

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **April 25th – May 1st, 2008**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Look ahead to the sturgeon fishing in the lower Columbia River. Prepare yourself for this fishery by learning all you can about it. Log onto our technical report page at: <http://www.theguidesforecast.com/techrpt.shtml> and order the tech reports that will benefit your outing today!

Willamette Valley/Metro- With the Columbia River from Bonneville Dam downstream now closed to salmon, steelhead and shad fishing, anglers will be seeking other opportunities in tributaries or upstream fisheries. Although lower river catch rates dropped dramatically in the closing days, success near Bonneville was excellent and dam counts verify the run is well underway.

Many of these prized fish are destined for upper river tributaries and will be challenging to pursue in the Columbia River reservoirs. Check updated regulations for open tributaries along the Columbia River as those fisheries will be peaking in the coming weeks.

Sturgeon will also become a focus for metro anglers from Bonneville to Buoy 10 in the coming weeks and catch rates are beginning to climb with the warming water temperatures. The best stretch will be in the Columbia River gorge with smelt a top choice to use as bait.

Counts of salmon and steelhead have slowed with a drop in the water temperature caused by unseasonably cold weather. Trollers and anchor fishers have experienced minor flurries of springer action but overall, fishing has been slow. Sturgeon fishing has been fair to good.

Steelhead are scattered on the North Santiam and fishing is slow.

Trout fishing on the McKenzie has been good between weather fronts with Caddis hatches occurring amidst the March Browns.

Water levels at the Clackamas are down from last week and the color is good. Steelheading is spotty but fresh summers are being caught daily.

Sandy anglers are taking a few summer steelhead but most are thinking about springers. There are chinook in the river and numbers will be increasing.

Scheduled for trout planting are Haldeman Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Huddelston Pond, Salmonberry Lake, Silver Creek Reservoir, Timothy Meadows Reservoir, Trojan Pond, Blue River above Reservoir, Blue River Reservoir, Carmen Reservoir, Clear Lake, Detroit Reservoir, Dexter Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Fall Creek, Foster Reservoir, Freeway Lake East, Green Peter Reservoir, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, the McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Roaring River Park Pond, Salmon Creek, Smith Reservoir, Walling Pond, Walter Wirth Lake, Willamette River Coast Fork and the Middle Fork Willamette above Hills Creek Reservoir.

Northwest – A significant rise in river levels was forecasted for north coast streams at mid-week but when flows do drop, steelhead will make up the bulk of the catch reports **pro guide**

Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808). Although it's likely a few summer steelhead may be in the creel, spent winter run fish headed back to sea will likely make up the bulk of the catch. An early spring chinook may also be available but most won't return until mid-May.

Tides won't be ripe for estuary sturgeon fishing in Tillamook or the Astoria area but friendly seas are forecasted for the weekend which should give bottomfishing enthusiasts some good opportunity for lingcod, seabass and surf perch. Be sure to check bar conditions before crossing.

North of Cape Falcon near Manzanita, halibut season opens on May 1st. Anglers are allowed to fish 7-days per week with a daily bag limit of 1 halibut per day, 6 per year.

Crabbing remains poor in most north coast estuaries and ocean crabbing is likely to be only slightly better if boats can get there this weekend.

Alder Lake, Big Creek Reservoir, Big Creek Reservoir, Buck Lake are scheduled to be stocked with hatchery trout.

Southwest – Halibut season will open on the central and south coast on May 1st inside the 40-fathom line with the first all-depth fishery May 8th through 10th.

As the winter steelhead run winds down on the Umpqua, spring chinook catches continue to improve and anglers have been diversifying tactics to target the fresh salmon.

Springer fishing has been slow in the Rogue with the water cold. In spite of challenging conditions, a few chinook are being taken daily. Warmer weather will trigger snowmelt which will, in turn, keep the water cool.

Surf casters have continued to take limits of perch off southwest beaches.

Boats crossing the bar and returning early at Brookings Harbor have been able to beat rough ocean conditions and are limiting on rockfish and lingcod in fairly shallow water.

Due to persistent snow and ice at Diamond Lake, the Kokanee Power Trout Derby which was scheduled for May 17th & 18th has been re-scheduled for June 7th & 8th.

Eastern – Trout fishing is fair on the lower Deschutes in mid-40-degree water that's at above-average flows. Mid-day is yielding best results.

Although flows remain high on the John Day, big smallmouth bass should be a viable target in the dropping flows into the early weeks of May reports **pro guide Steve Fleming (1-888-624-9424)**.

SW Washington – The signature fishery this year will be the Wind River and Drano Lake salmon effort. With large returns forecast and dam passage ramping up, catch rates have increased significantly in recent days with excellent prospects in the coming weeks. This area is relatively small so stress levels can take away from a quality experience for these prized springers.

On the Wind River itself, the daily bag limit has been increased to 2 fish per day.

Catches are improving on the Cowlitz and Kalama Rivers but effort remains light on the Lewis.

Soapbox Update

This may be your only chance to be heard on the Fall Chinook season. We're lost most of our ocean opportunity - these meetings will affect fishing in bays and estuaries.

ODFW Seeks Input on Fall Chinook Fishing Regulations

Salem, Ore. -- The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will be hosting public meetings in Gold Beach, North Bend, Newport and Tillamook to solicit input on possible regulations changes to the 2008 fall chinook fishing season for rivers, bays and estuaries along the Oregon Coast.

"The possible regulation changes are prompted by recent and anticipated declines in Oregon coast fall chinook returns," said Ron Boyce ODFW fisheries biologist.

In April, the Pacific Fishery Management Council closed all commercial salmon fishing in ocean waters from Cape Falcon, south of Manzanita, to the California/Mexico border. At the same time recreational fishing was sharply curtailed.

ODFW is now formulating regulations for commercial and recreational fishing in the inland and nearshore waters under its jurisdiction, Boyce said.

"We are going to do what we can to maintain as many traditional fisheries as we can," Boyce said. "We'll be looking at each fishery on a case-by-case basis and trying to offer as many fishing opportunities as possible within our biological constraints."

At the upcoming meetings, ODFW staff will present run forecasts and proposed regulations changes.

"We'll also be soliciting public comment on the proposed changes to present to the Fish and Wildlife Commission at its June meeting in Salem," Boyce said.

The meeting dates and locations are:

Gold Beach
April 28, 7-9 p.m.
Curry County Fairgrounds – Showcase Building
29392 Ellensburg (Hwy 101)
For information contact: Todd Confer (541) 247-7605

North Bend
April 29, 7-9 p.m.
North Bend Library – large conference room
1800 Sherman Ave.
For more information contact: Mike Gray (541) 888-5515

Newport
April 30, 7-9 p.m.
Hatfield Marine Science Center – Library Seminar Room
2040 SE Marine Science Dr.
For more information contact: Bob Buckman (541) 867-0300 ext. 224

Tillamook
May 1, 7-9 p.m.
Oregon Department of Forestry

5005 Third St.

For more information contact: Keith Braun (503) 842-2741 ext. 233

Columbia River Fishing Report – With the harsh reality check of another early closure for spring chinook anglers on the mainstem Columbia, anglers are once again left wondering, what went wrong? It's been identified that the problem is, we're getting too efficient at catching all the fish! It's a sad day, with the economic vibrancy and horsepower of this fishery that we are faced with an early closure leaving millions of dollars of economic possibility on the table. All because we're too good at what we do? Anyway, have I made my point? If not, we need MORE impacts or we need MORE fish!

But, that's not going to help you catch more fish this week. Managers will look at a possible re-opener but we have to reach the 50% mark for dam passage and if the run follows recent history, we're still several days (hopefully numerous days) away from realizing that. We need the Bonneville numbers to begin to really ramp up and most of us feel they are coming because we feel we just wouldn't have experienced the catch rates we have if the fish weren't there to catch. If they do materialize and maybe even exceed expectations, it would be mid-May before sport anglers saw any possibility for additional opportunity. As it stands now, sport anglers did exceed preseason expectations even with an early closure.

So, where does that leave us? The mainstem fishery above Bonneville Dam remains open but not many anglers (including myself) have much experience identifying places to intercept these fast migrating fish. The remaining open regulations are as follows:

COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, Bonneville Dam to McNary Dam: This section of the Columbia River is open to the retention of adipose fin-clipped spring chinook, adipose fin-clipped steelhead, and shad from March 16 through May 10, 2008 from the Tower Island powerlines (located approximately 6 miles downstream of The Dalles Dam) upstream to McNary Dam plus the Oregon and Washington banks between Bonneville Dam and Tower Island. Boat angling between Bonneville Dam and Tower Island powerlines is prohibited. The daily bag limit includes two adipose fin-clipped adult salmon or steelhead (chinook greater than 24" and steelhead greater than 20"). Catch limits for jacks remain in effect as per permanent regulations. All non-adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon and non-adipose fin-clipped steelhead must be released immediately unharmed.

Anglers will want to concentrate effort in areas of the river where distance is constricted. In most of these reservoirs, it will be difficult to find fish in the vast areas of these impoundments. The Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries should be quite impressive in coming weeks however.

Sturgeon effort and catch is ramping up with the increase in water temperatures. On the last day of the open salmon season, the temperature around the I-5 Bridge was at 47 degrees. Gorge fish are becoming more active and responsive to anglers offerings. Smelt will remain the top producing bait but sand shrimp is a close second. Regulations will have the section of Bonneville to Marker 85 closed down as of May 1st so action in this prime real estate won't last long.

As a re-fresher, here are the Columbia River regulations from Bonneville downstream:

BUOY 10 UPSTREAM TO WAUNA POWERLINES (including Youngs Bay and all adjacent Washington tributaries):

The Compact adopted the following rules at the December 13 Joint State Hearing for the sturgeon sport fishery below Wauna power lines (RM 40) downstream to Buoy 10, including Youngs Bay and all adjacent Washington tributaries for 2008:

- Allow the retention of white sturgeon seven days per week during Tuesday January 1, 2008 through Wednesday April 30, 2008 with a 42-inch minimum size and a 60-inch maximum size limit in effect.
- Allow the retention of white sturgeon seven days per week during Saturday May 10, 2008 through Tuesday June 24, 2008 (or until catch guideline is reached) with a 45-inch minimum size and a 60-inch maximum size limit in effect.
- Prohibit the retention of sturgeon seven days per week during Thursday May 1, 2008 through Friday May 9, 2008 and Wednesday June 25, 2008 through December 31, 2008. Catch and release angling is allowed during all retention closures.
- Retention of green sturgeon is prohibited as per permanent regulations.
- Daily and annual catch limits listed in the 2008 Oregon Sport Regulations pamphlet remain in effect.

WAUNA POWERLINES UPSTREAM TO BONNEVILLE DAM (including all adjacent Washington tributaries and the Willamette River downstream of Willamette Falls including the Multnomah Channel):

The Compact adopted the following rules at the December 13 Joint State Hearing for the sturgeon sport fishery above Wauna power lines (RM 40) upstream to Bonneville Dam, including all adjacent Washington tributaries, and the lower Willamette River (including the Multnomah Channel) upstream to Willamette Falls for 2008:

- **Allow the** retention of white sturgeon four days per week on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday during January 1, 2008 through July 31, 2008 and October 1 through December 31, 2008.
- Prohibit the retention of sturgeon three days per week on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday during January 1-July 31, 2008 and October 1 through December 31, 2008 and seven days per week during August 1 through September 30, 2008.
- Retention of green sturgeon is prohibited as per permanent regulations.
- Daily and annual catch limits listed in the 2008 Oregon Sport Regulations pamphlet remain in effect.

Catch rates were best in the gorge but the Portland to Longview stretch also put out some fair catches of keepers and shakers.

The Guide's Forecast – Despite the recent cold weather snap, fishing should be good in the Bonneville area for sturgeon. Use smelt or a combination of smelt and shrimp. Keepers are available and although effort may ramp up a bit this week, there should still be plenty of open water to target these fish. The most productive stretch will close on May 1st.

Estuary sturgeon fishers will have a brief shut down but even when it re-opens on May 10th, action is likely to start off slow as water temperatures will be cold.

Salmon fishers should focus their efforts in Drano Lake and the Wind River. Bonneville passage numbers are consistent enough to expect good catches in these fisheries. The peak is just a week or two away.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – It is evident looking at the Willamette Falls counts that runs has been stalled due to cold water. The daily passage of summers, winters and spring Chinook spiked on April 14th and 15th when the water temperature hit 51 degrees. The water temperature has been 48 degrees at the Willamette Falls for three

days and the low daily counts reflect it. Spring Chinook fishing has been mostly slow, but a few trollers are hooking fish.

Pro guide Jim Stevenson (503-881-5289) adds this, "Lower Willamette trolling green or red size herring working rather well, I had a good day there Saturday."

Summer and winter steelhead are entering the traps at Foster Dam on the South Santiam. Hatchery summers are being recycled downriver to give anglers another shot at them.

The Guide's Forecast – Springer fishing in the lower Willamette has been fair with occasional hotspots emerging. While the Sellwood Bridge stretch has been jammed since the Columbia closure, the river near the mouth at Kelly Point Park and within Multnomah Channel have been most consistent for Chinook.

Sturgeon fishing will be a numbers game as anglers release many fish too small to keep in an effort to find a keeper. Herring remains consistently effective with smelt and squid also drawing bites. Fish deeper areas from St. Johns to Oregon City for sturgeon.

Water level and flow at the North Santiam have been stable and barring a deluge, are likely to stay that way. Numbers of steelhead are going to increase and fishing here is expected to be decent once the water temperature rises a few degrees.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Fair to good numbers of summer steelhead are entering the Sandy. Anglers are reporting slow fishing but summers are being taken here daily. The numbers of spring Chinook available will be improving daily and will be worth the trip in mid-May. This should relieve some of the pressure on the lower Willamette.

Summers have been entering the Clackamas for weeks, but cold water has made it challenging to get them to bite. Regardless, some steelheaders seem to have this river wired. Spinners remain the most consistent lures to draw strikes. Fishing is expected to improve with the warm weather to come but spring Chinook prospects are probably a few weeks away.

Steelhead smolts releases will continue on the Clack so the use of bait is discouraged.

North Coast Fishing Report – It's a slow go for north coast anglers this week as we wait for the spring chinook to begin to arrive. Some steelhead will certainly be available as **pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)** points out: "There are few late winters around, and I know of only three summers so far. There is a rumor of a couple of springers caught, and it is just that...Rumor. It happens every year. Give it a week or two, and we should see some fresh fish of some kind on the lower end of the river. As long as spring shows up and the snow holds off."

Our rivers experienced a good rain freshet at mid-week which should liven action up a bit for the weekend fishery. I don't anticipate there will be much effort but summer steelhead, a few spent winter fish and maybe a rare spring chinook may show up on the driftboat catches this weekend. The Wilson and Trask offer up the best opportunities but don't count on gang-buster fishing.

Poor tides won't leave much to be desired for sturgeon this weekend. Crabbing remains poor in coastal estuaries as well. The weekend ocean weather forecast doesn't look all that good either.

It may not be the best weekend to recreate on the coast.

The Guide's Forecast – The best option on the coast will be driftboating in somewhat serene settings on the Wilson, Trask or Nestucca Rivers. Spring chinook should be possible on any one of these streams although it's pretty early to have high expectations. A variety of techniques should be employed but plugs and backbounced baits should offer up the best chances.

Size down your plugs and target steelhead in their traditional haunts when the flows subside. There should be summer steelhead available in the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers.

Don't waste your time sturgeon fishing or crabbing. It will be a disappointing venture.

Central & South Coast Reports – Summer steelhead fishing has been fair to good on the Siletz River even though it's still early for this river to be counted on as being productive.

While bright winter steelhead are still available in the Umpqua mainstem, the run is well into wind-down. With fresh springers being taken now, the focus is on Chinook. Steelheading is holding up fairly well on the South Umpqua with a few hatchery fish being taken. The North Umpqua above Soda Springs Reservoir opens April 26th for trout. The South and mainstem Umpqua remain closed for trout.

Winter steelheading is about wrapped up on the Coos system. Perch fishing has been fair to good in Coos Bay.

The Coquille will close to steelhead on April 30th but it has been all but over recently. It will re-open to trout angling on May 24th. In the meantime, there's not much here to attract fishers.

Spring Chinook fishing on the lower Rogue has been pretty dismal with the water low and very clear. While rainfall helped both these conditions slightly this week, catches haven't improved. As predicted last week, snowmelt has caused the water temperature on the Grants Pass stretch and stalled winter steelhead fishing. The upper river is slow although four springers had been counted at Gold Ray Dam as of April 17th.

The Chetco will remain closed to salmon, steelhead and trout until May 24th.

The original release from the ODFW on Friday, April 18th, regarding ocean fishing south of Cape Falcon to the California border was in error. Chinook fishing will not be allowed but the Coho season will be open June 22nd to August 31st, seven days per week with a bag limit of two fin-clipped coho per day for a quota of 9,000 fish.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Pro guide Steve Fleming (1-888-624-9424) writes from the John Day, "I have not been on the river for one week. It went up to 9000 CFS and got dirty, but has dropped back under 6000 CFS for about three days now and I'll go out today, Monday. It has been cold at night and slowed the snow melt down and the river will be dropping all week with the cold nights and cool days. The big bass will be back on the bite, and we should have a good week for big fish."

Saturday, April 26th is 'opening day' this year. Most waters at low to mid elevations will be accessible to anglers although snow remains on the ground at many of the higher lakes such as Clear Lake, Carmen Reservoir and Smith Reservoir among others. Diamond Lake is completely iced over and may not fish by Memorial Day. Cold water elsewhere is likely to slow the bite.

Odell, Wickiup, North and South Twin lakes will be accessible. Getting to many of the other high lakes will be a crap shoot (See below).

At the last check mid-week, Timothy Lake was inaccessible and still frozen. Pick a weekend later in the year.

Pro guide Rick Arnold (541-480-1570) reports from Lake Billy Chinook, "I had two return clients from earlier this spring on Thurs. We picked up a nice 10 LB. bull on our first trolling pass to start the morning. It turned out to be some of the best weather we have had this spring and we all enjoyed calm, sunny day that topped out near 60. The afternoon wind that was predicted didn't materialize and we added a couple of smaller bulls and a beautiful 3.5 LB. fish to total (4) bulls for the day. I may be out this coming week on a possible reschedule trip. Watch our site for the complete fishing report and photos.

"Probably only guiding for two more weeks or so if anyone is interested in a spring bull trout trip. Our big fish count stands at a 13, 10, 10 and 9.5 LB. since the opening on March 1."

Trout fishing will be allowed starting this Saturday on the stretch bordering Warm Springs Reservation (Warm Springs to Trout Creek, and Trout Creek down to the Deadline). Below that stretch, trout fishing has been fair to good on nymphs with dries effective when March Browns are hatching. With the flow down to about 4,500 cfs on the middle Deschutes, the river will be fishing well.

Wickiup will be accessible this weekend with the roads mostly clear and a portion of the parking areas plowed but it is very muddy. With limited access, it's expected to be crowded for the opener.

From the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office website:

Cascade Lakes access for opening weekend of fishing season

This information pertains to access at roads and waterbodies in Deschutes County only. It DOES NOT include roads and waterbodies in Jefferson or Crook counties. For information on conditions in those counties, please contact either the Jefferson or Crook County Sheriffs' Offices.

As of 1pm on Tuesday, April 22nd, access information for opening weekend of fishing on April 26th and 27th:

ROADS:

Forest Service Road42 (South Century Drive):

Open/plowed; mostly bare pavement to its junction with Forest Service Road 46 (Cascade Lakes Highway)

Forest Service Road40 (Spring River Road):

Closed from its junction with the 45 road west (not plowed, snow covered)
o Closed from its junction with Hwy 46 east (not plowed, snow covered)

Forest Service Road43 (Burgess Road):

Open to its junction with Road 42

Forest Service Road44 (southern edge of Wickiup Reservoir):

Not maintained, travel not recommended

Forest Service Road 4270, which provides eastside access to Crane Prairie and Crane Prairie Resort:

Closed between Forest Service Road 42 and Forest Service Road 40 (not plowed)

Forest Service Road 46 (Cascade Lakes Highway):

Closed from the southern end to the snow gate just north of the junction with Forest Service Road 42; closed north of the snowgate, NO ACCESS to the west side of Crane Prairie, Cultus Lake, or Lava Lake.

Forest Service Road 4260 (the main entrance road to Wickiup Reservoir, North/South Twin Lakes):

Open/plowed, some slight roadway width constrictions. Limited access to side roads off the main road. Road into Sheep's Bridge is open, limited width (one lane only).

Forest Service Road 21 (Paulina/East Lake Road):

Closed above the snowgate at 10-Mile snowpark, NO ACCESS to either lake until after May 1st (predicted)

RESORTS:

Twin Lakes resort is the only resort that is open and accessible. All other resorts, (Cultus, Crane Prairie and Cultus on the west side, East and Paulina Lake resorts on the east side) are closed and inaccessible.

WATERBODIES AND RAMP ACCESS:

Wickiup Reservoir: ice-free except for small portion near the dam

Gull Point ramp:	open, accessible, logging operations in area
North Wickiup ramp:	open accessible, logging operations in area
Davis Creek campground ramp:	closed by snow
Reservoir Campground ramp:	closed by snow
Sheep's Bridge ramp:	closed by snow
West South Twin ramp:	open, but very shallow beach access

North/South Twin Lakes: deicing, should be completely ice-free by Saturday

Ramp access: open at either lake (but both lakes are non-motorized lakes)

All other westside and eastside waterbodies:

CLOSED due to ice coverage or limited/no road access

Big Deschutes River: Wickiup Dam downstream to Bend

Limited access depending on area, fishing season doesn't open until later in May.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

With Wickiup Reservoir being the only motorized waterbody expect to be open for opening weekend, there will probably be **a lot** of traffic in the area. Most of the roads are less than normal width, with 2-4' snow berms on the shoulders of the road...**please drive attentively!**

Depending on the number of people who may come out over the weekend, parking at either Gull Point or North Wickiup boat ramps may be crowded. Watch for signage in the area directing

those who have launched to designated overflow parking areas along the powerline road. This will be designated as "one way" traffic, with one lane next to the snow berm for parking, and a second lane for vehicles/trailers to get past. **Please be patient and courteous!**

Please call the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office at (541) 388-6655 to receive photos and a jpeg formatted map for additional details.

Northwest Trout – The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will host a free youth fishing event at Trojan Pond near Rainier on Saturday, April 26 at Trojan Upper Empire Lake (Coos County) and on at Hebo Lake in Hebo on Saturday, May 3rd. These events will run from 9 AM to 2 PM.

The water at Henry Hagg Lake is clearing with the lake full. Expect to find about 30 inches of visibility this weekend. A bit of woody debris remains in evidence but the majority of obstacles have cleared out. The Hagg Lake Fishing Derby will take place this on Saturday, May 10th. There is no fee to enter other than the charge by Washington County for entry to the lake.

The opening of trout season was once a major fishing event. Streams and rivers, closed to fishing all winter, would open to anglers in April each year. With most moving water off-limits year 'round now, trout fishing is primarily limited to the pursuit of stocked hatchery fish in lakes and ponds.

With the opener April 26th this year, trout planting this week is extensive, even of those waters open all year.

Scheduled for trout planting in the Willamette Valley are Haldeman Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Huddelston Pond, Salmonberry Lake, Silver Creek Reservoir, Timothy Meadows Reservoir, Trojan Pond, Blue River above Reservoir, Blue River Reservoir, Carmen Reservoir, Clear Lake, Detroit Reservoir, Dexter Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Fall Creek, Foster Reservoir, Freeway Lake East, Green Peter Reservoir, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, the McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Roaring River Park Pond, Salmon Creek, Smith Reservoir, Walling Pond, Walter Wirth Lake, Willamette River Coast Fork and the Middle Fork Willamette above Hills Creek Reservoir.

Alder Lake, Big Creek Reservoir, Big Creek Reservoir, Buck Lake are scheduled to be stocked with hatchery trout in the Northwest Zone.

Off topic but amusing. The ODFW has started referring to it's stocking vehicles as fish liberation trucks.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report April 16th – April 29th, 2008

North Puget Sound

Blackmouth salmon are no longer the only game in town for the region's saltwater anglers. The **halibut** season is under way in Puget Sound and openings for other bottomfish are not far off. For freshwater anglers, one of the most anticipated fisheries occurs later this April, when the lowland lakes **trout** season kicks off.

Beginning April 26, anglers can cast a line in many of the region's lakes, where thousands of

legal-sized trout have been planted. Information on stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available on WDFW's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>).

During the first few weeks of the season, anglers should fish higher in the water column, where the stocked trout tend to remain after being placed in a lake, said Jon Anderson, WDFW resident trout manager. "After the trout are planted, they usually stay in about the top 3 to 5 feet of water," he said. "So anglers will want to keep the hook shallow early on. After a few weeks, anglers likely will have better success fishing lower in the water column."

Out on the saltwater, selective fisheries for hatchery **blackmouth** - resident chinook - continue through April 30 in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner). Anglers fishing in those two 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.

Halibut fishing opened April 10 throughout the region. Mutiny and Admiralty bays, as well as Eastern and Partridge banks usually are the best bets for flatfish early in the season. Halibut fishing is open five days a week, Thursday through Monday, with a daily limit of one halibut and no minimum size limit.

Beginning May 1, anglers in the region also will have an opportunity to drop a line for other **bottomfish**, such as **lingcod**, **rockfish** and **cabezon**.

Anglers out on Puget Sound will soon have an opportunity to catch shrimp as well. The shrimp season opens throughout the region May 3. Details are available on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/shrimpreg/shrimpindex.shtml>.

Before heading out, anglers should check the rules and regulations for freshwater and saltwater fisheries in WDFW's Fishing in Washington pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

While hundreds of Washington lakes are being planted with **trout** in time for the lowland lakes opener, anglers have been reeling in **halibut** and **lingcod** from coastal waters. **Razor clam** diggers, meanwhile, can head out for morning digs April 19-23.

For many anglers, "fishing season" begins April 26 on opening day of the lowland lakes trout season. On the state's single biggest fishing day, anglers can choose from among 99 lakes in the region stocked with thousands of legal-sized trout.

Lakes stocked with more than 5,000 trout include Sutherland Lake in Clallam County; Aberdeen Lake in Grays Harbor County; Leland Lake in Jefferson County; Island and Wildcat lakes in Kitsap County; Benson and Devereaux lakes in Mason County; Clear, Kapowsin and Ohop lakes in Pierce County; and Clear, Hicks, Long and Pattison lakes in Thurston County. Information on WDFW stocking schedules is available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>. For tips on fishing options, by water and county, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/prospects/index.htm>.

In Thurston County, youngsters ages 5-14 can attend a one-day fishing event at the Kids' Classic 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.

Meanwhile, recreational **halibut** anglers have been out in force near Port Angeles (Marine Area 6), pulling in more than 40 of the flatfish since the season began April 10. Marine areas 6-11 and 13 (Port Angeles and Puget Sound) are open five days a week, Thursday through Monday, through June 13.

This month and next are the best months to catch halibut, said Heather Reed, WDFW fish biologist. "The earlier in the year, the better," she said. Reed advises anglers to check the tides and go out when there's minimal change. "Fish bite best when the tide is moving slowly, with no significant highs or lows," she said.

Anglers should note the following additional halibut openers occurring in May:

- **Columbia River (Ilwaco):** Marine Area 1 will be open May 1, seven days a week until 70 percent of the quota is reached, or until July 20, whichever occurs first. The fishery will then reopen on Aug. 1 and continue three days a week (Friday-Sunday) until the remaining quota is reached, or Sept. 30, whichever occurs first.
- **South Coast (Westport/Ocean Shores):** Marine Area 2 will open on May 1, and then continue two days a week, Sundays and Tuesdays until the quota is reached, or Sept. 30, whichever occurs first. The northern nearshore area will open May 1 and will be open four days a week, Friday through Sunday and Tuesdays, until the quota is reached.
- **North Coast (La Push/Neah Bay):** Marine areas 3 and 4 will be open starting May 13 on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays until the quota is reached. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will reopen on June 17 and 19 (Tuesday and Thursday) in Area 4B and shoreward of a line approximating 30 fm from the Bonilla-Tatoosh line south to the Queets River. All recreational fishing in Marine Areas 3 and 4 outside of these areas will be closed on those dates. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will reopen in all areas of marine areas 3 and 4 on Saturday, June 21.
- **Strait of Juan de Fuca/Puget Sound:** Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) will be open May 22 through July 21, five days a week, Thursday through Monday.

Marine Area 12 (Hood Canal) is closed to fishing for halibut and a number of other species due to low dissolved-oxygen conditions.

All areas open to fishing have a one-fish daily catch limit and two-halibut possession limit, regardless of whether those fish are fresh or frozen. There is no minimum size limit for halibut caught in any area. All catch must be recorded on a WDFW catch-record card. For additional information on specific regulations for each marine area, call the Fishing Hotline at (360) 902-2500 or check the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/halibut>.

The **lingcod** fishery in Marine Area 4 (Neah Bay) gets under way April 16, giving anglers a chance to land some of the abundant fish in the area.

Meanwhile, many boats out of Westport in Marine Area 2 are catching their limits on lingcod since the March 15 opener, said Scott Barbour, WDFW fish biologist. "People are doing really well when the weather cooperates and they can stay out on the water," he said.

Marine areas 1-4 are open seven days a week with the following restrictions:

- 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.
- 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.

Retention of canary and yelloweye rockfish is prohibited in all waters. Anglers should note the minimum size for lingcod in Marine Area 4 is 24 inches, rather than 22 inches in marine areas 1-3.

Lingcod fishing in marine areas 5-13 gets under way May 1 and will be open seven days a week through June 15.

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>).

Anglers still have time to travel to the Olympic Peninsula for some **steelhead** fishing. With the exception of the Hoh River, area rivers will remain open for steelhead fishing through April 30.

Rather dig **razor clams**? A morning dig is scheduled April 19-23. Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Long Beach, Copalis and Mocrocks will all be open for digging April 19-20. Twin Harbors will be open for three additional days, April 21-23, All digging on those beaches must be finished by noon. Kalaloch Beach remains closed to harvest. Details are available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/razorclm/season.htm>.

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:

After weeks of good fishing, fishery managers for Washington and Oregon met today (April 16) to consider closing the **spring chinook** fishery on the lower Columbia River for a catch assessment.

The meeting follows a week in which boat anglers fishing from the west Hayden powerlines upriver to Bonneville Dam averaged an adult chinook for every 2.5 rods - the best catch rate for that period since 2000.

"Catch rates, especially for boat anglers, have been spectacular over the past couple of weeks," said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist.

If a closure takes effect, both states will review pre-season run-size estimates late this month or

in early May to determine if the fishery can be reopened within federal guidelines. Anglers should keep an eye on the WDFW website for updates on the fishery, Hymer said.

In the meantime, he suggests checking out tributaries to the big river above and below Bonneville Dam, where anglers are hooking up with spring chinook in increasing numbers. Springers are now moving into Wind River and Drano Lake above Bonneville and on the Lewis, Cowlitz and Kalama rivers below the dam.

"Fishing on the tribs is only going to get better in the weeks ahead," Hymer said. "If the fishery on the mainstem is any indication, they should definitely be worth some time on the water."

Adult chinook passage past Bonneville Dam has increased dramatically since April 10, when spills were increased to help move juvenile salmon downriver, Hymer said. Within days, adult passage increased from just over a hundred fish per day to nearly 1,300.

"Fishing should start getting good above Bonneville pretty soon," Hymer said.

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 Wind and White rivers, plus Drano Lake. Anglers should note that Drano Lake is scheduled to be closed to fishing Wednesdays beginning April 9.

Another possibility is the Klickitat River, which is open 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 are reminded that April 26 is opening day for many **trout lakes** throughout the state. While many lakes in southwest Washington are open year-round, the April 26 opener does mark the start of trout fishing in such perennial favorites as Mineral Lake in Lewis County and Rowland Lakes in Klickitat County.

Anglers should, however, be aware that the trout opening on Swift Reservoir in Skamania County has been delayed a month because of unusually low water levels due to a slow snow melt. That has made access to the lake difficult, and potentially dangerous. Planned stocking of catchable rainbows has been delayed until just before the Memorial Day weekend.

But trout plants at year-round at year-round lakes has continued on schedule, including:

- Mayfield Lake - 6,070 catchable-size rainbows.

- South Lewis County Pond - 618 triploids weighing 1.3 pounds each and 4,025 catchable-size browns.
- Sacajawea Lake in Longview - 10,325 catchable browns.
- Kress Lake in Kalaman - 2,040 catchable size rainbows and 6,510 browns.
- Horseshoe Lake in Woodland - 4,080 catchable rainbows and 6,510 browns.
- Battleground Lake - 3,000 half-pound rainbows.
- Klineline Pond - 4,000 catchable size rainbows and 2,000 half-pound browns.

Looking for a bigger tug on the line? **Sturgeon** fishing is heating up below Bonneville Dam and should improve in the days ahead, Hymer said.

Eastern Washington:

April 26 marks the start of some of the best **trout** fishing in the region, although this year's opening weekend catches may be smaller in size than anglers traditionally expect.

"The trout fry we stocked in these lakes last spring and fall just haven't grown as much by now because of our record long, cold and snowy winter," said WDFW District Fish Biologist Chris Donley in Spokane. "A lot of these waters remained iced-up and snow-covered for a lot longer this winter, so there just wasn't the feed for fish. We'll still have some very good fishing at the usual waters, but the average size of the fish will be smaller."

Those "usual" waters that provide good fishing include Badger, Williams and West Medical lakes in southwest Spokane County and Fishtrap Lake on the Lincoln-Spokane county line.

Donley said Badger's rainbows and cutthroats average 10 to 12 inches, with some larger. Last year over 30,000 cutthroat fry and about 50,000 rainbow fry were stocked in Badger. This spring 10,000 eight- to 12-inch rainbows, 400 14-inch-plus rainbows, and 1,000 triploid rainbows up to 1.5 pounds each were added to Badger. Williams Lake should be good for limits of 10- to 18-inch trout, mostly from last year's plants of 40,000 cutthroat fry and 108,000 rainbow fry. Williams also received 10,000 eight- to 12-inch rainbows, 400 14-inch-plus rainbows, and 1,500 triploids. West Medical also should be good with over 180,000 rainbow fry stocked last year and the same number of "catchables" as Badger received this spring.

Popular Fishtrap Lake will be good as well, but not like the peak production seasons of past years, Donley said. "Fishtrap anglers will still catch lots of 10- to 16-inch trout, including carryovers from 2006 stocking," he said. "But last year's fry plants may look significantly smaller than usual." Fishtrap received over 88,000 rainbow fry last year, and this spring the lake received 15,000 eight- to 12-inch rainbows, 400 14-inch-plus rainbows, and 750 big triploids.

Other trout lakes in the central district that open April 26 and will provide decent fishing include Fish and Clear lakes in southwest Spokane County. Both have tiger trout - a brook-brown trout hybrid - from fry plants last year (Clear received 20,000, Fish received 12,000). Clear also received 75,000 brown trout fry and over 60,000 rainbow fry last year, plus "catchables" this spring - 10,500 eight- to 12-inch browns, 30,000 same-size rainbows, 400 14-inch-plus rainbows, and 1,000 big triploids. Fish Lake also received about 1,700 14-inch-plus eastern brook trout this spring.

Amber Lake in southwest Spokane County, which has been open since March 1 for catch-and-release fishing, shifts to a harvest season April 26. Selective gear rules are still in effect at Amber and only two rainbow or cutthroat trout of at least 14 inches can be retained. Amber rainbows with clipped adipose fins must be released.

Two other selective-gear-rule lakes in the central district that have been open since the first of March and remain good bets through the spring are Coffeepot Lake in Lincoln County for rainbows, yellow perch and black crappie, and North Silver Lake in southwest Spokane County for rainbows. The requirement to release adipose-fin-clipped fish is also in place at North Silver.

Three mixed-species lakes that usually open on the last Saturday of April were changed to the March 1 opening season this year, although anglers will find them listed in the current pamphlet as opening April 26. Those lakes are Liberty, Downs and Medical lakes. Donley said that because of the record-long winter, the earlier opener didn't solicit angling crowds and none of them are anywhere near "fished out." Liberty Lake, east of Spokane near the Idaho border, continues to provide good catches of brown and rainbow trout, and as the weather warms it will produce more **largemouth** and **smallmouth bass, yellow perch, and crappie**. Downs Lake in the southwest corner of Spokane County has also been providing opportunity for yellow perch, largemouth bass, crappie, and rainbow trout. And Medical Lake, near the town of the same name in southwest Spokane County, is good for large brown, rainbow, and tiger trout under selective gear rules.

Year-round Sprague Lake has been receiving fish along with many of the lakes that open this month. Sprague had been without fish since last October's rotenone treatment to rehabilitate the declining fishery. Now Sprague has about 160,000 catchable-size rainbows, including over 3,200 triploid rainbows up to 1.5 pounds. Cow Lake, which was also treated last fall as part of the Sprague Lake watershed, received about 6,000 one-third-pound rainbows. Later this spring, broodstock largemouth bass, bluegill and crappie captured from other Washington waters will be stocked. About 4,000 black crappie and at least 60 channel catfish that were collected from Sprague Lake before last fall's treatment also will be returned this spring. Juvenile warmwater fish species from the Meseberg Hatchery - about 100,000 **bluegill**, 14,000 largemouth bass and 2,000 crappie - will also be stocked.

Other year-round, mixed-species fisheries in Spokane County might be just the ticket on April 26 for anglers who want to avoid crowds at the usual trout hot spots. Eloika and Bonnie lakes can be good for perch fishing, and Silver Lake has bass, crappie and bluegill.

Many more lakes open April 26 further north in the region, although some have been too icy to receive catchable-size trout plants. Many of the northern fisheries are based on fry plants from last year and the year before, so when they are accessible they should provide good fishing, Donley said.

As of April 16, several popular waters, including Diamond, Davis, Fan, Marshall and Sacheen lakes in Pend Oreille County, remained iced up and even some access sites snowed in.

"Many of our northern lakes may be June producers this year," Donley said. "By then those fry plants will hopefully get a little growth."

Whenever the fishery gets under way up north, Donley said some of the best bets will be Stevens County's Starvation Lake, which got 18,000 rainbow fry last year; Rocky Lake with over 5,000 rainbow fry; Deep Lake with over 75,000 cutthroat fry and over 10,000 rainbow fry; and Cedar Lake with over 20,000 rainbow fry.

Open water has allowed catchables to be stocked at Waitts and Jump Off Joe lakes. Waitts has received 15,000 eight- to 12-inch rainbows and 500 hatchery surplus broodstock rainbows. Jump Off Joe received 7,500 eight- to 12-inch brown trout and 4,000 rainbows of similar size.

Loon Lake in southern Stevens County has open water and should be receiving 400 14-inch-plus

rainbows and 750 big triploids, to boost last year's 15,000 rainbow fry. Deer Lake, just northeast of Loon, has been open since March 1 when anglers were ice-fishing for its rainbow and **lake trout**, largemouth and smallmouth bass, crappie, yellow perch, and kokanee from last year's fry plant of about 325,000. Deer is slated to receive 30,000 eight- to 12-inch rainbows, 400 14-inch-plus rainbows, and 1,000 triploids.

Donley says Pend Oreille County's Diamond Lake should be good fishing once it's stocked with its allotment - 10,000 eight- to 12-inch brown trout, 23,500 rainbows of the same size, 500 14-inch-plus rainbows, and 1,000 triploids.

All fish stocking details, by county and lake, are available in the 2008 Hatchery Trout Stocking Plan at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>.

A spring **chinook salmon** fishing season on portions of the Snake River could be coming soon, said WDFW District Fish Biologist Glen Mendel in Dayton. Anglers should stay tuned for an announcement of that special and limited opportunity.

April 25 is the registration deadline for the "Fishing Kids" event on May 3 at Spokane County's Clear Lake. This annual event for kids 5-14 years of age provides beginning fishing instruction, a T-shirt, a Zebco rod and reel, and other fishing goodies for just \$5 per kid. Registrants must signup for half-hour fishing instruction timeslots from 8 a.m. through 2:30 p.m. Registration forms are available at WDFW's eastern regional office at 2315 N. Discovery Place in Spokane Valley and Spokane County 4-H at WSU Extension, 222 W. Havana St. in Spokane. Call the 4-H office at 477-2638 for more details.

North Central Washington:

Although good fishing has been under way throughout the region for the past month, the best **trout** fishing opportunities start April 26 with the lowland lakes season opener.

Jeff Korth, WDFW district fish biologist from Moses Lake, said the best bets will be Blue and Park lakes north of the town of Soap Lake in Grant County. "Fishing should be excellent at these two lakes because we rehabilitated them two years ago and this will be the first year for yearling **rainbow trout** grown there," Korth explained. "Most anglers should get limits of fat 12-inch rainbows from our fingerling plants. Many of the catchable-sized rainbows stocked last year have carried over and will be 15-plus inches now. I think we'll see an average catch rate of at least three fish per angler on the opener."

Korth reported Blue Lake has received 196,455 rainbow fingerlings and Park Lake received 125,772. Blue Lake also received almost 5,000 **brown trout** fingerlings and 3,000 **tiger trout** fingerlings, and Park Lake received about 10,000 brown trout fingerlings. Korth noted the brown and tiger trout don't usually enter the fishery until they are more than two years old, so the rainbows will make up this year's catch.

Another good bet April 26 will be Vic Meyers Lake, a relatively small water connected to Park Lake that was also rehabilitated in 2006 to remove bullheads. Vic Meyers is mostly a shore fishery, although hand-carried boats or float tubes can be used. It was stocked with 3,600 fingerling rainbow trout, 200 fingerling brown trout, and 100 fingerling tiger trout. Korth predicts catch rates will be three to four fish per angler, mostly 12-inchers with maybe 10 percent being 15-inchers.

Perch Lake, in Sun Lakes State Park, is one of the most consistent fishing waters in the Columbia Basin, Korth said. Limits of 12-inch rainbow trout are generally the rule at this small but popular

lake. The plant is only 10,000 fingerlings, and the lake is usually fished out in a few weeks, so only an occasional 15-inch carryover will be seen. Perch is also mostly a shore fishery, although hand-carried boats or float tubes can be used.

Deep Lake, also in Sun Lakes State Park, usually provides very good fishing on the opener, with an average of four to five rainbows per angler, said Korth. Besides the usual 5,000 rainbow fingerlings, Deep Lake received an additional 5,000 catchable-size (10-12 inch) rainbow trout this year. The fingerlings stocked last year will now be 13-14 inches, Korth noted. Deep Lake is also stocked with 40,000 **kokanee** fingerlings that run eight to 10 inches by late spring and early summer. "The kokanee or 'silver' fishery has been good to those who know how to target them, but the better kokanee fishing comes later in the summer, by July and August," Korth said.

Another popular April 26-opening fishery is Warden Lake east of Potholes Reservoir. But Korth said Warden Lake's trout still suffer from competition with spiny-rayed fishes like sunfish and bullheads, so the survival rate of the 80,768 rainbow fingerlings stocked last spring is as mediocre as the catch rates. Anglers can expect only about two or maybe three fish apiece, but they will be nice trout at 13-plus inches, with carryover rainbows of at least 15 inches making up about five percent of the catch, Korth said. There are also some large brown trout in Warden Lake, and another 10,000 tiger trout fingerlings were stocked last fall.

Many more lakes open April 26 further north in the region. Bob Jateff, WDFW district fish biologist from Omak, said Conconully Reservoir near the town of Conconully in central Okanogan County should be very good for rainbow trout 11-12 inches with carryover fish to 15 inches. Pearrygin Lake near Winthrop will be good fishing for 11-inch rainbows. Alta Lake near Pateros will be good for rainbows up to 15 inches and Fish Lake near Sinlahekin should be good for yearling rainbows up to 11 inches.

Selective-gear-rule lakes that open April 26 that Jateff predicted will provide very good fishing include Blue Lake near Sinlahekin for browns and rainbows 12-18 inches, Ell Lake near Tonasket for rainbows up to 15 inches, and Big Twin Lake near Winthrop for 10-12 inch rainbows with a few carryover fish to 15 inches.

Fly-fishing-only Aeneas Lake near Tonasket should be good for rainbows 11-13 inches on the April 26 opener, Jateff said. Another fly-fishing-only water, Chopaka Lake near Loomis, was recently rehabilitated. But Jateff reported spring plants of 10-12 inch rainbows should provide good early season fishing, along with some larger 14-16 inch fish. "Anglers should check first before venturing to Chopaka," Jateff said. "Slower thawing conditions at the lake could delay fish plants until the first week in May."

Jateff also reminded anglers that some of the Okanogan County lakes that opened April 1 are also a good bet. Spectacle Lake near Loomis is providing good fishing for rainbows 11-12 inches, while Leader Lake near Omak has rainbows 11-12 inches plus **crappie** and **bluegill**. Patterson Lake near Winthrop is good for 10-12 inch rainbows and 8-10 inch yellow perch.

Many of the Columbia Basin fisheries that opened March 1 and April 1 are also still fishing well, especially Quincy, Burke, and the Hampton lakes, Korth noted. "The fisheries under selective gear rules with a one-fish daily catch limit - Dusty, Lenore, and Dry Falls lakes - are good to excellent. Lenore has been a little slow but should pick up soon with the spawning run about over and fish back out in the lake feeding," Korth said. "Dry Falls has been excellent with catches of 13-15-inch yearling rainbows and 16-20-inch carryovers."

Lenice and Nunnally lakes, which opened March 1 on the Crab Creek Wildlife Area just east of Beverly in Grant County, just received big triploid rainbow trout. Lenice received 500 and

Nunnally 600 of the one-and-a-half-pound fish. Both lakes are under selective gear rules and a one-fish daily catch limit.

Year-round Beda Lake, south of Winchester Wasteway, also recently received 250 triploid rainbow trout.

All fish stocking details, by county and lake, are available in the 2008 Hatchery Trout Stocking Plan at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>.

Korth reported **walleye** fishing at year-round Moses Lake should be picking up after a bit of a slow down. "They're still catching them at the Alder fill, but walleye fishing should really pick up with the spawning run about over and fish back out in lake feeding."

South Central Washington:

Most of the south central region's **trout** fisheries are on year-round seasons, although many waters receive hatchery fish plants along with April 26-opening lakes in other regions. Paul Hoffarth, WDFW district fish biologist from Pasco, noted three Tri-Cities area lakes recently received large triploid trout averaging well over a pound each - Dalton Lake northeast of the Snake River's Ice Harbor Dam in Franklin County, Powerline Lake northwest of Mesa in Franklin County, and juveniles-only (under 15) Columbia Park Pond near Kennewick in Benton County.

Eric Anderson, WDFW district fish biologist from Yakima, noted that large amounts of **triploid** rainbow **trout** have been planted in Mud, Myron, Fio Rito and Mattoon lakes in Yakima County. Clear, Dog, Leech and Lost lakes will likely not be planted with triploids until May due to snow and difficult access conditions. Hatchery surplus broodstock rainbows, that run seven to eight pounds each, recently went into I-82 Ponds 1 and 2, and Tim's Pond.

All details of how many fish have been stocked and where are available on WDFW's South Central Region webpage at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg3/index.htm>.

The biggest fishing draw in the region this year may be spring chinook salmon, with run forecasts indicating large numbers returning to the Columbia River, Hoffarth said. Currently, retention of hatchery-marked (adipose-fin-clipped) chinook is allowed on the Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Rapids Dam, with some area restrictions, through May 10.

"With the return of spring chinook running late again this year, the best fishing in the John Day Pool or Lake Umatilla will likely be during the final ten days of the season," Hoffarth said. "The spring chinook forecast for the Umatilla River is also well above normal and should lead to good catches in the Columbia River near Umatilla, Oregon."

WDFW has proposed opening several sport fisheries for spring chinook in portions of the Columbia, Snake, and Yakima rivers. These fisheries will be opened by emergency rule change and are dependent upon actual returns meeting forecast expectations. They would likely open around May 1 and be restricted to specific areas with special regulations. Hoffarth advises anglers to watch for special openings on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

Bass anglers are beginning to catch some nice pre-spawn smallmouth in the lower Yakima River, Hoffarth reported. "These fish will migrate farther upstream over the next few weeks," he said. WDFW now maintains multiple primitive boat launch sites in the lower Yakima River.

Hoffarth reminded anglers the Columbia River's John Day Pool is now closed to the retention of **white sturgeon**. Catch-and-release fishing for sturgeon is permitted in the John Day Pool,

except for the sturgeon sanctuary located from the I-82 bridge at Umatilla upstream to McNary Dam. "This area is also closed to all angling for sturgeon from May 1 to July 31," Hoffarth said. The Columbia River from McNary Dam to Priest Rapids Dam is currently open for sturgeon, including the Snake River upstream to Ice Harbor.

Columbia River **walleye** catch has slowed, but will likely begin to pick up with warmer weather, Hoffarth reported.

Registration is underway for two "Fishing Kids" events in the region that provide opportunities to introduce children 5 to 14 years of age to fishing. One is on Saturday, May 3, at Columbia Park Pond in Kennewick, co-sponsored by the Kennewick Parks Department. Call 509-585-4293 for details. The other is Saturday, May 10, at Sarge Hubbard Park Pond in Yakima, co-sponsored by Yakima Parks Department. Call 509-575-6020 for details.

Reader Email -

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

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Grant McOmie "let go," but has "not been fired":

***<http://www.oregonlive.com/outdoors/oregonian/index.ssf?/base/sports/1208917518292290.xml&coll=7>**

2008 Halibut sport season map:

***<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/mrp/finfish/halibut/seasonmaps/2008.asp>**

Halibut length-weight table:

***<http://www.iphc.washington.edu/HALCOM/pubs/bulletin/lenwtimpchart.htm>**

Weekly Quote – "As no man is born an artist, so no man is born an angler." - Izaak Walton

GOOD LUCK!