

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 10th – May 16th, 2013**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- The Willamette River is singing the same song it did a week ago. Rather disappointing fishing for spring chinook and ridiculously good catch and release sturgeon fishing. The shad haven't shown themselves as of yet but that could change at any time. For those intent on putting their time in for salmon, there are fish getting caught but most anglers have seen better seasons. What little action there witnessed, is coming from the Multnomah Channel and the head of the channel. Oregon City is producing a few fish, but many are finished off by a California sea lions before making it to the boat. The water temperature is running in the high fifties so salmon anglers would be well advised to try shiny hardware like a spinner.

The deeper holes in the Portland Harbor are giving up constant action for the few participating sturgeon anglers. Smelt, herring, sand shrimp and anchovies are all getting bit by indiscriminate sturgeon ranging from undersize to oversize.

Water flows at the McKenzie River have continued to inch up with snowmelt in warm weather over the past week. Flows are still decent for fly anglers targeting reddsides. Continue to throw nymphs in the absence of hatches, but watch for Caddis and March Browns popping in the afternoon.

Steelheading has been fair in the North Santiam and over 500 summer steelhead have been counted at Foster Dam on the South Santiam. With spring chinook counts nearing 10,000 at Willamette Falls, a fishery will develop here as springers move upriver.

Fishermen are faring well on the Clackamas River, catching summer steelhead early in the morning and later in the afternoon and evenings. Some are getting even luckier and hooking into a few spring chinook, although the peak of the salmon run is likely three weeks from now. Steelhead are spread river-wide while the springers will be loitering in the lower river below Barton. Expect more salmon to enter the system in the coming weeks.

The Sandy River continues to cough up a few late winter steelhead, but most have already spawned and are on their way back to the salt. Anglers are encouraged to handle spawner steelhead with care and release them as quickly and as easily as possible. More and more fresh, shiny summer steelhead are entering the river and anglers are finding them throughout the river as well. A couple spring chinook have been confirmed this last week and like the Clackamas, expect those numbers to grow through the month and into June.

Northwest – More spring chinook are being reported from Tillamook Bay and the season is about to enter its peak period. Another minus tide series will focus anglers into the upper estuary but if the weather forecast comes to fruition, a saltwater nearshore or offshore opportunity is certainly in order. This should be the first productive week of spring chinook effort.

For anglers venturing offshore for the California stock chinook, target them over 300 foot of water, fishing between the depths of 150 to 250 foot. They are plentiful but don't expect many large fish.

Not many people have targeted nearshore halibut yet but that will likely change in the coming weeks. The all-depth opportunity opens up Thursday for its first 3-day opportunity and fishing is likely to be good.

District rivers are low and clear but early morning chinook are an option on the Wilson, Trask and Nestucca systems. Don't expect results all that often however.

Razor clam digging should be good this weekend on Clatsop area beaches, especially with the low swell predicted.

Southwest- Boats out of Depoe Bay and Newport have been doing well for rockfish but lingcod catches have been spotty. A few halibut were taken during the first nearshore opener May 2nd through 4th.

All-depth halibut will open for the spring season Friday through Sunday, May 9-11. This fishery will re-open May 16-18, May 30-June 1 and June 6-8 or a quota of 120,947 pounds.

Offshore conditions are forecast to be decent on Friday but could turn marginal over the coming weekend. Be sure to check at the last minute.

Crabbing picked up in Winchester Bay but has been only fair. Redtail surfperch have started entering the bay to spawn but it will be a week or two until this fishery is worthwhile. The Umpqua has been too low to fish well.

Coos Bay consistently provides the most reliable results for crabbing with Half Moon Bay productive recently.

Ocean conditions played nice over the past weekend, allowing boats to get out of Gold Beach for limits of rockfish and lingcod. The lower Rogue was a bust in low water, however, yielding few springers. Rain is forecast over the next few days but it remains to be seen if it will be sufficient to rejuvenate chinook catches. Fishing on the middle river has been poor. As the upper Rogue transitions from steelhead to springers, upriver anglers are disgruntled with skinny water conditions.

Bottom fishing has been excellent out of Brookings. Lingcod catches were particularly good. Anglers who released smaller fish in anticipation of larger specimens were not disappointed.

Diamond Lake produced large trout over the past weekend, with bait fishers on the south end most successful although results for trollers are improving.

Eastern – Big Lava Lake has been fishing well with some anglers taking limits but has been challenging when the wind comes up.

Brownlee Reservoir has been producing scores of yellow perch with crappie a little more challenging.

SW Washington- District anglers remain somewhat stymied as options are limited with the sub-par returns we're witnessing. The Cowlitz and Lewis do have spring chinook available and summer steelhead numbers are starting to bolster but most anglers are losing interest fast with the low catch rates.

Also a reality, counts at Bonneville Dam are peaking, causing anglers to take a hard look at the Drano Lake and Wind River fisheries. Catches should peak this week and remain steady through mid-month.

Another minus tide series will likely bring excellent results for razor clam diggers beginning today. The proposed digs are:

Digging dates at those beaches, along with morning low tides, are as follows:

- May 8, Wednesday, 6:22 am -0.5 ft., Twin Harbors
- May 9, Thursday, 7:00 am, -0.8 ft., Twin Harbors
- May 10, Friday, 7:37 am, -0.9 ft., Twin Harbors, Long Beach
- May 11, Saturday, 8:12 am, -0.8 ft., Twin Harbors, Long Beach
- May 12, Sunday, 8:48 am, -0.7 ft., Twin Harbors
- May 13, Monday, 9:23 am, -0.5 ft., Twin Harbors
- May 14, Tuesday, 10:01 am, -0.2 ft., Twin Harbors

Columbia River Fishing Report – We’re still just watching the numbers of chinook pile over Bonneville Dam and even though a re-opener seems unlikely, it’s pretty fun just viewing the jack counts, giving an angler hope that there are better days ahead. When the jack count nearly equals the adult count, things are pretty good for the future of Columbia River fisheries. We can’t discount the fact however that jack counts don’t seem to mean as much as they used to but none-the-less, it’s a pretty strong indicator that we’ll have better opportunity next year.

Not much on the sturgeon front either. Although there isn’t much news coming from the estuary fishery, there should start to be some catches of legal fish down there given the low water spring that we’re having. Here’s the report from the areas that are being surveyed however:

Gorge Bank:

No report.

Gorge Boats:

Weekly checking showed one oversize and eight sublegal sturgeon released for six boats (13 anglers).

Troutdale Bank:

No report.

Troutdale Boats:

Weekly checking showed no catch for two boats (three anglers).

Portland to Longview Bank:

Weekly checking showed two legal white sturgeon kept, plus 12 sublegal sturgeon released for 13 bank anglers.

Portland to Longview Boats:

Weekly checking showed 21 legal white sturgeon kept, plus four legal, two oversize and 279 sublegal sturgeon released for 68 boats (168 anglers).

The Dalles Pool:

Weekly checking showed nine sublegal sturgeon released for eight bank anglers; and 17 sublegal sturgeon released for one boat (two anglers).

John Day Pool:

Weekly checking showed no catch for three bank anglers; and one oversize released for eight boats (14 anglers).

Rough seas has kept boaters at bay until recently but there are some folks heading out to the rockfish grounds in pursuit of sea bass and lingcod. The offshore forecast is looking better in the near future but as the forecast will indicate, action should be good.

The Guide's Forecast – Don't count on excellent sturgeon fishing, no matter where you go on the Columbia River but the estuary could start to boot some keepers out given the lower and warmer waters that we're experiencing right now. Sand shrimp would be the go-to bait for estuary fishers but in recent years, a good day this time of year would be 3 to 8 fish with a fair majority of those in the keeper size. Consumptive opportunity reopens on May 11th. Here are the official regulations:

- **Open to retention of white sturgeon 7 days per week during January 1 - April 30, 2013, and May 11 - June 30, 2013.**
- **Daily bag limit is 1 white sturgeon, 38-54 inches FORK LENGTH during January 1 - April 30, 2013 and 41-54 inches FORK LENGTH during May 11 – June 30, 2013.**

The river will open on May 16th for adipose clipped steelhead (likely summer run fish) and jack spring chinook (which could be quite good!) for boaters and bank anglers. We'll report more on that after the opener but there seems to be plenty of jack chinook around! Steelhead numbers at Bonneville remain low and aren't likely to improve for another month.

Although anglers targeting bottomfish at the south jetty out of the mouth of the Columbia *may* have opportune seas, we are on a minus tide series, which can make targeting lingcod at the tip of the south jetty quite challenging. Sea bass fishing could be quite good however.

Clam digging should also be good on the current tide series. Hurry however as the back side of the tide usually isn't as good as the front side. Anywhere from Seaside to the south jetty at Fort Stevens State Park are options.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "The Willamette River is singing the same song it did a week ago. Rather disappointing fishing for spring Chinook and ridiculously good catch and release sturgeon fishing. The shad haven't shown themselves as of yet but that could change tomorrow. For those intent on putting their time in for salmon, there are fish getting caught but most anglers have seen better seasons. What little action there is, is coming from the Multnomah Channel and the head of the channel. Oregon City is producing a few fish, but many are finished off by a California sea lion before making it to the boat. The water temperature is running in the high fifties so salmon anglers would be well advised to try shiny hardware like a spinner. The deeper holes in the Portland Harbor are giving up constant action for the few participating sturgeon anglers. Smelt, herring sand shrimp and anchovies are all getting bit by indiscriminate sturgeon ranging from undersize to oversize."

McKenzie River flows moderated this week with the level excellent for trout fishers. Pressure has been light despite pretty good catches of hatchery trout for those who fish them and for redsides which fly fishers target.

Water levels of the North Santiam rose this week as warm weather triggered snowmelt. The river is predicted to fall back into shape over the coming weekend. The South Santiam experienced a much smaller impact and will remain stable for the week to come. The river has experienced have traffic recently with lots of boats launching at Foster Dam.

A trout worth one million dollars has been planted at Hagg Lake. The lucky angler who catches the fish which is sporting a spaghetti tag will be in the money **only** if he does so prior to the July 7th deadline **and** has pre-registered for the event at the Cabela's website. The only other Oregon location to receive a tagged trout was South Twin Lake in Deschutes County.

Is it Labor Day Weekend already? Canby Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Sheridan Pond, Alton Baker Canal, Blue River above Reservoir, Blue River Reservoir, Carmen Reservoir, Clear Lake, Detroit Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Fall Creek above Fall Creek Reservoir, Foster Reservoir, Freeway Lake East, Green Peter Reservoir, Hills Creek above Hills Creek Reservoir, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River below Leaburg Lake, Quartzville Creek, Roaring River Park Pond, Salmon Creek, Salt Creek, Sunnyside Park Pond, Walling Pond and Walter Wirth Lake are scheduled for trout stocking this week with more for the upcoming long weekend, for sure.

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, trout fishing has been good on the Middle Fork of the Willamette. With the outflow from Hills Creek Reservoir falling to the 400 CFS range, the river is in great shape for fly fishers with nymphs effective all day long. Those targeting summer steelhead have experienced occasional success with the Town Run (Eugene to Springfield) most productive.

McKenzie redsides will respond to nymphs but definitely throw a dry in the event of an afternoon or evening hatch. A handful of summer steelhead have been taken recently but there are really too few in the system to count on a hookup. Numbers will improve as the fish move upriver although this is not a banner year for the run. Count on steelhead taking roughly 10 day to two weeks to reach the mouth of the Mac after they cross the Falls. Leaburg Lake will produce plenty of trout but move around to find a hotspot.

Prospects are fair on the Santiam for summer steelhead. While springers have started to enter the system, there are too few this early in the season to target them with any optimism. With Chinook counts at Willamette Falls hitting the 10,000 mark and summer steelhead pushing 5,000 so far this season, there will be some fish around.

The Willamette river continues to give up the occasional springer for the persistent angler. Up at Oregon City, the catch may be a touch more consistent but the threat of losing fish to a sea lion has kept the effort to a minimum. Spring Chinook continue to pass the ladder at Willamette Falls in adequate numbers, suggesting the fish are moving quickly through the lower river and that they are not on the bite. All things considered, why isn't the bite better? The answer is likely water temperature.

As of May 8th, the temperature is hovering around 60 degrees and YES, that's on the warm side. About six degrees higher than what would be expected for early May, give or take a couple degrees. As we watch the river's temperature progress during your average springer season, from the end of February through June 15th, we typically go from a brisk 38 degrees, warming to around 42 by mid-March, usually touching 45-48 by April fool's day.

By mid-April, we usually have 50-52 and by the end of April we are getting close to the magic 55 degrees and that's when the spinner bell starts ringing. This season, with our mild winter and early arriving spring, the Willamette's temp has tracked about five degrees higher since the beginning of March. I suspect this has a lot to do with why the fishing has been "off" most of the 2013 season.

Moving on, so as not to wallow in our fishing woes....traditionally, prior to the magic 55, baits like herring and prawns are favored by anglers and springers alike. But, when the temp hits 55+ degrees, that seems to be the kick-off for good spinner action and many seasoned anglers make

the transition from real bait, to whirling, metal and plastic baits. The old faithful, size 5 Bear Valley, blue tip rainbow spinner has long been a favorite of Willamette springer fishermen since the dawn of time.

Yester-years favorite blades were the Backmore, the Bear Valley, Skagit and the Lucky R. Today, modern spinner addicts are using the Cascade style blade more than any other, ranging in size from 5 to 7. There are a few other blade styles that are similar to the Cascade and they all seem to have one detail in common. They are shaped like a football, pointed at both ends rather than a pointed top and a rounded tip like the favorites of the old days.

The Toman series from Yakima Bait Co., the Fatal Flash and the GDF spinners all make a fine trolling spinner/blade and I'm particularly fond of the Fatal Flash, 5,6 and 7. I'm not sure why anglers have transitioned from the old standby's to the more modern football blades, but I will share a theory. Back in the old days, more spinner fishermen anchored rather than troll. Up until the 70's, trolling motors were, if not a luxury, downright unheard of. The wider, round blades (Backmores, Bear Valleys, etc.) fish better at slower speeds, so it makes sense that they would perform better sitting on anchor.

The football shaped blades of today fish better faster, rather than slower, making them a natural for trolling. Either way, regardless of how many fish are available or whether they are willing biters or not, its spinner time and anglers still content on catching this seasons super elusive Willamette spring Chinook should strongly consider trolling blades. All the usual colors will work from one day to the next. However, a theme I have noticed over the years is that greens, blues and chartreuses tend to get more springers than reds and oranges typically favored by fall chinook anglers.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports –Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "Fishermen are faring well on the Clackamas River, catching summer steelhead early in the morning and later in the afternoon and evenings. Some are getting even luckier and hooking into a few spring Chinook, although the peak of the salmon run is likely three weeks from now. Steelhead are spread river-wide while the springers will be loitering in the lower river below Barton. Expect more salmon to enter the system in the coming weeks.

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "The Sandy River continues to cough up a few late winter steelhead, but most have already spawned and are on their way back to the salt. Anglers are encouraged to handle spawner steelhead with care and release them as quickly and as easily as possible. More and more fresh, shiny summer steelhead are entering the river and anglers are finding them throughout the river as well. A couple spring Chinook have been confirmed this last week and like the Clackamas, expect those numbers to grow through the month and into June."

North Coast Fishing Report – All remains relatively quiet on the western front here although spring chinook are starting to get reported with more regularity here. Far from consistent, as expected, sporadic catches are coming mostly from the lower bay. That should soon change however as one might expect, as good of catch rates, if not better, as we're seeing on the Willamette River this season. A 27-pounder was recently reported from the north jetty (inside) with another bite for a short evening's effort last week. The few fish that are being reported are pretty decent in size. Reports from the upper bay don't seem as bright but that may change with the improving tide series going on right now.

Offshore opportunity has just recently improved with the weather but the most recent reports for those interested in California stock chinook make it sound that they are quite a distance offshore. Reports prior to this one had them around 300 feet of water with baits trolled at least 150 feet deep. Although there should be a lot of chinook out there, it will likely be a long distance to get there.

An improving bottomfish bite has recently been reported but effort remains somewhat light at Three Arch Rocks off of Oceanside. Anglers will have the opportunity to target bottomfish at other reefs if the ocean weather cooperates. Ocean crabbing remains fair, likely much better than in the estuaries.

Area rivers remain extremely low although reports of occasional spring chinook are still coming from the Trask and now, even the Wilson. It's certainly time for some action but until we get some water in the rivers, if indeed that ever happens, action will be at first light and not all that good to begin with.

Carter Lake, Clewax Lake, Munsel Lake and Sutton Lake are scheduled for trout planting.

The Guide's Forecast – Spring chinook will take front and center as it should be as we enter mid-May. This traditionally is the kick off week of decent catches for these fish. Last year around mid-month, I had my best day ever targeting spring chinook on an afternoon tide along the jetty. We had 11 opportunities, only yielding 4 keepers however. It was an exciting 2 hours however!

This week, springer anglers will have several options, especially with the calm seas that are predicted (at least predicted for now....). An early morning bar crossing, assuming it's safe as it's never a good idea to assume it's safe on a minus tide series (and it's a minus tide series). That would put you working the south side of the south jetty (again, assuming it's safe out there) and maybe north of the north jetty. Don't work the mouth of the estuary until the current slows down significantly as fish won't cross the bar on the screaming outgoing tide and it's simply not safe for you to be playing around on the maximum ebb flow either! An angler's other option is to target springers in the upper bay on the minus tide series. Backroll plugs (my favorite thing to do on a minus tide) or troll spinners or herring. With the low tide, fish will concentrate in the channels, making them an easy target. Finally, there is a great low exchange tide in the afternoon where a savvy angler can target the bite at high slack and then through a good part of the soft outgoing tide with peak catching time the middle 2 hours after max ebb has occurred. That for example would be from about 3.5 hours to 5 hours after high tide. These salmon will cross the bar after the tide has just started to slow. Thanks, I'll opt for the late afternoon start! Of course, you'll want to troll herring this low in the estuary.

And, we have a halibut opener this weekend as well. Starting Thursday actually (May 9th – 11th) anglers can target halibut during the first all-depth halibut opener south of Cape Falcon. Fishing in the traditional areas should be quite good but the nearshore fishery seems to be a bit quiet right now. Admittedly, not much effort has taken place on this now days per week fishery. The nearshore fishery is open May 2, three days per week (Thursday-Saturday), inside the 40-fathom line (defined by waypoints) through the earlier of 23,038 lbs. or Oct. 31. Although reports from Garibaldi have been sparse, some halibut have been taken out of Pacific City, which also happened to be the biggest producer of nearshore halibut last year. North of Cape Falcon, the season is open three days per week, Friday-Sunday, through 9,516 lbs. or the start of the summer season.

Bottomfishing should remain good but points up north of Garibaldi are rumored to be much more productive than Three Arch Rocks. There's been enough calm ocean days to think that some of

the nearshore biters have effectively already been culled out. There's certainly a healthy population left however.

River fishing is way too challenging for this guy. Plan on continued low and clear conditions with little hope for change in the near future. The tidewater stretch of the Trask River may already be an option for bobber tossers but don't bank on limits. It looks like we're in for a long, dry season ahead.

Although bay crabbing is improving slightly, the extreme morning tides this week will not do much for crabbers. The ocean remains the best bet and that's only somewhat good.

Central & South Coast Reports – Spring all-depth halibut fishing starts today off the central Oregon coast. Scheduled dates are May 9-11, May 16-18, May 30-June 1, and June 6-8 with back-up dates to follow if poundage remains in the quota.

Nearshore halibut off the central coast (40 fathoms of water or less) opened on May 2nd. A few have been taken, mostly by bottom fishers targeting rockfish. Fishing is allowed every Thursday through Saturday through October but the 23,038-pound quota is likely to fill well in advance of Halloween.

Offshore forecasts are fairly optimistic for launches Friday through Sunday although morning trips are recommended. Swells are predicted to increase in the afternoon.

Temperate southwest warmwater lakes are producing good catches of bass and panfish. Spring is typically a great time to target these fish. Often the best spiny ray catches occur in spring although the largest individual specimens invariably are taken in the fall.

Salmon fishing has been poor in Winchester Bay and the lower Umpqua. Crabbing has been slow to fair. A very few striped bass have been taken in tidewater but without many of these fish around anymore, fishing has been slow. Sturgeon fishing has been mostly non-productive as well. Spring Chinook results have been slow on the Umpqua mainstem in low water. Try above Scottsburg where a few have been hooked this week. The mouth of Rock Creek has produced some springers this week. Results for shad have been improving with warm, sunny water. The popular spots for bank fishers include Yellow Cree, Sawyers Rapids and the Elkton stretch. Brightly-colored shad darts have been effective. Steelhead have been caught on the North Umpqua with the flies only area producing some but it has been only fair at best. The South Umpqua will open on May 25th and will be productive for smallmouth.

Crabbing at Coos Bay is producing lots of females and undersized Dungeness but very few legal-sized males. Rock and jetty fishing has been fair to good.

It's early for summer steelhead on the lower Rogue, but spinner flingers have taken a few. Expect numbers to improve late this month and into June. Spring Chinook catches have been slow with water levels low due to the lack of precipitation. According to NOAA forecasts, rainfall due late in the coming weekend will have only marginal impact on flows. Middle Rogue results have been fairly dismal this week and even the upper Rogue, which had been productive in late April, has slowed with levels falling dramatically over the past week. With springers nosing into the area, a few have been caught.

The Chetco River will remain closed until the opening of trout season on May 25th.

When the US Forest Service campgrounds at Diamond Lake open in mid-May, the resort will no longer rent campsites. Call 800-733-7593 x 221 for reservations. Fishing with Power Bait or night crawlers at the south end of the lake has been productive with trollers have some success as well.

Clearwater Forebay #2, Lemolo Reservoir, Red Top Lake, Expo Pond, Reinhart Pond, Emigrant Reservoir and Spaulding Pond are scheduled for stocking with hatchery trout.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Salmonflies on the Deschutes! Many fly anglers look forward to this event all year and it appears they'll be rewarded with another early appearance this year. A few of these big bugs have appeared on the Warm Springs to Maupin stretch this week accompanied by the occasional Golden Stone. Fish Pale Morning Dun and Caddis patterns early in the day, then switch to patterns simulating the big bugs. It will only get better in coming weeks. In addition, this is a great time of year to hit the middle Deschutes where the weather is likely to be a little cooler and the fish are cooperative. Large brown trout will be sucking up large nymph patterns.

As water temperatures have warmed, the Metolius has continued to improve with Mayflies hatching in the afternoon. Watch for Caddis popping in the evenings here. Bull trout are being taken with this fishery improving over the next several weeks.

Crooked River flows have remained at just over 200 cfs for nearly two weeks. The Crooked will fish well at this level when the river is stable as it is now.

Crane Prairie is producing good catches of large trout to some anglers. Try the channels or fish in the trees. There are lots of fish here.

Bull trout catches have been decent at Lake Billy Chinook with best results reported from the Metolius Arm. Be sure to get a tribal permit to fish that area.

While kokanee fishing has been slow at Crescent Lake, catches of browns and rainbows have been good.

Odell Lake has been seasonally slow for kokanee with results improving as the water warmed. Trout fishing has been worthwhile.

Wickiup is producing good catches of large kokanee to trollers with early mornings most productive. The

Davis Arm has been productive with kokes readily hitting hoochies.

Trout fishing has been good with some nice fish taken over the past week at Davis Lake.

Roads are clear to Antelope Flats Reservoir but with early season water murky, results have been only fair. Those who tried to a few but they were big ones.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for May 2013

Last updated May 1, 2013

North Puget Sound

(Island, King, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom counties)

The lowland lakes fishing season is officially under way and anglers can expect to reel in some nice-size fish throughout May.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is adding more **trout** this month to several of the region's lakes, including Cranberry Lake in Island County; Desire, Green, Meridian, Morton, Shadow and Spring lakes in King County; Mountain Lake in San Juan County; Pass and Vogler lakes in Skagit County; Ballinger, Blackmans, Shoecraft and Gissburg Ponds in Snohomish County; and Squalicum and Terrell lakes in Whatcom County.

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. Complete information on stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available on [WDFW's website](#).

Anglers are also encouraged to check the ["Fish Washington" webpage](#) for details on lake fishing opportunities. The map-based webpage includes fishing information by county, lake and fish species throughout the state.

On Puget Sound, 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 one fish with an 18-inch minimum size limit.

Saltwater anglers can also reel in **halibut** this month. Several areas of Puget Sound will open for the big flatfish in early May. Heather Reed, coastal policy coordinator for WDFW, said this year's seasons were reduced by five days in the eastern region (Marine Areas 6-10) and nine days in the western region (Marine Area 5) to compensate for exceeding last year's quota.

"Catch rates were up again in Puget Sound last year, so we had to make some adjustments," Reed said. "In doing that, we made sure the seasons will open on the traditional opening dates, so folks can plan their annual halibut fishing trips well in advance."

The 2013 Puget Sound halibut seasons are as follows:

- **Marine Area 5:** From May 23-26, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday for Memorial Day weekend. From May 30 through June 1, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday and Saturday and then will be open for one final day on Saturday, June 8.
- **Marine Areas 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10:** From May 2-4, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday and Saturday. From May 16-18, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday and Saturday. From May 23-26, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday for Memorial Day weekend. The fishery will be open May 30 and 31, Thursday and Friday.
- **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 halibut fishing, there is a one-fish daily catch limit and no minimum size restriction. Anglers may possess a maximum of two fish in any form, and must record their catch on a WDFW catch record card.

Prefer shellfish? The **shrimp season** opens May 4 in Puget Sound, where recreational shrimp fishers will get more days to fish and a larger share of the catch.

This year's sport fishery for spot shrimp is expected to run from one day to several weeks longer in various areas of the Sound, due to policy changes recently adopted by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission.

"Recreational shrimp fishers will see a real difference in the length of this year's seasons, particularly in the San Juan Islands and the Strait of Juan de Fuca," said Rich Childers, WDFW shellfish manager. "Sport fisheries in other areas are also likely to pick up some extra fishing days under the updated policy."

In the San Juan Islands, the recent change in the state's spot shrimp policy will increase the sport fishery's share of the catch from 15 percent to 80 percent. To accommodate that change, WDFW split Marine Area 7-North into two subareas – 7 West and 7 South – each with its own season.

Under the higher sport quota, Childers said the new Marine Area 7-West could be open for more than a month this year, up from six days of fishing in those waters last year. The spot shrimp fishery in Marine Areas 7 East and 7 South, also open six days last year, is expected to run 13 days during the 2013 season, he said.

A map of the new subareas is available on WDFW's [Recreational Shrimp Fishing webpage](#) and is published in the [2013 Spot Fishing Rule pamphlet](#).

The shrimp season in Marine Area 6 in the Strait of Juan de Fuca is also expected to expand by several weeks under the new allocation policy, which increased the sport fishery's share of the catch in those waters from 15 percent to 22 percent this year.

The sport fishery in Hood Canal has received 100 percent of the state shrimp allocation in previous years, so it is not affected by the change in the commission's policy, Childers said. However, sport shrimpers will have five days to fish – up from four days last year – because stock trends have been healthy in recent years, he said.

Childers said the new policy does increase sport fishing allocations in other areas of central Puget Sound, but WDFW will determine whether that will translate into additional fishing days during the course of the season.

"The question is whether the higher catch shares will be enough to add a third day of fishing in those areas," he said. "We'll be watching the catch totals during the season and will make that decision on an area-by-area basis."

Puget Sound recreational shrimp season opening days are:

- **Hood Canal Shrimp District (Marine Area 12):** Open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 4, 8, 15, 18 and 22.
- **Discovery Bay Shrimp District (Marine Area 6):** Open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on May 4, 8, 15, 18 and 22.
- **Marine Areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5, 6 and 13 (excluding Discovery Bay Shrimp District):** Open daily beginning May 4 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 East and South:** Open May 4 at 7 a.m. for a one-day fishery and will reopen May 8-11, May 15-18, May 29-June 1.
- **Marine Area 7 West:** Open May 4 at 7 a.m., open Wednesday through Saturday each week until June 1. After June 1 the area will be open Thursday through Saturday each week until the quota is reached or Sept. 15, whichever comes first.
- **Marine Areas 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10 and 11:** Open May 4 and May 8 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Additional dates and times will be announced if sufficient quota remains after the initial fishing days scheduled above.

In all areas of Puget Sound, fishers are limited to 80 spot shrimp per day and a valid 2013-14 fishing license is required to participate in the fishery. For a description of the marine areas and fishing rules, see WDFW's [Recreational Shrimp Fishing website](#).

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

(Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason, Pierce, Thurston and Pacific counties)

A range of new fishing opportunities begin in May, when shrimp and lingcod seasons open in Puget Sound and halibut fishing gets under way in the Sound and off the coast. Anglers fishing coastal waters also will have an opportunity to hook hatchery chinook salmon during two short openers this month.

Marine areas 3 (LaPush) and 4 (Neah Bay) will be open for **hatchery chinook salmon** May 10-11 and May 17-18. Anglers will have a daily limit of two salmon, except they must release coho and wild chinook.

John Long, statewide salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), said the two salmon openers overlap with halibut fisheries in those areas. "This a great opportunity for halibut anglers who make the trip to the northern coast to round out their weekend by putting some salmon in the cooler as well," he said.

Anglers heading out to the north coast should note that **halibut seasons in marine areas 3 and 4** are open May 9, two days per week, Thursdays and Saturdays through May 18. If there is available quota the fishery will re-open May 30 and/or June 1 and continue again starting Thursday, June 13 until the quota is reached.

Halibut seasons elsewhere on the coast and in Puget Sound are:

- **Marine Area 1:** Open Friday May 3, three days per week (Friday through Sunday) until 80 percent of the quota is achieved. If the early season quota is not obtained prior to Aug. 3, the fishery will remain open three days per week (Friday through Sunday), until the remaining quota is taken, or until Sept. 29, whichever occurs first.
- **Marine Area 2:** Open Sunday, May 5, two days per week, Sunday and Tuesday for three consecutive weeks. The primary fishery is closed May 26 and 28. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will open the following Sunday and/or Tuesday and continue until the quota is achieved, or Sept. 30, whichever occurs first. The northern nearshore area will be open on May 5, and continue seven days per week until the nearshore quota is reached or until Sept. 29, whichever occurs first.
- **Marine Area 5:** Open May 23-26, Thursday through Sunday; May 30-June 1, Thursday through Saturday and Saturday, June 8.
- **Marine Areas 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10** (Marine Areas 11-13 are closed): Open May 2-4, Thursday through Saturday; Open May 16-18, Thursday through Saturday; May 23-26, Thursday through Sunday; May 30-31, Thursday through Friday.

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.

Anglers should also be aware that bottomfishing restrictions in marine areas 3 and 4 have changed from last year. Starting May 1, bottomfishing will be limited to waters shallower than 20 fathoms, except on days when halibut fishing is allowed. On those days, anglers may retain lingcod, Pacific cod and sablefish caught in waters deeper than 20 fathoms.

"The change was made to help avoid exceeding our yelloweye harvest quota through accidental by-catch," said Heather Reed, WDFW coastal policy coordinator. Anglers should take note of bottomfishing restrictions in place by consulting the [Fish Washington](#) pamphlet for regulations for marine areas they are interested in fishing.

Meanwhile, **lingcod** fishing opportunities expand May 1, when the fishery opens in all Puget Sound marine areas except marine area 12 (Hood Canal). 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 2013-14 [Sport Fishing Rules pamphlet](#).

Don't forget those **shrimp** pots. Shrimp fishing opportunities get under way May 4 in Puget Sound. 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 4, 8, 15, 18 and 22.
- Discovery Bay Shrimp District (Marine Area 6): Open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on May 4, 8, 15, 18 and 22.
- Marine areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5, 6 and 13 (excluding shrimp districts): Open daily beginning May 4 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 East and South: Open May 4 at 7 a.m. for a one-day fishery and will reopen May 8-11, May 15-18, May 29 – June 1.
- Marine Area 7 West: Open May 4 at 7 a.m., open Wednesday through Saturday each week until June 1. After June 1 the area will be open Thursday through Saturday each week until the quota is reached or Sept. 15, whichever comes first.
- Marine areas 8, 9, 10 and 11: Open May 4 and May 8 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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

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, including regulations for coonstripe and pink shrimp fishing seasons, see WDFW's [Recreational Shrimp Fishing website](#).

For freshwater anglers, **trout** are biting at dozens of lakes throughout the region. Opening day of the lowland lakes trout fishing season is over, but WDFW will keep stocking area waters with rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout right through the season. Information on stocking schedules for trout is available on [WDFW's 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 [Fish Washington pamphlet](#) for all regulations.

Additionally, the Fish Washington [website](#) offers information for all levels of anglers. This website contains the when's, where's and how-to's of fishing in Washington.

Anglers are reminded that the retention season for **wild steelhead** closed April 30 on the Bogachiel, Calawah, Dickey, Quillayute and Sol Duc rivers.

However, some rivers remain 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 [Fish Washington pamphlet](#).

Also, for those interested in introducing kids to fishing this spring, youth fishing events are planned throughout May in cities around the state. Events on or near Puget Sound and the Olympic Peninsula are taking place May 4, May 11, and May 18. Visit WDFW's [Youth Fishing webpage](#) for more information on some of the events taking place this summer.

Southwest Washington

(Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Lewis, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties)

Thousands of **spring chinook salmon** are moving up the fish ladders at Bonneville Dam each day, setting the stage for a succession of upriver fisheries on the mainstem Columbia River and its tributaries.

The lower Columbia River is currently closed to salmon fishing until further notice, but spring chinook – along with **hatchery steelhead, white sturgeon, shad** and **trout** – will be available for harvest in various waters throughout the region in May.

Above Bonneville Dam, the fishery for salmon and steelhead is set to run through May 5 on the mainstem Columbia River between the Tower Island power lines and the Washington/Oregon state line, 17 miles upriver from McNary Dam. Bank anglers can also fish upriver from Bonneville Dam to the Tower Island power lines during that time.

After a slow start this season, anglers fishing in that area caught nearly 200 upriver spring chinook salmon during the last week of April, accounting for most of the springers caught there this season. Before the season got under way, state fishery managers estimated that anglers would catch 658 upriver fish in that area through May 5, said Ron Roler, Columbia River policy coordinator for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"We expect to see some high catch rates through May 5," Roler said. Catch totals can ramp up very quickly when fish passage over the dam starts to peak."

Roler said fishery managers from Washington and Oregon may extend the season above Bonneville, but will hold off making that decision until mid-May when the estimated runsize is updated and more is known about how many hatchery fish are available for harvest. (This report will be updated online to reflect any additional fishing time approved for spring chinook fisheries above or below Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River.)

Whether or not the season is extended on the mainstem Columbia, Roler said anglers are likely to find this month's best fishing for hatchery spring chinook in the Wind River, Drano Lake and Klickitat River – more or less in that order. All three fishing areas typically heat up as fish passage begins to surge at Bonneville Dam, he said.

Like last year, anglers will have more room to fish at the mouth of the Wind River, where the outside fishing boundary has been moved about 250 yards out into the Columbia, Roler said. "Our goal last year was to help relieve overcrowding in that area, which proved successful," he said. Monitoring costs for that project are supported by the endorsement fee paid by anglers who fish the Columbia River and its tributaries.

Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist, said he also expects to see fishing for spring chinook salmon improve this month on the Cowlitz River. In addition, hatchery summer run **steelhead** are beginning to move into the Cowlitz, Kalama, East Fork Lewis, North Fork Lewis, and Washougal rivers. "That should help to sweeten the pot," said Hymer, noting that selective fishing rules will be in effect through early June on the lower East Fork Lewis and Washougal rivers.

Current fishing regulations for the Wind River and other waters throughout the state are described in WDFW's 2013-14 *Sport Fishing Rules* pamphlet, now [available online](#) and from

statewide recreational license dealers by early May.

Starting May 1, one new rule requires anglers to use **barbless hooks** when fishing for salmon or steelhead on the Columbia River and most of its tributaries downstream from Chief Joseph Dam. That rule, adopted last month by WDFW, expands on a similar regulation previously in effect on the stretch of the Columbia River that constitutes the border between Washington and Oregon.

The new rule extends the ban on barbed hooks another 250 miles upriver on the Columbia River and to dozens of its tributaries, including the Cowlitz, Wind, White Salmon, Klickitat, Snake, Yakima and Okanogan rivers. Anglers fishing any of those waters will still be allowed to use single, double-point or treble hooks, so long as the barbs have been filed off or pinched down.

With only a few exceptions, the rule requiring the use of barbless hooks will be in effect on rivers and streams where a Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement is required in addition to a current fishing license.

Other fishing rules that take effect May 1 include:

- **Cowlitz Falls Reservoir** (Lewis County): Salmon season opens year round in the reservoir, also known as Lake Scanewa.
- **Fort Borst Park Pond** (Lewis County): Opens to all licensed anglers until further notice. Two poles may be used with a Two-Pole Endorsement.
- **Kalama River** (Cowlitz County): Anglers may retain up to two hatchery steelhead starting 1,000 feet above the fishway at the upper salmon hatchery upstream to Summers Creek.
- **Merwin Lake** (Clark/Cowlitz County): The kokanee limit increases to 10 fish, and kokanee will not count as part of the trout daily limit.

On May 25, fishing will open from the mouth of the Green River to 400 feet below the Toutle Hatchery water intake, and from the mouth of the South Fork Toutle River to the 4700 Road Bridge. Anglers must release all trout, but may retain up to two hatchery steelhead. Selective gear rules apply in both areas.

Emergency fishing rules are also in effect on several rivers to ensure that spawning goals for spring chinook are met at local hatcheries:

- **Lewis River:** All chinook must be released from the mouth upstream to the mouth of the East Fork until further notice. The mainstem Lewis remains open for hatchery steelhead.
- **North Fork Lewis River:** All chinook must be released from the mouth of the East Fork upstream to Merwin Dam until further notice. Through May 31, fishing is closed for all species from Johnson Creek (located downstream from the Lewis River Salmon Hatchery) upstream to Merwin Dam. The North Fork Lewis from Johnson Creek downstream remains open to fishing for hatchery steelhead,
- **Kalama River:** All chinook must be released from the boundary markers at the mouth upstream to the upper salmon hatchery (Kalama Falls Hatchery). The Kalama River remains open to fishing for hatchery steelhead.
- **Wind River:** Through July 31, anglers are limited to one hatchery chinook or one hatchery steelhead per day from the mouth (boundary line/markers) upstream to 400 feet below Shipherd Falls. Wild chinook and wild steelhead must be released. All fishing is closed until further notice from 400 feet below Shipherd Falls upstream, including all tributaries.

For additional information, see the [rule change notices](#) on the WDFW website.

Meanwhile, anglers can catch and keep **white sturgeon** from Buoy 10 upstream to Bonneville Dam, and in The Dalles and John Day pools during the times specified below. Fishing has been slow, but anglers have been landing a few legal-size fish, particularly in the Dalles and John Day pools.

The limit is one legal-size white sturgeon per day, with a two-fish annual limit. The new annual limit was approved by the Washington and Oregon fish and wildlife commissions to help address the decline of legal-size sturgeon in the lower Columbia River in recent years.

Current fishing opportunities for sturgeon are as follows:

- **Buoy 10 to the Wauna powerlines:** Retention of white sturgeon is allowed daily from May 11 through June 30. During that period, sturgeon must measure between 41 inches to 54 inches (fork length) to be retained. Catch-and-release fishing is allowed on days when retention is prohibited.
- **Wauna powerlines to Bonneville Dam:** Retention of white sturgeon is allowed three days per week (Thursday through Saturday) through June 15 and from Oct. 19 through Dec. 31. Sturgeon must measure between 38 inches and 54 inches (fork length) to be retained. Catch-and-release fishing is allowed on days when retention is prohibited.
- **Pools above Bonneville Dam:** Bonneville Pool is open daily for catch-and-release fishing only, but anglers may retain legal-size sturgeon in the two reservoirs between The Dalles and McNary dams until their respective 300-fish and 500-fish guidelines are met.

Just as soon catch some **trout**? Several trout streams, stocked with feisty rainbows, will open for fishing on the Saturday of Memorial weekend. They include Canyon Creek and the upper Little White Salmon River in Skamania County, and Bird Creek, Outlet Creek, and Spring Creek and in Klickitat County.

WDFW also will continue to stock lowland lakes with catchable-size trout. Those receiving additional plants in May include Sacajawea, Kress, and Horseshoe lakes in Cowlitz county; Battleground Lake in Clark County; Kidney Lake in Skamania County; and Spearfish and Horsethief lakes in Klickitat County. Also, as the snow recedes in the mountains, many high lakes will become available to anglers.

Eastern Washington

(Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla and Whitman counties)

Trout-stocked lake fishing is in full swing in May throughout the region with some of the best producing waters just open since April 27. Opening-day catch rates for nearly 100 lakes throughout the state are summarized in a [news release](#) on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) website.

Two lakes in Spokane County and one each in Lincoln and Stevens counties were among the state's top dozen lakes, ranked according to catch-and-keep rates during the first weekend of fishing.

West Medical Lake, near the town of Medical Lake in southwest Spokane County, has been producing daily limits of five trout – mostly **rainbow** and **brown trout** – within a few hours for most anglers. The 114 anglers surveyed on opening day had kept 477 fish and released 98

others for an average catch per angler of 5.4 fish, of which 4.3 were retained. The largest fish recorded caught on opening day at West Medical was a 20-inch rainbow.

The 78 anglers surveyed at Williams Lake, southwest of Cheney in Spokane County, had kept 330 fish and released 93 others. had about the same catch and keep rates on the opener. The largest fish recorded caught there then was a 19-inch rainbow. A 16-inch **tiger trout** and five smaller **cutthroat trout** were also checked on the opener.

Fishtrap Lake, east of Sprague on the Lincoln-Spokane county line, had a 4.7 fish per catch rate and 4.4 fish kept per angler rate on the opener. Randy Osborne, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), reported checking 37 anglers at Fishtrap with 161 rainbow trout and 12 released fish. The largest catch recorded was a 24-inch hatchery broodstock rainbow trout.

Based on a check of 15 anglers with 67 fish, WDFW northeast district fish biologist Bill Baker reported a 4.5 fish per catch rate on the opener at Rocky Lake, south of Colville in Stevens County. Baker said about a quarter of the trout caught were carryovers bigger than 14 inches, with the rest averaging 11.5 inches from fry plants last year. The largest trout recorded was a 17.5-inch rainbow.

At Fish Lake northeast of Cheney in Spokane County, anglers averaged 2.6 trout kept, but catch-and-release anglers using selective gear averaged 6.9 fish, making the overall catch rate one of the highest in the state. The biggest fish recorded that day was a 17-incher, and Osborne said anglers caught some nice Eastern brook trout, too.

Clear Lake, south of the town of Medical Lake in Spokane County, also had a high overall catch rate on the opener – 6.7 fish per angler, with a 3.9 kept fish per angler average, based on 22 anglers checked with 85 fish and 63 released fish. Many kept fish were 14-16-inch carryover rainbows, in addition to the 10-12 inch catchable-size rainbows recently stocked. About 11 percent of the harvest was brown trout. The largest fish recorded there was a 17-inch rainbow.

Another high overall catch rate on the opener was measured at Ellen Lake, north of Inchelium in Ferry County, where 16 anglers were checked with 58 fish and 39 released fish, for a 6.1 average catch rate and 3.6 average fish kept rate. Ellen's largest fish on the opener was a 16-inch rainbow.

Stevens County's Starvation Lake, southeast of Colville, had lots of happy anglers on the opener, Baker reported, with an overall average catch rate of 3.8 mostly kept fish. That was based on a check of 39 anglers with 137 fish and just 10 released. Baker says almost of half of the kept fish were carryovers bigger than 13 inches, with the largest fish a 16-inch rainbow.

Waitts Lake, in southern Stevens County near Valley, also had a good opener, with an overall average catch rate of 3.5 fish per angler, based on a check of 72 with 175 fish and 75 released. The largest measured that day was a 21-inch rainbow.

Diamond Lake, near Newport in Pend Oreille County, had an opening day average catch rate of 3.2 fish per angler, based on 25 with 81 fish. The catch at Diamond is a mix of rainbow and brown trout, with the largest record on the opener a 22-inch rainbow.

Cedar Lake, north of Leadpoint near the Canada border in Stevens County, produced an average catch rate of 2.4 fish per angler on the opener, based on 23 with 55 fish and just one released. Baker reported anglers happy at Cedar with nice-sized carryovers; the biggest was a 16-inch rainbow.

Badger Lake, south of Cheney in Spokane County, produced an average of 2.2 trout per angler on the opener, based on 61 anglers catching 134 fish. The largest recorded were an 18-inch rainbow and a 17-inch cutthroat.

Mudgett Lake, in southern Stevens County near Fruitland, was slower on the opener, probably

because the windy conditions throughout the region seemed to pick up there earlier in the day. The catch rate measured was 1.6 fish per angler, based on 13 with 21 fish. The largest was a 16.5-inch rainbow, one of the few carryovers from fry plants.

Deep Lake, southeast of Northport in Stevens County, had the least number of anglers checked on the opener, largely due to wind very early in the day. Just nine anglers were fishing in the morning and none had catches. With better conditions, fishing for rainbow, cutthroat and brook trout should pick up and stocked **kokanee** will come on strong next month.

In the southeast end of the region, lake fishing has been under way on all but one of several Tucannon River impoundments in Columbia County since March. Curl Lake, an acclimation pond for spring Chinook salmon smolt that are now gone, just opened April 27 for fishing on hatchery-stocked rainbow trout. Curl will have plenty of action through this month and next on 10-12 inch rainbows and some "jumbos" that run about 1.5 pounds each.

Meanwhile on the Snake River, fishing for hatchery-marked **spring chinook salmon** open two days each week in three zones, but is expected to close before the month is over. The zone from Pasco upstream to near Ice Harbor Dam is currently open on Fridays and Saturdays. On Sundays and Mondays, fishing is open in the stretch from Texas Rapids to near Little Goose Dam, and in the stretch from the intersection of Steptoe Canyon and Wawawai River roads to the state line in Clarkston.

Anglers are advised to [check the details](#) of this restricted fishery and watch the WDFW website for possible notice of an early closure.

Many more lake fishing opportunities are available throughout the region and can be found in detail by county on WDFW's [Fish Washington website](#).

Northcentral Washington

(Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Grant and Okanogan counties)

Trout-stocked lake fishing is in full swing in May throughout the region with some of the best producing waters open since April 27. Opening-day catch rates for nearly 100 lakes throughout the state are summarized in a [news release](#) on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) website.

Conconully Reservoir in Okanogan County was one of the state's top dozen lakes on opening day with a catch-and-keep rate of 4.3 fish per angler. Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist, said the catch at the reservoir has been running about two-thirds **rainbow trout** in the 10-12-inch range and one-third **kokanee** in the 11-13-inch range.

Pearrygin, Alta, Fish, and Conconully lakes in Okanogan County are also producing good catches of rainbow trout in the 10-12 inch range, with larger fish to 18 inches, Jateff said. On the opener, Pearrygin anglers checked averaged 5.8 fish caught, with 3.8 kept, including a five-pound **brown trout** and five-pound triploid rainbow. At Alta Lake, anglers averaged 2.7 caught fish, with almost all kept. Conconully Lake anglers averaged 2.2 fish each, and Fish Lake anglers averaged 2.1 fish.

Other Okanogan County lakes that opened in late April but were not creel-checked are also producing well, Jateff said. Anglers at Blue and Big Twin lakes, which are under selective gear rules, are reportedly catching rainbows in the 10-16 inch range. Leader and Wannacut lakes received plants of 10-12-inch rainbows along with fish weighing a pound or more right before the opener.

Jateff also noted that Spectacle Lake, which has been open since April 1, continues to produce limits of rainbows in the 11-12 inch range for both shore and boat anglers. Patterson Lake, which is open year-round, continues to provide good fishing for kokanee in the 10-11 inch range along

with catches of **yellow perch**. Year-round Palmer Lake has also been a consistent producer for kokanee in the 11-14 inch range.

In Chelan County, WDFW district fish biologist Travis Maitland of Wenatchee reports checking 75 anglers at Wapato Lake on the opener when they averaged 2.3 fish each, most in the 14-15-inch range with several over 19 inches. Clear Lake anglers averaged 3.4 fish caught, with the largest about 18 inches. Anglers fishing Beehive Lake anglers averaged 1.6 fish each, the largest 16.5 inches along with some **tiger trout**.

In Douglas County, 40 anglers were checked on the opener at Jameson Lake for an average of 3.3 fish caught, including rainbows from nine to 24 inches.

Many Columbia Basin fishing lakes have been open since the first of March or April, but some top producers opening on the fourth Saturday of April were worth the wait. WDFW district fish biologist Chad Jackson of Moses Lake expects the good fishing measured on opening day will continue through May at Grant County's Blue, Deep, Park, Perch, Vic Meyers and Warden lakes.

The 36 anglers checked at Blue Lake on the opener averaged 3.8 fish caught and 3.6 fish kept, with most averaging 12.5-13.5 inches and carryovers from 16 to 20 inches. Ninety-one anglers checked at Deep Lake had great fishing for 11-15-inch trout, averaging 4.7 fish caught and 3.8 fish kept. Park Lake was a little slower with an average of 2.9 fish caught, but anglers checked there were happy with the quality of the fish, Jackson said,.

Perch Lake generally has few anglers because it's mostly a shoreline effort, Jackson said, but it has nice fish and it's a good place to get away from the crowds at the other lakes. Seven anglers were checked on the opener at Perch with an average of 5.3 fish caught and 3.6 fish kept, most 11-13 inches with some 14-16-inch triploids.

Vic Meyers Lake anglers averaged four fish caught, most in the 11-13-inch range with some carryovers and triploids running 14 to 20 inches. Warden Lake has good fishing for mostly 11-inch yearling trout, with some carryovers 16-20 inches. On opening day, 65 anglers checked at Warden averaged 3.9 fish caught and 3.6 fish kept.

Many more lake-fishing opportunities are available throughout the region and can be found on WDFW's [Fish Washington website](#).

Southcentral Washington

(Benton, Franklin, Kittitas and Yakima counties)

Anglers will have a chance to land some feisty spring chinook salmon this month and can catch good-size rainbow trout in well-stocked lakes around the region. Sturgeon also will be available in the waters above John Day Dam and McNary Dams.

With **spring chinook** just beginning to move into the Yakima River, state fishery managers are now planning to open the fishery sometime in mid-May. As of April 29, only four adult hatchery spring chinook had passed Prosser Dam.

"There's no good reason to open the fishery until there are enough fish to catch," said John Easterbrooks, WDFW regional fish program manager. "That would be a disservice to anglers and incur unnecessary monitoring costs for the department."

Easterbrooks said he expects that a fishing rule setting an opening for the fishery will be posted on [WDFW's website](#) and distributed to media outlets during the first or second week of May.

According to the pre-season forecast, approximately 3,200 adult hatchery spring chinook salmon will return to the Yakima River in 2013, compared to 5,700 predicted last year. Easterbrooks said this year's season will be similar to last year's, but will likely reflect a smaller return.

Like last year, anglers will have a daily limit of two adipose-fin-clipped hatchery chinook. All wild salmon, identifiable by an intact adipose fin, must be released unharmed and must not be

removed from the water prior to release. Bait is allowed, but anglers will be required to use single-point, barbless hooks with a hook gap from point to shank of 3/4 inch or less when fishing for salmon.

Trout are another option. Waters scheduled to be stocked with rainbow trout this month include Bear Lake, Clear Lake, Dog Lake, McCabe Pond and Columbia Park Pond. A complete trout-planting schedule for south-central lakes and ponds is available on the [WDFW website](#).

The 13th annual **Kids Fishing event** will be held at Columbia Park Pond in Kennewick on May 11. All youths [must pre-register at Kennewick Parks and Recreation](#) to attend.

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. Sturgeon spawning sanctuaries below Priest Rapids Dam and Ice Harbor Dam close to all sturgeon fishing (both harvest and catch-and-release) beginning May 1. They reopen for catch-and-release fishing on Aug. 1.

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 2013-14 license to fish state waters. Those who fish for salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River and its tributaries are also required to purchase an endorsement that helps maintain and improve fishing opportunities throughout the Columbia River Basin. Licenses and permits are available [online](#), by phone (1-866-246-9453) and from sporting goods stores and other retail license dealers around the state.

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Random Links

Deterring sea lions from NOAA:

http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/protected_species/marine_mammals/pinnipeds_seals_and_sea_lions/sea_lion_removals/deterring_problem_seals_and_sea_lions.html

Mirror Pond in Bend may be doomed:

<http://www.bendsource.com/bend/dam-near-done/Content?oid=2229631>

Cool coastal info and live cams:

<http://www.jimmyriggedcomputers.com/spanishhead.html>

GOOD LUCK!