

**COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 5**

**Columbia River Compact
March 5, 2008**

Fisheries under consideration: Tribal Winter Gillnet Fishery

2008 Winter Gillnet Fisheries

- The winter commercial gillnet fishery discontinued retention of sturgeon for sale on Friday February 29 for the Bonneville Pool and on Monday March 3 for the Dalles Pool.
- Catches are shown in the table below. The harvest guideline in the Bonneville Pool was significantly exceeded.
- Normally in commercial gillnet fisheries, when the commercial sales period ends, fish caught during the legal sales period can still be sold afterwards. However, in this instance due to the atypical decision by the tribes to continue commercial gillnet fishing for other species the sturgeon regulation was inadvertently crafted in a manner that did not allow sales after the commercial sturgeon fishing period ended. This resulted in confusion among fishers and buyers for The Dalles pool closure on Monday. The end result was that a potentially significant number of sturgeon (possibly around 1,500 pounds) may have been harvested legally, but not sold prior to 6:00 PM on Monday. It was never the tribes' intention to forbid sturgeon harvested prior to 6:00 PM to be sold.
- These fish are in totes on ice and fishermen want to sell their catch. Buyers are available to purchase the fish.
- By allowing the sale of these fish, staff will be able to estimate the actual catch from The Dalles Pool fishery with greater certainty. The tribes believe that the risk that small numbers of sturgeon harvested after 6:00 PM on Monday could be sold is offset by the benefit of greater certainty about the total tribal catch and the ability to get sampling data from the catch.

Preliminary 2008 Winter Gillnet Harvest Fisheries

Pool	CHINOOK	STEELHEAD	WALLEYE	STURGEON	
Bonneville	0	11	1	761	190%
The Dalles	0	1	1	378	69%
John Day	0	139	0	145	43%
Total	0	151	2	1,284	

- The Bonneville Pool harvest estimate should be close to final. The estimates for the other two pools are still very preliminary and are expected to change.
- A very large number of sturgeon (more than the total guideline) was harvested in the last couple days of the fishery. This is a very unusual circumstance. It will take some time to fully analyze why so many sturgeon were caught so quickly.

Tribal Proposal

- The tribes propose that sturgeon between 4 and 5 feet caught in The Dalles Pool fishery prior to 6:00 PM on March 3 be allowed for sale beginning immediately and ending at 1:00 PM on March 5, 2008.
- Other existing regulations for the Zone 6 commercial and subsistence fisheries remain unchanged at this time.

Other Matters

- The tribes will meet later today to discuss the status of the John Day pool fishery may make a proposal in the near future to set a end date for sturgeon sales in this fishery.
- The tribes propose a meeting of the Sturgeon Management Task Force as soon as it can be arranged. Topics for discussion should include a tribal proposal for increasing growth rates of sturgeon in the Bonneville Pool by removing some fish in the 2 to 3 foot size category as well as ways to improve the management of the Zone 6 sturgeon fishery.

*Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
March 5, 2008*