

The Guide's Forecast - volume 14 issue number 23

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **June 1st – June 7th, 2012**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- The bonus 2-day mainstem Columbia River opener produced poorly for most anglers over the weekend. Bonneville Dam counts indicate the bulk of the spring chinook run has passed the area. Steelhead will remain the main focus for bank anglers but catches not likely to ramp up until late June.

The Willamette River remains challenging to spring chinook anglers. Salmon numbers over the falls indicate a steady flow of fish but results downriver continue to disappoint, except for the occasional flurry at Oregon City. Some fish are being caught from St. Helens and Kelly Point, all the way up to Willamette Falls but steady to good fishing has yet to be seen. As many fishermen contemplate the peak of the run, others are turning to other fisheries such as shad and catch and release sturgeon fishing, which continue to bend rods from the lower Multnomah channel to Oregon City. It's as if the sturgeon anticipated the arrival of the shad and started staging in the feeding lanes two weeks before the first shad made an appearance. The dedicated salmon anglers who continue to work the lake line, sand bar, garbage hole and Meldrum have been having consistent run-ins with sturgeon. Right now, fishermen could hook a chinook, a steelhead, a sturgeon, a shad or even a sea lion, on the lower river. The shad are in their peak now, with hog lines and randomly anchored boats dotting the rivers length.

With the water level dropping over the past week, prospects for rainbows, cutthroat and summer steelhead are good on the McKenzie.

Fish the south Santiam for summer steelhead and the possibility of a spring Chinook hookup as numbers are increasing.

Historically, this is an excellent week for anglers on the Clackamas River. Although steelhead fishing has been steady, the springer fishing has been inconsistent. With near optimum water conditions, anglers would be hard pressed to find a better alternative in the Willamette Valley. Summers are here in good numbers from the mouth to Rivermill and a few springers are being caught daily. Angling pressure has increased with the anticipation of the first red hot day and guides and anglers in the know will start stacking numbers as we approach peak time. Traditional springer haunts like Henry's, Bud Stones, Riverside Park and Carver will kick out springers from now through the end of June if the water stays up. Summers will be spread further up river with the best holding water ranging from Carver up to McIver Park.

The Sandy River appears to be having a better year all around than the previous two, with both springers and good numbers of summer steelhead available for bank anglers and boaters alike. Good catches of summer steelhead are coming from Cedar creek and Revenue Bridge, but fish should be well distributed throughout the system. With very little "salmon" holding water below Dabney Park, anglers might better focus their efforts from Oxbow Park down to Dabney for salmon. The deeper holes with depths of eight feet or more will dole out the springers on a more consistent basis, while steelhead will be found in the quicker moving water of 3 to 8 ft.

Northwest – After a less-than-impressive week of salmon fishing despite a good tide series, salmon fishing on Tillamook Bay remains fair at best. Fishing is due to pick up for Tillamook Bay anglers however with early June often supporting some of the best catches of the season. Anglers will have the choice to work the upper bay on the extreme minus tides in the morning or the troll herring on the soft afternoon tides along the jetty. Both should produce good catches

this week. There are still a few days left to register for the Tillamook Estuary Project's Bounty on the Bay fishing tournament at www.tbnep.org.

No measureable precipitation is in the forecast, keeping driftboaters from becoming inspired for a float in pursuit of salmon or a rare summer steelhead on the north coast. The Trask will remain a top prospect however with the tidewater stretches likely to produce the best results under these conditions.

Bottomfishing out of Garibaldi remains excellent with good ling-cod catches still coming from Three-Arch Rocks off of Oceanside. Nearshore halibut remain scarce however but the offshore forecast for this last 3-day spring all-depth opener (Thursday – Saturday) should produce easy limits for smaller sized flatfish.

Southwest – Over the past weekend, charters out of central Oregon ports provided mostly limits of rockfish and ling cod with about half the anglers taking nearshore halibut on Sunday, May 27th.

Ocean chinook fishing was not productive over the past weekend with most boats failing to connect.

Beaches on the south coast are producing good catches of pinkfin surf perch, some limits and often in just a couple of hours.

Trout season is open in the southwest with most ocean tributaries producing sea-run cutthroat trout. Bait is allowed in tidewater with lures and flies effective above.

Winchester Bay is producing limits of pinkfin surf perch which are entering on their spawning run. With the water level of the mainstem Umpqua dropping, spring Chinook fishing is good will improve around Elkton. Springers are also being taken in the lower North Umpqua.

Charters out of Gold Beach took limits of halibut on two of three days during the all-depth opener last week. Rockfish and ling cod results have been excellent with a 70-pound nearshore halibut bonus taken on Memorial Day. Spring Chinook catches have been spotty on the lower and middle Rogue but have been improving over the past week on the upper river as flows have moderated.

Fishing for sea-run cutthroat trout has been good in tidewater on the Chetco River.

The Pacific halibut fishery south of Port Orford has been producing fish.

Fishing was great last week for large Diamond Lake trout but midges are starting to hatch which can be problematic for unprepared anglers. The bite has waned as trout gorge on these bothersome bugs.

Eastern – Salmonflies and Golden Stones are thick on the Deschutes from Warm Springs down. The fishing is reported as excellent but usually tapers off as reddsides become stuffed with insects.

Crooked River is in excellent shape and is fishing well with multiple hatches taking place every day.

The Wallowa River fished well at the opener and is in good shape. Warm weather will raise levels, however. Wallowa Lake is fishing well for fly anglers using nymphs or streamers.

SW Washington – The Cowlitz remains the best option for spring chinook anglers and catches of summer steelhead are starting to improve. Salmon are starting to concentrate in greater numbers between the hatcheries.

On Tuesday, fishery managers closed the Lewis River to the retention of all spring chinook (hatchery and wild) due to low returns back to the hatchery. The river remains open to summer steelhead.

Wind River and Drano Lake anglers are seeing a slowing of action as dam counts slow. Effort will re-focus in the upper reaches of these drainages where managers have increased the daily bag limit because the respective hatcheries have exceeded their egg take needs.

Columbia River Fishing Report – Despite the best laid plans, spring chinook anglers didn't load up on salmon or steelhead for that matter on the mainstem Columbia on the special 2-day opener over the holiday weekend. Although no one really expected the fishing to break wide open, based on the Bonneville Dam counts, anticipation was running high with an unprecedented June opener. What no one anticipated, especially this writer, was a mis-prediction of a run that looks to be coming in at about 1/3 less than the predicted return. There was some dangerously low counts last week, especially after they had just reopened the fishery for the 2-day season. We likely won't have that opportunity again anytime soon. Fishery managers have once again downgraded the run to just over 209,000 fish. The steelhead fishery will continue with few mortalities expected to sensitive chinook stocks (Snake River).

Here is the run-down by section for the weekend angler effort:

Gorge Bank:

Weekend checking showed nine adipose fin-clipped spring chinook adults kept, plus two unclipped spring chinook adults released for 101 salmon anglers; and 893 shad kept for 172 shad anglers.

Gorge Boats:

Weekend checking showed one adipose fin-clipped spring chinook adult, plus four unclipped spring chinook released for four salmon boats (18 anglers); and 120 shad kept for three shad boats (six anglers).

Troutdale Boats:

Weekend checking showed 13 adipose fin-clipped spring chinook adults, and one adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus nine unclipped spring chinook released for 117 salmon boats (262 anglers); and seven shad kept for two shad boats (four anglers).

Portland to Longview Bank:

Weekend checking showed 17 adipose fin-clipped spring chinook adults, two adipose fin-clipped spring chinook jacks, and 25 adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus eight unclipped spring chinook adults and five unclipped steelhead released for 666 salmon anglers; and 24 shad kept, plus two shad released for nine shad anglers.

Portland to Longview Boats:

Weekend checking showed 11 adipose fin-clipped spring chinook adults, three adipose fin-clipped spring chinook jacks and two adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus four unclipped spring chinook adults and one unclipped spring chinook jack released for 114 salmon boats (264 anglers); and 245 shad kept for nine shad boats (23 anglers).

Estuary Bank (Wauna Power lines to Clatsop Spit):

Weekend checking showed four adipose fin-clipped spring chinook adults, one adipose fin-clipped spring chinook jack, and 10 adipose fin-clipped steelhead kept, plus three unclipped spring chinook and two unclipped steelhead released for 31 bank anglers.

Estuary Boats (Puget Island to Clatsop Spit):

Weekend checking showed 19 adipose fin-clipped spring chinook adults, two adipose fin-clipped steelhead and one sockeye kept, plus five unclipped spring chinook adults and one unclipped steelhead released for 48 boats (134 anglers).

Bank anglers are clearly dominating the catch for steelhead on the mainstem Columbia. The continued high flows will bode well with a run that looks to be on track with the last several years, maybe even better.

Shad effort and catch is clearly peaking. Counts of 10 shad an angler indicate that it's almost as good as it gets. These fish make excellent crab bait or oversize sturgeon bait. They too look to be coming in on a large scale (no pun intended) return.

In the estuary, action is picking up for keeper sturgeon but the bite is rather localized. Some keepers are coming from the lower river but the best action is clearly well upriver from Tongue Point. Sand shrimp is the best early season bait but anchovies will come on when more show up in the river. It's the shallow water that is producing the best right now and that will likely continue to be the case until flows slow and warm. Peak season fishing is still likely several weeks away. Boaters working the Woody Island stretch seem to be producing the best catches and that will likely be the case for several more weeks.

Anglers may find it hard to secure bait in the estuary but one of the more consistent suppliers is World Class Fishing out on the port docks at the old Red Lion in Astoria. Call Andy at (503) 791-4094 to secure you bait in advance. He'll also fillet your sturgeon when you're lucky enough to catch one!

And speaking of catching one, action for rockfish out of Astoria is too good to be true. We fished out of Hammond on Tuesday, taking a quick 35 fish bottomfish limit and an additional 6 lingcod for 5 anglers along the south jetty. Doubles and triples were common and we weren't even able to get out to the good spot, on the sunken jetty, as the tide was ripping too much. The swell on the bar was a bit impressive too. Once we got out of the outgoing tide inertia, it was a pretty tolerable day however. The sea bass are running a nice grade! We took almost all our fish on Mega-baits; the jigs that look a lot like a Buzz Bomb in anchovy form.

The Guide's Forecast – Still weeks away from peak steelhead season, it does look as if it's off to a good start. A minus tide this week should only improve catch rates, especially for bank anglers, where growing numbers of steelhead and sockeye should hit the river bank in the coming week. Hatchery spring chinook jacks are also allowed. As we always preach, hot colors in red, pink and orange should produce results for plunkers that fish close to shore where these species are most likely to run. Beaches from Westport, Oregon to Sauvies Island should put out some steelhead catches but again, we're several weeks away from peak fishing but Clackamas, Sandy and Willamette Valley tributaries returning adults should be available in fair to good numbers. It will pay dividends to tip your spin-n-glos with coon shrimp. Remember, all adult chinook must be released unharmed. The summer chinook fishery won't open for another few weeks but if numbers all of a sudden start increasing dramatically, an earlier opening is possible. Fishing for steelhead is only open downstream of I-5 so check regulations carefully before venturing out.

Shad fishing should remain excellent well beyond this week but numbers are on the increase although still relatively low for Bonneville, yet action is excellent. Small Dick Nite spoons will work the best, using metallic colors in the sunlight and solid colors in the early morning. Remember, great crab bait, invasive species.

Sturgeon fishing on the upcoming minus tide in the lower Columbia estuary should produce an occasional keeper sturgeon. Flows remain high and currents cold so don't go into it with high expectations but anglers willing to hunt may produce results. Don't overlook the shallow stuff for keepers as they can often be found in water shallower than 3 feet, in pursuit of freshwater clams and shrimp. It will however, be several weeks before they begin congregating in heavier numbers.

Bottomfishers may be out of luck as we enter the extreme tide series. Fish will remain plentiful but don't count on producing good catches off of the most productive grounds, the sunken jetty. You should be able to find willing fish along the south jetty near the smelly sea-lions however.

Crabbing sucks.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – For some, it's an excuse to do something other than fish. For many, an opportunity to share the experience with friends, family and neighbors who have yet to discover the rewards of fishing. Either way, **Free Fishing Weekend** is June 9th & 10th this year, during which time no license or tag is required to chase the fishes. See **Random Links**, below, for a list of associated events and activities.

Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "The Willamette river remains a mystery to spring Chinook anglers. Salmon numbers over the falls indicate a steady flow of fish but results downriver continue to disappoint, except for the occasional spotty flurry at Oregon City. Some fish are being caught from St. Helens and Kelly Point, all the way up to Willamette Falls but steady to good fishing has yet to be seen. As many fishermen contemplate the peak of the run, others are turning to other fisheries such as shad and catch and release sturgeon which continue to bend rods from the lower Multnomah channel to Oregon City. Its as if the sturgeon anticipated the arrival of the shad and started staging in the feeding lanes two weeks before the first shad made an appearance. The die hard salmon anglers who continue to work the lake line, sand bar, garbage hole and Meldrum have been having consistent run-in's with sturgeon. Right now, fishermen could hook a Chinook, a steelhead, a sturgeon, a shad or even a sea lion, get them all in a day and we'll call it a Willamette Grand Slam. The shad are here in their peak now, with hog lines and randomly anchored boats dotting the rivers length."

Water temperature at Willamette Falls mid-day on Thursday, May 31st, was 57.2 degrees. The water level has been dropping slightly over the past few days. Spring Chinook counts are approaching the 20,000 mark while nearly 11,000 summer steelhead have been counted at Willamette Falls. It's worth remembering that while all winter steelhead above the Falls are wild, all summer steelhead are hatchery fish. Shad catches are good and improving on the lower Willamette and should stay productive through June. While Coon Island on Multnomah Channel has been slow recently, look for catches to pick up soon. Since the question always comes up, no, there are no shad above Willamette Falls. The ladder at this location is enclosed and shad won't swim through a 'pipe.'

McKenzie water levels have been gradually dropping for the most part over the past week. The river will be in excellent condition for fishing in the coming weekend.

North and South Santiam levels have dropped dramatically this week with the water clear. Conditions should be fishable for the coming weekend.

The ODFW decided years ago that lakes and ponds were better suited for hatchery stocking efforts while protecting migrating salmon and steelhead smolts in rivers and streams. Few rivers in Oregon are planted with hatchery trout, yet alone open for retention outside of coastal sea-run cutthroat. One exception is the South Yamhill which opened with the trout season on Saturday, May 26th from its confluence with the North Yamhill up to Rock Creek, about a three-mile stretch near Grand Ronde. It was stocked last week with 1,900 rainbows ranging from eight to 14 inches. The limit is five trout per day, two of which may be unclipped, wild fish.

Other trout planting this week includes Estacada Lake, Harriet Lake, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, Breitenbush River, Detroit Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River below Leaburg Lake, Quartzville Creek, Salt Creek and the North Fork Santiam River above Detroit Lake.

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "Waning effort for Spring Chinook on the Willamette brings shad fishing into the spotlight. However more springers are definitely on their way and some of the seasons best action might still be in front of us. Now is the time for rainbow spinners in the harbor, head of the channel and down in Multnomah channel. Seasoned Willamette salmon anglers prefer double rigs, fishing a smaller spinner on top off a short leader and a larger blade on the bottom with a slightly longer leader. This type of rig covers more water and in turn captures the attention of more willing biters. Green tip, blue tip and purple tip rainbow patterns have been the standard for years, but the chartreuse/green dot is also a favorite color. Shad fishing is well underway and anglers looking for bait are filling their freezers with this cousin of the herring. The numerous shad also offer steady action for kids who might otherwise quickly lose interest while waiting hours for a salmon to bite. Small bright lures like the Dick Nite, Shad King and tiny chartreuse grubs are the standard shad terminal tackle."

Summer steelhead hookups have been occurring frequently on the lower Willamette. Those targeting them with a Spin 'n' Glow and prawn combo have been doing pretty well. Catch-and-release sturgeon fishing is producing steady action for everyone including a few adventurous kayak anglers. Fish are ranging upwards to seven feet, the latter particularly for those who opt for shad as bait as that's almost certain to attract oversized sturgeon. The river level is forecast to remain steady for the week to come. It's worth mentioning (as we do every year at this time, that shad move upstream nose-to-tail in an undulating line. Anchoring in the path of the fish results in frequent hookups so if you see others getting more action than you, try moving toward one bank or the other. Once they're intercepted, you should catch all you need or want. Even if it's not fast and furious, it's only a matter of putting in the time. They're in there. When they're hitting well, a shiny, nickel Siwash hook will get 'em.

With over 1,100 summer steelhead and 300 spring Chinook having been counted at Foster Dam, prospects are improving on the South Santiam. Most of the summers are re-marked and recycled back downstream to make the run again, increasing numbers and probabilities for steelheaders here. Most are taken on jig and bobber here. Springers and summers have entered the North Santiam as well. Steelheader anglers are taking fish river-wide with best results coming from in the lower and middle runs. Look for springers holed up around Stayton Island and other deeper areas or where currents converge.

Fish the McKenzie for reddsides and native cuts or try for summer steelhead as there are plenty on the system to target them now.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "If there was a NW fisherman's almanac, it would tell anglers to get to the Clackamas "this week". Although steelhead fishing has been steady, the springer fishing has been inconsistent as of yet. With near optimum water conditions, anglers would be hard pressed to find a better alternative in the valley. Summers are here in good numbers from the mouth to Rivermill and a few springers are being caught daily. Angling pressure has increased with the anticipation of the first red hot day and guides and "dialed" fishermen will start stacking numbers as we approach peak time. Traditional springer haunts like Henry's, Bud Stones(aka Betz), Riverside park and Carver will kick out springers from now till the end of June if the water stays up. Summers will be spread further up river with the best holding water ranging from Carver up to McIver park.

"The Sandy river appears to be having a better year all around than the previous two, with both springers and good numbers of summer steelhead available for bank anglers and boaters alike. Good catches of acrobatic summer steelhead are coming from Cedar creek and Revenue bridge, but fish should be well distributed throughout the system. With very little "salmon" holding water below Dabney park, anglers might better focus their efforts from Oxbow park down to Dabney if fresh springer is needed for the BBQ. The deeper holes with depths of eight feet or more will dole out the springers on a more consistent basis, while steelhead will be found in the quicker moving water of 3 to 8 ft."

Clackamas water levels have been on a steady drop over the past week but are expected to fluctuate starting Saturday, June 2nd. This is not generally considered optimum fishing conditions although steelheading and spring Chinook results have been fair to good between McIver and Riverside. As the water level has dropped, many boaters have moved out of the Clackamas to concentrate efforts on the lower Willamette.

Sandy water levels have been dropping steadily over the past week.

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "Excellent water conditions are in store for this week and the spring chinook fishing should show signs of improvement. Local guides will be working the river in force and they will get their clients their share of the Northwest's most sought after fish. Summer steelhead will continue to be a part of the catch as these willing bait biters prefer the same fodder as the salmon. Sand shrimp and shrimp and egg combo's are the favorite baits of the best guides. Expect good fishing to continue through July 4th.

"The Sandy also should continue to offer favorable water conditions and steady fishing for both spring Chinook and summer steelhead will follow suit. For springers, troll spinners and herring at the mouth and run diver and bait set-ups in the deep holes below Oxbow park. Sand shrimp, prawns and eggs or combos of these baits will entice sandy river springers. Keep baits relatively small, with gobs of roe no bigger than a quarter and medium sized shrimp being the preference. Springers also like a little bit of "bling" , so a size 10 or 12 spin n glow will sweeten the offering. Here the summers are partial to bait here as well, but are often willing to take a spinner, plug or jig."

Spring Chinook are moving upriver on the Sandy River, providing additional opportunity for anglers. Try drifting from Oxbow to Lewis and Clark to intercept them. In addition, summer steelhead are hitting spinners on the Sandy upriver from Dodge Park. Cedar Creek has been producing decent summer steelhead catches recently. Try drifting bait here to hook up.

North Coast Fishing Report – Fishing for the most part remains challenging. We are starting to see signs of an improving trend however. Effort remains highest along the jetties on the slow, outgoing tide in the afternoon with the second half of outgoing producing the best results. Trolled herring, right on the bottom is producing the best results. Many guides have turned to using flashers in this fishery and they do seem to be paying dividends. Although we're finding most of the biters near the bottom of the bay, if you have the rods to play around with, do stratify one or two of them as there are clearly some suspended fish in the deep water. Until we get the bigger tides coming on over the weekend, the lower bay will be the best bet.

Although we've seen some spurts of brilliance at mid-month, Tillamook Bay returns often mimic Willamette returns. Of course it's too early to tell but we may not get the big push we've seen in years past. This will be a telling week however.

River fishers continue to struggle but those bank anglers fishing at the hatchery hole are still producing some fair catches, especially at first light. Anglers that utilize this spot are in for some good news. ODF&W is extending the season up there and even better news, they're extending it with some new gear restrictions that should keep the trash anglers out of there because they won't be able to snag as effectively. Here is the official press release:

NEWS RELEASE

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 31, 2012

ODFW extends Trask chinook season, adds anti-snagging rules

TILLAMOOK, Ore. – With a strong early showing of hatchery spring chinook, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has decided to extend the fishing season at the "hatchery hole" on the Trask River through June 30.

In addition to the season extension, ODFW is implementing new gear restrictions on a section of the Trask River and Three Rivers (which is a tributary of the Nestucca River) designed to reduce snagging.

The hatchery hole is a popular section of the Trask River located 200 feet above and 900 feet below its confluence with Gold Creek. This area was originally scheduled to close to fishing on May 31. However, ODFW recommended extending the season by 30 days because biologists are now confident that sufficient hatchery spring chinook will be available to meet the Trask Hatchery's brood stock needs for the year.

"Angling for spring chinook in the Tillamook Bay system has been good during the early part of the run this year," said Chris Knutsen, district fish biologist for ODFW's North Coast Watershed. "The Trask has been especially productive considering that the run is still in the early stages. All

indications are that the hatchery spring chinook return is large enough to support this additional harvest opportunity.”

Under new anti-snagging rules adopted for the Trask River from the Cedar Creek wooden boat slide to the Lorens Drift wooden boat slide, gear is restricted to fly and bobber angling only. Bobber fishing is restricted to rigs with a bobber, single point hook, and leader no more than 36 inches in length. Fly angling is as defined in the 2012 angling regulation booklet. On Three Rivers, gear is restricted to single point hooks with a gap no greater than 3/8ths inch (approximately size 2) and leaders no longer than 36-inches. The gear restrictions on the Trask and Three Rivers are effective beginning June 1 and last until spring salmon angling closes in each area.

These gear restrictions are necessary, according to Knutsen, to discourage the illegal practice of “snagging” or “flossing” fish that concentrate in these areas. Flossing is the practice of drifting line into the gaping mouth of a fish holding in the river current. Large hooks attached to the leader easily hook the fish on the outside of the jaw. ODFW biologists and Oregon State Police have noticed an increase in these illegal fishing practices, which reduces the number of fish available to anglers who are following the rules.

“These snaggers have been aggressive and have displaced legitimate anglers,” said Knutsen. “It is important that we maximize opportunities for law-abiding anglers, and that’s what these gear restrictions are designed to do.”

Offshore, there has been some sport effort for the California chinook stocks but it’s the commercial fleet that goes further offshore that is scoring better results. Although it would take a calm ocean to justify the trip out there, it can be good fishing. These fish however are just feeders, averaging 12 to 15 pounds each in most cases. They are not the quality fish that you can expect from a spring chinook, they’re from California after all....

Other opportunities exist however. Bottomfishing remains good at Three Arch Rocks off of Oceanside however rockfish seem harder to come by. Lingcod are present in good numbers and can be obtained if you keep your gear near the bottom.

Nearshore halibut remain hard to come by but the third and final spring halibut opener should produce good catches if the weather cooperates. These fish have been running small however.

Although I haven’t been doing all that well for offshore Dungeness crab, one guide landed 22 quality keepers to the north of the Tillamook Bay entrance on Wednesday using just 3 pots to lure them in. They were nice quality crab too. Tillamook Bay crabbing itself isn’t very productive.

Although trout anglers are much more scarce than they used to be, it remains a great option for families wanting some good action in the lower reaches of many north coast streams. Many quality cutthroat are likely in the estuary itself, taking advantage of a large crop of salmon fry that were spawned in last year’s brood. There were exceptional runs of adult chum salmon coming back to the Kilchis and Miami Rivers which should provide an ample food base for these quality fish.

The Guide’s Forecast – Salmon anglers should get a real taste of how this Tillamook Bay spring chinook season is going to end. Still in the peak weeks of this great fishery, anglers will have some choices to make when it comes to this week’s options.

A strong early morning minus tide will grace upper bay anglers with options for backtrolling plugs or trolling spinners and bait for motivated salmon about to enter their natal river systems. The

reason the upper bay is so popular this time of year is because most of these fish are destined for the Trask or Wilson Rivers which enter Tillamook Bay in the upper reach. There are several good areas to intercept these fish, especially in the low water that these upper bay anglers will see this weekend. Although we'll only catch a few hours of the best tide prior to the weekend, by early next week, there should be some quality time for salmon fishing in this reach. The bite has started at first light in the Oyster House Hole and progressed downriver, or should I say down bay as the tide goes out. The lowest most anglers are fishing is at the Ray's Place Piling, also known as The Corral.

Anglers can catch the high tide in the upper bay, using herring for bait, where we have some good history catching fish near the grassy knoll or where the old tug boat used to be. It has been a consistent spot in recent years.

The lower tidewaters of the Trask and maybe even the Tillamook Rivers may become viable options this week too. If rivers remain low, and they are forecasted to remain low, the fish can really stack up in the tidewater stretches of these systems in the deepest holes. Trolled spinners or herring have produced nicely under these conditions. Driftboaters may find some fish present in these lower flows with plugs and small baits taking a few fish for persistent anglers. Early mornings will produce the best results however.

Offshore anglers have this forecast to look forward to:

FRI

SW WIND 5 TO 10 KT...RISING TO 10 TO 15 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 7 FT. SHOWERS LIKELY.

FRI NIGHT

W WIND 10 TO 15 KT...VEERING TO NW AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 8 FT. SHOWERS LIKELY.

SAT

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT...EASING TO 5 TO 10 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 7 FT. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

SAT NIGHT

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 6 FT. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

SUN

N WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

MON

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 7 FT.

It looks like a good weekend to try some offshore fishing for salmon, halibut, bottomfish and/or crab. These conditions are certainly subject to change however, and I mean at a moment's notice. All of these species should be good options if the weather cooperates.

Bay crabbing won't get any better with the extreme tide series we're about to embark on.

Bay clamming as well as razor clam digging should be excellent over the weekend. Razors should be ample in the Seaside to Astoria area through Tuesday of next week. Here's a fun instructional

web site detailing how to dig razor clams:

http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/shellfish/razorclams/howto_dig.html

Central & South Coast Reports – Bottom fishing was hot and cold for rockfish mid-week out of central Oregon coasts. When it was 'on', it was great but would suddenly switch to the 'off' position. Still, most anglers took limits or near-limits. Ling cod results were a little more challenging but yielded limits of fish over 36 inches for the majority of those trying.

The nearshore halibut fishery, open seven days a week, has been worthwhile with best results out of the port of Newport where a 65-pounder was taken this week. As of the week ending May 20th, 16,470 pounds remained in the nearshore quota.

May 31st through June 2nd offers another opportunity for All-Depth Halibut with openers scheduled for June 14th-16th and 28th through 30th. Well over half the 120,821-pound quota remained following the mid-may opener.

The ODFW claims few boats are trying for ocean Chinook so catches are low but the reality is that fishing is so slow few are bothering to fish them. Actually, Ocean Chinook results improved a little this week although it's better out of port to the north.

Ocean crabbing has picked up recently although there have been no reports of any limits.

Beaches are producing pinkfin surf perch in good number and some anglers are filling 15-fish limits. Productive fishing is reported around Bandon, Coos Bay, around Gold Beach and at Port Orford.

At this time of year, pinkfin perch run into Winchester Bay on their annual spawning run. The pressure for them varies but a fishery this productive is certain to attract a number of fishers periodically. Catches have been very good recently but as these fish are live bearers, release the little ones if the opportunity presents itself.

Springer fishing has been fair to good on the Umpqua mainstem with best results coming from the confluence of the North and South Umpqua river down to Elkton. Steelhead catches have been steady for boaters pulling plugs or side-drifting. As the water level drops, expect to see springer moving upstream at an increased pace. A few shad have started to show but catches will improve as the weather warms with best results for these fish occurring on bright, sunny days. Counts at Winchester Dam are available only through May 15th but as of that date, about 1,900 springers had crossed and over 2,000 summer steelhead. Springer catches have been fair to good on the North Umpqua and will improve as fish move upstream. The South Umpqua opened with the trout season on May 26th. While no reports have been forthcoming, this river is a smallmouth bass hotspot with this fishery improving as the water temperature increases. Start fishing with soft plastics here, moving to crankbaits and spinnerbaits as the water warms.

Coos Bay crabbing has been good for boaters, fair for those dropping nets and traps from docks and is expected to further improve in June. Rockfish and greenling are being taken in fair to good number from the jetties. Fishing for sea-run cuts has been fair in the low, clear water of the Coos River and while only artificials are allowed above tidewater, spinners and bright-colored flies have been effective.

Spring Chinook results on the lower Rogue have been fair but steady as water temperatures moderated with cooler weather. Boat fishers are fairing better than those casting from the bank. Back-bouncers and plug pullers are catching Chinook on the middle Rogue but fishing has been

only fair. Anglers should expect to see a slight increase in the water level over the coming weekend. As flows on the upper river moderated, spring Chinook catches improved and have been steady this week. The ODFW recently released a forecast for fall Chinook this year to number 91,000. That would indicate a very good season this year.

Sea-run cutthroat trout fishing has been excellent in tidewater on the Chetco. Anglers are reminded that while bait may be used in brackish water, only artificial lures and flies are legal upstream.

With insects hatching at Diamond Lake, trout fishing here slowed. Despite this situation, a 26 1/2-inch rainbow weighing nine pounds, four ounces was taken by an 11-year-old angler over the Memorial Weekend. This is a new Diamond Lake record since the eradication of tui chubs. Vacationers are reminded that while there are 450 Forest Service campsites at Diamond Lake, fewer than 200 are available by reservation with the remainder to those who are first to arrive. Call 877-444-6777 to make a reservation.

The Rogue above Lost Creek is scheduled for trout planting this week.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Hatches are at their peak at Warm Springs but starting to taper off a little around Maupin. Trout seem yet to be gorged and continue to respond to dries although they seem to be a little more selective. If fish are finicky, try longer leaders or a mix of patterns. While it has been crowded for bank fishers on the lower Deschutes during the Salmonfly and Golden Stone hatch, drift boaters have been able to find good water without too much effort. Redsidies are typically near the bank, waiting for big bugs (or your offering) to drop from shoreline brush. Catches at Sherars Falls remain slow to spotty but keep in mind that the ODFW doesn't even bother to count fish here until July. Still ... an early Deschutes springer is darned cool. Brookies, whitefish and rainbows are plentiful and willing if not large on the upper Deschutes where they will respond to caddis dries.

Crooked River was lined with anglers over the Memorial Day weekend but has since quieted down. Conditions remain excellent and fishing is good now that there is once again less pressure.

With water temperature at the John Day into the high 50s now, smallmouth bass fishing has picked up. It's quite possible to enjoy one of those "100 fish days" in these conditions.

Lake Billy Chinook has been producing quick limits of kokanee according to reports this week. Jigs have been getting the job done here.

Paulina has been producing limits of kokanee with good numbers coming to trollers although larger fish are being taken by those using jigs in deeper water.

Kokanee fishing has been slow at Wickiup but the few that boaters are taking daily are large and fat.

Results have been sporadic at Odell although some have taken 25-fish limits of kokanee this week. Both trolling and jigging are effective here at times.

Wallowa and Imnaha rivers, both of which are currently offering fair fishing for large rainbow trout despite slightly high water conditions, will open for spring Chinook fishing on June 9th. Two hatchery adults and five jacks may be kept per day. Water conditions will remain fishable unless

warm weather triggers snowmelt and the consequent blowout.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for June 2012

North Puget Sound

June offers several fishing opportunities, including the opening of river fishing, a chance to fish for free, and special jumbo trout plants in more than a half-dozen regional lakes.

Hatchery chinook salmon fishing runs through the month on a portion of the Skagit River, from the Highway 530 bridge at Rockport to the Marblemount Bridge at Cascade River Road. The hatchery chinook fishery also is open on the Cascade River, from the mouth to the Rockport-Cascade Road Bridge. In both locations, anglers have a daily limit of four fish, including up to two adults.

Sockeye salmon fishing opens June 16 on the Skagit River, from Highway 536 (Memorial Highway Bridge) at Mount Vernon to the mouth of Gilligan Creek. Anglers have a daily limit of three sockeye, with a minimum size of 12 inches.

Most of the region's rivers and streams open for both game fish and trout fishing June 2 (the first Saturday of the month). The action starts a day earlier (June 1) on some waters, including the Skagit River, portions of the Skykomish and Cascade rivers and Fishtrap Creek in Whatcom County. In most rivers and streams there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches under statewide rules. However, some of the region's rivers and streams require that trout be at least 14 inches long to keep. For details on all fishing opportunities, check the Fishing in Washington pamphlet.

The Reiter Ponds area of the Skykomish River opens June 1 for steelhead fishing, earlier than in previous years. Reiter Ponds anglers are reminded that fishing is not allowed from any floating device from 1,000 feet downstream to 1,500 feet upstream of Reiter Ponds outlet from June 1 through July 31. The rule is aimed at avoiding conflicts with bank anglers.

In Puget Sound, lingcod fishing remains open through June 15, with a one-fish daily limit and a 26- to 36-inch size limit.

Meanwhile, the Tulalip Bay "bubble" salmon fishery continues Fridays through noon Mondays each week. The exception is June 9, when the area is closed for the Tulalip Tribes salmon ceremony. Salmon anglers fishing the bubble this year will be allowed to use two fishing poles from June 10 through Sept. 23, with the purchase of a WDFW two-pole endorsement. For details, check the WDFW fishing rule change. Anglers fishing the bubble have a two-salmon daily limit.

For those wanting to give fishing a try, Free Fishing Weekend is coming up June 9-10. During those two days, no license will be required to fish or gather shellfish in any state waters open to fishing. Also during Free Fishing Weekend, no Discover Pass or vehicle-access pass will be required to park at any water-access site maintained by WDFW.

While no licenses are required on Free Fishing Weekend, other rules such as size limits, bag limits and season closures will still be in effect. Anglers will also be required to complete a catch record card for any salmon, steelhead, sturgeon or halibut they catch. Catch record cards and WDFW's Fishing in Washington rules pamphlet are available free at hundreds of sporting goods stores and other license dealers throughout the state. Before heading out, anglers should check the Fishing in Washington pamphlet for all regulations.

June offers a special opportunity to try for large "triploid" trout, when WDFW fish hatchery crews stock 5,000 additional triploid rainbow trout in selected lakes just before Father's Day weekend (June 16-17). Specially stocked waters in the North Puget Sound region — and the number of triploid trout they'll receive — include: Green Lake (870), Lake Geneva (450), Bitter Lake (100), and Echo Lake (100) in King County; Blackmans Lake (300) and Gissburg Ponds, also known as Twin Lakes, (350) in Snohomish County; and Whistle Lake (300) in Skagit County.

"We encourage families to get Dad out fishing, especially if he hasn't been for awhile," said WDFW Inland Fish Program Manager Chris Donley. Lakes that will be stocked with these large trout have good shore and boat access. More details are available at the Father's Day fishing page on WDFW's website.

Washington fishing licenses make a great Father's Day gift. They can be purchased online, toll-free by phone at 1-(866) 246-9453 or at any of 600 license dealers statewide.

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

Summer fisheries get under way in June, when numerous rivers and streams open for trout and the salmon season starts up off the coast.

The popular ocean salmon season opens with a hatchery chinook selective fishery June 9 in marine areas 1 and 2 and June 16 in marine areas 3 and 4. The selective fishery will run through June 22 in Marine Area 1, June 23 in Marine Area 2 and June 30 in marine areas 3 and 4, or until a coastwide quota of 8,000 hatchery chinook are retained.

In all marine areas, the fishery will be open seven days a week with a daily limit of two salmon. Anglers will be required to release wild chinook and all coho during the selective fishery.

"We've seen chinook up and down the coast during the troll fishery," said Doug Milward, ocean salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). "That's a good sign for the sport fishery, which I expect to be very good once again this year."

Recreational ocean salmon fisheries for both chinook and hatchery coho will continue June 23 in Marine Area 1, June 24 in Marine Area 2, and July 1 in marine areas 3 and 4. Anglers fishing marine areas 1 and 2 will be allowed to retain one chinook as part of a two-salmon daily limit. Anglers fishing marine areas 3 and 4 will have a daily limit of two salmon. Fishing will be open seven days a week, except in Marine Area 2 where fishing will be open Sundays through Thursdays.

Before heading out, anglers should check the Fishing in Washington pamphlet for all regulations.

In Puget Sound, Marine Area 13 is open for salmon, while salmon fishing gets under way June 1 in Marine Area 11. Anglers fishing those areas have a two-salmon daily limit, but must release wild chinook.

Halibut fishing in most of Puget Sound is coming to a close. The fishery is set to close June 2 in most areas. The exception is Marine Area 5 (Sekiu), where anglers can fish for halibut three days a week, Thursday, Friday and Saturday through June 23.

On the coast, Marine Area 1 (Ilwaco) is open three days a week (Thursday through Saturday). However, Marine Area 2 (Westport/Ocean Shores) is already closed except in the northern nearshore area, said Heather Reed, a WDFW fish biologist.

Farther north, La Push and Neah Bay (marine areas 3 and 4) will open for two more days of fishing May 31 and June 2. "Once we tally the catch during those two days of fishing, we'll see if we can provide another opening," she said.

In all marine areas open to fishing, there is a one-fish daily catch limit and no minimum size restriction. Anglers may possess a maximum of two fish in any form, and must record their catch on a WDFW catch record card. For more information on the halibut fishery, check WDFW's website.

Anglers have through June 15 to fish for lingcod in Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. However, the lingcod season on the coast remains open through mid-October. Meanwhile, freshwater anglers might want to head out to the Chehalis River, where a spring chinook fishery is open through June 30. Anglers fishing the Chehalis, from the mouth to the Highway 6 Bridge in the town of Adna, have a daily limit of one salmon.

Anglers should be aware that a portion of the fishing regulations for the Chehalis River in the new Fishing in Washington pamphlet are incorrect. Anglers fishing the Chehalis, from the mouth to high bridge on Weyerhaeuser 1000 line approximately 400 yards downstream from Roger Creek (south of Pe Ell), are not required to follow selective gear rules.

A couple of other rivers are also open for salmon fishing, including the Hoh, Quillayute and Sol Duc.

Elsewhere, trout fishing will open at several rivers and streams beginning June 2. Under the statewide rule for trout, there is a two-fish daily limit and a minimum size of eight inches in rivers and streams. However, some rivers and streams have a rule requiring trout to be at least 14 inches in length to keep. Check the Fishing in Washington pamphlet for details.

Washingtonians who are interested in fishing but haven't actually given it a try have a perfect chance to do so during Free Fishing Weekend, scheduled June 9-10. During those two days, no license will be required to fish or gather shellfish in any waters open to fishing in Washington state. Also, no vehicle access pass or Discover Pass will be required during Free Fishing Weekend to park at any of the water-access sites maintained by WDFW.

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

The following weekend offers anglers another unique opportunity. WDFW fish hatchery crews will be stocking 5,000 triploid rainbow trout in 14 lakes just before Father's Day weekend, June 16-17. "We encourage families to get dad out fishing, especially if he hasn't been for awhile," said Chris Donley, WDFW Inland Fish Program manager. "Giving dad a fishing license as a gift and taking him out to catch one of these big fish is a great way to spend the weekend."

In addition to the 14 lakes that will be stocked with triploids, hundreds of other lakes have been stocked in Washington with millions of trout over the past year, said Donley.

Lakes stocked in the region and the number of triploids that will be stocked, include:

- Kitsap County: Island Lake, 300.
- Grays Harbor County: Vance Creek (Elma) Ponds, 100.

•Pierce County: American Lake, 1,200.
More details are available at WDFW's website.

Southwest Washington

Anglers may still get a few days in early June to catch spring chinook salmon, but many are shifting their attention to the next big opener on the lower Columbia River. That begins June 16, when fishing opens for summer chinook and fishing for hatchery steelhead and sockeye expands upriver from the Interstate 5 Bridge.

Pre-season forecasts anticipate a strong run of 91,200 summer chinook and an even stronger run of 462,000 sockeye this year, said Joe Hymer, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"This year's fishery offers anglers a chance to catch chrome bright trophy-sized fish weighing up to 40 pounds," Hymer said. "There's a good reason why these fish are known as 'June hogs,' and this season will give anglers a good chance to catch some."

The Columbia River will open to fishing for salmon and steelhead from the Megler Astoria Bridge upstream to Priest Rapids Dam. The daily limit is six fish, including two adult salmon, or two adult hatchery steelhead, or one of each. Only sockeye salmon, adipose-clipped chinook and adipose-clipped steelhead may be retained. All sockeye count as part of the adult daily limit.

Anglers can also catch shad, which have been open without size or catch limits since mid-May. Bank anglers have been catching shad in good numbers just below Bonneville Dam and at the public dock in Washougal. Boat anglers can do well in shallower water from Longview upstream.

Above Bonneville Dam, the season for summer chinook and steelhead is scheduled to run through July 31. Below Bonneville, the initial season will run through July 1, but anglers may get additional time on the water if the fish come through as expected, said Cindy LeFleur, WDFW Columbia River policy coordinator.

"Last year's summer chinook run came in at 12 percent below forecast," she said. "We need to make sure we're on target before we start adding fishing days in the lower river."

The same is true for spring chinook, LeFleur said. "We'd like to add a few days to the start of the summer chinook season, but we'll have to see what the run forecast for spring chinook does between now and then," she said.

Below Bonneville, anglers can still catch hatchery spring chinook and hatchery steelhead in several tributaries, including the Cowlitz and Lewis rivers. The Cowlitz River is the best bet for spring chinook, and Lake Scanewa (Cowlitz Falls Reservoir) opens for hatchery spring chinook June 1. Nearly 500 fish were planted in the lake as of May 26.

Summer run steelhead can also be found on the lower sections of the South Fork Toutle, Green, Washougal, and East Fork Lewis rivers, where bait is prohibited until the general season starts June 2. Though closed for spring chinook, the lower Kalama remains open for hatchery steelhead.

Anglers fishing any of those waters should check the Fishing in Washington pamphlet and WDFW's emergency rule website for additional regulations. As noted in the pamphlet, anglers with a two-pole endorsement can use two poles to fish for spring chinook salmon and other species on sections of the Cowlitz, Lewis and Wind rivers and at Drano Lake.

The daily limit for salmonids has been increased to six fish at Drano and on the Wind River upstream from the railroad bridge. Up to four may be adults, of which no more than two may be hatchery steelhead. Any chinook – whether adipose-fin clipped or not – may now be retained on the Wind upstream from Shipherd Falls. The daily limit on the Wind River below the railroad bridge remains two hatchery origin chinook, two hatchery steelhead, or one of each.

Starting June 1, the Klickitat River from the mouth to the Fisher Hill Bridge will be open seven days per week with a six-salmon daily limit, of which no more than two may be adults. Wild chinook must be released. Anglers may also retain two hatchery steelhead there and – starting June 1 – on the upper Klickitat River. Hatchery chinook jacks may also be kept from 400 feet above fishway #5 to the boundary markers below the salmon hatchery.

Rather catch sturgeon? Below the Wauna powerlines, the retention fishery is open daily through July 8 (or when the quota is met) with a one-fish daily limit, fork-length requirement of 41 to 54 inches. Above the powerlines, sturgeon retention is allowed Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays with a fork-length requirement of 38 to 54 inches. Fishing is prohibited in spawning sanctuaries below Bonneville, John Day, McNary and Priest Rapids dams.

In the Bonneville Pool, fishery managers have approved four additional days of retention fishing: June 15-16 and June 22-23. Based on public input, WDFW carried forward 1,060 fish from the fishery that ended Feb. 18 in those waters to provide a summer season, said Brad James, a fish biologist for WDFW. Anglers will be allowed to retain one white sturgeon a day between 38 inches and 54 inches fork length on the mainstem Columbia and its tributaries between Bonneville Dam and The Dalles Dam on those days.

When fishing for sturgeon, all anglers are limited to one single-point barbless hook

Anglers looking to catch some trout should check the region's trout stocking schedule for good spots to go in June. Canyon Creek, Klineline Pond, Rowland Lake and Spearfish Lake are some of the waters scheduled to receive fish this month.

Starting June 2, anglers also have the option of catching trout in a number of rivers and streams throughout the region. Many of those waters – ranging from Skate Creek to the Little White Salmon River – are being stocked with fish from area hatcheries. Information about fish plants is available on WDFW's website.

For walleye and bass, fishery managers suggest casting a line between Bonneville and McNary dams. For tiger muskie, try Mayfield or Merwin reservoirs.

Those who don't have a fishing license but would like to try fishing will get their chance June 9-10 during Free Fishing Weekend. During those two days, no license will be required to fish any waters open to fishing in Washington state. No vehicle access pass or Discover Pass will be required to park at WDFW wildlife areas or water-access sites those days.

During Free Fishing Weekend, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will host a public fishing event at Spearfish Park near Dallesport June 9 from 9 a.m. until noon. Co-sponsors include WDFW and the Klickitat Chapter of Trout Unlimited. For more information, call (541) 506-7819.

Eastern Washington

June is the start of river and stream fishing in many regional waters, from Asotin Creek and the Walla Walla River in the southeast, to the upper section of the Spokane River and LeClerc Creek in the northeast.

Anglers should check the WDFW Sport Fishing Rules pamphlet for special regulations that apply to rivers that open in June, as well as those rivers that opened earlier.

Many of the region's best trout lakes that opened in late April continue to produce good catches through June, including Spokane County's Amber, Clear, Fish, Williams and West Medical lakes and Lincoln County's Fishtrap Lake.

As snowpack melts further north in the region, additional waters are becoming productive. In Stevens County, the Little Pend Oreille chain of lakes—Gillette, Heritage, Sherry and Thomas—are providing catches, as are Pend Oreille County's Skookum and Yocum lakes and many others at higher elevation. Northeast lakes that produced well on the late April opener continue to see action, including Cedar, Loon, Mudgett, Rocky, Starvation and Waitts lakes in Stevens County, and Curlew and Ellen lakes in Ferry County.

Waters open year-round are good bets through June not only for trout, but also for warmwater fish species that begin to bite as air and water temperatures rise. Lake Roosevelt, the Columbia River reservoir off Grand Coulee Dam that extends along the Stevens, Ferry and Lincoln county lines, has big rainbow trout, kokanee, walleye and smallmouth bass. Sprague Lake, on the Lincoln-Adams county line, is producing catches of rainbow trout, largemouth bass and catfish. Rock Lake in Whitman County has rainbow and brown trout, largemouth bass, bluegill and crappie.

In the south end of the region, the Tucannon River impoundments—Big Four, Blue, Curl, Deer, Rainbow, Spring and Watson lakes—continue to be stocked with hatchery rainbow trout and are still providing lots of catches, reports WDFW Wooten Wildlife Area Manager Kari Dingman.

June 9-10 is Free Fishing Weekend statewide when no fishing licenses are required. Discover Pass or vehicle-access pass also are not required June 9 and 10 at WDFW water-access sites.

"Free Fishing Weekend is the perfect time to take a non-fishing friend or family member along on your fishing trip," said WDFW Eastern Regional Fish Program Manager John Whalen. "In this region we're also offering an opportunity for un-licensed adults to learn how to fish."

The fishing class will be held on Thursday evening, June 7, and Saturday morning, June 9. Registrations may be made through June 6 at WDFW's Spokane Valley regional office or by calling (509) 892-1001. Class space is limited.

On Father's Day weekend, June 16-17, Williams Lake in Spokane County will receive 365 extra triploid rainbow trout to encourage families to take dad fishing. Williams is one of 14 lakes across the state to receive extra jumbo trout; it was chosen for its excellent public and private shore and boat access. Learn more about the Father's Day fishing opportunity on the WDFW website.

Northcentral Washington

A new **trout** fishery in the region opens June 1 on the Columbia River from 400 feet below Chief Joseph Dam to the Highway 173 Bridge in Brewster, (Okanogan County).

"This new fishery allows anglers to fish for and keep **triploid rainbow trout** that wash down river from Rufus Woods Lake," said WDFW Okanogan District Fish Biologist Bob Jateff. "It could be quite a fishery if the numbers of fish in there are as high as we think they are."

The new fishery, which is listed in the Special Rules section of the WDFW [Sport Fishing Rules](#) pamphlet, is scheduled to run through August 15, with a daily catch limit of 10 fish, minimum size 12 inches.

June is also the start of river and stream fishing in many waterways throughout the region. Check the [Sport Fishing Rules](#) pamphlet carefully to make sure of all special regulations on rivers and streams, like catch-and-release, selective gear restrictions, minimum size, and daily catch limits.

Jateff also reports that Okanogan County lakes have been producing well for both boat and shore anglers. Trout-producing waters such as Spectacle, Wannacut, Pearrygin, and Conconully lakes, plus Conconully Reservoir, all are providing good fishing for **rainbow trout**. Selective-gear waters, such as Big Twin, Blue (Sinlahekin) and Big Green lakes are predominately rainbow fisheries. Anglers should consult the current sportfishing rules, Jateff notes, since some of the selective-gear lakes have varying bag limit restrictions.

Kokanee anglers should try Palmer, Bonaparte, and Patterson lakes in Okanogan County for fish in the 10 to 13-inch range.

"Spiny ray fisheries will pick up as water temperatures warm," Jateff said. "Some of the best bets would be Patterson and Palmer lakes for **yellow perch** and Leader Lake for **bluegills** and **crappie**."

Columbia Basin year-round waters, such as Banks Lake, Moses Lake and Potholes Reservoir, provide good fishing through June for **smallmouth** and **largemouth bass, walleye, yellow perch, crappie** and other species.

June 9-10 is [Free Fishing Weekend](#) statewide, when no fishing licenses are required. WDFW Northcentral Regional Fish Program Manager Jeff Korth says Free Fishing Weekend is a great time to take an unlicensed friend or family member along on a fishing trip. Discover Pass or vehicle-access pass are not required on June 9 and 10.

Southcentral Washington

Anglers have a variety of options available in June, starting with **hatchery** spring chinook salmon on sections of the Yakima River, then summer chinook on the Columbia River. Meanwhile, hatchery crews are still stocking trout in area lakes, and many rivers also open for trout fishing Saturday, June 2.

Smallmouth bass and walleye are also warming up to anglers' lures, and sturgeon fishing is still an option

"This is the time of year when you see boats on trailers heading in every direction," said Eric Anderson, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) based in Yakima. "June is a good time to catch fish in this part of the state."

Two sections of the Yakima River are currently open to **spring chinook** fishing. Although the river was swamped by high water after the fishery opened, Anderson said the flows have dropped and the river is in good condition.

"Anglers are definitely catching springers now," he said.

In the lower river, the fishery will likely remain open through June 30 from the Interstate 182 Bridge in Richland to the Grant Avenue Bridge in Prosser, Anderson said. The upper river, from the Interstate 82 Bridge at Union Gap to the railroad bridge below Roza Dam, is expected to remain open through July 31.

Anglers may keep two adipose-fin-clipped hatchery chinook per day. All wild salmon, identifiable by an intact adipose fin, must be released unharmed and must not be removed from the water prior to release. The same is true for all steelhead, as noted in the fishing rule on [WDFW's website](#).

Anglers are required to use single-point, barbless hooks with a hook gap from point to shank of 3/4 inch or less when fishing for salmon. Use of bait is allowed, and anglers have the option of purchasing a two-pole fishing endorsement.

Fishery managers are predicting a return of approximately 5,000 adult hatchery chinook to the Yakima River this year.

John Easterbrooks, regional WDFW fish manager, noted that the department is seeking anglers' cooperation in two aspects of the fishery – a hooking-mortality study and an effort to ensure continued access across Roza Dam to the popular fishing area downstream from the railroad bridge boundary. Both are described in a [news release](#) on the WDFW website.

To participate in the fishery, anglers must possess a Columbia River Salmon/Steelhead Endorsement (CRSSE), which supports maintaining and expanding fisheries in the Columbia River Basin.

That is also the case with the **summer chinook** fishery, which gets under way June 16 upriver to Priest Rapids Dam. The daily limit is six hatchery fish, of which up to two may be adult hatchery chinook.

Fishery managers are anticipating a strong return of 91,200 summer chinook and a record return of sockeye to the Columbia River this summer.

"Anglers often have a tough time landing summer chinook," said Paul Hoffarth, a WDFW fish biologist based in the Tri-Cities. "But with the high water and cooler temperatures this spring, anglers might be able to boat a few before the fish reach the Upper Columbia."

Meanwhile, anglers have been reeling in **channel catfish** from the lower reaches of the Yakima and Walla Walla rivers. Fishing has been good for "channel cats," which typically run 2-8 pounds but can easily weigh twice that amount, Hoffarth said.

"Put some cut bait on your hook and leave it on the bottom," he advises. "That's about all there is to it."

Steelhead fishing will remain closed until fall in the Columbia River upstream of the Highway 395 Bridge and in the Snake River, but Hoffarth recommends several other fisheries now under way on those river systems:

- **White sturgeon:** Fishing remains open in Lake Wallula (McNary Dam to Priest Rapids/Ice Harbor Dams) through July 31 this year. Fish must measure 43 inches to 54 inches (fork length) to be retained. Anglers should be aware that sturgeon fishing is prohibited in sturgeon sanctuaries in the Snake River from Goose Island upstream to Ice Harbor Dam and in the Columbia River upstream of the Priest Rapids Hatchery outlet to Priest Rapids Dam.
- **Shad:** By mid-June, shad should reach McNary and Ice Harbor dams in numbers that make for great fishing. While not as prized as salmon or sturgeon, they can put up a good fight and make for good eating, Hoffarth said.
- **Smallmouth bass** and **walleye:** Fishing for both species should improve in the Columbia and Snake rivers as those waters warm.

Rather catch some **trout**? WDFW will continue to stock lakes and ponds through June in the region, including Cooper, Easton, FioRito and Quartz in Kittitas County; and Bear, Clear, Dog and Indian Flat in Yakima County.

Starting June 2, a number of rivers will also open for fishing around the region. Anderson reminds anglers that most streams have reduced catch and size limits for **trout**, and there are catch-and-release zones on the Yakima River above Roza Dam, in sections of the Naches River and in Rattlesnake Creek where all trout must be released unharmed. Also, in most large mainstem rivers and streams in the Yakima basin, anglers must use single-point barbless hooks and no bait.

Always check the fishing rules pamphlet for details on a specific river or stream. The *Fishing in Washington Sportfishing* Rules guide is available free at stores that sell fishing licenses. It also can be downloaded from [WDFW's website](#).

Those who don't have a fishing license but would like to try fishing will get their chance June 9-10 during **Free Fishing Weekend**. During those two days, no license will be required to fish any waters open to fishing in Washington state. No vehicle access pass or Discover Pass will be required to park at WDFW wildlife areas or water-access sites those days.

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Random Links

Free Fishing Weekend activities from the ODFW:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/education/angling/free_fishing.asp

For bottom fishers - The 30 fathom line:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/regulations/sport_fishing/docs/30fmwaypts.pdf

Willamette River Recreation Guide (PDF):

<http://www.oregon.gov/OSMB/library/docs/WillametteRiverGuidePDF.pdf?qa=t>

Wickiup fishing map:

http://nwoutdoorwriter.com/Oregon_Lakes/Wickiup_map.html

Wickiup Fishing Info:

<http://www.bestfishinginamerica.com/OR-wickiup-reservoir-kokanee.html>

GOOD LUCK!