

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 3rd – May 9th, 2013**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro- The Willamette River continues to disappoint spring chinook fishermen. Although the count over Willamette Falls isn't too far off schedule, the bite has yet to pick up over the last week. However, there are a few fish to be caught and anglers shouldn't discount the possibility of a fish or two coming to their bait. Oregon City has had the best bite as of late, but the sea lions are in fierce competition for your fish. Expect spring salmon to be available through May, but it's likely the run is on the downhill side of the peak. Catch and release sturgeon fishing is steady to awesome, but few anglers are participating. With the water temperature in the low 50s, smallmouth bass fishing is well underway and fishing should only improve through the spring and summer.

Over on the Clackamas River, the summer steelhead are making a pretty decent showing. Gear and fly anglers alike are scoring and the action should continue to improve through June. A few springers have been taken here. Expect the effort to increase in the coming weeks as fishermen begin to target the salmon over the steelhead. The river below Carver has the best salmon water, while the stretch between Rivermill Dam and Carver will deliver more steelhead.

The first spring chinook was confirmed on the Sandy River on Monday. The lucky angler was John Gallagher of Portland and he hooked the 16 pound hatchery salmon on a metallic blue plug. The peak of the spring chinook run should show by late May. There are summer steelhead available here as well and anglers can expect their numbers to increase through June.

The weekend past was the traditional Oregon trout opener. McKenzie anglers were successful with nymphs mimicking large stoneflies as well as hare's ears and Prince nymphs. Hatches of March Browns and caddis in the afternoon has added some alternate possibilities. Both the lower river and the stretch above Leaburg Dam are in excellent condition for fishing. Expect to see a significant Stonefly component on the McKenzie over the coming weekend.

With chinook and steelhead counts picking up at the Falls, numbers of fish are improving on the Santiams. The North Santiam has been productive to Jefferson and the action will move upstream this week.

The ODFW will hold free family fishing events on Saturday, May 4 at Shorty's Pond in Molalla, Vernonia Pond and Reinhart Park Pond in Grants Pass. On Sunday, May 5, take the family to Alton Baker Canoe Canal in Eugene. All events start about 9 AM with volunteers to offer tips, loan out rods, reels and tackle and provide bait.

Northwest – With low, clear water conditions, anglers remain focused on saltwater options on the north coast. Spring chinook are certainly an option in Tillamook and Nestucca Estuaries but few are being caught. Offshore will remain the best option but the weather forecast still calls for strong late morning or early afternoon trade winds which will make ocean travel uncomfortable.

A rare spring chinook is being reported out of Garibaldi but effort this week was focused on upper Tillamook Bay, where strong tides offered up some fair opportunity for spinner and herring trollers as well as plug pullers. Very few reported success however. Softer tides this week will re-focus effort in the lower bay and stronger numbers should begin to show.

Clammers were out in force, both on the beaches for razor clams and in the estuaries for a multitude of species. Digging for both was productive last weekend but not again until the next minus tide series.

Ocean trollers continue to report good success for California stock chinook out of Garibaldi. Trolling herring or spoons deeper than 150 foot in 300+ foot of water is giving up limits of 10 to 15 pound chinook. It's clear that there are a lot of chinook in the ocean.

Crabbing remains fair as there is a lot of commercial effort still out there. As long as the price for fresh crab remains high, so will the effort.

Bottomfishing slowed somewhat out of Garibaldi for an unknown reason. Anglers are restricted to fishing in shallower depths with the spring time restrictions in place; check regulations for details.

Halibut becomes an option out of some coastal ports but may likely be more productive when the all depth fishery opens up.

Southwest- Boats out of Newport and Depoe Bay are limiting on lingcod while the rockfish bite has been spotty. Inshore halibut opens May 2nd with the spring all-depth halibut fishery opening May 9th through 11th.

Southwest beaches were once again kicking out good catches of redbait surf perch as ocean swells and breezes mellowed out.

Spring Chinook fishing slowed on the Umpqua mainstem as the water has dropped and cleared. Smallmouth bass are being caught with this fishery improving as the water temperature rises. Springers are entering the North Umpqua now and a few have been taken here.

Spring Chinook catches stalled on the lower Rogue in low, clear water. Success rates for salmon have been dwindling on the middle river as well although late winter steelhead catches have been fair. Rain will reverse fortunes here. Upper Rogue fishers are just starting to see springers.

Catches of rockfish greatly improved out of the Port of Brookings late last week when the ocean laid down with many black rockfish over four pounds landed. These results will be typical on calmer days. Ocean Chinook may be kept south of Humbug Mountain starting May 1st.

With the ice gone at Diamond Lake, boaters used night crawlers to take good-sized trout recently, the largest of which topped seven pounds.

Eastern – Redside action has been decent on the Deschutes with hatches occurring from mid-day through the afternoon. Look for spotty, sporadic Blue-Winged-Olive hatches as well as Caddis and Mayflies. Fish nymphs in the absence of bugs popping. The Pelton to North Reservation boundary which opened on April 27th has been fishing well.

Green Peter trollers are taking fine numbers of kokanee averaging 10 inches. Smallmouth are biting with the water temperature climbing into the mid-50s.

The Snake River opens to spring Chinook May 4th from Dug Bar to the deadline below Hells Canyon Dam for one hatchery adult per day.

SW Washington- With most district streams becoming low and clear, salmon and steelhead fishing remains challenging on the Lewis and Kalama. The Cowlitz will remain the region's top bet but even that isn't a great one.

With spring chinook now pouring over Bonneville Dam, interest and success is climbing in the Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries. Good catches can be expected this week for those trolling plugs, herring or shrimp. With no effort taking place downstream of Bonneville, success will likely be good.

Soapbox Update: How about you and/or your business join a growing list of businesses that support our wild fish resources by supporting two critical campaigns addressing forest health and banning coal exports from coming to Oregon. Here is some more info:

Please feel free to contact me via phone (503-812-9036) or email brees@pacifier.com if you have any questions. Again, thank you for considering!

On state forest lands- Many of you know, I've been working on this issue for the better part of a decade. It's been a hard push uphill but we've made some real progress over the last year and a half. Governor Kitzhaber has directed the Oregon Department of Forestry to designate conservation areas on state forest lands, lands that have already been deemed of "high conservation value" for either fish & wildlife habitat, recreation or clean water. As a business endorser, we'd be adding your name to a growing list of businesses that endorse our work to designate these areas for longer term protection so that they can continue to grow our wild salmon and steelhead that fuels our billion-dollar industry here on the north coast. Whether you fish the Tillamook or lower Columbia, this affects you and the wild fish you depend on for harvest or simply providing opportunity for hatchery fish. The more wild fish we have returning to these river systems, the more opportunity we have to pursue hatchery fish in AND out of the basin.

Most of our river systems in the Tillamook and Clatsop State forests are water-temperature limited! That means that during the summer time, they reach such lethally warm levels that wild salmon that over-summer in these watersheds either DIE or are severely compromised in their ability to rear and migrate in freshwater. Juvenile coho, cutthroat, steelhead and adult spring chinook all over-summer in these watersheds and are severely affected during the summer months, particularly mid-July through mid-August. Securing long-term conservation areas will help solve this issue. If you go to our homepage, you'll see a list of endorsing organizations as well as our mission. Our coalition is made up of other fish conservation groups such as The Association of NW Steelheaders, Trout Unlimited, The Wild Salmon Center and the NW Guides and Anglers Association. Our home page is here:

www.forestlegacy.org.

On Coal: This issue has gotten much attention from the environmental community lately. And for good reason. There are several reasons to endorse this campaign for environmental reasons but here are the two that I see as most important.

1. Barge traffic- Have you ever participated in the mainstem Columbia fall salmon fishery and been forced to pull your anchor during a hot bite to make way for ship or barge traffic? Well, if you haven't had the pleasure of this exercise, you certainly will as it is modeled that an additional 2,500 barges per year will be added to the lower Columbia River waterway. Here's some more detrimental information:

Ambre Energy proposes to send over 2,500 coal barges per year down the Columbia River to export coal to Asia. This huge increase in barge traffic, especially never-before-seen coal barges, threatens public safety and recreation on the river. Ambre's plans call for strip mining coal in the Wyoming and Montana, sending coal trains to Boardman, Oregon, loading coal onto barges at Boardman, and transferring the coal to ocean-going ships at the Port of St. Helens in the Columbia River Estuary. Up to 50 coal barges per week will be staged adjacent to Crims Island, a recently completed \$2.2 million salmon habitat restoration project.

Facts:

- Ambre will add 5,029 new barge trips to the Columbia River every year.
- Ambre's coal barges will create a 94% increase in barge traffic from current levels.
- Ambre will stage forty-eight coal barges per week in a prime salmon nursery in the critically important Columbia River Estuary. In fact, the coal barges will dock right next to and impact a \$2.2 million salmon habitat restoration project recently completed at Crims Island, funded in part by the Army Corps of Engineers. While the Crims Island project restored habitat used by juvenile Chinook salmon as they transition to the marine environment, the 2,500 coal barges transported by high-thrust tugs will threaten the salmon.

2. Contribution of ocean acidification- My personal biggest fear of Oregon contributing to coal exports is our hand in further changing the pH levels of the ocean. Already in Netarts Bay, the oyster hatchery there is having a very difficult time keeping oyster spat (juveniles) alive past this stage. It appears that ocean acidification is to blame as these juvenile oysters are not capable of developing their exoskeleton to sustain their own lives. Pteropods, the food source for most juvenile salmonids once they enter the ocean, also form exoskeletons. These are the tiny crustaceans (crab, shrimp, clam larvae) that are just the right size for our juvenile salmon to feed on when they first enter the estuary and ocean. If these creatures fail to lay down their shells (exoskeleton), they won't survive and neither will our salmon. Ocean acidification is already well documented. I'm asking that Oregonians take a stand against further exacerbation of this problem.

Some are asking, "Well, if we don't export coal from Oregon, and create the jobs we need here, won't some other country just do it?"

- Although it is likely that developing countries like China will still need to buy coal from other countries, the cheap coal being proposed for export out of the US will lead to more coal-burning plant start-ups, further degrading air and water quality here on the Pacific Coast. Biologists have found that up to 17% of mercury content found in the Cascade range is from fossil fuel consumption in China. We're already seeing the effects of fossil fuel emissions from overseas!

Here is an array of reports on coal dust, fossil fuel burning and the transport of coal if you're still not convinced:

<http://www.powerpastcoal.org/library/#reports>

Columbia River Fishing Report – Even as chinook pour over Bonneville Dam, there is no sign of any regulation changes coming for lower Columbia fishers. Anglers and managers are both keeping their eyes on dam counts and hoping that we haven't seen the peak passage last weekend as we had a few 4,000 and a 5,000+ fish day at Bonneville. The count has since dropped back down to 2,000+ fish per day but if the peak has passed, the news won't be good.

The next season for Columbia anglers is steelhead but that is still about 2 weeks away. Only 20+ steelhead are passing Bonneville each day. We'll need much more than that to inspire lower river anglers.

Springers fishers above Bonneville Dam are doing fairly well. Of course they have the fact that there is no angler effort below Bonneville to thank for their success as well. Here are some impressive checks coming from the pools above Bonneville Dam, especially The Dalles Pool:

Bonneville Pool:

Weekly checking showed no catch for four bank anglers.

The Dalles Pool:

Weekly checking showed 23 adipose fin-clipped spring chinook kept, plus five unclipped spring chinook released for 331 bank anglers; and six adipose fin-clipped spring chinook kept, plus one unclipped spring chinook released for 10 boats (23 anglers).

John Day Pool (Columbia River above John Day Dam and John Day Arm):

Weekly checking showed three adipose fin-clipped spring chinook kept, plus one unclipped spring chinook released for 35 bank anglers; and no catch for 11 boats (26 anglers).

No shad have passed Bonneville Dam yet.

Sturgeon anglers are starting to come around with the Portland to Longview stretch of the Columbia producing some minor results. Here are the creel checks up and down the Columbia:

Troutdale Boats:

Weekly checking showed two sublegal sturgeon released for 13 boats (26 anglers).

Portland to Longview Bank:

Weekly checking showed three sublegal sturgeon released for eight bank anglers.

Portland to Longview Boats:

Weekly checking showed 13 legal white sturgeon kept, plus one legal, one oversize and 299 sublegal sturgeon released for 51 boats (144 anglers).

The Dalles Pool:

Weekly checking showed two oversize and five sublegal sturgeon released for 22 bank anglers; and 23 sublegal sturgeon released for three boats (11 anglers).

John Day Pool:

Weekly checking showed seven sublegal sturgeon released for 14 bank anglers; and two legal white sturgeon kept, plus one oversize and 10 sublegal sturgeon released for 13 boats (27 anglers).

The Guide's Forecast – With no sign of additional opportunity in the near future, anglers fishing the lower Columbia will be forced to seek out sturgeon until the steelhead opener later this month. Sturgeon fishing is likely to remain fair in the Portland to Longview stretch and

anglers working the estuary may find some early keepers as well given the fact we're experiencing a low, warm water scenario that we haven't seen in the last several years. Most people will wait until the mid-May opener to target sturgeon in the estuary however.

There won't be much offshore opportunity for bottomfish or halibut with the upcoming weather forecast. It just won't be fun out there with the predicted wind-chop.

Upriver, anglers in the know in the Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day Pools should find increasing numbers of chinook available. The season closes May 5th however. An extension may come but not until a run-size update becomes available. We emphasize the term "may".

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "The Willamette river continues to disappoint spring Chinook fishermen. Although the count over Willamette Falls isn't too far off schedule, the bite has yet to pick up over the last week. However, there are a few fish to be caught and anglers shouldn't discount the possibility of a fish or two coming to their bait. Oregon City has had the best bite as of late, but the sea lions are in fierce competition for your fish. Expect spring salmon to be available through May, but it's likely the run is on the downhill side of the peak. Catch and release sturgeon fishing is steady to awesome, but few anglers are participating. With the water temperature in the low 50s, smallmouth bass fishing is well underway and fishing should only improve through the spring and summer."

Fishing on the McKenzie River has been productive for fly anglers during the last week of April with the first of the Golden Stones taking to wing. In the coming weeks, these big bugs will be more common; stock up accordingly with corresponding life stages and dries when the hatch finally starts in earnest.

The fish are coming! Spring Chinook counts have topped 7,700 at Willamette Falls and summer steelhead totals are approaching the 3,000 mark. The Santiams receive greater numbers of steelhead than either the upstream Willamette or the McKenzie River systems so there are definitely fish available. North Santiam flows are fairly stable but the level will be gradually rising over the coming week as hot weather causes some of the snowpack to melt. The South Santiam is forecast to remain level with fishing unlikely to improve, at least in the coming week

Benson Lake, Bethany Pond, Blue Lake, Canby Pond, Commonwealth Lake, Dorman Pond, Haldeman Pond, Hartman Pond, Alton Baker Canal, Detroit Reservoir, Dexter Reservoir, E. E. Wilson Pond, Foster Reservoir, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, the McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Sunnyside Park Pond, Timber Linn Lake, Walling Pond, Walter Wirth Lake and Waverly Lake are scheduled for trout planting.

Check the Fisheries Forecast, above for free family fishing opportunities this coming weekend at various locations around Oregon.

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "The Willamette River spring Chinook run has been little more than a disappointment this season. The clearly dismal run has sent many salmon enthusiasts to fishing for trout, or other species, just for the sake of avoiding depression. Before one concludes that this year's run is an all-out wash, we might look at how the last 10 years have tracked over both Bonneville Dam and Willamette Falls. The Columbia's spring Chinook run is scheduled to spike dramatically within the week, last year's run showed up in full force and passed Bonneville Dam on or about May 5. All things are pointing to that actually happening as predicted. Similarly, the Willamette's peak part of the run is due to start crossing the falls within the next week. The problem with the Willamette run this season is

that, very few fish are being caught in the channel and the lower river, worrying anglers that they won't show at all. Nonetheless, all this speculation is only speculation until it's all said and done. If by June 1st nothing spectacular has happened, only then we can consider this run a wash. All that said, there are still a few fish caught every day and you can't catch one moping on the couch. Angler effort is down, in both the channel and at the head of the channel near Fred's Marina. Willamette Park is seeing less traffic and very few fish brought in to the fish checkers. Oregon City also has less traffic than normal for this time of the season and the catch is down as well. Sea lions are still present in full force and many fisherman have thrown in the towel and left the area. As of this writing, the shad have yet to show but are expected any day now. Sturgeon are still present in strong numbers in the Willamette River, from top to bottom. Anglers looking for some action would be well advised to drop the anchor and fish a herring, sand shrimp or smelt in the deeper holes just to have something to pull on. The smallmouth bass are also starting to warm up to fishermen's lures and will be available in good numbers through the early fall."

On the Santiam systems, expect to encounter the occasional cutthroat as well, which can often put a very pleasant bend on one's rod. Although the Santiam system gets a better return of summer steelhead, there are some in the Mac and a few have been banked. There will always be a crowd of hopefuls in the hole below Leaburg Dam at this time of year.

Steelhead have been elusive on the North Santiam, even to those who have been fishing it successfully in seasons past. Stay versatile, persistent and cover as much water as possible. Even though the run is less than spectacular this year, with summers migrating up the Willamette in fair number now, prospects will be improving daily. Try spinners, bobber and jig or corky and yarn combos. If the run is worthwhile this year, catches will follow with numbers improving over the coming weeks with best results at the end of May into June. While recycling has been ongoing from Foster Dam to Waterloo (nearly 400 on May 3rd alone), steelheading is poor to slow on the South Santiam at this time.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) reports, "Over on the Clackamas River, the summer steelhead are making a pretty decent showing. Gear and fly anglers alike are scoring and the action should continue to improve through June. A few springers have been taken here, but the reports are about as elusive as the salmon. Expect the effort to increase in the coming weeks as fisherman begin to target the salmon over the steelhead. The river below Carver has the best salmon water, while the stretch between Rivermill Dam and Carver will deliver more steelhead.

"The first spring Chinook was confirmed on the Sandy River on Monday. The lucky angler was John Gallagher of Portland and he hooked (& boated) the 16-pound hatchery salmon on a metallic blue plug. The peak of the spring Chinook run should show by late May. There are summer steelhead available here as well and anglers can expect their numbers to increase through June."

The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "The Clackamas River is kicking out good numbers of summer steelhead and the occasional spring Chinook. It appears we are going to have another good season, much like last year, with good catchable numbers through the month of June. Include spring Chinook into the catch and the Clackamas River looks like the "go to" spot here in the Willamette Valley. Expect numbers of steelhead to remain steady through the summer and the spring Chinook catch to increase within the next week or two.

"The Sandy River has produced two confirmed spring Chinook over the last two days. One being caught by Portland angler, John Gallagher on a Yakima Bait, metallic blue, Maglip 3.5. Summer steelhead are also present in decent numbers and anglers would be well advised to use techniques that will work well for both species. As the river continues to drop, driftboat and pontoon boats are going to be the crafts of choice. Apparently, there are still hordes of large sturgeon in the deeper holes from the Troutdale Bridge down to the mouth. Targeting sturgeon in the lower Sandy River is prohibited."

North Coast Fishing Report – Still not much going on in this district of Oregon as spring chinook have yet to make a showing and offshore weather is less than friendly for saltwater anglers.

Spring chinook remains on the mind of many and some fish are being caught. Anglers focused their efforts in the upper bay over the weekend but even with the favorable minus tide series, few fish were to be found. Not uncommon as Tillamook springers most often peak starting in mid-May. Spring chinook have been reported from all areas of Tillamook Bay and the Trask River but not in any great number.

Steelhead, especially summer steelhead, seem to be absent from the system. Winter run fish should still be spawning so be sure not to harass these fish. Cutthroat trout season opens towards the end of the month.

All eyes remain glued on the offshore forecast for the halibut opener as well as bottomfishing and chinook opportunities. Willing fish are out there with California chinook highlighting the offshore opportunities out of Garibaldi lately. Great catches of 8 to 12 pound chinook have been coming from the north coast. We just need the seas to cooperate.

Razor clam diggers and bay diggers did well on the last minus tide series. The next one will occur starting May 7th.

Coffenbury Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County), Sunset Lake and Vernonia Pond are scheduled for stocking with hatchery trout this week.

The Guide's Forecast – With anglers in hurry-up-and-wait mode, anxious anglers can get their gear ready and even fish the lower bay if the motivation is there. The extreme tide series shifts to a soft one and the early morning high, followed by a soft outgoing may provide improving opportunity for spring chinook anglers in Tillamook and Nestucca Bays. Don't expect catches to explode but there should be a rare success story told.

Most will continue to wait for a friendlier ocean, where chinook, halibut and bottomfish should be available for those in the know. Ocean crabbing is the best bet but reports remain less than impressive. There remains a high degree of commercial effort but one sport boat reported 7 barely legal keepers for 2 pots early this week. You had better have some quality bait available. Here is the ocean forecast, keep in mind that these trade winds are good for ocean upwelling so our juveniles are feeding very well right now:

FRI

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT...EASING TO 15 TO 20 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 4 FT AT 11 SECONDS.

FRI NIGHT

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT...EASING TO 15 TO 20 KT AFTER

MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 4 FT AT 10 SECONDS.

SAT

NE WIND 10 TO 15 KT...BECOMING N 15 TO 20 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT.

SAT NIGHT

N WIND 20 TO 25 KT...BECOMING NE 15 TO 20 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT.

SUN

NE WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. NW SWELL 3 FT.

MON

SW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. NW SWELL 4 FT.

Rivers remain very low and clear so what few salmon and steelhead that may be available, won't be too excited to bite. Tidewater remains the best bet, especially the Trask for what few fish will be available to anglers.

Bay crabbing sucks.

Central & South Coast Reports – When the ocean laid down early this week off the central Oregon coast, boat launching out of Newport and Depoe Bay have been successful taking good numbers of ling and making fair to good catches of rockfish. The bite slowed for trollers launching offshore for salmon with only a 20% success ratio over the past week. Ocean Chinook is open off the central Oregon coast through October 31st, so there will be plenty of chances to come.

Sometimes confused with the 30-fathom depth restriction for groundfish, Halibut fishing opens out to the 40-fathom line on May 2nd for a three-day-per-week fishery on Thursdays through Saturdays for a 23,038-pound quota. Flatties have been taken recently by bottom fishers, indicating a good season may be in the offing.

Many offshore fishers look forward to all-depth halibut, however, and have to wait no longer than May 9th through 11th. The spring season will continue May 16-18, May 30-June 1 and June 6-8. Further dates will be allowed unless the spring quota of 120,947 pounds is fulfilled. Conversely, any shortfall on the quota will be rolled into the Summer All-Depth season which starts August 2nd.

Offshore forecasts indicate conditions should be conducive for boats crossing the bar over the coming weekend but it's always wise to check last minute updates.

Surf perch fishing remains excellent off most southwest beaches whenever swells and winds have moderated. Sand shrimp are great baits but delicate on a long cast into the waves so consider alternate options which are more durable such as prawns (frozen from the seafood section), clam necks or mussels. Small-sized Gulp plastics in darker tones have been working as well when redtails are biting.

Winchester Bay crabbing has been slow, and even boats crossing the bar are reporting results fair at best in the ocean. Chinook are being taken daily inside the bay along the jetty as well as outside in the ocean but catches have slowed dramatically over the past week. Fishing inside the

bay has been pretty good for those casting off the jetty. Catches of redbtail surf perch have been reported as slow but it's early still for the fishery. Retails enter the bay in late spring every year to spawn, allowing anglers to bag easy limits at times. The occasional salmon has been taken up the Umpqua mainstem but that fishery is slow as well. The few who have made early attempts at shad have walked away empty-handed. The river is still a little cool for the smallmouth bite to turn on but larger fish are historically taken early in the season. Steelheading in the flies-only stretch of the North Umpqua has been decent. Only hatchery fish may be retained on the Umpqua and over 96% of steelhead on the North Umpqua will be natives. The South Umpqua is closed to all fishing until May 25th.

Crabbing is slow at Coos Bay although rock fishers are taking decent numbers of greenling and black rockfish. Steelheading was all but over by the time the Coos and Coquille rivers closed at the end of April.

ODFW sez, "Volunteers are needed for the first annual Noble Creek Hatchery fin clipping event on Saturday, May 11. No experience is required and everyone is welcome. There will be training, coffee and doughnuts at 8 a.m. Fin clipping begins at 9 a.m. and should finish about 2 p.m. Lunch will be provided to all volunteers. The hatchery is located at 93638 Green Acres Lane in Coos Bay. To get there from Coos Bay, take Highway 42 and turn east onto Green Acres Lane into the community of Green Acres. Drive about one mile and watch for signs at the hatchery. For more information, contact Clyde Haga of Coos River STEP Association at 541-267-3563 or Gary Vonderohe of ODFW at 541-888-5515 or email gary.r.vonderohe@state.or.us"

Boats launching out of Gold Beach took easy limits of Rockfish over the past weekend as well as copious numbers of ling cod, the best of which hit the 40-pound mark. With the water still low, clear and warm, Chinook fishing has been poor to slow on the lower Rogue River. The few fish taken recently have come at first light. An occasional summer steelhead has been caught but the run won't get really get underway for several weeks. Winter steelhead are still being taken in fair number on the middle Rogue with Chinook catches only fair. With cooler water temperatures and decent flows, the upper river shows promise as Chinook have started showing at the Cole Rivers hatchery facility and steelhead remains fair to good here.

Brookings bottom fishers have enjoyed good results for ling cod and rockfish although ocean conditions have limited efforts this week to the early morning hours before the wind comes up. The Chetco River is closed until trout season which opens on May 25th.

Central and Eastern Oregon – Lower Deschutes redbait fishing has been slow to fair on the Warm Springs to Trout Creek drift. Larger nymphs have been most effective this week. Consider big salmonfly and golden stone nymphs as these buds are on the move this time of year with the hatch historically occurring in the first weeks in May and in full swing from Memorial Day through mid-June.

Crooked River flows are 220 cfs and stable which should provide good results for fly anglers.

Wickiup provided decent results for trollers at the opener over the past weekend. Kokanee were numerous and good sized with the bite fairly shallow early in the morning and progressively deeper as light levels increased. A scented hoochie behind a dodger has been a consistent combination. While the reservoir was crowded at the opener, boat traffic will moderate in coming weeks but traffic is to be expected at a location where kokes average 15 inches or better.

Kokanee fishing has been good at Odell with a limited window of opportunity. Jigging has taken fine numbers of kokanes but only early in the day and again late in the evening. It has been tough to buy a strike whenever the sun has been above the horizon.

Lake Billy Chinook has been slow for kokanee but is producing fair to good numbers of bull trout which have been hitting trolled plugs.

Trollers and jiggers have been taking kokanee at Green Peter with catches reported as slow to fair.

The ice is off Wallowa Lake but kokanee fishing has been slow here.

In a bulletin dated My 2nd, the ODFW reminded anglers that spring Chinook counts on the Umatilla River, tallied each year from April through July, are available online. As of May 1st, 67 adults had crossed Three Mile Falls Dam located at river mile three. For additional information and updated counts, go here:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/fish_counts/three_mile_falls_dam/index.asp

For those who prefer action of the spiny ray variety, Brownlee Reservoir is a worthwhile destination. While crappie fishing has been slow, smallmouth bass have been hitting well. The Army Corps of Engineers has promised to keep water levels up rather than dropping them at spawning time as has occurred in the past.

Washington fishing reports:

From the WDF&W Weekender Report for May 2013

Last updated May 1, 2013

North Puget Sound

(Island, King, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom counties)

The lowland lakes fishing season is officially under way and anglers can expect to reel in some nice-size fish throughout May.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is adding more **trout** this month to several of the region's lakes, including Cranberry Lake in Island County; Desire, Green, Meridian, Morton, Shadow and Spring lakes in King County; Mountain Lake in San Juan County; Pass and Vogler lakes in Skagit County; Ballinger, Blackmans, Shoecraft and Gissburg Ponds in Snohomish County; and Squalicum and Terrell lakes in Whatcom County.

Under statewide rules, anglers have a daily limit of five trout on most lakes. Released legal-sized trout, caught with bait, count toward the daily bag limit. Complete information on stocking schedules for rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout is available on [WDFW's website](#).

Anglers are also encouraged to check the "[Fish Washington](#)" webpage for details on lake fishing opportunities. The map-based webpage includes fishing information by county, lake and fish species throughout the state.

On Puget Sound, fishing for **lingcod** and **cabezon** begins May 1. During the hook-and-line lingcod 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. Cabezon anglers have a daily limit of one fish with an 18-inch minimum size limit.

Saltwater anglers can also reel in **halibut** this month. Several areas of Puget Sound will open for the big flatfish in early May. Heather Reed, coastal policy coordinator for WDFW, said this year's

seasons were reduced by five days in the eastern region (Marine Areas 6-10) and nine days in the western region (Marine Area 5) to compensate for exceeding last year's quota.

"Catch rates were up again in Puget Sound last year, so we had to make some adjustments," Reed said. "In doing that, we made sure the seasons will open on the traditional opening dates, so folks can plan their annual halibut fishing trips well in advance."

The 2013 Puget Sound halibut seasons are as follows:

- **Marine Area 5:** From May 23-26, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday for Memorial Day weekend. From May 30 through June 1, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday and Saturday and then will be open for one final day on Saturday, June 8.
- **Marine Areas 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10:** From May 2-4, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday and Saturday. From May 16-18, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday and Saturday. From May 23-26, the fishery will be open Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday for Memorial Day weekend. The fishery will be open May 30 and 31, Thursday and Friday.
- **Marine Areas 11, 12, 13:** These areas will remain closed to halibut fishing this year to protect threatened and endangered rockfish species.

In all marine areas open to halibut 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.

Prefer shellfish? The **shrimp season** opens May 4 in Puget Sound, where recreational shrimp fishers will get more days to fish and a larger share of the catch.

This year's sport fishery for spot shrimp is expected to run from one day to several weeks longer in various areas of the Sound, due to policy changes recently adopted by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission.

"Recreational shrimp fishers will see a real difference in the length of this year's seasons, particularly in the San Juan Islands and the Strait of Juan de Fuca," said Rich Childers, WDFW shellfish manager. "Sport fisheries in other areas are also likely to pick up some extra fishing days under the updated policy."

In the San Juan Islands, the recent change in the state's spot shrimp policy will increase the sport fishery's share of the catch from 15 percent to 80 percent. To accommodate that change, WDFW split Marine Area 7-North into two subareas – 7 West and 7 South – each with its own season.

Under the higher sport quota, Childers said the new Marine Area 7-West could be open for more than a month this year, up from six days of fishing in those waters last year. The spot shrimp fishery in Marine Areas 7 East and 7 South, also open six days last year, is expected to run 13 days during the 2013 season, he said.

A map of the new subareas is available on WDFW's [Recreational Shrimp Fishing webpage](#) and is published in the [2013 Spot Fishing Rule pamphlet](#).

The shrimp season in Marine Area 6 in the Strait of Juan de Fuca is also expected to expand by several weeks under the new allocation policy, which increased the sport fishery's share of the catch in those waters from 15 percent to 22 percent this year.

The sport fishery in Hood Canal has received 100 percent of the state shrimp allocation in previous years, so it is not affected by the change in the commission's policy, Childers said. However, sport shrimpers will have five days to fish – up from four days last year – because stock trends have been healthy in recent years, he said.

Childers said the new policy does increase sport fishing allocations in other areas of central Puget Sound, but WDFW will determine whether that will translate into additional fishing days during the course of the season.

"The question is whether the higher catch shares will be enough to add a third day of fishing in those areas," he said. "We'll be watching the catch totals during the season and will make that decision on an area-by-area basis."

Puget Sound recreational shrimp season opening days are:

- **Hood Canal Shrimp District (Marine Area 12):** Open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 4, 8, 15, 18 and 22.
- **Discovery Bay Shrimp District (Marine Area 6):** Open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on May 4, 8, 15, 18 and 22.
- **Marine Areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5, 6 and 13 (excluding Discovery Bay Shrimp District):** Open daily beginning May 4 at 7 a.m. The spot shrimp season closes when the quota is attained or Sept. 15, whichever comes first. The exception is Marine Area 13, which closes for spot shrimp May 31.
- **Marine Area 7 East and South:** Open May 4 at 7 a.m. for a one-day fishery and will reopen May 8-11, May 15-18, May 29-June 1.
- **Marine Area 7 West:** Open May 4 at 7 a.m., open Wednesday through Saturday each week until June 1. After June 1 the area will be open Thursday through Saturday each week until the quota is reached or Sept. 15, whichever comes first.
- **Marine Areas 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10 and 11:** Open May 4 and May 8 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Additional dates and times will be announced if sufficient quota remains after the initial fishing days scheduled above.

In all areas of Puget Sound, fishers are limited to 80 spot shrimp per day and a valid 2013-14 fishing license is required to participate in the fishery. For a description of the marine areas and fishing rules, see WDFW's [Recreational Shrimp Fishing website](#).

South Sound/Olympic Peninsula

(Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason, Pierce, Thurston and Pacific counties)

A range of new fishing opportunities begin in May, when shrimp and lingcod seasons open in Puget Sound and halibut fishing gets under way in the Sound and off the coast. Anglers fishing coastal waters also will have an opportunity to hook hatchery chinook salmon during two short openers this month.

Marine areas 3 (LaPush) and 4 (Neah Bay) will be open for **hatchery chinook salmon** May 10-11 and May 17-18. Anglers will have a daily limit of two salmon, except they must release coho and wild chinook.

John Long, statewide salmon manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), said the two salmon openers overlap with halibut fisheries in those areas. "This a great opportunity for halibut anglers who make the trip to the northern coast to round out their weekend by putting some salmon in the cooler as well," he said.

Anglers heading out to the north coast should note that **halibut seasons in marine areas 3 and 4** are open May 9, two days per week, Thursdays and Saturdays through May 18. If there is available quota the fishery will re-open May 30 and/or June 1 and continue again starting Thursday, June 13 until the quota is reached.

Halibut seasons elsewhere on the coast and in Puget Sound are:

- **Marine Area 1:** Open Friday May 3, three days per week (Friday through Sunday) until 80 percent of the quota is achieved. If the early season quota is not obtained prior to Aug. 3, the fishery will remain open three days per week (Friday through Sunday), until the remaining quota is taken, or until Sept. 29, whichever occurs first.
- **Marine Area 2:** Open Sunday, May 5, two days per week, Sunday and Tuesday for three consecutive weeks. The primary fishery is closed May 26 and 28. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will open the following Sunday and/or Tuesday and continue until the quota is achieved, or Sept. 30, whichever occurs first. The northern nearshore area will be open on May 5, and continue seven days per week until the nearshore quota is reached or until Sept. 29, whichever occurs first.
- **Marine Area 5:** Open May 23-26, Thursday through Sunday; May 30-June 1, Thursday through Saturday and Saturday, June 8.
- **Marine Areas 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10** (Marine Areas 11-13 are closed): Open May 2-4, Thursday through Saturday; Open May 16-18, Thursday through Saturday; May 23-26, Thursday through Sunday; May 30-31, Thursday through Friday.

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.

Anglers should also be aware that bottomfishing restrictions in marine areas 3 and 4 have changed from last year. Starting May 1, bottomfishing will be limited to waters shallower than 20 fathoms, except on days when halibut fishing is allowed. On those days, anglers may retain lingcod, Pacific cod and sablefish caught in waters deeper than 20 fathoms.

"The change was made to help avoid exceeding our yelloweye harvest quota through accidental by-catch," said Heather Reed, WDFW coastal policy coordinator. Anglers should take note of bottomfishing restrictions in place by consulting the [Fish Washington](#) pamphlet for regulations for marine areas they are interested in fishing.

Meanwhile, **lingcod** fishing opportunities expand May 1, when the fishery opens in all Puget Sound marine areas except marine area 12 (Hood Canal). 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 2013-14 [Sport Fishing Rules pamphlet](#).

Don't forget those **shrimp** pots. Shrimp fishing opportunities get under way May 4 in Puget Sound. Spot shrimp seasons for various areas of Puget Sound are:

- Hood Canal Shrimp District (Marine Area 12): Open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 4, 8, 15, 18 and 22.
- Discovery Bay Shrimp District (Marine Area 6): Open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on May 4, 8, 15, 18 and 22.
- Marine areas 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), 5, 6 and 13 (excluding shrimp districts): Open daily beginning May 4 at 7 a.m. The spot shrimp season closes when the quota is attained or Sept 15, whichever comes first. The exception is Marine Area 13, which closes for spot shrimp May 31.
- Marine Area 7 East and South: Open May 4 at 7 a.m. for a one-day fishery and will reopen May 8-11, May 15-18, May 29 – June 1.
- Marine Area 7 West: Open May 4 at 7 a.m., open Wednesday through Saturday each week until June 1. After June 1 the area will be open Thursday through Saturday each week until the quota is reached or Sept. 15, whichever comes first.
- Marine areas 8, 9, 10 and 11: Open May 4 and May 8 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Additional dates and times will be announced for these areas if sufficient quota remains.

In all areas of Puget Sound, fishers are limited to 80 spot shrimp per day. For a description of the marine areas and fishing rules, including regulations for coonstripe and pink shrimp fishing seasons, see WDFW's [Recreational Shrimp Fishing website](#).

For freshwater anglers, **trout** are biting at dozens of lakes throughout the region. Opening day of the lowland lakes trout fishing season is over, but WDFW will keep stocking area waters with rainbow, cutthroat and triploid trout right through the season. Information on stocking schedules for trout is available on [WDFW's website](#).

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 [Fish Washington pamphlet](#) for all regulations.

Additionally, the Fish Washington [website](#) offers information for all levels of anglers. This website contains the when's, where's and how-to's of fishing in Washington.

Anglers are reminded that the retention season for **wild steelhead** closed April 30 on the Bogachiel, Calawah, Dickey, Quillayute and Sol Duc rivers.

However, some rivers remain open for **salmon** fishing, including the Quillayute and a portion of the Sol Duc. The Hoh River also opens for salmon May 16. For details on those and other fishing opportunities, check the [Fish Washington pamphlet](#).

Also, for those interested in introducing kids to fishing this spring, youth fishing events are planned throughout May in cities around the state. Events on or near Puget Sound and the Olympic Peninsula are taking place May 4, May 11, and May 18. Visit WDFW's [Youth Fishing webpage](#) for more information on some of the events taking place this summer.

Southwest Washington

(Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Lewis, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties)

Thousands of **spring chinook salmon** are moving up the fish ladders at Bonneville Dam each day, setting the stage for a succession of upriver fisheries on the mainstem Columbia River and its tributaries.

The lower Columbia River is currently closed to salmon fishing until further notice, but spring chinook – along with **hatchery steelhead, white sturgeon, shad** and **trout** – will be available for harvest in various waters throughout the region in May.

Above Bonneville Dam, the fishery for salmon and steelhead is set to run through May 5 on the mainstem Columbia River between the Tower Island power lines and the Washington/Oregon state line, 17 miles upriver from McNary Dam. Bank anglers can also fish upriver from Bonneville Dam to the Tower Island power lines during that time.

After a slow start this season, anglers fishing in that area caught nearly 200 upriver spring chinook salmon during the last week of April, accounting for most of the springers caught there this season. Before the season got under way, state fishery managers estimated that anglers would catch 658 upriver fish in that area through May 5, said Ron Roler, Columbia River policy coordinator for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

"We expect to see some high catch rates through May 5," Roler said. Catch totals can ramp up very quickly when fish passage over the dam starts to peak."

Roler said fishery managers from Washington and Oregon may extend the season above Bonneville, but will hold off making that decision until mid-May when the estimated runsize is updated and more is known about how many hatchery fish are available for harvest. (This report will be updated online to reflect any additional fishing time approved for spring chinook fisheries above or below Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River.)

Whether or not the season is extended on the mainstem Columbia, Roler said anglers are likely to find this month's best fishing for hatchery spring chinook in the Wind River, Drano Lake and Klickitat River – more or less in that order. All three fishing areas typically heat up as fish passage begins to surge at Bonneville Dam, he said.

Like last year, anglers will have more room to fish at the mouth of the Wind River, where the outside fishing boundary has been moved about 250 yards out into the Columbia, Roler said. "Our goal last year was to help relieve overcrowding in that area, which proved successful," he said. Monitoring costs for that project are supported by the endorsement fee paid by anglers who fish the Columbia River and its tributaries.

Joe Hymer, a WDFW fish biologist, said he also expects to see fishing for spring chinook salmon improve this month on the Cowlitz River. In addition, hatchery summer run **steelhead** are beginning to move into the Cowlitz, Kalama, East Fork Lewis, North Fork Lewis, and Washougal rivers. "That should help to sweeten the pot," said Hymer, noting that selective fishing rules will be in effect through early June on the lower East Fork Lewis and Washougal rivers.

Current fishing regulations for the Wind River and other waters throughout the state are described in WDFW's 2013-14 *Sport Fishing Rules* pamphlet, now [available online](#) and from statewide recreational license dealers by early May.

Starting May 1, one new rule requires anglers to use **barbless hooks** when fishing for salmon or steelhead on the Columbia River and most of its tributaries downstream from Chief Joseph Dam. That rule, adopted last month by WDFW, expands on a similar regulation previously in effect on the stretch of the Columbia River that constitutes the border between Washington and Oregon.

The new rule extends the ban on barbed hooks another 250 miles upriver on the Columbia River and to dozens of its tributaries, including the Cowlitz, Wind, White Salmon, Klickitat, Snake, Yakima and Okanogan rivers. Anglers fishing any of those waters will still be allowed to use single, double-point or treble hooks, so long as the barbs have been filed off or pinched down.

With only a few exceptions, the rule requiring the use of barbless hooks will be in effect on rivers and streams where a Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement is required in addition to a current fishing license.

Other fishing rules that take effect May 1 include:

- **Cowlitz Falls Reservoir** (Lewis County): Salmon season opens year round in the reservoir, also known as Lake Scanewa.
- **Fort Borst Park Pond** (Lewis County): Opens to all licensed anglers until further notice. Two poles may be used with a Two-Pole Endorsement.
- **Kalama River** (Cowlitz County): Anglers may retain up to two hatchery steelhead starting 1,000 feet above the fishway at the upper salmon hatchery upstream to Summers Creek.
- **Merwin Lake** (Clark/Cowlitz County): The kokanee limit increases to 10 fish, and kokanee will not count as part of the trout daily limit.

On May 25, fishing will open from the mouth of the Green River to 400 feet below the Toutle Hatchery water intake, and from the mouth of the South Fork Toutle River to the 4700 Road Bridge. Anglers must release all trout, but may retain up to two hatchery steelhead. Selective gear rules apply in both areas.

Emergency fishing rules are also in effect on several rivers to ensure that spawning goals for spring chinook are met at local hatcheries:

- **Lewis River:** All chinook must be released from the mouth upstream to the mouth of the East Fork until further notice. The mainstem Lewis remains open for hatchery steelhead.
- **North Fork Lewis River:** All chinook must be released from the mouth of the East Fork upstream to Merwin Dam until further notice. Through May 31, fishing is closed for all species from Johnson Creek (located downstream from the Lewis River Salmon Hatchery) upstream to Merwin Dam. The North Fork Lewis from Johnson Creek downstream remains open to fishing for hatchery steelhead,
- **Kalama River:** All chinook must be released from the boundary markers at the mouth upstream to the upper salmon hatchery (Kalama Falls Hatchery). The Kalama River remains open to fishing for hatchery steelhead.
- **Wind River:** Through July 31, anglers are limited to one hatchery chinook or one hatchery steelhead per day from the mouth (boundary line/markers) upstream to 400 feet below Shipherd Falls. Wild chinook and wild steelhead must be released. All fishing is closed until further notice from 400 feet below Shipherd Falls upstream, including all tributaries.

For additional information, see the [rule change notices](#) on the WDFW website.

Meanwhile, anglers can catch and keep **white sturgeon** from Buoy 10 upstream to Bonneville Dam, and in The Dalles and John Day pools during the times specified below. Fishing has been slow, but anglers have been landing a few legal-size fish, particularly in the Dalles and John Day pools.

The limit is one legal-size white sturgeon per day, with a two-fish annual limit. The new annual limit was approved by the Washington and Oregon fish and wildlife commissions to help address the decline of legal-size sturgeon in the lower Columbia River in recent years.

Current fishing opportunities for sturgeon are as follows:

- **Buoy 10 to the Wauna powerlines:** Retention of white sturgeon is allowed daily from May 11 through June 30. During that period, sturgeon must measure between 41 inches to 54 inches (fork length) to be retained. Catch-and-release fishing is allowed on days when retention is prohibited.
- **Wauna powerlines to Bonneville Dam:** Retention of white sturgeon is allowed three days per week (Thursday through Saturday) through June 15 and from Oct. 19 through Dec. 31. Sturgeon must measure between 38 inches and 54 inches (fork length) to be retained. Catch-and-release fishing is allowed on days when retention is prohibited.
- **Pools above Bonneville Dam:** Bonneville Pool is open daily for catch-and-release fishing only, but anglers may retain legal-size sturgeon in the two reservoirs between The Dalles and McNary dams until their respective 300-fish and 500-fish guidelines are met.

Just as soon catch some **trout**? Several trout streams, stocked with feisty rainbows, will open for fishing on the Saturday of Memorial weekend. They include Canyon Creek and the upper Little White Salmon River in Skamania County, and Bird Creek, Outlet Creek, and Spring Creek and in Klickitat County.

WDFW also will continue to stock lowland lakes with catchable-size trout. Those receiving additional plants in May include Sacajawea, Kress, and Horseshoe lakes in Cowlitz county; Battleground Lake in Clark County; Kidney Lake in Skamania County; and Spearfish and Horsethief lakes in Klickitat County. Also, as the snow recedes in the mountains, many high lakes will become available to anglers.

Eastern Washington

(Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla and Whitman counties)

Trout-stocked lake fishing is in full swing in May throughout the region with some of the best producing waters just open since April 27. Opening-day catch rates for nearly 100 lakes throughout the state are summarized in a [news release](#) on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) website.

Two lakes in Spokane County and one each in Lincoln and Stevens counties were among the state's top dozen lakes, ranked according to catch-and-keep rates during the first weekend of fishing.

West Medical Lake, near the town of Medical Lake in southwest Spokane County, has been producing daily limits of five trout – mostly **rainbow** and **brown trout** – within a few hours for most anglers. The 114 anglers surveyed on opening day had kept 477 fish and released 98 others for an average catch per angler of 5.4 fish, of which 4.3 were retained. The largest fish recorded caught on opening day at West Medical was a 20-inch rainbow.

The 78 anglers surveyed at Williams Lake, southwest of Cheney in Spokane County, had kept 330 fish and released 93 others. had about the same catch and keep rates on the opener. The largest fish recorded caught there then was a 19-inch rainbow. A 16-inch **tiger trout** and five smaller **cuthroat trout** were also checked on the opener.

Fishtrap Lake, east of Sprague on the Lincoln-Spokane county line, had a 4.7 fish per catch rate and 4.4 fish kept per angler rate on the opener. Randy Osborne, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), reported checking 37 anglers at Fishtrap with 161 rainbow trout and 12 released fish. The largest catch recorded was a 24-inch hatchery broodstock rainbow trout.

Based on a check of 15 anglers with 67 fish, WDFW northeast district fish biologist Bill Baker reported a 4.5 fish per catch rate on the opener at Rocky Lake, south of Colville in Stevens County. Baker said about a quarter of the trout caught were carryovers bigger than 14 inches, with the rest averaging 11.5 inches from fry plants last year. The largest trout recorded was a 17.5-inch rainbow.

At Fish Lake northeast of Cheney in Spokane County, anglers averaged 2.6 trout kept, but catch-and-release anglers using selective gear averaged 6.9 fish, making the overall catch rate one of the highest in the state. The biggest fish recorded that day was a 17-incher, and Osborne said anglers caught some nice Eastern brook trout, too.

Clear Lake, south of the town of Medical Lake in Spokane County, also had a high overall catch rate on the opener – 6.7 fish per angler, with a 3.9 kept fish per angler average, based on 22 anglers checked with 85 fish and 63 released fish. Many kept fish were 14-16-inch carryover rainbows, in addition to the 10-12 inch catchable-size rainbows recently stocked. About 11 percent of the harvest was brown trout. The largest fish recorded there was a 17-inch rainbow.

Another high overall catch rate on the opener was measured at Ellen Lake, north of Inchelium in Ferry County, where 16 anglers were checked with 58 fish and 39 released fish, for a 6.1 average catch rate and 3.6 average fish kept rate. Ellen's largest fish on the opener was a 16-inch rainbow.

Stevens County's Starvation Lake, southeast of Colville, had lots of happy anglers on the opener, Baker reported, with an overall average catch rate of 3.8 mostly kept fish. That was based on a check of 39 anglers with 137 fish and just 10 released. Baker says almost of half of the kept fish were carryovers bigger than 13 inches, with the largest fish a 16-inch rainbow.

Waitts Lake, in southern Stevens County near Valley, also had a good opener, with an overall average catch rate of 3.5 fish per angler, based on a check of 72 with 175 fish and 75 released. The largest measured that day was a 21-inch rainbow.

Diamond Lake, near Newport in Pend Oreille County, had an opening day average catch rate of 3.2 fish per angler, based on 25 with 81 fish. The catch at Diamond is a mix of rainbow and brown trout, with the largest record on the opener a 22-inch rainbow.

Cedar Lake, north of Leadpoint near the Canada border in Stevens County, produced an average catch rate of 2.4 fish per angler on the opener, based on 23 with 55 fish and just one released. Baker reported anglers happy at Cedar with nice-sized carryovers; the biggest was a 16-inch rainbow.

Badger Lake, south of Cheney in Spokane County, produced an average of 2.2 trout per angler on the opener, based on 61 anglers catching 134 fish. The largest recorded were an 18-inch rainbow and a 17-inch cutthroat.

Mudgett Lake, in southern Stevens County near Fruitland, was slower on the opener, probably because the windy conditions throughout the region seemed to pick up there earlier in the day. The catch rate measured was 1.6 fish per angler, based on 13 with 21 fish. The largest was a 16.5-inch rainbow, one of the few carryovers from fry plants.

Deep Lake, southeast of Northport in Stevens County, had the least number of anglers checked on the opener, largely due to wind very early in the day. Just nine anglers were fishing in the morning and none had catches. With better conditions, fishing for rainbow, cutthroat and brook trout should pick up and stocked **kokanee** will come on strong next month.

In the southeast end of the region, lake fishing has been under way on all but one of several Tucannon River impoundments in Columbia County since March. Curl Lake, an acclimation pond for spring Chinook salmon smolts that are now gone, just opened April 27 for fishing on hatchery-stocked rainbow trout. Curl will have plenty of action through this month and next on 10-12 inch rainbows and some "jumbos" that run about 1.5 pounds each.

Meanwhile on the Snake River, fishing for hatchery-marked **spring chinook salmon** open two days each week in three zones, but is expected to close before the month is over. The zone from Pasco upstream to near Ice Harbor Dam is currently open on Fridays and Saturdays. On Sundays and Mondays, fishing is open in the stretch from Texas Rapids to near Little Goose Dam, and in the stretch from the intersection of Steptoe Canyon and Wawawai River roads to the state line in Clarkston.

Anglers are advised to [check the details](#) of this restricted fishery and watch the WDFW website for possible notice of an early closure.

Many more lake fishing opportunities are available throughout the region and can be found in detail by county on WDFW's [Fish Washington website](#).

Northcentral Washington

(Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Grant and Okanogan counties)

Trout-stocked lake fishing is in full swing in May throughout the region with some of the best producing waters open since April 27. Opening-day catch rates for nearly 100 lakes throughout the state are summarized in a [news release](#) on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) website.

Conconully Reservoir in Okanogan County was one of the state's top dozen lakes on opening day with a catch-and-keep rate of 4.3 fish per angler. Bob Jateff, WDFW Okanogan district fish biologist, said the catch at the reservoir has been running about two-thirds **rainbow trout** in the 10-12-inch range and one-third **kokanee** in the 11-13-inch range.

Pearrygin, Alta, Fish, and Conconully lakes in Okanogan County are also producing good catches of rainbow trout in the 10-12 inch range, with larger fish to 18 inches, Jateff said. On the opener, Pearrygin anglers checked averaged 5.8 fish caught, with 3.8 kept, including a five-pound **brown trout** and five-pound triploid rainbow. At Alta Lake, anglers averaged 2.7 caught fish, with almost all kept. Conconully Lake anglers averaged 2.2 fish each, and Fish Lake anglers averaged 2.1 fish.

Other Okanogan County lakes that opened in late April but were not creel-checked are also producing well, Jateff said. Anglers at Blue and Big Twin lakes, which are under selective gear rules, are reportedly catching rainbows in the 10-16 inch range. Leader and Wannacut lakes received plants of 10-12-inch rainbows along with fish weighing a pound or more right before the opener.

Jateff also noted that Spectacle Lake, which has been open since April 1, continues to produce limits of rainbows in the 11-12 inch range for both shore and boat anglers. Patterson Lake, which is open year-round, continues to provide good fishing for kokanee in the 10-11 inch range along with catches of **yellow perch**. Year-round Palmer Lake has also been a consistent producer for kokanee in the 11-14 inch range.

In Chelan County, WDFW district fish biologist Travis Maitland of Wenatchee reports checking 75 anglers at Wapato Lake on the opener when they averaged 2.3 fish each, most in the 14-15-inch range with several over 19 inches. Clear Lake anglers averaged 3.4 fish caught, with the largest about 18 inches. Anglers fishing Beehive Lake anglers averaged 1.6 fish each, the largest 16.5 inches along with some **tiger trout**.

In Douglas County, 40 anglers were checked on the opener at Jameson Lake for an average of 3.3 fish caught, including rainbows from nine to 24 inches.

Many Columbia Basin fishing lakes have been open since the first of March or April, but some top producers opening on the fourth Saturday of April were worth the wait. WDFW district fish biologist Chad Jackson of Moses Lake expects the good fishing measured on opening day will continue through May at Grant County's Blue, Deep, Park, Perch, Vic Meyers and Warden lakes.

The 36 anglers checked at Blue Lake on the opener averaged 3.8 fish caught and 3.6 fish kept, with most averaging 12.5-13.5 inches and carryovers from 16 to 20 inches. Ninety-one anglers checked at Deep Lake had great fishing for 11-15-inch trout, averaging 4.7 fish caught and 3.8 fish kept. Park Lake was a little slower with an average of 2.9 fish caught, but anglers checked there were happy with the quality of the fish, Jackson said,.

Perch Lake generally has few anglers because it's mostly a shoreline effort, Jackson said, but it has nice fish and it's a good place to get away from the crowds at the other lakes. Seven anglers were checked on the opener at Perch with an average of 5.3 fish caught and 3.6 fish kept, most 11-13 inches with some 14-16-inch triploids.

Vic Meyers Lake anglers averaged four fish caught, most in the 11-13-inch range with some carryovers and triploids running 14 to 20 inches. Warden Lake has good fishing for mostly 11-inch yearling trout, with some carryovers 16-20 inches. On opening day, 65 anglers checked at Warden averaged 3.9 fish caught and 3.6 fish kept.

Many more lake-fishing opportunities are available throughout the region and can be found on WDFW's [Fish Washington website](http://www.TheGuidesForecast.com).

Southcentral Washington

(Benton, Franklin, Kittitas and Yakima counties)

Anglers will have a chance to land some feisty spring chinook salmon this month and can catch good-size rainbow trout in well-stocked lakes around the region. Sturgeon also will be available in the waters above John Day Dam and McNary Dams.

With **spring chinook** just beginning to move into the Yakima River, state fishery managers are now planning to open the fishery sometime in mid-May. As of April 29, only four adult hatchery spring chinook had passed Prosser Dam.

"There's no good reason to open the fishery until there are enough fish to catch," said John Easterbrooks, WDFW regional fish program manager. "That would be a disservice to anglers and incur unnecessary monitoring costs for the department."

Easterbrooks said he expects that a fishing rule setting an opening for the fishery will be posted on [WDFW's website](#) and distributed to media outlets during the first or second week of May.

According to the pre-season forecast, approximately 3,200 adult hatchery spring chinook salmon will return to the Yakima River in 2013, compared to 5,700 predicted last year. Easterbrooks said this year's season will be similar to last year's, but will likely reflect a smaller return.

Like last year, anglers will have a daily limit of two adipose-fin-clipped hatchery chinook. All wild salmon, identifiable by an intact adipose fin, must be released unharmed and must not be removed from the water prior to release. Bait is allowed, but anglers will be 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.

Trout are another option. Waters scheduled to be stocked with rainbow trout this month include Bear Lake, Clear Lake, Dog Lake, McCabe Pond and Columbia Park Pond. A complete trout-planting schedule for south-central lakes and ponds is available on the [WDFW website](#).

The 13th annual **Kids Fishing event** will be held at Columbia Park Pond in Kennewick on May 11. All youths [must pre-register at Kennewick Parks and Recreation](#) to attend.

As of late April, anglers could still catch and keep **legal-size sturgeon** in Lake Umatilla (John Day Dam to McNary Dam), but that fishery will close as soon as the 500-fish quota for those waters is reached. Anglers planning to fish the lake should keep an eye on the WDFW website for possible updates. Farther upriver, the retention fishery for white sturgeon above McNary Dam (Lake Wallula) is scheduled to run through July 31.

In both areas, anglers may retain only those white sturgeon that measure between 43 inches and 54 inches when measured from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail. Sturgeon spawning sanctuaries below Priest Rapids Dam and Ice Harbor Dam close to all sturgeon fishing (both harvest and catch-and-release) beginning May 1. They reopen for catch-and-release fishing on Aug. 1.

Rather catch **warm-water fish**? Catch rates should continue to improve on area rivers for smallmouth bass, channel catfish and walleye right through spring.

Anglers age 15 or older are reminded that they must purchase a 2013-14 license to fish state waters. Those who fish for salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River and its tributaries are also required to purchase an endorsement that helps maintain and improve fishing opportunities throughout the Columbia River Basin. Licenses and permits are available [online](#), by phone (1-866-246-9453) and from sporting goods stores and other retail license dealers around the state.

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Random Links

Ocean salmon season finalized this week; here's the rundown:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/salmon/Regulations/docs/2013_Sport_Ocean_Salmon_Regs.pdf

Coho or Chinook? Know the difference: <http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/fmd/identify.htm>

Sport Fishing Waypoints off the Oregon Coast:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/mrp/regulations/sport_fishing/waypoints.asp

Portland Rod Building Class May 18, 2013 from Mudhole includes all materials for \$150:

<http://www.mudhole.com/RBCK-5-18-2013>

GOOD LUCK!