

The Guide's Forecast - volume 13 issue number 18

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 6th – May 12th, 2011**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Spring chinook anglers continue to be sidelined as thousands of chinook pour over Bonneville Dam. Managers may take a look at a re-opener but momentum must continue to build to bring optimism. Over 50,000 fish crossed Bonneville in just the last 7 days.

The level, flow and visibility are good on the lower Willamette and Multnomah Channel. Over 2,000 springers have crossed the Falls. Spring chinook anglers have been on a roller coaster ride of action but when the bite has been on, it's been rewarding. Oregon City has had an occasional great bite but most fish seem to be staging below Milwaukie. This should be a break out week for Oregon City anglers.

Nymph fishing on the Middle Fork Willamette is yielding large rainbows.

McKenzie water level is on the drop, temperatures are on the rise and fish are looking up with March Browns hatching.

Over 12,000 spring Chinook are forecasted to enter the Clackamas system. Try the lower river to intercept early arrivals. Steelhead fishing is improving.

There are steelhead and a few springers in the waters of the Sandy but fishing has been slow and results spotty. Chinook fishing should be peaking soon but a mediocre run is in the forecast.

Northwest – With waters getting low and clear, steelheaders employing stealth techniques are still getting late winter steelhead on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Bank anglers have an advantage in these lower flows but must target fish higher in the watersheds. Most winter fish are turning dark but a few bright winter fish are still present with a few summer run fish on their heels.

Still no glowing reports of spring chinook although one was reported at the Trask hatchery last week. One reliable report from upper Tillamook Bay had a local netting a chinook on Monday that spewed eggs in the bottom of the boat, indicating a late run fall fish. The fish was returned to the water but definitely an anomaly. Better tides will occur the week after this one.

Sturgeon are still being reported from the middle and lower bay on Tillamook. They should be easy targets in this weeks minus tide series.

Bay clamming should be easy on most coastal estuaries. Razor clamming has been challenging along Oregon beaches but if the surf calms, digging should improve.

Calm seas are in the forecast for Friday only. Bottomfishing should be excellent. Crabbing will be challenging and the offshore forecast is calling for rough water again by the weekend.

All-depth halibut season opens today north of Cape Falcon for three days per week, Thursday through Saturday. South of Falcon, nearshore (inside of 40 fathoms) opened on May 1st. Halibut often come close to shore this time of year to feed on softshell dungeness crab. The first all-depth fishery in this zone opens on May 12 – 14.

Southwest – With excellent returns predicted for the majority of south coast rivers, offshore chinook fishing should be very good this season.

Umpqua water level and flow has disallowed fishing recently but the river is forecast to recover by the coming weekend. Spring chinook will be in the upper mainstem and steelheading should be good for hatchery fish on the South Umpqua.

While there hasn't been much hoopla about ocean chinook catches, boats launching out of Charleston have made good catches of large fish recently.

When ocean conditions have allowed launches out of Gold beach, catches of rockfish and lingcod have been good.

Boats in productive locations on the lower Rogue have had plenty of hookups with spring chinook on the lower Rogue. Salmon are running about 50% hatchery keepers. Fishing is fair on the middle river. Steelheading remains good on the upper Rogue with springers starting to make an appearance. Wild steelhead must be released as of May 1st.

Offshore launches out of the Port of Brookings have produced a colorful mix of rockfish and lingcod as well as decent takes of ocean dungeness.

Ice and snow will likely greet Diamond Lake fishers again this coming weekend but most are taking limits of large trout by auguring to water level. The daily bag limit is now eight fish.

Eastern – Deschutes anglers are taking redsides averaging 15 inches on a combination of top and sub-surface offerings but dry action is expected to improve as water levels drop and the weather improves. Action has been decent on the middle Deschutes with the Salmonfly hatch occurring later this month.

Although the weather has been unsettled, John Day anglers have been taking large smallmouth bass.

SW Washington – Steelhead remain the top choice for SW Washington anglers. However, the Cowlitz does have a mix of spring chinook and steelhead right now. Summer steelhead are starting to show.

The Kalama has a mix of early summer run steelhead, late broodstock and wild winter fish with only a rare chinook showing.

The Washougal has summer run fish but will peak later into June.

With dam passage at an impressive season high, Drano Lake and the Wind River fisheries are well underway. Fishing should be excellent for the next 2 weeks as fish not familiar with sport gear continue to cross Bonneville.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Bonneville counts are coming on strong, creating buzz that fishery managers may re-open the lower river fishery for sport anglers. We're still tens of thousands of fish away from that but historically, when fish begin to move like they are now, they become pretty challenging to catch and by the time managers are able to re-open the fishery the bulk of the run will have passed Bonneville Dam. It's quite the quandary.

Managers met on Wednesday however to discuss the fishery above Bonneville Dam. Although the fishery closed on May 1st, over half of the available fish remain available for take. Managers were looking at an additional four days, May 7th – May 10th in an effort to harvest the additional available fish. They adopted the season on Wednesday afternoon. Here's the official press release:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE May 4, 2011

States re-open salmon season above Bonneville

CLACKAMAS, Ore. – Columbia River anglers between Bonneville Dam and the Oregon/Washington border will have at least an additional four days to catch spring chinook under a re-opened season adopted by fishery managers from Oregon and Washington.

Under the extension, the spring season will re-open from Saturday, May 7 through Sunday May 10 above Bonneville dam.

The extension was approved based on harvest estimates that projected a harvest of about 450 spring chinook through May 1, compared to a harvest guideline of 1,000 fish available prior to a run size update.

"We've had good dam counts recently that give us some comfort that the run is on the way as forecast," said Chris Kern, assistant fisheries manager of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Columbia River Program. "If counts continue to remain strong, a formal run update is likely to occur sometime next week."

The daily bag limit in this area is two adipose fin-clipped adult salmon or steelhead in combination, and up to five adipose fin-clipped jack salmon per day.

Angling for salmon and steelhead from a boat between Bonneville Dam and the Tower Island power lines, approximately six miles down stream from The Dalles Dam, is prohibited. However, bank angling is allowed in this area.

At this writing, nearly 70,000 adults had passed Bonneville, most in just the previous 8 days. If momentum like this continues to be strong, we could be on track for more opportunity.

Sturgeon fishers remain quiet and so do catches. With little exception, keepers are hard to find although some knowledgeable anglers are finding consistent success, mostly from Portland to Longview. Water temperatures are warming however but not as fast as sturgeon anglers would like. Success likely won't jump for many more weeks.

The Guide's Forecast – The Columbia will remain quiet with the exception of the above Bonneville fisheries. The best day will likely be opening day, May 7th. It's only 4 days so action should be good but brief.

Downstream anglers may get some good news next week although we've likely seen the best of that fishery as most of the run will be past Bonneville when the run size update happens (most likely).

Steelhead season is scheduled to open the week after this one. We'll give a more detailed report and forecast when we get there. We're pretty optimistic however!

Sturgeon anglers will continue to struggle for consistency. There are some fish available in the Bonneville area but you had better know how to fish and safely anchor in the high flows. The better bet may be the Portland to Longview stretch but don't go into it expecting great results. Keepers will continue to be hard to come by.

There may be some limited opportunity to target bottomfish out of the mouth of the Columbia. Here is the offshore forecast with Friday looking pretty promising!:

Fri...W wind 5 kt...backing to SW in the afternoon. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 8 ft. Chance of rain.

Fri Night...SW wind 15 to 20 kt. Wind waves 4 ft. W swell 6 ft. Rain likely.

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This forecast has already changed from the night before so go here for the latest and after that, don't take it too seriously. Ocean weather is hard to forecast! Offshore forecast:

<http://forecast.weather.gov/MapClick.php?minlon=-125&maxlon=-120.8&minlat=43.39&maxlat=46.91&mapwidth=354&site=pqr&zmx=1&zmy=1&map.x=125&map.y=71>

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Visibility is good and improving in the lower Willamette with the water temperature rising. Summer steelhead counts were over 2,600 at the Falls as of May 4th with springer counts approaching 3,000. Spring Chinook trollers and anchor fishers have seen steady results with the bite turning on occasionally, during which a number of hookups have occurred, then it settles back to occasional action. That's to be expected when springer fishing, though. Nearly half the boats checked by the ODFW on Sunday, May 1st, had landed keeper Chinook.

Willamette River fishing continues to be spotty but productive in certain areas for short periods of time. Wednesday brought good fishing in the Garbage Hole for back bouncers and back trollers working eggs and shrimp and/or sardine fillets. You can tell success rates by the number of boats working the area and the bulk of the Oregon City fleet was clearly in the Garbage Hole. Meldrum Bar has also been producing fair results for boaters but bank anglers were doing quite good for spring chinook and summer steelhead. It is peak season and the Oregon City area is starting to act like it.

The Lake Line and Sandbar are producing occasional bites but the area upstream of the I-205 Bridge is nearly sea-lion free, which is not the case downstream. Fish are being taken by the mammals. Trollers working the Portland Harbor and Multnomah Channel are also doing well right now and better than they typically do most spring seasons. The high water seems to be keeping the fish downstream of what is typically a good Oregon City carnage.

Water conditions on the McKenzie have been improving over the last week. Anglers targeting summer steelhead have been taking a few fish over the last couple of weeks.

While fish counts at Willamette Falls have been good and many of those are destined for the Santiam system, the river has been high. Lees water in the Santiams coupled with a warming trend may create a possibility here for anglers.

ODFW sez, "Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is hosting a free family fishing event Saturday, May 7 at Commonwealth Pond in Cedar Hills near Beaverton.

"ODFW will stock the pond with 3,000 legal size rainbow trout 300 larger trout and 300 trophies. The department is also supplying rods and reels for the day in addition to bait, tackle and fish bags for use by young anglers who do not have their own fishing equipment. ODFW staff and volunteers will be on site from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. to answer questions."

Canby Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Huddelston Pond, Mt. Hood Pond, Silver Creek Reservoir, West Salish Pond, Alton Baker Canal, Detroit Reservoir, Dexter Reservoir, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Salmon Creek, Walling Pond, Walter Wirth Lake, and the Middle Fork Willamette River above Hills Creek Reservoir are scheduled to be stocked with trout.

The Guide's Forecast – Now is the time to fish the lower Willamette and Multnomah Channel for spring Chinook. It may not be red-hot but it is the peak of the season and it would be foolish to wait for results to improve. Try Portland Harbor for springers as the Sellwood and top of Multnomah Channel have produced the most hookups although those areas will also be the most heavily trafficked. Trolling Green Label herring remains the most popular (and productive) technique although boats on anchor have had some success with wrapped Kwikfish and prawn spinners.

McKenzie level and flow should be conducive to good results for anglers this coming weekend. Factor in the March Brown hatch and the trip becomes particularly appealing. Those targeting summer steelhead in the lower river should find a few with which to tussle.

North Santiam levels are forecast to rise by the weekend the rise again in a week or so. This is not conducive to catching steelhead.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Clackamas water levels have been gradually dropping although color has been consistently good. The river is forecast to continue to fall slightly through the coming weekend but thereafter, all bets are off. The NOAA seems to think it will surge to a stage equal to that in the fourth week of April, which would be too much water for worthwhile fishing.

Sandy water levels have been slowly dropping (with periodic minor fluctuations) since the last week in April. The most recent reading on the morning of May 5th put the level at the Sandy gauge right at 10 feet. The color has been excellent this week although there is very little fishing pressure.

The Guide's Forecast – Clackamas steelheaders will need to put in their time to locate a biter on the Clackamas. Those who are doing so and covering as much water as possible are scratching out a few. In addition to late-season winters, fresh summer steelhead are entering now although numbers are fairly low at this time of year. Of greater interest to many are the spring Chinook which have just started entering. Try the lower river and stay optimistic. Results will improve as the water temperature warms with seasonal spring temperatures.

Results have been very slow to come for Sandy fishers although persistent anglers have taken a few steelhead and a couple of springers have been reported recently. It's too early in the season to target Springers with much optimism here.

North Coast Fishing Report – Steelheaders have switched gears to target spring Chinook but good numbers of fish are still present on the north coast. Water conditions have been excellent all week but effort low. For the most part, quality late run winter fish are hard to find. With so few anglers fishing and summer steelhead along with a rare late winter run available, fishing this time of year can be quite enjoyable. Anglers also stand a chance at an early spring Chinook, especially given the fact that river flows have remained relatively high for much of the spring season. Fish are likely to move right up into the river systems and not hold over in the estuary or tidewater section of these north coast streams.

Speaking of springers, one was reported caught at the Trask hatchery last week by a bank angler. A liberal season exists on this section of the river, best accessible by bank anglers. A Chinook was also reported from the bay near the Memaloose Boat Ramp but upon netting it, the hen lost its clutch of eggs on the bottom of the boat, clearly indicating that it was not a spring fish. What the heck was that? Reports of a few lost opportunities have come from herring trollers working the lower bay too. Fish too close to the jetty however and you're likely to encounter rockfish or lingcod, which really isn't a bad thing.

Sturgeon are still an option, especially with the good tides we're now experiencing. Reports of keepers were coming from anglers working the middle and lower estuary. Effort has dropped off significantly however, making for additional opportunity for those more interested in a white fleshed fish versus an orange one. Sand shrimp is of course the bait of choice.

Offshore anglers did quite well when conditions allowed last week. More opportunities may happen late this week or through the weekend if you can tolerate a wind-chop. Here is the forecast, copied from the Columbia section:

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The Guide's Forecast – A bit of a “hump” season on the north coast. While we wait for fresh spring Chinook and offshore opportunities, dark steelhead will dominate the catch throughout the system. Of course there are a few fresh summer run fish and a very rare spring Chinook but you'll have to weed through a lot of fish before you find a quality one.

Drift boaters will not have many options in the low flows this week. Only the lower sections will fish and you're likely to find both spent winters and a rare summer steelhead available. There may be another weather coming in on Sunday, which is typically pretty rare this time of year. Don't come to Tillamook County with high expectations but you'll experience solitude if you decide to fish.

You may be so motivated to try sturgeon and salmon fishing in Tillamook Bay. Tides dictate better fishing in the upper bay. Work plugs and spinners on the outgoing tide but you'll have to decide if you want to pursue sturgeon or the rare spring Chinook in the minus tide series. Sturgeon may produce better results than salmon but can you beat an early coastal springer? I don't think so...

Crabbing sucks and clamming will be challenging, at least it was for most of the winter season.

Carter Lake Cleawox Lake, Coffenbury Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County), Munsel Lake, Sunset Lake, Sutton Lake and Vernonia Pond are scheduled for trout planting.

Central & South Coast Reports – Offshore bottom fishing was more challenging off the central Oregon coast mid-week with anglers struggling to fill rockfish limits and taking only a few ling cod. Ocean forecasts indicate a cooperative weekend ahead, however, and prospects are good for bottom-grabbers. For those able to get out during the week, the long-range outlook is even better for offshore launches.

Ocean Chinook season will remain open through September, one of the longest seasons in years. Catches have been fair with periodic flurries of activity for some boats. Nearshore halibut fishing has yielded a few fish out of Newport and Depoe Bay but most fishers are anticipating the all-depth opportunity on May 12th through 14th.

Surf fishing has been good to excellent recently with pinkfin joining striped perch in catches. Fishing is generally best during the last two hours of the incoming tide. Small baits of shrimp, mussel and sand worms are effective but when these fish are present, be prepared to set the hook almost immediately following the cast.

According to the ODFW, anglers are taking striped bass on the Umpqua, Coquille and Smith Rivers. These anglers are not inclined to discuss their success so the best tip we can give is that better results come to those who fish stripers after dark.

Winchester Bay has been fair but spotty for crabbing although the South Jetty remains reliable for rockfish, greenling and the occasional ling. The roller coaster which has been the Umpqua mainstem is not yet at the end of its ride if one believes the forecasts Overall, the water is lower

than it was a week ago when it was considerably lower than the previous week. It's a promising trend. When conditions cooperate with those on a piscatorial pursuit, the Scottsburg and Scotts Creek stretches will yield bright, fresh, spring Chinook. On a lighter note, there are some shad in the river. Up the North Fork Umpqua, while there are a few late winter steelhead around, they are past their pull date but springers are crossing Winchester Dam and numbers are building. The South Umpqua will remain closed to all fishing until May 28th.

Crabbing has been slow in Coos Bay and despite the fact that sturgeon fishing historically improves at this time of year, catches have been slow. Clamming has been good in the bay when tides allow access to clam beds. Shad are expected to start showing in the Coos River any time now.

Spring Chinook fishing has been fair to good on the lower Rogue. Several springers were taken just prior to the last weekend, although catches slowed Saturday and Sunday. Regardless of reports, this is a damned good time to give the lower Rogue a shot for Chinook. Boats using wrapped plugs have been catching springers on the Grants Pass stretch and on the upper Rogue, spring Chinook have already been caught in the shady cove area. A mix of late summers a fresh springers are being taken just below the hatchery.

As predicted, it'll be another ice-fishing weekend at Diamond Lake. Results for anglers drilling to strike fish has been good with mostly limits and a dozen or so reported in the five-pound range so far this season. The daily bag limit is eight trout per day measuring eight inches or greater although only one may be 20 inches or longer. As of this week, the prediction is for ice-out around Memorial Day.

The ODFW and Crater Bass Club are sponsoring a Family Fishing Event on Saturday May 7 from 9 AM to 1 PM at Reinhart Pond. Volunteers will be on hand to help youngsters with tackle and bait available in limited supply for those without.

The ODFW claims the best bet for big trout in the Southwest Zone (other than Diamond Lake, we assume) would include Applegate Reservoir, Saunders Lake and Tenmile lakes.

Scheduled for trout planting this week are Expo Pond, Reinhart Pond, Emigrant Reservoir, Medco Pond, Spaulding Pond, Burma Pond, Dutch Herman Pond, Bradley Lake, Eel Lake, Lower and Middle Empire Lake, Powers Pond, Saunders Lake, Sru Lake, North and South Tenmile Lake, Ben Irving Reservoir, Cooper Creek Reservoir, Galesville Reservoir, Herberts Pond, Lemolo Reservoir, Loon Lake, Plat I Reservoir and Red Top Lake.

Central and Eastern Oregon – The Deschutes water level had dropped but was still cloudy on Wednesday this week. Despite a great deal of insect activity, trout were mostly unresponsive. results should improve as the water clears and warms.

Wickiup trollers have been scoring decent catches of kokanee, some of which have been in the teens, with best results coming mid-day to early afternoon. Experiment with colors and styles to discover the most effective combination as the fishes' preferences can change from one day to the next. The occasional brown trout has been taken by anglers targeting kokoes.

Crescent Lake trollers have been taking a mix of browns and lake trout but be prepared for tumultuous weather. There has been periodic snowfall here as well as periods of calm winds and sunshine.

Kokanee fishing has been slow for the most part at Green Peter but if schools can be located, it's possible to put some in the boat.

Odell has been slow to fair for kokanee with snow falling here at times.

Despite water temperatures in the mid-40s, John Day fishers targeting smallmouth bass are hooking several daily according to **Steve Fleming at Mah-Hah Outfitters (1-888-624-9424)**.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for May 2011

North Puget Sound

The blackmouth salmon season comes to a close at the end of April, but openings for halibut, lingcod and shrimp fisheries are coming up. For freshwater anglers, one of the most anticipated fishing opportunities gets under way at the end of April with the lowland lakes trout season.

Beginning April 30, anglers can cast a line in many of the region's lakes, where thousands of legal-sized **trout** have been planted. "This is the biggest fishing day of the year," said Phil Anderson, director of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Lakes in every county are well-stocked, so fishing families can keep travel costs down by enjoying good angling close to home."

Under statewide rules, anglers have a daily limit of five trout on most lakes. Released legal-sized trout, caught with bait, count toward the daily bag limit. Before heading out, anglers should check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) for all regulations.

Even after the opener, fishing should be good throughout the season as WDFW continues to stock lakes with trout. Information on stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available on [WDFW's website](#).

On saltwater, selective fisheries for hatchery **blackmouth** – resident chinook – are coming to a close. Marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) close at the end of the day April 30. Marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) are already closed to salmon fishing.

The **halibut** season, however, is just around the corner. The fishery is scheduled to run from May 5 through May 29 in marine areas 6-10. 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) but are closed Sunday through Wednesday except for Memorial Day weekend when they will be open Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

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.

Fishing for **lingcod** and **cabezon** also gets under way in May. During the hook-and-line season (May 1-June 15), there's a one-fish daily limit for lings, with a minimum size of 26 inches and a

maximum size of 36 inches. The season for cabezon also opens May 1, when anglers will have a daily limit of two fish with no minimum size limit.

Don't forget those **shrimp** pots. The shrimp season opens May 7 in Puget Sound. In all areas of Puget Sound, fishers are limited to 80 spot shrimp per day. Here are the fishing schedules for the Puget Sound region:

- Hood Canal Shrimp District (Marine Area 12): Open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 7, 11, 14 and 25. Additional dates and times may be announced if sufficient quota remains.
- Discovery Bay Shrimp District (Marine Area 6): Open May 7, 11 and 14 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Additional dates and times will be announced if sufficient quota remains.
- Marine areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5, 6 and 13 (excluding shrimp districts): Open daily beginning May 7 at 7 a.m. The spot shrimp season closes when quota is attained or Sept 15, whichever comes first, except for Marine Area 13, which closes for spot shrimp May 31.
- Marine Area 7: Opens May 7 at 7 a.m. and will be open May 11, 13, 14, 25 and 28. Additional dates and times will be announced if sufficient quota remains. The season for coonstripe and pink shrimp (with area and depth restrictions) runs daily from June 1 through Oct. 15.
- Marine areas 8, 9, and 10: Open May 7 and May 11 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Additional dates and times will be announced if sufficient quota remains.
- Marine Area 11, extending from the northern tip of Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge: Open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 7 only.

More details on the shrimp fishery are available on WDFW's [recreational shrimp fishing website](#).

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

More spring fishing opportunities begin in May, when shrimp and lingcod fisheries open in Puget Sound and the halibut season gets under way there and off the coast. But for freshwater anglers, one of the most anticipated fishing opportunities starts at the end of April with the lowland lakes trout season.

Beginning April 30, anglers can cast a line in many of the region's lakes, where thousands of legal-sized **trout** have been planted. "This is the biggest fishing day of the year," said Phil Anderson, director of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Lakes in every county are well-stocked, so fishing families can keep travel costs down by enjoying good angling close to home."

Under statewide rules, anglers have a daily limit of five trout on most lakes. Released legal-sized trout, caught with bait, count toward the daily bag limit. Before heading out, anglers should check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) for all regulations.

Even after the opener, fishing should be good throughout the season as WDFW continues to stock lakes with trout. Information on stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available on [WDFW's website](#).

Meanwhile, three ocean beaches will open in early May for a razor-clam dig that could be the last dig of the season. Morning digs are set on two beaches – Long Beach and Twin Harbors – for six straight days, May 3-8. Mocrocks Beach, which extends north from the Copalis River to the southern boundary of the Quinault Indian Reservation, will also be open for razor-clam digging May 7-8.

No digging will be allowed on any of those beaches after noon.

Rather catch finfish? **Lingcod** fishing opportunities expand May 1, when the fishery opens in Puget Sound. Lingcod fisheries in marine areas 1 (Ilwaco), 2 (Westport-Ocean Shores), 3 (LaPush) and 4 (Neah Bay) are already under way. For more information on lingcod fishing regulations, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

The **halibut** season also is just around the corner. 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-Vashon) and 13 (South 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.

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- Hood Canal Shrimp District (Marine Area 12): Open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 7, 11, 14 and 25. Additional dates and times may be announced if sufficient quota remains.
- Discovery Bay Shrimp District (Marine Area 6): Open May 7, 11 and 14 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Additional dates and times will be announced if sufficient quota remains.
- Marine areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5, 6 and 13 (excluding shrimp districts): Open daily beginning May 7 at 7 a.m. The spot shrimp season closes when quota is attained or Sept 15, whichever comes first, except for Marine Area 13, which closes for spot shrimp May 31.
- Marine Area 7: Opens May 7 at 7 a.m. and will be open May 11, 13, 14, 25 and 28. Additional dates and times will be announced if sufficient quota remains. The season for

coonstripe and pink shrimp (with area and depth restrictions) runs daily from June 1 through Oct. 15.

- Marine areas 8, 9, and 10: Open May 7 and May 11 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Additional dates and times will be announced if sufficient quota remains.
- Marine Area 11, extending from the northern tip of Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge: Open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 7 only.

"Fishing prospects in many areas are looking even better than last year," said Mark O'Toole, a shellfish biologist for the department, who noted that he expects a strong turnout by shrimp fishers – especially on opening day. "Some of the boat ramps can get pretty crowded, so we encourage fishers to be patient and wait their turn."

That will be especially important at **Twanoh State Park**, a popular access site on Hood Canal where construction work will limit parking facilities for boaters through June. The State Parks and Recreation Commission encourages fishers to use an alternate launch site – especially during the season opener. More details on the shrimp fishery are available on WDFW's [recreational shrimp fishing website](#).

Anglers are reminded that **salmon** fishing in marine areas 11 and 12 closes at the end of the day April 30. In addition, **wild steelhead** retention closes at the same time on the Bogachiel, Calawah, Dickey, Quillayute and Sol Duc rivers.

However, a couple of rivers are open for **salmon** fishing, including the Quillayute and a portion of the Sol Duc. The Hoh River also opens for salmon May 14. For details on those and other fishing opportunities, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

Southwest Washington

Spring chinook and summer steelhead are moving into area rivers in increasing numbers, sturgeon retention is allowed on portions of the Columbia River and several popular trout lakes will open for fishing April 30.

As part of that lineup, anglers can catch and keep hatchery-reared **spring chinook** from May 7 through May 10 on a section of the Columbia River stretching 163.5 miles above Bonneville Dam. But it remains to be seen whether that fishery – or the one that closed April 19 below the dam – will reopen later in the season.

That depends on the in-season update to the run forecast in early to mid-May, said Guy Norman, southwest regional director for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "We're hopeful that the updated forecast will come in at least as strong as the pre-season forecast," Norman said. "That would allow for additional fishing days both above and below Bonneville Dam."

That's because state harvest guidelines below McNary Dam include a 30 percent "buffer" in case returns of upriver spring chinook fall short of the pre-season forecast. If the in-season update equals or exceeds that number, the buffer will be converted into fishing time above and below the dam, Norman said.

"But nothing is certain at this point," he said. "We really won't know where we stand until more fish cross Bonneville Dam and we can get a clear idea of the run-size."

Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist, said poor fishing conditions – specifically high, cold, turbid water – held catch levels below expectations, and also appear to have delayed the movement of spring chinook over Bonneville Dam. Yet, test fisheries using tangle nets found relatively high concentrations of spring chinook in the lower river.

In response, fishery managers from Washington and Oregon extended the season in the lower river by 12 days. By the time fishing closed April 19, anglers had kept or released an estimated 9,379 spring chinook, including 5,669 upriver fish that count toward the 7,700-fish pre-season harvest guideline for upriver fish.

Above Bonneville Dam, the season was extended six days through May 1 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 through May 1 from Bonneville Dam upriver to the powerlines located about 6 miles below The Dalles Dam.

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. All wild chinook and wild steelhead must be released unharmed.

That is also true of **area tributaries**, where the daily limit is two spring chinook, two steelhead, or one of each. The Wind River and Drano Lake are traditional hotspots for spring chinook in May, although anglers should be aware that all sport fishing will be closed at Drano Lake on Wednesdays through June. Other prospects include the White Salmon River as well as the lower Klickitat River, the latter which is open for fishing Mondays, Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Below Bonneville, anglers can find hatchery spring chinook and steelhead in several rivers, including the Cowlitz, Lewis, and Kalama. The Cowlitz River is usually the best bet for spring chinook, and also offers good fishing for winter and summer run steelhead.

Starting May 16, fishing is also scheduled to open for hatchery steelhead – as well as **sockeye** and hatchery chinook jacks – from the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line to the Interstate 5 Bridge. Fishing for **shad** from Bonneville Dam downstream also opens the same day.

Other fishing opportunities in May include:

- **Trout:** Several popular trout-fishing lakes are scheduled to open April 30, including Mineral Lake in Lewis County, Rowland Lake in Klickitat County and Swift Reservoir in Skamania County. All were freshly planted for opening day, and will likely draw a big crowd. Plenty of year-round lakes will also be open for trout, and many are scheduled to be planted with catchable-size fish in May. (See the southwest Washington [Trout Stocking Schedule](#) for details.) Starting May 1, anglers may use two poles on Swift Reservoir from the dam to markers below the Eagle Cliff Bridge. Those looking to catch **kokanee** are advised to try Merwin Reservoir, which has been hot for the landlocked salmon in recent weeks.
- **Warmwater fish:** Fishing for **walleye** tapers off in May when the fish turn their attention to spawn, but **bass** fishing should pick up as water temperatures rise. Bonneville, The Dalles, and John Day pools should be good bets for both species.
- **Sturgeon:** The retention fishery below the Wauna powerlines on the Columbia River closes May 1, but reopens May 14 seven days a week with a one-fish daily limit, fork-length requirement of 41 to 54 inches. The retention fishery above the powerlines is open Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays with a fork-length requirement of 38 to 54 inches. Starting May 1, fishing is prohibited in spawning sanctuaries below Bonneville, John Day, McNary and Priest Rapids dams. See the [Fishing in Washington](#) rules pamphlet for details.

Eastern Washington

The month of May is full of fishing promise throughout the region, with the lowland lakes trout season getting under way April 30 and spring chinook salmon coming into the Snake River.

"Fishing is great all month in all of our open waters," said Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Central District Fish Biologist Chris Donley. "If you can't catch a fish anywhere that is open in the month of May you should take up needlepoint."

Among the region's many lakes that open April 30, Donley says the traditional best bets include Badger, Williams, West Medical, Fish, and Clear lakes in southwest Spokane County and Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County. Anglers usually average about two trout each at all of these waters. Most have **rainbow trout**, but some also have **cutthroat** and **tiger trout**.

Bill Baker, WDFW northeast district fish biologist, said a couple of Stevens County lakes that open in late April are often among the state's top 10 in catch rates. Cedar Lake, near the Canada border, and Rocky Lake, just south of Colville, last year provided limits of five rainbow trout for every angler out on the opener. "The month of May this year could be colder, maybe even snowier, than usual," Baker said. "But the fish are here for anglers willing to brave the weather."

Other good trout fishing in Stevens County can be found at Waitts, Loon, Deep, the Little Pend Oreille chain of lakes, and Potter's Pond. Selective gear fisheries like Bayley, Rocky and Starvation lakes are also good through May.

Pend Oreille County's Big Meadow and Yocum lakes usually provide anglers an average of two to three trout each. Other good producers include Diamond, Frater, North and South Skookum, Marshall and Sacheen lakes.

New this fishing season, and effective May 1, is a ban on the use of lead weights or lead jigs measuring 1 1/2 inches or less along the longest axis at Big Meadow, Yocum and South Skookum lakes where loons are known to breed and rear young. The ban is intended to improve loon survival by keeping the birds from being poisoned by ingesting small lead fishing gear lost by anglers. For more information on this new rule, check [WDFW's website](#).

The lead restriction is also in effect at three other northeast lakes that host nesting loons: Ferry County's Swan and Ferry lakes, and Stevens County's year-round-open Pierre Lake. No fishing flies containing lead are allowed at fly-fishing-only Long Lake, another loon-nesting water in Ferry County.

In the south end of the region, where many lakes and ponds are either open year-round or have been open since the first of March, WDFW hatchery trout stocking continues to keep fishing productive through May. Excessive rain and snow this spring has delayed some fish stocking in some of the Tucannon River impoundments, said WDFW Wooten Wildlife Area Manager Kari Dingman.

"But now all of the lakes have been stocked again and Big Four Lake, our fly-fishing only lake, was finally stocked for the first time this season, now that the river level is back down," Dingman said.

Check the complete [trout stocking plan](#) for details. The latest weekly stocking reports are available [here](#).

The Snake River **spring chinook salmon** fisheries that recently opened in three sections have been slow but should be picking up this month. "I expect that with the late run and fewer fish than last year over McNary Dam by late April, the catch won't pick up until early May," said Glen Mendel, WDFW southeast district fish biologist. "These chinook should be very good quality and there is expected to be a higher proportion of the larger five-year-old fish this year."

WDFW Regional Fish Program Manager John Whalen noted that an update on the run in the first week of May will likely give a better picture of how long the fisheries can continue. "The Snake River chinook fishery is scheduled to go through May 31," Whalen said. "But I suspect we will see a run size downgrade in early May, which could force us to close earlier."

Emergency fishing rule changes are distributed through [self-subscribing e-mail services](#) and posted on [WDFW's website](#).

All salmon and steelhead anglers are reminded to turn in 2010-11 catch record cards as soon as possible, whether or not you harvested anything or even fished at all. The cards help contribute to a data base that supports season setting.

WDFW officials also remind anglers to clean boats thoroughly before transporting them between fishing waters this season. WDFW's eastside Aquatic Invasive Species biologist Mike Wilkinson said that mandatory boat inspections at various water access sites throughout the state begin this month to try to prevent the illegal transport or spread of everything from milfoil to zebra mussels. For more information, see WDFW's [Aquatic Invasive Species website](#).

Northcentral Washington

Although many regional lakes have been open for trout fishing since early March or April, anglers can look forward to more options – and rising catch rates – during the month of May.

In Okanogan County, the traditional king of catch rates at this time is Pearrygin Lake, near Winthrop. Pearrygin usually produces a daily limit of five **rainbow trout** – most 10 to 12 inches, some up to 15 inches, with a few one to pound triploids -- for most anglers early in the season, said Bob Jateff, a district fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Fish Lake, northeast of Conconully, and Alta Lake, southwest of Pateros, are also good producers of rainbow catches through May. Last year, both averaged three trout per angler on the opener. Conconully Reservoir, south of Conconully, and Conconully Lake, east of town, are also good bets, giving up an average of two trout per angler per day.

Other newly opened lakes in Okanogan County that fish well include some with special rules: Big Twin Lake, near Winthrop, is under selective gear rules and a one-fish daily catch limit; Chopaka Lake, near Loomis, is fly-fishing only with no boat motors allowed. Aeneas Lake, near Tonasket, is also fly-fishing only with no boat motors allowed, but has some **brown trout** up to 18 inches.

Blue Lake, located within WDFW's Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, also has some brown trout as well as rainbows, and is under selective gear and electric motors only rules. Blue is also one of three Okanogan County lakes with a new restriction this season to protect loons that breed and rear young there.

Effective May 1, there is a ban on the use of lead weights or lead jigs measuring 1 ½ inches or less along the longest axis at Blue Lake, and on Bonaparte and Lost lakes, northeast of Tonasket, where loons also occur. The restriction is intended to improve loon survival by keeping the birds from being poisoned by ingesting small lead fishing gear lost by anglers. (For more information on this new rule, see [/conservation/loons/.](#))

In Chelan County, top trout producing lakes include Clear Lake, south of Wenatchee, and Wapato Lake, north of Manson. In Douglas County, Jameson Lake, south of Mansfield, usually provides good fishing and is well-stocked. In Grant County, Blue and Park lakes near the town of Soap

Lake, and Warden Lake east of O'Sullivan Dam on Potholes Reservoir are also well-stocked and traditionally fish well through May and beyond.

For the complete trout stocking plan for fishing waters throughout the region, see [/fishing/plants/statewide/](#) . For the latest weekly stocking reports, see [/fishing/plants/weekly/](#).

All salmon and steelhead anglers are reminded to turn in 2010-11 catch record cards as soon as possible, whether or not you harvested anything or even fished at all. The cards help contribute to a data base that supports season setting.

No matter where in the region or what kind of fishing you pursue, WDFW officials are reminding anglers to clean their boats thoroughly before transporting them between fishing waters. WDFW's eastside Aquatic Invasive Species biologist Mike Wilkinson notes that mandatory boat inspections at various water access sites throughout the state begin this month to try to prevent the illegal transport or spread of everything from milfoil to zebra mussels. For more information, see [/ais/](#).

Southcentral Washington

Anglers have from May 7 through May 10 to fish for **spring chinook salmon** in the Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Washington-Oregon border, 17 miles upstream of McNary Dam. Whether that fishery will be extended will largely depend on an in-season run update in early to mid-May, said Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) based in Pasco.

"The run has been slow to move upriver, making fishing tough in this area," Hoffarth said. "But we're still hopeful the pace will pick up in the weeks ahead."

Starting May 1, the Ringold Area bank fishery will open for spring chinook from the markers one-quarter mile downstream from the Ringold wasteway outlet to markers a half-mile upstream from Spring Creek. Only the hatchery side of the river is open to fishing. The daily limit is two hatchery Chinook, measuring at least 12 inches and a night closure is in effect.

Anglers should be aware that two sections of the Yakima River open to fishing for hatchery spring chinook salmon in May.

The Yakima River from the Interstate 182 bridge in Richland (river mile 4.5) to 400 feet downstream of Horn Rapids (Wanawish) Dam (river mile 18.0) will be open from May 7 through June 15. The section of the Yakima from the Interstate 82 bridge at Union Gap (river mile 107.1) to the BNRR bridge approximately 500 feet downstream of Roza Dam (river mile 127.8) will be open from May 14 through June 30.

For details, check the [emergency rule change notice](#).

Meanwhile, crews from WDFW continue to stock lakes with catchable-size and jumbo **trout** throughout the region. In Yakima County, Clear Lake is in line to receive 10,800 catchables in May, Dog Lake 3,500 and Lost Lake 2,000. Dog Lake will also get more than 400 jumbo trout weighing up to 1½ pounds apiece, with another 1,000 jumbos going to Lost Lake in Kittitas County and 500 to Columbia Park Pond, a popular fishing hole in Kennewick reserved for anglers under age 15 and people with disabilities. A complete trout-planting schedule for southcentral lakes and ponds is available on the [WDFW website](#).

On May 7, Columbia Park Pond will host a Kids Fishing Day, limited to 1,200 youths between the ages of 5 and 14. All anglers must register with Kennewick Parks and Recreation before May 5.

Anglers can register online at <http://go2kennewick.com>. Registration is \$10 and includes a rod and reel and everything you need to fish. Lots of volunteers will be on hand to help.

Hoping to catch a legal-size **sturgeon**? John Day Pool (Lake Umatilla) is now catch-and-release only, but Lake Wallula remains open through July for retention of sturgeon measuring 43 inches to 54 inches from snout to fork. Anglers should be aware that sanctuary areas described in the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet are closed to fishing – including catch-and-release – from May 1 through July 31.

For a different experience, try hooking one of the large **catfish** now showing up at the mouths of rivers including the Yakima, Walla Walla, and Palouse. "Bring a good rod and strong line and expect a fight if you hook into one of these monsters," Hoffarth said.

Walleye fishing is also picking up at Scootenev Reservoir, with fair catches reported. **Bass** fishing should also improve as soon as the water warms a bit.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

Subscriber Ralph S wrote to ask, "With Gas promising to hit the 4.00 a gallon mark soon , I think you should write about some of the best places to fish within a 50 mile radius of Portland for salmon steelhead Bass and other warm water fish as a trip to the Coast rivers might just turn into a luxury unless you're driving a car that gets 40 MPG and when Chinook run up the Columbia Do you know which side they tend to run on ? WA. or Oregon?"

TGF co editor and pro guide Bob Rees replied, "On your question, the salmon run up BOTH sides of the river. It really depends on what time of the year however. But even more importantly to a bank angler, how much flow is coming down the river dictates just how close to the river bank a fish travels. Higher flows = closer to the bank. Warmer water = migration in deeper water. Hope this helps and we'll try and put a bit more emphasis on metro centric fisheries to address your concern about fuel prices!

"Thanks for writing and thanks for being a TGF subscriber!"

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Lower Willamette Chart:

<http://www.oceangrafix.com/o.g/Charts/chartViewer.html?viewRegion=Pacific&viewChart=Port-of-Portland-Including-Vancouver-Multnomah->

Umpqua steelheader takes 26-pounder:

<http://www.mailtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20110429/LIFE/104290305/-1/OREGONOUTDOORS>



GOOD LUCK!