

COLUMBIA RIVER INTERTRIBAL FISH COMMISSION
JOINT STAFF REPORT - WINTER SHEET NO. 7
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
March 19, 2019

Fisheries Under Consideration: Treaty commercial gillnet
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Detailed information on stock status and management guidelines for Columbia River fisheries are presented in Joint Staff Reports, which are produced annually and available on-line. The most recent reports are the 2019 Sturgeon/Smelt Report (January 18, 2019) and the 2019 spring/summer report for Chinook, sockeye, steelhead and other species (February 8, 2019). Links to the on-line reports are: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/crc/> and <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/reports.asp>

STOCK STATUS

Sturgeon

- Sturgeon stock assessment information was presented in Winter Fact Sheet #1.
- The 2019 sturgeon commercial harvest guidelines for Treaty fisheries in Zone 6 are 500 fish for the Bonneville Pool, 415 for The Dalles Pool, and 175 fish for the John Day Pool.
- There is not a specific harvest guideline for the treaty subsistence catch of sturgeon, but these catches are accounted for and used in population assessments. Subsistence harvest typically occurs in association with fisheries targeting other species and is generally low. In 2018, the subsistence harvest was just 89 in all three Zone 6 reservoirs combined.

RIVER CONDITIONS

- The current water temperature at Bonneville Dam is gradually warming but is still only 39 degrees F.
- Flows yesterday at Bonneville Dam were just under 130Kcfs which is lower than average for this time of year but not outside of the range in the last 10 years.

2019 TREATY INDIAN WINTER FISHERIES

- A setline fishery occurs each January in all three Zone 6 pools under permanent regulations. This fishery generally has low effort and catch.
- The tribes typically set winter season gillnet fisheries during the period between February 1 and March 21. In 2018, the fishing period was extended to March 24.
- The tribes set initial winter season gillnet openings through February 13 in the two upper pools based on past catch rates. The fisheries were extended until 6:00 PM on February 19. The John Day Pool fishery was further extended until February 27. The Bonneville Pool fishery began on March 1 and is currently scheduled to close on March 20. Catch rates generally start out slow and increase over time as water temperature and effort increase.
- Preliminary Harvest information through March 18 is shown in the table below.

	January Setline	Winter Gillnet	Total	Guideline	Remaining
Bonneville	43	125	168	500	332
The Dalles	11	435	446	415	-31
John Day	20	44	64	175	111
Total	74	604	678		

- The winter steelhead count at Bonneville totals 1,100 from November 1 through March 16. The spring chinook count is 3. The public should anticipate some delay in the public distribution of dam counts from the Federal Hydro-power projects as the USACE transitions to a new contractor that will be making the counts.
- Two steelhead and no salmon have been harvested to date.
- The tribes have updated our modeled catch for the commercial gillnet opening in the Bonneville Pool. Catch rates to date have remained moderate. Even if catch rates increase this week, tribal staff do not expect the guideline will be reached by March 23.
- The four Columbia River treaty tribes will or have adopted regulations consistent with the following:

<i>2019 Treaty Indian Winter Season Commercial Gillnet Fishery</i>	
Season:	Extend the ongoing fishery through 6 PM Saturday March 23
Area:	The Bonneville pool only
Gear:	Gillnets with no minimum mesh size restriction
Sanctuaries:	Closed areas include standard dam and river mouth areas applicable to gillnet gear
Allowable Sales:	Salmon (any species), steelhead, shad, yellow perch, bass, walleye, catfish, and carp may be sold or retained for subsistence. Sturgeon from 38 to 54 inches fork length in the Bonneville Pool may be sold or kept for subsistence purposes. Fish landed during the open periods are allowed to be sold after the period concludes.
Additional:	24-hour quick reporting required for Washington buyers, pursuant to WAC 220-352-315 except that landings must be reported within 24-hours of completing the fish ticket.

- In January the Compact took action on the Zone 6 Platform and Hook and Line fishery which allowed commercial sales through March 21st. Because the tribes are extending the winter gillnet fishery through March 23, allowing sales for the Zone 6 platform and hook and line fishery should also be extended through the same time period for consistency.

<i>2019 Treaty Indian Winter Platform and Hook and Line Fishery</i>	
Season:	Extend the ongoing period allowing sales to 6 PM Saturday March 23. Subsistence fishing continues after March 23.
Area:	All of Zone 6
Gear:	Hoop Nets, Dip Nets, Hook and Line
Sanctuaries:	Closed areas include standard closed standard dam and river mouth areas applicable to platform and hook and line gear
Allowable Sales:	Salmon (any species), steelhead, shad, yellow perch, bass, walleye, catfish, and carp may be sold or retained for subsistence. Sturgeon from 38-54 inches fork length in the Bonneville Pool may be sold or kept for subsistence purposes. Sturgeon within the legal size limit and caught in the platform and hook and line fishery may only be sold if caught

during the open period and open pool of an open gillnet fishery. Fish landed during the open periods are allowed to be sold after the period concludes.

Additional: 24-hour quick reporting required for Washington buyers, pursuant to WAC 220-352-315 except that landings must be reported within 24-hours of completing the fish ticket.

- Tribal staff will work with state staff to monitor the catch and account for commercial fish tickets along with any direct to public sales and report total harvest.
- The tribes will assess the sturgeon harvest totals along with their spring ceremonial permit fishing plans and will notify the states if any additional winter gillnet fishing time is appropriate. Typically, the tribes begin ceremonial permit fishing about the last week in March.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- The treaty tribes will notify the states if a Compact Hearing is needed in the near future to address treaty fisheries.