

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

JOINT STAFF REPORT WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 9 Columbia River Compact March 22, 2006

Fisheries under Consideration:	Non-Indian Spring Chinook Commercial Salmon Select Area Commercial Fisheries
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STOCK STATUS

Spring Chinook

- The preseason spring Chinook run size forecasts include returns of 88,400 upriver stock and 46,500 Willamette stock.
- The non-treaty impact limit of 2.00% for upriver stock is allocated 0.86% for commercial fisheries and 1.14% for recreational fisheries.
- All fisheries will be managed with a 25% buffer until a run size update for upriver Chinook is available. This buffer translates to a 1.5% total impact with commercial fisheries managed at 0.645% and sport fisheries managed at 0.855%
- The upriver spring Chinook count through March 20 at Bonneville Dam totaled 2 spring Chinook. Passage is less than that of recent years.
- Willamette spring Chinook counts over Willamette Falls total 5 Chinook as of March 19. Passage is less than that of recent years.
- Run sizes cannot be updated until late April for upriver stock and early May for Willamette stock.

Wild Winter Steelhead

- The 2006 preseason forecast is for a return of 16,000 wild winter steelhead to the Columbia River mouth. The management guideline is 2.00%.
- Passage at Willamette Falls totaled 4,151 wild winter steelhead as of March 19. On average 50% of the run is past Willamette Falls by this date. The current run is tracking ahead of forecast, with a projected run size of at least 8,000 fish compared to the preseason forecast of 5,900 fish.
- Willamette wild winter steelhead typically represent 40% of the total wild winter steelhead return to the Columbia River.
- The Willamette run size will continue to be updated. Other winter steelhead populations have later run times and cannot be updated until mid-April.

WATER CONDITIONS

Columbia River

- Temperatures during March 1-16 ranged between 39°F and 42°F and averaged 41°F, which is slightly cooler than the 10-year average temperature for this time of year.
- Flow ranged from 128 to 200 kcfs with an average of 166 kcfs, compared to the 10-year average of 193 kcfs for this time of year.
- Visibility averaged 5 feet, ranging between 4-6.5 feet during March 1-20. Visibility is greater than the 10-year average of 4 feet during the same time period.

Willamette River

- Temperatures during March 1-21 ranged between 41°F and 43°F and averaged 42°F, which is cooler than the 50°F average temperature for this time last year.
- Visibility averaged 2 feet, ranging between 1-3.6 feet during March 1-21. Visibility is lower than the 5.8 average visibility observed during the same time period last year.

FISHERY UPDATES

2006 Lower Columbia River Recreational Fishery (Below Bonneville Dam)

- The mainstem Columbia River is currently scheduled to be open for adipose fin-clipped salmon, adipose fin-clipped steelhead, and shad angling from the mouth at Buoy 10 upstream to I-5 Bridge through April 19 and from Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Dam (excluding salmon angling from a boat and from the Washington shore between Bonneville Dam and Tower Island power lines) from March 16 through April 30. The area from I-5 Bridge upstream to Bonneville Dam is currently open for adipose fin-clipped steelhead through March 31 under permanent regulations.
- During March 1-20, the estimated handle of spring Chinook from the mouth upstream to the I-5 Bridge is 365 fish with 12% upriver in the kept catch. This is below the 705 spring Chinook handled (40% upriver kept) during the same period in 2005.

2006 Lower Willamette River Recreational Fishery

- The mainstem Willamette River below Willamette Falls is open for adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon and adipose fin-clipped steelhead the entire year.
- Catch estimates through March 12 include 69 spring Chinook kept for 4,504 angler trips or a catch rate of 0.0153. This is nearly half the 2005 catch rate of 0.0267 for the same time period.

Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Fishery

- Mainstem landings to date total 1,033 spring Chinook with a 27.4% average upriver stock component. The fishery has also handled an estimated 53 wild winter steelhead to date.
- Mainstem impacts to date are 0.149% for upriver Chinook and 0.099% for wild winter steelhead. These impacts represent 27% of the mainstem commercial upriver spring Chinook impact guideline and 5% of the non-Indian wild winter steelhead impact limit.
- Harvest rates on Willamette Hatchery fish are 22% of the 2,500 fish available to commercial fisheries.

<i>Chinook and Steelhead Handle During the 2006 Winter Fishery</i>										
Fishing Period	Gear	Del	Chinook Kept			Chinook Released			Sthd Handle	
			Total Kept	Upriver Stock	L River Stock	Total Rel	Upriver Stock	L River Stock	Wild Winter	White Sturgeon
Sturgeon Season	9"	74	39	0	39	5	0	5	0	288
Feb 23-24 (24 hr) + Mar 2-3 (24 hr)	8"	87	240	21	219	14	4	10	14	36
Mar 7-8 (24 hr) + Mar 9-10 (18 hrs)	8"	124	380	69	311	54	27	27	18	25
Mar 14-15 (18 hr)	8"	91	374	137	237	104	74	30	21	27
Total		387	1,033	227	806	177	105	72	53	376

2006 Spring Chinook Commercial Fishery -- Preliminary Observation Data																							
Fishery	Date	Mesh Size (Inches)	# Drifts	Lower R.			UpRiver			No VSI			Total Chinook	Ratio			Total Steelhead	Steelhead				Upriver Chinook	Marked Chinook
				Clipped	No Clip	Unk	Clipped	No Clip	Unk	Clipped	No Clip	Unk		Chinook/Drift	Sthd/Drift	Chinook /Sthd		Clipped	No Clip	Unk	DNA count		
Full Fleet	Feb 23-24	≥8	25	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0.1	0.1	1.0	2	1	1	0	1	0%	100%
Test	Feb 28-29	4¼	13	4	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.5	0.9	0.5	12	6	6	0	6	33%	100%
Full Fleet	Mar 2-3	≥8	43	13	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	17	0.4	0.0	17.0	1	1	0	0	0	6%	94%
Test	Mar 5	4¼	14	5	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	0.5	0.4	1.4	5	3	2	0	1	14%	86%
Full Fleet	Mar 7-8	≥8	36	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	6	0.2	0.1	3.0	2	1	1	0	1	50%	67%
Full Fleet	Mar 9-10	≥8	33	16	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	18	0.5	0.0	18.0	1	1	0	0	0	6%	94%
Test	Mar 12	4¼	12	2	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	8	0.7	1.3	0.5	15	8	7	0	6	25%	50%
Full Fleet	Mar 14-15	≥8	34	11	4	0	6	1	0	1	0	0	23	0.7	0.1	5.8	4	3	1	0	1	32%	78%
Test	Mar 21-22	4¼	14	5	4	1	4	2	1	0	0	1	18	1.3	0.6	2.0	9	4	5	0	3	41%	60%

- Catch rates (fish/drift) for spring Chinook have increased but remain below levels observed in 2005. Steelhead catch rates have decreased but remain above levels observed in 2005 during the same time period.

2006 Select Area Commercial Fisheries

- SAFE fisheries have landed an estimated 70 Chinook and three sturgeon through March 20. All landings are from Youngs Bay, except nine Chinook (no upriver) were landed in the Blind Slough area.
- Through March 20, the estimated upriver spring Chinook impacts for Select Area winter fisheries is 0.002%, or 2% of the 0.100% allocated to Select Areas.
- The Youngs Bay winter season is scheduled to continue with eight additional fishing periods limited by time and area. Two additional Blind Slough winter-season fishing periods were adopted March 19 and 22.
- The majority of any upriver impacts for Select Areas fisheries are expected to occur in spring seasons set to open the third week in April.
- In the Blind Slough area, compact action is required in concurrent jurisdiction waters, which extend downstream from the Railroad Bridge. Oregon State action is required for Oregon State waters which in Blind Slough extend upstream of the Railroad Bridge and in Youngs Bay are all waters.

FISHERY RECOMMENDATIONS

Select Area Commercial Fisheries

<i>Recommendation</i>	
The Joint Staff is recommending the following additional fishing periods for the Blind Slough Winter Season:	
Winter Season:	7 PM Sunday March 26 to 7 AM Monday March 27 (12 hours). 7 PM Wednesday March 29 to 7 AM Thursday March 30 (12 hours).
Area:	Blind Slough area only.
Gear:	A 7-inch minimum mesh size restriction. Nets restricted to 100 fathoms in length with no weight restriction on leadline. Use of additional weights or anchors attached directly to the leadline is allowed.
Allowable Sales:	Salmon, sturgeon, and shad. A maximum of 3 green or white sturgeon in the aggregate may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel during each calendar week (Sunday through Saturday) of the open fishing periods. The three sturgeon possession and sales limit includes all Select Area fisheries.
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 Joint Staff is recommending area modifications for the following previously adopted Youngs Bay fishing periods:	
Winter Season:	Noon to 4 PM Thursday March 23 (4 hours) 6 AM to 6 PM Monday March 27 (12 hours) 6 AM to 6 PM Thursday March 30 (12 hours) 6 AM to 6 PM Monday April 3 (12 hours) 6 AM to 6 PM Thursday April 6 (12 hours) 6 AM to 6 PM Monday April 10 (12 hours) 6 AM to 6 PM Thursday April 13 (12 hours)
Area:	March 23: Youngs Bay fishing area with upper boundary at the confluence of the Youngs and Klaskanine rivers. March 27-April 13: Confluence of the Youngs and Klaskanine rivers downstream to signs under first powerlines immediately downstream of the Walluski River.

- Provide additional fishing opportunity and area to harvest spring Chinook with minimal impacts to upriver stocks.

Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Fishery

<i>Recommendation</i>	
Season:	The staff is not recommending a fishing period at this time.

NEXT COMPACT HEARING

The Joint Staff is recommending test fishing to occur on Sunday March 26 with a Compact hearing on Monday March 27 at 2:00 pm, via telephone.