

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **April 24th – April 30th, 2009**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - Anglers are still waiting for the lower Columbia to break loose and they have one day left to witness the epic fishery we have been waiting for all year. Bonneville Dam passage is beginning to pick up which may inspire higher effort on the mainstem on this final day of fishing. Many anglers are skeptical that the run will come in as predicted but fishery managers remain confident that passage will pick up significantly this week. Even if it does, peak passage is still weeks away, likely too late for meaningful additional days for the sport fleet.

The Willamette is 51 degrees at the Falls where over 200 springers and about 650 summers have been counted. The lower river will remain open for spring chinook Thursdays through Saturdays until April 30th. Fishing is fair but best early mornings. The Thursday opener is always the best day to fish and the Oregon City area should produce the best results today and tomorrow. Sturgeon fishing has been fair in the lower river.

Massive caddis hatches are occurring on the McKenzie but trout are responding best to sub-surface offerings.

Side-drifters using bait in the cold water of the Clackamas below Carver are catching summer steelhead and a rare springer.

The Sandy River is producing a few spring chinook but catches are spotty. Results will improve into May although traditionally, mid-April has been a good time to pursue salmon.

Scheduled for trout stocking are Benson Lake, Bethany Pond, Blue Lake, Canby Pond, Commonwealth Lake, Dorman Pond, Hartman Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Huddleston Pond, Silver Creek Reservoir, Timothy Meadows, Blue River above Reservoir, Blue River Reservoir, Carmen Reservoir, Clear Lake, Detroit Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Fall Creek, Foster Reservoir, Freeway Lake East, Green Peter Reservoir, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Roaring River Park Pond, Salmon Creek, Smith Reservoir, Walling Pond, Walter Wirth Lake, Willamette River Coast Fork and Middle Fork above Hills Creek Reservoir.

Northwest – Despite a late season effort, steelheading in the north coast district is waning. Anglers had excellent water conditions over the weekend and with an intermittent springer season, the north coast is still drawing attention for weekend hopefuls.

It's transition time on the north coast and anglers will have to work hard to achieve results. Late winter run steelhead are still available although the quality of fish is poor. A few summer steelhead are in the Nestucca and Wilson Rivers but anglers are awaiting larger numbers of spring chinook to show in the system. Mid-May typically becomes more consistent for salmon but anglers can target sturgeon and bottomfish in the interim.

Sturgeon have been available in Tillamook Bay and anglers working the west channel are finding an occasional keeper. Boats working Bay City over the weekend only came up with light catches of green sturgeon that must be returned to the water. Sand shrimp will make the best bait.

Bottomfishers out of the north coast ports scored good results for seabass and lingcod in the calm

seas. Action should remain good for those species for the next few months.

The North of Falcon halibut opener is fast approaching beginning on May 1st. South of Cape Falcon, the nearshore halibut fisheries also kick off. Anglers should check gear and the reliability of their offshore engines because extensive cruising is often required to achieve results.

Two youth fishing events will be held on Saturday, April 25th, one at Vernonia Pond and the other at Hebo Lake. Both events will run from 9 AM to 2 PM and will be stocked in advance. Alder Lake, Battle Lake, Big Creek Reservoir 1 & 2, Buck Lake, Dune Lake and Elbow Lake are scheduled to be planted with trout.

Southwest – Decent early morning minus tides will provide clam diggers and opportunity for a bivalve bounty.

Pressure for springers is increasing on the mainstem Umpqua around Elkton. Various baits and lures have been effective for chinook averaging 20 pounds although fishing is fairly slow. The first springer of the season was landed on the North Umpqua April 15th.

Spring chinook angling on the lower Rogue slowed over the past week. Anglers plying the deeper slots with toned-down offerings are doing best with the weather turning sunny. Steelheading has been slow to fair at Grants Pass and the upper river.

Bottom fishers out of the Port of Brookings have continued to enjoy good results. The rockfish limit will increase from six to seven per day on May 1st although the ling cod daily limit will remain two fish, 22 inches or better. Nearshore crabbing is worthwhile and has provided a few limits. Surfperch fishing remains good off area beaches.

Scheduled for trout stocking are Upper and Middle Empire Lake, Millicoma Pond, Applegate Reservoir, Medco Pond, Spaulding Pond, Fish Lake, Burma Pond, Dutch Herman Pond, Expo Pond 1, Reinhart Pond, Ben Irving Reservoir, Clearwater Fby #2, Cooper Creek Reservoir, Galesville Reservoir, Hemlock Lake, Lake of the Woods, Lemolo Reservoir Loon Lake and Plat I Reservoir.

The opening of Diamond Lake on Saturday, April 25th is expected to be an ice-fishing event.

Eastern – While the traditional trout season opens on April 25th, many favorite trout lakes are iced over, snowed in or both. Call ahead to local businesses or sports shops for an update on which ones are accessible.

Dry offerings have been effective recently on the Deschutes with decent caddis hatches taking place now.

SW Washington – The Cowlitz remains one of the best SW Washington rivers to target salmon and steelhead on. Bank anglers reported fair catches over the weekend while boat anglers are catching more steelhead than salmon.

The Lewis system remains poor for salmon and steelhead and it's not likely to improve much with such a poor early showing.

Bonneville Dam counts are finally beginning to climb and anglers fishing upstream of the dam in the Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries should start to see catch rates climb. If the run is indeed going to show up this year, daily fish counts at Bonneville will climb substantially in the coming days.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Well, it's over and I'm not sure if anyone is really all that disappointed. Although sport anglers only had fair opportunity for spring Chinook on the Columbia this year, catch results were much more challenging than we had all hoped. Effort continued to noticeably decline, even on the last day as success rates remained low for most of the season.

On Wednesday, the last day of the season, it was quite nice not getting rocked to death on every pass due to the wakes of passing boats. We spent the morning (until 10:30) working the water just upstream of Portco Landing on the Washington side across from the Portland Airport to the railroad bridge just downstream of the I-5 Bridge. We saw very few fish caught but managed one wild one ourselves in the 12-pound range.

Other boats working the area reported poor results as well. Oddly, jacks have been making up a larger percentage of the catch. It's surely a good sign for the future but we thought that last year when we saw higher incidences of jack interceptions. And just where are we tracking this year? Well, one reason why I had high expectations for Wednesday's opener was that Chinook counts were on the rise earlier in the week. As of Wednesday afternoon, we still had less than 5,000 adults cumulatively over Bonneville Dam with a peak passage day of 1,164 on the 21st. That brought the cumulative count to 4,372 adults and 62 jacks as of the 21st. Just over 2,000 steelhead have crossed Bonneville Dam.

A recent report from the Bonneville area comes from **pro guide Joe Salvey (503-349-1411)**. Joe reported good fishing in the Bonneville area for those in the right area. Most recently some of the better fishing had been taking place along the Washington shoreline where fish are more likely to concentrate in higher flows. The "back-channel" was the place to be for backrollers and backbouncers willing to fight the crowds. Just as many of us feared, the fishery will shut down just as the action heats up.

But we're not out of the woods yet. If the run doesn't materialize, sport anglers will fall under heavy scrutiny for overharvesting more than our share of the impacts based on a lower run. The run size update is still well over a week away; we have to reach the mid-point of the run in order to assess what is likely to return. Run numbers will have to ramp up dramatically for a 300,000 fish run to come through.

The river above Bonneville Dam is likely to remain open through the 30th of this month and total impacts have not been reached by the sport or commercial fleet, leaving the door open if the number of adults passing Bonneville begins to increase dramatically. The projected catch for the sport fleet is around 16,600 adults with about 3,100 wild fish released. The Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries are likely to light up this week and peak in the next few weeks. New regulations further restrict boat anglers so check WDF&W regulations before participating in these fisheries.

With salmon the only game in town, I-5 travelers will see a bustling waterway drop to a deserted wasteland this week. Sturgeon is an option on the open days but effort has been low with the primary focus on salmon. Effort will likely begin to increase as water temperatures are beginning to reach a more favorable status for biting sturgeon hitting 50 degrees on Wednesday.

Walleye and bass upriver is also likely to pick up in the near future.

The Guide's Forecast – With no fishery on tap, anglers will focus their efforts on the Willamette in the coming weeks. Anglers willing to target salmon above Bonneville might find fruitful rewards in the coming weeks. Success will obviously hinge on dam passage and we'll certainly know more in the coming days.

Sturgeon anglers may soon become inspired as reports of success to begin to come in from Bonneville downstream. Anglers will have to adhere to the sanctuary restriction beginning May 1st. Flows are heavy so those targeting sturgeon in the river need to be prepared with heavy lead and strategic anchoring.

Pray for heavy salmon passage in the coming days.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Water temperature at Willamette Falls is up to 54 degrees as of April 22nd and 55 at Oregon City. Effort for sturgeon increased last week with 84 boats taking 25 legal-sized sturgeon. Wild steelhead over 24 inches may be retained on the Willamette basin waters above the Falls although opening dates vary by watershed so check regulations carefully.

Caddis hatches are ongoing at the McKenzie River. See McKenzie River Wooden Boat Festival information below in **Random Links**.

About half the number of springers, summers and winter steelhead have crossed at Willamette Falls as at this time last year. Those low numbers are being reflected in catches on the North Santiam. As of mid-April, 38 winter steelhead and one lonely springer had been counted at Foster Dam on the South Santiam.

Despite the fact that Willamette Valley lakes and ponds are open year-around, heavy trout planting always takes place the week of the traditional trout opener, which falls on April 25th this year. For a complete list, see the **Fisheries Forecast**, above, as well as a link to a map of many of the locations in **Random Links**, below.

Trout have been stocked this week at Hebo Lake and Vernonia Pond for youth fishing events taking place Saturday, April 25th from 9 AM to 2 PM. Tackle will be provided for those who need it and volunteers will be on hand to help and give advice.

The Guide's Forecast – The water temperatures of the lower Willamette should have spring Chinook on the move and springer fishers pulling out the hardware. Catches were fair to good last week and the river is expected to continue producing up to the scheduled closure for springers on April 30th. Sturgeon fishing is expected to produce plenty of shakers and a few keeper-sized fish.

Try the McKenzie early afternoons. If trout are feeding on the surface, that will be the time of day it will occur, making them vulnerable to dry offerings.

Steelheading on the North Santiam is expected to remain slow to fair although the river is a decent level and stable flow.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Those who have put in their time on the Clackamas and know what to use and where to fish have been taking limits of steelhead along with the occasional spring Chinook over the past week. The river is currently running high from snow, which melted during the recent warmer weather.

A few springers are being taken on the lower Sandy but catches are expected to improve into May.

North Coast Fishing Report – Still motivated steelheaders plied the waters of the major north coast streams in hopes for a bright late winter run fish. Most anglers went home disappointed as the

majority of the stock are in the tributaries or in the spawning mode. Some summer fish are available in the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers but hatchery plants of this strain continue to get ramped down.

There are a few late run winter fish available but the bulk of the catch will be made up of darker pre or post spawn adults. These fish don't make good tablefare. Rivers are on the drop now and with no precipitation in the forecast, fresh fish are not likely to make a strong showing this week.

Spring Chinook is on the minds of many, especially given the disappointing Columbia run this year. Four fish are rumored to have been taken to date although those rumors are unconfirmed.

Sturgeon anglers reported fair results in the west channel on the last tide series and with another one over the weekend, prospects are good for a productive weekend. Crabbing remains fair at best in coastal estuaries.

The Guide's Forecast – Opportunities for steelheaders are on the way out on the north coast but motivated anglers may find a rare summer run mixed in with predominately spent winter run fish. River conditions dictate that anglers stick to the lower portions of the rivers and time effort with the tides.

Spring Chinook are also an option for those versed in spinner trolling or backtrolling plugs in the upper bay. Peak fishing should be the last 2 hours of outgoing tide and anglers can couple up their trip by targeting sturgeon as well. The jaws of Tillamook Bay will not be a safe place to fish and unproductive anyway. The ocean forecast is calling for big wind waves and an unfriendly swell. Bottomfishers will not be having a good time this weekend.

Razor clam digging will be a strong option with the peak minus tide happening on Saturday, Sunday and Monday. If the swell is tolerable, the dig should be very productive.

Central & South Coast Reports – Offshore bottom fishers must now stay within the 40 fathom line but this is of little concern with rockfish and ling cod fishing good near shore at this time of year. The daily bag limit will increase to seven rockfish per day starting May 1st.

Oregon halibut season opens May 1st for seven-day-a-week for fishing inside the 40-fathom line. Rockfish are never allowed on a boat with halibut. All depth halibut spring season from Cape Falcon just north of Manzanita to Humbug Mountain near Port Orford starts May 14-16 with additional opportunities on May 21-23, 28-30; and June 4-6. Additional dates will be added as if the quota doesn't fill. It likely won't. The summer all-depth halibut season opens on August 7th.

Discussions have taken place regarding a new dam on the Siletz River, which would create a reservoir at Valsetz. If you would like to express an opinion on the subject, don't miss the meeting scheduled for May 7, 2009, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM at the Monmouth Library located at 168 S. Ecols in Monmouth.

A few spring Chinook are being taken daily from the mainstem Umpqua with the majority of the fish remaining below Yellow Creek. Crabbing has improved in Winchester Bay.

Steelheading on the Coquille has slowed and most of the fish present are spawned out.

As mentioned in the space some weeks ago, Savage Rapids Dam is in the process of being removed on the Rogue River. The process has disabled the fish ladder so Chinook are kegg up downstream, giving anglers an opportunity to catch a few. Drift rigs and plugs have been effective here recently. The lower river has been slow with only a springer being hooked here and there

although with the low, clear water, a freshet would breathe some life into this fishery. Steelheading 'most everywhere on the Rogue is very slow with many of those being hooked spawned-out down-runners.

Wind this weekend off the southwest coast is predicted to be fierce, keeping boats at bay, although a quick early-morning outing may be possible but boaters should use caution with morning outgoing tides. Catches of rockfish and ling cod have been excellent out of Brookings with good numbers of both species holding nearshore at this time of year. Even ocean crabbing has been good with several crabbers taking limits.

Some boats are dropping shrimp traps (available at local sporting goods retailers) in an effort to catch a generous 25-pound per day limit. Rock and jetty fishing has been productive as has surf fishing for perch from beaches but only when wind and wave action allow. Surf perch season is at its peak and will remain so through May.

Diamond Lake was still iced over on Wednesday this week and the opener on Saturday, April 25th. It is sure to be for ice fishing only. The Roseburg News-Review printed a disturbing story Tuesday this week about this Oregon jewel by guest columnist Diana Wales. See Random Links, below, to read it in full.

Central and Eastern Oregon – While many destinations will be unreachable due to snow or unfishable due to ice, Odell, Cultus, Crescent, Crane Prairie, Wickiup, North and South Twin and Paulina among the traditional opening day lakes that are accessible.

From East Lake Resort:

Update - 4/22/2009

“The road into Newberry Caldera is currently being plowed by the county road crews. The gate into the crater is still locked at the 10-mile marker but could be open as early as Friday morning April 24th to allow public access to Paulina Lake which is mostly ice free. Paulina Lake Lodge (541-536-2240) is able to give the most accurate update on the road conditions and will open the gate as soon as there is accessible water. Please continue to check this website for the most recent information as it becomes available. East Lake Resort’s projected opening day is Friday May 22nd. If we can get the resort operational beforehand and the lake is accessible we will certainly open earlier if at all possible. As of April 22nd East Lake was still frozen over with some open water near the hot springs; the resort was still snowed in with county road crews within a half mile.”

The East Lake Resort website will have the latest updates:

<http://www.eastlakeresort.com/default.aspx>

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report April 15 - 28, 2009

North Puget Sound

Blackmouth salmon are still the only game in town for the region's saltwater anglers. But the halibut season in Puget Sound is just around the corner 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 25, 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>).

With waters in every county of the state well stocked before the big opening day, families can keep travel costs down with good fishing close to home, said Phil Anderson, interim director of WDFW. "This may be the best time ever for those who used to fish to get back into it with family and friends," he said. "Costs remain low and our hatchery stocking is at a peak."

Because the lowland lake trout opener traditionally draws the biggest crowds, it's especially important for everyone to be patient and safe at boat launches and docks, Anderson noted. "Everyone in boats, and all children on shore, should use personal flotation devices," he added.

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. "Focus on the top 3 to 5 feet of water, where trout usually feed for a few weeks after they are planted," he said. "After several weeks, anglers likely will have better success fishing lower in the water column."

On the saltwater, selective fisheries for hatchery **blackmouth** - resident chinook - continue through today (April 15) in marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands) and 9 (Admiralty Inlet), while fisheries in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) run through April 30. Anglers fishing in any of those areas can keep two hatchery blackmouth as part of their two-salmon daily limit but must release wild chinook, which have an intact adipose fin.

Puget Sound's **halibut** season is fast approaching. The season gets under way April 23 in marine waters throughout the region, where fishing will be open five days a week, Thursdays through Mondays, with a daily limit of one halibut. There is no minimum size limit for halibut caught in any area. Mutiny and Admiralty bays, as well as Eastern and Partridge banks usually are the best bets for flatfish early in the season.

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** .

Shrimping opportunities in Puget Sound also soon will be available. The season opens throughout the region May 2. 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 all fisheries on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> .

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Anglers have been catching lingcod off the coast and an increasing number of spring chinook salmon on north coast rivers. Halibut season opens April 23 on Puget Sound, the lowland lake trout-fishing season opens April 25, followed by shrimp fishing May 2. Another item for the list - a razor clam dig tentatively scheduled April 25-27.

For many anglers, fishing season begins April 25 with the opening of the lowland lakes **trout** season. On the state's single biggest fishing day, anglers can choose from among 115 lakes in the region stocked with nearly 700,000 legal-size trout. More information and schedules are available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/> .

Regional lakes stocked with more than 5,000 trout include Sutherland Lake in Clallam County; Aberdeen and Sylvia lakes in Grays Harbor County; Leland Lake in Jefferson County; Kitsap and Wildcat lakes in Kitsap County; Benson, Devereaux and Nahwatzel lakes in Mason County; Clear, Kapowsin, Spanaway, Tanwax 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 18 - a week before the season opener. Children must be pre-registered to participate. For Information, call Lacey Parks and Recreation, (360) 491-0857.

On the saltwater, the recreational **halibut** season opens April 23 in marine areas 6-11 and 13 (Port Angeles and Puget Sound), followed by additional openings in May on the coast and the western Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Recreational halibut seasons for Washington's marine areas are:

- **Columbia River (Ilwaco):** Marine Area 1 will open May 1, three days a week, Thursday through Saturday until 70 percent of the quota is reached, or until July 18. The fishery will then reopen on Aug. 7 and continue three days a week (Friday through 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 3, two days a week, Sundays and Tuesdays, through May 12. Starting May 17, the fishery will be open on Sundays only until the quota is reached. In addition, the northern nearshore area will be open on Fridays and Saturdays until the quota is reached.
- **North Coast (La Push/Neah Bay):** Marine areas 3 and 4 will open on May 14, two days per week, Thursdays and Saturdays, through May 23. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will reopen June 4 and 6. If sufficient quota remains after that opener, the fishery will reopen starting June 18. If there is insufficient quota to open the fishery for one more day in the offshore area, the fishery will be open in the nearshore area only (Area 4B and shoreward of a line approximating 30 fathoms from the Bonilla-Tatoosh line south to the Queets River).
- **Strait of Juan de Fuca/Puget Sound:** Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) will be open May 21 through July 3. Marine areas 6-11 and 13 (Port Angeles and Puget Sound) will be open April 23 through June 5. These fisheries will be open five days a week, closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Marine Area 12 (Hood Canal) remains 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, no minimum size and a possession limit of two fish in any form. In Marine Areas 1-4, seasons will continue until the subarea quotas are reached. For additional information, call the Fishing Hotline at (360) 902-2500 or check the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/halibut/>.

Anglers should note that the Hood Canal Bridge will close for six weeks starting May 1. The Washington State Department of Transportation is offering a number of transportation options to help drivers during this time. Information is available at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR104HoodCanalBridgeEast/2009closure.htm>

On the coast, 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, said Erica Crust, WDFW ocean port sampler. "Some really nice lings have been released out of Neah Bay, which indicates a good opener for anglers," Crust said. The lingcod fishery will be open seven days a week with a two-fish daily limit.

Meanwhile, more anglers are catching their daily limit of lingcod off Westport, where ocean conditions have improved since the March 14 opener, Crust said. Marine areas 1-3 are also open seven days a week with a two-fish daily limit.

Crust advises anglers to note 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 through June 15. Anglers may retain sablefish and Pacific cod in these waters from May 1 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.

Anglers should be aware that 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 5-11 and 13 gets under way May 1 and will be open seven days a week through June 15. These areas have a daily limit of one fish. Retention of canary and yelloweye rockfish is prohibited in all waters.

Additional information about the lingcod fishery and other bottomfish is available on the WDFW Fishing Hotline (360)-902-2500 and the department's website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

Meanwhile, anglers are making the transition from **winter steelhead** to hatchery **spring chinook** on the north coast, where steelhead fishing on area rivers will wrap up April 30 (the Hoh River closes April 15). "Hatchery spring chinook are starting to enter the system and the run should keep building on the Sol Duc and Quillayute rivers through mid-June," said Mike Gross, WDFW fish biologist.

Anglers are required to release all wild, unmarked chinook and coho, but can keep two fin-clipped adult chinook and up to six fish, counting jacks.

Rather dig **razor clams** ? WDFW is tentatively planning a late- April dig, provided marine toxin tests show the clams are safe to eat. Tentative dates and tides:

- Saturday, April 25 (7:27 a.m., -1.3 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks
- Sunday, April 26 (8:10 a.m., -1.6 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks
- Monday, April 27 (8:55 a.m., -1.7 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks

A license is required for anyone age 15 or older. Any 2009-10 Washington state annual shellfish/seaweed license or combination license is valid. Another option is a razor-clam only license available in annual or three-day only versions. Descriptions of the various licensing options are available on the WDFW website at <https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov>.

Another season opener starts May 2, when anglers will have an opportunity to catch shrimp throughout the region.

Fishing areas and schedules:

- Marine Areas 4 (east of the Bonilla Line), 5, 6 (excluding the Discovery Bay Shrimp District) and 13 open May 2 at 7 a.m. and will be open daily until the quota is reached, or through Sept. 15, whichever comes first.
- Marine Area 7 will open May 2 at 7 a.m. and will be open Wednesdays through Saturdays only until the quota is reached.
- Marine Areas 8, 9, and 10, will be open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays and Wednesdays only, starting May 2. They will remain open until quotas for those areas are reached, or until May 31, whichever comes first.
- Hood Canal (Marine Area 12) will be open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 2, 6, 9 and 13, or until the quota is reached, whichever comes first. Additional dates and times may be announced if sufficient quota remains.

Anglers should note that Marine Area 11, extending from the northern tip of Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, will be open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 2 only. Also, the Discovery Bay Shrimp District in Marine Area 6 near Port Townsend will remain closed to both spot and non-spot shrimp fishing this year.

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/fish/shelfish/shrimpreg>

Southwest Washington

With the clock running down on the scheduled season, **spring chinook** fishing remained as erratic as the weather on the mainstem Columbia through mid-April. Catch rates have been up one week, down the next. Meanwhile, the number of spring chinook counted at Bonneville Dam was well below average through April 13, and about one-fifth of the count last year at the same time.

"Fishing was fairly good during the past week in the estuary and just below Bonneville Dam, but slower everywhere in between," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "Water levels have come up in the past week or so, which should benefit bank anglers. But, overall, it's been hard to draw a bead on this year's fishery."

Not that anglers haven't tried. During the first Saturday in April, an aerial survey tallied 3,300 boats and 1,100 bank anglers on the river - an all-time record for boats. While participation has waned a bit since then, the fishery has continued to draw plenty of anglers. Catch rates for boat anglers averaged just under one springer for every two boats during the week ending April 12. Bank anglers averaged a fish for every 14 rods.

Because of a disagreement over catch allocations, spring chinook seasons approved by the fish and wildlife commissions of Washington and Oregon will come to an end this month. Guy Norman, WDFW regional manager, said fishery managers and commissioners have been discussing various options for extending the season, both above and below Bonneville Dam. "At this point, it's still a work in progress," he said.

Below is a summary of the spring chinook seasons approved through April:

- **West power lines on Hayden Island downstream to Buoy 10:** Fishing is open through April 18 three days per week (Thursdays through Saturdays).
- **West power lines on Hayden Island to Bonneville Dam:** Fishing is open through April 22 four days per week (Wednesday through Saturday).
- **Bonneville Dam to McNary Dam:** Fishing is open seven days per week through April 30. The Washington and Oregon bank-only fishery will also be open from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Tower Island power lines located about six miles below The Dalles Dam.

Below Bonneville Dam the daily salmonid bag limit is six fin-clipped fish, no more than two adult salmon or steelhead or one of each. No more than one may be an adult chinook. Wild chinook and wild steelhead must be released.

From Bonneville Dam to McNary Dam the limit is two marked, hatchery-reared adult salmon or steelhead (or one of each) per day. The same daily limit is in effect for the bank-only fishery from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Tower Island power lines and on the Wind River and Drano Lake.

Hymer reminds Columbia River anglers that **shad** and fin-clipped **steelhead** may be retained only on days open to fishing for adipose fin-clipped chinook.

Meanwhile, anglers are beginning to catch some springers - along with hatchery steelhead - in several tributaries to the lower Columbia River. On the Cowlitz River, where 18 spring chinook had returned to the hatchery as of April 8, a recent survey turned up three springers and 30 late winter steelhead in the catch. On the Kalama River, anglers have been releasing dark hatchery steelhead as well as some wild fish.

Hymer reminds anglers that only one adult chinook salmon may be retained per day on the Kalama and Lewis rivers, due to low returns predicted for hatchery fish. He also notes that sections of two other rivers will open to fishing for hatchery steelhead April 16 under selective gear rules. No bait may be used in those fisheries, scheduled to open from the mouth of the East Fork Lewis River to the top boat ramp at Lewisville Park and from the mouth of the Washougal River to the Mt. Norway Bridge.

Anglers planning to fish Drano Lake or the Wind River should also be aware of two emergency rules recently approved by WDFW. One sets aside a small area around the outlet of Drano Lake for bank fishing only to minimize conflicts with boat anglers. That area is defined as westerly from a line projected from the eastern-most pillar of the Highway 14 Bridge to a posted marker on the north shore. In addition, Drano Lake is closed to all fishing each Wednesday through May.

The other new rule will exempt anglers fishing for spring chinook at Drano Lake and the lower Wind River from the new anti-snagging regulation from May 1 through June 30. That exemption will allow anglers to use single, double, or treble hooks on baits and lures on the lower Wind from the railroad bridge downstream and at Drano Lake during that time period. Those and other new fishing rules are available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

Just as soon catch **bass** or **walleye**? Boat anglers fishing the Bonneville Pool have been averaging a dozen bass and a walleye per rod. Fishing for both species is also heating up in The Dalles and John Day pools.

Boat anglers also been reeling in some legal-size sturgeon from the Bonneville Pool, but fishing has been slow below Bonneville Dam. The retention fishery for sturgeon ended April 13 in the John Day Pool and closes April 19 in The Dalles Pool.

Trout anglers should know that three area lakes were recently stocked with 1.5-pound triploids: Kress (350 fish), Horseshoe (608 fish) and Battle Ground (256 fish). In addition, Lacamas Lake was recently stocked with 5,800 catchable-size brown trout and 1,650 rainbows.

Eastern Washington

More fishing lakes open in this region on the last Saturday of April - April 25 this year - than any other season opener. But the region's long, cold winter has left many waters with more ice than usual. Fish hatchery crews will be working up to the last minute to plant catchable-size trout before opening day.

WDFW northeast district fish biologist Bill Baker reports most of the lakes in Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties are still frozen, if not completely at least in part. "I'm thinking some of them in the higher elevations are still going to be inaccessible by the opener due to snow," Baker said. "As they thaw out, I think we can expect good fishing at Starvation and Rocky lakes near Colville. They'll both have lots of 10-to-11-inch and 12-to-14-inch rainbows from past fry plants."

Baker said Lake Ellen, north of Inchelium on the Colville National Forest, should be decent, too. Ellen was treated last fall to get rid of sunfish and bass and is scheduled to receive 9,000 rainbow trout measuring 8-12-inches to provide a fishery this year until fry plants get bigger.

Frater Lake, southwest of Ione in Pend Oreille County, was also treated last fall to get rid of tench and sunfish. It is scheduled to receive cutthroat trout and some big triploid rainbows this spring, but Baker says it's questionable whether it will be thawed by the opener. When Frater does thaw and the fish are stocked, the fishing should be good. The other Little Pend Oreille chain of lakes, including Nile, Leo, Gillette and Sherry, are all frozen solid, too.

Diamond Lake, southwest of Newport, is scheduled to receive 982 triploid rainbows that average 1½ pounds each, but at last report the big lake was still frozen. Sacheen Lake, alongside Hwy. 211 just northwest of Diamond Lake, is scheduled to receive 6,500 eight to 12-inch rainbows, but it, too, is still frozen. Barring any severe weather changes, Baker believes both these popular waters will be thawed and stocked by the opener and will provide good fishing.

WDFW central district fish biologist Chris Donley says still-wintery conditions in Spokane, Lincoln and Whitman counties make it difficult to say at this point just how the opener will go. But he assumes some of the same fry-planted lakes that have produced good catches in past years will again be the best bets, once they thaw or warm up.

Williams Lake in southwest Spokane County is consistently a top producer on the opener, Donley noted. Last year, even after another long winter that chilled opening day action, anglers on Williams averaged 4.2 fish each - near the five-trout daily catch limit. Williams is stocked with over 40,000 cutthroat and 92,000 rainbow fry in spring and fall that grow into catchable size fish by opening day. It just received almost 10,000 eight to 12-inch rainbows and 1,473 triploid rainbows (one-and-a-half pounds each), and is due to get another 400 surplus hatchery rainbow broodstock by the opener or soon after.

West Medical Lake, just west of the town of Medical Lake in southwest Spokane County, is another traditional hotspot. For most of the past decade, opening day catches averaged four trout per angler; in 2007, every angler checked had the daily limit of five trout. Last year was the exception, with less than one trout caught per angler on the opener, but that catch rate picked up as the season progressed, Donley said. West Medical received 180,000 rainbow fry last spring

and another 7,700 last fall for this season's catchables. It just received 982 triploid rainbows and is scheduled to receive 400 broodstock rainbows soon.

Badger Lake, just northeast of Williams Lake, should also be good. During last year's chilly opener, anglers averaged two trout each and in past years the average has been near limits. Most of those catches come from spring and fall fry plants of over 30,000 cutthroat and 30,000 rainbows. The lake just received 982 triploid rainbows and is due to receive 400 broodstock and 7,500 catchable-size rainbows.

Clear Lake, two miles south of the town of Medical Lake, usually provides decent catches on the opener. Last year opening day anglers averaged two trout each. Clear is well-stocked with trout fry - 74,000 browns, 26,800 rainbows and 17,500 tiger trout. It just received 982 triploid rainbows and is scheduled for 30,000 catchable-size rainbows, 10,000 catchable browns and 400 surplus hatchery rainbow broodstock.

Fish Lake, northeast of Cheney off the Cheney-Spokane Road just west of Spokane, is the home of the state record tiger trout - a 14-plus-pound fish caught last spring. Fish Lake is stocked only with tiger trout fry (12,150 last fall), but is also slated to receive over 2,000 eastern brook broodstock. On last year's opener, Fish yielded an average of 3.2 fish per angler and it should be as good this year.

In Lincoln County, Fishtrap Lake is usually in the top five or 10 lakes for opening day catches. Fishtrap received 68,000 rainbow fry last spring that will make up the bulk of the catch in nine-to-12-inch trout this season. Just stocked to sweeten the pot were 14,443 catchable-size (eight to ten-inch) rainbows and 736 triploid rainbows (one-and-a-half pounds each.) Scheduled are 400 surplus hatchery rainbow broodstock before the opener.

For anglers who don't want to wait until April 25, Donley suggests several lakes in the central district that are already open and coming on strong now. Amber Lake, 11 miles southwest of Cheney off Mullinix Road, opened March 1 for catch-and-release fishing under selective gear rules for cutthroat and rainbow trout that are running 12 to 20 inches. On April 25, Amber switches to a catch-and-keep season under selective gear rules, but with a daily limit of two trout, minimum size 12 inches, and a requirement to release rainbows with clipped adipose fins.

Medical Lake, near the town of the same name, has also been open since March 1 under selective gear rules and two-trout daily limit. It's been producing similar-size brown, rainbow and tiger trout. Medical just received 500 eight-to-10-inch rainbows and 2,452 eight-to-10-inch brown trout.

Also open since March 1 is Coffeepot Lake, northeast of Odessa in Lincoln County, now producing catches of five to 15 rainbows of 12 to 20 inches per angler trip. Coffeepot is under selective gear rules with a daily trout limit of one fish of at least 18 inches, so many of those fish are being released.

Downs Lake, on the Spokane-Lincoln county line east of Sprague, has warmed up since its March 1 opening and is good for rainbows, tiger trout, largemouth bass. "We've got a lot of productive lakes," Donley said, "but none as productive as year-round Sprague Lake. The rainbows are growing fast on all the good forage and catches of five to ten of them, from 14 to 22 inches, are common. The chironomid hatch under way now at Sprague is unreal, and it's why fly fishing has recently been better than bait fishing or trolling. The fish are onto the naturals."

Donley reminds Sprague Lake anglers that only two of their daily catch limit of five trout can be over 20 inches. That may shorten some fishing trips since Sprague just received 2,165 triploid rainbows, coupled with the tremendous growth rate on the 350,000 rainbow fry planted last year and 65,000 eight to ten-inchers stocked this spring.

In the south end of the region most fishing lakes have been open since March 1 or are open year-round, and continue to receive hatchery trout plants periodically. Two southeast waters that open on April 25 are Headgate Pond, a small impoundment off Asotin Creek in Headgate County Park in Asotin County, and Curl Lake off the Tucannon River on the Wooten Wildlife Area in Columbia County. WDFW Tucannon Fish Hatchery manager Doug Maxey reports both waters will be stocked before the opener.

Headgate, which is open to juveniles, seniors and disabled anglers only, receives a total of 2,000 ten to 12-inch rainbows for the season. Curl, which restricts the five-trout daily catch limit to just two over 13 inches, receives a total of 12,300 catchable-size rainbows.

April 24 is the deadline for registering 5 to 14-year-olds for the "Fishing Kids" event on May 2 at Clear Lake in southwest Spokane County. Cost is \$5 and includes a half-hour of fishing instruction, rod and reel, and t-shirt. Registration forms are available at WDFW's Spokane Valley office at 2315 N. Discovery Place, or printable from the Spokane County 4-H website at <http://www.spokane-county.wsu.edu/4h/index.html>.

Northcentral Washington

The April 25 fishing season opener promises to be productive in many waters throughout the north central region, from the Columbia Basin to Okanogan County.

This is the year to fish Blue and Park lakes in Sun Lakes State Park, north of the town of Soap Lake, said Jeff Korth, WDFW regional fish program manager.

"Both these lakes were rehabilitated three years ago so the 2009 fishery will be composed of both yearling and carryover rainbows," Korth explained. "These fish are running 12 to 15-plus inches now, with good growth on the fingerlings we've stocked. Fishing should be excellent and I expect most anglers will get limits of fat rainbows."

Korth said Blue Lake has received over 210,000 rainbow fingerlings and Park has received over 138,000 rainbow fingerlings. Both have also received brown and tiger trout fingerlings in the last two years that should begin to show in the catches this year. As an added bonus, Blue is scheduled to receive 295 triploid rainbows (one-and-a-half pounders) and Park will get 196 triploids before the opener.

Deep Lake, also in Sun Lakes State Park, usually provides four to five trout per angler on opening day, although Korth notes that last year's opener was poor. Besides the usual 5,000 rainbow fingerlings stocked last year in Deep, now running 13-14 inches, an additional 5,000 catchable-size (10-12 inches) rainbow trout and 98 triploid rainbows were stocked this spring.

Deep Lake also received 40,000 kokanee fingerlings, which will run 8-10 inches by late spring. "It's a good fishery for those who know how to target them, although the better kokanee fishing comes later in the summer, July and August," said Korth.

Another Sun Lakes State Park fishery, Perch Lake, is among the most consistent waters in the Basin, Korth says. Limits of 12-inch rainbows are generally the rule at this small, but popular lake. The plant is only 10,000 fingerlings, and the lake is fished out in a few weeks most years, so only an occasional 15-inch carryover will be seen. Perch is mostly a shore fishery, although hand-carried boats or float tubes can be used.

Vic Meyers is a relatively small lake connected to Park Lake, and it was also rehabilitated in 2006 to remove bullheads. It was stocked with 3,612 fingerling rainbows, 208 fingerling brown trout, and 1,200 fingerling brook trout. Korth says catch rates should be three to four fish per angler,

mostly 12-inch fish and maybe a 10 percent carryover rate for 15-inchers. Vic Meyers is also mostly a shore fishery, although hand-carried boats or float tubes can be used.

Warden Lake, south of the town of Moses Lake about five miles east of O'Sullivan Dam on Potholes Reservoir, should produce two to three yearling rainbows per angler on the opener, Korth predicted.

"Warden was very good last year despite competition with spiny-rayed fishes, but the fingerling stocking rate was somewhat less for this year's fishery due to a shortage," Korth said. He said WDFW plans to add 10,000 catchable-sized (10-12-inch) rainbows to compensate. The catch should include 13-plus inch trout, with about 10-15 percent carryovers of 15-18 inches.

Warden also received 2,000 tiger trout fingerlings last year, with past plants of brown trout producing some very large fish.

Depending on access, weather and water conditions, opening-day lakes to check out farther north in the region include Pearrygin near Winthrop, Alta near Pateros, the Conconullys near Omak and Okanogan, Leader near Omak, Fish near Sinlahekin, Wannacut near Oroville, and Jameson near Mansfield in Douglas County, said Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist.

All received hefty plants of rainbow fry last year that have grown into this season's catches. Pearrygin received 60,000, Alta received 50,000, Conconully Lake received over 126,000, Conconully Reservoir received almost 69,000, Leader received over 15,000, Fish received over 35,000, Wannacut received over 62,000, and Jameson over 160,000. The Conconullys are also scheduled for plants of 8-12-inch rainbows this spring, plus 295 triploid rainbows for the lake and 393 triploids for the reservoir. Leader is also scheduled for 5,000 8-12-inch rainbows and 295 triploids this spring.

"Spring stocking of Jameson Lake with catchable-size fish is always dependent on water quality, and it looks good so far," Jateff said. Jameson is schedule to receive 30,000 eight to 12-inch rainbows and 1,437 triploid rainbows.

Jateff says good selective-gear rainbow trout waters that open April 25 include Blue on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, Big and Little Twin lakes near Winthrop, and Ell near Tonasket. The water level in Ell is very low, which might restrict some access to the lake, he noted.

Fly-fishing only waters that open April 25 include Aeneas Lake near Tonasket and Chopaka Lake near Loomis. Jateff says fishing for 12-18 inch rainbows should be good in both lakes. Since Chopaka is located at a higher elevation, anglers should check first to make sure that the road into the lake is passable.

Several fisheries already open in the region are worth checking out now.

Dry Falls Lake, three miles west of Coulee City at Sun Lakes State Park, provided anglers with catches of two to 12 fish on its April 1 opener. Angling continues to be good for 14-inch yearling rainbow trout and a 20 percent or better carryover rate for fish 16 to 20-plus inches. Brown trout and tiger trout have also been stocked. Water levels continue to be somewhat low. Selective gear rules are in effect for all species plus a one-fish daily limit on trout.

Lenice and Nunnally lakes on the Crab Creek Wildlife Area just east of Beverly, have produced 10 or more fish per trip for some anglers since they opened March 1. Carryovers from past stocking of triploids should provide rainbow more than 20 inches long. Both have selective gear rules for all species, with a one-fish daily limit on trout.

Year-round Beda Lake, just south of Winchester Wasteway and east of Dodson Road, has recently provided eight to 10 fish per angler, with reportedly many 20-plus fish days. Selective gear rules and a one-fish daily limit are in effect. Fingerling trout survival has been poor because of sunfish competition, so almost 2,000 large (two to three-pound) rainbows were stocked late last fall. Over-winter survival was very good, and brown and tiger trout are also available. Access is by foot only.

Fishing is picking up now at Lenore Lake, north of the town of Soap Lake. Two- to four-pound Lahontan cutthroat trout are abundant with some fish up to ten pounds. Selective gear rules apply for the entire open season. Fishing is catch-and-release only from March 1 through May 31, with a one-trout daily limit during the June 1 through November 30 season. Anglers should check the *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) and also note posted closed areas at the north and south ends.

Year-round Rocky Ford Creek, which is catch-and-release, fly-fishing-only, is especially good now with plentiful rainbows running two to ten-plus pounds. Korth says they can be finicky though, because "they're extremely well fed and educated."

Corral and Blythe lakes, just south of Potholes Reservoir, were rehabilitated two years ago, so 2009 is the premier year for their rainbow trout.

Canal, Windmill and Heart lakes, south of Potholes Reservoir, all were stocked with catchable-size rainbow last fall that are producing a very good spring fishery.

Spectacle Lake in Okanogan County opened April 1 with good catches of rainbow trout 11-13 inches.

Southcentral Washington

Although the south central region has mostly year-round fishing in lakes and ponds, rainbow trout stocking has "quadrupled" in the last few weeks, according to WDFW District Fish Biologist Eric Anderson.

"Warmer weather and improved lake access is driving people outdoors so our hatchery crews are working around the clock to keep fishing waters stocked," Anderson said. "We are putting out larger fish this year, with most catchable-size trout between 1/2 to 1/3 pound each. We're also spicing things up with some jumbo one-pounders, triploid trout that run one-and-a-half pounds each, and a few six- to eight-pound surplus hatchery broodstock rainbows."

Recently stocked lakes include Yakima County's Granger Pond, I-82 Ponds 1,2,3,4 and 6, Myron Lake, Rotary Lake, Sarge Hubbard Park Pond, Tims Pond, and Yakima Sportsmen Pond; and Kittitas County's FioRito lakes, Mattoon Lake, McCabe Pond, Naneum Pond, and Woodhouse Ponds.

"There are a lot more fish plants coming up in the next few weeks as more waters in the higher elevation, forested zones become snow free," Anderson said. "Right now we are still hampered by snowpack on the access roads into the shady, forested areas around Clear Lake, Lost Lake, Tieton Ranger Pond and Bear Lake. We can't get the big hatchery truck into those areas until warmer weather reduces the snowpack on access roads."

Anderson said that popular Mud Lake, off Hwy 410 west of Naches, may not be stocked with catchable-size trout at all, if access doesn't improve. "We are not holding out much hope that we will be able to plant the lake with any catchable trout at all, although we may try again in another month when road conditions are better," Anderson said. "If we can't get the larger trout in, we

will plant small rainbow trout fry via backpack, similar to how we plant other higher elevation lakes in the Cascade Mountains. These fry will grow to a catchable size in about a year."

Anderson reminds anglers they can check to see which lakes have been recently stocked on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>.

The deadline is May 1 to register for the 10th Annual Kid's Fishing event at Reflection Pond (aka Sarge Hubbard Park Pond) in Yakima County on May 9. Registration forms can be picked up at the WDFW office in Yakima (509-575-2740) or at the Yakima Greenway Foundation Office at Sarge Hubbard Park (509-453-8280). This event is for kids five to 14 years of age. For \$5, each child gets a "Fishing Kids" t-shirt, rod and reel, fishing instruction, and volunteer-cleaned and bagged fish.

The ninth annual Fishing Kids Event at Columbia Park Pond in the Tri-Cities is scheduled for May 2. Registration is with Kennewick Parks and Recreation at (509) 585-4293 or online at <http://www.ci.kennewick.wa.us>. Columbia Park Pond is a "juvenile only" water - only for anglers under 15 years of age or persons with a disability license - and has been stocked with catchable-size rainbow trout.

WDFW District Fish Biologist Paul Hoffarth of Pasco said **bass** fishing in the lower Yakima River is improving. Smallmouth bass typically migrate into the Yakima River in large numbers each spring to spawn, he said. WDFW maintains access sites at Snively Road, Hyde Road, and Duportail Road.

Hoffarth also notes Dalton Lake in Franklin County was recently stocked with more catchable and jumbo-size rainbow trout. In addition, Dalton, Columbia Park Pond, and Powerline Lake are scheduled to be stocked with large triploid trout soon.

Hoffarth reminds anglers that the Columbia River from John Day Dam to McNary Dam is now closed to the retention of **sturgeon**. The 2009 quota was reached on April 12. Anglers are permitted to fish "catch and release" for sturgeon for the remainder of the year with the exception of the area from the Interstate 82 bridge upstream to McNary Dam. This area is closed to all sturgeon angling from May 1 to July 31 to protect spawning sturgeon.

The Columbia River Ringold area bank fishery opens May 1 and continues through June 15 for **hatchery spring chinook salmon**. WDFW predicts that 200-plus hatchery spring chinook will return to the area this year. The permanent rule season (May 1-31) is being extended two weeks to adjust for a significant delay in the return of the upper Columbia spring chinook run and to allow anglers more time to catch as many hatchery chinook as possible.

Hoffarth noted that the new "anti-snagging rule," which replaces the "non-buoyant lure restriction" on May 1, 2009, is being removed for this bank fishery to allow "plunking" from shore with a plug-cut herring using two, single hooks.

TGF Inbox

Irregular contributor Kaptn Ken Johnson writes, "I went fishing last week at Siltcoos Lake and thought you might like to see what I caught there. We trolled and trolled, for two days straight after the first two days being blown off the lake with 20-50mph STORMY winds and hard hard rain. The first night that it started to clear, my buddy and I sat on the bank at Ada Resort and bank fished with Power Bait (Rainbow). After about 1 hour of sitting there and starting to think this wasn't the place to be *****WHAM***** My rod and reel almost went into the lake. After a 20-25 minute tussle on an ultra-light rod and reel set-up with 4lb. Maxima, we finally netted the fish. The "Electronic Scale" read it at 5 pounds on the button and my manual scale bounced around between 4.8 and 5.1 pounds...We'll call it five for the record books! At least we

weren't skunked!!! And, yes my arms were stretched out to make it look bigger, but what the photo doesn't show you is the girth of this guy...HUGE!"



Reader 'Mark' wrote to ask, "I live in Troutdale & do Not have a boat. where should I fish for steelhead."

TGF co-editor and pro guide Bob Rees responded, "I suggest that you explore the lower Columbia River beaches. Plunking for salmon or steelhead can be quite fun and productive. River beaches like the ones on Sauvies Island, near Rainier or even near the airport can be productive places to fish, especially in higher water flows like what we're experiencing now. Plunk spin-n-glos with scent or small pieces of bait for the best success. You can also fish near Bonneville near the mouth of Tanner Creek but those places are usually crowded so you'll have to fish with a thick skin. Good luck!"

Subscriber Dennis Frazier wrote to say, "Thank You TGF. Once again one of your tips led to a great day of Columbia river fishing. Thursday with no action going on, we started a troll using a tip you gave here regarding high flow conditions. Hour later two nice springers in the boat and done. Nice to look like the "expert" once in awhile. Thanks again for the tips and reports."

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

Write to the TGF staff:

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Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Sad - Bid online at the North River Auction:

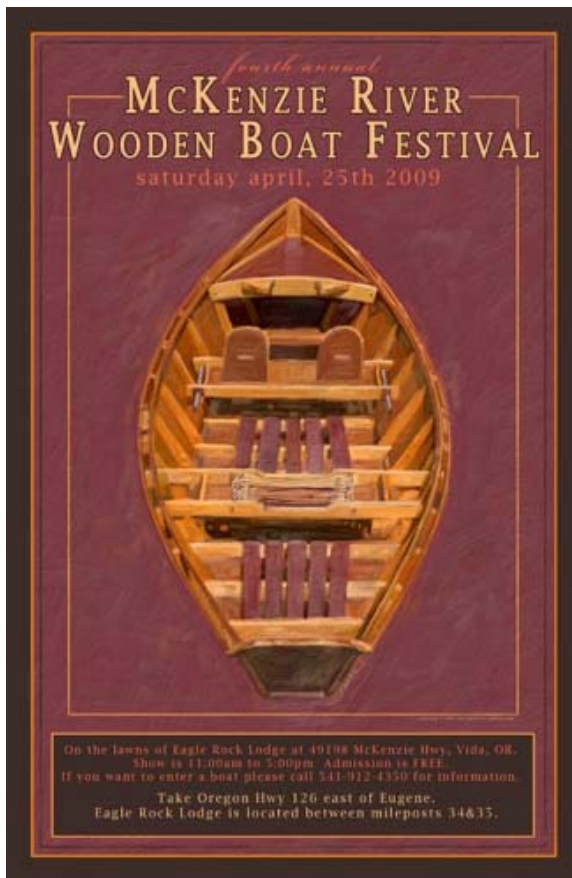
<http://www.murphyauctions.net/northriverca.html>

Map of trout stocking locations scheduled this week:

http://blog.oregonlive.com/bill_monroe_impact/2009/04/fish042009.jpg

Diamond Lake is again threatened by an invasive fish species and by gross mismanagement:

http://www.nrtoday.com/article/20090421/GUESTCOLUMNS/904229948/1029/NO_NE&parentprofile=1062



GOOD LUCK!