

The Guide's Forecast - volume 15 issue number 21

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 17<sup>th</sup> – May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013**

**Oregon Fisheries Update:**

**Willamette Valley/Metro-** Many have given up on the Willamette River's spring chinook season. The combination of the poor bite and the overabundance of thieving sea lions has rendered the fishing useless and a waste of time for a large part of the angling public. Anglers intent on the possibility of catching springers in the Willamette are encouraged to carry on as usual, as there will be fish moving through the system for another four to five weeks. The Multnomah Channel, Portland Harbor and Oregon City will have the best action.

The catch and release sturgeon fishing has been excellent, for the few who participate. The Portland Harbor is the favorite zone for the sturgeon crowd offering access at Swan Island and Cathedral Park boat ramps. There are also good numbers of sturgeon in the deeper slots of the Multnomah Channel and further upriver from Milwaukie up to Willamette Falls. Look to the deeper holes for the best action, often times reaching depths of 60-80 feet.

The shad are in and taking center stage at Oregon City, expect the action to be in full swing by the weekend. Smallmouth bass are on the bite and bass boats are frequenting the river, especially in the afternoons and evenings. Soon, the all too secretive walleye guys will be plying the shelves of the Multnomah Channel looking for their quarry.

Hatches have thinned out on the McKenzie River but nymphs remain productive. The Mac has been fishing well since early in the season this year. Rainbows, cutthroat and a few bull trout are available.

Flows at the North Santiam are expected to remain stable over the coming week. With little snow in the mountains, the level may drop a little once it's gone. With strong passage of spring chinook and fair but steady passage of summer steelhead at the Falls, results are expected to improve on the Santiams. Both chinook and steelhead have been caught on the North Santiam over the past week.

The Clackamas River is in good shape and has been giving up both summer steelhead and a few spring chinook. The steelhead will continue to trickle in and the fishing should remain about as steady as its going to get through the middle of July. The springer numbers should build through mid-June. Boaters are getting fish in the runs, back trolling plugs, side drifting small baits and running small divers and shrimp or roe. Bank anglers concentrate in the upper river from Barton upstream. Bobber and jig stet ups are the preferred method of the bank bound fisher, but a skilled hardware fisherman can do some real damage with spinners and spoons. Anglers targeting springers are picking up fish on small baits of roe and shrimp in the deep runs, but the odd fish will sometimes take a small plug.

Both summer steelhead and a few spring chinook are present in the Sandy River. Water levels are slowly dropping but remain about par for this time of year. Boater and bank anglers are scoring in the earlier part of the day as well as the evening when shade is on the water. Drift

boats are working the water between Oxbow Park and Lewis and Clark State park with average success. Bank fishers are finding the best access at Oxbow Park and Dodge Park.

**Northwest** – Although still sporadic, spring chinook have made a sizable showing on Tillamook Bay recently. During the current minus tide series, upper bay fishing held some promise, with rumors of a 6 fish day last week and fair action witnessed on Monday. Pat Vining and Keith Braun of the Tillamook area each took a hatchery springer on plugs early on Monday morning. Area rivers saw only a slight rise in levels on Monday but as dry as it has been, even a negligible river rise could have sent more fish upstream on the Trask and Wilson Rivers.

Offshore, all-depth halibut anglers came back largely disappointed after calm seas heightened interest on the last Thursday – Saturday opener. This is usually a slam-dunk fishery but action on the entire north coast was poor during this traditionally productive period of time. Something is amiss. Bottomfishing remains fair to good out of most ports although not as good as it was earlier in the season.

Sturgeon anglers on the lower Columbia fared well on the Saturday opener. Lower than normal flows for this time of year stimulated a fair bite out of the John Day Ramp (near Astoria) with nearly a keeper/boat witnessed on Saturday.

Crabbing both inshore and off remains challenging. Effort is running especially high during open days for halibut. Clamming was good on the last tide series as well. Another minus tide series won't happen until May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Southwest**- Good catches of rockfish and lings have been taken out of Newport and Depoe Bay, though mostly short of limits. Spring all-depth halibut fishing was decent and will continue May 16-18 and May 30-June 1.

Offshore forecasts for the coming weekend are optimistic about ocean conditions and conducive to bar crossings but the situation can change quickly so get last minute updates before hauling the boat westward.

Halibut fishers launching out of Winchester Bay for the first round of all depth angling had fair to good results. The redbait surf perch run has started in the bay with decent catches occurring recently around Marker 12. Spring chinook catches have been fair to good on the mainstem Umpqua where the shad run has started with best results at Sawyers Rapids. Steelheading is fair in the flies-only stretch of the North Umpqua. Bass fishing is expected to be good on the South Umpqua when it opens May 25th.

Boats launching out of Gold Beach over the past week had hot bottom fishing for rockfish and lings one day, short on limits the next. The first halibut fishery of 2013 was spotty. Spring chinook fishing remains slow on the lower Rogue despite a gradual increase in flows. Catches are poor in the middle river. With springers in the upper Rogue now and numbers building at the hatchery, chances of a hookup are improving daily. The upriver stretch will be the area to fish in the coming week.

Salmon hopefuls launching out of Brookings have returned to port with nothing to show but that's not unusual at this time of year. Chinook trollers will find success as ocean temperatures warm into the lower 50s which will occur later this month. Rockfish and lingcod were cooperative and several Pacific halibut were landed. Local beaches are producing good numbers of surf perch.

Trout fishing has been good at Diamond Lake following ice-out. Campsites will be available at the resort until the local campground opens for the year.

**Eastern** – Salmon Flies and Golden Stones are becoming more active daily on the Deschutes. Nymphs have been very effective and redsides are starting to look up for big bugs.

Crooked River flows have been just over 200 cfs and stable for over a week which is good news for fly fishers.

Dry flies have been effective at first light before a breeze comes up at Lava Lake.

Brook trout have been responding to nymphs at Hosmer Lake.

Chinook salmon season on the Umatilla River will close effective 12:01 on Thursday, May 16 under emergency regulations adopted today by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**Soapbox Update:** Come to the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Bounty on the Bay targeting spring chinook. It looks like it's going to be a good run here in Tillamook. Fair catches have already been experienced. PLUS, hear the latest and greatest on how Oregon is managing our cormorant population for ODF&W biologist Lindsay Adrean. Lots of great information here, including a spring chinook seminar on Friday, May 31<sup>st</sup> in Garibaldi! Check out all the details at [www.tbnep.org](http://www.tbnep.org).

**SW Washington-** Returns to district rivers are poor with the Kalama and Lewis River hatcheries witnessing fewer than 30 adults back to the facilities as of May 10<sup>th</sup>. The Cowlitz remains the best option and fish are being taken near the Barrier Dam.

Action as Wind River and Drano Lake predictably slowed with a high percentage of the fish taken being jacks. The run has peaked passed these fisheries.

**Columbia River Fishing Report** – Although fishery managers discussed the possibility of another sport opener for the mainstem Columbia, given the poor performance of the run passage at Bonneville, it was decided that an opener was not prudent. There are fish that remain "on the table" for the sport fleet but managers decided it may be best to add time to the summer chinook run instead of risking a short closure between the spring and summer chinook seasons. Look for additional time for the mid-June summer chinook opener.

Commercial gillnets got another short opener this week and they will likely eat up their allocation of upriver impacts for the season.

As for consumptive opportunity, there are some sturgeon around. With the estuary opener on Saturday, effort was running a bit high as anglers are searching for something positive this spring. Although catches remained predictably sporadic, boats that fished out of the John Day Ramp did average about a keeper per boat on the opening day (Saturday). Boats fishing lower in the estuary did not fare as well. Sand shrimp is an early season favorite and anglers fishing upstream of Longview are also doing quite well. Here is the check but as you can see, the better fishing actually took place upstream of Longview:

**Troutdale Bank:**

No report.

**Troutdale Boats:**

Weekly checking showed four legal white sturgeon kept, plus 22 sublegal sturgeon released for six boats (13 anglers).

**Portland to Longview Bank:**

Weekly checking showed one oversize and one sublegal sturgeon released for 15 bank anglers.

**Portland to Scappoose Boats:**

Weekly checking showed 40 legal white sturgeon kept, plus one legal, two oversize and 382 sublegal sturgeon released for 40 boats (120 anglers).

**Estuary Boats (Puget Island to Buoy 10):**

Weekly checking showed five legal white sturgeon kept, plus one legal, one oversize and 55 sublegal sturgeon released for 20 boats (51 anglers); and no catch for 12 charter boat anglers.

**The Dalles Pool:**

Weekly checking showed five sublegal sturgeon released for 10 bank anglers; and one legal white sturgeon kept, plus one oversize and 43 sublegal sturgeon released for eight boats (23 anglers).

**John Day Pool:**

Weekly checking showed no catch for eight bank anglers; and one legal, one oversize and 15 sublegal sturgeon released for nine boats (21 anglers).

With the relatively low water we're experiencing this season, it's not unexpected that we would see fair catches in the estuary and slightly upstream this time of year. Although spill and flow is expected to increase into late May, the river will remain somewhat low, relatively speaking anyway, compared to previous years. This should bring anchovies into the river sooner than in years past and stimulate the bite for keepers in the estuary. There are already reports of sea lions eating sturgeon in the estuary however. Hopefully, we won't have to deal with that in the near future. It's no secret at this point that there was a mass abandoning of sea lion pups in Southern California to feast on the smelt run on the lower Columbia. Now, we have an even greater over-abundance of sea lions on the lower Columbia with a finite food source to feed them. Meanwhile, a massive rescue mission is being conducted by folks such as the Oregon Coast Aquarium to save the sea lion pups instead of letting nature take its course.

Steelhead season opens on May 16<sup>th</sup> between Tongue Point and the I-5 Bridge but we'll report on that in the forecast section of this newsletter.

Shad are starting to go over Bonneville Dam in force but there are much bigger numbers to come. This should provide a very fun fishery in the near future.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Although sturgeon may steal the lime-light, summer steelhead and especially spring chinook jacks may have a role in this week's May 16<sup>th</sup> opener. Of course only fin-clipped jack spring chinook and steelhead may be retained and it's likely that anglers will come across adult spring chinook as well; they must be released unharmed. Unfortunately, this week is not a minus tide series so it won't be so conducive to productive salmon or steelhead fishing. The following week should be considerably better. As a general rule, until summer steelhead counts at Bonneville top 200 fish or better per day, action won't be all that great for the summer run fish. We're still a ways away from that. There will likely be some bank effort as it is the opener but don't count on great fishing unless something miraculous happens.

As for sturgeon, anxious anglers will be glad to know that the low spring flows will be a good thing for those after an early target for sturgeon on the lower Columbia. Although action may

actually be better in the St. Helens area, there should be some keepers available downstream of Wauna. It appears as if they are making their way downstream and fresh ocean-run sturgeon should also be making their way upstream but charter boat catches below the bridge were abysmal.

Sand shrimp will likely be the best option as anchovies will be hard to come by this early in the season. Some folks may have old frozen smelt available to them and that should work well too. Squid is a distant back up.

As for other species out of the Columbia, crabbing remains fair at best and bottom fishing on the extreme tide series was ok but could have been much better. The tides soften considerably over the weekend, which should bolster catches of lingcod and sea bass. There are a lot of kelp greenling available too. Fish along the rocks while the tide is running and head out to the sunken jetty when slack tide occurs. Both jigs and bait have been effective; bait is the slam dunk option for both bass and lingcod but especially lingcod. Wind waves may be a problem over the weekend but here is the forecast; of course, subject to change:

**FRI**

W WIND TO 5 KT. WIND WAVES 1 FT. W SWELL 4 FT AT 10 SECONDS.

**FRI NIGHT**

W WIND 5 TO 10 KT...BECOMING SW AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 4 FT AT 10 SECONDS. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

**SAT**

S WIND 5 TO 10 KT...RISING TO 10 TO 15 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 4 FT AT 10 SECONDS. SHOWERS LIKELY.

**SAT NIGHT**

W WIND 5 TO 10 KT. GUSTS TO 15 KT IN THE EVENING. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT AT 10 SECONDS. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

**SUN**

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 6 FT.

**MON**

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 5 FT.

Halibut fishing out of Astoria has been pathetic! Some charter boats are opting for bottomfishing trips or the sturgeon option but the halibut seem to be non-existent. It seem odd for this typically productive fishery; don't kill the messenger. Bottomfishing effort is taking place off of Tillamook Head to the south. Some nice lings are coming from the catches.

**Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "Many have given up on the Willamette River's spring Chinook season. The combination of the poor bite and the overabundance of thieving sea lions has rendered the fishing useless and a waste of time for a large part of the angling public. Funny though, the Willamette Falls counts indicate that daily fish passage is right in step with a "decent" return. One might suspect that because of higher than normal water temps and lower than usual flows and turbidity, the fish are moving rather than holding. When salmon are on the move, they aren't as interested in biting, it's that simple. Just a theory, but it's just as hard to argue, as it is

to ask the salmon why. Anglers intent on the possibility of catching springers in the Willy are encouraged to keep on keepin' on as there will be fish moving through the system for another four to five weeks. The Multnomah Channel, Portland Harbor and Oregon City will have the best action. Either way, there are other fishing alternatives in the metro area and fisher-people are better off focusing their efforts on those fisheries, as opposed to whining about the uneventful springer fishing on the Willamette proper. That being said, there are other opportunities on the Willamette. The catch and release sturgeon fishing has been off the hook, for the few who participate. The Portland Harbor is the favorite zone for the sturgeon crowd offering access at Swan Island and Cathedral Park boat ramps. There are also good numbers of sturgeon in the deeper slots of the Multnomah Channel and further upriver from Milwaukie up to Willamette Falls. Look to the deeper holes for the best action, often times reaching depths of 60-80 feet. "Savvy" gator fishermen rely heavily on their depth finders to locate the presences of fish, if they aren't showing on the screen, move till you find them. Why the feeding sturgeon stack in the deepest holes is a mystery to me, but it might be that the deepest holes are catch basins for drifting food. The fish don't seem to favor one bait more than the other, just get it down to them and get ready for some action. Smelt, squid, herring, shrimp and even worms will all bring bites. Smallmouth bass are on the bite and bass boats are frequenting the river, especially in the afternoons and evenings. Soon the all too secretive walleye guys will be plying the shelves of the Multnomah Channel looking for old dark eyes."

Despite fewer hatches on the McKenzie, fishing remains well worth the trip. River levels and flows will remain good for anglers through the weekend. There are a few summers in the system but trout will remain the primary quarry. Some guides are booking upcoming springer trips on the Mac.

With Detroit over full summer level, any adjustment will be reflected in North Santiam flows but other than that, the river is predicted to remain stable over the coming week. Over 14,000 springers and nearly 3,800 summers have been counted at Willamette Falls, many of these bound for the Santiams. While these are not yet impressive numbers, fish will continue upstream passage through June.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and several local partners will host a free youth fishing event at the McNary Channel Ponds near Hermiston on Saturday, May 18 from 10 a.m. to noon. The event is free and open to all youth 2 to 14 years old. Loaner fishing rods and reels, tackle and bait will be available for those who don't have their own gear.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will host a Family Fishing event on Saturday, May 18 at Mt. Hood Pond in Gresham from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Fishing at this location is restricted to youths 17 and under and persons with disability fishing permits.

Estacada Lake, Faraday Lake, Huddelston Pond, North Fork Reservoir, Small Fry Lake, Alton Baker Canal, Detroit Reservoir, E E Wilson Pond, Foster Reservoir, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Lake, Quartzville Creek, Sunnyside Park Pond, Timber Linn Lake, Trail Bridge Reservoir, Waverly Lake and the Coast Fork Willamette River are on the stocking schedule this week.

**The Guide's Forecast** – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377) predicts, "On the Willamette River, the shad run will be in full swing by the time this writing gets to press. Oregon City will have the best action and by far the greatest effort, but the Multnomah Channel fishers will soon fall in step and start forming hog lines. Spring Chinook will also still be present for a few more weeks but as stated in the report, effort and enthusiasm is waning. Sturgeon anglers will continue to knock out big numbers in the deep holes, but little competition is expected in this catch and release fishery."

When McKenzie hatches do occur, they're likely to be McKenzie Caddis at this time of year. Throw imitations of these larger insects in sizes 8 and 10 to hookup with the local trout. In the absence of hatches, fly anglers throwing nymphs will do well here.

Fishing has been fair on the North Santiam but is expected to improve as fish passage picks up on the Willamette. The counting facility at Foster Dam has seen over 50 spring Chinook and summer steelhead counts have topped 550, an indication there are fish to be had in the South Santiam. Most of the fish counted have been trucked back downstream to allow anglers another chance at them.

**Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** reports, "The Clackamas River is in good shape and has been giving up both summer steelhead and a few spring Chinook. The steelhead will continue to trickle in and the fishing should remain about as steady as its going to get through the middle of July before it slowly tapers off. The springer numbers should build into mid-June, and taper off when the river drops to a level making fishing conditions challenging. Anglers chasing the steelhead have been doing "decent" with most types of gear and techniques. Boaters are getting fish in the runs, back trolling plugs, side drifting small baits and running small divers and shrimp or roe. In between long runs, fishermen would be wise to toss bobbers and jigs and size 4 or 5 spinners in the riffles and boulder strewn pocket water. Doing this will result in additional fish caught, turning a slow day into a good day and a good day into an excellent day. Bank anglers concentrate in the upper river from Barton upstream. Bobber and jig set ups are the preferred method of the bank bound fisher, but a skilled hardware fisherman can do some real damage with spinners and spoons this time of year. Early in the season, springer fishing is primarily a boat show. Anglers targeting springers are picking up fish on roe and shrimp, either fished individually or in combination. Back-troll with a small diver or backbounce these baits and remember to keep your offering about the size of a quarter. Larger baits often get ignored by the weary spring Chinook. The shy springer will also at times take small plugs like the 3.5 Maglip or a standard Wiggle Wart. Gold, green pirate, metallic blue, red and green are a few favorite colors.

"On the Sandy River today, the Guides Forecast received another confirmed, reliable report of a springer taken in the Oxbow to Dabney Park stretch. This time it was a nice wild fish of about fifteen pounds, it was caught (and released) on a metallic blue 3.5 Maglip. A hot summer steelhead of ten pounds was also caught (and retained) on the very same lure. NW anglers take note, if you aren't already picking up on a theme here, the Maglip is a deadly plug for both steelhead and salmon alike. Water levels are slowly dropping on the Sandy but remain about par for this time of year. Plugging will be a very effective technique through the spring and it tends to be the preferred method when the water is at average to lower levels and has some clarity to it. Like mentioned above in the Clack section, boat fishermen should bring along a spinning rod with a bobber and jig rig or a spinner for the in-between spots."

**The Guide's Forecast – Pro guide Chris Vertopoulos (503-349-1377)** predicts, "Clackamas River anglers can expect much of the same for the next few weeks while the Chinook numbers continue to slowly build. Water levels should remain steady with a very slow drop over the next few days. Summer steelhead are present and fishermen should focus their effort to the mornings and evenings for the best success. Springers are also present and numbers should continue to ramp up through mid-June.

"On the Sandy, spring Chinook are beginning to show and more will be caught as the weeks go by. Expect the run to build through June and fish are regularly taken through the fourth of July. Summer steelhead are here too and fishermen have been posting modest numbers since mid

April. The river is scheduled to drop a couple of inches a day and fishing should remain decent through the weekend. Your fishing time will be best spent in the early mornings, when more shade is on the water and the inner tubers are still in bed."

**North Coast Fishing Report** – Spring chinook have finally started to arrive in catchable numbers and anglers that are motivated to get out after them in the early morning have been doing fair in the upper bay on the current tide series. The minus tide series is always a good bet in the upper estuary and this series was no exception although action was far from slam-dunk. Consistent catches did come for experienced anglers working the upper bay however but that quality opportunity is waning now that the tide series is. Springers were taken on plugs during the outgoing tide but spinners and herring were also responsible for several hatchery fish. I was quite surprised by the number of salmon rolling around in the upper bay this week; not so surprised about the number of them that were biting. If you got 2 fish for the morning effort, you were doing good. The incoming tide didn't produce well (as usual) until we got closer to high slack. Overall, it was good to see the numbers that we did for this time of year. Hopefully we didn't lose a bunch of these fish upstream on what little rain we had last week.

River rises in the district were only about a tenth of a foot this week, not big enough to stimulate a bunch of fish to head upstream but it doesn't take much when you've had as little rain as we've experienced in recent weeks. The Trask has remained the best bet, mostly due to the fact that it will receive the largest return of adults to the basin. Persistent anglers have been taking springers near the hatchery for a few weeks now, although not with any consistency. The Wilson has also reported a rare salmon but remains a second choice, along with the Nestucca and Three Rivers systems. It's only going to get better and the recent weather change will only do this fishery good. Cloudy weather typically produces better catches under these low, clear water conditions. Summer steelhead on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers have been slow.

Offshore anglers were a bit disappointed in results last week. Calm seas drew hoards of anglers in pursuit of halibut on the first 3-day opener on the north coast. Numerous anglers reported skunked catches for flatties and bottomfishing catches even slowed a bit last week. To boot, the offshore salmon that were being targeted seemed to move even farther offshore; some say even as far out as the halibut, which are typically about 24 miles to the west of Garibaldi. The biggest surprise was the lack of halibut on the traditional grounds; usually a slam-dunk fishery. It's clear something is amiss as halibut boats out of Astoria drew mostly skunks and were talking their passengers into targeting bottomfish or sturgeon in the lower river. Those that did target bottomfish off of Tillamook Head did quite well last week (that's mostly out of Astoria). Some bottomfishing boats out of Garibaldi may also be targeting bass and lingcod off of Arch Cape as catches at Three Arch Rocks off of Oceanside have been disappointing.

Crabbing and sturgeon fishing in Tillamook Bay and surrounding areas have not been all that productive. Overall, the sturgeon fishery on Tillamook Bay has largely been a bust this year. Commercial effort is still running pretty high on the salt chuck for crab. Couple this with the crab pots during the all-depth halibut opener and unless you can get away from other gear, don't count on a hugely bountiful catch of keeper crab.

Hebo Lake, Olalla Creek Reservoir, Thissel Pond and Woahink Lake are scheduled for trout stocking this week.

**The Guide's Forecast** – As we come into the peak weeks of the Tillamook Bay spring chinook season, anglers anxiously await to see if the Tillamook run will suffer the same fate as the Columbia and Willamette runs of fish; early indicators are that it won't. Still way too early to tell

however, with the number of fish we witnessed rolling around in the upper estuary last week, it seems that they are there in fair to good numbers; they just need to learn to bite better.

Softer tides will greet anglers this week, which means we should be focusing our efforts on the lower bay and bubble areas. By the weekend, we're only looking at a 5.2 foot run-off, making for a great opportunity to work herring along the jetty on the soft outgoing that follows an early morning high tide. Anglers should target high slack for an early morning, albeit, short bite, but about 3½ hours into the outgoing tide, once it starts slowing down, action should be pretty good for those keeping their herring close to the bottom. You'll see several folks using flashers in this fishery and they certainly don't reduce your catch of salmon but be prepared to untangle lines unless you're extremely careful upon deployment. Blue label herring, plug-cut, will account for the majority of bites but green-label herring will also produce, either plug-cut or rigged whole.

Tidewater anglers may find some of those fish we saw in the upper bay this week. With the lower tide exchange, action could be fair although the early fish are typically willing to negotiate the low flows in order to get upstream faster. The fact of the matter is however, is that we're already experiencing summer-low flows right now so fish may be more likely to hole up in tidewater, falling to bobber and bait on the second half of outgoing tide. River fishing should remain quiet but the Trask will draw in more fish in the coming weeks. Fishing near the hatchery will remain the best option but you'll have to mind the new regulations so be sure to check them before heading out.

It will be another week of looking westbound as saltwater options should continue to be on the table. The weather is on the cusp of opportunity but I'll give you a break-down by fishery below. Let's start with the offshore prediction for the weekend, keeping in mind that these forecasts are rarely accurate, especially the farther away from the date you want to go fishing. The wind waves may only be an afternoon factor, but they will be a factor:

**FRI**

SW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 5 FT AT 10 SECONDS.

**FRI NIGHT**

SW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 4 FT AT 10 SECONDS. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

**SAT**

S WIND 10 TO 15 KT...BECOMING SW 20 TO 25 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 3 FT. W SWELL 5 FT AT 11 SECONDS. SHOWERS LIKELY.

**SAT NIGHT**

NW WIND 10 TO 15 KT WITH GUSTS TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 5 FT AT 10 SECONDS. CHANCE OF SHOWERS.

**SUN**

NW WIND 15 TO 20 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 6 FT.

**MON**

NW WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 6 FT.

Halibut- Typically, the fishing only gets more challenging as limits are typically culled from the halibut grounds after the initial opener (last Thursday – Saturday). Expect action to be

challenging again this week both nearshore and offshore. Be sure to check regulations here: [http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/finfish/halibut/seasonmaps/2013\\_hbt\\_map.pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/finfish/halibut/seasonmaps/2013_hbt_map.pdf) as a days per week fishery has been established. Hopefully, they'll make a stronger showing in the coming weeks but it doesn't look all that good so far this season. Newport was by far the leader in landings, 5 times the amount in poundage than Garibaldi, followed by Depoe Bay. Pacific City lead the way for the nearshore fishery, except for Newport of course.

Salmon- the California stock fish clearly moved out of the nearby area and success rates by the commercial fleet has plummeted. Hopefully, we'll see those fish come within our reach again in the near future. Until then, with the current tide series, the ocean may be an option in the early morning but be aware of a strong possibility of afternoon winds that will likely force you back into the estuary for safety reasons. Remember that salmon caught in the Tillamook Bay Bubble must be fin-clipped and you MUST use barbless hooks to pursue them.

Bottomfish- will remain good but action is tapering a bit from the early season. Three Arch Rocks is not a go-to right now but there are plenty of other spots anglers can rely on for success. They could be a long run however. The south jetty out of the lower Columbia should be a good option if you hit the tides right.

Crabbing- will remain challenging as long as the ocean is nice and interest remains for offshore species such as halibut. Bay crabbing won't be much better but the tide are improving for opportunity. Crabbers would be lucky to get a half a dozen keepers for your day's effort.

Stay safe out there.

**Central & South Coast Reports** – Over the last few days off the central coast, the rockfish bite slowed and lingcod grabs have been few as bottomfish are gorging on crab larvae. Taking decent numbers in these conditions requires persistence.

The spring all-depth opener was worthwhile although halibut were running on the small side. Exceptions included a 60-pounder brought back to Reedsport and a Charleston angler who took an 80-pounder out of 150 feet of water on a combo trip. The 57-incher taken out of top-producing port of Newport wasn't weighed but estimated at 90 pounds. On the May 9-11 fishery, 34,712 pounds of the 20,947-pound quota was taken, leaving 71% remaining.

Over the first week of fishing, nearshore halibut fishers (inside 40 fathoms) took 775 pounds or 3% of the 23,038 quota with Newport producing the highest poundage.

Offshore forecasts indicate low swells and decent periods for the coming weekend. Saturday is currently predicted to be a little friendlier than Sunday for ocean fishers.

From Lincoln City to Brookings, surf perch anglers have been scoring redtails. There's plenty of information online about rigging so we won't detail it here at this time. Baits of sand shrimp are always effective but are delicate, so try sand worms, clam necks or mussels during the last two hours of incoming tide where waves break near the shore, indicating a steeper beach. The closer to a river mouth or bay entrance, the better.

Many rivers not listed are closed until the southwest trout season opens on May 25th. Among these are the Alsea, Coos, Coquille and South Umpqua.

Shad are entering the Siuslaw and while this is a lesser-known fishery than that on the Umpqua and it's not as large a run, they generally run larger here.

Ocean Chinook fishing has been slow out of Winchester Bay with fish moving further offshore recently. Redtail surf perch have started entering Winchester Bay as they do every year on their spawning run. Live bearers, let the little ones swim free if they're mature. Springer catches have been fair on the Umpqua mainstem. The shad run is occurring on the mainstem Umpqua now and will continue well into June. While sunny days are always best, these feisty fish can be caught anytime on colorful darts of bright, beadhead shad flies. Pink or chartreuse are popular and effective here. Smallmouth bass fishing is fair but will improve as the weather warms.

Boats launching out of Charleston to troll the ocean for Chinook have had some good days and the occasional large fish at about five miles out.

Waters of the lower Rogue are still suffering from low, clear flows which have slowed spring Chinook catches. A few are being taken early and late in the day. Long-range forecasts indicate an improvement in water levels will occur starting the weekend of May 25th but any drop in the water temperature could trigger a bite. Catches on the middle Rogue have been poor for a week with no reason to think it'll improve in the coming weekend. Upper Rogue anglers have the best reason for optimism with fair water conditions and spring Chinook entering this stretch of the river. Fishing has been fair to good this week.

A story appeared online today which told the tale of a pair of fly fishers making an annual trek to Diamond Lake over the past weekend. Winding their way between anchored boats full of bait anglers at the south end of the lake in order to troll their hand-tied offerings on Friday, May 10th, yielded good catches of fat trout. The top offering was the infamous Diamond Lake Special trailing a March Brown emerger. While Saturday started out slow, a change of location to the northwest side produced plenty of hookups and a decision to continue their annual tradition in 2014. Tiny bugs are hatching (Chromonids for amateur entomologist readers) which are primarily being inhaled by humans trying to catch fish. Read the article here:

<http://oregonflyfishingblog.com/2013/05/16/a-diamond-in-the-rough-diamond-lake-fishing-report/>



Photo by caddisbug.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is hosting a Free Family Fishing Event Saturday, May 18 from 8:30 AM to 2 PM at Eckman Lake in Waldport. Volunteers will be on hand to help

participants learn how to bait the hook, cast the rod, land the fish and will even help clean the catch. Eckman Lake is located 2.5 miles east of Waldport on Highway 34. The family fishing area will be set-up at the Nelson Wayside State Park across from the church parking lot.

Clearwater Forebay #2, Lemolo Reservoir, Red Top Lake, North and South Tenmile Lakes, Bradley Lake, Lower and Middle Empire Lake, Burma Pond, Dutch Herman Pond, Fish Lake. Fish Lake and Medco were planted with hatchery trout this week.

**Central and Eastern Oregon** – Redsides are reacting predictably on the Deschutes as the Salmon Fly and Golden Stone hatch is at its peak: they're feasting! From Trout Creek down, big bugs are thick and trout are looking up. The hatch may slow on days when the air temperature drops but now is the time.

Not much has changed on the Crooked River with levels and flows steady but this is good news for fly anglers who know how well it can fish in these conditions.

The Umatilla River, scheduled to remain open for Chinook fishing into June, will close at the end of day today, May 16th according to the ODFW. Low numbers at Bonneville, low water levels and high water temperatures combined to cause this emergency closure.

Kokanee have been tough on Wallowa Reservoir but those trolling with downriggers seem to be having the greater success.

Odell has been spotty although casting to jumpers early mornings and late evenings has been effective over the past week. Otherwise, spot schools of fish on depth finders and jig' em up.

Green Peter has been producing decent numbers of kokanee. While most people troll here, jigs are occasionally quite effective.

Lava Lake has been producing well for trout on the troll. While there are some large fish in the lake, most of those being caught are in the 12 to 15 inch range.

Brownlee Reservoir has been putting out good numbers of channel catfish although smallmouth bass fishing has been slow. Yellow perch and crappie fishing is improving.

### **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 **cutthroat 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](#).

### **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**

Controlling the sea lion population: Is it working?:

<http://www.katu.com/living/travel/Sea-Lion-Hazing-Willamette-River-205408451.html>

Olympia oysters thrive again on Oregon Coast:

<http://www.kgw.com/home/Olympia-oysters-thrive-again-off-Oregon-Coast-207640071.html>

Youth Outdoor Day: <http://www.youthoutdoorday.org/site/>

Bonny Dam Cams - both sides:

[http://nwpapps.usace.army.mil/environment/fish\\_cams\\_both.asp](http://nwpapps.usace.army.mil/environment/fish_cams_both.asp)

**GOOD LUCK!**