Fisheries under consideration: Select Area commercial

Management guidelines, allocations, and run forecasts for the 2008 fall season were presented in the Fall Fact Sheet #1 (July 22, 2008)

Stock Status

- The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met Friday September 5 and upgraded the preseason forecasts for both the Spring Creek Hatchery tule (BPH) and Upriver Bright (URB) runs by 25,000 each. The TAC met again today (9/8) and maintained their previous run update.

Select Area Commercial Fisheries

- Fall Select Area commercial fisheries opened in August in Youngs Bay with one 36-hour fishing period each week. The Youngs Bay fishery is currently open 7-days/week through October 31. Select Area commercial fisheries in Tongue Point/South Channel, Knappa/Blind sloughs, and Deep River opened after Labor Day with 3-4 nighttime fishing periods each week with fishing scheduled to continue through late October.

- The predicted return of 17,200 Big Creek tule fall Chinook to the Columbia River mouth is substantially higher than actual returns in 2006-2007. The use of large mesh gear was allowed during September 2-5 in Blind Slough/Knappa Slough to provide Chinook harvest opportunity.

- During the current week (week 37) commercial fishing is scheduled for Tuesday through Thursday nights in Knappa/Blind sloughs and Tongue Point/South Channel and Monday through Thursday nights in Deep River. Several fisherman have expressed interest in adding Monday night (tonight) to this week’s fishing schedule for the Knappa/Blind sloughs and Tongue Point/South Channel Select Areas.

- According to management protocol for 2008 commercial fisheries, white sturgeon landings in Select Area fisheries are not to exceed 400 fish per year, with no more than 300 during winter-summer fisheries. SAFE landings through September 5 total 450 white sturgeon for the year. SAFE fisheries currently have a three white sturgeon per vessel weekly limit in effect.

- Through September 5, Big Creek Hatchery has collected about 600 female Chinook, or about 40% of the minimum female broodstock goal. Hatchery staff estimate production needs can be met with the collections to date and the significant number of fish staging immediately below the hatchery.
Staff Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Select Area Fall Commercial Fisheries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective 12 noon Wednesday September 10, 2008, prohibit the retention and sale of white sturgeon in Select Area commercial fisheries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The proposed end date for sturgeon retention and sales in Select Area commercial fisheries should provide for adequate notification time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knappa/Blind Slough Select Area Fall Commercial Fisheries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective 7 PM Monday September 8, 2008 through October 31, 2008, a 9 ¾-inch maximum mesh size restriction is in effect for Knappa Slough and Blind Slough Select Area commercial fisheries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Allowing the use of large-mesh gear through the remainder of the season will allow additional opportunity to harvest surplus fall Chinook destined for Big Creek Hatchery.

- There have been requests to add 7 PM Monday September 8 through 7 AM Tuesday September 9 to the Knappa Slough/Blind Slough and Tongue Point/South Channel fisheries to provide additional access to surplus Chinook. Staff feels that there is no biological reason to deny such a modification, but did not include a recommendation due to the short notice.

Future Hearings

No additional Columbia River Compact hearings are currently scheduled. The Joint Staff may recommend a Compact hearing be scheduled for the week of September 15 to consider late September non-Indian commercial fishing opportunity.