

The Guide's Forecast - volume 13 issue number 17

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **April 29th – May 5th, 2011**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - Chinook counts at Bonneville Dam finally crested over 1,000 fish per day. The run is typically well underway by now but managers are still holding out hope that the nearly 200,000 prediction will come to fruition. The jump in counts should stimulate sport fishing above Bonneville Dam but the season will close after Sunday.

Willamette level and flow have been moderating over the past week with the water visibility improving. Over 100 springers were counted at the falls on Monday this week and summer steelhead crossed in even greater numbers. Springer fishing has been spotty with periodic flurries of activity around Sellwood Bridge. The Garbage Hole just below the I-205 Bridge had an epic bite on Monday. Prawns remain a top bait.

Following a slight rise early this week, water levels on the McKenzie are dropping and will fish well this week. Try the lower river for reddsides, around Leaburg for planted trout.

Steelheading has been just fair on the Clackamas River with most anglers optimistically gearing up for spring chinook. Chinook are likely to be late again this season with late May and June producing the best catches. Summer and late winter broodstock steelhead should be making a stronger showing soon.

Fishing has been slow on the Sandy. It may be worth waiting until springers start to enter. Warmer air and water temperatures will also stimulate the bite.

Northwest – Steelheaders put one last cap on a great north coast steelhead season late last week, tallying great catches of fresh and dark fish on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. There were still fish in the high teens being reported but a large percentage of the catch were wild fish.

No reports of summer run steelhead on the north coast and high water has hampered spring chinook effort. Both species will likely make a show this week but weather has kept most sensible anglers from trying.

Sturgeon catches were fair on the last tide series with another good set of tides starting early next week. Fishing could stay good through the month of May.

Seas could calm again by late in the weekend, giving offshore anglers an opportunity for bottomfish and California stocks of chinook well offshore. Ocean salmon regulations remain complex so check the ODF&W website for the expanded opportunity we'll be experiencing this season.

ODF&W will host a series of meetings on the coast April 26th – April 28th to craft fall salmon options for sport and commercial fishers. Overall, returns look much improved from recent years, allowing the department to relax regulations on most systems for chinook and even implementing non-selective coho seasons on some which haven't seen opportunity for well over a decade.

Crabbing remains poor on most estuaries and nearshore areas on the north coast. Prospects may not improve until mid-summer.

Southwest – When offshore conditions allow crossing, charter and recreational boats out of

central Oregon ports witnessed good catches of rockfish and lingcod despite the 40-fathom restriction.

Crabbing has been fair in Winchester Bay. As the Umpqua drops and clears, fishing for springers will pick up on the mainstem. Steelheaders will take hatchery fish on the South Umpqua as conditions improve.

Cooperative offshore conditions out of Gold Beach allowed productive bottom fishing over the past weekend. Boats landed limits or near limits of rockfish, many took good catches of lingcod and crabbing was fair to good. Conditions are once again rough this week but long-range forecasts look optimistic for weekend ocean forays. Spring chinook fishing has been fair on the lower Rogue despite high water. With river conditions forecast to improve this week, good results are expected to follow. Springer results will be picking up with dropping and clearing water on the middle Rogue. Early springers and late winter steelhead are being bagged on the upper river.

Local beaches have been the daily scene of south coast surf fishers with striped surf perch on the bite during incoming tides. Catches have been good and are expected to continue into mid-May. Good-sized fish are available with some scaling two pounds.

It was an ice-fishing show, as expected, at the Diamond Lake opener on April 23rd but everyone caught trout. Snow and ice still covered the lake early this week although the area is gradually thawing. Anglers can enjoy a little extra time on the water starting May 1st when the limit increases from five to eight trout per day.

Eastern – Lower Deschutes water conditions remain a little high but results for nymph fishers have been good. Best hatches continue to occur mid-day as the regular suspects begin taking wing.

Kokanee anglers enjoyed decent fishing over the past weekend for larger-than-average fish and the area clear of snow.

Trollers took limits while bait anglers scratched out only a few at the opener on Howard Prairie.

SW Washington – Steelhead are still the highlight on the Cowlitz River with best catches coming from the trout hatchery. Spring chinook appear to be on their way but a large run is not in the forecast.

The Kalama and Lewis systems are beginning to pick up for both chinook and steelhead. Peak season should occur closer to mid-May.

With the bump in Bonneville Dam passage, the Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries should get going. Catches will be best in the early season although the peak is still likely a few weeks away.

Columbia River Fishing Report – With the continued closure for salmon on the Columbia, all that we get to write about is how many spring chinook are finally passing over Bonneville Dam. And, it all began at once. After mediocre days of passage, consistently numbering less than 500 fish per day, the count jumped to over 1,000 passing on April 25th. Then on April 26th, the days passage more than doubled the season cumulative by numbering over 4,700 fish. Anxious eyes will be logging on frequently to monitor the days ahead. The run has finally arrived.

That doesn't do sportanglers any good, for now anyway. We're all certainly relieved that things are looking up but managers won't re-evaluate more sport opportunity until we get tens of

thousands of more fish over the dam. We have a ways to go for that to happen but a 4,000 fish day is a good start.

In the meantime, the Department has released season information for summer and fall salmon and steelhead seasons. The hair-raiser is the cut back in chinook opportunity for Buoy 10 fishing. Here are the seasons, you'll want to print this off for your reference or keep the archive page handy for future reference:

NEWS RELEASE

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 27, 2011

Columbia River summer and fall fishing seasons announced

CLACKAMAS, Ore. – Pacific Northwest fishery managers have announced summer and fall salmon fishing seasons on the Columbia River for 2011 following conclusion of the recent North of Falcon meeting process.

The North of Falcon process is a series of public meetings in which fishery managers from several jurisdictions, including Oregon, convene to review data and accept public testimony to plan recreational and commercial salmon fisheries on the Columbia River and parts of the ocean off the Oregon and Washington coasts. The name refers to Cape Falcon on Oregon's north coast, the southern end of the planning area.

North of Falcon is part of the broader Pacific Fishery Management Council process, a series of international discussions focused on planning ocean fishing seasons from three to 200 miles off the Pacific coast from California to as far north as Canada and Alaska.

The June 16-July 31 summer chinook season on the Columbia River will be identical to last year with retention limited to adipose fin-clipped hatchery chinook. Unlike 2010, sockeye retention will be allowed concurrent with steelhead fisheries scheduled to open May 16 and June 16 below and above the I-5 Bridge, respectively.

The fall seasons, which begin Aug. 1, include the popular Buoy 10 fishery near Astoria and the fall "upriver bright" chinook salmon season in the mainstem Columbia. Upriver bright chinook have a reputation for being some of the largest and most aggressive big game fish in the Pacific Northwest.

"The summer chinook forecast of 91,000 is exciting and should result in good catch rates for the recreational fishery," said John North, fisheries manager for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program. "The forecast for most fall chinook stocks is also good but our fisheries remain constrained due to available impacts for lower Columbia natural tule chinook."

The 2011 Columbia River late spring, summer and fall seasons are summarized as follows:

Spring/Summer Seasons (May 16-July 31)

- **Steelhead**
 - Per permanent regulations in all areas.
 - Retention of adipose fin-clipped steelhead allowed:
 - May 16 – December 31, 2011 from a line projected from Rocky Point on the Washington shore through red buoy #44 to the navigation light at Tongue Point upstream to the I-5 Bridge.
 - June 16 – December 31, 2011 from Astoria-Megler Bridge upstream to the OR/WA border.

- **Spring Chinook Jacks (May 16 - June 15 time frame)**
 - Per permanent regulations in all areas.
 - Retention of adipose fin-clipped jack chinook (12"-24") allowed:
 - May 16 – June 15, 2011 from a line projected from Rocky Point on the Washington shore through red buoy #44 to the navigation light at Tongue Point upstream to the I-5 Bridge.

- **Sockeye Salmon**
 - Retention of sockeye allowed:
 - May 16 – June 15, 2011 from a line projected from Rocky Point on the Washington shore through red buoy #44 to the navigation light at Tongue Point upstream to the I-5 Bridge.
 - June 16 – July 31, 2011 from Astoria-Megler Bridge upstream to OR/WA border.
 - All sockeye count toward adult salmonid daily limit, regardless of size.

- **Summer Chinook (June 16-July 31)**
 - Retention of adipose fin-clipped adult (>24") and jack (12"-24") summer chinook allowed June 16 - July 31, 2011 from the Astoria-Megler Bridge upstream to the OR/WA border.
 - The combined daily bag limit is two adults and five jacks.

Fall Salmon Season (August 1-December 31)

- **Buoy 10** (Buoy 10 line upstream to a line projected from Rocky Point on the WA shore through red buoy #44 to the navigation light at Tongue Point).
 - Retention of adult (>16") adipose fin-clipped coho and adipose fin-clipped steelhead allowed August 1 - December 31, 2011.
 - Retention of adult (>24") chinook only allowed during August 1-28 and October 1-December 31.
 - The combined daily bag limit is two adults, only one of which may be a chinook (when retention is allowed). Jacks may not be retained in the Buoy 10 fishery between August 1 and September 30 under permanent rules.
 - All other permanent rules apply.

- **Lower Columbia** (Tongue Point/Rocky Point upstream to Bonneville Dam).
 - Retention of adipose fin-clipped coho and adipose fin-clipped steelhead allowed August 1 - December 31, 2011.
 - Retention of chinook allowed:
 - August 1 - September 9 and October 1-December 31, 2011 from the Rocky Point-Tongue Point line upstream to a line projected from the Warrior Rock

- Lighthouse on the Oregon shore to red buoy #4 to a marker on the lower end of Bachelor Island.
 - August 1 – December 31, 2011 from a line projected from the Warrior Rock Lighthouse on the Oregon shore to red buoy #4 to a marker on the lower end of Bachelor Island, upstream to Bonneville Dam.
- The combined daily bag limit is two adults and five jack salmon. During August 1-September 9, 2011 the daily bag limit may not include more than one adult chinook. During September 10 – September 30, 2011, the daily bag limit may include two chinook (upstream of Lewis River deadline only). During October 1 – December 31, 2011 the daily bag limit may include up to two chinook.
- **Bonneville Dam upstream to the OR/WA border**
 - Retention of chinook, coho, and adipose fin-clipped steelhead allowed August 1 – December 31, 2011.
 - The combined daily bag limit is two adults and five jack salmon.
 - All coho retained downstream of the Hood River Bridge must be adipose fin-clipped.

Shad

Per permanent regulations in all areas.

- Retention of shad allowed:
 - May 16 – December 31, 2011 from the Buoy 10 line upstream to Bonneville Dam.
 - All year from Bonneville Dam upstream to the OR/WA border

White Sturgeon

- **Buoy 10 upstream to Wauna powerlines (River mile 40) including Youngs Bay and adjacent WA tributaries**
 - Retention of white sturgeon allowed seven days per week during January 1-April 30, May 14-June 26, and July 1-4, 2011.
 - 38-54 inch fork length in effect during January 1-April 30.
 - 41-54 inch fork length in effect during May 14-July 4.
- **Wauna powerlines upstream to Bonneville Dam, excluding the lower Willamette River**
 - Retention of white sturgeon allowed three days (Thursday-Saturday) per week during January 1-July 31, 2010 and October 8-December 31, 2011.
 - 38-54 inch fork length restriction in effect.
 - Angling for sturgeon prohibited from May 1-August 31, 2011 from Bonneville Dam downstream to a line crossing the Columbia River from Navigation Marker 82 on the OR shore through the upstream exposed end of Skamania Island, continuing in a straight line to the WA shore.
 - During January 1-April 30, 2011, angling for all species prohibited in the area from a line between the upstream end of Sand Island and a marker on the OR shoreline, downstream to a line between the lower end of Sand Island and a marker on the OR shoreline.
- **Lower Willamette River upstream to Willamette Falls, including Multnomah Channel**
 - The 2011 white sturgeon retention season closed effective March 17, 2011.
 - Angling for sturgeon prohibited from May 1 through August 31, 2011 from Willamette Falls downstream to the I-205 Bridge; catch-and-release fishing for sturgeon is permitted in the remainder of the river.

- *Seasons may be subject to in-season modification.*

And as far as sturgeon success goes, there hasn't been much. There are still a few keepers coming from the Portland to Longview stretch. Two legals for 8 boats in this stretch while gorge anglers tallied 2 keepers for 3 boats along with 17 shakers. Flows are still high and effort remains relatively low with better fishing ahead when temperatures warm.

For those interested in picking up a couple of extra bucks while fishing, the 2011 pikeminnow bounty season opens May 1st. Collect \$4 to \$8 each for bagging these trash fish in the Columbia and score \$500 for landing a tagged fish. See **Random Links**, below, for additional information and instructional clinic locations and times.

The Guide's Forecast – Unless we get an emergency spring chinook salmon opener, the next fishery on tap will be summer steelhead and spring chinook jacks beginning May 16th. We'll write about that when the time draws near.

Meanwhile, keep your eye on Bonneville counts as that is the most exciting piece of the Columbia River puzzle right now. We view counts at: http://www.fpc.org/CurrentDaily/7day-ytd_Adults.htm

Sturgeon fishing will likely remain fair at best with the gorge likely producing the best results. Anglers will have to search for slower water to fish effectively but a few keepers will continue to get pulled from these waters over the next few weeks.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Over the past weekend, more than 500 boats were checked by the ODFW with over half taking home a hatchery springers while releasing about 60 wild Chinook. Fish checker saw those odds improve on Wednesday this week. Boat traffic has been fairly heavy this week as water clarity and flow have improved. A kayak fisher landed a dandy springer near Willamette Park Wednesday this week on a plug.

McKenzie levels have been moderating this week with the temperature improving. With a dry trend in the forecast, it should fish well over the week to come.

The entire Santiam system remains high from spring runoff and snowmelt and is not expected to start recovering until sometime in the coming week. Once the river starts to drop, there should be a few summer steelhead available with numbers improving as more fish cross at the Falls.

Scheduled for planting with hatchery trout this week are Timothy Meadows, Trojan Ponds, Blue River above Reservoir, Carmen Reservoir, Clear Lake, Detroit Reservoir, Dorena Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, East Freeway Lake, Foster Reservoir, Hills Creek, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, Salt Creek, Sunnyside Park Pond, Timber Linn Lake and Waverly Lake.

The Guide's Forecast – Although the lower Willamette has shown a slight increase in flow over the last three days along with an increase in turbidity, visibility remains good enough to call the water fishable. Boats are still trolling herring to good effect although bait-wrapped Kwikfish have also tricked springers this week. The head of Multnomah Channel and Portland Harbor have produced the greater number of fish. While the water is not yet warm enough for spinners and spoons to be effective but with a 70-degree day in the forecast, that day is coming. Fishing has certainly been sufficiently worthwhile to recommend giving it a go at the earliest opportunity. Upper Willamette bass fishers can be optimistic about nailing smallmouth as water conditions clear and warm a little. Trout are readily available on the Middle Fork above Hills Creek Reservoir as it was recently planted.

Trout fishing should be rewarding as conditions improve on the McKenzie with beautiful wild fish rising to March Browns on the lower river and cooperative hatchery rainbows below Leaburg Dam and above in the lake. Bait is allowed in McKenzie above Hayden Bridge to Leaburg Dam for the remainder of the year. A few summer steelhead have been taken with catches improving as weeks go by.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – While the Clackamas has been running typically high with spring runoff, the levels are dropping this week, making this a good bet as the weather continues to improve.

Conditions at the Sandy River are showing some improvement following a rainy spring. The new acclimation pond at Bull Run is a bonus for Sandy fishers. The ODFW is seeking volunteers to heel feed the hungry fishes here.

The Guide's Forecast – There are a mix of summer and winter steelhead available in the Clackamas. Spring Chinook are just starting to enter and a few have been taken. Target springers low on the system for now.

Sandy fishers haven't been taking many fish but at least the outlook is better for the coming weekend. Expect to find debris from high water but improved flow and clarity. Fish numbers seem to be down this season, however.

North Coast Fishing Report – With high water in the Willamette Valley late last week, anglers took advantage of good conditions once again on the north coast. Boaters weren't disappointed. Anglers reported excellent results for adult steelhead late last week with double digit opportunities for professionals working the area. The Wilson produced exceptional results Wednesday and Thursday although accurate reports did mention about half of the fish caught were colored up run-backs. Regardless, the action was good.

The Nestucca also produced good results as many consider this the last productive stretch for the late winter run fish. The upper reaches produced the best results as high flows had fish on the move. Side-drifters dominated the catch as has been for much of the winter season in the high flows.

North coast rivers went out once again with recent precipitation putting rivers out of reach just after Easter. The north coast rivers have been pounded so frequently by rain however that they've been quick to recover lately. Although flows were still high at mid-week, the color was good, especially in the upper reaches.

A little known sleeper fishery that is taking off exists in the Astoria area. With spring chinook returning in good numbers to Youngs Bay and the Tongue Point terminal fishery, tributary systems will receive some benefit from unharvested returns. Bank and boat anglers have decent access to these spring chinook this time of year, especially when the gillnet fleet has had to sit idle as they nudge up against their mainstem ESA impacts from their previous fishery. Great fishing was had by many when the perfect storm hit; that is, a rain freshet coupled with a tied up gillnet fleet. The same is underway now although it's not certain numbers are quite as strong as they were last year.

The systems to target are the Klaskanine River, Gnat and Big Creeks. All these systems should have fish present but anglers need to study river regulations carefully before participating. The gillnet fleet however did get the go-ahead to fish for 2, five-hour periods beginning 4:00 p.m. on

April 28th. The next season will be Sunday, May 1st, same 5-hour time slot. There has already been some escapement however so bring your bobber and eggs. It should be worth your time.

And speaking of spring chinook, no, there hasn't been any caught in Tillamook Bay- none that have been reported anyway. There has been very little effort but it's cold, early and wet to expect any great results. Chinook are more likely to be intercepted in the Wilson, Trask or Nestucca this week with flows as high as they are. Fish aren't likely to stick around in the estuary under these circumstances.

Fair sturgeon fishing took place on the last minus tide series however. Some keepers were taken out of the middle and lower bay. It's helpful that we've had a lot of high water, keeping the immature crabs at bay.

When conditions allow, and that hasn't been very often, good bottomfish catches have been reported out of north coast ports. Lingcod action is good right now and should continue that way for several more weeks. We may have an opportunity coming late into the weekend. Be sure to read the **Forecast** segment of this section.

Crabbing remains poor in most estuaries and in the nearshore.

The Guide's Forecast – Steelhead will once again be the prime target for north coast anglers. Anglers should be prepared however for dark fish in the catch. Some summer steelhead and a few bright late winter runs should still be in the catches. The Wilson and Nestucca will remain top bets. The trend shows improving water conditions through the weekend. As flows drop, target fish in the lower reaches of these systems. As flows drop, plugs should become quite effective.

You can ply the waters for an early spring chinook but don't be too disappointed if you come up empty. The Trask, Wilson and Nestucca Rivers, in that order, may be better bets than Tillamook Bay however as fish are likely to trek right through the estuary to the rivers that are in prime condition for migration right now. By the weekend, chinook should start to settle in deeper holes where backbounced eggs or deep diving plugs will draw a rare strike this time of year. Mid-May should be better.

Tides will be more conducive to Tillamook Bay spring chinook fishing and sturgeon fishing beginning early next week. The tides are early in the morning but they should provide some fair opportunity for motivated anglers.

One of the better options this week may be one of the Highway 30 systems or the Klaskanine River. There should be good bank access and if you have good eggs, tip your offering with sand shrimp for the best opportunity. This is a relatively new fishery so you'll have to do some exploring at your own expense.

Offshore anglers may look at late in the weekend to get over the bar for some bottomfishing and likely sub-par crabbing. Here is the offshore weather outlook for through early next week; the revised forecast may be too choppy for good times however:

Fri...NW wind 15 to 20 kt. Wind waves 4 ft. W swell 10 ft.

Fri Night...NW wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 3 ft. W swell 8 ft.

Sat...N wind 10 kt. Wind waves 3 ft. W swell 7 ft.

Sat Night...N wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 3 ft. W swell 7 ft...subsiding to 5 ft.

Sun...NW wind 15 kt...becoming W to SW 10 kt in the afternoon. Wind waves 4 ft. W swell 4 ft.

Mon...W wind 15 to 20 kt. Wind waves 4 ft. W swell 5 ft.

Razor clam digging looks to be more promising early next week. Although most would agree the production this year has been poor, if the surf calms, there could be good digging. Clatsop Beaches will produce the best results.

Central & South Coast Reports – Offshore forecasts look good and are improving off the central and southern Oregon coast. Launches should be no problem with wind and wave action moderating through Monday next week.

Bottom fishing has been very good with mostly limits of rockfish and good catches of ling cod. The restriction to 240 feet or shallower hasn't been a hindrance this spring, unlike the last several weeks of rough offshore conditions.

with ocean conditions a little more cooperative recently, a few recreational anglers have had some success catching Chinook offshore. Reports have been positive out of Newport, Winchester and Coos Bay. As offshore conditions allow crossing of coastal bars, catch rates will surely improve.

Beach casters have continued to score good catches of larch surf perch with pinkfin showing in catches along with striped perch.

Crabbing has been fair in Winchester Bay but is expected to improve with less water flushing downstream from the Umpqua. Sturgeon fishing should be picking up in the next few weeks. Spring Chinook fishing should be decent around Scottsburg and Scotts Creek with the river dropping and clearing. The Umpqua system is well-known for producing some of the largest spring Chinook on the coast. The first shad of the year has been taken with more to follow - by the thousands. Steelheading has been good for hatchery fish on the South Umpqua for both boat and bank anglers but the last day for this fishery is April 30th with the South Umpqua closed to all fishing May 1st through May 27th. catch-and release of wild steelhead has been fair in the flies-only section of the North Umpqua with best results coming to boat anglers.

Coos Bay crabbing has been slow as has Bandon on the Coquille. Expect to see some improvement in sturgeon catches over the next few weeks. While steelheading closes officially at the end of April, it has been virtually over for a while here. Striped bass are available in upper tidewater according to fisheries biologists with evening and nighttime fishing most productive. Shad are just a few weeks away.

Spring Chinook fishing has been fair to good on the lower Rogue but is expecting to improve with levels dropping and as water temperatures rise. Most catches are coming on anchovy-spinner combinations. Some very large hatchery salmon have been boated along with wild fish to 40 pounds. With conditions improving on the middle Rogue, catches of springers will follow. Steelheaders are still taking winters although the allowance for one wild steelhead per day up to five per year on the middle and upper river will end April 30th. The Holy Water stretch has been productive for fly fishers who have been landing large trout. Steelhead continue to be taken on the upper Rogue and spring Chinook opportunities will be available with salmon just starting to enter.

Diamond Lake anglers will find snow and ice again this coming weekend. Fishing has been good, however, and trout are running large with most catches including 12- to 16-inch fish along with the occasional 20 inchers. Plus, the daily limit goes to eight fish starting May 1st as biologist estimate there are over 100 trout per acre of water here.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Water levels have been gradually dropping on the lower Deschutes but there's still a significant flow. Hatches have been good with trout often looking up. Fishing is fair on the middle Deschutes where March Browns have been hatching at times although nymphing has been the technique du jour. Long-rodders will find reddsides and some large browns in this stretch.

Kokanee fishing has been slow at Wickiup since the opener over the past weekend, although there have been catches of 11 to 12-inchers when a pod of fish has been spotted on depth finder.

Wickiup Reservoir is producing fair but steady catches of brown trout on trolled plugs.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for April 2011

North Puget Sound

Thousands of anglers are gearing up for the lowland lakes trout opener in late April, but many remain focused on the marine areas of Puget Sound, where blackmouth salmon fisheries are still under way.

As March comes to a close, fishing continues to be slow for most anglers targeting **blackmouth**, said Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "For the most part it has been a real grind for anglers fishing Puget Sound," he said. "But there have been a few bright spots. One angler recently caught a 27-pound hatchery chinook in the San Juan Islands and several participants in the recent Anacortes Salmon Derby did pretty good as well."

A total of 101 fish were weighed during the **Anacortes Salmon Derby**, which took place March 26-27. Mike Champion of Bellingham took home the \$15,000 grand prize with his 18.96-pound fish. Patrick Barton of Bellingham hooked a 18.74-pound salmon that was good enough for second place and \$5,000, and Brett Enholm of Bellingham was awarded \$2,500 for his third-place fish, which weighed in at 18.44 pounds.

"While anglers definitely have to put in some time on the water, it can be worth it for an opportunity to catch a large blackmouth," Thiesfeld said.

Anglers fishing marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) and 9 (Admiralty Inlet) have a two-**salmon** daily limit, but must release wild chinook salmon. Thiesfeld reminds anglers that Marine Area 9 is open only through April 15, while Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) is already closed to salmon fishing. Freshwater anglers looking to cast for **trout** will soon have numerous lakes to choose from. The lowland lakes trout season gets under way April 30, when many lakes – stocked with thousands of legal-sized trout – will open for fishing. Information on stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available on [WDFW's website](#).

Anglers should note that the **halibut** season gets under way in May. The 2011 recreational halibut seasons approved for Washington's marine areas are:

- **Columbia River (Ilwaco):** Marine Area 1 will open May 5, three days a week, Thursday through Saturday until 70 percent of the quota is reached, or until July 17. The fishery will then reopen on Aug. 5 and continue three days a week (Friday through Sunday) until the remaining quota is reached, or Sept.30, whichever occurs first. The 2011 catch quota is 15,418 pounds.
- **South Coast (Westport/Ocean Shores):** Marine Area 2 will open on May 1, two days a week, Sundays and Tuesdays. During the fourth week in May the fishery will be open Sunday only (May 22). Beginning the following week the fishery will resume the Sunday, Tuesday structure until the quota is reached. The northern near shore area will be open seven days per week, until the quota is reached. The 2011 catch quota is 43,500 pounds.
- **North Coast (La Push/Neah Bay):** Marine areas 3 and 4 will open on May 12, two days per week, Thursdays and Saturdays, through May 21. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will reopen the week of June 2. If sufficient quota remains after that opener, the fishery will reopen starting June 16. The 2011 catch quota is 108,792 pounds.
- **Strait of Juan de Fuca/Puget Sound:** Marine areas 6 through 10 (Strait, Port Angeles, Admiralty Inlet and Everett) will be open May 5 through May 29. Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) will be open May 26 through June 18. 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 Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The 2011 combined catch quota for these areas is 58,155 pounds.

All areas that will be open to halibut fishing have a one-fish daily catch limit, with no minimum size, a possession limit of one fish while on the vessel, and a possession limit of two fish in any form once the angler is on the shore.

Halibut fishing will remain closed in marine areas 11 (Tacoma) and 13 (southern Puget Sound) to protect three species of rockfish listed for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act. Marine Area 12 (Hood Canal) will remain closed due to low dissolved-oxygen conditions.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

April will see the traditional opening of the statewide lowland lakes trout fishing season, the expansion of lingcod fishing on the north coast and up to two rounds of razor-clam digging on ocean beaches.

One morning razor clam dig has been approved at two beaches -- Long Beach and Twin Harbors -- April 7-9. Digging dates and morning low tides are:

- April 7 (Thursday), 9:37 a.m. (0.1 feet); Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- April 8 (Friday), 10:19 a.m., (0.2 feet); Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- April 9 (Saturday), 11:07 a.m. (0.4 feet); Long Beach, Twin Harbors

Later in April, razor clammers could have another opportunity if marine toxin tests show the clams are safe to eat. Tentative opening dates and low tides for that dig are:

- April 19 (Tuesday), 8:07 a.m. (-1.8 feet); Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- April 20 (Wednesday), 8:54 a.m. (-1.7 feet); Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- April 21 (Thursday), 9:42 a.m. (-1.4 feet); Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks
- April 22 (Friday), 10:33 a.m. (-0.8 feet); Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks

- April 23 (Saturday), 11:27 a.m. (-0.2 feet); Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks (Digging allowed until 1 p.m.)

No digging will be allowed after noon on any of the razor-clam beaches, except on April 23 when digging is allowed until 1 p.m. on the four beaches. Fishery managers agreed to an extra hour of digging April 23 because low tide won't occur until 11:27 a.m. that morning, said Dan Ayres, coastal shellfish manager for Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Harvesters are allowed to take no more than 15 razor clams and must keep the first 15 they dig, regardless of size or condition. Each harvester's clams must be kept in a separate container. Noting that 2010-11 state fishing licenses expire March 31, Ayres reminds diggers age 15 or older that they must purchase a 2011-12 license to participate in the April openings. Various licenses, ranging from a three-day razor-clam license to a multi-species combination license, are available [online](#), by phone (1-866-246-9453) and from sporting goods stores and other retail license dealers around the state.

Also on the coast, the **lingcod** fishery is under way in marine areas 1 (Ilwaco), 2 (Westport-Ocean Shores) and 3 (LaPush). Beginning April 16, Marine Area 4 (Neah Bay) also will open for lingcod. For more information on lingcod fishing regulations, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

Meanwhile, fishing for **blackmouth** is still an option. Marine Areas 5 (Sekiu) and 6 (eastern Strait) are open through April 10, although Marine Areas 11 (Tacoma-Vashon), 12 (Hood Canal) and 13 (South Puget Sound) will remain open through April 30.

Anglers fishing marine areas 11 and 12 have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook. Those fishing the Strait of Juan de Fuca – marine areas 5 and 6 – and Marine Area 13 have a daily limit of one salmon.

In freshwater, anglers still have an opportunity to hook **wild steelhead** on the Olympic Peninsula. As in years past, anglers may retain only one wild steelhead per license year on the Bogachiel, Calawah, Clearwater, Dickey, Hoh, Quillayute, Quinault and Sol Duc rivers. Wild steelhead retention continues through April 30 on most of those rivers. The exceptions are the Clearwater, Hoh and Quinault rivers, where wild steelhead retention runs through April 15. Anglers should be aware that portions of the Dickey River closed in mid-March. For more information on steelhead fishing regulations, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

Lake fishing opportunities expand at the end of the month, when the **lowland lakes trout season** gets under way. Many lakes – stocked with thousands of legal-sized trout – open for fishing April 30. Information on stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available on [WDFW's website](#).

Anglers should note that the **halibut** season gets under way in May. The 2011 recreational halibut seasons approved for Washington's marine areas are:

- **Columbia River (Ilwaco):** Marine Area 1 will open May 5, three days a week, Thursday through Saturday until 70 percent of the quota is reached, or until July 17. The fishery will then reopen on Aug. 5 and continue three days a week (Friday through Sunday) until the remaining quota is reached, or Sept.30, whichever occurs first. The 2011 catch quota is 15,418 pounds.
- **South Coast (Westport/Ocean Shores):** Marine Area 2 will open on May 1, two days a week, Sundays and Tuesdays. During the fourth week in May the fishery will be open Sunday only (May 22). Beginning the following week the fishery will resume the Sunday,

- Tuesday structure until the quota is reached. The northern near shore area will be open seven days per week, until the quota is reached. The 2011 catch quota is 43,500 pounds.
- **North Coast (La Push/Neah Bay):** Marine areas 3 and 4 will open on May 12, two days per week, Thursdays and Saturdays, through May 21. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will reopen the week of June 2. If sufficient quota remains after that opener, the fishery will reopen starting June 16. The 2011 catch quota is 108,792 pounds.
 - **Strait of Juan de Fuca/Puget Sound:** Marine areas 6 through 10 (Strait, Port Angeles, Admiralty Inlet and Everett) will be open May 5 through May 29. Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) will be open May 26 through June 18. 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 Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The 2011 combined catch quota for these areas is 58,155 pounds.

All areas that will be open to halibut fishing have a one-fish daily catch limit, with no minimum size, a possession limit of one fish while on the vessel, and a possession limit of two fish in any form once the angler is on the shore.

Halibut fishing will remain closed in marine areas 11 and 13 to protect three species of rockfish listed for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act. Marine Area 12 will remain closed due to low dissolved-oxygen conditions.

Southwest Washington

Starting April 8, Columbia River anglers will get at least eight more days to catch hatchery-reared **spring chinook salmon** below Bonneville Dam under a decision announced today by fishery managers from Washington and Oregon.

The popular fishery, which closed for a catch assessment April 4, will reopen to fishing Friday, April 8, through Friday, April 15. Fishery managers will meet again April 14 to determine whether to allow additional fishing time.

The eight-day extension will give anglers another chance to catch hatchery-reared spring chinook still available for harvest, said Cindy LeFleur, Columbia River policy coordinator for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"Fishing conditions on the Columbia River have been pretty rough in recent weeks, leaving the sport catch well below the harvest guideline," LeFleur said. "These extra fishing days will give anglers some time to make up for the high water and turbid river conditions that have undercut catch rates to date."

Through April 4, anglers had caught and kept a total of 4,500 spring chinook. Approximately 3,800 were upriver fish, compared to a 7,700-fish harvest guideline for upriver chinook set at the beginning of the season.

The area set to reopen for spring chinook fishing April 8 extends from Buoy 10 upriver to Rooster Rock for boat and bank anglers, and to the fishing boundary below Bonneville Dam for bank anglers only. When the fishery is open, anglers can retain one marked, hatchery-reared adult chinook salmon as part of their daily limit.

Anglers may also retain **shad** and hatchery-reared **steelhead** when the spring chinook fishery is open. However, all wild salmon and steelhead not marked as a hatchery fish by a clipped adipose fin must be released unharmed.

Along with the eight additional fishing days, lower-river anglers could get another chance to catch spring chinook in May, once fishery managers update the run forecast. While the preseason forecast projected a return of 198,400 upriver fish, the fishery has been managed with a 30 percent "buffer" to guard against overestimating the run.

"If the fish return at or above expectations, we will look toward providing additional days of fishing on the river later in spring," LeFleur said.

The fishing extension starting April 8 does not affect the spring chinook season above Bonneville Dam, which is open seven days a week through April 24 between the Tower Island powerlines below The Dalles Dam and the Washington/Oregon state line, 17 miles upriver from McNary Dam. Bank fishing is also allowed from Bonneville Dam upriver to the powerlines located about 6 miles below The Dalles Dam through April 24.

Anglers fishing above Bonneville Dam can retain up to two marked, hatchery-reared adult chinook salmon or hatchery steelhead as part of their daily limit.

News of any additional fishing days will be announced on WDFW's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/>), the Fishing Hotline (360-902-2500), the Region 5 hotline (360-696-6211*1010) and through local news media.

Meanwhile, WDFW Fish Biologist Joe Hymer has some other fishing opportunities to recommend:

- **Fish a tributary:** This is the time of year when anglers start picking up increasing number of **spring chinook** in the Cowlitz, Lewis and Kalama rivers. **Winter steelhead** are still providing lots of action on the Cowlitz – especially near the trout and salmon hatcheries – and **summer steelhead** are moving into several other tributaries to the lower Columbia River. Note that the lower East Fork Lewis River and the Lower Washougal River open to steelhead fishing April 16. Check the [Fishing in Washington](#) rule pamphlet for current rules before you go.
- **Head upriver:** In April, the daily number of **spring chinook** passing Bonneville Dam usually jumps from hundreds to thousands of fish, which move into the Bonneville, The Dalles, and John Day pools and a number of tributaries in between. Wind River, Klickitat River and Drano Lake are all good bets for spring chinook in April. **Walleye** fishing is also picking up in The Dalles Pool and the John Day Pool.
- **Catch some trout:** Hundreds of lowland lakes open for trout fishing April 30 throughout the state, drawing tens of thousands of anglers out for their first cast of the year. While most lakes in southwest Washington are open year-round, "opening day" does mark the start of trout fishing in such perennial favorites as Mineral Lake (Lewis County), Swift Reservoir (Skamania County) and the Rowland Lakes (Klickitat County). Meanwhile, fishing is already good for **kokanee** running 12-15 inches in Merwin Reservoir on the North Fork Lewis River.
- **Fish for sturgeon:** In the last days of March, catch rates for legal-size sturgeon showed a marked improvement in the lower Columbia River below Bonneville Dam. This trend should continue in the weeks ahead as higher flows over Bonneville energize both the fish and the fishery. Note, however, that the Sand Island Slough near Rooster Rock will be closed to fishing at least through April 30. Also be aware that the retention fishery for sturgeon in the John Day Pool closes April 10, when the catch is expected to reach the 500-fish harvest guideline.
- **Dig some razor clams:** One morning razor clam dig has been approved for April 7-9 and a second is tentatively scheduled April 19-23, pending the results of marine toxin tests. The first is scheduled for Long Beach and Twin Harbors only, If test results are favorable, those beaches will reopen for digging April 19-23 and two others – Copalis and

Mocrocks will be open April 21-23. For more information, see the WDFW [razor clam](#) webpage.

Anglers and clam diggers over age 14 are reminded that a 2011-12 license is required to participate in any of the April openings, since 2010-11 licenses expire March 31. Licenses ranging from a three-day razor-clam license to a multi-species combination license are available [online](#), by phone (1-866-246-9453) and from sporting goods stores and other retail license dealers around the state.

Eastern Washington

Some of the region's best fishing will begin at the end of the month with the lowland lakes season opener on April 30, but there's plenty of good fishing to be had until then.

"Some waters that open in late-April that are well-stocked, such as Badger, Williams, West Medical, Fishtrap, Fish, and Clear lakes, will likely be excellent again," said Chris Donley, district fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "But until then, try some March 1-opening waters or year-round fisheries."

Coffeepot Lake in Lincoln County is producing 18- to 22-inch **rainbow trout** on chironomids and other flies, Donley said. Regulations at Coffeepot Lake include selective gear rules (no bait, artificial flies and lures only, knotless nets), a minimum size limit of 18 inches and daily catch limit of one trout.

Liberty Lake, in eastern Spokane County, "boomed at ice-out," with catches of **brown trout** that ran 16 to 25 inches, Donley said. Liberty still has lots of good fishing for both those trout and, as the water warms, some of the earliest **yellow perch** and **crappie**.

Downs Lake in southwest Spokane County just received some hatchery "catchable-size" (9 to 12 inches) rainbow trout, and is fishing well for **largemouth bass**. Downs also has yellow perch and crappie.

Medical Lake, near the town of the same name in southwest Spokane County, has brown and rainbow trout.

Catch-and-release fishing for both rainbow and **cutthroat trout** at Amber Lake has been "awesome," Donley said. Amber is under selective gear rules and shifts to a catch-and-keep season on April 30 when the daily limit will be two trout of at least 14 inches. Rainbows with clipped adipose fins caught at Amber must be released even after April 30.

A year-round fishery, Rock Lake in Whitman County, is consistently a good spot for catches of both brown and rainbow trout.

Bill Baker, WDFW northeast district fish biologist, said that year-round Lake Roosevelt keeps producing big rainbows most days, with **kokanee** on some days. Baker also notes Deer Lake in southern Stevens County, which opened March 1, is finally warming and likely producing some catches of rainbow and **lake trout**, with **bass**, **crappie**, **perch** catches not far behind.

"Most fishing lakes in the northeast district won't open until April 30, and even then, some at higher elevation may still have pretty cold water temperatures, if not some ice or snow," Baker said. "But the usual good producers will be the ones to plan on fishing late in the month."

In Stevens County, those include Waitts, Loon, Deep, Cedar, and the Little Pend Oreille chain of lakes, plus Potter's Pond and a few selective gear fisheries such as Bayley, Rocky and Starvation lakes. In Ferry County, traditional favorites opening in late April include Ellen, Davis, Swan and

Trout lakes, plus fly-fishing-only Long Lake. Pend Oreille County waters opening April 30 include Diamond, Frater, Big Meadow, North and South Skookum, Marshall and Sacheen lakes. In the south end of the region, the Tucannon River impoundments, on WDFW's Wooten Wildlife Area, have been producing nice rainbow catches since the March 1 opener. Area Manager Kari Dingman said Big Four, Blue, Deer, Rainbow, Spring and Watson lakes are all well-stocked with hatchery trout and slowly warming up as spring advances. Beaver Lake has water depth and vegetation growth issues that preclude it from viable fish stocking this year.

April 18 is the deadline to register for the May 7 **Kids' Fishing Event** at Clear Lake in Spokane County. For details on the registration form, see the [Youth Fishing 2011 Event Calendar](#) on WDFW's website.

Northcentral Washington

About three dozen lakes throughout the region open to fishing or shift to catch-and-release on April 1.

The bulk of those fisheries are in the Columbia Basin where WDFW District Fish Biologist Chad Jackson predicts a "fair to good" season, depending as always on weather. All but one are within or adjacent to the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge south of Potholes Reservoir, and over half are planted with either spring and/or fall **rainbow trout** fry.

"Those who traditionally fish the April 1 opener should note that North and South Teal lakes will not be fishable this year because we treated those lakes last fall to remove carp and other spiny rays to restore the trout fishery," Jackson said. "We'll be stocking them with fingerling rainbows later this spring so fishing should be good for next year's opener."

There are lots of other fishing spots to try now and the best may be Dry Falls Lake, the only one of the April 1-opening waters not in or near the refuge. It's located in Sun Lakes State Park, northeast of Park Lake and west of Coulee City in the north end of Grant County.

Jackson says anglers should expect to catch 13- to 14-inch yearling rainbows with carryovers 18 inches or greater on opening day at Dry Falls Lake. A total of 10,150 rainbow, 756 **tiger trout**, and 1,026 **brown trout** fry were stocked there in 2010.

"Just remember that Dry Falls has a selective gear regulation and a one trout daily bag limit," Jackson said. As defined in the [Sportfishing Rules Pamphlet](#), selective gear is only unscented artificial flies or lures with one single-point, barbless hook, bait prohibited, and knotless nets. Other April 1 opening waters in the Columbia Basin include:

- Upper and Lower Hampton lakes, in Grant County north of Othello on the refuge, stocked with 28,507 and 5,047 rainbow trout fry in the spring, respectively; Lower Hampton also received a trout fry plant of 4,500 in the fall. Lower Hampton should produce 12- to 14-inch yearling trout catches, probably an average of about three per angler; Upper Hampton may have larger fish, but the catch rates will probably again be slow.
- Pillar-Widgeon chain of lakes in Grant County on the refuge, stocked with trout fry in the spring as follows: Pillar – 2,500; Gadwall – 750; Snipe – 600; Shoveler – 750; Cattail – 1,500; Poacher – 150; Lemna – 450; Hourglass – 300; Sago – 300; and Widgeon – 1,650. Access to this lake chain is just southeast of Soda Lake. Try either the entire chain or at least three or four of the lakes to catch some 12- to 13-inch yearlings and carryover trout in the 18-inch or better range. Shore fishing is available at most, but consider packing in a float tube to increase chances for success. The best tend to be Widgeon, Sago, and Pillar, but all can produce well.

- Hutchinson and Shiner lakes on the refuge in Adams County with excellent **largemouth bass** and **bluegill** fishing. Only non-motorized boats are allowed.
- Coyote, Bobcat, and Hayes creek ponds, located just south of Morgan and Halfmoon lakes, on the refuge in Adams County. These ponds are relatively small and shallow, warming up quickly for good largemouth bass fishing
- Deadman Lake located just off McManamon Road next to Halfmoon Lake, on the refuge in Adams County, for bass and other warmwater species fishing.

In the north end of the region, in Okanogan County, a few other fisheries open April 1. Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist, said Spectacle Lake – nine miles southwest of Tonasket – should be good for **rainbow trout** in the 10- to 12-inch range. During the month of April, Spectacle will receive up to 800 one- to two-pound triploid rainbows.

Washburn Island Pond, located four miles east of Brewster on the Columbia River, offers largemouth bass and bluegill fishing starting April 1. A Colville tribal license is required if fishing from shore, but not if fishing from a boat. No internal combustion engine boats are allowed, only electric motors.

Jateff notes several Okanogan lakes switch to catch-and-release, selective gear rules, and electric boat motors only on April 1:

- Davis, Cougar, and Campbell lakes, located within the Methow Wildlife Area near Winthrop, with rainbow trout 10 to 12 inches and carryover fish up to 15 inches; small graveled boat launches at all three; could still have some ice during the first part of April.
- Rat Lake, located north of Brewster, with rainbow and brown trout 10 to 12 inches; WDFW access site with concrete boat ramp; should be thawed out by first week in April.
- Big and Little Green lakes, located five miles northwest of Omak, with rainbow trout 10 to 13 inches; WDFW access site on Big Green with concrete boat ramp; should be thawed out by first week or two in April.

Many more Okanogan County lakes will open April 30 to provide good trout fishing, including:

- Pearrygin Lake, near Winthrop, with rainbows 10 to 12 inches and carryover fish up to 15 inches; up to 500 triploid rainbows (one to two pounds each) will be stocked before the opener; boat launching facilities available at State Park, resort and WDFW access site.
- Conconully Reservoir and Lake, near town of Conconully, with rainbow trout 10 to 12 inches and carryover fish up to 15 inches; boat launching available at State Park and resorts at both lakes.
- Blue Lake, located within the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, with rainbow trout 10 to 16 inches and some **brown trout** also available; selective gear rules, electric motors only; camping and gravel boat launch sites.
- Big Twin Lake, near Winthrop, with rainbow trout 12 to 16 inches; selective gear rules and electric motors only; resort and WDFW access site with gravel boat launching facilities.
- Chopaka Lake, near Loomis, with rainbow trout 12 to 18 inches; fly fishing only and no boat motors allowed; Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) campsites and gravel boat launch.
- Aeneas Lake, near Tonasket, with rainbow trout 12 to 16 inches, brown trout up to 18 inches; fly fishing only and no boat motors allowed; WDFW access site with camping and gravel boat launch.

Southcentral Washington

This is the time of year that area anglers start thinking seriously about **trout**, because the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is planting plenty of fish in local waters

right now. Thousands of catchable-size trout are scheduled to be planted in Columbia Park Pond, Dalton Lake, Powerline Lake, Quarry Pond, Marmes Lake, and other lakes in April. Many lakes are also being stocked with jumbo trout, weighing over a pound apiece.

"This is a good time to get outdoors and celebrate spring by catching some fish," said Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Thousands of fish around southcentral Washington are just waiting to be caught."

A complete trout-planting schedule for southcentral lakes and ponds is available on the [WDFW website](#).

Hoffarth reminds anglers over the age of 14 that a 2011-12 fishing license is required to fish for trout and other species after March 31, when 2010-11 licenses expire. Licenses ranging from a three-day razor-clam license to a multi-species combination license are available [online](#), by phone (1-866-246-9453) and from sporting goods stores and other retail license dealers around the state.

Most **steelhead** sport fisheries are now closed in the Columbia and Snake rivers, although a "bank only" fishery adjacent to WDFW's Ringold Springs Hatchery near the Tri-Cities is open April 1 through April 15. The daily limit is two hatchery steelhead along the Franklin County shoreline from the WDFW marker a quarter-mile downstream from the Ringold irrigation wasteway outlet to the marker a half-mile upstream from Spring Creek.

Meanwhile, **spring chinook salmon** will be moving into the area in increasing numbers throughout the month of April. On the Columbia River, anglers can keep two adipose-fin-clipped hatchery chinook per day through April 24 from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Washington/Oregon state line, 17 miles upriver from McNary Dam. The lower Yakima River opens to spring chinook fishing May 1.

"Springers usually start arriving in fishable numbers around the middle of April," Hoffarth said. "Anglers should keep an eye out for emergency rules that open and close fishing on short notice." For updates, he recommends checking the [department's website](#), the Fishing Hotline (360-902-2500) and local news media.

Sturgeon anglers are also advised to stay abreast of new regulations. As of late March, anglers could still catch and keep legal-size sturgeon in Lake Umatilla (John Day Dam to McNary Dam), but that fishery will close as soon as the 500-fish quota for those waters is reached. Rather catch warm-water fish? Catch rates should continue to improve on area rivers for **smallmouth bass**, **channel catfish** and **walleye** in April right through spring.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

Write to the TGF staff:

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Random Links

2011 Spring Fishing Guide from the ODFW:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/RR/fishing_forecast/

Kaufmann's Streamborn to file for Chapter 7 bankruptcy protection:

http://www.oregonlive.com/business/index.ssf/2011/04/kaufmanns_streamborn_to_file_f.html

Sellwood Bridge Cam:

<http://www.richmorgan.com/>

All about the Pikeminnow:

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

GOOD LUCK!