

The Guide's Forecast - volume 12 issue number 18

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **April 30th – May 6th, 2010**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - Bonneville salmon passage continues ahead but numbers need to continue to climb in order to realize additional opportunity. Peak passage has been in the first week of May in recent years. Fisheries upstream of Bonneville are beginning to produce good results.

Red-hot catches of sturgeon near Rooster Rock prompted an abrupt closure from April 29 through July 31 between the upper and lower ends of Sand Island and corresponding markers on the Oregon shoreline.

Spring chinook are starting to pass in earnest at Willamette Falls. This should stimulate upriver fisheries in the very near future. Meanwhile, action at Oregon City remains excellent for backbouncers and backtrollers working shrimp and egg combinations or prawns reports **pro guide Joe Salvey (503-349-1411)**. Hogliners are doing well between the West Linn Bridge and I-205 as well. As temperatures warm, hardware will become more effective.

Pro guide Bill Kremers (541 754 6411) reports that springer fishing around the Portland Harbor area on the Willamette has not been red hot compared to the Oregon City area but fishing pressure is only moderate.

The Town Run on the upper river is producing steelhead and counts indicate a good season ahead.

A few steelhead were taken on opening day on the McKenzie. Weekend trout fishing was fair. Look for McKenzie Green Caddis hatching now.

South Santiam summer steelhead numbers continue to improve, recycling efforts picking up and pressure is building with both boat and bank participation increasing.

Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808) reports the Santiam has some nice summer steelhead in it. With the counts over Willamette Falls improving.

Fishing has been slow on the Clackamas for steelhead with many spawned out and only a few springers showing near the mouth.

Fair to good catches of mostly native steelhead are being caught (and released) on the Sandy River. Springers have yet to arrive in any fishable numbers.

Henry Hagg Lake, Huddleston Pond, Silver Creek Reservoir, Timothy Meadows and Waverly Lake are scheduled to be planted with hatchery trout.

Northwest – Spring chinook are starting to show in the Tillamook district. Quality fish have been taken in the Trask River and the upper Tillamook Bay. Although the action begins to peak later in May, if the run is sizable, anglers could experience good catches in the coming weeks. Sturgeon are hard to come by but a few are present.

A recent rise in river levels could send fresh steelhead and salmon into north coast systems. Although past peak season, late winter steelhead and a few summer fish may fall to the few

boaters working the Nestucca, Trask and Wilson Rivers reports **pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)**.

The bulk of the catch will likely be spent winter steelhead but fresh fish should be present in the faster flow and likely to fall to small drifted baits or plugs backrolled through shallow runs. Early spring chinook should be present in the deeper runs and will likely fall to plugs or backbounced eggs.

Bay crabbers are picking up a few keepers in Tillamook and Netarts bay. Most serious crabbers are awaiting more calm ocean conditions as better success is likely. Long term ocean forecasts are not looking promising however.

May 1st marks the north of Falcon halibut opener for the all-depth fishery. The 3-day per week season runs from Thursdays through Saturdays until the quota is met or July 17th. South of Cape Falcon, the nearshore fishery (inside of 40 fathoms) also opens on May 1st. The limit is 1 fish per day, 6 per year.

Good razor clam tides are now underway. Clatsop Beaches should produce the best digs.

Scheduled for trout stocking are Coffenbury Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County), Sunset Lake and Vernonia Lake.

Southwest – Morning tides greater than minus one foot through Saturday will mean late day launches for boaters. Clamming will be good in estuaries, however.

The ocean salmon season from Cape Falcon to the California border was finalized for May 29th through September 6th for chinook with hatchery coho retention allowed from June 25th through the closure or a quota of 26,000 fin-clipped fish, whichever comes first.

Shad fishing will heat up on the Umpqua in May and will continue through June. Spring chinook remain a good option here.

Rogue River levels will be on the increase through the weekend which will slow down spring chinook fishing. This is the second time in less than a week that the freshets have slowed the action, just when it's getting really good. As it starts to drop and more importantly, the water temperature improves, good results will resume.

Fishing was poor to slow at Diamond Lake for the opener with soft ice evident on the lake's surface in many locations. A little warm weather will have Diamond fishing at its true potential.

Incoming tides have been good to beach anglers for surf perch averaging two pounds when ocean conditions have allowed the activity.

Floras Lake and Powers Pond are scheduled to be stocked with trout.

Eastern – The Mecca opener on the Deschutes over the past weekend (Pelton to the Northern reservation boundary) had anglers trying at Maupin with mixed results although the middle river fished quite well.

Cold water is resulting in slow fishing at Odell.

Lake Billy Chinook offered fair fishing in frigid conditions for the opener.

SW Washington – The Lewis River produced a few spring chinook late last week with steelhead surprisingly absent. This should change as summer fish begin to arrive in numbers in the coming weeks.

The Cowlitz isn't producing the number of spring chinook most predicted by now. Although a good run is forecast, success rates should be climbing soon if the run is to come to fruition. Good steelhead numbers seem to be present.

The Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries produced well late last week but slowed for the weekend crowd. Success often correlates with Bonneville Dam counts and numbers should peak this week.

Columbia River Fishing Report – With salmon fishing closed (except for upstream of Bonneville Dam), reporting for this section will be minimal until more seasons open up or sturgeon fishing gets better. On that note, the blossoming sturgeon fishery near Rooster Rock has now closed. Unprecedented catches prompted the closure as the quota was fast disappearing which would have jeopardized a fall fishery. Here is the official announcement:

For Immediate Release

April 26, 2010

Heavy sturgeon harvest triggers fishing closure at Rooster Rock

CLACKAMAS, Ore. – Fishery managers from Oregon and Washington today decided to close a shallow slough at Rooster Rock State Park to all fishing in order to maintain scheduled retention seasons in the mainstem Columbia River upstream of Wauna powerlines.

The closure will take place from April 29 through July 31 on the Columbia River between the upper and lower ends of Sand Island and corresponding markers on the Oregon shoreline.

The action was prompted by heavy catch rates at the site, which has attracted hundreds of anglers the past few weeks.

"The catch rates at this one site alone were putting the rest of the Wauna to Bonneville sturgeon season at risk," said John North, manager of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Columbia River Fisheries Program.

The sturgeon retention season on a 100-mile stretch of the Columbia from Bonneville Dam downstream to the Wauna power lines is scheduled to continue through July 31 and resume again during October-December, or until a total harvest guideline of 4,835 sturgeon is achieved. Fishery managers estimate that approximately 1,700 sturgeon have already been kept in this section of the river since the beginning of the year, with most of those coming from the Sand Island slough area. Based on the catch rates they were seeing at Rooster Rock, they determined that if this site was not closed, the retention season on the adjoining section of the river from Bonneville downstream to Wauna would likely need to be reduced.

The season for retention of sturgeon is already closed in Bonneville and John Day reservoirs, where harvest quotas were achieved in February and March. The Willamette River, Multnomah Channel and Gilbert River closed effective in March 1 but are scheduled to reopen Nov 1. Below Wauna at River Mile 40 and downstream to the mouth, the sturgeon retention season is scheduled for Jan 1- Apr 30 and May 22-June 26, or until a guideline of 9,600 is met.

Boats fishing the gorge are starting to catch some keepers. Four keepers were reported for 25 boats over the weekend. Any good fortune anglers were experiencing will come to a halt with the Marker 82 to Bonneville Dam closure effective May 1st. This section won't open again until September 1st.

Meanwhile, salmon counts at Bonneville are tracking well but managers aren't optimistic that the record run is in the bag. Current models indicate a returning population closer to 300,000 fish versus the 470,000. It's still too early to predict until we see a peak passage day that is likely to happen by this time next week. Many-an-angler is hoping for a string of 20,000 fish days at Bonneville. The high to date is just over 11,000 adults. We'll also be keeping an eye on the jack counts in the coming weeks as that can be a predictor (albeit a poor one recently) of next years returning 4-year olds.

The Guide's Forecast – Nothing to really forecast:

Salmon: Closed

Sturgeon fishing: the best section (Rooster Rock) Closed. Beginning May 1st above Marker 82: Closed.

Let's keep hoping for good passage and another crack at mainstem sport opportunity. If run numbers begin to materialize, anglers should really look to Astoria and the Young's Bay and Blind Slough fisheries as STRONG options. Fish are STACKING in there with no sport or commercial effort and are likely to be the first open options if the run starts to show promise. Stay tuned!

For those familiar with the John Day and The Dalles Pools, both bank and boat anglers are doing well for upriver bound spring chinook. The action should only get better in the next few weeks and the limit is 2 chinook per person versus the 1 fish bag we had downriver. It may be worth the trip up there.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Rain this week has increased the level and flow of the lower Willamette slightly but the water visibility remains good and, perhaps of greatest importance at this time of year, the water temperature remains above 52 degrees, a positive number for spring Chinook results. While fish counts generally fall behind when numbers are up, the ODFW is doing a pretty fair job with updates considering the impressive passage that occurs at this time of year. As of the morning of May 19th, data was current through the 25th. Those numbers show nearly 11,000 spring Chinook have crossed Willamette Falls along with over 4,500 summer steelhead, impressive in either or both cases. The lower Willamette has been quite productive for spring Chinook with fish coming from the lower river at the green can, Sellwood Bridge and, as action has moved upriver, at Oregon City. Wednesday this week was particularly productive at OC, slow at Sellwood and below, dead in Multnomah Channel. Ya just never know. More on Oregon City in the Forecast. Springers are also being landed in Multnomah Channel with the action varying from spotty to flurries where 10 or a dozen have been boated. Upriver anglers are either unreasonably or justifiably optimistic, depending on how one views the situation and upper Willamette conditions. A few have been taken upriver by patient anglers who know that Salem is about a five-day trip for springers from Willamette Falls.

Pro guide Bill Kremers (541 754 6411) reports, "I been mostly springer fishing around the Harbor area on the Willamette. Well the fishing has not been red hot compared to the Oregon City area, fishing pressure is only moderate and we been averaging two or three fish a trip. Fishing mostly with cut plug herring, so far the Brad's Super baits are not working as well as they did on the Columbia. Tried prawns a couple of times two with no success."

McKenzie River water level and flow will be up for the weekend due to rain this week. With the impact of hatchery stocks on native populations and ever-increasing concern on the McKenzie River, ODFW biologist are hoping recreational anglers will provide data needed in studies now that stocking procedures have changed. Should anglers catch a tagged native, they are asked to note the location, size of the fish and tag number, then report that data to 541-726-3515.

Pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808) reports, "The Santiam has some nice summer steelhead in it. With the counts over Willamette Falls ramping up, there should be a good push of fish into both the North and south rivers. Usually, give them 7 to 10 days, and they will be somewhere.

"Both summer runs, and springers love shrimp, so make sure you have some. Over the next week, there should be some really good fishing here, with a mix of winter fish, summer fish and chinooks..."

Starting May 1st, North Santiam State Park will for the first time, offer camping with nine tent sites available. The camping area may be accessed by foot or by boat and flush toilets, but not showers, will be available. The camping area was made possible through the efforts of volunteers as Parks and Recreation lacked sufficient funds in their budget to have done so otherwise.

The Guide's Forecast – With the Columbia closed to spring Chinook, the Willamette is, to use a technical term, getting hammered. There is extremely muddy water moving downstream as a result of rain upriver earlier this week which should hit the lower Willamette just about now or Friday. The turbidity level actually started rising on Thursday this week. In any event, it's sure to have an effect on fishing this weekend and it doesn't look positive. That said, when the water is again fishable, Oregon City should remain a hotspot but those not familiar with the fishery should either fish downriver or take some time to study the boat traffic. It's a tricky place to fish and other boaters will let you know in no uncertain terms if you're not 'with the program.' Expect to see many boats in very close proximity to one another. Fishing among them will require a degree of skill. Backbouncing is de rigueur here with prawns or eggs the baits of choice and for good reason: it's most effective. Below Milwaukie, it's still mostly a herring show although prawns have been more effective at times. There are places near Sellwood where boats may anchor but not in the troll fishery here. Drop hook and you are bound to be enlightened, often with a degree of heat and at a high volume. There are friendly people as long as you don't block trolling lanes. Where anchor fishing is appropriate, Kwikfish will result in hookups as well as spinning prawns. See **Random Links**, below, for tips on how to hook them up. In the Multnomah Channel, it will be advantageous to have both prawns and herring on board to see which is the preferred bait on any given day.

The best bet on the McKenzie will be the upper river where catch-and-release fishing for wild trout should be very good and it's hard to find prettier fish than these. These upriver waters should remain fairly clear even during the current high water event.

Steelheading has been fair with inordinate pressure on the South Santiam. Results will improve when the water temperature rises as the fish, while present in decent number, are slow to bite or strike while the water is so cold. Speaking of which, it's a week or ten days from the Falls to the Santiam for a springer. Just sayin.'

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Clackamas fishing remains frustratingly slow. The occasional summer has been suckered by a small jig under a float at the mouth of a tributary, but the 'slow' tag is definitely applicable here.

There have been flurries of activity for steelhead in the Sandy although most are natives and all unclipped fish must be released here. Generally, the consensus is that there are a few summers and fewer springers in the water now.

The Guide's Forecast - Fresh, bright steelhead are in both the Clack and Sandy but they are scattered and the bite has been spotty. There has been moments on either or both where multiple hookups have occurred but those are the exception rather than the rule. Spring Chinook is uppermost in most anglers minds but an increase in water temperature must occur to entice the fish into the tributary and for them to be willing to bite or strike.

North Coast Fishing Report – Our rivers and estuaries are barren of effort. The steelheaders are all salmon fishing in the Willamette Valley although there are a few motivated early hopefuls pursuing spring chinook in the district.

Steelhead rivers have been low and given the fact it's getting pretty late in the season, anglers have re-focused their efforts elsewhere. None-the-less, there are decent opportunities in Tillamook area streams and the recent rain freshet could stimulate some action for late run winter steelhead as well as some summer run fish and spring chinook. The rivers most likely to give up quality fish are the Wilson, Nestucca and Three Rivers.

North coast rivers peaked in flow on Wednesday with the Wilson running just over 5 foot. Levels are expected to drop over the next week.

Reports of spring chinook have been coming from upper Tillamook Bay despite the fact that tides have not necessarily been all that conducive to productive fishing in that stretch. Herring trollers are only taking an occasional fish.

From the Nestucca, **pro guide Jesse Zalonis (503-392-5808)** reports, "The Nestucca is beginning to slow for Spring Steelhead. However, there is still a good mix of late fish on the lower river, plus some darker ones on the mid river, and fishing remains fair. There have been just a handful of summer runs caught, with most of them coming near the mouth of Three Rivers. With this rain event currently, it will be interesting to see what shows up over the next week. There has been no evidence of any Spring Chinook yet, but that will change soon."

The ocean has remained big for quite some time so ocean going bottomfishers and crabbers have remained dockside in recent weeks. That may change by the weekend so check the forecast section for more details if this interests you.

Bay crabbing is fair at best. Crabbers are reporting catching shy of 1 limit for a fair effort over several hours of a tide. Like bottomfishers, most are anxious to get outside and test their gear on a saltier variety of Dungeness.

The Guide's Forecast – Steelheaders may want to put in some effort over the weekend as river levels are looking quite favorable for Wilson, Trask and Nestucca anglers. An early spring chinook is certainly a possibility as well with reports of salmon already coming from the Trask River. By

Friday, all stretches of these rivers should be fishing well. The bulk of your catch is likely to be darker winter run fish but a few summers should be available in the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers, especially below Three Rivers.

Tillamook Bay anglers have a nice tide series to work with if they are so motivated to search for spring chinook in the upper bay. A nice minus tide series should trap waiting salmon in the deeper slots of the upper bay where herring trollers and spinner fishers stand a chance at one. Don't get too hopeful however, we're still weeks away from any peak action.

A rare sturgeon may also be an option for anglers in the extreme low tide this weekend. The upper bay may be the best bet as bait-stealing crab are likely present in the lower reaches.

Crabbing will likely remain challenging, especially with the recent influx of freshwater.

Offshore anglers may get a small window of opportunity on Saturday but I'd hope for a 1 foot wind wave prediction over a 2 foot prediction. Here is the outlook as of Wednesday evening:

Fri...NW wind 15 to 20 kt...easing to 10 to 15 kt in the afternoon. Wind waves 3 ft. W swell 9 ft. Chance of showers.

Fri Night...NW wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 3 ft. W swell 8 ft.

Sat...N wind 5 to 10 kt...backing to NW in the afternoon. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 6 ft.

Sat Night...NW wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 3 ft. NW swell 6 ft.

Sun...NW wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. NW swell 8 ft.

Mon...NW wind 20 to 25 kt. Wind waves 4 ft. W swell 8 ft.

Check the latest at: <http://forecast.weather.gov/MapClick.php?minlon=-125&maxlon=-120.8&minlat=43.39&maxlat=46.91&mapwidth=354&site=pqr&zmx=1&zmy=1&map.x=124&map.y=105> before you head out.

Saturday, May 1st, will be the last opportunity to fish Hebo Lake for a while. Bag and length limits are lifted through that date but the lake as well as the campground will close to public access this coming Sunday and remain so throughout summer this year as during renovation, construction and excavation which will result in a deeper lake and improved facilities which anglers and campers will enjoy in 2011. Updates and information may be obtained at 503-392-5100.

Central & South Coast Reports – Mid-day boat launches may be possible this weekend for ocean-bound anglers with only moderate wind and wave activity in the forecast. Morning minus tides will play a factor in timing bar crossings.

While it won't make any headlines as catches are often incidental, it will be legal to retain halibut within the 40 fathom line (nearshore) starting Saturday, May 1st. May 13th through 15th will be the first of the spring all-depth halibut opportunities.

Ocean crabbing out of Newport has been a hit-or-miss affair with two or three keepers per pot. With the ocean laying down a bit this weekend, the haul could be supplemented with rockfish and ling cod which, combined, should make for a decent seafood feast.

Crabbing has been poor to slow in Winchester Bay. Striped bass and sturgeon catches have been nil with few anglers even trying for them. Fortunately, fishing off the south jetty has been worthwhile with limits consisting mostly of large kelp greenling which, for those who have never tried them, are delightful table fare. The South Umpqua was a torrent of muddy water mid-week and with Friday the last day to fish it, may be off the game plan for this season. The North Umpqua is also blown out but dropping. Target springers from the confluence downstream through Scottsburg when the water drops and clears. Fishing here has been fair to good.

Rogue River water levels rose from just over four feet to nearly nine feet and over 17,000 cfs early on Wednesday, April 28th. It is dropping rapidly and should be fishable this weekend. Whether that occurs Saturday or as late as Sunday cannot be determined at this writing (mid-day Thursday). While springers are crossing Gold Ray Dam and a (very) few have been taken in the upper river (along with late-season winter steelhead) the middle Rogue is likely to fish earliest and the freshet will have drawn Chinook well into this stretch. When the lower Rogue settles down and clears, fishing should be good. If early catches are any indications, this is just flat-out an exceptional year for spring Chinook.

Rockfish catches have been good just outside Brookings Harbor around the north jetty although wind and wave action have hampered efforts much of the time.

Diamond Lake continues to be plagued by cold weather with snow on the ground, ice on the water and very few anglers trying this week. Warmer weather is in the forecast but it may be another week or two until conditions are conducive for success here.

A free kid's fishing event will take place Saturday, May 1st at Reinhart Park Pond in Grant Pass. The event is free and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife who have stocked the pond for this event, will have tackle on hand for those needing it as well as knowledgeable volunteers to offer help and guidance.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Those trudging through snow to launch at Crescent Lake had poor results over the past weekend.

Decent catches of smallmouth have continued to come from the John Day River between weather fronts. The river had been high and muddy earlier this week but is rapidly dropping and clearing.

Fishing has been slow but steady at Wickiup for trollers targeting kokanee. Once the fish are found, trolling back and forth through the school has been productive. Experienced kokanee fishers may ignore that last sentence. A few Browns are being taken on trolled pugs with first light most effective.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for April 28, 2010

North Puget Sound

With the blackmouth season coming to a close, anglers are gearing up for other upcoming fishing opportunities in Puget Sound, where the halibut fishery and the popular shrimp

season get started May 1. Meanwhile, freshwater anglers can cast for trout at numerous lowland lakes, which were recently stocked with fish.

Blustery weather kept some people away, but stalwart anglers who did make it out for the April 24 lowland lakes opener were rewarded with some nice **trout** . According to creel checks, the lake that produced the largest catch in the region was Whatcom County's Silver Lake, where 192 anglers took home 316 trout and released 113. In terms of the highest catch rates, King County's Geneva Lake tops the list. Fifteen anglers at Geneva caught and kept their limit of five trout on opening day.

Elsewhere, anglers in Skagit County averaged 4.7 trout per rod at Heart Lake and four trout per rod at Erie Lake. Anglers fishing Storm Lake in Snohomish County averaged 4.3 trout per rod, while those fishing King County's Steel Lake averaged nearly 3.9 trout per rod. At Deer Lake in Island County, anglers averaged 2.5 trout per rod.

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

Anglers should be aware that **Rattlesnake Lake** in King County, which opened to trout fishing April 24 with a five-fish limit, will switch to a year-round, catch-and-release fishery when new sportfishing rules take effect May 1. Selective gear rules will still apply.

On Puget Sound, the **blackmouth salmon** fishery closes at the end of the day April 30 in marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner). Until then, anglers fishing in any of those areas have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook.

The **halibut** season, however, gets under way May 1 in the region. The season is scheduled to run through May 30 in marine areas 6-10, where fishing will be open three days a week - Thursday, Friday and Saturday - and closed Sunday through Wednesday except for Memorial Day weekend when those marine areas will be open Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The usual hot spots - Mutiny and Admiralty bays, as well as Eastern and Partridge banks - are the best bets for flatfish early in the season.

Beginning May 1, anglers in the region also will have an opportunity to fish for **lingcod** . 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 36 inches. Under a new rule designed to protect weak rockfish populations in Puget Sound, anglers in the region are prohibited from fishing for lingcod and other bottomfish in waters deeper than 120 feet.

Don't forget those shrimp pots. The shrimp season opens May 1 in Puget Sound. Here are the fishing schedules for the northern Puget Sound region:

- **Marine Area 7** opens May 1 at 7 a.m., and also will be open on May 5, 6, 7, 8, 21 and 22. Additional dates will be announced if sufficient quota remains.
- **Marine areas 8-1, 8-2, 9 and 10** will be open May 1 and 5 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Additional dates will be announced if sufficient quota remains.

More details on the shrimp fishery 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

Late April and early May bring us another **razor clam** dig on up to five ocean beaches, the opening of Puget Sound's **shrimp and halibut** seasons and, hopefully, better weather for the rest of the spring and summer long low-land lakes fishing season.

Several million **trout** still await anglers after wind, rain and the occasional snow flurry kept many anglers away from the April 24 opener. Many of those fish reside in freshly stocked Olympic Peninsula and South Sound lakes, which are teeming with trout this time of year; many of them jumbos and larger.

Those larger fish didn't wind up in area lakes by accident. Anglers told WDFW they wanted the opportunity to catch larger trout, and the agency's fishery managers and hatcheries responded by producing more jumbo rainbow trout for release this year. The goal, says WDFW's Hood Canal District fish biologist Thom Johnson, is to provide a quality fishing experience and spread the harvest of large rainbows among more anglers.

As part of that change, the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission in February adopted a new rule that limits anglers to two large trout (over 14 inches) as part of their daily limit. The new rule applies to select Hood Canal and South Sound lakes in Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason, Pierce and Thurston counties, as outlined in WDFW's **2010-11 Sport Fishing Rules pamphlet** .

The new pamphlet is available at stores that sell state fishing licenses, WDFW offices and on the web at http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regs_seasons.html .

Johnson says the new rule is designed to reduce the number of catchable fish that are caught and released by anglers who hope to catch a bigger fish.

"Under the former regulation, anglers were tempted to fish until they filled their five-fish bag limit with jumbos," said Johnson. "That means they hooked and released quite a few smaller but catchable rainbows, many of which died after they were put back in the water."

WDFW fish biologist Patricia Michael says that hatcheries will continue to stock lakes, and there will be plenty of fish through seasons that run into October.

Kids and their parents are reminded that the deadline for registering for the May 15 Kid's Fish-In event at American Lake Park in Lakewood is fast approaching. For \$10, kids 14 and under get a Zebco rod and reel, which they get to keep, and a Kids' Fish-In tee shirt. Registration is open through May 7. To download a registration form and learn more about the event click on this link to the Go Play Outside Washington website at (http://www.gopaw.org/kids_fish-in_program).

To view which lakes have been stocked by WDFW, or soon will be, click on (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/plants/index.htm>). For tips on fishing options by water and county go to (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/prospects/>)

For those who like nothing more than to go clamming, the April 27 to May 2 opening may be one of the last chances you get to dig razors this season. Typically, the season closes in early May, when quotas are reached and nature takes over and the clams degrade. But Dan Ayres, WDFW's coastal shellfish manager, says poor weather early in the season may have set the stage for one more opening before quotas are reached and the season closes. Stay tuned.

Beach openings and morning low tides for the late April early May dig are:

- Tuesday April 27, 6:21 a.m., -1.0: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only
- Wednesday, April 28, 7:06 a.m., -1.4: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only
- Thursday, April 29, 7:50 a.m., -1.6: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only
- Friday, April 30, 8:32 a.m., -1.5: Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks
- Saturday May 1, 9:15 a.m., -1.0 : Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks and Kalaloch
- Sunday, May 2, 9:58 a.m., -0.7: Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks and Kalaloch

All of the openings begin at morning low tide and end at noon. The National Park Service scheduled the dig at Kalaloch Beach, which is located in Olympic National Park, to coincide with those at other coastal beaches.

Ayres reminds diggers that portions of the beach at Long Beach and Twin Harbors are closed to the public to protect nesting western snowy plovers, which are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

The closed portion at each beach includes the area above the mean high tide line. At Long Beach, the closed areas are located north of the Oysterville Road from the state park boundary north to Leadbetter Point. At Twin Harbors, the closed areas are located from just south of Midway Beach Road to the first beach-access trail at Grayland Beach State Park. Clam diggers are reminded that the entire northern section of Long Beach is closed to all driving starting at noon each day during this razor clam opener.

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

Prospective clammers should be forewarned that overnight and weekend repairs to Interstate 5 between Lacey and Tacoma will make it considerably more difficult to get to and from Washington's coast. For a schedule of closures go to the Department of Transportation's website at (<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/pavementrehab/i5martinwayto48thst/>)

May 1 also brings the opening of the Puget Sound shrimp season in all marine areas not open year round. For the first time since the season closed in 2005, **Discovery Bay** , located between Sequim and Port Townsend, will be open to shrimping. The two-day opening is scheduled for May 1 and May 5, but additional days could be added depending on availability.

While the May 1 opening is for all shrimp, spot shrimp are the big draw so long as they are available. After the spot shrimp season closes, several marine areas will reopen June 1 for the smaller **pink** and **coonstripe shrimp** . Any spot shrimp brought in during that season, which ends Oct. 15, must immediately be returned to the water.

The rules and dates for shrimping are published in the state's annual Sport Fishing Rules pamphlet, which will be out and available in stores that sell fishing licenses by May 1. The pamphlet is free and is also available at WDFW offices and on WDFW's web site at (http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regs_seasons.html). Information specific to shrimping is at (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/shrimpreg/shrimpindex.shtml>).

If all that didn't provide enough fun, the sport **halibut** season is set to open in May. This year's season is being cut a bit short, due largely to a 15 percent reduction in the Pacific coast halibut quota set by the International Pacific Halibut Commission.

"That reduction will really take a bite out of tribal and state fishing opportunities in Washington and other West Coast states," said Michele Culver, a WDFW regional director. "This year's quota reflects a reduction in halibut stocks from Alaska to California."

This year's quota for Washington, Oregon and California is 810,000 pounds, down from 950,000 pounds in 2009. In Washington, sport anglers will be allowed to catch 192,699 pounds of halibut compared to 214,110 pounds last year.

Constraints on fishing opportunities will be most apparent in Puget Sound, due to the combination of this year's reduced quota and an excessive catch last year. WDFW estimates that Puget Sound anglers caught more than 114,000 pounds of halibut in 2009 - well over the 57,393-pound quota.

Opening 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 through July 18. The fishery will then reopen on Aug. 6 and continue three days a week (Friday through Sunday) until the remaining quota is reached, or the end of the day on Sept. 26, whichever occurs first. The 2010 catch quota is 13,436 pounds.
- **South Coast (Westport/Ocean Shores):** Marine Area 2 will open on May 2, two days a week, Sundays and Tuesdays. During the fourth week in May the fishery will be open Sunday only (May 23). Beginning the following week the fishery will resume the Sunday, Tuesday structure until the quota is reached. The northern nearshore area will open May 2, seven days per week until the quota is reached. The 2010 catch quota is 35,887 pounds.
- **North Coast (La Push/Neah Bay):** Marine areas 3 and 4 will open on May 13, two days per week, Thursdays and Saturdays, through May 22. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will reopen June 3 and 5. If sufficient quota remains after that opener, the fishery will reopen starting June 17. The 2010 catch quota is 101,179 pounds.
- **Strait of Juan de Fuca/Puget Sound:** Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) will be open May 28 through June 19. Marine areas 6 through 10 (Strait, Port Angeles Admiralty Inlet and Everett) will be open May 1 through May 30. These fisheries will be open three days a week, Thursday, Friday and Saturday closed Sunday through Wednesday except for Memorial Day weekend when they will be open Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The 2010 combined catch quota for these areas is 50,542 pounds.

There are a couple of changes that will be in effect for the first time this year in Marine Area 2 that anglers should be aware of. The retention of lingcod seaward of the 30 fathom line will be allowed on days that the primary halibut season is open. Also, the boundary of the northern nearshore area has changed so that it lines up with the coordinates of the 30-fathom line. The northern nearshore area will go from 47 31.70 N. lat south to 46 58.00 N. lat and east of the 30 fathom line.

As coastal weather has improved, fishing for lingcod is beginning to pick up, says Erica Crust, WDFW's ocean port sampler. Crust observes that while a large number of private boats aren't venturing out, there's been some improvement in the catch rates on charter boats.

"Fishing for lingcod has picked up, but right now everyone is gearing up for the halibut opens this weekend (May 1) in marine areas 1 and 2," she said. "In the upcoming weeks there should be some great fishing."

Crust reminds anglers that recreational fishing for bottomfish (excluding lingcod during halibut season) is not allowed in waters deeper than 30 fathoms in Marine Area 2 (Westport/Ocean Shores) from March 15 through June 15. However, anglers may retain **sablefish** and **Pacific cod** in these waters from May 1 through June 15. Retention of **canary** and **yelloweye rockfish** is prohibited in all areas.

The minimum size for lingcod in marine areas 1-3 is 22 inches, while the minimum size in Marine Area 4 is 24 inches. All areas are open seven days a week. Additional information about the lingcod fishery and other bottomfish is available on the WDFW Fishing Hotline (360) 902-2500 [begin_of_the_skype_highlighting \(360\) 902-2500 end_of_the_skype_highlighting](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm) or online at <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm> .

Good thing there are plenty of fishing alternatives elsewhere because **salmon** fishing in Puget Sound has been slow.

That fact does not seem to have discouraged South Sound fishers. On April 25, off the Point Defiance boat ramp, 42 anglers and 21 boats were counted. Surveys indicated they brought in three chinooks and five **flatfish** . Fishing wasn't any better a little further north. On that same day, off the Everett boat ramp, the 71 anglers surveyed reported catching three chinooks and a few **rockfish** and flatfish.

Southwest Washington

Anglers are turning their attention to area tributaries and the mainstem Columbia above Bonneville Dam now that the lower Columbia is closed to fishing for **spring chinook salmon** . While thousands await word about a possible reopening on the lower river, many are making good use of their time fishing the Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, Wind, and Klickitat rivers plus Drano Lake and Bonneville, The Dalles, and John Day pools.

"I'm telling people there are areas to fish and fish to catch," said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. "Spring chinook are moving past Bonneville Dam in good numbers, but we may not get word about a possible reopening for another week or two. Until then, there are plenty of other good places to catch fish."

As of April 25, a total of 95,512 upriver chinook had crossed Bonneville Dam - the highest count to date since 2003 and the third highest count since 1977.

But anglers looking to hook up with a spring chinook in the days ahead might also want to give some thought to the catch rate at Drano Lake. A recent creel check found that about 40 percent of the bank and boat anglers fishing there had caught a spring chinook. About 120 boats were observed fishing there Saturday, April 24. According to the pre-season forecast, 28,900 springers will return to Drano Lake this year.

Fishing has also been productive at the Wind River, where about one in three boat anglers have been landing hatchery spring chinook. Bank anglers have also been taking some fish at the mouth of the Wind and in the gorge. According to the pre-season forecast, 14,000 springers will return to the Wind River this year.

Conditions can get crowded on the Wind, but the stretch above Shipherd Falls will open for fishing May 1, helping to relieve some of the pressure. Fishing above the falls will be

open upstream to within 800 yards of the Carson National Fish Hatchery, but will remain closed 400 feet below the coffer dam and 100 upstream of the coffer dam.

Anglers are also catching some fish on the Cowlitz River, although springers are only part of the story. In a recent creel check, 263 bank anglers had caught 26 spring chinook and 25 **steelhead**, while 51 boat anglers had taken four springers and 16 steelhead. Most of the springers were taken below the barrier dam at the salmon hatchery, while steelhead were primarily caught from there downstream to the trout hatchery. According to the pre-season forecast, 12,500 springers will return to the Cowlitz River this year.

During the week ending April 25, one in three bank anglers checked in The Dalles Pool had kept or released a spring chinook while about one in six boat anglers had caught a fish. Upriver at the John Day Pool, an estimated 549 adult hatchery chinook were harvested and 138 wild chinook were released. The majority of those fish were taken by bank anglers fishing the Oregon shore. Bonneville Pool bank anglers just outside Drano Lake were also catching some spring chinook.

On all rivers except the upper Wind, anglers are required to release any wild, unmarked spring chinook they intercept. For daily catch limits and other regulations for specific rivers, see the 2010-11 Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet, now available at all WDFW offices, license vendors and online at (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/regs/fishregs.htm>).

Sturgeon fishing has generally been slow on the lower Columbia River and anglers should be aware of pending rule changes above and below Bonneville Dam:

- **Lower Columbia downriver from Wauna powerlines:** The retention fishery closes April 30 at the end of the day, then reopens under a different size limit in May. The maximum fork-length size remains the same at 54 inches, but the current minimum size limit of 38 inches will increase to 41 inches when the fishery reopens for retention May 22. Catch-and-release fishing is allowed during non-retention days.
- **Expanded spawning sanctuary below Bonneville Dam:** Fishing is closed from May 1-Aug. 31 from Bonneville Dam downstream 9 miles to a line crossing the Columbia River from Navigation Marker 82 on the Oregon shore to the upstream exposed end of Skamania Island continuing in a straight line to the boundary marker on the Washington shore.
- **Closed waters in slough near Sand Island at Rooster Rock:** Effective Thursday April 29 through Saturday, July 31, 2010, angling for all species is prohibited from a line between the upstream end of Sand Island and a marker on the Oregon shoreline, downstream to a line between the lower end of Sand Island and a marker on the Oregon shoreline.
- **Spawning sanctuaries above Bonneville Dam:** Sturgeon fishing will be closed from May 1 to July 31 from John Day Dam downstream 5.4 miles to the west end of the grain silo at Rufus, Oregon and from McNary Dam downstream 1.5 miles to Hwy. 82 (Hwy. 395) Bridge.

- **The Dalles Pool:** Watch for news of a potential closure.

Meanwhile, opening day of the lowland lakes **trout** fishery has come and gone, but WDFW will continue to stock lakes throughout the summer season. Creel checks at lakes opening April 24 found that Swift Reservoir in Skamania County had the best catch rate in the region, giving up 3.8 fish per rod - including more than 100 naturally produced **coho** averaging 11 to 11.5 inches each and with nice pink colored flesh. Northwestern Reservoir followed with 3.1 fish per rod and Horsethief Lake with 2.8. Anglers fishing Mineral Lake in Lewis County averaged 1.68 fish per rod.

Trout anglers should be aware that Kline Pond in Vancouver will be closed two days for a kids "Hooked on Fishing" event. The pond will be closed to the general public April 30 and May 1, reopening May 2.

Ready for some warmwater fishing? Boat anglers fishing The Dalles Pool have been averaging 1.3 **walleye** per rod, while bank anglers are taking 2.6 **bass** apiece. The fishing will only improve as the water warms up.

Eastern Washington

Five to six more months of good lake fishing are ahead for the many anglers who didn't fight windy conditions across the region on the April 24 low-land lakes season opener.

"We estimated that in the Spokane area alone, where we had gust up to 30 miles an hour, the angler crowds were down by half," said WDFW regional fish program manager John Whalen. "But now, with calmer and warmer spring weather in the forecast, there are just that many more fish to be caught."

While overall average fish per angler harvest numbers were down on the opener, Whalen reported most anglers interviewed were satisfied with their catches. **Rainbow trout** in the 14 to 16 inch range were caught in several lakes, with some fish measuring 20 inches or more. Some of the best fishing in the region on the opener was measured at Cedar Lake in Stevens County where anglers averaged five fish, or a daily catch limit, each. Anglers at Stevens County's Rocky Lake averaged 4.4 fish each. Deep Lake saw 3.6 fish per angler, and Starvation Lake had 3.4 fish per angler.

The largest rainbow trout checked on the opener was a 23-incher from southwest Spokane County's Badger Lake, where anglers averaged just 1.7 fish each. Several 22-27-inch **tiger trout** were caught at Spokane County's Fish Lake, where anglers averaged just one fish each. Other central district waters check on the opener showed the following average catch rates: Clear, 0.6 fish per angler; Fishtrap, 2.2; West Medical, 2.2; and Williams, 2.3.

Opening day checks at Waitts Lake in Stevens County, where anglers averaged 2.4 fish each, included a 20-inch **brown trout**. Other northeast district lakes showed these average catch rates: Pend Oreille County's Big Meadow Lake, 2.75 fish per angler, and

Yokum Lake, 2.5; Stevens County's Mudgett Lake, 2.5 fish per angler; and Ferry County's Trout Lake, 2.5 fish per angler.

Also opening on April 24 were three more sections of the Snake River in the south end of the region for **hatchery spring chinook salmon** fishing. WDFW district fish biologist Glen Mendel of Dayton says the chinook fisheries there are "ramping up" as more salmon pour into the Snake River.

"Catch has been pretty good below Ice Harbor Dam and Little Goose Dam," Mendel said. "We're checking over a dozen salmon per day at those sites and other salmon are being caught without being checked. On Sunday (April 25), over 50 boats were counted below Ice Harbor Dam. The numbers of salmon at Lower Granite have just begun to pick up to near 1,000 per day so catch should increase below Lower Granite Dam and in the Clarkston area this week."

The Ice Harbor section opened April 20, and all four sections are scheduled to remain open through June 30, unless catch rates warrant an earlier closure to conserve salmon. Only hatchery-marked (adipose-fin-clipped) spring chinook adults or jacks can be retained, minimum size 12 inches, with jacks being less than 24 inches. The daily catch limit is two adults and four jacks per day, and fishing must cease as soon as the adult chinook daily limit is retained.

One exception is the area between the juvenile bypass return pipe and Little Goose Dam along the south shoreline, which includes the walkway area locally known as "the Wall." Only one jack and one adult can be retained there, and fishing must cease when one adult is retained. All chinook with the adipose fin intact, and all steelhead, must be immediately released unharmed.

See the all the rules for this special hatchery spring chinook fishery at <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/erule.jsp?id=877> .

Those fishing the year-round waters of the Pend Oreille River the week of May 3-7 will likely see several research gill nets with buoys marked "WDFW" or "Kalispel Tribe Natural Resource Department." WDFW fish biologist Marc Divens explains a survey for **northern pike** is underway in the section from Pioneer Park just north of Newport to the river bend just south of the LeClerc Creek Wildlife Area.

Northcentral Washington

Although the lake fishing season opener April 24 saw fewer anglers due to windy conditions, WDFW regional fish program manager Jeff Korth reports those that did brave the weather managed good catches of nice-sized **rainbow trout**.

The best catch rate recorded on the opener in the region was at Okanogan County's Pearrygin Lake where anglers averaged near the five-fish-daily-limit, with 4.4 fish each.

Yearling rainbows at Pearrygin ran 10 inches, carryovers are 14 inches and triploid rainbows are running 15 to 17 inches.

Other Okanogan County waters that opened and were checked April 24 were Fish Lake with a 2.9 fish per angler average, Alta Lake with 2.6 fish per angler, and Conconully Lake and Reservoir, each with two fish per angler averages. Among the catch at the Conconullys were some 20 - 24-inch rainbows.

In Chelan County, Wapato Lake anglers averaged almost 3.7 fish each on the opener, including some large carryover rainbows. Clear Lake, also in Chelan County, saw a three-fish per angler average and a few 18-20-inch fish.

Anglers at Jameson Lake in Douglas County on the opener averaged about 2.5 fish each, mostly 10-inch yearlings and 14-inch carryovers.

The best Grant County fishing could be found on Warden Lake, where on opening day anglers averaged 3.6 rainbow and **tiger trout** each, including a half-dozen released fish. Park Lake saw a 3.4 rainbow, tiger and **brown trout** per angler average, including 10 released fish. Anglers at Blue Lake averaged 1.9 fish each, including four releases. Anglers at both Perch Lake and Vic Meyers Lake averaged 1.2 fish each. Deep Lake shoreline anglers near the boat ramp fared well, but boat anglers were severely hampered by high winds; Including releases, overall average there on the opener was just over one fish each.

Starting May 1, the Columbia River from Priest Rapids Dam downstream 2.5 miles to the boundary marker on the river bank 400 feet downstream of the Priest Rapids Hatchery outlet channel (Jackson Creek) is closed to sturgeon fishing to protect spawning. The U.S. Geological Survey river flow gage towers and cableway that currently comprise the downstream sturgeon spawning sanctuary boundary line are being dismantled and removed, so the new boundary line is required for the sturgeon spawning sanctuary this year. The closure remains in effect through July 31.

Southcentral Washington

WDFW fish biologist Jim Cummins says that although river flows may still be too high for good fishing, the Yakima River **hatchery spring chinook salmon** fishery opens May 1.

The two sections of the Yakima that open are 1) from the Interstate 182 bridge in Richland (river mile 4.5) to 400 feet downstream of Horn Rapids (Wanawish) Dam (river mile 18.0), open through May 31; and 2) from the Interstate 82 bridge at Union Gap (river mile 107.1) to the BNRR bridge 500 feet downstream of Roza Dam (river mile 127.8), open through June 30.

The daily catch limit is two hatchery-marked (adipose-fin-clipped) chinook, minimum size 12 inches. Wild salmon (adipose fin intact) and all steelhead must be immediately

released unharmed and cannot be removed from the water prior to release. The new Columbia River Salmon/Steelhead Endorsement is required to participate in this fishery. See <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/erule.jsp?id=884> for details on this fishery.

WDFW district fish biologist Paul Hoffarth of Pasco reports Columbia River hatchery spring chinook salmon fishing in the John Day Dam pool has recently been best for bank anglers.

"Our latest creel checks indicated an estimated 549 adult hatchery chinook harvested and 138 wild chinook were released," Hoffarth said. "The majority of the harvest was retained by bank anglers fishing the Oregon shore. We interviewed 336 salmon anglers this past week with 85 hatchery chinook. For the season, an estimated 748 adult hatchery chinook have been harvested and 154 wild chinook were released."

Hoffarth reminds anglers that starting May 1 the anti-snagging rule is rescinded and the season extended through June 30 for the Ringold area bank spring chinook fishery. The fishery is in the Columbia River adjacent to Ringold Springs Rearing Facility in Franklin County, from the WDFW markers one-fourth mile downstream of the Ringold irrigation wasteway outlet to the markers one-half mile upstream of Ringold Springs Creek (hatchery outlet). Only the hatchery side of the river is open for bank fishing.

The anti-snagging rule is being removed for this bank fishery to allow anglers to use up to two, single-point hooks (barbed or barbless). Treble hooks are not permitted. The daily catch limit is two hatchery-marked (clipped adipose fin) Chinook salmon, 12-inch minimum size. All wild chinook (with an intact adipose fin) must be released immediately and may not be removed from the water. The new Columbia River Salmon/Steelhead Endorsement is required to participate in this fishery. See <https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/erule.jsp?id=883> for more details.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

Reader Lucas N. wrote to ask, "I recently fished this whole weekend on the Willamette without a single take down or fish. I trolled cut plug herring just like everyone told me to do and tried to keep it right on the bottom. However, I was still unable to connect with even a bite. I need some tips on what do?? Im not super confident in my cut plug herring but they did have a nice tight spin. The most frustrating part of this weekend was watching a boat pull in 3 springers within about an hour on a single red prawn (no spinner). I fished under the Sellwood bridge. Any advice on something to try or something i'm doing wrong. My rig was a spreader attached to me main line, then about 12 to 18 inches from the spreader to the weight. My leader from the other part of the spreader was about 4 or 5 feet long. I also need advice on trolling speeds. Really just anything you can tell me would be appreciated. Thanks"

TGF co-editor **Bob Rees** responded, "I would first suggest that you order one of our technical reports ([click here to find out what is available](#)). We have one specifically for Willamette River fishing. The best action is currently taking place at Oregon City using eggs and prawns. Herring work great at Sellwood early in the season but it switches to prawns about this time of year. The

fish are keggling at Oregon City, you may want to look upstream for your best chance. Herring will only account for a few fish for the rest of the season and that will be in the Portland Harbor and downstream from there.

"Stay persistent! Switch to prawns or hardware as the water warms up! Good luck!"

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

Salmon Fishing Willamette Chinook Action:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORaG2ph7awo>

The 2010 Pikemunniw Reward Program will start May 1, 2010:

<http://www.pikeminnow.org/>

GOOD LUCK!