

The Guide's Forecast - volume 12 issue number 20

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 14th – May 20th, 2010**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro - Anglers are still eyeing counts at Bonneville but with consistent daily counts between 5,000 and 7,000 fish, biologists are still unsure if the peak passage date has come and gone. Additional sport openers are unlikely but select area fisheries near Astoria have reopened although success is low with a record commercial catch in these areas.

Shad are just starting to pass Bonneville Dam and are not present in fishable numbers although that should change in the coming week. Shad are great sport on light gear and make great crab and oversize sturgeon bait.

The water temperature at Willamette Falls in the mid-50s as of May 11th. Spring Chinook fishing remains good with the river jammed with boats from the Falls through Oregon City. Warmer water has trash fish hitting baits with some anglers beginning to find success using hardware. The Multnomah Channel and Portland Harbor are beginning to slow as fish begin to stage for Willamette Falls passage.

The shad run has started but few are trying with springers available.

Look for the eponymous Green Caddis to be hatching on the McKenzie River. Fishing should be quite good.

The Clackamas is running cold and while summer steelhead are available, they're slow to bite. Late winter run fish made a strong showing in April but are entering their spawning phase, making poor tablefare.

Steelheading is fair on the Sandy River with water conditions improving. It's peak spring chinook time on the Sandy but a poor return will likely cause anglers to focus their efforts on the steelhead return.

Blue River above the Reservoir, Blue River Reservoir, Detroit Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Foster Reservoir, Green Peter Reservoir, Hills Creek, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River below Leaburg Lake, Roaring River Park Pond, Salt Creek, Sunnyside Park Pond, Timber Linn Lake, Trail Bridge Reservoir, Walling Pond, Walter Wirth Lake, Henry Hagg Lake, Huddleston Pond and West Salish Pond are scheduled for trout planting.

Northwest – Spring chinook are making a strong showing for this early in the season. Good catches have been reported along the jetty on the weak tide exchanges and in the upper bay on the stronger tides. Herring has been the bait of choice and some fish are tipping the scales in the high 20's. The peak is still a few weeks away but catches are likely to improve even more.

Spent steelhead made up the bulk of the catch for anglers fishing downstream of Mills Bridge late last week. No springers were reported. Spring chinook action has been fair for bank anglers working the hatchery hole on the Trask but low, clear water has slowed action.

The Nestucca and Three Rivers has very little traffic but should have both summer steelhead and a few early spring chinook available.

Catches have also slowed along the Highway 30 tributaries as commercial effort slowed the

passage of spring chinook into Gnat and Big Creeks as well as the Klaskanine River. Low flows will also dampen catches.

Another morning minus tide series started yesterday and with a calm swell forecasted, razor clam digging should be very productive right now. Harmful algae counts are on the rise but remain under threatening levels. Shellfish harvesters may want to check the ODA hotline before heading out however. Call (1-800-448-2474).

The first all-depth halibut opener began today and seas look friendly for anglers needing to make the 20+ mile trek west to productive fishing grounds. The fishing north of Cape Falcon has flatfish seekers disappointed with high incidental catches of dogfish sharks plaguing baits. Anglers fishing north of the Columbia River are finding better catch rates.

Bottomfishing should also be productive but anglers are not allowed to have both bottomfish and halibut on board on the same trip. This rule is strictly enforced.

Ocean crabbing appears to also be challenging but typically improves later into the month.

Scheduled for trout stocking are Cape Mears Lake, Eckman Lake, South Lake, Thissel Pond and Town Lake.

Southwest – Offshore conditions look favorable for boaters this coming weekend but morning minus tides will hamper launches while creating clamming opportunities.

The first all-depth halibut opportunity will take place this week on May 13th through 15th. Additional openings occur May 20th through 22nd and June 3, 4 and 5. Additional days will be available until the quota is caught.

Umpqua springer fishing turned on over the past weekend and, unlike the steelhead fishery here, most of the chinook are of hatchery origin. The Umpqua traditionally produces the largest springers on the south coast. Reports indicate the shad run has started here.

A few sturgeon have been caught on sand shrimp in the lower Coos River.

It's only \$5 to enter the Bandon Surf Perch Derby being held through May 31st in the Bandon area. First place is a cash prize with tackle packages going to second and third. Call 541-347-2875 for information.

Spring chinook fishing has been worthwhile on the lower Rogue with the river returning to decent shape. Any day the water temperature is between 52 and 55 degrees and the clarity is decent, fishing has been very good. About 75% of the salmon landed here have been hatchery keepers.

Diamond Lake is nearly clear of ice and should fish well by the coming weekend.

Hyatt Lake, Fish Lake, Clearwater Forebay #2 Lemolo Reservoir and Red Top Lake are scheduled to be planted with trout.

Eastern – Redsides are responding to caddis hatches on the Deschutes from Warm Springs to Trout Creek. Spring chinook anglers are starting to record fair catches with action likely to pick up in the coming 2 weeks. Drifted roe will produce the best results.

Water conditions at the Crooked River are improving with mid-day mayfly hatches. The better trout action has occurred in the after noon and if trout are not looking up, they'll respond to nymphs.

SW Washington – Overall, catches are not meeting pre-season expectations for most district area streams. The Cowlitz and Kalama are producing only a few spring chinook and summer steelhead while the Lewis system is only seeing an occasional steelhead. This run may have been grossly over-predicted.

Thankfully, SW Washington anglers have Drano Lake and the Wind River fisheries to fall back on with good catches reported from both systems. The early bird definitely gets the better action in these fisheries. Trolled plugs account for the majority of fish.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) today announced that four ocean beaches will open on Saturday, May 15 and two beaches will open the following day. No digging will be allowed after noon at any of the four beaches. The openings, along with morning low tides, are: Saturday, May 15, 8:15 a.m., -1.6 ft.: Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks and Sunday, May 16, 8:58 a.m., -1.6 ft.: Long Beach and Twin Harbors only.

Columbia River Fishing Report – With the Columbia above Bonneville now closed to salmon fishing, opportunity will only continue to shrink for NW anglers in pursuit of salmon and steelhead. Adult counts at Bonneville continue to baffle but biologists are becoming ever-more confident that the record return is not going to materialize. In other words, don't look for future opportunities on the mainstem for sportfishers.

There is good news for anglers wishing to fish for steelhead downstream of the I-5 Bridge however. Beginning Sunday, May 16th, anglers can fish for fin-clipped steelhead and the action may be good if last years catches and early season steelheading is any indication of how large the run will be. Fin-clipped Chinook jacks are also allowed for retention but don't anticipate large numbers like we had last year.

Sturgeon anglers fishing below Marker 82 are faring well for keeper sturgeon. Over the weekend, checkers noted 12 keepers (including keepers released) for 10 boats. Smelt is the key bait of course but with an upstream and downstream sanctuary, there should be fair action for keeper sized fish over the next few weeks. Oversized sturgeon should begin to show as well so the rare angler that finds some early shad should produce some good results. Shad fishing is open in the Willamette River and will re-open in the Columbia on Sunday as well. Shad fishing will be allowed downstream of Bonneville Dam while steelhead anglers must fish below I-5.

Further downriver, jetty fishers targeting lingcod and seabass have fared well in the recent calm ocean conditions. Flat seas have meant easy limits for persistent jiggers but ocean crabbing out of the Columbia has been poor.

Halibut fishing has also been unprecedentedly poor. Competent captains have reported less than stellar catches although a few boats did well last week north of the Columbia River but those spots have dried up as well. Dogfish sharks are dominating the catches.

The Guide's Forecast – There are actually good options for the Columbia district this weekend starting with the re-opening of steelhead season downstream of I-5. Morning tides are favorable with strong minus tides focusing calorie-counting steelhead near shore where bank anglers can have decent access to them. Hot colored spin-n-glos typically take fish in these conditions with top choices being florescent orange, red and pink. Don't forget to scent up your offering as plunking is the ONLY technique where the fish HAVE to come to you in order to bite. Scent does

play a key role in success for plunkers. Beaches downstream of Sauvies Island often produce the best as many of these early fish are destined for the Willamette system. Up to 5 fin-clipped spring Chinook jacks may also be retained but catches like that are unlikely.

For metro anglers in search of sturgeon, the Marker 82 and downriver fishery will be the place to be. Keepers do seem to be concentrating in this area and smelt and shrimp should take fair numbers again this weekend. If you have a fresh shad in your possession, chances are, you can catch an oversize fish with it. Shad season opens on Sunday so if you plan on using shad before that, you'll have to find them in the Willamette system. Shad are beginning to pass Bonneville Dam however.

Finally, also on tap is the possibility for a late morning or afternoon bottomfishing excursion on the south jetty out of the Columbia River. Extreme morning tides will make morning bar crossings extremely dangerous so wait until low slack before venturing out. Don't bother bringing your crab gear as females will fill your pots out there. Jigs have been very effective lately but herring will also produce results. Lingcod will be found in the deeper water where the sand meets the base of the sunken jetty but this water will be difficult to fish with any current out there.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Willamette Falls temperature is 55 degrees. Fish movement is up with about 6,000 springers counted over the last three days reporting data . Spring Chinook fishing slowed in the lower river this week but interest remains high. Shad fishing has started up at Oregon City and while not difficult to catch, most effort will be for springers at this time of year.

The McKenzie has been good for trout anglers, slow to fair for steelheading. Legal- and larger-sized trout were stocked this week below Leaburg Lake.

Nearly 600 summer steelhead have been counted at Foster Dam on the South Santiam where the water remains a little high but in very good condition.

A youth fishing event will take place at Alton Baker Canal in Eugene on Saturday, May 15th from 9:30 AM to 1 PM. Volunteers will be on hand to assist at this free event and tackle will be available to youngsters who have none.

The 28th annual Detroit Lake Fishing Derby is May 14th through 16th for two divisions, 14 and older (\$15 entry fee) and 13 and younger (\$8 entry fee) with "thousands of dollars" on prizes." Tagged fish will be worth \$100. Anglers may register at derby check-in at the north end of Detroit Avenue. Drawings and the prizes will be awarded at 3 p.m. May 17, and you must be present to win. For information, call 503-854-3696.

The Guide's Forecast – With the river jammed with aluminum craft from the Falls through Oregon City, don't neglect Multnomah Channel which has provided a few limits over the past week. The water temperature is high enough now that spinners are effective although many continue to score with herring while others have been hooking up back-trolling prawns or eggs. Targeting steelhead below Dexter Dam will become more productive as numbers of summers improve and as the water warms. Steelheading on the upper Willamette in any productive water below Hills Creek should be good as the numbers of summers available is good and improving.

With over 25,000 spring Chinook over Willamette Falls, it will soon be worthwhile to try for them below Leaburg on the McKenzie. Trout fishers should stick to nymphs unless trout show some interest in surface feeding during hatches.

Springers are entering the upper Willamette literally but the thousands so anglers' chance of intercepting a few on the Santiam system is improving daily. Summer steelheading is worthwhile on the South Santiam. Try the lower North Santiam as well as the mainstem right down to the Willamette with chances of a spring Chinook hookup improving daily.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Steelheading will be fair to good this weekend as the number of fish and action is improving on the Clackamas. Fly anglers will score by swinging dark patterns on sinking lines with the action improving as water levels drop. While spring chinook fishing has remains mostly non-productive, they will start moving in and catch rates will improve as the water warms. A few springers have been spotted at Eagle Creek but no hookups.

Steelheading is very slow on the Sandy River with no spring Chinook catches reported. Angler effort reflects the lack of action here.

The Woodstock of Spey Casting, better know as **Sandy River Spey Clave**, takes place this Friday and Saturday. The following Email from Julie Cash provides details of the event.

"I just wanted to make sure that you and your members are aware that Metro is hosting the Sandy River Spey Clave, May 14th - 16th at our majestic Oxbow Regional Park. Experts include famous authors; Chasing Metal - steelhead columnist for California Fly Fisherman Magazine, Oregon's most sought after fly fishing guides, the Captain of the England team for the 2003 world Fly Fishing Championships, top contemporary teachers of fly fishing specializing in Spey Casting, FFF-certified Master Casting Instructors, and steelhead fly fishing pioneers of the Sandy River. Here's the schedule; <http://www.flyfishusa.com/about-our-waters/spey-clave/spey-clave-agenda.htm>

"Friday, May 14th is ladies only day for which Mia Sheppard has gathered a stellar group of women instructors. Mia, one of only two female steelhead guides in our beautiful state of Oregon, has just returned from the Jimmy Green International Spey-O-Rama & Fly Casting Festival held at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, with the world champion spey casting title in the women's category.

"This is a free event, but we do charge \$5 for parking. If you need more information please let me know. thank you for your time."

Julie Cash
Communications project coordinator
Metro Parks & Environmental Services
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North Coast Fishing Report – Spring Chinook continue to make an impressive show for this early in the season. In recent years, the best action has taken place towards the latter part of May and into June and that will likely be the case this year but good catches have already been coming from the upper and lower bay. Although we're entering a stronger early morning tide series, the softer tide series we're just coming off of has produced good catches along the jetty for herring trollers in the late morning and early afternoon.

I fished along the jetty for a brief period (5/12) just prior to high slack with another 3 boats but didn't see any action. Reports from the previous day indicated good action about 2 hours prior to

high slack. Herring trolled on the bottom was responsible for several fish taken here. Remember, salmon fishing outside of the bay does not open for another few weeks. I spent most of my time on the 12th setting crab gear. I picked my pots after about a 3-hour soak averaging just under 2 keeper males per pot. The pots were packed with female crab however.

Upper bay anglers reported springers caught with some fish weighing in the upper 20-pound class. Trolled herring are responsible for fair numbers of early fish and spinners will take fish later in the season.

Tidewater anglers are taking a few fish using bobber and bait in the Trask River and although it's likely that the lower Wilson has produced springers, none have been publicly talked about.

The upper stretches of the Trask, Wilson and Nestucca Rivers are now low and clear and are still on the drop. What fish were present in these stretches will now seek out the deepest and darkest haunts and most likely unwilling to bite.

Steelhead remain available on the Wilson, Nestucca and Trask Rivers but most will be spent winter run fish with a few summers available on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers. Three Rivers is barren of anglers but may also hold a few early summer steelhead returning adults.

Offshore, bottomfishers have been doing well for lingcod, seabass and an occasional near-shore halibut in the recent string of calm weather days. Only a small wind-chop from the north has been noticeable.

Ocean crabbing is not all that impressive as I soaked 6 pots for 3 hours loaded with bait, only to come up with 11 keepers but they were hard-shelled keepers.

Ironically, excitement has dwindled for the all-depth halibut opener out of Garibaldi as the 24-mile run doesn't seem to draw much interest anymore. The Garibaldi Harbor was barren of boats the day before the scheduled opener and the seas were forecasted to be nice.

The Guide's Forecast – With the exception of the last few years, this mid-May minus tide series has been the jump start of a good season for Tillamook Bay spring Chinook. From the looks of things, we may see a nice return to that tradition as good early catches may indicate a fair return this year. I suggest starting in the upper bay for the early morning minus tides working herring, plugs or spinners on the outgoing tide. Once slack water hits, motivated anglers should pull their boats and trek across the bay to fish the lower stretch along the jetty for the incoming tide through high slack. Although I've had good success on the first part of the outgoing tide in previous years, most recently, including the 12th, there was no sign of action. If the wind does pick up, it likely won't have an adverse effect on anglers as we can troll close to the north jetty and avoid any stronger winds.

Driftboaters will find challenging conditions with streams low and clear over the weekend. There may be some willing fish available in the tidewater stretches of our streams but the estuary makes more sense to fish. You'll have to use low water tactics and concentrate on the early morning if you can muster the motivation. Sunrise comes pretty early these days.

If you're looking to get offshore, this should be a good weekend to explore that option. Keep in mind however that the morning minus tides will cause rough bar crossings and early morning excursions should be avoided. Halibut and bottomfish can wait for a late morning bite to eat. The nearshore halibut action has been fair north out of Garibaldi but don't expect consistent results.

Crabbing will be best in the ocean but limits will be hard to come by. The condition of keeper males is pretty good however.

And speaking of shellfish, there should be some excellent razor clam digging on north coast beaches this weekend. A soft swell should get clams feeding near the surface where diggers can access them. Clatsop Beaches from Seaside to Astoria will likely produce the best results as low-gradient beaches produce the best clam sets.

Central & South Coast Reports – Offshore forecasts for the coming weekend call for 4.5 to 6 foot swells at 16 to 20 seconds and light breezes. The only challenge is the early morning minus tides which will create clamming opportunities but can also create hazardous bar conditions. Plan accordingly.

All beaches and bays are open to clamming but the Oregon Department of Agriculture has extended an advisory against the taking or consumption of scallops although eating only the abductor muscle is supposedly safe. Let us know how that goes for you.

While bottomfish anglers are restricted to 40 fathoms or less, this has not seriously limited catches at this time of year with best results coming in half that depth or less. The seasonal depth restriction is an effort to restrict incidental catches of yelloweye and canary rockfish, populations of which could be threatened by over-fishing.

Many offshore anglers have anxiously awaited the first spring all-depth halibut opportunity between Cape Falcon and Humbug Mountain (near Port Orford) which begins today, May 13th, through Saturday, May 15th. The next opening will be from May 20th through 22nd with additional days available until the 105,948 pound quota has filled. Summer all depth halibut two-day openers start August 6th and 7th. Updates are available by calling 800-662-9825.

Anglers tailoring boats to the coast for halibut (or any other activity) are reminded that Highway 20 will be closed beginning at 6:00 p.m. Friday, May 14 until 6:00 a.m. Monday, May 17. Details here [*http://www.us20pme.com/](http://www.us20pme.com/)

North Umpqua anglers have been landing decent numbers of spring Chinook with best results above Scottsburg. A few shad are being taken at Yellow Creek but results will improve as the water level drops. Crabbing in Winchester Bay has been fair. Fishing will resume on the South Umpqua May 22nd.

The Coquille and Coos rivers re-open to fishing on May 22nd, Shad should be in the Coquille by then but that remains speculation until angling resumes.

Spring Chinook are being taken in good number daily on the lower Rogue as prospects improve into the coming weekend. Once again, anglers are reminded of a local anchovy shortage and are advised to bring their own or count on using small sardines or herring instead. Elephant Rock has received repeated mention in fishing reports as a particularly productive location but the word is out on this spot. Catches on the middle Rogue have been steady for both boat and bank anglers who are targeting moving fish. Although the upper Rogue remains fairly low, springers are being taken as numbers are fairly good despite skinny flows Backbouncers and plug-pullers are taking fish daily while bank anglers are scoring a few in the popular holes. We were going to write stories about dams in Oregon that are over 100 years old and are slated for removal but there's only one, currently. Gold Ray Dam on the Rogue will, if all goes well, come down later this year.

Boats launching out of the Port of Brookings have been taking seven-fish limits of rockfish and are making good catches of ling cod nearshore around rocky areas and off the jetties. In addition, surd perch fishing has been improving whenever wind and waves have allowed the activity. Mild conditions this weekend are predicted to be favorable. The Chetco River reopens to fishing on May 22nd.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Another Wallowa world record kokanee was landed on May 8th. The 8.85 pound fish was caught trolling a green wedding ring which was tipped with shoe peg corn. Sit down and click here:

<http://www.ifish.net/board/attachment.php?attachmentid=27556&d=1273440788>

Shears Falls on the Deschutes is getting a great deal of pressure although very few salmon are being caught.

While some nice trout have been landed at Davis this year, many anglers are looking forward to nice weather and the opportunity to tussle with some broad-shouldered largemouth on fly tackle.

Smallmouth bass fishing has been fair to good on the John Day River with results improving with the weather. Bass casters here have been surprised occasionally by steelhead hookups.

Imnaha and Wallowa rivers open to spring chinook fishing Saturday, May 22nd. Only hatchery fish may be taken.

Green Peter is producing limits of good-sized kokanee to trollers.

Trollers are taking fair to good numbers of kokanee at Simtustus.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report May 12th through May 26th, 2010

North Puget Sound

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

WDFW is adding more **trout** this month to several of those lakes, including Lone Lake in Island County; Green, Meridian and Sawyer lakes in King County; Mountain Lake in San Juan County; Pass, Campbell and Vogler lakes in Skagit County; Gissburg Lake in Snohomish County; and Squalicum and Toad lakes in Whatcom County.

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

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

On Puget Sound, anglers are hooking some nice **lingcod** . Catch counts at the Armeni Ramp indicate 15 anglers caught nine lingcod May 8 and seven anglers checked five lings the following day. Elsewhere, seven anglers at the Edmonds sling brought home six lingcod May 5, while 39 anglers checked at the Everett ramp caught seven lings May 9. 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.

The **halibut** season also is under way. 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. Anglers have a daily limit of one halibut and there is no minimum size limit.

Shrimping is still an option in the north Sound, but only in Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands), which will be open May 21 and 22. Shrimp fisheries in marine areas 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay), 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner), 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) are closed. More details on the shrimp fishery are available on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/shrimpreg/> .

Before heading out, anglers should check the rules and regulations for all fisheries on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations> .

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Halibut, shrimp, lingcod, clams and trout dominated fishing in the first half of May and - with rivers set to open the first Saturday in June - the good times are just beginning.

Bad weather and nasty ocean conditions during parts of the **razor-clam** season last fall and winter will pay dividends May 15-16 when up to four ocean beaches will open for one last dig. Normally the diggers have met the annual beach harvest quotas by now, but this season's slow start left enough clams for another May outing. The openings will begin on morning tides on the following beaches and end both days at noon:

- Saturday, May 15, 8:15 a.m., -1.6 ft.: Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks
- Sunday, May 16, 8:58 a.m., -1.6 ft.: Long Beach, Twin Harbors only

Kalaloch beach in Olympic National Park will remain closed to clam digging both days. Diggers should be aware 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.

Dan Ayres, WDFW's coastal shellfish manager, estimates that by the time this dig closes 4 million razor-clams will have been harvested from Washington beaches. That is up considerably from the 2.9 million average for the past 10 years. So, too, is the number of diggers. Since the season

opened last October, approximately 300,000 trips were made to dig clams, well over the 10-year average of 239,000 digger trips.

Shrimpers will also get another crack at a daily limit this month in Discovery Bay and in Marine Area 11 (Tacoma/Vashon). After the catch for the initial openings in those areas, WDFW extended the season on the following days:

- **Discovery Bay Shrimp District** : 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday, May 20, and Saturday, May 22.
- **Marine Area 11** : 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday, May 20

Discovery Bay opened to shrimping May 1 and May 5 for the first time since the season closed in 2005. However, shrimping was fairly slow, allowing shrimpers additional time on the water. The best shrimping earlier this month was on Hood Canal where Mark O'Toole, WDFW's Puget Sound shrimp management biologist, described the season this way: "Last Wednesday 85 percent of the boats limited. Shrimping just doesn't get any better than that."

In the three days it was open nearly 68,000 lbs. of shrimp were hauled in from Hood Canal, so it looks like Wednesday, May 12 will be the final day of the fishery. The abundance of shrimp wasn't unexpected. When test pots were hauled up from Hood Canal in April they contained more shrimp than had been seen in pots there for the past decade.

Shrimping rules are published in the state's annual *Sport Fishing Rules* pamphlet, which is available in stores that sell fishing licenses. That information is also available on WDFW's web site at (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations>).

On the coast, **halibut** fishing also proved productive, once the weather improved. "Rough weather delayed the openings at Ilwaco, but once the weather improved the fishing was pretty good," said Heather Reed, WDFW's coastal marine resources policy coordinator. "At Ilwaco they averaged a half a fish per person, and the halibut were good size, averaging 23 lbs. There was great fishing out of Westport, but the fish were smaller - about 14 lbs. Neah Bay opens Thursday (May 13) and Port Angeles is going gangbusters."

At the end of this month, the Port Angeles Salmon Club will hold its annual Halibut Derby over Memorial Day weekend, May 29-30. The entry fee is \$40, with \$20,000 in prizes. To learn more go to (<http://www.olympicpeninsula.org/event/halibut-derby>)
Halibut openings for Washington's marine areas are:

- **Columbia River (Ilwaco)**: Marine Area 1 opened May 1, and will remain open 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 through Sept. 26, whichever occurs first. The 2010 catch quota is 13,436 pounds.
- **South Coast (Westport/Ocean Shores)**: Marine Area 2 opened 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 opened May 2, seven days per week and will remain open 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.

Anglers should be aware of a couple of changes in effect for the first time this year in Marine Area 2. 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.

In the Strait and Puget Sound, the halibut and **lingcod** fishing was best up north. Creel counts at the Ediz Hook boat launch in Port Angeles had 258 anglers catching 147 halibut on May 7. The following day, at the same boat launch, creel counts showed 210 anglers with 68 halibut.

In the north Sound, anglers were having luck catching Pacific halibut, lingcod and **kelp greenling** off the Coronet Bay public ramp. In south and central Puget Sound, fishing was slow to non-existent.

With better weather, fishing for lingcod continues to improve off the coast, says Erica Crust, WDFW's ocean port sampler. Crust observes that private boats have begun venturing out, and the catch rate on charter boats continues to be good.

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 or online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/regulations>.

On Saturday (May 15), hundreds of kids will show up at American Lake Park in Lakewood for this year's **Kid's Fish-In** event. For \$10, kids 14 and under get a Zebco rod and reel, which they get to keep, a Kids' Fish-In tee shirt and time on American Lake to catch a couple of good size trout. Pre-registration was required, but in the days leading up to the fish-in there were still time slots available. To learn more, or to sign up for the event, go to (http://www.gopaw.org/kids_fish-in_program) or call (253) 983-7887. Or, say Lakewood Parks and Recreation officials, just show up Saturday.

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

Southwest Washington

The **spring chinook** fishery is now closed on the mainstem Columbia River from the mouth to McNary Dam, but anglers are still catching springers on a number of tributaries to the big river.

In addition, sport fishing opens May 16 for **hatchery steelhead** and **hatchery jack chinook** below the Interstate 5 Bridge and for **shad** below Bonneville Dam.

Anglers will be allowed to catch and keep up to two hatchery steelhead as part of their six-salmonid daily limit in the mainstem Columbia. Shad don't count, since there's no daily limit or minimum size.

Meanwhile, there's still a chance that the sport fishery could reopen for spring chinook on the Columbia, but only if the number of fish counted at Bonneville Dam significantly exceeds current expectations, said Guy Norman, WDFW regional manager for southwest Washington.

"Given the catch to date, it doesn't look like there's room for more sport opportunity," Norman said. "The run will have to bust out of the range on the high side to provide more opportunity." Norman's comments were based on a new run-size forecast of 350,000 upriver spring chinook, with a range of 330,000 to 370,000 fish. The update is down from the pre-season forecast of 470,000, but would still represent the second or third-largest upriver run since at least 1938. The record is 440,000 fish in 2001 followed by the next year with nearly 335,000 fish.

Lower river anglers caught 23,533 upriver spring chinook by the time fishing ended April 18. The catch above Bonneville Dam was expected to reach 3,400 fish by May 10, when fishing came to a close.

Among the tributaries, Drano Lake was still the hotspot during the week ending May 9, when creel checks found that just over half of the boat anglers took home a spring chinook under crowded conditions. Bank anglers averaged a fish for every 3.5 rods. Anglers are reminded the lake is closed to all fishing on Wednesdays through May.

Bank angling was slow on the Wind River last week, but just over 40 percent of the boat anglers caught a spring chinook. Conditions can also get crowded on the Wind, although fishing is now open above Shipherd Falls, helping to relieve some of the pressure. Fishing above the falls is open upstream to within 800 yards of the Carson National Fish Hatchery, but is closed 400 feet below the coffer dam and 100 feet upstream of the coffer dam.

Elsewhere, anglers have been catching a mix of hatchery spring chinook and hatchery summer-run steelhead on the Kalama, Lewis, Cowlitz and Klickitat rivers. Deep River recently re-opened from the mouth to town bridge, providing additional fishing opportunities for both species. Lake Scanewa, on the upper Cowlitz River, is also now open for hatchery spring chinook fishing. The lower East Fork Lewis and Washougal rivers are open to fishing for hatchery summer run steelhead under selective gear rules (no bait) until the general season begins in early June.

Daily limits for anglers fishing the Cowlitz, Lewis and Kalama rivers include up to two marked adult chinook, plus two marked adult steelhead. Anglers can take two hatchery chinook or two hatchery steelhead or one of each at the Wind River, Klickitat River or Drano Lake. In all cases (except the upper Wind River), unmarked wild fish must be released.

Mark-selective fishing rules will also be in place during the **summer chinook** fishery, which opens June 16 from the mouth of the Columbia River to Priest Rapids Dam. Anglers will be allowed to keep up to two marked hatchery fish but will be required to release any wild summer chinook they intercept.

With 89,000 summer chinook expected this year, fishery managers hope to keep the fishery open from mid-June through July, said Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist. Moving to a selective fishery

will help ensure a full season, while preserving wild broodstock for the new Chief Joseph Hatchery, scheduled to open in 2012, he said.

Starting May 22, fishing for **white sturgeon** will open seven days per week through late June below the Wauna powerlines on the mainstem Columbia River. The daily limit is one fish with a minimum fork length of 41 inches and a maximum of 54 inches. Hymer said sturgeon fishing has been picking up above the Wauna powerlines, where more than a hundred boats and 62 bank anglers were counted during a recent overflight.

Above Wauna, anglers may retain one white sturgeon per day between 38 inches and 54 inches in fork length on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Anglers are reminded Bonneville Dam downstream 9 miles to Marker 82 is closed to fishing for sturgeon and Sand Island Slough near Rooster Rock is closed to fishing for all species including sturgeon.

In The Dalles Pool, boat anglers have been catching **bass** and **walleye**, while those fishing Merwin and Yale reservoirs have been reeling in **kokanee**. Anglers with an appetite for **trout** should be aware that the following waters were stocked during the first week of May:

- Fort Borst Park Pond near Centralia: 2,019 catchable size rainbows.
- Lewis Co. Park Pond near Toledo: 580 triploid trout averaging 1.5 pounds each.
- Lake Sacajawea in Longview: 2,222 catchable size rainbows.

Eastern Washington

Glen Mendel, WDFW district fish biologist in Dayton, said the latest creel checks show **hatchery spring chinook salmon** fishing on the Snake River is starting to pick up in the Clarkston area.

The last check in the Ice Harbor Dam area shows 11 shore anglers with one harvested hatchery chinook for an average catch rate of 66 hours per fish, and nine boat anglers with two harvested hatchery chinook and one released wild chinook for an average catch rate of 42 hours per kept fish. About 300 chinook have been harvested in the fishery since it opened April 20.

Creel checks in the Little Goose Dam area show 44 anglers on the "wall" (walkway area in front of the juvenile fish collection facility near the dam) with seven harvested hatchery chinook and one released wild chinook for an average catch rate of 29 hours per fish kept; 71 shore anglers with 13 harvested hatchery chinook and eight released wild chinook for an average catch rate of 33 hours per kept fish; and 16 boat anglers with no fish.

Meanwhile, creel checks in the Lower Granite Dam area show seven shore anglers with no fish and three boat anglers with one released wild chinook. The Clarkston area fishery check showed five shore anglers with one harvested hatchery chinook for an average catch rate of about nine hours per fish kept, and 23 boat anglers with three harvested hatchery chinook for an average catch rate of 36 hours per fish kept.

Mendel notes that updates on run numbers are expected soon. Anglers should check WDFW's website for any changes in the fishery.

Only hatchery-marked (adipose-fin-clipped) chinook of at least 12 inches can be retained in these fisheries, with a daily catch limit of two adults and four jacks (less than 24 inches). One exception on the catch limit is in the area near Little Goose Dam, including the "wall," where only one jack and one adult can be retained. All steelhead and all wild chinook must be released immediately. Barbless hooks no larger than 5/8-inch from point to shank are required for all species except sturgeon. See all the rule details at

<https://fortress.wa.gov/dfw/erules/efishrules/erule.jsp?id=887>.

Rainbow trout fishing continues to be productive at many of the region's well-stocked waters. WDFW Spokane Fish Hatchery Manager Ace Trump recently reported seeing five-fish limits reeled in within three to four hours by a couple of anglers at southern Stevens County's Deer Lake. "They were pulling plugs and fishing between four and 12 feet down and staying in around 15 feet of water," Trump said. "They picked up most of their fish in the narrows. I was pulling plugs at around 18 to 20 feet down in 22 to 30 feet of water and picked up one rainbow and two fairly nice **lake trout** ."

WDFW Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Manager Juli Anderson said rainbows are biting at the area's walk-in-only Z-Lake. Anderson reminds anglers that rattlesnakes and ticks are out now with warmer weather, so be prepared.

Northcentral Washington

With an expectation of about 11,000 **spring chinook salmon** on their way to the Icicle River in Chelan County, a fishery will begin May 13 on a section of that waterway.

WDFW Northcentral region fish program manager Jeff Korth says up to two salmon of 12-inch minimum size can be harvested daily in the Icicle River from the closure signs located 800 feet upstream of the mouth to 500 feet downstream of the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery Barrier Dam.

Korth says that although upper Columbia River spring chinook have been listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the salmon returning to the Icicle River are not listed under the ESA. With about 1,000 salmon needed for hatchery broodstock, the size of this year's run means remaining fish will be available for harvest. A night closure will be in effect. Anglers must release fish with one or more round holes punched in the tail of the fish (caudal fin). These fish are part of a study and have been anesthetized so there is a 21-day ban on consumption of these fish.

The Icicle salmon fishery is expected to run through July 31.

WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist Bob Jateff of Twisp reports that despite recent cooler weather, Pearygin Lake, Conconully Reservoir and Conconully Lake continue to provide good fishing for rainbow trout. Most fish coming out of those waters are running 10-12 inches with winter-carryover fish up to 15 inches. WDFW Enforcement Officer Cal Treser recently checked shore fishermen on Pearygin who averaged two fish each.

Jateff also reports selective-gear-rule lakes such as Big Twin and the Sinlahekin's Blue are producing good catches of rainbows in the 12-16 inch range. Rat Lake, near the town of Brewster, is catch-and-release-only under selective gear rules and can provide some very fast fishing for rainbows 10-14 inches, plus a few **brown trout** . Aeneas is a fly fishing only lake, but is producing excellent catches of rainbow in the 14-16 inch range in addition to brown trout up to 18 inches.

Treser also reported shore anglers at year-round Patterson Lake, west of Winthrop, were recently using Powerbait to catch trout. A boat angler on Patterson was catching a lot of **yellow perch** .

"Fishermen need to remember to pick up their waste fishing line and lure wrappers," Treser said. "I have had a couple of birds recently entangled by fishing line, including one loon."

Southcentral Washington

Fishing for **spring chinook salmon** is closed from the mouth of the Columbia River to McNary Dam, but anglers are catching an increasing number of springers in the Yakima River.

Paul Hoffarth, WDFW district fish biologist from Pasco, reports that an estimated 20 hatchery spring chinooks were harvested in the lower Yakima River during the week ending May 9. In addition, eight wild chinook were caught and released. Anglers averaged 39 hours per chinook, up slightly from a year ago.

Creel reports indicate an estimated 225 adult hatchery marked (clipped fin) spring chinook were harvested at Ringold for the week of May 3-9. An estimated 44 wild chinook were caught and released. WDFW staff interviewed 166 anglers, 18 percent of the effort during the week. Anglers averaged one chinook for 17 hours of fishing, eight hours better than a year ago. For the season, 301 **hatchery steelhead** have been harvested.

Hoffarth reminds anglers that, because of budget cuts, this will be the last spring chinook fishery at the Ringold. It will remain open for hatchery steelhead and other species.

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

Eric Anderson, WDFW's district fish biologist for Yakima and Kittitas counties says there have been lots of anglers on the Yakima River, and that fishing has begun to pick up after a slow start. "We're seeing more fish in the river," said Anderson. "Just yesterday (May 11) anglers kept six hatchery fish and released seven wild salmon. The hatchery is continuing to stock catchable-size trout in area lakes and ponds."

Many of the region's lakes are open and stocked year-round. A schedule of all lake trout stocking can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/stocking/weekly/> .

Anderson and Hoffarth remind anglers that many streams in central and eastern Washington will remain closed until the June 5 opener to protect downstream migrating salmon and steelhead smolts and spawning trout and steelhead.

Anderson and Hoffarth note that the Yakima Greenway Path and several boat launches provide excellent access to the Yakima River from Selah to Union Gap. Maps can be found at <http://www.yakimagreenway.org/map.html> .

There is also access at Harrison Road and from the Yakima Canyon Highway above Harrison Road. Boaters should be aware that the river can be a challenge to float, particularly from the Terrace Heights Bridge down to Century Landing at Union Gap. For the lower reach of the Yakima, access maps are posted at http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/salmon/when_where_best_area-yakima.htm .

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

Subscriber Randall L. wrote via the Contact Form at the TGF website regarding a razor clam photo submitted by irregular reporter Ken Johnson, "It doesn't look so good when you post a picture with 17 razor clams and the limit is 15. It could have been a couple of people's limits but if the digging was that good why only 2 extra."

While Johnson's report was unusually succinct, he should have clarified that the 17 clams in the picture came as the result of an effort by himself and a lady friend. Perhaps discretion was the better part but sportsmen have sharp eyes for this sort of thing. We apologize for the confusion.

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

2010 Landing Estimates for the Oregon Pacific Halibut Sport Fishery:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/finfish/halibut/estimates/halcatch2010.asp>

Eleven-foot 'giant herring' found off Sweden:

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20100512/sc_afp/swedenanimalfishoffbeat#bd

GOOD LUCK!