

The Guide's Forecast - volume 6 issue number 43

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **April 29th – May 5th, 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>.

Sturgeon fishing in the Columbia has picked up significantly. The best action is taking place in the Columbia River Gorge. **Pro guide Dan Ponciano (360-607-8511)** reports that the fish are of quality size as well. Smelt is the preferred bait and Dan is cutting baits in half matching them with squid or shrimp to stretch those smelt a long way.

Sturgeon fishing in the estuary near Astoria continues to be a challenge. Water temperatures are likely the cause for the slow bite in that area. The lower river below Wauna power lines closes to catch and keep fishing on May 1st through May 13th. It then re-opens on May 14th but the minimum size for retention goes to 45 inches.

Spring chinook fishing on the Columbia remains closed for both sport and commercial fishermen. Although Bonneville counts are much improved in recent weeks, we have a long way to go in dam passage before additional opportunity can be looked at again. It likely won't happen prior to the opener of summer Chinook on June 16th.

Also opening on the North Oregon Coast is offshore halibut! May 1st marks the date when anglers may pursue halibut from Cape Falcon to Leadbetter Point in Washington. The opener is always good but the best spots are well guarded secrets amongst fishermen.

Razor clamming has closed along most coastal beaches due to a rise in toxin levels. The clamming had been good and there is no indication when the closure may be lifted.

On the North Oregon Coast, locals in the Tillamook district anxiously await fishable numbers of spring Chinook in their watersheds. A few Chinook have been taken in the lower and upper bay as well as the Wilson, Trask and Nestucca Rivers. The weekend tide series will be better for Bottomfishing than salmon fishing however.

Sturgeon fishing on Tillamook Bay continues to be productive as well. Crab are fairly prevalent in the south and middle channels so be prepared to go through a fair amount of bait. Anglers can also target sturgeon in the upper reaches of Tillamook Bay to avoid more crab interaction.

Crabbing on Tillamook Bay was great earlier in the week but has since slowed.

Offshore bottom fishing has been good when the ocean lays down. Surf perch are available from the beaches but watch for sneaker waves.

Umpqua anglers are catching springers but low, clear water has turned off the fishing at the Rogue River.

Counts at Willamette Falls are increasing dramatically every day with improved water temperatures and water clarity. Can decent spring chinook fishing be far behind?

The Clackamas has been slow but is expected to show improvement with fish on the move in the lower Willamette. The Sandy River is very slow and a poor bet for this weekend. The North Santiam is not

worth the trip at this time.

Smallmouth bass fishing is heating up in the Valley with recent catches (and great photos) coming from the upper Willamette River. Smallies have also been caught at Hagg Lake.

Odell and Lake Billy Chinook kokanee are hitting jigs. Lake Merwin in Washington State has been reliably producing limits of kokes.

Trout were stocked this week at Cullaby, Lost and Sunset, Henry Hagg, Salmonberry and Leaburg Lakes, Haldeman, E. E. Wilson, Junction City and Trojan Ponds, Detroit, Foster Silver Creek and Smith Reservoirs, Timothy Meadows, and the lower McKenzie River, Clear Lake, Burns Pond and Krumbo Reservoir.

Reader Emails this week address secret lures, surprising pictures, a creative sea lion solution, South coastal rivers and on-site details from Meldrum Bar and the Blacktop.

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:

On the mainstem, **pro guide Kevin Newell (360-430-2521)** reports that sturgeon action is picking up with increasing water temperatures. There may also be additional sport opportunity on the mainstem after the 2 states meet to discuss a run size update. Dam counts are finally encouraging.

Upriver, on the Wind River, **Pro Guide Bob Barthlow (509-952-9694)** reports action has picked up with the recent fish counts at Bonneville. The near-shore trough doesn't seem to be producing like the buoy line and artificials are out-producing herring for bait.

Pro Guide Erik Brigham (360-513-2331) reports there are more anglers than fish on the Lewis River. It seems like fishing should really begin to pick up there and there are rumors circulating that boat anglers could be shut off on a small section of the river unless fish counts begin to jump.

On the Lewis River Reservoir at Merwin Dam, the Kokanee fishing is very good right now. Limits are coming to most anglers once they find where the fish are holding. The Kokanee have been averaging around 14-15 inches with a few in the 16-17 inch range. They are very deep bodied and full of fight! Apparently the winter was very good to these fish!

The Kalama has a good mix of spring Chinook and summer steelhead right now. Some of the steelhead are running large so anglers may wish to bump up their line size to a minimum of 12 pound test. This is a great time to fish on the Kalama!

Crowds seem to be a bit more tame on the Cowlitz River as reported by **Pro Guide Brad Shride (206) 463-9230**. Brad reports that there are fish present but it is not wide open fishing. Backtrolling herring and jet diver is still a good option but more recently, salmon seem to be more receptive to backtrolled plugs.

Confusing restrictions on the Puget Sound and Neah Bay sportfisheries but ling cod and shrimp seasons open on May 1st. Pay close attention to the regulations and know before you go.

Spring Chinook are starting to arrive on the Olympic Peninsula. The Sol Duc is an early favorite although anglers should know the river well or hire a local fishing guide.

The Snake and Grande Ronde Rivers are beginning to warm and snow melt is coming with it. The fishing has slowed just a little but as the water levels and temperatures stabilize, the fishing should pick back up again. Bass are becoming a good option however. Sturgeon fishing on the Snake is also fair to good.

The Yakima Rivers continues to be a great option for river rainbow trout. Fly anglers are tossing nymphs in the cooler mornings and then switching over to caddis and Baetis patterns as the insects begin to emerge during the day.

April 30 is the Washington State lowland lakes trout opener and up to 300,000 anglers will likely cast their way to success on this popular day. The choices are numerous!

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 \$225 holds this seat but hopefully you will drive the price up- all in the name of salmon recovery!

Go to <http://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 – My, how things change on the Columbia. Following suit with previous years, fish counts at Bonneville show significant signs of improvement and the fishery closes almost simultaneously. How's that for justice? Almost on the day of the closure, the counts doubled and then doubled a few days later to where we are seeing over 4,000 springers pass the dam each day now. Just think how the fishing would be for anglers now (and how good it is for the sea-lions). I hope your blood pressure medicine is near by.....Anyway, we should be thankful that the fish have finally showed up but with these increased numbers, readers find themselves asking, "so, do you think they will re-open it?" My response is uncertain but my gut feeling is that we would have to see cumulative counts somewhere near 100,000 fish over Bonneville before that would ever be considered. And by the time that would happen, the run will be over Bonneville in the first place so the action would be moot. I am pretty sure anglers can just go ahead and write off this year's season on the Columbia. The state agencies will still have some hard questions to answer before we see another spring Chinook season on the mainstem.

So, let's talk about open seasons- or at least semi-open seasons anyway. The sturgeon fishing has made a real turn around recently. Action in the Columbia River Gorge has shown drastic improvement with quality keepers coming from many areas of the gorge. Cape Horn and the Beacon Rock area have seen a rebound in action like most would have never imagined. **Pro guide Dan Ponciano (360-607-8511)** reports tremendous results earlier in the week during the catch and release days. Dan credited much of his success to the fact there was very little other pressure on the water and was not sure the fishing would hold up during the catch and keep days starting 4/28 – 4/30. Dan reported smelt and squid are working well. This is clearly the best fishing he has had below Bonneville for the entire year. It's about time they showed up!

And since we're talking bait, the ODF&W commission recently made these changes regarding the use of lamprey for bait:

The Commission adopted rules to limit the illegal commercialization of lamprey and provide additional protection to the species by banning the use of lamprey as bait in all commercial and recreational fishing.

The action maintains the existing harvest regulations for the lamprey fishery at Willamette Falls, but prohibits using lamprey for bait in all commercial and recreational fisheries starting May 1.

Pacific lamprey have been harvested traditionally by Native Americans as a food source. Pacific lamprey are protected by state law, and have been petitioned for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act as they have declined in distribution and population abundance in recent years. Harvest of lamprey for re-sale or commercial use no longer is allowed in Oregon.

Sturgeon fishing in the lower Columbia has been reported as very poor. Water temperatures remain cold and expert guides have been test fishing the area with little or no results! Catch and keep season on this section of river closes on May 1st through May 13th. When it reopens on the 14th, the minimum size increases to 45 inches!

Also in the Columbia region worth mentioning is the fantastic Bottomfishing taking place along the south jetty out of the mouth of the Columbia. Ling cod fishing is especially productive but the heavy currents of the current tide series requires heavy lead (10 to 12 ounces) to keep your baits on the bottom where the fish are. Some big lings are being taken and oddly, to finish up the limit with Seabass or cabezon has been a bit challenging. Frozen herring has been the bait of choice and seems to be out fishing jigs significantly. Heavy leaders are recommended and jetty anglers have access to these fish as well although they likely won't be experiencing the success those do that can fish the sunken jetty from a boat. Jigs do work better from the rocks unless you have the capability to use a bobber and herring fished near the bottom.

Razor clamming closed on 4/27 as levels of toxins have once again invaded our shellfish. There is no guess on when the levels will subside enough to allow harvest again. Don't eat any razor clams that were harvested on this last minus tide series from Clatsop beaches!

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon fishing finally seems to be underway on the upper Columbia. Keepers and shakers are the rule but action won't last long in the very upper reaches as the sanctuary goes into effect on May 1st through July 31st. Cape horn and Skamania Flats are real options and smelt, squid or shrimp will be top baits. Fish have been running large and in good numbers so plan bait allocations accordingly. The best fishing should take place in the gorge but rumors of good action towards the mouth of the Willamette and into the Willamette itself are quite encouraging. This type of action has been long awaited.

Fishing in the Columbia River estuary is a bit of a waste of time. Halibut season does begin on May 1st and seas could be favorable but that is always a last minute call. Check buoy reports before departing and always wear your life jackets while on the water! Bottomfishing should remain steady as well as ling cod are near shore and in the spawning mode.

Razor clamming is CLOSED!

A lot of our readers have been asking about the sea lion issue recently. And this just in..... a news release from The Columbian dated April 9th:

Previously: A federal study indicated sea lions killed an estimated 2 percent of the upper Columbia River spring chinook salmon run in 2004.

What's new: Two sea lions have been spotted at the Bonneville Dam fish ladder, prompting consideration of lethal measures to reduce the threat to federally protected salmon. The problem: Sea lions are also federally protected.

What's next: The four-state Northwest Power and Conservation Council next week will consider asking

the National Marine Fisheries Service to resolve the problem.

Is hope on the way?

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Reports this week don't refer to easy limits but aren't discouraging, either. Multnomah Channel has been thick with trollers who are experiencing fair success with plug-cut herring. The Oregon City area has been crowded with boats and the bank below the mouth of the Clackamas is lined with rods. While only a few are falling to anglers daily, hopes are high.

Springer daily counts took a jump on the 20th and 21st as water temperatures topped 50 degrees. Over 780 chinook were counted on the 23rd pushing the YTD total to 2,060. Summer steelhead counts also improved with the total of nearly 1,100 for the 2005 season. Get the latest counts by telephone at 503-657-2059.

Pro guide Jim Stevenson (503-580-4162) adds this, " ... fishing Oregon City area, with some results ... Fish are beginning to pass the falls in pretty good numbers with rising water temps. This will allow for opportunities above the falls into the valley. This should be pretty good fishing until water warms too much and river gets too much vegetation growth."

Pro Guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808) wrote on April 25th, "The North Santiam is very slow. A few fresh summers have been caught, but no springers that we have heard of. Water temperature at the falls is getting better, so look for some action in the Santiams shortly."

The Guide's Forecast –The latest reports indicate far fewer springer opportunities are available in Multnomah Channel than in the lower Willamette. The majority of chinook seem to be entering via the river mouth.

As of the morning of Wednesday, April 27th, the lower Willamette and Multnomah Channel are in the mid-50 degree range with visibility over four feet. Spring chinook fishing will improve daily in these conditions. Go get 'em.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – The Clackamas River is at fine level and flow although it's almost too clear for great fishing. Steelhead have started responding to angler's offerings, particularly sand shrimp although the majority of the steelies present are of the unclipped variety, hence must be released unharmed.

Sandy River steelheaders and springer hopefuls are experiencing near-universal disappointment. The rare summer steelhead has been encountered, but it's slow to dead overall.

The Guide's Forecast – Fishing will gradually improve on the Clackamas as water temperatures and better numbers of fishing the lower river continue to increase.

The Sandy probably won't offer much to anglers this weekend. Try elsewhere. We'll keep an eye on it for next weekend.

North Coast District Fishing Report – I was in a little bit of everywhere in the Tillamook district this week. We started off our week fishing Barry and Jed Palmer from back east. The water conditions were ideal for driftboat fishing on the Wilson River over the weekend. We put in at Siskeyville Boat Ramp and proceeded on a long drift to Sollie Smith Bridge. We only saw one other boat and previous reports had indicated a good number of steelhead still available. The Palmers had booked me for Columbia River salmon and since that was closed, I knew I had to work hard to try for a Tillamook springer. We started off in the Siskeyville hole with a great grab and landing a 9 or 10 pound dark buck in the middle of the Chinook Hole! This is not all that uncommon as big bucks tend to hold in Chinook water but this

aggressive dude took a K-15 Kwikfish! With hopes high and a lot of virgin water worked, we came up with only a few other bites for the rest of the drift. I was targeting an early spring Chinook and therefore passed up a lot of steelhead water but we were clearly defeated after a hard day's work. There were Chinook present in the Wilson however as we saw at least one very nice Chinook roll in a deep pool just below Donaldson's put in. Credible reports of good steelhead action continued early into the week and a rare spring Chinook was taken in the Wilson and Trask Rivers over the weekend. It is simply about 3 weeks too early for consistent results despite the optimum conditions.

The next day, I took the Palmers fishing again on Tillamook Bay in pursuit of spring Chinook. Both brothers fished hard with spinners in the upper bay on the outgoing tide through low slack. No fish taken, no fish heard of. After the disappointing "no-show" low slack bite, we headed over to the jetty to target seafaring fish. We fished for a while before we got inspired to go pick up our crab pots and set them down as we heard crabbing has been very productive on Tillamook Bay. Well, this didn't pan out either as we put in a 5 hour soak for 5 keeper crab. We crabbed near the south jetty on the inside of the bay. Finally, as the tide had turned and started to head out, we had 2 quick bites and took one nice keeper springer at about 19 pounds. The fish took a plug cut herring fished very near the bottom in about 43 feet of water along the inside of the north jetty. There was one other confirmed springer taken a week from Thursday. The other strike we missed was on a whole, blue label herring in the same vicinity. We fished here again on the first part of the outgoing tide on 4/27 but saw no action although we marked numerous fish (likely rockfish) near the bottom of the bay.

Well rested after a few days off, we headed out into Tillamook Bay (4/27) in pursuit of spring Chinook and maybe some sturgeon for the 2nd annual Bounty on the Bay fundraiser (see home page!). We started off in the middle channel but got crabbed to death in pursuit of a keeper sturgeon. We moved ourselves into the upper bay and away from the crab and found results. In a matter of about an hour and a half, we had 4 bites, hooked 3 fish and kept a 54 and 47 incher, releasing another sturgeon about 36 inches. All fish were taken on mud shrimp in about 6 foot of water. One of the sturgeon had about 9 small Dungeness crab in its stomach! That had to hurt going down! There were also a handful of other sturgeon anglers on the bay that day although I don't know how they fared. Crabbing seemed to have slowed down by now. As the tide came close to low slack, we trolled spinners in the upper bay with no results. We trolled green and white and red/white size 8 blades- we have some good history with these blades on Tillamook springers! Heard of NO fish, caught NO fish. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, we went out to the jetty for the outgoing tide to no avail.

Further south, **pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)** reports, "The Nestucca winter season is at a close. The river is very slow, and odds are, if you hook one it will be a spawner. There was a Springer caught at the mouth of Three Rivers yesterday, so they are starting to trickle in. It is about a week away, but look for the early summer fish to show on the lower river, say, Farmers Creek down. The Springers will be a little ways off, but they tend to blow through tide and then slow down about half way between Three Rivers and Cloverdale. There has been zero fish in the trap at Cedar Creek, which will change soon. With the new regulation change, Three Rivers remains open through June."

The Guide's Forecast – Not the best situation for spring Chinook or sturgeon in Tillamook Bay this week. The tides are weakening, no significant rainfall is in the forecast and run timing is still early for returning Chinook. The best thing going in Tillamook this week will be ocean opportunity for Chinook in the control zone and along the north jetty on the inside trolling herring. Use the morning outgoing tide to maximize your effort but realize the best opportunity will come at the first part of outgoing along with the second half of the outgoing tide. It will be a long wait between bites however from the second through fifth hour of outgoing tide. If you are into hunting down fish, you could seek some of the sturgeon water away from the influence of crab in the upper bay. Call your bait shops to see if they have mud shrimp as sand shrimp simply don't have the "staying power" that the mud shrimp do although one of our keeper sturgeon had sand shrimp present in its stomach.

If you are going to target salmon this week in Tillamook, the options are not overwhelming. The rivers are going to continue to drop and even though there are fish available (including spring Chinook) the numbers aren't large and the fish that are there have been worked over for several days already. Fresh fish will not be moving into these rivers in droves this week with the hydrograph predictions. Little precipitation is in the forecast. Tides are not that worthy either however for those anglers well versed in saltwater fishing, the "bubble" out of Tillamook as well as the jaws may offer some opportunity as softer tides are more friendly to herring trollers. Keep in mind however that this week is still a bit early to expect great results for Tillamook springers but if you put your time in, you may find a fish or two. Bottomfishing may also be a nice combo option as that action is great as long as the seas are safe.

Getting quite late for winter run steelhead on the larger coastal drainages. The larger systems such as the Wilson, Trask, Nestucca and Nehalem will still have steelhead in them- both a mix of summer and winter run fish and may produce limited results. Keep in mind a regulation check is important as portions of some rivers (like the Nehalem) are closed to angling to protect wild stocks of spawning steelhead. Cutthroat action seems to have really picked up although it is illegal to target these trout until a May 28th opener. They are taking salmon and steelhead gear incidentally.

Surf perch fishing continues to produce great results along beaches from Pacific City to Rockaway. Sand shrimp is a great bait but anglers need to always be reminded to watch the tides as another group of 4 anglers were rescued from the rocks near Oceanside as they got trapped on an incoming tide. (And I thought people only risked their lives for salmon!).

Central & South Coast Reports – Bottom fishing has been good offshore out of Depoe Bay this week.

Spring chinook fishing is holding up well on the lower Umpqua. Fishing is slow but steady with fish as high as Yellow Creek and the island at Tyee.

The shad run has started on the Umpqua but is attracting very little attention from anglers as yet. They're in if you want to catch a bunch.

Sturgeon are being taken below Reedsport but as usual on the lower Umpqua, many of the fish being hooked are too darned large to keep.

Spring chinook fishing has stalled on the Rogue River. The lower stretch, productive in the past couple of weeks, is very slow. Rain would improve the low, clear river conditions and get the run underway once again. A few springers are being taken in the middle river but it's been slow.

When the surf lays down, pinfin perch will be available and eager. Use caution fishing from the beach if conditions are less than calm.

The sport season for halibut inside the 40-fathom line opens seven days a week offshore on May 1st. The season continues until October 31st or a quota of just over 20,000 pounds has filled. Details may be found here: http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/regulations/sport_fishing/Halibut%20Regs%20W%20Map%2020apr05.pdf

Central and Eastern Oregon – Smallmouth bass fishing hit the skids this week on the John Day River as rain on Monday, April 25th, caused a blowout. It may fish by the weekend but it'd be worth calling ahead before making the trip.

Trout fishing is fair to good on the Deschutes for fly anglers with redsides responding primarily to nymph patterns. Hatches will improve next week if the warmer weather holds.

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

Lower Columbia Fishing Report- The Lower Columbia is still closed to fishing for salmon, steelhead and shad. There is a slight possibility that the river may open up to salmon fishing on a limited basis starting next week. Any changes to the existing spring salmon season will be decided upon during next week's ODFW/WDFW fisheries compact meeting which will be held next Wednesday morning. A possible re-opening of the river will be contingent upon continued strong fish counts at Bonneville Dam, as well as fishery managers seeing other strong indicators such as good results from test netting in the lower river.

Sturgeon fishing success is starting to pick up now that the water temperature is rising. Anglers have had to work for their fish by moving around a lot and trying different baits until they find what the fish are biting on.

The Guides Forecast- Sturgeon fishing should continue to improve as water temperatures climb. Rumor has it that there is a good quantity of bait fish (probably anchovy) that has moved into the lower Columbia estuary. If this is true then this should also motivate more sturgeon to come into the river to feed. Comfortable water temps and an adequate food supply is the perfect environment for sturgeon. Sand Shrimp, herring, smelt and squid are all great baits for this time of year. Adding a night crawler to your offering can sometimes fool the big ones!

Don't forget that all sturgeon fishing is closed from Beacon Rock to Bonneville Dam May 1-July 31. In addition, the mainstem Columbia and its tributaries from the Wauna power lines downstream to Buoy 10 is catch and release only from May 1-13.

Wind River Fishing Report – Pro Guide Bob Barthlow (509) 952-9694 reports, that Bonneville Dam fish counts have risen to over 3000 fish per day the fishing at Wind River has also taken off! Fishing isn't red hot but it is definitely a bright spot amongst the many rivers where spring Chinook fishing has been a non-event this season.

Bob Barthlow reports success on his first Wind River trip of the season on Sunday April 24, "We tried herring in the morning in the Trough which is usually good for at least one fish but we didn't touch a thing. After switching to plugs we started hitting fish."



Travis Devore of Prosser WA, with a Wind River Spring Chinook caught on a Warden's lures Mag. Fatfish in Flo. red w/ black herring bone in 17' of water.

Pro Guide Kevin Newell (360) 430-2521 reports, "Fishing in the trough along the Washington shore was slow, we picked up all of our fish out near the buoy line in the afternoon after 1:00. There was definitely a morning bite right at first light with about 1 in 3 boats landing fish and then the bite was sporadic throughout the day. About 1 in two boats had fish from the looks of things. We landed 2 fish and lost another for a full day's effort.



Wind River Spring Chinook taken Wed. April 26.

The Guides Forecast- The mouth of the Wind River will continue to fish well as long as the Bonneville Dam counts stay above 3000 fish per day. For about the next three weeks the fish will hold at the mouth of the river and then they will start moving up into the Wind and the troll fishery will start to dwindle. Mag Fatfish in orange/ red with black herring bone or orange with silver/gold glitter work well.

The river from 100 feet above Shipherd Falls to markers approximately one-half mile below Carson National Fish Hatchery (except the closed area around the coffer dam) will be open to fishing for spring Chinook and hatchery steelhead May 1-June 30.

Lewis River Fishing Report – Pro Guide Erik Brigham (360) 513-2331 reports "We're catching around 2 fish a day on the Lewis. It still hasn't really turned on yet for some reason. We've been seeing about a half dozen fish being caught in the Meat Hole in the morning and another half a dozen being caught throughout the day on the rest of the river. There sure is a lot of pressure for the amount of fish that aren't here. I spoke with the folks at the hatchery and this definitely isn't a sure thing, but they have been talking about the possibility of shutting the river down to boat anglers from Johnson Creek upstream due to the low return of fish."

The fish that Erik has been catching have been falling prey to back bounced eggs or eggs and shrimp on 3/0 Owner hooks, 4 foot 15# leader with an 8" dropper and 2-6 ounces of lead depending on the amount of current.

The Guides Forecast- According to Erik, "If it's not in full swing by next Friday I'm going to be worried. If it's not happening by then, then we're not going to get the numbers that were forecasted."

Hopefully it kicks off soon. The Lewis River is still a little cooler than average so that may have

something to do with the lack of fish.

A few summer steelhead are starting to show in the catch so expect to see more of these silver rockets as we move into June!

Lewis River Reservoirs Fishing Report- Kokanee fishing at Merwin Reservoir is very good right now. Limits are coming to most anglers once they find where the fish are holding. The Kokanee have been averaging around 14-15 inches with a few in the 16-17 inch range. They are very deep bodied and full of fight! Apparently the winter was very good to these fish!

Finding where the fish are holding is pretty easy, just look for the other boats! Often times when you see a cluster of boats working an area it is because that area is currently producing fish or it had been productive the previous day.

Anglers that are launching at Speelyai boat launch and heading straight across the reservoir to the south side and fishing close to shore have been successful. Another area that has been very productive is near the small creek and waterfall that are located on the north side of the reservoir about a mile down the reservoir after you enter the lake from the Speelyai launch. As the season progresses, the area in front of Campers Hide Away will also produce fish.



The ideal Kokanee setup! G. Loomis' GL3 ultra light trolling rod and a small downrigger, make fighting Kokanee on light tackle a world class sport!



A nice Merwin Kokanee!



A limit of Kokanee taken on April 25!

The Kokanee are running around 30-50 feet deep. Slow trolled wedding ring spinners, Dick Nite Spoons and small Spin n' Glow's with Mylar wings are all producing fish if fished at the right depth. Putting a piece or two of Green Giant White Shoepeg corn on your hook will definitely increase your odds of a hookup. Other types of corn work, but this one is definitely the most productive.

Anglers working downriggers definitely have the advantage when fishing for these deep holding fish, however most anglers are using 1-3 ounces of lead to get down where the fish hold.

The Guides Forecast- Kokanee fishing is going to continue to be productive as long as the water temperatures stay stable. If we get a strong cold snap for several days then we could see them go off the bite. The fishing should remain good from now until late June. It may take a trip or two to figure out where the fish are, but once you have them patterned you should be able to consistently fill your cooler with these silver jewels!

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

According to Wayne, "Currently the river is in good shape with just a hint of color. There are spring Chinook in the river right now and some huge steelhead! Most guys are getting one or two fish for an all day effort. You really need to use heavier line for these big fish. 15lb. test is ideal but whatever you do, don't go less than 12lb. 12lb is the minimum that will give you a fighting chance with these guys."

The Guides Forecast- The Kalama should continue to fish well as long as the water levels don't get too low. The month of May produces good numbers of springers in this river and we should start seeing a few summer steelhead before too long.

Cowlitz River Fishing Report- Pro Guide Brad Shride (206) 463-9230 reports, "I fished the Cowlitz Thursday, Friday and Saturday of last week, and on Saturday we landed two fish and lost one. Most anglers are getting anywhere from 0-2 fish per day. It's still pretty slow but the nice thing is that it's not really crowded right now, especially if you can get up here during the week."

"On Saturday I was running four rods, two with herring and two with silver and green K-15 Kwikfish. We got both of our springers on the Kwikfish, and both of them came from the same hole. I knew that spot had fish in it and we just kept pounding it, and it worked out well," said Brad.



Loyde Heiser out from Iowa, celebrating his 87 birthday with a nice Cowlitz springer.



Tim McCoy of Vancouver WA, with the first of his pair of back to back Cowlitz cookie cutter springers. These fish were caught on back trolled #20' Jet divers and plug cut herring, in the area of Mission Bar.

The Guides Forecast- Brad Shride believes the river will fish better next week as more fish begin to move into the river.

River levels fluctuate on the Cowlitz according to the power needs of Tacoma Power's customers. If you hit the river after they have changed the water level you may find that it takes the better part of a day for the fish to reacclimatize to the changed conditions; this holds true for both spring Chinook and steelhead fishing on this river.

Puget Sound and Neah Bay Fishing Report- Lingcod hook-and-line season runs May 1-June 15 throughout the region. Lings must be between 26 and 40 inches to retain and there is a one-fish daily limit. Rockfish season opens May 1. There is no minimum size, and the daily limit is the first legal rockfish caught. No yelloweye or canary rockfish may be retained. Fishing for rockfish in marine areas 8-1, 8-2 and 10 is allowed only during lingcod or salmon seasons. Cabezon fishing also begins May 1 throughout the region, with a daily two-fish limit and no minimum size.

May 7 is the opening day of Puget Sound recreational **shrimp** fishing. Details are available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crabreg/> on the Internet. Shellfish harvesters can also check emergency regulations by calling 1-866-880-5431.

Olympic Peninsula Fishing Report- 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 reports the recent warm weather is melting out the little snow pack that remains in the high country and the rivers are rising slightly and taking on a little more color the past few days. The Snake, Clearwater and Grande Ronde are all rising but remain fishable. Bass fishing in the Snake and Ronde is very good as is the sturgeon fishing on the Snake. Water conditions should level out soon and the continued warming conditions will improve fishing for all species.

On a short bass run this morning up the Snake we landed around 25 fish with several in the 3 to 4 lb. range, a couple which would push 5 lbs. and lots of little guys. Water temps were around 52 deg. early in the day and warming to around 54 by early afternoon. We found no large congregations of fish in any one area (two or three here and 3 or 4 there) but the fish were active and hitting everything from spinners to tubes.

The Guides Forecast- At this time the Snake and Clearwater are both open for springers but we may see an emergency closure soon if the counts don't improve dramatically. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game is in a holding pattern at this time but without sufficient numbers to provide the required hatchery stocks and wild spawners I'm certain the season will shut down before it really gets going. A few dedicated fishers are on the water each day but with only 15 fish above Lower Granite Dam they are probably spending a lot of time reminiscing about past years!!

Yakima River Fishing Report – Pro Guide David Child (509) 962-5523 reports, "We've had several trips down the Yakima lately and have had great success. On one trip we hit an explosion of Caddis action from 10am to 1pm with risers in likely spots, and caught better than 20 for the day. The guide (me) even got into 4, including a nice 16 incher. When the fish weren't whacking on top, the nymph game was the ticket producing a beauty of a 17 incher on a stone nymph."

"On another guide trip over the weekend we put in early and nymphed our brains out until the risers really got busy around 1pm or so. We then tossed caddis and Baetis, as well as limited PMDs to risers, and ended our float right before the rain storms dumped," says David.

The Guides Forecast- David forecasts, "Today (4-25) it's gorgeous outside with sunny skies and temperatures in the 80s. The river has come up a bit in volume with the recent rains, but it will be short lived. Cooler temperatures are forecasted for later in the week, and I'm confident that there are floats on the YAK that will definitely produce during this higher flow."

Washington Lakes- April 30 is the Washington State lowland lakes trout opener!

According to WDFW's Weekender Report, "Up to 300,000 anglers are expected to cast a line somewhere in Washington during the opening weekend. No other single fishing season attracts as many fishers."

Many lakes throughout the state have been recently stocked with trout. Anglers can read the 2005 Washington State stocking plan at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/2005stocking.pdf>

Northwest Bass & Panfish - Temperate coastal lakes are heating up for largemouth fishing. This fishery got off to a sluggish start but is worth the trip now. Smallmouth bass are active at Hagg, but they're tough to catch. One angler cracked the code recently to catch and release a 6 1/2-pounder.

The most well informed out-of-date Oregon Fishing web site on the internet!
<http://home.comcast.net/~glansing/fmhq/>

Northwest Trout - Odell is producing kokanee limits on jigs. Lake Billy chinook has offered decent fishing for kokes on jigs as well as producing a few bull trout. Lake Merwin in Washington State has been reliably producing limits of fat kokanee to trollers.

Trout were stocked this week at Cullaby, Lost and Sunset Lakes in the Northwest Zone. Henry Hagg, Salmonberry and Leaburg Lakes, Haldeman, E. E. Wilson, Junction City and Trojan Ponds, Detroit, Foster Silver Creek and Smith Reservoirs, Timothy Meadows, and the lower McKenzie River were all planted on Tuesday, April 25th. In the Deschutes watershed, Clear Lake, Burns Pond and Krumbo Reservoir got a fresh rainbow infusion on Monday this week.

Reader Email

Subscriber and frequent contributor **Marc Davis** wrote to make an interesting suggestion regarding the ongoing sea lion problem, "In your travels and conversations has this subject ever come up. I ask it because I grew up on an Indian reservation on the Olympic Peninsula.

Those folks are not bound by many of the laws and restrictions that we are. Witness the whale hunting trips out of Neah Bay.

Why can't local (Columbia River) tribes (in their usual and accustomed manner) eat their (usual and accustomed) food (killed in their usual and accustomed manner?) Seals and to a lesser extent sea lions were a food source for these people. Do their treaty rights trump those of the federal Marine Mammal Protection Act. I know a lot of people that would donate heavily should any of these folks decide they would like to traverse the (highways, byways and rivers) in search of their (usual and accustomed foods taken in common with their white brothers.)

The in common with does not include the white man when it comes to pinapeds. We have to obey game laws in taking fish and game. They do not.

If the Makahas can take federally and internationally protected whales using 50 cal. weapons and an outboard, can local tribes take seals and sea lions???

Worth a thought!"

Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Fishery Program Manager **Curt Melcher** received a copy of Marc's Email and wrote, "I am not an expert on treaty law but I believe it depends on the language in their agreement with the US Government and of course there has to be an interest on the part of the tribe. So far, there has not been any interest (that I am aware of) in marine mammal subsistence harvest by the Columbia River tribes. I have cc'ed this to Stuart Ellis of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. He may have additional comments."

Reader and sometimes contributor **Grant Lansing, AKA Fish'n Magician** reports on the upper Willamette, "After living in Oregon for some 30 odd years.....I just now learn of the **spectacular** smallmouth bass fishery in the Willamette River. Almost 10lbs of fish in 2 hours!

"I wish I'd known this when I was younger (only fished for carp in the Willamette). This wish prompted me to shout out this email so any of those interested have the information that I didn't.

Have fun fish'n!"

Here's one of the smallies, a 4 1/2 pounder:



Regular contributor **Kap'n Ken Johnson** brings it again this week, "Meldrum Bar Report, April 27th, 2005 xxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxx Fill in blanks here because the "Fishin's Great...The Catchin's Lousy!" Things remain pretty slow here in this stretch of the Willamette at Meldrum Bar and The Blacktop. There was only one boat anchored in the mouth of the Clackamas River so far at the time of this writing, 10:00am. I'm sure a few more diehards will show up in their boats a little later in the day. Words out...Catchin' is really slow. Across from Clackamette Park along Clackamette Island and anchored in the Willamette there are currently two little Hog Lines. One has three boats in it and the other has Two.

"Each Hog Line produced a Chinook this morning and so far, those are the only fish caught today that the locals knew of. I'm sure there are a few more fish being caught up and down the river, but the days of 5-15 Chinook being landed on "The Blacktop" are long gone, I believe. Again, pray for rain...It may not be too late...Or is it!? Hey, there's always next year...And, how about them Trout & Kokanee????



Subscriber Brian T. wrote to Bob Rees late last week with some questions about trolling herring, "1) I have read your Tech Report #14 on trolling herring. In the report it was mentioned that a miter box for plug cutting herring would be offered in your store at some point. Is this available or will it be available?

"2) I own a Gilly Cutter Jig from Pro Cure at this time. I have read both in your report and in STS Magazine about making more of a "Blunt" cut on the herring to obtain a tight spin. So what I have been doing is cutting by freehand without the aid of a jig and still placing a 45' angle on the herring from the back to the belly but trying to not to put much of an angle or no angle on the face of the cut. Then I have been placing my front hook through the spine and the back in the side as outlined in the report/article. Am I on the right track or am I going to experience too much inconsistency by freehand cutting without the aid of a jig.

"Thanks for all your help---"

Bob responded, "1) We are still in the development stages of this project. We will certainly let our readers know when we have it available!

"Your consistency really comes down to just how much herring do you cut? My guess is that it will be inconsistent and you will fail to achieve the results you want on a regular basis. I cut a lot of herring freehand and don't achieve these results as often as I like but even with the miter box, there is still some inconsistency (albeit less).

The only other piece of advice that I can give you is don't make your other cut at a 45 degree angle. Both the top to bottom AND fore to back cuts need to be blunt. This, coupled with proper placement of the top hook will give you the best chance for a fast spin.

"Good luck Bryan and if you come to our Bounty on the Bay fundraiser on 5/13, I will be giving a herring seminar and will be addressing these and many more questions on herring trolling on Tillamook Bay. It will be one you will NOT want to miss if trolling herring is really what you want to do!"

Be sure to visit Grant's website for more information and pictures. He calls it "The most well informed out-of-date Oregon Fishing web site on the internet!" <http://home.comcast.net/~glansing/fmhq/>

Subscriber Gary D. wrote to ask about a South coast fishery, "I was just wondering why the Elk river is not on any of the river reports and could it be added ? I always see Elk creek."

Michael Teague responded, "I report on the South coast in co-writing The Guide's Forecast with Bob

Rees.

"As you're likely aware, the Elk (and Sixes, for that matter), are volatile streams, often swelling to levels unfishable or falling to extreme lows in the absence of precipitation. When the river is fishable or otherwise in season, I do get reports from the area and relate the information in TGF.

"Earlier in the year when we were suffering from a lack of rain, often the mention was a single line to the effect that it was just too low to fish.

"You won't see the Elk River in any reports for a while, though, because it closed on March 31st for salmon and steelhead along with the Sixes, Chetco, the Coos above the forks, the Applegate and several other Southern coastal streams. Most of these will re-open on May 28th and if anybody's catching fish, I'll hear about it and you'll read it in TGF the same week it's happening.

"Write anytime, we're here to help you catch more fish!"

Most people realize that it's the TGF network which allows us to know what others do not. Fine folks let us in on top-secret stuff to which others without such great connections are not privileged. Such is the case with **Norman E. Ritchie, Co-President, Association of Northwest Steelheaders**, who wrote this week to let us in on this, "My spies at Luhr Jensen sent me this photo of the latest killer model KwikFish. Get your orders in early. I understand most stores can't even get them."



Write to the TGF staff:

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Michael Teague: SailCat@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Oregon River Games May 20-22: <http://www.oregonrivergames.com/>

Albacore movie: <http://www.sportfisherprowler.com/video/PROWLER8.wmv>

Hopes are high for a Columbia re-opener as chinook counts skyrocket at Bonneville. Here's that Fish Cam: <http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/op/b/fishcam/fishimage.jpg>



Weekly Quote – "Some fishermen think that any rod they buy and pay for should stand any form of abuse, and if it does not, the rod-maker is blamed and his work decried. The makers know this, and that their reputation for skilled and honest work is as sensitive as that of a woman.To such of my readers as wish to buy and do not care to make, I would say that the maker who has a reputation, will do his best to maintain it. If he once turned out good work, competition will force him to do so still. If he has the skill, you may be sure he will use it. No one knows better than he that one bad rod will do him more harm than a hundred first class in every respect will benefit him..... " - Henry P. Wells

GOOD LUCK!