

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: SUMMER FACT SHEET NO. 3
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
June 28, 2012

Fisheries under consideration:	Treaty Indian fisheries Select Area commercial Recreational sturgeon below Wauna Recreational sturgeon above Wauna
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Stock status and management guidelines for 2012 summer season fisheries were presented in Summer Fact Sheet #1 (June 13, 2012).

Stock Status

- Bonneville Dam counts of adult upper Columbia Summer Chinook total 23,070 fish (June 16-27). Based on the 10-year average, passage is typically 50% complete by June 29, but has been as late as July 1. The preseason forecast is 91,200 adult fish at the Columbia River mouth.
- Bonneville Dam counts of sockeye total 321,462 fish through June 27. Based on the 10-year average, passage is typically 50% complete by June 25, but has been as late as July 1. The preseason forecast is 462,000 adult fish at the Columbia River mouth.
- The *U.S. v Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met this morning (June 28) to review Chinook and sockeye returns. TAC reported that the summer Chinook return will be well below forecast, and provided an estimate of 54,000 fish. TAC also recognized the record daily counts of sockeye at Bonneville Dam and stated that the sockeye return is tracking to exceed the preseason forecast and estimated a return of 540,000 fish to the Columbia River mouth. TAC is scheduled to meet again Monday July 2.
- Based on current run size estimates and management agreements, 13,051 adult summer Chinook are available for treaty Indian fisheries and 10,249 for non-Treaty in-river fisheries (compared to 22,993 pre-season). Allowable sockeye harvest totals 37,800 for treaty Indian fisheries and 5,400 for non-treaty Indian fisheries.

Treaty Indian Fisheries

- The first tribal summer season gillnet fishery occurred June 18-21 and the second weekly opener began June 25 and ends at 6:00 PM today (June 28).
- For the June 18-21 period, preliminary harvest is estimated at 3,744 adult Chinook, 9,765 sockeye and 306 steelhead. A total of 358 nets were counted. For the June 25-28 period, effort picked up a bit from last week (401 nets) and catch projections include 3,900 Chinook and 15,000 sockeye.
- Combined with platform harvest, the total tribal catch (through June 28) is projected to be as high as 7,644 Chinook, 25,071 sockeye and 1006 steelhead.

- Based on the inseason run size updates and current catch estimates, a balance of 5,406 Chinook and 12,729 sockeye remain available for treaty Indian harvest.

2012 Treaty Indian Summer Chinook Commercial Fishery - recommendation		
Season	6 AM Tuesday July 3 to 6 PM Friday July 6, 2012	(3.5 days)
	6 AM Monday July 9 to 6 PM Wednesday July 11, 2012	(2.5 days)
Area	Zone 6	
Sanctuaries:	Standard river mouth sanctuaries applicable to gillnet gear. No Spring Creek sanctuary necessary	
Gear:	Gill nets. No mesh restriction.	
Allowable Sales:	Salmon, steelhead, shad, yellow perch, bass, walleye, catfish and carp may be sold or retained for subsistence. Sturgeon may not be sold, but 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 may be kept for subsistence purposes. 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.	

- Catch estimates for both openers combined total 4,900 Chinook and 10,600 sockeye.
- Effort normally declines after the first two weeks of the summer gillnet season, but we are basing the projected catch on 400 nets next week and 350 nets the following week.

2012 Treaty Indian Summer Season Fisheries			
Fishery	Effort (Nets)	Chinook	Sockeye
Spring season			396
Jun 18-21	358	3,744	9,675
Jun 25-28 (proj.)	401	3,900	15,000
Subtotal		7,644	25,071
Jul 3-6 (proj.)	400	2,700	7,200
Jul 9-11 (proj.)	350	2,200	3,400
Total proposed		4,900	10,600
Platform catch (proj. for season)		200	1,500
Total Harvest (actual and projected)		12,744	37,171

- Season total commercial harvest, along with platform and hook and line harvest, is projected to remain within the allowed harvest rates for treaty Indian fisheries at the current run sizes.

Non-Indian Commercial Fisheries

Mainstem Commercial

- An eight-hour fishery occurred on June 17-18 in Zones 1-5 with an eight-inch minimum mesh restriction. Catch from the fishery included 1,679 Chinook, 373 sockeye and 277 sturgeon.

Select Area Commercial

- Management protocol for harvest of white sturgeon in 2012 commercial fisheries were adopted at the January 26, 2012 Compact (see winter Fact Sheet #1). Based on this guidance, 2012 SAFE fisheries are to be managed for an annual catch of 200 white sturgeon.
- Select Area commercial fisheries have been ongoing since February 12 under a two white sturgeon weekly landing limit restriction. Currently only the Youngs Bay area is open.
- Landings through June 22 total 194 white sturgeon including eight fish from winter, 178 from spring and eight from the summer opener in Youngs Bay (June 20-22).
- The Select Area white sturgeon guideline is expected to be met upon the conclusion of the June 27-29 period in Youngs Bay.

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

Effective 6 PM, Monday July 2, 2012, prohibit retention of white sturgeon in the Youngs Bay commercial fishery for the remainder of the summer season.
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- Sturgeon retention in 2012 fall Select Area fisheries will be prohibited. Seasons will be set at the July 26 Compact hearing.

Non-Indian Recreational

Recreational Salmon Fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam

- The area from the Astoria-Megler Bridge upstream to Bonneville Dam is open from June 16-July 1 with a two adult fish daily bag limit. Hatchery Chinook and sockeye retention is allowed, along with hatchery steelhead.
- Season total kept and release mortalities are estimated at 3,185 adult Chinook and 4,108 sockeye which includes incidental release mortalities after the fishery closes.

Recreational Salmon Fishery upstream of Bonneville Dam

- The area from Bonneville Dam upstream to Priest Rapids Dam is open June 16-July 31 with a two adult fish daily bag limit. Hatchery Chinook and sockeye retention is allowed, along with hatchery steelhead.
- Season total kept and release mortalities are estimated to be 397 adult Chinook and 533 sockeye.

Non-Indian Salmon and Sockeye Catch Summaries

2012 Non-Indian Summer Chinook Catch Summary				
Fishery	Guideline	Kept	Released	Total Mortalities
Commercial: Mainstem	900	1,679	--	1,679
Recreational: Below PRD <u>Below Bonneville</u>	900			
-Actual thru 6/24		2,125	1,439	2,341
-Proj. thru 7/1		725	440	791
-Proj. 7/2-7/31		--	350	53
<i>Total Below Bonn. Sport</i>		2,850	2,229	3,185
<u>Bonn to PRD</u>				
-Actual thru 6/24		49	38	55
-Proj. thru 7/31		310	210	342
<i>Total Bonn to PRD Sport</i>		359	248	397
<u>Above PRD Sport - Opens 7/1</u>	3,900-4,600	--	--	--

2012 Non-Indian Sockeye Catch Summary			
Fishery	Kept	Released	Total Mortalities
Commercial: Mainstem	373	--	373
Recreational			
<u>Below Bonneville</u>			
-Actual thru 6/24	3,007	339	3,041
-Proj. thru 7/1	1,000	165	1,017
-Proj. 7/2-7/31	--	500	50
<i>Total Below Bonneville Sport</i>	4,007	1,004	4,108
<u>Bonn to PRD</u>			
-Actual thru 6/24	77	7	78
-Proj. thru 7/1	250	25	253
-Proj. 7/2-7/31	200	20	202
<i>Total Bonn to PRD Sport</i>	527	52	533

- Total non-Indian Chinook mortalities for fisheries downstream of Priest Rapids Dam are estimated at 5,361 fish compared to 1,800 allocated at the current run size.
- The Chinook allocation to fisheries upstream of Priest Rapids Dam will have to be reduced by about 3,300 fish in order to remain within the 10,249 fish allowed to in-river non-treaty fisheries.
- Total non-Indian sockeye mortalities downstream of Priest Rapids Dam total 5,014 fish, compared to the 5,400 fish allowed based on the current run size estimate and the 1% ESA impact limit.

Recreational White Sturgeon Fisheries Above Wauna

- The 2012 white sturgeon retention seasons for the lower Columbia River were adopted at the January 26 Compact hearing. The fishery above Wauna is open for retention three days a week (Thu-Sat) during January 1-July 31 and October 20-December 31 (38-54 inch fork length). The catch guideline for this area is up to 2,080 fish.
- Through May, anglers have kept an estimated 600 white sturgeon from 10,200 trips. Staff estimates an additional 510 white sturgeon will be kept during June.
- The 2012 white sturgeon retention season in the lower Willamette River consisted of one 2-day opener on February 18-19 (38-54 inch fork length). The guideline for this area was 1,768, not to exceed 2,022 fish. Actual catch totaled 1,535 fish
- The current language for the sturgeon angling closure below Bonneville Dam during May 1-August 31 references the “upstream exposed end of Skamania Island”. Due to high flows over the past few years, Skamania Island has eroded and is no longer an accurate reference point. Staff proposes modifying the language to reference existing markers on both sides of the river and removing the reference to Skamania Island. Changes to the current language are highlighted in bold in the following recommendation.

<i>2012 Sturgeon Recreational Fishery for Above Wauna – Staff Recommendation</i>
Refine language for the sturgeon sanctuary below Bonneville as follows: Closed to angling for sturgeon from May 1 to August 31 from Bonneville Dam downstream 9 miles to a line crossing the Columbia River from navigation marker 82 on the Oregon shore westerly to a boundary marker on the Washington shore upstream of Fir Point.

Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery Below Wauna

- The 2012 retention fishery adopted for below Wauna is January 1 – April 30 (38-54 inch fork length) and May 12 – July 8 (41-54 inch fork length). The catch guideline for this fishery is 4,160 white sturgeon.
- Catch and effort during January 1 – April 30 is typically minimal, with the majority occurring during the second half of the season, especially beginning in June. Catch estimates from January 1 – May 31 total 276 sturgeon from 2,315 angler trips (0.11 catch per unit effort (CPUE)).
- Catch rates have improved significantly over the past few weeks. Catch estimates from June 1-24 total 2,544 sturgeon from 11,720 angler trips (0.22 CPUE; midway between 2010-11 and 2008-09), which averages over one hundred fish per day. Once catch rates improve, the popularity of the fishery increases and daily catch tends to increase.
- Based on a guideline of 4,160 fish and a cumulative harvest of 2,820 through June 24, 1,340 (32%) fish remain on the guideline. The current season includes 14 retention days during June 25-July 8. Assuming slightly improving catch rates for the remainder of the season, the projected catch would be 5,220, or 125% of the guideline.
- Staff is recommending the currently adopted estuary sturgeon fishery be modified.

2012 Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery Below Wauna - recommendation	
Area	Mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines downstream to the mouth at Buoy 10, including Youngs Bay, and all adjacent Washington tributaries.
Season	Option #1: Prohibit retention of white sturgeon effective 12:01 am Tuesday July 3, 2012 Option #2: Prohibit retention of white sturgeon effective 12:01 am Thursday July 5, 2012
Catch Estimates	Option #1: ~4,160 season total Option #2: ~4,400 season total

- Option 1 would be expected to maintain kept catch within the allowable guideline.
- Option 2 would allow retention through the July 4 holiday, but require using the balance remaining from the Willamette River allocation.

Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery in Zone 6 (Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Dam)

- Under permanent rule, the 2012 Zone 6 (Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Dam) recreational white sturgeon fisheries opened for retention effective January 1. The fisheries remain open for sturgeon retention until the annual guideline for each pool is met. Fishery status for all pools are as follows:

2012 Recreational Sturgeon Harvest in Zone 6				
Pool	Guideline	Catch ¹	Balance	Comments
Bonneville	2,000	1,836	164	Closed June 23
The Dalles	300	106	194	Ongoing, slow and steady
John Day	500	471	29	Closed May 21

¹ *The Dalles Pool through May 31*

- The two 2-day summer retention periods concluded in Bonneville Pool June 23. Catch estimates include 508 fish from June 15-16 and 388 fish from June 22-23. Average catch was 224 fish each day. The remaining balance is not enough to provide additional retention opportunity.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- A Compact hearing is requested for the afternoon of July 11 to consider Treaty fisheries.
- A fall Compact hearing is scheduled for 10 AM Thursday July 26 in Cathlamet, Washington at The River Street Room (25 River Street)