

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT - SPRING FACT SHEET NO. 6
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
June 8, 2009

Purpose: Update on Non-Indian recreational sturgeon fisheries

Stock status and management guidelines and season recommendations for 2009 sturgeon fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #1 (December 18, 2008).

2006-2009 Joint State Agreement

- A Joint State Agreement has been in effect and renewed every three years since 1997 with adjustments as necessary to protect sturgeon populations while maintaining harvest opportunity. The Fish and Wildlife Commissions of Oregon and Washington met in December 2008 and agreed to extend the 2006-2008 agreement (and associated fishery protocols) through 2009, pending completion of white sturgeon conservation and management plans currently underway in both states.

2009 Above Wauna Recreational Sturgeon Fishery

- Since 2003, the annual white sturgeon harvest guideline for the recreational fishery from the Wauna powerlines upstream to Bonneville Dam has been 12,800 fish (40% of the recreational allocation).
- In 2008, harvest in the mainstem Columbia River above Wauna was 8,121 fish, with an additional 5,798 harvest (above the 1,225 baseline) estimated for the Willamette, for a total harvest of 13,919 fish, or 1,532 fish over the 2008 guideline.
- Based on the 2006-2009 Joint State agreement and catch from 2006 through 2008 (including adjustments for harvest in the lower Willamette River) a total of 11,268 fish are available for harvest in 2009. This includes harvest in the Willamette River which is projected to be 4,450 fish above the baseline (5,675 fish total) in 2009.
- Based on this available harvest, retention fisheries were adopted for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday only during January 1-July 31, and October 1-December 31, 2009.
- The estimated harvest for the Willamette River from January 1-May 31, 2009 is 4,129 fish, which is 190 fish below the projected harvest through May and 73% of the modeled annual harvest of 5,675 fish.
- The estimated harvest for the mainstem Columbia River from January 1-May 31, 2009 is approximately 2,000 white sturgeon, or about twice the 2008 harvest for the same period but only 200-300 fish above the projected harvest through May.

2009 Below Wauna (Estuary) Recreational Sturgeon Fishery

- Since 2004, the annual white sturgeon harvest guideline for the recreational fishery downstream of Wauna has been 16,000 fish.
- Based on the 2006-2009 Joint State agreement and catch during 2006 through 2008, a total of 15,529 fish are available for 2009 fisheries below Wauna.
- Based on this available harvest, 7-day/week fisheries were adopted for January 1-April 30, May 9-June 28, and July 2-5, 2009.
- Harvest estimates during January 1-May 31 total 1,100 white sturgeon, the lowest total since 1991 for this period and about 600 fish below the 2008 harvest for the same period.

- Based on catch estimates through May, about 14,400 fish are available for harvest below Wauna for the remainder of 2009. Catch rates through May are tracking lower than in 2008.

<i>2009 Lower Columbia River Sturgeon Recreational Fisheries</i>		
<u>Area</u>	<u>Planned Season Structure</u>	<u>Final Season Structure</u>
<u>Above Wauna</u>		
➤ Sturgeon retention allowed Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays only, 38-inch fork length min. size.	January 1-July 31	Ongoing
➤ Sturgeon retention not allowed.	August 1-September 30	TBD
➤ Sturgeon retention allowed Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays only, 38-inch fork length min. size.	October 1-December 31	TBD
<u>Below Wauna</u>		
➤ Sturgeon retention allowed seven days per week, 38-inch fork length minimum size limit.	January 1-April 30	As proposed
➤ Sturgeon retention not allowed.	May 1- May 8	As proposed
➤ Sturgeon retention allowed seven days per week, 41-inch fork length minimum size limit.	May 9-June 28	Ongoing
➤ Sturgeon retention not allowed.	June 29-July 1	TBD
➤ Sturgeon retention allowed daily, 41-inch fork length minimum size limit.	June 2-July 5	TBD
➤ Sturgeon retention not allowed.	June 6-December 31	TBD

Future updates

- Staff will continue to distribute weekly updates. A second update should be available by June 17, 2009.