

**OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**  
**JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 5a**  
**Columbia River Compact**  
**April 4, 2011**

<b><i>Fisheries under Consideration:</i></b> Non-Indian Commercial Salmon
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*Stock status and management guidelines for 2011 Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #2 (February 8, 2011).*

- Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam through April 3 totals 262 adult fish. Passage at Bonneville is typically less than 1% complete by the end of March, and has been late-timed for five of the past six years. The average 50% passage date is May 4, ranging from April 18 to May 13 over the past ten years.

*Recreational fisheries*

- A full review of the recreational fishing season through April 4 downstream of Bonneville Dam will occur at 3 PM Wednesday, April 6.

*Commercial Fisheries*

- The number of upriver spring Chinook (kept plus release mortalities) available to the mainstem non-Treaty commercial fishery prior to a run size update is 1,915 fish. Winter fisheries accounted for 53 fish, leaving a balance of 1,862 upriver Chinook for spring fisheries.
- Test fishing has occurred once a week since February 22 to index Chinook and steelhead abundance and Chinook stock ratios. All test fishing is conducted with tangle net gear, and has occurred in Zones 2-3.

<b>2011 Spring Chinook Observation Summary_ All data preliminary</b>													
				<b>Chinook Data</b>						<b>Ratios</b>		<b>Steelhead</b>	
<b>Fishery</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b># of Drifts</b>	<b># of</b>	<b>Lower River</b>	<b>Upper River</b>	<b>No VSI</b>	<b>Ttl Chin</b>	<b>Mark Rate</b>	<b>% Upriv.</b>	<b>Chin/ Drift</b>	<b>Sthd/ Drift</b>	<b>Total Sthd</b>	<b>Mark Rate</b>
Test	Feb	22	13	1	2		3	67%	67%	0.2	0.6	8	13%
Test	Feb	27	12	1	4		5	80%	80%	0.4	0.6	7	57%
Test	Mar	6	17	4	3		7	57%	43%	0.4	0.5	9	67%
Test	Mar	13	17	15	5		20	85%	25%	1.2	0.4	7	57%
Test	Mar	20	17	7	10		17	76%	59%	1.0	1.7	29	59%
Test	Mar	26-27	20	42	56	5	103	79%	57%	5.2	0.8	15	80%
FullFleet	Mar	29	64	72	74	30	176	78%	51%	2.8	0.3	17	71%
Test	Apr	3	18	24	54	0	78	81%	69%	4.3	0.6	10	40%

- A four-hour fishing period occurred on March 29 in Zones 1-4 up to Kelley Point. Mesh size was restricted to 4 1/4- inch maximum mesh size. Landings were less than expected, totaling 1,263 Chinook from 150 deliveries. Upriver fish represented around 73% of the catch.

- Based on landings to date, an estimated 911 upriver Chinook, or 48% of the pre-update commercial quota remains available. Considering expected mark rates and upriver Chinook stock proportions, staff is estimating 1,200-1,300 total Chinook remain available for commercial harvest.
- With Chinook abundance generally increasing, developing a fishing period to allow access to harvestable fish is challenging. Staff continues to put forth recommendations that are very conservative in order to reduce the risk of exceeding pre-update allowances.
- Staff has considered three options for the non-treaty commercial fishery prior to a run update.
  - Wait until post-update: The most conservative approach is to not recommend any additional fishing prior to the run-update given the remaining quota of upriver Chinook. The balance of 911 upriver Chinook would simply be carried over to the post-update period.
  - Short fishing period: Another option is a short fishing period similar to the March 29 fishery. Based on test fishing results (3.5 kept Chinook/drift), the period would need to be  $\leq 2$  hours in duration under normal assumptions. Due to the volatile nature of Chinook abundance in early April and full fleet efficiency, catch projections would likely have a wide range. This option poses the highest risk of exceeding the remaining upriver quota. Due to the short duration of the fishery, setting equitable hours for the fleet will be challenging.
  - Landing limit: A third option is to implement landing limits on a per vessel basis, similar to what has been used for white sturgeon. This is a new concept for lower Columbia River salmon fisheries but may be a useful tool for this particular situation. All other regulations typically in place for spring season fisheries would remain in place (recovery boxes, drift times, etc.). Landing limits would be based on the remaining balance (all stocks) divided by the expected number of participating vessels. The biggest challenge for this approach is determining the number of vessels expected to participate.
- If additional fishing time is considered, rather than waiting until post run update, staff recommends the following season:

<i>Joint Staff Recommendation- Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Fishery</i>	
Option	9:30 AM to 2:30 PM Wednesday April 6, 2011 (5 hours)
Allowable Sales:	Adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon, shad and white sturgeon.  <b>A maximum of 6 adipose fin clipped Chinook</b> may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel. The first 6 adult hatchery fish must be retained and no additional drifts may be conducted once the Chinook limit has been retained.
The following Applies to both options:	
Area:	Zones 1-5
Sanctuaries:	Grays River, Elochoman-B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, Lewis-B, Sandy R. and Washougal
Allowable Sales:	Adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon, shad and white sturgeon.
Gear:	Drift nets only. 4 ¼ ” maximum mesh size restriction. Multifilament web required for the 4-¼ inch mesh.

Standard regulations typically in place for spring Chinook commercial fisheries are in effect, including but not limited to: net length, use of recovery boxes, limited soak times, red corks, lighted buoys, tangle-net certification, etc.

**Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms**, except tangle nets constructed with an optional steelhead excluding device (large mesh panel, weedlines, or droppers) hung between the corkline and the 4¼” maximum mesh size tangle net may extend to a maximum length of 175 fathoms. The excluder panel web must be a minimum mesh size of 12” stretched measure when taut under hand tension. Monofilament mesh is allowed for the excluder panel only. The excluder panel must be a minimum of five feet in depth and must not exceed ten feet in depth as measured from the corkline to the upper margin of the tangle net mesh as the net hangs naturally from a taut corkline. Weedlines or droppers (bobber type) may be used in place of the steelhead excluder panel. A weedline-type excluder means the net is suspended below the corkline by lines of no less than five feet in length between the corkline and the upper margin of the tangle net. A dropper-type excluder means the entire net is suspended below the surface of the water by lines of no less than five feet in length extending from individual surface floats to a submersed corkline. The corkline cannot be capable of floating the net in its entirety (including the leadline) independent of the attached floats. Weedlines or droppers, must extend a minimum of five feet above the 4¼” maximum mesh size tangle net. Tangle nets constructed with a steelhead excluder panel, weedlines, or droppers must have two red corks at each end of the net, as well as the red corks required under miscellaneous regulations. There are no restrictions on the use of slackers or stringers to slacken the net vertically. There are no restrictions on the hang ratio. The hang ratio is used to horizontally add slack to the net and is determined by the length of the web per length of the corkline.

**Soak times**, defined as the time elapsed from when the first of the gill net web is deployed into the water until the gill net web is fully retrieved from the water, must not exceed 45 minutes.

**Red corks** are required at 25 fathom intervals, and red corks must be in contrast to the corks used in the remainder of the net.

**Lighted Buoys:** Nets that are fished at any time between official sunset and official sunrise must have lighted buoys on both ends of the net unless the net is attached to the boat. If the net is attached to the boat, then one lighted buoy on the opposite end of the net from the boat is required

**Recovery Box:** Each boat will be required to have on board two operable recovery boxes or one box with two chambers. Each box and chamber and associated pump shall be operating during any time that the net is being retrieved or picked. Each chamber of the recovery box(es) must include an operating water pumping system capable of delivering a minimum flow of 16 gallons per minute, not to exceed 20 gallons per minute of freshwater per chamber. Each chamber of the recovery box must meet the following dimensions as measured from within the box; the inside length measurement must be at or within 39 ½ inches to 48 inches, the inside width measurements must be at or within 8 to 10 inches, and the inside height measurement must be at or within 14 to 16 inches.

Each chamber of the recovery box must include a water inlet hole between ¾ inch and 1 inch in diameter, centered horizontally across the door or end wall of the chamber and 1¼ inches from the floor of the chamber. Each chamber of the recovery box must include a water outlet hole that is a least 1½ inches in diameter located on either the same or opposite end as the inlet. The center of the outlet hole must be located a minimum of 12 inches above the floor of the box or chamber. The fisher must demonstrate to WDFW and ODFW employees, fish and wildlife enforcement officers, or other peace officers, upon request, that the pumping system is delivering the proper volume of fresh river water into each chamber.

All non-legal sturgeon, non-adipose fin-clipped salmon, and steelhead must be released immediately to the river with care and with the least possible injury to the fish, or placed into an operating recovery box.

Any fish that is bleeding or lethargic must be placed in the recovery box prior to being released.

All fish placed in recovery boxes must be released to the river prior to landing or docking.

Additional Rules: **Observer program:** As a condition of fishing, owners or operators of commercial fishing vessels must cooperate with department observers or observers collecting data for the department, when notified by the observer of his or her intent to board the commercial vessel for observation and sampling during an open fishery.

**Live Capture workshop:** Only licensed Columbia River commercial fishers that have completed the required state-sponsored workshop concerning live capture commercial fishing techniques may participate in this fishery. At least one fisher on each boat must have live capture certification.

24-hour **quick reporting** required for Washington wholesale dealers, per WAC 220-69-240.

- Staff believes this approach provides the lowest risk of exceeding the remaining pre-update upriver balance (911 fish) if additional fishing time is considered.
- Catch estimates range from 900 to 1,300 Chinook kept.

#### **Future Meetings**

- A Joint State hearing is scheduled for 3 PM Wednesday April 6 to review the lower Columbia River recreational fishery.