

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE JOINT
STAFF REPORT – WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 4

Columbia River Joint State Hearing

February 20, 2019

<i>Fisheries under consideration:</i>	Mainstem recreational salmon Select Area commercial Select Area recreational
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Detailed information on stock status and management guidelines for Columbia River fisheries are presented in Joint Staff Reports, which are produced annually and available on-line. The most recent report is the 2019 Spring/Summer salmon, steelhead, and other species report (February 8, 2019). <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/crc/> or <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/reports.asp>

STOCK STATUS

Upriver Spring Chinook

The upriver spring Chinook run is defined as all spring Chinook destined for areas above Bonneville Dam and Snake River summer Chinook. Chinook passing Bonneville Dam between January 1 and June 15 are managed as upriver spring Chinook. Snake River wild spring/summer Chinook and upper Columbia wild spring Chinook are components of this run and are federally-listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Spring Chinook returning to other tributaries above Bonneville Dam are part of this run but are not ESA-listed. Based on the recent ten-year average (2009-2018), Bonneville Dam passage is usually 50% complete by May 8. Over the past ten years, adult runs have averaged around 198,200 (range 115,100 to 315,300).

Willamette Spring Chinook

Willamette River spring Chinook exhibit broader migration timing than upriver spring Chinook. Wild spring Chinook destined for portions of the Willamette River and its tributaries are ESA-listed. Over the past ten years, adult runs have averaged around 59,700 fish (range 35,400 to 107,700).

Lower Columbia Spring Chinook

Spring Chinook returning to the tributaries of the lower Columbia River are destined for the Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, and Sandy rivers and the Select Areas. Wild components of this group are ESA-listed, with the exception of the Select Area fish. Over the past ten years, the combined adult return of these lower river stocks has averaged around 20,000 fish (range 10,300 to 34,400) to the tributaries and 10,300 fish (range 2,500 to 23,000) to the Select Areas.

Winter Steelhead

The geographic range of winter steelhead includes all tributaries of the Columbia River upstream to Fifteenmile Creek on the Oregon shore and the Klickitat River on the Washington shore. Wild populations from the Cowlitz River upstream to Fifteenmile Creek and from specific areas above Willamette Falls are ESA-listed. Steelhead handled downstream of Bonneville Dam during November through April are managed as winter steelhead. Over the past ten years, wild winter steelhead returns have averaged around 16,000 fish (range 9,400 to 22,400).

Summer Steelhead

Lower Columbia summer steelhead abundance in the Columbia River peaks during May and June. The Skamania stock hatchery summer steelhead are widely planted in the lower Columbia tributaries,

including the Willamette Basin. Skamania stock hatchery fish are also released annually in some tributaries upstream of Bonneville Dam. Wild lower river summer steelhead are present in the Kalama, Lewis, Washougal, and Wind rivers in Washington and in the Hood River in Oregon. The lower Columbia River steelhead DPS is listed as threatened by the NMFS. All steelhead handled in fisheries downstream of Bonneville Dam during May and June are managed as lower river Skamania stock.

<i>Columbia River Adult Salmon Returns: Actual and Forecasted*</i>				
		2018	2018	2019
		Forecast	Return	Forecast
Spring Chinook	Total Spring Chinook	248,520	177,043	157,500
	Willamette River	53,820	37,441	40,200
	Sandy River	5,400	4,733	5,500
	Select Areas**	12,300	9,887	8,200
	Cowlitz River	5,150	4,076	1,300
	Kalama River	1,450	2,371	1,400
	Lewis River	3,700	3,454	1,600
	Lower River Total	81,820	61,962	58,200
	Wind River**	5,300	3,109	2,800
	Drano Lake/Little White Salmon River**	10,200	7,352	5,600
	Hood River**	2,500	2,026	2,300
	<i>Hood River wild**</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>--</i>
	Klickitat River**	1,990	667	1,100
	Yakima River**	7,000	3,155	3,000
	Umatilla River**	6,300	3,257	2,400
	Deschutes River**	5,880	1,618	1,455
	Mid-Columbia total (by subtraction)	39,200	34,641	40,000
	Upper Columbia (total)	20,100	12,844	11,200
	<i>Upper Columbia wild</i>	<i>3,400</i>	<i>1,977</i>	<i>2,100</i>
	Snake River Spring/Summer (total)***	107,400	67,596	48,100
	<i>Snake River wild***</i>	<i>18,500</i>	<i>11,339</i>	<i>8,200</i>
	Upriver Total	166,700	115,081	99,300
Summer Chinook	Upper Columbia	67,300	42,120	35,900
Sockeye	Total Sockeye	99,000	210,915	94,400
	Wenatchee	25,700	--	18,300
	Okanogan	72,600	--	74,500
	Yakima	50	--	1,300
	Deschutes	50	--	100
	Snake River	600	297	200
Winter Steelhead	Wild	11,700	11,323	14,400

* Components may not sum to totals shown since individual forecasts are not available for all upriver spring Chinook tributaries. Wild components are included in the stock total.

** Return to tributary mouth.

*** 2018 return is based on standard TAC run reconstruction methodology.

1/30/2019

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

U.S. v Oregon Management Agreement

- The 2018-2027 *U.S. v Oregon* Management Agreement (MA) provides the treaty Indian and non-treaty fishery harvest frameworks and harvest rate schedules for salmon and steelhead stocks destined for areas upstream of Bonneville Dam.
- Fisheries are managed to meet the upriver spring Chinook catch balance provision in the MA, which requires mortalities in non-treaty fisheries not exceed the total allowable catch available for treaty Indian fisheries.
- The MA also specifies fisheries occurring prior to a run size update be managed for a run size that is at least 30% less than the predicted upriver spring Chinook run size to allow for forecast uncertainty.
- A 30% reduction to the preseason forecast (99,300 adults) equates to a run size of 69,510 fish, which allows for an allowable harvest (kept plus release mortalities) of 4,866 upriver spring Chinook and an ESA limit of 1.5% for non-treaty fisheries prior to a run size update.

Endangered Species Act

- A Biological Opinion (BO) based upon the management actions outlined in the MA was issued by NMFS in 2018.
- Impacts to wild winter steelhead are limited to 2% for all mainstem Columbia River non-treaty fisheries. Impacts to wild LCR summer steelhead are also limited to 2%.
- ESA authorization for fisheries impacting listed lower Columbia River Chinook requires specific hatchery escapement goals be met, with a Cowlitz goal of 1,337 and Lewis goal of 1,380.
- From the NMFS guidance letter to the Pacific Fishery Management Council in 2018: “The Cowlitz and Lewis River Hatcheries are being used ... for reintroduction of spring-run Chinook into the upper basins above the existing dams. The hatchery programs are therefore critical to the overall recovery effort. Given the circumstances, maintaining the hatchery brood stocks for the Cowlitz and Lewis River Hatcheries is essential for implementation of specified recovery actions.”
- The 2019 spring Chinook forecast for the Cowlitz River is less than needed to meet the hatchery escapement goal. The Lewis River return is forecast to be just under the escapement need.

Willamette Spring Chinook Management

- The Willamette River Fisheries Management Evaluation Plan (FMEP) limits freshwater fishery impacts on wild Willamette River spring Chinook to $\leq 15\%$.

- The Willamette River FMEP includes a sliding scale for escapement goals based on abundance of hatchery fish, which determines the allocation of surplus hatchery spring Chinook to recreational and commercial fisheries downstream of Willamette Falls. The escapement goals are also intended to allow for full recreational fisheries in the upper Willamette River.
- Based on FMEP guidance, an expected return of 33,980 hatchery spring Chinook, and the FMEP escapement goal of 23,000 hatchery fish, the harvestable surplus totals 10,980 hatchery fish.

2019 Spring Chinook Management

- The Washington and Oregon Fish and Wildlife commissions have provided guidance on spring Chinook management. Allowed ESA impacts to upriver spring Chinook are allocated 80% to recreational fisheries and 20% to commercial fisheries; the Select Area commercial allocation is not subject to the *U.S. v OR* run-size buffer provision. This direction, combined with catch balance provisions in the MA, result in the following guidelines:

Prior to an in-season run update, allocation of upriver fish (including release mortalities) for non-treaty fisheries will be:

- 3,689 fish for the recreational fishery below Bonneville Dam
- 492 fish for the recreational fishery from Bonneville Dam to the OR/WA state line
- 357 fish for recreational fisheries in the Snake River (Washington waters)
- 10 fish for Wanapum tribe (Upper Columbia)
- ≤318 fish for Select Area commercial fisheries
- With the expected shortfall of Cowlitz Hatchery and Lewis River spring Chinook, the states are focusing management actions on the areas with the highest potential and probability of harvesting Cowlitz and Lewis river spring Chinook.
- The approach to 2019 fishery structure is consistent with the ESA management strategies in the Columbia River Basin – fisheries are managed to limit the impacts to ESA-listed fish while providing harvest opportunity for healthy and harvestable stocks.
- Fisheries are also managed by time and area to reduce the potential for handling ESA-listed species or other stocks of concern.

2019 NON-TREATY FISHERIES

Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Recreational Fisheries

- The Columbia River downstream of the I-5 Bridge is currently open through March 31 for hatchery salmon and hatchery steelhead under permanent regulations.
- The Columbia River from the I-5 Bridge upstream to the Highway 395 Bridge at Pasco, WA is currently open through March 31 for hatchery steelhead under permanent regulations.
- Washington spring Chinook stocks typically comprise a small proportion of the lower Columbia catch of spring Chinook; however, considering the current situation regarding the expected returns to the Cowlitz and Lewis rivers, a conservative approach to 2019 spring Chinook fisheries is warranted.

- Spring season fisheries were discussed with the Columbia River Recreational Advisory Group (CRRAG) on February 13, 2019.

<i>Recommendations: 2019 Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery</i>		
Downstream of Bonneville Dam		
Season:	Friday March 1 through Wednesday April 10	41 retention days
Area:	<p>Warrior Rock line upstream to Beacon Rock (boat and bank) plus bank angling only from Beacon Rock upstream to the Bonneville Dam deadline. Angling for and retention of steelhead, salmon, and shad is prohibited from the Warrior Rock line downstream to Buoy 10.</p> <p>Legal downstream boundary defined as: A line projected from the Warrior Rock lighthouse on the Oregon shore through red buoy #4 to a marker on the lower end of Bachelor Island (Warrior Rock line).</p> <p>Legal upstream boat boundary defined as: A deadline marker on the Oregon bank (approximately four miles downstream from Bonneville Dam Powerhouse One) in a straight line through the western tip of Pierce Island to a deadline marker on the Washington bank at Beacon Rock.</p>	
Daily Bag Limit:	<p>Two adult salmonids (Chinook or steelhead) per day, but only one may be a Chinook. Only adipose fin-clipped fish may be kept. Shad may also be retained. All other permanent regulations apply.</p>	
Bonneville Dam to Oregon/Washington Border		
Season:	Monday April 1 through Sunday May 5	35 retention days
Area:	<p>Tower Island power lines (approximately 6 miles below The Dalles Dam) upstream to Oregon/Washington border, plus the Oregon and Washington banks between Bonneville Dam and the Tower Island power lines.</p>	
Daily Bag Limit:	<p>Two adult salmonids (Chinook or steelhead) per day, but only one may be a Chinook. Only adipose fin-clipped fish may be kept. All other permanent regulations apply.</p>	

- Catch expectations are approximately 4,050 adult Chinook kept (3,330 upriver mortalities) for the fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam and 449 adult Chinook kept (461 mortalities, all upriver stock) for the fishery upstream of Bonneville.
- The recommended season for the fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam is expected to minimize the harvest of Cowlitz and Lewis river spring Chinook and provide the protection to hatchery broodstock.
- The season for the fishery upstream of Bonneville Dam is based on the available pre-update allocation and estimated catch rates. The April 1 start date was supported by upriver representatives on the Columbia River Recreational Advisor Group.
- Fishery recommendations were developed to remain within and comply with:

- ✓ Impact limits for species listed under the ESA.
 - The most constraining stocks for the fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam are Cowlitz and Lewis river hatchery spring Chinook.
 - Upriver spring Chinook are also a management concern for both fisheries. Staff estimates the recommended fisheries will accrue 0.40% impacts to upriver spring Chinook.
 - Fishery-specific impact rate expectations for other species and stocks are expected to remain within the estimates provided in the latest Spring/Summer Joint Staff Report in the 2019 Winter, Spring, and Summer Season Expectations section.
- ✓ Run-size buffer and catch balance provisions are outlined in the MA.
- ✓ Policy guidance and management objectives provided by the Commissions.
- Staff will continue to analyze prior year fisheries data for catch of Cowlitz and Lewis stock fish in lower river fisheries and, if possible, may recommend modifications to the season structure.
- Although a key management goal is to minimize the need for in-season emergency action, due to the dynamic nature of fisheries and fish runs, none of the seasons recommended guarantee that in-season action will not be necessary in order to remain within ESA limits and/or catch balancing requirements.
- Staff will monitor the fisheries in-season. If they are tracking within preseason expectations, the intent would be to allow the fisheries to run through the proposed end dates. After closure of each fishery, staff will review catches and determine if additional fishing opportunity is warranted.

Tributary Spring Chinook Fisheries Downstream of Bonneville Dam

- No changes to permanent regulations are recommended for spring Chinook recreational fisheries in the Sandy, Clackamas, and Willamette rivers.
- Washington tributary seasons are currently open and modifications will be made through emergency rules.
 - WDFW expects to close the Cowlitz and Lewis rivers to angling beginning March 1.
 - A creel sample on the Cowlitz River occurs 5 days/week and less frequently on the Lewis River – no spring Chinook have been sampled to date.

Select Area Commercial Fisheries

- Winter, spring, and summer seasons for 2019 Select Area commercial fisheries were adopted at the January 29 Compact/Joint State hearing.
- Select Area fisheries target local-origin fish but do incidentally harvest non-local stocks at low levels (2013-18 average harvest rate of Cowlitz- and Lewis-stock spring Chinook is 1.2%). Catch of Cowlitz and Lewis spring Chinook has been observed annually; interceptions of these stocks are positively correlated with tributary run sizes.
- Early winter-season fisheries have low effort and catches and the probability of intercepting fish from the Cowlitz or Lewis rivers during this timeframe is low.
- To further minimize interception of LCR spring Chinook, modifications to the current season structure would be necessary. Additional analysis of past coded-wire tag recoveries and

expectations for encounter of LCR spring Chinook in 2019 fisheries is on-going. Staff anticipates that the analysis will be complete soon and could be prepared for a hearing by late next week.

Select Area Recreational Fisheries

- Permanent angling regulations for Oregon waters within the Select Areas of Youngs Bay and Blind Slough/Knappa Slough are listed in the 2019 Oregon Recreational Fishing Regulations booklet. These waters are open year-round to hatchery Chinook salmon hatchery steelhead, and hatchery Coho except for some seasonal tributary closures.
- Permanent Washington recreational fishing rules list waters of Deep River from the mouth to the town bridge are open to adipose-fin clipped Chinook salmon, fin-clipped steelhead, and adipose fin-clipped Coho the entire year.
- Interception of Cowlitz and Lewis spring Chinook in these fisheries is expected to be minimal in a typical year. Potential modifications to 2019 Select Area recreational fisheries will be considered at a future hearing addressing Select Area commercial fisheries.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- No additional Compact/Joint State hearings are currently scheduled. Staff will continue to review available information and request additional hearings as necessary.