

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 27th – June 2nd, 2011**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Although the Columbia remains open for opportunity, passage numbers have plummeted in the recent week. Catch rates downriver indicate low numbers still to come but jack counts seem very strong in creel census data however. An occasional steelhead is showing up for bank anglers between Portland and Longview.

Beginning Friday, fishery managers will extend the deadline from Beacon Rock to Bonneville Dam in a decision on Wednesday. This section of river hasn't been open for years, indicating the level of confidence that fishery managers have that catch rates will remain low enough not to jeopardize impact rates or catch sharing agreements. Fishing will remain challenging in the high flows and use extra caution when anchoring in this area.

A few sturgeon, including oversize, are starting to show in the below Marker 82 fishery. Shad, the primary bait for oversize anglers are starting to trickle over Bonneville Dam so bait collection isn't easy. The oversize fishery should peak in the coming weeks but effort has faded over the years.

Over 14,000 spring chinook have been counted at Willamette Falls along with roughly 5,500 summer steelhead. Water color and temperature are good in the lower river although high spring flows have fish off the bite. Chinook are being taken daily in the Oregon City area but results aren't consistent day to day. With the high flows we're experiencing this year and the fact that only a fraction of the adult salmon have migrated over the falls, fishing should remain good in Oregon City, especially when flows begin to subside.

Expect higher-than normal flows on the McKenzie but trout and steelhead are available to those willing to adapt.

South Santiam plunkers have taken a few spring chinook in high water conditions. Action should build as Willamette Falls passage increases.

Springers are in the lower Clackamas but so are the sea lions. Summer steelhead are scattered.

A few summer steelhead have been taken on the Sandy with the color remaining good. Springer fishing is slow.

Northwest – Spring chinook have shown in strong numbers on Tillamook Bay. It's clearly going to be a good run as Tillamook chinook often mimics the Willamette run. Avid angler Pat Vining of Bay City hooked 18 fish in the last 6 days, landing 13 fish for take-home. Spinners and plugs took the bulk of upper bay fish this week.

Upcoming tides dictate lower bay fishing, using herring along the jetty. The soft tides keep adults from migrating into the upper reaches of Tillamook Bay. Bar crossings would be friendly but ocean forecasts are calling for significant wind chop, likely keeping the offshore fleet inshore.

Halibut fishing would likely be productive but the weather forecast makes it appear as if it wouldn't be fun. To boot, the grade of fish this season has been on the small side. There will be other opportunity into June.

Bay crabbing remains challenging but an overnight soak if the ocean comes down should produce a few quality crab.

Rivers remain low but are forecast to rise this week with the shower activity predicted. Spring chinook and summer steelhead should make their way into the Trask and Wilson Rivers. The Nestucca and Three Rivers should also see a fair bump of salmon this week.

Southwest – All-depth halibut will be open Thursday through Saturday, May 26 through 28 with the next three-day opener starting on June 2nd.

Rough offshore conditions have prevented effort for ocean crab for much of the spring season. Ocean forecasts for the Memorial Day weekend look discouraging.

Crabbing has been fair in Winchester Bay but will slow with the next freshet. Bay chinook fishing is slow. Flows are high but improving on the mainstem Umpqua although another rise is predicted by the weekend. Shad fishing will be good when the water level drops.

Tidewater Coquille anglers are making fair to good catches of striped bass early and late in the day.

Boats launching out of Gold Beach have experienced fair but steady catches of bottom fish and ling cod.

Ocean chinook fishing has been worthwhile but spotty. Lower Rogue springer fishing has been slow with only a few taken daily. Results are slow to spotty for chinook on the middle river. All the action is on the upper Rogue and is likely to remain so. Flows are predicted to be higher and cooler through summer this year, which will require a change of tactics for anglers on the Rogue.

Ocean salmon fishing has been producing fair catches out of the Port of Brookings where the season opened over the past weekend.

Diamond Lake anglers have been able to get out by launching at the north ramp and slogging through slushy snow. Fish are biting light but catches have been fair to good.

Eastern – Salmonflies are hatching on the lower Deschutes below Mecca where the water is high but the color is good. With Golden Stones and Salmonflies hatching in the middle Deschutes, fly fishing has been good.

Crane Prairie has been producing large trout to fly anglers using leach patterns in the Rock Creek area.

Davis Lake has slowed for bass fishing although trout catches are good.

SW Washington – The Cowlitz remains the bright spot in the district with spring chinook and an occasional steelhead being taken in the upper reaches. Like the mainstem Columbia, jacks counts remain high indicating better years ahead.

The Kalama and Lewis are not drawing a lot of interest from anglers. Hatchery returns have been much lower than expected but with high flows, the run may be late, such is the case on the Columbia. Summer steelhead should begin to make a stronger showing.

Drano Lake and Wind River fisheries are waning, with the adult salmon counts at Bonneville Dam. Fishing in the upper reaches has been good for bank anglers.

Numerous regulation changes happen in this district in early June. Be sure to check regulations before heading out.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Despite the good opportunity for salmon and steelhead on the lower Columbia, catch rates remain low for all species. High flows have impeded passage and challenged anglers in finding feeding fish. Bank anglers should be the advantaged group but even they are not scoring fish in big numbers.

Here is the creel report from ODF&W over the weekend:

Gorge Bank:

Weekend checking showed no catch for six bank anglers.

Gorge Boats (below Beacon Rock boundary):

Weekend checking showed no catch for one boat (four anglers).

Troutdale Boats:

Weekend checking showed one adipose fin-clipped spring chinook adult and four adipose fin-clipped spring chinook jacks kept for 21 boats (49 anglers).

Portland to Longview Bank:

Weekend checking showed 10 adipose fin-clipped spring chinook adults, nine adipose fin-clipped spring chinook jacks, and six adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus two unclipped spring chinook adults released for 173 bank anglers.

Portland to Longview Boats:

Weekend checking showed one adipose fin-clipped spring chinook adult, and three adipose fin-clipped spring chinook jacks kept, plus one unclipped spring chinook jack released for six boats (18 anglers).

Estuary Bank (Jones Beach to Tongue Point):

Weekend checking showed two adipose fin-clipped spring chinook adults, 10 adipose fin-clipped spring chinook jacks, and three adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus two unclipped steelhead released for 90 bank anglers.

Estuary Boats (Puget Island to Tongue Point):

Weekend checking showed four adipose fin-clipped spring chinook adults, 15 adipose fin-clipped spring chinook jacks, and five adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus two unclipped steelhead released for 11 boats (27 anglers).

Fishery managers met on Wednesday to discuss additional opportunities for sportanglers below Bonneville Dam. Washington and Oregon decided anglers could return to the old deadline at Bonneville Dam when targeting salmon. Although flows and temperatures are likely to curb success, the additional opportunity may pay off when flows subside. Managers also gave some additional sport days above Bonneville. Here is the official press release:

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

May 25, 2011

Managers re-open parts of Columbia River to salmon fishing

CLACKAMAS, Ore. – In a fishing season plagued by high flows and cold water temperatures, Columbia River fishery managers today announced a fourth continuation of the popular spring chinook fishery.

Below Bonneville Dam, the river from the Beacon Rock line upstream to the fishing deadline at Bonneville Dam will open to boat fishing on Friday, May 27 through Wednesday, June 15, 2011. Previously, this area has been open to bank fishing only.

Above Bonneville Dam, the river between Bonneville Dam and the Oregon/Washington border will be open from Saturday, May 28 through Thursday, June 2, 2011.

According to Chris Kern, assistant manager of ODFW's Columbia River Fisheries program, managers estimate there are 2,700 upriver spring chinook remaining in the lower river recreational harvest quota.

Due to poor fishing conditions in the lower river, managers don't expect the entire harvest quota to be met, Kern said. Therefore, they have assigned some of the available fish to the fisheries above Bonneville, where anglers have already exceeded the original quota for those areas.

Anglers above and below Bonneville will be allowed to retain sockeye, adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon and adipose fin-clipped steelhead. The daily bag limit is two adult salmon or steelhead in combination, and an additional five fin-clipped jack chinook. Downstream of Bonneville Dam, the daily bag limit can only include one adult chinook. Sockeye salmon count towards the adult limit regardless of size.

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With spring chinook and summer steelhead action on the downturn, some anglers are hopeful that the sturgeon fishing will pick up the slack. Well, creel data is once again not showing what anglers are holding out hope for.

Here is the creel report for sturgeon on the lower Columbia River:

Gorge Bank (below Marker 82):

No report.

Gorge Boats (below Marker 82):

Weekend checking showed one legal, three oversize and 26 sublegal sturgeon released for eight boats (29 anglers).

Troutdale Boats:

Weekend checking showed one legal white sturgeon kept, plus four sublegal sturgeon released for two boats (six anglers).

Portland to Longview Bank:

Weekend checking showed two sublegal sturgeon released for three bank anglers.

Portland to Longview Boats:

No report.

Estuary Boats (Puget Island to Tongue Point):

Weekend checking showed six legal white sturgeon kept, plus 20 sublegal and two green sturgeon released for 20 boats (63 anglers).

As you can see, action isn't great anywhere in the river but for estuary anglers, it will likely continue to be exceptionally challenging. One of the reasons for this is with the high flows we're currently experiencing, the incoming tide is muted by the strong spring flow. This creates a lake-like setting where no flow occurs and sturgeon will be off the feed. Flows are expected to remain high for several more weeks.

Gorge and Troutdale anglers will also find non-traditional flows, causing sturgeon to utilize other areas of the Columbia. Some of the more productive areas in these high flows are currently closed to all sturgeon fishing.

With the huge influx of freshwater in the lower river estuary, not much interest is taking place for crab in the lower estuary. Although prospects may be good this week from a tide point of view, the action shouldn't.

Halibut and bottomfishing out of Astoria has been challenging as well. The numbers have been fair but poor weather conditions have kept most motivated anglers from participating in the fishery.

The Guide's Forecast – There's not much good to say about any of the fisheries in or near the Columbia River this week. Maybe one of the best prospects is the 6-day opportunity for springer fishers above Bonneville Dam. With the bulk of the run in the upper reaches and flows a bit more controlled, action in this 6 day window is expected to be good.

Although some anglers have this fishery wired already, select areas will produce better than others. Anglers working faster flows near the dam seem to produce the best results. Plugs and backbounced bait will work fine. Spinners plunked behind boats will also take fish in these upper reaches.

Spring chinook and steelhead fishing below Bonneville Dam will remain challenging until flows drop, and that's not in the near term forecast. If you do choose to pursue however, keep fishing near the shore's edge where fish are more likely to migrate to keep from burning up all their calories. Plugs and spin-n-glos will work the best. Scent heavily.

Sturgeon fishing should remain challenging, although estuary anglers may actually be blessed with weak incoming tides this weekend. Strong upriver flows may negate the weak incoming tide, allowing fair flow for a good part of the day. Catches will likely remain low however as cold water temperatures will keep fish from actively feeding heavily.

Crabbing success will likely be low in the coming weeks and offshore forecasts don't look too bad although the swell could come down a bit:

Fri...SW wind 10 to 15 kt with gusts to 20 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 8 ft. Showers likely and slight chance of tsrms.

Fri Night...SW wind 10 to 15 kt...becoming W 5 to 10 kt after midnight. Wind waves 2 ft. W

swell 8 ft. Showers likely.

Sat...SW wind 5 to 10 kt. Gusts up to 15 kt in the afternoon. Wind waves 1 foot. W swell 9 ft. Showers likely.

Sat Night...NW wind 10 kt with gusts to 15 kt...becoming 5 to 10 kt after midnight. Wind waves 1 foot. W swell 8 ft. Chance of showers.

Sun...W wind 5 to 10 kt. Wind waves 1 foot. W swell 8 ft.

Mon...SW wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 5 ft.

Bottomfish and halibut should be willing in the softer tides we're going to see in the upcoming series. This puts clamming off the table.

Here is a courtesy reminder of the seasons adopted out of the mouth of the Columbia:

Columbia River fishery, from Leadbetter Point, Wash., to Cape Falcon, Ore.: The spring season opened May 5 and will continue three days per week, Thursday-Saturday, until the 10,793-pound quota is met or July 16, whichever occurs first. The summer fishery opens Aug. 5, three days per week, Friday-Sunday, until Sept. 30 or the spring and summer combined quota of 15,418 pounds is met.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – With spring Chinook run counts at Willamette Falls over 17,000 and summer steelhead numbers pushing 6,500, upriver anglers have reason for optimism. Water clarity is good at the Falls but this does not take into account the significant effect of Columbia backup which is not only causing higher levels but is lowering water temperatures in the lower Willamette.

NOTE: Gilbert River boat ramp is closed due to high water. This means the access road is flooded - don't try it!

The McKenzie has been on the rise this week and levels are likely to be coming up gradually through the holiday weekend.

North Santiam River levels have finally started to moderate. The flow is still a little high and swift but any improvement is welcome. Unfortunately, south Santiam levels have been rising this week, a trend which is forecast to continue through the coming weekend. Still, spring Chinook have been taken this week around Waterloo.

Scheduled for trout planting this week are Harriet Lake, Henry Hagg Lake, Sheridan Pond, Shorty's Pond, Silver Creek Reservoir, Timothy Meadows, Trillium Lake, West Salish Pond, Yamhill River (opens Saturday, May 28th), Blue River above Reservoir and Blue River Reservoir.

The Guide's Forecast – Chinook fishing is expected to be fair to good on the lower Willamette and in Multnomah Channel for the coming weekend. That said, the lower river is also expected to be jammed with boats below Sellwood Bridge. Success rate of boats has been about 25% and that should hold up for the coming week. Anticipate little flow with the Columbia backup only getting worse. Trolled herring and wrapped plugs (where current can be located) have taken fish this week. A few shad are being caught at Oregon City with this fishery heating up in June. Spring Chinook are being taken above the Falls by plunkers using spinners but this fishery will be over as soon as the algae growth starts. Then again, the green stuff only grows when the sun

shines and the water warms; who knows when that'll happen this year? Upriver plunkers are getting a little action as well.

With decent passage at Willamette Falls, there are fishable numbers of summer steelhead in the McKenzie. Finesse is required to hook them in the cold water and landing a fish in the high, swift water is challenging. Springers are in the lower river but very few are being hooked.

The majority of the fish crossing Willamette Falls by the hundreds every day are bound for the Santiam system. While the South will be a tough nut over the holiday weekend, the North Santiam will be gradually improving. Prospects will continue to improve into June.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Clackamas water levels remain fairly high but the color is good. Spring Chinook catches are expected to improve with a rise in water temperatures of only a couple of degrees.

Dropping for the past 1- days, conditions at the Sandy River have continued to improve. While the water is showing a little color, it has remained in good shape for fishing.

The Guide's Forecast – With showers forecast through the weekend and snowmelt ongoing, the water level will continue to rise on the Clackamas through the three-day weekend. Spring Chinook should be nosing into Eagle Creek about now.

Spring Chinook and summer steelhead fishing have been worthwhile on the Sandy. It remains a good bet for the Memorial Weekend but is expected to get a little crowded at times.

North Coast Fishing Report – Spring chinook have arrived in Tillamook Bay and in numbers I haven't seen before. Many anglers are calling it a good run this year and conditions are shaping up for a good week in the estuary.

Just coming off a minus tide last week produced good catches of chinook in the upper bay. Plug dunkers did well as well as spinner trollers. Herring took some fish as well. On Saturday, an epic bite took place near the Ray's Place Piling with several boats taking several fish. We only latched onto one fish however and it busted us off. After re-rigging all the rods with new leaders and scrubbing the rod handles down, we went out on Sunday taking 3 fish for 6 rods but far fewer fish were taken this day. We took our first fish just downstream from the mouth of the Wilson on a K-15 pearl pink Kwikfish and the next 2 springers on Fatal Flash blades (one brass/red-tip, the other chartreuse/green dot).

Decent fishing was had for much of the early part of the week in the upper bay. Tides switched over by mid-week however with herring trolling the favorite method on the softer outgoing tide. Although the bite was less than impressive on Wednesday, it will surely pick up throughout this tide series.

Some sturgeon remain in the bay but effort has switched over to take advantage of the good salmon fishing. One angler reported landing an oversize on Sunday and having one other chance in the south channel. He was using sand shrimp for bait.

River fishers have been waiting for their rain freshet as low clear water has kept any motivated salmon and steelhead in the lower reaches of their respective watersheds. It obviously also makes for challenging conditions to fish in. That could change this week however, if the hydrograph forecast actually comes to fruition. Fish are ready to go, just waiting for the

opportunity.

Alder Lake, Big Creek Reservoir 1 & 2, Buck Lake, Cleawox Lake, Dune Lake, Erhart Lake, Georgia Lake, North Gerogia Lake, Perkins Lake and Thissel Pond are scheduled for trout stocking.

The Guide's Forecast – Barring any river blow-outs that will send hordes of spring chinook up the rivers (Trask and Wilson), this tide series has become one of my favorites to fish in. The weak tides should produce good catches of springers along the jetty for anglers using herring for bait. The outgoing will produce the best results, likely from about half way through until about an hour from low slack. This will be the best springer fishing of the season.

Although the ocean out of Garibaldi may be a fair option, inside the jetty, on the north side, will produce the most fish, as well as the most effort. Keep those baits close to the bottom and don't be afraid to run the green label herring as blue labels are in short supply.

Although spinners were working fair in the upper bay, it will be a herring show in the lower reaches. Anglers should find success in the lower bay around the Ghost Hole and Bay City Piling too. High slack and late in the outgoing tide will produce a few fish.

It won't take much of a bump in river levels to get good numbers of fish to run up the river. The Wilson is forecast to bump about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a foot before the weekend and although that won't do much to improve water conditions, it should bring good numbers of fish into the systems. If the Wilson gets into the upper 4-foot range, fishing will be good on both the Wilson and Trask Rivers. Plugs and eggs will take good numbers of fish. Salmon will be available on the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca and Three Rivers while steelhead will be available on the same systems but with far fewer on the Trask as that will only get an occasional stray summer run.

Check your local listings for the upcoming river trout openers on the north coast. This fishery is rebounding with some good prospects in the district.

Sturgeon action is on the way out and the weak tides won't help the effort. If you do try, stick to the west channel and fish the deeper water to keep in the flow. Crabs may become a bit more of an issue if you fish too low in the channel however.

The second all-depth halibut season should produce good catches this weekend. Soft tides should make for easy bar crossings. Couple that with fairly mild seas and the action should be fair. Bottomfishing should also be good but be mindful of the regulations when targeting halibut and rockfish. They have changed throughout the years.

Offshore crabbing may be fair at best with an overnight soak likely to take the most keeper males. Some crab are entering the softshell stage however. Nearshore halibut fishing between Nehalem Bay and Tillamook Bay may produce some fair-at-best fishing. Drag herring on the bottom, you may catch a chinook doing this too. If you do catch a chinook, you have to pay attention to where you caught it as the terminal area, also known as the bubble requires your chinook to be fin-clipped.

Central & South Coast Reports – All-depth halibut is open this week from Today, May 26th through Saturday, May 28th. Halibut fishing is open inside the 40-fathom line seven days a week and has been produced decent catches this year although larger fish lurk in deeper water.

When offshore conditions have allowed boats to make ocean salmon trips, fishing has been fair for some, good for others with very few boats taking limits. Rockfishing has been good out of every port while ling cod catches have been slow to fair with windy days particularly difficult. Ocean crabbing has been slow off the central coast.

Boats launching out of Reedsport for ocean Chinook have experienced spotty success, the kind that reads "good at times" in some reports. With all the water flushing out of the mainstem Umpqua, crabbing in Winchester Bay has been slow. Rockfish and greenling are being caught from the South Jetty. Pinkfin surf perch have started entering the lower Umpqua and limits will be the rule very shortly although the nearby surf will also be productive and the latter will yield good catches of only male perch rather than the preggers females running into the bay. Sturgeon fishing has improved and a few striped bass are being caught. Spring Chinook fishing has been fair to good on the mainstem Umpqua below Elkton and at Cleveland Rapids. Shad are in the river but catches won't be decent until the water level comes down. Anglers on the North Umpqua are catching spring Chinook in fair number. The South Umpqua will open for fishing with the trout opener on May 28th. Fishing for smallmouth bass should be worthwhile.

Crabbing has been slow in the lower Coquille. Shad have yet to appear in fishable number.

Coos Bay is producing a few keeper crabs but it is slow and catches are far short of limits. Area beaches have been improving for surf perch with reports of a couple of surf fishers hooking striped bass.

Water is rising on the lower Rogue and is forecast to continue to do so through the weekend. Fishing has been poor and in these conditions, won't improve. The middle Rogue rose rapidly on May 25th. Mid-day May 26th, flows at Grants Pass were 5,500 cfs which is about 2,000 cfs above average for this time of year. It looks like this: http://web.thedailycourier.com/web_cam/. These are challenging conditions but boaters using wrapped Kwikfish have been taking springers below Grants Pass. The upper Rogue has been most productive now that good numbers of spring Chinook have made their way upstream.

Boaters did fairly well out of the Port of Brookings on the May 14th ocean Chinook opener for the water south of Humbug Mountain. Early season catches were better than expected with most of the fish in the teens and the occasional 20-pounder. Chinook are within a few miles of port due to a nearshore concentration of baitfish.

Recreational ocean Chinook trollers might take a tip from the commercial fishers who report taking all their fish

between 24 and 60 feet. Most bottom fishers are taking limits of rockfish, a few ling cod and some large ocean Dungeness. Offshore effort would be greater if not for persistent rough ocean conditions and troublesome blustery wind.

The Chetco River and most other south coast rivers and streams open for trout on Saturday, May 28th.

Diamond Lake is a 'go' for the Memorial Weekend. As of Thursday, May 26th, it is 75% ice-free and thawing. While the water temperature is cold, trout are biting, albeit lightly.

Willow Lake, Applegate Reservoir, Lost Creek Reservoir, Lake Selmac, Reinhart Pond, Spaulding Pond and the Rogue above Lost Creek are scheduled for trout stocking.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Deschutes anglers, pack your bags. Big bugs are out in force and redsides are keyed on them. The lower river from Mack's Canyon to Warm Springs is offering prime fishing now with the hatch in full force. The water level is still high but it isn't hampering results. Hatches are thick on the middle Deschutes as well with the usual suspects evident: Golden Stones, Salmonflies and Caddis.

Crane Prairie has been productive for the eponymous resident trout (that's Cranebows for those recently located to Oregon).

Lava Lake head been fishing very well for large trout. While the area is reported as mostly clear of snow, road reports are mixed, Check with OGOT before making this journey.

Results for trout are better than those for largemouth at Davis Lake.

Kokanee results have been slow at Green Peter, fair for trout. Try flat-lining as the fish are holding shallow.

Fishing has been fair for kokanee at Wickiup but there has been a quite a bit of pressure even on weekdays.

Wallowa Lake kokanee fishing has been decent and is improving with fish running predictably larger than anywhere else.

The Imnaha and Wallowa rivers in northeast Oregon will open to spring Chinook fishing on Saturday, May 28th. The Imnaha River will be open from the mouth upstream 45 miles to Summit Creek Bridge. The Wallowa River will be open from the deadline at the lower end of Minam State Park upstream to the mouth of the Lostine River. Also opening on that date is Lookingglass Creek, a tributary to the Grande Ronde River. While not a well-known fishing spot, it is significant because it hasn't been opened for Chinook in 10 years. Fishing will be allowed from the Moses Creek Lane Bridge (County Road 42) upstream to the junction with Jarboe Creek. Two adipose fin-clipped Chinook adults and five adipose fin-clipped jacks a day from any of these fisheries.

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."

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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.

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.

"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 release 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 later 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 ½ 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 <http://wdfw.wa.gov/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 waste-way 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

Write to the TGF staff:

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Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Snow Water Equivalent Update Graph:

<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/cgibin/snowup-graph.pl?state=OR>

Highest releases in 12 years will make Rogue River much faster this summer:

<http://www.mailtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20110523/NEWS/105230332>

Police bust illegal clammers at Netarts Bay:

<http://www.kqw.com/lifestyle/grants-getaways/Clam-Violations-at-Netarts-Bay--122478764.html>

GOOD LUCK!