

COLUMBIA RIVER INTERTRIBAL FISH COMMISSION
JOINT STAFF REPORT – SUMMER FACT SHEET NO. 3
Columbia River Compact
July 8, 2021

Fisheries Under Consideration: Summer Treaty commercial gillnet

Detailed information on stock status and management guidelines for Columbia River fisheries are presented in Joint Staff Reports, which are produced annually and available online. The most recent reports for salmon are the 2021 spring/summer report for Chinook, sockeye, steelhead, and other species (February 4, 2021). Links to the online reports are at:

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

RIVER CONDITIONS

Columbia River conditions as measured at Bonneville Dam are similar in temperature but with lower flows than the recent 5-year averages for early June. The current outflow is 171.5 kcfs, compared to the recent 5-year average of 193.0 kcfs. The recent 5-day average water temperature currently measures 69.8° F which is above the 5-year average of approximately 65.6° F¹. Current temperatures are approximately 70° F.

STOCK STATUS AND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- TAC met on July 6 and reviewed sockeye and summer management period Chinook counts and harvest to date. TAC downgraded the sockeye run expectation from a preseason forecast of 155,600 to 149,600 at the Columbia River mouth with an expectation of 149,300 at Bonneville. This is based on TAC’s assessment that the sockeye run is approximately 2 days late, compared to the 5-year average run timing. The adult Chinook counts at Bonneville for the summer management period have remained consistent with last week’s update of 59,600 fish at the Columbia River mouth. TAC did not change our projection for this run. TAC will meet again on July 12 and may provide further updates at that time.
- Updated salmon and pre-season steelhead forecasts applicable to the summer management period compared to 2020 are shown in tables 1 and 2 below. Projected total Chinook and sockeye returns are to the Columbia River mouth and steelhead forecasts are to Bonneville Dam.

Table 1. Updated Columbia River Summer Chinook and Sockeye Forecasts to Columbia River Mouth

<i>Columbia River Adult Salmon Returns: Actual and Forecasted Annual Returns *</i>				
		2020 Forecast	2020 Return	2021 updated Forecast
Summer Chinook	Upper Columbia	38,000	65,494	59,600
Sockeye	Total Sockeye	246,300	345,018	149,300

¹ Temperature data from: <http://pweb.crohms.org/tmt/documents/ops/temp/202106.lcol.html>

Table 2. The 2021 forecasted abundance of A and B-Index summer steelhead at Bonneville Dam

	2020 Forecast	2020 Actual Return	2020 Actual / 2020 Forecast	2021 Forecast
A Index	85,900	75,392	88%	89,200
<i>Total Hatchery</i>	52,600	47,260	90%	61,700
<i>Clip Hatchery</i>	49,900	42,542	85%	57,700
<i>Unclip Hatchery</i>	2,700	4,718	175%	4,000
Natural Origin	33,300	28,132	84%	27,500
B Index	9,600	32,199	335%	7,600
<i>Total Hatchery</i>	8,200	26,921	328%	6,600
<i>Clip Hatchery</i>	6,800	23,001	338%	5,600
<i>Unclip Hatchery</i>	1,300	3,920	302%	1,000
Natural Origin	1,400	5,278	377%	1,000
Total A/B Index	95,500	107,591	113%	96,800
<i>Total Hatchery</i>	60,800	74,181	122%	68,300
<i>Clip Hatchery</i>	56,800	65,543	115%	63,300
<i>Unclip Hatchery</i>	4,000	8,638	216%	5,000
Natural Origin	34,800	33,410	96%	28,500

Rounded numbers of each component may not sum to the rounded totals.

Steelhead

- Steelhead passing Bonneville Dam from April 1 through June 30 or that are caught in this period in the Bonneville Pool are considered upriver Skamania stock steelhead. Through June 30, there were a total of 1,917 Skamania steelhead counted at Bonneville including 1,153 unclipped fish (60% unclipped). These were the lowest steelhead counts for this period on record.
- Steelhead passing Bonneville Dam from July 1 through October 31 are considered part of this year's A and B-Index Steelhead run. Steelhead caught upstream of The Dalles Dam from January 1 through June 30 are considered part of the previous year's A and B-Index steelhead run.
- The steelhead counts at Bonneville Dam from July 1-July 7 are 1,490 including 898 unclipped fish (60% unclipped). These are the second-lowest counts to date in the last 10 years.

Upper Columbia Summer Chinook

- Upper Columbia Summer Chinook are counted at Bonneville Dam from June 16 through July 31. Chinook salmon passing Bonneville Dam or harvested during this period are managed as Upper Columbia summer Chinook and are not ESA listed. These fish are destined for mainstem and tributary areas from the Yakima River upstream to the Okanogan River as well as Chief Joseph Hatchery. Through July 7, a total of 40,439 adult summer chinook have passed Bonneville dam. The clip rate is 72%. The count to date is the 7th largest in the last ten years. The jack count to date is 6,720.

Sockeye

- Sockeye caught during any management period all count as part of the current year's sockeye run. All sockeye in fisheries and dam counts are treated as adult fish. Through July 7, a total of 128,207 sockeye have been counted at Bonneville Dam which is the second-lowest count in the last ten years.
- The sockeye count at Lower Granite Dam is 129 through July 7.

Summer Management Limits

- Any sockeye harvested in mainstem fisheries downstream from the mouth of the Snake River count against the Sockeye harvest rate limit. Based on the in-season forecast the harvest rate limit will be 7% for treaty fisheries and 1% for non-treaty fisheries. This equates to harvest limits of 10,472 and 1,496 respectively.
- Treaty and non-treaty summer chinook impacts are shared equally. Both PFMC non-treaty ocean fisheries and in-river fisheries count as part of the non-treaty share. Based on current in-season forecasts, both treaty and non-treaty fisheries expect to be allowed harvest of 16,197 fish each.
- There is no specific harvest rate limit for steelhead in summer season treaty fisheries, but steelhead harvest is low in the summer and is expected to remain within recent average rates.

SUMMER SEASON TREATY FISHERIES

Treaty Mainstem Summer Management Period Commercial Fisheries

- The treaty tribes allowed commercial sales of platform and hook and line fish beginning on June 8 and sales have run continuously through the summer management period and are expected to run into the fall.
- The treaty tribes began commercial gillnet fisheries on June 16 and are in the fourth opening currently.
- Fisheries have been modeled and projected catches are shown in Table 3 below along with preliminary catches to date. For projected fisheries, the model scales average set net effort with actual counts from this year along with average weekly harvest rates scaled to current year catch rates. The model is adjusted to account for actual fishery performance as the season progresses. The projected catches for weeks with commercial gillnet fisheries include the expected catch in the platform and hook and line fishery for those weeks.

Table 3. Projected 2021 Summer Season Treaty Harvest

2021 Treaty Indian Summer Season Fisheries									
Fishery					Adult Chinook	Harvest Rate	Sockeye	Harvest Rate	Steelhead
Spring season through 6/15					na		10	0.0%	na
Week	Gillnet Fisheries	Start	End	Effort (Set Nets)					
25	Preliminary	16-Jun	19-Jun	241	2,018	3.4%	180	0.1%	16
26	Preliminary	21-Jun	24-Jun	202	1,985	3.3%	925	0.6%	12
27	Preliminary	28-Jun	1-Jul	238	2,205	3.7%	2,612	1.7%	61
Subtotal					6,208	10.4%	3,727	2.5%	89
28	Projected	5-Jul	8-Jul	230	2,000	3.4%	1,200	0.8%	110
29	Projected	12-Jul	15-Jul	220	2,000	3.4%	1,200	0.8%	200
30	Projected	19-Jul	22-Jul	220	1,800	3.0%	400	0.3%	310
Platforms after Planned Gillnet Fishing					300	0.5%	300	0.2%	100
Total					12,308	20.7%	6,817	4.6%	809
Allowed at Pre-season Forecast					16,197	27.2%	10,472	7.0%	
Remaining After Planned Fisheries					3,889	6.5%	3,655	2.4%	

Note: projected catches for statistical weeks with gillnet fisheries include platform and hook and line catch for those weeks including any catch downstream of Bonneville Dam.

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

<i>2021 Treaty Indian Summer Season Commercial Gillnet Fishery</i>		
Season	6 AM Monday, July 12 to 6 PM Thursday, July 15	(3.5 days)
	6 AM Monday, July 19 to 6 PM Thursday, July 22	(3.5 days)
Area	Zone 6	
Sanctuaries:	Standard river mouth and dam closed areas applicable to gillnet gear, except the Spring Creek Hatchery sanctuary is not in effect during the summer management period.	
Gear:	Set and Drift Gill nets with a no minimum mesh size restriction	
Allowable Sales:	Salmon (any species), steelhead, shad, yellow perch, bass, walleye, catfish, and carp may be sold or retained for subsistence. 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 and may be 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 and landings must be reported within 24-hours of completing the fish ticket.	

- The projected total catch from proposed and ongoing fisheries are expected to be within allowed harvest limits for river mouth run sizes of as low as 49,400 summer chinook and 97,400 sockeye.
- Catch and effort will be monitored to ensure the fishery remains within management limits. Total catch is determined through a tribal creel program. Fish ticket data are used as a supplement to the creel program. Set net effort will be monitored by aerial surveys each week. Drift net effort is estimated through the creel monitoring program. Catches for the platform fishery are typically summed with and reported with gillnet catches for any week with a commercial gillnet opening. Any harvest downstream of Bonneville Dam is part of the total allowed catch for any species. Tributary harvest is managed under separate limits.
- The Compact previously took action on the Zone 6 platform and hook and line fishery, the fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam and the Yakama Nation tributary fisheries and does not need to take further action on these fisheries.
- Treaty commercial fishing provides important economic benefits to tribal members and their families as well as to communities along the river and on reservations.
- The tribes do urge recreational river users to be cautious around treaty set nets and other treaty fishing gear to avoid damaging the gear or risking injury.

Future Meetings

The tribes may request another Compact Hearing during the week of July 19 if a gillnet fishery during the week of July 26 is planned.