

The Guide's Forecast - volume 6 issue number 42

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **April 22nd – April 28th, 2005**

Fisheries Update: Spring Chinook are on their way so make sure that you have the tools you need to put more fish in the creel! Our technical report #1- Willamette River Spring Chinook Tactics and Locations for the Boat Angler is a real hit and a real help! These reports and several more are available at:
<http://www.theguidesforecast.com/techrpt.shtml>.

The Columbia is CLOSED once again! A gross mis-prediction of the spring run is calling for drastic restrictions in the sport and commercial fisheries beginning midnight 4/20. Although mixed reports showed some improvement early in the week, poor catches overall are a good indicator that the run is simply not going to materialize.

"This is either the latest run in recorded history, or the smallest run in recorded history, or both," said Steve Williams, deputy director of fisheries for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Sturgeon fishing on the Columbia remains mostly a shaker show. Effort was light due to the springer interest but that will likely change now. Some keepers are being reported from the lower river near Astoria and the retention rule changes on 5/1 where the minimum size increases to 45 inches and re-opens to retention on the 15th of May.

Springer fishing remains slow on the Willamette but a handful are being taken daily. Improvement is expected if the water warms four or five degrees.

Fishing is slow to dead on the Clackamas. It's worse on the Sandy. On the other hand (or fin), summer steelheading is pretty darned good at the Santiams with some specimens taken recently over 10 pounds.

Recent improvements in the weather have the ocean fishable for bottomfish! Keep your eyes open for the NW winds that are occurring in the late morning!

Smallmouth fishing in the Columbia and Willamette Rivers slowed with the last rain and consequent drop in water temperature. With the warmer weather, expect these feisty cichlids to be on the prowl. Smaller lakes and ponds should be the target for anglers looking for largemouth action.

Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808) reports steelheading on the North Oregon Coast is beginning to slow. Jesse states we are in a transition period where an angler can catch some spawned out steelhead, have a chance at a fresh late winter run, summer run or spring Chinook. The North Coast streams that remain open should fish decent over the weekend.

South coast streams are cranking up with the springer run gaining momentum. Decent catches are a regularity on the lower Rogue and some large fish have been taken on the Umpqua including a 53-pounder this week!

Crabbing is surprisingly good in Tillamook Bay for those strategically placing their pots. A good minus tide series this weekend could hamper crabbing success but sturgeon fishing could be a good option!

Additional opportunities for trout anglers will occur starting Saturday, April 23rd. The lakes which are closed seasonally open on that date which is now considered the opening of trout season. Fishing at Lemolo Reservoir at the opener for naturally occurring brown trout and stocked rainbows should be good from boat or bank. With the ice off Diamond Lake, large holdovers and 11,000 stocked trout await anglers.

For the 'opener,' stocking of lakes, ponds and reservoirs open year-around has kept the tank trucks busy

this week. Big Creek Reservoirs 1 and 2, Alder, Buck, Dune, Elbow, Georgia, Hebo, Mercer and Lost Lakes in both Clatsop and Lane Counties, Mt. Hood, Bethany, Canby, Haldeman, Dorman, Hartman, Roaring River Park, Huddleston, E. E. Wilson, Junction City, Walling and Trojan Ponds, Alton Baker Canal, Harriet, Henry Hagg, Roslyn, Salmonberry, Freeway Lake East, Clear, Leaburg, Timber Linn, Commonwealth and Walter Wirth Lakes, Blue River, Cottage Grove, Carmen, Detroit, Dorena, Green Peter, Foster And Dexter Reservoirs, Blue River, Coast Fork Willamette, Fall Creek, Upper McKenzie River, Mid Fork Willamette Rivers and Salmon Creek Fall River, Shevlin Pond and Simtustus Lake were all planted earlier this week.

Full length subscribers will note a significant section on Washington fishing this week. The Guide's Forecast-Washington edition is coming to fruition as requested by our numerous readers and **pro guide Kevin Newell (360-430-2521)** is doing a bang-up job of making it happen. Enjoy the fruits of his labor and for our free version subscribers, here is a re-cap of the Washington report:

Pro Guide Jeff Knots (509) 366-4052 tells us that there is not much to report on the Mid Columbia but "The lower Yakima River from the Highway 240 bridge up to Horn Rapids (Wannawish)Dam is filled with big trophy sized small mouth!", says Jeff.

Pro Guide Rob Orzel (360) 673-3557 and Wayne Orzel of Prichards Western Anglers report, "Yesterday was the best day so far for this spring salmon season. The river was hot with several anglers bringing in limits of fish with the largest fish being around 20 pounds.

Pro Guide Bob Barthlow (509) 952-9694 reports on the Cowlitz River, "Fishing has been a little slow lately. There was a nice push of fish that came through last week and we are basically fishing for the remnants and stragglers from that batch of fish.

Mike Jamboretz (425) 788-5955 or (206) 595-9526 says halibut fishing in Puget Sound started off well on April 14. Calm weather conditions allowed anglers to get out on the water and off Port Angeles, about 162 anglers reeled in 53 halibut during the first four days of the season.

Pro Guide Pat Long (509) 751-0410 tells us that the Snake is fishing very well for smallmouth bass and sturgeon with some nice fish coming to the boat. Sturgeon fishing in the catch and release area has been great for the past week with several fish in the 7 to 10 ft range and good numbers of smaller fish.

Pro Guide David Child (509) 962-5523 says that on his most recent Yakima River trip on April 19, "We saw a great caddis emergence from 10am to 1pm with fish rising to the hatching caddis. We boated around 20 fish yesterday from 10 to 17 inches including 2 cutthroat." Currently the WDFW is planning to allow razor clam digging at all five of Washington's razor clam beaches. These digs are scheduled for April 23-25.

Soapbox Update: Please join us for our second annual Bounty on the Bay fundraiser to support salmon restoration efforts in the Tillamook area. Last years event was a smashing success and we think the fishing will be even better this year! We will start off the event with a seminar by **pro guide Bob Rees** on how to catch Tillamook Chinook using herring trolling techniques. Follow this with a great tournament and win yourself some great prizes for biggest and most spring Chinook landed on the bay that day!

The biggest catch of the day is the opportunity to fish with **NW legend Buzz Ramsey!** The current high bid of \$200 holds this seat but hopefully you will drive the price up- all in the name of salmon recovery!

Go to www.tbnep.org to register or call the Tillamook Estuaries Partnership at (503) 322-2222 for any questions. You won't want to miss this event!

Columbia River Fishing Report – Most anglers know by now that the Columbia River is closing to fishing as of Wednesday, April 20th. As for this guide, I can't say that I am too disappointed as fishing really wasn't all that fun anyway! Sympathy rather than frustration was eating away at me at how

this years spring Chinook season was progressing. My hope was that with the gross mis-calculation of a great spring Chinook season this year, we don't get burned in subsequent years for the likelihood of overextending our impact percents if indeed the run doesn't materialize as I am sure it is NOT at this point. This sort of scenario will have far reaching impacts in the near future of sportfishing on the Columbia River. But do you really want to hear about that anyway? Well, this weeks success really isn't all that much more intriguing! My trips this week usually gave up between 2 and 5 opportunities usually only landing about half of those opportunities. Some of the best fishing took place on the lower river's wing jetties at Brookfield and Jim Crow Sands. What did frustrate anglers was the fact that you only had a small chance to actually land one of those fish due to sea-lion predation. There were some decent "bites" in Clifton Channel but certainly nothing to write home about. Sea-lions took a high number of those fish as well. All in all, the lower river fishery was not impressive and many anglers are not sure what the future of this spring Chinook fishery is.

Further upriver, reports from Portco and the I-5 area improved slightly by the closure and the Bonneville fishery performed well on Monday. Bonneville slowed somewhat on Tuesday as dam counts showed slight improvement indicating a spat of fish came through that day.

Most of these reports have no application now that the season is closing but the hope of all anglers is that this run does actually materialize to meet the needs of listed Snake River wild spring Chinook and egg takes at our hatcheries. A few things are certain after observing this year's run performance. The Departments will certainly need to take a look at how the Columbia run is forecasted as these sort of miscalculations will not be tolerated much longer by restrictions to ESA listed salmon and what are we going to do with the sea-lion problem on the Columbia? Admittedly, I didn't keep any fish in the water when evaluating whether it was a wild fish or not. The sea-lion interaction rate was far too significant to risk the loss of life or limb (let alone a wild salmon) when determining whether the fish was to return to the water or not. On the sea-lion issue, as much as we would like to, can we really blame the sea-lions for being as opportunistic as they are? What we have here is another problem that exists due to human error. Now granted, we're not going to be removing Bonneville Dam just because it is allowing sea-lions an easy meal but we're not going to be blasting these problem animals out of the water either if PETA has anything to say about it- and they will. Hopefully, the success that we've experienced on the Willamette and at Ballard Locks can spill over to the Columbia problem.

According to the ODFW, "Pre-season predictions for 254,100 "upriver" spring chinook salmon to enter the Columbia River and cross Bonneville Dam have not materialized. To date, only 1,545 spring chinook have been counted at the dam. Over the last five years, an average of 31 percent of the run had passed by this time, which would equate to more than 70,000 fish. Fishery managers will meet at 11:30 a.m. April 27, to assess the run and make a new run size prediction." Most years it has been 4,000 to 5,000 per day at this time of year. As of April 17th, 2004, the count at Bonny was 26,202.

"This is either the latest run in recorded history, or the smallest run in recorded history, or both," said Steve Williams, deputy director of fisheries for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Sturgeon fishing on the Columbia remains much the same however improved catches in the estuary seem to be a recent rumor. It is not all that uncommon to have good late April catches in the estuary as fish seem to be making their way into estuary shallows in search of freshwater clams and shrimps. The fish are overdue to make an appearance in the Columbia this season. Early season success is often sporadic as is usually the case when limited numbers of sturgeon are available. The limits are still a bit more liberal as the 45 inch restriction doesn't kick in until 5/15 and the fishery closes to catch and keep for a few weeks starting 5/1.

Bottom fishing out of Astoria was excellent for the few people getting out after them. Reports of excellent ling cod fishing came from the south jetty and "jetty jumpers" can get after them using herring or jigs

right from the rocks. Surf perch are another good option from this location (within Fort Stevens State Park) using sand shrimp in the surf area.

The Guide's Forecast – Well, this ought to be simple. For the best salmon action, head yourself up to the fish viewing window to see the majestic sea-lion eat itself out of hunger by taking passing Chinook. That's the only mammal that will be fishing on the Columbia this week. And they are predicted to do pretty well as peak passage is about to happen (if you can call anything "peak" this year).

As for sturgeon fishing, shakers are quite available in the gorge area and there are a few keepers being taken in the estuary. For those willing to search for them, Tongue Point is often the best place to seek keeper action this time of year. Smelt is often a good bait (got any?) in the deeper slots while sand shrimp will produce good results in the shallower water. The water from Tongue Point to Aldrich Point will produce results for the folks that know where to go.

Another alternative to chinook is the halibut fishery opening offshore out of the Columbia on May 1st.

Crabbing is reported as fair (at best) but many of the keepers are under the legal limit for commercials as they have been well culled by this time.

Bass fishing in the Columbia near Biggs and Arlington should begin to improve as the water should warm slightly with the recent improvement in weather conditions. The walleye bite is beginning to slow as they enter heavy spawning.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Certainly the Willamette spring chinook fishery will receive a great deal of attention now. The run has been stalled by low water temperatures but will improve as temps move into the mid-50 degree range. Currently, springer fishing is fair and improving. A handful of springers are being caught daily between 205 Bridge and mouth of the Clackamas. Multnomah Channel is slower. Visibility less than three feet.

About 750 springers had been counted at Willamette Falls as of April 17th, the latest data. At this time last year, the count was over 11,000. Nearly 5200 spring chinook had been *caught* as of April 17th, 2004.

Bill Kremers (541-754-6411) adds this, "Was out on the Willamette River this morning by Oregon City. River was up, off color with some logs in the water. Saw two salmon caught. Included a couple of pictures. One of the Falls about noon today and another of pheasant along the river just below the Cedar Oaks ramp on the east side."



The Guide's Forecast – With the water temperature 48 degrees at the Falls, 50 in the Channel, it will likely take some warming to jump-start the belated spring chinook run on the lower Willamette. See **Reader Email**, below, for this week's Blacktop Report from avid angler Ken Johnson for the latest on bank fishing below the mouth of the Clack.

A similar temperature problem exists at the McKenzie River, where 45-degree water has stalled trout fishing. March Browns are hatching, but we may be into the next hatch by the time the water gets over 50 degrees.

One bright spot is the Santiams where summer steelhead catches are improving weekly. At this writing, the South Santiam is most productive with many simmers running well over 10 pounds.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Anglers plying the Clackamas have come up mostly empty-handed. Chinook fishing on the Sandy had stalled as well. Pressure on these rivers will surely increase with the Columbia closure regardless.

The Guide's Forecast – Same deal, different rivers. Let's hope warmer water will get some fish into these systems.

Alternative activities this weekend might include the spinner building class by expert Bill Williamson at the Beaverton G.I. Joe's at 7 PM on Friday, April 22nd. The cost is \$25 and those interested may register at the store.

Clackamas County and Gladstone Fire Departments will be conducting a rope rescue drill at High Rocks Park in Gladstone on April 24th from 10 AM - 2 PM. Learn to save your stranded buddy along the water where access is difficult.

North Coast District Fishing Report – More good steelheading was witnessed after the recent rain freshet. Good reports came from many north coast streams by mid-week and could last into the weekend. Reports of some spring Chinook from the Trask River are a real possibility too. One wild fish was reported released on 4/20. The Wilson has continued to be a stand out producer as these fish are running strong for this late in the season- can the Columbia springers possibly taking advice from North Coast steelhead?

Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808) reports, "Nestucca is beginning to taper off a bit. We are still getting a few chances each day. There have been a couple of summer steelhead caught, and one confirmed springer. The best results this time of year will come from the lower river. We have been doing best with small baits of eggs, and either pink or green colors. A touch early, for we are in the transition stage, but look for a group of summer fish to show up any time around the Three Rivers area. Typically they are in a wad, so if you catch one, there will usually be more."

Tides for sturgeon fishing were not all that favorable but that will change over the weekend (see forecast). Crabbing on the other hand has been reported as good to excellent for those knowing where to place their pots.

The ocean may give some reprieve to the bottom fishing fleet. NW winds come up quickly however, so an early morning trip offers the best opportunity for calm seas.

Tillamook County surf perch fishing should also be underway this time of year. Calmer seas may offer some opportunity for surf casters using sand shrimp for bait.

The Guide's Forecast – Rivers are receding and steelhead anglers have a right to be excited for the weekend. The larger streams like the Wilson, Trask and Nestucca should fish fair over the weekend. The fishing has simply been too good for too long since the first significant rain a few weeks ago. Don't expect double digit days but a good mix of run back wild and hatchery fish, fresh native winter runs, a few summer steelhead and spring Chinook and a quality trip is a real possibility. The lower stretches of the Wilson, Trask and Nestucca could produce some good results and dropping water conditions offer up the possibility of good plug pulling conditions. Rags and bait produced well in the mid-week and should also continue to be productive over the weekend. Smaller coastal tributaries are closed to angling to protect downriver migrating salmon and steelhead. Check regulations if you have unanswered questions.

Sturgeon fishing should be a good option over the weekend however, high winds associated with spring weather could keep angler days short. The upcoming minus tide series does happen in the morning when winds are at a minimum but be prepared for the wind to kick in at tide change. Crabbing seems to be best when pots are soaking overnight but the minus tide series will not be all that friendly to overnight soakings. The traditional "sanding in" of pots is likely to occur and is not a friendly situation.

A bit too early to get excited for early season springers but Tillamook Bay does have that potential on the upcoming minus tide series. Upper bay spinner fishing could produce some results for the desperate angler but bring along sturgeon gear or clamming equipment to justify the trip.

Central & South Coast Reports – Springer fishing is improving on the Lower Umpqua with many chinook falling daily to delighted anglers. A rumor is circulating with regard to a giant taken near Scottsburg but this story could not be substantiated. There have been some big 'uns landed in the past few days, including one of 36 pounds and a jaw-dropper at 53, the latter coming from just above Wells Creek. Sturgeon fishing is holding up well in tidewater with catches running about 50-50 keepers and over-sized.

Steelhead fishing has been slow in the middle Rogue River around Grants Pass as the run is winding down. The stretch below Savage Rapids Dam has been rewarding for bank anglers who are taking chinook. A lack of water is preventing the springers from running much above tidewater, however, making the lower Rogue the place to be where trollers are scoring consistently near Elephant Rock. Bank angling has been good at Gold Beach, Lobster Creek and at Huntley.

With the ocean laying down a bit recently, rock and jetty fishermen are scoring ling cod. Pinfin surf perch are being caught in good numbers from many of the ocean beaches.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Deschutes anglers will have a little more river to fish with the stretch from Pelton Dam to the North end of the reservation opening on Saturday, April 23rd. The river is in very good shape. Trout fishing is excellent for fly anglers tossing nymphs. Blue-winged olives are hatching in small number with a few cadisses in the mix. Deschutes steelhead are spawning so should be left unmolested.

Brought to you by The Washington Guides Forecast Editor and Pro Guide Kevin Newell (360-430-2521)

Lower Columbia Fishing Report

Well it's over, at least for the time being. The Columbia River is currently closed to spring Chinook fishing. Fishery managers will meet at 11:30 a.m. April 27, to assess the run and make a new run size prediction. If the counts for spring Chinook at Bonneville Dam improve during the coming weeks, fishery managers will consider re-opening the fishing seasons. Go to www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2005/April/014.asp for the full news release.



Some spring Chinook from just before the closure.

The last 4 days of fishing before the closure were pretty good from the mouth of the Willamette River up to the I-205 Bridge. Not all anglers were getting fish but the ones that had it "dialed in", which were primarily trollers were doing well. The 10% of the anglers were getting 90% of the fish rule definitely applied.

The Guides Forecast

The number of spring Chinook going over Bonneville has finally started to climb, water temperatures are rising and water clarity is great. All of these factors make for great spring Chinook fishing. Unfortunately we are going to have to wait until the fish count over Bonneville increases before the fishery managers decide to give us another shot at it.

Keep in mind that fishing upstream of Bonneville Dam is also closed but this closure does not affect the fishery at the mouth of the Wind River. Anglers can still intercept decent numbers of spring Chinook in

this area especially when the dam counts start to climb over 3500 fish per day. If you go fishing in this area make sure you stay inside the fishing boundary. This boundary separates the Wind River fishing area from the main Columbia and it is strictly enforced.

Mid Columbia River Fishing Report - Pro Guide Jeff Knots (509) 366-4052

Not much to report on the Mid Columbia but "The lower Yakima River from the Highway 240 bridge up to Horn Rapids (Wannawish)Dam is filled with big trophy sized small mouth!", says Jeff. This is primarily a catch and release fishery. Anglers must release fish between 12"-17". 5-15 fish per day is common in this area.

Jeff has been targeting these fish using avocado and pumpkinseed colored Kalin grubs with 1/8 ounce jig heads, or drifting Yamamoto Bait's Senko Worm in the same colors. Throw them out and drift them in back water eddies and around tree roots and other structure. "Currently the water in some of the areas we are fishing is very weedy and getting weedier by the day."



Avid angler Mr. Evans with a nice smallmouth taken near the Tri Cities!

Jeff says "I have 4 or 5 different spots that I like to fish and if one spot isn't producing I go to another." Jeff works through a series of spots until he finds fish that are biting, then after the bite dies down he often moves back to one of the areas he had tried earlier in the day, and often he finds that these areas produce fish the second time around.

For anglers in the Kennewick/Richland area an effective method is to fish from a float tube. Launch at Twin Bridges and float to Van Geisen Bridge and target the fishy looking areas along the bank.

The Guides Forecast

Smallmouth fishing is just going to get better and better for the next few weeks. Currently it's 90% hens and none of them have spawned. 2-3 weeks from now it will be small males and not as many hens", says Jeff.

Lewis River Fishing Report

Nothing to report.

The Guides Forecast

Springers should start showing up any day now. There are a few chinook in the river and every week should produce better fishing from now into mid May.

Lewis River Reservoirs Fishing Report

Kokanee fishing has died down a little for some reason. Avid angler Lacey DeWeert fished the majority of the day on Saturday April 16 and left Merwin Reservoir fishless. Lacey reports "It was a nice day to be on the water but the fish just weren't cooperating. It seems like they just disappeared, the only fish I marked were on the bottom in 80 to 90 feet of water." According to Lacey, other anglers were faring no better on that day.

The Guides Forecast

Last week I reported that:

"We should see the Kokanee fishing really improve as soon as we get a decent stretch of warm weather. Once the water starts to warm up the fish will go on the bite. Anglers that can find the fish and then pattern the Kokanee's movement up and down in the water column will be very successful."

Well we are now in a stretch of warmer weather so expect the bite to improve with decent fishing happening as early as this weekend.

Kalama River Fishing Report - Pro Guide Rob Orzel (360) 673-3557 and Wayne Orzel of Prichards Western Anglers

Wayne reports, "Yesterday was the best day so far for this spring salmon season. The river was hot with several anglers bringing in limits of fish with the largest fish being around 20 pounds. Some real nice steelhead continue to be taken as well. Currently the river has good flows and is definitely driftable in a drift boat."

According to Wayne, "The canyon area of the river is producing with the Painted Rock section being the best. The deadline area just below the upper hatchery fished very well last week but has since died off. Anglers in the canyon are doing the best fishing with bobber and egg/sand shrimp combinations."

Drift boaters have been doing very well throughout the lower river and are finding success using bait divers or just side drifting prawns or sand shrimp.

The Guides Forecast

The Kalama is going to continue to fish well as long as we have good flows and not too much water clarity. The Kalama is a very popular river amongst SW Washington anglers so make sure you get there early on the weekends if you want to have first shot at biting fish.

Cowlitz River Fishing Report – Pro Guide Bob Barthlow (509) 952-9694

Bob reports, "Fishing has been a little slow lately. There was a nice push of fish that came through last week and we are basically fishing for the remnants and stragglers from that batch of fish. Currently we're getting 1-2 fish per day with several other opportunities. Mission Bar downstream to below I-5 is the section of river that has produced best so far this year."

The Guides Forecast

May is the time when the pushes of fish become much more consistent and until then the fishing is going to be spotty at best. As the water warms and the fish have been in the river a little while they will start

to key in more on eggs and sand shrimp and even cured prawns. For the next week or so your best bet is going to be back trolling herring behind a 10' or 20' jet diver.

Expect a lot of boat traffic on the Cowlitz now that the Columbia has closed. Please be considerate of other anglers working the river, don't "low-hole" someone, start behind them and let them work down through the run and then you do the same. Courtesy and patience go a long way toward making fishing bearable on the Cowlitz River and it is everyone's responsibility.

Puget Sound and Neah Bay Fishing Report – Mike Jamboretz (425) 788-5955 or (206) 595-9526

Halibut fishing in Puget Sound started off well on April 14. Calm weather conditions allowed anglers to get out on the water and off Port Angeles, about 162 anglers reeled in 53 halibut during the first four days of the season. The fishery is open five days per week (closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays) in marine areas 6-11 and 13, but is closed for the season in Hood Canal due to low dissolved-oxygen levels.

The Guides Forecast

Halibut fishing will be consistent for the time being. These fish are migratory so soon they will be heading west toward the Pacific for their spawning season. If catching Halibut in the calmer waters of Puget Sound is what you're after you need to do it soon before they leave.

Marine Areas 1 – 4 Fishing Report

Halibut fishing in Marine areas 1 (Ilwaco) and 2 (Westport) will open May 1, followed by areas 3 and 4 (La Push and Neah Bay) on May 10. Marine Area 5, west of Low Point in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, opens May 26.

Fishing for lingcod has been good in Marine areas 1-3, and the fishing will just get better with Marine Area 4 opened up for fishing since April 16. "The waters off Neah Bay are historically the best spot to catch lings," said Greg Bargmann, WDFW marine fish manager. "If the weather cooperates, we should see some excellent fishing out there again this year."

Olympic Peninsula Fishing Report - Pat Graham (360) 374-5313

Nothing to report

The Guides Forecast

Spring Chinook are starting to arrive in limited numbers and the fishing will continue to improve through May.

Snake River Fishing Report – Pro Guide Pat Long (509) 751-0410

The Snake is fishing very well for smallmouth bass and sturgeon with some nice fish coming to the boat. Sturgeon fishing in the catch and release area has been great for the past week with several fish in the 7 to 10 ft range and good numbers of smaller fish. The bass fishing is not going crazy as yet but that is not far away. The lower reservoirs on the Snake are producing good catches of channel and blue cats as well as smallies.

All area streams are up a little from last week following the recent rains but visibility is good and all remain fishable and dropping/clearing at this time.

The Clearwater Bass Anglers tourney on the Snake last weekend produced some nice fish: The winning team weighed in a 5 fish limit at 19.38 lbs, heavy fish was 5.11 lbs followed by a 4.82 and a 4.49- for anyone interested the next tournament will be April 30th on Dworshak Reservoir (contact Jack Worle for club/tourney info, 1-509-758-8019).

The Guides Forecast

Water temps are holding just under 50 degrees and smallmouth fishing will continue to improve as the temps climb. The out-migration of salmon and steelhead smolts is currently under way. This out-migration is what many of the bass, sturgeon and catfish key in on for food during this time of year on the Snake River. Climbing water temperatures, increased water clarity and an adequate food supply should make for some decent to good fishing for the next several weeks.

Yakima River Fishing Report – Pro Guide David Child (509) 962-5523

David says that on his most recent Yakima River trip on April 19, "We saw a great caddis emergence from 10am to 1pm with fish rising to the hatching caddis. We boated around 20 fish yesterday from 10 to 17 inches including 2 cutthroat."

David reports "Currently we have the following hatches occurring, Baetis, a few march browns and were starting to see some caddis action. Skwala stone flies are showing up in limited numbers with hatches in some areas being better than others. These hatches along with good nymphing are what we've experienced lately on the YAK. Our guided trips have gone well, and we've boated some big fish. As the caddis action intensifies over the next few weeks be ready with various elk hairs, x-caddis, poly wing jobs, and emergers tied in 14 to 20 with tan to green, to gray, to brown, to black bodies.

The Guides Forecast

Get busy at the vise, and let's go fishin'. I've also seen a few pmd's lately, so be ready. Look for the aggressive groups of feeders out there, and move on if they are too selective to fool. Also be ready to shake off a few smolts. The out-migrating spring Chinook need a good push of water to send them out. I do not know if we'll get a good freshet or two with this year's low snow pack.

Currently the fishing is pretty good and it should stay that way as long as water levels remain consistent. Cloudy days are going to produce the better hatches so watch the weather forecast to time your trip accordingly.

Razor Clam Digging

Currently the WDFW is planning to allow razor clam digging at all five of Washington's razor clam beaches. These digs are scheduled for April 23-25. Clam digging is always contingent upon low toxin levels. You can visit <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shellfish/razorclm/season.htm> to find out more about clam digging opportunities.

Beaches will receive plenty of attention for this opener with early morning minus tides occurring on all three days.. Harvesters may take no more than 15 razor clams and must keep the first 15 taken regardless of size or condition. The required shellfish license may be purchased online at *<http://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov/>, by dialing 1-866-246-9453 or at any retail store which sells WDFW licenses and permits.

Northwest Bass & Panfish - Smallmouth fishing in the Columbia and Willamette Rivers slowed with the last rain and consequent drop in water temperature. With the warmer weather, expect these feisty cichlids to be on the prowl 'most anywhere current breaks provide ambush points around rock or rocky structure.

Smaller lakes and ponds should be the target for anglers looking for largemouth action. Sunshine and above average air temps will warm the water sufficiently to rev up the bucketmouth's metabolism. Target shallows, preferably with deep water adjacent, on the South side of you favorite waters. Bass travel much as deer, following underwater 'ravines' from one structure object to the next, often seeking security of weeds, docks or wood bear shore. Tip: the distance a bass will hold from an object is dependent upon water clarity. Bass feel secure if they can see the object.

Start out for either species with soft plastics or drop-shot rigs fished slowly. As the water warms they'll become more aggressive and willing to chase faster moving lures such as crankbaits and spinnerbaits, but it'll be a few weeks before that happens.

Try this technique at Hagg Lake. Both smallies and largemouth are getting active now!

Northwest Trout - Additional opportunities for trout anglers will occur starting Saturday, April 23rd. The lakes which are closed seasonally open on that date which is now considered the opening of trout season. In an April 19th release, the ODFW states that "millions of trout" will be planted in 300 lakes and reservoirs. Additional millions of trout fingerlings airlifted by helicopter to 330 high mountain lakes are in the 10-inch-range now.

Fishing at Lemolo Reservoir at the opener for naturally occurring brown trout and stocked rainbows should be good from boat or bank. With the ice off Diamond Lake, large holdovers and 11,000 stocked trout await anglers.

For the 'opener,' stocking of lakes, ponds and reservoirs open year-around has kept the tank trucks busy this week. On the North coast, Big Creek Reservoirs 1 and 2, Alder, Buck, Dune, Elbow, Georgia, Hebo, Mercer and Lost Lakes in both Clatsop and Lane Counties got rainbows.

In the Willamette Zone, Mt. Hood, Bethany, Canby, Haldeman, Dorman, Hartman, Roaring River Park, Huddleston, E. E. Wilson, Junction City, Walling and Trojan Ponds, Alton Baker Canal, Harriet, Henry Hagg, Roslyn, Salmonberry, Freeway Lake East, Clear, Leaburg, Timber Linn, Commonwealth and Walter Wirth Lakes, Blue River, Cottage Grove, Carmen, Detroit, Dorena, Green Peter, Foster And Dexter Reservoirs, Blue River, Coast Fork Willamette, Fall Creek, Upper McKenzie River, Mid Fork Willamette Rivers and Salmon Creek have been planted.

Fall River, Shevlin Pond and Simtustus Lake received state-raised rainbows in the Deschutes watershed.

Reader Email

Reporting from the lower Willamette, subscriber Ken Johnson wrote on Wednesday, April 20th, ""Black Top" is loading up. 2-3 fish are caught each day as the water flowing out of the Clackamas is absolutely beautiful. The Willamette itself could stand to be 2'-3' deeper at High Tide, but it'll have to do at its present state. I mean, what am I??? A Magician??? Naaawt! The water is just about a perfect color compared to some of the times I've caught Chinook is similar conditions in years past. Still, the numbers of Chinook seem to still be down. The Dogwoods are in full bloom, and the fish should be there, but something is "Fishy" with Mother Nature this year. Yesterday, the Columbia closed COMPLETELY because of pitiful Chinook counts...Something like 1500 Chinook have passed the dam and the numbers, this time of year, are generally in the tens of thousands...ODFW is saying the numbers still look fairly good in the Willamette. This will bring a bunch more fishing pressure from the generally Columbia bound fisher folks, so everyone be patient at the boat ramps. Go to your quiet place, put the boat in, help those who might need it (like me sometimes) and have a nice day...More and more fishermen/women are hitting the beaches at Meldrum Bar these days. They'll be there no matter what...Kind of like an itch that

won't go away...They have to scratch it, no matter what~! Personally, I'm thinking that we are still in a drought and the fish know it too. ODFW says it may be that the numbers are just plain way down, right now, all over and the real run is still to come...Let's hope so. They're hoping it may be the latest Chinook run (in the Columbia) in recorded history. I think what's happening in the Columbia is certainly what's happening in the Willamette too. If we can keep the rain coming, gently but steady, and keep the temperatures low enough for the mountains to get a good snow pack, I personally think things will change for the better soon. Hey, if not there's always next year, and that of course that old itch that needs scratchin' this year...No matter what."

Kap'n Ken followed up with this later in the day: "And I quote from today's News Release from ODFW: "Facing the second-lowest spring chinook counts on record for this date, Oregon and Washington fishery managers today decided to close all sport angling and commercial fishing for spring chinook in the Columbia River, effective 11:59 p.m. Wednesday night. The decision closes the fishing season for salmon, steelhead and **shad** in the mainstem Columbia River between the mouth at Buoy 10 upstream to McNary Dam near the Oregon-Washington border." (emphasis is Johnson's, Ed.)

"Could this be a misprint???"

"Shad??? SHAD???"

Michael Teague responded, "I dunno, buddy. This year we all have more questions than answers. 'Guess we'll find out next month when the shad run starts "

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: drees@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: SailCat@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Toxic fishing rods for kids - About 1.5 million fishing rods have been recalled by distributor W.C. Bradley and Zebco due to lead paint on the handles of the rods. Lead on kid's rods? What ere they thinking? It's has been illegal for use in house paint for decades. Throw 'em away if you've got any; Zebco will send you a new one: *<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml05/05155.html>



Clatsop County Lake Fishing Guide from the ODFW:

*http://www.dfw.state.or.us/ODFWhtml/InfoCntrFish/PDFs/clatsop_county.pdf

South Willamette Fishing Guide, also from the ODFW:

*<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/ODFWhtml/springfield/anglingguide.html>

Weekly Quote – "The farther you travel to fish, the worse the fishing will be. However, it will improve immediately after you leave to return home, thus the old saying: The fishing is always better the day before you get there and the day after you leave. But in early November of 1968 - it was shortly before Election Day - I looked over the list of presidential candidates and it was clear to me that if ever there was a time for a man to go fishing, this was it." - Max Shulman

GOOD LUCK!