

**COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION
JOINT STAFF REPORT - WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 4
Columbia River Compact
February 7, 2024**

<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 online. The most recent report relevant to this fishery is the 2024 Sturgeon/Smelt Report (January 12, 2024) available at:

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/management/columbia-river/compact/other-information#2024> and <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/jsmreports.asp>

RIVER CONDITIONS

- The recent 5-day average river temperatures at The Dalles Dam have averaged 38.6 degrees which is about one degree less than the 5-year averages for this time period. Water temperatures have been increasing over the last week.
- The recent 5-day average outflow at The Dalles Dam is approximately 126 kcfs compared to an average outflow of 155.

STOCK STATUS

Zone 6 Sturgeon

- The states and tribes work cooperatively to complete white sturgeon stock assessments, which rotate between the three Zone 6 reservoirs on an annual basis. The 2023 survey was conducted in The Dalles Pool and indicated an increase in the abundance of legal sized sturgeon (43–54 inch fork length), The population of over-legal fish (greater than 54 inches) also increased. However, there was a decline in smaller sized fish. Lack of successful spawning rather than fisheries is presumed to be the primary cause of the decline in numbers of smaller younger fish.

Steelhead and Salmon

- No chinook or steelhead are handled in sturgeon setline fisheries and are therefore not discussed in this Fact Sheet

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Zone 6 Sturgeon

- The Sturgeon Management Task Force which is a joint state tribal body met in January and reviewed the stock assessment for The Dalles Pool. They made the following recommendation regarding updated harvest guidelines for The Dalles Pool sturgeon fisheries.

New Harvest Guidelines for The Dalles Pool		
	75%	25%
Overall Guideline	Treaty Commercial	Recreational Retention
1,100	825	275

- The other commercial harvest guidelines are shown in the table below.
- 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.

2024 TREATY INDIAN WINTER FISHERIES

- A setline fishery occurs each January in all three Zone 6 pools under permanent regulations through January 31. This fishery generally has low effort and catch. The January setline catches were above average in each of the three Zone 6 Pools. Preliminary catch estimates through January 31 are shown in the table below. These include both ticketed landings and direct to public sales. No salmonids are handled in setline fisheries.

Table 1. Preliminary Sturgeon Harvest to Date

Pool	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Total Harvested	Guideline	Remaining	Percent of Guideline Harvested
Bon	28	115	0	77	83	303	675	372	44.9%
TD	138	38	0	82	53	311	825	514	37.7%
JD	44	0	0	27	0	71	210	139	33.8%
Total	210	153	0	186	136	685			

- Catch rates generally start out slow and increase over time as water temperature and effort increase.
- In 2023, we saw relatively high catch rates in the winter fisheries.
- Estimates of steelhead harvest in platform fisheries are not available yet and will be reported when available. Normally, catches and effort are very low in the winter.
- In order to plan fisheries, the tribes have used conservative estimates of likely average daily catches based on actual catches in the past two years. For the Bonneville Pool fishery, the tribes are assuming last year's highest catch rates of 98 fish per day. These were the highest average daily catch rates for any recent setline opening. For The Dalles Pool, the tribes have assumed the highest daily setline catches from either this year or last year which was 28 fish per day. The highest recent setline catches for the John Day pool have been 8 fish per day.

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

2024 Treaty Indian Winter Season Commercial Setline Fishery (Bonneville Pool)	
Season:	6 AM Saturday February 10 to 6 PM Monday February 12 (2.5 days)
Area:	The Bonneville Pool only
Gear:	Setline gear only
Sanctuaries:	Closed areas include standard closed areas applicable to setline gear
Allowable Sales:	Sturgeon from 38 to 54 inches fork length in Bonneville Pool 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. Oregon buyers are required to electronically submit fish tickets.

2024 Treaty Indian Winter Season Commercial Setline Fishery (The Dalles Pool and John Day Pools)	
Season:	6 AM Tuesday February 13 to 6 PM Tuesday February 20 (6.5 days)
Area:	The Dalles Pool and John Day Pool only
Gear:	Setline gear only
Sanctuaries:	Closed areas include standard closed areas applicable to setline gear
Allowable Sales:	Sturgeon from 43 to 54 inches fork length in The Dalles Pool and John Day Pool 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. Oregon buyers are required to electronically submit fish tickets.

- Sales are restricted to sturgeon caught with setline gear. There are no regulatory changes for the ongoing subsistence platform and hook and line fishery.
- Expected catches from the planned fisheries are shown in the table below.

Pool	Total Harvested to Date	Expected Catch in Planned Fisheries	Expected Total Catch After Planned Fisheries	Guideline	Remaining Available After Planned Fisheries
Bon	303	245	548	675	127
TD	311	182	493	825	332
JD	71	52	123	210	87
Total	685	479	1,164		

- With the expected catches, there are sufficient remaining available fish to act as a buffer in case catch rates are higher than planned.
- 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 an additional hearing on February 27.