

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT - WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 6a
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
February 22, 2023

<i>Fisheries under consideration:</i>	Mainstem recreational salmon Select Area recreational 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 online. The most recent report is the 2023 Spring Chinook, Summer Chinook, Sockeye, Steelhead and Other Species Report (February 2, 2023) available at:

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

RIVER CONDITIONS

- Current Columbia River water temperature at Bonneville Dam (38°F) is the same as the five-year average for this time in February. The five-day average outflow is about 130 kcfs, which is lower than the recent 5-year average of 180 kcfs. The five-day average visibility is 6.4 feet which is higher than the five-year average of 5.2 feet.

STOCK STATUS

Upriver Spring Chinook

- The upriver spring Chinook run is defined as spring Chinook destined for areas upstream of Bonneville Dam plus Snake River summer Chinook. Chinook passing Bonneville Dam between January 1 and June 15 are managed as upriver spring Chinook. Snake River spring/summer Chinook and upper Columbia spring Chinook are components of this run and are federally listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Spring Chinook returning to other tributaries upstream of Bonneville Dam are part of this run but are not ESA-listed. Based on the recent ten-year average, Bonneville Dam passage is usually 50% complete by May 10. Over the past ten years, adult returns have averaged 150,485 fish (range 73,105 to 288,993). The 2023 forecast to the Columbia River mouth is 198,600 adults (see table on page 3).

Willamette Spring Chinook

- Willamette River spring Chinook exhibit broader migration timing than upriver spring Chinook. Spring Chinook destined for areas upstream of Willamette Falls and the Clackamas River are in the upper Willamette River evolutionary significant unit (ESU) which is listed under the ESA. Over the past ten years, adult returns have averaged 48,457 fish (range 27,292 to 84,532). The 2023 forecast to the Columbia River mouth is 71,000 adults (see table on page 3).

Lower Columbia Spring Chinook

- Spring Chinook returning to the tributaries of the lower Columbia River are destined for the Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, and Sandy rivers (CKLS) and the Select Areas. CKLS populations are in the Lower Columbia ESU which is listed under the ESA; hatchery spring Chinook produced for Select Area fisheries are not considered part of the ESU. Over the past ten years, the combined adult return of the lower river stocks has averaged 19,846 fish (range 6,803 to 34,323) to the

tributaries and 9,127 fish (range 2,479 to 18,896) to the Select Areas. The 2023 forecasts to the Columbia River mouth are listed in the table on page 3.

Winter Steelhead

- The geographic range of winter steelhead includes all tributaries of the Columbia River upstream to Fifteenmile Creek on the Oregon shore and the Klickitat River on the Washington shore. Populations returning to Washington-side tributaries from the Cowlitz River upstream to the Klickitat River and Oregon-side tributaries from the Willamette River upstream to Fifteenmile Creek are in the Lower Columbia DPS and populations from areas upstream of Willamette Falls are in the Upper Willamette DPS. Both of these DPSs are listed under the ESA. Over the past ten years, wild winter steelhead returns have averaged around 14,660 fish (range 9,440 to 22,379). The 2023 forecast to the Columbia River mouth is 15,700 fish (see table on page 3).

<i>Columbia River Adult Salmon & Steelhead Returns: Actual and Forecasted</i>				
		2022	2022	2023
		Forecast	Return	Forecast
Spring Chinook	Upriver Total *	122,900	185,209	198,600
	Upper Columbia	21,700	29,605	41,400
	<i>Upper Columbia natural-origin</i>	<i>2,800</i>	<i>5,264</i>	<i>5,800</i>
	Snake River Spring/Summer **	73,400	103,025	85,900
	<i>Snake River natural-origin**</i>	<i>13,200</i>	<i>23,331</i>	<i>13,200</i>
	Lower River Total	74,100	101,745	117,000
	Total Spring Chinook	197,000	286,954	315,600
	<u>Area-specific detail</u>			
	Willamette River	51,200	55,391	71,000
	Sandy River	5,600	10,289	7,800
	Select Areas***	8,800	18,896	22,100
	Cowlitz River	4,100	7,146	9,000
	Kalama River	2,000	3,148	2,400
	Lewis River	2,400	6,875	4,700
	Wind River***	4,200	6,530	4,400
	Drano Lake/Little White Salmon River***	3,800	11,491	8,000
	Hood River***	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Klickitat River***	1,800	2,088	1,400
	Deschutes River***	n/a	2,472	n/a
	John Day River***	n/a	1,529	n/a
	Umatilla River***	3,000	3,332	2,500
	Yakima River***	4,700	5,430	5,500
Summer Chinook	Upper Columbia	56,300	78,494	84,800
Sockeye	Total Sockeye	198,700	664,935	234,500
	Wenatchee	19,200	147,473	44,300
	Okanogan	175,700	513,317	187,400
	Yakima	3,500	157	100
	Deschutes	100	35	100
	Snake River	200	2,329	2,600
Winter Steelhead	Wild	13,400	15,111	15,700
Summer Steelhead	Total Upriver Steelhead	99,700	123,871	67,800
(to Bonneville Dam)	Upriver Skamania Index (total)	3,100	6,902	4,400
	<i>(wild)</i>	<i>1,600</i>	<i>2,979</i>	<i>2,100</i>
	A-Index (total)	81,000	76,691	55,400
	<i>(wild)</i>	<i>28,100</i>	<i>23,189</i>	<i>17,300</i>
	B-Index (total)	15,600	40,278	8,000
	<i>(wild)</i>	<i>1,900</i>	<i>6,737</i>	<i>1,300</i>

* Upriver totals are developed by TAC for use in management of *U.S. v. OR* fisheries. Wild components are included in the stock total. Area-specific estimates for upriver tributaries detailed here are provided by other agencies/entities and may not sum to TAC's upriver abundance estimates.

** 2022 return is based on current TAC run reconstruction methodology.

*** Return to tributary mouth. The 2023 Deschutes forecast is for a range of 3,365-5,102 adult spring Chinook. 2/8/2023

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

2018–2027 U.S. v Oregon Management Agreement

- The 2018–2027 *U.S. v Oregon* Management Agreement (MA) provides the treaty Indian and non-treaty fishery harvest frameworks and harvest rate schedules for salmon and steelhead stocks destined for areas upstream of Bonneville Dam.
- Non-treaty fisheries are managed to meet the catch balance provision in the MA for upriver spring Chinook which requires upriver mortalities not exceed the total allowable catch available for treaty Indian fisheries.
- The MA specifies that when the Snake River natural spring/summer Chinook return is less than 10% of the total upriver run size, the allowable mortality rate will be based on the Snake River natural spring/summer Chinook run size. The 2023 forecast of Snake River natural spring/summer Chinook represents 6.6% of the total upriver run size.
- To allow for uncertainty in preseason forecasting, the MA requires a 30% reduction from the forecasts (i.e., a run-size buffer) to start the season, which equates to 139,020 upriver spring Chinook and 9,240 Snake River wild spring Chinook. At these run sizes, the MA allows for a non-treaty ESA limit of 1.6% and an allowable harvest (kept plus release mortalities) of 10,287 fish prior to a run size update.

Endangered Species Act

- A Biological Opinion (BO) based upon the management actions outlined in the MA was issued by NMFS in 2018.
- ESA impacts to wild winter steelhead are limited to 2% for all mainstem Columbia River non-treaty fisheries. ESA impacts to wild summer steelhead in non-treaty fisheries are also limited to 2% for each management stock.
- Compliance with ESA-take authorization for fisheries impacting listed lower Columbia River Chinook (spring run) is determined by the ability to perpetuate these stocks individually over time. Hatchery return expectations are reviewed annually to ensure compliance with escapement goals.

Willamette Spring Chinook Management

- The Willamette River Fisheries Management Evaluation Plan (FMEP) limits annual freshwater fishery impacts on wild Willamette River spring Chinook to $\leq 15\%$.
- The Willamette River FMEP includes a sliding scale for escapement goals based on abundance of hatchery fish which determines the allocation of surplus hatchery spring Chinook to recreational and commercial fisheries downstream of Willamette Falls. The escapement goals are also intended to allow for full recreational fisheries in the upper Willamette River.
- Based on FMEP guidance, an expected return of 56,020 hatchery spring Chinook, and the FMEP escapement goal of 27,600 hatchery fish, the harvestable surplus totals 27,020 hatchery fish.

Lower Columbia Chinook Stocks (spring run)

- The 2023 forecasts for the CKLS rivers are sufficient to meet hatchery escapement goals.

2023 Spring Chinook Management

- The Oregon and Washington allocation policies for 2023 specific to commercial-recreational ESA-impact sharing and within sport sub-allocations are not concurrent. Under the WA policy, no more than 70% of the non-treaty allocation can be allocated to the recreational fisheries, and under Oregon rule, no more than 20% of the non-treaty allocation can be allocated to the commercial fisheries.
- Additionally, under the WA policy, no more than 70% of the recreational allocation can be allocated to the Lower Columbia River (LCR) recreational fishery, and under Oregon rule, no more than 25% of the recreational allocation can be allocated for fisheries upstream of Bonneville Dam (Bonneville to OR/WA state line, Snake River).
- Therefore, modeling only utilizes 90% of the non-treaty allocation and 95% of the recreational share of upriver spring Chinook ESA impacts. When combined with catch balance provisions in the MA, the following guidelines are available for 2023:

Prior to an in-season run update, allocation of upriver fish (including release mortalities) for non-treaty fisheries will be:

- 1,028 unallocated non-treaty
 - 6,487 fish for the recreational fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam
 - 927 fish for the recreational fishery from Bonneville Dam to the OR/WA state line
 - 669 fish for recreational fisheries in the Snake River (Washington waters)
 - 37 fish for Wanapum tribe (Upper Columbia)
 - 463 unallocated recreational
 - ≤675 fish for Select Area commercial fisheries
- The approach to 2023 fishery structure is consistent with the ESA management strategies in the Columbia River Basin – fisheries are managed to limit the impacts to ESA-listed fish while providing harvest opportunity for healthy and harvestable stocks.
 - Fisheries are also managed by time and area to reduce the potential for handling ESA-listed species or other stocks of concern.

2023 NON-TREATY FISHERIES

Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Recreational Fisheries

- The Columbia River downstream of the I-5 Bridge is currently open through March 31 for hatchery Chinook under permanent regulations.
- Permanent regulations typically allow steelhead retention through March 31 from the Buoy 10 line upstream to the OR/WA state line and closed thereafter, except when spring Chinook angling is open. However, due to the low abundance of upriver summer steelhead from the 2022-2023 return year, retention is currently closed through March 31, 2023 for waters upstream of The Dalles Dam.
- Spring-season fisheries were discussed with the Columbia River Recreational Advisory Group (CRRAG) on February 8, 2023.

Recommendations: 2023 Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery

Downstream of Bonneville Dam

Season:	Wednesday March 1 through Friday April 7	38 retention days
Area:	Buoy 10 line upstream to Beacon Rock (boat and bank) plus bank angling only from Beacon Rock upstream to the Bonneville Dam deadline. 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 hatchery salmonids (Chinook or steelhead) per day, but only one may be a Chinook. Shad may also be retained. All other permanent regulations apply.	

Bonneville Dam to Oregon/Washington Border

Season:	Saturday April 1 through Saturday May 6	36 retention days
Area:	Tower Island power lines (approximately six miles below The Dalles Dam) upstream to Oregon/Washington border, plus the Oregon and Washington banks between Bonneville Dam and the Tower Island power lines.	
Daily Bag Limit:	Two adult hatchery salmonids (Chinook or steelhead) per day, but only one may be a Chinook. All other permanent regulations apply.	

- Catch expectations are approximately 7,766 adult Chinook kept (6,411 upriver mortalities) for the fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam (99% of the pre-update guideline for this fishery) and 845 adult Chinook kept (866 mortalities, all upriver stock) for the fishery upstream of Bonneville Dam (93% of the pre-update guideline for this fishery).
- The CRRAG supported the proposed season for the LCR since few alternatives are available.
- The season recommendation for the fishery upstream of Bonneville Dam is based on the available pre-update allocation, estimated catch rates, and support from the CRRAG.
- Fishery recommendations were developed to remain within and comply with:
 - Impact limits for species listed under the ESA.
 - ✓ The most constraining stock for both fisheries is upriver spring Chinook. Staff estimates the recommended fisheries will accrue 0.76% impacts to upriver spring Chinook for the LCR and 0.10% for fisheries upstream of Bonneville.
 - ✓ Fishery-specific ESA impact rate expectations for other species and stocks are expected to remain within the estimates provided in the 2023 Spring/Summer Joint Staff Report in the Winter, Spring, and Summer Season Expectations section.
 - Run-size buffer and catch balance provisions outlined in the MA.

- Policy guidance and management objectives provided by the Commissions.
- Hand cast bank only regulations will be in effect for the Washington shore from both Beacon Rock to Bonneville Dam and from Bonneville Dam to Tower Island power lines.
- The use of barbless hooks is required when angling for salmon or steelhead in mainstem Columbia River waters from the mouth upstream to the OR/WA state line.
- Although a key management goal is to minimize the need for in-season emergency action, due to the dynamic nature of fisheries and fish runs, in-season action may be necessary to remain within ESA limits and/or catch balancing requirements.
- Staff will monitor the fisheries in-season. If they are tracking within preseason expectations, the intent would be to allow the fisheries to run through the proposed end dates. After closure of each fishery, staff will review catches and determine if additional fishing opportunity is warranted.

Tributary Spring Chinook Fisheries Downstream of Bonneville Dam

- No changes to permanent regulations are anticipated for spring Chinook recreational fisheries in the Sandy, Clackamas, and Willamette rivers in Oregon or the Cowlitz, Kalama, and Lewis rivers in Washington.

Select Area Recreational Fisheries

- Permanent angling regulations for Oregon waters within the Select Areas of Youngs Bay and Blind Slough/Knappa Slough are listed in the 2023 Oregon Recreational Fishing Regulations booklet. These waters are open year-round to Chinook salmon (hatchery only during January 1 – July 31), hatchery steelhead, and hatchery Coho except for some seasonal tributary closures.
- Permanent Washington recreational fishing rules list waters of Deep River from the mouth to the town bridge as open to Chinook salmon (hatchery only during January 1 – July 31), hatchery steelhead, and hatchery Coho the entire year.
- ESA impacts to non-local Chinook and steelhead (including wild fish) are expected to be minimal since the majority of fishing effort is concentrated in upper tidewater areas or in the tributaries.
- In order to ease enforcement of co-occurring recreational fisheries in Select Areas and the mainstem Columbia River, staff recommends that daily bag limit in Select Area recreational fisheries be modified to match those of the mainstem when the fisheries are open concurrently.

<i>Recommendation: 2023 Select Area Recreational Fisheries</i>
<p>Effective March 1 – June 15:</p> <p>On days when the mainstem Columbia River recreational fishery below Bonneville Dam is open to retention of Chinook, the salmonid daily bag limit in Oregon and Washington Select Areas will be the same as mainstem Columbia River bag limits.</p> <p>On days when the mainstem Columbia River recreational fishery below Bonneville Dam is <u>closed</u> to Chinook retention, the permanent salmonid bag limit regulations for Select Areas apply.</p>

FUTURE MEETINGS

- No Compact or Joint State hearings are scheduled at this time. Joint staff will monitor fisheries and recommend additional hearings as needed.