



FACT SHEET

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091

February 11, 2000

Joint State Sport Hearing Fact Sheet

Follows Columbia River Compact Meeting
Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife / Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Purpose: To establish lower Columbia River mainstem and tributary sport fisheries.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

- The states' intent is to manage mainstem sport fisheries in accordance with the harvest rates set forth in the Application/Assessment sent to the NMFS.

Willamette Fish Management Plan

- At their January 21, 2000 meeting the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (OFWC) adopted catch guidelines of 7,800 Willamette spring chinook for sport fisheries below Willamette Falls, including 1,200 in the mainstem Columbia River, and 1,200 Willamette spring chinook for Columbia River mainstem commercial fisheries.

Joint State Agreement on Sturgeon Management

- Total annual harvestable number of 50,000 white sturgeon is allocated 40,000 (80%) sport and 10,000 (20%) commercial.
- Recreational regulations include; size limits of 42-60 inches for white and green sturgeon, one sturgeon per day and 10 per year catch limits, and barbless hooks required.

FISHERIES

Mainstem Spring Chinook Sport Fishery

- The mainstem Columbia River upstream to the I-5 Bridge is currently open through March 31 for salmon angling under permanent regulations.
- At their January 21 meeting, the OFWC allocated 1,200 Willamette spring chinook to the Columbia River mainstem sport fishery.
- Public meetings were held on February 3 at St. Helens and Oregon City to receive input concerning sport fishing regulations for 2000 in the mainstem Columbia River and Willamette River basin.

- Public generally supported continuing mainstem Columbia River sport fishing regulations as currently adopted until 1,200 Willamette spring chinook catch allocation is achieved.

Joint Staff Recommendation	
Area:	Columbia River mouth to I-5 Bridge.
Dates:	Fishery closes when 1,200 Willamette spring chinook catch allocation is achieved.
Expected Catch:	1,500 - 1,700 spring chinook. 300 - 500 upriver spring chinook 0.22% - 0.37% SRW impact

- The mainstem Columbia River upstream to Pasco, Washington is scheduled to reopen to salmon angling on August 1, 2000.

Mainstem Steelhead and Shad Sport Fishery

- The mainstem Columbia River upstream to Bonneville Dam is currently open for steelhead and shad angling through March 31 under permanent regulations.

Joint Staff Recommendation	
Area:	Columbia River mouth to Bonneville Dam.
Dates:	Fishery closes concurrently with the closure of spring chinook sport fishery.

- The mainstem Columbia River is scheduled to reopen to steelhead angling downstream of the I-5 Bridge on May 16, 2000 and upstream of the I-5 Bridge on June 16, 2000.
- The mainstem Columbia River downstream from Bonneville Dam is scheduled to reopen to shad angling on May 16, 2000.

Tributary Spring Chinook Sport Fisheries

- No changes to permanent regulations for the Sandy River spring chinook sport fishery.
- WDFW will host a public meeting to discuss spring chinook sport fishery options for the Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, Wind, White Salmon, and Klickitat rivers plus Drano Lake. The meeting will be held at the WDFW Region 5 office in Vancouver, Washington on Wednesday, February 23, 2000 from 7 -9 PM.

Mainstem Sturgeon Sport Fishery

- The mainstem Columbia River upstream to Bonneville Dam is currently open for sturgeon angling all year under permanent regulations.
- Expected catch may exceed newly adopted catch guideline of 40,000 white sturgeon.
- Modifications to the current fishing

Current Season	
Area:	Columbia River below Bonneville Dam
Dates:	January 1-December 31, 2000
Catch Limits:	1 sturgeon per day and 10 sturgeon per year
Size Limits:	42-60" for both white and green sturgeon
Expected Catch:	Up to 44,000 white sturgeon 100 green sturgeon

season are needed to remain within catch guidelines.

- Public meetings were held on January 17, and January 19, 2000 in an attempt to reach public consensus concerning modification of the current season.
- The first public meeting included 12 constituents who represented a cross-section of the sturgeon angling public. This constituent group did not reach consensus on one option but did develop three fishing options that were subsequently presented at a public meeting.
- The second public meeting was open to any interested party and the attendees (20-30) primarily fished in the gorge and the estuary with few middle river anglers present. This group provided feedback concerning the three options presented but could not reach consensus on a preferred option.
- Consensus was not achieved at either meeting; however, the following management strategies reflect the preferences of meeting attendees.

1. Manage 2000 to achieve a 40,000 white sturgeon catch.
2. Increase management flexibility using inseason fishery modifications is necessary.
3. If 40,000 catch is not achieved, apply savings to following years' catch guideline.
4. States should annually review sturgeon seasons to ensure that the 3-year allocation (120,000 white sturgeon) is achieved.
5. Constituent group leaders supported no restriction of bank fisheries while public meeting attendees supported closure of boat and bank fisheries equally.
6. Maintain catch and keep fishing during core months which are A) June-August with May and September also being important for estuary, B) February-April for the middle river, and C) March-May and September-November for gorge.

- The currently adopted season was not modified at the January 27 Joint State meeting but based on public testimony the Joint Staff was instructed to meet with the smaller constituent group to attempt to reach consensus concerning proposed regulation changes, including consideration for a sturgeon spawning sanctuary in the gorge.
- The Joint Staff was further instructed that any modifications to the regulations should result in not more than 50% of the angler trip reduction occurring in the river section between Wauna power lines and Bonneville Dam.
- The Joint Staff met with the constituent group on February 8, 2000 with the following results:

1. Consensus was not reached concerning a sturgeon spawning sanctuary in the gorge area.
2. Three options were developed concerning regulation modifications for 2000.
3. The group agreed to a preferred fishing option for 2000.

- Based on the results of the constituent meeting and the need to achieve a 9% harvest reduction, the Joint Staff has developed the following recommendation and two alternatives for 2000.
- Joint Staff recommendation and both alternatives allow for catch and release fishing when retention is

disallowed and pertain to both boat and bank anglers.

Joint Staff Recommendation	
Area:	Columbia River mouth to Bonneville Dam.
Dates:	Remain open to sturgeon angling the entire year.
Retrictions:	Disallow the retention of sturgeon in the area below Wauna power lines during April 1-30 and August 16-September 15 and above Wauna power lines during November 1-30.

Catch reduction	10.4% overall	Effort reduction	17,500 overall
	8.3% Above Wauna		6,700 Above Wauna (38%)
	11.1% Below Wauna		10,800 Below Wauna (62%)

- This option received near consensus support by the constituent group.
- April retention restriction increases management flexibility during late summer and fall time frame.
- Limits impact during core fishing months.
- Time period allows for inseason modifications as needed.

Alternative 1	
Area:	Columbia River mouth to Bonneville Dam.
Dates:	Remain open to sturgeon angling the entire year.
Retrictions:	Retention of sturgeon disallowed every Sunday during June and July.

Catch reduction	10.0% overall	Effort reduction	12,100 overall
	1.6% Above Wauna		3,000 Above Wauna (25%)
	13.6% Below Wauna		9,100 Below Wauna (75%)

- This option was preferred by some members of the constituent group.
- Most members supporting this alternative also supported staff recommendation as second choice.
- Eliminates blocks of time where sturgeon retention is disallowed.
- Impacts fewer number of fishing days and angler trips.
- Impacts core fishing months in estuary.
- Time period does not allow for inseason modifications.

Alternative 2	
Area:	Columbia River mouth to Bonneville Dam.

Dates:	Remain open to sturgeon angling the entire year.
Retrictions:	Maximum size limit reduced from 60" to 48". Minimum size limit remains 42".

Catch reduction 8.3% overall
8.3% Above Wauna
8.3% Below Wauna

- This option was supported by some members of the constituent group.
- All members supporting this option also supported staff recommendation as a second choice.
- Would reduce need for retention restrictions.
- Would likely have no impact on fishing days or angler trips.
- Does not allow for inseason or year-to-year modifications.

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