

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 11th – May 17th, 2012**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- As chinook begin to pour over Bonneville Dam, managers will be keeping a close eye on overall counts before providing a run-size update. Managers are no longer confident that the pre-season prediction is accurate but a sizeable return is still likely. No further sport opportunity is likely in the near future but in these high flows, Columbia fish can sometimes supplement catches in the lower Multnomah Channel and salmon action there could easily continue into July this year. Trolled herring draws the most bites in this fishery.

With the continued high water, spring chinook fishing has been spotty and the fish have been scattered from Scappoose to Oregon City. Water clarity remains good and the standard herring/flasher will produce. The prawn bite has been building and with water temperatures reaching 53 degrees, spinners will soon be taking fish regularly too. Summer steelhead are also showing up consistently in the catch with most being caught by plunkers at Meldrum Bar. The California sea lions also have a strong presence throughout the river so anglers need be aware of the risks when angling. In the Oregon City stretch, some reports indicate that nearly half of the salmon hooked are stolen by sea lions. When a fish is hooked, all anglers can do is try to remain inconspicuous by not standing up and waving the net around. Also muscle the fish to the boat as quick as possible and when you do have a hatchery fish in the net, pull it in the boat immediately as more and more nets are being destroyed or taken while your catch is hanging over the side.

Cool water temperatures and high flows will keep the springers from entering the Clackamas in any numbers but the summer steelhead are not letting that slow them down. The summers are abundant here this season and anglers are getting their share but pressure remains fairly light. Fish are spread from the mouth to Rivermill Dam but the Feldheimer's to Carver stretch will likely produce best. When the water temperature reaches 52, spring chinook will enter in better numbers.

Both spring chinook and summer steelhead are here in decent numbers and the Sandy River remains a solid "Plan B" if you are looking for a quiet alternative to the Willamette. Pressure has been light, but local anglers have been faring well for summers and a small handful of springers have been taken from Oxbow down. Sand shrimp is the bait of choice for both springers and summers either back trolled, drifted or fished under a bobber. Trolling prawn's and herring at the mouth below I-84 is also a good bet, especially when the Columbia flows remain high.

An unusually wet spring has created challenging conditions on the McKenzie but fishing for native rainbows and cutthroat is good when conditions have periodically moderated. It looks good this week.

The North Santiam will remain high due to snowmelt this week.

Northwest – In Tillamook Bay, spring chinook are being caught with surprising regularity for this early in the season. Salmon are being taken on occasion from the hatchery hole on the Trask as well as an occasional one for the rare angler on the Wilson. The upper bay has produced a few fish and the lower bay is putting out an occasional one as well. The strong tide series we're currently on keeps most motivated anglers fishing in the upper reaches of the estuary with spinners and herring producing the best catches.

The Trask is likely to produce the best catches this early in the season although with dropping flows, fish are more likely to remain in the estuary than make a run into the district's rivers. The Hatchery Hole on the Trask however may continue to produce catches in the early morning hours. Eggs and shrimp will fare best.

Although pressure is light, an occasional summer steelhead is coming from the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Hard-core steelheaders will wait another month however when lower flows make targeting this quarry more productive.

Although a minus tide hampered early morning bar crossings, anglers interested in the bounty offshore out of Garibaldi did well for bottomfish and crab early this week. Salmon, both spring chinook and offshore California stock are coming with more regularity. Early next week poses a better opportunity as tides soften.

Southwest – Chinook fishing offshore has been contingent on ocean conditions. When boats can get out and find fish, it's been fair to good.

Nearshore halibut has been producing fish up to 80 and 90 pounds. The all-depth halibut opener begins May 10th through 12th and is expected to be productive if ocean conditions cooperate.

Offshore bottom fishing has been producing reliable limits of rockfish and near-limits of lingcod.

Surf perch fishing is productive and has yielded some limits on the south coast whenever ocean swells moderate.

Winchester bay has remained slow for crabbing and sturgeon fishing. Spring chinook catches are improving around Elkton with the mainstem Umpqua forecast to be dropping this week. A 36-pounder was landed Monday this week. Steelheading is fair to good for late winters on the North Umpqua.

Boats launching out of Gold Beach have enjoyed excellent results for bottom fish. Spring chinook catches have been fair with the occasional very good day on the lower Rogue. Spinner/anchovy rigs have been most effective. A few fresh steelhead were taken recently. Spring chinook catches are starting to pick up on the middle Rogue. Migration lanes on the upper Rogue will be producing springers now that the flow is finally stable.

Offshore chinook fishing was slow at the opener out of the Port of Brookings but will improve in weeks to come with 80,000 springers forecast to return to the Klamath system.

Boats are soon expected to be able to launch on the partially-thawed waters of Diamond lake. The surface is no longer safe for ice fishing.

SW Washington – Catches of spring chinook and summer steelhead are starting to ramp up on the Cowlitz. Most of the action is taking place near the salmon hatchery but with peak season coming on, anglers will get more concentrated as the returning adults do.

The Kalama and Lewis Rivers will also see a jump in angling success as flows moderate. Returns to these systems aren't as strong as the Cowlitz but neither is the effort.

With counts at Bonneville ramping up, success rates at Drano Lake and the Wind River will climb as well. Anglers were averaging about a fish for every 8 rods but effort and success should improve markedly this week. Plugs, herring and prawns can all produce good catches in the weeks ahead.

Eastern – The Deschutes is fishing well from Warm Springs to Maupin with reddsides responding to nymphs as there aren't many hatches occurring.

Water conditions and catch results are improving with the Crooked River water at good level for fishing and stable this week.

Crane Prairie has been productive around Rock Creek. Kokanee catches have been fair but steady for fish averaging 16-inches at Wickiup. Fish are still holding fairly shallow with pink lures most effective recently.

Soapbox Update:



Tillamook Estuaries Partnership *A National Estuary Project*

PRESS RELEASE – For Immediate Release

Contact: Sierra Lauder, Tillamook Estuaries Partnership (TEP)
Phone: 503-322-2222 Email: bounty@tbnep.org

Registration Open April 16th for Tillamook Estuaries Partnership's 9th Annual Bounty on the Bay Fundraiser and Fishing Tournament

Garibaldi, OR. – Spring is coming and that means...FISH!! Anglers from across the northwest will be gathering in Garibaldi June 1st and 2nd to participate in Tillamook Estuaries Partnership's (TEP) annual Bounty on the Bay. Tides are looking good for pursuit of the mighty Spring Chinook, and there are seats available with professional guides for the Saturday fishing tournament, or anglers can register private boats. Those looking for a good meal Friday night and tips for Saturday's tides are encouraged to join us at the Old Mill for dinner and a pro-fishing guide seminar. This event is not just for the fishermen- those interested in an alternative bay adventure can participate in a guided kayak tour of Tillamook Bay; the "Paddle Picnic" will be led by a local birder and include lunch at Goose Point with guest speaker Gary Albright from the Tillamook County Pioneer Museum. Hungry seafood lovers are invited to join us Saturday night for the main event: the bountiful Seafood Feast and Silent Auction, where tournament winners will be announced.

At TEP we are all about estuaries and this weekend event highlights the best Tillamook Bay has to offer: amazing scenery, humongous fish, great local food, and jovial company. In its ninth year, Bounty on the Bay features two days of revelry. Thanks to our Watershed Sponsors: Kayak

Tillamook, Garibaldi House Inn and Suites, and the City of Tillamook's TRT Grant Fund, this action-packed weekend will raise vital funds to support TEP's Local Grant Program that encourages research, habitat restoration, and education projects throughout Tillamook County.

Registration is open April 16th and necessary for all facets of the event. Register early, before May 15th, for any of the on-the-water packages and receive a free Bounty on the Bay t-shirt! Whether you are interested in the guided fishing trips (early reservations recommended), taking out your own boat, joining us for the Friday night dinner and Pro-Guide Seminar, our fabulous Seafood Feast on Saturday night, or the Picnic Paddle, we have something for everyone. Garibaldi House Inn and Suites, the official hotel of Bounty on the Bay, is offering discounted rates for Friday and Saturday night stays if you mention Bounty on the Bay.

Please register by May 25th! Registration forms are available online by going to www.tbnep.org or, to obtain more information regarding the event, contact Sierra Lauder by phone at (503) 322-2222 or by email at Bounty@tbnep.org .

This annual fundraiser supports TEP's efforts to implement the Tillamook Bay Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). Over thirteen years in implementation, the CCMP establishes 63 scientifically based, community supported actions that restore water quality, enhance degraded habitats, reduce sedimentation and lessen the impacts of coastal flooding.

Tillamook Estuaries Partnership is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and restoration of Tillamook County's estuaries and watersheds in their entirety. For more information on TEP programs and how they benefit our local communities, visit www.tbnep.org.

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Columbia River Fishing Report – Spring chinook are starting to pour over Bonneville Dam with passage each day surpassing the previous day. On Tuesday, May 8th, twelve thousand adults passed the facility, making for a grand total of over 63,000 adults to date. We'll likely see the peak passage day within the next 7 days. With no active sport-fisheries underway, there really isn't much to report. If you're bored, you can read the agencies "Spring Fishery Update":

**OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: SPRING FISHERY UPDATE #1
May 7, 2012**

Stock Status

Bonneville Dam passage of Chinook through May 6 totals 42,346 adults.

The *U.S. v Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met today to review the status of the upriver spring Chinook run. TAC did not provide an update, but stated the run will not meet the preseason forecast of 314,200 at the river mouth, is late timed, the recent 5-year and 10-year

average 50% date is May 7 and May 6, and there is not enough information to update the run size today.

Treaty Fishery Update

The ceremonial permit fishery, platform and hook-and-line fishing, and the hook-and-line fishery downstream of Bonneville are ongoing. No commercial gillnet fisheries have occurred in 2012 for spring Chinook.

Preliminary summary of 2012 Treaty Indian upriver Chinook catches			
Fishery	In Hand (thru 5/6)	Planned (thru 5/11)	Total
Ceremonial Permits	6,907	2,093	9,000
Zone 6 Platform/H&L			1,190
Below Bonneville Dam H&L			390
Platform H&L Subtotal	1,580	420	2,000
Total Upriver Impacts	8,487	2,513	11,000

The current season total upriver catch in all treaty Indian fisheries through May 6 is 8,487 fish. A final upriver run size of 109,000 is required to remain with impact limitations (8.3%) for fisheries through May 6.

The projected catch estimate of upriver spring Chinook from treaty Indian fisheries through May 11 totals 11,000 fish. A final upriver run size of 132,500 is required to remain with impact limitations (8.3%) for fisheries projected through May 11.

Non-Treaty Fishery Update

Two mainstem commercial salmon fishing periods (18 hours combined) occurred on April 3 and April 10. Landings include 6,179 Chinook. One additional Chinook was landed during the winter sturgeon season. Upriver Chinook mortalities total 4,318 fish, compared to the 5,900 available pre-update (73%).

Winter season Select Area fisheries concluded April 5 and spring fisheries began April 19. Landings thru May 4 total 2,701 Chinook.

The lower Columbia River recreational fishery was open through Sunday April 22. The estimated catch is 11,826 kept adult fish from 106,400 angler trips. Kept and release mortalities of upriver fish is estimated at 8,922 fish, or 70% of the 12,700 available prior to a run update.

The recreational fishery from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Oregon/Washington border was open March 16 through May 6. Catch totaled 591 kept and 174 released with upriver Chinook mortalities totaling 608 compared to the 1,700 available pre-update (36%).

The recreational fisheries on the Snake River (Washington waters) opened below Ice Harbor Dam on April 20 and in three areas between Little Goose Dam and Clarkston, WA on April 25. Catch estimates through May 6 totaled 79 upriver Chinook. Catch projections through May 13 are for an additional 405 upriver mortalities (kept plus released) for a total of 484 compared to the 1,362 available pre-update (36%).

The current season total upriver catch (kept and release mortalities) in all non-treaty fisheries is 14,056 fish. A final upriver run size of 154,500 is required to remain within catch balance and impact limitations for completed fisheries and Select Area commercial fisheries (through May 4).

Preliminary summary of 2012 Non-treaty upriver Chinook catches (Pre-Update)				
Upriver Catch				
(kept plus release mortalities)				
Fishery	Allocated	In Hand	Planned	Total
Mainstem commercial (complete)	5,914	4,318	0	4,318
Select Area commercial (actual thru 5/4; proj. thru 6/15)	330	129	35	164
Below Bonneville recreational (complete)	12,666	8,922	0	8,922
Bonn to OR/WA border recreational (actual thru 5/6)	1,689	608	0	608
Snake River recreational (actual thru 5/6, proj. thru 5/13)	1,362	79	405	484
Wanapum Tribal	33	0	33	33
Total Upriver Impacts	21,994	14,056	473	14,529

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon is the only game in town until steelhead opens up in mid-May (May 16th). Sturgeon fishing remains challenging but the estuary fishery will reopen on Saturday although action will be light. Here is the report from Troutdale to Longview. Less than impressive:

Troutdale Boats:

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

Portland to Longview Bank:

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

Portland to Longview Boats:

Weekly checking showed three legal white sturgeon kept, plus 43 sublegal sturgeon released for 28 boats (77 anglers).

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – With water flows moderating at Willamette Falls, the latest water temperature reading is 55 degrees. Greater numbers of springers and summer steelhead will be crossing in these conditions. Spring Chinook catches in the lower river and Multnomah Channel have been good one day, not-so-good the next. According to ODFW fish checkers, about one-third of the boats trying caught and kept springers. Regardless of catch rate reports, now is the time to fish springers in the lower Willamette as the peak of the run will continue through May.

Pro Guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "The Willamette: With the continued

high water spring Chinook fishing has been spotty and the fish have been scattered from Scappoose to Oregon City. There is always a decent chance of finding a few fish so one has to put in an effort to achieve any success at all. Water clarity remains good and the standard herring/flasher will produce. But the prawn bite has been building and with water temps reaching 53 degrees spinners will soon be taking fish regularly too. Summer Steelhead are also showing up consistently in the catch with most being caught by plunkers at Meldrum Bar. The California sea lions also have a strong presence throughout the river so anglers need be aware of their presence. In the O.C. stretch some reports indicate that nearly half of the salmon hooked are stolen by sea lions. When a fish is hooked, all anglers can do is try to remain in-conspicuous by not standing up and waving the net around. Also muscle the fish to the boat as quick as possible and when you do have a hatchery fish in the net, pull it in the boat immediately as more and more nets are being destroyed or taken while your catch hang over the side."

As conditions improve, catches will follow on the McKenzie, although it's been pretty good all week. Anglers will find large, broad-shouldered reddsides willing to chase and consume offerings of nymphs although anglers should watch for signs of surface activity as well. With the temperature of the water still low, look for trout to hold in slower water. They won't move to shallow riffles and runs until the water warms with higher air temps and as snowmelt slows. Stick to deeper runs and pools this coming weekend. There are enough summer steelhead in the system to make it worthwhile targeting them now although recent catches of hatchery fish have been on the small side. Spring Chinook numbers will be at fishable levels in June.

The water level at the McKenzie River has been dropping all week, from about 7,000 cfs to around 4,000 cfs at Leaburg as of the morning of May 10th. Warm, sunny weather this weekend will make for pleasant fishing conditions but also means, for best results, an early start on McKenzie native rainbows and cutthroats is in order.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will host a Family Fishing event the Alton Baker Canoe Canal in Eugene on Saturday, May 12 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. This event is free and no pre-registration is required. This event is part of the ODFW Outdoors program and is designed to introduce young people and their families to the fun of fishing. The department will loan out rods, reels, tackle and provide bait for use by anglers who are learning to fish or do not have their own gear. Participants should feel free to bring their own equipment if they prefer. ODFW staff and volunteers will be on hand to help participants learn how to bait the hook, cast the rod and land the fish. Volunteers will even help clean the catch.

Benson Lake, Blue Lake, Hartman Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Blue River above Reservoir, Blue River Reservoir, Carmen Reservoir, Clear Lake, Detroit Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Fall Creek above Fall Creek Reservoir, Foster Reservoir, Freeway Lake East, Green Peter Reservoir, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River below Leaburg Lake, Roaring River Park Pond, Salmon Creek, Salt Creek, Walling Pond, Walter Wirth Lake and the Willamette River Middle Fork above Hills Creek Reservoir are scheduled for trout stocking.

The Guide's Forecast – Anglers in the Oregon City stretch has experienced hit or miss hookups while enduring assaults from sea lions. Those furbags seem particularly aggressive this year. Portland Harbor seems to be most consistent while remaining pinniped-free. Another hotspot has been the head of Multnomah Channel. Both herring and prawns are producing this week. Plunkers at Meldrum Bar are taking a few steelhead and fewer spring Chinook although a 20-pound spring was landed here on Wednesday this week. With upper Willamette water levels moderating, trout fishing will be rewarding on the Middle Fork. Nymphs will be most effective with dry patterns working only if hatches materialize. Summer steelheading has been worthwhile in this stretch.

Pro Guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) adds this, "Willamette: As water levels continue to drop, look for fishing to become more consistent especially in the Oregon City area. Likewise as the temperature near 55 degrees the prawn and spinner bite will be in full swing. Plug cut and whole herring will continue to entice biters through June with corresponding temp's up to 65 degrees, but more anglers turn to the larger sized rainbow spinners and catch as many or more than the herring draggers. Counts over Willamette Falls indicate the summer Steelhead run is going strong, but springers are dragging their feet. Look for that to change after this week's warm weather."

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Clackamas water levels have been high again this week but are forecast to be dropping Friday and Saturday this week, Fresh summers are entering and there are a few spring Chinook in the lower river.

Sandy River levels have been dropping for a week after holding at mostly high flows for most of the season. This bodes well for the coming weekend.

Pro Guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "Cool water temps and high flows will keep the springers from entering the Clackamas in any numbers, but the summer Steelhead aren't letting that slow them down. The summers are abundant here this season and anglers are getting their share but pressure remains fairly light. Fish are spread from the mouth to Rivermill Dam but the Feldheimer's to Carver stretch will likely produce best. When the water temperature reaches 52, spring Chinook will let their presence be known.

"Both spring Chinook and summer Steelhead are here in decent numbers and the Sandy River remains a solid "Plan B" if you are looking for a quiet alternative to the Willamette. Pressure has been light, but local anglers have been faring well for summers and a small handful of springers have been taken from Oxbow down. Sand shrimp is the bait of choice for both springers and summers either back trolled, drifted or fished under a bobber. Trolling prawn's and herring at the mouth below I-84 is also a good bet."

The Guide's Forecast – Steelheading has been quite productive at times upriver from Cross Park. Several were taken on Wednesday this week with bobber and jigs effective. Expect to see a number of colorful winter steelhead and the occasional bright summer fish. Spring Chinook catches are slow but there are fish available in the lower river. Winter steelhead catches are predictably winding down at this time of year. ODFW creel checkers have reported good catches of summer steelhead and as water conditions improve, prospects are positive for the week to come. The Oxbow to Dabney stretch should be productive.

Pro Guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "As the Clackamas continues its slow drop look for the summer steelhead fishing to improve with more anglers getting on the water. This week's warm weather should also bump the temp a smidge, starting to draw the first surges of springers into the river. May is traditionally the kick off month for spring salmon here, but the stream thermometer hitting 52 degree's seems more important to the chinook than the calendar month. For boaters, back trolling and back bouncing shrimp and egg cocktails with a small spin-n-glow will be the go to method. This week bank anglers will begin to congregate at High Rocks and a few Springers will succumb.

"Water levels on the Sandy will remain steady this week. Look for the level at Bull Run to hover around the 10 foot mark as this is optimum fishing level. Both drift boaters in the upper river and power boats on the lower stretch will post some numbers this week and next. Both summer Steelhead and spring Chinook are here in good numbers and anglers fishing sand shrimp, prawn tails and small diving plugs should expect decent action.....the variable being WHAT you will hook up with."

North Coast Fishing Report – Although effort remains light, motivated spring chinook anglers are reporting fair success for this early in the fishing season. Reports of hatchery spring chinook from the Hatchery Hole on the Trask are reliable and consistent enough to indicate adults have been moving into area rivers on the recent rain freshet. Salmon have recently been taken in upper Tillamook Bay as well as near the Coast Guard station in Garibaldi. It seems pretty early to be getting consistent opportunities in early May but if the Tillamook return follows suit with where the Willamette Valley predictions are running this year, it should be a good one.

Hatchery manager Jim Skarr reported taking a springer the other day at the Trask hatchery while steelhead fishing. That likely means he was fishing in the fast water at the head of the hole. River conditions have been ideal lately, making the Trask and Wilson Rivers and to a lesser degree the Nestucca River, good early season options for driftboaters. The effort is light. Steelhead are likely present; both late (and likely spent) winter fish and an occasional silver summer variety. The Wilson and Nestucca are the best options for an early summer steelhead and salmon will hover in steelhead water on occasion, especially in higher flows. With flows in the rivers on the steep decline, the bay will be the best option into the weekend but more on that later.

Pro guide John Kirby (406-930-1133) reported getting a pull in front of Garibaldi on Monday, trolling herring in front of the Coast Guard Station near the bottom. He only spent a few passes pursuing springers and got 4 keeper crab in the bay for a short 1-hour soak.

Ocean goer's had some great opportunity early this week, scoring on good catches of bottomfish, including lingcod. Some anglers put in some time for salmon but with the rivers in prime shape for migration, it seems most adults took advantage of the optimum river levels. Ocean crabbing remain fair; no limits but no shut-outs either.

Razor clam diggers had a good time along Clatsop Beaches over the weekend, scoring good numbers of clams in quality shape. Although the minus tide series was very low, the size of the clams was not impressive. Those digging in the surf however did find some quality sized clams for the catch. It was pretty slam dunk clamming last Sunday as all the stars were aligned for a good harvest.

No glowing reports of a high halibut harvest in the calm seas but it's a bit of a crap shoot in the nearshore fishery. The offshore fishery opened up today however and the catch is likely to be good.

Eckman Lake and Thissel Pond are scheduled for trout stocking.

The Guide's Forecast – Salmon anglers will be more interested in targeting salmon inshore, as in Tillamook Bay and as the tide series softens, anglers will look to the lower bay to catch a herring trolled fish near the mouth or in front of Garibaldi. There should be some fair to good catches but anglers may get frustrated by a predicted NW wind in the afternoon. Be prepared to fish with wind but we should see the first good shot of chinook in the Tillamook system although action may be best after the weekend.

Driftboaters will come upon dropping flows which keep chinook hidden in predictably deep holes and dark water. Backbounced eggs or plugs may take fish most effectively and as flows drop, use smaller baits and plugs in the clearing water. Summer steelhead may be in their classic drifts but the same rule applies, go small when the flows drop.

Crabbing may be a fair option with the weak weekend tides. You'll want to run your gear close to the ocean where the most motivated feeders are likely to reside.

For halibut anglers, the offshore prediction looks a bit like a washing machine. For the size of the halibut that you're likely to catch, you may re-think your effort:

FRI

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. W SWELL 6 FT.

FRI NIGHT

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT...EASING TO 15 TO 20 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

SAT

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT...EASING TO 10 TO 15 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 4 FT...SUBSIDING TO 2 FT IN THE AFTERNOON. NW SWELL 6 FT.

SAT NIGHT

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

SUN

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 7 FT.

MON

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. W SWELL 8 FT.

That doesn't look too friendly for anyone seeking offshore opportunity for salmon, crab, halibut or bottomfish.

For more details on the upcoming halibut seasons, go here:

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

Central & South Coast Reports – The ocean swell forecast looks favorable with fairly long periods and mild onshore winds for those looking forward to launching boats to seek the ocean's bounty in the coming weekend.

Bottom fishing started out slow in the morning mud-week out of central Oregon ports, but picked up mid-morning, allowing most anglers to fill seven-fish limits of rockfish and near-limits of two ling cod.

Offshore crabbing has improved with Dungeness in good condition, making it well worthwhile to drop pots on the way out for any species.

While nearshore halibut has been productive for decent-sized flatties (several over 50 pounds in as little as 50 feet of water!), many offshore fishers are looking forward to the spring halibut

season which opened today, May 10th through Saturday, May 12th from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain. With the quota increased to 120,821 pounds this year, fishing is likely to continue on the following scheduled dates: May 17th-19th, May 24th-26th, and May 31st-June 2nd.

Crabbing has been slow to fair at Winchester Bay but has shown signs of recent improvement. Surf perch are being taken in the bay as they start their annual migration into the bay although there are few anglers fishing for them yet. Striped bass have been caught in upper tidewater. With the water level forecast to drop through the coming weekend and spring Chinook running upstream, there's reason for optimism. Catches have been fair to good recently. Although over 100 spring Chinook had been counted at Winchester Dam at the end of April, only one has been landed according to reports.

Summer steelhead numbers will be picking up along with springers, the latter of which should provide decent results through June.

Crabbing has been good recently in Coos Bay where rock fishers casting from the jetties are taking kelp greenling and rockfish. Dock crabbing has been somewhat slower. Clamming has been excellent in the bay during minus tides.

Lower Rogue springer fishing has been mostly good with some days better than others but that always seems to be the case with Chinook. Rogue River Rigs which combine a spinner with an anchovy has accounted for the majority of hookups. While catches of winter steelhead are dropping off, spring Chinook numbers are building along with angler's success rates on the middle river. Water temperature was 53 degrees and the flow 3,500 cfs and dropping at mid-day on May 10th. Steelheading has been fair to good with the water flow decent in the upper Rogue. A few spring Chinook have also been hooked this week.

Only a quarter of the water surface at Diamond Lake was covered in ice at mid-week with boats launching from the ramp on the north shore. It should be nearly ice-free by the coming weekend and fishing prospects are excellent. Hundreds of thousands of husky trout are available and four to five pounders are taken here almost daily. While bait fishing is most popular here, hardware and fly fishers will also find success at Diamond.

Expo Pond, Reinhart Pond, Emigrant Reservoir, Spaulding Pond, Clearwater Forebay #2, Herbert's Pond, Lemolo Reservoir, and Red Top Lake will be planted with hatchery trout.

Central and Eastern Oregon – There have been a few sightings of salmonflies near the Deschutes below Maupin but nothing to get excited about this early in the season. Redsides are responding to large stonefly nymphs, however and Golden Stones are hatching below Sherars Falls. Speaking of which, a few spring Chinook are being taken daily here with prospects improving as salmon move upriver on the Columbia.

Crooked River levels have continued to drop and with flows less than 400 cfs, this one will be fishing well in the weekend to come.

Davis Lake is producing fair to good numbers of largemouth bass along with some nice-sized rainbow trout.

Deep water trollers are taking some good-sized lake trout at Odell. For those inclined to chase sockeye, kokanee catches have been excellent.

Trollers are enjoying fair to good results for kokanee at Wickiup Reservoir. Historically an early season fishery, get there now through June for best results.

Timothy and Trillium lakes are not yet accessible. Lava Lake is supposed to open for fishing this coming weekend.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will host a Family Fishing event Saturday, May 12 at Peach Pond on the Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area near La Grande from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. ODFW will provide loaner fishing rods, reels, and will have bait, bobber kits and information about additional fishing opportunities at the event. Staff and volunteers also will be on hand to answer questions and help participants hone their fishing skills. To get to Peach Pond from La Grande, take Highway 203 south toward Union. After 5.7 miles turn left onto Peach Rd., just past Hot Lake. Travel 0.9 miles to the pond on the left.

Scheduled for trout planting are Bend Pine Nursery, Simtustus Lake, Sparks Lake, Lake of the Woods, Clear lake and Middle Fork Pond.

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 and minks, 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.

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Random Links



Bonneville Dam Fish Camera, Oregon Side:

http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/locations/fishcam_hs_or.asp

Lucky Oregon angler could hook a million dollar fish:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2012/May/050412.asp>

Free registration - Webinars for those new to offshore satellite services:

<http://www.ripcharts.com/WebConference.aspx>

Guide to Fishing for Chinook Salmon:

<http://fish-works.com/fish-works/node/22>

GOOD LUCK!