

Fishing Opportunities in May

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : April 29, 2011 at 5:10 am

This is the time of year when new fishing opportunities start popping open like daffodils in the afternoon sun. On various dates in May, shrimp and lingcod fisheries open in Puget Sound and halibut seasons will get under way there and off the coast. But none of those fisheries draw bigger crowds than the lowland lakes trout-fishing season, which opens April 30 statewide. With 300,000 anglers predicted to turn out that day alone, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has been busy stocking 20 million trout in lakes and ponds from the Olympic Peninsula to the Palouse. Millions more trout, ranging from eight-inch "catchables" to five-pound jumbos, will be planted during the season, which runs through October, said Jim Uehara, WDFW inland fish manager. "We stock lakes with trout for the whole season, not just opening day," Uehara said. "Trout fishing should be most productive in lowland lakes through June, and then again in September. Fishing should be good in the higher-elevation lakes, and those stocked with kokanee, right through the summer." For most anglers, a valid 2011-12 fishing license is required to participate in any of these fisheries, now that 2010-11 licenses have expired. The exception is young people under age 15, who fish for free in Washington state.

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. A list of [license vendors](#) is available online and from local WDFW offices. Key dates for fisheries opening in May include: May 1 – Halibut fishing opens in Marine Area 2 off the south coast (Westport and Ocean Shores) and Puget Sound opens for lingcod. May 5 – Halibut fishing opens in Marine Areas 6-10 in Puget Sound, and in Marine Area 1 off the south coast (Ilwaco). May 7 – Shrimp fishing opens in areas of Puget Sound. May 12 – Halibut fishing opens in marine areas 3 and 4 off the north coast (La Push/Neah Bay). May 16 – Fishing opens for hatchery steelhead, sockeye salmon and shad on a section of the lower Columbia River. Fishing regulations and other information about fisheries scheduled or under way around the state are available in [Weekender Regional Reports](#) and in the 2011-12 [Fishing in Washington](#) rules pamphlet posted on WDFW's website. Meanwhile, anglers should be aware that Catch Record Cards for last year's fishery are due to WDFW by April 30. Card holders are required to report their catch of salmon, steelhead, sturgeon and halibut, whether they caught fish or not. The completed cards should be mailed to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Fish Program, Catch Record Cards, 600 Capitol Way N., Olympia WA 98501-1091. Hunters are advised that May 18 is the last day to apply for special hunting permits for fall deer, elk, mountain goat, moose, bighorn sheep, and turkey seasons in Washington state. WDFW will select permit winners by random drawing in late June. The special permits qualify hunters to hunt at times and places beyond those authorized by a general hunting license. Applications may be purchased from license vendors statewide or on [WDFW's website](#). Weekender Reports are updated throughout the month. Go to <http://wdfw.wa.gov/weekender/> to view the latest edition.