

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **April 4th – April 10th, 2008**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**With the re-opener of the Columbia and the beginning of a very productive anchor fishery using plugs with sardine wraps, be sure you are stocked up on [Bob's Bait Wraps](#) by visiting your local Fisherman's Marine and Outdoor store or go to our on-line tackle store and order yours today:**

**<http://www.theguidesforecast.com/store/cart.php?cat=Fishing+Gear>**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Spring chinook anglers should begin to hit their stride in the next few weeks as the weather pattern stabilizes, water temperatures warm and the run nears its peak. Anglers working the mainstem Columbia at Portland continue to log high catches. Washington Fish and Wildlife logged a respectable one salmon for every 5.4 anglers fishing.

Oddly, anglers working the lower river downstream of Longview are struggling for consistent results. Trollers working the Westport area on the lower Columbia are only finding an occasional fish. Fortunately, it doesn't seem to indicate success in upriver fisheries. This fishery, from Buoy 10 to the Hayden Island West powerline towers will close 1 hour after sunset on Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Pro guide Brandon McGavran (360-607-1327)** reports limits for his clients and a springer for himself on Monday, March 31<sup>st</sup> with various areas producing fish.

Willamette Falls water temperatures remain in the low 40's as the level and flow moderate. Clarity on the lower Willamette is marginal but improving with spring chinook catches increasing recently for boaters. Fishing will further improve as the water temperature rises. The first spring chinook of the 2008 season crossed the Falls on March 27th.

Smelt, squid, herring and anchovies have all produced sturgeon at times with Sellwood and the lower river to the mouth kicking out mostly shakers and the occasional keeper.

The Clackamas is showing some signs of life for anxious anglers. Summer steelhead catches improved over the past week and while it's only fair, the run is underway. Vandalism has been a problem in popular parking areas. Be vigilant and don't store gear in your rig while fishing.

North Santiam water temperatures have been too low to provide optimum fishing, but with the Willamette Falls summer steelhead count nearing the 500 mark, action will be improving with warmer weather this week.

The March Brown hatch is in progress on the McKenzie and is a good one this year. Rainbow and cutthroat trout are responding accordingly.

Henry Hagg Lake, Sheridan Pond, St Louis Pond, Trojan Pond, Alton Baker Canal, Cottage Grove Pond and Cottage Grove Reservoir are scheduled to be stocked with trout.

**Northwest –** Steelheaders braved wintry weather over the weekend, still pursuing late run wild and hatchery fish on many north coast streams. Wilson and Nestucca River anglers were still finding success and flows should remain stable with the late addition of a coastal snow-pack late last week. Some darker fish are beginning to show in the catches.

Many smaller coastal streams are now closed to steelhead fishing. Rivers that have hatchery programs for steelhead and salmon are likely still open but check local regulations before heading out. Spring chinook is the next fishery on tap but catches won't begin to peak until mid-May.

Offshore anglers had good opportunity on Monday for an ocean harvest but effort remained light due to the inconsistent ocean conditions.

Offshore crabbing out of Newport has improved with a few large crab showing in pots but no limits reported. Bottom fishing has been good with some nice lingcod in the mix.

**Southwest** – Umpqua anglers braved the occasional snow flurry over the past weekend to enjoy fair to good catch and release fishing for large, bright native steelhead. Steelheading has been fair but steady on the North and South Umpqua. Anglers have been encouraged recently with the appearance of spring chinook in the lower river. Sturgeon fishing may be another option with a morning minus tide series starting Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>.

Lower Rogue River spring chinook anglers scored again over the past week, with a few springers topping the 30-pound mark. Following a slow season last year, the strong, early start is encouraging.

Surf fishing off southwest beaches continues to deliver limits of pinkfin and striped perch.

Offshore bottomfishing out of Brookings has been limited by rough ocean conditions but when wind and wave allow, it's fabulous. A variety of rockfish are available any time the ocean lays down. The Chetco closed to salmon and steelhead fishing on March 31st.

Scheduled for hatchery trout planting this week are Bluebill Lake, Empire Lake, Johnson Mill Pond, Millicoma Pond, Powers Pond, Saunders Lake and Sru Lake.

**Eastern** – Despite freezing air temperatures overnight and cold water conditions, the John Day River has been delivering decent catches of large smallmouth bass and the fishing is expected only to improve into April.

Redside fishing on the lower Deschutes has been fair with the water level a little lower than average for this time of year.

**SW Washington** – A little over 130 salmon have passed over Bonneville Dam but anglers are already targeting springers at Wind River and Drano Lake. Only an occasional fish has been taken.

Steelhead returns to the Kalama Falls hatchery are at a 30-year low. Few anglers are fishing but success has been low.

The Lewis River remains a late season steelhead option with a few springers beginning to show. The most interest remains on the Columbia mainstem however so effort here is light.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – The good news just keeps coming in from the mainstem Columbia River where anglers are finding good success trolling for salmon upstream of the I-5 Bridge. Although action varies by day, some boats are consistently catching good numbers of hatchery springers. High effort counts don't seem to be deterring success as effort flights have counted as many as 1,500 anglers downstream of Bonneville Dam. The increased effort has

certainly translated into good catches with over 4,400 fish kept through March 31<sup>st</sup>. With catch rates this good, it seems unlikely that sportanglers will experience a season through the end of the month but who am I to spread rumors?

A slowdown in catches is a likely scenario with smolt spills in the forecast for the lower river starting April 10<sup>th</sup>. When water flows, fish move and it will certainly wreak havoc with the good catch rates we're seeing now. It's important to keep perspective however, these fish need to go to sea and with great snowpack and I've already noticed a stiff north wind in Bay City on the recent sunny days, we have favorable ocean conditions for a good survival this year! We just need those north "trade" winds to keep blowing through May.

Oops, back to fishing. Some of the best catch rates are coming from the anglers that angle the most. **Pro guide Brandon McGavran (360-607-1327)** reports, "Monday 3-31-08 I was 5 for 5 and done by 12:30. I even got to take one home. The fish were on a steady bite Monday, no big flurry's of fish for the fleet just a steady 1 here, 1 there. The fish checker had tallied 39 boats with 37 fish checked at about 1 pm when I pulled my boat out at Portco, my boat and fish were included in those numbers. The river was low Monday morning and the weather was good making for favorable fishing conditions. And with the great weather forecast for this week, springer fishing on the Columbia should be really good. Cut plug herring trolled slowly near the bottom will produce the best results. Prawn spinners or #6 or #7 spinner are another good option. Please be courteous to the boats fishing around you. Have some common sense and run up the outside of the fleet instead of right through the trollers. There's nothing worse than having boats run by you at 20 yards throwing you wakes all day."

The best checks have come from just above Hayden Island to Troutdale. The gorge fishery has not been very productive. Last check indicated .27 fish caught per boat, very similar to catch rates downstream of Longview. Bank anglers have also had a hard go of it.

Downriver, the reports are not nearly as encouraging and I don't understand why. Effort out of Westport has been high with little to show for the efforts of fishermen. Anglers have not had optimum tides to work Kwikfish in select areas so trolling has been the preferred method for most anglers. The head of Tenasillahe Island has drawn some of the larger crowds of anglers but most are leaving frustrated with the lack of success they are witnessing. To put things in retrospect, catch rates below Hayden Island have been a paltry 11 angler days per fish kept while upstream of Hayden Island, it only takes an angler 6 trips to catch a keeper. Almost twice as good in the upstream area! The fishery downstream of Hayden Island closes on Friday so effort will once again shift to upstream of the I-5 Bridge.

Commercial fishers working with their tooth tangle nets did not post impressive numbers of fish above I-5 on their Tuesday opener. Only 140 keepers were retained with a low incidence of steelhead in the nets. 140 fish is a far cry from the 4,000 salmon the commission has set for a target for the commercial fleet. They'll likely fish again on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

Effort is beginning to climb upstream of Bonneville Dam in the Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries. Only a handful of fish have passed Bonneville Dam (157 as of 4/1) but the run into the Wind River and Drano Lake this year is supposed to be quite sizable.

Sturgeon fishing remains poor on the mainstem Columbia.

**The Guide's Forecast** – With the lower river closure due on Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, effort will shift upstream to above Hayden Island just downstream of the I-5 Bridge. Fortunately, this is where the best fishing has been occurring and it likely won't change in the near future. The one exception may be when the BPA begins spring spill to push juvenile salmon and steelhead

downstream with additional spills from upstream impoundments. This action often puts fish off as they become desperate to move upstream. It may also stimulate the bank fishery as well as increase catches in the Bonneville area. It's a bit of a crap shoot with what will happen with the additional flows but starting April 10<sup>th</sup>, catch rates may begin to slow which is exactly what this fishery needs for it to last until the end of the month.

Most pros agree, your bait has to be on the bottom in order to catch 'da fish! Most guides are using lead to ensure their baits are on the bottom where the motivated biters seem to be. It likely won't change when the flows increase as flows are actually softer on the bottom of the river.

Effort may increase in the Bonneville area as well with the increased flows. Anchor anglers will be more motivated to sit on anchor with hard working plugs fished near the bottom to get the job done. Anglers are clearly motivated by recent catch rates and nice weather. That doesn't look like it will change in the very near future. It may be too soon to be motivated to backbounce, particularly in the higher flows. I'd wait until the fish counts start inching closer to 1,000 fish day before I got too excited about hanging 12 ounces off my rods with a gob of eggs.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** – As of April 2nd, the water temperature at Willamette Falls is still in the low 40s but clarity is over three feet. Summer steelhead counts have topped the 500 mark. Sturgeon are being taken in good number in Multnomah Channel but reports indicate they have all been 'shorts.'

**The Guide's Forecast** – Warm weather this week should help to push the water temps up a little. While it won't top 50 degrees and push to optimum warmth for springer fishing, any increase should be reflected in the Chinook bite. There aren't a lot of fish in the Willamette system this year, so anglers putting in their time when conditions are most conducive for results will be the ones who will dine well. Plug cut herring with a flasher has been effective for springers as have Kwikfish wrapped with either sardines or prawns. Keeper-sized sturgeon have been tough to locate everywhere on the Willamette. Fly anglers on the Middle Fork of the Willamette have been doing well this week. Despite warm, sunny weather triggering the March Brown hatch, nymphs have been most effective, especially for fooling the larger fish.

McKenzie fly anglers are having a good time this week with the March Brown hatch coming on strong. The river is producing good-sized, beautifully-colored rainbows and cuts.

As summer steelhead stream over Willamette Falls daily, the numbers of hatchery fish available in the North Santiam will improve.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – While snowmelt lowered the water temperature on the Clackamas which subsequently cooled the fishing action, the water is expected to warm with nice weather this week. With improved water temps, steelheading should also improve. The ubiquitous Pink plastic worms and spinners hooked steelhead over the past weekend. Bait is discouraged as the hatchery continues to release springer and steelhead smolts.

While fishing on the Sandy has been spotty, it has rewarded anglers periodically. It has been slow over the past week, however, and challenging whenever gorge winds whip up. Anglers have banked a few steelhead at Cedar Creek but the vast majority have been native fish lately. Anglers wading the Sandy at Cedar Creek should be aware that flows and depths have changed since the removal of Marmot Dam. Use extreme caution in this area. Rumors of spring Chinook catches are just that. We'll believe it when we see a photo.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Despite the good springer catches, I was a bit surprised to see so many motivated anglers fishing the coastal systems this last weekend. I had a lot of quality water to myself in the upper Wilson (Siskeyville to Mills Bridge) with the bulk of our action coming from this stretch of river. Joe and Frank Ness opted to take advantage of a late start on Sunday- 9:00 a.m. was my idea but they warmed to it nicely given the fact there was snow on the ground at sunrise that day. We only had 5 hours to get the job done and given the dropping water conditions, I opted to pull plugs through much of the water. We had all of our grabs on K-11 kwikfish losing 2 of the 3 takers and landing our last one at the take-out at Donaldson's gravel bar. The chrome with red dots has clearly been one of the better producing colors this year. Our landed fish was an 8-pound buck. Other boaters reported fair success at best but the day was chamber of commerce and the company was good.

Other north coast streams have been fishing fair as well with the Nestucca turning on some better fishing in recent days. The renewal of snowpack at lower elevations has kept water in the rivers although they are on a steady decline. Temperatures remain low but the fish don't seem to mind too much.

Many north coast streams are now closed to steelhead fishing so check regulations before heading out. Rivers without hatchery returns of salmon or steelhead are likely closed but the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca will remain open for the spring season as chinook are due back to these systems in the coming months. It may be several weeks before we see any in these watersheds however. The returns have tracked late in recent years.

Sturgeon effort has dropped to nearly nil. There may still be some fair opportunities in the Nehalem River estuary.

Ocean conditions were favorable for ocean anglers on Monday but few took advantage of the friendly conditions.

**The Guide's Forecast** – This is about the last week one could expect any good results for steelhead on many remaining open streams on the north coast. The Nestucca and the Wilson Rivers still offer up the best bets for hatchery and wild steelhead in the area and river conditions will dictate better lower river opportunities. Tides will improve the situation as more fish are likely to ride the larger tide swing beginning on Friday and well through the weekend. Again, lower flows should direct anglers to the lower ends of these watersheds.

Good spring chinook action is still several weeks away and anglers are reminded that the bubble is closed this spring to fishing. It's certainly possible to catch a salmon this early in the season but highly unlikely unless you are driven.

There may be some limited opportunity for offshore bottomfishing late in the week and maybe Saturday. Watch the ocean weather forecast at: <http://seaboard.ndbc.noaa.gov/data/Forecasts/FZUS56.KPQR.html> for better details. There are some tasty lingcod out there! Crabbing should be fair as well.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Morning minus tides starting Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup> may provide additional opportunities for anglers but won't be conducive for bar crossings.

Boats launching out of Newport and Depoe Bay found friendly seas on Tuesday this although afternoon winds encouraged most to head for port. Ling cod catches were good with bonus

rockfish in the bag.

Offshore forecasts for the weekend looked good earlier this week but are becoming less optimistic. Weather-related predictions are subject to sudden change and your life may depend on a last minute check of the conditions.

Black and blue rockfish make up the bulk of the offshore catch of bottom-dwellers, but large ling cod were also seen on cleaning tables last week. Terminal tackle for bottom fish is simple, often just a hunk of lead with a hook, but color can make a difference so get creative.

The South Umpqua has been slow although most boats reporting had hooked at least one fish in the low, clear water. Cured eggs have been most effective as the winter run winds down here. Most of the steelhead present are natives requiring release, but it's great entertainment.

The Elk River closed to salmon and steelhead fishing and while the Sixes closed to trout and steelhead on March 31, it remains open for salmon fishing.

Rock and jetty fishing is producing fair catches of greenling (locally referred to as 'sea trout') and black rockfish.

This is the best time of year on the south coast for surf perch fishing. Pinkfin and striped perch are numerous and cooperative when productive areas are located. Those areas are usually as simple as finding a steep ocean beach, particularly if it's near a tributary or estuary entrance. Sand shrimp are excellent for bait, but many other offerings such as clam necks, mussels, sand crabs, blood worms and even nightcrawlers can be effective and all will stay on the hook far better than sand shrimp.

Following a disappointing season in 2007, early catches of spring Chinook on the lower Rogue have been encouraging. Anchoring can be challenging in higher flows, so boaters should be certain they have a solid hookup before putting out tackle. Anglers fishing around any tide change have been most successful.

While the 2008 Rogue River spring Chinook run forecast isn't stellar, early catches of springer, some of which have topped 30 pounds, is reason for optimism. Those traveling any distance for this fishery would be wise to postpone the trip until later in the season when numbers of spring Chinook in the Rogue will improve. The major factor effecting springer action is water temperature and it's still cold. When the water tops the 50-degree mark, action will be as good as it's going to get. Bank anglers will find springers traveling on the inside bends of gravel bars in six feet of water or less. Boat fishers will score using spinner and anchovy rigs or plugs.

Chetco steelheading was poor to fair prior to its closure at the end of March. It will reopen May 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Green Peter has been producing fair to good catches of decent-sized kokanee along with the occasional Chinook.

**Northwest Trout** – Henry Hagg Lake will be stocked with 12,000 legal-sized trout this week. In addition, Sheridan Pond, St Louis Pond, Trojan Pond, Alton Baker Canal, Cottage Grove Pond and Cottage Grove Reservoir in the Willamette Valley will be planted with hatchery trout.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will host a free youth fishing event at the St. Louis Ponds at pond # 3 near Woodburn on Saturday, April 5 from 9 AM to 2 PM. ODFW staff and volunteers will be available from 9 a.m. to 2 PM to help participants learn how to bait a hook, cast a rod and land a fish. Prior to the event, over 1,200 rainbow trout, including 250 larger and 10 trophy fish for the event. St. Louis Ponds are located off I-5 to the Woodburn Exit, Go east to Hwy 99E and turn south to Gervais Road. Continue west on Gervais Road through the town of Gervais. The road eventually changes to St Louis Road. Continue west on St Louis Road back over I-5. Turn left at the railroad crossing on Tesch Rd. and follow the signs to the ponds.

**Northwest Bass & Panfish** - ODFW reminds anglers, "Bag limits and size restrictions have been lifted on Roslyn Lake in preparation of lake drawdown which is expected to start in early May of this year. Anglers are allowed by temporary rule to harvest as many trout, bass, crappie, or catfish as they would like from the lake prior to the lake being closed during drawdown."

### Washington fishing reports:

#### **From the WDF&W Weekender Report April 2<sup>nd</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

##### North Puget Sound

The lowland lakes **trout** opener is coming up later this month, but most anglers in the region are still focused on the marine areas of Puget Sound, where **blackmouth salmon** fisheries remain open and the **halibut** season gets under way April 10.

"Only a few weeks remain in the **blackmouth** season, so now's the time to get out on the water," said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW fish biologist. "Fishing has been decent in some spots, and those anglers that made it out for the Anacortes Salmon Derby seemed to do pretty well."

Nearly 230 fish were weighed during the Anacortes Salmon Derby, which took place March 29-30. Nancy Cabe took home the \$10,000 grand prize with her 24-pound, 22-ounce fish. Keith Olson's 19.64-pound salmon was good enough for a second-place finish and \$5,000, while Rod King was awarded \$2,500 for his third-place fish, which weighed in at 18.34 pounds.

Selective fisheries for hatchery blackmouth - resident chinook - continue through April in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner). However, April 15 is the last day to fish for blackmouth in Marine Area 9 (Admiralty Inlet). Anglers fishing in any of those areas can keep two hatchery blackmouth as part of their two-salmon daily limit and must release wild chinook, which have an intact adipose fin.

Thiesfeld reminds anglers that regulations are different for Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), where anglers have a daily limit of one chinook salmon. That area is open for salmon through April 15.

Dust off those **halibut** rods. The fishing season for big flatfish starts up April 10 in marine waters throughout the region. Mutiny and Admiralty bays, as well as Eastern and Partridge banks usually are the best bets for halibut early in the season. The fishery will be open five days a week, Thursdays through Mondays, with a daily limit of one halibut. There is no minimum size limit.

Freshwater anglers looking to cast for **trout** will soon have numerous lakes to choose from. The lowland lakes trout season gets under way April 26, when many of the region's lakes - stocked with thousands of legal-sized trout - will open for anglers. Information on stocking schedules for

rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available on WDFW's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>).

Before heading out, anglers should check the rules and regulations for all freshwater and saltwater fisheries on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

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

Saltwater anglers can look forward to halibut fishing in Puget Sound and the expansion of lingcod fishing on the north coast this month. Razor clam digs are tentatively scheduled April 6-9 and April 19-23 at various ocean beaches, and opening day of the statewide lowland lakes trout-fishing season is set to begin April 26.

Anglers should also be aware that the Hoh River will close to all recreational fishing effective April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The recreational **halibut** season opens April 10 in marine areas 6-11 and 13 (Port Angeles and Puget Sound). 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. Additional openings will follow in May on the coast and the western Strait of Juan de Fuca.

For additional information, call the Fishing Hotline at (360) 902-2500 or check the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/halibut/>.

Meanwhile, **lingcod** fishing opened March 15 in coastal waters south of Cape Alava (marine areas 1, 2 and 3) and will open April 16 in Marine Area 4 (Neah Bay).

All four marine areas will be open seven days a week with the following restrictions:

- In Marine Area 2 (Westport Ocean Shores), recreational fishing for bottomfish or lingcod is not allowed in waters deeper than 30 fathoms from March 15 through June 15.
- In Marine Areas 3 and 4 (La Push and Neah Bay), recreational fishing for bottomfish or lingcod is not allowed in waters deeper than 20 fathoms from May 21 through Sept. 30, except on days the halibut fishery is open.
- In Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco), no bottomfish, with the exception of sablefish and Pacific cod, are allowed on any vessel with halibut on board from May 1 through Sept. 30.

Retention of canary and yelloweye rockfish is prohibited in all waters. The minimum size for lingcod in marine areas 1-3 is 22 inches. The minimum size for lingcod in Marine Area 4 is 24 inches.

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 99 lakes throughout the region with 550,000 legal-size trout to prepare for the April 26 lake-fishing opener. An additional 25,300 jumbo and broodstock trout will be stocked in 61 of these lakes and ponds. Thirty-six 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 attend a one-day fishing event at the Kids' Klassic Family Fish-in, held at the Woodland Creek Community Park on April 19 - a week before the season opener. Children

must be pre-registered to participate. For Information, call Lacey Parks and Recreation, (360) 491-0857.

In river fishing on the north coast, anglers should note that the Hoh River and the South Fork Hoh River on the north coast of the Olympic Peninsula will close to all sport fishing April 3 to protect wild steelhead.

Meanwhile, other rivers in the Quillayute system will remain open to steelhead fishing through April 30. Recent creel surveys showed that 42 anglers on the Bogachiel caught 21 wild steelhead and released 16. On the Calawah, anglers averaged one fish per rod and 28 anglers on the Sol Duc released eight wild fish and kept four.

Anglers may want to put their rods aside and grab a shovel for a **razor clam** dig tentatively scheduled April 6-9 and April 19-23. If approved, Twin Harbors will be open on all days while Long Beach will be open April 6-8 and April 19-20. Copalis and Mocrocks will be open April 19-20. All digs will be held on morning tides.

With April 1 marking the beginning of the current license year, all diggers must have an applicable 2008-09 fishing license to dig razor clams on any beach. Anyone age 15 or older must have a license to dig razor clams. Licenses can be purchased at <http://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov>, by telephone (1-866-246-9453), or in person at more than 600 license vendors throughout the state. A list of vendors is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/lic/vendors/vendors.htm>. Updates on the razor clam season are available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/razorclm/season.htm>.

No digging will be allowed after noon on any beach. Tentative early-April dates and low tides are:

- Sunday, April 6, 7:23 a.m., -0.7 ft: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only
- Monday, April 7, 8:09 a.m., -1.2 ft: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only
- Tuesday, April 8, 8:55 a.m., -1.5 ft: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only
- Wednesday, April 9, 9:43 a.m., -1.4 ft: Twin Harbors only

Tentative mid-April dates and low tides are:

- Saturday, April 19, 6:40 a.m., -0.1 ft: Long beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks
- Sunday, April 20, 7:18 a.m., -0.4 ft: Long beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks
- Monday, April 21, 7:55 a.m., -0.6 ft: Twin Harbors only
- Tuesday, April 22, 8:30 a.m., -0.6 ft: Twin Harbors only
- Wednesday, April 23, 9:06 a.m., -0.5 ft: Twin Harbors only

### **Southwest Washington:**

Good fishing for **spring chinook salmon** has been drawing large numbers of anglers to the lower Columbia River in recent days. Nearly 1,550 boats were counted Saturday, March 29, downstream from Bonneville Dam during an aerial survey that also tallied 755 bank anglers on both sides of the river. In all, angler turnout was nearly twice as high as in the past two years on the same date.

A big part of the attraction is that catch rates for March were higher than in any year since 2002. Through March 31, anglers caught 4,400 chinook in the lower river, compared to 1,100 last year and 1,900 in 2006.

In a creel check conducted during the last full week of the month, 4,431 anglers reported catching 726 adult chinook and 10 steelhead below the dam. For boat anglers, that translated to

one adult chinook kept or released for every 5.4 rods, compared to 12.5 rods in 2007, 5.6 rods in 2006, 17.1 rods in 2005, 6.4 rods in 2004, 7.1 rods in 2003 and 4.7 rods in 2002.

Bank anglers fishing below Bonneville Dam have been averaging one adult chinook for every 28.7 rods, about the same as in recent years.

"This fishery is definitely up and running, with catch rates running as high a chinook per boat in some areas," said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. "The preseason forecast called for a strong return of upriver chinook, and that's just what we're seeing on the fishing grounds." He noted that 88.5 percent of the fish sampled were identified as upriver stock.

As in past years, anglers may retain only hatchery chinook and steelhead, identified by a clipped adipose fin. All wild chinook and steelhead with an intact adipose fin must be released.

Hymer reminds anglers that Friday, April 4, is the last day to fish for spring chinook in waters downstream from the west power line towers on Hayden Island. From the west power lines upstream to Bonneville Dam, fishing will continue six days per week - closing from one hour after official sunset Mondays to one hour before official sunrise Wednesdays - through April 30. The limit is one hatchery chinook per day.

Above Bonneville Dam, chinook fishing was slow through the end of March, when only 173 fish had been counted moving through the fishways. But that is expected to change by April 10, if not before, Hymer said.

"Starting April 10, spills are planned at Bonneville Dam to help move juvenile salmon downriver," Hymer said. "Those spills should also spur more adult salmon to move upstream, and improve catch rates for bank anglers just below the dam."

Chinook fishing is currently open seven days per week on the Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Dam, as well as on the Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, Wind and White Salmon rivers, plus Drano Lake. The limit for those waters is two adult hatchery chinook per day. Anglers should note that Drano Lake is scheduled to be closed to fishing Wednesdays beginning April 9.

Another possibility is the Klickitat River, which opens today (April 2) for salmon and steelhead fishing Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays only. The daily limit is one hatchery salmon or one hatchery steelhead on the Klickitat from the Fisher Hill Bridge downstream. The fishery will likely be slow until more fish cross Bonneville Dam, Hymer said.

Hymer reminds anglers that the shoreline outside the mouth of Drano Lake will be open for bank fishing for the first time in 30 years. In all, this year's fishing regulations will open up 40 additional miles of bank fishing on the mainstem Columbia River from Bonneville Dam to the Tower Island power lines six miles below The Dalles Dam.

"I think the best bet will be at the mouth of Drano Lake," Hymer said. "Casting a plug or lure from shore is sure to produce fish." Anglers fishing the newly open bank are asked to follow three rules: Don't cross the highway, don't trespass over the railroad tracks and don't interfere with tribal fisheries.

Parking and access to the bank fishery at the mouth of Drano Lake will likely be best Wednesdays, when the rest of the lake is closed to recreational fishing, Hymer said.

Meanwhile, anglers have been catching some legal-size **sturgeon** in the Bonneville Pool, and the fishery is improving from Portland to Longview as the river warms. In the John Day Pool, sturgeon fishing is catch-and-release-only through the end of the year, although anglers have been taking home some **walleye**.

**Trout** anglers should be aware the bank anglers at Klineline Pond have been averaging nearly three browns per rod. The pond was planted with 1,500 half-pound brown trout March 24. Klineline Pond will be closed to public fishing from April 10 through 6 p.m. April 12 for the annual Kids Fishing Event on April 12.

Lacamas Lake in Camas also got 5,000 half-pound brown trout March 24, while Silver Lake near Castle Rock was planted with 6,760 catchable-size rainbows the following day.

### **Eastern Washington:**

The Tucannon River impoundments in Columbia County continue to provide good fishing for hatchery-stocked **rainbow trout**. The seven small, man-made lakes along the river on the Wooten Wildlife Area opened last month and will be stocked repeatedly by Tucannon and Lyons Ferry fish hatchery crews throughout April, May and June. The season's total hatchery allotments of catchable-size rainbows by lake is as follows: Beaver, 1,000; Big Four, 3,300; Blue, 21,800; Deer, 3,300; Rainbow, 15,300; Spring, 11,300; Watson, 19,300. Among those total numbers, Blue, Rainbow, Spring and Watson each recently received 100 "jumbo-size" (14-inch-plus) rainbows.

Walla Walla County's Quarry Pond, which is open year-round, is receiving plants of catchable-size and "jumbo" rainbow trout from the hatcheries this week.

Anglers at Liberty Lake in eastern Spokane County continue to catch good-sized **rainbow** and **brown trout**. The 711-acre mixed-species lake opened March 1, a few weeks earlier than in previous years. Medical and Downs lakes in southwest Spokane County also opened earlier this year, although persistent winter-like conditions have slowed action.

Other lakes that opened March 1, such as Amber in southwest Spokane County, Coffeepot in Lincoln County, and Deer Lake in southern Stevens County, should be warming and also providing some decent fishing. Amber and Coffeepot are both under selective gear rule restrictions. Amber is catch-and-release only for its **cutthroat** and **rainbow trout**, and Coffeepot has a minimum size of 18 inches and a daily catch limit of one trout.

**Walleye** fishing is starting to pick up on year-round Lake Roosevelt above Kettle Falls. Jim Ebel, WDFW Colville Fish Hatchery manager, said some anglers are catching 14- to 17-inch walleye in 50 to 100 feet of water.

Year-round Sprague Lake, straddling the Lincoln-Adams county line along Interstate 90, is being re-stocked after it was treated with rotenone in October to rehabilitate the declining fishery.

"The first fish we're putting back in Sprague are catchable-size **rainbow trout** from our hatcheries," said Chris Donley, WDFW district fish biologist in Spokane. "Later we'll stock **crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass** and **channel catfish** that will take a few years to grow and reproduce. The rainbows will provide good fishing now and over the next few years until the warmwater species are up and running in good numbers and size."

About 160,000 catchable-size rainbows are being stocked in Sprague this month and next, including about 91,000 one-third-pound trout from the Columbia Basin and Lyons Ferry

hatcheries, about 65,000 one-fifth-pound trout from the Spokane Hatchery, and over 3,200 triploid rainbows up to one-and-a-half pounds each from the private hatchery Trout Lodge. Cow Lake, which was also treated last fall as part of the Sprague Lake watershed, is receiving about 6,000 one-third-pound rainbows from the Naches Hatchery. Later this spring, broodstock largemouth bass, bluegill and crappie captured from other Washington waters will be stocked. WDFW will also return about 4,000 black crappie and at least 60 channel catfish that were collected from Sprague Lake before last fall's treatment. Juvenile warmwater fish species from the Meseberg Hatchery - about 100,000 bluegill, 14,000 largemouth bass and 2,000 crappie - will also be stocked. WDFW will purchase and stock juvenile channel catfish when available.

WDFW fish hatchery crews are also busy adding catchable-size trout to many lakes that open April 26. The fisheries in most of those lakes in the region develop from last year's fry and fingerling plants, but some receive boosts of 8- to 12-inchers, 1- to 1.5-pound triploids, and surplus broodstock.

### **North Central Washington:**

WDFW regional fish program manager Joe Miller reports fishing was "fair" on the April 1 season opener on many Grant County waters. Persistent winter-like weather likely kept more some anglers home, but many of those who were out caught **rainbow trout** that averaged over 15 inches.

"Upper Hampton Lake provided the best fishing with anglers averaging 3.4 rainbow trout per rod," Miller said. "Lower Hampton saw an average of only 1.4 trout per rod. The Pillar Widgeon lakes had a low catch rate of half a fish per rod, but the fish caught averaged 17.4 inches. Dry Falls Lake, which is a selective fishery, produced about two fish per rod and averaged 15.6 inches. Several **brown** and **tiger trout** were reported in the catch at Dry Falls, too."

With rising temperatures in the forecast, Miller said catch rates should improve at these and many other Columbia Basin fisheries now open. Two selective-gear fisheries that opened March 1 - Lenice and Nunnally lakes on the Crab Creek Wildlife Area just east of Beverly - will be boosted with 1,100 one-and-a-half-pound rainbows each this month.

WDFW fish biologist Matt Polacek reports that catch rates for **walleye** are high on Banks Lake. "Anglers are commonly catching limits walleye at Barker Flats, the westside of Steamboat Rock, and on the north end of the lake near the inlet canal," he said. "Cold air temperatures have caused water temperatures to remain cool, resulting in longer pre-spawn feeding."

Trout fishing on Roses Lake, just north of Manson in Chelan County, is also picking up, according to WDFW district fish biologist Art Viola of Wenatchee. "Many 10-to-12-inch **rainbows** and a few 14-to-16 inchers are being caught at Roses," he said. "The Rock Island Ponds are also producing trout catches. Pitt Lake, a kids-only pond among the Rock Island ponds, was recently stocked with 700 catchable-size rainbows and 50 larger ones. Once Fish Lake up north of Leavenworth is unfrozen it should also provide good fishing for trout."

WDFW district fish biologist Bob Jateff of Omak reports catch rates were slowed by cooler water temperatures at Spectacle Lake, northwest of Tonasket in Okanogan County, when it opened for fishing April 1. "But the fish were a good size, with **rainbows** averaging 11 to 12 inches," he said. "A few winter-carryover fish up to 15 inches were also caught. Spectacle should be very good fishing as the water continues to warm up."

Jateff said lakes in the Methow Valley area are still covered with ice, but anglers wanting to fish selective gear rules can try Rat Lake near Brewster for browns and rainbows that run 11 to 13

inches. Catch-and-release rules are in effect for Rat Lake, he noted, adding that access with concrete boat ramp is available.

Jateff also reminds anglers that **steelhead** and **whitefish** seasons on the Similkameen and Okanogan rivers are now closed.

WDFW fish hatchery crews are busy adding catchable-size trout to many lakes that open April 26. The fisheries in most of those lakes in this region are supported by fry and fingerlings planted last year, but some also benefit from plants of 8-12-inchers, one-to-one-and-a-half-pound triploids and surplus broodstock.

### **South Central Washington:**

Mud Lake, Myron Lake, Rotary Lake, Tims Pond and the I-82 Ponds 1, 2 and 3 were recently stocked with **rainbow trout** ranging in size from a third of a pound to one pound each. Myron Lake and Tims Pond also received some three to seven-pound rainbow broodstock, which were surplus to hatchery needs.

"It should be good fishing in all of these areas, especially as the weather starts to warm up a bit," said Eric Anderson, WDFW district fish biologist from Yakima. "There will be many more lakes and ponds stocked in the next few weeks."

Dalton Pond, which is open year-round and located northeast of the Snake River's Ice Harbor Dam near the Tri-Cities in Franklin County, is receiving catchable-size rainbow trout plants the first week in April from Lyons Ferry Fish Hatchery.

Anglers can view the complete fish-stocking plan for south central Washington lakes along with weekly updates on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg3/index.htm>, or pick up a list at 1701 S. 24th Ave. in Yakima.

"If we don't get some warm weather soon," said Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist from Yakima, "lakes like Dog and Clear near White Pass may be planted later than expected, especially with the new snow in the mountains this week."

Cummins reminds anglers that rivers and streams are closed to fishing until June 1, unless listed as open in the fishing regulations pamphlet. Based on calls, some people don't understand the need to check the general regulations before looking for a specific river or stream under "special rules," Cummins said. "Not all waters are listed, because many fall under the general rules," he said.

Anglers with catch record cards for steelhead, salmon and sturgeon are required to submit them by the end of this month, either by mail to WDFW Olympia headquarters or via drop-off at the regional office.

### **Reader Email -**

Reader Dale H. wrote via the Contact Form at the TGF website, "I'm at an age, at least my knees are, where walking the streams is no longer an option for me. I would like to seriously take up surf fishing (perch) on the northern Oregon coast. I know the techniques but don't know where to go. If any of you have this information I would be indebted if you would pass it on to me. My thanks in advance."

"We're always happy to help when we're able and like you, I'm not as mobile as I once was but enjoy surf fishing, especially for pinkfin as they are arguably the finest table fare of any of the

perch family and dwell only off ocean beaches. I've never taken one in bays or estuaries.

"There are many places that will provide decent surf fishing and many can be found simply by observing the beach at low tide. Look for steeper beaches or those with depressions where surf perch might feed. There's no need to cast beyond the breakers, either; perch feed right in the waves. Use just enough lead to hold bottom.

"Heavy tackle isn't necessary either. I used to throw with a 12-foot surf rod 'til I realized that I was unnecessarily working too hard. Now I use a nine-foot Chinook bobber rod. It'll handle enough lead and certainly any perch in the sea.

"Specific locations that have been productive in the past may no longer fish well. Every winter, beach configurations get 'rearranged' by storms. A place that fished great last year may be a shallow flat this year.

"That said, here are some places which have produced in seasons past.

"The Rest Area just north of Rockaway has trails leading down to the beach. Once there, head a little further north. You can spot the area (here and on any productive beach) where the outermost waves break closer to the shore.

"Short Sand Beach at Oswald West State Park has hosted meat-fishing derbies in the past for Boy Scouts. Well worth checking out.

"Cape Meares beach changes dramatically over the winter. Sometimes it's sand, sometimes rock. When it's been good however, it has been very good.

"Oceanside north of Netarts has produced very well for me at times. Fish on the north side of the point of land that juts out into the ocean south of town.

"The beach at Cape Lookout Park has been very productive for surf perch at times. Plus, you can dig sand (mole) crabs with your hands from the beach there. Excellent bait.

"Fogarty Creek and Gleneden Beach seem to run hot or cold, but worth the trip when productive.

"By the way, right now the surf fishing is about as good as it will be all year, so go get 'em.

"Please write again if you have any questions and definitely if you go to let us know how you do!"

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

Write to the TGF staff:

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### **Random Links**

Spring Chinook bank fishing opportunities on the Columbia:

\*[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/hot\\_topics/BankRiverFishingFlyerFinal.pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/hot_topics/BankRiverFishingFlyerFinal.pdf)

**Weekly Quote** – “Fish sense, applied in the field, is what the old Zen masters would call enlightenment: simply the ability to see what's right there in front of you without having to sift through a lot of thoughts and theories and, yes, expensive fishing tackle.” - John Gierach

**GOOD LUCK!**