

**OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT - SPRING FACT SHEET NO. 3
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
April 24, 2019**

<i>Fisheries under consideration:</i>	Mainstem recreational salmon downstream of Bonneville Dam
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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 reports are the 2019 Sturgeon/Smelt Report (January 18, 2019) and the 2019 spring/summer report for Chinook, sockeye, steelhead and other species (February 8, 2019). Links to the on-line reports are: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/management/columbia-river/reports> or <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/reports.asp>

RIVER CONDITIONS

- Columbia River conditions recently measured at Bonneville Dam are higher and much more turbid than recent 5-year averages for this date in April. Current outflow is 305 kcfs (including 119 kcfs spill), which is higher than the recent 5-year average of 282 kcfs. Visibility is 1.0 foot which is less than the average of 4.0 feet. Water temperature currently measures 51° F, which is the same as the recent 5-year average. The river stage at Vancouver is currently 9.0 feet and is forecasted to continue receding slightly through this weekend to an average of about 8.0 feet.

STOCK STATUS

- Adult Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam through April 23 totals 1,250 fish, which is the 2nd lowest passage in the last 10 years and only 6% of the 10-year (2009-2018) average cumulative count (22,499) for this date. On average, 9.7% of the run has passed Bonneville Dam by April 23 (range: 0.6% - 29.7%). As evidenced by the variability in proportion passage complete by this date, cumulative counts in mid-April are not a reliable indicator of final passage. The recent 10-yr average 50% passage date at Bonneville Dam is May 9.
- Weekly test fishing in the lower Columbia River began on Monday, March 18, with six days completed so far. Catch rates (Chinook per drift) increased for the first three Mondays (0.3, 0.7, and 0.9) consistent with 2018, but dropped to 0.5 on April 8 (2.3 in 2018). Catch rates improved significantly on April 15 to 5.0 Chinook per drift (6.8 in 2018), and then declined on April 22 to 3.5 Chinook per drift (8.1 in 2018).
- Tributary returns of spring Chinook are typically minimal this early in the year; 26 and 46 adults have returned to the Lewis and Cowlitz hatcheries respectively.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Forecasts and management guidelines for 2019 spring Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #4 (February 20, 2019).

2019 NON-TREATY FISHERIES

Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery - Below Bonneville Dam

- The lower Columbia River (LCR) recreational spring Chinook fishery was open under temporary regulations from March 1 – April 10, April 13-14, and April 20-21. Due to low projected returns to the Cowlitz and Lewis rivers, the fishery has been restricted to the area from Warrior Rock line (just upstream of the Lewis River) upstream to Bonneville Dam.
- Water temperatures through April 10 were much colder than average but river conditions were otherwise favorable for fishing except during the last couple of days. High turbidity and flow negatively affected catch rates for both of the recent weekend openings. The estimated kept catch for April 20-21 is 88 adult spring Chinook and three steelhead from 2,929 angler trips. The combined season kept catch through Sunday April 21 is estimated at 1,639 adult spring Chinook from 30,322 angler trips.
- Upriver mortalities through April 21 are estimated at 1,445 adult Chinook, or 39% of the 3,689 available to this fishery prior to a run update.
- Given the significant balance on the pre-season buffered allocation of upriver spring Chinook (2,244 fish remain available) for this fishery, there is potential for additional angling opportunity. A conservative approach moving forward may still be warranted given the limited in-season information available regarding the upriver spring Chinook run and the fact that abundance should be increasing in the LCR.
- The proposed fishery will provide additional recreational opportunity; however, fishing conditions are expected to remain very challenging due to high turbidity, which will limit catch.

<i>Recommendation: 2019 Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery</i>	
Downstream of Bonneville Dam	
Season:	Saturday April 27 through Sunday April 28 2 retention days
Area:	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. Legal downstream boundary defined as: A line projected from the Warrior Rock lighthouse on the Oregon shore to red USCG buoy #4, then to the piling dolphin on the lower end of Bachelor Island (Warrior Rock line). 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.
Daily Bag Limit:	Two adult salmonids (Chinook or steelhead) per day, but only one may be a Chinook. Only hatchery fish may be kept. Shad may also be retained. All other permanent regulations apply.

- Given the expected water conditions, the combined kept catch for the proposed fishery is not expected to exceed 260 adult Chinook (246 upriver mortalities).
- With the proposed extension, projected cumulative upriver mortalities (1,691 adults) would represent 46% of the 3,689 mortalities available to the recreational fishery below Bonneville prior to a run update.
- An upriver spring Chinook run size of 53,300 adults would cover the projected cumulative mortalities for this fishery and pre-update set-asides for other non-treaty fisheries.
- Impacts to other listed stocks are expected to remain within take limitations based on recent year results. Fishery-specific impact rate expectations can found in the latest Spring/Summer Joint Staff Report in the 2019 Winter, Spring, and Summer Season Expectations section.
- An alternative approach is to postpone additional LCR Chinook openings until mid-May. By then water conditions should be more favorable, an update of the upriver run size might be available, and more will be known about the status of Cowlitz and Lewis river hatchery fish. This information would help inform decisions regarding additional angling opportunity.

Mainstem Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery – Bonneville Dam to OR/WA Border

- The recreational spring Chinook fishery is currently open through May 5 from Bonneville Dam upstream to the OR/WA border under temporary regulations.
- Similar to recent years, the estimated harvest to date is very low. Current estimates indicate no fish have been harvested yet this year. Effort has been extremely low (135 angler trips) due to low Chinook passage and recent poor water conditions.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- The Joint Staff request a hearing be scheduled for Wednesday May 8, 2019 to consider Columbia River recreational salmon fishery upstream of Bonneville Dam.