

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **June 23rd, – June 29th, 2006**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Quality Chinook are falling to anglers from Rainier to Bonneville. Fish over 25 pounds are quite common and spinners are the ticket. Flows are still very swift on the mainstem so anchor with caution. Both wild and hatchery fish are allowed to be harvested.

Oversized sturgeon fishing in the gorge continues to improve but manipulated flows on Saturdays have put fish off for the last 5 weeks. Keeper sturgeon are hard to come by and the shad fishing remains outstanding with nearly 3 million having passed Bonneville Dam.

Beach plunkers have produced some excellent steelhead catches, especially out of Westport but catches are sporadic. Hot colored spin-n-glos are producing the best results.

As of June 14th, late run spring Chinook counts at Willamette Falls were increasing with over 500 salmon passing on that day alone. The total for 2006 stood at 28,846. Nearly 12,000 summer steelhead had crossed as of that date.

Water temperature at Willamette Falls was 62 degrees on Monday with flows moderating and visibility at 4.8 feet. Shad catches are slowing as the run winds down. Good numbers of spring Chinook are being taken daily with most falling for spinners. The head of Multnomah Channel is producing best with Columbia River salmon in the mix. Catches of legal-sized sturgeon have been rare.

Bright Springers and steelhead are being caught on the upper Willamette below Dexter Dam.

The Clackamas has produced summer steelhead and a few springers over the past week.

Sandy River anglers have had a slow week although a few springers have been taken at the mouth. Steelheading upstream is fair.

South Santiam spring Chinook catches picked up recently as water conditions continue to improve. Over 1,100 springers and nearly 3,600 steelhead have crossed at Foster Dam. The North Santiam is worthwhile for summer steelhead.

The McKenzie is at fishable level with catches of steelhead and trout fair to good.

Hatchery trout are scheduled to be stocked at Faraday Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Silver Creek Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Clear Lake, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River, Quartzville Creek, Salt Creek and the North Fork Santiam River.

Northwest – Lower Columbia River sturgeon fishing is good but results aren't consistent. The freshwater influx in the river is keeping good numbers of sturgeon below the Astoria/Megler Bridge. The best fishing has been close to low slack, which is now taking place late in the afternoon. The upcoming weak tide series will aid anglers when targeting deep-water sturgeon. Anchovies have been the best bait as shrimp are too fragile to last in swift, sculpin infested waters.

Tongue Point has also been producing steady catches with keepers located in the deeper water also. Oversized sturgeon have migrated upstream from the estuary, likely in pursuit of upstream shad and

spawning grounds.

Spring salmon catches on Tillamook Bay are starting to slow but fish are still available. The fin-clipped only rule remains in effect through July 31st but most hatchery fish are upstream by late June. Softer tides will favor lower bay herring trollers this week. Rivers remain low but salmon are holding in deep holes and the tidewater stretches of the Trask and Wilson Rivers. The Nestucca and Three Rivers are yielding some spring Chinook and summer steelhead.

The offshore coho opener yielded fair results for boats fishing the 40-fathom line. Although limits were not common a mix of wild and hatchery fish were caught. Wild fish must be released unharmed. Bottomfishing remains excellent out of Garibaldi and the crabbing is best when boats can cross the bar into the ocean.

Sturgeon fishing has slowed in Tillamook Bay.

Big Creek Reservoir # 1 and # 2 and Olalla Creek Reservoir will be stocked with trout this week.

Southwest - The Spring all-depth halibut season will reopen from June 22nd through 24th. Catches should be good if seas cooperate.

From Depoe Bay to Brookings, boats are taking salmon offshore. The coho season, which opened Saturday, June 17th, has produced silvers to eight pounds on brightly-colored hoochies trolled fairly fast.

Surf perch fishing remains very good off South coast beaches and jetties.

Shad and smallmouth bass fishing will improve this week as the Umpqua River water drops and warms. Springers remain elusive although counts are improving with the late run this year. Summer steelhead will start running soon. Winchester Bay is producing fewer than one Chinook per boat and crabbing is poor.

Spring Chinook continues to languish on the Rogue River with the upper stretch offering the best shot at a salmon. Section 5 of the Rogue River will be stocked with trout this week.

Bottom fishing out of Brookings has been outstanding with catches of big rockfish and lings showing at the dock. A cabezon was taken recently which scaled at 26 pounds. Some charters are running two trips a day, limiting each time. Offshore Chinook fishing is fair.

Eastern - Crowds have thinned but an extended Salmonfly hatch on the lower Deschutes has trout active near the banks. Fly-fishing is expected to remain excellent over the coming week.

Mayflies are the primary pattern on the Metolius and fly fishers are doing well. Bull trout are taking nymphs and streamers.

Fish Lake, Holbrook Reservoir and Lofton Reservoir are scheduled to be planted with trout.

Southwest Washington- The North Fork of the Lewis is beginning to produce sound catches of summer steelhead. Spring Chinook numbers are beginning to wane.

The Cowlitz River has been one of the brighter spots for summer steelhead following a dismal appearance of spring Chinook. The runs on these lower Columbia tributaries should begin to build in the coming weeks.

Jeff Knotts from JB's Guide Service 509-366-4052 reports excellent shad fishing below McNary dam. The best lure bar none is a silver & orange size 0 Dick Nite below a diver, (mag-wart with the hooks removed). Tie it directly with five of leader, Dick Nite on one end snap-swivel on the other. Attach it to the belly hook of the Wart. These fish will be most easily caught when fishing along current breaks at depths from 10-20 feet. I like to troll slowly up river until I really find the depth they are traveling at, then anchor up and let the fun begin.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Rumors of an early salmon closure are not confirmed but likely. Sport anglers were kept to a 1,500 fish quota with no restrictions on retention of wild or hatchery fish. If fishery managers had appropriate foresight, with a selective fishery, sport anglers would likely still be fishing well into July. One has to ask, when will the bad decisions cease? Fishing for summer Chinook has been good in the gorge. Guides have been successfully targeting these fish downriver from Portland (mouth of the Kalama/Cowlitz) but the best success rates are coming from the gorge. Small spinners in red and brass are taking fish. The river remains high and fluctuating flows are keeping fish from slowing down. Counts are better than 2,000 fish per day and a run size update is due to come out soon. One guide took a 6 fish limit for 3 anglers earlier this week.

Sturgeon anglers in the gorge continue to fool oversized sturgeon using fresh shad for bait. Despite the fact that anglers are restricted to Marker 85 (several miles downstream of Beacon Rock), guides are not having problems finding fair numbers of large fish. Shad fishing is a slam dunk and there are so many fish passing by that they don't seem to be picky about what they take for lures. Small Dick Nite spoons in chartreuse and brass are taking good numbers of biters around the Shad Rack.

Estuary sturgeon anglers are faring well although consistency is not common amongst the fleet. Last week, the lower river below the Astoria/Megler Bridge was producing good numbers of large keepers but that bite dried up by Sunday. There seems to be large numbers of fish present in front of Astoria but they seem a bit reluctant to bite. Historically, the incoming tide was a good time to target these fish but the first part of outgoing tide produced good results on Wednesday along the green line. Anchovies continue to be a top producing bait- especially in the deep water. Some of the shallow channels upstream of Tongue Point are producing consistent numbers of fish as well. Big numbers of fish seem to be available to folks fishing the deeper water but the keeper to shaker ratio is much smaller. Sand shrimp took most of our keepers on 6/21 in about 6 foot of water. The previous day, anchovies took all of our fish in 50 foot of water so be prepared to fish different depths with different baits.

The NW wind has been an afternoon factor and is forecasted to be into the weekend. It would be wise for anglers to plan their fishing trip to take advantage of a calm morning and hope to take a limit by the time the afternoon winds hit. These afternoon winds have been keeping Astoria bottomfishers at bay.

Beach plunkers working lower Columbia River sand bars have not posted good results this week. The tides are much more favorable next week.

The Guide's Forecast – Gorge salmon fishers should be coming into their prime this week following an excellent set of tides in the lower river. Passage remains high and so do the flows making it difficult to find a productive and safe slot to anchor in. Spinners will continue to take the majority of fish in the gorge but if you have a true running Kwikfish, that will also be an effective tool. Target these fish in 10 to 16 feet of water along the gravel bars for best results but this is a fishery where experience really pays dividends so don't be disappointed if you come up shy.

Shad passage has dropped off at Bonneville but there are likely to be hundreds of thousands of more shad to cross the dam. Small spoons and jigs will take scores of fish if you like but this late in the season, folks are just catching enough for sturgeon bait. Oversized sturgeon continue to be

aggressive on shad but the bite may begin to taper with the bulk of the run passing through. Fluctuating water flows is making Saturdays difficult to be productive- at least for the last 5 weeks. Keepers are hard to come by in the gorge.

Keeper seekers are hitting the lower Columbia and like the upper river, the crowded weekends seemingly have an impact on the bite. Of course there are more boats working over the same number of fish but it really pays to get away from the crowds to find your own fish. It does take a small degree of luck to accomplish this however. If you plan on fishing the deep water, another large minus tide will limit the amount of time you can effectively fish here. Target deep water areas on the flood and low slack and use your fish finder to locate fish feeding on the bottom. The green line, upstream and down of the Astoria/Megler Bridge should be a prime location for the weekend crowd. The extreme low tides over the weekend may make the water downstream of Hammond productive again but crabs and sculpin will be competing for your baits. With all the fresh water still coming down the Columbia, these "competitors" are not as bad as they have been in recent years.

A little upstream, Tongue Point anglers should stick to the rule of fishing shallow until flows subside near low slack and then drop deep. As soon as you can get away with fishing 8 or 10 ounces in 30 to 50 foot of water, you should begin finding biters providing you are where the fish are marking on your Lowrance.

The NW wind will keep most people in fresh water fisheries. Couple this with a strong morning outgoing tide and bottomfishing does not look promising.

Clamming along the entire Oregon Coast is now open and the tides are ripe for great digging along the Clatsop stretch. Many of the larger clams have been culled from the beaches so look for larger holes if you are targeting larger clams. You are required to take the first 15 clams you dig due to wastage problems sport diggers experience with harvesting.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – As of June 17th, the spring Chinook count was still fewer than 30,000 although daily counts are holding up well. Summer steelhead totals topped 12,700 as of that date. Few anglers are making an effort for spring Chinook now. As in years past however, good catches are coming from the head of Multnomah Channel where spinner trollers are reporting multiple opportunities each day. The chartreuse green dot spinner is producing well in size 6. Some of the fish being taken are of Columbia River decent- marked by a dark chin versus the Willamette "snowbellies" that are destined for its tributaries.

Sturgeon fishing on the lower Willamette has resulted only in sub-legal-sized fish although the occasional oversized is being hooked.

Shad fishing is winding down here with the better fishing from the Falls to Oregon City although Coon Island in Multnomah Channel has picked up a little over the last week.

Flows are good on both the North and South Santiams. Anglers can keep up to three hatchery fish a day here, two of which may be salmon. Springers are not yet as high as Fishermen's Bend on the North Santiam.

The Guide's Forecast – Try the head of Multnomah Channel for springers over the next week but with numbers dwindling, lower your expectations to avoid disappointment.

For shad fishers, it's the twilight of the run. Get out now if you want any of the excellent, smelly baitfish.

Drift or back-bounce good-quality, cured salmon eggs to entice springers on the Santiam. Fishing will only get better in this system now. Spinners or jigs will catch summer steelhead as will drifted sand shrimp.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Despite water conditions that have remained steady over the past week, it's liable to rise anytime there's hydroelectric activity upstream. The hatchery has reported one of the best-ever return of springers with over 2,500 showing up in hatchery traps. Fishing in the lower river has been slow recently. Alternate recreational activity starts up during the day as rafters and swimmers take over the river.

The waters of the Sandy River have risen but not yet turned milky. It'll be over when that occurs. Catches of steelhead and springers are fair. Over 400 springers have returned to the hatchery.

The Guide's Forecast – Steelhead are scattered throughout the Clackamas River and fishing has been reported as fair to good. Spring Chinook fishing is likely to remain a long-shot proposition as the run winds down. Try Dog Creek and upstream for the best chance at springer or summer but get their early - it's been crowded. With the hot weather predicted and school out, it's probable that the non-fishers will show up early over the weekend.

Think high or low for spring Chinook or summer steelhead on the Sandy. Trolling at the mouth is likely to be effective. Upstream, the best chance is up near Cedar Creek or into the creek itself as fish return to the hatchery facility located there.

North Coast District Fishing Report – The ocean opened up for hatchery coho over the weekend and while no one envisioned easy limits, hatchery coho were recorded on the opener. Through June 18th, 5 hatchery coho were retained while 3 wild fish were released for 18 recorded angler trips. Seas were not so friendly over the weekend so effort was low. One charter boat reported catching 7 fish working the ocean at 240 feet. The Chinook catch was non-existent in the ocean.

On its last legs, the Tillamook spring Chinook run is winding down. Although the fishery will remain open for hatchery fish only, the bulk of the run is in the area's rivers. With low, clear conditions, they will be reluctant to bite. Action was fair at best along the jetty during the softer tide series with a larger component of the catch being wild.

Bay sturgeon fishing continues to be challenging with fish likely making their way into the Tillamook River in search of an adequate food source. Mud or sand shrimp should take fish into late July and bank anglers have a good shot at Fraser Road access.

Bottomfishing out of Garibaldi remains good but rough ocean conditions have limited some craft and for those venturing out, it hasn't been all that comfortable.

The Guide's Forecast – The seas on the North Oregon Coast are forecasted to remain lumpy-likely not to inspire anglers to pursue the few hatchery coho available out of Garibaldi. Populations of mostly Columbia River bound hatchery coho will build into July with early to mid-July offering the best opportunity. This may not be the week to try ocean salmon, crabbing or bottomfishing. Beware of the screaming minus tides this weekend! Bar crossings will be dangerous.

Another good tide series hits the estuary over the weekend with the best scenario being the spinner fishing in the upper bay. Low tides will concentrate springers in the deeper water and the oyster

house hole itself will be a viable option. Also a good option will be bobber fishing or spinner trolling in the tidewater sections of the Trask, Wilson or Nestucca Rivers. Area rivers will remain too low for driftboats.

Get out and go clamming this weekend! The minus tide series along with the nice weather, should allow for some great mornings on the beach! Take the first 15 clams that you dig and look for bigger holes indicating bigger clams. Clatsop Beaches will produce the best digging but the entire coast is now open for digging.

Central & South Coast Reports – With over 30,000 pounds remaining in the generous total quota of 175,474, all depth halibut anglers will get at least one more shot at the flatties on June 22nd, 23rd and 24th for the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain stretch off the Oregon coast. With rough seas forecast, many sports anglers may not be able to cross the bar. If the ocean and wind cooperate, halibut catches are expected to be good. For whatever reason, if sufficient halibut remain available, additional dates in July have been set aside for fishing. The limit is one per day per angler, three in possession (up from an overly-restrictive two last year) and six for the year.

The summer all-depth halibut season starts on August 4th through 6th for a whopping 233,965 pounds.

Offshore Chinook fishing has been spotty but early catches of coho which opened Saturday, June 17th, have been encouraging despite rough seas which prevented many from crossing the bars over the weekend. The Northwest will often keep the ocean lumpy while a shift to Southerly winds will usually lay it down. Most years, the coho opener is just a date on the calendar which means we can fish, but the actual catching starts sometime later into the summer. Coho taken over the last few days have scaled up to eight pounds - a fish of respectable mass for this early. These fish will put on a pound a week through the season.

Coho are attracted to hoochies which are frequently fished with bait, with whole herring or anchovy or a chunk of one or the other. Scent is often used to increase the appeal. These fish will be higher in the water column than Chinook and baits or lures are trolled faster - about four knots for maximum effectiveness.

Bottom fishing remains good offshore with about half the rods hooking ling cod during ocean forays.

Despite an improvement in the numbers of spring Chinook entering the Umpqua mainstem, catches remain very low and few are even trying for them now. Warming water has revved up the smallmouth and shad fishing, which is just past the peak of the run. The warmer weather is causing snowmelt, which in turn is keeping water temperatures low on the North Umpqua. A few legal sturgeon are being caught below Reedsport but most fish hooked are too large to keep.

The entire Oregon Coast is open for razor clam digging although prospects are better on the North coast. Ocean crabbing is fair, producing few limits.

Returns of springers on the Rogue River are so low that the ODFW disallowed the retention of unclipped fish, calling it an "emergency measure." First light has been most productive for spring Chinook hopefuls on the lower river, but action overall has been very slow. It's even slower in the Grants Pass stretch. Upper Rogue anglers have the best shot at a salmon with the Hatchery Hole producing several a day in the early morning. Summer steelhead are becoming more plentiful. As of June 15th about 5,600 springers and 280 summers had been counted.

Chetco River cutthroat anglers are reporting decent results in tidewater for fish to 18 inches.

Central and Eastern Oregon – The Metolius is fishing well now for both bull trout and rainbows. Look for Green Drakes as the hatch to match. Fish larger nymphs and streamers for action with bull trout. Hot weather will only serve to improve the fishing here.

Water levels have dropped at Crooked River but the water has not yet cleared. Despite the off-color conditions, fishing has picked up with caddis's on the water.

Now that the water is down on the Deschutes, fly fishing for trout has improved. Caddis flies have joined the Salmonflies on the lower river to make for stellar fishing. The first couple of steelhead have been taken but numbers are too low to target them. Look for action with summers to pick up at the end of June and into July.

Northwest Trout – Trollers are taking both rainbows and kokanee in good numbers at Detroit Reservoir.

North Puget Sound

As summer approaches, anglers have their pick of saltwater or freshwater fishing opportunities throughout the region.

Out on the saltwater, the Tulalip Bay "bubble" **salmon** fishery started off slow, but the catch rate is expected to pick up in the coming weeks, said Steve Thiesfeld, a WDFW fish biologist. "This fishery usually starts slow, but it tends to improve as we move into July," Thiesfeld said. "So it's still early, but it's a great opportunity for anglers to get their boat on the water and try out their gear before the fishery heats up."

According to WDFW creel checks at the Everett Ramp, a total of 336 anglers accounted for only six chinook during the first three days of the fishery (June 2-4). During the following opening (June 9-11), a total of 233 anglers checked in only four chinook.

Thiesfeld reminds anglers that the bubble fishery is open each week from Friday through noon Monday and runs through Sept. 25, except for a one-day closure on June 17. There is a two-salmon daily limit and chinook must be 22 inches in length to retain.

Anglers also can drop a line for salmon in the northern portion of Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton). The marine area remains open through June 30 to catch-and-release fishing for salmon, which is allowed north of a line from Point Monroe to Meadow Point. Handling rules are in effect for this fishery.

Meanwhile, **lingcod** and **halibut** fisheries in the region are winding down. The lingcod season closes June 15, while the halibut fishery ends June 18. During the lingcod hook-and-line season, there's a one-fish daily limit for lings, which must be a minimum size of 26 inches and a maximum size of 40 inches. For halibut, there's a daily limit of one fish and no minimum size limit.

The **coonstripe** and **pink shrimp** seasons are under way in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner), the northern and central portions of 7 (San Juan Islands) and a portion of 9 (Admiralty Inlet). The daily limit in all of these fisheries is 10 pounds, heads and tails, of all shrimp species combined. Shrimp heads can be removed, but the heads must be retained while in the field. Details, such as the required minimum mesh size and maximum fishing depths, are available on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crabreg/>.

Crab fishing is just around the corner. The fishery opens July 1 in marine areas 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10, and the southern portion of 7. Fisheries in those areas will generally be open on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, although the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission recently added extra fishing days around the Fourth of July. See WDFW's sport-crabbing website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>) for more information.

On freshwater, the Skagit, Skykomish and Cascade rivers are open for **spring chinook** fishing. On the Skagit, springers are scattered throughout the river and fishing has been steady when river flows are about normal, said Brett Barkdull, WDFW fish biologist. "Anglers should check the Marblemount and Bacon Creek stream gauges before heading out to the Skagit," Barkdull said. "If flows are about normal, fishing should be decent." Barkdull reminds anglers that the Skagit River is open to hatchery spring chinook retention from the Highway 530 bridge at Rockport to the Cascade River. The daily limit is two hatchery chinook at least 12 inches in length.

On the Cascade River, anglers can fish from the mouth of the river to the Rockport-Cascade Road bridge, with a daily limit of two hatchery chinook at least 12 inches in length. On the Skykomish, hatchery springer fishing is open from the Lewis Street Bridge in Monroe to the Wallace River. The Skykomish fishery also has a daily limit of two hatchery chinook at least 12 inches in length.

Trout fishing continues on the lakes and several of the region's rivers and streams. Under the statewide rule for trout, there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches in rivers and streams. However, some of the region's rivers and streams have a rule requiring trout to be at least 14 inches in length to retain. For more rules and details on trout fishing, anglers can check out WDFW's *2006/2007 Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

As opportunities for catching **halibut** and **shrimp** wind down, the start of summer is stirring anticipation for crab and coastal **salmon** fishing. Meanwhile, lake and river fishing is in full swing, with anglers reeling in **trout** and **steelhead**.

Signs of the upcoming sport-crabbing season will begin appearing in the next few weeks at boat ramps and beaches throughout the Puget Sound area. The metal signs will list requirements for participating in the recreational **crab** fishery that begins June 18 in some areas of Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Crab fishing in three areas of Puget Sound will get under way June 18. Those waters - which include marine areas 4 (Neah Bay east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5 (Sekiu) and 13 (south of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge) - will be open seven days per week through Feb. 28.

Eight areas will open to crab fishing July 1, including marine areas 6 (eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), 11 (Tacoma/Vashon) and 12 (Hood Canal). Crab fishing in those four areas will be open daily from July 1-8 before switching to a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule. The fishery will be open the entire Labor Day weekend, Sept. 2-4, before closing for a catch assessment. Fishing will resume in areas where the catch quota has not been met, on dates to be announced by WDFW.

See WDFW's sport-crabbing website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/>) for more information.

Another much-anticipated summer fishery begins June 30 when waters off Neah Bay and La Push open for **salmon** fishing. The Sekiu/Pillar Point, eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca and Hood Canal (marine areas 5, 6, and 12) salmon fisheries open July 1, while the fisheries at Ilwaco and Westport (marine areas 1 and 2) open on July 3.

Salmon fishing opened a bit slower than expected in Marine Area 11 (Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge) on June 1. "It wasn't the big bang to start with, but some fish were caught, and

people got out and had fun. The closer we get to July, the better the fishing should get," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. The fishery runs seven days a week, with a limit of two salmon a day. Minimum size for chinook is 22 inches, but there is no minimum for other species. Commencement Bay remains closed to salmon fishing until Aug. 12.

Anglers will get two more days in June to fish for **Pacific halibut** off the state's north coast. Marine areas 3 (La Push) and 4 (Neah Bay) will be open for halibut fishing June 22 and again June 24. A 20-fathom depth restriction in place in marine areas 3 and 4 will not apply on June 22 and 24. The restriction, which runs through September 30, 2006, applies only on days when halibut fishing is closed. On those days, anglers may not fish for, retain, possess or land any rockfish or lingcod caught seaward of a line approximately 20 fathoms offshore. The coordinates for the 20-fathom line are available on WDFW's website (http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/bottomfish/20fathoms_may06.htm) and on the recreational hotline (360-902-2500).

Halibut anglers have four more days to fish - June 15-18 - in marine areas 6 (East Strait of Juan de Fuca), 11 (Tacoma/Vashon Island), 13 (South Puget Sound), and 9 (Admiralty Inlet) before the season closes in those areas.

"It's been a good season overall" for halibut fishing on the strait, said Larry Bennett, WDFW fish biologist based in Port Angeles. "The fish tend to be big up here and anglers don't have to fish so deep as in the ocean areas." The halibut fishery remains open in Marine Area 5 (Sekiu/Pillar Point) through Aug. 5. The daily limit for halibut is one fish. Lingcod fishing in Marine Area 6 closes tomorrow (June 15).

Fishing for coonstripe and other non-spot opened June 1 in several areas of Puget Sound including marine areas 11 (Tacoma/Vashon Island) and 9 (Admiralty Inlet), with a 150-foot depth restriction. The fishing is open daily. While most waters have now closed to spot shrimp fishing, those still open include marine areas 4, 5, 6, and 13.

River fishing, which opened June 1, is a sure sign that summer's around the corner. Flows on most of the rivers are still normal to slightly high for this time of year due to recent rains, according to Rick Ereth, WDFW fish biologist. "The summer-run steelhead catch has been fair on the Wynoochee River, with most effort concentrated below White Bridge," Ereth said. "There's a mix of steelhead in the Wynoochee right now. Although most fish caught and retained have been fresh summer runs, small numbers of late winter-run fish are still moving in to spawn, and also a fair number of spawned-out kelts are still moving downstream." Anglers have also been fishing the Satsop and Chehalis rivers. A few chinook were picked up last week in the Chehalis mainstem upstream of the Fuller Bridge. The pursuit of trout in local creeks and streams is also offering good results. Ereth reminds anglers to check the *Fishing in Washington* (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) pamphlet before going out for specific regulations on the waters they are fishing.

On the Olympic Peninsula, occasional warm days continue to keep the Hoh River high and murky, said David Low, WDFW fish biologist. Creel counts between June 8 and 10 found 25 anglers catching seven chinook and four summer steelhead. Low said the fishing on the Sol Duc River has been slow. "The river has been low and clear, and the fish have been holding in pools, not biting well. Hopefully the recent rains will move some fish," he said.

While the weather remains cool, trout continue to grow in area lakes, according to Hal Michael, WDFW fish biologist, who says this is a good time for anglers to consider fishing for pan fish. "Bluegill, pumpkinseed, rock bass, warmouth, large and smallmouth bass, and other sunfish are all actively spawning now in shallower waters and should be more accessible to anglers, particularly those fishing from shore," Michael said. Yellow perch have already spawned. "We've had several reports of fish kills. It's the male yellow perch - they just don't survive spawning. It's an annual thing we see," he said.

Two lakes in the region are currently closed to fishing due to water conditions. Anderson Lake near Chimacum was closed by the State Parks Department and the Jefferson County Health Department. Wapato Lake, a juvenile-anglers-only lake in Pierce County, was closed by Tacoma Metro Parks.

Southwest Washington

As spring comes to an end, summer steelhead are beginning to show up in the lower Columbia River tributaries, and summer chinook are starting to return in greater numbers to the Columbia's mainstem. Meanwhile, sturgeon anglers continue to do well on the Columbia, particularly at the mouth of the river.

On the lower Columbia's tributaries, bank anglers casting for steelhead are having the most success on the Cowlitz River, while anglers along the Kalama and Lewis rivers are doing fairly well. A recent creel survey found 27 bank anglers kept 16 adipose-clipped steelhead on the Cowlitz River, while 56 bank anglers brought home eight steelies on the Kalama River, and 30 anglers kept seven steelhead on the Lewis River.

"The steelhead fishery is just getting started," said Wolf Dammers, a WDFW fish biologist. "Over the next few weeks, look for these rivers to become more and more productive."

Trout fishing also continues on several of the region's lakes, rivers and streams. After a recent stocking of trout, anglers are expected to do well at Kidney, Lacamas and Battle Ground lakes, Mayfield Reservoir and Klineline Pond, said Dammers.

Before heading out, anglers should check fishing regulations in the *2006-07 Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) on the WDFW website.

On the lower Columbia's mainstem, summer chinook are starting to arrive, and the hot spot for anglers is just below the Bonneville Dam. A recent creel check in that area found 42 bank anglers kept eight hatchery chinook and released 34. "That's pretty good bank fishing," said Dammers, who reminds anglers that only adipose-clipped chinook can be retained through June 15. Beginning June 16 - the official start of the summer chinook fishery - anglers fishing from Tongue Point near Astoria to the Priest Rapids Dam can keep chinook with or without an adipose fin, he said.

Shad continue to show up in large numbers to the lower Columbia River. Bank anglers are having the most success just below Bonneville Dam, where shad stack up before passing upstream.

"Because the river is running higher than normal, the fish are forced toward the banks of the river," Dammers said. "So bank anglers are finding a lot of shad nearby and are doing very well."

Recent catch counts gave some indication of angler success. A total of 129 bank anglers interviewed just below the dam kept 1,653 shad.

A record six million shad returned to the Columbia River in 2005 and biologists are predicting another strong return this year. For shad recipes, see the WDFW website at

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/outreach/fishing/shad/shad.htm>.

Want to hook a sturgeon? Head out to the Columbia River estuary, where anglers continue to pick up an increasing number of legal-sized fish. Charter anglers checked at Ilwaco and Chinook were averaging one legal-size sturgeon for every 1.4 rods, while anglers in private boats were averaging one keeper for every 3.2 rods.

Eastern Washington:

When summer officially arrives and drier and warmer weather settles in throughout the region, fishing options should increase. "If the Spokane River ever recedes," said WDFW District Biologist Chris Donley, "it should have some good trout fishing. And when it warms up, Loon Lake will again

be good for kokanee night fishing. Some folks have already been trolling for kokanee at Loon and catching a few."

Meanwhile, Donley says the region's many trout-stocked lakes are still a good bet, especially early mornings and late afternoons, between rainstorms. "Fly fishing for cutthroat and rainbows at Amber Lake is still good," he said, "but you've got to fish deeper now, 15 to 20 feet deep, with wet lines."

Post-spawn perch, crappie and bluegill have been moving into deeper water and providing some action at several waters, including Spokane County's Clear, Eloika, Long and Silver lakes. Eloika Lake is also good for largemouth bass fishing now. Bonnie Lake, off Rock Creek near the Spokane-Whitman county line, has good crappie and bass fishing, but access is up a creek channel by small boats only and the private property surrounding the lake must be respected.

Whitman County's Gilchrist Pond, southwest of Colfax, will be closed to fishing June 14 until the start of a kids' fishing clinic on Saturday, June 17, to protect catchable-size trout stocked specifically for the event. For more information contact Whitman County 4-H at 509-397-6290.

Sprague Lake has decent action on rainbows and perch and some walleye. The Spokane arm of Lake Roosevelt and the upper stretches of the reservoir above Kettle Falls, from Gifford to China Bend, are producing lots of walleye catches now. Tag returns on Roosevelt's rainbow trout are steady. "Fishing the free-flowing reach of the Columbia River from Northport to the Canada border could be a real adventure," Donley said. "We don't conduct any creel census in that area, but I know there are some nice fish in that big water."

In the other end of the region, smallmouth bass fishing should be good now on the lower stretch of the Grand Ronde River, from its mouth at the Snake River in Asotin County. The Snake's spring chinook salmon season in the Little Goose dam area continues slow but steady. Be sure to follow gear restrictions, including barbless hooks, for that special season.

North Central Washington:

The special fishing season for spring chinook salmon on Chelan County's Icicle River has been closed until further notice because of last week's theft of broodstock at Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery. Two hundred of the 250 chinook collected towards the hatchery's need for 1,000 broodstock were stolen. Until the hatchery collects 950 more fish, the season will remain closed. Based on the most recent run counts over Rock Island and Rocky Reach dams on the Wenatchee River, WDFW District Fish Biologist Art Viola estimates about 1,250 fish are heading up the Icicle River. "At the rate these fish are now coming up river we might be able to re-open this fishery after the broodstock goal is met," he said. "The run was later than we expected, but fishing was picking up and more consistent than past years." Viola reported recreational anglers had harvested about 150 fish when the theft occurred. The season on the portion of the Icicle River 400 feet upstream of the mouth at the Wenatchee River to 500 feet downstream of the hatchery fish rack originally was scheduled to run through July 31.

WDFW District Fish Biologist Bob Jateff of Omak reports rivers in the Methow Valley of Okanogan County are still too high to fish effectively. "But there are some lakes in county that are still producing good catches of trout," he said. "Both Rat Lake near Brewster and Davis Lake near Winthrop are good bets for rainbow trout 11 to 13 inches. Both of these lakes are catch-and-release with selective gear rules in effect at this time." Jateff also reported Leader Lake has good fishing for bluegills and crappie, with some rainbow trout in the catch, too. "Sidley Lake near Oroville is also a good prospect," he said, "with rainbows running to 15 inches." Sidley is a year-round open lake with a two-fish daily catch limit.

WDFW enforcement officers report many anglers have been going after triploid rainbow trout, walleye and kokanee at Rufous Woods Lake, the Columbia River reservoir on the Okanogan-Douglas county line.

Walleye continue to be the fish to catch at Moses Lake reports WDFW District Fish Biologist Jeff Korth of Moses Lake. The recent Moses Lake Walleye Classic tournament yielded one 10.8-pound fish and one 9.08-pound fish. "Remember the new regulations for walleye," Korth said. "It's now an eight-fish daily catch limit with a 12-inch minimum and no more than one fish over 22 inches." Continued rain and wind have slowed action at Potholes Reservoir, but as water levels drop and conditions settle into summer, catches will improve. Walleye fishing has already improved in the sand dune area and post-spawn largemouth bass are moving into deeper water.

South Central Washington:

With continued rain, rivers and streams throughout the region are not dropping into good fishing condition as quickly as expected after recent flooding from snowmelt runoff. But water levels are dropping, said WDFW Fish Biologist Jim Cummins, and sooner or later most waterways will provide some good action on trout and other fish. "The Naches River remains a little high for fishing," he said, "but smaller streams are fishable."

Rimrock Reservoir kokanee are biting now, mostly by chumming or trolling. WDFW district fish biologist Eric Anderson reports that although the fish are only running seven to nine inches, many anglers are catching limits of 16 kokanee a day from boats and south shoreline areas. Cummins noted that recent wind, rain and cold weather has made Rimrock kokanee fishing "challenging," especially for those with small boats. "Be extra careful out there," he advised.

Fishing at smaller trout lakes has been easier. Anderson reported plans to stock more triploid rainbow trout this week in Yakima County's Clear, Leech and Dog lakes, now that they're all free of snow. Lost Lake in Kittitas County will be stocked after June 20. Meanwhile, Leech Lake anglers are catching some 8- to 13-inch brook trout and some carryover triploid rainbows in the 17- to 19-inch range. Anderson reminds anglers that Leech Lake is fly-fishing only. Occasional lake trout up to 12 pounds are being caught in Cle Elum Lake by trolling or jigging about 100 feet deep.

WDFW enforcement officers recently checked high numbers of shad fishermen with good success on the Columbia River. Lots of bass, catfish, walleye and **sturgeon** anglers have also been out on the Columbia, Yakima and Snake rivers. Several nice bass and walleye were checked on the Columbia in the Paterson area of Benton County.

Reader Email

Kapt'n Ken writes again this week with his regular report on the lower Willamette: "Been on the river a bit, in the Oregon City area and Shad are still on the bite...Not like they were or should be but they're still hitting the Dick Nites I am throwing at them...I've only fished for a couple of hours at a time and in about two+ hours of fishing, I've caught 5-7 fish respectively...They're in there but I think they're still a bit scattered because of the still high water. Hey, I'm in it to sit in the boat and just relax...The fish are just a bonus...Yeah, right...I'll eat my words when I go Sturgeon Fishing and don't have enough good Shad Bait...Or crabbing too. Other boats were doing better depending on where they were sitting. I was amazed that some guys would sit at anchor the entire time I was there, not catching a dang single fish, and never ever move. Even when other boats are pulling them in...I just don't get it...If you're not catching Shad, move the dang boat! Simple! I was alone

and didn't care that much about catchin' so I only moved once...but last week I moved about 4 times before I got into the right slot, if there is such a thing when the water is flowing slow and kind of high. I mean, catching 7 Shad in 2-3 hours is not a good day of catching Shad!!! A few of the guys out there were dangling Alvin's and even a flatfish about 2 feet above their Shad Darts hoping for Mr. Chinookie to come on board. Didn't see any Chinook caught at all, but I know they're still out there. Weird year, for me, at least! But, as little as I've gone out, I've had a good time of it! Maybe next year it'll be better...Catchin' that is...The Fishin's been GREAT!"

Going fishing? Send us a report or a story! Got an opinion on something? Shoot us an Email!

Write to the TGF staff:

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Michael Teague: SailCat@SailCat.com

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Random Links

Tillamook Bay Map & Info: *<http://www.marinebd.osmb.state.or.us/CoastalWaters/Tillamook.htm>

Marine Board publications of interest to boaters: *<http://www.boatoregon.com/Library/>

Knot guide for mariners: *<http://www.marlinnut.com/knots/index.shtml>

Weekly Quote – Fishing, if I a fisher, may protest

Of pleasures is the sweet'st, of sports the best,

Of exercises the most excellent,

Of Recreations the most innocent.

But now the sport is marred, and wot ye why?

Fishes decrease, and fishers multiply. - Reverend Thomas Bastard in Fishing, published in 1498

GOOD LUCK!