

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 18<sup>th</sup> – May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Dam passage at Bonneville remains good and fishery managers recently downgraded the predicted spring salmon run from well over 300,000 fish to just about 200,000 returning adults. Although the lower Columbia will remain closed to the taking of adult chinook, it opens today to angling for adipose fin-clipped steelhead, adipose fin-clipped chinook jacks (between 12 and 24 inches) and shad. The daily bag limit is two steelhead plus five adipose fin-clipped chinook jacks. Anglers are likely to intercept more salmon than steelhead this time of year.

Near perfect conditions early last week contributed to a consistent catch of spring chinook from top to bottom on the Willamette River. Warmer temperatures were fine for the onset but the continued hot weather has slowed the fishing a bit. Reports are good from the Multnomah Channel but successful anglers need to know the water well. The head of the Multnomah Channel has been slow but has been putting out small numbers of fish for a slug of boats. The harbor, Willamette Park and Sellwood all are putting out small numbers for the effort. Oregon City back trollers had the best success last week, but the looming sea lions made it very challenging at times just to boat a fish. There seems to be two or three of the mammals working each popular fishing haunt from the falls on down. There is quite an abundance of sturgeon in the area below the falls and salmon anglers are incidentally catching a handful each day.

While the number of summer steelhead caught on the Clackamas has dipped, springers are starting to show often enough to warrant fishing here. Many of the top guides have been spotted here and the word is out that the springers are in. With the water temperature in the high 40's, the Clackamas is still a ways off from being prime, but with the warming trend, prime time is near. Some summers are still being taken from the upper stretch from Riverrill down to Barton and springers are being taken from the lower river favorites like Carver, the Japanese Garden, Coffee's, the Winery and High Rocks.

The Sandy River is fishing well. Both spring chinook and summer steelhead are present and being caught daily. Most of the steelhead action is from Dabney Park on up to Cedar Creek, while the salmon are holding in the lower river for now. Herring and prawn trollers are still catching a few at the mouth and a handful have been taken on the drift from Oxbow Park to Lewis and Clark State Park. When fishing the lower river, be sure you are fishing over a rocky or gravel bottom. There is still plenty of silt and sand left over from the dam removal and anglers have found the rocky spots are providing higher success rates. Steelhead and salmon will not hold over a sand or silt bottom.

Lower McKenzie fly fishers have been doing well on nymphs. Hatches will pick up this week with warmer weather.

South Santiam levels are good and improving with steelhead and springer numbers increasing. Over 550 summer steelhead have been counted at Foster Dam.

**Northwest –** Spring chinook are beginning to enter Tillamook Bay in good number. Weak tides focused effort near the jetty tips early this week and fish from 14 to 30 pounds have been taken recently. Charlie and Winnie Payne of Newport took 12 and 20-pounders on Monday, fishing herring on the bottom near the Coast Guard Tower on Monday. The group landed 4 hatchery springers for 6 chances with the most opportunities on the second half of the outgoing tide.

Upper bay anglers are likely to score this weekend.

Area rivers remain low although the color is good. Springers are likely present in fair numbers in the Trask and Wilson but the bulk of the run should remain in the bay for weekend anglers. Another rain freshet isn't forecasted until next week. Summer steelhead should also be available in limited numbers on the Wilson and Nestucca systems.

All-depth halibut seekers didn't have much opportunity to pursue their quarry until Saturday, the last day of the first 3-day opener. Limits came easy but the fish weren't large. No sign of significant near-shore halibut success lately but effort will ramp up as seas calm.

Bottomfishers out of the mouth of the Columbia scored easy limits of rockfish off of the sunken jetty on Tuesday. Lingcod were plentiful as well but the rockfish were so thick that many had to be released before attaining your lingcod limit.

The sturgeon opener on the lower Columbia was less than impressive last Saturday. Shakers were the rule and not many of those in the current high, cold water. This fishery likely won't take off until later in June, as it did last year.

Another round of minus tides begins over the weekend. Razor clam digging was excellent on the last series and will likely produce good catches again on this one. The best digging should be Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.

**Southwest** – High winds kept south coast boats at port on the all-depth halibut opener. Conditions improved to allow fishing over the past Saturday with catches of halibut reported as very good. The next all-depth opportunity is May 17-19.

Rockfish catches slowed out of central Oregon ports early this week but lingcod fishing has continued to yield limits. Ocean crabbing has been fair but steady.

Crabbing has been slow to fair but improving in Winchester Bay. Jetty anglers are taking good numbers of rockfish. Spring chinook catches have been fair to good on the mainstem Umpqua around Elkton. Springers are also being hooked on the lower North Umpqua.

Chinook fishing is slow in Coos Bay but will pick up in coming weeks. Crabbing has been fair.

Boats out of Gold Beach and Port Orford have been taking limits of lingcod and rockfish. Water on the lower Rogue is clearing, in the mid-50's and producing regular hookups for boaters using anchovy-spinner combos. Results for chinook have been slow on the middle river despite good numbers of fish. Back-trollers are hooking springers on the upper Rogue.

When boats have been able to get out of the Port Of Brookings, rockfishing has been excellent while lingcod catches have been fair to good. Ocean chinook is open but slow this early in the season.

Diamond Lake historically fishes best immediately following ice-out and recent results confirm that fact. Many are taking Oregon's most generous lake limit of eight trout averaging 16 inches.

**Eastern** – Salmonflies are hatching on the lower Deschutes with warm weather accelerating their appearance. This once-a-year event will continue over the next few weeks. Flows were 4,350 cfs early this week.

The Crooked River is fishing very well with water levels down. Caddis hatches have created

excellent opportunities for fly rodders.

Metolius water conditions are excellent with Pale Morning Duns hatching although nymphs have been most effective recently.

**SW Washington** – The Cowlitz, Kalama and Lewis Rivers are all options for spring chinook and a few summer steelhead. The Cowlitz remains the top prospect however.

The Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries are peaking right now. Action has been as good as a fish for every 3 rods from both the bank and boat fisheries. With passage at Bonneville still good, the action should remain equally good through this weekend as well.

Summer steelhead are present in the Washougal River but this systems is still several weeks away from peaking.

**Soapbox Update:** Time is running out to register for the annual Bounty on the Bay event being held on June 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> this year. Spring chinook fishing in Tillamook Bay is heating up with **pro guide Bob Rees (503-812-9036)** reporting a large number of spring chinook staging at the bay entrance. Bob fished for just 3 hours on Wednesday, getting 11 bites, bringing 7 fish to the boat but only landing 4. It looks like an awesome year ahead! Register at the Tillamook Estuaries Partnership Bounty on the Bay web page, here:

<http://www.tbnep.org/>

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Fishery managers will meet again on Thursday, to discuss more sportfishing options for lower Columbia River anglers. Although fish passage is going well, managers recently downgraded the run to just over 200,000 adults from 314,000 fish. It seems early for sport anglers below Bonneville to get any more time right now but above Bonneville anglers may get another crack at them sooner rather than later.

The steelhead opener on Tuesday was productive, however anglers that participated noted more salmon than steelhead being taken by boaters and bank anglers. Not a huge surprise here and it's likely to remain that way for a while. Although tides weren't all that conducive to productive bank fishing, high flows remain on the mainstem, keeping fish focused along the river bank where anglers have decent access to them. No word yet on actual creel numbers but as we've already mentioned, more salmon than steelhead were in the catch. Here are the actual regulations for what you're allowed to keep:

Salmon, Steelhead and Shad:

The following modifications are now in effect for the mainstem Columbia River from Buoy 10 upstream to the Oregon/Washington border above McNary Dam:

**COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, BUOY 10 LINE UPSTREAM TO TONGUE POINT/ROCKY POINT LINE:**

Effective Wednesday May 16, this section of the Columbia River is closed to angling for salmon and steelhead, but is open to angling for shad.

**COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, TONGUE POINT/ROCKY POINT LINE UPSTREAM TO THE I-5 BRIDGE:**

Effective Wednesday May 16, this section of the Columbia River is open to angling for adipose fin-clipped steelhead, adipose fin-clipped chinook jacks (between 12 and 24 inches), sockeye (fin-clipped or not) and shad. The daily bag limit is two sockeye/steelhead in combination plus five adipose fin-clipped chinook jacks. All sockeye count toward the adult daily limit, regardless of size.

**COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, I-5 BRIDGE UPSTREAM TO BONNEVILLE DAM:**

Effective Wednesday May 16, this section of the Columbia River is closed to angling for salmon and steelhead, but is open to angling for shad.

**COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, BONNEVILLE DAM UPSTREAM TO THE OREGON/WASHINGTON BORDER:**

This section of the Columbia River is currently closed to angling for salmon and steelhead, but is open to angling for shad. Effective Wednesday May 16 through Tuesday July 31, 2012 only single point hooks are allowed when angling at Cascade Locks in the area between the boat ramp at the lower end of the locks upstream to the east (upstream) end of the lock wall.

Recent reported landings from the Young's Bay gillnet salmon fleet indicate there was a good surge of fresh fish entering the system. Hopefully we see continued good passage at Bonneville Dam through the rest of this month.

Sturgeon fishers working the lower Columbia out of Astoria were predictably disappointed. Anglers fishing charter boats out of Astoria went home with few stories to tell. Experienced anglers fishing upstream also produced poorly as is to be expected in the high flows we're now experiencing on the lower Columbia. It won't get any better in the near future either.

Bottomfishers out of the mouth of the Columbia scored super easy limits off of the south jetty on Monday however. According to some, it was doubles and triples on several rods with one boat headed back to the dock at 8:30 a.m. with a 4-person limit of rockfish and lingcod from the south jetty. Although the seas have rarely been friendly recently, when they are, it's easy action. Anglers are reporting a nice grade of black rockfish also.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Although tides will play a valuable role in this weekend's success, don't look for steelhead to all of a sudden start piling into the river. Hatchery jacks may be retained however, although it doesn't look like there is an over-abundance of those right now.

The minus tide series begins on Friday, which is ideal for weekend anglers. To focus on steelhead, plunkers should use brightly colored spin-n-glos, fished close to shore with heavy scent on them. Be prepared to release spring chinook however as it seems unlikely that anglers will get any additional time below Bonneville Dam when managers meet on Thursday. Steelhead catches likely won't ramp up until late June.

Sturgeon effort will likely remain subdued as biters will be hard to come by. That is, if they are even there. Sturgeon effort and catch in the estuary will remain poor. If you do go, you'll want to use sand shrimp in the shallows but bring a book.

Shad are starting to negotiate Bonneville Dam and although still weeks away from peaking, interest may start coming for the oversize fishery although the Marker 82 deadline went into effect on May 1<sup>st</sup>. There are very few keepers available in this reach.

Tides won't be conducive to bottomfishing over the Columbia River Bar. The tides will be too strong and the ocean doesn't look all that friendly anyway.

If you're a razor clam digger however, the tides look pretty favorable for some good digging starting on Saturday or Sunday. Clatsop Beaches will be hard to beat.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "The Willamette: Near perfect conditions early last week contributed to a consistent catch of springers from top to bottom on the Willamette river. Warmer temperatures were fine for the onset but the continued hot weather has slowed the fishing a bit. Reports are good from the Multnomah Channel but successful anglers need to know the water well. The head of the Mult. Channel has been slow and has been putting out small numbers of fish for a slug of boats. The harbor, Willamette Park and Sellwood all are putting out small numbers for the effort. The "Sultan of Sellwood" himself was spotted fishing all the way up at Oregon City if that tells you anything. Oregon City back trollers had the best success last week, but the looming sea lions made it very challenging at times just to boat a fish. There seems to be two or three animals working each popular fishing haunt from the falls on down. A stout rod, strong knots, tight drag and stealthiest on the anglers part will get a fish to the boat in a hurry before the marine mammal intercepts your catch. There is no time to mess around when a fish is hooked. Be helpful and courteous to other anglers and give them plenty of room when they are lucky enough to hook up. Also, there is quite an abundance of sturgeon in the area below the falls and salmon anglers are incidentally catching a handful each day."

Fewer than half of the boats trying managed to land a hatchery Chinook over the past weekend according to ODFW fish checkers. Results should be good in the next few days with water levels down and water temperatures up. With spring Chinook selling for \$25 per pound or better at fish markets, a successful trip is well justified. With regard to fishing Oregon City where Chinook fishing has been decent for back-bounders but almost every hookup has resulted in a sea lion dinner, advice heard from a couple of guides should be heeded. When you hook up in that area, \*stay seated\* and don't raise the net until the very last minute. Only when the fish is at the gunwale and is ready to be landed should the anglers stand and the net-man ready the net. Seals and sea lions have learned to watch for the signs. Fool 'em or feed 'em. Also be aware that the Clackamette Boat Ramp will be closed May 18-20 while the Oregon City Pioneer Family Festival is underway.

North Santiam level has come down a little over the past few days but are still over 5,000 cfs at Mehama. High flows here create hazardous boating conditions above Green's Bridge so caution is advised. The river is forecast to be dropping dramatically over the next five days. South Santiam water conditions are somewhat better than the North.

Scheduled for trout planting this week are Estacada Lake, Huddelston Pond, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, Timothy Meadows, Alton Baker Canal, Big Cliff Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Detroit Reservoir, Foster Reservoir, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Quartzville Creek, Santiam River NF above Detroit Lake, Sunnyside Park Pond, Timber Linn Lake, Trail Bridge Reservoir, Waverly Lake and the Coast Fork Willamette River.

**The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** predicts, "The Columbia River is on the rise again, further backing up the Willamette. Expect fishing here to remain a steady "so so" with spurts of action mostly up at Oregon City. Plug cut herring with or without a flasher is the dominant choice from Milwaukee to Scappoose, but with water temps in the mid-50s now, spinner's will account for many hook-ups from here on out. Up at OC, roe, shrimp and prawns are the standard baits but a few fish are succumbing to the Kwikfish in sizes 12,13,14 and 15. Plunkers at Meldrum Bar like a spin-n-glow with a prawn or small piece of shrimp on the hook."

Most of the regular areas on the lower Willamette are producing spring Chinook now and herring trollers are scoring in Multnomah Channel. With over 10,000 springers and 6,000 summer steelhead have crossed Willamette Falls, upriver prospects are looking up. Water temps in the lower Willamette are approaching 60 degrees and in addition to prawn spinners for springers, that means shad. A few have reported marking smaller fish in Multnomah Channel and one boat was spotted landing some mid-week at Oregon City and another took nearly 50 today, May 17th. Sure, this means more boats in the river but also a greater variety of fish to catch. Popular nymph patterns (Zug Bugs, Prince nymphs and Possie Buggers) have been reliable taking trout on the upper Willamette this week. Steelhead catches will improve as the numbers over Willamette Falls continue to build. Incidentally, for those who have asked, the channel under the I-5 Bridge on the upper Willamette is now open.

Try the McKenzie below the hatchery for summer steelhead this weekend. Results have been fair to good and will improve in weeks to come.

Steelheaders have been taking summers from the South Santiam in many locations below Foster Dam. A few springers have been taken on the South and more are bound for the system with thousands over Willamette Falls.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "While the number of summer steelhead caught on the Clackamas has dipped, springers are starting to show often enough to warrant fishing here. Many of the top guides have been spotted here and the word is out that the springers are in. With the Water temperature in the high 40s, the Clack is still a ways off from being prime, but with the warm trend... prime is near. Some summer are still being taken from the upper stretch from Rivermill down to Barton and the springers are being taken from the lower river favorites like Carver, the Japanese Garden, Coffee's, the Winery and High Rocks. "

"The Sandy river is fishing ! Both spring Chinook and summer steelhead are present and being caught daily. Most of the steelhead action is from Dabney Park on up to Cedar Creek, while the salmon are doddling in the lower river for now. Herring and prawn trollers are still catching a few at the mouth and a handful have been taken on the drift from Oxbow Park to Lewis and Clark State Park. When fishing the lower river, be sure you are fishing over a rocky or gravel bottom. There is still plenty of silt and sand left over from the dam removal and anglers have find the rocky spots to achieve much success. Steelhead and salmon will not hold over a sand or silt bottom."

Although water levels have been on the rise this week on the Clackamas, the water is forecast to be dropping through the weekend, Fishing for summer steelhead should be good and chances for a spring Chinook hookups are improving as several have been landed recently below Barton. Rainfall is predicted to return next week when the river is forecast to rise once again. The hatchery at Eagle Creek has reported no spring Chinook yet, but two-year olds are forecast to be returning this season and should start entering the creek in the coming weeks.

**The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** predicts, "The show is on here on the Clackamas, with the first of its springers already showing up on anglers BBQ's. Expect fishing for spring Chinook to improve here as the weeks roll on, but summers will continue showing in the catch as more anglers put an effort in. Boaters back trolling jet divers and shrimp/egg combo's will score while bank fishermen prefer plunking spinning bobbers with a sand shrimp or bobber fishing with roe in the slower, deeper holes.

"With the rising Columbia, the mouth of the Sandy river becomes a great opportunity for herring and prawn trollers. When the Columbia flows are from 10 to 14 ft. (at Vancouver), this is the favorite of local anglers as a strong showing of Columbia River Chinook detour into the lower Sandy while trying to find their way upstream. Light sinkers in 3/4 to 2 ounce is all that's needed to effectively fish the shallow slots that are rarely over 8 ft. deep. Don't leave your spinners at home as they will also take a fair share. Upriver, summer steelhead are being caught on the same bait and tackle that will fool a spring Chinook. The Oxbow Park area should produce for bank fishermen and the stretch from Oxbow down to Dabney will kick out both species of fish this week. A few springers will be taken from the Gauge Hole and the Duck Hole but many of the other favorites are still filled in with silt and don't hold fish like they used to."

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Action is breaking loose on Tillamook Bay although few anglers are here to enjoy it. Well, they were here but they leave before the action starts to get good. On Monday and Wednesday of this week, I went out for just a few hours to try and catch some fresh salmon for the "Barbie". Well, it was pretty easy pickings with a few fish coming just prior to high tide but the second half of the outgoing tide was producing some damn nice catches. On Monday, most of our action took place on the second half of outgoing tide, just after peak ebb. Just as the flows started slowing, the action took off with us getting 5 additional bites and landing 3 more hatchery fish. On Wednesday it was the same thing. We didn't start fishing until 1:00 p.m. along the jetty and proceeded to get 11 bites, hooking 7 fish, landing 4 of which 3 were hatchery fish to 20 pounds. We lost 3 at the boat, two of which were close enough to identify them as hatchery fish. There was a SLUG of springers at the jaws on Wednesday afternoon, for only us and 2 other boats to take advantage of. We were simply fishing herring (green label) right on the bottom, trolling with the outgoing tide from Lyster's Corner to the jetty tips. We were getting bites throughout the drift and in the bottom 8 feet of the bay. We thought we continue to press our luck by chasing them up the bay so we spent another hour in front of Garibaldi but to no avail. By low slack, the bite dies, as it usually does in this system.

Upper bay fishing is beginning to show signs of improvement. As the tide series increases and lower bay fish take interest in the upper reaches, fishing should improve dramatically in the coming days. Anglers have only been taking an occasional fish on this weak tide series. Adults just don't get too interested in traveling up there on a soft tide series.

The tidewater sections of the Trask and Wilson are not producing although there are very few people fishing for them in those reaches.

The Trask itself still has fish in it but they are becoming road weary. Anglers working the hatchery hole are still taking an occasional fish but bank anglers would welcome a rain freshet. The Wilson and Nestucca are much the same. Steelhead are a rare catch on these systems although there are still a few down-runners for the few still targeting steelhead on these systems.

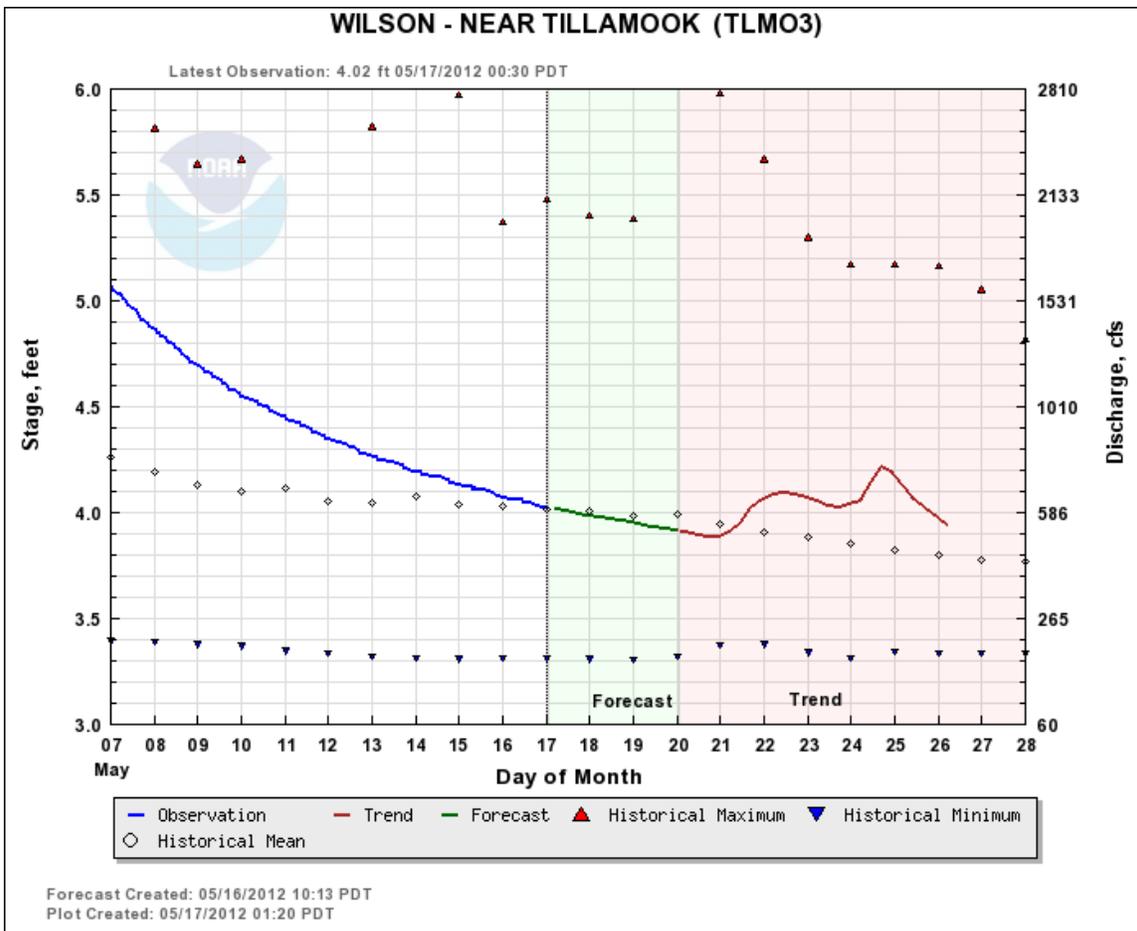
Offshore, traditional bottomfishers are wanting to shift their effort to halibut. Offshore halibut seekers didn't get too much opportunity until Saturday. When Saturday hit, it was EZ money although the fish were not large.

**The Guide's Forecast** – It should be all-out war on Tillamook Bay spring chinook this weekend. With great tides coming for upper bay anglers, and a clear slug of fish in the estuary, action should be excellent for herring and spinner trollers working the upper bay from Memaloose to Ray's Place piling. We should see some good fishing through the weekend and maybe beyond. The big question will be, how much rain will we get over the weekend? Enough to send them all upstream? Any measureable amount of rain will send a good batch of them upstream this weekend but the tides will dictate how they will move until that happens.

Strong incoming tides in the darkness, coupled with a morning minus tide should keep the fish motivated and willing to bite anglers lures. No question however, we won't see the kind of action that is likely for herring trollers working the lower bay prior to the weekend. We'll continue to do fair to good on the afternoon tides trolling herring prior to the weekend. I just can't believe it would be any better than what we witnessed on Wednesday.

My favorite thing to do, although maybe not the most productive, is to backroll plugs on the outgoing tide in the upper bay. Spinner and herring trollers will likely do as good, if not better but the take on a plug in the shallow waters of Tillamook Bay is something to behold. The stronger the tide, the more likely the fish will be to bite but it's always best when the sands start to show as then, you'll know where the fish are concentrated. Of course trollers working spinners or herring should do quite well too. Just be sure to use solid colors in the morning, and switch to metallic colors in the afternoon, assuming the sun does shine.

As for river fishers, here is the river level forecast:



It's too soon to really gauge what the river is actually going to do but it won't take much of a rise to get fish motivated to run upriver. The Trask will be the go-to river although the Wilson should receive a good pod of fish as well. The Nestucca will likely see some action as well but the Nestucca fish seem to be a little later in the season. Backrolled plugs or backbounced eggs should produce. Summer steelhead will be incidental but you'll have to target them in traditional water that's unlikely to hold chinook.

There are some sturgeon in the west channel of Tillamook Bay. Although they are not present in huge numbers, for those that have a higher interest in sturgeon, Tillamook is a viable option right now. Sand shrimp is best, as always.

The offshore forecast doesn't look too promising until Saturday:

**FRI**

NW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. GUSTS TO 15 KT IN THE MORNING. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

**FRI NIGHT**

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT...BECOMING N 5 TO 10 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

**SAT**

N WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT.

**SAT NIGHT**

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT...BECOMING N 5 TO 10 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 1 FT. W SWELL 3 FT.

**SUN**

W WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FT. W SWELL 3 FT.

**MON**

S WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 6 FT.

Saturday could be another nice all-depth halibut option. It's been good out there at the deep hole, about 24 miles NW of the Tillamook Bay Jetty tips. Nearshore halibut has not been all that great.

Big Creek Reservoir-1& 2, Cape Meares Lake, Hebo Lake, Olalla Creek Reservoir, South Lake and Town Lake are scheduled for trout planting.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Offshore forecasts look very friendly for the coming weekend with swells predicted at 3.5 or lower at seven to 10 seconds and winds at 7 mph or lighter off the central Oregon coast.

Opportunities this weekend include all-depth halibut May 17th through 19th. Although halibut may be taken inside the 40-fathom line seven days a week, the big ones lurk in deeper water.

Bottom fishing is producing seven-fish limits of rockfish for 'most everybody although ling cod catches slowed a bit this week. This activity must take place in water of 30 fathoms or shallower.

Ocean Chinook catches have been slow to take off although boats out of Charleston have taken some fish. With excellent offshore conditions this weekend, this may be the time for a number of anglers to hookup (although it's still early).

South coast beaches are producing good catches of redbtail (pinkfin) surfperch, particularly around Bandon and Coos Bay.

Catches of rockfish are fair to good off the South Jetty at Winchester Bay and crabbing has been improving. Pressure has been light for surf perch in the bay despite pretty good catches recently. Sturgeon fishing has been slow to fair but is expected to improve as water temperatures increase. Striped bass have been caught again this week in the lower Umpqua. Spring Chinook are moving into and through the Umpqua mainstem, providing good catches over the past week and with the river level gradually dropping, catches have been decent. The mainstem is forecast to rise starting Tuesday next week but until then, results should remain good. Shad are yet to show on the Umpqua. While summer steelhead numbers are improving on the North Umpqua, the run forecast is calling for only a fair return this year, making the spring Chinook fishery here even more appealing. With springers entering the North Umpqua in ever-greater numbers, catch rates are improving. Chinook numbers will continue to build for weeks to come.

Coos Bay crabbing has been good from boats, fair from local docks. Jetty fishing is producing good catches of rockfish and greenling. A decent low tidal series over the next several days should provide excellent clamming in the bay.

Lower Rogue water visibility has been improving all week although with water temperatures rising, spring Chinook hookups have slowed somewhat. The better opportunities for success will come early and late in the day under these conditions. There are still summer steelhead to be caught in the lower river as well. Springer fishing has improved on the middle Rogue where water temperatures are a little lower and back-bouncers and plunkers are hooking up regularly. Chinook are entering the upper Rogue in significant number and are showing in the trap at the hatchery. Boat and bank fishers are taking fair to good numbers with action steady. Boaters should try wrapped Kwikfish early in the day, then switch up to back-bouncing as the sun assumes an overhead position. Mid-week fishers took multiple springers on Wednesday this week using these techniques.

Chetco, Coos, Coquille and Elk rivers will open with the south coast trout season on May 26th.

Diamond Lake is completely free of ice and is expected to fish great over the coming weekend. All facilities and boat ramps are in operation.

Learn more about Diamond Lake trout fishing at the seminar With Pro Guide Steve Husted from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. on May 16th at Fisherman's Marine & Outdoor in Oregon City. Call 503-557-3313 for more information.

Burma Pond, Dutch Herman Pond, Medco Pond, Fish Lake, Hemlock Reservoir and Lake of the Woods are scheduled for trout stocking.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Now that salmonflies have been hatching on the lower Deschutes for a while, redsides are starting to key on them. Big bugs are thick from Mecca Flats to Maupin. The response to imitations has been good this week but soon trout will gorge on these large insects and become more challenging to hook. Salmonflies are in evidence on the middle Deschutes below Lake Billy Chinook and in the Bend area. It's on! Some spring Chinook are being hooked at Sherars Falls but of those, very few are hatchery keepers. Area travelers are advised that the road from Maupin to Sherars Bridge will be under repair starting Monday, May 21st which may result in delays for much of the coming week. River revelers might want to take in the annual Riverfest taking place on May 16th and 27th in Maupin which promises fun and activities for the whole family.

Caddis hatches on the Crooked River are thick most days and fishing has been very good. Nymphs have been most effective this week.

While caddis and Pale Morning Duns are hatching regularly on the Metolius. Carry some large orange flies as salmonflies have been showing up as well on occasion.

Kokanee catches have improved at Green Peter Reservoir. Expect extra traffic this weekend as there is a derby taking place on Saturday, May 19th.

A single lane was plowed on the road to Paulina over the past weekend, allowing access although there is still quite a bit of snow on the ground. Fishing has been slow.

Kokanee fishing has been fair to good at Odell for jig fishers but better for trollers using lures tipped with shoepeg corn. A lake trout which weighed over 28 pounds was taken on The 9th of May.

Century Gravel Pit, Cottonwood Pit, Big Cultus Lake, Deschutes River, East Lake, Fall River, Jefferson County Pond, Paulina Lake, Shevlin Pond, North Twin Lake, South Twin Lake, Magone Lake, Murray Reservoir, Lugar Springs Pond, Pendland Lake, Kinney Lake, Cavendar Pond, Long Creek Pond, Twin Ponds, Ukiah, Holliday Park Pond, 7th Street Pond, Hatrock Reservoir, Nine Mile Pond and Wallowa Lake were planted with hatchery trout this week.

#### **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**

Subscriber Don H. wrote via the Contact Form at the TGF website, "I live in Grants Pass and have been keeping a close eye on the Rogue with Springer fishing in mind. A friend drifted Wednesday with no luck, a very few were taken this week back bouncing. The river is just getting in shape with good color but today the river was running at 4400-4450 cfs not the 3500 cfs you reported. Other than that I like your reports."

TGF co-editor Michael Teague replies "Thanks so much for writing, Don. It is always great to hear from subscribers. With regard to river levels and flows, with rely on others (the NOAA, mostly) and their charts and forecasts. We do the best we can with the data provided. Thanks for the correction.

"Write again anytime and good luck out there!"

**Write to the TGF staff:**

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**Random Links**

Register for the ODFW Adult Fly Fishing Workshop June 2nd near Coquille:

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/education/outdoor\\_skills/workshops/adult\\_fly\\_fishing\\_lavern\\_park\\_june\\_2.asp](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/education/outdoor_skills/workshops/adult_fly_fishing_lavern_park_june_2.asp)

Fishing information for Wickiup Reservoir:

[http://nwoutdoorwriter.com/Oregon\\_Lakes/Wickiup.htm](http://nwoutdoorwriter.com/Oregon_Lakes/Wickiup.htm)

Fishing information for Odell Lake:

[http://www.how-to-fish.com/how\\_to\\_fish\\_odell\\_lake.htm](http://www.how-to-fish.com/how_to_fish_odell_lake.htm)

**GOOD LUCK!**