

The Guide's Forecast - volume 16 issue number 18

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

Forecasting for the fishing week of **May 2nd – May 8th, 2014**

Oregon Fisheries Update:

Willamette Valley/Metro – Visibility has been the biggest problem for trollers on the lower Willamette. Fish checkers at various locations reported one to three fish for the day on Monday this week. A few springers have been landed in the area from Sellwood to Ross Island on prawns or herring but a flasher is a must in the off-color water. Wrapped plugs have taken a few at Oregon City as well as prawns and eggs. The river is clearing however.

McKenzie River levels are still a little higher than they were a month ago at this time but it is clear, dropping and quite fishable. Anglers will find trout amenable to March Brown dries or similar nymphs and emergers. Summer steelhead are trickling in.

Snow fell above Detroit last week and the runoff with warmer weather will keep water levels high on the North Santiam. This will make conditions on the upper river hazardous for boating. A majority of the thousands of springers and summer steelhead which have been counted at Willamette Falls are headed here, however.

Expect higher than average water levels on the Clackamas this week. Steelheading has been tough this season but Alex Wilson, age 7 of Milwaukie caught his first steelhead on April 20th, fishing plugs near Carver, weighing in at about 6 pounds. The best chance of a hookup will be around Estacada, however, on spoons, spinners or corkies. Springers have also been hooked on the lower Clackamas, often by those targeting steelhead.

Sandy water levels are returning to normal with visibility improving this week. A few summer steelhead have been landed recently although spring chinook fishing has been slow but is expected to improve with the peak of the season approaching.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will host a free family fishing event scheduled for Vernonia Pond from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 3. More than 2,000 rainbow trout will be planted prior to the event.

Northwest – With spring chinook peak still weeks away, district anglers are scratching for opportunity. Steelhead season is virtually over with mostly spent fish in the systems with a rare summer fish around on the Wilson and Nestucca Rivers.

The current minus tide series won't bode well for bar crossings but the offshore forecast is looking quite positive for bottomfishing opportunities. Garibaldi and the south jetty out of the mouth of the Columbia are two of the best options. Crabbing is likely to be best in the ocean and not all that good for that matter.

Razor clam diggers will likely find good results with the calming ocean. Estuary diggers could also find some good opportunity in the morning tide series.

Southwest- While the all-depth halibut season opens off the central Oregon coast May 8-10, and every other Thursday through Saturday following, nearshore fishing won't open until July 1. Once nearshore efforts begin, fishing will be allowed seven days a week until either Oct. 31 or a quota of 22,274 pounds. Halibut fishers south of Humber Mountain are allowed to start fishing inside the 40-fathom line on May 1.

As expected at this time of year, fishing for surf perch from south coast beaches has been steadily

improving.

Bottom fishing has been good for rockfish out of Yaquina Bay with boats limiting early. Ling cod limits have been difficult to fill over the past week. Conditions are forecast to be favorable for those hoping to cross the bar this week.

Boats launching out of Reedsport for ocean chinook have been doing fairly well whenever ocean conditions have allowed offshore trolling. Crabbing is fair in the Winchester Bay. While still early, spring chinook are entering the Umpqua mainstem and have been hitting plugs. South Umpqua steelheaders have been picking up some good-sized hatchery fish.

Offshore chinook fishing has been worthwhile for boats launching out of Charleston although the wind has created challenges at times. Crabbing remains slow in Coos Bay while clamming has been excellent on minus tides.

Lower Rogue water levels crested early this week and are forecast to continue dropping through the weekend to come. Steelheading has been winding down for a while and is of little interest while spring chinook fishing has been quite good at times. The bite has slowed as low water conditions return but boat and bank anglers have continued to hook up occasionally. There are a few springers in the middle Rogue now amidst dark or spawned out winter steelhead. While few of the winters on the upper Rogue are worth keeping, there are enough of them to provide action. A few springers have been landed including a bright hatchery hen on Monday this week. It appears dam removal was a positive decision.

Boats launching out of Brookings may start fishing nearshore halibut on May 1st. To avoid confusion (and potential fines), nearshore halibut is allowed inside 40 fathom or 240 foot depths while those angling for rockfish and lingcod may venture no deeper than 30 fathoms or 180 feet.

Eastern – The Deschutes opened from Pelton Dam to the Northern Reservation Boundary over the past weekend to reward fly anglers with water which had been undisturbed for months. Nymphs have been more effective than dries but that situation could reverse with dry, warm weather.

Crooked River flows have leveled off at 350 cfs, still considerably higher than this time last month although it continues to fish well.

Odell Lake gave up some nice Mackinaw along with a few limits of kokanee at the opener over the past weekend.

Kokanee fishing was excellent on the opener on Saturday, April 26th but slowed for most anglers on Sunday.

SW Washington- The Cowlitz remains the best lower Columbia tributary for spring chinook and steelhead. Spring chinook catches will be peaking for the next 2 weeks. The Kalama and Lewis are experiencing very poor results with just 12 chinook reported between the two hatcheries; it's a disaster on these systems and closed to retention for chinook.

Expectedly, the Wind River and Drano Lake fisheries are well underway with one chinook reported for every 5 and 6 boats respectively on these systems. The fishing will only get better as we near peak passage sometime in early May.

Columbia River Fishing Report – With the Columbia mainstem closed to spring chinook fishing, my job here is pretty easy. We're just watching chinook pass by Bonneville in hopes that numbers continue to ramp up, indicating that the run is indeed coming in as predicted, if not better. Hopefully not the peak,

but over 17,000 springers passed by Bonneville on Wednesday, twice the previous season high just a few days before. It's pretty exciting and the more fish passing by Bonneville in the coming days, the sooner the river will open for more spring chinook opportunity. The Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association is working for a re-opener (days per week) almost immediately but we may have to wait until early June, in which we'll get additional opportunity prior to the June 15th summer chinook opener. Stay tuned.

In the meantime, sturgeon effort remains light on the mainstem Columbia but springer anglers still have a good chance at fish. Those fishing the upper reaches of the river are finding fair to good success. For your convenience, here is the regulations for that area:

COLUMBIA RIVER MAINSTEM, Bonneville Dam upstream to Oregon/Washington border
Effective March 16 - May 9, 2014, regulations modified as follows:

- **Open for adipose fin-clipped Chinook and adipose fin-clipped steelhead 7 days per week from Tower Island Power lines (located approximately 6 miles downstream from The Dalles Dam) upstream to Oregon/Washington border for boat and bank, plus BANK ANGLING ONLY from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Tower Island Power lines.**
- **Daily bag limit is 2 adult salmon/steelhead in combination, of which only 1 may be an adult Chinook. Chinook adults are > 24 inches and steelhead > 20 inches.**
- **Up to 5 adipose fin-clipped jacks may be retained in addition to the adult bag limit.**
- **Season modifications may be required to remain within harvest guidelines.**

Effort elsewhere is futile. If the tides weren't so extreme, the south jetty out of Astoria would be a productive place for bottomfish anglers. Unfortunately, that's not the case right now.

The Guide's Forecast – Nothing too interesting brewing right here. If you need to go springer fishing, The Dalles and John Day Pools should offer up some good opportunity. With the run passage nearing peak at Bonneville Dam, action will only get better for the tens of thousands of springers already in this reach of the river. Anchor fishing often works best for these fish on the move but backrollers will occasionally get some biters using plugs or eggs to draw strikes.

Willamette, McKenzie & Santiam Rivers Fishing Report – Spring Chinook movement dropped way off late last week as evidenced by the dip daily in fish counts at Willamette Falls. Summer steelhead counts seem unaffected as those have remained fairly steady most of the month of April. The fish checker at Wilmette Park saw nine fish for the day on Wednesday this week although there has been an evening bite of sorts in this area. Portland Harbor has produced a few springers on herring trolled right on the bottom. Oregon City has produced the occasional fish on prawn & egg combos on a spinner and the stretch above the I-205 Bridge has given up a few. It has been slow everywhere this week.

McKenzie water levels were still a bit high on Wednesday this week although rapidly dropping. Visibility is excellent and the weekend ahead looks most promising.

The Santiam system is running high from the last series of storm fronts and from runoff from snowmelt in higher elevations.

Alton Baker Canal, Detroit Reservoir, Dexter Reservoir, Junction City Pond, Leaburg Lake, McKenzie River above Leaburg Dam, Sunnyside Park, Timber Linn Lake, Walling Pond, Walter Wirth Lake, Waverly Lake, Benson Lake, Blue Lake, Canby Pond, Henry Hagg Lake, Huddleston Pond, Mt. Hood Pond and Silver Creek Reservoir are on the trout stocking schedule for this week.

The Guide's Forecast – The Willamette River is 54 degrees at the Falls as of the afternoon of May 1st. Turbidity has dropped from a high measurement of 12 (not so good) on May 27th to 7 (not bad at all) on the morning of Thursday this week. The visibility has been low downriver but clearer water is on the way.

Boats fishing prawn spinners at Oregon City and below Meldrum Bar will be in a good position to score once springers start moving again. Those plunking from shore are mostly having a bad time. With the level dropping and clearing while the water temperature rises, hardware may well be an option sooner than we anticipated on the lower Willamette. Bank fishers are likely to score the occasional summer steelhead on the Meldrum Bar stretch but a springer hookup will be a real rarity.

Catch-and-release sturgeon has been fair to good for those who, in frustration, are taking a break from springer fishing. Be aware that the stretch from Willamette Falls to the Railroad Bridge is off limits now, even for C&R. Shad are coming with this fishery starting up later this month.

Hatches of March Browns will persist on the McKenzie River even well into May along with Green and Grannon Caddis. Be prepared with appropriate imitation but be aware, as well, that the best-constructed, most accurate representation of these insects won't be of much use when the wind is blowing so pack nymphs and emergers, either or both of which have been highly effective at fooling McKenzie redsides this week.

The Santiams hold promise for producing summer steelhead and eventually spring Chinook but will need some time for water level and flow to moderate. As the water drops, summer steelhead will be in the North Santiam while spring Chinook historically head for the South Santiam.

Clackamas and Sandy River Fishing Reports – While the Clackamas took quite a hit from the last storm front which passed through, the water level has dropped and visibility is excellent now. There are winter and summer steelhead in the system now.

The Guide's Forecast – Fish high on the Clackamas, certainly above Barton, for winter steelhead although the quality of the fish will be mixed this late in the season. Summer steelhead will be scattered throughout the lower river with numbers having improved as fish entered during the last freshet. There have been reports of spring Chinook catches and while we have yet to see photos, there's little doubt they are in the river by now. Try for them near the mouth..

North Coast Fishing Report – Not much going on in this district but that will change in the coming weeks. As we near mid-May, spring chinook action should continue to improve but until then, you'll have to hunt pretty hard to find what you're looking for. Success to date has largely been restricted to the Trask River, where last week's rain freshet produced a few fish for anglers that were able to pursue salmon upriver. By now, the best success is likely to be at the hatchery for those working bobbers and eggs. Trollers working the bay have found little to brag about.

Offshore bottomfishers have done well for lingcod and sea bass lately. Ocean conditions have been mild lately, allowing for boats to get out and get after ample numbers of bottomfish. That trend won't last too much longer however.

Little to no action for river steelheaders. The spawn is on and there aren't enough summer steelhead or spring chinook to justify a trip down one of these rivers just yet. The river remains in ideal shape however so that alone, may be fun. If you fish, expect to find a lot of run-back fish.

Coffenbury Lake, Lost Lake (Clatsop County), Sunset Lake and Vernonia Pond have been planted with trout this week.

The Guide's Forecast – No big changes in river levels but another system may bring the major rivers back up for a spell. Regardless, there won't be many quality fish around as it's early for a big push of

spring chinook and not many summers are showing yet. Here's the river forecast as of Thursday afternoon:



Although it's likely there will be some spring chinook for river anglers, especially in the Trask, the best place to target them will be in the hatchery hole. That's where they'll start to keg up for the next several months. Bobbers and eggs will be most effective here but again, it'll be scratch fishing for a few more weeks. It still pays to be the early bird in this hole.

Tillamook Bay anglers will still have a minus tide to work with over the weekend, making the upper bay the best chance for success; just don't come with high expectations.

Offshore anglers won't have much to get excited about either. The ocean is supposed to blow up this weekend, putting bottomfish in a "safety zone" for the time being. Here is the offshore forecast:

FRI

SW WIND 5 TO 10 KT...VEERING TO W IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 1 FT. W SWELL 5 FT AT 10 SECONDS. PATCHY MORNING FOG.

FRI NIGHT

W WIND 5 TO 10 KT...BACKING TO SW WITH GUSTS TO 15 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. WIND WAVES 3 FT. SW SWELL 5 FT AT 10 SECONDS...BUILDING TO W 8 FT AT 12 SECONDS AFTER MIDNIGHT.

SAT

S WIND 10 TO 15 KT...RISING TO 20 TO 25 KT IN THE AFTERNOON. WIND WAVES 3 FT...BUILDING TO 5 FT IN THE AFTERNOON. W SWELL 9 FT AT 13 SECONDS...BUILDING TO 11 FT AT 13 SECONDS IN THE AFTERNOON. RAIN LIKELY.

SAT NIGHT

S WIND 20 TO 25 KT WITH GUSTS TO 30 KT. WIND WAVES 6 FT. W SWELL 11 FT AT 13 SECONDS. RAIN.

SUN

S WIND 20 TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 5 FT. SW SWELL 10 FT. SHOWERS LIKELY.

SUN NIGHT

SW WIND 15 TO 20 KT...EASING TO 10 TO 15 KT AFTER MIDNIGHT. GUSTS TO 25 KT. WIND WAVES 4 FT. W SWELL 8 FT. SHOWERS LIKELY.

MON

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

TUE

NW WIND 5 TO 10 KT. WIND WAVES 2 FT. W SWELL 4 FT.

Things may get better by early next week (if you believe in long-range forecasts.....)

Central & South Coast Reports – Wednesday this week was stellar on the ocean off the central Oregon coast. Boats launching out of Depoe Bay and Newport enjoyed soft winds, mild seas and unseasonably warm weather. Oh, yeah ... the fishing was pretty darned good, too. Most boats limited on rockfish by mid-morning and took limits or near-limits of ling cod. It appears that Friday this week will hold the best promise for offshore launches as swells will increase over the coming weekend according to forecasts.

Chinook fishing has remained spotty with some boats getting a few and others blanking as salmon are widely scattered. Commercial efforts have done somewhat better far offshore.

All depth halibut opens for the spring season on May 8-10 with additional opportunities to fish on May 22-24, June 5-7 and June 19-21 with back-up dates into July if the quota allows. The summer all depth season opens August 1-2 then every other Friday and Saturday until the quota is met. Inshore Halibut opens July 1st seven days a week.

Boats are planning for albacore trips but realistically, tuna fishing in May would be remarkably early.

There has been concern regarding radioactivity in migratory albacore from the Fukushima reactor accident in March of 2011. This week, CNN released a report that states the radioactive cesium is 0.1% of the FDA's allowable limit (that's 1.10th of one percent, folks) which means you would have to eat 700,000 lbs of albacore to match the annual natural accumulated dosage of just being alive on earth. Stop worrying about it and go fishing!

Summer steelhead have started trickling into the Siletz. Look for catches to improve into May and June.

Winchester Bay anglers are anticipating the appearance of pinkfin perch which start entering every year in May on their spawning run. Results can be everywhere from lights out to "Where are the fish?" with best results often occurring mid-May. Springer hopefuls are still throwing spinners at Half Moon Bay with periodic success. Spring Chinook have been getting caught despite low water conditions on the Umpqua mainstem. It's not wide-open fishing but they are taking fish regularly. Anchor fishing in the migration lines with an anchovy/spinner rig has been putting fish in the boat. Plugs are also effective at times. Shad have also been taken over the past week at Elkton and Yellow Creek although Sawyers Rapids may be

the only spot that will produce of the water drops further. the smallmouth bite is expected to improve with warm weather this week. Catch-and-release steelheading is slow to fair on the North Umpqua. The South Umpqua is closed as of May 1st but will re-open with trout season on May 24th.

Boats have taken a few legal Dungeness from Coos Bay but overall crabbing remains slow. Anglers are taking some rockfish and ling cod from the jetties. Clamming is excellent in the bay when tides are conducive but the next minus series won't occur until mid-May. Steelhead fishing closed in the Coos River Basin as of May 1st. Trout season does not open in rivers until May 24.

Spring Chinook are scattered on the lower Rogue and catches have been spotty although flurries of activity have produced a few limits. Water levels will continue dropping and clearing well into the coming week which will only serve to make salmon fishing more challenging. Springers will often enter on a flood tide but bite best on the ebb even when they are in the river above tidewater. Steelheaders on the middle Rogue are seeing mostly spawned out down-runners this late in the season. Fortunately, spring Chinook numbers are improving in the Grants Pass stretch. Quality of winter steelhead is declining on the upper Rogue as well although the occasional springer is being taken thanks to the ability to pass unrestricted since the removal of the dams. Upper river Chinook fishing will only improve in weeks to come.

For boats launching out of Brookings, nearshore halibut opens today, May 1st. The area between Humbug Mountain and the Oregon/California border is now called the Southern Oregon Subarea. The limit is still one Pacific halibut per day; three daily limits on land. But the Southern Oregon Subarea now has its own separate quota from the rest of Oregon, which is 3,712 pounds. Combo trips for halibut and bottom fish are allowed, but fish for rockfish and ling cod inside the 30-fathom line first, then pursue halibut out to 40 fathoms. It is always illegal to fish for groundfish with a halibut on board.

Anglers using Power Bait are taking eight-fish limits of fat Diamond Lake trout fishing at the south end of the lake.

ODFW sez, "A free family fishing event is set for Reinhart Volunteer Park Pond in Grants Pass this Saturday, May 3 from 9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is partnering with the Crater Bass Club to host the event. To make learning – and catching fish – as fun and easy as possible, ODFW will provide rods, reels, tackle and bait at no charge. Crater Bass Club volunteers and ODFW staff can offer assistance on everything from baiting and casting a rod to catching and cleaning fish. Anglers are welcome to bring their own gear, if they prefer."

Bradley Lake, Butterfield Lake, Bluebill Lake, Eel Lake, Powers Pond, Saunders Lake, and Tenmile Lakes are all scheduled to be stocked with legal size rainbow trout this week. There are also lots of trout in Garrison Lakes and anglers have been catching fish by fly fishing, casting spinners or slow trolling wedding ring spinners.

Central and Eastern Oregon – According to the ODFW, a "substantially larger" run of spring Chinook is anticipated this year over 2013 when sparing fishing was not allowed.

Crooked River flows are dropping slightly from the 350 cfs of earlier this week. It continues to fish well.

Hosmer Lake is ice free and Big Lava is producing some fish but the air temperatures require proper insulation against cold wind.

Paulina Reservoir fished well for kokanee at the opener over the past weekend. Trollers using small hoochies behind flashers took good numbers.

Fishing has been slow to fair for kokanee at Green Peter with trollers picking up the occasional trout.

Lake Billy Chinook has been reliably producing limits of kokanee 11 to 12 inches on jigs. Casting to jumpers has been effective. Be sure to get your tribal permit where required.

Odell produced limits of kokanee at the opener on Saturday, April 26th to anglers using jigs. Action has continued strong this week for anglers casting to jumpers or fishing deep water when the wind has come up.

Trollers at Wickiup have been taking good numbers of kokanee averaging 16 inches despite morning temperatures below the freezing mark. A variety of lures have been effective including wedding rings, sling blades and hoochies fished behind flashers. Efforts usually shut down here as the wind comes up.

Wind neither dampened spirits nor hampered catches for the opener at Lake Billy Chinook where anglers caught kokanee brook and rainbow trout.

Suttle Lake has been producing some nice brown trout while kokanee catches have been reported as few and running small.

The Rufus Oregon Catfish Derby is May 24th & 25th. To register call Gorge Outfitters Supply at 541-739-2222.

May 24th, 25th

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TGF Inbox - Reader E-mail

Subscriber Marvin S. wrote to ask, "Anything on Brookings OR? Am I just not finding your report?"

"That is the section of the newsletter for which I report. We strive to provide comprehensive information on every fishery we cover although some of them are effected by regulatory changes. Such is the case with the Brookings area where the Chetco River is closed until trout season opens on May 24th.

"Boats launching from the harbor and fishing just outside in the ocean are doing well with jigs for rockfish and ling cod whenever the ocean allows, often launching early and returning to port before the wind kicks up. That's about the only fishery that has been available recently in that immediate area other than casting from the area beaches for surf perch.

"While the ocean south of Humbug Mountain opens for halibut on May 1st, catches are generally fewer than out of more northerly points. Reports should resume in earnest when the ocean opens for Chinook on May 10th and whenever there are salmon, steelhead or blueback to be caught at the Chetco River.

"We always appreciate hearing from our readers and urge you to write again anytime with questions or personal fishing experiences."

Marvin wrote back to say, "Thank you for your report. I just recently renewed my subscription and I'm looking forward to fishing in Oregon again this year. Thanks again."

Write to the TGF staff:

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Random Links - Oddity Edition

Fishing (?) Boat for Sale: <http://portland.craigslist.org/grg/boa/4448753759.html>

Barramundi Farm in Medford?

<http://www.dailytidings.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20140425/LIFE/404250302>

Fisherman BBQs World-Record Mako: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/florida-fisherman-catches-805-pound-shark-article-1.1763788>

Huge striped bass in Lower Columbia River:

<http://blogs.seattletimes.com/reeltime/northwest/2013/06/26/huge-striped-bass-caught-in-lower-columbia-river-was-full-of-eggs/>

GOOD LUCK!