Calispell, Harvey, LeClerc and Ruby creeks, parts of the Spokane and Little Spokane rivers, and portions of such Snake River tributaries as Asotin Creek and the Grande Ronde, Touchet, Tucannon and Walla Walla rivers.

However, the section of the Kettle River on the Ferry-Stevens county line from Barstow Bridge upstream opens May 29, as do portions of the Colville and Little Pend Oreille rivers in Stevens County. Check the fishing rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/>) for all river and stream regulations, listed by waterway, including section boundaries, catch and size limits and gear restrictions.

Other fisheries are going strong throughout the region. Lake Roosevelt anglers are

catching nice-sized **rainbow trout** and **kokanee** , although - with water levels dropping - fishing activity could slow down. **Walleye** fishing on the reservoir is improving from the Kettle Falls area to the Spokane arm. Walleye anglers need to remember that the Spokane arm is downstream from the Hwy. 25 bridge over the Spokane River, and that the Spokane River upstream from that bridge doesn't open for walleye until June 1.

WDFW central district fish biologist Chris Donley of Spokane says most waterways are fishing well now, from trout lakes like Amber, Williams, West Medical, Fishtrap and Sprague to mixed-species lakes like Downs for **perch** and **bass** , Bonnie for **panfish** , and Long Lake (Spokane River reservoir) for **crappie** . "It's that time of year when you can't help but catch fish," Donley said.

WDFW northeast district fish biologist Bill Baker of Colville reports **northern pike** fishing on the Pend Oreille River is hot now. He also says fishing for **rainbow trout** is good now at Curlew Lake northeast of Republic in Ferry County. The lake receives hatchery fry plants but also has net-pen reared rainbows. The rainbow fry planted in Ellen Lake last fall are coming on now, too, he said. Ellen is 14 miles north of Inchelium and, like Curlew, has a public campground.

Rocky, Waitts and Starvation lakes in Stevens County are also fishing well. The catch-and-keep season at Starvation Lake ends May 31, then switches to catch-and-release through October.

That change illustrates why anglers should make sure to check the rules before hitting the lakes. Recent patrols turned up violations at Medical Lake, where regulations are different from nearby West Medical Lake. Selective gear rules (no bait, only artificial flies or lures with one single-point, barbless hook, and only knotless nets) are in effect at Medical Lake, where the daily catch limit is simply two trout measuring at least 14 inches.

Anglers are also reminded to pick up fishing line and other trash that may cause entanglement or ingestion problems for birds and other wildlife. WDFW Officer Pam Taylor recently retrieved a drowned osprey from Loon Lake, where it had fishing line and a lead shot weight wrapped around its wing.

Officers in the south end of the region recently reported lots of good-sized **smallmouth bass** being caught on the lower Walla Walla River, where fishing for non-trout species is open year-round.

WDFW Tucannon Fish Hatchery crews recently stocked 3,293 quarter-pound **rainbow trout** in Asotin County's Golf Course Pond, a small impoundment open to fishing year-round off the Snake River near the bottom of Alpowa Grade west of Clarkston. They also stocked 300 quarter-pound rainbows and 50 one-plus pounders in Walla Walla County's Lions Park Pond, open year-round to juvenile anglers under 15 years of age.

Northcentral Washington

WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist Bob Jateff says several **rainbow trout** lakes are providing good fishing now and through June. Pearrygin, Wannacut, Conconully Reservoir, Conconully Lake, Spectacle and Alta are producing rainbows in the 8-12 inch range with winter-carryover fish up to 15 inches.

"Remember, when fishing with bait the first five fish caught are considered part of the daily limit whether kept or released," Jateff said. "This rule is in place to minimize hook and release mortality on fish caught with bait."

Several lakes in Okanogan County are under selective gear rules with catch-and-release regulations during the summer months. These waters - Big and Little Green, Rat, Campbell, Davis, and Cougar lakes - all have rainbows. Rat Lake also has **brown trout**. "Aeneas Lake is a fly fishing only water that has provided good fishing for rainbows 14-16 inches with an occasional brown trout up to 18 inches," Jateff said. "Aeneas has several campsites, a boat launch and toilet, so it's a good choice for a family weekend outing."

Trout fishing in rivers and streams opens June 1 - or June 5 in many waterways where trout spawn and need the protection of a later opener. That includes some sections of the Entiat, Icicle, Lost, Methow, Okanogan, Similkameen, Twisp and Wenatchee rivers, along with tributary streams.

Check the fishing rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/>) for all river and stream regulations listed by waterway, including section boundaries, catch and size limits and gear restrictions.

WDFW enforcement officers remind those fishing on lakes to check that lake's specific rules, too. Recent patrols have resulted in citations for some, like using bait and keeping too many fish on the Sinlahekin's Blue Lake, which is under selective gear rules with a one-trout daily catch limit. Officers also note the new two-pole opportunity this year at some waters, like Okanogan County's Pearrygin Lake, doesn't mean anglers can have two daily catch limits.

Warmwater fish species are starting to come on at many waters throughout the region. **Walleye** are in the catch, along with trout, on Rufus Woods Lake. **Largemouth bass**, which are under a slot limit statewide (only bass less than 12 inches, except one over 17 inches, can be kept, up to five total) are being caught at Banks Lake. **Bluegill** and **crappie** are coming out of Leader Lake, west of Okanogan.

WDFW Wells Fish Hatchery crews recently stocked 25, one-plus-pound **rainbow trout** in Conconully Lake in Okanogan County.

Fishing for **spring chinook salmon** continues on the Icicle River in Chelan County through July, as long as the predicted run of about 11,000 salmon holds up. WDFW district fish biologist Art Viola reminds anglers the daily catch limit is two salmon, minimum size 12 inches. All fish with one or more round holes punched in the tail or

caudal fin must be released. These fish are part of a study and have been anesthetized; the FDA requires a 21-day ban on consumption of these fish.

Southcentral Washington

For most people, the Memorial Day weekend marks the beginning of summer, and that means warmer weather and great fishing. Two other things will enhance that experience: Washington's annual **Free Fishing Weekend**, and the official opening of Washington's rivers on the first Saturday in June.

June 5 marks the opening of rivers around the state to fishing for more **steelhead** and **trout**. The following weekend, June 12 and 13, anglers won't need a license to fish in Washington. Also, no vehicle use permit will be required during **Free Fishing Weekend** to park at any of the 500 water-access sites maintained by WDFW.

The event is designed to introduce folks to fishing, and remind them of how much fun a day on the water can be. But while the fishing will be free, anglers still need to abide by rules governing size limits, bag limits and season closures. Anglers also will be required to complete a catch record card for any salmon, steelhead, sturgeon or halibut they catch. Catch record cards and WDFW's *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet are available free at hundreds of stores that sell hunting and fishing licenses. The pamphlet is also available on WDFW's web site at (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations/>).

While the **spring chinook** fishery at Ringold closed on May 21, the Columbia River below Priest Rapids Dam will reopen for **summer chinook** on June 16. Only hatchery chinook, identified with a missing adipose fin, can be retained. The daily limit will be six chinook salmon, only two of which can be adult fish.

Paul Hoffarth, WDFW's district fish biologist based in Pasco, estimates that 466 hatchery spring chinook were harvested in the Ringold area during the season, and 44 wild chinook were caught and released.

The lower Yakima River closes for spring chinook fishing on May 31, although the upstream fishery from the I-82 bridge at Union Gap to Roza Dam will remain open through June 30. Fish counts at Prosser and Roza dams are available at

<http://www.cbr.washington.edu/dart/adult.html> and <http://ykfp.org/yakindex.htm>.

Smallmouth bass fishing in the lower Yakima River has been spotty this spring with an increase in flows and turbidity. However, fishing should improve as the water recedes and clears. **Channel catfish** are being caught in the lower Yakima and Walla Walla rivers. Walleye fishing is beginning to pick up in the Columbia River both above and below McNary Dam. **Shad** are beginning to move through Bonneville Dam and should be arriving below McNary in strong numbers by mid-June.

"Chinook fishing continues to be good in the Yakima, and many lakes have been planted with catchable-size **rainbow trout**, says Eric Anderson, WDFW's district fish biologist in Yakima and Kittitas counties. "The cool weather has definitely improved the bite."

To find which lakes have been planted, and when, please go to WDFW's hatchery website at (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/stocking/weekly/>).

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Random Links

Free Fishing Weekend is June 12th and 13th. Here are some of the possible activities:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2010/june/060310.asp>

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2010/june/060110b.asp>

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2010/june/060110.asp>

Down for nearly a decade, Crane Prairie is a fishing hot spot again:

<http://www.registerguard.com/csp/cms/sites/web/sports/outdoors/24830123-41/fish-crane-prairie-garrison-trout.csp>

Learn to dig gaper clams during free class:

<http://www.statesmanjournal.com/article/20100528/OUTDOORS/100528035/1034#ixzz0pnsnKEtu>

GOOD LUCK!