

**OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
 JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 4
 Columbia River Joint State Hearing
 February 20, 2014**

Fisheries under consideration:	Bonneville Pool Recreational Sturgeon
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- The Sturgeon Management Task Force (SMTF) met February 12 to consider management recommendations for 2014 Zone 6 white sturgeon fisheries, including potential modifications to harvest guidelines based on updated population assessments. No changes were made to existing harvest guidelines for 2014:

2014 Zone 6 Recreational Sturgeon Harvest Guidelines		
Bonneville Pool	The Dalles Pool	John Day Pool
1,100	300	500

- Under permanent rule, Zone 6 (Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Dam) recreational white sturgeon fisheries open annually for retention effective January 1. Since 2011, the Bonneville Pool fishery has been managed to provide retention opportunity during winter and summer seasons, with the guideline being shared ~ 50/50 between winter and summer seasons.
- Managers met on December 11, 2013 and January 29, 2014 and set winter sturgeon retention periods of January 1-19 and February 1-17 in Bonneville Pool.
- Bonneville Pool sturgeon catch during January 1-19 has been corrected downward from a preliminary estimate of 247 fish to 163 fish. The estimated catch for February 1-17 is 18 fish. This brings the total to 181 fish, which is about a third of the 550-600 fish allocated to the winter season from the total sport guideline of 1,100 fish.
- Since 2011, catch in Bonneville Pool has averaged 17.8 fish per day (125 fish per week) during the winter season but has been as high as 78 fish per day (547 fish from January 17-23, 2011). Catch per day during 2014 is averaging 5 fish, with a high of 17.6 fish per day during the first week of January.
- Windy conditions for much of January and hazardous weather and a cold river during February reduced angling effort and catch, contributing to lower than expected harvest.
- Staff is proposing the following winter season extension for Bonneville Pool:

<i>Staff Recommendation: 2014 Bonneville Pool Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery</i>	
Season:	Monday February 24 through Sunday March 9, 2014 (14 days)
Area:	Mainstem Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to The Dalles Dam, including adjacent tributaries.
Allowable Catch:	White sturgeon between 38-inches and 54-inches fork length.

- At 17.8 fish per day, the proposed season would harvest an additional 250 fish, for a season total of 430 fish or 40% of the annual guideline.

- However, if catch rates return to the 2011-2012 winter season average of 26.5 fish per day, the proposed season would result in a catch of an additional 370 fish, for a season total of 550 fish or 50% of the annual guideline.
- The proposed 14-day extension results in 50 winter-season retention days in 2014, compared to 41 days in 2013 and 48 days in 2012.
- To insure enough fish remain for a multi-day summer retention season, staff recommends not extending the winter fishery beyond March 9.
- Staff will monitor the fishery as it progresses and provide updates as needed.
- Staff is not recommending any changes for fisheries in The Dalles Pool and John Day Pool at this time.

Future Meetings

- Staff is not proposing any hearings at this time.
- Staff anticipates a hearing will be needed in March to consider a June retention season in Bonneville Pool and a May-July spawning sanctuary downstream of The Dalles Dam.