

COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION
JOINT STAFF REPORT - WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 1b
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
January 26, 2021

<i>Fisheries under consideration:</i>	Zone 6 treaty commercial fisheries
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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 2021 Sturgeon/Smelt Report (January 14, 2021) available at:

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/management/columbia-river/reports> and <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/jsmreports.asp>

The 2021 Winter/Spring/Summer Staff Report is scheduled to be distributed prior to the February 16 Compact hearing which will address Select Area commercial spring Chinook and treaty fisheries.

RIVER CONDITIONS

- Fact Sheet 1a contains information on current river conditions.

STOCK STATUS

Zone 6 Sturgeon

- Each year, a stock assessment is conducted in one of the Zone 6 reservoirs. Stock assessments are done cooperatively by the states and tribes and rotate between reservoirs each year. The most recent survey (2020) was conducted in The Dalles Pool which indicated a 54% increase in the abundance of legal-sized sturgeon (43–54 inch Fork Length), but a 21% decline in the overall 33-65 inch FL population.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Zone 6 Sturgeon

- The Sturgeon Management Task Force (SMTF), a joint state/tribal body, met on January 20, 2021 and recommended new harvest guidelines for 2021-2023 in The Dalles Pool (750 fish total guideline, 560 for treaty commercial and 190 for recreational retention) which the states and tribes have adopted based on the improved legal-size population estimate.
- The SMTF did not modify 2021 harvest guidelines for Bonneville (500 each for treaty and recreational) or John Day (210 for treaty and 105 for recreational) pools.
- There is no harvest guideline for the treaty subsistence catch of sturgeon, but these catches are accounted for and used in population assessments. Subsistence harvest typically occurs in association with fisheries targeting other species and is generally low. The 2020 subsistence harvest estimate is 295 fish for all three Zone 6 reservoirs combined.

2021 TREATY INDIAN WINTER FISHERIES

- A setline fishery occurs each January in all three Zone 6 pools under permanent regulations. This fishery generally has low effort and catch. This year's catches are slightly below average

in the Bonneville and John Day Pools, but above average in The Dalles Pool. But they are within past ranges. Current catch estimates for the season are shown in the table below. These include both ticketed landings and direct to public sales.

	January Setline	Winter Gillnet	Total	Guideline	Remaining	% of guideline
Bonneville	6	0	6	500	494	1%
The Dalles	113	0	113	560	447	20%
John Day	15	0	15	210	195	7%
Total	134	0	134			

- Catch rates generally start out slow and increase over time as water temperature and effort increase.
- Average past catch rates indicate the John Day Pool guideline may be reached in about 15 days and the fishery guideline in The Dalles Pool may be reached in about 23-39 days. However, at the highest recent catch rates, the John Day Pool guideline could be reached in about 8 days and The Dalles Guideline could be reached in as little as 7 days. As a precautionary approach, the initial plan is for a 6.5-day fishery. Actual catch rates are impacted by weather, river conditions, and effort. Expected catch rates will be adjusted based on actual fishery performance. If there are remaining available fish after the planned opening, then additional fishing time will be scheduled.
- In 2020, The Dalles pool saw very high catch rates. Catch rates in the John Day pool were affected by flooding in the Umatilla River.
- Steelhead caught upstream of The Dalles Dam from November 1-June 30 are counted as part of the A/B-Index summer steelhead return. There are no specific harvest limits for steelhead in winter season fisheries, but the steelhead catch is low averaging 59 fish annually in The Dalles and John Day pools combined since 2001 with no recorded catch during the winter gillnet fishery in the past eight years. The highest observed catch since 2001 was 306 in 2008. Because of generally low steelhead harvest in the winter gillnet fishery, no specific management actions regarding steelhead are expected. Chinook are not expected to be present during the winter gillnet fishery.
- Steelhead caught in the Bonneville Pool from November 1 through March 31 are counted as winter steelhead. There is no specific harvest limit for winter steelhead, but harvest is generally low. Winter steelhead harvest has averaged 107 fish per year since 2001 and was 61 fish in 2020. Because harvest is generally low, no specific management actions regarding steelhead are expected to be needed. No Chinook are expected to be harvested in the Bonneville Pool during the winter gillnet fishery.

The four Columbia River treaty tribes will adopt regulations consistent with the following:

<i>2021 Treaty Indian Winter Season Commercial Gillnet Fishery</i>	
Season:	6 AM Monday February 1 to 6 PM Saturday February 6 (5.5 days)
Area:	The Dalles and John Day pools only
Gear:	Gillnets with no minimum mesh size restriction
Sanctuaries:	Closed areas include standard closed standard dam and river mouth areas applicable to gillnet gear
Allowable Sales:	Salmon (any species), steelhead, shad, yellow perch, bass, walleye, catfish, and carp may be sold or retained for subsistence. Sturgeon from 43 to 54 inches fork length in The Dalles and John Day pools may be sold or kept for subsistence purposes. Fish landed during the open periods are allowed to be sold after the period concludes.
Additional:	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.

<i>2021 Treaty Indian Winter Platform and Hook and Line Fishery</i>	
Season:	6 AM Monday February 1 to 6 PM Friday March 19
Area:	All of Zone 6
Gear:	Hoop Nets, Dip Nets, Hook and Line
Sanctuaries:	Closed areas include standard closed standard dam and river mouth areas applicable to platform and hook and line gear
Allowable Sales:	Salmon (any species), steelhead, shad, yellow perch, bass, walleye, catfish, and carp may be sold or retained for subsistence. Sturgeon from 38 to 54 inches fork length in the Bonneville Pool and from 43 to 54 inches fork length in The Dalles and John Day pools may be sold or kept for subsistence purposes. Sturgeon within the legal size limit and caught in the platform and hook and line fishery may only be sold if caught during the open period and open pool of an open gillnet fishery. Fish landed during the open periods are allowed to be sold after the period concludes.
Additional:	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.

- The intent of the platform fishery regulation is to allow any sturgeon caught incidentally with platform or hook and line gear to be sold if they are caught in a pool with an open commercial gillnet fishery and to allow the sale of any steelhead that may be caught.
- Catch will be monitored to ensure the tribal fisheries remain within management limits. The tribes expect to set additional fishing time after this period or may extend this period if appropriate. The tribes will take action to close fisheries early if harvest limits are projected to be met early.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- The tribes may request a Compact Hearing on Tuesday February 9 if there is an opportunity for remaining fish on either The Dalles or John Day Pool guidelines.