
Columbia River Recreational Advisor Group Meeting

February 10, 2025

4:00-6:00p

Hybrid (Clackamas ODFW,
virtual)

Prepared by: Columbia River Joint State Staff

Columbia River Recreational Advisor Group Meeting

Clackamas ODFW office: 17330 SE Evelyn Street, Clackamas, OR 97015

Online: [Join the meeting now](#) ID: 216588359782 Passcode: 8u3Fg6g6

Or call in (audio only): 1-503-446-4951 Conference ID: 481935095#

4:00p – 6:00p February 10, 2025

Agenda	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ground rules ○ Introduction ○ Agenda review 	(20 minutes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring Fishery Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Summary of management guidelines ○ Lower Columbia River modeling ○ Bonneville-OR/WA state line modeling ○ Snake River season 	(80 minutes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional discussions (as time permits) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sampling staff encounters 	(20 minutes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WA Fish and Wildlife Commission (Columbia River blue sheet topics and C-3630 annual report), Olympia, WA, Feb 13-15 ○ Joint State Hearing (recreational spring Chinook and Zone 6 recreational white sturgeon), Clackamas ODFW, Feb 19, 10a ○ WDFW Forecast meeting, Olympia, WA, February 28, 9a ○ Pacific Fishery Management Council, March 5-11, Vancouver, WA ○ CRRAG North of Falcon meeting, March 17, 4p ○ WDFW Upper Columbia/Snake North of Falcon (Northeast of McNary) meeting, March 18, Wenatchee, 6p ○ Columbia River North of Falcon public meeting, Ridgefield WDFW, April 3, 10a ○ Pacific Fishery Management Council, San Jose, CA, April 9-15 ○ CRRAG white sturgeon fisheries discussion, TBD ○ Zone 6 pool white sturgeon stock status and fisheries public meeting, TBD 	

Ground rules

- Focus on the task at hand – *stick to the agenda*
- Be a conduit and collaborator – *share information*
- One person at a time to speak – speak your name to be added to the speaking list
 - Non-advisers will observe meeting and stay on mute – *comments may be permitted at the end of the meeting if time permits*
- Be respectful of others
 - Mute phone or line; take side conversations into another room
 - Be tough on issues and questions, not on people or organizations
 - No personal attacks, insults or threats
 - Listen to others
 - Speak and act professional – *no offensive, disrespectful, or derogatory language, including profanity*
 - Allow for a balance of speaking time – *limit length and number of times to speak on each topic*
- For virtual meetings
 - *6 to mute/unmute
 - Chat will not be monitored or used except for technical assistance

Columbia River Recreational Advisory Group (2024–2026)

<u>Name</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>
Harry Barber	Washougal	WA
Jim Bridwell	Cathlamet	WA
Kyle Hawes	Vancouver	WA
Jeremy Hull	Portland	OR
Les Kipper	The Dalles	OR
Don McBride	Richland	WA
Bill Monroe Jr.	Oregon City	OR
Robert Moxley	Dundee	OR
Pat O’Grady	Astoria	OR
Larry Phillips	Olympia	WA
Bob Rees	Clackamas	OR
David Sass	Warren	OR
Alexander Shar	Long Beach	WA
Greg Short	Hood River	OR
Jesse Vassar	Tualatin	OR
Steve Watrous	Battle Ground	WA
Chris (Clinton) Winn	Kalama	WA
Randy Woolsey	Tigard	OR

Spring Fishery Planning

<i>Columbia River Adult Salmon Returns: Actual and Forecasted</i>				
		2024	2024	2025
		Forecast	Return	Forecast
Spring Chinook	Upriver Total *	121,000	116,332	122,500
	Upper Columbia	19,400	18,224	21,500
	<i>Upper Columbia natural-origin</i>	2,700	1,609	2,200
	Snake River Spring/Summer **	63,500	70,743	56,200
	<i>Snake River natural-origin**</i>	9,200	10,514	9,800
	Lower River Total	84,600	73,227	95,000
	Total Spring Chinook	205,600	189,559	217,500
	<u>Area-specific detail</u>			
	Willamette River	48,800	37,737	51,200
	<i>Willamette River hatchery-origin</i>	39,300	28,099	36,600
	Sandy River	7,700	5,358	7,300
	Select Areas***	18,100	15,953	16,600
	Cowlitz River	4,700	8,983	13,700
	Kalama River	1,900	2,474	3,000
	Lewis River	3,400	2,722	3,200
	Wind River***	4,200	4,604	4,900
	Drano Lake/Little White Salmon River***	5,300	7,863	7,600
	Hood River***	n/a	881	n/a
	Klickitat River***	1,300	491	1,200
	Deschutes River***	n/a	580	n/a
	John Day River***	n/a	2,430	n/a
	Umatilla River***	n/a	1,319	2,600
	Yakima River***	2,400	2,501	2,600
Summer Chinook	Upper Columbia	52,600	42,511	38,000
Sockeye	Total Sockeye	401,700	761,682	350,200
	Wenatchee	97,000	183,445	94,000
	Okanogan	288,700	572,552	248,000
	Yakima	12,100	4,485	5,000
	Deschutes	100	21	100
	Snake River	3,800	1,179	3,100
Winter Steelhead	Wild	14,400	25,361	17,400

* Upriver totals are developed by the *U.S. v. OR* 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.

** 2024 return is based on current TAC run reconstruction methodology.

*** Return to tributary mouth.

1/28/2025

Spring Chinook Management Guidelines

Upriver Chinook Stocks

- 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.
- Fisheries are also managed to meet the catch balance provision in the MA for upriver spring Chinook, which requires that mortalities in non-treaty fisheries not exceed the total allowable catch available for treaty Indian fisheries. The following table is derived from the harvest schedule within the MA and reflects the allowable catch and associated ESA impacts for treaty Indian and non-treaty fisheries.

Spring Management Period Harvest Rate Schedule						
Total Upriver Run Size	Snake River Natural Run Size	Treaty Indian Harvest Rate	Treaty Indian Catch Guideline	Non-Treaty Harvest Rate	Non-Treaty Mortality Guideline	Total Harvest Rate
44,000	4,400	6.0%	2,640	1.0%	2,640	7.0%
55,000	5,500	7.0%	3,850	1.5%	3,850	8.5%
82,000	8,200	7.4%	6,068	1.6%	6,068	9.0%
109,000	10,900	8.3%	9,047	1.7%	9,047	10.0%
141,000	14,100	9.1%	12,831	1.9%	12,831	11.0%
217,000	21,700	10.0%	21,700	2.0%	21,700	12.0%
271,000	27,100	10.8%	29,268	2.2%	29,268	13.0%
326,000	32,600	11.7%	38,142	2.3%	38,142	14.0%
380,000	38,000	12.5%	47,500	2.5%	47,500	15.0%
434,000	43,400	13.4%	58,156	2.6%	58,156	16.0%
488,000	48,800	14.3%	69,784	2.7%	69,784	17.0%

- 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 harvest rates will be based on the Snake River natural spring/summer Chinook run size. The 2025 forecast of Snake River natural spring/summer Chinook represents 8% of the total upriver run size.
- The MA also specifies that fisheries occurring prior to an in-season run size update be managed for a run size that is at least 30% less than the preseason forecasted upriver spring Chinook run size.

Lower Columbia Chinook Stocks (spring run)

- The 2025 forecasts for the Cowlitz, Lewis, Kalama, and Sandy rivers are sufficient to meet escapement goals (ESA compliance metric) and allow for Columbia River mainstem fishing opportunities.

Willamette Spring Chinook

- The Willamette River Fisheries Management Evaluation Plan (FMEP) limits 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. The forecasted hatchery fish surplus (all age classes) available for recreational fisheries is about 14,900 fish and is not expected to be a constraint.

Preseason management guidelines

- Based on the MA, the preseason forecast of 122,500 upriver spring Chinook, and the preseason forecast for 9,800 Snake River natural-origin spring Chinook, ESA impacts for 2025 fisheries are limited to 9.0%, with 1.6% for non-treaty fisheries and 7.4% for treaty Indian fisheries.
- To allow for uncertainty in preseason forecasting, the MA requires a 30% reduction from the preseason forecast (i.e., a run-size buffer) to plan and manage the initial phase of the spring Chinook fisheries, which equates to 85,750 upriver spring Chinook. At this abundance, the MA allows for a non-treaty ESA limit of 1.6% and an allowable harvest (kept plus release mortalities) of 6,346 fish based on the allowed treaty harvest rate of 7.4%.

2025 Spring Chinook Preseason Management Guidelines			
	2024 postseason	2025 preseason	Difference
Upriver CHS abundance (adults)	116,332	122,500	+6,168
ESA impact rate (non-treaty)	1.60%	1.60%	0.00
Willamette CHS abundance (adults)	37,737	51,200	+13,463

- The allocation policies for 2025 specific to commercial-recreational ESA-impact sharing and within-recreational sub-allocations are not concurrent. All information in this document assumes the following: no more than 70% to recreational fisheries (WA Policy) and no more than 20% to commercial fisheries (OR Policy); within the recreational sub-allocation no more than 70% to the lower Columbia River fishery (WA Policy) and no more than 25% for fisheries upstream of Bonneville Dam (OR Policy; Bonneville Dam to OR/WA state line, Snake River). Due to this nonconcurrency, 10% of the non-treaty allocation will not be available for use by either the recreational or commercial fisheries, and within the recreational fishery allocation, 5% will not be available for use by any of the recreational fisheries. If additional guidance is provided, staff will modify the results described below and adjust future staff recommendations at upcoming Compact/Joint State Hearings.

Commission Guidance (ESA impact allocation)	2024	2025	Difference
Sport allocation	70%	70%	0
Commercial allocation	20%	20%	0
U.S. v OR Catch Balance	preseason	preseason	
30% Buffered Run	84,700	85,750	+1,050
ESA Impact rate	1.60%	1.60%	0.00
Unallocated Impact Rate	0.16%	0.16%	
Catch Balance Pre-update	6,268	6,346	+78
Unallocated Non-treaty	627	635	
Commercial Mainstem	TBD	TBD	
Commercial Select Area	≤387	≤392	+5
Sport Fisheries (LCR, Z6, Snake)	5,237	5,300	+63
Lower Columbia (below Bonneville)	3,906	4,030	+124
Bonneville to OR/WA border	558	576	+18
Snake River (WA waters)	493	407	-86
Sport unallocated	279	288	

- Weekly mainstem test fishing is expected to occur on Mondays beginning March 10 through the month of May.
 - Provides stock composition, catch rate, and bycatch information and continues the long-term data set; test fishing is helpful in setting potential future commercial fisheries.
 - Hatchery fish are sold at fair market value to off-set test fishing operational costs.
 - All information can be found at: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/commercial/columbia-river-test>.
- Typically, while OR/WA staff monitor fishery performance closely in-season, catch estimates are evaluated after the initial open period concludes and compared to the allowable ESA impact rates and catch balance for each of the non-treaty fisheries. If staff determine there are sufficient ESA impacts and catch balance remaining for use by a particular fishery, staff model scenarios to determine what opportunities might be considered. Following this, a Compact/Joint State Hearing is scheduled to consider these fisheries.
- The pre-season buffer is removed once the *U.S. v. Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) provides an initial run size update which typically occurs in mid-May. TAC typically meets on Mondays from early May through the rest of the spring season and reviews passage counts, catch information, test fishing data, and other pertinent information in order to assess the run and project the final abundance expectation.

Recreational Lower Columbia River Fishery Modeling – preliminary considerations

- The initial phase of the 2024 season was January 1 – February 29 from Buoy 10 to the I-5 Bridge and March 1 – April 11 from Buoy 10 to Beacon Rock plus bank only between Beacon Rock and Bonneville Dam. The area from Tongue/Rocky Point to Beacon Rock plus the banks between Beacon Rock and Bonneville Dam reopened May 17-19, 24-27 and June 1-7. Beginning June 8, and continuing through June 15, the area from Tongue/Rocky Point to Bonneville Dam was open to angling from both shore and boat. The daily bag limit was one adult Chinook for the duration with the exception of a two adult Chinook daily bag limit for the January 1 – February 29 timeframe (permanent regulations).
- Regulations during the early portion of the spring management period allow for steelhead retention in the mainstem downstream of Bonneville Dam through March 31 and closed thereafter except when spring Chinook is open. Steelhead caught downstream of Bonneville Dam are managed as winter steelhead through April.
- For 2025, a total of 4,030 total upriver spring Chinook mortalities are available prior to an in-season run update under existing OR/WA guidance (3,906 in 2024).
- Since the projected escapements for lower Columbia Chinook stocks are expected to meet minimum hatchery broodstock needs (i.e., ESA-compliance metric for these stocks), modeling assumes the recreational fishery will be open throughout the LCR fishing area as normal. Staff used catch and effort data from the 2018 and 2022 fisheries to model the 2025 fishery due to similarities in environmental conditions and abundances to the current year.
- Assuming a seven-day per week fishery from Buoy 10 upstream to Bonneville Dam (bank only upstream of Beacon Rock), modeling results indicate the season would need to close after April 6 to remain within the pre-update guideline. Staff estimates this season structure could result in 6,196 fish handled (5,203 kept), including 3,961 upriver CHS mortalities (98% of pre-update guideline) from about 57,000 angler trips (Run #2 below).

- Actual fishery performance will be monitored in-season and recommended adjustments to the season will be made as necessary.

2025 Model Output for Spring Chinook Recreational Fisheries below Bonneville (Buoy 10 to Beacon Rock + Bank to Bonneville)										
Run #	Model Scenario	Last Retention Day	March Days	April Days	Total Days March +April	Angler Trips	Upriver (UR)		Kept Catch	Comments
1	Removing the first weekend of April	4-Apr	31	4	35	48,517	3,065	965	4,112	More conservative pre-update
2*	Including the entire weekend (Saturday + Sunday)	6-Apr	31	6	37	56,736	3,961	69	5,203	within limit by 69 UR
Upriver Fish Available Pre-Update to LCR:							4,030			
Notes/Comments										
1) ModelRun #1 and #2 use the general approach used for the past eight years (2011 - 2024).										
2) ModelRun #1 is more conservative and potentially leaves more fishing opportunity post update.										
3) ModelRun #2 is our proposed season plan and utilizes the full pre-update guideline.										

Recreational Bonneville-OR/WA State Line Fishery Modeling – preliminary considerations

- The 2024 preseason plan included the pre-abundance-update phase of the fishery being open April 1 – May 2. In season, the states closed the fishery early (effective April 30) due to higher-than-expected effort and catch on the final weekend fished. Results through April 29 totaled 1,440 kept and 193 released adult Chinook (1,459 mortalities) from approximately 4,600 angler trips which was 261% of the pre-update allocation (558 mortalities). Following several in-season run size updates and weekly evaluations of below Bonneville fishery performance, the 2024 post-update fishery season dates of June 8-15 were adopted and announced by the states on June 6. This second phase of the fishery remained open as adopted with a catch of 23 kept and 17 released (25 mortalities) adult Chinook from about 450 angler trips.
- The 2024 spring management period total adult Chinook mortalities for this fishery was 1,485 fish or 199% of the allowed post-season catch balance allocation. Catches included 1,463 kept and 219 released adult Chinook from approximately 5,000 angler trips. The daily bag limit included up to one adult Chinook for the spring management period.
- In 2022 and 2024, the pre-update Zone 6 recreational fishery exceeded the pre-update allocation and was closed ahead of schedule on May 4 and April 29, respectively. Additionally, this led to the fishery not re-opening in those years until late May/June, and only because there was unused lower river allocation available to transfer.
- In recent years, the initial in-season run update has not been available from TAC until mid/late-May.
 - As in past years, it is expected that this fishery will have a break (split season) between the pre-update and post-update phases assuming there is sufficient catch balance allocation remaining for this fishery.

- 2025 regulations during the spring management period allow for steelhead retention through March 31 and closed thereafter except when spring Chinook is open. Steelhead caught downstream of The Dalles Dam are managed as winter steelhead through March and upriver Skamania summer steelhead from April through June.
- Staff modeled a standard (7 day-per-week) pre-update fishery using recent higher catch and effort assumptions (recent 3 years) and also explored other concepts:
 - Reserve a portion of the allocation for the post-update timeframe.
 - Limit fishing in late April through early May when high catch rates are anticipated.
- Based on the assumptions described above, the 2025 fishery will be managed for 576 total mortalities prior to the in-season run update (558 in 2024).

Season model outputs for the BON-S/L (Zone 6) recreational spring Chinook fishery, 2025					
Model Output	Dates	Total Days	Kept	Mortalities	% of Catch Balance
1	April 1-24	24	274	281	49%
2	April 1-26*	26	549	563	98%
3	April 26 & May 3	2	506	519	90%
4	May 3 & 8	2	520	533	93%
5	April 1-23, May 3	24	506	519	90%

* Add Sun. April 27, 801 total mortalities, 139% of pre-update CB

- Model output 1: April 1 start, 7d/week, and provides more catch balance to post-update opportunity. Lowest risk for exceeding pre-update catch balance.
 - Model output 2: April 1 start, 7d/week, and ends on a Saturday with the most consecutive days open.
 - Model output 3: two quality Saturday opportunities with ability/time to close the second day if necessary.
 - Model output 4: two May days, one Saturday and a later weekday (Thursday) with ability/time to close the second day if necessary.
 - Model output 5: April 1 start, 7d/wk, and one quality Saturday in May with ability/time to close the last day if necessary.
 - Actual fishery results will be monitored in-season and recommended adjustments to the season will be made as necessary.
- Pool specific allocations are not being considered but the table below shows the recent year averages.

Recent Zone 6 pool splits (2022-2024) for pre-update and full season fisheries.				
Zone 6 Spring Recreational	Pre-Update		Full season	
	Effort	Mortalities	Effort	Mortalities
Bonneville	20%	20%	17%	19%
The Dalles	51%	51%	49%	47%
John Day	29%	29%	34%	34%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

In-season lower Columbia River and Bonneville to OR/WA state line spring Chinook recreational fisheries management

- Following the first in-season TAC upriver spring Chinook abundance expectation update, which typically occurs by mid-May, the pre-season buffering stipulation is removed. TAC will continue to evaluate the return weekly throughout the spring management period and provide updated abundance projections as necessary.
- OR/WA staff re-evaluate non-treaty catches as compared to the allowable ESA impact rates and catch balance given the current in-season abundance expectation. If it is determined there is sufficient ESA impact and catch balance for use by a particular fishery, staff will model scenarios to determine what opportunities might be considered. Following this, a Joint State Hearing is scheduled to consider the fisheries.
 - In recent years, if sufficient catch balance allocation is available, initial limited re-openers have occurred within a week of the run size update. This allows for opportunity when Chinook abundance is high while also balancing uncertainty to the final run size and available catch balance.
 - This pattern of re-openers can often continue for several weeks or even the remainder of the spring season and is dependent on the remaining catch balance allocation.
 - In past years, the Columbia River Recreational Advisory Group has supported providing fishing opportunity in June to merge with the summer season which typically begins June 16. However, the 2025 preseason forecast for upper Columbia River summer Chinook is expected to be insufficient to provide directed Chinook fishing.

Recreational lower Snake River (Washington waters) fishery – preliminary considerations

- Based on the assumptions described above, the fishery will be managed for 407 total mortalities pre run update in 2025 (493 in 2024). This total mortality allocation is dependent on the forecasted mark rate; the actual allocation will change if the observed fishery mark rate differs from forecasted.
- WDFW fishery managers in Region 1 determine the structure for the lower Snake River season.
- This fishery typically opens in late April on a days-per-week basis in up to four areas (two areas in 2024).
- WDFW discussion with constituents will occur at the scheduled NE McNary meeting in Wenatchee on March 18.