

**OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 11**

**Joint State hearing
September 26, 2007**

Fisheries under consideration:	Non-Indian recreational salmon Non-Indian recreational sturgeon
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Management guidelines, allocations, and run forecasts for the 2007 fall season were presented in the Fall Fact Sheet #1 (July 26, 2007)

STOCK STATUS

- Bonneville Dam adult Chinook passage through September 25 totals 127,193 adult fish, including 111,179 brights and 15,474 tules.
- TAC updated Chinook run sizes on September 24 to include 118,500 URBs and 17,000 BPH at the Columbia River mouth.
- McNary Dam adult Chinook passage from August 9 - September 23 totals 34,173 fish. TAC (9/24) estimated total season passage of 46,000-49,000 adults.

NON-INDIAN FISHERIES

2007 Below Wauna (Estuary) Recreational Sturgeon Fishery

- The recreational white sturgeon fishery downstream of the Wauna powerlines (estuary) was open for retention during January 1 – April 30, and May 12 – July 4. The preseason harvest guideline was 16,274 fish including a rollover of 274 fish from 2006.
- The final catch estimate for the estuary fishery is 19,131 fish, or 2,857 fish over the adjusted 2007 guideline, leaving 13,143 fish for 2008.

2007 Above Wauna Recreational Sturgeon Fishery

- The combined 2006-2008 harvest guideline for the above Wauna recreational sturgeon fishery is 38,400 fish, which equates to a 12,800 annual guideline. During 2006, anglers harvested an estimated 8,545 white sturgeon in the mainstem Columbia River, leaving 29,855 for harvest in 2007-2008. Based on this rollover, the annual harvest guideline was increased to 14,900 for 2007 and 2008.
- A review of sampling and punch card data indicates that harvest of white sturgeon in the Willamette River increased above baseline levels in 2006 and 2007, similar to 2004. Unfortunately, only minimal creel sampling is conducted in the Willamette River during January and February. Punch card data indicates 2,250 white sturgeon were harvested in the Willamette River during 2006, which is 650 fish above baseline (1,600 fish) harvest levels currently determined as the average harvest during 1998-2000 based on ODFW punch card data. Based on this additional catch, the annual harvest guideline should be reduced to 14,600 fish for 2007 and 2008.

- The estimated harvest of 2,705 fish in the mainstem Columbia River during January – June was well below expectations, even though the fishery was expanded from three to four-days/week during February-July. Based on this under-performance, seven-day/week fishing was adopted during August 18-September 30.
- Conversely, creel data indicates sturgeon harvest in the Willamette River during 2007 may be as much as 3,600 fish above the baseline harvest level described above, based on the relationship between Willamette River creel results and punch card data.
- An estimated 810 sturgeon were harvested during August. Staff estimates an additional 1,300 fish will be harvested in September bringing the year-to-date white sturgeon harvest in the mainstem Columbia River to 4,815 fish and 8,415 fish including the preliminary estimate for harvest in the Willamette River.
- Based on the adjusted 2007 guideline, 6,185 fish remain available for harvest above Wauna during October-December.

<i>2006-2008 Recreational White Sturgeon Harvest Summary</i>			
	2006	2007	2008
Below Wauna			
Guideline	16,000	16,274	13,143
Harvest	<u>15,726</u>	<u>19,131¹</u>	
Remaining	274	-2,857	
Above Wauna			
Guideline	12,800	14,600 ²	14,600 ⁴
Columbia R. Harvest	8,545	4,815 ³	
Willamette Harvest Adj.	<u>650</u>	<u>3,600</u>	
Total Harvest	9,195	8,415	
Remaining	3,605	6,185	
¹ <i>Final estimate</i> ² <i>2007 and 2008 guidelines adjusted to 14,900 prior to realization of need to adjust for Willamette R. harvest in excess of baseline levels. The actual adjusted annual guideline for 2007 and 2008 should be 14,600.</i> ³ <i>Preliminary harvest estimate through September 2007.</i> ⁴ <i>Actual guideline for 2008 could be higher or lower depending on decision for October-December 2007 days/week and the final Willamette harvest estimate for 2006 and 2007.</i>			

- Staff estimates harvest during October-December will be about 4,500-5,000 fish if the season continues as scheduled (four-days/week) and about 6,000 fish if the season is increased to seven-days/week.
- Expanding the October-December 2007 fishery to seven-days/week provides the greatest opportunity for the fishery to achieve the combined 2006-2008 harvest guideline.
- The Joint Staff met with the Columbia River Recreational Advisory Group (CRRAG) August 7, 2007 to discuss sturgeon harvest above Wauna. The group's main concerns were for population conservation and developing a 2007 season that wouldn't reduce the base 2008 sturgeon guideline (12,800).

- Staff has the ability to update catch on a monthly basis and can recommend fishery modifications as the season progresses; however, staff recognizes the benefit of a consistent season structure for this fishery.

2007 Buoy 10 Recreational Fishery

- The Buoy 10 fishery is currently closed for Chinook retention until further notice. The fishery remains open for retention of hatchery coho and steelhead.
- Through September 12, an estimated 34,000 anglers kept 4,200 Chinook and 7,900 coho, compared to the preseason catch expectation of 4,300 Chinook and 12,200 coho. The Chinook catch includes 560 URBs and 950 LRHs.
- Impacts associated with this fishery are 0.47% for URB and 1.10% for LRH.

Mainstem Recreational Fishery

- Following a run upgrade to 105,000 URBs on Monday September 17, the Joint States met and prohibited retention of Chinook downstream of Bonneville Dam effective September 19, and from Bonneville Dam upstream to Highway 395 Bridge in Pasco, Washington effective September 20.
- Based on an increased URB run size prediction (115,000) on September 21, the Joint States reopened Chinook retention in the area from the Hood River Bridge upstream to Highway 395 effective Saturday September 22. The Hood River Bridge deadline was intended to allow escapement of tule Chinook returning to Spring Creek Hatchery.
- TAC upgraded the URB run slightly on September 24 to 118,500 fish at the Columbia River mouth.
- Catch projections for the fishery from Tongue Point/ Rocky Point upstream to Bonneville Dam through September 19 total 8,200 adult Chinook, including 3,700 URBs and 1,900 LRHs.
- Total impacts associated with this area are estimated at 3.10% on URBs and 2.25% on LRHs.
- Catch estimates for the area from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Highway 395 Bridge in Pasco (including projections from September 22 on) total 460 Chinook, including 380 URBs. Impacts associated with this fishery are 0.32% URBs.
- Combined recreational impacts in Buoy 10, below Bonneville, and above Bonneville Chinook fisheries total to 3.90% URBs and 3.35% LRHs.
- Remaining URB impacts for recreational fisheries are 0.27% URBs at the current run size, which equates to about 320 harvestable URBs. No LRH impacts remain on the recreational fishery allocation.

RECCOMENDATIONS

<i>Recommendation – Modify the 2007 Recreational Sturgeon Fishery Above Wauna</i>	
Current Season:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>January 1-31</u>: White sturgeon retention allowed Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays only. • <u>February 1-July 31</u>: White sturgeon retention allowed Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays only. • <u>August 1-September 30</u>: White sturgeon retention allowed seven-days/week. • <u>October 1-December 31</u>: White sturgeon retention allowed Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays only.
Staff Recommendation	Allow retention of white sturgeon in the above Wauna fishery seven days each week during October 1 through December 31, 2007.
Area:	Mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines upstream to Bonneville Dam, all adjacent Washington tributaries, and the lower Willamette River upstream to Willamette Falls, including Multnomah Channel.
Other restrictions:	Retention of green sturgeon prohibited effective January 1, 2007.

- Assuming the estimated and projected catches for 2007 are accurate, approximately 200 fish will remain available for rollover to 2008 which would increase the 2008 above Wauna harvest guideline to 14,800.
- Staff understands that consistency in season structure is important to constituents, management, and enforcement. Staff does not anticipate further modifications will be necessary for the remainder of the 2007 season unless harvest is well above projections.
- Staff intends to review additional Oregon punch card data to further refine the Willamette River baseline harvest level which could then affect the cumulative catch estimates for 2006 and 2007.

Recommendation for the Mainstem Columbia River Recreational Salmon Fishery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow retention of Chinook salmon in the Columbia River recreational salmon fishery from Buoy 10 upstream to the Hood River Bridge effective 12:01 AM Saturday September 29, 2007. • Increase the coho retention limit in the area between Buoy 10 and Bonneville Dam to four adult adipose fin-clipped coho per day.

- The projected URB run size appears to be stabilizing at around the current prediction of 118,500.
- The Hood River Bridge deadline in Bonneville Reservoir is no longer needed since the vast majority of BPH tules have escaped to Spring Creek Hatchery. Additionally, an existing recreational sanctuary near the fishway entrance at Spring Creek Hatchery provides sufficient protection for tule Chinook returning to the hatchery.
- Expected catch for the recommended fishery is 500 Chinook, of which 60% are expected to be URB stock. Impacts to URB stock from the proposed fishery are expected to be 0.25%, bringing the season total URB impact rate for combined recreational fisheries to 4.15%, or 99% of the recreational guideline.
- LRH stock abundance in the mainstem lower river has dwindled as fish entered tributaries and is expected to be near zero by October 1. Although recreational impacts to date have

exceeded the preseason allocation, additional impacts to LRH Chinook are expected to be minimal, estimated at 15 fish, or 0.02% additional impacts.

- Daily and weekly catches for the area below Bonneville Dam are expected to be low, and would allow opportunity for management intervention if necessary to remain within impact limits, though further season modifications for Chinook are not expected.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- A Compact hearing is scheduled via teleconference for 2:30 PM Wednesday September 26 to consider a commercial fishing period in Zones 4-5 for Thursday night, September 27.
- A Columbia River Compact hearing is scheduled for 2:30 PM Thursday, September 27 to discuss additional treaty Indian and non-Indian commercial fishing periods.