

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 29th – June 4th, 2009**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Effort and catch for sturgeon continues to taper off with exception of dedicated oversize anglers working the gorge downstream of Marker 85. Catches of oversized sturgeon is picking up for those using fresh shad for bait. Shad fishing is picking up as well, making great sport for new anglers wanting consistent action. As shad numbers build, success from bank anglers will also improve. Small spoons and shad darts are consistent producers.

Steelhead fishing remains closed on the mainstem Columbia but action wasn't likely to improve until mid-June anyway. Chinook passage remains consistent at around 2,000 adults per day. The jack count is now triple the previous record set in 2000 which in 2001 yielded the largest adult return since record keeping began in 1938.

Willamette River water temperature has hit 60 degrees and chinook should begin to pass in greater numbers at Willamette Falls. Summer steelhead continue to cross at a rate of about 180 to 200 per day. The upstream tributary fisheries should begin to improve. Shad fishing remains fair with bulk of the run yet to appear. Steelhead are being caught below Dexter Dam with effort building here.

A few summer steelhead are being landed on the McKenzie by anglers drifting fresh sand shrimp. Resides are taking dry offerings on the upper river.

The Clackamas River continues to yield mostly summer steelhead with only an occasional salmon falling to backbouncers. Steelhead are well distributed to River Mill Dam and action should begin to peak in the coming weeks. The Clackamas opened to trout fishing from the mouth to North Fork Dam on May 23rd. Two hatchery trout may be kept per day.

Sandy River anglers continue to have to work for their fish but steelhead are holding up at Cedar Creek. Anglers are still coming across native fish and spring chinook are hard to find when traditionally, the fishing should be peaking this time of year.

Scheduled to be planted with trout are Estacada Lake, Faraday Lake, Harriet Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake and Timothy Meadows.

Northwest – Sturgeon anglers are anxious for more consistent sturgeon fishing in the Astoria area. Keeper action did pick up for anglers fishing closer to Aldrich Point but limits of keepers are rare. The fishing downstream of the Astoria/Megler Bridge remains slow.

Tomorrow is the last day to fish for halibut at any depth from Leadbetter Point in Washington to Cape Falcon near Manzanita. The spring quota has been reached but the fishery will re-open on August 7th with a more liberal catch quota.

Anglers weren't able to access productive bottomfishing grounds with severe tides and large wind waves pounding the coast for much of the week. This weeks ocean forecast isn't improving and tides remain extreme until late in the weekend.

Tillamook Bay anglers aren't encouraged by recent success for spring chinook. The upper bay

produced minimal results despite excellent tides. Laurie Ferris of Newport took a 21-pound chinook on Sunday however using a white with red dotted Flatfish with a sardine wrap. The lower bay has been producing a few fish near high slack and the first part of outgoing tide. Estuary clamming was excellent on the weekend.

Fair catches of chinook came from Trask River driftboaters on the last rain freshet but dropping flows will likely keep most fish in the lower tidewater stretches of the river. The Wilson was also producing a few salmon and a rare summer steelhead.

Southwest – Fishing pressure on the Umpqua River is up from previous years and returning numbers indicate an improvement over the last few years. Anglers are reporting fair catches of jacks in the river with plugs and bait taking the majority of the fish. Shad are also beginning to show in fair numbers.

Diamond Lake is now ice free and producing good catches of rainbow trout. This fishery should stay strong into late June and experience a resurgence later in the fall.

Anglers will have another crack at all depth halibut fishing but seas are forecasted to be less than friendly. Early morning boats may escape the predicted north winds but plan for slow going in the choppy seas. Bottomfishing for those not targeting halibut will remain good but lingcod action is beginning to taper.

Spring chinook fishing on the lower and middle Rogue River remains productive but should taper this week. Anchovies have been most effective down low but as adults acclimate to fresh water, they are more likely to fall to plugs as the territorial instinct kicks in and causes them to bite out of aggression.

Striped bass are becoming more active in the warming waters of the Umpqua and Smith Rivers. Although often challenging to catch, they will fall to trout imitations and plugs this time of year.

Eastern – John Day River fishing should improve with dropping flows this week. Warmwater fisheries in this district should build as water temperatures increase.

The Deschutes River is closed to spring chinook but the Umatilla River run of salmon is increasing with a viable spring chinook fishery available to those willing to learn it. For trout anglers, sufficient numbers of salmon flies are hatching for the trout to be keyed in on them. Adults are becoming abundant from Maupin up to Trout Creek. It's still a good idea to have stonefly imitations as well as nymphs this early in the year.

SW Washington – Consistent counts are producing fair catches of salmon for anglers fishing at Drano Lake, the Wind River and the mouth of the Klickitat River. A significant portion of the catch are jacks. Anglers should check regulations for their favorite body of water as regulation changes effect some waterways beginning June 1st.

The Cowlitz River is the only district stream producing some catches of spring chinook. Steelhead are available as well and numbers should begin to build into June.

The Kalama and Lewis Rivers are fair options for steelheaders but spring chinook returns to the respective hatcheries are alarmingly low.

Columbia River Fishing Report – On the mainstem the best thing going right now is the oversize fishery. The behemoths are gathering in the gorge to feed on spawning shad and to engage in their yearly ritual of spawning themselves. Anglers able to get fresh shad for bait are targeting oversize fish in the Marker 85 fishery and finding consistent results. Although the bulk of the oversize fish are staging closer to Bonneville Dam, the Marker 85 deadline and downstream area has been an effective stretch to target these fish in the early part of the season. It's no different this year.

Also available are a few remaining keepers but the action is far from what anglers witnessed in recent weeks. It's now clear that many of those fish are en route to the estuary where food sources will be more plentiful in the coming months. There are still fish being taken, especially on smelt but action will likely continue to taper into the summer months.

Shad fishing in itself is a good option right now as numbers crossing the dam are on track for another big return. The largest day of passage to date took place on the 26th with over 30,000 fish crossing that day. Dick Nite spoons, particularly greens and gold, have produced the best in recent years.

Steelheaders will have to wait (likely until mid-June) before they are allowed to pursue summer run fish and an occasional incidental sockeye off the beaches and select anchor areas on the Columbia. Run numbers are beginning to build but even if the fishery was open, success rates wouldn't be all that good. When passage at Bonneville Dam tops 200 fish per day, it's time to get excited.

Further downstream, sturgeon chasers working the estuary are still not coming up with consistent results. Action certainly picked up this week but anglers are still having to work to catch a half a dozen fish. Occasionally, a guide boat may land 20 to 30 fish with only a fraction of those fish in the new keeper size slot limit. Sand shrimp are taking the majority of the fish but anchovies are available and also working well.

The Guide's Forecast – As we enter the tail end of this tide series, anglers may want to look to the deeper water for fair catches of sturgeon in the estuary. Anchovies are the best bait in the deeper water and action should continue to improve as the water temperature does. The river upstream of Tongue Point will likely continue to be the best area to target these fish.

Sturgeon fishers in the gorge will also be entering peak season for oversized fish. These large fish should readily take fresh shad for bait and those too should be easy to catch as numbers grow exponentially every day. Keepers are also available and will take shad strips but smelt is a better bait if you are targeting fish in the keeper range.

Steelheaders are still on the wait for an open season and looking at recent dam passage for chinook, it's not likely to open prior to the June 15th summer chinook season.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – The water temperature at Willamette Falls has hit 60 degrees, spring Chinook numbers are over 12,000 and summer steelhead counts are pushing 4,500. Boaters should be aware of a recent slow, no-wake rule in effect now for powered boats on the Willamette River between Canby and Newberg.

Trout fishing has been worthwhile on the McKenzie with the level dropping and temperature rising.

Fishing has been slow on the Santiam system due to high, swift water and despite improve numbers of springers and summer steelhead. There's hope once the water level settles down.

The Silverton Lions Club is sponsoring an event for physically and mentally challenged anglers from those to the very experienced. The event will take place June 6th from 1:30 to 4:30 PM at Silverton Reservoir.

The Guide's Forecast – With the shad run starting on the lower Willamette, there is some interest in the Oregon City area. Catches have also picked up at Coon Island in Multnomah Channel. Shad fishing will improve as the numbers increase in a week or two. Sturgeon fishing is expected to produce lots of shakers as well as a few keepers particularly in the stretch from the St. Johns Bridge to the Toyota ole. The Middle Fork Willamette will improve for trout as the weather warms the chilly water.

Trout fishing will remain good on the McKenzie, particularly the upper river.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Spring Chinook are scattered throughout the Clackamas although hookups have been spotty. Some anglers report fishing has all day without a bite or even seeing a fish roll while others are getting two or three opportunities in a day.

Springers are being hooked here and there on the Sandy but with the Columbia predicted to remain high for the next week or so, the best opportunity may be at the flooded mouth of the river. There have been flurries of action here periodically.

North Coast Fishing Report – Spring chinook is on the minds of most north coast anglers. Tillamook Bay and the Nestucca River are some of the few coastal systems that get returning adults. The large tide series we're just coming off of should have produced good catches of springers for upper bay anglers but it didn't really pan out that way. We had our best day on Sunday, May 24th having 3 opportunities and taking 21 and 24-pounders near the mouth of the Wilson River. We got our fish early, 5:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. in the shallow water (about 4.5 feet) using Kwikfish with sardine wrap. The mouth of the Wilson, Oyster House Hole and along the picket fence have been the more productive spots to target springers. The last 3 hours of outgoing tide have produced the best results.

There was fair action reported in the Trask River last week as we were coming off the previous rain freshet. The hatchery hole on the Trask is rumored to have fair numbers of fish present. There was a 41-pounder supposedly weighed in from the hatchery hole last week.

The Wilson, Nestucca and Three Rivers also have confirmed catches of salmon but water levels are once again low so fish will be concentrated in the deeper holes on these streams and most willing to bite in the early morning. Eggs and shrimp combo's are most likely to take fish but spinners may work as well.

Sturgeon effort is waning on Tillamook Bay but there are still a few fish in the system. One boat fished the corral over the weekend, catching one shaker and losing another bigger fish. Juvenile crabs are strewn throughout the estuary making for challenging fishing on the lower end.

Halibut fishers did not have the best weather to target their quarry on the last opener but those that did go out, found good success. Bottomfishing has been good in front of Oceanside at Three Arch Rocks.

Bay crabbing is poor but ocean crabbing is fair to good, especially if you are using fresh bait such as spring chinook carcasses.

The Guide's Forecast – For spring chinook anglers, softer tides this week will shift effort to the lower bay as anglers will break out the herring in search of biters along the jetty. Keep in mind that you are NOT allowed to fish outside of the estuary for salmon. No chinook retention fishery will take place in the ocean this year until the fall bubble fishery begins in order to protect sensitive stocks of California chinook. Low tides will take place in the afternoons this week so if the ocean is calm, you can try for bottomfish and crab before targeting chinook along the jetty.

Anglers that plan on staying inside the bay for chinook shouldn't bother to fish up-bay from the Ghost Hole. The soft tides won't move fish too far up the bay this week.

River anglers can target chinook in the lower stretches of the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Summer steelhead should be in fair numbers on the Wilson and Nestucca systems as well as Three Rivers.

Sturgeon fishing will be a poor option.

Pending ocean conditions, bottomfishing should be good, especially for seabass along area reefs. Drop those crab pots too and it should be a good combination. Nearshore halibut are also an option if you have a good spot to target them. There are good areas off the mouth of Nehalem Bay.

Don't bother with bay crabbing although you can target bay crabs along the south jetty inside the bay when flows are too intense; near high and low slack.

Central & South Coast Reports – The weekend offshore forecast is improving daily. It looks like a launch off to the central Oregon coast will be a possibility. Thursday, Friday and Saturday are open for all-depth halibut. Rockfish and ling cod anglers must remain inside the 40-fathom line. It's illegal, to have rockfish and halibut on board simultaneously, however.

A few summer steelhead are being taken at the Siletz River. Jigs have been most effective although fishing will be better here as numbers improve into June.

Boats launching out of Depoe Bay have been catching some rockfish but enjoying excellent results for ling cod. Anglers out of Newport have hit the ocean recently for good results with rockfish, cabezon and ling cod.

Sturgeon and striped bass fishing is slow in the lower Coos although rockfish catches have been good off area rocks and jetties.

Coquille anglers are making fair to good catches of cutthroat trout and the first of the shad run is starting to show.

The Elk and Sixes re-opened May 23rd and have been providing fair to good fishing for sea-run cuts.

Shad are being caught in fair to good numbers at Sawyers Rapids on the mainstem Umpqua and the lower river has continued to produce springers. Chinook are also being caught in the North Umpqua and counts thus far indicate a better return than in the last few years. With the water temperature warming, smallmouth bass have started biting with the best results coming at the

lower South Umpqua. Winchester Bay sturgeon fishing remains fair and striped bass activity is improving.

Chinook fishing has slowed in the lower Rogue where only a couple of fish per day are being licked up by backbouncers. Action has dropped off in the Grants Pass stretch as well with favorable flows urging fish further upstream. It follows, then, that the majority of springers are being caught in the upper Rogue where the Hatchery Hole has been kicking out fair to good numbers. Speaking of which, the numbers of Chinook returning this year remains low, so anglers are thankful for every opportunity. Due to low returns, it is likely to be finalized today, May 28th, that the retention of spring Chinook will not be allowed for the remainder of the season. Stoneflies are hatching en masse in the Holy Water section of the Rogue and trout are definitely looking up.

Conditions look favorable for boats launching out of the Port of Brookings this coming weekend. Catches of rockfish are expected to be good within the 40-fathom limit and many anglers will fill seven-fish limits by using jigs. Ling cod fishing has been fair to good with a few fishers taking two-fish limits.

Surf fishing for perch should be good with the ocean laying down. Cutthroat trout fishing is good in the recently-opened Chetco River. Anglers are reminded that only artificial lures may be used above tidewater.

Diamond Lake is completely free of ice and is fishing very well for large, fat trout.

Central and Eastern Oregon – While the level of the John Day River has been high, smallmouth fishing has been good with plenty of action on the surface.

Warm weather has triggered decent hatches on the Metolius with several anglers experiencing very good trout catches.

Numbers of salmon flies are improving below Maupin on the Deschutes. Hatches will be good in a few weeks.

Crescent Lake is producing large Mackinaw as well as limits of good-sized kokanee.

Paulina has been reliably producing limits of kokanee on the troll. ODell has been fair while Green Peter is slow.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report *May 27 - June 9, 2009*

North Puget Sound

Spring fishing seasons are winding down in the region, but saltwater anglers still have their pick of halibut and lingcod fisheries. In the freshwater, anglers fishing the region's lakes will soon have an opportunity to turn their attention to the rivers, where trout and salmon fisheries are just around the corner.

Portions of the Skagit, Cascade and Skykomish rivers open for **chinook salmon** fishing June 1, said Brett Barkdull, WDFW fish biologist. The Skagit will open to hatchery chinook retention from the Highway 530 bridge at Rockport to the Cascade River. On the Cascade, anglers will be

allowed to fish from the mouth of the river to the Rockport-Cascade Road Bridge. Both stretches are open through July 15.

The daily limit on the Skagit and Cascade rivers will be four hatchery chinook, two of which may be adults (chinook salmon at least 24 inches in length). Barkdull noted that statewide rules require anglers to stop fishing for salmon once they have kept two adults.

"Traditionally, fishing has been pretty good on the Skagit and Cascade rivers on the opener, and we're hopeful that will be the case this year," said Barkdull. "But expectations are down because the run forecast at 1,400 hatchery chinook is about 600 less fish than last year's return."

Barkdull reminds anglers that gamefish regulations have changed on the Cascade River from the mouth to the Rockport-Cascade Road Bridge. From June 1 to July 15, anglers can retain up to two trout, which includes hatchery steelhead and bull trout. For details, anglers should check the rules and regulations pamphlet on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>

On the Skykomish River, hatchery chinook fishing will be open from the Lewis Street Bridge in Monroe to the Wallace River through July 31. Anglers fishing the Skykomish will have a daily limit of two hatchery chinook salmon.

Meanwhile, **trout** fishing will open at several of the region's rivers and streams beginning June 6. Under the statewide rule for trout, there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches in rivers and streams. However, some of the region's rivers and streams have a rule requiring trout to be at least 14 inches in length to keep.

Out on the saltwater, the northern portion of Marine Area 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) opens June 1 to catch-and-release fishing for **salmon**. Fishing will be allowed north of a line from Point Monroe to Meadow Point.

Farther north, the Tulalip Bay "bubble" fishery begins June 5. Except for a one-day closure on June 20, the fishery is open each week from Friday through noon Monday through Sept. 7. The fishery will reopen Sept. 12 on a Saturday and Sunday-only schedule through Sept. 27. Anglers fishing the bubble will have a two-salmon daily limit, plus two additional pink salmon. Chinook must measure 22 inches in length to retain.

Fishing for **lingcod** is still an option. The fishery runs through June 15 in the region, where anglers have hooked some nice lings recently. Catch counts at the Coronet Bay public ramp indicate 113 anglers hauled in seven lingcod May 23, and 84 anglers checked five lings the following day. Elsewhere, 36 anglers at the Washington Park ramp brought home five lingcod May 24. 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.

Time is running out to hook a **halibut**. The season for the big flatfish is open through June 5. Until the fishery closes, anglers can fish five days a week, Thursday through Monday, with a daily limit of one halibut and no minimum size limit.

The region's **spot shrimp** fishery is closed, but shrimpers can soon fish for **coonstripe** and **pink shrimp** in some marine areas beginning June 1. For details on shrimp fisheries check 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>.

Washingtonians who are interested in fishing but haven't actually given it a try have a perfect chance to do so during **Free Fishing Weekend**, scheduled June 6-7. During those two days, no license will be required to fish or gather shellfish in any waters open to fishing in Washington state. Also, no vehicle use permit will be required during Free Fishing Weekend to park at any of the 500 water-access sites maintained by WDFW.

While no licenses are required on Free Fishing Weekend, other rules such as size limits, bag limits and season closures will still be in effect. Anglers will also be required to complete a catch record card for any salmon, steelhead, sturgeon or halibut they catch. Catch record cards and WDFW's Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet are available free at hundreds of sporting goods stores and other license dealers throughout the state. The rules pamphlet is also available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

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 scheduled for closure through mid-June. The Washington State Department of Transportation offers a number of transportation options to help drivers during this time (<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR104HoodCanalBridgeEast/2009closure.htm>).

With June nearly here, anglers can soon add trout and steelhead to their list of fishing choices, or continue to take advantage of the halibut and lingcod seasons, which end in a few more weeks. In addition, a new crab season is on the horizon. Don't forget free fishing weekend June 6-7.

The recreational **halibut** fishery in Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco) closes Friday, May 29 at the end of the day, but anglers trying for the big flat fish still have options. Marine Area 2 (Westport) will be open at least two more Sundays, May 31 and June 7. Additional openings are possible if enough quota remains, said Heather Reed, WDFW coastal policy coordinator.

Farther north, Neah Bay and La Push (marine areas 3 and 4) will open for two more days of fishing June 4 and 6. "We will evaluate the quota after these dates to determine if there's enough quota for additional openings," Reed said. For updated information on the fishery, Reed suggests anglers check recent regulations at http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regs_seasons.html.

Sunny weather in Port Angeles (Marine Area 6) brought out hundreds of **halibut** fishers who participated in the 9th annual Port Angeles Halibut Derby during the Memorial Day weekend. Creel checks conducted in the area showed 558 anglers pulled in 121 halibut with the winner of the derby bringing in a 77-pound trophy. This area, as well as Marine Area 11 (Tacoma-Vashon Island) closes June 5. Marine Area 5 (Seiku) will remain open through July 3. These fisheries are open five days a week, Thursday through Monday.

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/>.

A few weeks remain for anglers looking to catch **lingcod**, **rockfish** and **cabezon** in marine areas 5-13, where the season wraps up 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.

Meanwhile, June 1 marks opening day for **salmon** fishing in Marine Area 11, which extends from the northern tip of Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Salmon fishing is currently open in Marine Area 13 (South Puget Sound). Both areas have a daily limit of two fish and all wild chinook must be released. Anglers should also note that Commencement Bay is closed to salmon fishing until Aug. 1. Details on rules and limits are included in the *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet, or online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

On the freshwater, **trout** and **steelhead** anglers should note that the statewide opening date for river fishing 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.

Free Fishing Weekend is coming up June 6-7. During those two days, no license will be required to fish or gather shellfish in any waters open to fishing in Washington state. Also, no vehicle use permit will be required during Free Fishing Weekend to park at any of the 500 water-access sites maintained by WDFW.

While no licenses are required on Free Fishing Weekend, other rules such as size limits, bag limits and season closures will still be in effect. Anglers will also be required to complete a catch record card for any salmon, steelhead, sturgeon or halibut they catch. Catch record cards and WDFW's *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet are available free at hundreds of sporting goods stores and other license dealers throughout the state. The rules pamphlet is also available online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>.

Looking forward to crab fishing? The popular recreational fishery opens June 18 seven days a week in the western Strait of Juan de Fuca (marine areas 4 and 5) and southern Puget Sound (Marine Area 13). Most other marine areas will open July 1 on a Wednesday-through-Saturday schedule, although Hood Canal and some waters north of Anacortes will not open until later in summer.

Crab fishers are reminded that those who fail to file catch reports for 2009 will face a \$10 fine, which will be imposed when they apply for a 2010 crab license. Puget Sound sport crabbers are required to report their Dungeness crab catch on separate summer and fall/winter catch record cards during the course of the season. Additional information is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crab/index.htm> or <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>

Southwest Washington

Anglers are still reeling in good numbers of **spring chinook salmon** on several tributaries to the Columbia River, but other fisheries are beginning to compete for their attention. As this year's spring chinook run winds down, many anglers are making plans to fish for **summer steelhead, shad, sturgeon** and **trout**.

"This is a time of year when a lot of good fishing opportunities start opening up," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "A lot of anglers kick off the season with spring chinook, then move from one fishery to the next right through the summer months."

If that sounds like fun, prospective anglers interested in taking up the sport will have a chance to test the waters during **Free Fishing Weekend**, scheduled June 6-7. During those two days, no license will be required to fish or gather shellfish in any waters open to fishing in Washington state. Also, no vehicle use permit will be required during Free Fishing Weekend to park at any of the 500 water-access sites maintained by WDFW.

While no licenses are required on Free Fishing Weekend, other rules such as catch record cards, size limits, bag limits and season closures will still be in effect. For more information, see WDFW's *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>), available free at hundreds of sporting goods stores and other license dealers throughout the state.

For now, anglers looking for **spring chinook** can still find them - especially on the Cowlitz, Wind, and Klickitat rivers, and at Drano Lake. On the Wind River, bank anglers fishing in the gorge averaged a hatchery chinook per rod while boat anglers averaged a fish for every three rods during the week ending May 24. Only hatchery chinook with a clipped adipose fin may be retained on the lower Wind River and other tributaries to the Columbia River.

At Drano Lake, boat anglers averaged nearly two-thirds of a salmon per rod, as did bank anglers fishing downriver from the Fisher Hill Bridge on the Klickitat River. Jack salmon made up 40 percent of the catch at Wind River, 60 percent on Drano Lake and 70 percent on the Klickitat River that week.

"We're seeing a very strong return of jacks to those and other tributaries this year, which should provide good fishing for some weeks to come," said Hymer, noting that Drano Lake is closed to fishing on Wednesdays through June 10. He noted that daily catch limits were recently increased at Drano Lake and on the Wind River to six salmon - including up to two adults - to give anglers an opportunity to catch more of those record breaking jack returns.

Starting June 1, the Klickitat fishery for hatchery salmon and steelhead will be open seven days per week downstream from Fisher Hill Bridge and 400 feet upstream from the No. 5 fishway to the boundary markers below the Klickitat Salmon Hatchery. The salmon daily limit will be six fish that same day. Only two may be adults from the Fisher Hill Bridge downstream and only jacks are allowed upstream. Again, be sure to check the *Fishing in Washington* pamphlet for details. Catch rates for hatchery spring chinook appears to be slowing some on the Cowlitz River but summer-run **hatchery steelhead** are moving in to take up the slack. Hymer said steelhead fishing should continue to improve in the Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, Washougal and Klickitat rivers in the weeks ahead.

Sections of the South Fork Toutle River and the Green River recently opened early to fishing for hatchery steelhead, and the Grays River and a stretch of the lower Elochoman River opened early to fishing for both hatchery chinook and hatchery steelhead. For more information on those fisheries, check the Fishing Rule Updates on the WDFW website (http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regs_seasons.html).

Anglers should also be aware that sections of the East Fork Lewis River and the Washougal River will open June 6 to fishing for hatchery steelhead with bait, as outlined in the *Fishing in Washington* rules pamphlet.

The mainstem Columbia River, which has been closed to fishing for salmon and steelhead to conserve wild upriver spring chinook runs, will open to fishing for both species no later than June 16. Before then, the Columbia River **shad** fishery - which has been slow to take off - should also be in full swing, said Hymer, noting that 30,000 of the oversized herring passed Bonneville Dam on May 26.

Based on recent creel sampling results, lots of lower Columbia River **sturgeon** appear to be headed on their annual summer migration towards the coast. Success for legal size fish has slowed in the gorge, improved between Vancouver and Longview, and is just getting started in the estuary.

"We're reaching the end of the spring season and are about to transition into summer fisheries," Hymer said. "Anglers can look forward to a lot more options."

One of those options is catching **trout** in rivers and streams, many of which open for fishing June 6. In anticipation of that fishery, WDFW will be planting thousands of catchable-size rainbows in a number of waters, including Skate Creek, Tilton River, Bird Creek, Bowman Creek, Outlet Creek, Spring Creek, and the Little White Salmon River. Canyon Creek (Clark Co.) will not be stocked as planned this year because of road and snow conditions.

WDFW also stocked several area lakes with rainbows during the last two weeks of May, including Battleground Lake (3,053), Kidney Lake (3,000), Spearfish Lake (3,095), Maryhill Pond (510) and Horsethief Lake (3,102). For additional information about fish stocking, see the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>

Mayfield Lake and Lake Scanewa on the Cowlitz will also get regular rainbow plants throughout the summer. Some of the 60,000 rainbows from an earlier release at Swift Reservoir as well as kokanee at Merwin and Yale reservoirs will provide plenty of action on the Lewis River impoundments.

Eastern Washington

As water levels drop in the Snake River in the southeast part of the region, fishing for **smallmouth bass** and **channel catfish** in the backwaters and sloughs is heating up. Smallmouth bass fishing is also picking up farther north in the region on the lower Spokane River near Fort Spokane, the Spokane arm of Lake Roosevelt, and Lake Roosevelt itself. Bass anglers are reminded to follow the statewide rules - of the 10 smallmouth that can be kept per day, only one can be over 14 inches; bass can be caught, retained in a livewell, and released alive until a daily limit is in possession.

Anglers fishing many **rainbow trout** stocked lakes in the northeast district of the region - Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties - are doing well. Those fishing southern Stevens County's Loon and Waitts Lake are finding decent action on **largemouth bass** and **yellow perch**. Loon also produces catches of **lake trout** and **kokanee** and Waitts provides **rainbow** and **brown trout** fishing.

Largemouth bass and **crappie** are the catch of the day at north Spokane County's Eloika Lake. Largemouth bass fishing is also good at Down's Lake in the southwest corner of Spokane County. **Rainbow** and **cutthroat trout** fishing at Badger and Williams, just northeast of Downs, continues to be productive.

Sprague Lake, on the Lincoln-Adams county line, also continues to produce rainbow trout catches. Sprague anglers are reminded that only two of the daily catch limit of five trout can be over 20 inches.

Anglers throughout the region are reminded that June 6-7 is the weekend to introduce friends and family to the sport. That's "**Free Fishing Weekend**" in Washington when no fishing license is required for anyone.

There's still 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 five 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

Chinook salmon fishing opened on the Icicle River in Chelan County May 22 and is scheduled to run through July 31. The open stretch is from the closure signs located 800 feet upstream of the mouth to 500 feet downstream of the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery Barrier Dam. Daily limit is two salmon, minimum size 12 inches. Release fish with one or more quarter-inch round holes punched in the tail of the fish (caudal fin). These fish are part of a study and have been anesthetized; the FDA requires a 21-day ban on consumption of these fish.

Columbia River anglers can again attempt to launch boats at WDFW's Sunland Estates access site, about eight miles west of George in Grant County. Because the ramp is in poor condition, the drop-off is now clearly marked with a buoy and there are signs to warn boaters of hazards. Anglers can also 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.

There's still 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 youth five through 14 years of age 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.

Anglers throughout the region are reminded that June 6-7 is the weekend to introduce friends and family to the sport. That's "**Free Fishing Weekend**" in Washington when no fishing license is required for anyone.

Southcentral Washington

The first week of the special middle Yakima River **chinook salmon** fishing season was slow, mostly because of high river flows at Roza Dam and the confluence with the Naches River, said WDFW Fish Biologist Jim Cummins. No creel checks were made over the Memorial Day weekend because of high flows, and Cummins said if levels remain high, there will be little fishing opportunity the rest of this month.

Cummins said if flows in the Naches near the town of Naches are above 3,000 cfs and flows at Umtanum are above 4,000 cfs, or the flow at Parker is above 5,000 cfs, it's not worth fishing. "Often the water is very muddy at flows near or above these and fish are not caught," Cummins said. "High flows can also make floating the river dangerous, especially below the confluence with the Naches."

Cummins said a quick way to find river flows is to look for the "Yakima River Basin Reservoir Storage (Teacup Diagram)" at <http://www.usbr.gov/pn/hydromet/yakima/>. Codes for those flows are UMTW (Umtanum), RBDW (Roza) and NACW (Naches at Naches). River flow forecasts can be found under UMTW1 and NACW1 at <http://tinyurl.com/o4sqdl>.

The lower Yakima River is also open to chinook, and Cummins suggests anglers check the Kiona flows to determine if a fishing trip is worth it at this time. Flows in the range of 4,000 to 5,000 cfs are marginal for decent fishing.

Fish counts at Prosser and Roza dams are available at <http://www.cbr.washington.edu/dart/adult.html> and <http://ykfp.org/yakindex.htm>. Cummins reminds anglers that many rivers and streams remain closed until June 6 to protect downstream migrating salmon and steelhead smolts and spawning trout and steelhead.

High elevation lakes, like Lost and Clear lakes in Yakima County, are stocked with catchable size **rainbow trout**. All lake trout stocking can be found at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/weekly/>.

Anglers throughout the region are reminded that June 6-7 is the weekend to introduce friends and family to the sport. That's "**Free Fishing Weekend**" in Washington when no fishing license is required for anyone.

TGF Inbox

Subscriber Ken W. wrote, "The following photos were taken Saturday May 16 2009 on the main stream of the Umpqua River near Macey cove. This should prove that attacks on sturgeons by Sealions are not isolated incidents and in fact are more common place than we have been led to believe. In closing I would just like to say that the over population of Sealions are just increasing the pressures on many already strained fishery's."

Below is one of the photos Ken sent, just as a pinnaped takes a bit out of sturgeon fishing:



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

Free Fishing Weekend Events:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2009/may/052209d.asp>

Halibut fishing information:
<http://www.halibut.net/>

GOOD LUCK!