

The Guide's Forecast - volume 14 issue number 19

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 4<sup>th</sup> – May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

### **Oregon Fisheries Update:**

Join us in welcoming our newest contributor to The Guide's Forecast, **pro guide Chris Vertopoulos**. Chris brings decades of experience of fishing knowledge and forecasting to our team and is still an active guide in the industry. Chris will be providing additional coverage to the Willamette Valley along with **pro guide Bob Rees** and contributing editor **Michael Teague**.



We've greatly expanded our coverage of the Willamette, Clackamas and Sandy Rivers with Chris' keen eye to detail. **Full length subscribers** will reap the greatest benefit so plan on having the information to catch even more fish with guidance from our 14-year project, **The Guide's Forecast!** Thank you for being a **TGF subscriber!**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Fishery managers met early this week, deciding to extend the sport fishery above Bonneville Dam through Sunday. Spring chinook counts took a predictable nose-dive when flows jumped over the weekend but most believe fish will start pouring over Bonneville in the coming week. Managers will likely stall further sport opportunity until a significant number of fish pass upstream to meet treaty and other state obligations. Sturgeon fishing remains slow.

Plagued with high water this week and last, the Willamette continues to offer fair fishing for those that apply high water strategies. The plus side is that the color/turbidity remains good, with levels ranging between 6 and 8. Most consider anything below 12 very fishable. Oregon City backrollers finally got a taste of good fishing last week with Thursday, Friday and Saturday looking like the season was well underway, but the catch had dropped off a bit by Sunday as the next rise in water level took effect. The Falls counts are healthy for both springers and summer steelhead, so by all indications the fish are moving through, the savvy anglers will get theirs by fishing close to shore and finding seams that break up the flow. Getting your offering in the travel lane is paramount. Milwaukee, Sellwood, downtown and the harbor all continue to put out their share, but "lights out" fishing is far from the norm. The downstream troll from the Broadway Bridge all the way down to the head of Multnomah Channel remains a reliable tactic.

Troll downstream as slow as possible, just fast enough to keep your bait spinning. Try to zig zag on the way downstream, as the turns will change the action of your bait, raising and lowering it a foot or two. Green and blue label herring with or without a flasher, held down with 6 to 8 ounces of lead is the standard. Some anglers are also doing well with Delta Divers fished the same way you would at Buoy Ten. The top twenty five feet of water is where most of your bites will happen. Sea lions have been problematic at times.

Although the entire McKenzie opened for trout over the past weekend, water conditions have been hampering efforts. Conditions are forecast to improve, however, with the river in good shape for fishing over the coming weekend. Summer steelhead are also available.

North Santiam levels are high but forecast to drop this week. Summer steelhead have been taken on the South Santiam.

Clackamas steelheaders are taking a few in the high flows with spring chinook just starting to enter the lower river.

The Sandy spiked from 10 feet to over 12 at the end of April but will be dropping this week. Summer and winter steelhead as well as spring chinook are available.

**Northwest** – With most steelhead now on the spawning beds, anglers have their eye on spring chinook. Reports of one boat having a 3-fish day in the bubble over the weekend are believable but the ocean has picked back up again making it a poor option all week.

Spring chinook have been rumored to have been caught in the bay but the first big push of fish should come in about another 10 days. With the Willamette Valley rivers largely unfishable for much of the season, anglers will be anxious to recreate in a more stable environment. The annual Bounty on the Bay fundraiser is now open for registration. Dates for the event are June 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> and details can be found on the TEP web site at [www.tbnep.org](http://www.tbnep.org).

A variety of offshore opportunity exists when the ocean lays down again. Spring chinook, offshore chinook, nearshore halibut, bottomfishing and crabbing are all strong options this month. Safe passage over north coast bars into a calm ocean is all that is required.

**Southwest** – Charter boats launching out of central Oregon ports have done very well when the ocean has cooperated over the past week. Lingcod are on the bite with fish taken to 30 pounds. A variety of colorful rockfish have provided mostly limits to anglers. Crabbing is slow to fair but worthwhile to round out a seafood feast.

Nearshore halibut opened on May 1st for depths of 40 fathoms or less. Rockfish may not be on board with halibut catches. The spring all depth halibut season will start on May 10th through 12th, continuing weekly on select days of the week, until the quota fills.

Ocean chinook is now open and with a huge run of Klamath and Sacramento-bound fish forecast to return this year, optimism is high. Catches usually start off slow but will improve as the season progresses.

Winchester Bay crabbing has been slow but will pick up as salinity improves and the water clears. Spring chinook fishing has been fair to good whenever the mainstem Umpqua is dropping. No springers have been reported on the North Umpqua.

Crabbing has been fair to good for boats in Coos Bay. Low tides over the past weekend allowed clam diggers to take limits.

When fresh springers have been entering the lower Rogue, fishing has been very good. Chinook to 38 pounds have been landed and the action will hold up whenever the ocean lays down, allowing fish to cross the bar while river flows remain favorable. The middle Rogue will be dropping this week with springer catches expected to improve.

Bottom fishing out of the Port of Brookings has been excellent, yielding many limits of rockfish and lingcod. Area beaches are producing limits of surf perch when the ocean has laid down.

The Diamond Lake opener on April 28th drew about 150 anglers to the still-frozen waters. Results were decent with many taking eight-fish limits of large trout on bait.

**Eastern** – The lower Deschutes has been rising over the last week due primarily to snowmelt. It's high but clarity has been decent so prepare accordingly. Redsides are cooperating at Mecca Flats.

Wickiup produced fair to good catches of large kokanee at the opener over the past weekend but action slowed on Sunday.

Odell trollers have been enjoying good results with kokanee averaging 12 inches.

Fishing at Howard Prairie was good over the past weekend for trout to 18 inches.

**SW Washington** – The Cowlitz will continue to be the strongest option for spring chinook and summer steelhead but the Kalama and Lewis Rivers will also be viable options for the next 4 weeks. Unfortunately, flows remain high hampering angler success. Anglers are likely to see peak catches later than normal, with action likely to get better towards the end of the month.

As Bonneville counts begin to swell, so should catches in the Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries. Drano fished excellent last Wednesday but has dropped off ever since. Regulations have changed here in recent years so be sure to check your favorite destination before venturing out.

**Soapbox Update:** Can you believe there's people in Idaho that believe it's not necessary to breach the Snake River Dams in order to restore wild Snake River salmon? If you've ever taken the time to review the science, I think you'd know the answer to the question. Let your thoughts be known on this online poll that currently has the dark side winning out. Go here and state your thoughts. Scroll down to the bottom right and cast your vote:

<http://Imtribune.com/>

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – The Columbia River remains a place of solitude lately as the sport closure of the lower river has anglers refocusing their efforts on the Willamette, and for good reason.

Although some good news came out of a joint-state call on Monday for anglers fishing above Bonneville Dam, passage at Bonneville remains somewhat quiet after several big number days. The total cumulative count at the time of this writing was just over 25,000 chinook, a long way to go to reach the predicted number. Have faith however, with some huge jumps in river levels over the course of the last week, a significant drop in passage numbers was to be expected. These fish are keggung up below Bonneville, let's just hope the sea lions leave a few for spawning.

And here is a less than impressive creel check for sturgeon anglers upstream into the John Day Pool:

**Gorge Bank:**

Weekly checking showed one legal white sturgeon kept for four bank anglers.

**Gorge Boats:**

Weekly checking showed one legal and three sublegal sturgeon released for two boats (three anglers).

**Troutdale Bank:**

No report.

**Troutdale Boats:**

Weekly checking showed eight sublegal sturgeon released for one boat (two anglers).

**Portland to Longview Bank:**

Weekly checking showed two sublegal sturgeon released for 13 bank anglers.

**Portland to Longview Boats:**

Weekly checking showed one legal white sturgeon kept, plus 24 sublegal sturgeon released for 25 boats (62 anglers).

**The Dalles Pool:**

Weekly checking showed two legal white sturgeon kept, plus one legal, one oversize and 38 sublegal sturgeon released for 30 bank anglers; and three oversize and 59 sublegal sturgeon released for eight boats (21 anglers).

**John Day Pool:**

Weekly checking showed one oversize and five sublegal sturgeon released for 29 bank anglers; and four legal white sturgeon kept, plus one legal, five oversize and 27 sublegal sturgeon released for 22 boats (48 anglers).

Yeah, I know.....

**The Guide's Forecast** – Most readers likely know what this means.....N/A, or not applicable.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – Plagued with high water this week and last, the Willamette continues to offer "fair" fishing for those that apply high water strategies. The plus side is that the color/turbidity remains good, with levels ranging between 6 and 8. Most consider anything below 12 very fishable. Oregon City backrollers finally got a taste of good fishing last week with Thursday, Friday and Saturday looking like the season was well underway, but the catch had dropped off a bit by Sunday as the next rise in water level took effect. The Falls counts are healthy for both Springers and Summer Steelhead, so by all indications the fish are moving through, the savvy anglers will get theirs by fishing close to shore and finding seams that break up the flow. Getting your offering in the travel lane is paramount. Milwaukee, Sellwood, downtown and the harbor all continue to put out their share, but "lights out" fishing is far from the norm. The downstream troll from the Broadway Bridge all the way down to the head of Multnomah Channel remains a reliable tactic. Troll downstream as slow as possible, just fast enough to keep your bait spinning. Try to zig zag on the way downstream, as the turns will change the action of your bait, raising and lowering it a foot or two. Green and blue

label herring with or without a flasher, held down with 6 to 8 ounces of lead is the standard. Some anglers are also doing well with Delta Divers fished the same way you would at Buoy Ten. The top twenty five feet of water is where most of your bites will happen.

Over the past Friday through Saturday, ODFW creel checkers reported 323 springers kept and 53 released for 924 boats with best results coming from St. Johns, upper Multnomah Channel and between Ross Island and Milwaukie. Plunkers at Meldrum Bar have had very few hookups but are landing the occasional steelhead and very occasional springer.

On Thursday, May 3rd, trolled herring took a few springers near Willamette Park and at the head of Multnomah Channel while back-trolled prawns and eggs were modestly successful at Oregon City. The general consensus is that rising water has slowed the bite. Catch-and-release sturgeon fishing has been excellent on those days when springers won't cooperate.

There are sufficient numbers of spring Chinook over the Falls for upriver anglers to target them. The rule of thumb is to locate a slot eight to 12 feet deep that runs near the bank. This fishery is almost exclusively in a boat on anchor but there are places that fit this criteria where back fishers can try it as well. Spinners are used almost exclusively which is why it shuts down as soon as algae (often called 'moss') starts to bloom. With nearly 2,000 spring Chinook across the Falls as of the latest data, numbers are about on track with this time last year but pale in comparison to 2010 when over 15,000 springers had been counted by May 1st with nearly identical river flows, water temperature and visibility.

McKenzie River level is at 7.5 feet and 6,000 cfs as of the morning of May 3rd. The level and flow are forecast to moderate into the coming weekend.

A permit application by Willamette Water Company to take and estimated **22 million gallons of water per day** from the McKenzie River for mostly unspecified purposes by undisclosed users was been recommended for denial by an Administrative Law Judge on April 27th, thanks primarily to efforts by Water Watch (<http://waterwatch.org/>). Before we breathe a final sigh of relief however, we must wait for final determination by the Water Resources Department.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will host a free Family Fishing event at Walter Wirth Lake in Cascade Gateway Park in Salem on Saturday, May 5 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Unfortunately continued high flows on all of the Portland area rivers are in the forecast for this week. It shouldn't however keep anglers from taking their chances, as the fishermen who put their time in, adjusting their techniques to the higher flows will catch dinner. No one ever catches a tasty springer while sitting at home watching the ball game or reading a high-water fishing report. Look for more spring Chinook and summer Steelhead to enter the tributaries in the coming weeks, but all indications point towards the spring fishing stretching out well into June this season. Trout fishing is going strong on all the valley lakes and ponds and if working over the high flows of the Willamette, Clack and Sandy doesn't excite you, stocker rainbows are a solid back up plan.

McKenzie River levels have improved and with summer steelhead and a few spring Chinook in the system, prospects are improving. Trout have been stocked and may be intercepted between the town of Leaburg and Hayden Bridge. Check for an adipose clip to keep 'em.

The Santiam system is on the rise at this writing and will continue to come up through the weekend, and then start to drop with levels predicted to be decent for fishing in a week or so. Over 150 summer steelhead were trucked from the Foster Dam trap downstream on the South Santiam to give anglers another shot at them. With fresh fish entering and recycled steelhead in

the system. prospects are improving.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – High water but decent color is the story here on the Clackamas. The river has been running between 13 and 15 feet on the gauge near Estacada, with 12 feet being the optimum fishing level. A few anglers are giving it a try but success is limited with the raging flows. Plunkers at Riverside Park have a good chance of taking a spring or summer Steelhead or a trailblazing spring Chinook. Spin-n glows and sand shrimp or a prawn will do the job if you can get it in front of a biter. Here also, positioning your bait in the travel lane is the key to success.

With the Columbia holding steady at "Action Stage", the Sandy has the potential to produce reliable action for the willing angler. Conditions point to near perfect for trolling prawns just inside the river's mouth and upstream I-84 bridge. Small spinner blades placed 1 to 1.5 inches ahead of a pink prawn are the rig of choice here. Lightweight sinkers in the 3/4 to 1.5 oz size, hung on a 16 inch dropper and held tight to the bottom is the setup for this shallow water fishery. Some angler will also score with red or green label plug cut herring also kept tight to the bottom. Up river, the high flows have hampered the success for late winter and early summer steelhead. If the river drops to 10.5 ft at the Bull Run gauge, the catch rate will increase exponentially.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Catches of summer steelhead have been fair to good on the Clackamas. A few springers have been hooked below Riverside Park to the mouth with this fishery just beginning here. Clackamas levels will be rising into the weekend but are forecast to drop over the coming week with the river at excellent levels for fishing in the second week of May of projections remain accurate. While Eagle Creek is in decent shape, it has not been worth the trip as fishing here has been poor.

Summer steelheading should remain productive on the Sandy which is a good thing with the winter run winding down and the spring Chinook component yet to be significant in the system.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Still little to report from the north coast district. Effort remains light as we transition from steelhead to spring chinook in the district. **Val Folkema of Garibaldi Marina (503-322-3312)** reported that one boat, fishing the bubble over the weekend (Saturday), came in with 3 chinook on the calm ocean day. The ocean has so much to offer this time of year, we just need it to lay down a bit.

Another report of springers at the jaws came in from Tuesday. One boat was rumored to have hooked 2 fish, landing one, likely toward the latter half of the outgoing tide. Herring trolled on the bottom is always a good idea on the second half of the outgoing tide along the jetty.

Although the river conditions have been fair for steelhead recently, most anglers now have their focus on spring chinook. Most of the steelhead are dark or spent, making them worse for wear as far as a sport fish and even worse for table fare. There is an occasional summer steelhead however. Another rise in river levels is forecast for this week.

Sturgeon effort is light and offshore effort even lighter in the swollen seas. Although the ocean condition looked tolerable on Wednesday, not many people took advantage of it given the prediction NOAA had laid out for the week. Serious anglers plan way in advance for an ocean trip and can often times get disappointed by last minute weather changes.

Inshore crabbing was fair on this tide series but tides will be increasing into the weekend. Hopefully, the offshore opportunity increased too.

**The Guide's Forecast** – It's still a bit early to expect spring chinook success but it can happen. Most anglers will remain focused on the Willamette Valley as it has yet to peak. For anglers dialed into the tidal influence of coastal estuaries, upper Tillamook Bay may produce a fish here or there through the weekend. A nice set of early morning outgoing tides will grace the upper reaches, a perfect scenario for a fish on the latter half of outgoing tide. Plugs are often most effective here but herring and spinners work well too. If you get bored salmon fishing, there should be some sturgeon present in the middle and upper bay as well.

The offshore forecast doesn't look too promising. It may be another weekend of dreaming of nearshore halibut success but between flatties, rockfish, nearshore and offshore salmon and crab, there will be bountiful opportunity for those that await a friendly sea.

Here's the forecast:

**FRI**

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 6 FT.  
SHOWERS LIKELY.

**FRI NIGHT**

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL  
6 FT. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

**SAT**

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 6 FT.  
CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

**SAT NIGHT**

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

**SUN**

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

**MON**

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

Area rivers, particularly the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca in that order, may produce an early spring chinook or a late run steelhead, although the likelihood of a fresh one will be rare but possible. Early run chinook respond well to plugs but backbounced eggs can be a producer as well. You'll have to work a lot of holes and luck will play a role. It would be a great way to spend some quality alone time however as the rivers won't be crowded.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Offshore charters out of central Oregon ports have observed a little slowing in the ling cod bite but results remain worthwhile. Most fishers are bagging limits of seven rockfish and ocean crabbing has picked up. It's definitely worth dropping pots on the way out.

Nearshore halibut efforts have yielded some good-sized fish this week. It would appear another big fish season is shaping up for shallow water halibut anglers who may pursue these fish to 40 fathom depths seven days a week.

**The ODFW sez,** "New this year is the prohibition of fishing for or retaining groundfish (including rockfish, lingcod, cabezon, greenling and others) offshore of the 30-fathom line in Oregon through the end of September. So during days on which nearshore halibut is open and all-depth halibut is closed, the game plan is to fish first for halibut between the 30- and 40-fathom lines, catch your halibut, and then move inside the 30-fathom line to catch groundfish"

The ocean is rough today but is forecast to improve Friday and Saturday and is certainly worth the trip with the offshore bounty available now. Long-range offshore forecasts are not always reliable, but the week ahead looks great so far.

South coast beaches are producing good catches of surf perch. Try the last two hours of the incoming tide and fish through the tide change for best results using clam necks, bloodworms. sand shrimp or prawns.

Excellent low tides will create opportunities for clam diggers starting Friday and continuing for several mornings into next week.

Ocean Chinook catch reports slowed out of the Port of Newport following a productive period around the middle of April. Crabbing has improved in Yaquina Bay.

Crabbing remains slow in Winchester Bay although rockfishing from the jetties is producing fish. A few striped bass are being caught on the upper bay but sturgeon fishing remains slow. Boats have formed hoglines upstream from Scottsburg and pressure has been picking up as water conditions have improved. Expect to see a spike in the river level of two or more feet over the weekend to come. The waters of the Umpqua are predicted to be dropping through the following week, however, and spring Chinook fishing should bounce back as conditions improve. Shad season opens here on May 26th and usually starts out a little slow. Steelheading picked up in the North Umpqua although a significant percentage of the fish being hooked have spawned out and are heading back to the ocean. Unfit for the table, these should be released. The South Umpqua is closed until May 26th.

Crabbing has been good for boaters in Coos Bay although those dropping nets and traps from docks have been struggling.

Clamming will be excellent in the bay with minus tides over the coming weekend. Jetty fishers report good catches of rockfish and greenling on incoming tides.

Spring Chinook fishing has been hot or cold on the lower Rogue with variations in the water level and flow a contributing factor. Monday this week was one of the 'hot' days as recreational and guide boats landed some dandies with a couple of those wild fish topping the 40-pound mark. While one unmarked steelhead maybe kept per day, these were released. Spinner and anchovy, the so-called "Rogue Rig," has been responsible for the vast majority of hookups. Bank anglers did very well on the last day of May with several landed at Huntley Park. With the Rogue level and flow forecast to be dropping on the lower as well as the middle Rogue, springer catches are expected to be good up to and if the water becomes too low and clear to fish well. As the numbers of spring Chinook in the upper Rogue continue to improve, these fish are becoming the primary target of anglers in this stretch of the river.

Southwest rivers are closed to trout fishing and many closed in entirety until May 26th.

Howard Prairie has been fishing well, producing mostly limits in fairly short order. Trout are averaging 15 inches with a few reported to 18 inches or better.

Prepare for another weekend of productive ice fishing at Diamond Lake as the frozen waters remain covered by several inches of slushy snow. Results have been good for bait fishers who are taking limits of 17 to 20 inch rainbows regularly as well as a few which are better measured in pounds. Get there while the ice remains thick enough to safely support humans.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will host a Family Fishing event Saturday, May 5 at Reinhart Pond in Grants Pass from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. Bait, bobber kits and information about additional fishing opportunities will be available at the event. Staff and volunteers also will be on hand to answer questions and help participants hone their fishing skills.

Blubill Lake, Bradley Lake, Eel Lake, Lower and Middle Empire Lake, Bethany Pond, Canby Pond, Commonwealth Lake, Dorman Pond, Huddelston Pond, Mt. Hood Pond and Silver Creek Reservoir are scheduled for planting with hatchery trout.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Snow fell on roads to the Deschutes earlier this week and the morning temperature was below freezing at Mecca Flats on the morning of Wednesday this week. Lower Deschutes anglers have been frustrated by high water but have gotten results this week by throwing large stonefly nymphs. Redsides are responding to offerings fished very near the river banks. There is little interest at Sharars Falls and no wonder as Chinook fishing is very slow. Fluctuations in water flows on the middle Deschutes have resulted in spotty catches. Hatches have been sparse, making nymphs most productive on this section of the river. Salmonfly hatches are only week or so away.

While the Metolius is swollen, the water is clear and fishing has been worthwhile for bull trout. Streamers are generally the tool of choice but small nymphs in red or blue have turned the trick on some days.

Crooked River flows, at 550 cfs and dropping as of Thursday this week. Catches have been excellent here whenever the river level has been conducive to fishing.

Trollers are taking bull trout in the Metolius and Deschutes arms of Lake Billy Chinook. Troll large plugs that imitate kokanee, a favorite baitfish for bulls.

Crane Prairie has been fishing pretty well, particularly in the Rock Creek area.

With kokanee scattered at Wickiup Reservoir, it has been a little challenging finding a school to fish. The rewards have been worth it, though, with fish averaging 16 inches and several reported over 20 inches, these fish are worthy of the grill.

Despite good results reported by kokanee fishers at Odell over the opener, fishing this week has been very slow.

Although fishing has been fair for kokanee and trout at Green Peter, catches slowed mid-week.

**ODFW Sez**, "Oregon may have a million dollar fish

"If we do, one lucky angler could catch it in Crane Prairie, Dexter or Blue River Reservoir. All three are included in the nationwide "Wanna Go Fishing for Millions" contest sponsored by Cabelas, Outdoor Channel and several fish and wildlife agencies (including ODFW)." See Radom Links, below, for more information and to register.

Central and eastern waters scheduled for trout planting this week include North South Umatilla Forest Ponds, Rowe Creek Reservoir, Cutsforth Pond, Clear Lake, Hanel Pond, and Rock Creek Reservoir. Taylor Lake, Ana Reservoir, Fall River, Shevlin Pond, Simtustus Lake and Three Creeks Lake.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

#### ***From the WDF&W Weekender Report for May 2012***

#### **Fishing options sprout in May for trout, halibut, shrimp, lingcod**

This is the time of year when new fishing opportunities start popping open like daffodils in the afternoon sun. Shrimp and lingcod in Puget Sound. Halibut there and off the Washington coast. Spring chinook salmon on the Chehalis and Yakima rivers.

But none of those fisheries draw bigger crowds than the lowland lakes trout-fishing season, which opened April 28 statewide. In preparation for opening day, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) planted millions of trout, ranging from 11-inch "catchables" to 11-pound jumbos.

"The weather was good, and so was the fishing," said Chris Donley, WDFW's inland fish manager. "We saw a lot of limits taken at lakes throughout the state."

For catch rates at dozens of Washington lakes on opening day, see the [news release](#) on the department's website.

But opening day is just one day of many in the state's trout season, Donley said. Now the tanker trucks are rolling again, delivering more fish to Washington lakes.

"We stock lakes with trout for the whole season, not just opening day," Donley said. "Trout fishing should be highly productive in lowland lakes through June, and then again in September. In higher-elevation lakes, fishing should be good right through the summer."

For most anglers, a valid 2012-13 fishing license is required to fish in Washington state. The exception is young people under age 15, who fish for free.

Licenses and permits are available online (<https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov/>), by phone (1-866-246-9453) and from sporting goods stores and other retail license dealers around the state. A list of license vendors is available at [/licensing/vendors/](#) and from local WDFW offices.

Key dates for fisheries opening in May include:

- May 1 – Lingcod fishing opens in Puget Sound. Also spring chinook fishing opens on the Chehalis River.
- May 3 – Halibut fishing opens in Marine Areas 6-10 in Puget Sound. Halibut fishing also opens in Marine Area 1 off the south coast (Ilwaco).
- May 5-7 – Last razor-clam dig of the season, at Twin Harbors only.
- May 5 – Shrimp fishing opens in areas of Puget Sound.
- May 6 – Halibut fishing opens in Marine Area 2 off the south coast (Westport and Ocean Shores)
- May 10 – Halibut fishing opens in marine areas 3 and 4 off the north coast (La Push/Neah Bay).
- May 24 – Halibut fishing opens in Marine Area 5 (Sekiu/Pillar Point)

For more information about these and other outdoor activities coming up in the weeks ahead, see the region-by-region **Weekender Reports** on WDFW's website at [/weekender/](#). These

reports are updated throughout the month for changes in fishing rules and other developments throughout the state.

For access information and fishing prospects, check out the new *Fish Washington!* look-up tool on WDFW's website at [/fishing/washington/](#).

### **North Puget Sound**

Lowland lake fishing is officially open for the season, and anglers heading out this spring can expect to reel in larger-than-usual trout in regional lakes.

With more than three million hatchery-reared trout averaging 11-13 inches — two to three inches longer than last year's average — released into state waters for the spring lake fishing season, there's still plenty of fishing action remaining after April 28's official opening day. Millions of other trout stocked last year have grown to catchable size. And some lakes also have been stocked with triploid and jumbo trout weighing up to 11 pounds apiece.

There'll be an uptick in regional fishing opportunity on Memorial Day weekend, because a number of lakes in King and Snohomish counties will be stocked with more catchable trout prior to the holiday. The May fish plants not only extend the trout fishing season, they also are timed to minimize predation by migratory cormorans, according to regional Inland Fisheries Biologist Justin Spinelli. Lakes scheduled to receive May catchable-trout plants are: Ballinger, Blackmans, Chain, Gissberg/Twin, Ketchum, Killarney, Loma, Martha (Warm Beach), Roesiger and Shoecraft lakes in Snohomish County; and Boren, Bitter, Desire, Doloff, Echo, Green, Haller, Holm, Meridian, Morton, Shadow, Spring, Trout and Twelve lakes in King County.

Complete information on stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available at the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) [website](#). For access information and fishing prospects, check out the new [Fish Washington!](#) look-up tool on WDFW's website.

As the season progresses and the weather warms, fish move lower in the water. Experts suggest using a weight and fishing off the bottom as the season progresses.

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

Remember to pick up a current Washington freshwater or combination fishing license. Anglers age 15 and older must have a current Washington freshwater fishing license valid through March 31, 2013. Licenses can be purchased [online](#) at; by telephone at 1-866-246-9453; or at hundreds of license dealers across the state. For details on license vendor locations, visit the WDFW [website](#).

Freshwater fishing licenses cost \$27.50 for resident adults 16 to 69 years old. Fifteen-year-olds can buy a license for \$8.25, and seniors 70 and older can buy an annual fishing license for \$5.50. Children 14 years of age and younger do not need a fishing license.

May is also a great month for **wild coastal cutthroat trout** and **smallmouth bass** in Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish, according to WDFW fish managers. **Kokanee** fishing also should be good in Lake Stevens, as well as Angle Lake in south King County and American Lake in Pierce County, according to WDFW fish biologists.

On saltwater, openings for halibut, lingcod and shrimp fisheries are coming up. Fishing for **lingcod** and **cabezon** begins May 1. During the hook-and-line lingcod 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. Cabezon anglers have a daily limit of two fish with no minimum size limit.

**Halibut** sport fishing will be four days longer than last year in much of Puget Sound. Puget Sound anglers will get an extra day to catch the big flatfish during the Memorial Day weekend and three additional days during the course of the season.

Halibut fishing opens May 3 in Marine areas 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca, and San Juan Islands south to the northern tip of Vashon Island). From May 3-19, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday and Saturday. From May 24-28, the fishery in those marine areas 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.

In Marine Area 5 (Sekiu and Pillar Point) the halibut fishery will be open from May 24-28, (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.

In all marine areas open to fishing, there's a one-fish daily catch limit and no minimum size restriction. Anglers must record their catch on a WDFW catch record card.

Marine Areas 11, 12 and 13 (Tacoma waters, Hood Canal and south Puget Sound) remain closed to halibut fishing this year to protect threatened and endangered rockfish species.

Meanwhile, the **spot shrimp** sport fishing season gets under way May 5 in Puget Sound. 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."

A valid 2012-13 fishing license is required to participate in the fishery.

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.

In all areas of Puget Sound, fishers are limited to 80 spot shrimp per day. For a description of the marine areas and fishing rules, visit WDFW's [Recreational Shrimp Fishing website](#).

Anglers should note that the opening of the **Tulalip Bay Terminal Area** salmon fishery will be delayed by two weeks to accommodate the Tulalip Tribes' ceremonial and subsistence fisheries.

The recreational salmon fishery in the Tulalip Bay Terminal Area – known as the “bubble” – is now scheduled to open Friday, May 18. That fishery was originally scheduled to open May 4.

“At the request of the Tulalip Tribes, we are delaying the sport fishery by two weeks to ensure treaty tribal fishers can meet their ceremonial and subsistence fishing needs,” said Pat Pattillo, salmon policy coordinator for WDFW. Even with the delay, the Tulalip bubble will be open for recreational salmon fishing two weeks earlier than in previous years, said Pattillo.

Beginning May 18, the Tulalip Bay Terminal Area will be open Friday through noon Monday each week through Sept. 3. The exception is June 9, when the bubble is closed for the Tulalip Tribes salmon ceremony. Beginning Sept. 8, the bubble will be open only on Saturday and Sunday of each week through Sept. 23.

Pattillo reminds salmon anglers fishing the bubble this year that they will be allowed to use two fishing poles from June 10 through Sept. 23, with the purchase of a two pole endorsement.

### **South Sound/Olympic Peninsula**

Additional spring fishing opportunities begin in May, when the Chehalis River opens for spring chinook, Puget Sound opens for shrimp and lingcod, and the halibut season opens in the Sound and off the coast. For freshwater anglers, hungry trout are still biting at many of the region’s lakes.

WDFW is adding more **trout** this month to several of those lakes, including Aberdeen, Failor, Sylvia and Vance Creek Pond #1 in Grays Harbor County; Island and Trails End (Prickett) in Mason County; American Lake in Pierce County; and Long’s Pond and Clear, Lawrence, Offutt and Ward lakes in Thurston County.

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

To participate, anglers must have a current Washington freshwater fishing license valid through March 31, 2013. Licenses can be purchased [online](#); by telephone at 1-866-246-9453; or at hundreds of license dealers across the state. For details on license vendor locations, visit the WDFW [website](#).

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

Freshwater anglers also might want to head out to the Chehalis River, where a spring chinook fishery gets under way May 1. Anglers fishing the Chehalis, from the mouth to the Highway 6 Bridge in the town of Adna, will have a daily limit of one salmon through June 30.

Anglers should be aware that a portion of the fishing regulations for the Chehalis River in the new [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) are incorrect. Anglers fishing the Chehalis, from the mouth to high bridge on Weyerhaeuser 1000 line approximately 400 yards downstream from Roger Creek (south of Pe Ell), are **not** required to follow selective gear rules.

Meanwhile, the last razor clam dig of the season will take place May 5-7 at Twin Harbors beach. All other coastal beaches in Washington will be closed to razor clam digging until a new season is announced in fall.

Morning low tides will be as follows:

- May 5, Saturday, 6:32 a.m., -1.5 feet
- May 6, Sunday, 7:19 a.m., -2.1 feet
- May 7, Monday, 8:07 a.m., -2.3 feet

Under state law, diggers can take 15 razor clams per day, and are required to keep the first 15 they dig. Each digger's clams must be kept in a separate container.

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

Anglers should note that the **halibut** season also 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.

Don't forget those **shrimp** pots. Shrimp fishing opportunities get under way May 5 in Puget Sound. The season 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 **salmon** fishing in marine areas 11 and 12 closes at the end of the day April 30. In addition, **wild steelhead** retention closes at the same time on the Bogachiel, Calawah, Dickey, Quillayute and Sol Duc rivers.

However, a couple of rivers are open for **salmon** fishing, including the Quillayute and a portion of the Sol Duc. The Hoh River also opens for salmon May 16. For details on those and other fishing opportunities, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

### **Southwest Washington**

The spring chinook fishery is currently closed below Bonneville Dam, but has been extended through May 6 upriver from the dam to the Washington/Oregon state line above McNary Dam. Meanwhile, anglers are increasingly turning to area tributaries for salmon and steelhead and to lakes and reservoirs that opened for trout April 28.

Fishing above Bonneville Dam has been slow, with the bulk of the run yet to arrive, prompting fish managers from Washington and Oregon to extend the **spring chinook** fishery by four days from the dam 163 miles upstream on the Columbia River.

As before, both boat and bank fishing are allowed from the Tower Island powerlines upriver to the state line. Bank anglers can also fish from the powerlines downriver to Bonneville Dam. Anglers fishing those areas can keep two marked hatchery adult chinook per day. All wild, unmarked chinook must be released unharmed.

"The extension will give anglers some extra time to catch some fish," said Cindy LeFleur, Columbia River policy manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). While additional fishing time for spring chinook remains uncertain, the mainstem Columbia River reopens May 16 for hatchery **steelhead**, **hatchery jack chinook** and **sockeye** below the Interstate 5 Bridge and for **shad** below Bonneville Dam. Anglers will be allowed to catch and keep up to two hatchery steelhead as part of their six-salmonid daily limit. Shad don't count, since there's no daily limit or minimum size.

Meanwhile, anglers have a number of other options to consider, ranging from fishing for hatchery-reared spring chinook and steelhead in area tributaries to trout in well-stocked lakes. Below Bonneville, anglers can find **hatchery spring chinook** and steelhead in several rivers, including the Cowlitz, Kalama, and Lewis. The Cowlitz River is the best bet for spring chinook while the Kalama and Lewis rivers are expected to have smaller returns and are limited to no more than one hatchery adult chinook salmon per day. Summer run steelhead can also be found on the lower sections of the Washougal and East Fork Lewis rivers, where bait is prohibited until the general season starts in early June.

Effective May 1, anglers with a two-pole endorsement can use two poles to fish for spring chinook salmon and other species on sections of the Cowlitz, Lewis and Wind, as described in the *Fishing in Washington* rule pamphlet. Starting May 12, that will also be true for Drano Lake. For tributaries such as Drano Lake and the Wind River, fishing prospects will likely follow closely behind fish counts at Bonneville Dam. Approximately 9,500 spring chinook are projected to return to Drano Lake this year, and another 8,400 to the Wind River.

The daily limit on both rivers is two hatchery origin chinook, two hatchery steelhead, or one of each. That is also the case on the Klickitat River, where sport fishing is open Mondays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Anglers are reminded Drano Lake is closed to all fishing Wednesdays through June, and that any chinook – adipose-fin clipped or not – may be retained on the upper Wind starting May 1.

Anglers heading to the Wind River will find they have more room to fish at the mouth, where WDFW recently expanded the fishing area by moving the outside boundary about 250 yards out into the Columbia River. The department's stated goal was to relieve crowding in an area that often draws up to 200 boats during the peak of the spring chinook fishery.

"The public has asked us for years to move the fishing boundary out into the Columbia," said John Weinheimer, a WDFW fish biologist involved in the project. "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 bound for the upper Columbia River."

Weinheimer said the boundary line will be readjusted during the course of the season if catch monitoring shows a high catch of upper Columbia chinook.

The expansion would not have been possible without financial support from the Columbia River endorsement fee paid by anglers who fish in the Columbia and its tributaries, Weinheimer said. "This is exactly the type of action the sport fishing community has requested be funded with the endorsement dollars," he said.

Rather catch **sturgeon**? The retention fishery for sturgeon below the Wauna powerlines on the Columbia River closes May 1, but reopens May 12 seven days a week through July 8 (or when the quota is met) with a one-fish daily limit, fork-length requirement of 41 to 54 inches. The retention fishery above the powerlines is open Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays with a fork-length requirement of 38 to 54 inches. Starting May 1, fishing is prohibited in spawning sanctuaries below Bonneville, John Day, McNary and Priest Rapids dams.

In the Bonneville Pool, fishery managers recently approved four additional days of retention fishing: June 15-16 and June 22-23. Based on public input, WDFW carried forward 1,060 fish from the fishery that ended Feb. 18 in those waters to provide a summer season, said Brad James, a fish biologist for WDFW. Anglers will be allowed to retain one white sturgeon a day

between 38 inches and 54 inches fork length between Bonneville Dam and The Dalles Dam on those days.

John Day Pool will close for retention of white sturgeon at 12:01 a.m. Thursday, May 21, when the catch is expected to reach the pool's 500-fish harvest guideline.

Meanwhile, anglers have been filling up stringers with **trout** caught on freshly stocked lakes open year-round and newly opened April 28 around the region. Rowland Lake in Klickitat County was the regional hotspot that day, followed by Horsethief Lake in Columbia Hills State Park. For **kokanne**, Merwin and Yale reservoirs are also good bets in May.

WDFW stocked more than 150,000 **rainbow trout** – some weighing up to a pound apiece – in six area lakes that opened April 28, with thousands more to follow. Mineral Lake in Lewis County got 42,000 of those fish, with tens-of-thousands more going to Rowland, Spearfish and Horsethief lakes in Klickitat County as well as Kidney Lake and Swift Reservoir in Skamania County.

"Trout fishing doesn't end with opening day," said WDFW biologist Weinheimer. "Many of these and other lakes will receive additional plants into June, and fishing should be good until the summer heat slows things down."

Information about trout stocking in southwestern Washington is available on [WDFW's website](#). Unlike trout, **bass** don't mind a little warm weather and fishing is expected to improve steadily in the pools above the Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day dams in the weeks ahead.

### **Eastern Washington**

The month of May is full of fishing promise throughout the region, with lots of opportunities in trout-stocked lakes that just opened April 28 and at others that opened earlier in March or are open year-round. Meanwhile, spring chinook salmon are moving into the Snake River.

John Whalen, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Eastern Region Fish Program Manager, said the **rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** lakes that typically perform well on the late April opener did so again this year. Top producers for average number of trout (in a five-fish catch limit) kept per angler included: Ferry County's Ellen Lake (5.0); Stevens County's Mudgett Lake (4.1), Starvation Lake (3.7), Cedar Lake (3.3), and Rocky Lake (2.71); Spokane County's Williams Lake (3.9) and West Medical Lake (3.1); and Lincoln County's Fish Trap (3.0).

"The weather on the opener was significantly better this year and angler participation was up accordingly," Whalen said. "Anglers were happy with the larger 11- to 13-inch rainbow trout just stocked and many caught fish in the 14- to 19-inch range."

Whalen noted the largest fish checked in the region on the opener were a 22-inch **brown trout** at Waitts Lake in Stevens County, a 21.7-inch **tiger trout** in Fish Lake in Spokane County and a 20-inch brown trout in Clear Lake in Spokane County.

Anglers should note that the public access site on the northeast shore at Newman Lake in eastern Spokane County is scheduled for re-development. The access area will be closed May 7-8 for re-paving, and the boat launch will be closed May 16 for installation of a new floating dock to assist boat launching. Newman Lake also has private resort boat launching.

In the south end of the region, where many lakes and ponds are either open year-round or have been open since the first of March, WDFW hatchery trout stocking continues to keep fishing productive through May. WDFW Wooten Wildlife Area Manager Kari Dingman notes that Curl

Lake is one fishery that opened April 28. Curl is used as an acclimation pond for spring chinook, but is then stocked with catchable size trout for the opener and throughout the spring and summer.

Spring hatchery **chinook salmon** fishing is open through May 24 in the Snake River section from the Highway 12 Bridge at Pasco upstream about seven miles to the fishing restriction boundary below Ice Harbor Dam. Chinook fishing is open through May 31 in three other sections of the Snake near Little Goose Dam, near Lower Granite Dam, and near Clarkston (see section and all rule details in the [Fishing Rule Change](#) online.) Daily catch limit is six hatchery (adipose fin clipped) chinook, of which no more than two may be adult chinook. The only exception is the area between the juvenile bypass return pipe and Little Goose Dam along the south shoreline of the facility (includes the walkway area locally known as "the wall" in front of the juvenile collection facility), where the daily bag limit is one jack and one adult hatchery chinook. An angler must cease fishing when the one allowed adult is retained. For all areas open for chinook, anglers must cease fishing when the adult limit has been retained for the day.

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

A new "Fish Washington" search tool to find fisheries by species, water and county across the state is available [online](#).

For the complete trout stocking plan for fishing waters throughout the region, see [WDFW's stocking website](#). For the latest weekly stocking reports, [click here](#).

### **Northcentral Washington**

The month of May—with warming weather and water temperatures—often brings the best trout catches, even in regional lakes that have been open since early March or April.

The region's top-producing **rainbow trout**-stocked lake on the April 28 official opening day of lowland lake fishing season, was Warden Lake in Grant County, where anglers averaged 4.09 fish caught and kept. Anglers at Grant County's Deep Lake averaged catches over the five-fish daily limit, and kept 3.13 fish, on average, after releases. Park Lake, also in Grant County, had a 2.91 fish per angler average.

In Okanogan County, Wannacut Lake anglers averaged 3.4 trout harvested and Alta Lake averaged 2.92. WDFW Okanogan District Fish Biologist Bob Jateff reports overall angler effort was down a bit from previous years and fishing success seemed to be hampered by water clouded by recent heavy rains.

A couple of other lakes—Big Twin near Winthrop and Blue near Sinlahekin—opened April 28 but were not checked because they're under selective gear rules and one-fish catch limits. Both should be good for rainbows in the 12-16 inch range. Blue Lake also has **brown trout**. Chelan County's Clear Lake saw an average harvest of 2.92 fish per angler on the opener. Anglers at Beehive Lake, also in Chelan County, averaged 2.73 fish harvested.

Douglas County's Jameson Lake saw an average of only two fish harvested per angler on opening day. But WDFW District Wildlife Biologist Travis Maitland reports a lot more fishing pressure and

success at Jameson than creel data indicates, since the creel reports are based only on completed angler trips.

Jateff also noted several Okanogan County selective-gear, catch-and-release waters continue to provide good fishing after their April 1 opener. Davis Lake near Winthrop and Rat Lake near Brewster both have rainbows in the 10-14 inch range, and Rat also has brown trout.

Spectacle Lake near Loomis, which has been open since April 1, has been producing rainbows in the 10-14 inch range with an occasional triploid up to two pounds. Spectacle also has **yellow perch**, **bluegill**, and **bass** available.

WDFW Fish Biologist Mike Schmuck reports **walleye** fishing on Moses Lake has been good on the Crab Creek arm (locally known as the "Alder Street Fill") in downtown Moses Lake. **Smallmouth bass** fishing on Moses Lake and Potholes Reservoir has been good, with warm weather moving fish into shallower water. Largemouth **bass** fishing (catch-and-release only) is picking up on the Quincy Wildlife Area's Stan Coffin Lake as water temperatures warm into the mid-to high-50s. Stan Coffin Lake also has a healthy **channel catfish** population with some fish up to five pounds.

A new ["Fish Washington" search tool](#) is available on WDFW's website to help anglers locate fishing opportunities by species, water and county across the state. The complete [trout stocking plan](#) for fishing waters throughout the region also is available online, along with [weekly stocking reports](#).

### **Southcentral Washington**

Anglers have a chance to land feisty spring chinook salmon and a virtual guarantee of catching good-size rainbow trout in well-stocked lakes around the region in May. Sturgeon also will be available in waters above John Day Dam.

**Spring chinook** are finally passing Bonneville Dam in large numbers will be moving through area fisheries throughout the month. Through May 6, anglers can keep two adipose-fin-clipped hatchery chinook per day from Bonneville upstream to the Washington/Oregon state line, 17 miles upriver from McNary Dam.

That season, previously set to close May 2, was extended by fish managers from Washington and Oregon, who may consider another extension in the days ahead.

"Anglers should keep an eye out for emergency rules that open and close fishing on short notice," said Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) stationed in the Tri-cities.

That also goes for the Yakima River, which is expected to open for spring chinook fishing in mid-May, said John Easterbrooks, WDFW regional fish program manager. An announcement about that fishery will be posted on the [department's website](#) and released to the news media soon, he said.

"The forecast is for 12,040 spring chinook, with 5,680 headed for the Cle Elum hatchery," he said. "That's a good return – up from 10,320-fish projected last year, when 13,400 adults actually returned to the mouth of the Yakima."

Of course, **trout** will be in even greater supply. WDFW has stocked lakes and ponds throughout the region with thousands of fish since March, and still has a couple months to go. Columbia Park Pond, Dalton Lake, Mattoon Lake and Rotary Lake are just a few of the waters scheduled to be

restocked this month. A complete trout-planting schedule for south-central lakes and ponds is available on the [WDFW website](#).

“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, fishing should pick up in lakes throughout the region.”

**Sturgeon anglers** are also advised to stay abreast of new regulations. As of late April, 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 retention 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.

Catch-and-release sturgeon fishing above McNary Dam begins Aug. 1 and runs through Jan. 31, 2013. Sturgeon spawning sanctuaries below Priest Rapids Dam and Ice Harbor Dam close to all sturgeon fishing – both harvest and catch-and-release – May 1. They reopen for catch-and-release fishing on Aug. 1, as described on pages 75 and 81 of the [Fishing in Washington](#) rules pamphlet.

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

Anglers age 15 or older are reminded that they must purchase a 2012-13 license to fish state waters. Those who fish for salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River and its tributaries are also required to purchase an endorsement that helps maintain and improve fishing opportunities throughout the Columbia River Basin. 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.

## **TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail**

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### **Random Links**

Critical this season - Offshore waypoints:

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/regulations/sport\\_fishing/waypoints.asp](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/regulations/sport_fishing/waypoints.asp)

2012 Sport Halibut Season Map:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/finfish/halibut/seasonmaps/2012.pdf>

Voice your opinion in upcoming regs here:

<http://dfw.state.or.us/news/2012/May/050112.asp>

Didn't win a million dollars fishing last year? Try again:

[http://www.cabelas.com/browse.cmd?categoryId=107520480&WT.tsrc=CRD&WT.mc\\_id=fishformillions](http://www.cabelas.com/browse.cmd?categoryId=107520480&WT.tsrc=CRD&WT.mc_id=fishformillions)

Good News - SATURDAY'S 'SUPERMOON' WON'T DESTROY EARTH:

<http://news.discovery.com/earth/supermoon-earthquakes-tsunami-link-120503.html>

**GOOD LUCK!**