

Columbia River Springers Update

Columbia River Fishing: The spring chinook fishery got off to a fast start March 16, with boat anglers averaging a fish for every 5.5 rods on the lower Columbia River between the Hayden Island west power lines and Bonneville Dam. The turnout was good, too. In all, 368 boats and 170 bank anglers were counted on both sides of the river during an aerial survey opening day. The highest concentration of boats - 110 - was near the Portland Airport, although 35 boats were counted between the Interstate 5 Bridge and the power lines. Most bank anglers were fishing immediately downstream from the dam, though the fishing there was slow. "We're getting a strong early showing, the best in several years," said Joe Hymer, WDFW fish biologist. "The best news is this run's just getting started, and we're expecting to see a lot of fish move upriver before it's all over." According to pre-season forecasts, 269,300 spring chinook will return to the Columbia River and its tributaries above Bonneville Dam, the third-largest run since 1977. That compares to just 86,230 fish last year. The chinook fishery from the Hayden Island power lines upstream to the dam runs seven days a week through March 23, then switches to six days a week - closing from one hour after official sunset Mondays to one hour before official sunrise Wednesdays - through April 30. The limit is one adult hatchery chinook per day. Below the Hayden Island power lines, chinook fishing opens daily downstream to Buoy 10 from March 24 through April 4. Fishing in that area, normally the focus of the lower river season, was held to just 12 days this year to protect weak Willamette River stocks. There, too, the limit is one hatchery adult chinook per day. As most anglers know, hatchery chinook can be identified by a clipped adipose fin. All wild chinook with an intact adipose fin must be released unharmed. Team J and L is currently fishing the Columbia River for Spring Chinook and taking reservations for Columbia, Lewis and Kalama rivers. Jet boat trips on the Columbia and Lewis rivers for 4 anglers are at a special price of just \$580.00 and 2 person driftboat trips on the Kalama are \$325.00. Additional information can be obtained online at <http://www.columbia-river-fishing-guide.com> or by phone at 206-920-2428

About the Author

Jerry Brown- J and L Guided Sportfishing

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