

The Guide's Forecast - volume 14 issue number 22

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 25<sup>th</sup> – May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Fishery managers met on Wednesday to discuss additional fishing options for lower Columbia sport anglers over the Memorial Day weekend. After much deliberation, officials decided to re-open the lower river below Bonneville Dam for spring chinook on Saturday and Sunday before reassessing the run again on Tuesday of next week. High flows however will likely keep catch rates in check.

Last week's unusually warm weather brought the Willamette's water temperature up to 60 degrees, pushing the fish on the move looking for cooler, more oxygenated water. Springers were still brought in but at a fraction of the catch rate from the previous week. The lower Multnomah Channel still seemed to shine brighter than other popular salmon haunts upriver but the pressure and the catch rate had noticeably declined. Reports from the head of the channel averaged about one fish for 7 rods most days last week. The Portland harbor to Willamette Park put out the occasional fish but Sellwood has been very slow. Upriver, Oregon City anglers were faced with little current and warm water, but any salmon that was unlucky enough to get hooked was being ambushed by a California Sea Lion. Shad have arrived in droves for Oregon City anglers, providing ample sport and quality crab bait. This fishery will go on strong through mid-June and some years lasts till July 4th. Anglers who have been bringing their sturgeon gear along are also being rewarded with decent "catch and release" action.

Spring chinook and summer steelhead are both available on the Clackamas in good catchable numbers. Steady flows with good water color has been the norm but pressure has remained relatively light. A handful of spring chinook have been caught here, but summer steelhead are still the dominant catch. The growing guide presence on the Clackamas indicates two things, the presence of springers and the slow fishing on the Willamette. Expect the boat traffic to increase in the coming week as the springer run gets underway. The lower river from Carver down to the mouth will carry most of the sled traffic, while the Feldheimers to Carver stretch will be the best bet for drift boaters. Power boats rule the lower reaches so drift boat anglers looking for a quiet, lazy drift should plan accordingly. Stick to the upper stretch, but sometimes a late afternoon drift on the lower river can often be tolerable if not pleasant. By mid-June when the water level drops, the drift boat becomes a valuable tool and the sleds start seeing more driveway time.

Summer Steelhead are making a good showing this year on the Sandy and anglers who know the holding spots are catching their share. Since the removal of Marmot Dam, the river from Revenue Bridge down to Dabney State park has the best holding water. From Dabney on down, expect most of the traditional deeper holes to be a fraction of their historic depth as silt from behind the now absent dam has found a new home downriver. Still, some opportunity can be found down low but expect the fish to be in more of a migration mode rather than in a holding pattern. Plunking in travel lanes is a good approach and will account for decent numbers especially in higher flows. The river from the I-84 bridge down to the deadline at the mouth continues to kick out a few springers to trollers and back-trollers. As the Columbia continues to hold above 10 ft. on the gauge at Vancouver, this stretch will continue to see some action.

The McKenzie should fish well as it starts to drop in the coming weekend. Trout fishing is good and summer steelheading is improving.

The water is up this week on the North Santiam but is forecast to drop by the weekend while the South Santiam is predicted to rise through Saturday, dropping in the week to come, providing

springer and steelhead opportunities.

**Northwest** – After a week of productive fishing in lower Tillamook Bay, the upper reaches are only producing an occasional fish to trollers. The fish are running between 17 and 22 pounds however but recent rains may send the bulk of the estuary fish into district rivers. Tides remain favorable to fish the upper bay into the weekend.

The slight rise in river levels should stimulate catches on the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca in that order. The Trask receives the most hatchery plants and will likely produce the best results. Backrolled plugs and bait should produce the best with both bank and boat anglers having fair access to these quality fish.

Tillamook is in peak season now and fish should be well distributed in area rivers and the estuary. Although action will remain sporadic, quality fish should remain available in good numbers through the first week of June.

Although forecasters botched the Sunday ocean forecast, halibut, rockfish and salmon anglers got out over the weekend and scored good catches of all species. Crabbing was fair at best with most pots averaging just 1 to 2 keepers per pot for a long soak. The wind and wave forecast for the 3<sup>rd</sup> three-day opener for halibut on Thursday indicate anglers may have fair seas to recreate in.

Trout anglers can once again target cutthroat trout beginning Saturday with a 2-fish bag limit. Although it seems the population isn't as prolific as it was last year, fish should be available on most north coast streams but larger fish are commonly found in the estuary ecosystem at this time of year, feeding on salmon fry and small baitfish.

**Southwest** – Offshore bottom fishing has been excellent for rockfish and good for lingcod. Ocean crabbing has improved with pots producing near-limits.

Crabbing has been slow in Winchester Bay but shows sign of improvement. Rockfishing has been good from the south jetty.

Salmon fishing has slowed on the Umpqua with levels rising. Action should pick up as the river drops over the coming weekend. Plug-pullers and backbouncers should score chinook.

Spring chinook fishing was slow over the past weekend on the lower Rogue. With rain showers and cool weather this week, prospects should improve. Fishing has been spotty on the middle river while the upper Rogue has been good whenever outflow from Lost Creek isn't excessive.

Boats returned to the Port of Brookings with early season, ocean-caught chinook over the past week. This fishery is expected to turn on in June.

Diamond Lake has been fishing very well, providing eight-fish limits of large, fat trout to most anglers.

**Eastern** – The salmonfly hatch is underway on the middle Deschutes and reddsides are keying in on them. The lower river will soon be awash in salmonflies as well. Get there before trout are too stuffed with big bugs to be interested in angler's offerings.

Crooked River levels are excellent with hatches ongoing all afternoon and into the evening.

Wallowa Lake is fishing fair but steady for kokanee with larger fish hard to come by.

Green Peter is fishing well for trout and kokanee.

Kokanee fishing has been very slow at Wickiup.

### **Soapbox Update: SOS on eBay**

Save Our Wild Salmon has joined the online auction community at eBay! You can now donate 10% to 100% of the item's final sale price to Save Our Wild Salmon when you buy or sell an item on eBay, via the eBay Giving Works program. [Check out our eBay Giving Works page.](#)

We have 3 items currently up for auction – 100% of the proceeds going directly to SOS:

#### **[Handmade LC PARKS Bamboo Fly Rod 6'9", 4 wt, 3 pc, 2 tips](#)**

This item is a beautiful 6' 9", 4 weight, 3 piece custom built bamboo fly rod with 2 tips. It is a fantastic creek rod and the work of Lew Parks is superb. [Check it out.](#)

[http://www.ebay.com/itm/Handmade-LC-PARKS-Bamboo-Fly-Rod-69-4-wt-3-pc-2-tips-100-CHARITY-AUCTION-/190681959527?pt=LH\\_DefaultDomain\\_0&hash=item2c6587cc67](http://www.ebay.com/itm/Handmade-LC-PARKS-Bamboo-Fly-Rod-69-4-wt-3-pc-2-tips-100-CHARITY-AUCTION-/190681959527?pt=LH_DefaultDomain_0&hash=item2c6587cc67)

#### **[Hand Blown Crystal Salmon-themed Vase by Nancy Arthur-McGehee](#)**

This one-of-a-kind glass vase features the engraving work of artist Nancy Arthur-McGehee of San Diego, CA. The vase is made from handblown crystal with a green lip wrap by Pairpoint Glass Company of Cape Cod, MA. Pairpoint is the oldest glass working company in the US. This beautiful piece stands at 8" tall and 4" at widest width. [Behold.](#)

<http://www.ebay.com/itm/251067586269?ssPageName=STRK:MESELX:IT&trksid=p3984.m1555.l2649#payId>

#### **[2 Handcrafted Ceramic Plates from Matthew Patton](#)**

For sale are two brilliant handcrafted ceramic plates from artist Matthew Patton. Both measure roughly 12 1/2 inches across and 2 1/2 inches tall when laid flat. Each piece is handmade on the wheel. Both of these pieces of pottery are food, oven and microwave safe; however, the plastic coated copper hanging wire on the back of these plates should be removed prior to oven or microwave use. [Take a look.](#)

<http://www.ebay.com/itm/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=190682301678>

**SW Washington** – The Cowlitz, Kalama and Lewis Rivers are peaking for spring chinook although the Cowlitz is clearly the best option. These fisheries should remain viable for another 2 weeks but the Cowlitz will remain a top bet with summer steelhead readily available too.

Catch rates on the Wind River and Drano Lake remain good with a fish for every 3 rods on average. Adult salmon passage at Bonneville is slowing and will likely subsequently slow in these fisheries as well.

Bonneville shad anglers are scoring good numbers in shallow water.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Although fish passage continues to dwindle at Bonneville, fishery managers believe the run will materialize enough to allow some additional sport fishing time in the mainstem below Bonneville Dam for 2 days over the holiday weekend. Managers figured that there was about 1,400 fish left on the sportfishing guideline to allow such a fishery,



Weekend checking showed five adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus 14 adult spring chinook released for 103 salmon anglers; and three shad kept for two shad anglers.

**Portland to Longview Boats:**

Weekend checking showed one adult spring chinook released for 19 boats (37 anglers).

As you can see from the Gorge check, the shad are running!

Look to the forecast section of this report for info on how to catch one of these fish in the upcoming tide series.

Sturgeon fishing is less than stellar with the exception of the Portland to Longview stretch where keeper action is beginning to heat up. Here is the weekend ODF&W check:

**Gorge Bank (below Marker 82):**

No report.

**Gorge Boats (below Marker 82):**

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

**Troutdale Bank:**

No report.

**Troutdale Boats:**

Weekend checking showed 10 sublegal sturgeon released for six boats (nine anglers).

**Portland to Longview Bank:**

Weekly checking showed one legal white sturgeon kept, plus two sublegal sturgeon released for eight bank anglers.

**Portland to Longview Boats:**

Weekend checking showed 16 legal white sturgeon kept, plus two oversize and 120 sublegal sturgeon released for 63 boats (161 anglers).

**Estuary Boats (Puget Island to Buoy 10):**

Weekend checking showed seven legal white sturgeon kept, plus two oversize and 102 sublegal sturgeon released for 32 boats (84 anglers); and two sublegal sturgeon released for 18 charter boat anglers.

The estuary remains relatively quiet as will likely continue to be the case with the high, cold flows that we're likely to experience for another few weeks.

Although Sunday may be an option for south jetty bottomfishers, prior to Sunday, the ocean looks a bit hairy. Predicting the weather this far out however is nowhere near reliable so be sure to check the latest updates yourself from this web page:

<http://forecast.weather.gov/shmrn.php?mz=pzz250&syn=pzz200>

**The Guide's Forecast** – Although salmon fishing is not likely to be off the hook this weekend, anglers do stand a fair chance at catching a late-run spring chinook over the weekend; as a

matter of fact, a better chance than a summer steelhead this time of year. Although the tides aren't going to be the screaming successful ones that most bank anglers prefer, flows remain high enough to concentrate fish close to shore where anglers have easy access to them. Upwards of 1,400 fish remain on the quota and anglers may see an early opener for summer chinook (slated to open on June 16<sup>th</sup>) if the run size comes in at the modified 216,500 adults depending on how this weekend's success rates go.

Targeting these late-running spring chinook will present challenges in of itself. Most anglers choose to anchor fish with plugs under these conditions and that should be a good option this time of year. Hardware, such as spinners should also produce some good action as it often does when water temperatures finally begin to warm. This is a popular technique at Bonneville but boaters still have to be aware of the early season restrictions that remain in place. See press release above.

Bank anglers would be wise to tip their spin-n-glo options with bait; either sand shrimp, coon shrimp or prawns as both salmon and steelhead seem to enjoy this buffet. Don't cast too far out as fish should still be traveling close to shore under these conditions. You'll still have to decide to use green shades if targeting salmon and hot colors (red/pink/orange) if you're targeting steelhead. With salmon making up the bulk of the catch, it shouldn't be a hard decision.

Although sturgeon effort and success is picking up in the Portland to Longview stretch, most anglers will be focused on the salmon option this weekend. This may open up some additional opportunities for spring time sturgeon anglers with effort subdued. Squid and smelt combo's have been producing good catches although serious anglers should remain focused on the lower Willamette River but catch and release regulations exist here.

Estuary action may begin to pick up a little but we're still several weeks away from a productive fishery here. Target keepers above Tongue Point in the estuary as charter boats fishing downstream of Tongue Point are not catching much of anything (see creel report above).

Softening tides this weekend may prove productive for bottomfishers working the south jetty out of the Columbia this weekend. Be sure to check last minute weather forecasts however as it's an ever-changing environment out there.

For your convenience, here is a list of upcoming Columbia River fishing seasons:

You can click on the link immediately below for the additional spring chinook press release in regards to this weekend's spring chinook opener:

**News:**

**[States re-open upper Columbia for spring chinook](#)**

**[2012 summer and fall salmon seasons set for Columbia River](#)**

**[Spring/Summer Salmon Season \(May 16-July 31 timeframe\)](#)**

**HOOK REGULATION**

- **During May 16 – July 31, 2012 when bank 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 only single-point hooks are allowed.**

## **STEELHEAD**

- Retention of adipose fin-clipped steelhead allowed May 16 – June 15, 2012 from a line projected from Rocky Point on the Washington shore through red buoy #44 to the navigation light at Tongue Point upstream to the I-5 Bridge under permanent regulations.
- Retention of adipose fin-clipped steelhead allowed June 16 – July 31, 2012 from Astoria-Megler Bridge upstream to the OR/WA border under permanent regulations.
- **Retention of adipose fin-clipped steelhead allowed May 19 - May 20, 2012 from Tower Island Power lines (located approximately 6 miles downstream from The Dalles Dam) upstream to OR/WA border for boat and bank, plus BANK ANGLING ONLY from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Tower Island Power lines.**

## **SPRING CHINOOK (May 16-June 15 timeframe)**

- Retention of adipose fin-clipped Chinook jacks (12-24") allowed May 16 – June 15, 2012 from a line projected from Rocky Point on the Washington shore through red buoy #44 to the navigation light at Tongue Point upstream to the I-5 Bridge under permanent regulations.
- **Retention of adipose fin-clipped Chinook (adults and jacks) allowed May 19 - May 20, 2012 from Tower Island Power lines (located approximately 6 miles downstream from The Dalles Dam) upstream to OR/WA border for boat and bank, plus BANK ANGLING ONLY from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Tower Island Power lines.**
  - **Daily bag limit is 2 adult salmon/steelhead in combination.**
  - **Up to 5 adipose fin-clipped jacks may be retained in addition to the adult bag limit.**

## **SOCKEYE SALMON**

- **Retention of sockeye allowed May 16 – June 15, 2012 (or until guideline) from a line projected from Rocky Point on the Washington shore through red buoy #44 to the navigation light at Tongue Point upstream to the I-5 Bridge.**
- **Retention of sockeye allowed June 16 – July 1, 2012 (or until guideline) from Astoria-Megler Bridge upstream to Bonneville Dam.**
- **Retention of sockeye allowed June 16 – July 31, 2012 from Bonneville Dam upstream to the OR/WA border.**

## **SUMMER CHINOOK (June 16-July 31 timeframe)**

- **Retention of adipose fin-clipped Chinook adults (>24") allowed June 16 – July 1, 2012 (or until guideline) from Astoria-Megler Bridge upstream to Bonneville Dam.**
- **Retention of adipose fin-clipped Chinook adults (>24") allowed June 16 – July 31, 2012 from Bonneville Dam upstream to the OR/WA border.**
- Retention of adipose fin-clipped Chinook jacks (12"-24") allowed June 16 – July 31, 2012 from Astoria-Megler Bridge upstream to the OR/WA border under permanent regulations.
- **Daily bag limit is 2 adult salmon/steelhead in combination.**
- Up to 5 adipose fin-clipped jacks may be retained in addition to the adult bag limit.

### **Fall Salmon Season (August 1-December 31 timeframe)**

**COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, Buoy 10 upstream to Tongue Point/ Rocky Point** (Buoy 10 line upstream to a line projected from Rocky Point on the WA shore through red buoy #44 to the navigation light at Tongue Point).

- Open to retention of adult (>16") adipose fin-clipped coho and adipose fin-clipped steelhead during August 1 - December 31, 2012 under permanent rules.
- **Open to retention of adult (>24") Chinook during August 1-September 3, 2012 (or until guideline) and October 1-December 31, 2012.**
- **The combined daily bag limit is two adults, only one of which may be a Chinook during August 1 – September 3, 2012. Beginning October 1 the combined daily bag limit is two adults.**
- Jacks may not be retained between August 1 and September 30, 2012 under permanent rules.
- All other permanent regulations apply.

**COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, Tongue Point/ Rocky Point upstream to Bonneville Dam** (a line projected from Rocky Point on the WA shore through red buoy #44 to the navigation light at Tongue Point upstream to Bonneville Dam)

- Open to retention of adipose fin-clipped coho and adipose fin-clipped steelhead during August 1 - December 31, 2012 under permanent rules.
- **Open to retention of Chinook:**
  - **August 1 - September 9, 2012 (or until guideline) and October 1-December 31, 2012 from the Rocky Point-Tongue Point line upstream to a line projected from the Warrior Rock Lighthouse on the Oregon shore to red buoy #4 to a marker on the lower end of Bachelor Island.**
  - **August 1 – December 31, 2012 (or until guideline) from a line projected from the Warrior Rock Lighthouse on the Oregon shore to red buoy #4 to a marker on the lower end of Bachelor Island, upstream to Bonneville Dam.**
  - **The combined daily bag limit is two adults and five jack salmon. During August 1-September 9, 2012 the daily bag limit may not include more**

**than one adult Chinook. During September 10 – December 31, 2012, the daily bag limit may include two Chinook upstream of Warrior Rock. During October 1 – December 31, 2012 the daily bag limit may include up to two Chinook from Tongue Point upstream to Bonneville Dam.**

**COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, Bonneville Dam upstream to the OR/WA border** (Rocky Point on the WA shore through red buoy #44 to the navigation light at Tongue Point upstream to Bonneville Dam)

- Retention of Chinook, coho, and adipose fin-clipped steelhead allowed August 1 – December 31, 2012 (or until guideline) under permanent regulations.
- The combined daily bag limit is two adults and five jack salmon.
- All coho retained downstream of the Hood River Bridge must be adipose fin-clipped.

### **SHAD**

- Retention of shad allowed May 16 – December 31, 2012 from the Buoy 10 line upstream to Bonneville Dam under permanent regulations.
- Retention of shad allowed all year from Bonneville Dam upstream to the OR/WA border under permanent regulations.

### **STURGEON**

- The retention of green sturgeon is prohibited at all times.
- Anglers are limited to the use of one single-point barbless hook while angling for white sturgeon.
- It is unlawful to use lamprey for bait.
- In all areas, catch-and-release sturgeon angling is allowed during non-retention periods, unless otherwise indicated.
- **The lower Willamette River (including Multnomah Channel and the Gilbert River) sturgeon regulation updates can be found under the [Willamette Zone](#).**

**COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, Buoy 10 upstream to Wauna Powerlines(mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines (River Mile 40) downstream to the mouth at Buoy 10, including Youngs Bay; and all adjacent Washington tributaries)**

- **Open to retention of white sturgeon 7 days per week during January 1 - April 30, 2012, and May 12 - July 8, 2012.**
- Daily bag limit is 1 white sturgeon, 38-54 inches FORK LENGTH during January 1 - April 20, 2012 and **41-54 inches FORK LENGTH during May 12 - July 8, 2012**

**COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, Wauna Powerlines (RM 40) upstream to Bonneville Dam** (including all adjacent Washington tributaries)

- **Open to retention of white sturgeon on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays during January 1 - July 31, 2012 and October 20 - December 31, 2012.**
- Daily bag limit is 1 white sturgeon, 38-54 inches FORK LENGTH.
- Angling for sturgeon is prohibited from May 1-August 31 from Bonneville Dam downstream to a line crossing the Columbia River from Navigation Marker 82 on the Oregon shore through the upstream exposed end of Skamania Island, continuing in a straight line to the Washington Shore under permanent regulations.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "Willamette: Last week's unusual warm weather brought the Willamette's water temp up to 60 degrees, pushing the fish on the move looking for cooler, more oxygenated water. Springers were still brought in but at a fraction of the catch rate from the previous week. The lower Multnomah Channel still seemed to shine brighter than other popular salmon haunts up river, but the pressure and the catch rate had noticeably declined. Reports from the head of the channel averaged about one fish for 7 rods most days last week. The Portland harbor to Willamette Park put out the occasional fish but Sellwood has been a ghost town. Upriver, Oregon City was plagued with little current and warm water, but any salmon that was unlucky enough to get hooked was subject to being ambushed by a California sea lion. On another lighter note, the shad are now here in droves and anglers looking for merely something to pull line from their reels have the cousin to the herring as a good alternative. This fishery will go on strong through mid-June and some years lasts till July 4th. Anglers who have been bringing their sturgeon gear along are also being rewarded with decent "catch and release" action."

As the Willamette level rose slightly with valley rainfall this week, the temperature dropped several degrees at Willamette Falls. It remains to be seen how this turn of events will effect fish passage but Salmon and steelhead numbers have been good recently. Well over 17, 000 spring Chinook are on their way upstream with 9,000 summer steelhead accompanying them. Oregon City produced a spring Chinook over 28 pounds on Monday this week to an anglers using diver and eggs. The sea lions missed a dandy, but it is possible if the rod man and the net man to everything right. Stay calm and stay seated until the last moment. The head of Multnomah Channel has been as reliable as anywhere on the lower river. It has been slow this week.

A proposal has been made to ban bait on the McKenzie River in the catch-and-release-only section between Hendricks and Hayden Bridges. This stretch is not stocked with hatchery fish and is a high production area for wild Redside trout. Bait fishing is estimated to kill about a third of the fish that are released after being caught in that manner.

The North Santiam dropped over the past weekend then rose sharply on Tuesday this week. It's still rising but is forecast to start dropping over the Memorial weekend although it will be a week before it's back to a reasonable level. While the South Santiam is predicted to spike into the weekend, it won't approach the level of the North and will be dropping through the weekend as well. Over 700 summer steelhead had been recycled from the hatchery as of May 17th. See **Random Links**, below, for an article on the Santiam River.

The Luckiamute, Rickreall, Yamhill and Tualatin rivers are among those opening on Saturday, May 26th for wild cutthroat trout fishing. Two per day may be kept if you must.

Blue River above Reservoir, Blue River Reservoir, Carmen Reservoir, Clear Lake, E E Wilson Pond, Fall Creek above Fall Creek Reservoir, Foster Reservoir, Hills Creek above Hills Creek Reservoir, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Salmon Creek, Smith Reservoir, Willamette River Middle Fork above Hills Creek Reservoir, Harriet Lake, Silver Creek Reservoir, Timothy Meadows, Trillium Lake and the South Fork Yamhill River are scheduled to be planted with trout.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "The Willamette should show an improvement for springers this week with the more typical spring weather allowing the river to cool a few degrees. Spinner, herring and prawn trollers in Multnomah Channel and the head of the channel should see consistent catches as long as the fish keep coming. Also, expect the harbor, Willamette Park and Sellwood to pick up, while Oregon City will likely remain slow and challenging to fish with much success. The swollen Columbia river backs up the Willy and hampers the flows needed for back trollers, couple that with the shad anglers who like to hog line all the way across the river and the looming sea lions and backtroller don't have a chance. Expect the action to continue through mid to late June. For shad fishermen, this week and next are the glory days. Tiny Flicker spinners and 1/32 chartreuse grubs are the "lures du jour" either fished on a size 20 Jet Diver or with 3-6 ounces of lead."

Much to the chagrin of some Oregon City backbouncers, the shad fishers are in. Shad catches are good and will remain steady for those who find the "lanes" through June. Shad do not go over the Falls. Spring Chinook fishing has been slow in the Lower Willamette and Multnomah Channel this week although the few fish that are being taken are good ones. Back-trolling, back-bouncing, trolling herring with and without a flasher, wrapped Kwicks and even spinners have all taken some in the past few days. Just not a lot of hookups. There are periodic flurries of actions, one of which occurred at the Channel on Wednesday this week.

Trout fishing is excellent on the McKenzie River and summer steelhead are being taken daily. It's a great time of year to fish the Mac.

While only a handful of spring Chinook have been counted at Foster Dam, over 800 summer steelhead had entered the trap as of May 21st, making the South Santiam a solid bet for steelheaders as it drops over the coming week. Most steelheaders use bobber and jig here and it is effective.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "Spring Chinook and summer steelhead are both available on the Clackamas in good catchable numbers. Steady flows with good water color has been the norm but pressure has remained relatively light. A handful of spring Chinook have been caught here, but summer steelhead are still the dominant catch. The growing guide presence on the Clack indicates two things, the presence of springers and the slow fishing on the Willamette. Expect the boat traffic to increase in the coming week as the springer run gets underway. The lower river from Carver down to the mouth will carry most of the sled traffic, while the Feldheimers to Carver stretch will be the best bet for drift boaters. Power boats rule the lower reaches so drift boat anglers looking for a quiet, lazy drift should plan accordingly. Stick to the upper stretch, but sometimes a late afternoon drift on the lower river can often be tolerable if not pleasant. By mid-June when the water level drops, the drift boat becomes a valuable tool and the sleds start seeing more driveway time.

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expect most of the traditional deeper holes to be a fraction of their historic depth as silt from behind the now absent dam has found a new home downriver. Still some opportunity can be found down low but expect the fish to be in more of a "moving through" mode rather than in a holding mode. Plunking in travel lanes is a good approach and will account for decent numbers especially in higher flows. The river from the I-84 bridge down to the deadline at the mouth continues to kick out a few springers to trollers and back-trollers. As the Columbia continues to hold above 10 ft (on the gauge at Vancouver), this stretch will continue to see some action."

**The Guide's Forecast** – Fly anglers are doing well fishing the Clackamas above Carver, making good catches of summer steelhead and the occasional spring Chinook. Eagle Creek will host a nice return of spring Chinook this season, the first of which may be nosing into the creek now. Into June, numbers will pick up along with catches (and droves of anglers) providing flows remain decent. These fish are the product of a 2010 release of 240,000 smelts.

Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "Conditions should shape up this week for excellent opportunity on the Clackamas for both springers and steelhead. Timing and water temperature are everything here but water flow and height take a close second. Likely to see a slight rise from Mondays rain, but once the level settles back to 12-13 ft, its "game on". Sand shrimp and quarter size gobs of roe will account for more fish than any other baits, but small/medium size diving plugs will also fool a few. Anglers fishing higher up in the river targeting steelhead should try 1/8th Jigs tipped with a small piece of shrimp on the hook.

"Expect fishing to continue to improve here as peak time approaches for spring Chinook. In addition, summer steelhead will continue to supplement the catch and anglers should expect steady spurts to show through July. As long as the Columbia flows stay in the briars, the Sandy river mouth will spit out spring salmon heading for the upper Sandy as well as "dip-ins" bound for tributaries above Bonneville dam. Pay close attention here to the deadline markers and don't stray over the imaginary line into the big river(until it re-opens anyway). Officers have been known to stake out the area with binoculars and violators will be served accordingly when said officer can catch up with you at a later time."

**North Coast Fishing Report** – After a productive week in the lower estuary last week, avid anglers on Tillamook Bay are wondering where'd they go? Effort and success has shifted to the upper bay with the exception that there isn't much success. Despite a quality minus tide series, action has been slow in the upper bay. There is an occasional fish being taken here and there but the last several days, I've felt fortunate to average about 1 fish per day with 1 to 3 opportunities on my backrolled plugs in the upper reaches. There is no hot bite to speak of but predictably, there are a few fish coming at first light from the Oyster House Hole and then as the tide continues to run out, the grassy knoll and along the picket fence to Ray's Place Piling as we near low slack. Herring and plugs have been effective but some anglers are doing ok on spinners as well.

Although the jetty bite also died by the weekend, there were some fish being taken in the ocean on the calm Saturday morning as well as alongside the north jetty on the last half of the outgoing tide. Most recently, anglers reported a few fish for very few boats along the jetty on Wednesday night although far from the wide open bite we experienced about a week ago out there. The Ghost Hole and the Coast Guard Station in front of Garibaldi has experienced low effort recently; and for good reason.

With the recent rise in river levels, one would have expected action to be good in the tidewater stretch of the Trask or Wilson Rivers or upstream in these respective rivers as well. Well, that didn't pan out as reports from Wednesday's near perfect conditions yielded little results. Only a

few fish were reported. Where did that wad of fish go from last week? The Trask should have been laden with spring chinook at mid-week. They were nowhere to be found.

Bottomfishers out of Garibaldi took advantage of friendly seas on Saturday with easy limits of lingcod and bottomfish coming from the Cape Meares area of Three Arch Rocks near Oceanside. Feathered jigs as well as rubber grubs produced great catches. Ocean crabbing has been fair at best with pots fishing near Oceanside producing about 3 keepers per pot for a 3 to 4 hour soak while those fishing closer to the Tillamook Bay entrance closer to 1.5 keepers per pot.

It sounds as if offshore salmon fishing has slowed a bit. It can always be hit or miss this time of year. Commercials and a rare sporty are targeting California stocks of chinook and they move up and down the coast often this time of year.

The all-depth halibut fishery prosecuting Thursday through Saturday remains productive when boats can get out. The fish remain on the small side however. I saw a 50-quart cooler go up the dock last week with 3 halibut tails coming out of it. Those had to be small halibut if 3 of them fit in a 50-quart cooler! Conversely, the nearshore fishery is not producing great catches what-so-ever. That could change at any time however but some anglers targeting flatties north of Tillamook Bay are reporting fair action for sizable lingcod. The technique is slow trolling near the bottom of the ocean.

**The Guide's Forecast** – As we continue our 2<sup>nd</sup> week of peak season on Tillamook Bay, the upper bay tide series is beginning to fade and anglers are once again likely to look down-bay to herring trolling on the weaker tide series. Last week, the bulk of the effort took place in the morning when the tide was running in.....WRONG.....! When everyone was leaving, I was putting the boat in the water and having the jetty practically to myself. As you might have read, my results were quite good with one 3-hour session yielding 11 opportunities with 7 fish to the boat (only landed 4 and lost several clumps of hair in frustration). The weak tide series this week shifts to the morning.

Although the minus tide series will run through Saturday, and action is likely to shift, there should still be upper bay opportunity into the weekend. Plugs and spinners have proven themselves worthy although catches have not been impressive. That could and likely will change at any time however. There was a relatively significant rain event however and we likely lost some fish upstream however upstream anglers weren't reporting great success.

Another bump is in the forecast, as you can see:



This may make conditions ideal for Saturday driftboaters taking advantage of a rare opportunity on the Trask, Wilson and to a lesser extent, the Nestucca River. Even with indications of fair at best fishing in these rivers right now, there should be fair numbers of fish present. Backrolled plugs work well on these larger fish but savvy anglers will also employ backbounced shrimp and egg combo's to score quality fish. The Trask offers the best opportunity as it has the largest return. Flows should be ideal over the weekend.

By early next week, tides will once again be ideal for jetty trolling inside the bay. Mid-afternoon low tides on a low tide exchange will bring good opportunity to herring fishers on the second half of the outgoing tide. If we didn't lose our entire run upstream on this rain freshet, it could be pretty good fishing.

Some offshore opportunity may exist as well. Although the ocean is rough right now, it may come down to friendly levels by the weekend:

**FRI**

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT.  
W SWELL 6 FT AT 9 SECONDS.

**FRI NIGHT**

NW WIND 15 TO 20 KT...EASING TO 10 TO 15 KT AFTER  
MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 7 FT.

**SAT**

N WIND 5 TO 10 KT WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT...BACKING TO W IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 7 FT.

**SAT NIGHT**

SW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT. CHANCE OF RAIN.

**SUN**

SW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

**MON**

NW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 6 FT.

Halibut fishing on Friday doesn't look to be too fun but Saturday may generate some interest. Sunday looks just lovely out there but the all-depth halibut season is closed that day. Nearshore halibut, bottomfishing and nearshore springer fishing should be good options however. Anglers targeting halibut typically target flatties to the north of Tillamook Bay, even north of Nehalem Bay. One boater reported fair success for lingcod slow trolling herring on the bottom from the north to the south in about 110 feet of water.

Offshore crabbing has been fair-at-best. Tillamook Bay crabbing even worse.

Scheduled for trout stocking are Alder Lake, Big Creek Reservoir-1 & 2, Buck Lake, Cleawox Lake, Dune Lake, Erhart Lake, Georgia Lake, North Georgia Lake, Perkins Lake, Siltcoos Lagoon and Thissel Pond.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Following stormy conditions the last couple of days, the coastal forecast is shaping up nicely for ocean forays. Today through May 31st allow for all-depth halibut trips although catches inside the 40 fathom line have been good and is allowed every day (see **Inbox**, below, for a reader report). The next all-depth opener is May 31st through June 2nd.

According to the latest data available, 89% of the Central Coast All-depth Spring Halibut fishery remains available while 78% of the nearshore quota remains to be caught.

Chinook catches have been spotty offshore but while it's been legal to fish for them for a while, the catching part of the season is just getting started. Ocean salmon is forecast to be excellent this year and should be good through June.

Many south coast beaches are producing good catches of redbait surf perch. South coast rivers which have been closed or restricted will open to trout fishing on Saturday, May 26th. The primary quarry of interest will be sear-run cutthroat trout which are suckers for spinners or brightly-colored flies.

Crabbing has yet to return to what it was prior to storms earlier this year and jetty fishing is only fair. Sturgeon fishing has been picking up as the water level drops in the Umpqua. While there has been little pressure, there are surf perch available in the bay as they enter annually to spawn. While the Umpqua water level is forecast to spike about 18 inches at Elkton through the coming weekend, it's supposed to be dropping starting Sunday and through the following week. Chinook fishing is anticipated to improve as the water drops with best results coming from Scottsburg to River Forks. Springers are also up into the North Umpqua where they are being

caught in modest number. This fishery will improve into June. The South Umpqua will open with the trout season on Saturday, May 26th.

Coos Bay crabbing has been good for boaters, fair for those dropping nets or traps from docks. Clamming has been excellent in the bay during minus tidal series. Jetties have been productive for rockfish and greenling anglers.

Springers won't have to be fin-clipped to keep as wild Chinook may be retained on the Rogue River starting June 1st from the mouth to the old Gold Ray Dam site. ODFW but biologists expect wild and hatchery returns equal to or better than last year along with better fishing conditions because of more moderate river flows. Rain this week cooled the waters of the lower Rogue and improved spring Chinook catches but it's still only fair at best. Boat fishers are doing far better than bank anglers on the lower river. While catches have been slow, results on the middle Rogue are expected to improve over the coming week. Springer catches are good on the upper Rogue from Gold Hill to Cole Rivers Hatchery and are expected to remain that way for a while. Chinook counts are on a rapid rise at the hatchery and this is the time of year the upper Rogue shines. Click [here](#) for a video of upper Rogue spring Chinook action.

**[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=LYL4GtC9MEU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=LYL4GtC9MEU)**

The Chetco River will open to trout fishing on May 26th but be sure to check the regulations with regard to a bait restriction above tidewater.

All facilities and campgrounds are expected to be open at Diamond Lake for Memorial Weekend but be sure to call ahead to ensure a place to stay over the popular holiday Power Bait is really all that's needed to take an eight-fish limits of large trout although trollers and fly fishers have also been doing very well here.

Arizona Pond, Laird Lake, Willow Lake, Applegate Reservoir, Lost Creek Reservoir, Lake Selmac, Spaulding Pond and Rogue above Lost Creek are scheduled for trout stocking.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Salmonflies are thick on the lower Deschutes as are Golden Stones. Bi bogs are everywhere from Warm Springs to the mouth and fishing for reddsides has been excellent. Fish are looking up and no one is considering anything other than floating imitations with a Chubby Chernobyl at the top of the list. Mast days at Sherars Falls it has been very slow fishing.

Crooked River flows are low and stable, providing excellent fishing conditions.

Green Peter is fishing very well for kokanee. It would appear the derby that took place here over the past weekend isn't having a negative effect on catches this week. Fish are being taken primarily on downriggers at depths of 40 to 50 feet.

Lake trout fishing is good at Odell with many fish over the 10-pound mark being taken and a few bruisers over 20 pounds.

Fishing is very slow at Crane Prairie.

The John Day River opened for Chinook fishing on Wednesday, May 23rd. This is the first time in 36 years that it has been legal to target springer here. The opener is a 20-mile stretch of the river from the Longview Ranch's Johnson Creek Division bridge (about 200 feet upstream of the mouth of the North Fork John Day) upstream to the mouth of Rattlesnake Creek that will be open

only through June 3rd. The ODFW has stated that wild populations of spring Chinook have rebounded here.

Catherine Creek and Lookingglass Creek, tributaries to the Grande Ronde River, will open Saturday, May 26th for spring Chinook for the first time since 1978. The ODFW credits a successful hatchery program for making this opener possible. Fishing is allowed on designated stretches of the creeks so be sure to check before fishing. While there is a quota, fishing is expected to continue into early July. For more information, contact the ODFW Northeast Region Office in La Grande at (541) 963-2138.

With spring Chinook returns falling far short of predictions, the Umatilla River was subject to an emergency closure from the Hwy. 730 Bridge upstream to the reservation boundary located upstream of the Hwy 11 Bridge at Pendleton today, May 24th, 2012.

### **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**

It's good to hear from once-regular reporter Kap'n Ken Johnson who writes this week, "I fished in front of Manzanita Saturday & Sunday, less than one mile out... We lucked out on Saturday and put a 25# Halibut in the boat. Caught several "bottom fish" but this was the prize....Weather on Sunday literally turned to bloody hell so we went in after about 4 hours. Huge swells and kind of dangerous actually. I was quite proud of how the Seahawk handled the rough water, but, that being said, another 10' of boat wouldn't have hurt one little bit!

Hope you guys are doing well!"

Here's a photo of the 'little' boat and the not-so-little halibut.



**\*butt.jpg**

**Write to the TGF staff:**

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**Random Links**

ODFW Spring Fishing Guide:

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/RR/fishing\\_forecast/](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/RR/fishing_forecast/)

Creel study important for Santiam system:

[http://democratherald.com/oregon-outdoors/creel-study-important-for-santiam-system/article\\_5effb17a-a137-11e1-8f26-001a4bcf887a.html#ixzz1vdm3D03z](http://democratherald.com/oregon-outdoors/creel-study-important-for-santiam-system/article_5effb17a-a137-11e1-8f26-001a4bcf887a.html#ixzz1vdm3D03z)

Buy a fabulous fishing spot \$4,105,000:

<http://www.livewaterproperties.com/wild-billy-lake-or.asp>

Willamette Creel checker Chinook report:

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/fish\\_counts/willamette/2012/12\\_chs\\_will\\_summaries.pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/fish_counts/willamette/2012/12_chs_will_summaries.pdf)

**GOOD LUCK!**