

**COLUMBIA RIVER INTERTRIBAL FISH COMMISSION**  
**JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 6a**  
**Columbia River Compact**  
**September 5, 2019**

<b><i>Fisheries under consideration:</i></b>	Treaty mainstem commercial salmon
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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 2019 Fall Report was distributed on July 22, 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**

- The recent average Columbia River flows at Bonneville Dam are 115 kcfs, which is similar to the ten-year average of 103 kcfs for this date. Flows are expected to be reduced at Bonneville Dam from Friday-Sunday due to the planned removal of a sunken boat.
- Water temperature at Bonneville Dam is 71.8°F as of August 5, which is above the recent ten-year average of 69.2°F. Water temperatures typically peak in the last half of August.

### **STOCK STATUS**

- Through September 4, a total of 76,655 adult fall Chinook have passed Bonneville Dam which is similar to expectations; however, passage of Chinook is typically only 33% complete by this date. While bright chinook have been tracking similar to pre-season expectations, tule chinook have been tracking somewhat behind. Over the last 10 years, the average 50% complete date has been September 9 for the total fall chinook run. The average 50% date for tules is often slightly ahead of the average 50% date for brights. The clip rate for chinook at Bonneville is 37.1%.
- Chinook jack passage to date is 12,283 which is above last year but well below the 10 year average to date of 22,263.
- Passage of upriver summer steelhead at Bonneville Dam since July 1 totals 54,196 total A/B Index fish of which 28,806 are unclipped. The total A/B Index steelhead run is typically 74% complete by September 4. A situation has occurred this year where the unclipped fish total more than the clipped hatchery fish. This has not been observed since clipped and unclipped counts for steelhead began at Bonneville Dam in 1994.
- The *U.S. v. Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met on September 3, 2019 to review the A/B-Index steelhead passage at Bonneville Dam. TAC downgraded the total expected A/B-Index steelhead return to 74,000 fish (118,200 pre-season forecast), and downgraded the expected passage of unclipped A/B-Index steelhead to 36,000 fish (40,250 pre-season forecast). The majority of the downgrade is due to the clipped hatchery-origin A-Index component tracking lower than forecast. Due to the typically later timing of B-Index fish, it is too early to assess the return of this component.
- Counts at Bonneville Dam through September 3 total 10,829 adult early stock Coho (defined as Coho passing prior to October 1). The total to date is less than last year (11,163) and less than the 10 year average passage to date of 16,346. Passage of upriver early stock

Coho is typically 25% complete by September 4. The clip rate for coho at Bonneville is 11.1%.

- The Coho jack count to date is 1,394. This is less than last year but above the ten year average to date of 1,243.
- Run size forecasts and stock descriptions for salmon and steelhead were presented in the 2019 Fall Fact Sheet #1.

## **MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

### ***Salmon/Steelhead***

- The 2018-2027 *U.S. v Oregon* Management Agreement (MA) provides specific fishery management guidelines for fall Chinook, summer steelhead, and Coho.
  - The allowable impact rate for combined treaty Indian and non-treaty fisheries is 31.25% of the URB run based on preseason forecasts (URB stock is the surrogate for SRW Chinook). This impact limit is allocated 23% for treaty Indian fisheries and 8.25% for non-treaty fisheries.
    - However, for 2019 the states have opted to manage non-treaty fisheries conservatively, and expect to only accrue a 6.58% harvest rate (HR) on the URB/SRW stock prior to an in-season run-size update. Additional fishing opportunity is planned if the URB return is projected to meet or exceed preseason expectations.
  - The escapement goal at Spring Creek Hatchery is 7,000 adult fall Chinook (BPH stock).
  - The management goal for adult fall Chinook at McNary Dam is 60,000 fish.
  - The allowable non-treaty impact rates for wild summer steelhead (A-Index and B-Index) during fall fisheries is 2% each.
  - Based on the pre-season forecast, treaty Indian impacts are limited to 13% of the total B-Index steelhead.
  - The goal for upriver Coho passage at Bonneville Dam is 50% of the ocean abundance.
  - Fisheries are managed based on preseason forecasts until in-season run size updates become available.

## **2019 TREATY INDIAN FALL FISHERIES**

- Fall Management Period platform and hook and line fisheries began August 1. Early August catches are generally low. Low levels of fishing just downstream of Bonneville Dam is expected to occur.
- Commercial gillnet fisheries typically begin in mid to late August. Given uncertainties about run sizes, the tribes have chosen to begin gillnet fisheries in late August this year.
- The tribes also did a limited amount of ceremonial permit gillnet fishing during the week of August 19 to help meet needs for fish that were not met in the spring and summer management periods.

- Preliminary harvest estimates along with projections for this week and next are presented in the table below. In order to model steelhead impacts, tribal staff assumed that the steelhead run downgrade applied to the A-Index fish and kept the pre-season forecast for B-Index fish. This was done since TAC estimates that normally only a very small portion of the B-Index run has passed Bonneville by this date.

2019 Treaty Indian Fall Season Fisheries (Preliminary and Modeled catches)									
Week		Gillnet Fishery	Dates	Expected Effort (Nets)	Total Adult Chinook	URB Chinook	Total Steelhead	B Steelhead	Coho
31-34	Preliminary	Platform/H&L	August 1-24	na	358	114	605	0	11
34	Preliminary	Permit	August 19-23	na	503	279	46	0	0
35	Preliminary	8/26	8/28	371	5,282	1,635	193	33	101
36	Projected	9/2	9/5	501	12,200	3,300	320	70	120
37	Projected	9/9	9/12	550	17,160	4,870	360	110	130
		<b>Total</b>			35,503	10,198	1,524	213	362
		<b>Allowed at Forecast run size</b>				36,628		1,040	
		<b>Expected Harvest by Sept 14</b>				10,198		213	
		<b>Remaining after Sept 14</b>				26,430		827	
		<b>Expected Harvest Rate by Sept 14</b>				6.4%		2.7%	
		<b>Remaining Harvest Rate After Sept 14</b>				16.6%		10.3%	

- Catches for platform and hook and line fisheries in weeks with commercial gillnet openings are included in the gillnet estimate.
- The tribes have planned an additional commercial gillnet opening and have or will adopt regulations consistent with the following.

2019 Treaty Indian Fall Commercial Gillnet Fishery		
<b>Season:</b>	6 AM Monday September 9 to 6 PM Thursday September 12	(3.5 days)
<b>Area:</b>	Zone 6	
<b>Sanctuaries:</b>	Standard river mouth and dam closed areas applicable to gillnet gear, including the Spring Creek Hatchery sanctuary are in effect.	
<b>Gear:</b>	Set and Drift gillnets with an 8-inch minimum mesh restriction	
<b>Allowable Sales:</b>	Salmon (any species), steelhead, shad, yellow perch, bass, walleye, catfish, and carp may be sold or retained for subsistence. Fish landed during the open periods are allowed to be sold after the period concludes. Sturgeon may not be sold, but sturgeon from 38 to 54 inches fork length in the Bonneville Pool and sturgeon from 43 to 54 inches fork length in The Dalles and John Day pools may be kept for subsistence purposes.	

<b>Additional:</b> 24-hour quick reporting required for Washington buyers, pursuant to WAC 220-352-315 except that landings must be reported within 24-hours of completing the fish ticket.
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- The projected catches through the week ending September 14 will be within the URB harvest rate limit down to a run size of 44,339 and will be within the B-Index steelhead run size limit down to a run size of 1,638. This will leave options for adjusting fisheries in the event of a run size downgrade.
- Catch and effort will be monitored to ensure the tribal fisheries remains within management limits. Set net counts will be made by air for each week of commercial gillnet fishing. State and tribal staff work collaboratively to ensure biological sampling of fall season fisheries occurs and that data are shared regularly.
- Based on expected catches through September 14, the treaty fishery would be within its allowed limits even at lower than forecast run sizes.
- Platform and hook and line fisheries, fisheries downstream of Bonneville, and Yakama Nation tributary fisheries do not require Compact action at this time.

#### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

- The Treaty tribes request a Compact hearing be scheduled via teleconference for either late Wednesday September 11 or any time on Thursday September 12 to consider additional treaty commercial gillnet openings.

**OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**  
**JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 6b**  
**Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing**  
**September 5, 2019**

<b><i>Fisheries under consideration:</i></b>	Above Wauna recreational white sturgeon fishery
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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 pertaining to white sturgeon is the 2019 Sturgeon/Smelt Report (January 18, 2019). Links to the on-line Joint Staff Reports are:*  
<https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/management/columbia-river/reports> or  
<https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/jsmreports.asp>

**STOCK STATUS**

***White Sturgeon***

- White sturgeon stock status information was presented in Winter Fact Sheet #8 dated March 28, 2019.

**MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

***White Sturgeon***

- For the years when white sturgeon retention is allowed downstream of Bonneville Dam, current Oregon and Washington Commission guidance on white sturgeon management assumes;
  - Assign 80% of the white sturgeon available for harvest to recreational fisheries and 20% to commercial fisheries.
  - Oregon Commission guidance requires that a 10% conservation buffer be applied if the maximum harvest rate (16%) identified in the Oregon White Sturgeon Conservation Plan is utilized.

**2019 RECREATIONAL FISHERIES**

***Recreational White Sturgeon Fisheries***

- Due to the decline of legal-size fish and other indicators during 2008-2012, retention fisheries downstream of Bonneville Dam were closed during 2014-2016; however, based on the increasing trend for legal-size white sturgeon in the LCR during that timeframe, both Commissions approved limited retention fisheries starting in 2017, and again in 2018.
- Earlier this year, staff provided updates on the LCR white sturgeon status to both Commissions and also to the Columbia River Advisor groups. Both Commissions supported implementing sturgeon retention fisheries in 2019 similar to what occurred the previous two years. Input from the Advisor groups generally supported implementing 2019 fisheries in a similar fashion to what occurred in 2018. For the area upstream of Wauna powerlines, there was some support for delaying the fishery until late-September or early-October.

- To maintain a cautious approach, staff assumed the following when modeling 2019 sturgeon fisheries:
  - Continued use of the standardized legal slot of 44-50 inches fork length (FL) for all LCR fisheries to facilitate management and provide escapement of larger-size white sturgeon by excluding them from harvest.
  - Modeled a conservative 3.8% harvest rate on 44-50 inch fish (equivalent impact to broodstock escapement of a 4.6% harvest rate on the traditional 38-54 inch size slot).
  - Used the previous harvest allocation distribution for recreational fisheries of 48% Estuary, 20% Above Wauna, and 12% in the lower Willamette River.
- Based on the 2019 abundance forecast of 160,250 fish (38-54 inch FL), a total of 6,160 white sturgeon (44-60 inch FL) are available for harvest downstream of Bonneville Dam.

Estimated Abundance (38-54 inch FL)	160,250
Annual Harvest Guideline	6,160
Commercial (20%)	1,230
Recreational (80%)	4,930
Estuary	2,960
Above Wauna	1,230
Lower Willamette River	740

Below Wauna Powerlines

- The 2019 Estuary fishery consisted of 11 retention days during May 13 through June 5 resulting in 2,838 kept fish (96% of the 2,960 fish guideline) from 22,102 angler trips.

Above Wauna Powerlines

- Generally, catch rates in this river section are better during the spring and late fall months. The 2019 season consisted of two retention days on Saturdays in mid-September (15th and 22nd). Catches were similar to expectations with 1,049 fish kept (85% of the 1,230 fish guideline) from 11,031 angler trips
- Results of the 2017 and 2018 Above Wauna retention fishery provided useful data for designing the 2019 fishery but modeling this fishery remains challenging due to limited recent September-October fishery data and uncertainty in predicting effort. However, staff believes the following fishery proposal represents a reasonable approach for 2019.

<i>Recommendation - 2019 Sturgeon Recreational Fishery for Above Wauna</i>	
<b>Season:</b>	Saturday September 21 and Saturday September 28 <span style="float: right;">2 days</span>
<b>Area:</b>	Mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines upstream to Bonneville Dam, including the Cowlitz River
<b>Allowable Catch:</b>	Up to 1,230 white sturgeon Legal size: 44-inch minimum and 50-inch maximum fork length (Fork length is measured in a straight line from the tip of the nose to the fork in the caudal fin (tail) with the fish laying on its side on a flat surface, with the tape measure/ruler positioned flat <u>under</u> the fish)
<b>Additional Regulations:</b>	Daily bag limit: One fish Annual bag limit: Two fish Retention of green sturgeon is prohibited

- The proposed fishery is based on several modeling assumptions. If catches are higher than anticipated on the first retention day, there is adequate time to modify the remainder of the fishery. Alternatively, if catches are lower than expected, season extensions can be considered.
- The expected kept catch for the 2-day season is approximately 1,050 fish (85% of the guideline).
- Per permanent regulations, catch and release fishing is allowed all year, except angling for sturgeon is prohibited May 1 through August 31 from Bonneville Dam downstream to a line crossing the Columbia River at Navigation Marker 82 on the Oregon shore westerly to a boundary marker on the Washington shore upstream of Fir Point. In addition, anglers are reminded the use of barbless hooks is required when angling for sturgeon.

#### Lower Willamette River

- Oregon staff is not prepared to recommend a sturgeon retention season for the lower Willamette River at this time.
- Per permanent regulations, catch and release fishing is allowed all year, except angling for sturgeon is prohibited May 1 through August 31 from the Lake Oswego-Oak Grove Railroad Bridge upstream to Willamette Falls.

#### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

- No additional Compact/Joint State hearings are currently scheduled. Staff will continue to monitor the fisheries and stock status and recommend additional hearings as needed. The Treaty tribes will likely request a hearing next week to consider additional treaty commercial gillnet openings.