

**OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 5
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
March 30, 2015**

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| <i>Fisheries under Consideration:</i> Non-Indian Mainstem Commercial Salmon |
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Stock status and management guidelines for 2015 Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #2a (January 28, 2015).

- River conditions are higher, warmer, and clearer than recent five and ten year averages. Water temperatures have been above normal for March and currently measure 48° F. Current outflow at Bonneville Dam is 231 kcfs, compared to the 5-yr average of 202 kcfs for this date (March 29).
- Adult Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam through March 28 totals 1,000 fish. Based on the pre-season forecast and 5-year average timing, about 300 fish would be expected at Bonneville Dam by this date. The (5-yr ave) 50% passage date at Bonneville Dam is May 7.
- 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 generally within expectations.
- The number of upriver spring Chinook (kept plus release mortalities) available to the mainstem commercial fishery prior to a run size update is 1,760 adult fish. An additional 4,000 Willamette hatchery spring Chinook are available to commercial fisheries for the 2015 spring season, but access to these fish will be constrained by the commercial upriver Chinook allocation.
- Test fishing has occurred in Zones 2-3 on Sundays beginning March 15. Data from the March 29 test fishery indicates an increase in Chinook abundance and a decrease in steelhead abundance, when compared to data collected last week (March 22).

| 2015 Spring Chinook Observation Summary_ All data preliminary | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|----------|--------|-------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------------|-----------|
| | | | | | | Chinook | | | | | | Steelhead | |
| Fishery | Month | Date | (inches) | # of | Zones | Handle | Mark Rate | % Upriver | Chin/ Drift | Chin/ Sthd | Sthd/ Drift | Total Sthd | Mark Rate |
| | | | Mesh | Drifts | | | | | | | | | |
| Test | March | 15-16 | 4.25 | 16 | 2-3 | 3 | 100% | 67% | 0.2 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 7 | 29% |
| Test | March | 22 | 4.25 | 16 | 2-3 | 14 | 86% | 64% | 0.9 | 0.6 | 1.6 | 25 | 44% |
| Test | March | 29 | 4.25 | 18 | 2-3 | 58 | 86% | 63% | 3.2 | 3.2 | 1.0 | 18 | 33% |

- March 29 test-fishing data showed 63% of the Chinook were upriver fish and the Chinook mark rate was 86% combined (all stocks).
- Based on the lower number of steelhead encountered, the increasing number of Chinook per drift and the March 31 sport angling closure, staff is providing the following recommendation for a commercial fishing period:

Joint Staff Recommendations- Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Fishery

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|-------------------|---|-----------|
| Season: | 6:30 AM to 1:30 PM Tuesday March 31, 2015 | (7 hours) |
| Area: | Zones 1-5 | |
| Sanctuaries: | Grays River, Elochoman-B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, Lewis-B, Sandy and Washougal. | |
| Gear: | <p>Drift nets only. 4¼-inch 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.</p> <p>Mesh size is determined by placing three consecutive meshes under hand tension, and the measurement is taken from the inside of one vertical knot to the inside of the opposite vertical knot of the center mesh. Hand tension means sufficient linear tension to draw opposing knots of meshes into contact.</p> <p>Nets not specifically authorized for use in these areas may be onboard a vessel if properly stored. A properly stored net is defined as a net on a drum that is fully covered by a tarp (canvas or plastic) and bound with a minimum of ten revolutions of rope with a diameter of 3/8 (0.375) inches or greater.</p> | |
| Allowable Sales: | Adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon and shad. | |
| Regulations: | <p>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.</p> <p><u>Soak times</u>, 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. Red corks 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><u>Lighted Buoys</u>: 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><u>Recovery Box</u>: 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 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 salmonid 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>Observer program: As a condition of fishing, owners or operators of commercial fishing vessels must cooperate 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>Live Capture workshop: 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 quick reporting required for Washington wholesale dealers, per WAC 220-69-240.</p> | |

- The expected kept catch is 2,000 Chinook (range 1,800-2,200). Chinook catch is expected to include 1,640 upriver fish (kept and release mortalities) which represents 93% of the 1,760 upriver Chinook allowed pre-update (catch balance), and 57% of the 0.21% ESA impact allowed pre-update.
- Wild winter steelhead release mortalities are expected to be 60 fish (0.37% impact), or 19% of the 2.00% impact limit for wild winter steelhead.
- As Chinook continue to enter the Columbia River, stock composition and mark rates will change. Typically, stock composition shifts to a higher proportion of upriver fish, and the mark rate could potentially decrease. These two variables, along with overall Chinook abundance on the river, are critical in structuring recommendations for commercial fishing periods.
- If the fishery is postponed until next week, it is very likely that landing limits would be necessary.

Future Meetings

- A Joint State hearing is scheduled for April 7; however, staff is proposing a change in the hearing date in order to complete fishery analysis. Staff is recommending a hearing at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday April 8, 2015.
- Agenda items will include:
 - Update for the ongoing Lower Columbia River recreational fishery
 - Consider a summer season recreational fishery for white sturgeon retention in Bonneville Pool
 - Consider regulations to permit only hand-casting from the bank of the Columbia River near the Wind River mouth