

Smelt Update

Thursday – March 12, 2009

Conditions:

Just limited sport and commercial effort this week, yielding just a handful of smelt.

The Cowlitz River discharge has been low all week, with the gauge reading 7,190 cfs (still less than the median daily discharge of 9,200 cfs for this date). The water remains very clear, with the turbidity at 34 fnu. Water temperatures increased, reaching 44.0°F (6.7°C) in the Cowlitz River and 43.4°F (6.3°C) in the Columbia River.

WDFW test dipped early Wednesday, March 11th at various sites in the Cowlitz River, from Camelot up to Castle Rock. No fish were caught. No bird and marine mammal activity.

The sport fishing prospect for this coming Saturday is poor.

This morning, NOAA Fisheries proposed listing the southern distinct population segment of Eulachon as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. This proposal does not affect the current Columbia River smelt fishery season, since a final determination will not be made until next year. Ref: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/fish/pacific_eulachon.htm

Catches:

Columbia River:

Sport: There were no reports of sport dipping this past week.

Commercial: No reported landings for Monday, March 9th. No reports from today, so far. Season total remains at 5,319-lbs.

Cowlitz River:

Sport: Minimal effort. Some people able to get their 10-lbs limit on Saturday, March 7th.

Commercial: No landings this week. Cumulative catch since January 3rd is 12,093-lbs.

Treaty Tribe: No C&S effort this past week. Cumulative Ceremonial and Subsistence take is 3,500-lbs.

Sport Seasons/Regulations:

Tributaries - Sport dipping is only allowed on the Cowlitz River, from 6 AM to 10 PM Saturdays through March 31st. The daily limit is 10 lbs per person per day. This is equivalent to ¼ of a 5-gallon bucket.

Mainstem Columbia River daily limit is 25 lbs per person per day and the fishery is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Commercial Seasons:

Columbia River: 7-hour fishing periods on Mondays and Thursdays.

Cowlitz River: 6-hour fishing periods on Sunday and Wednesday nights.

Fishing Rule updates are also available by calling (360) 696-6211, then press *1010

Here are some web sites that provide daily river data:

Cowlitz River water flow and levels: USGS Web site:

http://waterdata.usgs.gov/wa/nwis/uv/?site_no=14243000&PARAMeter_cd=00060.00065

Columbia River estuary water temperature: CORIE Web site:

<http://www.ccalmr.ogi.edu/CORIE/network/woody/>