

**OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**  
**JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 7**  
**Columbia River Compact**  
**April 2, 2012**

***Fisheries under Consideration:***      Non-Indian Mainstem Commercial Salmon

*Stock status and management guidelines for 2012 Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #1 (January 26, 2012).*

- River conditions are poor, with the Columbia and Willamette rivers running high, fast, and cool. Water visibility is also very low, and there is a lot of debris in the river.
- Adult Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam through April 1 totals 41 fish. Based on the pre-season forecast and 5-year average timing, about 400 fish would be expected at Bonneville Dam by this date.
- Winter steelhead abundance typically peaks in mid-March, then declines as the fish move into the tributaries. Passage at Bonneville Dam and Willamette Falls indicates the run is tracking at or above expectations.
- The number of upriver spring Chinook (kept plus release mortalities) available to the mainstem commercial fishery prior to a run size update is 5,900 adult fish. An additional 9,600 Willamette spring Chinook are available to commercial fisheries for the 2012 spring season.
- Test fishing has occurred once weekly since February 14 mainly in Zones 2-3. Test fishing has been conducted with both tangle net (4.25-inch mesh) and large mesh gear (8-inch gear). The most recent test fishery occurred on Sunday April 1 with tangle net gear (16 drifts).
- Data from April 1 indicates an increase in Chinook abundance and a decrease in steelhead abundance, when compared to data collected last week (March 25).

<b>2012 Spring Chinook Observation Summary_ All data preliminary</b>															
						<b>Chinook Adult Data</b>									
						<b>Lower R.</b>		<b>UpRiver</b>						<b>Steelhead</b>	
Fishery	Month	Date	Mesh	# of Drifts	Zones	Ad-Clip	No-Clip	Ad-Clip	No-Clip	Ttl Chin	Chin/Drift	Chin/Sthd	Sthd/Drift	Ttl Sthd	Ad-Clip
Test	Mar	4	4.25	8	2-3			1		1	0.1	0.1	1.0	8	2
Test	Mar	4	8	8	2-3	2	1	1		4	0.5	4.0	0.1	1	1
Test	Mar	11	4.25	12	1-3			4		4	0.3	0.2	2.2	26	16
Test	Mar	11	8	5	1-3	1		2		4	0.8	2.0	0.4	2	2
Test	Mar	18	4.25	18	2-3	11	3	8	3	25	1.4	0.6	2.2	40	25
Test	Mar	18	8	2	2-3	3				3	1.5	0	0	0	0
Test	Mar	25	4.25	18	2-3	21	2	11	4	38	2.1	1.3	1.6	29	20
Test	Apr	1	4.25	16	2-3	25	3	25	2	55	3.4	4.6	0.8	12	8

- Based on the recent decline in the number of steelhead encountered, the increasing number of Chinook per drift, a favorable Chinook mark rate, and the April 3 sport angling closure, staff recommends the following commercial fishing period:

<i>Joint Staff Recommendation- Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Fishery</i>	
Season:	7:00 AM to 7:00 PM Tuesday April 3, 2012 (12 hours)
Gear:	Drift nets only. 4¼” maximum mesh size restriction. Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms. Net length can increase from 150 to 175 fathoms for nets constructed with a steelhead excluder panel, weedlines, or droppers. Nets not specifically authorized for use in this fishery may be onboard the vessel if properly stored.
Area:	Zones 1-5
Sanctuaries:	Grays River, Elochoman-B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, Lewis-B, Sandy and Washougal as applicable.
Allowable Sales:	<p>Adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon, shad and white sturgeon (43-54 inch fork length). A maximum of 6 white sturgeon may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel during each calendar week (Sunday through Saturday) that the fishery is open.</p> <p><b>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.</b></p> <p><b>Soak times</b>, 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.</p> <p><b>Red corks</b> are required at 25 fathom intervals, and red corks must be in contrast to the corks used in the remainder of the net.</p> <p><b>Lighted Buoys:</b> 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</p> <p><b>Recovery Box:</b> Each boat will be required to have on board two operable recovery boxes or one box with two chambers that meet the flow and size requirements standard for the winter/spring season. Each box and chamber and associated pump shall be operating during any time that the net is being retrieved or picked. 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.</p>
Additional Rules:	<p><b>Observer program:</b> As a condition of fishing, owners or operators of commercial fishing vessels <u>must cooperate</u> 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.</p> <p><b>Live Capture workshop:</b> 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.</p> <p>24-hour <b>quick reporting</b> required for Washington wholesale dealers, per WAC 220-69-240.</p>

- The expected kept catch is 3,000 Chinook (2,500-3,500 range). Chinook catch is expected to include 2,000 upriver fish (kept and release mortalities) which represents 34% of the 5,900 upriver Chinook allowed pre-update and 23% of the 0.444% impact allowed pre-update.
- Wild winter steelhead release mortalities are expected to be 55 fish (0.36% impact), or 18% of the 2.00% impact limit for wild winter steelhead.
- A balance of 438 fish, or 91% of the 480 white sturgeon allocated to winter/spring commercial fisheries remain available. Sturgeon harvest is expected to be less than 50 fish.
- Based on the preseason plan, additional mainstem commercial fishing opportunity could occur on Thursday, however with the hazardous river conditions, staff would be hesitant to recommend fishing during hours of darkness.
- Test fishing is scheduled to occur again Sunday April 8.

#### **Future Meetings**

- A Joint State hearing is scheduled for 10 AM Thursday April 5 to review the ongoing sport fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam.