

The Guide's Forecast - volume 13 issue number 19

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 13th – May 19th, 2011**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- Fishery managers continue to look at good passage rates over Bonneville. Of particular interest is the jack count. Court ordered spill in recent years has drastically improved survival rates, which will translate into excellent opportunity next season. Managers will likely meet later this week to discuss options for a re-opener downstream of Bonneville Dam.

The water has remained clear and is warming in the lower Willamette with the flow fairly stable. Chinook fishing slowed this week but should improve with stronger tides. Over 2,000 springers crossed at Willamette Falls on May 5th. Anglers working the Oregon City area cite the importance of sizing down baits for willing springers. Shrimp and egg combinations are working the best but keep the size of your egg clusters to 10 to 15 berries. The Middle Fork is fishing well for trout.

McKenzie fly anglers are enjoying good fishing for trout with the water cold but stable and a variety of dries and nymphs effective. Look for stoneflies starting to hatch. A few summer steelhead are being taken.

Steelheading is slow on the Clackamas although there are a few springers in the lower river. The spring chinook run should peak later this year as high, cold water will influence success for the next few weeks. Fishing could remain good into July this season.

Sandy fishing remains slow. Steelhead remain the primary focus. Only a few summers are around with an occasional late winter run being taken. Fly fishers interested in two-handed casting will want to check out the Spey Class at Oxbow Park Friday through Sunday this week.

Summer steelhead fishing has been fair on the South Santiam.

Northwest – Effort has all but disappeared for steelhead on the north coast. Some summer run fish should be nosing into the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers.

Spring chinook have been caught in the upper bay and Trask tidewater. The fishing will only improve from here with favorable tides beginning around the 15th for upper bay trollers. This should be the first good push of springers on Tillamook Bay although the better fishing is likely to happen later in the month.

River levels are dropping which should aid estuary anglers. A small bump in river levels is in the forecast just after the weekend which could provide a rare opportunity for driftboaters on the Trask and Wilson Rivers for spring chinook and a rare summer steelhead.

There should still be some sturgeon available in Tillamook Bay with the upcoming minus tide series. Keepers should be available for those soaking shrimp in the upper and middle estuary.

Ocean enthusiasts may have a welcome opportunity this weekend with swell forecasts tolerable for those seeking bottomfish, offshore chinook, crab and halibut. With the limited opportunity that has presented itself this season, action should be great.

The all-depth fishery for halibut opens up today through Saturday and action should be excellent for those willing to make a run. The hot spot out of Garibaldi is about 24 miles NW of the jetty

tips.

Southwest – Bottom fishing has been worthwhile off the central Oregon coast with near-limits the rule for rockfish along with a few lingcod. Halibut may be taken seven days a week inside the 40-fathom line with all-depth fishing opening Thursday through Saturday this week.

Crabbing has produced only fair results in Winchester Bay. Spring chinook catches have picked up on the Umpqua mainstem. North Umpqua steelheading is fair while the South Umpqua remains closed.

Little effort for ocean chinook has taken place out of Charleston. Crabbing has been fair with best results in the lower bay.

Boats crossing the bar out of Gold Beach have experienced good fishing for rockfish and fair to good ling catches when offshore wind has allowed access. Ocean salmon fishing was a bust for the most part over the past week. Spring chinook are being hooked daily on the lower Rogue although more wild fish are showing up in catches. Results have slowed as the water clears. Fishing for springers has been fair on the middle river. Upper Rogue steelheaders are catching a fair to good number of fish with many in decent condition for this time of year.

Offshore bottom fishing has been rewarding for boats launching out of the Port of Brookings with charter and recreational anglers taking limits. Ocean chinook fishing will open on Saturday, May 14th. Surf perch fishing has been good off area beaches.

Diamond Lake anglers will have to wait for the spring thaw as ice covering the water has become too soft to walk on. Hopes are high for Memorial Day weekend.

Eastern – Big stoneflies are just starting to show on the lower Deschutes. Warm weather this week should trigger the hatch. Nymphing has been taking reddsides this week. Salmonflies are evident on the middle river.

The Umatilla is an option for spring chinook anglers. Although the count is only a few hundred fish, the action should jump in the coming weeks as this run builds over time.

SW Washington – Cowlitz River anglers were catching some spring chinook and summer steelhead. Chinook fishing should improve in the next few weeks although a banner run is not in the forecast. Jack catches are impressive for this early in the run.

The Kalama and Lewis Rivers have spring chinook and summer steelhead available. Both should be fair options this week with dropping flows.

Drano Lake and Wind River posted predictably good catches this week. This good action should continue as Bonneville Dam counts keep climbing. A sea-lion is working the area so fight your fish quick in order to retain your prize.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Although fish counts are still cruising on the Columbia River, managers will meet and likely take action Friday on how to craft further sport opportunity for our Columbia River fisheries. Still on the table is a good percentage of impacts for the sportfleet downstream of Bonneville Dam. How we best utilize those that work best for the angling public is

the question. The ODF&W would love to have a continuous fishery into mid-June when summer Chinook gets underway.

Managers have upgraded the spring Chinook run to just over 200,000 returning adults but if the counts continue like they are, we could do better than that. What's really fun to watch is the jack counts, which will bode well for next years opportunities. Jacks traditionally return later than the adults do so it's likely many more are on their way.

For your convenience, here is copy of current regulations right from the ODF&W web site, referring to the upcoming openers on the lower river:

COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, BUOY 10 LINE UPSTREAM TO TONGUE POINT/ROCKY POINT LINE:

This section of the Columbia River is currently closed to angling for salmon, steelhead and shad. **Effective Monday May 16, this section will open to angling for shad.**

COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, TONGUE POINT/ROCKY POINT LINE UPSTREAM TO THE I-5 BRIDGE:

This section of the Columbia River is currently closed to angling for salmon, steelhead and shad. **Effective Monday May 16, this section will open to angling for adipose fin-clipped steelhead, sockeye, adipose fin-clipped chinook jacks (between 12 and 24 inches) and shad. The daily bag limit is two adult salmon or steelhead in combination plus five adipose fin-clipped chinook jacks. All sockeye count toward the adult salmonid daily limit, regardless of size.**

COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, I-5 BRIDGE UPSTREAM TO BONNEVILLE DAM:

This section of the Columbia River is currently closed to angling for salmon, steelhead and shad. **Effective Monday May 16, this section will open to angling for shad.**

COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, BONNEVILLE DAM UPSTREAM TO THE OREGON/WASHINGTON BORDER ABOVE McNARY DAM:

This section of the Columbia River is currently closed to angling for salmon and steelhead, but is open to angling for shad.

Sturgeon remained the focus for the few anglers working the lower Columbia River. Catch rates remained subdued but some keepers were caught near Troutdale and the Portland to Longview stretch also remains viable. Court-ordered flow and spill will keep temperatures down and river velocity high. This won't bode well for catch rates in the coming weeks. Although the estuary fishery has been catch and release since May 1st, it will open up to retention on the 14th. No word of effort in the catch and release fishery and with river conditions, expectations should not be running high for the retention opener coming up.

Offshore, the ocean has finally decided to calm down, inviting bottomfishers to take part in what should be a bountiful harvest. Halibut fishers had a harder time than usual for this area but flatties to 50 pounds were reported. Most are waiting for friendlier seas. Wind chop can put a damper on a fun day.

The Guide's Forecast – Steelhead are on tap for Columbia River fishers beginning on Monday. How convenient that we have an excellent tide series to go with this opener. Early morning

minus tides should produce good opportunities for bank anglers. High water and what seems to be ample early numbers of summer runs could spell good success for beach-goers. The beaches around Westport Oregon and upstream of Rainier will likely produce the best catches but Sauvies Island could produce as well. The peak is still several weeks away but there have been years, similar to this one, when the May opener produced good catches.

Use bright colored spin-n-glos shallow and scent them up well. Be knowledgeable in your fish identification as adult Chinook are not lawful to keep but jacks can be kept. Sockeye are also allowed in your daily bag limit. Know your fish!

Sturgeon anglers will have to be knowledgeable and motivated to try with all the other opportunity available this weekend. A few keepers will be available in the Portland to Longview stretch. The estuary likely won't fish well, especially with a long incoming tide through most of the morning and afternoon hours.

Stand by for more salmon opportunity. We'll certainly know more by next week as managers are likely to rule as early as Friday. Let's hope for more options above Bonneville too!

Good offshore conditions may exist for offshore anglers. Here is the forecast cut and pasted from the North Coast report:

Fri...SE wind 5 to 10 kt...backing to N in the afternoon. Wind waves 1 foot. W swell 8 ft at 11 seconds. Chance of showers.

Fri Night...N wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 7 ft. Chance of showers.

Sat...NW wind 5 to 15 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 7 ft. Showers likely in the afternoon.

Sat Night...W wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 1 foot. W swell 5 ft. Chance of showers.

Sun...SW wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. NW swell 5 ft.

Mon...S wind 15 to 20 kt. Wind waves 4 ft. W swell 5 ft.

Sunday look particularly attractive. Crabbing may be tough out there but halibut should be fair and bottomfishing along the jetties after the screaming outgoing tide in the early morning, should be good. Be cautious in your bar crossings.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – It's springer time. Over 10,000 have crossed Willamette Falls and the density of fish in the lower river is plenty good enough to warrant some time on the water in pursuit of them. About 3,6000 summer steelhead have been counted and nearly 7,00 winters. ODFW fish checkers report that 768 boats trying the lower Willamette over the past weekend took over 400 Chinook, releasing only 65. Not every day has provided exceptional fishing although springers are being taken daily. The bite has turned on and off which is fairly typical of Chinook fishing. the most consistent catches have come from the stretch between Oregon City and the head of Multnomah Channel.

After a good stint of action at Oregon City, catches slowed a bit as water cleared and dropped. The garbage hole had been producing the best catches for those using small egg clusters along with small shrimp tails or sardine fillets. Guides went downstream into the faster water near Yucca Island (across from the mouth of the Clackamas River) and Meldrum Bar. Cedar Oaks has also been producing fair catches recently.

Although eggs seems to remain the most viable option, bait-wrapped plugs seemed to produce nicely for the few anglers utilizing them. The water above I-205 has slowed a bit, making for more challenging conditions to backtroll in. The hog-line bite also slowed but may still be worth your while. Little effort exists above the cement Gladstone Bridge toward Willamette Falls but fish should be present. As flows continue to drop action and effort will jump.

Harbor trollers are still doing well but action for bait druggers also slowed. Hardware seemed to produce nicely however with spinners taking the cake. Action on hardware should continue to produce as the water temperature rises. There are still plenty of Willamette bound Chinook coming.

Due to recent rain and runoff from snowmelt, the North and South Santiams are high and rising, conditions which are

not conducive to fishing success.

From the ODFW: "A free family fishing event will be held at Alton Baker Canoe Canal Saturday, May 14 from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Desert Springs Trout Farm will release 1,050 rainbow trout the morning of the event, including 50 one-pounders. Angler-education instructor volunteers and ODFW staff will be available to assist young anglers and their families with fishing. Pre-registration is not required and all equipment necessary will be provided.

"The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will host a family fishing event Saturday, May 14 at Mt. Hood Pond from 9:00 a.m. to 2 p.m. The department will release more than 4,000 rainbow trout for the event at this "youth only" pond, including 300 fish ranging from 1-2 pounds."

Scheduled for trout planting are Benson Lake, Blue Lake, Hartman Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Sheridan Pond, Blue River above Reservoir, Blue River Reservoir, Carmen Reservoir, Clear Lake, Detroit Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, East Freeway Lake, Fall Creek Foster Reservoir, Green Peter Reservoir, Hills Creek, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River below Leaburg Lake, Roaring River Park Pond, Salt Creek, Timber Linn Lake, Trail Bridge Reservoir, Walling Pond, Walter Wirth Lake and Waverly Lake

The Guide's Forecast – Water conditions in the lower Willamette are good for spring Chinook fishers. Try Multnomah Channel around Coon Island, at the head of the Channel, Portland Harbor, Oregon City and Sellwood as all have been hotspots at times. Trolling and anchor fishing seems to be about equally effective. Even the plunkers below the mouth of the Clackamas are getting a few but not as many as the sea lions. Above the Falls, springers have been taken by boats sitting on spinners. Catch the March Brown hatch on the Willamette above Harrisburg and enjoy decent results for cutthroat. Nymphing has been most effective in the cold water of the Middle Fork Willamette.

Trout fishing has been good on the lower McKenzie and the river has been stocked with hatchery fish above and below Leaburg Dam. Summer steelhead numbers are building in the McKenzie and anglers targeting them are seeing some success.

There are decent, catchable numbers of hatchery summer steelhead in the Santiam system but until the water starts to drop, the river won't be fishable.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Clackamas water levels have been gradually rising over the past week and long term forecasts indicate the trend will continue with the water

volume spiking around May 20th. Despite the less than optimum conditions, fishing has been fair to good at times as the water temperature has been stable. There's nothing of interest to anglers at Eagle Creek currently with steelheading over for the year but spring Chinook will start to nose in later in the month.

Sandy water levels are up bit the color has remained good. The low 40-degree range water temperature is not likely to change for a while.

The Guide's Forecast – Spring Chinook are in the Clackamas although not in great number this early in the season. Several have been caught in the lower river with hookups occurring as high as Rivermill. Results will continue to improve through May and into June.

There have been a few summer steelhead and spring Chinook caught recently but overall, fishing here is slow. It has even been a challenge for the professionals to catch a fish here this year. Final reminder: Sandy Spey Clave is this weekend at Oxbow Park. See Random Links, below, for details.

North Coast Fishing Report – With an end to the steelhead fishing in the district, anglers have been anxiously waiting for good numbers of spring Chinook to make an appearance in Tillamook County. Well, that day has come as a recent report indicated several springers came aboard a boat fishing along the jetty on Wednesday. I only like to publicly report numbers that I know are true so take this for what it's worth but this boat (I am unsure of the angler) supposedly landed 5 springers on the tide using herring along the jetty. That's a great day, even in peak season! If that number is accurate, along with other recent reports for springers in the area, it appears we're in for another good run this year.

Trollers working the upper bay haven't reported excellent results but a few fish were taken last week. The tides haven't been too conducive for excellent fishing. The better tides are those where we get more time close to low tide, especially when the low tides are of the "minus" variety. More on that in the forecast section.

Spring Chinook have also been reported in the Trask tidewater recently as fish were likely to stack up as flows dropped in the upper reaches of these systems. Keep in mind that the Wilson and Trask get all the hatchery returning spring Chinook with the Trask the main river receiving the most hatchery plants.

Sturgeon are still in the estuary as well but with coastal springers the top option in the district, we'll see an effort shift in pursuit of the more silvery fish. Anglers are taking a few keepers in the west channel with some effort still remaining in the middle channel and Bay City as well.

There's not much river effort right now but spent winter run fish as well as a rare summer steelhead or spring Chinook are certainly available. Spawning steelhead would be pretty easy to spot in the tailouts so please avoid fishing on these sensitive fish.

The ocean just "got friendly" so offshore effort should be taking place for halibut, rockfish, crab and maybe even Chinook. Reportedly, most of the Chinook are further south and therefore the fishing for them will be spotty. Rockfishing should be excellent right now. I've had excellent luck with the Gulp! baits this time of year, those imitating small shrimp were particularly effective.

Inland crabbing has been poor.

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

The Guide's Forecast – Tides will dictate how and where to fish for spring Chinook this weekend on Tillamook Bay. The most recent success has taken place in the lower bay along the jetty. That should continue into the weekend with those tides taking place in the afternoon. Target the middle part of the outgoing tide through low slack for the best action. There aren't many blue label herring around so you'll have to use green label which should work just fine. Plug cut those small herring to make them spin tight but don't be afraid to fish a whole herring either as those can be equally effective this time of year.

Upper bay trollers will have some great opportunity after the weekend. Great tides actually start on Sunday but the early bird will get the worm here. As the week progresses, so will angler opportunity. And these are some smokin' good tides, just when the seasons first good push of salmon should be entering the estuary. Upper bay anglers will do good on plugs, herring and spinners, especially those colored green. Once the tide begins to push in however, the bite will likely slow. These spring fish don't bite as good on the incoming as the fall fish do with a lot of that likely due to the fact that there aren't nearly the numbers of spring Chinook as there are fall fish. You'll see most people pack it up on the incoming tide.

Sturgeon anglers will also have good opportunity after the weekend. The minus tides will concentrate keepers (and shakers and oversize) fish in the deeper slots. You may even spot feeding sturgeon in the shallows as one angler reported seeing a huge sturgeon tail on the surface as an oversize was rooting around on the bottom feeding on clams or shrimp.

The offshore forecast looks favorable, at least until Sunday:

Fri...SE wind 5 to 10 kt...backing to N in the afternoon. Wind waves 1 foot. W swell 8 ft at 11 seconds. Chance of showers.

Fri Night...N wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 7 ft. Chance of showers.

Sat...NW wind 5 to 15 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. W swell 7 ft. Showers likely in the afternoon.

Sat Night...W wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 1 foot. W swell 5 ft. Chance of showers.

Sun...SW wind 10 to 15 kt. Wind waves 2 ft. NW swell 5 ft.

Mon...S wind 15 to 20 kt. Wind waves 4 ft. W swell 5 ft.

Halibut fishers both in the nearshore and all-depth fisheries should be pretty excited. Action should be good, especially for the all-depth fishing. Bottomfishing should be excellent as well but as we get into next week, be watchful of the extreme morning tides. Bar crossing will be hazardous.

River fishers will have low, clear water conditions to contend with. While that can be advantageous for stealthy anglers, the regular "Joe" will find this challenging. Small baits may take a few steelhead (both in good and poor condition) and Chinook along with steelhead will likely be concentrated in the deeper pools, albeit in small numbers. Hardware may take a few fish at first light.

Central & South Coast Reports – Ocean conditions have been favorable for boats and are predicted to remain good through the coming weekend. Winds have kicked up periodically, however, cutting some offshore trips short. While forecasts are for lumpy seas on Friday this week, it should soften Saturday and Sunday is predicted to be a stellar opportunity to get out. Bottom fishing for rockfish has been good, ling cod catches are fair. Rock and jetty anglers are making decent catches and surf fishing is producing perch.

All-depth halibut is open today, May 12th, through Saturday, May 14th although boats can target them any day inside the 40-fathom line. Nearshore results have been above average this year. There should be plenty of halibut remaining in the 158,205 pound quota for additional all-depth opportunities on May 26th through 28, June 2nd through 4th and June 9th, 10th and 11th.

Winchester Bay has been slow for crabbing but tidewater sturgeon fishing has been improving. Striped bass have been caught in the lower river recently and the South Jetty has been productive for rockfish and kelp greenling.

Spring Chinook fishing has been very good on the mainstem Umpqua above Scottsburg although water levels are forecast to be up and down over the coming week. Shad are in and catches have been fair in water that's too high and cold for this fishery to shine. The Umpqua is actually fishing better than the Rogue and the fish are larger. The flies-only section of the North Umpqua has been fair for steelheading. The South Umpqua is closed until the trout opener on May 28th.

Striper anglers have taken a few in tidewater on the Coquille River this week.

Crabbing has been slow but is improving in Coos Bay. While few sturgeon have been biting, this is the time of year when catches usually pick up. Shad are expected to arrive very soon.

Spring Chinook fishing was good last week on the lower Rogue, then slowed through the weekend and has remained fair. Better results are coming from the middle Rogue at this time as springers move upriver. Both bank and boat anglers are catching fish. The upper Rogue is producing fair catches of Chinook and steelhead with some of the winters still in surprisingly good condition.

Diamond Lake Fishing is on hold with the spring thaw progressing. At this writing, the ice is not safe for anglers to walk on and open water is an optimistic two weeks away. When the lake is again accessible, Diamond fishers will enjoy a bounty of jumbo rainbows and a generous eight-fish-per-day bag limit.

Fish Lake has been stocked this week with legal-sized and larger trout.

Central and Eastern Oregon – The Deschutes is a little high and and slightly off color but is fishing well for reddsides. Blue-Winged Olives and March Browns are around but few Salmonflies to speak of below Maupin. Big bugs should be evident in a week as they are active on the middle Deschutes. Shearars Falls is producing a few fish.

Lake Billy Chinook is producing rainbows, browns and bull trout. Anglers may keep on bull per day over 24 inches as this impoundment has a healthy population of them.

Crane Prairie is producing some of those large rainbows for which it is so well known as well as the occasional brook trout.

Kokanee fishing has been worthwhile for trollers at Wickiup.

Green Peter has been fair although kokanee averaging 11 to 12 inches are in good condition for the table. With a 25-fish limit in place, few will be filling limits this early in the season but catches will be improving as the water warms. The level is about 10 feet from full pool.

Reminder:

ATTENTION ANGLERS!



Overhead view of redd



Protect tomorrow's fish today!



Photo credit: John Adelman, Wild Salmon Center

REDD ALERT!

WHAT IS A REDD?

- Redds are the nests of spawning fish.
- Spawning fish dig depressions in the gravel and deposit eggs in the mound behind this depression. Depending on the species, eggs and sac-fry may spend 6 to 18 weeks in these mounds.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

- Wading and walking in redds can destroy the developing fish.
- Anglers unaware of redds can cause damage to the next year's fish population by trampling redds and targeting spawning fish.

WHAT DOES A REDD LOOK LIKE?

- The most distinguishable feature of a redd is the oval-shaped depression of clean-looking gravel along the bottom of the river.
- Gravel in the depression will usually be a lighter color than the gravel surrounding the redd, look for mounds behind depressions.

WHEN & WHERE ARE REDDS FOUND?

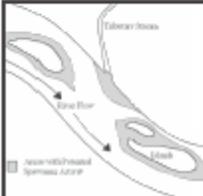
- Fish in the Deschutes River spawn in the following seasons: Steelhead build their redds in the spring, trout in the spring and summer, Fall chinook salmon in the fall and winter.
- Trout and steelhead redds are typically found in shallow gravel beds, near islands, and in riffles. Fall chinook redds are found in slightly deeper water with larger gravel.
- Anglers are encouraged to use extra caution during these times.
- Spawning fish are dark and sluggish and should be left alone.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Minimize disturbance. Avoid fishing, walking, wading, and mooring boats in shallow gravel bars near islands, and pass by islands in the deepest channel available.
- Don't cast to spawning fish and gently educate your fellow anglers.

THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

- Middle Columbia Steelhead were listed under the ESA on March 25, 1999. Under the ESA, it is illegal for any person to harm or harass a listed species. Disturbing spawning steelhead or their redds can be considered harm or harassment under the ESA.
- Please help protect and recover the fish of the Deschutes River by staying away from spawning fish and their redds.




*According to the National Marine Fisheries Service "The Bureau of Land Management shall regulate and monitor commercial and private boaters using the Lower Deschutes River such that disturbance of spawning adult steelhead is avoided or minimized."

For More Information:

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Mid-Columbia Office
503-962-8911 ext. 225

Jim Eisner
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BLM, Prineville District
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Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for May 2011

North Puget Sound

The blackmouth salmon season comes to a close at the end of April, but openings for halibut, lingcod and shrimp fisheries are coming up. For freshwater anglers, one of the most anticipated fishing opportunities gets under way at the end of April with the lowland lakes trout season.

Beginning April 30, anglers can cast a line in many of the region's lakes, where thousands of legal-sized **trout** have been planted. "This is the biggest fishing day of the year," said Phil Anderson, director of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "Lakes in every county are well-stocked, so fishing families can keep travel costs down by enjoying good angling close to home."

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. Before heading out, anglers should check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#) for all regulations.

Even after the opener, fishing should be good throughout the season as WDFW continues to stock lakes with trout. Information on stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available on [WDFW's website](#).

On saltwater, selective fisheries for hatchery **blackmouth** – resident chinook – are coming to a close. Marine areas 7 (San Juan Islands), 8-1 (Deception Pass, Hope Island and Skagit Bay) and 8-2 (Port Susan and Port Gardner) close at the end of the day April 30. Marine areas 9 (Admiralty Inlet) and 10 (Seattle/Bremerton) are already closed to salmon fishing.

The **halibut** season, however, is just around the corner. The fishery is scheduled to run from May 5 through May 29 in marine areas 6-10. Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) will be open May 26 through June 18. These fisheries will be open three days a week (Thursday, Friday and Saturday) but are closed Sunday through Wednesday except for Memorial Day weekend when they will be open Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

All areas that will be open to halibut fishing have a one-fish daily catch limit, with no minimum size, a possession limit of one fish while on the vessel, and a possession limit of two fish in any form once the angler is on the shore.

Halibut fishing will remain closed in marine areas 11 (Tacoma) and 13 (southern Puget Sound) to protect three species of rockfish listed for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act. Marine Area 12 (Hood Canal) will remain closed due to low dissolved-oxygen conditions.

Fishing for **lingcod** and **cabezon** also gets under way in May. 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 season for cabezon also opens May 1, when anglers will have a daily limit of two fish with no minimum size limit.

Don't forget those **shrimp** pots. The shrimp season opens May 7 in Puget Sound. In all areas of Puget Sound, fishers are limited to 80 spot shrimp per day. Here are the fishing schedules for the Puget Sound region:

- Hood Canal Shrimp District (Marine Area 12): Open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 7, 11, 14 and 25. Additional dates and times may be announced if sufficient quota remains.
- Discovery Bay Shrimp District (Marine Area 6): Open May 7, 11 and 14 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Additional dates and times will be announced if sufficient quota remains.

- Marine areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5, 6 and 13 (excluding shrimp districts): Open daily beginning May 7 at 7 a.m. The spot shrimp season closes when quota is attained or Sept 15, whichever comes first, except for Marine Area 13, which closes for spot shrimp May 31.
- Marine Area 7: Opens May 7 at 7 a.m. and will be open May 11, 13, 14, 25 and 28. Additional dates and times will be announced if sufficient quota remains. The season for coonstripe and pink shrimp (with area and depth restrictions) runs daily from June 1 through Oct. 15.
- Marine areas 8, 9, and 10: Open May 7 and May 11 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Additional dates and times will be announced if sufficient quota remains.
- Marine Area 11, extending from the northern tip of Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge: Open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 7 only.

More details on the shrimp fishery are available on WDFW's [recreational shrimp fishing website](#).

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

More spring fishing opportunities begin in May, when shrimp and lingcod fisheries open in Puget Sound and the halibut season gets under way there and off the coast. But for freshwater anglers, one of the most anticipated fishing opportunities starts at the end of April with the lowland lakes trout season.

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Meanwhile, three ocean beaches will open in early May for a razor-clam dig that could be the last dig of the season. Morning digs are set on two beaches – Long Beach and Twin Harbors – for six straight days, May 3-8. Mocrocks Beach, which extends north from the Copalis River to the southern boundary of the Quinault Indian Reservation, will also be open for razor-clam digging May 7-8.

No digging will be allowed on any of those beaches after noon.

Rather catch finfish? **Lingcod** fishing opportunities expand May 1, when the fishery opens in Puget Sound. Lingcod fisheries in marine areas 1 (Ilwaco), 2 (Westport-Ocean Shores), 3 (LaPush) and 4 (Neah Bay) are already under way. For more information on lingcod fishing regulations, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

The **halibut** season also is just around the corner. The 2011 recreational halibut seasons approved for Washington's marine areas are:

- **Columbia River (Ilwaco):** Marine Area 1 will open May 5, three days a week, Thursday through Saturday until 70 percent of the quota is reached, or until July 17. The fishery will then reopen on Aug. 5 and continue three days a week (Friday through

Sunday) until the remaining quota is reached, or Sept. 30, whichever occurs first. The 2011 catch quota is 15,418 pounds.

- **South Coast (Westport/Ocean Shores):** Marine Area 2 will open on May 1, two days a week, Sundays and Tuesdays. During the fourth week in May the fishery will be open Sunday only (May 22). Beginning the following week the fishery will resume the Sunday, Tuesday structure until the quota is reached. The northern nearshore area will be open seven days per week, until the quota is reached. The 2011 catch quota is 43,500 pounds.
- **North Coast (La Push/Neah Bay):** Marine areas 3 and 4 will open on May 12, two days per week, Thursdays and Saturdays, through May 21. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will reopen the week of June 2. If sufficient quota remains after that opener, the fishery will reopen starting June 16. The 2011 catch quota is 108,792 pounds.
- **Strait of Juan de Fuca/Puget Sound:** Marine areas 6 through 10 (Strait, Port Angeles, Admiralty Inlet and Everett) will be open May 5 through May 29. Marine Area 5 (Sekiu) will be open May 26 through June 18. 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 Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The 2011 combined catch quota for these areas is 58,155 pounds.

All areas that will be open to halibut fishing have a one-fish daily catch limit, with no minimum size, a possession limit of one fish while on the vessel, and a possession limit of two fish in any form once the angler is on the shore.

Halibut fishing will remain closed in marine areas 11 (Tacoma-Vashon) and 13 (South Puget Sound) to protect three species of rockfish listed for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act. Marine Area 12 (Hood Canal) will remain closed due to low dissolved-oxygen conditions.

Don't forget those **shrimp** pots. The shrimp season opens May 7 in Puget Sound. In all areas of Puget Sound, fishers are limited to 80 spot shrimp per day.

Here are the fishing schedules for the Puget Sound region:

- Hood Canal Shrimp District (Marine Area 12): Open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 7, 11, 14 and 25. Additional dates and times may be announced if sufficient quota remains.
- Discovery Bay Shrimp District (Marine Area 6): Open May 7, 11 and 14 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Additional dates and times will be announced if sufficient quota remains.
- Marine areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5, 6 and 13 (excluding shrimp districts): Open daily beginning May 7 at 7 a.m. The spot shrimp season closes when quota is attained or Sept 15, whichever comes first, except for Marine Area 13, which closes for spot shrimp May 31.
- Marine Area 7: Opens May 7 at 7 a.m. and will be open May 11, 13, 14, 25 and 28. Additional dates and times will be announced if sufficient quota remains. The season for coonstripe and pink shrimp (with area and depth restrictions) runs daily from June 1 through Oct. 15.
- Marine areas 8, 9, and 10: Open May 7 and May 11 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Additional dates and times will be announced if sufficient quota remains.
- Marine Area 11, extending from the northern tip of Vashon Island to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge: Open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 7 only.

"Fishing prospects in many areas are looking even better than last year," said Mark O'Toole, a shellfish biologist for the department, who noted that he expects a strong turnout by shrimp fishers – especially on opening day. "Some of the boat ramps can get pretty crowded, so we encourage fishers to be patient and wait their turn."

That will be especially important at **Twanoh State Park**, a popular access site on Hood Canal where construction work will limit parking facilities for boaters through June. The State Parks and Recreation Commission encourages fishers to use an alternate launch site – especially during the season opener. More details on the shrimp fishery are available on WDFW's [recreational shrimp fishing website](#).

Anglers are reminded that **salmon** fishing in marine areas 11 and 12 closes at the end of the day April 30. In addition, **wild steelhead** retention closes at the same time on the Bogachiel, Calawah, Dickey, Quillayute and Sol Duc rivers.

However, a couple of rivers are open for **salmon** fishing, including the Quillayute and a portion of the Sol Duc. The Hoh River also opens for salmon May 14. For details on those and other fishing opportunities, check the [Fishing in Washington pamphlet](#).

Southwest Washington

Spring chinook and summer steelhead are moving into area rivers in increasing numbers, sturgeon retention is allowed on portions of the Columbia River and several popular trout lakes will open for fishing April 30.

As part of that lineup, anglers can catch and keep hatchery-reared **spring chinook** from May 7 through May 10 on a section of the Columbia River stretching 163.5 miles above Bonneville Dam. But it remains to be seen whether that fishery – or the one that closed April 19 below the dam – will reopen later in the season.

That depends on the in-season update to the run forecast in early to mid-May, said Guy Norman, southwest regional director for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "We're hopeful that the updated forecast will come in at least as strong as the pre-season forecast," Norman said. "That would allow for additional fishing days both above and below Bonneville Dam."

That's because state harvest guidelines below McNary Dam include a 30 percent "buffer" in case returns of upriver spring chinook fall short of the pre-season forecast. If the in-season update equals or exceeds that number, the buffer will be converted into fishing time above and below the dam, Norman said.

"But nothing is certain at this point," he said. "We really won't know where we stand until more fish cross Bonneville Dam and we can get a clear idea of the run-size."

Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist, said poor fishing conditions – specifically high, cold, turbid water – held catch levels below expectations, and also appear to have delayed the movement of spring chinook over Bonneville Dam. Yet, test fisheries using tangle nets found relatively high concentrations of spring chinook in the lower river.

In response, fishery managers from Washington and Oregon extended the season in the lower river by 12 days. By the time fishing closed April 19, anglers had kept or released an estimated 9,379 spring chinook, including 5,669 upriver fish that count toward the 7,700-fish pre-season harvest guideline for upriver fish.

Above Bonneville Dam, the season was extended six days though May 1 between the Tower Island powerlines below The Dalles Dam and the Washington/Oregon state line, 17 miles upriver from McNary Dam. Bank fishing is also allowed through May 1 from Bonneville Dam upriver to the powerlines located about 6 miles below The Dalles Dam.

Anglers fishing above Bonneville Dam can retain up to two marked, hatchery-reared adult chinook salmon or **hatchery steelhead** as part of their daily limit. All wild chinook and wild steelhead must be released unharmed.

That is also true of **area tributaries**, where the daily limit is two spring chinook, two steelhead, or one of each. The Wind River and Drano Lake are traditional hotspots for spring chinook in May, although anglers should be aware that all sport fishing will be closed at Drano Lake on Wednesdays through June. Other prospects include the White Salmon River as well as the lower Klickitat River, the latter which is open for fishing Mondays, Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Below Bonneville, anglers can find hatchery spring chinook and steelhead in several rivers, including the Cowlitz, Lewis, and Kalama. The Cowlitz River is usually the best bet for spring chinook, and also offers good fishing for winter and summer run steelhead.

Starting May 16, fishing is also scheduled to open for hatchery steelhead – as well as **sockeye** and hatchery chinook jacks – from the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line to the Interstate 5 Bridge. Fishing for **shad** from Bonneville Dam downstream also opens the same day.

Other fishing opportunities in May include:

- **Trout:** Several popular trout-fishing lakes are scheduled to open April 30, including Mineral Lake in Lewis County, Rowland Lake in Klickitat County and Swift Reservoir in Skamania County. All were freshly planted for opening day, and will likely draw a big crowd. Plenty of year-round lakes will also be open for trout, and many are scheduled to be planted with catchable-size fish in May. (See the southwest Washington [Trout Stocking Schedule](#) for details.) Starting May 1, anglers may use two poles on Swift Reservoir from the dam to markers below the Eagle Cliff Bridge. Those looking to catch **kokanee** are advised to try Merwin Reservoir, which has been hot for the landlocked salmon in recent weeks.
- **Warmwater fish:** Fishing for **walleye** tapers off in May when the fish turn their attention to spawn, but **bass** fishing should pick up as water temperatures rise. Bonneville, The Dalles, and John Day pools should be good bets for both species.
- **Sturgeon:** The retention fishery below the Wauna powerlines on the Columbia River closes May 1, but reopens May 14 seven days a week with a one-fish daily limit, fork-length requirement of 41 to 54 inches. The retention fishery above the powerlines is open Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays with a fork-length requirement of 38 to 54 inches. Starting May 1, fishing is prohibited in spawning sanctuaries below Bonneville, John Day, McNary and Priest Rapids dams. See the [Fishing in Washington](#) rules pamphlet for details.

Eastern Washington

The month of May is full of fishing promise throughout the region, with the lowland lakes trout season getting under way April 30 and spring chinook salmon coming into the Snake River.

"Fishing is great all month in all of our open waters," said Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Central District Fish Biologist Chris Donley. "If you can't catch a fish anywhere that is open in the month of May you should take up needlepoint."

Among the region's many lakes that open April 30, Donley says the traditional best bets include Badger, Williams, West Medical, Fish, and Clear lakes in southwest Spokane County and Fishtrap Lake in Lincoln County. Anglers usually average about two trout each at all of these waters. Most have **rainbow trout**, but some also have **cutthroat** and **tiger trout**.

Bill Baker, WDFW northeast district fish biologist, said a couple of Stevens County lakes that open in late April are often among the state's top 10 in catch rates. Cedar Lake, near the Canada border, and Rocky Lake, just south of Colville, last year provided limits of five rainbow trout for every angler out on the opener. "The month of May this year could be colder, maybe even snowier, than usual," Baker said. "But the fish are here for anglers willing to brave the weather."

Other good trout fishing in Stevens County can be found at Waitts, Loon, Deep, the Little Pend Oreille chain of lakes, and Potter's Pond. Selective gear fisheries like Bayley, Rocky and Starvation lakes are also good through May.

Pend Oreille County's Big Meadow and Yocum lakes usually provide anglers an average of two to three trout each. Other good producers include Diamond, Frater, North and South Skookum, Marshall and Sacheen lakes.

New this fishing season, and effective May 1, is a ban on the use of lead weights or lead jigs measuring 1 1/2 inches or less along the longest axis at Big Meadow, Yocum and South Skookum lakes where loons are known to breed and rear young. The ban is intended to improve loon survival by keeping the birds from being poisoned by ingesting small lead fishing gear lost by anglers. For more information on this new rule, check [WDFW's website](#).

The lead restriction is also in effect at three other northeast lakes that host nesting loons: Ferry County's Swan and Ferry lakes, and Stevens County's year-round-open Pierre Lake. No fishing flies containing lead are allowed at fly-fishing-only Long Lake, another loon-nesting water in Ferry County.

In the south end of the region, where many lakes and ponds are either open year-round or have been open since the first of March, WDFW hatchery trout stocking continues to keep fishing productive through May. Excessive rain and snow this spring has delayed some fish stocking in some of the Tucannon River impoundments, said WDFW Wooten Wildlife Area Manager Kari Dingman.

"But now all of the lakes have been stocked again and Big Four Lake, our fly-fishing only lake, was finally stocked for the first time this season, now that the river level is back down," Dingman said.

Check the complete [trout stocking plan](#) for details. The latest weekly stocking reports are available [here](#).

The Snake River **spring chinook salmon** fisheries that recently opened in three sections have been slow but should be picking up this month. "I expect that with the late run and fewer fish than last year over McNary Dam by late April, the catch won't pick up until early May," said Glen Mendel, WDFW southeast district fish biologist. "These chinook should be very good quality and there is expected to be a higher proportion of the larger five-year-old fish this year."

WDFW Regional Fish Program Manager John Whalen noted that an update on the run in the first week of May will likely give a better picture of how long the fisheries can continue. "The Snake River chinook fishery is scheduled to go through May 31," Whalen said. "But I suspect we will see a run size downgrade in early May, which could force us to close earlier."

Emergency fishing rule changes are distributed through [self-subscribing e-mail services](#) and posted on [WDFW's website](#).

All salmon and steelhead anglers are reminded to turn in 2010-11 catch record cards as soon as possible, whether or not you harvested anything or even fished at all. The cards help contribute to a data base that supports season setting.

WDFW officials also remind anglers to clean boats thoroughly before transporting them between fishing waters this season. WDFW's eastside Aquatic Invasive Species biologist Mike Wilkinson said that mandatory boat inspections at various water access sites throughout the state begin this month to try to prevent the illegal transport or spread of everything from milfoil to zebra mussels. For more information, see WDFW's [Aquatic Invasive Species website](#).

Northcentral Washington

Although many regional lakes have been open for trout fishing since early March or April, anglers can look forward to more options – and rising catch rates – during the month of May.

In Okanogan County, the traditional king of catch rates at this time is Pearrygin Lake, near Winthrop. Pearrygin usually produces a daily limit of five **rainbow trout** – most 10 to 12 inches, some up to 15 inches, with a few one to pound triploids -- for most anglers early in the season, said Bob Jateff, a district fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Fish Lake, northeast of Conconully, and Alta Lake, southwest of Pateros, are also good producers of rainbow catches through May. Last year, both averaged three trout per angler on the opener. Conconully Reservoir, south of Conconully, and Conconully Lake, east of town, are also good bets, giving up an average of two trout per angler per day.

Other newly opened lakes in Okanogan County that fish well include some with special rules: Big Twin Lake, near Winthrop, is under selective gear rules and a one-fish daily catch limit; Chopaka Lake, near Loomis, is fly-fishing only with no boat motors allowed. Aeneas Lake, near Tonasket, is also fly-fishing only with no boat motors allowed, but has some **brown trout** up to 18 inches.

Blue Lake, located within WDFW's Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, also has some brown trout as well as rainbows, and is under selective gear and electric motors only rules. Blue is also one of three Okanogan County lakes with a new restriction this season to protect loons that breed and rear young there.

Effective May 1, there is a ban on the use of lead weights or lead jigs measuring 1 ½ inches or less along the longest axis at Blue Lake, and on Bonaparte and Lost lakes, northeast of Tonasket, where loons also occur. The restriction is intended to improve loon survival by keeping the birds from being poisoned by ingesting small lead fishing gear lost by anglers. (For more information on this new rule, see [/conservation/loons/](#).)

In Chelan County, top trout producing lakes include Clear Lake, south of Wenatchee, and Wapato Lake, north of Manson. In Douglas County, Jameson Lake, south of Mansfield, usually provides good fishing and is well-stocked. In Grant County, Blue and Park lakes near the town of Soap Lake, and Warden Lake east of O'Sullivan Dam on Potholes Reservoir are also well-stocked and traditionally fish well through May and beyond.

For the complete trout stocking plan for fishing waters throughout the region, see [/fishing/plants/statewide/](#) . For the latest weekly stocking reports, see [/fishing/plants/weekly/](#).

All salmon and steelhead anglers are reminded to turn in 2010-11 catch record cards as soon as possible, whether or not you harvested anything or even fished at all. The cards help contribute to a data base that supports season setting.

No matter where in the region or what kind of fishing you pursue, WDFW officials are reminding anglers to clean their boats thoroughly before transporting them between fishing waters. WDFW's eastside Aquatic Invasive Species biologist Mike Wilkinson notes that mandatory boat inspections at various water access sites throughout the state begin this month to try to prevent the illegal transport or spread of everything from milfoil to zebra mussels. For more information, see [/ais/](#).

Southcentral Washington

Anglers have from May 7 through May 10 to fish for **spring chinook salmon** in the Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Washington-Oregon border, 17 miles upstream of McNary Dam. Whether that fishery will be extended will largely depend on an in-season run update in early to mid-May, said Paul Hoffarth, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) based in Pasco.

"The run has been slow to move upriver, making fishing tough in this area," Hoffarth said. "But we're still hopeful the pace will pick up in the weeks ahead."

Starting May 1, the Ringold Area bank fishery will open for spring chinook from the markers one-quarter mile downstream from the Ringold wasteway outlet to markers a half-mile upstream from Spring Creek. Only the hatchery side of the river is open to fishing. The daily limit is two hatchery Chinook, measuring at least 12 inches and a night closure is in effect.

Anglers should be aware that two sections of the Yakima River open to fishing for hatchery spring chinook salmon in May.

The Yakima River from the Interstate 182 bridge in Richland (river mile 4.5) to 400 feet downstream of Horn Rapids (Wanawish) Dam (river mile 18.0) will be open from May 7 through June 15. The section of the Yakima from the Interstate 82 bridge at Union Gap (river mile 107.1) to the BNRR bridge approximately 500 feet downstream of Roza Dam (river mile 127.8) will be open from May 14 through June 30.

For details, check the [emergency rule change notice](#).

Meanwhile, crews from WDFW continue to stock lakes with catchable-size and jumbo **trout** throughout the region. In Yakima County, Clear Lake is in line to receive 10,800 catchables in May, Dog Lake 3,500 and Lost Lake 2,000. Dog Lake will also get more than 400 jumbo trout weighing up to 1½ pounds apiece, with another 1,000 jumbos going to Lost Lake in Kittitas County and 500 to Columbia Park Pond, a popular fishing hole in Kennewick reserved for anglers under age 15 and people with disabilities. A complete trout-planting schedule for southcentral lakes and ponds is available on the [WDFW website](#).

On May 7, Columbia Park Pond will host a Kids Fishing Day, limited to 1,200 youths between the ages of 5 and 14. All anglers must register with Kennewick Parks and Recreation before May 5. Anglers can register online at <http://go2kennewick.com>. Registration is \$10 and includes a rod and reel and everything you need to fish. Lots of volunteers will be on hand to help.

Hoping to catch a legal-size **sturgeon**? John Day Pool (Lake Umatilla) is now catch-and-release only, but Lake Wallula remains open through July for retention of sturgeon measuring 43 inches to 54 inches from snout to fork. Anglers should be aware that sanctuary areas described in the Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet are closed to fishing – including catch-and-release – from May 1 through July 31.

For a different experience, try hooking one of the large **catfish** now showing up at the mouths of rivers including the Yakima, Walla Walla, and Palouse. "Bring a good rod and strong line and expect a fight if you hook into one of these monsters," Hoffarth said.

Walleye fishing is also picking up at Scootenev Reservoir, with fair catches reported. **Bass** fishing should also improve as soon as the water warms a bit.

TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

Write to the TGF staff:

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Random Links

Time for action? Sea lion yanks a Willamette River fisherman overboard:

http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2011/05/sea_lion_yanks_a_willamette_ri.html

Sandy Spey Clave May 13, 14, 15:

<http://www.flyfishusa.com/spey-clave.htm>

Family Fishing Events:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/outdoor_skills/yaep.asp

GOOD LUCK!