

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT - WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 4a
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
February 9, 2023

<i>Fisheries under consideration:</i> John Day Pool recreational white sturgeon
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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 relevant to these fisheries is the 2023 Sturgeon/Smelt Report (January 13, 2023) available at:

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

RIVER CONDITIONS

- As of February 8, the current Columbia River water temperature at Bonneville Dam of 38°F is similar to the five-year average for this time in February (40°F). The outflow is about 129.8 kcfs, which is lower than the recent 5-year average of 179.3 kcfs. Visibility is 7 feet which is similar to the five-year average of 6.4 feet.

STOCK STATUS

White Sturgeon – Columbia River Zone 6 (Bonneville Dam to McNary Dam)

- White sturgeon stock status for populations upstream of Bonneville Dam was presented in Winter Fact Sheet #1, dated November 9, 2022.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

White Sturgeon – Columbia River Zone 6

- Management guidelines for sturgeon fisheries upstream of Bonneville Dam were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #1 and updated in Winter Fact Sheet #3a.

2023 NON-TREATY FISHERIES

Zone 6 Recreational White Sturgeon Fisheries

- Under permanent regulations, the area from Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Dam opens January 1 each year for white sturgeon retention. Upon opening for retention, all three Zone 6 reservoirs are managed to the pool-specific guidelines.
- At the Joint State Hearing on November 9, 2022 the states modified the Bonneville and The Dalles pools' fisheries by adopting a limited days-per-week retention fishery structure. John Day Pool retention fisheries opened under permanent rules on January 1, 2023.
- At the Joint State Hearing on January 24, 2023, the states closed John Day Pool to sturgeon retention effective January 30, because catch projections indicated that the harvest guideline would likely be reached by this date.

- Current recreational sturgeon guidelines and harvest estimates for 2023 Zone 6 recreational fisheries are summarized below:

Table 2. Current sturgeon harvest estimates in Zone 6 reservoirs.

Pool	Angler Trips	Harvest	Recreational Guideline	Percent of Guideline	Fished Through
Bonneville	2,183	600	675	89%	1/11/2023
The Dalles	1,443	188	190	99%	1/25/2023
John Day	2,516	84	105	80%	1/29/2023

- In John Day Pool, 21 fish remain on the harvest guideline and the relatively low daily catch rates indicate additional open days for retention may be warranted. Staff recommend using a days-per-week approach for these additional open days to ensure harvest remains within sustainable guidelines.

<i>Recommendation - 2023 John Day Pool Recreational Sturgeon Fishery</i>		
Season:	Saturday, February 11, Wednesday, February 15, and Saturday, February 18.	3 days
Area:	Mainstem Columbia River from John Day Dam to McNary Dam, and all adjacent tributaries	
Allowable Catch:	Up to 21 white sturgeon Legal size: 43-inch minimum and 54-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) Daily bag limit: One fish Annual bag limit: Two fish	

- The projected total kept catch in the John Day Pool through February 18 is 96 fish (91% of the guideline).
- Permanent regulations allow for catch-and-release sturgeon angling all year, except angling for sturgeon is prohibited May 1 through August 31 within the sanctuary areas designated below each of the dam tailraces.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- A Compact Hearing is scheduled for 10 AM February 14, 2023 via teleconference to consider Select Area (winter-summer) and treaty commercial fisheries.
- A hybrid Joint State Hearing is scheduled for 10 AM February 22, 2023 to consider mainstem Columbia River recreational spring Chinook fisheries. The meeting will be held at the WDFW Ridgefield office (5525 S. 11th Street, Ridgefield, Washington 98642), and a teleconference call-in option will be available.