

## Agenda Item Summary

### BACKGROUND

#### **A New Fisheries Management and Reform Framework**

In August 2012, Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber asked the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) to initiate a public rulemaking process to consider a new fisheries management and reform framework for Columbia River recreational and non-tribal commercial fisheries. Consequently, the fish and wildlife commissions of Oregon and Washington established a Columbia River Fishery Management Workgroup (Workgroup) in September 2012 and tasked it with developing a set of recommendations for managing these fisheries in 2013 and beyond. In November 2012, the Workgroup unanimously endorsed, and subsequently forwarded to the Oregon and Washington commissions, recommendations for management strategies for Columbia River recreational and non-tribal commercial fisheries for 2013 and beyond (Attachment 2 - *Management Strategies for Columbia River Recreational and Commercial Fisheries: 2013 and Beyond*). Workgroup materials and public correspondence can be viewed at: [www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/LMCR\\_fisheries\\_mgmt\\_reform.asp](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/LMCR_fisheries_mgmt_reform.asp)

#### **Initial Rulemaking**

On December 7, 2012, the Commission held a rulemaking hearing to consider amending rules governing commercial and recreational fisheries in the Columbia River and tributaries (OAR Chapter 635, Divisions 004, 005, 006, 007, 014, 023, 042, and 500). At that hearing, the Commission heard public testimony on the Workgroup's recommendation and ultimately accepted an amended version of the recommendation and adopted administrative rules that implemented its guiding principles and management strategies. On January 12, 2013, the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted a policy (C-3620) establishing a new management framework for Columbia River salmon fisheries similar to that adopted by Oregon (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/commission/policies/c3620.html>). This policy included similar principles and management strategies adopted into rule by Oregon, and will be used to guide Washington's shared management responsibility for non-tribal Columbia River fisheries with Oregon.

#### **A Request for Judicial Review**

On January 4, 2013 a petition was filed with the Court of Appeals for the State of Oregon (Court) seeking judicial review of the validity of Oregon Administrative Rules 635-500-6700 through 635-500-6765 and requesting a determination declaring those rules invalid (*Fick v. ODFW*). Petitioners subsequently moved to stay enforcement of those rules pending disposition of the judicial review. On February 11, 2013, the Court granted the Petitioners' motion for the stay. However, in response to a motion filed by the Department stating its intent to reopen the rules to address the perceived procedural issues raised in the petition, the Court subsequently issued an order on February 25, 2013 holding judicial review of the challenged administrative rules in abeyance until May 31, 2013, but maintaining the stay prohibiting enforcement of the contested rules.

### **Subsequent Rulemaking**

On June 6, 2013, the Commission held a rulemaking hearing to reconsider rules it adopted in December 2012 governing commercial and recreational fisheries in the Columbia River and tributaries (OAR Chapter 635, Divisions 004, 005, 006, 007, 014, 023, 042, and 500). The rules opened for reconsideration were the same as those adopted by the Commission in December 2012. However, the information available to inform the Commission not only included that which was available in December, but additional considerations relating to the fiscal effect of the rules, as described in a revised Fiscal Impact Statement and report to the Commission by the Fiscal Impact Advisory Committee. In addition, the proposed rules made permanent the temporary rules put in place early in 2013 for sturgeon harvest management and barbless hooks. Following extensive public comment, the Commission re-adopted the rules put in place at the December hearing.

The rules adopted by the Commission in June 2013 are only one part of the new Columbia River fisheries management and reform framework, the implementation of which will require additional Commission rulemaking at the end of the transition period and adaptive management.

### **Legislative Actions**

Successful implementation of the new Columbia River fish management and reform framework required new legislation, which was passed and signed into law this past summer as Senate Bill 830. Among other things, the legislation:

1. Established policy objectives for the Columbia River fish management and reform rules: (a) optimize overall economic benefits to this state; (b) enhance the economic viability of Oregon's recreational and commercial fisheries and the communities that rely on these fisheries; (c) contribute to native fish conservation and recovery; (d) promote orderly fishery management with the state of Washington; and (e) provide consistency with agreements made with Indian Tribes pursuant to state or federal court orders.
2. Repealed ORS 509.216 which made it unlawful to take salmon and steelhead "by means of fixed fishing gear or seines in any waters of the state." The Commission is now authorized to allow the use of fixed gear and seines in Columbia River commercial fisheries to more selectively target the harvest of hatchery salmon without exceeding limits placed on the overall handling impacts to wild fish.
3. Established an Enhancement Fund to enhance fisheries, optimize economic benefits of fisheries and advance native fish conservation. In addition to \$1.5 million of General Fund appropriated to this fund, SB 830 provides the Commission the authority to establish by rule an annual and daily Columbia River Basin salmon, steelhead and sturgeon recreational fishing endorsement. The Commission acted on this authority in October 2013 establishing the additional recreational

fee at the limit authorized (\$9.75 per annual license and \$1 per day per daily license) beginning January 2014. This is expected to generate an additional \$2 million per full biennium for this fund.

4. Established a Transition Fund to provide financial assistance to individual commercial fishermen affected by the new Columbia River fish management and reform rules – including monies to help offset the cost to those individuals of alternative gear required for mainstem fisheries. SB 830 appropriates \$0.5 million General Fund to the Transition Fund. The Department will use the funds to provide grants to assist counties that implement county programs providing compensation to impacted commercial fishers.

#### **Status of Ongoing litigation**

On July 1, 2013, the petitioners in *Fick v. ODFW* moved to stay certain rules the Commission adopted in June 2013 governing commercial and recreational fisheries in the Columbia River and tributaries. The motion for a stay was denied in an order issued on October 22, 2013 by the Appellate Commissioner and adhered to in an order issued by the Oregon Court of Appeals on December 2, 2013. The focus of the litigation will now be on the petitioners' request for judicial review of the contested rules. The petitioners' brief was submitted to the Court of Appeals December 23, 2013; the Department has 49 days to file its response. We do not anticipate curtailment of implementing the rules during this judicial review.

#### **Initial Review of Fisheries Reforms**

OAR 635-500-6765, adopted by the Commission in June 2013, requires “an initial review in 2014 and... a comprehensive review at the end of the transition period [January 2017].” This agenda item constitutes that review and focuses on implementing the rules relative to off-channel enhancements, alternative gear research and fisheries.

#### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

- January 23, 2013- Met with the Columbia River Recreational Advisory Group and Columbia River Commercial Fishery Advisory Group.
- January 30 through October 22, 2013- Held twenty Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearings dealing with mainstem commercial and recreational fisheries downstream from Bonneville Dam.
- March 12 and April 1, 2013- Met with Columbia River commercial and recreational fisheries stakeholders as part of the North-of-Falcon process for planning summer and fall fisheries.
- October 29, 2013- Met with the Columbia River Commercial Fishery Advisory Group.
- December 12, 2013- Met with Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association.
- December 16, 2013- Met with the Columbia River Recreational Advisory Group.
- December 17, 2013- Met with the Columbia River Commercial Fishery Advisory Group.
- December 18, 2013- Met with Salmon for All.

- December 18, 2013- Held public meeting in Astoria to discuss planning for 2014 commercial seine fisheries.

## ISSUE 1

### NECESSARY LEGISLATION AND BUDGET

#### ANALYSIS

As discussed in the background section, SB830 was passed and signed into law last summer and provided necessary authorities and funding to begin implementing the Columbia River fish management and reform rules. This legislation, coupled with the agency's budget bill, resulted in an overall biennial budget of approximately \$5 million to help implement the Commission rules. This funding is consistent with the agency request and is adequate to fully support rule implementation during this biennium.

The legislation also established a Columbia River Enhancement Fund. As discussed in the background section, the Commission already established recreational fishing fees beginning in 2014 to augment the \$1.5 million General Fund appropriation for the Enhancement Fund. The Agency has implemented these recreational fishing fees for 2014 and continues to provide extensive outreach to the public and vendors to aid implementation.

Senate Bill 830 also established a Transition Fund and provided \$0.5 million General Fund appropriation for the 2013-15 biennium. The legislation directs the Department to "establish and implement a Columbia River fisheries transition program" under which counties are provided grants from the Transition Fund to implement county programs to compensate qualified commercial fishers for economic harm resulting from Columbia River fisheries reforms and provide financial assistance to qualified commercial fishers to help offset costs associated with required fishing gear changes resulting from those same fisheries reforms.

The Department has begun the process of soliciting county participation and developing a framework for implementing the program. This will include county, commercial fisher and public input, culminating in Commission review and authorization of the program in spring 2014. In December 2013, staff held initial discussions with Clatsop County officials to gauge interest in and discuss approaches to establishing a county-based program. Most of the commercial fishers potentially affected by Columbia River fisheries reforms reside in the county. Additional discussions with Clatsop County are planned, as well as initial discussions with other Oregon counties that may have an interest in the program.

## ISSUE 2

### OFF-CHANNEL (SELECT AREA) ENHANCEMENTS

#### ANALYSIS

**Enhanced Production of Spring Chinook, Select Area Bright Fall Chinook and Coho in Existing Select Area (Off-Channel) Fisheries.** One of the policy objectives in rules adopted by the Commission in June 2013 is to enhance the economic benefits of off-channel commercial fisheries by "providing additional hatchery fish for release in off-channel areas by shifting currently available production, and where possible

providing new production... (OAR 635-500-6705(7)(a)).” Although not specified in rule, the Commission provided further guidance related to the numbers and stocks of hatchery fish that were to be released in off-channel (Select) areas. In the near term (2013 through 2016), the additional releases were to be as follows:

- a) 500,000 juvenile spring Chinook. Relocated from other hatchery programs.
- b) 600,000 juvenile coho. Relocated from other hatchery programs.
- c) 500,000 Select Area Bright (SAB) fall Chinook. Additional egg take to be reared and/or released at Big Creek and North Fork Klaskanine hatcheries.

The tables below summarize releases by stock and location in 2013 and what is planned for 2014.

Year		Hatchery Stock	Rearing Hatchery	Number Released	Release Month	Release Location
2013	Spring Chinook	South Santiam	South Santiam	153,674	March	Blind Slough
2013	Spring Chinook	Sandy	Sandy	133,990	March	Tongue Point
2013	Spring Chinook	Clackamas	Leaburg	101,260	March	Tongue Point
		TOTAL		388,924		
2013	Coho	Sandy	Bonneville	385,814	April	Tongue Point
2013	Coho	Sandy	Oxbow/Herman	200,463	May	Blind Slough
		TOTAL		586,277		
2013	SAB Fall Chinook	SAB Fall Chinook	N. Fork Klaskanine	481,663	July	N.Fork Klaskanine

Year		Hatchery Stock	Rearing Hatchery	Currently On-Hand	Release Month	Release Location
2014	Spring Chinook	Clackamas	Leaberg	187,608	March	Youngs Bay
2014	Spring Chinook	South Santiam	Leaberg	98,933	March	Blind Slough
2014	Spring Chinook	McKenzie	McKenzie	77,950	March	Tongue Point
2014	Spring Chinook	North Santiam	Marion Forks	143,468	March	Tongue Point
2014	Spring Chinook	Sandy	Marion Forks	173,038	March	Tongue Point
		TOTAL		680,997 <sup>1</sup>		
2014	Coho	Tanner	Oxbow/Herman	410,908	April	Tongue Point
2014	Coho	Tanner	Oxbow/Herman	220,000	May	Blind Slough
		TOTAL		630,908 <sup>2</sup>		
2014	SAB Fall Chinook	SAB Fall Chinook	N. Fork Klaskanine	820,000 <sup>3</sup>	July	N.Fork Klaskanine

<sup>1</sup> 680,997 juveniles on hand, expect 99% survival to release

<sup>2</sup> 630,908 juveniles on-hand, expect 99% survival to release

<sup>3</sup> 820,000 eggs on-hand, expect 90% survival to release as juveniles

The Department was on track to meet release expectations for spring Chinook in 2013 when the Commission rules were stayed by the Court of Appeals. This resulted in some of the smolts initially planned for release in off-channel areas instead having to be released into the Clackamas River to avoid mortalities resulting from delay. The Department was able to make up the majority of these fish from other sources and make releases in off-channel areas after coordinating with the Court.

Because of limitations associated with the number of returning adults the prior fall and subsequent survival of eggs, the additional number of juvenile Select Area Bright fall Chinook reared and released at the North Fork Klaskanine Hatchery in 2013 was slightly less (4%) than the 500,000 target.

Hatchery production for 2014 is on track to meet or exceed release targets for each of the stocks (spring Chinook, coho and Select Area Bright fall Chinook).

### **Evaluation of Opportunities to Expand Commercial Fishing Opportunity in Existing Select Area (Off Channel) Sites and Examine Feasibility of Establishing New Sites**

One of the policy objectives in rules adopted by the Commission in June 2013 is to enhance the economic benefits of off-channel commercial fisheries by “expanding existing seasons and boundaries in off-channel areas and/or establishing new off-channel areas... (OAR 635-500-6705(7)(b)).” Although some investigations are ongoing funded through the Department’s base budget, the primary funding for this research is from SB 830 and was not available until summer 2013.

#### **Existing Sites**

Opportunities to expand current seasons in existing Oregon Select Area (off-channel) sites primarily exist during the winter in Tongue Point/South Channel and in Knappa Slough. In 2013, fisheries were opened in these two sites from February 11 through March 12. Fishers harvested 70 Chinook and six sturgeon in Tongue Point/South Channel. Harvest from Knappa Slough could not be distinguished from Blind Slough because no on-board observers were present; although plans for 2014 include on-board observation.

Since fall 2011, test fishing in areas adjacent to existing Select Area (off-channel) sites has been conducted. Results are summarized in the table below. To determine if these sites are viable for expanded commercial fisheries, the stock composition of the catch must be evaluated to determine whether “mainstem” stocks are present. Because three years of test fishing has only recently been completed at only two sites (Grant Slough and Upper Prairie Channel) and only during the fall fishing period, the stock composition of the catch has not yet been determined.

Summary of Select Area Fisheries Expansion Test Fishing, 2011-2013					
Season	Site	Chinook	Coho	Steelhead	Sockeye
2011 Fall	Grant Slough	15	5	0	0
	Upper Prairie Channel	15	5	0	0
2012 Fall	Lower Prairie Channel	50	21	6	0
	Grant Slough	10	4	1	0
	Upper Prairie Channel	20	3	2	0
2013 Spring	Lower Prairie Channel	119	0	25	6
	Upper Prairie Channel	18	0	12	1
	Inner Youngs Bay	35	0	3	1
	Outer Youngs Bay	18	0	3	0
2013 Summer	Inner Youngs Bay	15	0	0	0
	Outer Youngs Bay	9	0	0	1
2013 Fall	Lower Prairie Channel	127	71	8	0
	Grant Slough	36	27	1	0
	Upper Prairie Channel	30	15	1	0
	Outer Youngs Bay	18	33	3	0
<b>Grand Total</b>		535	184	65	9

Plans for 2014 include continuing winter fisheries in Tongue Point/South Channel and Knappa Slough, including on-board observations. Test fishing will also continue in 2014 during the spring, summer and fall periods at all sites listed in the table above, except for Grant Slough and Upper Prairie Channel.

### **New Sites**

Efforts to identify new Select Area (off-channel) sites in Oregon waters of the Columbia River downstream from Bonneville Dam will begin in 2014. In 2013, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife began an evaluation of Cathlamet Channel as a potential new site in Washington waters of the Columbia River. Results from that evaluation are not yet finalized.

Efforts in Oregon in 2014 will focus on initial reconnaissance to identify candidate-sites for further evaluation. The reconnaissance effort will use past assessments of potential off-channel sites conducted in the 1990s and discussions with commercial fishers and fisheries management staff to narrow down the list to three top candidates.

Contracted fishers will test fish in the candidate sites in spring and fall 2014 to determine salmon stock composition and catch rates. Test fishing will occur from mid-March through mid-June and from September through October. During the reconnaissance effort staff will also confer with scientists in the region who have recently conducted or are currently conducting juvenile salmon and steelhead surveys downstream from Bonneville Dam to identify salmonid stocks that currently use the candidate sites.

## ANALYSIS

One of the policy objectives in rules adopted by the Commission in June 2013 is “develop and implement selective-fishing gear and techniques for commercial mainstem fisheries to optimize conservation and economic benefits consistent with mainstem recreational objectives...” (OAR 635-500-6705 (8)). Since 2009, Oregon and Washington fisheries managers have been evaluating different gear for use in Columbia River commercial fisheries. Department funding for this research is from base budget and federal Mitchell Act funds, and is in addition to funding appropriated and authorized through SB 830.

**Results to Date**

The gears tested to date are beach seines, purse seines, tangle nets, trolling gear, fish traps, and arrow nets. Some results to note from the table below include:

- a) Evaluations of purse and beach seines fished during the fall handled a large number of Chinook and coho and are viable gear for the selective harvest of these stocks (targeted hatchery fish) if long-term release mortality (for wild fish) proves to be within a biologically sustainable range. Evaluations of long-term release mortality by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife are on-going.
- b) Evaluations of purse and beach seines fished during the summer handled a large number of sockeye. Although most of these fish are non-listed upper Columbia river sockeye, this poses a potential problem since ESA-listed Snake River sockeye are mixed in and allowable take, including mortality of fish handled and released, is capped at 1% of the overall adult return to the mouth of the Columbia River.
- c) Evaluations of purse and beach seines fished during the fall handled a large number of steelhead. Certain stocks of steelhead are ESA-listed and allowable take, including mortality of fish handled and released, is capped at 2% of the adult return to the mouth of the Columbia River.

Gear	Season	Year	Adult Chinook			Adult Coho			Steelhead	Sockeye
			Catch (Total)	Catch (Marked Fish)	Catch per Set (Marked Fish)	Catch (Total)	Catch (Marked Fish)	Catch per Set (Marked Fish)		
Purse Seine	Late-Spring	2011	269	161	5.6	0	0	0.0	5	116
		2012	324	207	5.2	0	0	0.0	69	388
Purse Seine	Summer	2011	364	202	1.7	0	0	0.0	71	495
		2012	298	178	3.7	0	0	0.0	63	3,148
		2013	414	230	4.8	0	0	0.0	65	1,836
Beach Seine	Summer	2011	172	102	1.2	0	0	0.0	107	141
		2012	166	126	1.1	0	0	0.0	79	921
		2013	252	141	2.8	0	0	0.0	53	1,596
Purse Seine	Fall	2009	163	48	0.7	372	215	3.1	54	0
		2010	6,900	2,760	5.7	6,085	3,590	7.5	975	0
		2011	8,503	3,333	3.9	7,667	4,838	5.6	1,164	1
		2012	83	24	0.4	170	136	2.3	7	0
Beach Seine	Fall	2012	591	236	1.2	158	83	0.4	92	0
		2009	32	11	0.3	110	67	1.5	17	0
		2010	4,717	2,689	4.8	2,724	1,689	3.0	1,315	0
		2011	5,999	3,029	2.4	4,327	2,475	2.0	1,728	2
Tangle Net	Fall	2011	144	59	0.6	117	85	0.8	14	1
		2012	1,595	775	2.1	813	461	1.3	303	0
		2009	4	0	0.0	292	232	4.1	2	0
		2010	16	3	0.0	617	467	2.3	5	0
Trap	Fall	2011	25	6	0.0	304	231	1.5	7	0
		2009	1	0	0.0	34	26	1.8	0	0
Troll	Fall	2010	25	14	0.1	61	45	0.5	4	0
		2010	18	14	0.2	21	15	0.3	1	0
Arrow Net	Summer	2013	4	2	0.3	1	1	0.2	12	8
Sum			62,136	28,686	2.8	47,724	29,298	2.9	12,411	17,298

### Planned Work

Evaluations of six alternative commercial fishing gears are on-going and will continue in 2014 and beyond: coho tangle nets, beach and purse seines, a fish wheel, hook and line sampling, and arrow nets.

a) Coho Tangle Net:

- Monitoring and evaluation of the full-fleet pilot coho tangle net commercial fishery is planned for fall 2014.
- A 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the coho tangle net post-release mortality study is also planned for fall 2014

b) Purse and Beach Seine: Based on initial evaluations, seines tested during the summer were modified to reduce impingement of sockeye. A 2<sup>nd</sup> year of test fishing with the modified gear will be implemented during summer 2014 (mid-June to mid-July).

c) Fish Wheel: During late spring 2014 and 2015 (mid-May – mid-June) operation of a fish wheel functioning under a shad experimental gear permit will be monitored for species/stock composition, and condition of catch and by-catch.

d) Hook and Line: From mid-August to mid-September 2014 a commercial hook and line fishery feasibility study will be conducted to determine the catch rates, species/stock composition, and condition of fish.

e) Arrow nets: In 2013, Department personnel conducted a very limited feasibility study to determine catch rates and species/stock composition of arrow nets. A scaled up study will be implemented during mid-August to Mid-September 2014 with a contracted commercial fisherman.

ANALYSIS

One of the policy objectives adopted in rule (635-500-6705) by the Commission in June 2013 is “(5) For steelhead, salmon and sturgeon, prioritize recreational fisheries in the mainstem and commercial fisheries in off-channel areas of the lower Columbia River. Toward this end: a) Assign mainstem recreational fisheries a sufficient share of ESA-impacts and harvestable surplus to enhance current fishing opportunity and economic benefit. b) Assign commercial fisheries a sufficient share of the ESA-impacts and harvestable surplus to effectively harvest fish in off-channel areas and harvest surplus fish with selective techniques in the mainstem Columbia River.” This policy objective was followed by rules prescribing a phased shift in allocation among recreational and non-tribal commercial fisheries for 2013 and beyond (OAR 635-500-6715 through OAR 635-500-50).

The planned allocation shifts for 2013 were relatively modest to avoid significant economic harm to commercial fishers before adult salmon returned from enhanced off-channel production. As a result of the stay, Oregon entered into negotiations with Washington at the Columbia River Compact advocating similar allocations as 2012 for spring and summer mainstem fisheries, resulting in slightly higher allocation for commercial fishers and lower allocation for recreational fisheries than prescribed by rule (see table below).

Fishery	Allocation Under Rules Adopted in December 2012 and June 2013	Actual Allocation in 2013
<b>Spring Chinook</b>	Recreational Fisheries: 65% ESA-Impact Commercial Fisheries: 35% ESA-Impact	Recreational Fisheries: 60% ESA-Impact Commercial Fisheries: 35% ESA-Impact Held in Reserve: 5% ESA-Impact
<b>Summer Chinook</b>	Recreational Fisheries: 60% Harvestable Surplus Commercial Fisheries: 40% Harvestable Surplus	Recreational Fisheries: 55% Harvestable Surplus Commercial Fisheries: 45% Harvestable Surplus
<b>Tule Fall Chinook</b>	Recreational Fisheries: ≤70% ESA-Impact Commercial Fisheries: ≥30% ESA-Impact	Recreational Fisheries: 69% ESA-Impact Commercial Fisheries: 31% ESA-Impact
<b>Upriver Bright Fall Chinook</b>	Recreational Fisheries: ≤70% ESA-Impact Commercial Fisheries: ≥30% ESA-Impact	Recreational Fisheries: 44% ESA-Impact Commercial Fisheries: 56% ESA-Impact
<b>White Sturgeon</b>	Recreational Fisheries: 80% Harvestable Surplus Commercial Fisheries: 20% Harvestable Surplus	Recreational Fisheries: 80% Harvestable Surplus Commercial Fisheries: 20% Harvestable Surplus

It should be noted that for the fall period the recreational fisheries objectives set by OAR 635-500-6760 were met or exceeded in 2013. As such, as stated in OAR 635-500-6755, the final allocation of ESA impacts for tule fall Chinook and Upriver Bright fall Chinook reflects the management intent to provide additional opportunity for mainstem commercial fisheries.

ANALYSIS

**Preseason Planning**

In 2013, management guidelines for the harvest of upriver spring Chinook were based on forecasted run-sizes to the Columbia River mouth of 141,400 adult upriver spring Chinook and 59,800 Willamette spring

Chinook and catch-balance provisions under the *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement. The Columbia River Compact initially adopted the guidelines consistent with the rule adopted by the Commission at its December 2012 meeting. However, the guideline was modified after the Oregon Appellate Commissioner issued his order staying enforcement of the rule. This resulted in a slight decrease in the share allocated to recreational fisheries (60% v. 65%) and a slight increase in the share allocated to non-Indian commercial fisheries (<100 fish).

### **Actual Returns/Final Guidelines**

The actual return of adult upriver spring Chinook was about 123,100 or 87% of the pre-season forecast. Almost 113,000 adults and 43,000 jacks passed Bonneville Dam through June 15. The jack count was the third highest on record. Although run reconstruction work is still being completed for lower river tributaries, the estimated return of Willamette spring Chinook is 47,300. Because the actual returns were less than forecasted, the final management guidelines were less than originally anticipated.

### **Recreational Fisheries**

#### *Downstream from Bonneville Dam*

Seasons: Prior to a run-size update, 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. As a result of a Joint State Hearing, the fishery remained open March 1 through April 12 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 March 26, April 2, and April 9 to allow for possible commercial fishery openers.

After a run-size update, the fishery reopened May 25 through June 15 from Tongue Point upstream to Bonneville Dam. However, the area between Beacon Rock and Bonneville Dam was restricted to bank angling only until June 8. The bag limit was one adipose fin-clipped Chinook per day throughout the season.

Harvest/Angler Trips: An estimated 6,950 adult spring Chinook were kept and 2,666 released from 109,655 angler trips downstream of Bonneville Dam. These totals include 3,340 angler trips and 149 adult Chinook released during the May 16-24 steelhead only fishery below the I-5 Bridge. In addition, 687 jack Chinook and 1,880 steelhead were also kept. The catch rate averaged one adult Chinook kept for every 11 angler trips.

The final allocation to the recreational fishery downstream from Bonneville Dam under the *U.S. v. Oregon* catch balancing agreement was 6,168 adult upriver spring Chinook. Of this total, the fishery used 5,343 or 86.6% of its allocation.

### *Upstream of Bonneville Dam*

Seasons: Prior to the run-size update, anglers were allowed to retain spring Chinook from March 16 through May 5 from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Oregon/Washington border with a two adipose fin-clipped Chinook daily bag. After the run-size update, the fishery in this area reopened June 8 through 15 with a one adipose fin-clipped Chinook daily bag limit.

Harvest/Angler Trips: An estimated 4,230 angler trips retained 586 Chinook and 102 jack Chinook. An additional 273 adult Chinook were released. The catch rate averaged one adult Chinook kept for every 7 angler trips. In the Snake River, anglers kept 353 spring Chinook and released 128 fish.

As with the fishery downstream from Bonneville Dam, recreational anglers upstream from Bonneville Dam did not take their full allotment of adult upriver spring Chinook. The fisheries used 987 or 69.3% of the 1,425 fish they were allocated.

### **Non-Indian Commercial Fisheries**

#### *Mainstem*

Three 24-hour commercial fishing periods occurred from January 31 through February 7 in Zones 1-5 with a 9-9 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch mesh restriction. Fishers landed fifteen white sturgeon and no Chinook. Deliveries ranged from 2 to 4 per period.

Four six- to fourteen-hour commercial fishing periods occurred from April 9 through May 30 in Zones 1-5. For two of the openers (April 9 and May 15) fishers were required to use tangle nets ( $\leq 4\frac{1}{4}$ -inch mesh) to reduce release mortality. For the last two openers (May 22-23 and May 29-30) fishers were required to use large mesh ( $\geq 8$ -inch) to reduce steelhead handle. Combined landings totaled 1,914 adult and 293 jack spring Chinook, 274 white sturgeon, and 5,225 shad. Deliveries ranged from 47 to 130 per period.

The final allocation to the non-Indian mainstem commercial fishery under the *U.S. v. Oregon* catch balancing agreement was 2,439 adult upriver spring Chinook. Of this total, the fishery used 1,498 or 61.4% of its allocation.

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

Select Area winter and spring commercial fisheries were open in Youngs Bay, Tongue Point/South Channel, Blind/Knappa Sloughs, and Deep River (Washington). Participation and harvest are summarized below:

Site	Season	Dates	Days	Deliveries per period	Chinook	White sturgeon
Youngs Bay	Winter	Feb 11-Mar 25	18	0-28	331	5
Tongue Point/ South Channel.	Winter	Feb 11-Mar 12	9	0-9	70	6
Blind Slough	Winter	Feb 11-Apr 2	15	0-10	157	3
Knappa Slough		Feb 11-Mar 12	9	<5		
Deep River	Winter	Feb 11-Apr 2	15	0-4	72	3
Subtotal					<b>630</b>	<b>17</b>
Youngs Bay	Spring	Apr 18-Jun 14	29	8-78	4,306	62
Tongue Point/ South Channel	Spring	Apr 25-Jun 14	15	1-11	304	114
Blind Slough/ Knappa Slough	Spring	Apr 18-Jun 14	17	3-21	780	31
Deep River	Spring	Apr 18-Jun 14	17	0-4	52	5
Subtotal					<b>5,442</b>	<b>212</b>
Total					<b>6,072</b>	<b>229</b>

Harvest in Select Area fisheries slightly exceeded expectations given the lower than forecasted run size for spring Chinook.

## ISSUE 6

## 2013 FISHERIES FOR SUMMER CHINOOK AND SOCKEYE IN THE MAINSTEM COLUMBIA RIVER

### ANALYSIS

#### Preseason Planning

In 2013, management guidelines for the harvest of summer Chinook were based on forecasted run-sizes to the Columbia River mouth of 73,500 adults. The Columbia River Compact adopted guidelines that represented a compromise between the salmon policy adopted by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission and Oregon's policy given the Oregon Appellate Commissioner's order staying enforcement of the rule adopted by the Commission in December 2012. The result was a lesser share (~220 fish) allocated to recreational fisheries than would have otherwise occurred and an equally greater share allocated to commercial fisheries. The management guideline for sockeye was about 1,800 for recreational fisheries and non-Indian commercial, or one percent of the pre-season forecasted run size of 180,350.

#### Actual Returns/Final Guidelines

The actual return of adult summer Chinook was about 67,600 or about 92% of the pre-season forecast. Just over 63,500 adults and 17,000 jacks passed Bonneville Dam from June 16 through July 31. The jack count was the third highest since at least 1979. Based on actual returns, the management guidelines for the full summer season were about 12% less than pre-season. In contrast, the actual return of sockeye was 186,250, which was 103% of forecast. As a result, the guideline increased by about 3% to 1,860 fish.

#### Recreational Fisheries

##### *Downstream from Bonneville Dam*

Seasons: The recreational fishery downstream from Bonneville Dam was open for hatchery Chinook and sockeye retention June 16 through June 30. Sockeye retention reopened July 13 through July 31.

Harvest/Angler Trips: An estimated 2,058 adult hatchery Chinook and 510 sockeye were taken (including release mortalities) from 52,037

angler trips targeting Chinook, sockeye and steelhead downstream of Bonneville Dam. The catch rate for Chinook averaged one adult Chinook kept for every 14 angler trips.

The final allocation to the recreational fishery downstream from Bonneville Dam was 2,121 adult hatchery Chinook. Of this total, the fishery used 2,058 or about 97% of its allocation.

#### *Upstream of Bonneville Dam*

Seasons: Anglers were allowed to retain hatchery Chinook and sockeye from June 16 through July 31 upstream from Bonneville Dam.

Harvest: Anglers retained 30 hatchery Chinook and 10 sockeye. An additional 40 adult Chinook were released.

Anglers upstream from Bonneville Dam did not take their full allotment of adult hatchery Chinook. The fisheries used 34 or 6.9% of the 490 fish they were allocated.

### **Non-Indian Commercial Fisheries**

#### *Mainstem*

Two 8-hour commercial fishing periods occurred during summer 2013; June 16-17 and July 15-16. The fisheries occurred in Zones 1-5 with an 8-inch mesh restriction. Fishers landed 1,868 Chinook, 119 sockeye and 326 white sturgeon. Deliveries were 117 for the first period and 40 for the second.

The final allocation to the non-Indian mainstem commercial fishery was 2,145 adult summer Chinook. Of this total, the fishery used 1,868 or about 87% of its allocation.

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

Select Area summer commercial fisheries were open only in Youngs Bay. Six 48-hour periods occurred from June 19 through July 26. Fishers landed 1,992 Chinook, nine sockeye and 25 white sturgeon. Deliveries ranged from 39 to 99 per period.

## **ISSUE 7**

### **2013 FISHERIES FOR FALL CHINOOK AND COHO IN THE MAINSTEM COLUMBIA RIVER**

## **ANALYSIS**

#### **Preseason Planning**

In 2013, 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 678,640 adult fall Chinook (including 434,600 Upriver Brights, of which 31,600 are Snake River Wild stock) and 433,600 adult coho. They were also informed by modeling that allocated sufficient lower Columbia River tule fall Chinook ESA-impacts and Snake River Wild fall Chinook ESA-impacts to meet recreational fisheries objectives.

### **Actual Returns/Final Catch Allocations**

The actual return of adult fall Chinook is not yet final, but is expected to approach 1.2 million or about 177% of the pre-season forecast. Over 80% of the return is mid-Columbia and Upriver Bright fall Chinook. Just over 953,000 adults passed Bonneville Dam through December 17. Given the much larger-than-expected returns, the final catch allocations for adult Chinook were much higher than pre-season expectations.

### **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. Because of higher than expected catches, retention of unmarked Chinook was prohibited from August 23 through September 1. The fishery reopened on September 13, at which time anglers were again prohibited from keeping unmarked Chinook. However, the bag limit was increased to two Chinook. On September 26, the prohibition on keeping unmarked Chinook was removed.

Tongue Point to Warrior Rock: The fishery was open for Chinook retention on August 1 with a daily bag limit of two fish/one Chinook. However, retention of unmarked Chinook was prohibited from September 6 through September 25. On September 13, the bag limit was increased to two Chinook and on September 26, the prohibition on keeping unmarked Chinook was removed.

Warrior Rock to Bonneville Dam: The fishery was open for Chinook retention on August 1 with a daily bag limit of two fish/one Chinook. On September 13, the bag limit was increased to two Chinook.

Bonneville Dam to Highway 395 Bridge near Pasco, Washington: The fishery was open for Chinook retention on August 1 with a daily bag limit of two fish/two Chinook.

Tongue Point to Highway 395 Bridge near Pasco, Washington: On September 13, 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).

#### Harvest/Angler Trips:

Buoy 10 to Tongue Point: An estimated 22,800 Chinook and 8,000 hatchery coho were kept from 64,500 angler trips. An additional 16,600 Chinook and 7,300 coho were released. The catch rate averaged one adult Chinook kept for every 2.5 angler trips.

Given the much larger returns of Upriver Bright Chinook than what was forecasted, the final catch allocation of adult Chinook was 4,100 fish, or 19%, greater than preseason expectations. The total take (including release mortality) in the fishery was within 2% of its final allocation of

25,960 fish. In contrast, the total take of adult hatchery coho was about 5,500, which was less than half of expectations.

Tongue Point to Bonneville Dam: An estimated 31,879 adult Chinook and 951 adult hatchery coho were kept from 141,481 angler trips. An additional 9,657 Chinook and 387 coho were released. The catch rate averaged one adult Chinook kept for every 4.4 angler trips.

As with the Buoy 10 fishery, the much larger returns of Upriver Bright Chinook increased the final catch allocation, which was 13,000 fish, or 50% greater than preseason expectations. The total take of adult Chinook (including release mortality) in the fishery was about 33,600, which was less than its final catch allocation of 39,630, but much higher than the preseason expectation of 26,500 fish. The total take of adult hatchery coho was about 1,025, or 60% of expectations.

Upstream from Bonneville Dam: Estimates of actual catch of adult Chinook in fisheries upstream from Bonneville Dam are based on average harvest rates from past seasons and are expected to be about 14,000.

## **Non-Indian Commercial Fisheries**

### *Mainstem*

#### Chinook Fisheries

Seven nine-hour and one five-hour commercial fishing periods targeting Chinook occurred from August 11 through August 29 in Zones 4-5 with a 9-9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-inch mesh restriction. Fishers landed 45,649 Chinook, 378 coho and 719 white sturgeon. Deliveries ranged from 67 to 125 per period. Twenty-one six- to twelve-hour commercial fishing periods targeting Chinook occurred from September 15 through November 1. Two openers (September 26-27 and 29-30) occurred in Zones 1-5, but the rest were in Zones 4-5. Fishers were required to use large mesh (≥8-inch). Combined landings totaled 39,360 Chinook, 2,668 coho, and 324 white sturgeon. Deliveries ranged from 3 to 127 per period.

Consistent with the management intent of moving toward more selective mainstem commercial fisheries, fisheries were restricted to Zones 4-5 for all but two openers. This was in contrast to what was typically done in the past when more opportunity was provided downriver. However, because fishing in Zones 4-5 resulted in a much lower proportion of tule fall Chinook in the catch, fishers were able to harvest significantly more Upriver Bright Chinook before reaching the ESA-impact limit for tules. In total, harvest of Chinook in commercial fisheries targeting Chinook was within 3% of their final catch allocation of 82,610, but was much higher than the preseason expectation of 52,000 fish.

#### Coho Fisheries

Eight twelve-hour commercial fishing periods targeting coho occurred from October 2 through October 15 in Zones 1-3 with a 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-inch tangle-net mesh restriction. Fishers landed 4,555 hatchery coho and 1,814

Chinook. Deliveries ranged from 15 to 27 per period.

Observers on board commercial fishing boats that participated in the tangle-net fisheries monitored 357 drifts from 61 boats. Of the 897 coho observed, 77.4% were marked, which met expectations. Immediate mortality rate observed for unmarked adult coho was 7.1%, which also met expectations. Just under 20% of the coho landed in tangle-net fisheries were observed.

Five twelve-hour commercial fishing periods targeting coho occurred from October 16 through October 25 in Zones 1-3 with a 6-inch mesh restriction. Fishers landed 1,983 coho and 579 Chinook. Deliveries ranged from 24 to 37 per period.

Total take of coho in fisheries targeting coho was about 6,700 (including release mortality in the tangle-net fisheries), or one-third of the assumed catch for coho-directed fisheries. The low catch was a function of a less-than-forecasted run size, and low participation in the tangle-net fishery (deliveries were about one-third of what was assumed in planning).

*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). Participation and harvest are summarized below:

Site	Dates	Days	Deliveries per period	Chinook	Coho	White sturgeon
Youngs Bay	Jul 1-Oct 31	71	0-109	14,075	15,409	38
Tongue Point/South Channel	Aug 26-Oct 31	39	0-26	5,545	14,037	40
Blind Slough/Knappa Slough	Aug 26-Oct 31	39	0-11	2,336	3,710	14
Deep River	Aug 26-Oct 18	30	0-49	1,725	9,357	8
<b>Total</b>				<b>23,681</b>	<b>42,513</b>	<b>100</b>

Harvests in Select Area fisheries were similar to catch expectations for Chinook, but exceeded catch expectations for coho by 6,913, or 19.4%.

**ISSUE 8**

**2013 FISHERIES FOR WHITE STURGEON IN THE MAINSTEM COLUMBIA RIVER DOWNSTREAM FROM BONNEVILLE DAM**

**ANALYSIS**

**Preseason Planning**

In 2013, management guidelines for the harvest of white sturgeon were calculated based on a forecasted abundance of legal-sized white sturgeon of 74,300, a 13.6% harvest rate and a sharing formula that assigned 80% of the white sturgeon available for harvest to recreational fisheries and 20% to commercial fisheries. The guidelines were consistent with amendments to the 2011-2013 Joint State Sturgeon Accord negotiated by the Directors of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The harvest rate was 85% of the maximum rate allowed in Oregon’s white sturgeon conservation plan and effectively held 15% of the harvestable surplus in reserve as a conservation buffer.

### **Actual Abundance**

The actual abundance of legal-sized white sturgeon in 2013 was 114,200 fish or 154% of the forecast. This estimate is based on recaptures of fish marked in the spring and summer of 2013. Although the management guideline was not changed because an updated abundance estimate is not available until November each year, the harvestable surplus in 2013, with a 15% conservation buffer, was over 5,400 fish, or 54%, greater than the 10,105 fish guideline used to manage the fisheries.

### **Recreational Fisheries**

#### Seasons:

The annual bag limit statewide was one fish from January 1 through March 31. However, the limit was increased to two fish from April 1 through December 31 to maintain concurrent regulations with the State of Washington.

Estuary: The fishery was open for white sturgeon retention seven days per week from January 1 through April 30 and May 11 through June 20. Although the states intended for the second season to extend through June 30, the guideline was reached, and actually exceeded, before then. The minimum fork length for retention was 38 inches from January 1 through April 30 and 41 inches from May 11 through June 20. The minimum was raised in May and June to maximize the season length.

Wauna to Bonneville Dam: The fishery was open for white sturgeon retention three days per week (Thursday, Friday and Saturday) from January 1 through June 15. Although the states intended to reopen the fishery to retention on October 19, less than 80 fish remained on the guideline and the fishery remained closed to retention. The minimum fork length for retention was 38 inches. Angling for white sturgeon from Bonneville Dam downstream nine miles was prohibited from May 1 through August 31 to protect spawning sturgeon.

Willamette River: The fishery was open for white sturgeon retention Thursday, Friday and Saturday, July 11 through July 13, July 18 through July 20, and July 25 through July 28 and on Saturday October 19. The minimum fork length for retention was 38 inches. Angling for white sturgeon from Willamette Falls downstream to the I-205 Bridge was prohibited from May 1 through August 31 to protect spawning sturgeon.

#### Harvest/Angler Trips:

In total, recreational fisheries exceeded their share of the management guideline by 115 fish, or 1.5%. This was solely due to harvest in the estuary fishery. However, given that the number of legal-sized white sturgeon available for harvest in 2013 was significantly higher than forecasted, the actual harvest rate in recreational fisheries was 7.7%, compared to a planned harvest rate of 10.9%.

Estuary: An estimated 4,559 white sturgeon were kept from about 17,200 angler trips. This was 113% of the guideline.

Wauna to Bonneville Dam: An estimated 1,942 white sturgeon were kept from about 15,900 angler trips. This was 96% of the guideline.

Willamette River: An estimated 1,410 white sturgeon were kept from about 12,400 angler trips. This was 81% of the guideline. Although over 300 fish remained on the guideline after the last retention fishery, no additional fisheries were conducted because the estuary fishery exceeded its guideline by over 500 fish.

### **Non-Indian Commercial Fisheries**

Except for a mainstem winter fishery that targeted white sturgeon, harvest primarily occurred incidentally to salmon fisheries in the mainstem and Select Areas. In total, commercial fisheries harvested 2,012 white sturgeon or 99.5% of their share of the management guideline. Given that the number of legal-sized white sturgeon available for harvest in 2013 was significantly higher than forecasted, the actual harvest rate in commercial fisheries was 1.8%, compared to a planned harvest rate of 2.7%.

#### *Mainstem*

Fishers landed 15 white sturgeon during three 24-hour winter periods from January 31 through February 7. Deliveries during the winter fishery ranged from two to four per period. Fishers landed an additional 1,643 white sturgeon in other mainstem commercial fisheries that occurred after the winter period.

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

Fishers landed 354 white sturgeon in Select Area salmon fisheries.

## **ISSUE 9**

### **ANGLER TRIPS AND EX-VESSEL VALUE OF 2013 COLUMBIA RIVER NON-TRIBAL FISHERIES**

## **ANALYSIS**

One of the policy objectives in rules adopted by the Commission in June 2013 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 in Oregon” (OAR 635-500-6705 (4)). For recreational fisheries for salmon, an economic measure considered during the Columbia River fisheries reform process was angler trips. For commercial fisheries a measure was ex-vessel value. Department staff is currently working with staff from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop an assessment framework and reference points that will be used to evaluate progress going forward.

### **Recreational Fisheries**

Angler trips were estimated by season and area based on angler surveys. The table below lists the total angler trips in 2013 by fishery.

Fishery	Number of Angler Trips
Spring	115,700
Summer	52,000
Fall-Buoy 10	64,500
Fall-Tongue Point to Bonneville Dam	141,500

In general, when accounting for differences in run sizes and the resultant season structures and lengths, the number of angler trips was within expectations when compared to modeled results presented to the Commission as part of its rulemaking in 2012 and 2013.

### Commercial Fisheries

Ex-vessel value of commercial fisheries was calculated as total landings in pounds (lbs) multiplied by the average price per pound (\$/lb) paid to fishers upon delivery of their catch. In general, the expectation of the Workgroup and the Commission was that during the transition period (2013 through 2016), the overall ex-vessel value of commercial landings was to be similar to, and would not decline by more than 5% of, levels in recent years. However, it was recognized that there may be significant variation in ex-vessel value due to annual variation in the number of each salmon stock returning to the Columbia River.

The ex-vessel value of 2013 commercial fisheries is summarized by salmon stock and area (mainstem and Select Area (off-channel)) in the table below.

Fishery	Season/Stock	Harvest (numbers)	Landings (lbs)	Avg Price (\$/lb)	Ex-Vessel Value (\$)
Select Area (Off-channel)	Spring/Chinook	6,072	79,052	\$7.64	\$603,957
	Summer/Chinook	1,992	32,771	\$4.20	\$137,638
	Fall/Chinook	23,681	328,018	\$2.42	\$793,804
	Fall/Coho	42,513	314,672	\$1.84	\$578,996
	Subtotal	74,258	754,513		\$2,114,396
Mainstem	Spring/Chinook	2,207	27,405	\$7.28	\$199,508
	Summer/Chinook	1,868	30,899	\$4.58	\$141,517
	Fall/Chinook	87,402	1,346,394	\$2.06	\$2,773,572
	Fall/Coho	9,584	68,159	\$1.79	\$122,005
	Subtotal	101,061	1,472,857		\$3,236,602
<b>TOTAL</b>		175,319	2,227,370		\$5,350,998

In general, when accounting for differences in run sizes, the harvest numbers and ex-vessel values were within expectations when compared to modeled results presented to the Commission as part of its rulemaking in 2012 and 2013.

## ISSUE 10

## ADDITIONAL MANAGEMENT ISSUES FOR 2014

### ANALYSIS

#### Youngs Bay Control Zone

The Oregon legislature in SB 830 directs the Commission, as part of the rules related to Columbia River fisheries reform to “establish a zone at the mouth of Youngs Bay in which recreational fishing, including recreational fishing taking place with guide boats, is prohibited in order to

reduce interception of hatchery fish returning to the off-channel commercial fishery in Youngs Bay.” Staff met with the Columbia River Commercial Fishery Advisory Group and Columbia River Recreational Fishery Advisory Group in December to discuss the legislation and solicit input regarding establishment of the zone. The Commission will be asked to consider rules establishing the zone at its February 2014 meeting.

### **Pilot Purse and Beach Seine Fisheries**

As required under Washington state law, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has established a five-person advisory panel of Washington commercial fishers to assist them in developing recommendations for implementing pilot beach and purse seine fisheries in 2014. Oregon staff members have attended these meetings as observers. In two meetings a number of questions have arisen concerning who gets to participate in the fishery, how participants will be selected, how harvest quotas will be shared between the pilot fisheries and existing mainstem gill net fisheries, how gear and boats will be regulated, and when and where the fisheries will occur.

Oregon and Washington staff members have agreed to coordinate Washington’s process with a more comprehensive planning effort involving the Columbia River Commercial Fishery Advisory Group and the public. Two Advisory Group meetings were held, one in October and one in December, as was a public meeting in Astoria in December to discuss options and solicit input from Columbia River gill netters, fish buyers and interested members of the public. Discussions are on-going on how best to implement pilot fisheries in 2014.

### **Coho Harvest Management**

Harvest of lower Columbia River naturally-produced coho in ocean and mainstem Columbia River fisheries is managed under rules adopted by NOAA Fisheries in response to their listing under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). These rules are partially based on, but are more conservative than a harvest management proposal developed by Oregon and Washington in response to the ESA listing. In 2012, NOAA Fisheries and the states agreed that it was time to revisit the harvest management approach based on updated and expanded population information, and an analysis of the relative risk to these populations under alternative abundance-based harvest management rules.

In October 2013, Oregon and Washington presented results from a risk assessment to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) of the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council). The assessment looked at risks to the viability of various coho populations in the lower Columbia River associated with various abundance-based harvest management options. The SSC endorsed the assessment as scientifically sound and the Council endorsed a proposal by Oregon and Washington to have the states work with NOAA Fisheries and the Council’s Salmon Advisory Subpanel to develop updated harvest management rules that the Council can consider for adoption at its fall 2014 meeting. This work is scheduled to begin in early 2014.