

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 4
Columbia River Compact
March 28, 2011

<i>Fisheries under Consideration:</i> Non-Indian Commercial Salmon

Stock status and management guidelines for 2011 Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #2 (February 8, 2011).

- Chinook passage at Bonneville March 27 totals 130 adult Chinook. Passage at Bonneville is less than 1% complete by the end of March. Chinook passage at Bonneville has been late-timed for five of the past six years. The 50% passage date has ranged from April 18 to May 13 over the past ten years, the average 50% passage date is May 4.
- River flows this winter/spring have been higher than average due to heavy rainfall. Tributary run-off has contributed to poor visibility. River temperatures are also below average, measuring around 40 F, compared to the 10-year average of 44 F.

Recreational Fisheries

- Chinook retention in the Columbia River is scheduled to be open through Monday April 4 in the area below Bonneville Dam. From Bonneville Dam upstream to the Oregon/Washington border, Chinook retention is currently allowed through April 24. Only Chinook with a clipped adipose fin may be kept.
- February catch was less than 300 Chinook, but still greater than the average catch observed in past years during the month of February. Catch during March 1-20 was slightly less than expected and the stock composition was slightly heavier towards upriver fish. As a result, the season total catch of upriver fish for February – March 20 is nearly identical to the preseason expectation (1,242 through March 20 compared to 1,182 expected).
- Preseason expectations were for about 85% of the season total catch of upriver fish to occur between March 21 and April 4.
- The number of upriver spring Chinook (kept plus release mortalities) available to the recreational fishery below Bonneville Dam prior to a run size update is 7,743 fish.

Angler Effort and Chinook Catch Below Bonneville Dam, through March 20 , 2011								
Season and Area	Angler Trips	Percent Upriver	Mark Rate	Total Salmon		Upriver Only		Catch Balance
				Kept	Rel.	Kept	Rel.	
Jan 1 - Feb 28 (Buoy 10 to I-5)	5,598	93%	86%	280	47	262	42	266
March Below I-5	20,060	79%	77%	532	162	433	117	445
March Above I-5	10,073	96%	80%	537	134	518	126	531
March 1-20 Total	30,133	88%	78%	1,069	296	951	243	976
Total (Jan 1- Mar 20)	35,731	89%	80%	1,349	343	1,214	285	1,242

- Catch rates began to improve last week, and reports indicate the improvement carried through the week-end. Improving river conditions and increased fish abundance are contributing to improving angler success.
- Based on catch to date, and catch projections, the recreational fishery below Bonneville Dam will remain open as scheduled through April 4. The states will continue to monitor sport catch and will provide an update on lower river sport catch through March 27 this week.

Commercial Fisheries

- The number of upriver spring Chinook (kept plus release mortalities) available to the mainstem 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.
- 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.
- Test fishery results from this weekend indicate that Chinook abundance increased markedly and wild steelhead abundance has declined to less than the long-term average.

2011 Spring Chinook Observation Summary. All data are preliminary															
			Chinook Data									Ratios		Steelhead	
Fishery	Date	# of Drifts	Lower R.		UpRiver		No VSI		Ttl Chin	Mark Rate	% Upriv.	Chin/ Drift	Sthd/ Drift	Total Sthd	Mark Rate
			Ad-Clip	No Clip	Ad-Clip	No Clip	Ad-Clip	No Clip							
Test	Feb 22	13	1		1	1			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	3	1	1	2			7	57%	43%	0.4	0.5	9	67%
Test	Mar 13	17	13	2	4	1			20	85%	25%	1.2	0.4	7	57%
Test	Mar 20	17	6	1	7	3			17	76%	59%	1.0	1.7	29	59%
Test	Mar 26-27	20	35	7	44	12	2	2	102	79%	57%	5.1	0.8	15	80%

- Delaying commercial fishing beyond this week moves the fishery into a time period when Chinook abundance is expected to continue to increase, creating more uncertainty in catch projections.

<i>Joint Staff Recommendation- Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Fishery</i>	
Season:	7:30 PM to 11:30 PM Tuesday March 29, 2011 (4 hours)
Area:	Zones 1-4, upstream to Kelley Point
Sanctuaries:	Grays River, Elochoman-B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, Lewis-B
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. Nets not specifically authorized for use in this fishery may be onboard the vessel if properly stored. A properly stored net is defined as a net on a drum that is fully covered by a tarp (canvas or plastic) and bound with a minimum of ten revolutions of rope with a diameter of 3/8 (0.375) inches or greater

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.

- Based on the expected high participation and the observed Chinook per drift and mark rate, the expected catch is 2,700 Chinook (2,400-3,000 range).
- Based on a kept catch of 2,700 fish, the upriver Chinook catch (kept plus release mortalities) is projected to be 1,581 fish, or 85% of the 1,862 remaining to the mainstem commercial fishery prior to a run update.
- Wild winter steelhead release mortalities are expected to be less than 50 fish (0.33% impact).
- Given the large amount of recreational fishing effort, staff has recommend an evening fishery to minimize gear conflicts, as outlined in the 2011 preseason commercial fishing plan.
- Delaying the fishery would increase the likelihood that full fleet fisheries would be even shorter in duration, or may not occur until after a run size update (early May).

Future Meetings

- Staff is not recommending a hearing at this time.