

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

JOINT STAFF REPORT SUMMER FACT SHEET NO. 4 June 27, 2008

<i>Fisheries under consideration:</i>	<i>Treaty Indian commercial</i> <i>Non-Indian commercial</i> <i>Recreational sturgeon below Wauna</i> <i>Recreational Chinook above Bonneville</i>
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Management guidelines and run forecasts for the 2008 summer season were presented in the Summer Fact Sheet #1 (June 12, 2008)

Stock Status and Management Guidelines

Sockeye

- The preseason forecast for the 2008 Columbia River sockeye return is 75,600 fish. The 2008 forecast includes 13,700 Wenatchee stock, 61,200 Okanogan stock, and 700 Snake River sockeye.
- Sockeye passage at Bonneville Dam through June 25 totals 146,324 fish. Passage is typically 50% complete by June 25 based on the recent 10-year average.
- TAC met on June 26 and upgraded the sockeye run to at least 210,000 fish to the river mouth.
- Sockeye fisheries are managed to remain within ESA impact limits. Non-Indian fisheries are not to exceed 1% and treaty fisheries are not to exceed 7% total harvest rate

Upper Columbia Summer Chinook

- The preseason forecast for upper Columbia summer Chinook is 52,000 fish.
- Summer Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam totals 23,855 adults during June 16-25. Passage is typically 34% complete through June 25 and 50% complete by July 1 based on the recent 10-year average.
- The counting period for summer Chinook at Priest Rapids Dam is June 14 through August 13. Passage at Priest Rapids is 3,986 summer Chinook and 12,899 sockeye through June 25.
- Based on the preseason forecast for summer Chinook, non-Indian fisheries were allocated 3,375 fish for harvest below Priest Rapids Dam. Of those fish, 1,687 were allocated to commercial fisheries. Recreational fisheries were allocated at least 468 fish for harvest in the area from Bonneville upstream to Priest Rapids Dam, and no more than 1,220 were available for harvest in recreational fisheries below Bonneville Dam
- TAC also reported that summer Chinook is tracking slightly ahead of forecast, and updated the run to at least 60,000 fish. TAC is scheduled to meet again on July 2.
- Based on the current in-season run estimate (60,000 fish), treaty Indian fisheries are allocated 14,250 fish and non-Indian fisheries are also allocated 14,250 fish.

- Of the 14,250 fish allocated to non-Indian fisheries, 4,275 Chinook are available harvest for below Priest Rapids Dam. These fish are further divided 50/50 between recreational and commercial fisheries (2,137 fish each).

Columbia River Fisheries

Non-Indian fisheries

Recreational Fisheries

- The summer season recreational fishery below Bonneville Dam is open for retention of adult Chinook and sockeye from June 21-28. Catch expectation for this fishery was about 1,200 Chinook. To date, the catch rate for Chinook/angler has been within expectations but effort has been higher than anticipated.
- Based on available data, the projected kept catch below Bonneville Dam through June 28 is about 2,000 adult Chinook and 300 sockeye. An additional 600 sockeye are projected to have been released during June 16-28.
- The summer season recreational fishery above Bonneville Dam is scheduled to be open from June 16-July 31 for adult Chinook and sockeye. Catch expectation for this fishery was about 500 Chinook. Catch in this area is tracking above expectations, and is projected at 700 adult Chinook and 100 sockeye through June 29.
- The recreational white sturgeon fishery below the Wauna powerlines is estimated to have kept 1,711 fish during January-May. Based on incomplete data, the catch during June 1-24 was 7,228 fish, for a season total of 8,939 white sturgeon. According to the 2008 harvest guideline of 13,143 fish, 4,204 white sturgeon remain available for harvest during 2008.

<i>2008 White Sturgeon Catch Below Wauna</i>		
Period	Catch	Number Remaining
Guideline		13,143
January 1 – April 30	22	13,121
May 10-31	1,689	11,432
June 1-24 (preliminary)	7,228	4,204
	8,939	4,204

Commercial fisheries

- Non-Indian commercial fishing periods for summer Chinook (large mesh nets) were adopted for the evenings of June 24 and July 1 (10 hours each night). Landings for the June 24 fishing period were below expectations, totaling 741 Chinook, 76 sockeye and 204 white sturgeon. Catch for the July 1 fishing period is expected to be less than the June 24 fishery.

Treaty Indian Fisheries

- A treaty Indian commercial gillnet fishery occurred during June 23-25 (2.5 days) and the platform hook and line fishery has been ongoing since June 16. Yakama Nation tributary and below Bonneville Dam fisheries are also in place. Landings from these fisheries include:
 - Zone 6 Gillnet – 2,833 summer Chinook, 64 steelhead, 1,786 sockeye
 - Zone 6 Platform H&L – 164 summer Chinook, 138 steelhead and 300 sockeye through June 23

Discussion

Summer Chinook

- Non-Indian harvest below Priest Rapids Dam is projected to be 3,440 fish through June 30. Based on the in-season run size, there are about 800 fish remaining for non-Indian harvest below Priest Rapids Dam, some of which will be harvested in the July 1 commercial fishery.
- Additional fish for commercial harvest may be available if the run forecast increases above 60,000 or allocation from other fisheries becomes available.

Sockeye

- Total mortalities (kept and released) from non-Indian fisheries are estimated at 630 sockeye out of a total of 2,100 fish allowed under the ESA, leaving 1,470 fish available for additional non-Indian harvest.
- Total mortalities from treaty fisheries are estimated at 2,086 sockeye out of a total of 14,700 fish allowed under the ESA, leaving 12,614 available for additional harvest.

Steelhead

- Non-Indian fisheries are limited to a 2% ESA impact rate on wild summer steelhead during the winter/spring and summer season. Steelhead handled in the lower river during May and June are considered lower river Skamania stock. On average, annual impacts to wild Skamania steelhead are <0.5% and are primarily accrued during recreational fisheries below Bonneville Dam.
- Non-Indian impacts on Group A wild summer steelhead average <1% during the winter/spring and summer season and are primarily accrued during recreational fisheries above and below Bonneville Dam
- Based on landings and the preseason forecast, treaty Indian impacts are minimal for Group A wild steelhead to date.

White Sturgeon

- 2008 is the final year of a three-year agreement and total allowable harvest must remain within the boundaries outlined within the agreement (48,000 cumulative harvest for the 3-year period). Therefore harvest above/below the 2008 guideline is not transferable to 2009.
- Sturgeon management protocol for recreational fisheries includes the objectives to minimize emergency in-season action, balance the catch above/below Wauna at a 40/60 ratio, and maintain fishery monitoring and management capabilities.
- The area below Wauna closed to recreational white sturgeon retention as scheduled on June 25. Prior to its closure, staff realized the estuary fishery would have harvestable white sturgeon remaining on the 2008 guideline for this area. However, since the 2008 is the final year of the current agreement, staff thought that it would be prudent to allow the fishery to close as scheduled. This allowed the agencies time to develop the best possible estimate of harvest, and make recommendations on how to structure additional harvest opportunity.

Recommendations

<i>Treaty Indian Gillnet Fishery</i>		
Dates:	6:00 AM Tuesday, July 1 to 6:00 PM Thursday, July 3, 2008	2.5 Days
	6:00 AM Tuesday, July 8 to 6:00 PM Thursday, July 10, 2008	2.5 Days
Area:	All of Zone 6	
Gear:	No minimum mesh size restriction	
Sanctuaries:	Standard river mouth and dam sanctuaries applicable to these gear types remain in effect. The Spring Creek Hatchery Sanctuary is not necessary this time of year.	
Allowable Sales:	Chinook, coho, sockeye, steelhead, walleye, carp, and shad may be sold or retained for subsistence. Sturgeon may not be sold. Sturgeon between 4-5 feet in length in The Dalles and John Day pools may be retained for subsistence. Sturgeon between 42-60 inches in the Bonneville Pool may also be retained for subsistence.	
Additional	24-hour Quick reporting rule in effect for Washington buyers	
Expected catch	2,500 Chinook per week, 4,000 sockeye July 1-3, 3,000 sockeye July 8-10 and 500-600 steelhead per week	

- The proposed tribal commercial fisheries are expected be well within the overall allowed summer season fishery impacts.
- In addition, Yakama Nation tribal members are proposing that commercial sales of sockeye caught on the Washington shore immediately below Bonneville Dam as described in Yakama Nation/WDFW MOA be allowed.

<i>Recreational Sturgeon Fishery Below Wauna</i>	
Area:	Mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines downstream to the mouth at Buoy 10, including Youngs Bay, and all adjacent Washington tributaries.
Option #1	<u>July 11 – August 2</u> White sturgeon retention allowed 2 days/week (Friday and Saturday; 8 days; 4,060 fish projected catch)
Option #2	<u>July 12 – July 27</u> White sturgeon retention allowed 2 days per week (Saturday and Sunday; 6 days; 3,740 fish projected catch)
Option #3	<u>July 3 – July 13</u> White sturgeon retention allowed 3 days per week (Thursday through Saturday; 6 days; 3,180 fish projected catch)
Option #4	<u>July 1- 10</u> White sturgeon retention allowed seven days per week (10 days; 3,990 fish projected catch)
Size limit	45-inch minimum and 60-inch maximum size limit
Additional Regulations	Retention of green sturgeon prohibited as per permanent regulations
Estimated catch	<4,200 kept white sturgeon

- The season options presented by Staff above represent some of several possible scenarios for additional harvest opportunity. The number of sturgeon available for harvest is fixed at 4,204 fish, however the potential season structure used to access the fish is flexible.

- The options and projected catch are based on catch rates observed in 2008, and considers assumptions for:
 - Reduced catch due to a re-opener effect,
 - Within-week effort shifts,
 - Weekend vs weekday effort, and
 - Effort reduction as the season progresses.
- Options 1, 2 and 3 pose less risk as they allow for weekly catches to be reviewed after each fishing period.
- Some of the options (1 and 3) pose difficulties in estimating angler effort due to conflicts with aerial flight schedules.
- Public testimony in past years has indicated the desire to have the fishery open during (or through) the 4th of July weekend when possible. Additional support has been expressed for extending the season later into the calendar year whenever possible.

<i>Recreational Chinook Fishery above Bonneville Dam</i>	
The Joint Staff is recommending that the mainstem Columbia River close for adult Chinook and sockeye retention effective 12:01 AM Tuesday July 1, 2008 in the area from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Hwy 395 Bridge, near Pasco, Washington	

- Recreational fisheries below Priest Rapids Dam are expected to exceed the harvestable allocation, based on the current in season forecast of 60,000 fish.

<i>Non-Indian Commercial Sockeye Salmon Fishery</i>	
Season:	12:00 (noon) through 6:00 PM Monday June 30, 2008 (6 hours)
Area:	Area 2S - True north/south line through Light #50 near the mouth of the Sandy River upstream to the commercial fishing boundary near Beacon Rock.
Gear:	Drift nets only. 4½” maximum mesh size restriction, single wall, unslackened, floater gill net.
Allowable Sales:	Chinook, sockeye, shad and white sturgeon. A maximum of five white sturgeon may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel during each calendar week (Sunday through Saturday) that the fishery is open. Sturgeon retention in Select Areas remains prohibited.
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.
Additional	24 hour Quick Reporting Rule for Washington buyers.

- Staff reviewed sockeye to steelhead ratios in both the upper and lower sections of the river. Given the date (late June) and migration patterns of both sockeye and steelhead, staff concluded that fishing in the 2S area would maximize sockeye catch while minimizing steelhead handle.

- Recent Bonneville Dam counts have shown a high ratio of sockeye to steelhead (21:1). The ratio in the lower River is likely less.
- The short fishing period will allow commercial access to sockeye with minimal risk of exceeding ESA-impacts.
- Fishing effort is expected to be low.
- Catch is estimated at 400 sockeye, 50 Chinook and 10 sturgeon. The expected incidental handle of steelhead is 19 fish, including 4 wild fish. The expected incidental handle of Snake River sockeye is 1 fish (0.3% of total).

Future Hearings

- The Joint Staff is recommending a Compact hearing for Thursday July 3, 2008 at 11AM via teleconference.
- A Compact hearing is scheduled for July 22, 2008 at 10:00 AM via teleconference to consider early fall season commercial fisheries.