

# COMMISSION REPORT

## Annual Review Columbia River Basin Salmon Management Policy Implementation 2014

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**January 9, 2015**

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# **Annual Review: Columbia River Basin Salmon Management Policy**

## **Background:**

Columbia River recreational and commercial fisheries are a vital part of the social and economic fabric of Oregon and Washington, providing valuable jobs and economic vitality to rural and urban communities. Optimizing the economic value of both of these fisheries within a conservation-based framework that assists recovery of Columbia and Snake River fish species currently listed under the Endangered Species Act is a management priority.

In September, 2012 the Washington and Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commissions agreed to work together, along with agency staff and key stakeholders, in an effort to develop alternative approaches to management of the sport and commercial fisheries on the Columbia River. A Workgroup was formed consisting of three commissioners from each state. Advisors to the Workgroup included two sport and two commercial fishing stakeholders from each state and a Clatsop County Commissioner representing the four coastal counties of Pacific, Wahkiakum, Clatsop, and Columbia. The Workgroup met three times during September-November, 2012 to discuss and analyze proposed fishery strategies. A final document, 'Management Strategies for Columbia River Recreational and Commercial Fisheries: 2013 and Beyond', was completed on November 21 to reflect the agreed recommendations made by consensus of the Washington and Oregon Commission Workgroup members.

In January, 2013, The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) utilized the November 21 Workgroup recommendations as guidance to adopt Policy C-3620. The policy is applicable to management by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) of Pacific salmon (spring Chinook, summer Chinook, fall Chinook, sockeye, chum, and coho) fisheries in the mainstem of the Columbia River and the lower Snake River. The policy term is January, 2013 through December, 2023.

The policy provides the Department a set of guiding principles and a progressive series of actions to improve the management of salmon in the Columbia River basin. The actions will be evaluated and, as appropriate, progressively implemented in a transitional period occurring from 2013-16. There is uncertainty in the presumptive path forward, including the development and implementation of alternative selective fishing gear, securing funding for enhanced hatchery production, and the expansion or development of off-channel fishing areas. Consequently, the Commission recognizes that management decisions in the transitional period, and subsequent years, must be modified as necessary to meet the stated purpose of the policy.

To address the uncertainties in some aspects of the presumptive path forward, the Commission included adaptive management procedures as an essential tool to achieve the purpose of the policy. The policy's adaptive management plan calls for the Commission to track implementation and results of fishery management actions and artificial production programs in the lower Columbia River during the transition period, with annual reviews beginning at the end of 2013 and a comprehensive review at the end of the transition period ( e.g. 2016).

The policy also calls for the Department to provide the Commission a briefing on the effectiveness of fishery management actions in meeting spring Chinook recreational fishery allocation objectives throughout the Columbia River basin, including recreational fisheries below Bonneville Dam, above Bonneville Dam, and in the Snake River.

## **2014 Review: Implementation of Policy C-3620**

The following review summarizes Columbia River fishery management events and outcomes related to implementation of the Columbia River basin Salmon management policy in 2014. The summary includes status of litigation, legislation, public processes, *U.S. v. Oregon*, C-3620 policy provisions, alternative gear development, and fishery outcomes.

### ***Review of 2014 Events***

#### Litigation

Legal challenges of the revised fishery management direction adopted by the Washington and Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commissions were filed in both Washington and Oregon in 2013.

*Washington Litigation* – Columbia River commercial fishing interests filed a case in Wahkiakum County on March 13 asking the court to declare the Commission action invalid. The case was re-filed in Thurston County on April 8. The Thurston County Judge dismissed the case on April 23. The plaintiffs filed an appeal on December 16. Briefing and oral arguments regarding the appeal concluded on September 11, 2014. The judicial opinion on the appeal is pending.

*Oregon Litigation* – Columbia River commercial fishing interests filed with the Oregon Court of Appeals on January 4, 2013 asking for a determination declaring the Oregon Administrative Rules invalid. On February 11, the Court granted the Petitioners a motion to stay enforcement of the rules. On June 6, 2013, the Oregon Commission held a rulemaking hearing to reconsider rules it adopted in December 2012 governing commercial and recreational fisheries in the Columbia River. On July 1, 2013, the petitioners asked the Court to stay certain rules the Commission adopted in June, 2013. The petition was denied on October 22, 2013 and upheld on appeal on December 2, 2013. The case is now focused on judicial review of the rules contested by the petitioners. There has not been any further judicial curtailment of implementing the rules during this judicial review.

#### Legislative Actions

*Washington Legislation* – Policy C-3620 calls for the use of commercial fishing gear other than gillnets. Since a commercial fishery that uses a new gear type (seine nets) would be considered experimental, Washington law (RCW 77.70.160) requires a process to be followed under the ‘Emerging Fishery’ rule. Under this ‘Emerging Fishery’ rule, a five-member board representative of the affected commercial fishery industry was appointed in 2013 to review and make recommendations to the Director on rules relating to the number and qualifications of the participants for such experimental fishery permits. The five-member board and the Columbia River Commercial Advisory Group worked with Columbia River staff to develop recommendations for rules to regulate the pilot seine fishery conducted in the fall of 2014.

*Oregon Legislation* – In addition to the rules adopted by the Oregon Commission in June 2013, implementation of the entire new framework also required new legislation, which was passed and signed into Oregon law this past summer as Senate Bill 830. The legislation: 1) repeals Oregon rules which made it unlawful to take salmon and steelhead “by means of fixed fishing gear or seines in any waters of the state, 2) establishes an Enhancement Fund to enhance fisheries, optimize economic benefits, and advance native fish conservation, and 3) establishes a

Transition Fund to provide financial assistance to individual commercial fishermen affected by the new Columbia River fish management and reform rules.

### Public Processes

Throughout 2014, a series of public meetings and hearings occurred including;

1. WDFW and ODFW held 51 Columbia River Compact and Joint State hearings in 2014 to review stock status, fishery harvest, allocation mandates, and ESA limits and implement commercial, recreational, and treaty tribal fisheries in joint state managed waters of the Columbia River.
2. WDFW and ODFW convened three Columbia River Recreational and Commercial Advisor Group meetings to review run forecasts, receive input for fishery management strategies, as well as receive input regarding management strategies for alternative gear development.
3. A Spring Chinook recreational sub-allocation advisory group was established in 2013-14 by WDFW to review the effectiveness of fishery management actions in meeting allocation and recreational opportunity objectives below Bonneville Dam, above Bonneville Dam, and in the lower Snake River. WDFW and ODFW staff convened the sub-allocation advisor group three times between September 2013 and January 2014. WDFW staff provided a report to the Commission in February 2014.
4. The annual North of Falcon (NOF) process occurred during March and April, 2014 where Washington and Oregon agency staff worked with constituents, tribes, and National Marine Fisheries Service to develop management plans for Columbia River summer and fall fisheries. The staff advanced policy C-3620 transition period actions to the extent possible.

### Gill Net License Buyback Program

The Department is coordinating with ODFW to develop baseline data concerning historic effort, participation, and ex-vessel values associated with Columbia River gillnet licenses. The agencies are also researching information regarding the process and implementation of past buyback programs. The Department will continue to coordinate with ODFW and work with the industry to survey and evaluate the industry's interest level in such a program, as well as research potential funding sources.

### Development and Implementation of Alternative Gear

One of the guiding principles of the Commission policy reads, "In a manner consistent with the Department's licensing authority, develop and implement alternative selective-fishing gear and techniques for commercial mainstem fisheries to optimize conservation and economic benefits". Since 2009, Oregon and Washington fisheries managers have been evaluating different gear for use in Columbia River commercial fisheries. The gears tested to date are beach seines, purse seines, tangle nets, trolling gear, fish traps, and arrow nets. Evaluations for some of the gears are still ongoing. Of the gears tested to date, purse and beach seines during the fall season (August through October) are moving to the implementation (pilot fishery) stage.

Some results to note are:

- a. Evaluations of purse and beach seines fished during the fall season handled a large number of Chinook and coho and appear to be a viable gear for the selective harvest of these stocks. Release mortality results will be a key factor in future management of this gear.
- b. Evaluations of purse and beach seines fished during the fall season also handled a fair amount of summer steelhead. Certain stocks of steelhead are ESA-listed and allowable impacts are limited. A low release mortality rate will be one of the a key factors in directing seine fisheries at hatchery Chinook and coho while minimizing impacts to released steelhead.
- c. Evaluations of purse and beach seines fished during the summer season handle both summer Chinook and sockeye. Snake River sockeye are listed ESA-listed and allowable impacts are limited. Sockeye impacts may be the constraining factor for any summer season seine fisheries.
- d. A three-year field study conducted by the Department to determine the appropriate release mortality rates for salmonids handled with seine gear concluded at the end of 2013. The field data, including 2013 radio tracking information from USGS, were analyzed by the *U.S. v. Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Due to technical issues with the study, the TAC was only able to agree on a set of interim rates for managing the pilot 2014 seine fisheries. The department's science section has re-analyzed the seine mortality study data to attempt to address some of the technical problems encountered during the TAC's review. The department has proposed a revised methodology and mortality estimates for Chinook and steelhead for review by the TAC and NOAA. The revised methodology produces mortality estimates that are significantly lower for Chinook and coho than the interim values used for 2014. The TAC and NOAA review is expected to be completed by February 2015, with final determination by NOAA completed by March, 2015.
- e. A limited entry pilot commercial seine fishery was implemented in fall 2014 using the interim mortality rates (results are shown on pages 27-28).
- f. Coho tangle-net gear was covered under current NOAA ESA permits and was legal gear in both states at the time of the 2013 NOF planning process. A pilot coho tangle-net season was included in the commercial fall season plan and allocated a portion of the Columbia River coho ESA impacts. The pilot coho tangle-net fishery was implemented in October 2013 and was conducted again in 2014 using interim mortality rates. A long-term survival evaluation was initiated in 2013 by ODFW and replicated in 2014. Methods for this study are similar to those used for seine gears and for past evaluations of spring Chinook captured in large mesh gillnets and tangle nets. Evaluation of post-release mortality is ongoing.
- g. A fixed pound net trap was evaluated by the department during fall 2013 with disappointing results. The Department plans on testing pound nets again during the fall of 2015.



## Off-Channel Development and Enhancement

**Washington-** Currently, the only Select Area (off-channel) site in Washington is Deep River. This site has limited space and although it has produced fair returns of coho, the spring Chinook smolt survival to adults, and harvest, has been minimal. In 2013 and 2014, as part of the policy direction to expand Select Area sites, the department conducted spring test fishing in Cathlamet Channel to evaluate its potential as a new off-channel fishing site. Test fishing in Cathlamet Channel was conducted twice a week from late February through late May. Data collected at this site was similar to mainstem test fishing, which collects biological data on Chinook to determine stock and origin, and also collects data measuring catch and release condition on all salmonids. The first two years of test fishing revealed a catch pattern in the channel. The catch in the top of the channel had the highest catch/effort which indicates that a portion of the mainstem migrating spring Chinook back down the upper portion of the channel instead of swimming up the channel. This information may indicate a more selective opportunity for future fisheries in the lower portion of the Cathlamet Channel. This area specific analysis will be investigated further during test fishing in 2015. The Department has worked closely with the city of Cathlamet to secure a city owned site for net pen rearing and release, as well as NOAA, Wahkiakum County, Department of Ecology (DOE), and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to secure permits. The Department has also completed a SEPA process concerning the release of fish production from the Cathlamet site with a determination of non-significant impacts. Spring Chinook smolts (200,000) were released at this site in 2014, with similar numbers planned for 2015.

The expectation is that these fish will produce more returning adults, and the inclusion of Cathlamet Channel as a Select Area site will provide additional space in Washington for more fishermen to participate. The success of this program will depend on these locally produced fish providing strong enough returns to support a fishery, and for outside stock interception to be at level that can be managed within commercial ESA allocations. In-season test fishing and fishery management response will be a key part of the approach. The first return of adult spring Chinook from the Cathlamet Channel releases will be in 2016. Other programs in Deep River will continue, including the rearing and release of 800,000 coho and 1.0 million tule fall Chinook. The fall Chinook released in Deep River is connected to the hatchery reform and sustainable fisheries program.

**Oregon-** Opportunities to expand current seasons in existing Oregon Select Area (off-channel) sites primarily exist during the winter season in Tongue Point/South Channel and in Knappa Slough. In 2013 and 2014, fisheries were opened in these two sites during the winter season. Effort and catch was minimal.

Since the fall of 2011, test fishing in areas adjacent to existing Oregon Select Area (off-channel) sites has been conducted. To determine if these sites are viable for expanded commercial fisheries, the stock composition of the catch must be evaluated. Test fishing will continue in 2015 during the winter, spring, summer and fall periods for outer Youngs Bay and during the winter, spring and fall in upper and lower Prairie Channel. Test fishing results will be evaluated for stock composition and encounters of ESA-listed non-target stocks to determine which sites hold potential for area expansion. Catches of ESA-listed stocks are to be expected in these areas and have occurred during testing. Evaluation of the potential effects of full implementation of fisheries on available ESA impacts is ongoing.

Efforts by ODFW to identify new Select Area (off-channel) sites were initiated in 2014 and included initial reconnaissance to identify candidate sites for further evaluation. This effort utilized past assessments of potential off-channel sites conducted in the 1990s along with site visits, discussions with commercial fishers, and consultation with Select Area Fisheries Project staff to narrow down the list to three top candidates. As a result of this process, Clifton Channel (OR), Westport Sough (OR), and Coal Creek Slough (WA) were selected for further evaluation.

#### WA/OR Select Area Production Enhancement Progress

*Spring Chinook* – Oregon initiated an increase of 250,000 per year in 2010 based on OFWC direction in 2008. An additional 500,000 Oregon increase was scheduled for 2013 as part of the transition period. Washington discontinued releases of 350,000 spring Chinook in Deep River in 2014, as planned in the reform package, because of a track record of very poor survival of these fish, and little contribution to the commercial fishery. Washington was also to initiate 250,000 additional spring Chinook production elsewhere in 2013. (Further increases are scheduled to begin in 2017 to bring the total to 1,250,000 “additional releases” and a cumulative goal of 2,200,000 by 2017).

*Coho* – Oregon initiated an increase of 120,000 per year in 2010 based on OFWC direction in 2008. An additional 600,000 Oregon increase was scheduled for 2013 as part of the transition period. Washington was also to initiate 200,000 additional production in 2013. (Further increases are scheduled to begin in 2017 to bring the total to 1,920,000 “additional releases” and a cumulative goal of 6,090,000 by 2017).

*Select Area Bright (SAB) fall Chinook* – An Oregon increase of 500,000 was scheduled for 2013 as part of the transition period. (Further increases are scheduled to begin in 2017 to bring the total to 750,000 “additional releases” and a cumulative goal of 2,200,000 by 2017).

In general, enhanced production in off-channel areas is on track, with some exceptions noted below. Oregon met its goal of releasing an additional 500,000 spring Chinook in 2014. As planned, Washington discontinued releases of 350,000 spring Chinook in Deep River in 2014 because of a track record of very poor survival of these fish, and little contribution to the commercial fishery. Washington initiated a new release of 200,000 spring Chinook in Cathlamet Channel in 2014 as part of WDFW efforts to evaluate potential new Select Area sites.

Coho and Select Area Bright (SAB) fall Chinook releases in Oregon in 2014 were 104% (number) and 114% (number) of the production goal, respectively. The SAB increase was due to higher than expected broodstock availability allowing for implementation of an extra 250,000 smolt production not scheduled to occur until 2017. Washington coho enhancement of 200,000 additional fish in Deep River has been slowed due to federal budget reductions.

Oregon hatchery production for 2015 releases is on track to meet release targets for coho and spring Chinook, but Washington production is less than anticipated for spring Chinook and coho. Although SAB fall Chinook releases were higher than planned in 2014, releases will likely fall about 250,000 fish short of goal in 2015.

#### Barbless Hooks

Part of the management strategy adopted in policy C-3620, is to make fisheries more selective by deploying gear that minimizes harm or allows for the safe release of imperiled wild fish. In light of this concept, effective January 2013, recreational anglers were required to use barbless hooks

in the mainstem and Columbia River tributary fisheries for salmon and steelhead. The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission are considering a proposal to rescind the barbless hook requirement for the Willamette River and portions of the Select Area fisheries. Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission are considering an exception to the barbless hook in lower Columbia River selected tributaries during times and areas where abundance of hatchery fish is high and wild fish abundance is low, or ESA listed fish are not present.

#### Increase Management Certainty

The Department is working to ensure that federal funding through NOAA and Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) continues to support monitoring of fisheries and collection of return data and analysis. These programs provide the information that is critical for developing run forecasts, fishery planning, and in-season fishery management. Additionally, the Department continues to engage with state, tribe, and federal biologists in the *U.S. v. Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to coordinate technical data that is relied upon for developing stock status data bases and in-season stock specific fishery impact analysis. These data are critical for the decision-making process of the Columbia River Compact in adopting fisheries that meet the *U.S. v. Oregon* mandated treaty Indian and non-Indian harvest sharing requirement, NOAA Requirements regarding non-Indian and treaty Indian ESA limits, Commission policy regarding commercial and recreational fishery allocation of ESA impacts, commercial sharing of ESA impacts between mainstem, Select Areas and different gear types, recreational sub-allocations of impacts by area, and recreational season objectives. There are typically 40-50 Columbia River Compact hearings per year to manage these fisheries in-season.

#### Improve Management Tools

One of the tools identified in policy C-3620 was to improve the accuracy of preseason forecasts and in-season run size updates, and the in-season tracking of ESA impacts accrued from harvest by individual fishery. The table below includes the 2014 preseason forecast compared to actual returns and the 2015 forecasts for spring Chinook and sockeye. The 2014 fall Chinook and coho returns are not finalized until mid-February.

<i>Columbia River Mouth Fish Returns Actual and Forecasts**</i>					
			<b>2014 Forecast</b>	<b>2014 Return</b>	<b>2015 Forecast</b>
<b>Spring Chinook</b>	<b>Total Spring Chinook</b>		<b>308,000</b>	<b>315,600</b>	<b>312,600</b>
	Willamette		58,700	51,800	55,400
	Sandy		5,500	6,000	5,500
	Cowlitz*		7,800	10,500	11,200
	Kalama*		500	1,000	1,900
	Lewis*		1,100	1,500	1,100
	Select Areas		7,400	2,200	5,000
	<b>Lower River total</b>		<b>81,000</b>	<b>73,000</b>	<b>80,100</b>
	Upper Columbia	Total	24,100	33,100	27,500
	<i>Upper Columbia</i>	<i>Wild</i>	<i>3,700</i>	<i>5,700</i>	<i>4,500</i>
	Snake River Spring/Summer	Total	125,000	137,900	140,800
	<i>Snake River</i>	<i>Wild</i>	<i>42,200</i>	<i>46,000</i>	<i>45,300</i>
	<b>Upriver Total</b>		<b>227,000</b>	<b>242,600</b>	<b>232,500</b>
<b>Summer Chinook</b>	<b>Upper Columbia</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>67,500</b>	<b>78,300</b>	<b>73,000</b>
<b>Sockeye</b>	Wenatchee		63,400	118,500	106,700
	Okanogan		282,500	523,700	285,500
	Snake River	<i>Wild</i>	<i>1,200</i>	<i>2,900</i>	<i>1,800</i>
	<b>Total Sockeye</b>		<b>347,100</b>	<b>645,100</b>	<b>394,000</b>
<b>Steelhead</b>					
	Wild winter steelhead	Wild	16,100		
	Summer Upriver	Total	339,200	320,700	

\*Return to tributary mouth \*\*Totals may not sum due to rounding

As each season progresses, runsize updates are provided by TAC. TAC is a comprised of technical staff from multiple entities which represent all parties to *U.S. v Oregon*. During the course of 2014, TAC met almost every week from late April until mid-October to provide Columbia River fishery management staff run size updates. These run size updates allowed fishery managers to track ESA impacts and harvest shares, and allowed the Compact to make informed decisions in structuring fisheries in the Columbia River and the lower Snake River.

<b>2014 TAC runsize updates for upriver salmon and steelhead stocks (in thousands of fish)</b>									
	Spring Chinook		Summer Chinook	Sockeye			Upriver Steelhead		Coho
<b>Spring</b>	<i>Upriver</i>	<b>Summer</b>	<i>Upper Col.</i>	<i>Col R.</i>	<b>Fall</b>	UR B	Group B	Group A	Early Stock
<b>Preseason</b>	<b>227.0</b>	<b>Preseason</b>	<b>67.5</b>	<b>347.1</b>	<b>Preseason</b>	<b>919.0</b>	<b>31.0</b>	<b>241.0</b>	<b>367.1</b>
21-Apr	No Update	30-Jun	67.5	425.0	8-Sep		No Update		
28-Apr	No Update	7-Jul	74.0	560.0	10-Sep		No Update		
5-May	185.0 Min	14-Jul	77.0	600.0	15-Sep	723.4	36.5	No Update	
12-May	224.0	21-Jul	78.0	615.0	22-Sep	677.6	37.5	259.1	167.0 @ BON
19-May	224.0				29-Sep	656.0	45.0	260.0	181.0 @ BON
27-May	230.0				6-Oct	658.1	45.0	260.0	
2-Jun	234.0				13-Oct				
9-Jun	243.0								

### Adaptive Management Provision

The Adaptive Management provision of Policy C-3620 states that “State-managed fisheries pursuant to this policy will be adaptive and adjustments may be made to mainstem fisheries if policy objectives, including catch or economic expectations for commercial or recreational fisheries, are not achieved consistent with the principles of this plan. If these expectations are not achieved, efforts will be made to correct the course. Department staff may implement actions necessary to manage adaptively to achieve the objectives of this policy and will coordinate with the Commission, as needed, in order to implement corrective actions. Reconsideration of state-managed mainstem fisheries may take place under the following circumstances:”

1. Lower than anticipated catch and economic expectations to the commercial salmon fishing industry.
2. Insufficient space within off-channel sites to accommodate the commercial fleet.
3. Biological, fiscal and/or legal circumstances that delay or preclude implementation of alternative selective gear, buyback of commercial fishing permits, and/or additional off-channel hatchery investments.
4. Management objectives are not achieved for commercial or recreational fisheries.
5. Conflict with terms of *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement.
6. Failure to meet conservation objectives.

The Columbia River Compact did exercise an in-season adaptive management action in late May of 2014 when large-mesh gillnet gear was approved for the commercial mainstem spring Chinook fishery to reduce handle time of ESA-listed salmonids. Because the interception of shad with tangle-net gear was so significant during this time-frame, it compromised the time it took to retrieve wild spring Chinook from the net. The mark-selective gear regulations require a limited net ‘soak time’ of 45 minutes to improve survival of released wild fish. The large-mesh gear enabled shad to pass through the net, allowing fishers to focus on salmonid handle time.

Although it is too soon to assess performance relative to the above adaptive management provisions, the Department will continue to coordinate with the Commission as more information is collected and assessed during the transition period. Current information includes:

- The commercial ex-vessel value for salmon harvest was above average in 2014 due to a high upriver bright fall Chinook return and a corresponding large commercial harvest of fall Chinook in the mainstem Columbia River and a large coho return and harvest in the Select Area fisheries..
- Research to determine the feasibility of additional off-channel sites is on-going.
- Production enhancements in Select Areas is progressing, however budget constraints have impacted progress in Washington.
- The first pilot commercial seine fishery in the mainstem Columbia River occurred in 2014.
- The study to determine release mortality rates for salmonids in fall seine fisheries is complete and results are being analyzed. Interim mortality rates were used for 2014.
- Legal challenges by commercial fishing interests are on-going.

- The Department continues to coordinate fishery strategies with the Columbia River treaty tribes and NOAA through *U.S. v. Oregon* technical and policy committees.
- Success in meeting conservation objectives will be assessed as more information is collected during the remainder of the transition period.

### ***Review of 2014 Columbia River Fisheries***

The following review includes pre-season sport/commercial allocations, actual catch by user group, ex-vessel value for commercial fisheries, angler trips and seasons for recreational fisheries. Performance or success of these fisheries can be measured when compared to fishery objectives, harvest and impact sharing guidelines and overall economic value. In addition, the implementation of adaptive management during the course of the 2014 season recognizes the flexibility needed in managing Columbia River fisheries which are inherently dynamic in nature. All data for 2014 should be considered preliminary and subject to change.

#### 2014 Columbia River Spring Chinook Season

##### **Spring season - Policy Guidelines**

Commission policy (C-3620) allocates the allowable impacts of ESA-listed upriver spring Chinook between recreational and commercial fisheries. The policy includes the following language:

- a. Transition Period (2013-2016): During 2014-16, assign 70% of the ESA-impact for upriver spring Chinook stocks to mainstem recreational fisheries and the balance (30%) to off-channel and mainstem commercial fisheries.
- b. Long Term (2017 and beyond): Assign 80% of the ESA-impact to mainstem recreational fisheries to meet management objectives and the balance (20%) to off-channel and mainstem commercial fisheries.
- c. To ensure broad geographic distribution of recreational opportunity, 75% of the impacts allocated to recreational fisheries will be assigned to the recreational fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam, and the balance (25%) assigned and reserved for recreational fisheries upstream of Bonneville Dam (including the Snake River).
- d. The Department will seek in the long term to extend recreational opportunity downstream of Bonneville Dam as long into April as possible, with a high probability of an uninterrupted 45-day season beginning March 1.

##### **Spring season - Preseason Planning**

The 2014 pre-season forecast for upriver spring Chinook was 227,000 adult fish to the Columbia River. Based on the *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement (MA), non-Indian fisheries were limited to an ESA impact of 2.0% and a catch balance limit of 22,700 upriver fish (kept plus release mortalities). A 30% buffer (also mandated by the MA) was applied to the preseason forecast and the allowable impacts were accordingly reduced. This buffer resulted in early spring (pre run-size update) fisheries being managed for a run size of 158,900 fish and allowable impacts of 9.1% for treaty and 1.9% for non-Indian fisheries. Non-Indian fisheries were planned based on a total of 14,460 upriver spring Chinook harvest mortalities available prior to a run-size

update Commission sharing formulas and buffers were applied to produce the allowable take by each fishery prior to a run size update.

On January 28, 2014, the Columbia River Compact adopted management guidelines for the harvest of upriver spring Chinook consistent with the Commission policy. 2014 spring Chinook fisheries were managed based on an ESA-sharing formula that allocated 70% to recreational and 30% to commercial fisheries.

The final preseason catch guidelines for upriver spring Chinook (kept plus release mortalities) used for managing fisheries prior to a run-size update were:

- a. Recreational Fisheries (Total = 12,487)
  - Downstream from Bonneville Dam: 10,157
  - Bonneville Dam upstream to the Oregon/Washington border: 1,354
  - Snake River (Washington waters): 950
- b. Non-Indian Commercial Fisheries (Total = 1,973)
  - Mainstem: 1,734
  - Select Areas (Off-channel): 238

### **Spring Season - Actual Returns/Final Guidelines**

The actual return of adult upriver spring Chinook was 242,600 fish, which was 107% of the pre-season forecast. Bonneville Dam passage through June 15 totaled 225,000 adults and 32,400 jacks. The jack count was the 4th highest on record. The actual return for lower river tributaries totaled 73,000 fish (111% of forecast) and included 51,800 Willamette spring Chinook.

Based on actual return of 242,600 upriver fish, the allowable ESA impact was 2.0% for non-Indian fisheries and the catch balance limit was 24,300 upriver Chinook mortalities. The post-season management guidelines (buffers removed with final runsize) for the spring season were:

- a. Recreational Fisheries (Total = 19,347).
  - Downstream from Bonneville Dam: 15,682.
  - Between Bonneville Dam and Oregon/Washington border: 2,091.
  - Snake River: 1,521.
- b. Non-Indian Commercial Fisheries (Total = 4,911).
  - Mainstem: 4,547.
  - Select Areas (Off-channel): 364.

### **Spring Season - Fisheries**

#### **Spring Season – Recreational Fisheries**

##### *Downstream of Bonneville Dam*

Seasons: The recreational fishery downstream from Bonneville Dam was open for Chinook retention January 1 through February 28 from Buoy 10 upstream to the I-5 Bridge under permanent rules. Under temporary rules, the fishery remained open March 1 through April 14 from Buoy 10 upstream to Bonneville Dam, although the area between Beacon Rock and Bonneville Dam was open only to bank fishing. During this period, the fishery was closed on

three Tuesdays (March 25, April 1, and April 8) to allow for possible commercial fishery openers. The fishery re-opened April 19 for one additional day prior to a run size update. TAC provided run updates beginning May 5<sup>th</sup>, and the area was re-opened during May 9-10, and May 15-June 15 from Tongue Point upstream to Bonneville Dam (except bank only from Rooster Rock upstream prior to May 15). The bag limit was one adipose fin-clipped Chinook per day throughout the season. In total, angling was open for 77 of a possible 107 days from March 1 through June 15, including 13 of 30 days in April.

Harvest/Angler Trips: An estimated 15,700 adult spring Chinook of all stocks were kept and 6,800 were released from 145,600 angler trips downstream of Bonneville Dam. In addition, 1,793 jack Chinook and 2,400 steelhead were also kept. The catch rate averaged one adult Chinook kept for every 9.3 angler trips.

The recreational fishery downstream from Bonneville Dam caught 13,600 adult upriver spring Chinook compared to 15,600 allowed under the *U.S. v. Oregon* catch balancing agreement and Commission allocation policies. This was 87% of the available catch balancing allocation for this fishery and was primarily due to the effect of declining catches following mid-May run updates. ESA impacts totaled 0.79% compared to the 1.05% allocated.

#### Upstream of Bonneville Dam

##### *Bonneville Dam upstream to the Washington/Oregon border:*

Seasons: Since 2010, the Zone 6 recreational fishery has also included the area from McNary Dam upstream to the Oregon Washington border, and the Oregon and Washington banks between Bonneville Dam and Tower Island. In 2014 a total of 0.112% ESA impacts were set aside for this fishery for use prior to a run size update, which translated to nearly 1,400 Chinook (kept + release mortalities) allocated to the fishery. The fishery opened under mark-selective regulations on March 16 and was scheduled to continue through May 9. The daily bag limit for adult Chinook was one fish (was 2-fish in previous years), which extended the season a few more days into May. The fishery progressed with minimal catch through late-April, but as dam counts increased so did the catch (and effort). Creel data provided a catch estimate of 1,174 adult Chinook kept (434 released) from 5,500 anglers through May 4. On May 5 TAC provided a minimum runsize update for upriver spring Chinook (185,000 fish) that allowed for an increased allocation totaling 1,500 fish. Catch projections through May 9 totaled 1,900 fish (130% of allocated). At the May 6 hearing, the Joint Staff recommended the fishery continue only through May 7; closing 2-days earlier than scheduled in order to remain within the upriver allocation. The Compact reviewed catch data and projections from all ongoing recreational fisheries. The Compact concluded that a sufficient balance of fish remained on the LCR recreational fishery allocation to cover any overages; therefore the risk in exceeding the recreational allocation of Chinook was minimal. The fishery continued as scheduled through May 9.

At the May 13 Compact hearing, the Compact directed staff to transfer the balance of any unused Chinook allocation from the LCR Sport fishery to fisheries upstream of Bonneville Dam and distribute proportionately to both the Zone 6 and Snake River fisheries. At that time, the Compact had re-opened the LCR sport fishery for the rest of the season and catch projections were less than allocated (~800 fish remained). The balance was not sufficient to re-open the fishery immediately, but on May 27 the in-season run size estimate was upgraded to 227,000 upriver spring Chinook. Given the upgrade and the LCR sport catch projections, the fishery was



able to re-open on May 31 and continue through June 15. Catch and effort during this time frame included 50 adult Chinook kept (25 released) from 2,700 angler trips. In total, angling for spring Chinook was open 86 days during the period of March 1 to June 15.

Harvest/Angler Trips: Season total catch estimates for adult Chinook include 2,100 kept and 900 released from 8,000 angler trips. In-season fishery management decisions allowed the fishery to continue through May 9 as scheduled, and also re-open by transferring in a portion of the fish remaining on the LCR sport fishery allocation. ESA impacts associated with this fishery totaled 0.126%, or 90% of allocated. Upriver Spring Chinook mortalities totaled 2,200 fish, or 107% of allocated.

*Snake River upstream to the Washington/Idaho border:*

Seasons: Prior to a run size update, 0.168% ESA impacts were set aside for this fishery, which translated to nearly 1,000 Chinook allowed (kept plus release mortalities). The fishery was open in four sections of the Snake River in Washington waters. Each section was open three days per week with an adult daily limit of one hatchery Chinook. No closure dates were set, but the fishery was expected to remain for four to six weeks; with the closure date dependent on catch rates and associated impacts. On April 24 the area near Little Goose Dam and Clarkston opened to hatchery Chinook retention followed by the April 27 opening of the area below Ice Harbor Dam and the area below Lower Granite Dam. On May 5, TAC provided an official run size update for upriver spring Chinook, estimating a minimum of 185,000 fish (227,000 preseason). The run size update resulted in the allocation changing by less than 100 fish for this fishery. TAC continued to update the run, and on May 12 estimated a return of 224,000 upriver Chinook. A run of this size resulted in an increased allocation, totaling 1,358 Chinook, including release mortalities. Catch through May 13 was estimated at 880 Chinook kept (25 release mortalities).

At the May 13 Compact hearing, the Compact directed staff to transfer the balance of any unused Chinook allocation from the LCR Sport fishery to fisheries upstream of Bonneville Dam and distribute proportionately to both the Zone 6 and Snake River fisheries. At that time, the Compact had re-opened the LCR sport fishery for the rest of the season and catch projections were less than allocated (~800 fish remained). The transfer was not sufficient to sustain all sections of the fishery, as catch rates had improved significantly with increased dam passage.

The two lower-most areas (Ice Harbor and Little Goose) remained open until sunset on May 14. Beginning May 14, the two upper areas near Lower Granite Dam and Clarkston were expanded to include four open days per week in an effort to balance opportunity between the upper and lower areas. The area near Clarkston closed May 25 and the area below Lower Granite Dam closed May 27. By May 27, catch estimates totaled 1,358 fish compared to the in-season allocation of 1,394 upriver mortalities.

All four areas reopened on a days-per-week basis in early-June as a result of improved run size estimates and the transfer of upriver fish from the balance of the LCR sport allocation. The seasons continued through June to provide additional angler opportunity. In total, angling was open for spring Chinook in various areas of the lower Snake River for 62 days during the period of April 24 to June 30.

Harvest: Season total catch estimates for adult Chinook include 1,500 kept and 600 released. ESA impacts associated with this fishery totaled 0.120%, or 57% of the 0.201% post season

impact guideline for this fishery. Upriver Spring Chinook mortalities totaled about 1,500 fish, or 98% of allocated.

## **Winter/Spring Season - Commercial Fisheries**

### Mainstem Columbia River

#### Seasons:

Five commercial fishing periods (8-12 hours each) occurred from April 1 through June 5 in Zones 1-5. On May 12, TAC upgraded the inseason run size estimate to 224,000 upriver fish which allowed for a 2.0% ESA limit and a catch balance limit of 22,400 upriver mortalities. Mainstem commercial fisheries were allocated 4,200 upriver fish, which meant there was a balance of 2,100 fish available for commercial harvest. At the May 13 Compact hearing, the Joint Staff recommended a fishing period in Zones 1-5, but provided two options; the first was a 10-hour period using large mesh gear (8-inch minimum), the second was a 12-hour period using tanglenet gear. Similar to 2013, public testimony included the continued concern regarding high shad encounters and the challenges it posed in keeping Chinook and steelhead handle time at a minimum. The Compact decided to implement the adaptive management clause within the current policy that allowed for policy adjustments when conservation/fishery objectives were at risk of not being met. Taking into account the economic value of the fishery and the prescribed regulations (including 45-minute soak times), the Compact adopted a 10-hour period with large-mesh gear. A spring season fishery occurred on May 20 and landed about 300 hatchery Chinook and 10 shad.

TAC continued to provide inseason runsize updates for upriver spring Chinook. These updates combined with catch to date allowed for two additional spring season fishing periods (May 28 and June 4). The Compact also recognized that landings from the second period may result in the commercial sector slightly exceeding the allocated ESA impacts allocated to commercial fisheries. The Compact implemented an adaptive management action to allow for this slight overage knowing that 1) the risk of exceeding overall non-Indian ESA allowance was minimal, 2) Select Area fisheries were below their ESA allocation and 3) recreational fisheries were open for the remainder of the season and would not be impacted. Both periods were 12-hours each and conducted in Zones 1-5 with large mesh gear.

#### Harvest/ Number Deliveries:

Combined landings totaled 3,500 adult and 500 jack spring Chinook, and 1,200 shad. An additional 2,200 adult spring Chinook were released. Deliveries ranged from 43 to 149 per period. ESA impacts associated with this fishery totaled 0.509%, or 113% of the 0.450% post season impact guideline for this fishery. Kept and release spring Chinook mortalities totaled 3,400 (74% of allocated).

### Select Area (Off-channel)

Seasons: Select Area winter and spring commercial fisheries were open in Youngs Bay, Tongue Point/South Channel, Blind/Knappa Sloughs, and Deep River. Season structure in 2014 was similar to recent years. Generally speaking, during the winter season Select Areas are open 2-3 nights per week from mid-February to mid-March in Tongue Point and Knappa Slough. The Youngs Bay, Blind Slough and Deep River seasons extend into late March. The spring season typically is open 2-3 nights per week from mid-April through June 13.

Harvest/ Number Deliveries: Harvest in Select Area winter and spring commercial fisheries were well below expectations and the poorest since 2005. Due to relatively high interceptions of upriver spring Chinook early in the fishery, emergency closures were enacted during the peak of the spring season to ensure ESA limitations were not exceeded. ESA impacts associated with this fishery totaled 0.107%, or 71% of allocated. Kept and release mortalities totaled 260 (71% of allocated).

**Winter/Spring Season - Summary**

<b>2014 Summary of upriver spring Chinook catch balance and ESA-impact sharing</b>							
Commercial		<u>Catch Balance</u>			<u>ESA Impacts</u>		
		Pre*	Post	Actual	Pre*	Post	Actual
	Mainstem	1,734	4,547	3,364	0.210%	0.450%	0.509%
	Select Area	238	364	257	0.150%	0.150%	0.107%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>1,972</i>	<i>4,911</i>	<i>3,621</i>	<i>0.360%</i>	<i>0.600%</i>	<i>0.616%</i>
Recreational	Mainstem	10,157	15,682	13,572	0.840%	1.050%	0.793%
	BONN to McN	1,354	2,091	2,231	0.112%	0.140%	0.126%
	Snake River/Wanapum	976	1,573	1,546	0.168%	0.210%	0.152%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>12,487</i>	<i>19,347</i>	<i>17,349</i>	<i>1.120%</i>	<i>1.400%</i>	<i>1.070%</i>
<b>Total Non-Indian</b>		<b>14,459</b>	<b>24,258</b>	<b>20,970</b>	<b>1.480%</b>	<b>2.000</b>	<b>1.686%</b>
<i>*Preseason data includes buffered runsize/ESA impacts used until an inseason runsize is available</i>							

2014 Columbia River Summer Chinook Season

**Summer season - Policy Guidelines**

Commission policy (C-3620) allocates the harvestable surplus of upper Columbia summer Chinook between fisheries above and below Priest Rapids Dam, and between commercial and recreational fisheries downstream of Priest Rapids Dam. For fisheries downstream of Priest Rapids Dam, the policy includes the following language:

- a. Transition Period (2013-2016): Through 2014, assign 60%, of the harvestable surplus to mainstem recreational fisheries and the balance (40%) to mainstem commercial fisheries. During 2015-16, assign 70%, of the harvestable surplus to mainstem recreational fisheries and the balance (30%) to mainstem commercial fisheries
- b. Long Term (2017 and beyond): Determined following discussions with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Commission policy (C-3620) also allocates the allowable ESA-impact for Snake River sockeye between recreational and non-Indian commercial fisheries. The policy includes the following language:

- a. Transition Period (2013-2016): Assign 70% of the ESA-impact for Snake River sockeye to mainstem recreational fisheries and the balance (30%) to mainstem commercial fisheries for incidental harvest of sockeye in Chinook-directed fisheries.

- b. Long Term (2017 and beyond): Assign ~80% of the ESA-impact for Snake River sockeye to mainstem recreational fisheries to meet management objectives and the balance (~20%) to mainstem commercial fisheries for incidental harvest of sockeye in Chinook-directed fisheries.

### **Summer Season - Preseason Planning**

The 2014 preseason forecast for upper Columbia summer Chinook was 67,500 adult fish to the Columbia River mouth. Based on the *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement (MA), non-Indian Columbia River fisheries were limited to a harvest of 14,600 upriver fish (kept plus release mortalities). Commission sharing formulas were then applied to produce the allowable harvest by each fishery. The allocation of harvestable upper Columbia summer Chinook assigned to each fishery preseason was:

- a. Fisheries upstream of Priest Rapids Dam (Total = 9,830)
- b. Fisheries downstream of Priest Rapids Dam (Total = 4,733)
  - Recreational Fisheries: 2,840 (2,414 below BON)
  - Commercial Fisheries: 1,893

The 2014 pre-season forecast for sockeye was 347,100 fish to the Columbia River mouth. Based on the *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement (MA), non-Indian Columbia River fisheries were limited to a 1% allowable ESA impact rate. The Columbia River fisheries were limited to a harvest of 3,470 sockeye (downstream of the Snake River).

### **Summer Season - Actual Returns/Final Guidelines**

The actual return of upper Columbia summer Chinook was 78,300 adult fish (116% of forecast). Based on the actual return, the number of harvestable fish increased to 24,025. The following outlines the harvestable fish allocated to fisheries based on the actual return of adult upper Columbia summer Chinook:

- a. Fisheries upstream of Priest Rapids Dam (Total = 12,883)
- b. Fisheries downstream of Priest Rapids Dam (Total = 6,502)
  - Recreational Fisheries: 3,901 (3,316 below BON)
  - Commercial Fisheries: 2,601

The actual return of sockeye was 645,100 fish (185% of forecast). Non-Indian fisheries were well within the ESA limit of 1%, with actual impacts estimated at 0.4%.

### **Summer Season – Fisheries**

#### **Summer Season Recreational Fisheries**

##### *Downstream from Bonneville Dam*

Seasons: The 2014 recreational fishery in this area was open for hatchery Chinook and sockeye retention from June 16 through June 30. Sockeye retention reopened July 3 through July 31 and summer Chinook retention reopened July 3-6 and July 11-31. The area was also open for hatchery steelhead under permanent regulations.

Harvest/Angler Trips: Catch estimates for adult Chinook include 2,000 hatchery Chinook (2,700 released) and 900 sockeye from 53,700 angler trips. Total Chinook mortalities (2,385) in this

area represented 72% of the guideline. Low Chinook mark rates (~37%) contributed to the low kept Chinook numbers despite the robust season. This area was open to retention of Chinook for a total of 40 days of a possible 46 days

#### *Upstream of Bonneville Dam to Priest Rapids Dam*

Seasons: Summer season recreational fisheries were open June 16 through July 31 from Bonneville Dam upstream to Priest Rapids Dam. The fishery allowed retention of hatchery Chinook and sockeye.

Harvest: The estimated catch included 440 hatchery adult Chinook kept (780 released) and about 730 sockeye. Total Chinook mortalities (559) in this area represented 96% of the guideline

### **Summer Season Commercial Fisheries**

#### *Mainstem*

Based on the preseason forecast, management agreements and commission guidelines, nearly 1,900 summer Chinook were available for commercial harvest. Season structures are discussed annually with constituents and during the North of Falcon public process. Regulations included an 8-inch minimum mesh size and tributary mouth sanctuaries to protect ESA-listed steelhead. Sockeye sales were allowed since ESA impacts were available to cover the minimal catch expected with this gear. Consistent with Commission policy for all fisheries downstream of Bonneville Dam, sturgeon sales/possession were prohibited.

The first summer Chinook fishing period was an eight-hour period conducted on the evening of June 16 in Zones 1-5. Staff anticipated catch at around 1,800 Chinook from 125 deliveries. Actual catch was less, with roughly 1,400 Chinook and 200 sockeye from 74 deliveries (Table 19). This left a balance of 500 fish for commercial harvest. On June 30 TAC reviewed summer Chinook run and maintained the preseason forecast. A 12-hour fishing period was conducted on July 7 in Zones 1-5. Also on July 7, TAC upgraded the summer Chinook return to 74,000 fish which increased the commercial allocation to 2,300 Chinook. Three additional 12-hour periods occurred during the remainder of the summer season. It was anticipated that the runsize upgrade would result in non-Indian fisheries harvesting much less than allocated, despite all sport seasons scheduled to be open for the remainder of the season. For this reason, fishery managers allowed the final period to occur. The 2014 summer season consisted of five fishing periods (56 hours total).

Harvest/ Number Deliveries: During the summer season, harvest included 2,700 Chinook and nearly 300 sockeye. Deliveries were 75 for the first period and 21-30 for the other four periods. Total Chinook harvest represented 105% of the (2,601) catch balance guideline for this fishery.

#### *Select Area (Off-channel)*

Season: Select Area summer commercial fisheries occur in Youngs Bay to harvest late spring hatchery Chinook and early-returning Select Area bright hatchery fall Chinook, as opposed to upriver summer Chinook targeted in mainstem fisheries. Seven periods occurred from June 16 through July 31. Open hours for the initial four fishing periods were 50-100% greater than previous years to provide additional opportunity.

Harvest/ Number Deliveries: Fishers landed 1,842 Chinook and 29 sockeye. Included in the catch are 45 summer Chinook. Deliveries ranged from 29-82 per period. Chinook landings were 15% higher than the recent 5-year average.

### Summer Season Summary

<b>2014 Non-Treaty Summer Chinook Fisheries Summary</b>				
<i>(All data preliminary and includes kept + release mortalities)</i>				
	<b>Pre</b>	<b>Post</b>		
<b>Runsize</b>	67,500	78,300		Actual/
Harvest allocated Fishery	Allowed Pre	Post	Actual Take	Actual/ allowed
PFMC Ocean Fisheries	4,000	4,640	4,640	
Below Priest Rapids Dam (PRD)	32.5%	35.7%		
Recreational Below Bonneville	2,414	3,316	2,385	72%
Commercial Below Bonneville	1,893	2,601	2,788	107%
Recreational Bonn. to PRD	426	585	559	96%
Below PRD Total	4,733	6,502	5,732	88%
Above Priest Rapids Dam (PRD)	67.5%	64.3%		
Wanapum Tribal	300	350	150	43%
Colville Tribal	4,915	6,441	3,622	56%
Recreational above PRD	4,615	6,091	2,875	47%
Above PRD Total	9,830	12,883	6,647	52%
<b>Non-Treaty Total</b>	<b>18,563</b>	<b>24,025</b>	<b>17,019</b>	<b>71%</b>

### 2014 Columbia River Fall Season

#### Fall Season - Policy Guidelines

Commission policy (C-3620) provides guidelines for allocation of salmon and fishery objectives that are categorized into four sections: 1) Lower Columbia River tle Chinook, 2) Upriver Bright Chinook, 3) coho and 4) chum. Policy language is as follows:

#### ***Lower Columbia River tle fall Chinook:***

- a. Transition Period (2013-2016): Assign no more than 70% of the ESA-impact for lower Columbia River (LCR) tle Chinook to mainstem recreational fisheries to meet management objectives and the balance (not less than 30%) to off-channel commercial fisheries, mainstem commercial fisheries that target Upriver Brights, and (if using selective gear) Lower River Hatchery fall Chinook.
- b. Long Term (2017 and beyond): Assign no more than 80% of the ESA-impact for LCR tle Chinook to mainstem recreational fisheries to meet management objectives and the balance (not less than 20%) to off-channel commercial fisheries and mainstem commercial fisheries that target Upriver Brights, and (if using selective gear) Lower River Hatchery fall Chinook.

- c. Management objectives for recreational fisheries by area include:
  - Buoy 10 – August 1 through Labor Day
  - Tongue Point to Warrior Rock – August 1 through September 7, then mark-selective for Chinook September 8-14
  - Warrior Rock to Bonneville Dam - August 1 – October 31

***Upriver Bright fall Chinook:***

- a. Transition Period (2013-2016): Assign no more than 70% of the ESA-impact for Snake River Wild fall Chinook to mainstem recreational fisheries to meet management objectives and the balance (not less than 30%) to off-channel and mainstem commercial fisheries.
- b. Long Term (2017 and beyond): Assign no more than 80% of the ESA-impact for Snake River Wild fall Chinook to mainstem recreational fisheries to meet management objectives and the balance (not less than 20%) to off-channel and mainstem commercial fisheries.
- c. The Department will focus mainstem commercial fisheries to target Upriver Bright fall Chinook in the area upstream of the Lewis River where the incidental take of LCR tule Chinook is reduced
- d. Harvest of Upriver Bright fall Chinook in the area downstream of the Lewis River will occur in selective fisheries that target Washington Lower River Hatchery Chinook and coho.
- e. The presumptive path forward regarding targeted commercial harvest of Upriver Bright fall Chinook upstream of the Lewis River will be to access available Chinook with alternative selective gear and techniques. Because access to Upriver Bright Chinook will be important to ensuring the long-term economic viability of commercial fisheries, adaptive management will be used to ensure alternative selective gear and techniques are effective and that commercial fishers continue to have profitable mainstem access to these economically important stocks.

***Coho:***

- a. Transition Period (2013-2016): Assign commercial fisheries a sufficient share of the ESA-impact for Lower Columbia Natural coho to implement off-channel coho and fall Chinook fisheries and mainstem fall Chinook fisheries and the balance to in-river mainstem recreational fisheries. If these in-river mainstem recreational fisheries are expected to be unable to use all of the ESA-impact for Lower Columbia Natural coho, assign the remainder to mainstem commercial coho fisheries. As selective techniques are developed – provide additional mainstem commercial fisheries in October to access hatchery coho.
- b. Long Term (2017 and beyond): Assign commercial fisheries a sufficient share of the ESA-impact for Lower Columbia Natural coho to implement off-channel coho and fall Chinook fisheries and mainstem fall Chinook and hatchery coho fisheries. Assign the balance to in-river mainstem recreational fisheries. If these fisheries are unable to use all of the ESA-impact for Lower Columbia Natural coho, assign the remainder to mainstem commercial coho fisheries. It is expected that substantial new opportunities

for selective mainstem commercial fisheries will be available for hatchery coho, particularly in October.

**Chum:** Maintain current practice of opening no fisheries that target Chum, and assign a sufficient share of ESA-impacts to cover incidental catch in commercial off-Channel and mainstem fisheries.

### **Fall Season - Preseason Planning**

In 2014, the Columbia River Compact adopted fisheries based on management guidelines and fisheries objectives developed through the North of Falcon process. The annual “Non-Indian Columbia River Summer/Fall Fishery Allocation” agreement outlines the results of the North and Falcon process, and includes allocation guidelines for ESA-listed salmon between commercial and recreational fisheries, as well as probable season structures based on preseason forecasts and ESA impact sharing.

In 2014, catch expectations for the harvest of fall Chinook and coho in recreational and non-tribal commercial fisheries were based on forecasted run-sizes to the Columbia River mouth of a record 1,500,000 adult fall Chinook (including 919,000 Upriver Brights, of which 61,000 were Snake River wild stock) and a strong return of 640,000 adult coho. Although some years have had very large returns of either Chinook or coho, returning run sizes of this magnitude for both species in the same year have not generally been observed. Fisheries were modelled based on allocations of lower Columbia River natural (LCN) tule fall Chinook ESA-impacts and consideration of recreational fishery objectives.

### **Fall Season - Actual Returns/Final Guidelines**

The actual return of adult fall Chinook is not yet final, but is expected to be approximately 1.15 million or about 77% of the pre-season forecast. Over 77% of the return was mid-Columbia and Upriver Bright fall Chinook. Almost 855,000 adults passed Bonneville Dam through December 19. Run sizes for the constraining lower river wild (LCN) tule Chinook stock generally cannot be updated in season.

The actual coho return to the Columbia River is not yet complete but is expected to exceed 885,000, or 139% of forecast. Much of the excess was from the upriver component, evident by increased coho passage over Bonneville Dam. Lower River hatchery coho returns are still being tallied.

Wild B-run steelhead were a constraining stock in 2014; the TAC provided three updates to the B-run wild steelhead run size. The three updates changed the preseason forecast of 6,500 fish to 9,100, 9,350 and 9,900 wild B-run steelhead, respectively. These updates helped ensure significant opportunity for commercial fisheries to access upriver bright Chinook.

A total of 15 Columbia River Compact (commercial and tribal fisheries) and five Joint State Hearing (recreational fisheries) meetings were held during the fall season. Seven TAC meetings occurred during the period, resulting in three formal run size updates for upriver fall Chinook, though upriver stocks were not constraining for fisheries in 2014.

Pending final run reconstructions for fall Chinook stocks, the most recent available assessment of fall Chinook impact by fishery was conducted in mid-October. Based on this assessment post-season sharing of LCN fall Chinook is estimated to be approximately 80% for recreational



fisheries and 20% for commercial fisheries while impacts on SRW fall Chinook are approximately 36% for recreational fisheries and 64% for commercial fisheries. Updated estimates of these impacts will be completed over the winter. Sharing of wild coho impacts generally followed the preseason plan, as fisheries were not modified in order to remain within allowable impacts.

## **Fall Season - Fisheries**

### **Fall Season Recreational Fisheries**

#### Seasons:

Buoy 10 to Tongue Point: The fishery was open for Chinook retention August 1 through September 1 with a daily bag limit of two fish/one Chinook. During August 30 – September 1, only fin-clipped Chinook could be retained. Chinook retention reopened October 1 when the bag limit was also increased to two Chinook. Retention of adipose fin-clipped coho and steelhead was allowed August 1-December 31. Due to the expected large coho return, one additional coho was allowed as part of the daily bag limit September 2-30 and October 3-December 31. In total, the fishery was open to retention of Chinook for 32 days in August-September (61 days possible), and the season objective of Chinook retention through Labor Day was reached.

Tongue Point to Warrior Rock: The fishery opened for Chinook retention August 1 with a daily bag limit of two fish/one Chinook. Chinook retention continued through September 14 but retention was restricted to only adipose fin-clipped Chinook September 8-14. The fishery reopened to Chinook (fin clipped or not) retention October 1 with a two fish/two Chinook daily bag limit. The fishery was open for retention of Chinook for 45 days in August-September (61 days possible). The season objective of non-mark selective through September 7 was reached.

Warrior Rock to Steamboat Landing: The fishery was open to Chinook retention August 1-December 31 with a two fish/two Chinook daily bag limit.

Steamboat Landing to Highway 395 Bridge (near Pasco, Washington): This boundary definition was new for 2014 and was created to establish an area where anglers would be able to keep an additional Chinook from the large 2014 upriver return, while avoiding catches of LCN tules. The fishery was open for Chinook retention August 1-December 31 with a daily bag limit of three fish/three Chinook.

Buoy 10 to Highway 395 Bridge: For the entire season, each legal angler aboard a vessel was allowed to deploy angling gear until the daily bag limit of salmon/steelhead for all anglers aboard the vessel was achieved (party rule). This rule has been in place in the Buoy 10 fishery for many years. It was applied for the first time in the upriver areas this year in order to increase angler access to the large 2014 upriver return.

#### Harvest/Angler Trips:

Buoy 10 to Tongue Point: An estimated 26,800 Chinook (hatchery and wild) and 57,600 hatchery coho were kept from 107,700 angler trips. An additional 16,600 Chinook and 40,300 coho were released. The number of Chinook kept was the third highest for this fishery while the total Chinook handle was the highest. The catch rate averaged one adult salmon kept for every 1.3 angler trips. Chinook take totaled 29,983 fish.

Although the fishery caught less than preseason expectations for total Chinook take, impacts on LCN tule Chinook will likely exceed the preseason allocation due to a higher percentage of this stock in the catch than anticipated. At this time, the final run size for LCN tule Chinook has not been calculated, thus current estimates of impact are based on the preseason run expectation. The total take of adult hatchery coho was about 65,300, or 116% of preseason expectations, reflecting the higher than expected abundance.

Tongue Point to Bonneville Dam: An estimated 26,300 adult Chinook and 5,800 adult hatchery coho were kept from 143,900 angler trips. The number of Chinook kept was the third highest for this fishery. An additional 6,800 Chinook and 3,000 coho were released. The catch rate averaged one adult Chinook kept for every 4.5 angler trips.

The total take of adult Chinook (including release mortality) in the fishery was about 27,634 fish, which was 65% of the preseason expectation of 42,780. The difference is primarily due to the lower overall run size and lower than anticipated catch rates early in the season. However, impacts on LCN tule Chinook will likely be close to the preseason allocation for this fishery due to a higher-than-expected frequency of this stock in the catch. The total take of adult hatchery coho was about 6,340, or 167% of expectations. This catch was a record high for this area.

Upstream from Bonneville Dam: Estimates of catch of adult Chinook in fisheries upstream from Bonneville Dam are based on average harvest rates from past seasons (pending availability of angler catch record cards for 2014) and are expected to be about 9,200.

## **Non-Indian Commercial Fisheries**

### *Mainstem*

#### Chinook Fisheries

Early fall mainstem commercial fisheries consisted of 13 nine-hour periods targeting Chinook from August 3 through September 2 in Zones 4-5 with a 9-9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-inch mesh restriction. Fishers landed 47,732 Chinook and 966 coho. Deliveries ranged from 8 to 148 per period. The preseason expectation was 86,450 Chinook based on the large forecast. As with the recreational fishery, catches in the early commercial fisheries were substantially less than expected.

Late fall commercial fisheries targeting Chinook included 18 nine- to twelve-hour periods from September 14 through October 31. All openers occurred in Zones 4-5 to minimize take of LCN Chinook. Fishers were required to use large mesh ( $\geq 8$ -inch). Combined landings totaled 49,932 Chinook and 6,603 coho. Deliveries ranged from 1 to 144 per period. The actual catch was more than twice the preseason expectation of 23,000 Chinook, and brought the total Chinook catch to a total of 97,664 (89%) out of an expected 109,450 fish.

#### Coho Fisheries

Nine 12-hour commercial fishing periods targeting coho occurred from October 1 through October 21 in Zones 1-3 with a 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-inch tangle-net mesh restriction. Fishers landed 18,960 hatchery coho and 2,066 Chinook. Deliveries ranged from 17 to 39 per period.

Agency observers' onboard commercial fishing boats that participated in the tangle-net coho fisheries monitored 262 drifts from 64 boats. Of the 1,520 coho observed, 83% were marked, which was very high and exceeded expectations, although mark rates on coho are generally highest later in the season. The observed handle of 20 steelhead (0.016 steelhead per marked

coho) was low. The observed immediate mortality rate was 14.5% compared to 6.9% in the 2013 fishery, and may have been due to warmer water (65°F vs 61°F) this fall.

Thirteen 12-hour commercial fishing gillnet periods targeting coho occurred from October 9 through October 31 in Zones 1-3 with a 6-inch mesh restriction. Fishers landed 46,284 coho and 2,143 Chinook. Deliveries ranged from 19 to 89 per period.

Total take in coho-directed fisheries was about 66,950 coho (including release mortality in the tangle-net fisheries), which was 26% higher than expectations based on the preseason run size.

*Select Area (Off-channel)*

Select Area fall commercial fisheries were open in Youngs Bay, Tongue Point/South Channel, Blind/Knappa Sloughs, and Deep River (Washington). The general season was from August through October.

Landings in fall Select Area fisheries were excellent. Coho landings were the highest ever recorded, at nearly 150% of the previous high catch in 2003. Chinook harvest was the highest since 1988. The average price per pound decreased by approximately 33% from 2013, possibly due to the high total harvest in 2014 fall fisheries. The large coho return was a result of very good smolt-to-adult survival. Smolt releases contributing to the 2014 Select Area coho return were only 9% larger than base production levels.

*Pilot Mainstem Seine Fishery*

A 22-day pilot research seine fishery was implemented during August 19 - September 30 to address research-related questions regarding implementation of this new commercial fishery. Therefore, mortalities on ESA-listed stocks for this fishery were applied to the allowable impacts reserved for research rather than being subtracted from commercial fishing impacts. Because research impacts are limited, the fishery was restricted in scope in order to provide a reasonable economic return for participants. A total of 10 fishers (four purse and six beach) were randomly drawn from a pool of 45 Washington and Oregon applicants (15 purse and 30 beach).

The fishery was operated under an Individual Fisher Quota (IFQ) system that limited allowable steelhead handle and the number of adult Chinook and coho that could be kept and sold. Sales of jack Chinook and jack coho were allowed but did not count toward quotas. IFQs by gear type are shown in the following table:

<b>2014 Summary of quotas assigned to the lower Columbia River pilot seine fishery</b>						
Gear	Chinook (kept)		Coho (kept)		Steelhead (handle)	
	Individual	Total	Individual	Total	Individual	Total
Beach	500	3,000	250	1,500	360	2,160
Purse	750	3,000	450	1,800	360	1,440
Sum		6,000		3,300		2,600

To limit mortalities of LCN tule Chinook and lower Columbia River natural coho, allowable sales were limited to marked fish only. Regulations required unmarked salmon and all steelhead to be released. The fishery was observed by agency staff at a rate of 100%.

Combined landings for the fishery totaled 2,439 adult and 355 jack Chinook and 1,031 adult and 39 jack coho (see table below). Landings varied widely among fishers. Beach seiners landed 0-

95% of their adult Chinook IFQs and 0-92% of adult coho IFQs. Purse seiners landed 4-94% of their adult Chinook IFQs and 0-61% of adult coho IFQs.

An additional 7,642 unmarked Chinook, unmarked coho, and steelhead were released. Mark rates by species were low for Chinook (38%), very low for coho (32%), and average for steelhead (66%). Catch results by seine type are shown in the following table:

2014 Summary of kept and released catch in fall Columbia River pilot seine fishery									
	Kept				Released				
	<u>Chinook</u>		<u>Coho</u>		<u>Chinook</u>		<u>Coho</u>		Steelhead
	Adult	Jack	Adult	Jack	Adult	Jack	Adult	Jack	
Beach	1,133	204	489	20	1,425	209	902	28	456
Purse	1,306	151	542	19	2,620	386	1,319	50	247
Total	2,439	355	1,031	39	4,045	595	2,221	78	703
	3,864 kept (33.6% of salmonid handle)				7,642 released (66.4% of salmonid handle)				

The average weight of Chinook landed in seines was 20% less than Chinook landed in the mainstem gillnet fishery, while coho were similar in weight. The observed ratio of about 3 steelhead-per-10 marked adult Chinook was similar to pre-season expectations. Based on post-fishery interviews with participants, low mark rates resulting in a high percentage of the catch being released and high start-up and operational costs were the most significant issues encountered in the fishery.

Summary of Recreational Catch and Effort; Summary of Commercial Ex-Vessel Value

One of the Guiding Principles in Washington Commission Policy C-3620 reads “in a manner that is consistent with conservation and does not impair the resource, seek to enhance the overall economic well-being and stability of Columbia River fisheries”.

Recreational fishery objectives include season stability and duration. The 2014 sport fisheries included some in-season adjustments from pre-season planned structure, but overall were successful in meeting recreational objectives. **The total salmon and steelhead angler trips in the lower Columbia River were a record high.**

2014 Lower Columbia River Sport - Angler Trips and Harvest				
Fishery	Trips	Chinook	Coho	Sockeye
Winter/Spring	145,600	15,700		
Summer	53,700	2,400		900
Buoy 10	107,700	30,000	65,300	
Fall LCR	143,900	27,600	6,300	
<b>LCR Total</b>	<b>450,900</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>71,600</b>	<b>900</b>

2014 Columbia River Above BON Sport - Angler Trips and Harvest				
Fishery	Trips	Chinook	Coho	Sockeye
Spring Z6/Snake R		3,600		
Summer Z6/>PRD		3,400		30,900
Fall Z6		9,200	2,000	
Hanford Reach	41,300	24,900		
<b>Above BON total</b>	<b>41,300</b>	<b>29,470</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>30,900</b>

An economic measure for commercial fisheries considered during the Columbia River fisheries reform process was ex-vessel value, i.e. the price per pound paid to fishers upon delivery of their catch. In general, the expectation was that during the transition period (2013 through 2016), the overall ex-vessel value of commercial landings was to be at least similar to recent years, with the potential for some increase associated with off-channel enhancements, although it was recognized that there may be significant variation due to annual variation in the number of each salmon stock returning to the Columbia River.

The preliminary 2014 ex-vessel value (displayed below) totals over \$3.7 million from mainstem fisheries and nearly \$2.5 million from Select Area fisheries. These values are above recent year average. The increased Columbia River commercial value is primarily associated with the large fall Chinook harvest, in particular the mainstem large-mesh gillnet fishery upstream of the Lewis River, where commercial fisheries focused on the record high upriver bright Chinook return. The coho harvest in the mainstem and Oregon Select Areas was also above average due to the large return of Columbia River hatchery coho in 2014. These values compare with 2013 values of \$3.4 million from mainstem fisheries and \$2.3 million from Select Area fisheries.

<b>2014 Columbia River Mainstem Commercial Ex-vessel Value</b>				
	Chinook	Coho	Sturgeon	Total
Winter/Spring	\$320,521		\$0	\$320,521
Summer	\$171,190		\$0	\$171,190
Early Fall	\$1,591,883	\$8,367	\$0	\$1,600,200
Late Fall	\$1,061,256	\$600,891	\$0	\$1,662,147
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,144,800</b>	<b>\$609,258</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$3,754,058</b>

*All data preliminary*

<b>2014 Columbia River Select Area Commercial Ex-vessel Value</b>				
	Chinook	Coho	Sturgeon	Total
Winter/Spring	\$253,105		\$0	\$253,105
Summer	\$101,151		\$0	\$101,151
Fall	\$497,219	\$1,620,781	\$0	\$2,118,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$851,475</b>	<b>\$1,620,781</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,472,256</b>

*All data preliminary*

## 2015 Fishery Planning and Policy Implementation

Following is a general schedule that highlights the processes for managing 2015 Columbia River fisheries in the Washington/Oregon concurrent jurisdictional waters. These events capture main events, some scheduled, and some anticipated for 2015. There will undoubtedly be additional processes not listed here; including regular TAC meetings, special issue-specific *U.S. v. Oregon* meetings, Columbia River Advisor meetings, WDFW and ODFW coordination meetings, constituent meetings, ESA coordination with NOAA, and further dialogue between the Departments and the Washington and Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commissions.

**January 14- Columbia River Commercial Advisors:** Staff and Advisors meet to discuss outlook and options for spring Chinook seasons and recommendations for rules to implement seine fisheries in 2014.

**January 14- Columbia River Recreational Advisors:** Staff and Advisors meet to discuss outlook and options for spring Chinook season and allocation of upriver spring Chinook recreational ESA impacts and harvest above and below Bonneville Dam, and in the lower Snake River.

**January 28- Columbia River Compact:** Meet to review stock status and set initial non-Indian spring Chinook recreational seasons, commercial Select Area seasons, and commercial spring season planning guidance.

**January 30-31- U.S. v. Oregon Quarterly Policy Meeting:** Parties meet to review several fishery and production related policy issues, including discussions concerning technical and policy aspects of management of 2015 fisheries. The Policy Committee will receive reports from the Technical Advisory Committee regarding technical issues concerning monitoring and management of the fisheries. Status of the seine fishery mortality study will be discussed in this forum.

**February- Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission:** The Department will present the results of the 2014 pilot seine fishery to the Fish Committee.

**March- U.S. v. Oregon Quarterly Policy Meeting:** Parties will meet to review on-going fisheries and pre-season fishery planning and discuss other Management Agreement issues, including schedule and agenda for re-negotiation of the 2008-17 *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement.

**March/April- NOF process:** develop plans for summer and fall fisheries in the ocean and Columbia River. This process will include planning for selective commercial and recreational fisheries, including pilot fall seine fisheries.

**March-June- Columbia River Compact:** will conduct several in-season management hearings to regulate treaty Indian and non-Indian spring Chinook fisheries

**May- U.S. v. Oregon Quarterly Policy Meeting:** Parties will work through on-going issues including conduct of 2014 fisheries and continue discussions concerning re-negotiation of the 2008-17 *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement.

**June- Columbia River Compact:** will meet to set initial recreational and commercial summer Chinook and sockeye seasons for treaty Indian and non-Indian fisheries.

**June-July- Columbia River Compact:** will conduct several in-season hearings to modify summer seasons as necessary.

**July- Columbia River Compact:** will meet to set initial early fall Chinook mainstem and Select Area commercial and treaty-Indian fisheries with guidance from North of Falcon planning process. Non-Indian commercial mainstem seine fisheries are expected to be implemented with Washington Experimental Fishery permits issued by the WDFW Director and ESA permit from NOAA.

**August- Columbia River Compact:** will conduct in-season hearings to adjust recreational, commercial, and treaty-Indian fisheries as necessary based on in-season data.

**August- U.S. v. Oregon Quarterly Policy Meeting:** Parties will work through on-going issues including conduct of 2015 fisheries and re-negotiation of the 2008-17 *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement.

**September- Columbia River Compact:** will meet to review TAC update of run-sizes, set late fall commercial and treaty Indian seasons, and consider modification or extensions of the recreational seasons. Several additional Compacts will occur to review in-season information and adjust fisheries as necessary.

**October- Columbia River Compact:** will meet as necessary to adjust coho directed commercial season and treaty Indian late fall seasons.

**November- U.S. v. Oregon Quarterly Policy Meeting:** Parties will work through on-going issues including conduct of 2015 fisheries and re-negotiation of the 2008-17 *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement.

**December-** WDFW and ODFW staff will meet with Commercial and Recreational Advisors to review 2015 actual salmon and steelhead returns, fisheries performance, and pre-season spring and summer salmon forecasts for 2016. Staff will also attend the annual Northwest Sport Fishing Industry Association (NSIA) meeting and the annual Salmon for All (SFA) meeting.

Annual Commission Report - The Department's review of 2015 fisheries and policy C-3620 implementation will include the results of the commercial seine fishery, and a review of the requirements for issuing 2016 Experimental Fishery permits.