Columbia River Spring Chinook Allocation

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting
Vancouver, Washington
January 10, 2009

Spring Chinook Stocks

- Lower river stocks – below Bonneville
  - Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, Willamette
- Upriver stocks – above Bonneville
  - Snake River, Upper Columbia, Mid-Columbia
- Both groups include ESA-listed components

U.S. v Oregon Plan

- Conservation Based Management Plan
  - Protect, rebuild, enhance upriver runs
- 1980s-1990s – no directed fishing
  - Non-Indians limited to <5% of run
- 2008-2017 current plan
  - Abundance based harvest schedule
  - Non-Indians 0.5%-2.7%

Previous Allocation Decisions

- Prior to 2002 – no formal allocation
- Three 2-year policies 2002-2007
- 1-year policy 2008
- Allocation ranged from 57%-65% sport and 35%-43% commercial

Spring Chinook Fisheries Management

- Jointly managed with Oregon
- Fisheries expanded in time and area
- Conservative management
  - Within ESA limits
  - Within *U.S. v Oregon* limits

Management Challenges

- Balance the needs of both fisheries
  - Predictability/stability
- Manage risks associated with uncertainty
  - Run size forecasts and fishery performance
  - Variations in run timing and fisheries complicate management

Columbia River Fish Working Group (CRFWG)

- Facilitate collaborative decision-making between states and key stakeholders
- Voting members include three fish and wildlife commissioners from each state
- Non-voting members include two agency staff and six advisors from key stakeholders in each state

CRFWG Objectives

- Phase 1
  - Recommendations to respective commissions for allocating harvest of spring and summer Chinook between sport and commercial fisheries

CRFWG Objectives

- Phase 2
  - Develop recommendations on a broader range of Columbia River issues
    - Salmon recovery
    - Selective fisheries development
    - Hatchery reform

Recommendations of the CRFWG- Phase1

- Six commissioners provided recommendations for the near term – 2009-2013
  - Defined objectives and strategies for fisheries management, including allocation plan
  - Provided a conservation buffer to reduce risk to ESA stocks
  - Periodically review fishery performance

Objectives – Sport Fishery

- Main-stem Sport Fisheries Below Bonneville
  - Before Run Update: High likelihood of at least 45 days in March and April
  - After Run Update: Harvest opportunity through May
- Main-stem Sport Fisheries Above Bonneville
  - High likelihood of no emergency closures

Sport Fishery Allocation

- Downstream from Bonneville Dam
  - 75% of available impacts
- Upstream from Bonneville Dam
  - 25% of available impacts

Objectives – Commercial Fishery

- Select Areas
  - Harvest levels at least similar to recent years
- Main-stem Columbia
  - Before Run Update: Harvest opportunity in March-April
  - After Update: Maximum harvest opportunity in May

Commercial Fishery Allocation

- Select Area Fisheries
  - 0.15% ESA impacts set aside
- Mainstem Fisheries
  - The balance of available ESA impacts after 0.15% select area set-aside to be used for mainstem fisheries

Rebalancing Opportunity After the Run-size Update

- Allocate impacts available so that the sport/commercial shares approximate the matrix
- Impacts in excess of that needed to meet a fishery's objective may be reallocated to other fisheries

Conservation Objective-Managing Risks (The Buffer)

- Set aside ~35% of allowable impacts
- Allocation of the buffer
  - If sport fishery share of total impact > 65% - each fishery's contribution is the same ~ 35%
  - If sport fishery share of total impact ≤ 65%
    - Sport fishery's contribution is ~ 25%
    - Commercial fishery's contribution is ~ 50%
  - Up to 5% flexibility in assigned sport buffer to minimize likelihood of emergency closure

Recommended Allocation Matrix

Run Size of Upriver Columbia Spring Chinook	**Run Size of Willamette Spring Chinook**	
	Low (<50,000)	**High (>50,000)**
Very Low (<33,000)	Share = 85/15%	Share = 75/25%
	Buffer share = 35/35%	Buffer share = 35/35%
Low (33,000 – 55,000)	Share = 75/25%	Share = 70/30%
	Buffer share = 35/35%	Buffer share = 35/35%
Medium-High (55,000 – 271,000)	Share = 70/30%	Share = **65/35% (base)**
	Buffer share = 35/35%	Buffer share = 25/50%
Very High (>271,000)	Share = 60/40%	Share = 55/45%
	Buffer share = 25/50%	Buffer share = 25/50%

Spring Chinook Harvest Under CRFWG PLAN

	Recent Yrs (1999 – 2008)			2009 Scenarios	
	Lowest	Highest	Average	Med-High	Very High
Upriver Return	38,700	416,500	199,600	250,000	300,000
Willamette Return [1]	>50,000	>50,000	>50,000	<50,000	<50,000
ESA Impact Allocation	70% sport 30% com	55% sport 45% com	65% sport 35% com	70% sport 30% com	60% sport 40% com
Total Sport Catch [2]	3,600	75,200	32,400	26,300	29,700
Total Commercial Catch [3]	1,100	35,800	13,800	9,700	13,100
Percent Catch – Sport	77%	68%	70%	73%	69%
Percent Catch – Commercial	23%	32%	30%	27%	31%

Hind-cast of Closing Dates for Spring Chinook Sport Fishery

	Recent Yrs (1999 – 2008) High Willamette Run			2009 Scenarios Low Willamette Run	
	Lowest	Highest	Average	High	Very High
Upriver Return	38,700	416,500	199,600	250,000	300,000
ESA Impact Allocation	70% Sp 30% Com	55% Sp 45% Com	65% Sp 35% Com	70% Sp 30% Com	60% Sp 40% Com
Total Sport Catch	3,600	75,200	32,400	26,300	29,700
Closing date (3d/wk)	March 28	May 2	May 9	April 24	May 14
Closing Date (7d/wk)	March 23	April 15	April 15	April 12	April 16

End