

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: SUMMER FACT SHEET NO. 5
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
July 16, 2015

Fisheries under consideration: Non-Indian recreational sturgeon upstream of Bonneville Dam

- River conditions are lower, warmer, and clearer than recent five- and ten-year averages. Current outflow at Bonneville Dam is averaging 137 kcfs for July, compared to the recent five-year average for July 1-14 (287 kcfs). Water temperatures have been above average all year and currently average 73° F for July 1-14, compared to the five-year average of 65° F for this same timeframe.
- Over the past 1-2 weeks, reports have been received of sturgeon mortalities in areas upstream of Bonneville Dam. The frequency and magnitude of the reported mortalities have increased sharply in recent days. The majority of these accounts have reported the sturgeon to be large, over-size fish generally considered as broodstock. At least 80 sturgeon mortalities have been observed by agency or enforcement personnel to date, primarily in John Day Pool.
- Agency staff intends to investigate the cause of the mortalities, however due to the rapid decomposition, the cause may be difficult to discern. Elevated water temperatures and potentially low dissolved oxygen levels in the water may be significant factors contributing to the mortalities.
- In an effort to reduce any additional potential stress to the broodstock sturgeon populations upstream of Bonneville Dam, the Joint Staff are recommending a temporary moratorium on sturgeon angling.

<i>Joint Staff Recommendation: 2015 Non-Indian White Sturgeon Recreational Fisheries</i>

Effective Sunday July 19: Angling for sturgeon will be prohibited in the waters of the Columbia River and adjacent tributaries from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Oregon/Washington border.
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- Staff will continue to monitor the area for any additional reports and work to determine the cause of the mortalities.
- WDFW staff is working to announce a similar action in Washington waters of the Columbia River upstream of the Oregon/Washington border and in Washington waters of the Snake River.
- ODFW took similar action today for the lower Willamette River, where sturgeon mortalities have also been observed.

Future Meetings

- A Compact Hearing is planned for Monday afternoon, July 20 via teleconference to consider treaty commercial fisheries.
- A fall Compact hearing is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Wednesday July 29, 2015 at the Clark Regional Wastewater District (8000 52nd Court, Vancouver, Washington).