

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **April 6<sup>th</sup> – April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Flows at Willamette Falls continue to moderate but the water temperature remains at 50 degrees. As a consequence, salmonid counts remain low. Over 4,300 winter steelhead and 350 summers have been counted this season while only 26 springers have crossed the Falls. Some anglers managed combination sturgeon and spring Chinook catches over the weekend, but keeper sturgeon numbers have declined.

**Pro guide James Stevenson (503-881-5289)** reports that he's been unable to crack the springer code yet this year.

With stable water conditions, trollers are seeing catches of spring chinook daily in the Portland Harbor. Trolled herring are taking the bulk of the salmon but colder than normal water temperatures are likely keeping this fishery from busting open.

Columbia River spring salmon anglers are still fighting cold water temperatures and catches are slow to improve. Consistent catches are not reported from any particular stretch of the river but action should begin to show strong signs of improvement this week if the run is going to materialize. Recent reports from **Pro guide Brandon McGavran (360-607-1327)** however indicate more consistent action in the Kalama to St. Helens stretch taking advantage of the tide changes.

The Clackamas River is in great shape but fishing remains slow.

Sandy steelheaders are experiencing fair to good catches, but most are released as they are wild. Few dark fish seem to be in the mix yet.

Numbers and catches are improving in the North Santiam, but it's still primarily catch-and-release for native winter steelhead.

Scheduled for trout stocking this week is Henry Hagg Lake, Huddleston Pond, Sheridan Pond, St Louis Pond Alton Baker Canal, Cottage Grove Pond, Cottage Grove Reservoir, Creswell Pond, Detroit Reservoir, Foster Reservoir and Roaring River Park Pond.

**Northwest –** Several coastal tributaries closed to steelhead fishing on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Rivers remaining open are likely to have spring chinook and summer steelhead returning. Tillamook area streams are beginning to drop and clear but the Wilson remained productive into this week reports **pro guides Dave Johnson (503-201-4292) and Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)**. The mainstem Nehalem was productive last week but has since slowed.

Those seeking success for sturgeon in Tillamook Bay are coming home disappointed. Effort has dropped and only a rare keeper is being taken.

Bottomfishers witnessed success for seabass and lingcod early this week with larger fish coming further from port. Crabbing near the mouth of Tillamook Bay is slow but ocean crabbing remains a better bet than the estuary. A few softshells are beginning to show in the catch.

No sign of spring chinook in the Tillamook watershed but a wild springer was rumored to have been landed and released on the Nestucca River last week.

Herring jiggers at Yaquina are coming up with only low double digits for several hours of effort. Crabbing is slow here and worse at Waldport.

Bottom fishers launching out of Depoe Bay have had fair to good success this week in water shallower than 240 feet.

**Southwest –** The final day for bottom fishing outside the 40 fathom line provided excellent rockfish and ling cod action with extra large specimens on tap. Boater's attention will now be focused on ocean Chinook. The deeper ocean re-opens in September for bottomfish although halibut will remain on tap at times. All bottomfish including halibut may be taken seven days a week in water 40 fathoms or less.

Many anglers on the Umpqua are forsaking reasonably good steelhead action to take advantage of the burgeoning spring Chinook run in the lower mainstem. Improving water temperatures will reflect favorably on fishing prospects although **pro guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944)** reports springer fishing on the Umpqua has been slow. A few large fish have been caught, but it's still early. Give it a couple of more weeks for some better numbers to start showing. Smallmouth bass are in pre-spawn on the Umpqua with larger fish showing in catches recently.

Steelheading remains open on the South Fork of the Coquille River and prospects are decent although many of the fish will be spawned out downrunners.

The Rogue spring Chinook fishery got off to a decent start, but a dip of the water temps into the 40s has stalled the bite this week. Anglers are spotting steelies in the upper river but have been frustrated recently in getting the fish to respond to bait or lure. The ODFW is funding barriers to prevent sea lions from lounging on boat docks in the Rogue River boat basin.

The Chetco is among many south coast rivers which is now closed to fishing. Trout opens here on May 26th.

Surf perch fishing off ocean beaches is producing good catches of large fish.

Marie Lake, Bradley Lake, Eel Lake, Upper and Lower Empire Lake, Lake Johnson Mill Pond, Millicoma Pond, Powers Pond and Saunders Lake are scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout.

**Eastern –** Although hatches remain pretty steady on the lower Deschutes, it's nymphs that are producing trout.

Steelhead prospects for eastern Oregon remain strong for just another 10 days reports **pro guide Mac Huff (800-940-3688)**. Season averages are excellent for last years returning summer run fish.

Pinehollow Reservoir is scheduled to be stocked with trout.

**SW Washington –** Kline Pond in Vancouver will feature a children's fishing event on April 14<sup>th</sup>. The pond will close for public access beginning April 12<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 p.m. the day of the event.

Higher flows have finally subsided on SW Washington streams yielding steelhead on the Cowlitz and a few spring chinook on the Lewis River. Conditions should only improve in the coming weeks.

### **Soapbox Update: Judge rules loosening of law protecting forests was illegal**

Wednesday, April 04, 2007

SEATTLE -- The Bush administration illegally suppressed and misrepresented the views of dissenting scientists when it eased logging restrictions under the Northwest Forest Plan, a federal judge has ruled.

U.S. District Judge Ricardo S. Martinez struck down the administration's change to the forest plan, which governs logging on 24 million acres of federal lands in Washington, Oregon and Northern California.

"Here, the dissenting views of responsible scientists were neither set forth in substance, nor their import discussed," as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, Martinez wrote in his ruling late last week.

Under the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan's Aquatic Conservation Strategy, before federal agencies could approve logging, road building or other projects, they had to determine that the projects would not harm watersheds. That wording, designed to protect salmon, had held up timber activities on 4 million acres designated for logging.

In March 2004, the Bush administration dropped the wording at the request of the timber industry.

Several U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service scientists who worked on the original Northwest Forest Plan objected, saying the change would "remove or weaken several key conservation provisions for aquatic species" and "is of great concern to us."

But such comments were not included in the environmental impact statement prepared in conjunction with the wording change, Martinez said. Instead, some of the objections were "buried in the appendices as a summary of public comments" but were not seriously weighed by the U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management.

Forest Service spokesman Tom Knappenberger said his agency is reviewing the ruling.

(From the Oregonian)

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The Guide's Forecast would like to congratulate **Jennie Logsdon Martin**, L. O. F., for her induction into the Association of Northwest Steelheaders Hall of Fame.

You go, girl!

Bob, Doug and Michael

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Make Friday, April 13th a Lucky Day by fishing the **13th Annual HAWGS-N-DOGS fishing Tournament**. More information here: <http://www.theguidesforecast.com/soapbox.shtml>

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – With the gillnets removed from the river, anglers are starting to see the benefits of net free waterways. Catches have improved but cold water still dogs anglers in what is coming into the peak season for Columbia River springers.

ODF&W creel checks indicate a significant jump in catch and effort this week. Estuary boats posted the best catches with nearly a fish for every 3 boats. Scattered catches were reported and success is still not consistent day by day. Visual stock indexing is showing nearly half or better of the fish being reeled in by sportanglers are destined for the upper Columbia. "White-faced" Willamette bound chinook are

not present in great numbers in the mainstem fishery. Although March catch rates were down due to poor water conditions, the upper Columbia component of the spring run is higher than anticipated. The departments believe that the fishery is tracking as predicted and may in fact hit the April 15<sup>th</sup> closure date. It's still too early to determine however but as favorable tides, run timing, water conditions and a warming trend fast approach; our impacts have the potential to get eaten up rather quickly.

**Pro guide Brandon McGavran (360-607-1327)** reports from the Woodland area. Brandon writes, "Fishing has been decent since last Friday. I have been putting fish in the boat trolling herring and prawn spinners, no flashers. There has been a consistent early bite the last few days at a few spots between St. Helens and Kalama. I was 3 for 4 yesterday and 3 for 4 again today, 4-4-07. The fish are still being finicky due to the higher flows so get out of the heavy current and fish shallower and easier water when trolling. Try fishing prawn spinners and whole or cut plug herring while on the pick, this will increase your success with tough biting fish." Brandon still recommends targeting your effort closer to the tide exchanges.

Sturgeon effort remains low but catches are improving. The bulk of the keepers were reported in the Portland to Longview stretch but one boat reported 2 keepers from the estuary as well. Warmer water temperatures are likely to continue to improve the catch and the gorge often improves significantly in the spring months. Smelt will remain a favorite bait but sand shrimp will produce great results as well.

Upriver, walleye fishing remains steady with significant effort in pursuing the fish. As the fish near their spring spawn, success should drop off.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Salmon anglers on the Columbia should be facing ideal conditions in the coming week for fair to good spring chinook action. Tides will actually weaken in the coming week but the run timing will be a key factor in this weeks success. Flows may still be high if upper impoundments continue to spill. This will continue to challenge anglers but those that find the sanctuary of an island or target their efforts close to tide changes should find favorable results.

Herring trollers seem to be doing the best with 2 to 5 opportunities for a days effort. Brandon McGavran indicated he was doing considerably better trolling than the anchor anglers fishing just downstream of him. These fish don't seem to respond too well when the plugs are wiggling too fast. Needless to say, you'll have to keep your herring near the bottom to expect any consistent results. Flows near the bottom are not near the velocity as they are up closer to the surface and that is where the shy chinook often travel the most in swifter flows.

All stretches of the Columbia should start producing better catches this week but anglers that are able to utilize the estuary will have greater opportunity to take advantage of the incoming tide. This incoming tide will slow the flow- enough to allow for some quality time trolling herring and spinners. Tide changes also last longer here. Fishing from Tongue Point to Jim Crow Sands may prove productive this week.

Bank anglers will not have strong tides to look forward to. The following week beginning on April 16<sup>th</sup> (a day after the season is scheduled to close) is a minus tide series that will favor bank anglers. If flows continue to be high however, bank anglers do stand a reasonable chance at a quality spring salmon. Some summer steelhead may also begin to show in the catches- especially along the banks of the lower Columbia.

Sturgeon anglers may want to begin to hone their tactics for gorge keepers. If you lucked into smelt this season, you will want to dunk those in your favorite spots. Success should continue to climb into this month and early May as water temperatures are on the increase.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – Willamette anglers are taking fish daily but the catch numbers remain low, a situation that will change when the water warms a few degrees. Lower Willamette water temps have held right around 50 or lower since March 1st. Warm weather this week should finally change that. The area below Sellwood Bridge remains a popular stretch for springers although fish have been taken at various locations from Oregon City to the mouth with Coon Island in Multnomah Channel producing a few. Plunkers fishing from the bank along the Blacktop/Meldrum Bar stretch are taking a couple of fish a day with about a 50/50 split between springers and steelhead.

**Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411)** reports " ... had my first springer trip yesterday at Fred's and top of channel. We landed one native and saw about another dozen fish caught. There were about 30 to 40 boat there at the peak. The bite was over with by one. Trolling herring was the way to go. Made it quick trip to the Columbia and it was only 46 degrees while the Willamette was 2 and 3 degrees warmer. Marked only a few fish by the barges and only saw a couple of boats there fishing. A couple of hints, watch the fish finder and what the depths the fish are. We were constantly adjust our depth to get where the level the fish were at. Also watch your herring, there are a lot of smolts in the river right now and they like to peck at your herring. The fishing should improve from here on out, as we will have a waning moon next week and the Columbia and Willamette will warm up a little more"

**Pro guide James Stevenson (503-881-5289)** reports the he's "Still trying the lower Willamette with herring, seeing 5-10 fish caught the last two times I've gone. 0 for one for me, wow what a great beginning! maybe get better?????????"

Sea lions are present in the lower river and are taking fish. In at least one case, right from the end of an angler's line after he hooked it. The ODFW will concentrate hazing efforts at Bonneville and will not be addressing the pinniped pests in the lower Willamette.

Sturgeon action in the lower Willamette cooled off during the last retention period, likely due to the cold water. St. Johns is as good a place to start as any, but be prepared to move in order to find keeper-sized biters.

Catch and release fishing for native steelhead has been fair to good on the North Santiam with anglers occasionally hooking early summer fish. Over 100 winter steelhead have entered the trap at Foster Dam on the South Santiam, accompanied by 22 summer fish but no spring Chinook have been tallied as yet.

The next 'Learn the River' trip will be from Stayton to Green's Bridge with members of the NW Steelheaders, Watershed Council and local guides leading the way will occur this Saturday, April 7th. Either meet the crew for breakfast at 6:30 AM at Neufelt's Diner in Aumsville or be ready to launch your drift boat at 9 AM at Stayton Bridge. The feedback from boaters who have made these trips has been positive. A shuttle will be available for a fee but the trip is free. It will take until about 2:30 to complete the drift.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Springer action picked up mid week and should remain fair to good into the weekend. Trolling herring with the current on the outgoing tide will be the demise of some fish. Areas to try include Coon Island, the Sellwood stretch and around the Hawthorne Bridge and near Fred's Marina. Sturgeon fishing improved over last week if the early Thursday, April 5th results are any indication. If I were a betting man, and I am, I'd wager it's a trend which will continue through Sunday with the weather warming. Water conditions this week are excellent if cool.

Stayton and Green's Bridge have the best population of steelhead in the North Santiam and would be a good place to start with numbers of summer steelhead improving. This could be stellar summer steelheading in a few weeks. It has a history of outstanding years and others which have only been fair.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – A couple of spring Chinook have taken out of the Clack in the stretch below Barton, signaling the start of the fishery here. The winter steelhead run is starting to wind down but anglers will have a chance at them as the water drops this week. With a few summers and spring Chinook coming into the Clackamas and the water level dropping and warming it has the potential to produce this weekend as well. Take the full arsenal: spinners, bobber and jigs, corkies and yarn. Add some high-quality cured eggs to the mix to cover all your bases.

With an broodstock program well-established on the Sandy, steelheaders continue to take bright fish although the percentage of unclipped fish is increasing. Catch rates are fair to good with the majority of the fish chrome. Spring Chinook smolts have are being released at Cedar Creek for anglers to enjoy a few years hence. Adult springers have been seen in the Sandy and while numbers are low, it won't be long until this fishery gets rolling. If the run is good, it'll be smokin' by the second week in May.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Effort for steelhead on the north coast is beginning to wane. Mid-week pressure is very tolerable as most folks begin to focus on salmon- especially given the good water conditions now happening in the Willamette Valley.

There are still steelhead around however. Inconsistency still rules the roost. The Nehalem produced some good catches last week and I drifted it yesterday with poor results- we never had a bite! Guides working the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers however did catch fish at mid-week with a mix of hatchery summer steelhead, broodstock and wild fish in the mix. The rivers are once again low and clear and fish responded best to plugs in these lower flows.

Nestucca anglers have been taking winters along with a few early summer steelhead. The river opened April 1st for spring Chinook, and while very early for them, a couple had been caught and released prior to the opener. The water level at Beaver dipped below four feet mid-week. The Nestucca is closed above Moon Creek to Elk Creek on April 1st and will remain closed until the 1st of June.

The lower flows dictated what drifts most fishers utilized. Lower Wilson guides like **pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reported good catches Wednesday with fish going into the broodstock tank and in the cooler for home-pack. He landed and kept both a summer run fish and a broodstock steelhead. **Pro guide Dave Johnson (503-201-4292)** reported, "I fished the Wilson today, it was low and real clear but we hooked five late steelhead pulling plugs, Tabpolly's and K11 Kwifish." **Pro guide Kent Anderson (503-550-6303)** reported good success on the lower Nestucca River with a mix of natives, broodstock and summer run steelhead. The upper Nestucca is still plagued with seals however as **pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)** reports; "The Nestucca is VERY slow. We have seen a few fish, but as of the last few days, the fishing has been quite slow, to near non existent. We have had a Seal epidemic for several weeks. There have been numerous animals from fifth bridge all the way down past Cloverdale. Over the last several days, we have had one within sight of the boat on every drift. These things are becoming a real problem, and they are putting the fish down almost completely. They are also in Three Rivers itself, and at the mouth as well. We are in the process of having the issue addressed, and if you have any concerns, please contact ODFW, and give them the heads up. As for now, with the recent events, we are going to cancel the rest of our steelhead season, and hope for the best when we see some good numbers of summer fish, and some Chinooks. There have been a few summer Steelhead caught, but it is luck of the draw. If all goes well, and the Seals leave, we will see some good fishing here shortly. Also, crabbing in the bay is dead. We gave it a shot yesterday, and did not see a keeper for several hours. Have a good week! I'm doing yard work..."

Seas have been calm enough to venture outside again. Overall, fishing and crabbing nearshore has been less than impressive. We went outside on Monday (4/2) in an attempt to find some lingcod and black seabass. We did find both species but our 4 rod effort only yielded 4 bass and one ling- we were

using herring. We dropped our 4 crab pots as well only to find 3 keeper crabs inside! We then headed up the west channel to the top of the west channel in pursuit of sturgeon. Sand shrimp accounted for one 40 incher that we threw back. Not the most productive trip but fun none-the-less.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Steelheaders will have a double whammy against them this week as low flows will plague most north coast streams. The mainstem Nehalem will be one of the better bets as it was in ideal color and height at mid-week. If you choose other north coast streams, stick to the bottom ends as fish will be slow to migrate upstream in these lower flows. Bank anglers working the upper stretches will have to employ stealthy techniques. Bobbers and jigs become productive at these flow levels. A mix of late winter fish and summer run steelhead should be available for the next week before the run peters out.

Spring chinook fishing is open but catches will not pick up for several more weeks. The earliest I have taken Tillamook Bay springers is April 14<sup>th</sup> but it is certainly possible before then. Anglers that are in serious pursuit of these fish should target them closer to the bay entrance or in the ocean itself.

And speaking of ocean, seas are predicted to be quite friendly prior to the weekend but a ground swell may make weekend fishing a bit iffy. Be sure to check here for updated swell forecast: <http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/data/Forecasts/FZUS56.KPQR.html>. The morning tides are low enough to exercise caution when crossing the bar.

Sturgeon fishing is not productive. It appears as if the sturgeon did not come into Tillamook Bay in great numbers this season. The upper end of the west channel and Bay City are the best places to target keepers over the weekend morning low tides.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – According to an ODFW bulletin April 5th, "The spring all-depth season dates for the central coast area from Cape Falcon (30 miles south of the Columbia River) south to Humbug Mountain (south of Port Orford) are May 10-12, 17-19, 24-26 and 31; and June 1-2 and 7-9 (Thursday-Saturdays). If quota remains the fishery will resume on June 21-23 and July 5-7, 19-21 or until the 170,242-pound quota is taken. Open dates will be announced on the National Marine Fisheries Service hotline (1-800-662-9825) and posted on the ODFW Marine Resources Program Web site at: [www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/)

"The central coast all-depth fishery summer season opens Aug. 3 and is scheduled to be open every other Friday-Sunday until the season all-depth quota of 226,989 pounds is taken or Oct. 28. The possibly of a second fish to the bag limit could occur after the Labor Day weekend if the catch is low ...."

Stonewall Bank will remain off limits to protect canary and yelloweye rockfish which have been over-fished. 2007 bag limits are once again one halibut per day and three per week up to six in the calendar year. The ocean inside the 40-fathom line is open seven days a week for halibut starting May 1st for a quota of 19,378 pounds

Coastal rivers are getting low and clear, but this doesn't mean that steelhead aren't there nor that fishing isn't good. Quite the contrary. It's time to change to low water tactics. Use lighter line and smaller baits and lures. Look for steelhead in broken, bubbly water instead of slots and tail-outs.

Many coastal rivers close or are subject to retention restrictions on April 1st. Be sure to check the regulations. Among rivers closed until May 19th are the Chetco, Elk, Sixes and Applegate.

Spinners are particularly effective in low water conditions; there's no mistaking a strike. Steelhead will either stop the lure cold as of a log materialized where none had existed earlier or they'll hit it so hard it

nearly tears the rod from your hand. Just writing that increased my heart rate. Cast quartering upstream and work the spinner just fast enough for the blade to tick bottom occasionally. If you're knocking the paint off without losing a bunch of lures, you've got it right. The more one does it, the fewer lures will be lost.

A jig drifted naturally under a bobber can also be lethal and should be part of any low water steelheader's program.

The Siletz will be below the four-foot level by Saturday. A broodstock program here means finclipped steelhead will be present and susceptible to anglers using the low-water tactics described above.

Over 1,400 steelhead have entered the hatchery on the Alsea and anglers here are still managing to take a few late-season bright fish.

**Pro guide Jeff Jackson (541-268-6944)** reports, "Most of the Siuslaw closed on Mar. 31. The Siuslaw from Whittaker to 200 yards below Wildcat is still open until Apr. 15. Steelhead fishing has been slow. Most of the fish being caught are natives.

"Springer fishing on the Umpqua has been slow. A few large fish have been caught, but its still early. Give it a couple of more weeks for some better numbers to start showing."

Mild tides favor crabbing this weekend, but results in bays and estuaries have been spotty. Yaquina Bay has delivered a few although crab have seemingly disappeared from the normally-productive Alsea Bay. It's slow at most other coastal locations. It's that time of year that softshells will start to show in catches so give that fist set of legs a squeeze at the segment closest to the body. Herring are yet to show in significant number at Yaquina Bay.

The final day for bottom fishing outside the 40 fathom line provided excellent rockfish and ling cod action with extra large specimens on tap. Boater's attention will now be focused on ocean Chinook and bottom-dwellers in shallower water. The deeper ocean re-opens in September for bottomfish although halibut will remain on tap at times. All bottomfish including halibut may be taken seven days a week in water 40 fathoms or less. A few boats have been out on the Big Pond trolling for Chinook but no one has connected. It is theorized the salmon are far offshore in very deep water.

Most anglers on the mainstem Umpqua are ignoring steelhead for which fishing was only fair anyway to take advantage a spring Chinook run which has just started in the lower river, although some have been taken as high as Roseburg and a couple have crossed Winchester Dam. Improving water temperatures will reflect favorably on fishing prospects. The mainstem Umpqua River slowed for steelhead over that last week although numbers are good on the North Umpqua and catches reflect it and the best steelhead fishing on this system is on the South Umpqua. Spinners and plugs are working well here, but bait is the best bet for a hookup. Some dandy smallmouth bass have been taken as these prolific fish enter their pre-spawn phase. It'll only get better as the season progresses as this is one of the Oregon locations capable of delivering catches of 100 or more smallies a day.

Steelheading remains open on the South Fork of the Coquille River and prospects are decent although many of the fish will be spawned out downrunners.

Upper Rogue steelheaders are doing very well flinging spinners for the best run of steelhead in three years. Although steelies are running small - five pounds or a little less average - there are plenty of 'em. About 10,000 have crossed Gold Ray Dam with more steelhead crossing daily. The vast majority of the steelhead population remain in the river below Gold Ray, however, creating a strong fishery below that point. Steelhead fishing has been spotty in the Grants Pass stretch and the spring Chinook fishery which got off to a decent start a week ago has stalled in cold water conditions, a situation which has plagued



fisheries state-wide this season. With the promise of warm weather this week, a lull in the water temperatures may turn on the Chinook.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Regular contributor and **pro guide Mac Huff (800-940-3688)** reports, "About 10 more days of steelhead fishing remain in eastern Oregon and Washington. At this time the catching continues at a good pace of about 5 hours per fish on the Grande Ronde and Willamette rivers. Water quality is excellent at this time, almost too clear for good steelhead fishing, and the weather outlook will allow the rivers to continue dropping for the foreseeable future, further enhancing fishing prospects.

"Current conditions offer a great opportunity to end the 2006-07 steelhead run season with some fun and productive fishing."

**Northwest Trout** – TGF co-editor Michael Teague writes I don't have a problem with the ODFW policy of no longer stocking streams which are now populated with wild fish and are open to catch-and release only. Even prior to the decision to limit (with rare exception) trout planting to Oregon's stillwaters, I held to the belief that native cutthroat shouldn't be retained.

Many years ago, a young fellow came into the now-defunct Fishing Unlimited tackle store in McMinnville which was operated by the late Bill Cox and myself, asking where he could stream fish for trout. As this teen was the son of a minister/customer of ours, a fly fisher and a man-boy I believed to be an ethical angler. I told him about a lovely spot on the North Yamhill which was a slam-dunk for native cuts.

In later discussion with him regarding this foray, I disclosed the above belief in his nature and inquired about how the youth fared in this seldom-disclosed location. He replied, "Great! They were delicious grilled."

You know who you are. Quit giggling.

In any event, now it's the law now and just as well that this resource can't be exploited nowadays ... or barbecued.

Trout have been planted this week at Huddleston Pond, Sheridan Pond, St Louis Pond Alton Baker Canal, Cottage Grove Pond, Cottage Grove Reservoir, Creswell Pond, Detroit Reservoir, Foster Reservoir and Roaring River Park Pond in the Willamette Valley. Marie Lake, Bradley Lake, Eel Lake, Upper and Lower Empire Lake, Lake Johnson Mill Pond, Millicoma Pond, Powers Pond and Sru Lake are scheduled to be planted with hatchery rainbows on the South coast. Stocking in the Northwest and Central Zones will take place next week.

Kokanee fishing at Green Peter is slow but early season kokos are running quite large.

Trout anglers at Hagg Lake will have a shot at an additional 12,000 eight to 10 inch rainbows which were planted this week. Fishing has been consistent near shore with trollers working over deeper water coming up fishless for the most part. Some of the larger trout stocked for the opener remain available.

About 300 16- to 18-inch and 1,500 legal-sized rainbows have been stocked at St. Louis Ponds for a free fishing event intended for youngsters/ Volunteers will have pamphlets and fishing gear available on Saturday, April 7th from 9 AM to 2 PM.

## **Washington fishing reports:**

**From the WDF&W Weekender Report April 4<sup>th</sup> – April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

### **North Puget Sound**

Anglers are starting to gear up for **halibut**, but they shouldn't set their **salmon** rods aside just yet. There's still time to get out on the water and participate in the blackmouth fishery, which could continue to provide decent fishing for anglers in the region.

"We're entering the final weeks of what has turned out to be a great **blackmouth** salmon season," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "And anglers are still finding chinook in some spots, especially in Marine Area 8-1."

Anglers in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) have through April 30 to hook a blackmouth. Anglers in those areas can keep up to two hatchery chinook per day, so long as the fish measure at least 22 inches in length. Wild chinook salmon, which have an intact adipose fin, cannot be brought aboard the boat.

The only other area open in the region for blackmouth is Marine Area 9 (Admiralty Inlet), where anglers have through April 15 to fish for salmon. Anglers in Marine Area 9 have a daily limit of one salmon, and chinook must measure at least 22 inches in length.

Saltwater anglers itching to drop a line for a big flatfish don't have to wait much longer. The **halibut** season gets under way April 9 in marine waters throughout the region. The fishery will be open five days a week, Thursday through Monday, with a daily limit of one halibut. There is no minimum size limit for halibut caught in any area.

Meanwhile, freshwater anglers can still cast for **steelhead**. The catch-and-release steelhead fishery on the Skagit and Sauk rivers continues through April. Anglers on the Skagit can fish for **steelhead** from the Dalles Bridge to the Cascade River, while those on the Sauk can fish from the mouth of the river to the Darrington Bridge.

Brett Barkdull, WDFW fish biologist, reminds Skagit River anglers fishing from boats, sleds or any other floating device equipped with a gas or electric motor that it's illegal to fish while under power during the catch-and-release season. Rules and regulations for the Skagit River fishery, as well as other freshwater and saltwater fisheries, can be found in WDFW's *2006/2007 Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

### **South Sound/Olympic Peninsula**

Some anglers are looking forward to halibut season, while others wait for trout fishing to open April 28 on hundreds of lowland lakes across the state. Then again, many of those anglers are already on the water catching lingcod, steelhead and other fish in season.

The recreational **halibut** season starts April 9 in most areas of Puget Sound (marine areas 6-11 and 13). These fisheries will be open five days a week - Thursday through Monday - with a daily limit of one halibut. There is no minimum size limit for halibut caught in any area. Best bets in April for catching a big flatfish are marine areas 6 and 9, said Michele Culver, regional director for the coastal area. "The fishing should be good, and we've heard that April is the best time to go," Culver said.

Most charter boats fishing **lingcod** out of Westport are averaging one to 1.5 fish for everyone on board, said Carol Henry, WDFW marine resources analyst. Most lings are running 6-8 pounds. "The weather's been a bit rough for the smaller, private boats, but the charter boats are doing well," she said. Lingcod fishing opened March 17 in coastal waters south of Cape Alava (marine areas 1, 2 and 3)

and will open April 15 in Marine Area 4 (Neah Bay). Additional information about the lingcod fishery and other bottom fish is available on the WDFW Fishing Hotline (360-902-2500) and the department's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

Meanwhile, WDFW hatchery crews are stocking 110 lakes throughout the region with 615,000 legal-size, jumbo and broodstock trout. Thirty-three area lakes and ponds are also stocking up on 1.5 pound triploids. For a complete trout-stocking schedule for the region, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg6/index.htm>.

Youngsters ages 5-14 can take advantage of a one-day fishing event at Long Lake Park in Thurston County on April 21 - a week before the season opener. The area open to fishing includes the waters within the swimming buoy line between the fences at the north and south boundaries of the swim beach. Children must be pre-registered in order to participate. Information on registering and the event is available by calling Lacey Parks and Recreation, (360) 491-0857.

Over on the Olympic Peninsula's north coast rivers, **steelhead** anglers on the Sol Duc and Upper Hoh are still averaging one fish per two rods as the season winds down. Fifty anglers on the Sol Duc reported catching 25 wild steelhead and releasing 21 of them on the March 30-April 1 weekend, when 99 anglers fishing the Upper Hoh caught and released 55 wild steelhead. Steelhead fishing will be open through April 15 on the Hoh River and through April 30 on the Sol Duc.

Even better, 46 anglers on the Bogachiel reported catching 35 wild steelhead and releasing all but seven of them. On the Calawah, three anglers caught and released nine wild steelies. Steelhead fishing will be open through April 30 on the Quillayute River system, which includes the Bogachiel, Calawah, Sol Duc and Quillayute rivers.

The arrival of the first **spring chinook salmon** at the Sol Duc Hatchery signals the start of another season ahead. "This springer showed up a little bit later than last year, but now they're on their way," said Brian Russell, WDFW hatchery manager. Russell said he expects somewhat lower numbers from last year's 1,003 count.

Saltwater anglers can compete for prizes at the 2007 Sekiu **Spring Salmon Derby**, scheduled April 7-8 with weigh-in at Olson's Resort. First prize for the biggest salmon is \$1,000. Anglers 12 and younger can also try their luck by signing up for the Kids Derby Ladder. For more information, call Olson's resort at 360-963-2311, or the Sekiu Chamber of Commerce at 877-812-4933.

Rather dig **razor clams**? WDFW is tentatively planning a dig for April 19-22 - the first of the season scheduled on morning tides. If marine toxin tests are favorable, one beach - Twin Harbors - will open for digging Thursday, April 19, joined by Long Beach on Friday, April 20. Those beaches plus Copalis, Mocrocks and Kalaloch will open for digging Saturday, April 21. All beaches except Kalaloch will be open for digging Sunday, April 22. All digging on those beaches must be finished by noon.

### **Southwest Washington**

Catch rates for **spring chinook salmon** have been picking up on the lower Columbia River, but not as fast as they did last year. Boat anglers fishing from the Interstate 5 Bridge downstream to Buoy 10 averaged one chinook for every 12.5 rods during the week ending April 1. That compares to an average catch rate of one chinook for every 5.6 rods during the same week last year, when anglers caught an estimated 2,000 springers in just seven days of fishing.

Through March 2007, nearly 34,000 angler trips produced just 1,200 chinook kept and 350 released.

"Anglers have been catching spring chinook in fits and starts," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "Just when the fishing starts to pick up, it slacks off again. But the run is still building and the fishery

could take off at any time."

Like last year at this time, boat anglers fishing the Columbia River off Cathlamet have had the highest success rates. The average catch there last week was one spring chinook for every 8.7 rods, compared to one for every three rods during the same time last year.

Overall, spring chinook fishing on the lower Columbia River has been fairly consistent with this year's pre-season run estimate of 164,000 fish, said Hymer, noting that an estimated 225,000 fish returned to the river last year. With the season in the lower river scheduled to run through April 15, fishery managers from Washington and Oregon are assessing the catch through March in relation to pre-season estimates. Those findings will be posted on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/crc/crcindex.htm> by April 4.

Meanwhile, some spring chinook are starting to show up in the catch on the Lewis River, where the first summer-run hatchery steelhead of the season recently found its way to the trap below Merwin Dam. More summer steelhead and spring chinook should start arriving to the Lewis and Kalama rivers in the weeks ahead, Hymer said.

Late-run winter steelhead are also still providing some action on the Cowlitz River.

Eleven boat anglers, mostly at Blue Creek, reported catching six steelies during a creel survey ending April 1. Forty bank anglers caught 10 steelhead and released three others during the same week. No spring chinook were found in the creel but that should change soon. Hymer reminds anglers that no fishing is allowed within a 100-foot radius of the new outlet structure located downstream of the Blue Creek boat ramp at the Cowlitz Hatchery.

Above Bonneville Dam, fishing has been slow for steelhead and spring chinook salmon on the Columbia River and its tributaries. Anglers have been catching some steelhead in the John Day Pool, but Hymer noted that the chance of catching a springer above Bonneville is still low given that only 87 fish had been counted moving past the dam as of April 2. "That number should increase significantly in the next couple of weeks, said Hymer, noting that more than 8,600 spring chinook passed the dam in a single day last year. He advises anglers to keep an eye on the "dam counts" - available on the Army Corps of Engineers website (<https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/op/fishdata/home.asp>) or the DART website (<http://www.cbr.washington.edu/dart/adult.html>) -- to gauge upriver fishing prospects for spring chinook and steelhead in the days ahead.

Fishing for legal-size **sturgeon** has been slow in most areas of the Columbia River except around Vancouver where it's been improving. The Dalles Pool is "catch-and-release" only through the end of the year. Boat anglers are, however, averaging a half to three-quarters of a **walleye** per rod in the Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day pools. Boat anglers fishing behind John Day Dam are also catching some **bass**.

Hundreds of lowland lakes are now being stocked for the statewide **trout** opener April 28, but many waters around the region offer good fishing right now. Two year-round waters - Silver Lake in Cowlitz County and Swofford Pond in Lewis County - were just planted with catchable-size rainbows at the end of March. Silver Lake received 7,448 of them and Swofford Pond got 3,600. For the latest information on fish plants, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/> on the WDFW website.

Trout anglers are also advised that the Lewis River Power Canal will open to fishing from the fishing pier upstream to the access road at Swift Dam on April 28.

### **Eastern Washington:**

WDFW fish hatchery crews are busy stocking **trout** in lakes throughout the region in preparation for

the April 28 lowland lakes fishing season opener. But they're also stocking waters that are open year-round, and those may be ones to hit now.

Year-round Eloika Lake, north of Chattaroy off Highway 2 in north Spokane County, recently received 5,000 catchable-size (8-12-inch) brown trout from the Spokane Fish Hatchery. Eloika is actually known best for its spring largemouth bass and crappie fishing. Many Eloika anglers voluntarily practice catch-and-release with the bass to allow them to grow to the four to six-pounders occasionally landed. Crappie anglers at Eloika must follow a nine-inch size minimum and 10-fish daily catch limit.

Year-round Long Lake, the 5,000-plus-acre reservoir also known as "Lake Spokane" off Long Lake Dam, recently received 2,500 catchable-size (8-12-inch) **brown trout** from the Spokane Hatchery. Last fall Long Lake received 12,000 **cutthroat trout** fry and 25,000 brown trout fry that are usually of catchable size by now. Largemouth and **smallmouth bass** are also fair game in Long Lake, although the bass season shifts to catch-and-release May 1.

Year-round Rock Lake, near Ewan in northwest Whitman County, has already received some of its 2007 allotment of 30,000 catchable-size (8-12-inch) **rainbow trout** and 20,000 brown trout. Last fall Rock Lake was stocked with 40,000 rainbow fry and 35,000 brown trout fry.

"Rock Lake is usually a good bet at this time," said WDFW fish biologist Jason McLellan. "Some really nice browns and rainbows come out of there by those who know how to navigate it in a boat." Rock Lake is notoriously windy and its 2,000-plus acres of narrow, long, and deep waters have basalt shelves that, if not avoided, can be boat-eaters, he explained.

McLellan says recent overcast, windy, rainy and even snowy days of spring might not be comfortable for fishing, but they can actually make for just as good catching as sunny days. Trout and other fish have excellent eyesight, he explained, and there is no evidence that those conditions hamper their ability to see food sources.

Lakes that opened March 1 continue to provide good fishing. Coffeepot Lake, northeast of Odessa in Lincoln County, is yielding rainbow trout mostly in the 15 to 22-inch range. Coffeepot has selective gear rules with a daily limit of one trout with a minimum size of 18 inches. Southwest Spokane County's Amber Lake, under catch-and-release rules, is providing 11 to 22-inch rainbows and an occasional cutthroat trout. Amber shifts to a catch-and-keep season for two trout daily on April 28. North Silver Lake in Spokane County was recently stocked with 2,500 catchable-size (8-12-inch) rainbows. North Silver is under selective gear rules with a two-trout daily limit and 14-inch minimum size.

In the south end of the region, the Tucannon River impoundments open since March 1 - Beaver, Big Four, Blue, Deer, Rainbow, Spring and Watson - continue to produce good catches of eight to 12-inch rainbows. Fishhook Pond, east of Burbank in Walla Walla County, has also been open since March 1 and has been restocked since then with catchable-size rainbows.

Other southeast waters open year-round that were recently stocked with catchable-size rainbows include Asotin County's Golf Course, Silcott and West Evans ponds; Columbia County's Dam, Dayton Juvenile, and Orchard ponds; Walla Walla County's Jefferson Park and Lions Park (College Place) ponds for juveniles, and Quarry Pond and Bennington Lake (Mill Creek Reservoir); and Whitman County's Pampa and Riparia ponds. For hatchery trout stocking numbers per waterway, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>.

WDFW Enforcement Officer Rob McQuary of Walla Walla recently checked anglers on the lower Walla Walla River and Columbia River. "The **channel catfish** are starting to bite," he reported, " but cold temperatures are keeping the fish from cooperating."

### **North Central Washington**

WDFW district fish biologist Jeff Korth of Moses Lake reports the "April Fool's Day" fishing season opener in the Columbia Basin produced decent catches of large fish for lots of anglers, although blustery spring weather "may have put a damper on the overall catch-per-angler averages." On the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge north of Othello in Grant County, Upper Hampton Lake anglers averaged about 1-1/2 fish each. Catches were mostly 15-inch **rainbow trout**, with about 42 percent running a little over 19 inches. Lower Hampton Lake anglers averaged less than one fish each, most running a little less than 14 inches, with 40 percent near 20 inches. Most Lower Hampton anglers were releasing eight to 10-inch yearling rainbows caught on lures or flies.

### **South Central Washington**

WDFW Yakima and Kittitas counties district fish biologist Eric Anderson reports that stocking of year-round fishing lakes with hatchery **rainbow trout** that was scheduled to start this month got an early start because of good numbers of fish at Naches Hatchery.

"Since we're not planting Wenas Lake this year because there's no public access, we're re-distributing the extra fish among the other lakes," he said. "Along with the larger triploid rainbows that are going into the south central region's lakes this week and next, we will have some fantastic fishing action here this month."

Anglers can check the South Central Washington trout stocking schedule on the website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg3/index.htm>. Anderson also noted that the actual weekly plants are updated every Thursday at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>.

### **Reader Email**

Got a question, story to tell or information to share? Shoot us an Email!

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### **Random Links**

Day-use Oregon Park passes, good for a year, are on sale through April for \$20 (regularly \$25). Get yours here: \*[http://egov.oregon.gov/OPRD/PARKS/dayuse\\_permit\\_vendors.shtml](http://egov.oregon.gov/OPRD/PARKS/dayuse_permit_vendors.shtml)

Bill Monroe's herring brine - 'Shrimp in a Blender':

\*<http://www.oregonlive.com/sports/oregonian/video/index.ssf?herringvideo>

**Weekly Quote** – "The water not only washes over the streambed, but courses through the psychological geography of the fisherman, giving definition and density to the angler's private world." - Ted Leeson

**GOOD LUCK!**