

COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION
JOINT STAFF REPORT – SUMMER FACT SHEET NO. 3
Columbia River Compact Hearing
June 27, 2024

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 report is the 2024 Spring Chinook, Summer Chinook, Sockeye, Steelhead and Other Species Report (February 1, 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

- As of June 26, the five-day average outflow at Bonneville Dam is 174 kcfs compared to the five-year average of 248 kcfs for the same time period.
- The current five-day average water temperature at the Bonneville Dam forebay is 63.4°F which is the same as the five-year average.

STOCK STATUS AND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Upper Columbia Summer Chinook, Sockeye, and Steelhead

- Pre-season salmon and steelhead forecasts applicable to the summer management period were presented in Summer Fact Sheet #1.
- The *U.S. v. Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met on Monday June 24 to review and discuss information relative to the Sockeye and upper Columbia summer Chinook returns. TAC did not provide updated in-season abundance expectations but did note that the Sockeye run is tracking higher than the preseason forecast and the summer Chinook run is tracking similar to the preseason forecast.
- TAC will meet again later today and on Monday July 1 and anticipates updating the expected Sockeye run size today and the upper Columbia summer Chinook run size on Monday.

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 time 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 Okanagan River as well as Chief Joseph Hatchery. Based on 10-year average run timing the run at Bonneville would be expected to be 50% complete on June 29.
- Through June 26, a total of 18,610 adult and 2,990 jack summer Chinook have passed Bonneville Dam.

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 June 26, a total of 376,531 sockeye have been counted at Bonneville Dam which is the highest count to date since Bonneville Dam Construction. Based on 10-year average run timing the run would be expected to be 48% complete on June 26 and 53% complete on June 27.
- While it is possible the sockeye run may be somewhat early timed, it is apparent it will be larger than forecast. Just over 22,000 sockeye need to pass Bonneville dam to reach the pre-season forecast. Even though TAC has not updated the run yet, tribal staff think it is appropriate to plan the next tribal gillnet openings assuming a run size of 450,000. Tribal staff think this is still a very conservative estimate as there are run timing predictors that suggest the run may be over 500,000. Tribal staff think that using a more realistic sockeye run size in fishery modeling will produce more reasonable catch projections.

Steelhead

- Steelhead passing Bonneville Dam from April 1 through June 30 or that are caught in this time period in the Bonneville Pool are considered upriver Skamania stock steelhead. Through June 26, there have been a total of 7,354 upriver Skamania steelhead counted at Bonneville Dam including 3,110 unclipped fish. The counts are the 2nd largest counts to date in the last 10 years. The counts have exceeded the pre-season forecasts of 4,050 total fish and 1,900 unclipped fish.
- 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.

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 pre-season forecasts the harvest rate limit will be 7% for treaty fisheries and 1% for non-treaty fisheries. Based on the pre-season forecast this equates to harvest limits of 28,119 and 4,017 respectively. Actual harvest limits are determined based on in-season run sizes and will be higher if the run size is larger.
- 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 pre-season forecasts, both treaty and non-treaty fisheries expect to be allowed harvest of 13,411 fish each. Actual harvest limits are based on in-season abundance estimates.
- There is no specific harvest rate limit for steelhead in summer season treaty fisheries, but harvest of steelhead 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 17 and expect sales to run continuously through the summer management period and into the fall.
- The treaty tribes began commercial gillnet fisheries on June 17. As a precautionary step, the tribes authorized just two initial gillnet openings to start the season, but are planning to set an additional two openings.
- Preliminary catches to date with projected catches in planned fisheries are shown in Table 1 below. The model assumes the set net effort next week will be about the same as the 241 nets counted this week, but expect net counts gradually decline as has been observed in past years. The model has been adjusted to account for catch rates in the first week. The projected catches for weeks with commercial gillnet fisheries include the expected catch in the platform and hook and line fishery for those weeks. Historically, the summer model tends to over predict harvest early in the season which is viewed as a precautionary approach. Catches in the first week were less than modeled. The model continues to use maximum recent harvest rates (calculated as catch per net per day divided by the abundance). The tribes are planning fisheries using conservative estimates to minimize risk catches being significantly higher than expected. No harvest has been observed downstream of Bonneville Dam.

Table 1. Preliminary and Projected 2024 Summer Season Treaty Harvest

2024 Treaty Indian Summer Season Fisheries									
Fishery					Adult Chinook	Harvest Rate	Sockeye	Harvest Rate	Steelhead
Spring season through 6/15					na		53	0.1%	na
Week	Gillnet Fisheries	Start	End	Effort (Set Nets)					
25	Preliminary	17-Jun	19-Jun	196	1,968	3.7%	4,129	0.9%	243
26	Projected	24-Jun	27-Jun	241	4,130	7.8%	11,400	2.5%	350
27	Projected	1-Jul	4-Jul	240	2,100	4.0%	10,800	2.4%	330
28	Projected	8-Jul	10-Jul	200	2,200	4.2%	3,000	0.7%	260
29	Projected	Platforms only			190	0.4%	570	0.1%	140
30	Projected	Platforms only			130	0.2%	240	0.1%	180
31	Projected	Platforms only			70	0.1%	110	0.0%	170
Total Actual and Projected					10,788	20.5%	30,239	6.7%	1,673
Allowed at Preseason chinook forecast and Min expected sockeye run size (450K)					13,411	25.5%	31,500	7.0%	
Remaining After Planned Fisheries					2,623	5.0%	1,261	0.3%	

- The model projects platform and hook and line fisheries for weeks without current planned gillnet fisheries. With the modeled gillnet fisheries, the remaining Chinook and sockeye after these planned gillnet openings would be sufficient to keep the platform fishery open through the remainder of the summer management period leaving a small buffer to address uncertainties in catch projections.
- Depending on future run size updates the tribes may consider rescinding the current mesh size restriction if sufficient impacts are available.
- The four Columbia River treaty tribes will also adopt gillnet regulations consistent with the following:

<i>Recommendation: 2023 Summer Season Treaty Commercial Gillnet Fishery</i>		
Season	6:00 AM Monday July 1 to 6:00 PM Thursday, July 4 6:00 AM Monday July 8 to 6:00 PM Wednesday, July 10	(3.5 days) (2.5 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 7” minimum mesh size	
Allowable Sales:	Salmon (any species), steelhead, shad, yellow perch, bass, walleye, catfish and carp may be sold or retained for subsistence. Fish landed during the open periods are allowed to be sold after the period concludes. 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.	
Additional:	24-hour quick reporting is required for Washington wholesale dealers for all areas as provided in WAC 220-352-315, except that all landings from treaty fisheries described above must be reported within 24-hours of completing the fish ticket.	

- 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.
- Treaty commercial fishing provides important economic benefits to tribal members and their families as well as to communities along the river and on reservations.

Future Meetings

- The tribes may request another Compact Hearing on during the week of July 8 to consider additional commercial gillnet openings that may begin on July 15 assuming sufficient impacts remain.