

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 22nd – May 28th, 2009**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- The red-hot sturgeon fishery in the gorge has slowed dramatically indicating keeper sized fish are moving downstream in anticipation of summer feeding opportunities near the estuary. Catches remained respectable however with 30 keepers landed for 70 boats below the Marker 85 deadline. Smelt remains a top bait.

Shad fishing is still open on the mainstem Columbia but catches are slow. Jack counts continue to set a record pace at Bonneville with jacks outnumbering adults every day now. If run models become reliable again, 2010 is likely to be a record return. Steelhead fishing remains closed until further notice.

A few shad are being caught at Oregon City. Sturgeon fishing is producing keepers in the lower Willamette to those who seek them out with a variety of bait.

Spring chinook are being hooked on plugs below Leaburg Dam. Those targeting summer steelhead are also taking a few. Look for Green McKenzie Caddis hatching on the lower river where water conditions are good for fishing.

The North Santiam has summer steelhead scattered throughout the system. Fishing will improve once the water level and temperature stabilize. Some springers have been caught on the South Santiam around Sweet Home and Waterloo.

The Clackamas has springers and summers available with anglers taking a few here and there.

The Sandy River is still running high but prospects should improve over the weekend. Chinook and steelhead are well distributed throughout the system with consistent summer steelhead reports coming from Cedar Creek.

Scheduled for trout planting are Estacada Lake, Faraday Lake, Henry Hagg Lake, Huddleston Pond, North Fork Reservoir, Silver Creek Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, South Yamhill River, Timothy Meadows, Trillium Lake, West Salish Pond, Big Cliff Reservoir, Breitenbush River, Carmen Reservoir, Clear Lake, Detroit Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Foster Reservoir, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Quartzville Creek, Salmon Creek, Santiam River NF above Detroit Lake Willamette River Coast Fork and Willamette R MF above Hills Creek Reservoir.

Northwest – Spring chinook have arrived in Tillamook Bay with consistent catches coming from inside the bay along the north jetty early in the week. Novice angler John Robinson of West Linn took first place in the Bounty on the Bay tournament out of Garibaldi on Saturday; landing a 24 and 14.5 pounder in just under an hour near low slack on trolled herring. Action should switch to the upper bay on the minus tide series beginning on Friday.

Driftboaters did fair on the Trask River last weekend but flows have since dropped and low tide exchanges are likely to keep fish in the salt water, at least until the next rain freshet which may be many days away. The Wilson, Nestucca and Three Rivers also have chinook present.

Ocean fishers scored great catches of halibut in the all-depth fishery last week and are likely to do so

again this week. The open days are Thursday through Saturday.

Bottomfishers also did well in the nearshore with good catches of black rockfish available along most reefs. Lingcod catches have declined and likely will continue to do so into the summer months.

Ocean crabbing was fair out of Garibaldi but will likely decline as summer traffic increases.

After many years of closure, trout fishing on many north coast streams opens up again for consumptive harvest beginning May 23rd. Check local regulations and identification charts to properly ID cutthroat trout as juvenile salmon and steelhead smolts are often mis-interpreted for trout this time of year. The daily bag limit is 2 fish with an 8-inch minimum size limit. Bait restrictions apply on many waterways upstream of tidewater.

Big Creek Reservoirs 2 and 2 and Olalla Creek Reservoir are scheduled for trout stocking.

Southwest – Nine out of 10 anglers trying all-depth halibut during last week's first-of-season opener returned to port with a fish.

The mainstem and North Umpqua are fishing fairly well for spring chinook now with fish well distributed. Baits of sand shrimp and cured salmon eggs are most successful. Reports indicate fishing is better this season than last. Several springers have been caught in the mid-20-pound range, and a few over 30. Shad are being taken in fair to good numbers now. Sturgeon fishing is poor in the estuary.

Last week's freshet has improved results for spring chinook fishing in the lower and Middle Rogue. While action for anadromous fishes is slow in the fast, high water on the upper Rogue, trout fishing is good.

Boaters launching out of the Port of Brookings last week were blessed with calm ocean conditions and phenomenal bottom fishing with rockfish limits for most.

Surf fishers hitting south coast beaches are continuing to limit on pinkfin and striped perch in the two- pound range with a few specimens topping the four-pound mark.

Diamond Lake will be ice-free or very nearly so for Memorial Day Weekend. Fishing is expected to be good for large trout.

Willow Lake, Applegate Reservoir, Lost Creek Reservoir, Lake Selmac, Rogue above Lost Creek, Lake of the Woods and Hemlock Lake are all scheduled for stocking.

Eastern – Trout fishing is improving on the Deschutes as adult stoneflies start to hatch below Maupin and with nymphs active upriver.

SW Washington – The Kalama and Lewis Rivers remain closed for spring chinook but catches are being witnessed on the Cowlitz River. A few summer steelhead are available on all three streams.

The Wind and Drano Lake fisheries are performing fair with jacks making up nearly half of the catch.

Interest for chinook and steelhead is also growing on the Klickitat River.

Columbia River Fishing Report – With the news of red-hot sturgeon fishing last week in the Columbia River Gorge, anglers flocked to the water in anticipation of limit fishing. As expected,

success rates dropped dramatically but action was still noteworthy with 70 boats landing 30 keepers in the weekend check. Anglers will be restricted to the water downstream of Marker 85 into July but it's likely when the upper reach re-opens in August, most of the fish will be in the estuary that time of year. Spring fishing should remain good in this fishery and in the Portland to Longview stretch as well for the next few weeks. Smelt will always rule the roost in this fishery.

The only other fishery open is shad and anglers targeting this favored oversize bait found an occasional fish for a fair amount of effort. Shad counts are ramping up fast at Bonneville Dam however and action should pick up dramatically in the coming days.

Steelheaders will be forced to hold off on good opportunity until better numbers of salmon cross Bonneville Dam. Lower river users are in jeopardy of exceeding Snake River impact percentages until we get about 150,000 salmon over Bonneville Dam. Let's hope they come or we're in for some real restrictions next year when we try and take advantage of a run that's likely to be very sizable. Jack counts have far exceeded the last record.

Downriver, sturgeon anglers continue to struggle in the Columbia River estuary where high flows and cold water hamper success rates. Effort is spread far and wide in hopes of hitting the mother lode but results have been few. It won't be long however when waters warm and anglers locate fishable schools of keepers to take advantage of. The recent creel check indicates fish are beginning to move into the area however. About 1 keeper for every 3 boats was tallied last weekend. There are better times ahead.

Ocean fishers out of Astoria scored easy limits of black rockfish and a few ling cod along the south jetty in calm seas last weekend. Fish were quite receptive to feather jigs and lead-headed jigs as well. Lingcod to 20 pounds have been taken.

The Guide's Forecast – Sturgeon fishing in the gorge will likely continue to taper as keepers become more motivated to feed in the summer conditions of the lower river estuary. Knowledgeable anglers targeting oversized fish using fresh shad should do well and those using smelt should continue to find a few keepers. Flows are likely to subside slightly enabling anglers to take advantage of more areas. Catches in the Portland to Longview stretch will remain mediocre.

Shad anglers both boat and bank should see a significant increase in action in the coming days. Numbers are beginning to climb and anglers will want to take advantage of the great crab and sturgeon bait. Last year, it wasn't as easy as it normally is so you may want to be more serious about your effort if you rely on this resource for your other fisheries.

Estuary anglers will likely have to wait another week or two before action picks up when the temperatures do. Sand shrimp is a top bait this time of year, in the shallows where water temperatures are often warmer than the deep. Don't overlook 2 to 4 foot of water this time of year as it can oftentimes hold quality keepers. Watch your measurements carefully as guides are telling me it actually takes a 47-inch fish, in old measurement terms, to make a keeper under the new 41-inch fork length measurement scheme. You may only retain fish in the 41 to 54 inch range (fork length).

A stiff north wind will keep ocean going fishers at bay this week. We will likely begin to fall into the trade-wind pattern now; critical to productive upwelling, this pattern whips up an afternoon wind that takes the fun out of recreation on big blue. We may get brief periods of morning calmness but plan your trip home riding WITH the wind chop or prepare for a liver transplant.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Spring Chinook counts are pushing

11,000 with 3,000 crossing on May 16th and 19th alone. Summer steelhead totaled 3,682 as of May 19th. The Water temp is up to 58 degrees at the Falls with over five feet visibility and flows which continue to moderate. Good news crossed our desk this week regarding the ravenous sea lions dining on our precious springers below Willamette Falls. The ODFW is considering trapping and euthanizing them as they are at Bonneville. Kudos.

Nice weather is having a positive effect on the water and hatches on the lower McKenzie River. Large McKenzie Green Caddis are hatching and while the trout aren't yet keyed on them, it'll happen soon.

A few summer steelhead are being taken daily on the North Santiam with summers and springers scattered from Mehama to Packsaddle. As of May 20th, about 450 summer steelhead and five spring Chinook had entered the trap at Foster Dam on the South Santiam.

The long Memorial Day weekend means lots of trout planting in anticipation of heavy participation as folks get out and enjoy what's predicted to be beautiful weather. Check the **Fisheries Forecast**, above, for a complete listing.

Mark your calendars: Free Fishing Weekend is June 6th and 7th this year, during which no licenses or tags are needed for any species of fish or shellfish. It's a great time to show your non-fishing friends (and their kids) what all the fuss is about.

The Guide's Forecast – Shad have started up and are being caught in fair number at Oregon City. Catches will improve into June. Anglers fishing the Willamette below Dexter Dam are picking up springers in poor condition along with chrome steelhead with fishing slow to fair. Smallmouth bass fishing is heating up with good numbers coming to anglers fishing above and below the Falls.

Nymphing has been most productive for reddsides on the McKenzie recently. The Chinook which are pouring over the Falls in fairly decent number now will soon be in the Waters of the McKenzie where a few have already been taken.

Expect to find water on the high side for a while. Some Chinook are being caught at Pleasant Valley, however. Boat anglers have the advantage on the South Santiam for springers with bait being the best option.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Cross Park on the Clackamas may be a good spot to start a spring Chinook foray as they can be seen rolling, rolling on the river. With most streams and rivers off limits for trout retention, anglers will have a new and unusual chance to fish local moving water for fin-clipped trout starting Friday, May 23rd, as the lower 20 miles of the Clackamas open to hatchery trout retention. This area is from the mouth up to North Fork Dam.

A few summers a fewer springers are being caught on the Sandy but get out early in the morning. As soon as the air temperature warms, the happy-splashers are hitting the river.

North Coast Fishing Report – Last week was a great week to recreate on the north Oregon Coast. Spring Chinook are certainly in the lime-light with fair catches coming from Tillamook Bay last week. The soft tides produced good catches along the jetty over the weekend and into the early part of the week. One guide reported going 4 for 6 along the jetty on Monday trolling herring near the bottom. John Robinson of West Linn fished with me on Saturday in the 5th annual Bounty on the Bay fishing tournament sponsored by the Tillamook Estuaries Partnership (www.tbnep.org). He took first place with a 24-pound and 14.5 pound hatchery fish. Five other keepers were brought in for the event. Prior to targeting salmon inside the north jetty, we dropped crab pots on the south side of the bay

and targeted rockfish at dinner reef taking in just 4 nice sized bass and a dozen keeper crab. The weather was the real treat however with calm seas and chamber of commerce weather the frosting on the cake.

With such great ocean conditions, we spent more time on the ocean on Sunday heading down south to Three Arch Rocks for bottomfish scoring 26 for about 2 hours of effort. Feathered shrimp jigs took the lions share of the catch with black seabass making up the bulk of the harvest. All the lingcod we caught were way too small to keep. Crabbing was better that day and a 2 string pull yielded 36 keepers. There was a pretty good crowd taking advantage of the calm weather conditions on Sunday in front of Oceanside.

The weather kicked up a bit by early in the week so effort shifted to salmon inside the bay. Ideal tides for targeting springers brought good results with a few boats ending up with 2 or more salmon on a tides effort. It was a good start to the season, let's hope it stays that way.

Driftboaters working the Trask River fared well over the weekend but most thought it was a bit crowded. That's to be expected when the water conditions are as ideal as they were over the weekend. Although not large numbers of salmon were caught, action was fair for this early in the season. Although we don't have any reports from the Wilson, there was likely fish present in this system as well as the Wilson River. Spring Chinook catches have happened on Three Rivers as well. There aren't many people targeting steelhead but summer run fish should be in the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers.

Halibut fishers had slam dunk fishing on the Thursday – Saturday opener with more friendly ocean conditions on the latter 2 open days. It's just a matter of how fun it is bringing up 15 to 25 pounds of lifeless flesh from 700 feet of water. It tastes better than it fights. It's an easy decision when seas are calm. The decision will be much harder this week.

The Guide's Forecast – A good tide series should motivate Tillamook Bay anglers to take a look at the upper bay using spinners, plugs or herring for bait. Strong incoming tides should push fair numbers of fish into the upper bay and minus tides should congregate good numbers of salmon into the deeper slots where anglers can get after them. The most productive stretches should be the lower Trask tidewater to Ray's Place Piling (the corral) in the middle bay. With a strong north wind in the afternoon forecast all week, the upper or middle bay will not be a pleasant place to fish. If you plan on fishing a whole day, you'll likely have to move your operation downstream to hug the north jetty to protect against the stiff wind.

It won't be nearly as much fun to recreate this week in the open water as it was last. The north wind will keep bottomfishers and much of the halibut fleet in port this week. Read it and weep:

THU NIGHT N WIND 20 TO 25 KT...WITH GUSTS TO 30 KT. WIND WAVES 6 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT AT 8 SECONDS.

FRI N WIND 20 TO 25 KT..WITH GUSTS TO 30 KT. WIND WAVES 6 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

FRI NIGHT N WIND 20 TO 25 KT...WITH GUSTS TO 30 KT. WIND WAVES 8 FT...SUBSIDING TO 6 FT AFTER MIDNIGHT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

SAT N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 6 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

SAT NIGHT N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 6 FT. NW SWELL 5 FT.

SUN N WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 6 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

MON N WIND 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 6 FT.

District rivers will be very low and clear so driftboating would be more of a dragboat show. The lower stretches of the Trask and Nestucca tidewaters should produce some fish however but you'll have to move for them and target them on the last hours of outgoing tide.

Clam diggers, both razor diggers and bay clam diggers should find good conditions to dig in this week. Target the early part of the minus tide series as clams, especially razor clams on the beach, get pounded down the later in the series that you wait.

Central & South Coast Reports – Decent morning minus tides will allow clamming in many bays and estuaries along the central and plenty of sand shrimp for those with a gun and the desire for high-quality bait that's expensive to buy but cheap when acquired with a little labor.

From Oregon Coast Today: "If you're tired of the glam, scam and flim flam, come to Clam a Rama. This inaugural event, set for Sunday, May 24, will introduce you to one of the simplest ways to have fun on the coast: clamming in the clean and beautiful Alsea Bay. Volunteers from the Waldport Chamber of Commerce and rangers from Oregon State Parks will be on the flats, just outside the Historical Alsea Bay Bridge Interpretive Center, showing you how it's done. If you want to keep your catch, you'll need a state shellfish license and your own container. Don't miss the Clam-a-rama, ding dong. The minus tide will be hitting about 7 a.m. on Sunday, for details and demonstration times, call the chamber info desk at 541-563-2133."

Halibut fishing out of Newport during last week's opener was a fairly fast and furious effort. While releasing smaller fish in the effort to retail good-sized keepers is common, over 90% of anglers trying brought home nice-sized halibut. Spring all-depth halibut continues Thursdays through Saturdays although this weekend may be too rough to fish.

Smallmouth bass fishing has started up on the Umpqua and while fishing is good is will improve over the next several weeks as the water warms. Unfortunately, weed growth has gotten an early start as well. Umpqua anglers have been experiencing fair to good results for spring Chinook in the mainstem and in the North Umpqua below Winchester Dam. Shad fishing has started around Yellow Creek and has been good at times. Winchester Bay has been producing sturgeon for anglers using mud shrimp on the outgoing tide.

Coos Bay anglers are picking up few sturgeon in the bay while area rock and jetty fishers are doing well for rockfish on days when the ocean allows.

With springers moving upstream and out of the lower Rogue, catches have slowed. The action has improved on the Grants Pass stretch with good flows keeping Chinook on the move. Backbouncing cured eggs has been far more effective than pulling plugs. The fishing remains less than spectacular, however, due to low returns this season. Early mornings have rewarded anglers on the upper Rogue with a few springers but be prepared for high flows through the weekend.

While bottom fishing has been excellent for most anglers, rough seas and high winds are likely to prevent boats launching out of the Port of Brookings this weekend. The surf should lay down sufficiently for beach casters to try for the jumbo perch which have been scaling at two pounds or better. Among others, Winchuck Beach Wayside has been productive with two inch Berkeley Gulp! sand worms as effective as any bait.

With Diamond Lake in good shape for the Memorial Day weekend, crowds of anglers are expected to enjoy the fine fishing. Most anglers take five-fish limits of fat trout from 15 to 20 inches.

Central and Eastern Oregon – The water level of the lower Deschutes rose slightly mid-week but the river is still in excellent shape although fishing for reddsides is only fair. Caddis are the insect of primary interest now with salmon fly hatches just around the corner. The Deschutes above Benham Falls opens May 23rd.

Fish the Crooked River now to experience it at its peak for the year. Take a variety of wet and dry patterns and hit the stretch below Bowman Dam..

Odell is producing Mackinaw averaging 15 pounds. It's still cold here, however, with snow falling recently.

Fishing is fair to good on the Metolius, best during the occasional massive caddis hatches which are occurring periodically.

Washington fishing reports:
For the period of May 13-26, 2009

North Puget Sound

Spring fisheries are under way and anglers have their pick of several fishing opportunities in the region. Halibut and lingcod seasons are open, shrimping is still an option in one marine area and hungry trout are biting at many of the region's lakes.

WDFW is adding more **trout** this month to several of those lakes, including Lone Lake in Island County; Green, Meridian, Sawyer and Shady lakes in King County; Egg and Mountain lakes in San Juan County; Pass and Vogler lakes in Skagit County; Ballinger, Goodwin, Ketchum, Loma and Panther lakes in Snohomish County; and Squalicum and Terrell lakes in Whatcom County.

"Plenty of trout remain in a lot of the lakes, and we will continue to stock some of those lakes throughout the season," said Jon Anderson, WDFW resident trout manager. "Fishing should continue to be good through spring and into summer."

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 at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>.

On Puget Sound, anglers are hooking some nice **lingcod**. Catch counts at the Armeni Ramp indicate 41 anglers caught six lingcod May 9 and 16 anglers checked five lings the following day. Elsewhere, 48 anglers at the Washington Park ramp brought home 16 lingcod May 9, while 25 anglers checked at the Coronet Bay ramp caught 10 lings May 10. During the hook-and-line season (May 1-June 15), there's a one-fish daily limit for lings, with a minimum size of 26 inches and a maximum size of 40 inches.

Anglers also can drop a hook for other bottomfish, such as **halibut**, **rockfish**, and **cabezon**. The halibut season is open five days a week, Thursday through Monday, with a daily limit of one halibut and no minimum size limit. For rockfish, there is no minimum size, but 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.

Shrimping is still an option, but only in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) for a limited time. The northern and central portions of Marine Area 7 will close at 9 p.m., May 15, while the southern portion of the marine area will close at 9 p.m., May 16.

Shrimp fisheries in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner), 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) are closed. More details on the shrimp fishery are available on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/shrimpreg/>.

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>.

Meanwhile, **gray whales** continue to lure whalewatchers to the region. The large marine mammals have been milling about the Whidbey and Camano islands area the last several weeks during their annual journey north. Farther south, a **humpback whale** was recently seen traveling between Vashon and west Seattle.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Hood Canal Bridge closure: People heading to or from the northern Olympic Peninsula should note that the Hood Canal Bridge is closed through mid-June. The Washington State Department of Transportation offers a number of transportation options to help drivers during this time. Information is available at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/sr104hoodcanalbridgeeast/>.

From saltwater to freshwater, fishing opportunities abound for anglers in the region. Halibut fishing is expanding, lingcod and shrimp fisheries are under way, and there are still plenty of rainbows, browns and cutthroat in area lakes.

With river fishing coming up soon, anglers should note that the statewide opening date has changed from June 1 to the first Saturday of the month, which falls on June 6 this year. Many popular regional streams and rivers are affected by this regulation, including the Bogachiel, Chehalis, Hoh, Sol Duc, Wishkah and Wynoochee rivers.

Meanwhile, on the saltwater, fishery managers have scheduled another day of **shrimp** fishing on Hood Canal Saturday, May 16. The four-day Hood Canal season was scheduled to be open May 2-13, on Saturdays and Wednesdays only.

"Angler participation on Hood Canal has decreased somewhat in recent years, so we're able to offer an extra day," said Mark O'Toole, WDFW fish biologist. Catch rates for the area were similar to last year, with anglers averaging about 62 prawns per pot compared to 64 in 2008. The daily limit is 80.

Shrimp fishing in Marine Area 11 (Vashon Island to the Narrows Bridge) was limited to one day - May 2. WDFW counted 478 buoys with an average catch of 47 prawns per pot. 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/>.

On the coast, **halibut** fishing got off to a good start near Ilwaco and Westport earlier this month, but has since slowed because of recent rough weather, said Wendy Beeghley, WDFW fish biologist. "Halibut anglers are looking for calmer seas before heading out and, hopefully, that will happen soon," Beeghley said.

The halibut fishery in Ilwaco (Marine Area 1) is open three days a week, Thursdays through Saturdays until 70 percent of the quota is reached, or until July 18. The fishery will then reopen on Aug. 7. Westport (Marine Area 2) is open on Sundays only until the quota is reached.

Anglers will have a new opportunity to catch halibut starting May 14, when fishing begins in La Push and Neah Bay (marine areas 3 and 4). The fishery will be open two days a week, Thursdays and Saturdays, through May 23, or until the quota is reached. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will reopen June 4 and 6, with another scheduled June 18 depending on the quota. "These are popular areas, so the fishing should go quick," Beeghley said.

Another halibut fishery opens May 21 in Marine Area 5 along the western Strait of Juan de Fuca (Sekiu). The fishery is open five days a week, Thursdays through Mondays, and runs through July 3.

Along the eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca, anglers in the Port Angeles area (Marine Area 6) pulled in 25 of the flatfish over the May 9-10 weekend. Halibut fishing in marine areas 6-11 and 13 is open five days a week, Thursdays through Mondays, closing June 5.

And coming up, those with a competitive streak can try for a \$5,000 first prize at the 9th Annual Halibut Derby sponsored by the Port Angeles Salmon Club. The two-day derby will be held May 23-24 near the Dungeness Spit. Ticket information is available at <http://www.swainsinc.com/> or (360) 452-2357. On the fence about entering? Consider Silverdale's Ray Frederick, who pulled in an 80-inch, 224-pound barn door at the Kitsap Poggie Club's annual halibut derby earlier this month. Frederick hauled in his winning catch off Point Wilson.

All areas open to halibut fishing have a one-fish daily catch limit, no minimum size. For additional information, call the Fishing Hotline at (360) 902-2500 or check the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/creel/halibut/>.

Lingcod, rockfish and **cabezon** fisheries in marine areas 5-13 got under way May 1 and will run through June 15. During the hook-and-line season for lings (May 1-June 15), all fish must measure at least 26 inches, but no more than 40 inches. The spearfishing season for lingcod runs May 21-June 15, with no size limits. The fishery is open seven days a week with a one-fish daily limit. For rockfish, there is no minimum size, but anglers must keep the first legal rockfish caught.

For more information on regulations and restrictions, anglers are advised to call the Fishing Hotline at (360) 902-2500 or check the 2009-10 *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

On the freshwater, there's still plenty of trout to catch in local lakes. With more than 6,000 triploid trout planted in 29 lakes around the region, anglers should have a good chance of catching some large fish over the next few weeks. Averaging 1.5 pounds each, these trout have the potential to grow to trophy size.

Lakes stocked with more than 300 triploids include Kitsap Lake (Kitsap County), Benson, Haven and Wooten lakes (Mason County), Ohop and Tanwax lakes (Pierce County), and Clear and Lawrence lakes (Thurston).

Weekly reports and information on WDFW trout-stocking are 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>

On the Olympic Peninsula, **spring chinook** have been slow to return to the Sol Duc River, but recent rain should help bring in more fish, said Brian Russell, WDFW hatchery manager. "So far, the fishing hasn't been red-hot, but there are some nice springers in the river," Russell said. Some of these fish will also be available to anglers in the Hoh River because of their tendency to "dip in" to the lower Hoh as they migrate to the Quillayute system, Russell said. Spring chinook season opens May 16 on the Hoh, running Wednesdays through Sundays with a limit of one adult

chinook per day. The Sol Duc is open daily with a limit of two adult fish per day. Anglers must release all wild chinook and coho salmon.

Southwest Washington

The mainstem Columbia River remains closed to retention of spring chinook and summer steelhead, but anglers are reeling in increasing numbers of both species on tributaries above and below Bonneville Dam. Sturgeon fishing is also improving in the lower Columbia River as fish that overwintered below the dam begin moving downriver to the coast.

"Fishing for hatchery **spring chinook** is pretty hot right now at Drano Lake and the Wind River," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "I'd recommend hitting those fisheries soon, because the springers now seem to be in a hurry to get home."

Including jacks and fish released, boat anglers at Drano Lake averaged one hatchery spring chinook for every three rods (four rods for bank anglers). On Wind River, boat anglers averaged a springer for every 5.4 rods. Since May 11, anglers have been able to keep up to six jack salmon as part of their daily limit for those waters. (See recent rule changes on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.)

Anglers fishing the Cowlitz River are also reporting decent catches of hatchery spring chinook - especially near the barrier dam - along with some early **summer steelhead**. The Kalama and Lewis rivers recently closed for retention of spring chinook, but both remain open for arriving hatchery summer steelhead. Several other rivers will open June 6 for additional hatchery spring chinook and summer run steelhead angling opportunities as noted in the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet.

But the hatchery summer steelhead season on the mainstem Columbia River has been postponed until further notice, due to concerns about hooking mortality on upriver spring chinook salmon. That action, approved May 13 by fishery managers from Washington and Oregon, was based on an updated forecast of 120,000 to 150,000 spring chinook - about half the number originally expected to return this year.

Cindy LeFleur, WDFW Columbia River policy coordinator, said postponing the steelhead fishery was necessary to ensure passage of wild spring chinook upriver. She said June 16 is the latest date that the steelhead fishery will open.

"It's a puzzle," LeFleur said of this year's spring chinook return. "We've had very high jack counts in the past couple of years - normally a strong indication of strong adult returns the following year. But the adults just haven't arrived in the numbers we expected. This year, the jack counts have been even higher - literally off the charts - so we're going to have to figure out what that means for next season."

Meanwhile, sturgeon fishing has picked up in the Gorge, where an aerial survey tallied 150 boats fishing May 9. The 10 anglers surveyed there had two legal-size fish and had released 12 sublegals. Four anglers fishing for sturgeon near Vancouver had no legal-size fish, but had released two sublegals. Anglers fishing the Bonneville Pool have also been catching some legal-size sturgeon.

Anglers fishing for sturgeon in all areas are advised to check the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>) for current seasons and regulations. New fork-length measurements now in effect statewide are explained on page 15 of the pamphlet.

Anglers looking for a place to catch steelhead might want to consider Kress Lake in Kalama. According to the Longview Daily News, a man was fishing the lake earlier this month when a 10-pound steelhead literally jumped into his boat. There's good reason to believe that account: WDFW has planted more than 100 surplus winter-run hatchery steelhead in Kress Lake since May 1. Both Kress Lake and Swofford Pond are also expected to receive weekly plants of surplus summer-run steelhead through June.

Mineral Lake in Lewis County received 3,450 catchable-size rainbow trout on May 6. Kline Pond will be closed to public fishing May 15 through 4:49 p.m. May 16 for a youth fishing event.

Eastern Washington

Snake River **spring chinook salmon** fishing is finally heating up, but the opportunity may not last long, said Glen Mendel, WDFW District Fish Biologist.

"We're seeing more chinook crossing the Lower Monumental and Little Goose dams, and with the nice weather lots of anglers are after them," Mendel said. "Catch rates for shore anglers were running 17 to 26 hours per fish, depending on where they were fishing."

Mendel said 33 hatchery marked chinook were checked and another seven had been released on May 9. "Unfortunately, the numbers of chinook crossing Bonneville Dam are not as high as we expected," Mendel said. "Anglers should keep checking WDFW's website for any possible changes in the fishery."

Sprague Lake continues to provide great **rainbow trout** fishing. Out of 34 anglers recently checked by WDFW enforcement officers, 30 nice trout were caught. Sprague anglers are reminded that only two of the daily catch limit of five trout can be over 20 inches. At the rate the rainbows are growing in Sprague Lake that might mean a relatively short day of fishing there.

North Spokane County's Eloika Lake is producing decent catches of **bass** and **crappie**. Bass anglers at southwest Spokane County's Down's Lake have also been doing well, and bass fishing success along the Snake River is increasing.

Trout-stocked lakes in the northeast district of the region are warming up and providing more and better fishing. Many in Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties are on the Colville National Forest, where camping facilities make them a good bet for Memorial Day weekend outings. Plan ahead by checking out the particulars on lakes listed in the 2009 Washington Fishing Prospects at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/prospects/>.

Traveling anglers with boats in tow are reminded to clean their vessels before launching and after retrieving them from any waters to avoid spreading aquatic nuisance species like milfoil or zebra mussels. Mike Whorton, WDFW eastern region enforcement captain, said that once non-native species become established in a new environment where natural enemies, pests, or disease that kept them in check in their native environment are missing, they may spread rapidly and cause unanticipated negative biological and economic impacts. Whorton reports that officers throughout the region will be conducting emphasis patrols at WDFW water access sites now and through the summer to check for aquatic nuisance species, including mandatory check stations on roads leading to recreation areas and boat launches. For more information about aquatic nuisance species, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/ans/>.

It's time to sign up for the June 13 "Fishing Kids" event at Whitman County's Gilchrist Pond near Colfax. This is one of several events across the state sponsored by WDFW, the C.A.S.T. (Catch A Special Thrill) for Kids Foundation, and several local groups designed to introduce youth 5 through 14 years of age to sport fishing. Sign-up forms are available at <http://www.castforkids.org> or call Whitman County 4-H at (509) 397-6290.

Northcentral Washington

Jeff Korth, WDFW fish program manager for the north central region, reports recent cool water temperatures have made for very good **trout** fishing in the Columbia Basin.

"Blue and Park lakes have very good catch rates with three to four 13-inch rainbow trout per angler," Korth said. "Dry Falls, Lenice, Nunnally and Beda lakes, all early-opening selective gear fisheries with one-trout daily catch limits, are all still fishing well."

Korth noted that Douglas County's Jameson Lake was "barely touched on the April 25 opener," but has close to 40,000 rainbow catchables stocked. In Chelan County, Korth reports Lake Chelan **kokanee** are "firing up" with fish running 11-12 inches this year.

Okanogan County fishing is good, especially in the Methow Valley, reports Cal Treser, WDFW enforcement officer.

"The **bluegill** are starting to bite on Leader Lake along with a few **crappie**," Treser said. "Pearygin and Patterson lakes are good just fishing from shore, with some 12 to 14-inch rainbow trout at Pearygin and up to 18-inchers at Patterson. Fly fishermen at Big Twin, which is a selective gear rule lake, are doing very well with chironomids, some catching and releasing 20 fish in a morning."

Korth also notes that since the April 1 opener, Spectacle Lake, southwest of Oroville, has been very good on yearling and carryover rainbow and brown trout.

WDFW's Sunland Estates access site on the Columbia River, about eight miles west of George in Grant County, is closed until further notice to assess and repair the boat launch. The launch's poor condition makes it hazardous to launch trailered boats. Anglers can access the river at several alternative sites in the area, including WDFW's Old Vantage Highway, Buckshot and Vernita access sites, Crescent Bar Recreation Area southwest of Quincy, and Wanapum Recreation Area southwest of Vantage on the Kittitas County side of the river.

It's time to sign up for the June "Fishing Kids" events in the region, at the Leavenworth Fish Hatchery on June 6 and at Moses Lake on June 13. These are two of several events across the state sponsored by WDFW, the C.A.S.T. (Catch A Special Thrill) for Kids Foundation, and several local groups, designed to introduce youths, age five through 14 years, to sport fishing. Sign-up forms are available at <http://www.castforkids.org/> or, for the June 6 event, contact Hooked on Toys In Wenatchee at (509) 663-0740, and for the June 13 event contact Moses Lake Park and Recreation Department at (509) 766-9240.

Southcentral Washington

Paul Hoffarth, WDFW district fish biologist from Pasco, reports fishing for hatchery-marked (clipped fin) **spring chinook salmon** in the Ringold area of the Columbia River has recently been better than expected, with an average catch rate of 25 hours per chinook.

"Unfortunately, angler encounters with non-clipped chinook has been higher than normal," Hoffarth said. "Through May 10, an estimated 39 hatchery adults and 18 hatchery jacks have been harvested, and 16 wild adults and 2 wild jacks have been caught and released."

Hatchery chinook fishing seasons not listed in the rules pamphlet will begin on the lower Yakima River May 13 and on the middle reach of the Yakima River May 16. The portion of the lower Yakima River opening by special rule is from the Interstate 182 bridge in Richland (river mile 4.5) to 400 feet downstream of Horn Rapids (Wanawish) Dam (river mile 18.) The portion of the

middle reach of the Yakima River is from the Interstate 82 bridge at Union Gap upstream to the Burlington Northern Railroad Bridge about 500 feet downstream of Roza Dam.

The special seasons are allowed because WDFW and Yakama Nation fishery managers are predicting a return of between 10,000 and 15,900 adult spring chinook and 56 percent are predicted to be hatchery salmon, originating from the Yakima/Klickitat Fisheries Project research hatchery at Cle Elum. This more abundant hatchery component of the run is available for harvest, while all wild or natural-origin chinook are protected.

The daily limit is two hatchery-marked chinook (clipped and healed adipose fin) of at least 12 inches. Wild salmon (adipose fin intact) must be immediately released unharmed and cannot be removed from the water prior to release. Gear is restricted to one, single-point, barbless hook with a hook gap from point to shank of 3/4 inch or less. Use of bait is allowed. Fishing for steelhead remains closed. All steelhead must be immediately released unharmed and cannot be removed from the water prior to release. For all rule details, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

Jim Cummins, WDFW fish biologist, notes that spring chinook throughout the Columbia River Basin are late arriving, but fish are starting to enter the Yakima River, and may peak the last couple weeks of May or early June. Fish counts at Prosser and Roza Dams can be viewed at <http://www.cbr.washington.edu/dart/>.

"Water flows frustrated anglers last year and there's the same potential this spring," Cummins said. "Temperatures in the mountains get into the high 70's and the mountain snowpack begins to melt. Best fishing flows are in the range of 600 - 1500 cfs as measured at Roza Dam. Flows higher than 2000 cfs at Roza generally make the river unfishable."

Anglers can check flows at <http://www.usbr.gov/pn/hydromet/yakima>. Cummins also notes the Yakima Greenway Path and several boat launches provide excellent access from Selah to Union Gap. Maps can be found at <http://www.yakimagreenway.org/map.html>. There is also access at Harrison Road and from the Yakima Canyon Highway above Harrison Road. Cummins says boaters should be aware that the river can be a challenge to float, particularly from the Terrace Heights Bridge down to Century Landing at Union Gap. For the lower reach of the Yakima, access maps are posted at http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/salmon/when_where_best_area-yakima.htm.

Cummins reminds anglers that many rivers and streams remain closed until June 6 to protect downstream migrating salmon and steelhead smolt and spawning trout and steelhead.

"Some of our higher elevation lakes are starting to be stocked with catchable size **rainbow trout** now that snow is melting and mountain roads are becoming accessible," Cummins said. "Lost and Clear lakes in Yakima County are already planted." All lake trout stocking can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>.

TGF Inbox

Reader Steve A. Asked via the Contact Form at the TGF website, "Are there any reports of shad fishing below the falls on the Mighty Willamette?"

TGF co-editor Michael Teague responder, "Good news, Steve. Shad are being caught in fair number at Oregon City but are yet to show at Coon Island in the Multomah Channel. It's possible at this time to catch a handful of these smelly critters now, catches will continue to improve into June.

"Incidentally, catches of shad are best on sunny days.

" Have fun and let us know how you do!"

Regular contributor Kapt Ken Johnson chimes in again this week, "I was heading to Costco after the dental appointment but I thought..."Oh what the hey...I'll drive on the beach at Gearhart and drive all the way up to the Peter Iredale..." So, I did. When I got to the beach, and headed North, I spied 3-4 commercial clammers getting their gear on for Razor Clams. I pulled up to one of them and asked if I was missing something. He said "the tide is still heading out for about 2 hours but it was only a +2.0 Tide...BUT, there are still clams kind of high on the beach..." So, luckily I had my gun in the truck because of a new modification to it I had done, so I started to drive North on the beach...After going about 500', or so, I saw a DOUGHNUT! "What?" I thought, and got out of the truck...I took my gun and plunged right in. Clam #1. I looked around and saw another 4-5 "shows" so I went to them and dug up some more Razors, somewhat on the below average size, but TASTY!!! I drove up the beach another 1000' and parked when I saw a "show" from my window as I drove by. Then another, then another etc...I limited out in about 40-45 minutes, to keep a long story short! Damn, I thought...And this is almost a TWO FOOT tide...Hhhmmmmmmmmmm, I think this coming week of clamming is going to be pretty good!!!

"Here's what NOAA says for Barview area: 05/20/2009 Wed 03:59PM 1.9 L (That's a "Positive" tide, btw...)"

Here's Ken's catch o' the day:



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

Write to the TGF staff:

Bob Rees: brees@pacifier.com

Doug Rees: doug@TheGuidesForecast.com

Michael Teague: Michael@TheGuidesForecast.com

Random Links

Plunking for steelhead - Rigging a Whole Sand Shrimp:
<http://www.steelheaduniversity.com/sandshrimp.html>

Thanks and a tip o' the fishin' cap to Kapt KJ for the following:
Fish and Wildlife Commission adopts summer and fall salmon seasons for the ocean and Columbia:
<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2009/may/051509.asp>

GOOD LUCK!