

The Guide's Forecast - volume 14 issue number 15

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **April 6th – April 12th, 2012**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Although water temperatures are slowly improving on the mainstem Columbia, high flows are now hampering success for spring chinook region-wide with little reprieve in the future. Court ordered spring spill, which will help young salmon migrate to the ocean, is set to begin mid-month. This will further curb success but concentrate fish close to shore where bank anglers should have fair access to salmon and steelhead.

Fishery managers will decide Thursday whether to extend the sport season downstream of Bonneville Dam. An extension is highly likely given the poor catch rates witnessed this season but managers will have to take a precautionary approach until more positive signs of a healthy return exhibit themselves. Only 41 fish have bypassed Bonneville Dam, one of the lowest return rates recorded for early April.

Following the wettest March in history, the Willamette started to moderate at the Falls and is forecast to drop into the coming weekend. The water is likely to be too cold and muddy to fish well for springers by the weekend but, barring heavy rain, it won't be long until the season takes off.

The McKenzie River which crested at just over bank-full at the end of March will be on the drop and should fish in the coming weekend. Look for March Browns hatching.

The Santiam system remains very high after cresting at the end of March. While there are steelhead in the system, it will still be too high to fish well this week.

Northwest – North coast steelheaders had another weekend off due to a late season flood event. The Wilson should finally come back into shape before the weekend and should once again fish well during the clearing spell. With one of the best seasons in memory, the run should easily extend into mid-April with fair weather likely to produce aggressive fish.

The Wilson and Nestucca remain the best hatchery fish options although other district streams should receive good numbers of wild fish. Some smaller streams closed on April 1st so check fishing regulations before venturing out. With Willamette Valley salmon fishing likely a poor option for several more days, area rivers may get more pressure than in previous years.

The Trask begins to peak this time of year with some of the largest steelhead on the coast returning to spawn. The upper reaches should fish best prior to the weekend and lower reaches as the flows drop. It wouldn't be unheard of to catch an early spring chinook as the north coast opened up for fin-clipped salmon on April 1st. Catches don't peak until mid-May however.

Tillamook Bay still has sturgeon available and early morning tides may prove productive for shrimp soakers. Try Bay City and the west channel for the best opportunity.

Ocean anglers are hopeful the offshore forecast holds. Easy limits of black rockfish and lingcod are attainable and crabbing should be fair as well. There have been very few opportunities this winter but anglers need to study regulations carefully as recent modifications limit access. A bounty of offshore chinook awaits the sport and commercial fleet but no one has been able to access them because of rough seas. It may take a while to find them but catches are often best between 7 and 15 miles offshore.

Southwest – As of April 1st, salty fishers are allowed to keep one cabezon 16 inches or better as part of their seven-rockfish limit. Retention of this species has been disallowed since July 20th of last year. Cabbies will readily take jig-type lures and will be anxious to bite when located.

Offshore conditions are expected to improve this week and be friendly by the weekend. Be aware, however, that as of April 1st, bottom fishing is restricted to no deeper water than 30 fathoms (180 feet). This restriction is for all species of bottom-dwellers, including nearshore halibut.

Crabbing should start to pick up in Winchester Bay as salinity levels improve. Local fishers have been trying for sturgeon but legal-sized fish are rare here. The Umpqua system is dropping and will fish by the coming weekend with spring chinook in the mainstem and the South Umpqua the best bet for steelheaders.

While the lower Rogue dropped sufficiently early this week to allow fishing, the results were very slow. Prior to the last freshet, a surprising number of mint-bright, late winter steelhead were caught. Water levels on the middle and lower Rogue crested the last day of March and are forecast to be dropping into mid-April. Spring chinook will be the primary target. Winter steelheading has slowed on the upper Rogue. The Applegate River closed April 1st.

The Chetco, Elk and Sixes Rivers are now closed to steelhead and salmon fishing until May 26th.

Eastern – Deschutes levels were a little high with the water off-color early this week but conditions are predicted to improve through the weekend. March Browns should be in the mix with caddis being the best opportunity for dry action in the afternoon.

Anglers have been enjoying good results from the Crooked River but rain has pushed flows many times higher than just a week ago making it unfishable this week.

Green Peter is in fair shape with kokanee tightly schooled but the cold-water bite is very slow this early in the year.

SW Washington – Although most anglers remain focused on the mainstem Columbia to meet their fishing needs, the Cowlitz is still experiencing a fair steelhead return and spring chinook have been caught recently. The highest effort takes place near the trout hatchery and that will consistently produce the best catches for a good part of the season.

The Kalama and Lewis also remain good steelhead prospects and spring chinook have been rumored to have been caught in the Lewis system.

Drano Lake historically is beginning to turn on now but fish passage remains low at Bonneville making it a poor option. It's pretty clear that if the run does materialize as predicted, peak passage at Bonneville is likely around the first week of May.

Columbia River Fishing Report – It's another week of anglers throwing their arms up in the air and saying, "What's up?" High cold water and inclement weather certainly has effort down but that doesn't typically stop the spring chinook angler, especially if one even has a chance at the region's top prize. Multiple trips with little success has anglers anxious to learn what our possibilities are after Washington and Oregon managers meet on Thursday to decide the fate of the sport fleet after the proposed April 6th closure date. Most recently, **pro guide Brandon McGavran (360-607-1327)** reported fair at best fishing near Bachelor Island. Brandon

witnessed about 6 fish for 20 anchored boats in the area but as you guessed it, the weather and water conditions were less than ideal. Although Brandon reported catching a few fish this week, overall, he's admitted this has been the worst season he's witnessed since guiding the mainstem.

Well, his reports are consistent with what's going on in other areas of the Columbia. Guides throughout the system are cancelling trips or rescheduling for a later date. From the airport to Davis Bar and well downstream in the colored, Willamette-influenced water, fishing is slow and miserable. Folks are trying to justify their time on the water just to be a part of the landscape, and that's good. I'm happy to be stoking the fire and not even having a chance right now but hopefully, we'll all soon be in the chrome.

Here are the catch statistics right from the most recent ODF&W recreation report:

Gorge Bank: No report.

Gorge Boats: Weekly checking showed no catch for two boats (seven anglers).

Troutdale Boats: Weekend checking showed no catch for 47 boats (130 anglers).

Portland to Longview Bank: Weekend checking showed 14 adipose fin-clipped spring chinook adults, one adipose fin-clipped spring chinook jack, and 17 adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus one unclipped spring chinook and two unclipped steelhead released for 302 bank anglers.

Portland to Longview boats: Weekend checking showed eight adipose fin-clipped spring chinook and one adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus three unclipped spring chinook released for 158 boats (440 anglers).

Estuary Bank (Clatsop Spit to Wauna Powerlines): Weekend checking showed no catch for two bank anglers.

Estuary Boats (Tongue Point to Wauna Powerlines): Weekend checking showed three adipose fin-clipped spring chinook kept, plus one unclipped spring chinook released for 24 boats (61 anglers).

Believe it or not, it seems catch rates actually took a downturn from the weeks before. This kind of catch and effort can't last much longer.

Unfortunately, we have to go by commercial catches and test net data to figure out if there really is any fish in the system. Well, there is but like sportfishing, it's hit or miss right now. Test net fishing indicated over 3.4 chinook per drift on April 1st with fewer steelhead showing in the catches. By the Tuesday opener (April 3rd), the catch per drift for chinook had dropped to about 2.1 fish/drift although steelhead numbers remained low. The netters were expected to catch about 3,000 fish or about 34% of their upriver chinook quota. Numbers weren't available at this writing but it's clear that the netters didn't "slay 'em" so their likely to get additional time. Sturgeon and steelhead catches were likely minimal.

Unfortunately also, that's enough about salmon, at least until the water conditions improve. Sturgeon fishing remains equally (but predictably) challenging although catch rates did improve in the Portland to Longview stretch. There was a pretty good keeper per boat average over the weekend as witnessed by the ODF&W creel results reflected in the weekly report:

Gorge Bank: Weekend checking showed no catch for 13 bank anglers.

Gorge Boats: Weekend checking showed no catch for one boat (two anglers).

Troutdale Bank: No report.

Troutdale Boats: No report

Portland to Longview Bank: Weekend checking showed no catch for seven bank anglers.

Portland to Longview Boats: Weekend checking showed five legal, two oversize and 36 sublegal sturgeon released for seven boats (16 anglers).

Although I don't think the Portland to Longview report was a fluke, I also don't think that anglers can count on that type of action on a consistent basis this time of year. Fish should be available and action remains good in the Willamette so maybe some of these fish are venturing out into colder water (although warming) as their metabolisms rise. Smelt remains the bait of choice and recent biological studies indicate it was a good run this year. This might have drawn more fish into the system. Here's a good article on what's going on with smelt:

<http://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Threatened-smelt-recovering-on-Cowlitz-3447641.php>

This just in at deadline:

Joint State Action

In joint Oregon and Washington state action the states discussed the following recreational fishery and took the following actions:

Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery

- Extended the following recreational fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam:
Area: Buoy 10 upstream to Beacon Rock (boat and bank) plus bank angling only from Beacon Rock upstream to Bonneville Dam deadline.

Legal upstream boundary defined as: "A deadline marker on the Oregon bank (approximately four miles downstream from Bonneville Dam Powerhouse 1) in a straight line through the western tip of Pierce Island to a deadline marker on the Washington bank at Beacon Rock."

Season: Saturday April 7 through Friday, April 13, 2012, except closed to salmon and steelhead angling on Tuesday April 10, 2012 (6 days).

Catch Limits:

Two adult adipose fin-clipped salmonids per day, only one of which may be a Chinook.

Additional Regulations:

Effective through June 15, 2012 for the mainstem Columbia River salmon and steelhead fishery from the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line upstream to OR/WA border, it is unlawful when fishing from vessels which are less than 30 feet in length (substantiated by Coast Guard documentation or Marine Board registration) to totally remove from the water any salmon or steelhead required to be released.

Effective through May 15, 2012, the mainstem Columbia River will be open for retention of adipose fin-clipped steelhead and shad only during days and seasons open for retention of adipose finclipped spring Chinook. Effective through June 15, 2012, on days when the mainstem Columbia River recreational fishery below Bonneville Dam is open to retention of Chinook, the salmonid daily bag limit in Oregon and Washington Select Areas will be the same as mainstem Columbia River bag limits. On days when the mainstem Columbia River fishery is closed to Chinook retention, permanent salmonid bag limit regulations apply.

In Washington, on the mainstem Columbia River below Bonneville Dam, anglers may not possess in the field fish mutilated so that size, species or fin clip cannot be determined until the angler has reached their automobile or principle means of land transportation and has completed their daily angling

All other permanent regulations remain in effect.

The Guide's Forecast – Although the fishing HAS to get better, it doesn't look like there will be significant improvement in the weather anytime soon. Warmer weather is supposed to be on the way but how many times have we expected that in the last two weeks?

Water temperatures are on the rise but soon, snow melt and spring flow will cause the river to remain high throughout the spring run, no matter how many days they give us. The run will continue to build however and those that learned how to fish for these springers in high flows should begin to bolster their catches in the next few weeks. The joint-state compact meets Thursday to review the fishery and likely extend the season although Idaho and the upstream tribes will lobby for an immediate closure.

Fishing will remain challenging no matter where you fish. Davis Bar upstream however will likely remain the best place to intercept fish as the Willamette will continue to soil the mainstem Columbia below Kelly Point Park. Catching is still an option down there but you need to use a lot of scent and bright lures when anchored; flashers if you're trolling. Don't overlook the shallower water as chinook and steelhead will certainly be utilizing the softer flows when fighting the upstream current that is strong right now. Steelhead remain a large percentage of bank caught fish along the beaches.

Anchor anglers are likely to do as good as trollers as water temperatures warm. Fish will become more receptive to the "invaders" and are most likely to be intercepted in shallower water along islands and sandbars. Green mag lips and Kwikfish will likely produce the best results for chinook and brighter colors such as red and orange for steelhead.

Bank anglers are intercepting fish using spin-n-glo's in solid colors such as orange with black tiger stripe and even purple on occasion. It's best to utilize your 2 or 3 hook options when plunking on the Columbia, you can run different colors or even a plug if conditions allow. Scent heavily, that much we do know.

Boaters can try for sturgeon if the salmon fishing remains slow. Sturgeon tend to congregate in the deeper water this time of year and can fall to sand shrimp or smelt if you have it to fish with. Fishing near the mouth of the Cowlitz may be one of the better options this time of year given the magnitude of the smelt run this season.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Fish counts at Willamette Falls were fair prior to the high muddy water, but have slowed as conditions went south. Winter steelhead passage has reached 5,162 through April 3rd while summer steelhead passage came up to 569. Daily passage has started to improve. It is still far too early in the season for much in the way of spring Chinook passage with no springers showing since the second of the year was counted on March. While the water temperature is up to 48 degrees as of April 4th, visibility remains less than one foot.

While the McKenzie crested above the so-called Action Level overnight on March 30th, it has been gradually dropping on level and flow since that date.

According to an update received Wednesday, April 4th, the Learn the River trip on the North Santiam scheduled for this Saturday has been cancelled due to high water. Not a good sign. Another date will be set.

ODFW sez: "The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife invites young anglers to take part in its first Family Fishing Event of the year Saturday, April 7 at Canby Pond from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event is free and ODFW staff and volunteers will be on hand to support participating youths.

The department will provide rods, reels, fish ID cards and bait for youngsters who don't have their own gear. Certified angling education instructors will be available to answer questions and offer instruction in such skills as knot tying, fish identification, and casting."

The Guide's Forecast – Water conditions and particularly clarity will need to improve before spring Chinook fishing resumes. Plunkers along the banks at Meldrum Bar, Dahl Park and at the mouth of the Clackamas may have a chance at winter steelhead.

Water level at the McKenzie is dropping more slowly than expected. It will still be high over the coming weekend but color should be decent and it will fish for those comfortable dealing with higher-than-average levels. While the March Brown hatch should be starting, it may be a nymph show in the next few days.

Corps of Engineers are increasing North Santiam flows this week so it will not be fishable or even safe to fish. South Santiam levels will be a little high but dropping over the coming weekend and there should be a few hatchery summers in the system.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – The muddy waters of the Clackamas have been clearing as the water levels have been dropping. Steelhead were boated on Wednesday this week.

Sandy water rose sharply at the end of March but has dropped back to pre-storm levels and cleared up nicely to provide good conditions for fishing this weekend.

The Guide's Forecast – Prospects for steelhead are fair to good on the Clackamas as water conditions are expected to be good.

While the Sandy is forecast to be in good shape for the weekend, it will be a matter of chasing late winter steelhead as it's still too early to count on fishable numbers of spring Chinook. Expect to find a mix of wild and fin-clipped fish. Give it a few weeks to start producing salmon.

North Coast Fishing Report – Steelheaders are just now coming into opportunity for some north coast streams. With the recent closure of some popular north coast systems, some quality ones remain open.

The Wilson, often highlighted here, remains productive although effort continues to wane. That may change by the weekend however as spring chinook fishing in the valley is likely to remain less-than-impressive. The Wilson began fishing good again on Wednesday as another fresh slug of fish entered the system after all the high water from the last flooding period. Action was excellent for the few folks participating with one boat (not even a guide boat) reporting double digit action and a limit of nice hatchery steelhead, one going 17 pounds, on Wednesday. Most of the fish were taken sidedrifted eggs downstream of Siskeyville Boat Ramp. Although conditions are forecasted to only get better, action will likely slow as the most fish have been coming on the higher but clearing part of the drop.

The Kilchis remained a strong option earlier this week as it comes into shape first for all the north coast streams. It likely booted out fair to good numbers of wild fish early in the week and remains open year around for steelhead although hatchery fish are a rarity here right now.

The Trask is fishing well, as expected. The upper reaches are always the first to fish, and fish best in high water conditions. Drifted eggs and sand shrimp produce best and plugs will become more effective as the water drops, but so will the navigational hazards. The lower reaches may fish better by the weekend, in the dropping flows. Maybe you'll even catch an early spring chinook. Yes, it has to be fin-clipped to retain.

The Nestucca is the remaining option in Tillamook County. A good mix of wild and hatchery fish remain available over here and it should continue through mid –April. A few summer steelhead are beginning to show. Like the other rivers, the upper reaches are producing the best but that will change as the flows drop. This time of year, fish will be well distributed throughout the system but darker fish will begin to make up a larger portion of your catches in the coming weeks. Bait will work best in the higher flows too but plugs will see their day as the weekend nears.

Nehalem, both the north and south fork closed. The Necanicum is closed as well.

Area lakes continue to produce some trout catches although cormorants, typically destined for Tillamook Bay this time of year, are setting down on Cape Meares for a feast on recently stocked rainbow trout. Another waste of a limited resource.

Rough weather has anglers working interior waters instead of the estuary or ocean. That may change by the weekend if the forecast holds true. More on that in the forecast section.

The Guide's Forecast – As we previously hinted, the rivers are forecast to look pretty fishy by the weekend but the best fishing is actually taking place right now (which is mid-week as we write this). The whole season, the best success has come during the higher flows and it's no different this week. The Wilson and Nestucca will likely have fished the best on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday although the weekend should still have fish available, just not as many as they make their way upstream into adjacent tributaries for spawning.

By the weekend, the smaller streams will be low and clear if you can believe that. The Wilson and Nestucca will remain the best options, especially for hatchery fish. The lower reaches will produce the best and oftentimes, you'll see the guides target the lower reaches (for example on the Wilson, Donaldson's put in at first light) to get all the new biters that came in on the last tide.

The reach below Sollie Smith should be a good option as well for both sidedrifters and bobber and bait anglers. On the Nestucca, by the weekend, First Bridge all the way to Cloverdale should hold good numbers of fish but bank anglers working the entire system should find opportunity.

Don't bother with any of the other systems for steelhead. They'll be too low with the exception of the Trask which is coming into its prime for wild winter fish. Numbers should be ample but by the weekend, Cedar Creek downstream should be the best bet unless you're on foot. The upper reaches should produce action for bank anglers. Bobber and bait or jigs work well in the water above Cedar Creek.

Good sturgeon tides are once again gracing Tillamook Bay anglers. Although it's clear there aren't a lot of keepers present, there are keepers present and if you're willing to hunt for them, they should be taking sand shrimp if you can endure a cool east wind.

That same east wind will lay the mad ocean down a bit, making for some good crabbing and a good shot at great rockfish angling. All north coast ports should produce good catches and fish should be anxious to take baits and artificials when presented. The commercial crabbing season wasn't much to write home about but the weather didn't help matters. There should be fair to good crabbing in nearshore areas.

Here's the favorable offshore forecast:

FRI

S WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 7 FT.
CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

FRI NIGHT

SW WIND 5 TO 10 KT...BACKING TO E AFTER MIDNIGHT.
WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

SAT

E WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

SAT NIGHT

SE WIND 5 TO 10 KT...BACKING TO E WITH GUSTS TO
15 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 3 FT.

SUN

SE WIND 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. SW SWELL 8 FT.

MON

SE WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. SW SWELL 7 FT.

With fairly calm seas this weekend, boaters might consider trolling for ocean salmon now that the season is open.

Razor clam digging should also be an option. Target Clatsop County Beaches for the best bet and with the surf predicted to be small, the shows should be plentiful. There may be high effort as most serious clambers haven't had much of an opportunity all winter long.

Central & South Coast Reports – Offshore launches look like a 'go' this weekend, particularly on Saturday with winds moderate and swells at four feet or less at nine seconds or more. It rarely gets better than that at this time of year.

Those pursuing bottom fish are reminded that, as of April 1st, they must stay within the 30-fathom line. Here's a list of waypoints:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/mrp/regulations/sport_fishing/docs/30fmwaypts.pdf

With wave action moderating this weekend, south west beaches will produce surf perch. Various baits are effective with areas near bay or river mouths most productive.

Ling cod are being taken off the South Jetty at Yaquina Bay.

The Freshet at the end of March will continue to slow crabbing in Winchester Bay until salinity levels return to normal. Spring Chinook have been entering the Umpqua with catches resuming and presumably improving as the water drops and clears. The mainstem is expected to be high but fishable this week. Rain moved fresh fish in to the North Umpqua where bank fishers have hooked up. South Umpqua levels should allow for pursuit of winter steelhead and most fish are of hatchery origin here.

Coos and Coquille Rivers will remain open for steelhead through April. High and muddy earlier this week, the rivers are dropping and clearing and should be fishable this weekend although this late in the season, most of the winters available are past their prime with very few bright fish in the mix.

Lower Rogue water levels are forecast to be dropping and are predicted to be at pre-storm levels by Saturday, This should make it possible to target springers which will be entering with moderate wave action offshore. Chinook are of primary interest on the lower river and while there are winter steelhead available in the Grants Pass stretch, results have been slow. The upper Rogue has been fair to good with boat and bank fishers taking summer steelhead mid-week. Steelheading has been good in the upper Applegate River and action should pick up as the river level improves through the weekend.

Despite predictions of good steelheading this weekend on the ODFW website, don't do it. The river is closed until May 26th & we don't want any of our readers to get busted!

Elk and Sixes rivers are also closed.

Diamond Lake opens April 28th but the latest recommendation from the resort is to prepare for the opener with ice fishing gear as they had 80 inches of snow in the month of March. Here's the boat ramp as of March 21st:



Central and Eastern Oregon – Lower Deschutes water levels are high. Not too high to fish at all but certainly not at its best. There will be some trout hanging near the banks which may be fooled by nymphs, or skip it for now & try again in a week or two. Middle Rogue water is are very high and off-color.

The Crooked River has picked up so much water from recent rainfall that it is predicted to be a couple of weeks until it is once again fishable.

Trouting on the Metolius has been fair to good despite high water conditions. Try nymphs for rainbows or streamers for bull trout.

Smallmouth bass fishing was good on the John Day River mid-week and should hold up as the weather becomes warmer into springtime as water temperatures are currently rising only into the mid-40s. A decent number of larger smallies are being taken with crankbaits effective recently.

Expect a little additional pressure on Green Peter this coming weekend as nice weather brings out early-season hopefuls. Fishing for kokanee has been pretty slow this early in the season, however, and it will be a while before anyone needs to be concerned about pushing the 25-koke limit.

Lake Billy Chinook has been reliably producing bull trout to seep trollers.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for April 2012

North Puget Sound

One of the state's most popular fishing openers is scheduled for later in the month, when the lowland lakes trout season gets under way.

The lowland lakes **trout** season begins April 28, when many lakes – stocked with thousands of legal-sized trout – will open for fishing. Information on stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) [website](#).

But, until then, fishing for blackmouth in Puget Sound takes top billing in the region.

Overall, fishing in March was slow for salmon anglers in the region, said Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound salmon manager for the WDFW. "It's been very spotty," he said. "We'll get reports of decent fishing one day, and then it cools off for several days. So they're out there, but people definitely need to put some time in on the water to have any success."

Anglers fishing marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) and 9 (Admiralty Inlet) have a two-**salmon** daily limit, but must release wild chinook salmon. Marine Area 9 is open only through April 15, while Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) is already closed to salmon fishing.

Thiesfeld said anglers might want to consider fishing the Strait of Juan de Fuca – Marine Areas 5 (Sekiu) and 6 (eastern Strait) – where salmon fishing has been much better. However, time is running out to hook a salmon in those waters. The two areas, which have a daily limit of one salmon, are open only through April 10.

Meanwhile, it's not too early to start planning for halibut fishing, which opens in May. The 2012 recreational halibut seasons approved for Puget Sound are:

- **Marine Area 5:** From May 24-28, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday for Memorial Day weekend. From May 31 through June 23, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday and Saturday. WDFW has also set Thursday, May 23 as the opening day of the 2013 season.
- **Marine Areas 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10:** From May 3-19, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday and Saturday. From May 24-28, the fishery will be open each day (Thursday through Monday) for Memorial Day weekend. From May 31-June 2, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday and Saturday. WDFW has also set Thursday, May 2 as the opening day of the 2013 season.
- **Marine Areas 11, 12, 13:** These areas will remain closed to halibut fishing this year to protect threatened and endangered rockfish species.

In all marine areas open to fishing, there is a one-fish daily catch limit and no minimum size restriction. Anglers may possess a maximum of two fish in any form, and must record their catch on a WDFW catch record card.

For more information on the halibut fishery, including seasons in Washington's ocean areas, click [here](#).

Prefer shellfish? Sport fishing for **spot shrimp** in Puget Sound opens May 5. Shrimp fishing opportunities in various areas of Puget Sound will be similar to last year, although there is one change this season that was made to avoid an extreme minus tide, said Mark O'Toole, a shellfish biologist for WDFW.

Unlike previous years, the shrimp fishery will not reopen on the following Wednesday after the May 5 opener. Instead, the fishery will reopen in most areas on Friday, May 11. "With such an extreme low tide on that Wednesday (May 9) it only made sense to shift the second day of fishing to Friday," O'Toole said. "We don't want to leave shrimpers stranded 100 feet from the boat ramp on a low afternoon tide."

In all areas of Puget Sound, fishers are limited to 80 spot shrimp per day. Spot shrimp seasons for various areas of Puget Sound are:

- Hood Canal Shrimp District (Marine Area 12): Open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 5, 11, 12 and 16.

- Discovery Bay Shrimp District (Marine Area 6): Open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on May 5, 11, 12 and 16.
- Marine areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5, 6 and 13 (excluding shrimp districts): Open daily beginning May 5 at 7 a.m. The spot shrimp season closes when the quota is attained or Sept 15, whichever comes first. The exception is Marine Area 13, which closes for spot shrimp May 31.
- Marine Area 7: Opens May 5 at 7 a.m. and will be open May 11, 12, 17, 18 and 19.
- Marine areas 8, 9, 10 and 11: Open May 5 and May 11 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Additional dates and times will be announced for these areas if sufficient quota remains.

For a description of the marine areas and fishing rules, including regulations for coonstripe and pink shrimp fishing seasons, see WDFW's [Recreational Shrimp Fishing website](#).

Anglers are reminded that all 2011-2012 Washington state fishing licenses expire at midnight March 31. To keep fishing, anglers 15 years of age and older must purchase a 2012-13 license. Licenses and permits are available [online](#), by phone (1-866-246-9453) and from sporting goods stores and other retail license dealers around the state.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

The popular lowland lakes fishing season gets under way later in the month. Many lakes – stocked with thousands of legal-sized trout – open for fishing April 28. Information on stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) [website](#).

Until then, anglers have plenty of other fishing opportunities in the region.

One option is to dig some razor clams during an opening approved at several ocean beaches April 7-9. Opening dates and morning low tides are:

- April 7, Saturday (7:36 a.m., -1.2 ft.): Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks, Kalaloch
- April 8, Sunday (8:23 a.m., -1.5 ft.): Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks, Kalaloch
- April 9, Monday (9:11 a.m., -1.5 ft.): Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Kalaloch

No digging will be allowed after noon on any of the razor-clam beaches. Harvesters are allowed to take no more than 15 razor clams and must keep the first 15 they dig, regardless of size or condition. Each harvester's clams must be kept in a separate container, said Dan Ayers, coastal shellfish manager for WDFW.

Noting that 2011-12 state fishing licenses expire March 31, Ayres reminds diggers age 15 or older that they must purchase a 2012-13 license to participate in the April openings. Various licenses, ranging from a three-day razor-clam license to a multi-species combination license, are available [online](#), by phone (1-866-246-9453) and from sporting goods stores and other retail license dealers around the state.

Also on the coast, the **lingcod** fishery is under way in marine areas 1 (Ilwaco), 2 (Westport-Ocean Shores) and 3 (LaPush). Beginning April 16, Marine Area 4 (Neah Bay) also will open for lingcod. For lingcod fishing regulations, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#). For information on the deepwater portions of marine areas 1 and 2 that are closed, check the [fishing rule change](#) on WDFW's website.

Meanwhile, fishing for **salmon** is still an option. Marine areas 5 (Sekiu) and 6 (eastern Strait) are open through April 10. "Salmon fishing in the Strait has been good over the last couple weeks,"

said Steve Thiesfeld, Puget Sound salmon manager for WDFW. "I'd recommend fishing those two areas before they close."

Marine areas 11 (Tacoma-Vashon), 12 (Hood Canal) and 13 (South Puget Sound) are also open for salmon fishing in April.

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

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

Anglers should note that the **halibut** season gets under way in May. The 2012 recreational halibut seasons approved for Washington's marine areas are:

- **Marine Area 1 (Columbia River):** Opens May 3, three days per week (Thursday-Saturday) until 80 percent of the quota is achieved, or until July 14, whichever is earlier. The fishery will reopen Aug. 3 and continue three days per week (Friday-Sunday), until the remaining quota is taken, or until Sept. 30, whichever occurs first. The early quota is 9,516 pounds; the late quota is 2,379 pounds.
- **Marine Area 2 (Westport):** Opens May 6, two days per week (Sunday and Tuesday) for three consecutive weeks. The area-wide fishery will be closed May 27 and 29. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will open the following Sunday and/or Tuesday and continue until the quota is reached, or until Sept. 30, whichever occurs first. The northern nearshore area will open May 6 and continue seven days per week until the nearshore quota is reached, or until Sept. 30, whichever occurs first. The quota for the area-wide fishery is 40,739 pounds; the quota for the northern nearshore fishery is 2,000 pounds.
- **Marine areas 3 and 4 (La Push and Neah Bay):** Opens May 10, two days per week (Thursdays and Saturdays) through May 19. If enough harvestable fish remain to be caught, the fishery will re-open May 31 and/or June 2 and possibly on additional days (Thursdays and Saturdays) until the quota is reached or Sept. 28, whichever occurs first. The combined quota for both areas is 108,030 pounds.
- **Marine Area 5:** From May 24-28, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday for Memorial Day weekend. From May 31 through June 23, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday and Saturday. WDFW has also set Thursday, May 23 as the opening day of the 2013 season.
- **Marine areas 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10:** From May 3-19, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday and Saturday. From May 24-28, the fishery will be open each day (Thursday through Monday) for Memorial Day weekend. From May 31-June 2, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday and Saturday. WDFW has also set Thursday, May 2 as the opening day of the 2013 season.
- **Marine areas 11, 12, 13:** These areas will remain closed to halibut fishing this year to protect threatened and endangered rockfish species.

In all marine areas open to fishing, there is a one-fish daily catch limit and no minimum size restriction. Anglers may possess a maximum of two fish in any form, and must record their catch on a WDFW catch record card.

Prefer shellfish? Sport fishing for **spot shrimp** in Puget Sound opens May 5. Shrimp fishing opportunities in various areas of Puget Sound will be similar to last year, although there is one change this season that was made to avoid an extreme minus tide, said Mark O'Toole, a shellfish biologist for WDFW.

Unlike previous years, the shrimp fishery will not reopen on the following Wednesday after the May 5 opener. Instead, the fishery will reopen in most areas on Friday, May 11. "With such an extreme low tide on that Wednesday (May 9) it only made sense to shift the second day of fishing to Friday," O'Toole said. "We don't want to leave shrimpers stranded 100 feet from the boat ramp on a low afternoon tide."

In all areas of Puget Sound, fishers are limited to 80 spot shrimp per day. Spot shrimp seasons for various areas of Puget Sound are:

- Hood Canal Shrimp District (Marine Area 12): Open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 5, 11, 12 and 16.
- Discovery Bay Shrimp District (Marine Area 6): Open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on May 5, 11, 12 and 16.
- Marine areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5, 6 and 13 (excluding shrimp districts): Open daily beginning May 5 at 7 a.m. The spot shrimp season closes when the quota is attained or Sept 15, whichever comes first. The exception is Marine Area 13, which closes for spot shrimp May 31.
- Marine Area 7: Opens May 5 at 7 a.m. and will be open May 11, 12, 17, 18 and 19.
- Marine areas 8, 9, 10 and 11: Open May 5 and May 11 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Additional dates and times will be announced for these areas if sufficient quota remains.

For a description of the marine areas and fishing rules, including regulations for coonstripe and pink shrimp fishing seasons, see WDFW's [Recreational Shrimp Fishing website](#).

Anglers are reminded that all 2011-2012 Washington state fishing licenses expire at midnight March 31. To keep fishing, anglers 15 years of age and older must purchase a 2012-13 license. Licenses and permits are available [online](#), by phone (1-866-246-9453) and from sporting goods stores and other retail license dealers around the state.

Southwest Washington

After a couple of months of slow fishing for **spring chinook salmon**, fishery managers from Washington and Oregon are set to decide whether to extend the initial season on the lower Columbia River beyond April 6.

Their decision, scheduled April 5, will be reported on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) [website](#) and on the department's Fishing Hotline (360-902-2500).

"Like last year, the spring chinook run has been late to arrive – and for many of the same reasons," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "Not only has the Columbia been running high and cold, but all that rain in recent weeks has muddied up the water below the Willamette and Cowlitz rivers."

In addition, the bulk of this year's return is expected to be four year-olds, which arrive a bit later, Hymer said.

Those conditions are clearly reflected in the catch. Through March 25, an estimated 42,600 anglers had caught only 1,176 of the spring chinook available for harvest through April 6. Of that number, about 800 were upriver salmon that count toward the 12,700-fish harvest guideline for the first leg of the fishery.

At the same time, only a few dozen fish have been counted crossing Bonneville Dam.

As anglers may recall, the pre-season forecast anticipated a return of 314,200 upriver spring chinook, which would be the fourth-largest run on record. Hatchery-reared spring chinook returning to the Cowlitz, Lewis Willamette and other tributaries below Bonneville Dam will also contribute to the number of fish available for harvest.

To guard against overestimating this year's run, the states are managing spring chinook fisheries with a 30 percent buffer until the forecast is updated in late April or early May. Whatever they decide about extending the sport fishery in early April, they will also consider reopening the fishery after the run update.

Hymer reminds anglers that all 2011-2012 Washington state fishing licenses expire at midnight March 31. To keep fishing, anglers age 15 and older must purchase a 2012-13 license and a Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement. Licenses and permits are available [online](#), by phone (1-866-246-9453) and from sporting goods stores and other retail license dealers around the state.

Through April 6, anglers fishing downriver from Bonneville Dam may retain one marked, hatchery-reared adult spring chinook as part of their daily catch limit. Anglers should note that the sport fishery will be closed April 3 to accommodate a possible commercial fishery.

Above Bonneville Dam, the fishery is open to boat and bank anglers on a daily basis through May 2 between the Tower Island powerlines six miles below The Dalles Dam and the Washington/Oregon state line, 17 miles upriver from McNary Dam. Bank anglers can also fish from Bonneville Dam upriver to the powerlines during that time. Anglers fishing above Bonneville Dam can keep two marked adult spring chinook per day.

The mainstem Columbia River is also open for retention of shad through May 15 on days and in areas open for retention of adipose fin-clipped spring chinook.

Fishing for chinook salmon and **hatchery steelhead** is also open on a number of tributaries to the Columbia River under rules outlined in the 2011-12 [Fishing in Washington](#) pamphlet. Hymer said fishing for winter hatchery steelhead is still going strong, particularly on the Cowlitz and Kalama rivers, noting that summer-run steelhead are moving in right behind them.

Anglers are limited to one adult hatchery-reared chinook a day on the Kalama and Lewis rivers, but can keep two hatchery fish a day on the Wind River and Drano Lake. Starting April 1, the lower Klickitat River is open for spring chinook fishing Mondays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays only. The daily limit is two hatchery chinook, two steelhead, or one of each.

Sometime in early April, WDFW plans to expand the popular fishing area at the mouth of the Wind River by pushing the outside boundary 100 yards out into the Columbia River. John Weinheimer, a WDFW fish biologist, said the expansion is designed to help relieve crowding at

the mouth of the Wind River, where up to 200 boats a day often compete for space during the peak of the spring chinook season.

Approximately 8,400 hatchery-reared adult spring chinook salmon are expected to return to the Wind River this year, compared to 7,800 last year.

"The public has asked us for years to move the fishing boundary out into the Columbia," Weinheimer said. "We're trying it this year on an experimental basis to see if we can do that without a significant impact on federally protected spring chinook and summer steelhead bound for the upper Columbia River."

Once the buoy line has been moved, WDFW will open the expanded area for fishing and announce the regulation change on its [website](#).

The expansion is being funded by fees paid by anglers for a Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement, which is required to fish the Columbia or its tributaries. The Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement Advisory Board, which allocates that funding, approved spending \$33,300 to hire a biologist and a technician to monitor the catch and analyze the data over a three-month period.

Hymer noted that a similar expansion is in the works at Drano Lake. Building on the bank-only fishing opportunity near the outlet that opens April 16, fishery managers plan to keep a bank-fishing area outside Drano Lake open after the mainstem Columbia closes in early May.

He added, however, that anglers should also expect to see more Yakama Nation tribal fishing in the lake. Starting in mid-April, subsistence fisheries from fishing platforms will be allowed from noon Monday through 6 p.m. Thursday each week through mid-June. As in recent years, a set net fishery also will take place Tuesday night into Wednesday during the same period.

"We ask that both tribal and non-tribal fishers respect each others' space," Hymer said.

As with spring chinook, fishing for **white sturgeon** has been slow, with low participation in recent weeks. Fisheries below Bonneville Dam are open on the following schedule:

- **Buoy 10 to the Wauna powerlines:** Retention of white sturgeon is allowed daily through April 30 and from May 12 through July 8. Through April 30, sturgeon must measure between 38 inches and 54 inches (fork length) to be retained. From May 12 through the end of the season they must measure 41 inches to 54 inches (fork length) to be retained. Catch-and-release fishing is allowed on days when retention is prohibited.
- **Wauna powerlines to Bonneville Dam:** Retention of white sturgeon is allowed three days per week (Thursday through Saturday) through July 31 and from Oct. 20 through Dec. 31. Sturgeon must measure between 38 inches and 54 inches (fork length) to be retained. Catch-and-release fishing is allowed on days when retention is prohibited.

Sand Island Slough near Rooster Rock is closed to fishing at least through April 30.

Rather catch some **trout**? Several popular lakes – including Mineral Lake (Lewis County), Swift Reservoir (Skamania County) and Rowland Lake (Klickitat County) – open for business April 28. In addition, many year-round lakes throughout the region will be stocked with thousands of rainbow trout over the next few weeks – some weighing up to a pound a piece. See how many, and where, on WDFW's [regional stocking report](#).

Now is also a good time to start plying the waters for **walleye** and **bass** from Bonneville Dam up to McNary Dam. "Catch rates for both species should pick up right through spring," Hymer said.

Eastern Washington

Some of the region's best fishing will begin with the lowland lakes season opener on April 28. Hundreds of thousands of trout will be waiting in lakes throughout the region when anglers hit the water for opening day.

Best bets in the central district include Badger, Williams, West Medical, Fishtrap and Clear lakes, which will be well-stocked and grow fish well, said John Whalen, regional fish program manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

In Stevens County, Whalen recommends Waitts, Loon, Deep, Cedar, Potter's Pond, Bayley, Rocky, Starvation and the Little Pend Oreille chain of lakes. In Ferry County, he likes Ellen, Davis, Swan and Trout lakes, and favors Diamond, Frater, Big Meadow, North and South Skookum, Marshall and Sacheen lakes favors in Pend Oreille County.

But anglers don't have to wait until the end of April to catch some nice trout, Whalen said. Lots of lakes that opened for business March 1 are still producing well, he said.

For example, Coffeepot Lake in Lincoln County is producing **rainbow trout** up to 22 inches, mostly on flies. Coffeepot is under selective gear rules (no bait, artificial flies and lures only, knotless nets), a minimum size limit of 18 inches and daily catch limit of one trout.

Liberty Lake, in eastern Spokane County offers good catches of **brown trout** that run up to 25 inches. Liberty still has lots of good fishing for both those trout and, as the water warms, some of the earliest **yellow perch** and **crappie**.

Downs Lake in southwest Spokane County receives hatchery "catchable-size" rainbow trout, but it should also fish well this month for **largemouth bass**. Downs also has yellow perch and crappie. Medical Lake, near the town of the same name in southwest Spokane County, has brown and rainbow trout.

Catch-and-release fishing on both rainbow and **cutthroat trout** at Amber Lake in southwest Spokane County has been good. Amber is under selective gear rules and shifts to a catch-and-keep season on April 28 when the daily limit is two trout of at least 14 inches. Rainbows with clipped adipose fins caught at Amber must be released even after April 28.

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

Year-round Lake Roosevelt keeps producing big rainbows most days, with some **kokanee** and **walleye**. Anglers should keep in mind that the portion of the reservoir from the Kettle arm upstream to Barstow Bridge closes April 1 through the Friday before Memorial Day (May 25).

Deer Lake in southern Stevens County, which opened March 1, is finally warming up and likely producing some catches of rainbow and **lake trout**, with **bass**, **crappie** and **perch** catches not far behind.

In the south end of the region, the Tucannon River impoundments, on WDFW's Wooten Wildlife Area, have been producing nice rainbow catches since opening March 1. Area manager Kari Dingman said Big Four, Blue, Deer, Rainbow, Spring and Watson lakes are all well-stocked with hatchery trout and slowly warming up as spring advances.

Anglers are reminded that all fishing rules in the [2011-2012 regulations pamphlet](#) apply throughout the month of April. New rules take effect May 1, 2012, and will be available in pamphlets online and at license dealers later this month.

Anglers are also reminded that all 2011-2012 Washington state fishing licenses expire at midnight March 31. To keep fishing, anglers 15 years of age and older must purchase a 2012-13 license. Licenses and permits are available [online](#), by phone (1-866-246-9453) and from sporting goods stores and other retail license dealers around the state.

April 20 is the deadline for registration for the May 5 **Kids' Fishing Event** at Clear Lake in Spokane County. For details on the registration form, see the [Youth Fishing 2012 Event Calendar](#) on WDFW's website.

Northcentral Washington

Dozens of the region's lakes opened to fishing April 1, most in Adams and Grant counties of the Columbia Basin.

With cold, wet, windy weather on the opener, fishing effort was down, reported Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) district fish biologist Chad Jackson of Moses Lake.

"Dry Falls Lake had the best fishing on the opener for those willing to brave the high winds and cold temperatures," he said. "Successful anglers were primarily using small black chironomids at depths of 15 to 25 feet. Anglers who fished three to five hours on the opener caught-and-released five trout on average. Trout size was fair to good, ranging from 10 to over 20 inches. It appears that last year's cold spring shortened the growing season for trout in Dry Falls Lake, as yearlings should easily be 12-14 inches by the opener, instead of 10-12 inches. Smaller yearling trout size has been observed in other lakes in the Basin this year. Over the next couple months these trout should grow to a nicer size."

Dry Falls Lake, which is in the north end of Grant County near Coulee City, should continue to provide good fishing through the spring. It's a Selective Gear Rule fishery with an internal combustion motor prohibition and a one fish daily catch limit. In addition to **rainbow trout**, Dry Falls gets stocked with **brown** and **tiger trout**.

Jackson said the Hampton and Teal lakes fished poor on the opener averaging from one to two trout per angler. However, trout caught from these lakes were very nice sized, ranging mostly from 14 to 18 inches.

North and South Teal lakes, among the "Seep Lakes" south of Potholes Reservoir and north of Othello, were rehabilitated in 2010 and restocked with rainbow trout fry in 2011. Upper and Lower Hampton lakes, north of Othello on the wildlife refuge, are usually good producers in this early season, but Jackson predicted they only be fair at best. "The Hamptons are in need of rehabilitation to remove nuisance fish species that impact trout fry survival," he said. "There are still some good size trout in the two lakes for the patient angler."

Many of the other waters that opened April 1 are within the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge, including the Pillar-Widgeon chain of lakes. "These small lakes should be fair to good through the spring," Jackson said. "We encourage anglers to fish three to five of these lakes in an outing in order to catch a decent number of **rainbow trout**."

One refuge fishery – Para-Juvenile Lake, seven miles northwest of Othello on the Adams-Grant county line – opened April 1 only to anglers up to 14 years of age. It's a good spot to take kids to catch **bass** and **sunfish**.

Beyond preparation for the vagaries of spring weather, Jackson reminds anglers to have a new fishing license, valid April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013, in hand before participating in this opener.

All 2011-2012 Washington state fishing licenses expired at midnight March 31. To keep fishing, anglers 15 years of age and older must purchase a 2012-13 license. Licenses and permits are available online, by phone (1-866-246-9453) and from sporting goods stores and other retail license dealers around the state.

Southcentral Washington

This is the time of year that area anglers start thinking seriously about **trout**, because the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is planting plenty of fish in local waters right now. Thousands of catchable-size trout are scheduled to be planted in Columbia Park Pond, Dalton Lake, Matoon Lake, FioRito Lake, Powerline Lake, Marmes Lake, and other lakes in April. Several lakes are also being stocked with jumbo trout, weighing over a pound apiece.

"Rotary Lake in Yakima has been particularly good with some trout up to two pounds apiece," said Eric Anderson, a WDFW fish biologist based in Yakima. "As the weather continues to warm and the March winds subside, fishing should pick up in lakes throughout the region."

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

Anderson reminds anglers that all 2011-2012 Washington state fishing licenses expire at midnight March 31. To keep fishing, anglers age 15 and older must purchase a 2012-13 license. Licenses and permits are available [online](#), by phone (1-866-246-9453) and from sporting goods stores and other retail license dealers around the state.

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

Meanwhile, **spring chinook salmon** will be moving into the area in increasing numbers throughout the month of April. On the Columbia River, anglers can keep two adipose-fin-clipped hatchery chinook per day through May 2 (or until the quota is reached) from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Washington/Oregon state line, 17 miles upriver from McNary Dam. The lower Yakima River opens to spring chinook fishing May 1.

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

Sturgeon anglers are also advised to stay abreast of new regulations. As of late March, anglers could still catch and keep legal-size sturgeon in Lake Umatilla (John Day Dam to McNary Dam), but that fishery will close as soon as the 500-fish quota for those waters is reached. Anglers planning to fish the lake should keep an eye on the WDFW website for possible updates.

Farther upriver, the sport fishery for white sturgeon above McNary Dam (Lake Wallula) is scheduled to run through July 31.

In both areas, anglers may retain only those white sturgeon that measure between 43 inches and 54 inches when measured from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail.

Rather catch warm-water fish? Catch rates should continue to improve on area rivers for **smallmouth bass**, **channel catfish** and **walleye** in April right through spring.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

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Random Links

'Ghost ship' off Canada heralds arrival of tsunami debris: <http://news.yahoo.com/ghost-ship-off-canada-heralds-arrival-tsunami-debris-014556777.html>

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GOOD LUCK!