

**OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 6  
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing  
April 6, 2015**

<b><i>Fisheries under Consideration:</i></b> Non-Indian Mainstem Commercial Salmon
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*Stock status and management guidelines for 2015 Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #2a (January 28, 2015).*

- Adult Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam through April 5 totals 2,588 fish. Based on the pre-season forecast and 5-year average timing, about 700 fish would be expected at Bonneville Dam by this date. The (5-yr ave) 50% passage date at Bonneville Dam is May 7.
- Winter steelhead abundance typically peaks in mid-March, then declines as the fish move into the tributaries. Passage data indicates the run is tracking within expectations.
- Prior to a run size update the number of upriver spring Chinook (kept plus release mortalities) available to the mainstem commercial fishery is 1,760 adult fish. An additional 4,000 Willamette hatchery spring Chinook are available to commercial fisheries, but access to these fish is constrained by the commercial upriver Chinook allocation.
- Test fishing has occurred once a week since March 15 to index Chinook and steelhead abundance and Chinook stock ratios. All test fishing is conducted with tangle net gear, and has occurred in Zones 2-3.

<b>2015 Spring Chinook Observation Summary_ All data preliminary</b>														
						<b>Chinook</b>						<b>Steelhead</b>		
Fishery	Month	Date	(inches)	# of	Zones	Handle	Mark	%	Chin/ Drift	Chin/ Sthd	Sthd/ Drift	Total Sthd	Mark Rate	
			Mesh				Drifts	Upriver						
Test	March	15-16	4.25	16	2-3	3	100%	67%	0.2	0.4	0.4	7	29%	
Test	March	22	4.25	16	2-3	14	86%	64%	0.9	0.6	1.6	25	44%	
Test	March	29	4.25	18	2-3	58	86%	63%	3.2	3.2	1.0	18	33%	
FullFleet	March	31	4.25	84	1-5	83	87%	73%	1.0	4.4	0.2	19	42%	
Test	Apr	5	4.25	23	2-3	59	83%	66%	2.6	3.7	0.7	16	50%	

- A seven-hour fishing period occurred on March 31 in Zones 1-5. Mesh size was restricted to 4¼-inch maximum mesh size. Landings were less than expected, totaling 980 Chinook from 94 deliveries. Upriver fish represented around 76% of the catch. Average weight for Chinook was 12 pounds per fish. Average ex-vessel value was about \$10 per pound.
- Based on landing to date, an estimated 1,000 upriver Chinook, or 57% of the pre-update commercial quota remains available. Considering expected mark rates and upriver Chinook stock proportions, staff is estimating about 1,200 total Chinook remain available for commercial harvest.
- Staff has considered two options for the non-treaty commercial fishery prior to a run update.
  - Short fishing period: Based on test fishing results (2.6 kept Chinook/drift) the period would need to be no more than four hours in duration under normal assumptions. Due to the volatile nature of Chinook abundance in early April and full fleet efficiency, catch

projections would likely have a wide range. This option poses the highest risk of exceeding the remaining upriver quota. Due to the short duration of the fishery, setting equitable hours for the fleet will be challenging.

- Landing limit: A second option is to implement landing limits on a per vessel basis, similar to what was used in 2011 and 2013. This proved to be a useful tool when harvestable fish were limited and Chinook abundance was high. All other regulations typically in place for spring season fisheries would remain in place (recovery boxes, drift times, etc.). Landing limits would be based on the remaining balance (all stocks) divided by the expected number of participating vessels. The biggest challenge for this approach is determining the number of vessels expected to participate and the stock composition of the kept catch.

- Given the two options, Staff is recommending the following season:

<i>Joint Staff Recommendations- Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Fishery</i>		
Season:	10:00 AM to 6:00 PM Tuesday April 7, 2015	(8 hours)
Area:	Zones 1-5	
Sanctuaries:	Grays River, Elochoman-B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, Lewis-B, Sandy and Washougal.	
Allowable Sales:	Adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon and shad. Landing limits in place: A maximum of eight (8) adult adipose fin clipped Chinook may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel. The first eight (8) adult hatchery fish must be retained and no additional drifts may be conducted once the Chinook limit has been retained. Jacks (Chinook less than 24-inches) do not count against the adult landing limit.	
Gear:	Drift nets only. 4¼-inch maximum mesh size (tangle net). Single-wall multi-filament net only. Monofilament tangle nets are not allowed.  Mesh size is determined by placing three consecutive meshes under hand tension, and the measurement is taken from the inside of one vertical knot to the inside of the opposite vertical knot of the center mesh. Hand tension means sufficient linear tension to draw opposing knots of meshes into contact.  <u>Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms.</u> There are no restrictions on the use of slackers or stringers to slacken the net vertically. There are no restrictions on the hang ratio. The hang ratio is used to horizontally add slack to the net and is determined by the length of the web per length of the corkline.  Net length may be increased from 150 to 175 fathoms for nets constructed with a steelhead excluder panel, weedlines, or droppers. An optional use of a steelhead excluder panel of mesh may be hung between the corkline and the 4¼" maximum mesh size tangle net. The excluder panel web must be a minimum mesh size of 12" stretched measure when taut under hand tension. Monofilament mesh is allowed for the excluder panel only. The excluder panel must be a minimum of five feet in depth and must not exceed ten feet in depth as measured from the corkline to the upper margin of the tangle net mesh as the net hangs naturally from a taut corkline. Weedlines or droppers (bobber type) may be used in place of the steelhead excluder panel. A weedline-type excluder means the net is suspended below the corkline by lines of no less than five feet in length between the corkline and the upper margin of the tangle net. A dropper-type excluder means the entire net is suspended below the surface of the water by lines of no less than five feet in length extending from individual surface floats to a submersed corkline. The corkline cannot be capable of floating the net in its entirety (including the leadline) independent of the attached floats. Weedlines or droppers must extend a minimum of five feet above the 4¼" maximum mesh size tangle net. Tangle nets constructed with a steelhead excluder panel, weedlines, or droppers must have two red corks at each end of the net,	

as well as the red corks as required under subsection (1)(f)(ii) of this section.

Red corks are required at 25-fathom intervals, and red corks must be in contrast to the corks used in the remainder of the net.

Multi net rule in place: Nets not specifically authorized for use in these areas may be onboard a vessel if properly stored. A properly stored net is defined as a net on a drum that is fully covered by a tarp (canvas or plastic) and bound with a minimum of ten revolutions of rope with a diameter of 3/8 (0.375) inches or greater.

Regulations:

**Soak times** are defined as the time elapsed from when the first of the gillnet web is deployed into the water until the gillnet web is fully retrieved from the water, must not exceed 45 minutes.

**Recovery Box:** Each boat will be required to have on board two operable recovery boxes or one box with two chambers. Each chamber of the recovery box(es) must include an operating water pumping system capable of delivering a minimum flow of 16 gallons per minute, not to exceed 20 gallons per minute of freshwater per chamber. Each box and chamber and associated pump shall be operating during any time that the net is being retrieved or picked. Each chamber of the recovery box must meet the following dimensions as measured from within the box: the inside length measurement must be at or within 39 ½ inches to 48 inches; the inside width measurements must be at or within 8 to 10 inches; and the inside height measurement must be at or within 14 to 16 inches. Each chamber of the recovery box must include a water inlet hole between ¾ inch and 1 inch in diameter, centered horizontally across the door or end wall of the chamber and 1¾ inches from the floor of the chamber. Each chamber of the recovery box must include a water outlet hole that is a least 1½ inches in diameter located on either the same or opposite end as the inlet. The center of the outlet hole must be located a minimum of 12 inches above the floor of the box or chamber. The fisher must demonstrate to WDFW and ODFW employees, fish and wildlife enforcement officers, or other peace officers, upon request, that the pumping system is delivering the proper volume of fresh river water into each chamber.

All sturgeon, non-adipose fin-clipped salmon, and steelhead must be released immediately to the river with care and with the least possible injury to the fish, or placed into an operating recovery box.

Any salmonid that is bleeding or lethargic must be placed in the recovery box prior to being released. All fish placed in recovery boxes must be released to the river prior to landing or docking.

**Observer program:** As a condition of fishing, owners or operators of commercial fishing vessels must cooperate with department observers or observers collecting data for the department, when notified by the observer of his or her intent to board the commercial vessel for observation and sampling during the fishery. In addition, cooperation with department personal prior to a fishing period is expected.

**Live Capture workshop:** Only licensed Columbia River commercial fishers that have completed the required state-sponsored workshop concerning live-capture commercial fishing techniques may participate in this fishery. At least one fisher on each boat must have live-capture certification.

**Lighted Buoys:** Nets that are fished at any time between official sunset and official sunrise must have lighted buoys on both ends of the net unless the net is attached to the boat. If the net is attached to the boat, then one lighted buoy on the opposite end of the net from the boat is required.

**24-hour** quick reporting is in effect for Washington buyers (WAC 220-69-240(14)(d)).

- The estimated kept catch is 1,000 Chinook based on 135 deliveries.
- If the period is adopted, season total Chinook catch is expected to total 1,701 upriver fish (kept and release mortalities) which represents 97% of the catch balance allowed pre-update and about 60% of the ESA impact allowed pre-update.
- Season total wild winter steelhead release mortalities are expected to total 64 fish which represents 20% of the 2.00% ESA impact limit allowed.

### **Future Meetings**

- A Joint State hearing is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. April 8, 2015 via teleconference. The hearing may occur tomorrow (April 7) if necessary.
- Agenda items will include:
  - Update for the ongoing Lower Columbia River recreational fishery
  - Consider a summer season recreational fishery for white sturgeon retention in Bonneville Pool
  - Consider regulations to allow only hand-casting from the Washington bank of the Columbia River in Bonneville Pool when the area is open for spring Chinook.
  - Chinook possession limit in Zone 6 Reservoirs.