

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: SUMMER FACT SHEET NO. 3
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
June 23, 2011

Fisheries under consideration:	Treaty Indian Fisheries Select Area Commercial Recreational sturgeon below Wauna Recreational sturgeon in Bonneville Pool
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Treaty Indian Fisheries

- The first tribal summer season gillnet fishery occurred June 16-18 and the second one began June 20 and ends at 6:00 PM today (June 23).
- Catch estimates include 12,000 Chinook and 5,000 sockeye for the first two openings. The preliminary harvest in the first gillnet opening was 4,230 adult Chinook, 139 steelhead, 602 sockeye and 38 walleye. A total of 44 legal sized sturgeon were retained for subsistence purposes. Based on these catch rates, the tribes expect 4,000 to 5,000 Chinook and 1,500 to 2,000 sockeye to be harvested in this week’s fishery. Including platform harvest, the total tribal catch is expected to be up to 9,300 Chinook and 2,600 sockeye.
- The tribes had expected effort to be up to 400 nets. There were 322 nets in the first opening and 350 nets in the second opening. Effort has normally declined after the first two weeks of summer gillnet fishing, but the tribes assume that next week will have approximately 350 nets again.
- The tribes expect a fishery next week to harvest 4,000-4,500 Chinook and 2,000-2,500 sockeye. This is based on previous year’s catch rates and assumes Chinook counts will remain close to current levels and sockeye counts will continue to increase.

2011 Treaty Indian Summer Season Fisheries			
Fishery	Effort (Nets)	Chinook	Sockeye
Week 1 (6/16-18)	322	4,230	602
Week 2 (6/20-23) projected	350	5,000	2,000
Subtotal		9,230	2,602
Week 3 (6/27-30) projected	350	4,500	2,500
Additional platform catch		600	2,500
Minimum Total Harvest (actual and projected)		14,830	7,102

- The harvest at the end of next week’s fishery (June 27-30), along with platform and hook and line harvest (presuming no additional gillnet fisheries were set) would be low enough to remain within harvest rate limits at a run sizes down to approximately 61,000 Chinook and 109,000 sockeye. If the run sizes are less than forecast, the fisheries would likely harvest less than the expected numbers of fish as well. Because the expected harvest is much less than allowed at the pre-season forecast run size and within the allowed harvest rates at runs somewhat less than forecast, the tribes maintain this is a reasonable fishery plan for next week and hope to propose additional gillnet fishing later.

- Because sturgeon remain available for harvest in all three pools, the tribes plan to allow the commercial sale of sturgeon caught incidentally during next week's commercial gillnet fishery. The tribes have had numerous requests over the years from fishers to try this. The tribes do not want fishers to target sturgeon and therefore will not allow diver gillnet gear (nets suspended below the surface of the water). While the tribes do not have reliable estimates of the total handle of sturgeon in summer salmon gillnet fisheries, based on the typical subsistence retention of sturgeon, the tribes think handle would be modest. For instance, in last week's commercial gillnet fishery 29 sturgeon were retained in the Bonneville Pool. If one out of every 10 legal sized sturgeon handled, is retained, the total catch would have been 290 fish which would have been well within the number of sturgeon that could have been caught for commercial purposes. By testing this in the summer fishery, the tribes hope to gain data on the number of legal sized sturgeon handled in the tribal fishery.

2011 Treaty Indian Sturgeon			
Pool	Guideline	Harvest	Balance
Bonneville	2,000	1,663	337
The Dalles	1,000	309	691
John Day	1,000	732	268

<i>Treaty Indian Summer Chinook Commercial Fishery</i>		
Season	6 AM Monday June 27 to 6 PM Thursday June 30	(3.0 days)
Area	Zone 6	
Sanctuaries:	Standard river mouth and dam sanctuaries, except no Spring Creek sanctuary.	
Gear:	<u>Floating gill nets only</u> . No diver gillnets are allowed. No mesh restriction.	
Allowable Sales:	Salmon, steelhead, shad, yellow perch, bass, walleye, catfish and carp may be sold or retained for subsistence.	
	Legal sized sturgeon may be sold or retained for subsistence (This includes sturgeon from 43 to 54 inches fork length in The Dalles and John Day Pools and from 38 to 54 inches fork length in the Bonneville Pool).	
	Sales of fish caught during open gillnet periods are allowed after the end of the open period, as long as the fish were landed during the open period.	
Additional:	24-hour quick reporting rule is in effect for Washington buyers. Commercial buyers may only purchase sturgeon in the round	

- Catch is expected to remain well within the treaty harvest limits. Additional weekly openers are anticipated. Catch and effort will be monitored to ensure the fishery remains within management limits.

<i>Treaty Indian Summer Chinook Platform/Hook and Line Fishery – Above BON</i>
Sales of legal-size sturgeon landed from the ongoing platform hook and line fisheries in the mainstem Columbia River above Bonneville Dam will be allowed if caught during the open gillnet period (concurrent sales).

Non-Indian Commercial

Select Area Commercial

- Management protocol for harvest of white sturgeon in 2011 commercial fisheries were adopted at the February 8 Compact (see winter Fact Sheet #2). Based on this guidance, 2011 SAFE fisheries are to be managed for an annual catch of 200 white sturgeon.
- Select Area commercial fisheries have been ongoing since February 13 under a two white sturgeon weekly landing limit restriction. Currently only the Youngs Bay area is open. To date, white sturgeon landings total 186 fish including 22 fish landed during the winter season, 144 during the spring season, and 20 during the first period (June 15-17) of the summer season.
- Staff expects the 200 Select Area white sturgeon guideline to be met during this week's fishing period (6 AM Wednesday June 22 - 6 AM Friday June 24) in Youngs Bay.

<i>Oregon Staff Recommendation - Youngs Bay Commercial Fishery</i>

Effective 6 PM, Monday June 27, 2011, prohibit retention of white sturgeon in the Youngs Bay commercial fishery for the remainder of the summer season.

Non-Indian Recreational

Recreational White Sturgeon Fisheries Above Wauna

- The 2011 white sturgeon retention seasons for the lower Columbia River were adopted at the February 8 Compact hearing. The fishery above Wauna is open three days a week (Thu-Sat) during January 1-July 31 and October 8-December 31 (38-54 inch fork length). The guideline for this area is 3,410 fish.
- Through May, anglers kept an estimated 402 white sturgeon from 9,678 trips (0.05 kept/angler) compared to 2010 when anglers kept 2,204 fish from 19,955 angler trips (0.11 kept/angler) during the same timeframe. However, the 2010 catch rate was influenced by the high catch in the Sand Island Slough area.
- The 2011 white sturgeon retention fishery in the lower Willamette River opened three days/week beginning February 17 with a 2,550 fish guideline. Through March 12, anglers kept an estimated 2,688 fish from 12,634 angler trips (0.21 kept/angler) resulting in a closure earlier than anticipated. The average catch rate during February through mid-March in 2010 was 0.13 kept/angler.

Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery below Wauna

- The 2011 catch guideline for this fishery is 6,800 white sturgeon.
- The retention season adopted for the area below Wauna included January 1- April 30 (38-54 inch fork length), May 14 – June 26, and July 1 – 4 (41-54 inch fork length after April). Expected catch was 6,100 fish.
- The catch estimates for the 2011 season were modeled based on the average effort and catch during 2009-2010. Based on 2010 only, when effort and catch rates were low, the 2011 catch projections would have been substantially less.

- A conservative season for 2011 (90% of guideline), based on 2009-2010 catch data, was adopted due to uncertainty surrounding the projected effort and catch rates.
- Catch during the January through April portion of the fishery is typically minimal, with the majority of the effort and catch occurring from late May forward.
- Catch rates so far this year have resembled 2010 instead of 2009-2010 average. Catch through June 19 of this year is estimated at 1,230 kept from 9,000 angler trips (0.137 kept/angler) compared to 2,200 kept from 17,500 angler trips (0.125 kept/angler) in 2010. Effort to date is tracking at 51% of 2010 and about 40% of the 2009-2010 average.
- Catch rates have improved throughout the month June. During June 1-12 kept catch averaged 40 fish/day, and increased to an average of 79 fish/day from June 13-19. Catch rates have continued to increase based on Oregon creel data. Data from June 20-23 indicate an average catch rate of 132 fish/day (Oregon only).
- This year through June 19, Oregon catch rates have been about twice as high as Washington's, so once Washington's data is combined with Oregon's, the average would likely be less than 132/day.
- Based on a guideline of 6,800 fish and a cumulative harvest of 1,230 through June 19, 5,570 fish remain on the estuary guideline. The currently adopted season includes 11 additional retention days through July 4. Assuming a kept catch of 110 fish/day (average rate in July 2010), the expected catch for the balance of the season would be 1,210 fish for a total of 2,440 sturgeon, or 36% of the guideline.
- The expected balance of 4,360 fish would allow for additional retention days. Extending the retention season through July 31 (7 days/week) would add 31 retention days (June 27-30 and July 5-31) to the fishery. At an average kept catch of 110 fish/day, this would add 3,410 fish, for a season total of 5,850, or 86% of the guideline. Average daily kept catch could be as high as 132 fish/day from June 20 through July 31 and still remain within the guideline.

<i>Staff Recommendation: Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery - Below Wauna</i>		
Modify the ongoing recreational white sturgeon fishery downstream of Wauna powerlines to allow retention through Sunday July 31, 2011 by <u>adding</u> the following periods to the existing season.		
Season	June 27 – 30, 2011 (daily)	4 days
	July 5 – 31, 2011 (7 days per week), or until guideline met	27 days
Area:	Mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines downstream to the mouth at Buoy 10, including Youngs Bay, and all adjacent Washington tributaries.	
Allowable Catch:	White sturgeon between 41-inches and 54-inches fork length Retention of green sturgeon prohibited	

- The proposed season modification is similar to action taken in 2010 and would allow additional harvest opportunity preceding the Buoy 10 fishery which opens August 1.
- Although the recommended fishery is projected to leave a balance of 950 fish, staff does not intend to propose extending the fishery past July 31.

- Staff will continue to closely monitor catch as the season continues, and modify the proposed season if necessary to remain within the catch guideline.

Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery in Bonneville Pool

- Under permanent rule, the 2011 Zone 6 (Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Dam) recreational white sturgeon fishery opened for retention effective January 1. The fishery remains open until the annual guideline for each pool is met. Fishery status for all pools are as follows:

2011 Recreational Sturgeon Harvest in Zone 6				
	Guideline	Catch	Balance	Season
Bonneville Pool	2,000	1,627	373	Closed February 19
The Dalles Pool	300	141 ^a	159	Ongoing
John Day Pool	500	532	-32	Closed April 10

^a Through June 19

- The John Day Pool closed April 10 for sturgeon retention. Catch rates started off slow then rapidly increased resulting in anglers harvesting 32 fish over the guideline.
- Catch rates to date in The Dalles Pool have been lower than recent years and the fishery remains open. Catch should improve as the season progresses which could result in short notification of a fishery closure.
- In Bonneville Pool, catch rates (and effort) were higher than normal, resulting in a projection of the guideline being met by February 18. Actual catch rates in mid-February were lower than expected resulting in a balance of 373 fish remaining on the guideline.
- Staff discussed options for additional retention opportunity and agreed to delay re-opening the fishery until the early summer timeframe.
- Considering the balance of harvestable sturgeon remaining on the Bonneville Pool guideline and expected catch rates, staff proposes the following season recommendation:

Staff Recommendation: Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery – Bonneville Pool		
Open the Bonneville Pool for white sturgeon retention on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from June 30 through July 9, 2011.		
Season	June 30 – July 2 and July 7 – 9, 2011	6 days
Area:	Mainstem Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to The Dalles Dam, including adjacent Washington tributaries.	
Allowable	White sturgeon between 38-inches and 54-inches fork length	
Catch:	Retention of green sturgeon prohibited	

- Estimating catch for this fishery is difficult due to recent changes in population abundance and structure and projecting angler effort.
- Based on a projected catch of 50-60 kept fish/day, the proposed fishery is expected to harvest most of the fish remaining on the guideline.
- Staff will continue to monitor the fishery and recommend further action if needed.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- A Compact to consider August mainstem (Treaty and non-Treaty) and fall Select Area commercial fisheries is scheduled for 10 AM July 28 at the Holiday Inn (204 West Marine Dr.) in Astoria, Oregon.