

[The Guide's Forecast - volume 17 issue number 7](#)

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **February 13th – February 19th, 2015**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro – Passage of winter steelhead at the Falls has slowed over the past couple of weeks. Water flowing from upstream is still muddy, adding to the turbidity of the lower river.

Water levels remain high on the McKenzie River.

The Santiam system has not yet recovered from rainfall earlier this week.

The Clackamas River started rising in the middle of last week but never really blew out. It has dropped, is exhibiting good color and is a decent bet for winter steelhead.

With the Sandy River dropping and clearing and winter steelhead scattered, it will produce over the coming weekend.

Anglers anxiously await more spring chinook news and plunkers as well as boaters ply the waters in hopes of an early prize. The season's first spring chinook made itself visible at Bonneville Dam on February 8th. The mainstem Columbia season is *projected* to run through April 10th.

Northwest – Early indications following the high water indicates that there are good numbers of steelhead around and as expected, a number of spent fish with some fresh wild fish available too. With larger, more productive rivers just coming on line at this writing, we won't know more until the next issue but check the Forecast section for the region you'll be fishing in for an accurate assessment of what lies ahead for your favorite stream. This is in the paid member's only section.

The Wilson and Nestucca as well as the Siletz will remain top options for those seeking hatchery fish options. Wild steelhead should be available in nearly every system.

Rough weather kept recreational boats at bay for the week but conditions may improve by the weekend. Rockfish and lingcod await anglers.

Crabbing remains poor both in the ocean and local estuaries. It's clearly a down-cycle for the crustaceans.

Southwest - Offshore launches should be possible this coming weekend off the central Oregon coast.

South coast surf anglers have been making good catches of redbtail and calico surf perch whenever the ocean has laid down.

As the mainstem Umpqua drops and clears, steelhead should be good although less than 10% of the fish here will be of hatchery origin.

Steelheading will yield a mix of hatchery and wild fish in the Coos system.

Waters of the lower Rogue are still high but clearing. It should fish by Friday or Saturday. The middle river is in better shape and upper Rogue steelheader should have a decent shot at winters now.

Waters were just dropping into fishing levels and the clarity rapidly improving on the Chetco as of Thursday this week.

Eastern – The lower Deschutes offers little to steelheaders at this time of year.

Fly fishers on the Metolius report that fishing is slow.

SW Washington- District steelheaders remain less than motivated although streams are just now coming into shape. The Cowlitz will remain a top option until spring chinook arrive but the North Fork Lewis and Kalama will also get some pressure. The early season return proved much better than last year's return.

Smelt dippers most often took limits during the last open season on Saturday. The final opener for the Cowlitz will be this Saturday and dipping will likely remain good. No license is required to catch these fish but you do have to adhere to a 10-pound limit, which is about ¼ of a 5 gallon bucket full.

Columbia River Fishing Report – No news is bad news. Nothing continuing to go on here although the first spring chinook of the year passed by Bonneville Dam on February 8th. Let's hope we get some momentum going in the very near future.

The Guide's Forecast – If you need something to read, here is the 2015 forecasts for the spring run of chinook: http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/forecasts/columbia_river/2014-results_2015-expects.pdf

A dirty Willamette River and sub-par tides won't do beach plunkers any favors this weekend.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Passage of winter steelhead at the Falls has slowed over the past couple of weeks. Water flowing from upstream is still muddy, adding to the turbidity of the lower river.

Water levels remain high on the McKenzie River.

The Santiam system has not yet recovered from rainfall earlier this week.

The Guide's Forecast – The lower Willamette has been good for catch-and-release sturgeon fishing. They're holding in Portland Harbor so there's no reason to venture too far from the launch at Swan Island. A couple of anglers caught fish until they ran out of bait on Monday this week. St. Johns area and Milwaukie have also been reliable for sturgeon. When asked about spring Chinook fishing, **Robert Campbell at Fisherman's Marine in Oregon City (503-557-5600)** predicted this: "With the Willamette warm and murky and the Clackamas flowing green, there will be springers caught at the mouth of the Clack, and when they are, you can bet neither you nor I will hear about it." When asked to predict when to hit the lower Willamette for spring Chinook, Campbell predicted, "Sunday or Monday there will be a flurry of activity at Sellwood. This is the teaser run with the next bunch arriving in March." You heard it here.

There's nothing of interest to anglers on the McKenzie and with the level up, it will be next week until it's even a possibility.

With fewer than 1,400 winter steelhead over Willamette Falls, there may be a few in the North Santiam but too few to put much stake in this catch-and-release fishery.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – The Clackamas felt the brunt of precipitation early, with the water starting to rise Wednesday, February 4th. This trend continued through Tuesday, February 10th, at which time it started dropping. Steelhead are being caught, however. A couple were even taken out of muddy water below Big Cliff last Sunday.

Sandy water levels are dropping and clearing. It will continue to improve over the coming weekend as should steelheading.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife announced it will again conduct a very limited recreational smelt fishery on the Sandy River, from 6 a.m. until noon on Saturday, March 7 and again Sunday, March 15.

The Guide's Forecast – While the Clackamas is still a little high, the color is excellent. "The Clackamas is remarkably good for this time of year," stated **Robert Campbell at Fisherman's Marine in Oregon City (503-557-5600)**, "and it should get better over the next few days."

"The Sandy was fishing well on Monday," said **Robert** reporting by telephone today. This is because the impact from rain storms didn't occur until Tuesday this week, when the level rose sharply and the water turned muddy. Winter steelhead are scattered throughout the system from the mouth to above Cedar Creek. "Overall, fishing has been excellent on the Sandy this season," said Campbell. Jig and bobber has been effective but try drifting cured roe under a bobber or throw hardware if the water still has some color. At this writing in February 12th, it's about 11.5 at the town of Sandy.

North Coast Fishing Report – Not much to report this early in the drop-down from all the rain we had last week. Some of the smaller streams put out some fish at mid-week however with the Necanicum highlighting the north coast opportunity for late winter-run steelhead.

Pro guide Andy Betnar (503-791-4094) reported great success for steelhead on Wednesday, fishing the small, north coast Necanicum River system. Andy stated his party hooked 15 fish, landing 10, of which 5 were downstream, spawned-out fish and 5 were of wild origin. Andy has access to higher reaches of the Necanicum with his driftboat, avoiding the massive log-jam that exists downstream of the Klootchie Creek put-in. This just in, Andy again fished the Necanicum on Thursday, only hooking 5 fish for a hard effort, keeping 2 fish of which one was a fresh down-streamer. Andy stated he was the only boat on the drift and was quite disappointed given all the action they had yesterday. The water remained in excellent condition. Local area bank anglers reported dismal reports from the Necanicum, proving it can be a volatile river system for different user groups.

The North Fork Nehalem is not producing great results despite the significant rain freshet and ideal water conditions. *Some* steelhead were being caught throughout the day and workers were likely to check the trap in the coming day or so but this run is certainly on the ramp-down.

We're absent reports for the larger systems such as the Wilson and Nestucca systems as they are just now coming into shape. The upper Trask is also a great option about now but few anglers will take advantage of it as it's largely catch and release fishing.

Pro guide Grant Putnam (503-784-1217) reported in from the Siletz River. He fished in high flows on Wednesday, starting late and landing 2 wild fish on the Moonshine float. Grant put in a stronger effort on Thursday, yielding a 4 for 8 day, of which only 1 had a maxillary clip so he didn't take any of the fish for 2 days of effort. Wild fish are seemingly ruling the roost. They are sidedrifting small clusters of EZ eggs on this system.

All other fisheries were rather off limits this week, with all the wild weather we've been experiencing. Maybe that will change in the coming week however. See the forecast section below for more detail.

The Guide's Forecast – Although still early to be calling it peak season for later running winter steelhead, if the run is going to shape up like most of us think it is, we'd expect action to be pretty good following this nicely timed rain freshet. Regardless, peak season for late run steelhead is still a few weeks away.

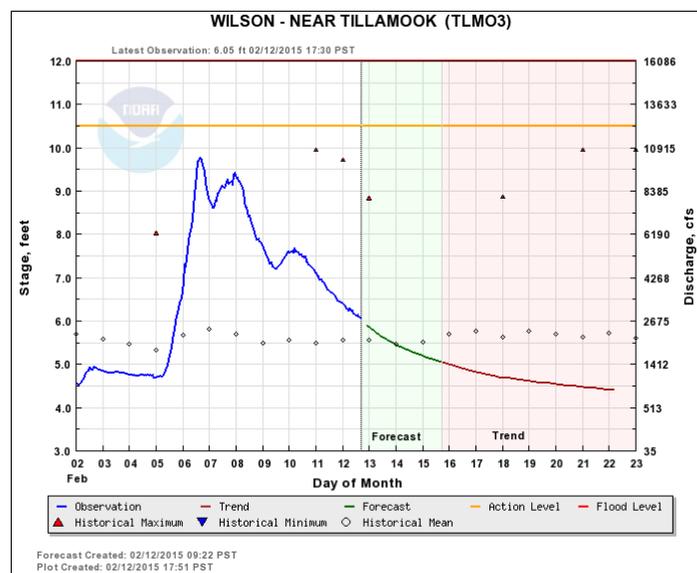
As we've done in the past, here is a system by system break-down of the districts options following the recent rain freshet:

Necanicum River – More spawned out steelhead on the way. The spawning phase of these earlier returning fish is about over so they should continue to dominate the catches as they make their way back downstream. They bite quite readily and some of them can still be in good enough shape to justify a harvest. This will last a few more weeks but wild fish will begin to dominate the catch as we enter late February. The action for wild fish on this system can be quite impressive with few other anglers to contend with. It's a great all around stream.

Mainstem Nehalem – More wild fish should be making their way into the river but it will remain roiled through the weekend. If the upcoming weather forecast prevails, it could fish by early next week. There should be some brutes available.

Kilchis River- Likely fishing best right now and should slow by the weekend as flows drop. This can be a wild fish factory and this year, that will likely be the case. For those versed in low water tactics, the lower reach may fish just fine over the weekend.

Wilson River – All eyes are on this system and the Nestucca as ample hatchery fish opportunity is on the horizon. The river should have fished well Thursday (our print day) but action should last into the weekend. As is typically the rule, fish higher in the system during higher flows and go low as flows drop. It will certainly be a very busy weekend on this river over the weekend. Wild fish will certainly start making a stronger showing in the coming weeks and well into April. Use bigger, more brightly colored baits in the higher flows and select more subtle colors and sizes as flows drop. Here is the hydrograph for the coming days:



Trask River – The upper reaches of the Trask should be fishing well prior to the weekend. One reach popular (although not many actually drift it), is the Stone’s Camp to Upper Peninsula float, where fish have to pass the dam hole, which is only achievable in higher flows. By the weekend, anglers working the lower reaches should also find more consistent catches although this system typically peaks later in the other rivers in the immediate area.

Three Rivers/Nestucca system – Although Three Rivers is all but done, the mainstem Nestucca should be fishing pretty well in the upper reaches right now. Boaters in the know will look to the 6th Bridge and downstream float to find fish and rightfully so. By the weekend, 5½ Bridge and downstream should have ample numbers of fish available. This weekend should provide a good jump-start for late season steelheaders but there will be many more to come by early March.

With more rough ocean conditions and poor crabbing results in the ocean and out, there won’t be much more opportunity than steelheading for coastal outdoor recreationalists until maybe next week. Here is the ocean forecast:

FRI

SE WIND 5 KT...VEERING TO W IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 1 FT. W SWELL 8 FT AT 13 SECONDS. CHANCE OF RAIN.

FRI NIGHT

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 8 FT AT 11 SECONDS. RAIN LIKELY IN THE EVENING...THEN SCATTERED SHOWERS AFTER MIDNIGHT.

SAT

N WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 6 FT AT 11 SECONDS.

SAT NIGHT

N WIND 15 TO 20 KT...RISING TO 20 TO 25 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. W SWELL 6 FT AT 11 SECONDS.

SUN

NE WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. W SWELL 6 FT AT 11 SECONDS.

SUN NIGHT

NE WIND 20 TO 25 KT...EASING TO 15 TO 20 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. GUSTS TO 30 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

MON

NE WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 3 FT.

TUE

E WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. SW SWELL 4 FT.

Central & South Coast Reports – Offshore launches should be possible this coming weekend off the central Oregon coast. Saturday is the transition but Sunday looks positively friendly according to NOAA forecasts.

South coast surf anglers have been making good catches of redbtail and calico surf perch whenever the ocean has laid down. The Bandon, Brookings and Gold Beach areas have been particularly productive.

While the Siuslaw hasn't been as productive the last couple of seasons, this year seems to be showing an improvement. Stocking of hatchery steelhead has been stepped up so the future looks even brighter. There has been talk recently about sturgeon fishing on the lower Siuslaw. There are a few with emphasis on few.

Coos Bay has been muddy from runoff due to recent rains, as it clears and the salinity returns to normal, crabbing and jetty rockfishing will resume. Steelheading will yield a mix of hatchery and wild fish in the Coos system. The West Fork Millicoma River has dropped and cleared sufficiently to fish with the South Fork Coos not far behind.

As the mainstem Umpqua drops and clears, steelhead should be good although less than 10% of the fish here will be of hatchery origin. There have been no reports of spring Chinook as yet but it's not uncommon for springers to make an appearance here in February. Catch-and-release steelheading will improve on the North Umpqua along with water conditions. Were just entering the peak of the hatchery steelhead season on the South Umpqua, which fishery should produce winters through March. At just over four feet with flows at 1,500 cfs near Tiller, it will be fishing now.

Waters of the lower Rogue are still high but clearing. It should fish by Friday or Saturday and results prior to the recent freshet were good on the lower river with winters running on the larger side. If the water is off-color, try pink plastic worms or drift roe. If it's too swift, plunk Spin 'n' Glos. On the middle river where steelheading has been fair to good and steady, water conditions have improved and it is fishable now. Side-drifting or pulling plugs should hook some fish. Upper Rogue steelheaders will have a much better chance of a hookup following rain earlier this week as the fresh water will draw those fish upstream. Try a jig tipped with shrimp on the upper river.

Waters were just dropping into fishing levels and the clarity rapidly improving on the Chetco as of Thursday this week. Steelheading should be good but anglers should expect to hook a mix of fresh, bright fish and those which has spawned out which will be returning from tributaries now.

Steelhead have been caught at the Elk River and a few on the Sixes, but these river drop so rapidly that they'll probably be fairly low by the coming weekend.

With open water at Diamond Lake, it's time for the ice fishers to put away their jigging rods and for Power Baiters to get busy. The local weather forecast looks like a mostly sunny weekend for lake fishers.

Central and Eastern Oregon – If one can find any summer steelhead on the lower Deschutes now, they're not worth the trouble. Winters will start to show in fishable numbers in July with better fishing in the following months.

A few caddis and Blue-Winged-Olive are hatching afternoons on the Metolius but trout don't seem too interested. Fishing has been slow but the few taken have been nice ones.

After years of conventionally stocking trout and Atlantic salmon at Hosmer Lake with less than stellar results, the ODFW is changing tactics. 'Cranebow' rainbow trout (hatchery fish derived from wild redband trout found in Crane Prairie Reservoir) will replace the conventional plantings in hope that anglers will have a better experience here. Atlantic salmon will also be discontinued at Hosmer, a lake which has never had a native trout population.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

Reader Don C. wrote this week to ask, "Under what heading do I look at to get the latest info on the Siletz and Alsea rivers. There seems to be a void there or there isn't anything going on there?"

TGF co-editor Michael Teague replied, "While the Siletz, Alsea and even Siuslaw are technically in the Northwest Zone, since I write the southwest section, most of the reports come to me. As a matter of course, I started placing them in that section in the TGF newsletter as it made more sense than passing this information back and forth between Bob Rees and I.

"So, in answer to your question, that's where you'll usually find reports on those rivers. That said, we depend on receiving reports from those locations; if we don't get any info. On any particular week, there won't be a report. We don't speculate.

"Be aware that the northernmost waterways will be listed first so those rivers will be near the top of that section, following general information such as offshore conditions.

"Thanks for writing and good fishing!"

Write to the TGF staff:

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Random Links

High Water Steelhead Feb. 10, 2015:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFIBUZjwyyU&feature=youtu.be>

Oregon Experience: Astoria:

<http://www.opb.org/television/programs/oregonexperience/>

Angling regulation, hatchery production changes for the Coos-Coquille-Tenmile Lakes:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2015/february/020615b.asp>

GOOD LUCK!