

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT #14
Lower Columbia River Recreational Fishery Update
September 11, 2008

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

- The recreational Chinook salmon fishery from Tongue Point to Bonneville Dam opened September 1.
- The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has met September 5, September 8, and September 11. On September 11, TAC upgraded the forecast for the Upriver Bright (URB) run to 194,700 fish to the Columbia River mouth. Bright passage at Bonneville Dam appears to be running slightly earlier (2-4 days) than the recent 10-year average.
- During September 1-7, an estimated 5,030 Chinook were kept from 29,300 angler trips. Staff is projecting total catch of about 7,000 Chinook through September 12 and 8,400-8,800 through Sunday, September 14.
- URB catch from completed fisheries (Buoy 10 and August commercial) totals 6,838 fish, which equates to 3.51% impact at a run size of 194,700 URBs. The lower Columbia recreational fishery is expected to catch 4,731 URBs through September 14, which would bring the total non-Indian impact to 11,569 URBs (5.94% at current run size).

Summary of Impacts (<i>italics indicate projected catches</i>)						
Preseason URB Run = 164,400				In-Season URB Run = 194,700		
Fishery	Catch	URB Catch	Impact	Catch	URB Catch	Impact
Buoy 10	6,513	1,254	0.76%	8,274	2,547	1.31%
<i>LCR Sport</i>	9,217	4,855	2.95%	<i>8,604</i>	<i>4,731</i>	<i>2.43%</i>
<i>Zone 6 Sport</i>	1,235	1,110	0.68%	<i>1,451</i>	<i>1,315</i>	<i>0.68%</i>
Sum	16,965	7,219	4.39%	18,329	8,593	4.41%
SAFE	8,353	214	0.13%	8,464	253	0.13%
August Commercial	13,686	3,401	2.07%	14,400	4,291	2.20%
<i>Sept/Oct Commercial</i>	8,463	2,733	1.66%	8,732	2,921	1.50%
Sum	30,502	6,348	3.86%	31,596	7,465	3.83%
Total Non-Indian	47,468	13,567	8.25%	49,926	16,058	8.25%

- Coded-wire tag information is limited, but indicates that the percentage of URBs in the lower Columbia recreational catch may be higher than expectations. Assuming the URB percentage is within expectations the fishery has sufficient URB impacts to allow a total catch of around 8,600 Chinook while remaining within impact guidelines at the current estimated run size. If the URB percentage and/or total catch is higher, the fishery through Sunday may slightly exceed the URB guidelines at the current estimated run size.

Management Considerations

- There are still many uncertainties surrounding a decision to modify the season.
 - The URB run appears to be early timed but we are still in the heart of the run at Bonneville Dam. Forecasts during this period are quite sensitive to small changes. Forecasts based on run timing models ranging from 2 days early to 4 days early result in projections that are 18,000 fish different from one another.
 - Other fisheries either in progress or upcoming include: recreational above Bonneville Dam and SAFE (both ongoing), and September/October commercial (upcoming). Until CWTs are collected from these fisheries, the stock composition for these fisheries is projected to be the same as preseason expectations, except that run sizes have been adjusted for inseason estimates.
 - The stock composition in the mainstem sport fishery is based on preseason expectations adjusted for inseason run size estimates. Final stock composition may vary from this– the only information currently available is based on low numbers of CWTs (17), but suggests that the proportion of URBs may be greater than expected.
 - About 500 fish (300 URBs) would be needed to continue the fishery through Tuesday, September 16, based on preseason stock composition assumptions.
 - A decision could be delayed until Friday September 12 to allow for another day of dam count data, which may provide additional information to assess the risk of allowing the fishery to continue through September 16..