

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

**JOINT STAFF REPORT  
WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 9  
Columbia River Compact  
March 14, 2005**

<b>Fisheries under Consideration:</b> Non-Indian Winter Commercial Salmon Select Area Commercial Salmon Treaty Indian Commercial Sturgeon
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**STOCK STATUS**

***Spring Chinook***

- Spring chinook primarily enter the lower Columbia River during March and April with upriver stock abundance peaking during the late March to early April timeframe.
- The preseason spring chinook run size forecasts to the mouth of the Columbia River include returns of 254,100 upriver stock and 116,900 Willamette stock. Impact guidelines are 0.80% for commercial fisheries and 1.2% for recreational fisheries
- The upriver spring Chinook count through March 3 at Bonneville Dam was 2 spring Chinook. Recent past counts are 30 in 2004, 374 in 2003 and 115 in 2002. Run update efforts will begin in earnest in late March.
- Willamette spring Chinook are just beginning to pass Willamette Falls with 21 chinook passing as of March 10th.
- Run sizes cannot be updated until late April for upriver stock and early May for Willamette stock.

***Wild Winter Steelhead***

- Wild winter steelhead pass through the lower Columbia River primarily during January through early April and generally peak during late March.
- The preseason forecast was for a return of 27,000 wild winter steelhead to the Columbia River mouth. The management guideline is 2.00%.
- Passage at Willamette Falls totaled 2,500 as of March 10, 2005.
- The Willamette run size will be updated in late March. Willamette wild winter steelhead typically represents 40% of the total wild winter steelhead return to the Columbia River.
- Other winter steelhead populations have later run times and cannot be updated until mid April

## COLUMBIA RIVER WATER CONDITIONS

- Temperature during March 1-10 has ranged from 41-43 F and has averaged 42 F, which is equal to the 10-year average temperature for this time of year.
- Flow has ranged from 120 to 143 kcfs with an average of 127 kcfs, compared to the 10-year average of 196 kcfs for this time of year. Turbidity remains at 7 feet.

## FISHERY UPDATES

### *Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Fishery*

- Test fishing operations have been conducted on each Sunday beginning February 27, 2005. All test fishing is conducted with 4¼-inch mesh.
- Three 12-hour fishing periods occurred on March 1-2 (5:00 PM – 5:00 AM), March 3-4 (6:00 PM - 6:00 AM), and March 8-9 (6:00 PM - 6:00 AM). An additional fishing period occurred March 10-11 (6:00 PM –2:00 PM), which was a 20 hour period. A 9" minimum and 9-¾" maximum mesh size restriction was in effect for all periods.
- Long-term mortality rates used to determine impact rates are the same as those recommended by the TAC: Those rates are 40% for chinook and 30% for steelhead in large mesh (8" -9¾"), and 18.5% for chinook and steelhead in small mesh ( $\leq 4\frac{1}{4}$ ").
- Impacts to listed species to date are estimated to be 0.070% for upriver spring chinook and 0.064% for wild winter steelhead. Total impacts to date represent 8.75% of the upriver spring chinook impact limit (0.6% with buffer) and 3.20% of the wild winter steelhead impact limit.
- Over the four fishing periods, a total of 970 chinook were kept and an estimated 31% were of upriver stock.
- The observed mark rate for the March 10-11th fishing period was 77% for chinook with a total observation of 24 chinook marked and zero steelhead released.
- For the four fishing periods a total of 41 sturgeon have been landed which leaves almost 1,300 sturgeon remaining (1,800 allocated for winter fisheries).

**Spring Chinook Fishery 2005**

**Preliminary Test / Observation Data**

Date	Lower R.			UpRiver			Chinook no VSI			Total Chinook	Ratio Chinook / Steelhead	Total Steelhead	Steelhead				Steelhead	UpRiver Chinook	Chinook Marked	#
	Clipped	No Mark	Undetermined	Clipped	No Mark	Undetermined	Clipped	No Mark	Undetermined				Hatchery	Wild	Undetermined	DNA count				
<b>Feb 27 Test</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	3	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>15</b>
Mar 1 Obsv	2	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	7	3.50	2	1	1	0	0	22%	29%	57%	56
Mar 3 Obsv	9	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	13	6.50	2	0	2	0	1	13%	8%	85%	57
<b>Mar 6 Test</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>16</b>
Mar 8 Obsv	29	11	0	3	2	0	1	0	0	46	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0%	11%	72%	53
Mar 10 Obsv	20	5	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	30	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0%	11%	80%	48
<b>Mar 13 Test</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1.18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>5.41</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>255</b>

**Chinook and Steelhead During 2005 Winter Fishery**

Fishing Period	Gear	Del	Chinook Kept			Chinook Released			Steelhead Released		
			Total	Upriver Stock	L River Stock	Total	Upriver Stock	L River Stocks	Total	Wild Winter	White Sturgeon
Mar 1-2 (12 hr) + Mar 4-5 (12 hr)	9"	119	297	71	224	97	42	55	58	58	9
Mar 8-9 (12 hr) + Mar 10-11 (20 hrs)	9"	215	673	190	483	569	114	122	0	0	32
<b>Total</b>		<b>334</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>41</b>

**Select Area Fishery**

- Preliminary landings for Select Area winter fisheries during the first seven fishing periods (February 16-March 13) include 89 spring chinook and 2 white sturgeon landed in Youngs Bay and 37 spring chinook landed in Blind Slough.
- Through March 13, the estimated upriver impact for the Youngs Bay and Blind Slough winter seasons minimal.

***Smelt Fishery***

- The smelt fishery was downgraded from a Level Two to Level One on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2005 in accordance with the Joint State Eulachon Management Plan.
- Commercial fishing in the mainstem Columbia River is scheduled for Thursdays (3 AM to 9 PM) and on Wednesday evenings (6 PM to 6 AM) in the Cowlitz River.
- Recreational fishing is allowed on Saturdays (6 AM-10 PM) in the Cowlitz River. A daily limit of 10 pounds per person is in place for the Cowlitz sport fishery. Dipping for smelt in the mainstem Columbia River is allowed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with a daily limit of 25 pounds per person. Both catch and effort are minimal and this season conforms to that of Oregon.
- Commercial mainstem landings to date total 81 pounds, compared to 15,800 pounds reported to date on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2004. No landings have been reported since January 81, 2005.
- Tributary landings total 100 pounds to date, compared to 14,725 pounds reported as of March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2004. These fish were landed March 10, 2005.

***Treaty Indian Sturgeon Fisheries***

- The tribes are expected to bring forth a proposal regarding the Zone 6 sturgeon fishery.

**FISHERY RECOMMENDATIONS**

***Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Fishery***

- The Joint Staff is recommending the following fishing period to allow the commercial fishery access to their Willamette River hatchery spring chinook allocation.

<b><i>Recommendation</i></b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Joint Staff is proposing the following additional fishing period for the commercial fishery.</li></ul>
<b>Season:</b>	6pm Tuesday March 15 through 6am Wednesday March 16, 2005
<b>Area:</b>	Mouth to Kelley Point (Zones 1-4)
<b>Sanctuaries:</b>	Grays River, Elokomin –B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, and Lewis-B.
<b>Gear:</b>	Drift nets only. 9” minimum and 9-¾“ maximum mesh size restrictions. Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms.
<b>Allowable Sales:</b>	Adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon and sturgeon.
<b>Participants:</b>	Columbia River commercial fishers with appropriate licenses and legal gear that attended a state-sponsored workshop concerning live captive commercial fishing techniques and possess a certificate that allows participation in this fishery.

<b>New Regulation</b>	As a condition of fishing, owners or operators of commercial fishing vessels must cooperate with Department observers or observers collecting data for the Department, when notified by the observer of their intent to board the commercial vessel for observation and sampling during an open fishery
<b>Miscellaneous Regulations:</b>	<p>Soak times, defined as time elapsed from when first mesh enters the water to when last mesh leaves the water, must not exceed 45 minutes.</p> <p>Red corks are required at 25-fathom intervals and red corks must be in contrast to the corks used in the remainder of the net.</p> <p>Use of recovery boxes will be required on all lethargic or bleeding salmonids.</p> <p>Each participant will be required to have 2 operable recovery boxes or one box with two chambers in place to participate in this fishery. Operable recovery boxes will require a flow of 16-20 gallons per minute to the box or each chamber. Each box shall be operating during any time that the net is being retrieved or picked.</p> <p>Lighted buoys required on each end of nets being fished between sunset and sunrise.</p> <p><b>Quick reporting rule in effect for Washington buyers.</b></p>

- ✓ The proposed fishing period is consistent with the 2005 Winter Season Commercial Fishing Plan
- ✓ The proposed fishing period will be managed to remain within ESA-related impact limits and WFMP catch allocations for listed upriver spring chinook, wild winter steelhead, and Willamette hatchery spring chinook.
- ✓ The proposed fishery is expected to effectively target Willamette stock hatchery spring chinook while minimizing impacts to listed spring/summer chinook and steelhead.
- ✓ The 9" minimum mesh size restriction will target spring chinook while minimizing steelhead handle.
- ✓ The large B sanctuaries for Washington tributaries will increase protection for wild winter steelhead in the associated streams.
- ✓ Use of recovery boxes will improve the survival rate of all listed species.

*Select Area Commercial Fishery*

<i>Recommendation</i>	
The Joint Staff is recommending the following additional winter seasons for the Blind Slough Area:	
Winter Season:	7PM Wednesday March 16 through 7AM Thursday March 17 (12 hours).
Area:	Blind Slough area only
Gear:	A 7-inch minimum mesh size restriction during the winter season Nets restricted to 100 fathoms in length with no weight restriction on leadline.
Allowable Sales:	Salmon, sturgeon, and shad. A maximum of 3 white sturgeon may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel during each open period.
Miscellaneous Regulations:	Special transportation permits are not required to take fish outside the fishing area. Permanent transportation regulations will be in effect.

<i>Recommendation</i>	
The ODFW staff is recommending the following additional seasons for the Youngs Bay Select Area Winter Season:	
Winter Season:	6 PM Wednesday March 16 - 6 AM Thursday March 17 (12 hours)
Area:	Youngs Bay fishing area with upper boundary at the confluence of the Youngs and Klaskanine rivers.
Gear:	A 7-inch minimum mesh size restriction during the winter season Maximum net length of 250 fathoms and weight on leadline not to exceed two pounds in any one fathom.
Allowable Sales:	Salmon, sturgeon, and shad. A maximum of 3 white sturgeon may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel during each open period.
Miscellaneous Regulations:	Special transportation permits are not required to take fish outside the fishing area. Permanent transportation rules will be in effect.

**NEXT COMPACT HEARING**

- The Joint Staff is recommending a Compact hearing for Wednesday March 16 at 2:00 pm, via telephone.