

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: SPRING FACT SHEET NO. 4
Columbia River Joint State Hearing
April 19, 2012

Fisheries under Consideration: Recreational salmon downstream of Bonneville Dam

Water Conditions

- The Willamette River dropped to 11 feet (Salem gauge) on Monday April 16, is currently about 14 feet, and is projected to drop back down to around 11 feet by Tuesday of next week. Visibility at Willamette Falls has been averaging 3 feet recently.
- The Columbia River crested at 16.0 feet (Vancouver), dropped to 9 feet by April 16, and is projected to remain at the current 11 feet into next week. Discharge at Bonneville Dam is currently at 312 kcfs (95 kcfs of which is spill) compared to a 5-year average of 206 kcfs for April 18. The current water temperature of 48°F equals the 5-year average.

Stock Status

- Bonneville Dam passage of Chinook through April 18 totals 1,079 adults. Based on the 5-year average, passage at Bonneville averages 6% complete by April 18 and the 50% passage date is May 7, ranging from May 1 to May 12. It is still too early in the run to make any conclusions regarding run size; however, passage to date is less than expected. The *US v Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will begin reviewing the upriver run size in late April, although a run size update is not expected until the second week of May.

Lower Columbia River Recreational Fishery

- A total of 12,700 adult upriver spring Chinook (kept plus release mortalities) are available to the LCR recreational fishery prior to a run size update.
- The Chinook retention season on the Columbia River downstream of Bonneville Dam was extended beyond the scheduled closure date of April 7, and is currently scheduled to close effective Monday April 23.
- Effort and angler success rates have generally been less than expected until recently, mainly due to poor river conditions and the apparent late timing of the spring Chinook return.
- Catch rates began to increase last Friday as river conditions improved. Almost 60% of last week's catch occurred over the weekend (April 14-15), when the river-wide catch rate averaged 0.5 Chinook kept per boat. Catch rates continued to escalate on Monday (April 16)

Preliminary Summary of the 2012 LCR Recreational Spring Chinook Fishery			
	Angler Trips	Total Kept Catch	UR Catch (kept + rel mort)
Feb	8,188	37	20
Mar	41,983	1,634	1,072
Apr 1- 15	28,675	3,118	2,082
Apr 16-22 (proj.)	32,800	9,430	7,955
Total	111,646	14,219	11,129

and Wednesday (April 18) when catch rates exceeded one fish per boat, with effort higher than the recent weekend.

- The estimated catch through April 15 is 4,789 kept adult fish. The kept and release mortality for upriver fish is estimated at 3,174 fish, or 25% of the 12,700 available.
- Based on current catch rates and projected effort/water conditions, the updated kept catch estimate for the remainder of the season (April 16-22) is 9,430 fish which would include 7,955 upriver mortalities (kept+release) for a season total of 11,129, or 88% of the pre-update guideline.
- If catch rates continue to increase and effort approaches record highs (6,000 weekend boats), the projected kept catch could reach 10,975 and include 9,260 upriver mortalities (kept+release) for a season total of 12,434, or 98% of the pre-update guideline.
- Additional fishing opportunity may be available after the upriver run size update.

Preliminary Summary of 2012 Non-Indian Upriver Chinook Catch				
Fishery	UR Catch (kept + rel mort)	% of Allowable CB	Upriver Impact %	% of Allowable Impact
LCR Sport (actual and proj. through Apr 22)	11,129	87.9%	0.401%	60.8%
Above Bonneville Sport (pre-update allowed)	3,084		0.220%	
Recreational Total	14,213	90.2%	0.621%	70.6%
Mainstem Commercial (actual)	4,366	73.8%	0.239%	53.9%
Select Area Commercial (pre-update allowed)	330		0.150%	
Commercial Total	4,696		0.389%	65.5%
Actual and Projected Season Totals	18,909	86.0%	1.010%	68.5%
Allowable Pre-Update	21,994		1.474%	
Remaining	3,085		0.464%	

- A final upriver run size of 208,000 is required to remain within catch balance and impact limitations for the completed mainstem commercial fisheries, LCR recreational (projected through April 22) fisheries and pre-update allocations for Select Area commercial and above Bonneville recreational fisheries.

Future Meetings

- Staff is recommending a Joint State hearing be scheduled for 2 PM Monday April 30 to review the ongoing mainstem recreational fishery upstream of Bonneville Dam.