

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 10
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
March 30, 2017

<i>Fisheries under Consideration:</i> Recreational salmon downstream of Bonneville Dam

Stock status and management guidelines for 2017 Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #5 (February 23, 2017).

- Adult Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam through March 27 totals 14 fish. Based on the pre-season forecast and 5-year average timing, about 200 fish would be expected at Bonneville Dam by this date. The (5-yr ave) 50% passage date at Bonneville Dam is May 7.
- Test fishing conducted on March 26 indicates Chinook abundance in the lower mainstem Columbia is increasing, with 3.1 Chinook per drift observed compared to 1.7 per drift on March 19. The peak rate observed in 2016 was 2.7 Chinook per drift (April 3rd)
- Columbia River conditions as measured at Bonneville Dam are currently much higher, colder, and more turbid than recent 5-year averages for late March. Current outflow is 447 kcfs, which is twice the average of 220 kcfs. Water temperature currently measures 44.0° F, which is colder than the average of 45.2° F. Visibility is 1.0 feet compared to the average of 4.7 feet. The river stage at Vancouver is currently 17.6 feet (flood stage is 16.0 feet) and is forecasted to crest at 17.9 feet on March 31.

Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Fishery - Below Bonneville Dam

- The lower Columbia River (LCR) recreational spring Chinook fishery is currently open through Thursday April 6.
- Due to extremely poor fishing conditions, kept catch and upriver mortalities through late March are well below pre-season modeling. The estimated Chinook catch through Sunday March 26 is 53 kept adult fish and 6 released (~25 upriver mortalities) from 8,305 angler trips compared to an expectation of 1,575 kept (1,150 upriver mortalities) from 33,900 angler trips based on pre-season modeling. Modeling output extended through March 29 expected 3,375 (2,400 upriver mortalities) from 45,750 angler trips. Steelhead catch through March 26 has also been very low with 14 fish kept and 38 released.
- Given current river conditions, it is highly unlikely the LCR recreational fishery will achieve the pre-run update allocation of upriver Chinook mortalities (6,905) during the currently scheduled season. However, it is difficult to project catch and impacts beyond April 6 without a better understanding of when fishing conditions will improve and how the fishery will perform when they do.
- Based on current river conditions and catch rates, as compared to allowable upriver mortalities prior to the run update, staff believes the ongoing fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam can be extended beyond April 6.

<i>Staff Recommendation: 2017 LCR Recreational Spring Chinook Fishery</i>	
Season:	Friday April 7 through Monday April 10 (4 days)
Area:	<p>Buoy 10 upstream to Beacon Rock (boat and bank) plus bank angling only from Beacon Rock upstream to the Bonneville Dam deadline.</p> <p>Legal upstream boat boundary defined as: “A deadline marker on the Oregon bank (approximately four miles downstream from Bonneville Dam Powerhouse One) in a straight line through the western tip of Pierce Island to a deadline marker on the Washington bank at Beacon Rock.”</p> <p><u>Except</u> no angling is allowed within a closure area near the mouth of the Lewis River. This closure area is defined as: A line from a marker on the lower end of Bachelor Island through USCG buoy Red #4 to the Oregon shore, downstream to a line from the lower (north) end of Sauvie Island across the Columbia River to the downstream range marker (0.7 miles downstream of the Lewis River) and continuing along the wing jetty to the Washington shore.</p>
Daily Bag limit:	<p>Two adult salmonids per day, but only one may be a Chinook.</p> <p>Only adipose fin-clipped fish may be kept. All other permanent regulations apply.</p>
Additional Rules:	<p>Effective through May 15, the Columbia River will be open for retention of adipose fin-clipped steelhead from Buoy 10 to the Highway 395 Bridge and shad from Buoy 10 to Bonneville Dam <u>only</u> during days and in areas open for retention of adipose fin-clipped spring Chinook.</p> <p>Effective through June 15, when the recreational fishery below Bonneville Dam is open to retention of Chinook, the salmonid daily bag limit in Oregon and Washington Select Areas will be the same as mainstem Columbia River bag limits. On days when the mainstem Columbia River fishery is <u>closed</u> to Chinook retention, permanent salmonid bag limit regulations apply.</p>

- This recommendation would add four days to the currently scheduled season.
- Although staff cannot accurately predict the catch (and associated upriver mortalities) for the proposed extension at this time, the estimated savings in upriver mortalities through March 29 (~2,350) is approximately sufficient to cover the proposed extension even if catch rates during April 7-10 season extension improve to match modeled results for that timeframe.

Future Meetings

- No hearings are scheduled at this time.