

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT – SUMMER FACT SHEET NO. 1b
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
June 14, 2017

Fisheries under consideration:

- Estuary Recreational Sturgeon
- Bonneville Pool Recreational Sturgeon
- Select Area Commercial

Detailed information on stock status and management guidelines for Columbia River fisheries are presented in Joint Staff Reports, which are produced annually and available on-line. The most recent report is the 2017 Joint Staff Report Concerning Stock Status and Fisheries for Sturgeon and Smelt (January 30, 2017). <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/crc/>

Recreational White Sturgeon Fisheries

Below Wauna Powerlines (Estuary)

- At the May 31 hearing, a 6-day white sturgeon retention fishery was adopted for the Estuary consisting of 3-days per week (Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday) from June 5-17.
- The harvest guideline was 3,000 fish, with an expected catch of 2,620 kept.
- Effort during the first four days (June 5-12) of the fishery exceeded expectations while catch rates were similar to modeled estimates.
- Through Monday June 12, an estimated 2,427 white sturgeon (44-50 inches fork length) were kept from 10,036 angler trips (0.24 kept per angler trip).
- The expected kept catch for Wednesday June 14 is 600-800 additional fish, resulting in a combined kept catch of approximately 3,000-3,200 fish (100%-107% of the harvest guideline).
- The expected kept catch for Saturday June 17 would be approximately 1,000 additional fish, bringing the season total kept catch projection to 4,000-4,200 fish (133%-140% of the harvest guideline). Therefore, staff recommends the final day (Saturday June 17) of the 2017 Estuary sturgeon fishery be rescinded.

Staff Recommendation - 2017 Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery for Below Wauna–

For the mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines downstream to the mouth at Buoy 10, including Youngs Bay, and all adjacent Washington tributaries, white sturgeon retention is prohibited effective 2:00 PM Wednesday June 14 through December 31, 2017.

- Per permanent regulations, catch and release fishing is allowed all year, except in the spawning sanctuary closure area.

Above Wauna Powerlines/Lower Willamette River

- Retention seasons for the lower Willamette River and the mainstem Columbia upstream of the Wauna Powerlines will be addressed later this year after preliminary results from the 2017 stock assessment field work are available.
- Per permanent regulations, catch and release fishing is allowed all year, except angling for sturgeon angling sanctuaries.

Bonneville Pool Recreational Sturgeon

- Under permanent rule, the 2017 Zone 6 (Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Dam) recreational white sturgeon fisheries opened for retention effective January 1. The fishery in Bonneville Pool is managed for a split winter/summer season; however, the reduced guideline implemented in 2016 has made that goal more challenging. The Bonneville Pool winter season closed to retention on March 25.
- An additional summer retention day occurred on June 10 with an estimated kept catch of 85 fish. Fishery status for all pools are as follows:

2017 Preliminary Recreational Sturgeon Harvest in Zone 6				
	Guideline	Catch	Balance	Season
Bonneville Pool	325	181	144	Winter /Summer
The Dalles Pool	100	84	16	Closed March 25
John Day Pool	105	127	-22	Closed March 30

- The Bonneville Pool cumulative kept catch of 181 fish represents 56% of the 325 fish guideline leaving a balance of 144 sturgeon for additional summer retention opportunity.
- Considering the balance of harvestable sturgeon remaining on the Bonneville Pool guideline and expected catch rates, staff proposes the following season recommendation:

<i>Staff Recommendation: 2017 Bonneville Pool Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery</i>	
Season:	Friday June 23 (1 retention day)
Area:	Mainstem Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to The Dalles Dam, including adjacent tributaries.
Sanctuary:	Angling for sturgeon prohibited during May through July from The Dalles Dam downstream 1.8 miles to a line from the east (upstream) dock at the Port of The Dalles boat ramp straight across to a marker on the Washington shore.
Allowable Catch:	White sturgeon between 38-inches and 54-inches fork length.

- Staff has proposed a weekday fishery to moderate catch since the remaining balance (144 fish) is less than some single weekend day harvest rates observed in past Bonneville Pool summer retention fisheries.
- Catch and release continues to be allowed, except in the spawning sanctuary closure area.

Select Area Commercial Fisheries

- The spring season in Blind Slough/Knappa Slough and Tongue Point is scheduled to close after June 13.
- Landings have remained relatively strong during the past two weeks with 50-150 Chinook landed per opener in Blind/Knappa Slough and 100-200 per opener in Tongue Point. Preliminary coded-wire tag analysis indicates the fish being harvested are primarily of Select Area origin.
- Given reasonable catches of local-origin fish and high ex-vessel prices, staff recommends additional Select Area fishing time be considered.
- With white sturgeon retention re-instated for 2017, 20% (1,245 fish) of the overall harvest guideline (6,235 fish total) is available for commercial harvest. Using the same approach applied to the recreational fishery, 60% (750 fish) of the commercial allocation would be available for harvest prior to reviewing in-season CPUE information from summer/fall setline research to verify the 2017 sturgeon abundance estimate.
- Staff polled the Columbia River Commercial Advisor Group regarding preferred sharing of white sturgeon between Select Area and mainstem fisheries but did not obtain a consensus.
- Staff recommends opening sturgeon retention in ongoing Select Area fisheries with a limited weekly landing limit, and setting fishery-specific allocations at a later date.

Blind/Knappa Slough Select Areas

- Concurrent jurisdiction waters extend downstream from the Railroad Bridge in Blind Slough and encompass all of Knappa Slough and require Compact action. Oregon State waters extend upstream of the Railroad Bridge and require Oregon State action.

Joint Staff Recommendation: 2017 Blind Slough/Knappa Slough Commercial Fishery		
Season:	Monday June 19 – Tuesday June 20	(12 hours)
	Thursday June 22 – Friday June 23	(12 hours)
	Monday June 26 – Tuesday June 27	(12 hours)
	Thursday June 29 - Friday June 30	(12 hours)
	Sunday July 2 – Monday July 3	(12 hours)
	Thursday July 6 – Friday July 7	(12 hours)
	Monday July 10 – Tuesday July 11	(12 hours)
	Open hours are from 7 PM to 7 AM.	
Area:	Blind Slough and Knappa Slough areas are open. The lower boundary of the Knappa Slough fishing area is defined by markers on the west end of Minaker Island to markers on Karlson Island and the Oregon shore (fall boundary).	

Gear:	<p>9¾-inch maximum mesh size restriction</p> <p>Nets restricted to 100 fathoms in length with no weight restriction on leadline. Use of additional weights and/or anchors attached directly to the leadline is allowed.</p> <p>Nets not specifically authorized for use in this fishery may be onboard the 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:	<p>Salmon, white sturgeon and shad. A maximum of five white sturgeon with a fork length of 44-50 inches may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel during each calendar week (Sunday through Saturday). The five white sturgeon possession and sales limit includes all Select Area fisheries.</p>
Additional:	<p>Other permanent regulations including rules related to transportation and lighted buoys remain in effect.</p> <p>Oregon buyers are required to submit fish receiving tickets electronically pursuant to OAR 635-006-210.</p> <p>A 24-hour quick reporting rule is in effect for Washington buyers pursuant to WAC 220-69-240.</p>

Tongue Point/South Channel Select Areas

<i>Joint Staff Recommendation: 2017 Tongue Point/South Channel Commercial Fishery</i>		
Season:	<p>Monday June 19 – Tuesday June 20</p> <p>Thursday June 22 – Friday June 23</p> <p>Monday June 26 – Tuesday June 27</p> <p>Thursday June 29 - Friday June 30</p> <p>Sunday July 2 – Monday July 3</p> <p>Thursday July 6 – Friday July 7</p> <p>Monday July 10 – Tuesday July 11</p>	<p>(12 hours)</p>
	<p>Open hours are from 7 PM to 7 AM.</p>	
Area:	<p>The Tongue Point fishing area includes all waters bounded by a line extended from the upstream (southernmost) pier (#1) at the Tongue Point Job Corps facility through navigation marker #6 to Mott Island, a line from a marker at the southeast end of Mott Island northeasterly to a marker on the northwest tip of Lois Island, and a line from a marker on the southwest end of Lois Island westerly to a marker on the Oregon shore.</p> <p>The South Channel area includes all waters bounded by a line from a marker on John Day Point to a marker on the southwest end of Lois Island upstream to an upper boundary line from a marker on Settler Point northwesterly to a marker on the eastern tip of Burnside Island defining the upstream terminus of South Channel.</p>	

Gear:	<p>9¾-inch maximum mesh size restriction</p> <p>In the Tongue Point fishing area, gear restricted to a maximum net length of 250 fathoms and weight not to exceed two pounds on any one fathom.</p> <p>In the South Channel fishing area, gear restricted to a maximum net length of 250 fathoms and no weight restriction on leadline. Use of additional weights and/or anchors attached directly to the leadline is allowed.</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:	<p>Salmon, white sturgeon and shad. A maximum of five white sturgeon with a fork length of 44-50 inches may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel during each calendar week (Sunday through Saturday). The five white sturgeon possession and sales limit includes all Select Area fisheries.</p>
Miscellaneous Regulations:	<p>Other permanent regulations including rules related to transportation and lighted buoys remain in effect.</p> <p>Oregon buyers are required to submit fish receiving tickets electronically pursuant to OAR 635-006-210.</p> <p>A 24-hour quick reporting rule is in effect for Washington buyers pursuant to WAC 220-69-240.</p>

Youngs Bay Select Areas

<i>Joint Staff Recommendation: 2017 Youngs Bay Commercial Fishery</i>	
<p>Effective June 19, modify allowable sales for the Youngs Bay Select Area fishery to allow white sturgeon retention as described below:</p>	
Allowable Sales:	<p>Salmon, white sturgeon and shad. A maximum of five white sturgeon with a fork length of 44-50 inches may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel during each calendar week (Sunday through Saturday). The five white sturgeon possession and sales limit includes all Select Area fisheries.</p>

- These season extensions will allow access to late-returning Select Area spring Chinook which are still present in the fishing areas, as well as providing partial access to the commercial sturgeon allocation.
- The catch expectation is about 1,000-1,400 spring Chinook for the proposed season modifications, and less than 200 white sturgeon for Select Area late-spring and summer fisheries.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- No additional Compact hearings are currently scheduled.