

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **June 24th – June 30th, 2011**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Salmon counts at Bonneville remain strong with the official start of the summer chinook run beginning June 16th. The spring run met preseason predictions. Jack counts continue to wow biologists but in recent years, have proven to be a volatile factor when predicting next years returning adults. River levels remain high, hampering angling success in the Bonneville region.

Bonneville area sturgeon anglers continue to target oversize fish. Although the bulk of the spawning population now resides above the Marker 82 deadline, oversize sturgeon can be found downstream and will fall to fresh caught shad for bait. Shad numbers are on the increase with an average of 3 shad per rod as tallied by WDF&W creel checkers.

About 30,000 springers and over 13,000 steelhead have been counted at the Falls. The Willamette River remains most productive in the Multnomah Channel and to a lesser degree in the Portland Harbor. Trollers working the channel are likely also intercepting Columbia River bound chinook. Trolled herring are working best but spinner action should begin to pick up. The Oregon City area is slow for chinook and fair to good for shad. It's not uncommon to intercept chinook while shad fishing in the Oregon City area right now so beef up your leaders.

Steelhead are being taken on the middle and Coast Fork of the Willamette River.

The McKenzie is in great shape now and fishing well. Redsidies and cutthroat are responding to nymphs as well as dries with evening results best.

Santiam levels remain higher than average for this time of year but increasing numbers of hatchery summer steelhead are available.

Fishing has been slow on the Clackamas but spring chinook and summer steelhead are present.

Fishing on the Sandy is slow to spotty although there has been some chinook action at the mouth. The Sandy River will be closed periodically at I-84 for bridge demolition on Friday, June 24th. Cedar Creek may be the best option for summer steelhead but action has been slow as of late.

Northwest – Sturgeon fishing is slowly starting to improve on the lower Columbia River. Although the fishery was slated to close after Sunday, fishery managers agreed to prosecute the sturgeon opportunity wide open with a 7-day per week fishery effectively immediately. The proposed closure date is now July 31st. Sand shrimp is the best bait as high Columbia River flow is keeping anchovies in the ocean. Keepers are beginning to show downstream of the Astoria Bridge.

The select only chinook fishery outside of the mouth of the Columbia River is producing fair results. A high number of undersize chinook and even coho are in the catch and anglers are being cited for illegal catches. Study regulations before going out but limits will not be easy.

On the lower Columbia, chinook are plentiful in the river and often outnumber summer steelhead in the creel checks. Anglers are taking both wild and hatchery salmon on spin-n-glos but plugs are more effective for chinook. Summer steelhead action should heat up in the coming weeks.

After a productive season, spring chinook fishing on Tillamook Bay has slowed. Straggler fish should still be available this week but most fish have moved into tidewater and the upper reaches of the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca River. Low water conditions will make catching them challenging. Light leaders and small baits may take a few at first light.

Southwest – Results have been good for boats launching out of central Oregon ports for rockfish and most are scoring limits of decent-sized lingcod. Wind, wave and swell predictions are mild for the coming weekend.

With 27% of the all-depth halibut quota remaining after the June 9th through 11th fishery, anglers are ensured of a deep-water halibut opener June 23rd through 25th. Over 40% of the nearshore quota remains available and this fishery is open seven days a week.

Shad fishing on the mainstem Umpqua has improved with water levels dropping. Spring chinook catches are fair to good on the North Umpqua. South Umpqua smallmouth bass results will improve as water warms.

Boats launching out of Gold Beach are making excellent catches of rockfish and scoring a few lingcod. Offshore salmon fishing has been good at times with most fish in the 15-pound range although the occasional 30 and one over 40 pounds has been landed over the past week. High winds are a possibility for weekend offshore anglers, check conditions before launching.

The public pier in Brookings Harbor is producing perch, rockfish and Dungeness crabs. Sea-run cutthroat trout fishing remains good in the Chetco River.

With the return of gnats (midges) to Diamond Lake, fishing has slowed as trout are stuffed with natural insect feed. Power Bait is most effective. Bring insect repellent to ward off bugs.

Eastern – Although Stonefly and Salmonfly hatches are about done on the lower Deschutes, trout remain keyed on those patterns. Fishing has also been good on the middle Deschutes.

With good water level and flow and insects hatching, fishing has been good on the Crooked River.

Bass and trout fishing has improved at Crane Prairie despite cool water temperatures.

Kokanee fishing is fair to good at Paulina. Snow has the campground closed.

SW Washington – Spring chinook opportunities continue to remain limited for district anglers. With the Lewis and Kalama Rivers closed to chinook, the focus is turning to steelhead. Steelhead returns overall have been lagging, with the likely culprit the high flows of the spring season. The Lewis, Kalama and Washougal are all fair prospects for summer run steelhead for the next several weeks.

Beach plunkers working the lower Columbia downstream of Kelso are getting more chinook than steelhead, which is unusual for this time of year. That is likely to remain the same for another few weeks until water temperatures begin to rise.

Upriver, the Klickitat River may be a fair prospect for spring chinook adults and jacks with steelhead soon to follow.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Sturgeon is king of the Columbia now although other opportunities exist that we typically don't see this time of year.

Starting with sturgeon, although catch rates have been low and certainly the effort has, persistent anglers have been able to get in touch with some quality keepers as of late. Effort and success has finally expanded with some fair opportunity downstream of the Astoria/Megler Bridge. Stink-house Flats (the mouth of Young's Bay) has been putting out some fish and one charter boat reported success at Proper Bar out of Hammond recently. Although many would say the action remains spotty, fresh fish do seem to be moving into the system. There was even a brief period when the Illwaco Charter Fleet was working the really deep water out of Chinook recently, taking good numbers of fish close to low slack. The downtown Astoria fishery had some moments of glory as well.

One thing remains more consistent this year than ever before in this fishery; sand shrimp are responsible for the majority of keepers and shakers this season. With all the fresh water in the river, anchovies remain "out to lunch" in the ocean. Some guides however, are claiming that nearly half of their catch is coming from anchovies. This is a rare circumstance however.

I've remained in the upper river, upriver from Tongue Point for the most part but did take a keeper off of Taylor Sands just north of the East End Mooring Basin. Taylor Sands however, has not been a success story this season.

Marker 3 and vicinity is drawing a lot of attention lately but on Wednesday, action was quiet for much of the morning as a light outgoing and strong incoming numbed flow for a good part of the day. Lack of water velocity keeps fish from actively feeding and the ones that do decide to take a bait are rather lackadaisical in their effort. In other words, they don't bite very aggressively and we miss a lot of bites.

Fishery managers met today to discuss additional fishery options as we're not close to reaching the quota for the season. It was decided that the fishery will not close as scheduled on Sunday the 26th but remain open through July 31st barring any significant increase in catch rates, jeopardizing the quota guidelines.

Salmon fishing on the other hand is pretty good right now. Anglers working the lower river stand as good a chance, if not better, of hooking into a salmon than a steelhead, and we should be entering peak season for steelhead right now. As could be expected, the steelhead migration is looking a little late with all the high, cold water coming down the river this season. As a general rule, local area "big river steelheaders" wait for counts topping 200 steelhead per day over Bonneville before venturing out. We haven't achieved those numbers yet but should any day now.

Creel checks from the week below Bonneville are as follows:

Gorge Bank:

Weekend checking showed no catch for two salmon anglers; and 245 shad kept for 97 shad anglers.

Gorge Boats:

Weekend checking showed three adipose fin-clipped summer chinook kept, plus one unclipped summer chinook released for four salmon boats (12 anglers); and 195 shad kept for 12 shad boats (33 anglers).

Troutdale Boats:

Weekend checking showed one unclipped summer chinook released for eight salmon boats (15 anglers); and no catch for one shad boat (four anglers).

Portland to Longview Bank:

Weekend checking showed 17 adipose fin-clipped summer chinook adults, two adipose fin-clipped summer chinook jacks, two sockeye, and six adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus seven unclipped summer chinook adults, one unclipped summer chinook jack, one unclipped steelhead and one sockeye released for 192 bank anglers.

Portland to Longview Boats:

Weekend checking showed 10 adipose fin-clipped summer chinook adults, seven adipose fin-clipped summer chinook jacks, and one adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus five unclipped summer chinook adults and two unclipped summer chinook jacks kept for 42 boats (110 anglers).

Estuary Bank (Jones Beach to Tongue Point):

Weekend checking showed eight adipose fin-clipped summer chinook adults, 10 adipose fin-clipped summer chinook jacks, three sockeye and 10 adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept for 64 bank anglers.

Estuary Boats (Puget Island to Tongue Point):

Weekend checking showed 11 adipose fin-clipped summer chinook adults, six adipose fin-clipped summer chinook jacks, three sockeye, and five adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus five unclipped summer chinook adults, one unclipped summer chinook jack and one sockeye released for 40 boats (104 anglers).

Currently, weak tides on the lower Columbia will likely curb angler success rates. Even though we will still have strong current coming from all the snowmelt currently underway, the weak tides do play a role in angler success from both the beach and boat fisheries.

We targeted salmon and steelhead on a recent few trips last week, getting action each time we tried but last Thursday was the best with about 8 opportunities for a 3-hour stint just upstream of Tongue Point. All the action was salmon, even though we had gear targeting steelhead. Plugs, plain spin-n-glos and spin-n-glos tipped with sand shrimp all drew strikes. We landed just 3 salmon, 1 adult (wild) and 2 jacks (hatchery) for 7 rods. The salmon bit on both K-11 Xtremes and K-14 Xtremes. None of the plugs were wrapped with sardines but I did hear anglers using sardine wrapped plugs fared well that same day. It's been an unprecedented year for opportunity on salmon, especially in the late spring.

Offshore, a select Chinook fishery is currently underway and those making it out to test the waters are coming back reporting fair results. One of the first years this opportunity existed, the action for adult Chinook was pretty good. We haven't had a season like that one for some time and we don't get the opportunity every year. This year, anglers are reporting a high incidence of jack Chinook offshore, which must be released if they are under 24 inches. Reports of coho to the north are coming in as well with some anglers mis-identifying and illegally retaining these fish. You will be cited if you are caught so know your salmon, the burden of knowledge is your responsibility.

For the Columbia River ocean fishery for June 18th and 19th fishing days, 31 angler trips yielded 25 kept Chinook, 10 illegal retained coho and 5 coho and 78 Chinook released. Sounds like a lot of action for a decent kept catch out there. The average was over a fish per rod but that included illegally retained coho. Reports were hit and miss with an occasional boat taking a limit of clipped fish. It wasn't easy however and most boats did report coho in the mix. The best action seemed to take place south of the CR Buoy but some boats did score fish to the north of Buoy 1.

Crabbing reports are next to non-existent. With big tides and unpredictable seas, effort has been low. A heavy commercial haul and the onset of the softshell season has people concentrating their efforts elsewhere. Razor clam digging was good on the last tide series however. The next one is closer to the holiday weekend.

The Guide's Forecast – A focus on the lower Columbia will remain, you just have to choose what specie you want to pursue. Sturgeon will likely offer some of the greatest opportunities in the coming week and given the current river conditions, it's rather surprising that the catch is as good as it is. Anglers will be anxious however for a better set of tides as two incoming tides will hit estuary anglers over the course of the weekend. In other words, anglers may experience a lot of down time with little or no river current in the lower reaches.

Fish are present however, you just have to choose wisely where to target them. Anglers will want to fish the deeper water where flows are likely to maintain some interested fish. Just like salmon and steelhead, sturgeon bite better and in fact, are more likely to bite at all, when flows are moving instead of slack. You'll want to make the most of this brief period as it will be the most productive time of the tide. Use shrimp for bait, it's been the best bait by far for the entire season. You just have to be sure to switch out your bait if you get hit by a sturgeon and don't hook up. If the good yellow goo is not present in the shrimp, you won't get bit so prepare to change your baits often, especially if you fish sculpin laden waters. Sculpin won't be much of a problem above the Astoria Bridge however.

The lower estuary (below the bridge) does have keepers present, you may just have to bounce around to find them. Anchovies may have a bit more application here but shrimp will remain the top choice for keepers. Don't be afraid to get up in shallow water (less than 4 feet) if you're getting crabbed or sculpined to death.

If you are going to fish the more popular area above Tongue Point, keep your baits fishing in the flow for as long as you can. Fish have started to move into shallower water here too. You still may have to bounce around to find fish however. The Tongue Point Hole dried up recently. There will still be a strong contingency of boats fishing it however, just bring lots of bait because there are bait stealers in this deep abyss.

Salmon anglers won't have great opportunity as tides are weak. The stronger the tide, the closer to the beach the salmon and steelhead will travel. They could be anywhere in these softer flows. Anglers may ask, "why not troll for them". It's not a bad idea, especially with a larger than average return happening this year but it's still a fraction of the fall run, a run we know we have a good chance at taking advantage of with the much higher returning adult numbers. If you're bored, try dragging a spinner or herring in the shipping channel upstream of Tongue Point. You may get lucky but stay out of the way of the ship traffic.

Beach anglers, don't get too excited about your prospects. You certainly do have a fair opportunity, especially upstream, where incoming tide is likely to have less of an impact in these higher flows. The steelhead run should begin to ramp up after this week.

Offshore anglers will likely continue to get undersize Chinook mixed in with coho and a more rare fin-clipped Chinook. The 7-day per week fishery opens on the 26th for all salmon off of the mouth of the Columbia. See for yourself here:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/salmon/Regulations/docs/2011_Ocean_Sport_Season_Regulation_Summary.pdf

Bar crossings should be tolerable given the weak tides. Here is the ocean forecast into early next week:

FRI NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. SW SWELL 5 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF RAIN OR DRIZZLE IN THE MORNING. SLIGHT CHANCE OF SHOWERS IN THE AFTERNOON.

FRI NIGHT N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. SW SWELL 5 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

SAT N WIND 10 KT WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FOOT. SW SWELL 5 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

SAT NIGHT N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. SW SWELL 4 FT. SLIGHT CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

SUN NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. SW SWELL 5 FT. **MON** N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. SW SWELL 5 FT.

The CR Buoy is always a safe bet but don't overlook to the north of the Columbia River entrance. You stand a higher chance for a Chinook to the north, especially working the shallower 100 to 150 foot lines close to the bottom. It sounds like the coho are pretty nice right now however.

Ocean crabbing should be better than river crabbing with all the fresh water in the system. Plan on softshell crab however.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – With tens of thousands of more spring Chinook due over Willamette Falls, anglers are wondering by now if the run is going to come through as predicted. If the run does come in, there are close to another 70,000 adults yet to come.

Fishing at Oregon City is oddly challenging as fish should be staging here if the run is going to come to fruition. Shad anglers now are dominating the effort. A rare Chinook is being taken or targeted for that matter.

Downriver, anglers are still scoring impressive numbers of Chinook in the Multnomah Channel with some theorizing that a fair percentage of those fish are upper Columbia River bound. Regardless, those dialed into the fishery are having double-digit opportunities trolling herring and spinners in the channel. The Portland Harbor is still producing fair catches but not as good as the Multnomah Channel itself.

River levels on the McKenzie and Santiam's are scheduled to continue to drop. This should stimulate fish to bite even more with steelhead one of the prime targets heading into July. Obviously, there are going to be late fish with anglers relishing the opportunity to fish these Cascade driven streams for much of the summer under good water conditions.

Chinook should be more willing to bite than in most years. Cooler water temperatures for this time of year should give anglers a reasonable chance at some fair fishing.

The Guide's Forecast – The Multnomah Channel will continue to be the hotspot for Chinook and as long as Bonneville counts remain steady near 2k per day, action should remain good. Peak passage for summer Chinook typically happens in early July. We might all be guessing it will be later this year so early numbers do look promising.

Spinners can become a very effective tool in warmer flows but we're not there yet. Keep your bait spinning but if you're comfortable trolling a double-hook rig, do use a spinner or wobbler as an attractor while doubling it as another chance at a fish. Allow ample spacing between riggings to prevent tangles.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – In theory, it should be peak spring Chinook time on the Sandy and Clackamas. Lower than hoped for returns on these systems however is making for challenging opportunities.

The Clackamas is predicted to get a fair run this year and the river should fish well into July. Look for late season pushes of fish with the upper reaches more likely to produce results. Flows are expected to drop. Bait should produce the best, especially eggs in the Clackamas River.

The Sandy is seeing some spring Chinook action near Oxbow Park but much better success rates are coming from trollers working the mouth of the Sandy. Sandy and upriver Chinook should be present and willing to bite hardware and bait in this section of the river. Summer steelhead should be more accessible in the Cedar Creek area but don't count on ample opportunity.

The Guide's Forecast – As we've frequently been saying all season, action should get better as flows drop and water temperatures rise. Target springers on the Clackamas and look to the Sandy to provide fair opportunities for hunting steelheaders. Eggs will be a top bait for Chinook and steelhead.

On the Sandy, target salmon up higher from Dodge Park to Marmot Dam. Fish should begin a holding pattern in the deeper holes until they get closer to spawning in early September. Bobber and eggs should be a regular tool in your toolbox.

Clackamas anglers should target salmon in the McIver Park stretch, especially if you're a bank angler. Steelhead numbers should justify the effort and don't overlook the water immediately below River Mill Dam for both salmon and steelhead although there will be significant more numbers of adults coming if the run-size prediction comes through.

North Coast Fishing Report – With spring Chinook season winding down, focus will now turn to the offshore fisheries. Chinook season is open now offshore but catches are light. Coho season opens next week.

Spring Chinook are still present in good numbers in tidewater and good bobber tossers should be scoring results. Eggs will produce the best results, by far. Above tidewater, especially on the Trask, early morning bobber and bait tossers should be able to find a few willing fish on most cloudy mornings. The Wilson and Nestucca are also options with summer steelhead available too. The hatchery hole on the Trask closes at the end of this month.

There will only be a rare hatchery spring Chinook in the estuary from here on out. It won't be long however before fall Chinook opportunity kicks in with the late August/early September fishery a good prospect.

Trout fishing in tidewater or the estuary itself should be a good option for the rest of the summer season. Trolling spinners and worms will produce well but sculpin pattern flies may take fish for long-rodgers, what few there are exploring this fishery that is.

The Guide's Forecast – Dog days lie ahead. It will be a bank angler show for much of the remainder of the season. Light leaders, small baits and early morning presentations will be a common theme in the coming weeks.

Chinook fishing on the Trask should be a top priority for the serious north coast angler. Fish towards the hatchery for your best opportunity. The Wilson and Nestucca should be holding good numbers of fish as well. Three Rivers is a good bet on the Nestucca system. Although there is good bank access here, much of it is private land so watch your step.

Get your boat shovel ready as ocean coho season is just around the corner. Be sure all your kinks are worked out and that your VHF radio is in working order.

Cutthroat trout should be available in the lower stretches of every major north coast system.

Central & South Coast Reports – The sport halibut season got its extension and is currently underway out of Central Coast ports. Action in the additional all-depth opportunity is likely to be very good although the size of the fish leave something to be desired. The possibility for a combo salmon/halibut trip could make for some interesting options.

Like every year, rumors of tuna are already circulating. Cold water conditions will squash any real opportunity for tuna to be within range of Oregon sportboats. Some of the most recent info had tuna well west of Fort Bragg.

Bottomfishing remained good out of Depoe Bay but little effort for salmon is taking place. There were recent reports of water temperatures in the low 40's, certainly a product of ocean upwelling. Sudden temperature changes will certainly put fish off the bite and this is the time of year when they are most likely, especially when the NW wind blows.

Crabbing has been productive out of Charleston. The current soft tide series should only improve catches.

The Rogue remains best higher in the system. Spring Chinook fishing should remain good well into mid-July with summer steelhead on their heels. As flows drop, fish should begin to hold in the deeper, more traditional areas you'd expect to find salmon. Shallower water will be more productive in the early morning hours. It's early for fall run fish but eagerness is growing. Larger fish tend to show earlier.

Umpqua spring Chinook is winding down. The upper reaches will still hold fish but the longer salmon reside in the mainstem, the more challenging it will be to find biters. Backbounced bait will produce the best results with eggs and shrimp a must do combo. Shad are also showing in greater numbers.

Diamond Lake anglers are being handsomely rewarded. Not only are there good number of willing biters but the size of the fish are impressive. The first few weeks of ice-off will produce the best catches and conditions are improving daily.

Central and Eastern Oregon – After a good spring bingeing, Deschutes River trout are beginning to fall again to flies. As temperatures warm, predictable hatches will become more evident. Steelhead are still many weeks away with the migration stalled due to high flows and cold temperatures in the mainstem Columbia.

Many Century Drive lakes that were previously inaccessible are now open due to snow. Big Lava, Clear and East Lake are now open and should be fishing well. Crane Prairie is producing large rainbow and brook trout and the early season typically produces the best results.

Frog Lake has recently been stocked with both legal and broodstock trout. Deep bodied rainbows are falling at Ochoco Reservoir.

Wickiup Reservoir is producing both trout and kokanee. Jiggers are doing best for kokes.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for June 2011

North Puget Sound

Anglers have their pick of several fishing opportunities in June. On Puget Sound, the Tulalip Bay bubble fishery gets under way June 3, while the lingcod fishery remains open through mid-month. In freshwater, numerous rivers open for trout June 4 and – in a few waters – salmon fishing opens at the beginning of the month.

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

Fishing for salmon, as well as **trout** and other **gamefish**, also opened June 1 on portions of the Skykomish River.

Elsewhere, **trout** fishing will open at several of the region's other rivers and streams beginning June 4. Under the statewide rule for trout, there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches in rivers and streams. However, some of the region's rivers and streams have a rule requiring trout to be at least 14 inches in length to keep. For details on river fishing opportunities, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

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

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

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

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

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

Farther north, the **Tulip Bay "bubble" fishery** begins June 3. The fishery is open each week from Friday through noon Monday through Sept. 5. The exception is June 12, when the bubble is closed for the Tulip Tribes salmon ceremony, said Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound salmon manager for WDFW. "They recently rescheduled their salmon ceremony, so the one-day closure was moved to June 12," Thiesfeld said. "That means the bubble will be open June 19 this year." For details, check the [emergency fishing rule change](#). Anglers fishing the bubble will have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon.

The **halibut** fishery in the region is closed, but fishing for **lingcod** is still an option. The lingcod fishery runs through June 15 in the region. During the hook-and-line season (May 1-June 15), there's a one-fish daily limit for lings, with a minimum size of 26 inches and a maximum size of 36 inches.

Before heading out, anglers should check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) for all regulations. Washingtonians who are interested in fishing but haven't actually given it a try have a perfect chance to do so during **Free Fishing Weekend**, scheduled June 11-12. During those two days, no license will be required to fish or gather shellfish in any waters open to fishing in Washington state. Also, no vehicle use permit will be required during Free Fishing Weekend to park at any of the water-access sites maintained by WDFW.

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

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Some fisheries are winding down in the region, but anglers have other options as numerous rivers and streams open for trout June 4 and salmon fishing gets under way mid-month off the coast.

The popular **ocean salmon season** opens June 18 with a mark-selective fishery for hatchery chinook in all ocean areas. The selective fishery will run seven days a week, with a daily limit of two salmon, through June 25 or until 4,800 hatchery chinook are retained. Anglers will be required to release wild chinook and all coho during the selective fishery, said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"It looks like there are a lot of chinook out there," said Milward. "And from what we are seeing in the troll fishery, I expect fishing to be much like last year, which was pretty darn good."

Ocean salmon fisheries for chinook and hatchery coho will open June 26 in marine areas 1, 2, 3 and 4, where anglers will be allowed to retain one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit. Anglers also are allowed one additional pink salmon each day in marine areas 3 and 4. Salmon fishing will be open seven days a week, except in Marine Area 2 where anglers can only fish for

salmon Sundays through Thursdays. Before heading out, anglers should check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) for all regulations.

In Puget Sound, marine areas 11 and 13 are open for salmon. Anglers fishing those areas have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook.

Halibut fishing is closed in most of Puget Sound. The exception is Marine Area 5 (Sekiu), where anglers can fish for halibut three days a week, Thursday, Friday and Saturday through June 18. On the coast, Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco) will close to halibut fishing June 5, and then re-open Aug. 5 and continue three days a week (Friday through Sunday). Marine Area 2 (Westport/Ocean Shores) is already closed except in the northern nearshore area.

Farther north, La Push and Neah Bay (marine areas 3 and 4) will open for two more days of fishing June 2 and 4. "We will evaluate the quota after these dates to determine if there's enough quota for additional openings in those two areas," Reed said.

All areas 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. For more information on the halibut fishery, check [WDFW's website](#).

Anglers have through mid-month to fish for **lingcod** in Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca, where the fishery closes June 15 in both areas. However, the lingcod season on the coast remains open through mid-October.

Anglers are reminded that work will limit parking facilities for boaters through June at **Twanoh State Park**, a popular access site on Hood Canal. The State Parks and Recreation Commission encourages fishers to use an alternate launch site.

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

Elsewhere, **trout** fishing will open at several rivers and streams beginning June 4. Under the statewide rule for trout, there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches in rivers and streams. However, some rivers and streams have a rule requiring trout to be at least 14 inches in length to keep.

Washingtonians who are interested in fishing but haven't actually given it a try have a perfect chance to do so during **Free Fishing Weekend**, scheduled June 11-12. During those two days, no license will be required to fish or gather shellfish in any waters open to fishing in Washington state. Also, no vehicle use permit will be required during Free Fishing Weekend to park at any of the water-access sites maintained by WDFW.

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

Southwest Washington

The spring chinook fishery runs through June 15, followed the next day by a promising six-week summer chinook season. Meanwhile, increasing numbers of sockeye salmon and hatchery

summer steelhead are moving into the lower Columbia River Basin, where anglers can also catch and keep white sturgeon in most areas.

But high water will present an ongoing challenge for anglers engaged in all of these fisheries, said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "The river has been up in the trees for several days, and the snow pack hasn't even started to melt," said Hymer during the last week of May. "These high-water conditions could be with us for a while."

Anglers can check area river conditions on websites maintained by the [Fish Passage Center](#) and the [Northwest River Forecast Center](#).

Apart from their effect on fishing conditions, high flows and floating debris present a safety risk to anglers – particularly boat anglers – fishing the mainstem Columbia River. So long as the river is high, Hymer suggests that anglers leave their boats at home and take up a position on the bank.

"Success rates for bank anglers were higher than those for boat anglers fishing for **spring chinook** during the last week of May," he said. "There's a lesson in that."

Through June 15, fishing is open to both boat and bank anglers from Rocky Point/Tongue Point upriver to Bonneville Dam. Fishery managers opened the four-mile area from Beacon Rock to the dam to boat angling in late May to give anglers more access to upriver spring chinook still available for harvest.

The fishery above Bonneville Dam has also been extended through June 15 for boat and bank anglers from the Tower Island power lines upriver to the Washington/Oregon state line, 17 miles upriver from McNary Dam. Bank fishing was also reopened through June 15 from Bonneville Dam upriver to the power lines, located six miles below The Dalles Dam.

During the spring chinook season, anglers fishing below Bonneville Dam may retain one adult spring chinook salmon marked with a clipped adipose fin as part of their daily catch limit. Above Bonneville, the daily limit can include two marked hatchery adult chinook salmon. **Sockeye salmon** and hatchery-reared **steelhead** also count toward anglers' adult daily limit.

In both areas, all unmarked chinook and steelhead must be released unharmed.

That is also the case in the **summer chinook salmon** fishery, which gets under way June 16 from the Megler Astoria Bridge up to Priest Rapids Dam. One difference is anglers fishing below Bonneville Dam can retain two adult hatchery-reared chinook after June 16, rather than one. Like last year, the six-week mark selective summer chinook season is made possible by the additional revenue produced by the new Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement fee. "In the past, the cost of adequately monitoring and sampling a six-week fishery was prohibitive," Hymer said. "The extended summer chinook fishery was one of the first uses the department made of those revenues."

Based on the pre-season forecast, this year's summer chinook season looks promising, Hymer said. Approximately 92,000 upriver fish – the highest number since 1980 – are expected to return, including a high percentage of five-year-olds running 20-40 pounds. Anglers can also top off their daily limits with sockeye salmon and summer-run hatchery steelhead, which are also expected to return in high numbers this year.

Many of the early returning **steelhead** are headed for the Elochoman, Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, Toutle, Washougal, and Klickitat rivers, where they should provide good fishing through the summer. Fishing for hatchery spring chinook is also open on a number of area tributaries, including Drano Lake and the Wind River, where anglers can now retain four adult hatchery spring chinook as part of their six-fish daily limit.

Those fishing Drano Lake should be aware that Wednesday closures have been extended through June. In addition, the Kalama and Lewis rivers were recently closed to fishing for spring chinook due to low returns.

On the Klickitat River, salmon fishing is now open seven days a week downstream from the Fisher Hill Bridge, where anglers may retain two adult hatchery spring chinook plus two hatchery steelhead. Anglers fishing 400 feet upstream from the #5 fishway to the boundary markers below the Klickitat Salmon Hatchery may retain hatchery chinook jacks and hatchery steelhead. New rules will also take effect June 4 on the following rivers:

- **Elochoman River:** Opens for retention of hatchery chinook and hatchery steelhead from the mouth to the West Fork.
- **Grays River:** Opens for retention of hatchery chinook and hatchery steelhead on the mainstem from the mouth to the South Fork, and the West Fork from the mouth to the hatchery intake/footbridge.
- **South Fork Toutle River and the Green River:** Opens for hatchery steelhead on the entire South Fork Toutle, plus the Green River from the mouth to the 2800 Road Bridge. Bait may be used. All tributaries to the South Fork Toutle and Green rivers will remain closed to all fishing.
- **East Fork Lewis River:** Opens for hatchery steelhead from the mouth to 400 feet below Horseshoe Falls (except closures around various falls). Bait may be used.
- **Washougal River:** Opens for hatchery steelhead from the mouth to Salmon Falls Bridge. Bait may be used.

For more information about these and other fishing rule updates, check for [Emergency Rule Changes](#) on WDFW's website.

Rather catch a **sturgeon**? Boat anglers have been catching some legal-size fish around Camas, Longview and Cathlamet on the Columbia River. The retention fishery below the Wauna powerlines runs seven days a week through June 26, then resumes July 1-4. The daily limit is one white sturgeon with a fork-length requirement of 41 to 54 inches. Above the powerlines, sturgeon may be retained Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays through July 31 up to Navigation Marker 82, nine miles below Bonneville Dam. The daily limit is one fish with a fork-length requirement of 38 to 54 inches.

And don't forget **shad**. While not as highly prized as sturgeon or salmon, they can put up a good fight and make for good eating, said WDFW biologist Joe Hymer. Even though their numbers may be down this year, more than a million of them will likely mount a charge up the Columbia this month. There are no daily limits or size limits for shad, the largest member of the herring family.

Fishing for **walleye** and **bass** should also pick up this month as water temperatures rise. During the last week of May, boat anglers averaged eight bass and eight walleye per rod fishing in The Dalles Pool. More than a dozen lakes, rivers and reservoirs – from Mayfield Reservoir in Lewis County to the Little White Salmon River in Skamania County – will be stocked with trout this month. See the [WDFW website](#) for a complete listing.

Those interested in fishing but don't have a fishing license will be able to get in on the action during **Free Fishing Weekend**, scheduled June 11-12. During those two days, no license will be required to fish or gather shellfish in any waters open to fishing in Washington state. While no licenses are required on Free Fishing Weekend, other rules such as season closures, size limits and bag limits will still be in effect.

Eastern Washington

June is usually one of the best months of the year for a variety of fishing opportunities throughout the region, with river and stream seasons opening and warmwater fish species beginning to bite.

But this year, with extended cooler temperatures and greater than usual spring rain and runoff flooding some areas and putting many waterways out of shape, anglers are advised to use caution and plan ahead by checking access conditions with local sources.

Many northeast district rivers, including the Colville, Kettle, Little Pend Oreille, and Lake Roosevelt tributaries, opened to fishing May 28. Most other rivers and streams in the region will open June 4, the first Saturday of June. However, portions of the Spokane River open June 1, and some waterways are open year-round. Anglers should check the fishing rules pamphlet for details.

Two areas of the Snake River – near Little Goose Dam and Clarkston – are open to **spring chinook salmon** fishing through June 2. For details see the [emergency rule change](#).

Lakes that have been open since late April continue to produce good catches of **rainbow, cutthroat** and other **trout**. In the central district, good bets are Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County; and Amber, Badger, Chapman, Clear, Fish, West Medical and Williams lakes in southwest Spokane County. Many mixed-species waters that are open year-round or opened earlier this spring are starting to produce catches of **bass, bluegill, crappie, perch** or **catfish**, along with trout. These include Spokane County's Eloika, Liberty, Long, Newman, and Silver lakes.

In the northeast district, many **trout** fishing lakes are on U.S. Forest Service or other public lands with campgrounds – perfect for family weekend outings. In Ferry County, that includes Davis, Ellen, Ferry and Swan lakes; in Stevens County, Gillette, Pierre, and Thomas lakes; in Pend Oreille County, Bead, Cook's, Mystic, No-Name, Skookum, Sullivan and Yocum lakes. Anglers need to keep in mind that seven lakes where loons breed and nest in the northeast district have new rules prohibiting the use of lead weights and jigs that measure 1 ½ inches or less along the longest axis – these are Ferry, Long and Swan in Ferry County; Pierre in Stevens County; and Meadow, South Skookum and Yocum in Pend Oreille County.

Stevens County's Cedar, Rocky and Starvation lakes continue to be among the best trout producers in the region, but anglers need to keep in mind that Rocky and Starvation shift to catch-and-release only on June 1.

Free Fishing Weekend, June 11-12, is the best time to invite your non-fishing family or friends to join you on the water because that's when no fishing licenses are required of anyone. With Washington State Tourism's "[Share Your Washington](#)" campaign, you can even be eligible for air travel prizes when you invite others to fish with you in Washington. The contest runs through June 15.

WDFW is piloting a **free adult fishing class** on June 11 with help from Inland Northwest Wildlife Council volunteer instructors and Bunkers Resort on Williams Lake in southwest Spokane County. The class will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., mostly with time on the water to learn how to

catch fish, but also with instruction on cleaning and cooking fish. Limited class space is filling fast with a registration deadline of June 6; call WDFW Eastern Region office at 509-892-1001 or e-mail teamspokane@dfw.wa.gov.

Northcentral Washington

River and stream **trout** fishing is scheduled to start the first Saturday in June, but WDFW Okanogan District Fish Biologist Bob Jateff says higher than normal flows will make fishing difficult at best – at least for the first few weeks of the month. “Anglers should focus on some of the smaller tributaries which have a tendency to clear up much quicker than larger rivers,” Jateff said.

Spring chinook salmon fishing on the Icicle River in Chelan County should improve considerably in June as more fish move up into the river. “There should be a number of fish available as the pre-season forecast for the Icicle calls for a run of approximately 9,000 fish,” Jateff said. Daily limit is three salmon, minimum size 12 inches. Standard gear rules are in effect and there is a night closure. Anglers must release all fish with one of more round holes punched in the tail (caudal) fin.

“Lake fishing should improve during the month as a later than normal spring has kept lake waters cooler than normal,” Jateff said. **Rainbow trout** waters to check out are Pearygin near Winthrop, Alta near Pateros, Conconully Reservoir and Lake near Conconully, Spectacle near Loomis, and Wannacut near Oroville. Anglers can expect to catch rainbows in the 10-13 inch range with larger carryover fish in the 15-16 inch range in all of these lakes, Jateff said.

Fly-fishing only waters in Okanogan County worth visiting in June are Aeneas Lake near Tonasket and Chopaka Lake near Loomis. Jateff reports Aeneas Lake has rainbow and **brown trout** 12-18 inches, and Chopaka has rainbows in the 12-17 inch range. Electric motors are not allowed on fly-fishing only waters, unless a special use permit has been issued. Selective gear waters to try would be Big Twin Lake near Winthrop, Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, Buzzard Lake near Okanogan, and Rat Lake near Brewster. All of these lakes are planted with rainbow trout fingerlings and/or catchables and should provide good fishing for 12-16 inch fish. Both Rat and Blue also have brown trout available.

For spiny ray anglers, Patterson Lake near Winthrop has **yellow perch** as well as **smallmouth** and **largemouth bass**. Expect perch in the 6-9 inch range in Patterson with an occasional fish up to 11 inches. Leader Lake, near Okanogan, has a mix of **black crappie** and **bluegill**, as well as largemouth bass. You can expect bluegill in the 6-7 inch range and crappie in the 6-9 inch range. Both Patterson and Leader Lakes are also planted with rainbow trout catchables up to 13 inches.

Wapato Lake in Chelan County continues to provide good fishing for rainbows in the 12-13 inch range, with a few larger fish up to 17 inches. Jameson Lake in Douglas County has been fishing well for rainbows in the 10-11 inch range along with a number of spring planted triploid rainbows in the 16-17 inch range.

On June 1, Grimes Lake near Mansfield will open for trout fishing under selective gear rules and a one fish daily limit. Anglers can expect good fishing for Lahontan cutthroat in the 12-18 inch range, with some fish in the 20-inch category. Float tubes, pontoon boats, and small row boats can be launched at the south end of the lake under an access agreement with the local land owner. The fishing season at Grimes Lake continues through Aug. 31.

In the Columbia Basin district of the region, fish biologist Chad Jackson said **trout** fishing has been very good during this cool, wet spring and warmwater fish species should begin biting more later this month. "Pretty much all of the catch-and-release or fly-fishing or selective gear waters in the basin are fishing quite well with these conditions," Jackson said. "Lenice and Dry Falls lakes are the most popular and some anglers are catching and releasing 12 to 20 or more trout per day, and the fish are running up to 20 inches."

Jackson reported that Quail, Dusty, Lenore, and Nunnally lakes are also fishing well. So are the "production waters," like Warden, Blue, and Park lakes in Grant County. "These fisheries appear to be holding up well since the late April opener, but that's based on just a few reports," he said. "The weather, especially wind, plays a big factor in successful fishing at those lakes."

Jackson also noted that **bass** and **walleye** fishing should be heating up this month in the usual big three waters in the basin – Banks Lake, Potholes Reservoir and Moses Lake. "I'm already hearing some good reports, especially for smallmouth and largemouth bass," he said.

Free Fishing Weekend, June 11-12, is the best time to invite your non-fishing family or friends to join you on the water because that's when no fishing licenses are required of anyone. With Washington State Tourism's "[Share Your Washington](#)" campaign, you can even be eligible for air travel prizes when you invite others to fish with you in Washington. The contest runs through June 15.

Southcentral Washington

Area anglers have been reeling in **channel catfish** from the lower reaches of the Yakima and Walla Walla rivers, while fishing in the Columbia and Snake rivers has been choked by high water. Fishing has been good for "channel cats," which typically run 8-10 pounds but can easily weigh twice that amount, said Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"Put some cut bait on your hook and leave it on the bottom," Hoffarth advises. "That's about all there is to it."

Trout fishing in area lakes is another alternative for anglers waiting for heavy flows to subside in the Columbia River. Powerline Lake and Marmes Pond, two walk-in lakes in Franklin County, were planted with trout in early spring and cooler temperatures should "keep the bite going" for several weeks, Hoffarth said.

In addition, more than a dozen waters – ranging from Bear Lake in Yakima County to Easton Ponds in Kittitas County – are scheduled to receive fresh plants in June. Many of those waters will receive an assortment of catchable and jumbo-size fish, the latter weighing up to 1½ pounds apiece. See the [WDFW website](#) for the full lake-stocking schedule in June.

Out on the Columbia River, fishing prospects look good for salmon, sturgeon and shad – after the river drops to fishable levels. Meanwhile, anglers should exercise caution in venturing out into the big river.

"Flows on the mainstem Columbia have been nearly twice the seasonal average, and there's a lot of debris in the water," he said. "It's not just a matter of fishing conditions, it's a safety issue." Anglers can keep tabs on water conditions on the Fish Passage Center's [website](#). Once they flows subside, they'll have several good options for catching fish:

- **Chinook salmon:** June 16 marks the start of the fishery for hatchery-reared summer chinook salmon upriver to Priest Rapids Dam. The daily limit is six hatchery fish, up to

two may be adult hatchery chinook. Anglers must stop fishing when their adult portion of the daily limit is retained. Anglers fishing the Columbia River downstream from the Highway 395 bridge at Pasco/Kennewick can retain **sockeyesalmon** or **hatchery steelhead** as part of their daily bag limit.

- **White sturgeon:** Fishing remains open in Lake Wallula (McNary Dam to Priest Rapids/Ice Harbor Dams) through July of this year. Fish must measure 43 inches to 54 inches (fork length) to be retained. Anglers should be aware that sturgeon fishing is prohibited in sturgeon sanctuaries in the Snake River from Goose Island upstream to Ice Harbor Dam and in the Columbia River upstream of the Priest Rapids Hatchery outlet to Priest Rapids Dam.
- **Shad:** By mid-June, **shad** should reach McNary and Ice Harbor dams in numbers that make for great fishing. While not as prized as salmon or sturgeon, they can put up a good fight and make for good eating, Hoffarth said.
- **Smallmouth bass** and **walleye:** Fishing for both species should improve in the Columbia and Snake rivers as those waters warm. One veteran angler from Richland recently pulled a 18 pound, 4 ounce walleye out of the McNary Pool.

Steelhead fishing will remain closed until fall in the Columbia River upstream of the Highway 395 Bridge, and in the Snake River.

Those interested in fishing but don't have a fishing license will be able to get in on the action during Free Fishing Weekend, scheduled June 11-12. During those two days, no license will be required to fish or gather shellfish in any waters open to fishing in Washington state. While no licenses are required on Free Fishing Weekend, other rules such as season closures, size limits and bag limits will still be in effect.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

GOOD LUCK!