Outdoors

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Coho run

projects to be one

big catch

The hatchery and wild

counts are expected to

exceed the millon mark

for first time since 2010

By Jim Murez

For The Register-Guard

cean salmon anglers

may see one of their

better seasons in

years and have the most

opportunities to fish for

2010 season.

coho they've had since the

This year's coho run is

projected to approach 1 mil-

likely to exceed the million-

fish mark. Once the sport

coho season opens June 21,

anglers will be able to fish

"I don't think we'll catch 80,000 coho, but you never know," Schindler said. "Last year, the fishing was terrible, and we only caught 6,000 in July. There should be a lot more coho around this summer, and the fishing should be much better." Any coho remaining from the summer hatchery will be rolled over into the non-selective season during which anglers can keep any legal-size coho caught — in September. The outlook is particularly bright for coho from Bandon up to the Columbia River. The sport "nonselective" coho season runs from Aug. 30 to Sept. 30 with a quota of 20,000 fish from Cape Falcon south to Humbug Mountain.

The sport chinook season from Cape Falcon south to Humbug Mountain, near Port Orford, opened March 15 and will remain open

through Oct. 31. Fishery

managers have been hearing of good ocean chinook catches from Newport

to Bandon. The area from Humbug Mountain south to the California border is open May 10 to Sept. 7 for

chinook, and will be open for the June 21 through Aug. 10 hatchery coho season as well.

Most of the hatchery coho off the central coast

ter catch last year is fewer

south than normal. While

the forecast for this year's

salmon seasons are bright,

next year is uncertain with

"That's bad news for

"but it shouldn't affect this

As for tips, he looks for

the water temperature to be

between 52 and 56 degrees.

He also looks for areas with debris on the surface, as

that usually indicates some

fish. Schindler's other trick

While the forecast is for a good year for coho,

Schindler doesn't want to get anyone's hopes up too

upwelling or a tidal edge

that are likely to attract

with coho is to keep his

gear in close: "Until the flasher drops just out of sight in the prop wash."

an El Nino projected to develop off shore.

salmon," Schindler said,

year."

fish made their way this far

come from the Columbia River system. Part of the reason for the lacklus-

seven days a week. "With coho, and all things being equal, we should have a tremendous season," said Eric Schindler, ocean salmon sampling project leader for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in Newport. The sport fin-clipped coho season is open June 21 to Aug. 10 with a quota of 80,000 fish from Cape Falcon south to California. That's up from 2013's quota

of 10,500.

lion hatchery fish. Count-

ing wild coho, the run is



registerguard.com/outdoors

TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2014

SECTION D

FISHING PREVIEW

Better bite on tap for opener

A drier winter plus warmer water should make for an active start to trout season

> By JIM MUREZ For The Register-Guard

drier-than-normal winter means the trout season will get off to a better-than-average start Saturday with more places where anglers can wet their lines.

"There's a good chance on opening day we'll have lower and warmer water than in previous years," Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife district biologist Jeff Ziller said. "That will usually help the activity."

The ODFW will continue to stock numerous lakes, rivers and streams this week and then will continue to restock them next week. Anglers will have ample opportunity to come home with a creel that shouldn't be empty.



IVAR Vong/For The Register-Guard, 2012

Hatchery fish swim in the display pond near the dam at Leaburg Lake, which will be a popular spot come Saturday.

For one of the most popular and traditional opening-day fisheries, the agency will follow the same pattern it's used the past few years to stock the McKenzie River by first stocking the section below Leaburg Dam to Hendricks Bridge. It had stocked

the upper river first for several years, but surveys in 2009 and 2010 found the catch rate was extremely poor, so it changed its strategy.

"People will want to make sure they target the lower river in early May," Ziller said.

Ziller also encourages people

who don't plan to keep their catch to give sections of the McKenzie and Willamette that are catch-and-release or have lower limits. Those include the McKenzie from Hendricks Bridge to its mouth, the Middle Fork of the Willamette River from Dexter Dam to the Coast Fork and the Willamette from the McKenzie River to Harrisburg. These tend to have good insect hatches this time of year and are very productive for wild fish.

Another spot Ziller recommends is Hills Creek Reservoir. The ODFW used to stock the Middle Fork of the Willamette River upstream from the reservoir. But anglers' success had been so poor that the agency decided to shift the fish to the reservoir. In 2012 and 2013, anglers "knocked the socks" off of these fish.

In addition to the 200,000 fingerling trout released, the ODFW will stock the reservoir

Turn to **TROUT,** Page D2



IVAR VONG/For The Register-Guard, 2012

Keina Wolf, of Eugene, helps her daughter, Riley, on the opening day of the 2012 fishing season at Leaburg Lake.

A COMPLICATED CODE ON THE MCKE

Trout fishing regulations juggle a multitude of complex issues

By Paul Hoobyar

For The Register-Guard

n 1916, a simple dictum regulated trout fishing for the entire McK-enzie River Basin: "75 trout per day. Bait allowed."

Since then, conditions have changed in the McKenzie watershed: more people live here, more demands are placed on the river from multiple users, and our understanding of native trout as part of a complex ecological system has evolved. Consequently, fishery managers juggle a multitude of legal mandates and angler preferences.

Today, the river's trout fishing regulations provide for both the stocking and consuming of hatchery trout, while simultaneously protecting the McKenzie's prized native-trout population.

To the casual observer, fishing regulations in Oregon are about as simple

to decipher as fractals in Chaos theory: the 108 pages for 2014 are a testament to the contortions the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife assumes in regulating, and providing access to, fish-

To others, the trout fishing regulations for the McKenzie can look like a Rube Goldberg contraption.

With the trout fishing season approaching, it's a good time to shed light on the maze of regulations, management strategies, basin plans and angler preferences.

The McKenzie is managed by the ODFW in an intricate balancing act. The department's decision space is bordered by the state's Native Fish Conservation Policy and the McKenzie River Sub-Basin Plan, both of which prioritize sustaining native fish populations. The federal Endangered Species Act, which mandates the re-introduction and expansion of habitat for bull trout in the basin and a host of conflicting angler preferences.

On one hand, the goal is to sustain the McKenzie's native redside trout population. On the other, the department stocks the middle section of the river with approximately 130,000 hatchery fish between April and September with the intent of providing catchable, legalsized fish for people to consume.

As a result, the agency divides the McKenzie into three trout management zones. The lower river, from its confluence with the Willamette River up to Hendricks Wayside (approximately 11 miles), is managed for native trout, with year-round fishing restricted to artificial lures, flies and catch-and-release only. No hatchery fish are stocked in this section, and no bait fishing is



Turn to McKENZIE, Page D2

"The DDT killed off the bugs and our trout. As a little kid, I remember we'd catch big trout — up to 3 to 4 pounds. (In the early 1950s) you were lucky if you caught five or six trout that were six inches long"

— DAVE HELFRICH. LONG-TIME MCKENZIE RIVER GUIDE

"I've done this long enough to know that fish are going to do what fish are going to do," he said.

OUTDOORS **BRIEFLY**

NEWS & NOTES

FIVE YEARS OF WORK AT AWBREY PARK

Neighborhood volunteers in Santa Clara have been working for five years to restore the natural area of Awbrey Park by removing invasive species of plants along Spring Creek and replanting native varieties. The volunteers who have worked diligently invite locals to join them to celebrate five years of commitment to the park. There will be a wildflower celebration from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 27 at Awbrey Park.

SULLIVAN TO HOST PUBLIC TALK

Take a virtual tour of Oregon's oddest hiking and travel destinations with author William L. Sullivan at his illustrated talk, "Oregon for the Curious," at the downtown Eugene Public Library at 6 p.m. April 30. Admission is free. Sullivan's presentation will take the audience from an island sea cave to a forgotten canyon of colored pinnacles, Expect off-the-beaten-path tales of history and geology, as told by the bestselling author of many hiking books, four novels, and a new short story collection, "The Oregon Variations."

ODFW SET FOR OPEN OF TROUT FISHING

While many lakes and some rivers are open year-round to trout fishing, Saturday marks the official start of the trout season, with the opening of many popular locations, including large portions of the Willamette, Santiam and McKenzie rivers and small streams in the Willamette Valley. Anglers should check the 2014 Sport Fishing Regulations for the full list of water bodies that will open Saturday by going to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife website.

ODFW COMMISSION TO DISCUS HALIBUT

The ODFW will consider the 2014 sport and commercial halibut seasons when it meets at 8 a.m. Friday at the Mill Casino in North Bend. The commission will adopt sport and commercial regulations for Pacific halibut, and it will finalize season dates for all-depth fishery of the Central Coast subarea.

CASCADE FAMILY FLYFISHERS PROGRAM

The Cascade Family Flyfishers will present a program, "Why fish chironomids," by Bob Wolfe at its monthly meeting Wednesday. Wolfe retired after 36 years with the Forest Service. Guests welcome, doors open at 6:15 p.m. and the program is at 7 p.m. at the Veteran's Memorial Building, 1626 Willamette St.

HENDRICKS PARK FUNDRAISER

There will be a fundraiser for the non-profit organization Friends of Hendricks Park from 8 a.m. to midnight today at Wild Duck Cafe at 1419 Villard St. For the required flver, email moonkelley@ yahoo.com.

TALK ON IMPORTANCE OF LAMPREY

Long Tom Watershed Council is holding a presentation April 29 on lamprey and the animal's current importance. Learn about the biology and life cycle of the fish species from biologist Lance Wyss, and Cayuse/ Walla Walla tribal citizen Gabe Sheoships will discuss why lamprey are an integral part of the heritage and culture of Native American tribes in the Columbia and Willamette river basins. The free event is from 6 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. at the Veneta Community Center. Visit www. longtom.org or call 541-338-7060 for more information.

NOAH STRYCKER AT AUDOBON MEETING

Noah Strycker will be the featured speaker at the Lane County Audubon program at 7:30 p.m. today. The meeting will be at the Eugene Garden Club, 1645 High St., and all are welcome.

McKenzie: Some want hatchery fish removed

Continued from Page D1

allowed except between May 1 and June 15 for salmon and steelhead fishing, when hook-size restrictions are designed to minimize effects on native trout.

From Hendricks Wayside to Forest Glen Boat Ramp near Blue River, a stretch of approximately 33 miles, hatchery fish are stocked from the end of April until mid-September. All non-fin clipped, or native, trout are subject to the same catch-and-release regulations of the lower and upper river. However, up to five fin-clipped, or hatchery fish, per day can be kept between April 26 and Dec. 31, and bait fishing is allowed in this section.

Upstream of Forest Glen Boat Ramp, the same catch-and-release, no bait regulations that apply in the lower river are in place, with the caveat that this section is open for fishing from April 26 to Dec. 31. The fishing delay on the upper section is to prevent fishing pressure during the native trout spawning season in the spring and to increase angling success by limiting fishing to warmer months.

The combination of managing for native fish in some sections of the river and continuing to plant hatcherv fish in the middle section has created controversy among various constituencies and added to an already complex regulatory picture. Among those who regularly fish or guide on the river, all who were contacted for this article are proponents of protecting and sustaining the native trout populations. The controversy lies in whether the hatchery program is perceived as a threat to the native populations.

Stocking of hatchery trout on the McKenzie gained momentum in the 1940s, according to Dave Helfrich, who has been guiding on the river since 1943. Helfrich said he remembers support for hatchery trout grew after the collapse of the McKenzie's native trout populations in the 1950s. A massive infestation of spruce budworm in the

ODFW STOCKING

These will occur before Saturday's opening of the general trout season

RIVERS AND STREAMS

Lower McKenzie River: 9,000 legals between Leaburg Dam, Hendricks Park

Fall Creek: 1,500 legal-size and 250 larger released upstream of Fall Creek Lake

Salmon Creek: 1,500 legals and 250 larger Blue River: 1,000 legal and 250 larger be released

upstream of the reservoir Coast Fork Willamette River: 1,500 legal will go in

LAKES AND RESERVOIRS

Clear Lake: 2,500 legal, 1,125 larger

Hills Creek: 6,385 legal **Smith Reservoir:** 4,000 legals

Carmen Reservoir: 2,500 legals and 500 larger

Dorena Lake: 6,300 legal Leaburg Lake: 2,900 legal.

Junction City Pond: 1,200 legal and 250 larger

COASTAL LAKES

at Cottage Grove

Alder Lake: 850 legal-size, 225 larger, 36 trophy Buck Lake: 850 legal, 20 larger, 36 trophy Dune Lake: 850 legal-size, 225 larger, 36 trophy

Elbow Lake: 600 larger Erhart Lake: 200 legal

Georgia Lake: 150 legal Lost Lake: 500 larger Mercer Lake: 2,250 larger Munsel Lake: 3,150 larger North Georgia Lake: 150 legal

Perkins Lake: 250 legal, 200 larger Siltcoos Lagoon: 850 legal, 350 larger, 106 trophy

Siltcoos Lake: 1,000 larger Sutton Lake: 1,500 larger

Source: Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

upper watershed in the mid-1940s led to spraying of DDT, with severe consequences, he said.

"The DDT killed off the bugs and our trout," Helfrich said. "As a little kid, I remember we'd catch big trout, up to 3 to 4 pounds."

By the late '40s, Helfrich also remembered seeing the McKenzie's native trout population crash. In the early '50s, the McKenzie's trout population was so depressed, "you were lucky if you caught five or six trout that were six inches long back then."

A 2007 study by the U.S. Geological Service on sediments buried in Cougar Reservoir gives credence to Helfrich's memory. When the reservoir was drawn down in 2002 to construct water temperature towers, those sediments washed downstream. The USGS recorded, "... DDT applied throughout much of the upper McKenzie River drainage basin to control spruce budworm

during the 1950s, was detected in the South Fork near Rainbow ... and on the mainstem river near Vida.

While hatchery stocking has been part of the McKenzie's trout-management strategy for more than half a century, a new ethos has gained traction among a growing constituency. Groups such as The Native Fish Society, McKenzie Fly Fishers, Trout Unlimited and other conservation organizations cite the growing body of scientific evidence that shows stocking of hatchery trout depresses native trout populations.

As a result, Montana eliminated stocking of hatchery fish in all of its rivers, with a resulting boon to native trout populations. Proponents of eliminating hatchery stocking on the McKenzie cite Montana's experience as a basis for curtailing the practice here. Yet, when proponents make such claims, others liken this to an

apples-to-oranges type of comparison.

Gary Williams, a longtime guide and angler, questions such comparisons. He said Montana's rivers are "valley rivers," with massive weed beds that support large populations of mayflies that trout feed on.

"The McKenzie is a mountain stream that doesn't have the capacity to support large populations of insects like Montana," he said.

Others point to the existence of anadromous salmonids (sea-run species) on rivers that flow off the west slope of the Cascades. These streams are nutrient-limited, and salmon consequently evolved migrating to the ocean for food, so direct comparisons between Montana's experience and the response of the McKenzie's native trout to hatchery curtailment raise other questions.

Chris Daughters, owner of The Caddis Fly Shop in Eugene, is a proponent of eliminating hatchery stocking on the entire McKenzie. Daughters acknowledges the rebound of the McKenzie's native trout population, if hatchery stocking is eliminated, may not be as large as that seen in Montana. Yet, he contends eliminating hatchery fish from the McKenzie would change the economics of trout fishing for the better.

"If (the ODFW) made the McKenzie a wild fish river, it could become a world-class fishery," Daughters said.

He said such a fishery would attract far more people to the McKenzie for multiple-day trips throughout the year and result in an economic boon to the area, as well as further protect the native redside population.

For other anglers, this issue is so black and white. Bob Bumstead, a longtime fishing enthusiast who's also a member of several local fishing groups, said even though planting hatchery fish in a river depresses wild fish populations, hatchery fish and native fish often occupy different types of habitat. "When I go fishing

for hatchery fish," Bumstead said, "I look for habitat that looks like

a hatchery - basically long, slow pools with

moderate depth." Native fish don't seem to congregate in those kinds of habitats, he

Those who regularly fish the McKenzie harbor opinions about other changes that would help sustain its native trout populations. Helfrich would like to see a barbless-hook restriction for the entire river, which would result in easier releases of native trout and decrease the mortality rate. Daughters said he would like to see a "no-bait" restriction for the entire river instead of limiting it to the upper and lower native trout reserves.

As Jeff Ziller, the district biologist at the ODFW, views the issue, "It's more a social issue than a conservation issue because there is a strong population of wild redbands." How hatchery stocking is balanced with native trout management will likely depend on the public's priorities.

"Right now the majority of anglers want hatchery trout, and we believe releases of these fish will not jeopardize the longterm survival of the native stock," Ziller said.

He also noted the hatchery program currently releases sterile trout, eliminating the potential for the hatchery fish to inter-breed with native trout.

According to a 2011 ODFW survey, 78 percent of licensed anglers who lived within 20 miles of the river supported continuing the hatchery program.

The diversity and passion with which different constituencies hold views regarding the McKenzie's trout fishing regulations ensure the regulations will stay in flux, similar to the incessant patterns of weather, financial markets and other forms of turbulence identified in Chaos theory.

Paul Hoobyar of Eugene is the owner of Watershed Initiatives, LLC, a consulting firm that works on natural resource and public policy issues dealing with watersheds, fisheries, land use and endangered species.

Trout: Estimated spring chinook run on Willamette system is 58,000

Continued from Page D1

with 6,000 catchablesized fish this year.

A low snowpack in the Cascades has opened access to mountain lakes earlier than usual. Ziller said he was able to drive to Clear Lake with no problem. "People that do best with the hikein lakes go when the ice comes off," he added, but the lack of snow will lead to low water flows this summer that will be hard on fish.

As for salmon and steelhead in the Willamette River system, the ODFW is trying to reestablish a run in the Coast Fork of the Willamette for the first time since the 1970s. The department began the effort in 2012 with the

To submit events

registerguard.com. All events are

Bicycling

TUESDAY

out Fox Hollow road, with a return route to be determined by the

weather. Meet at 9 a.m. at Alton Baker Park. Jacki Murdoff is the

WEDNESDAY

town ride of varying length for seniors, every Wednesday starting

at Campbell Community Center, 155 High St., at 10:30 a.m. Helmets

Eugene GEARS: 26 miles

from Irving to Fir Butte, meet at 6 p.m. at Alton Baker Park. Mike

THURSDAY

Clearwater Trail around Springfield. Meet at 9 a.m. at Alton Baker Park.

Eugene GEARS: 25 miles on

required. Info: 541-682-5318.

Cantrell is the leader.

Eugene Adult Service: In-

Eugene GEARS: 25-60 miles

free, unless otherwise noted.

Submit listings to: Outdoors@

release of more than 200,000 smolts that will return to the Coast Fork this year as four-year-

"It's going to be an interesting fishery," Ziller said. "It's a smaller stream, and a little warmer, and you can get a better bite."

Anglers will be able to use drift boats early, as well as pontoon boats later in the season.

A steelhead fishery that ODFW laid the foundation for in 2011 with the release of 30,000 smolts in the Willamette River at the Beltline Road bridge appears to have been successful.

"They came back in 2013 and created one of the better fisheries in the 'Town Run,'" Ziller

Mike Cantrell is the leader.

Jobanek is the leader.

all Obsidians outings.

SATURDAY

McKenzie View and Sunderman.

Meet at 9 a.m. at Alton Baker Park. Garry Swanson is the leader.

Eugene GEARS: 35 miles on

Eugene GEARS: 58 miles on

9 a.m. at Alton Baker Park. George

SUNDAY

Dale Kuni Road via Seavey Loop. Meet at 9 a.m. at Alton Baker Park.

Hiking

WEDNESDAY

waters/Spencer Butte, 6.2 miles,

1,530 feet of elevation gain. Sign

up only online at obsidians.org for

Obsidians: Spencer Butte, Conditioning, 6 miles, 1,100 feet eleva-

WEDNESDAY

Obsidians: Horse Rock, 3.5

tion gain, leader Dalen Willhite.

Obsidians: Amazon Head-

Paula Erickson is the leader.

Eugene GEARS: 34 miles to

said. "It's also one of the few places where Town Run anglers had success for summer steelhead. We expect this year's run to be spread out more evenly between Island Park in Springfield and Beltline bridge."

The estimated run for spring chinook in the Willamette River system is 58,000, and 35,000 to make their way past Willamette Falls.

"It's a middle-of-theroad run," Ziller said.

He also noted a key change that went into effect this year for anglers who plan to fish for salmon, steelhead and sturgeon in the Willamette and local rivers that feed into it. They will need a Columbia River Basin endorsement in addition to a license

and Combined Angling Tag. The cost is \$9.75.

Aspiring anglers will have opportunities to give fishing a try with the help of experienced hands nearby this spring. A family fishing event will be held at Alton Baker Park on May 4 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The ODFW will be on hand to help beginners and others fish the park's ponds. Adults who plan to fish will need to have a license.

Free-fishing weekend will be held June 7-8 statewide. Everyone can fish for free, and another event will be held in Alton Baker Park that weekend. The ODFW's fish division website (dfw.state.or.us/fish) also contains easy-to-understand tips on how to get

started, and where and when to go fishing.

And while many folks hit local lakes and rivers hard once the season opens Saturday, Ziller said people shouldn't feel like the season ends at the end of April.

'There are so many things happening this time of year, but during May is when the water warms up, and the bass and crappie get more active, and those can be fun, too."

New Web Site!





Action Surplus has military surplus clothing that is great for hunters, law enforcement and workers. New and used military surplus clothing is functional, durable, comfortable and priced right.

4000 Franklin Blvd, Eugene 541 746 1301

field. **WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY** Altair Sports Club: 5 to 6 miles around town, meet at 9 a.m. at Brail's, 1689 Willamette St.

Information: 541-746-6263. THURSDAY

50-plus, self-led: Hourlong group walk around neighborhood surrounding Petersen Barn Community Center, 870 Berntzen Road. Meet at 9:30 a.m. For those 50 or older. **FRIDAY**

Campbell Community Cen-

ter: Walk 'n' Talkers group is self-led for 3-5 miles every Friday from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., leaving from 155 High St. Info: 541-682-5318.

SATURDAY

miles, 600 feet elevation gain, For those 50-plus, a moderate to brisk pace for one hour, leaves from Willamalane Adult Activity Center, 215 West C St., Springleader Lana Lindstrom.

SUNDAY Obsidians: North Bank Deer Preserve, 7.4 miles, 1,400 feet elevation gain, leader Janet Jacob

OUTDOORS CALENDAR

Obsidians: Fall Creek, 6 miles. 200 feet elevation gain, leader Jane Hackett.

Trail maintenance SATURDAY

Obsidians: Spencer Butte Trail, 2 miles, 500 feet elevation gain, leader Matthew Bell.

Walking MONDAY, WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY

Steppers Walking Group: For those 50-plus, casual 30- to 60-minute walk through Island Park, leaves Willamalane Adult Activity Center, 215 West C Street Springfield, at 8:30 a.m. Info: 541-

TUESDAY & THURSDAY Whippets Walking Group:

Altair Sports: 4-5 miles on river bike trails. Meet 9 a.m. at Cafe Aroma at Valley River Mall. Information: 541-343-7893. ActionSurplusEugene.com