

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

JOINT STAFF REPORT SPRING FACT SHEET NO. 2 April 24, 2008

Fisheries under consideration: Select Area spring commercial fisheries

- Adult Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam through April 22 totals 17,970 fish. Based on the recent 10-year average, passage is typically 29% complete by this date. Late runs are typically 14% complete by this date.
- Based on the 2008 forecasted upriver spring Chinook run size of 269,300 adults, non-Indian fisheries are restricted to a 2.00% ESA-impact limit with Select Area commercial fisheries allocated 7.5% (0.15% impact) of the total non-Indian impact limit.
- Preseason catch expectations for Select Area commercial fisheries were 2,000 fish in Youngs Bay, 1,400 in Blind Slough, 30 in Deep River, and the potential for 270 in Tongue Point.
- To date, Select Area commercial landings are tracking below expectations as summarized in the following table:

<i>Spring Chinook landings in winter-summer Select Area commercial fisheries, 2008</i>						
Season	Youngs Bay	Blind/Knappa Sloughs	Deep River	Tongue Pnt./ S. Channel	Sum	2007
Winter (weeks 7-15)	240	80	0	ns	320	968
Spring (thru April 18)	165	82	nya	ns	247	Opened 4/23
Total	405	162	nya	--	567	--

ns=No season; nya=Not yet available

- Impacts to upriver spring Chinook in SAFE commercial fisheries (thru April 18) total 0.017%, or 12% of the 0.15% impact limit.
- Spring commercial fisheries in Tongue Point occurred from 1998 – 2003 (partial season).
- Production-level releases of spring Chinook at the Tongue Point site were discontinued in 2000 due to higher-than-anticipated straying of adult returns. Experimental releases have continued since then from both the new MERTS site and the nearby John Day River.
- Volunteer test fishing took place on April 18 and 22 (am and pm). Landings included four spring Chinook from 10 drifts. Based on VSI, all spring Chinook were of lower river origin.
- Given a high predicted upriver run forecast, low cumulative impacts to date in SAFE commercial fisheries, and favorable test fishing results, staff believe this is an opportune time to initiate a full-fleet spring fishery at Tongue Point to help evaluate the feasibility of re-establishing production-level releases of spring Chinook at this site.

Recommendation

The Joint Staff is recommending the following fishing periods for the Tongue Point/South Channel Select Areas:

Spring Season: Monday and Thursday nights from April 28 through June 13 (14 nights).
Open hours are 7 PM to 7 AM (12 hours).

Area: **Reduced** Tongue Point and South Channel areas open entire season (see map).

The **reduced** Tongue Point fishing area includes all waters bounded by a line extended from the upstream (southern most) pier (#1) at the Tongue Point Job Corps facility through navigation marker #6 to Mott Island, a line from a marker at the southeast end of Mott Island northeasterly to a marker on the northwest tip of Lois Island, and a line from a marker on the southwest end of Lois Island westerly to a marker on the Oregon shore.

The South Channel area includes all waters bounded by a line from a marker on John Day Point through the green USCG buoy #7 to a marker on the southwest end of Lois Island upstream to an upper boundary line from a marker on Settler Point northwesterly to the flashing red USCG marker #10, northwesterly to a marker on Burnside Island defining the upstream terminus of South Channel.

Gear: In the **reduced** Tongue Point fishing area, gear restricted to 8-inch maximum mesh size, maximum net length of 250 fathoms, and weight not to exceed two pounds on any one fathom.

In the South Channel fishing area, gear restricted to 8-inch maximum mesh size, maximum net length of 100 fathoms, and no weight restriction on leadline.

Multi- Net Rule: Multiple Net Rule: It will be legal to have onboard a commercial vessel more than one net provided the nets are of mesh size legal for the fishery, or the net has a minimum mesh size of 9 inches, and the length of any one net does not exceed 1,500 feet in length.
Nets not specifically authorized for use in this fishery may be onboard the vessel if properly stored. A properly stored net is defined as a net on a drum that is fully covered by a tarp (canvas or plastic) and bound with a minimum of ten revolutions of rope with a diameter of 3/8 (0.375) inches or greater

Allowable Sales: Salmon, white sturgeon, and shad.

Miscellaneous Regulations: During April 28 through May 9, transportation or possession of fish outside the fishing area is unlawful until ODFW staff has biologically sampled individual catches. A sampling station will be established at the MERTS dock during the first four fishing periods (April 28-May 9). After sampling, fishers will be issued a transportation permit by agency staff. Beginning May 12, fishers are required to call 503-325-3418 and leave a message including name, catch, and where and when the fish will be sold.

- Although staff anticipate catches in the proposed fishery will be limited given recent releases and generally poor returns in other Select Area sites to date, it will provide additional information on the potential to re-establish this site as a spring Chinook fishery.
- Estimating impacts to upriver and Willamette spring Chinook resulting from the proposed fishery is difficult because this specific area and time combination has not previously been evaluated. Given the reduced fishing area and season timeframe, staff believes impacts to non-target stocks will be minimal.
- Staff intend to closely monitor landings in this fishery (stock composition and white sturgeon catch) and may propose modifications to season dates (including closure) or allowable sales if needed.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- Staff will continue to monitor the progress of the spring Chinook run and provide updates and/or schedule hearings as needed.

