

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 2<sup>nd</sup> – May 8<sup>th</sup>, 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 over 10,000 chinook streaming over Bonneville Dam in recent days, anglers are still hopeful that additional time could be a possibility on the mainstem. Biologists still can't make that call until the peak day of passage is certain, which may still be well over a week away. A large surge is needed to make this scenario a possibility.

Sturgeon action has heated up on the mainstem Columbia as effort from the mouth to Bonneville Dam showed significant increase this last week. The best action remains in the Longview to Portland stretch. The Columbia River below the Wauna Powerlines will close from May 1<sup>st</sup> through May 9<sup>th</sup> in an effort to prolong the estuary fishery.

Counts are improving as the water temperature rises at Willamette Falls. Spring chinook totals remain dismal but both winter and summer steelhead counts are decent. Trollers have been catching very few springers. Summer steelhead are making a good show in the Oregon City area where savvy anglers are finding success backtrolling plugs for them. It appears the system may be in for a good run. Sturgeon fishing has been good in the lower river and in the Multnomah Channel.

**Pro guide Jim Stevenson (503-881-5289)** reports the Willamette seems to be producing at minimal levels.

High water and strong flows will be the rule at the North Santiam for some time with snowmelt and spring rains keeping the level up. Fishing is slow in mid-40 degree water.

The lower Clackamas has been delivering fresh summer steelhead although action slowed when the water level rose over the weekend.

Steelheading has been slow in the Sandy although a few summers have made it up to the hatchery trap on Cedar Creek.

While hatches have been massive at times on the McKenzie, trout have only recently keyed on dries.

Scheduled to be planted with trout this week are Bethany Pond, Blue Lake, Commonwealth Lake, Dorman Pond, Haldeman Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Huddelston Pond, Mt Hood College Pond, Salmonberry Lake, Sheridan Pond, Silver Creek Reservoir, Detroit Reservoir, Hills Creek, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie below Leaburg and Salt Creek.

**Northwest –** Recent rain freshets have brought up river levels to fishable shape again. Even though winter steelhead season is dropping off and spring chinook have yet to ramp up, fish are available. Gus Gates of Florence took a 7-pound hatchery summer steelhead from the Wilson River on Tuesday.

The Nestucca is also an option for an early summer steelhead or spring salmon while the Trask offers up only spring chinook in the coming months.

The inshore May 1<sup>st</sup> halibut opener could produce some fair fishing on the north coast. Seas are forecasted to be friendly but a wind chop is expected to build by the weekend making fishing uncomfortable for a while. Other bottomfish are legal to retain in the inshore halibut season but not on the all-depth fishery. For complete regulations, log onto:  
[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/docs/2008\\_Sport\\_Ocean\\_Regulations.pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/docs/2008_Sport_Ocean_Regulations.pdf)

Cullaby Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County), Sunset Lake and Vernonia Pond are scheduled for trout stocking this week.

**Southwest** – Halibut season opens seven days a week May 1st inside the 40 fathom line with the first all depth fishery May 8<sup>th</sup> through 10th. Following a record year in 2007, fishing is expected to be very good.

The Umpqua has been heating up for spring chinook with anglers taking fish to 20 pounds and one fish reported over the 40-pound mark.

Rogue anglers experienced an improvement in spring Chinook catches recently with water temperatures hitting the magic 52-degree mark for the first time. The Birthday Hole has been a hotspot where boat and bank fishers scored good numbers of fresh springers.

As recently as Monday this week, ocean conditions have allowed safe bar crossings allowing bottom fishers out of Brookings Harbor and Gold Beach to quickly fill limits of rockfish and lingcod. Beach casters have continued to take limits of surfperch.

Anglers hit Diamond Lake for the opener on April 26th to catch trout in the 16 to 18 inch range through the ice. It may remain iced-over for another two weeks.

Scheduled for planting with hatchery trout are Powers Pond and Floras Lake.

**Eastern** – The Deschutes fished very well on the opener of the entire lower river with fly rodders landing trout to 20 inches or better.

Kokanee fishing at Green Peter has been slow with anglers challenged to find any schools.

**Pro guide Steve Fleming (1-888-624-9424)** that the warming trend may trigger high flows for John Day bass anglers in search of smallmouth trophies. Flows should stabilize when the weather pattern becomes more consistent.

**SW Washington** – Anglers are anxiously watching dam counts at Bonneville to trigger the Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries. Recent reports indicate the fishery is beginning to bolster with trollers likely to take the majority of salmon. Effort will increase dramatically in the coming weeks. Illegal parking in these areas will cost anglers an additional \$75.00 ticket.

The other SW Washington favorites, the Kalama, Cowlitz and Lewis Rivers are producing some catches of spring chinook and summer steelhead. The Lewis seems to be the favored system.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Sturgeon fishing on the mainstem is gaining more interest and catch rates are starting to reflect just why that is. For the Bonneville area, the weekend creel showed 10 legal white sturgeon kept, plus two oversize and nine sublegal sturgeon released for 11 boats. That's one of the best checks of the season. It's also unrealistic to think this area will continue to produce given the fact this fishery closes on May 1<sup>st</sup> lasting through the month of July. The section from Marker 85 upstream to Bonneville Dam is the area affected. Historically, this section of river produces quite well for keeper sturgeon and maybe with the flows we're likely to have this year, the flows downstream of Marker 85 could be strong enough to support some good catches. The fish should be present and willing to bite even better as the water warms.

Downstream, the stretch from Portland to Longview is also beginning to show some promise. Anglers fishing this stretch checked nine legal white sturgeon and three oversize, four legal and 98 sublegal sturgeon released for 7 boats. This is pretty common for this stretch of water this time of year and catches should remain somewhat stable in the coming weeks.

Most folks can't get their mind off of the spring chinook season that we just got off of. It's hard to put the good fishing behind us. It's still too early to determine if sport anglers will get any additional time to fish on the mainstem below Bonneville Dam. Catch estimates for the sportfishery indicate that anglers took just over 20,000 keeper springers from this fishery when the fishery was modeled for a catch of only 19,000 fish.

The season remains open upstream of Bonneville Dam (to McNary) with catches beginning to ramp up in these upstream impoundments. WDF&W reported that below the John Day Dam, bank anglers were averaging a springer for every 5.6 rods, and boat anglers were reeling in a fish for every 9.3 rods.

The Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries are starting to bump up on pressure and catch as well. **Pro guide Dave Johnson (503-201-4292)** reports, "I'm starting my Drano Lake season in SW Washington. I fished it yesterday for the first time this year and we got two fish for two clients. Reports have been of slow fishing but with the counts rising as well as water temps, I'm expecting things to start taking off reel good." Pit tags place in returning adults are also monitored at Bonneville Dam. The early results indicate a good batch of fish headed for this fishery.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Sturgeon will be on the minds of most metro anglers if you're looking to the Columbia to recreate this weekend. With the pending closures however, opportunities will be further constricted. The May 1 – May 9 closure will be effecting anglers pursuing sturgeon downstream of the Wauna Powerlines to Buoy 10 and the upstream closure of Marker 85 to Bonneville Dam will also have an impact on catch rates. That leaves the gorge fishery from Marker 85 downstream and not all that bad of an option as high flows could still produce good catches. Smelt will be a top bait with sand shrimp a close second.

The Portland to Longview stretch should also continue to boot out keepers although not the catch rates we've been seeing in the gorge however. Smelt will be a top bait here too. It's too early to understand how the May 10<sup>th</sup> opener will go for estuary fishers but high, cold water may put a damper on a good start for this fishery. Only time will tell.

Salmon anglers will still have to pursue their quarry above Bonneville Dam. The Dalles and John Day Dams are the best places to intercept these high quality fish and effort and catch is building. This has historically been a localized fishery and truthfully, I don't have a lot of information on what techniques are employed here. One thing is for sure, if the numbers don't keep going up at Bonneville Dam, some modifications may be in store for this fishery if the run is determined to be

coming in under-predicted.

Some summer steelhead are starting to show in the tributary fisheries downstream of Bonneville Dam. Far from peak however, these fisheries may provide some fair opportunity for anglers in the coming weeks. Check regulations closely for open areas.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report** –While the springer run in the lower Willamette is predicted to be 34,000, a poor season, fewer than 16,000 are expected to cross the Falls. Sturgeon fishing is fair to good for keeper-sized fish and has bailed out more than a few fishless springer runs. Be aware that the popular boat ramp at Clackamette Park is closed for a week while new docks are being installed.

**Pro guide Jim Stevenson (503-881-5289)** reports, "The Willamette seems to be producing at minimal levels, given the amount of pressure it is receiving. Its tough to get excited about fishing it given the high fuel prices etc, for those of us who have to commute to fish it."

The McKenzie remains high this week and fishing is slow to fair.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Multnomah Channel should deliver spotty but steady catches of spring Chinook to trollers using green label plug-cut herring. Sellwood boaters will take a few and down low near Kelly Point Park should be modestly productive. Fish early in the day for the best results. Sand shrimp & herring are expected to be top baits for sturgeon with squid and smelt also getting bites. Shad will be in the Willamette in fishable number toward the end of May. If, that is, the water warms up by then.

Anglers may expect to find the McKenzie dropping in the coming week which, combined with warmer, dryer weather, will improve fishing. Expect to see green McKenzie Caddisflies hatching.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports** – While steelhead are entering the Clackamas, it's darned few with the water still cold. When they're in the Clackamas, they waste no time - they're on the move and don't seem to hold anywhere. Anglers are catching the occasional fish but the problem of low water temps is reflected in the slow bite. The good news is that it's not crowded as few are even trying it. Give the smolts a break; toss lures instead of bait.

The Sandy is not seeing much in the way of action or angler participation. While a lone spring Chinook has been confirmed as caught a couple of weeks ago, no additional reports have been forthcoming.

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Effort remains low on most north coast bodies of water. River conditions were ideal at mid-week on several area rivers and steelhead are still available for those trying their luck. I put in a half day drift on the Wilson River on 4/29, drifting from Siskeyville to Mills Bridge with Gus Gates and Jim Carlson working the rods. Gus managed 2 steelhead, both hatchery but one fish was dark but the other was a nice fresh summer run steelhead. Both fish were caught on a K-11 Kwifish (blue pirate) in about 5 feet of water with Gulp! power spray- crawdad scent. We never saw another boat although there was a boat trailer at each of the two downstream take-outs. It was still cold on the water with snow still in the coast range at the higher elevations!

We did work larger plugs in hopes of a springer but came up empty. There have been confirmed

springers caught in the Tillamook watershed; I'm just not sure what body of water they came from.

Sturgeon tides were poor this week but that is due to change and ocean conditions were rough barring any ocean crossings.

**The Guide's Forecast** – A nice minus tide is on tap for the weekend here in Tillamook County. It may still be too early to get excited about bay fishing for springers but there is likely to be some effort out there. Spinners in the upper bay may produce some results but anglers may still want to take advantage of the higher water conditions and float a boat again on the Wilson, Trask or Nestucca Rivers. Try larger gear or eggs in the deeper holes but plugs in the K-11 or K-13 sizes could produce either a steelhead or a chinook this time of year. The water could drop down to levels where fish will be expected to hold pretty well.

Sturgeon fishing may also be an option for Tillamook Bay anglers with sand shrimp a top bait. The ocean forecast looks fairly promising for weekend saltwater anglers but check ocean conditions before heading out. It can be quite volatile this time of year.

Crabbing remains poor.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Pro guide Bill Kremers (541-754-6411) reports, "Had a bottom fishing trip out of Depoe Bay last weekend. Fishing was good for both lings and a variety of bottom fish. The best fishing was on the reef off of Lincoln City in only 60 feet of water. I will have a seminar on Fishing the Oregon Coast at Joe's in Salem on Saturday morning between ten and noon. All depth halibut season starts next week on Thursday the 8th, hoping for a calm ocean. There will be some big tide exchanges so be carefully crossing the bar."

Bernie Taylor holds up a cabezon from the above trip with Kremers.



Boats launching out of Newport recently have found quick rockfish limits. Ocean crabbing, however, is poor, as is crabbing in Yaquina Bay.

The Alsea River closes to salmon and steelhead fishing on May 1st.

Boats launching out of Winchester Bay earlier this week took advantage of the bounty of bottom fish available and returned to port with limits of ling cod and rockfish. Ocean crabbing has remained poor.

With nearshore halibut opening May 1st and the first all-depth opportunity May 8th through 10th, anglers are reminded that rockfish may not be on board with halibut during the all-depth fishing periods. Combo catches of salmon (when applicable) and tuna (when available) are allowed.

Catches of springers are good enough in the lower Rogue now to make it worth the trip. It probably won't achieve red hot status this year as the run numbers are predicted to be lower this year. Spinner-anchovy rigs are being used for the most part and for that reason, responsible for the majority of hookups here.

Spring Chinook fishing in the lower Rogue are good enough to make it worth the trip, It probably won't achieve 'red-hot' status this season with run numbers predicted to be below average. Spinner-anchovy rigs are most widely used and for that reason are responsible for the majority of hookups.

With surf perch fishing off the hook this year (so to speak), it's natural to receive inquiries requesting details. See **Reader Email** below to find specific locations to do some beach casting.

I (Michael) read an article in the Curry Coastal Pilot that mentioned the difficulty many anglers have in getting pile perch to bite. These bay perch, as the name implies, feed around dock and other pilings. When vacationing at Hood Canal on Puget Sound as a youngster, I'd watch these fish, some to three pounds, swim lazily under the dock at dawn while grazing around the barnacle-covered cement pilings. These perch are skittish; scattering at a shadow or the splash of lead into the water but they're not the least leader shy. Baiting a hook with a scavenger crab, we'd lay the rod flat on the dock with a few inches of the rod tip over the water. When the tip twitched it'd be fish on. Fooling them was easy but landing was another matter. They run in circles, often around one of the concrete pillars. Those barnacles are sharp. Fish off. Incidentally, they're not premium table fare but great fun to catch on appropriate tackle.

While black rockfish are most prevalent in catches, blues are also in the mix and the brilliant vermilion rockfish have been extra large this year as are quillbacks. Cabezon are frequently caught and returned as offering too little return on the angler's cleaning investment. Cabbies are one of the best examples of a fish that's all head. Keep the big ones, though; the meat is delectable. Ling cod numbers have been good this season and are prized for their fighting ability and as a dinner entree.

The Chetco, Coos and Coquille rivers will re-open to salmon, trout and steelhead on May 24th.

The Eugene Register-Guard remarked that conditions at Diamond Lake made for an "ideal opener" last weekend, but it wasn't ideal for trolling. With the entire lake frozen, cutting holes in the ice and still fishing was the only option available. On the other hand, catches of fat trout in the 16 to 18 inch range was the norm and the weather Saturday allowed anglers to shed coats and bask in the sunshine. All manner of bait has been effective here. Just stick it in your ice hole.

**Central and Eastern Oregon – Pro guide Steve Fleming (1-888-624-9424)** reports from the John Day, "This last week has been a mixed bag, with high & off color water, but we have had good success, again on the Master Angler smallmouth and Trophy fish. Carolina rig, 1/8 oz leadhead, Spinnerbaits, and large floating crankbaits have all produced Master Angler Smallmouth. The prediction is for the river to rise because of the warm weather we have been having, 78 degrees on the water today, and the rains that are coming our way. The river may blow out by Thursday, but come back in by Saturday?"

Trout fishing on the Deschutes was only fair earlier this week in the Warm Springs To Maupin stretch with nymphs producing

best. With thousands of spring Chinook crossing at Bonneville daily it won't be long until a trip to Sherars Falls becomes worthwhile.

Suttle Lake has been fishing well for kokanee averaging 12 inches. Jig fishing has been effective.

While Wickiup is producing the occasional large German Brown, as with many location it's slow due to cold water temperatures. Fishing will improve here with warmer weather. Green Peter was very slow over the past weekend.

**Northwest Trout –** The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will host a free youth fishing event at Commonwealth Lake in Beaverton on

Saturday, May 3rd from 9 AM to 2 PM. ODFW staff and volunteers will be on hand to help participants learn how to bait a hook, cast a rod and land the catch. Kids 13 and under do not require a license. In order to increase the fun factor, ODFW will stock 2,000 legal-sized rainbow trout and purchase approximately 100 six-pounders from Island Springs Hatchery for the event. Commonwealth is a three-acre lake located in Cedar Hills in Beaverton.

Another free youth fishing event will take place from 9 AM to 2 PM at Hebo Lake on Saturday, May 3rd. The ODFW will provide rods, reels, tackle and bait for use by young anglers who are fishing for the first time or do not have their own fishing equipment. Watch for the sign for Hebo Lake on Highway 22 just south of the town of Hebo.

The 20th Annual Hagg Lake Fishing Derby will take place on May 10th this year at Boat Ramp C from 6 AM to 2 PM.

Detroit Reservoir has been fishing fairly well for holdover trout and this week it will receive and additional 10,000 legal-sized hatchery trout.

The planting of Salt Creek has that appears on the stocking schedule has been postponed. A landslide has resulted in poor water quality here.

Scheduled to be planted with trout in the Willamette Valley this week are Bethany Pond, Blue Lake, Commonwealth Lake, Dorman Pond, Haldeman Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Huddelston Pond, Mt Hood College Pond, Salmonberry Lake, Sheridan Pond, Silver Creek Reservoir, Hills Creek, Leaburg Lake and the McKenzie below Leaburg. Scheduled for planting with hatchery trout are Powers Pond and Floras Lake in the Northwest Zone.

**Oregon Bass & Panfish** - Willamette Valley bass fishers, take heart! The weather will get

warmer (eventually) and local waters will deliver the quality fishing that we have grown to expect. Just move all the dates on your calendar ahead three weeks or so.

Temperate coastal lakes are starting to fish well for warmwater gamefish. Tenmile has been producing both largemouth bass and crappie recently.

### **Washington fishing reports:**

#### **From the WDF&W Weekender Report April 30 - May 13, 2008**

##### **North Puget Sound**

The **blackmouth** season in the region comes to a close at the end of today (April 30), but saltwater anglers still have good reason to get out on Puget Sound, where **halibut** fisheries are under way and the popular **shrimp** season gets started in just a few days. In the freshwater, the lowland lake fishing season recently opened and anglers can cast for **trout** at numerous lakes throughout the region.

The weather was good for the lowland-lakes opener, but catch rates for **trout** anglers were slightly down this year, said Jon Anderson, WDFW resident trout manager. According to creel checks, the lake that produced the largest catch in the region was King County's Pine Lake, where 92 anglers took home 247 trout and released 365. In terms of the highest catch rates, Island County's Goss Lake tops the list. Two anglers at Goss caught their limit of five trout on opening day.

Elsewhere, anglers in Skagit County averaged 4.4 trout per rod at Heart and McMurray lakes, while those at Sixteen Lake averaged 4.3 fish per rod. Anglers fishing Snohomish County's Howard Lake and San Juan County's Cascade Lake also did well. Anglers at those two lakes averaged four trout per rod. In Whatcom County, anglers at Toad Lake averaged 3.8 fish per rod, the same average as those fishing King County's Steel Lake.

"We couldn't have asked for nicer weather for the lowland lake opener," said Anderson. "Anglers of all ages caught lots of nice trout, including several real lunkers, but because waters remained cool so long into spring, catch rates tended to be lower in many lakes. However, the fish will still be there later in this five-to six-month season."

Under statewide rules, anglers have a daily limit of five trout on most lakes. Released legal-sized trout, caught with bait, count toward the daily bag limit. Complete information on stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available on WDFW's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>).

Out on Puget Sound, the **blackmouth** season closes at the end of the day April 30, but **halibut** fisheries continue in the region. The usual hot spots - Mutiny and Admiralty bays, as well as Eastern and Partridge banks - 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 bottom dwellers, such as **lingcod**, **rockfish** and **cabezon**.

While out on the Sound, bring some **shrimp** pots. The popular 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**

Plenty of trout remain after cold lake temperatures lowered catch rates for anglers on the opening day of **trout** season. Meanwhile, a final spring **razor clam** dig is set for May 3-7, **shrimp** season gets under way May 3 in most areas of Puget Sound, and **halibut** and **lingcod** seasons expand to more areas.

Greeted by sunny skies, anglers of all ages came out for the opening day of **trout** season, but the fish were slow to bite in many lakes, said Jon Anderson, WDFW fish biologist. "The boat ramps were busy and people caught some nice trout, but the water's still a bit too cold to get many of the fish to bite," Anderson said. "Once it warms up, people should be getting their limits."

According to opening-day reports, Anderson Lake in Jefferson County gave up 3.75 fish per angler, while Clear Lake in Pierce County yielded 3.5 fish per rod. Anglers at Stump Lake in Mason County averaged about 2.8 fish per rod. In Grays Harbor County, the winner of the Kid's Derby at Aberdeen Lake landed a rainbow trout weighing 14.2 pounds, and an angler won the derby at Failor Lake with an 11-pound, 11-ounce rainbow.

Weekly reports and information on WDFW trout-stocking plans are available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>.

On the saltwater, recreational **shrimp** fishing opens Saturday, May 3 in most areas of Puget Sound. The exception is the Discovery Bay Shrimp District near Port Townsend, which will remain closed to both spot and non-spot shrimp fishing this year.

Marine Area 11-extending from the northern tip of Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge-will be open on Saturday, May 3 only, to keep the recreational catch within the area's spot shrimp harvest quota.

Various fishing schedules will be in effect in the following areas:

- Marine Areas 4 (east of the Bonilla Line), 5, 6 (excluding the Discovery Bay Shrimp District) and 13 will be open daily beginning May 3 at 7 a.m. until the quota is reached, or through Sept. 15, whichever comes first. Marine Area 13 closes for spot shrimp May 31. Coon strip and pink shrimp season closes Oct. 15.
- Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) will be open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 3, 7, 10 and 14, or until the quota is reached, whichever comes first. Additional dates and times may be announced if sufficient quota is remaining.

More information on shrimp seasons and rules is available on the WDFW shellfish hotline at 1-866-880-5431, or online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/>.

Still hankering for clams? If so, good tides should help **razor clam** diggers get their last limits of the season May 3-7, said Dan Ayres, WDFW fish biologist. "The low tides should offer excellent digging opportunities, especially if the weather cooperates," Ayres said.

Long Beach and Twin Harbors will open for morning digs May 3-7, while Copalis and Mocrocks are scheduled to open May 4-5 only. Each day's dig on those beaches must be completed by noon.

Ayres reminds diggers that portions of the beaches at Long Beach and Twin Harbors are closed to protect nesting **western snowy plovers**, which are endangered. At Long Beach, the closed area is located north of the Oysterville Road from the state park boundary north to Leadbetter Point. At Twin Harbors, the closed area is located from just south of Midway Beach Road to the first beach-access trail at Grayland Beach State Park. The closed portion at each beach includes the area beyond the mean high tide line.

"Signs clearly mark the area and instruct people to stay on the hard-packed sand," Ayres said.

Dates and low tides for the dig are:

- Saturday, May 3, 5:27 a.m., -0.3 ft: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only
- Sunday, May 4, 6:16 a.m., -1.2 ft: Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks
- Monday, May 5, 7:04 a.m., -1.9 ft: Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks
- Tuesday, May 6, 7:51 a.m., -2.3 ft: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only
- Wednesday, May 7, 8:39 a.m., -2.4 ft: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only

All diggers must have an applicable 2008-09 fishing license to dig razor clams on any beach. A license is required for anyone age 15 or older. 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>.

Under WDFW rules, harvesters may take no more than 15 razor clams and must keep the first 15 taken, regardless of size or condition. Each digger's limit must be kept in a separate container.

Meanwhile, along the Strait of Juan de Fuca, recreational **halibut** anglers in the Port Angeles area (Marine Area 6) pulled in 60 of the flatfish over the April 26-27 weekend. Next month, those with a competitive streak can try for a \$5,000 first prize at the 8th Annual Halibut Derby sponsored by the Port Angeles Salmon Club. The two-day derby will be held May 24-25 near the Dungeness Spit. Ticket information is available at <http://www.swainsinc.com> or (360) 452-2363.

Halibut fishing in marine areas 6-11 and 13 will continue to run five days a week Thursday through Monday through June 13.

Anglers looking for more opportunity can soon cast their lines wider as the following halibut fisheries open:

- **Columbia River (Ilwaco):** Marine Area 1 will open May 1, and continue 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 open on May 13, and continue 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 Neah Bay (Marine Area 4) got underway April 16 and people are generally doing pretty well, especially when the wind is in their favor, said Scott Barbour, WDFW fish biologist. "There were at least 30 boats out there this past weekend," Barbour said. "People did much better on Sunday when the wind shifted from the east to the west."

Anglers will have more opportunity to fish for lingcod - as well as **rockfish** and **cabezon** - when the fishery gets under way May 1 in marine areas 5-13. During the hook-and-line season for lings (May 1-June 15), there's a one-fish daily limit, which must be a minimum size of 26 inches and a maximum size of 40 inches. For rockfish, there is no minimum size and anglers must keep the first legal rockfish caught. Anglers fishing for cabezon have a daily limit of two fish, and there is no minimum size limit. Because specific regulations and restrictions apply to these fisheries, anglers are advised to check the 2008-09 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet for more information (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

On the Olympic Peninsula, the Hoh River below the mouth of Willoughby Creek, will open for **salmon** fishing May 16 through Aug. 31, Wednesdays through Sundays only. Anglers are limited to six fish per day; only one adult may be retained. All wild chinook must be released. Before heading out, anglers should check the 2008-09 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet for boundaries and regulations.

### **Southwest Washington:**

After providing several weeks of good fishing in the lower Columbia River, the **spring chinook** run suddenly stalled out in mid-April, leaving anglers and fishery managers watching and waiting. By month's end, the count of fish passing Bonneville Dam jumped above 3,500 per day, but questions remain whether the run is late or lower than expected.

"We're in kind of a holding pattern right now," said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. "It should be prime time for the next couple of weeks, and hopefully - with water temperatures warming - the fish will begin to move in the mainstem and into tributaries."

Some of the best fishing during the last week of April was just below John Day Dam, where bank anglers were averaging a springer for every 5.6 rods, and boat anglers were reeling in a fish for every 9.3 rods. A total of 45 boats were counted in the three-mile stretch of the river there April 25.

Some of those anglers moved upriver from Drano Lake, where boat anglers averaged just one fish for every 12.8 rods that week. On the Wind River, boat anglers averaged a fish for every 14.6 rods and bank fishing was slow.

One positive sign is that increasing numbers of spring chinook tagged with passive integrated transponders (PIT) and bound for the Wind River have been counted at Bonneville Dam. Up to 10,000 spring chinook - more than double last year's return - are predicted to enter the Wind River, according to the pre-season forecast.

Hymer reminds anglers planning to fish the Wind River and Drano Lake that Skamania County is now charging a fee to park or launch a boat in those areas. The one-day cost is \$5, although annual passes can also be purchased. "A ticket will cost you \$75, so I'd recommend paying the parking and launch fee," Hymer said.

Boat anglers are also catching some **bass** in the Bonneville Pool and some **walleye** in The Dalles Pool.

Below Bonneville Dam, the mainstem Columbia River remains closed to fishing for **chinook** and **steelhead**, although anglers are catching some of both species in the Cowlitz, Kalama and Lewis rivers. On the Lewis, almost as many summer-run steelhead were trapped at Merwin Dam as spring chinook through April 23.

"Spring chinook have been slow to move into those rivers, but summer steelhead appear to be right on time," Hymer said. Skamania Hatchery on the Washougal River has also reported taking in the first summer-run steelhead of the year.

**STURGEON** on the other hand, are available for the catching right now from the dam downriver to the I-5 Bridge. Rising water temperatures are helping to improve the bite, especially in the stretch between Vancouver and Woodland, Hymer said. Fish may be retained Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays only.

To protect spawning fish, the area from Navigation Marker 85 upstream to Bonneville Dam closes to fishing for sturgeon from May through July. Also closing to sturgeon fishing during that period is the stretch from John Day Dam downstream 2.4 miles to the west end of the grain silo at Rufus Oregon and from McNary Dam downstream 1.5 miles to the Highway 82 Bridge.

Starting May 10, sturgeon retention will reopen in the estuary below the Wauna powerlines. After May 10, only sturgeon measuring 45 to 60 inches may be retained daily in that stretch of the Columbia River. The season for this area is scheduled to remain open through June 24 though the actual ending date depends on the 13,143 fish quota being met.

Northwestern Reservoir on the White Salmon River was the area hotspot on the April 26 lowland lakes **trout** opener and it should continue to provide good fishing in the weeks ahead. WDFW sampled 25 anglers with 94 trout, a 3.76 per rod average at the 97-acre reservoir behind Condit Dam. The daily limit for trout in Washington is five.

At Kidney Lake near North Bonneville, 57 anglers were sampled with 72 trout, a 1.26 average. In Klickitat County, the numbers were: Rowland Lake, 59 rods, 130 trout, 2.2 average; Spearfish Lake, 33 rods, 70 trout, 2.1 average; and Horsethief Lake, 14 rods with 14 trout, 1.0 average. For information on weekly trout plants see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>.

### **Eastern Washington:**

Trout fishing on opening weekend at many lakes across the region proved a little slower than usual, mostly due to lingering winter-like conditions, according to Eastern Region Fish Program Manager John Whalen. Cold water and ice cover on some northern lakes kept catch rates lower this year, he explained.

"The weather for anglers was the best we have seen in weeks with clear, sunny skies and little if any wind," Whalen said. "Lots of folks were out, but some of the traditional best bets for opening day were off substantially."

Whalen noted, for example, that creel checks at southwest Spokane County's West Medical Lake and at Stevens County's Cedar Lake indicated an average harvest of less than one fish per angler. Other lakes that often produce lots of five-trout limits on the opener fared better, but were still slow. Starvation Lake in Stevens County had an average harvest of less than three fish per angler and Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County averaged slightly more than three fish per angler.

"On the other hand, Williams Lake in southwest Spokane County and Rocky Lake in Stevens County actually did pretty well, each with a harvest average of about four fish per angler," Whalen said. "Fishing will definitely pick up at many more of these lakes as the water temperatures warm. And since these fisheries are open for five or six months, this slow, cold start should extend good catch rates through the summer."

WDFW fish hatchery crews will continue stocking lakes that could not be reached due to snow and ice before the opener. All details of fish stocking are available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>.

In the south end of the region, catch rates have varied during the special Snake River hatchery spring **chinook salmon** fishing season.

Glen Mendel, WDFW district fish biologist in Dayton, said in three days of creel checks on the river portion below Ice Harbor Dam, which opened April 22, catch rates have been measured from 2.5 to 6.5 hours of effort per chinook from shore during weekdays, and up to 37.7 hours per fish during the weekend.

"Angler participation has been low in the Ice Harbor stretch, but some of those who are out are catching spring chinook up to 42 inches," Mendel said. "We don't currently have catch rates for boats there, but we estimate that about 75 chinook have been harvested since the season opened."

Mendel has just two days of creel checks on the Little Goose Dam stretch that opened April 24. "So far Little Goose has also been slow for numbers of anglers, but they are catching a few fish there as well," he said. "Catch rates that we do have vary from 8.6 to 53.4 hours of effort per fish, depending on the day and location, or angler type."

Fish counts at Bonneville have risen to about 4,000 per day, Mendel noted. "So the run is coming and fishing should improve over the next week or two," he said.

### **North Central Washington:**

Relatively low pressure and few bites on the April 26 fishing season opener in the Columbia Basin only means there are plenty of **trout** left and great days of fishing ahead, said Jeff Korth, WDFW district fish biologist from Moses Lake.

"I recommend Park, Blue, and Vic Meyers lakes," Korth said. "We rehabilitated these Grant County waters in 2006 and the fisheries there have improved considerably."

Park and Blue averaged nearly four trout per angler on the opener. Vic Meyers averaged less than two fish per angler. Perch Lake, another Grant County fishery that opened April 26, averaged 3.6 trout per angler. Korth also recommends Perch for improved fishing as spring advances.

Korth also noted that several March 1-opening fisheries in the Basin are continuing to produce good catches, including Quincy, Burke, Dusty and the Caliche lakes. Dry Falls Lake, which is a selective gear fishery that opened April 1, has also been very good.

In the Chelan County district of the region, Art Viola, WDFW fish biologist, reports a similarly slow April 26 fishing season opener, mostly due to persistent cold weather, snow-covered roads and even ice-covered lakes.

"Little or no fish stocking was even possible at Beehive Reservoir and Lilly Lake," Viola said, "but as spring finally arrives we should be able to get those fisheries up to speed."

Chelan County's Wapato Lake provided very slow fishing on the opener, compared to past years, Viola said, with only a one-trout-per-angler average harvest measured. Most of those were the big triploid rainbows stocked just prior to the opener.

In the Okanogan district, Bob Jateff, WDFW fish biologist, also reported a slower than usual season opener due to more winter-like than spring conditions. He expects that when access and water temperatures improve, fishing should be good in traditionally popular waters like Conconully, Spectacle, Wannacut, Pearrygin and Alta lakes in Okanogan County and Jameson Lake in Douglas County.

Jim Brown, WDFW enforcement sergeant, reported that despite overall lower participation and catch rates, the Conconully lakes on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area were among the most popular spots on the opener. "I think some of the best fishing, and largest fish we saw caught, were on Upper Conconully Lake," Brown said. "Ross and Linnell Green of Ellensburg, for example, caught their limits, including an 18-inch, 2-1/2-pound rainbow. They were pretty happy."

While anglers wait for access to improve, Jateff suggested sampling some of the earlier-opening, catch-and-release fisheries in the area. "Davis Lake near Winthrop is producing 10-11-inch rainbows, plus a few carryovers up to 15 inches," he said. "Big and Little Green are two lakes near Omak/Okanogan that are good for rainbows 11 to 12 inches. Rat Lake near Brewster has both rainbow and brown trout to 13 inches. All of these waters are catch-and-release with selective gear rules and only electric motors allowed."

Korth also noted **walleye** fishing should be picking up, with the spawn about over, at Moses Lake, Potholes Reservoir and Banks Lake. A walleye tournament at Potholes is scheduled May 3-4; see <http://www.mardonresort.com/index3.html> for more information.

**Smallmouth bass** fishing on the Basin's big waters should also be good now, Korth said, but anglers must remember to follow the new regulations that go into effect May 1. There's a 10-bass limit, with no minimum size, but only one over 14".

### **South Central Washington:**

The region's many lakes that are open year-round continue to be stocked with catchable-size trout to keep up with fishing demand. Eric Anderson, WDFW district fish biologist from Yakima, notes big **triploid rainbow trout** have been planted in Mud, Myron, Fio Rito and Mattoon lakes in Yakima County. Clear, Dog, Leech and Lost lakes should be planted with triploids soon. 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 and where fish have been stocked are available on WDFW's South Central Region webpage at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/regions/reg3/index.htm>.

Anderson also reminds young fishers and their parents to register for the eighth annual "Fishing Kids" event at Sarg Hubbard Pond in Yakima, scheduled this year on May 10. More than 800 five- to 14-year-old fishers will receive fishing instruction, a rod and reel, and a t-shirt for just \$5 each. Registration deadline is May 2; contact the Yakima Parks and Recreation Department at 509-575-6020.

### **Reader Email -**

Subscriber Bob wrote to ask, "I read your forecasts regular, and also fish surf perch from seaside to the Columbia any chance I get. You are always reporting good surf fishing on " the southwest beaches ". I would like to try there also. What specific area would that be ?"

TGF co-editor Michael Teague replied, "most any ocean beach where the surf breaks close to shore, indicating a steep beach or depression is likely to hold surf perch at this time of year. From now until the perch spawn they will be most numerous and in the best condition for the table. Ocean beaches will hold pinkfin (red tail) surf perch, the preferable target as they're larger and of better flavor and texture than other varieties. Next on the list is the barred surf perch which is a close second.

"Locations on the south coast which have produced surf perch limits include both sides of the Winchuck the Chetco River jetties, particularly the North sides, but be aware that catches from these areas may include striped perch and if your keeping fish to fillet, they're not as desirable. Sportshaven Beach, Mill Beach and the sandy beaches each in front of the Best Western in Brookings have been hotspots.

"While your question was specifically about southwest Oregon, there are some great spots off the north coast as well. The beach access from the rest area north of Rockaway has been productive for me, as has Oceanside depending on how the winter waves have configured the beach. Other places that have produced include Cape Meares, Cape Lookout and Gleneden Beach.

"If you have any other questions regarding bait or tackle, please write to me directly."

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**

ODFW Spring Fishing Forecast:

**[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/docs/Oregon\\_Spring\\_Fishing\\_Forecast.pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/docs/Oregon_Spring_Fishing_Forecast.pdf)**

It's pikeminnow time. Get paid to play. Here's how: **<http://www.pikeminnow.org/>**

**Weekly Quote** – And if the angler catches the fish with difficulty, then there is no man merrier than he is in his spirits. – Dame Juliana Berners

**GOOD LUCK!**