

**JOINT STAFF REPORT**  
**SPRING CHINOOK SPORT FISHERY FACT SHEET**  
**Compact/Joint State Hearing**  
**April 15, 2003**

<p><b>Purpose:</b> To review salmon stock status, review the ongoing spring chinook sport fishery, consider modifications to the ongoing sport fishery in the mainstem Columbia River, and consider modifications to Select Area commercial fisheries.</p> <p><b>TAC:</b> This Fact Sheet was not reviewed by the TAC.</p>
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**MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

***Endangered Species Act (ESA)***

- Fisheries being considered at this Compact are addressed in a Section 7/10 Application outlining proposed non-Indian fisheries that the states of Washington and Oregon submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on November 3, 2000.
- The ESA limits aggregate fishery impacts to  $\leq 2\%$  for listed wild steelhead.

***Interim Management Agreement***

- An Interim Management Agreement covering fisheries for upriver spring chinook, summer chinook, and sockeye is in effect for 2001-2003.
- The Interim Management Agreement includes a sliding scale spring chinook harvest matrix for 2001-2005 and allocates upriver impacts between non-Indian and treaty Indian fisheries for 2001-2003.
- Based on preseason run size forecasts, the Interim Management Agreement limits impacts to listed upriver spring chinook to  $\leq 2\%$  for non-Indian fisheries and  $\leq 9\%$  for treaty Indian fisheries in 2003.

***Non-Indian Upriver Impact Allocation***

- Non-Indian fisheries will be managed in accordance with the guiding principles, fishery management objectives, and impact sharing matrix adopted by the Oregon and Washington Fish and Wildlife Commissions and the Columbia River Compact.
- Non-Indian impacts are allocated 1.7% for fisheries below McNary Dam and 0.3% for fisheries above McNary Dam and Select Area fisheries or as a management buffer.
- Upriver impacts for non-Indian fisheries below McNary Dam in 2003 are further allocated 35% (0.59% impact) for commercial fisheries and 65% (1.11% impact) for sport fisheries.

***Willamette Spring Chinook Management***

- The Fisheries Management and Evaluation Plan (FMEP) for Willamette spring chinook limits impacts for all freshwater fisheries in 2002 to  $\leq 15\%$  on wild Willamette River spring chinook.
- Based on the preseason run size forecast of 109,800 the Willamette River Basin Fish Management Plan (WFMP) allocates surplus hatchery Willamette River spring chinook 70% for sport fisheries (40,900 fish) and 30% for commercial fisheries (17,500 fish) in 2003.

## STOCK STATUS

### *Spring Chinook*

- The preseason spring chinook run size forecasts include returns of 145,400 upriver stock and 109,800 Willamette stock to the Columbia River mouth.
- Upriver spring chinook passage over Bonneville Dam is tracking well ahead of preseason expectations with 67,160 adults passing through April 13. During 2000-2002 spring chinook counts at Bonneville Dam through April 13 ranged between 18,509-134,895 adults.
- Upriver spring chinook passage over Bonneville Dam typically peaks in late April.
- The TAC met on Monday April 14 and upgraded the adult spring chinook run size to 158,000-190,000. Oregon and Washington will use a run size of 174,000 (midpoint on the range) for fishery management purposes.

## WATER CONDITIONS

- Columbia River water conditions at Bonneville Dam have remained relatively stable during early April.
- Columbia River flow, as measured at Bonneville Dam, has exceeded 200 kcfs on only two days during the first 13 days of April. Flows typically range between 150 kcfs and 300 kcfs during April.
- Water temperatures measured at Bonneville Dam have ranged between 46°F-49°F since April 1. Temperatures typically range between 46°F-52°F during the first half of April.
- Visibility measured at Bonneville Dam declined from 6 feet to 3½ feet during the first half of April. Visibility can fluctuate widely during April, typically ranging between 2-5 feet.
- Willamette River water conditions have been relatively stable during early April.
- Flows measured at Salem ranged between 31,500-41,000 cfs during the first 12 days of April.
- Visibility measured at Willamette Falls increased from 2.0 feet on April 1 to 3.2 feet on April 11.
- Temperature measured at Willamette Falls has ranged between 48°F-51°F during early April.

## FISHERY UPDATES

### *Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Demonstration Fishery*

- The fishery consisted of two 16-hour (5 am-9 pm) fishing periods on February 17 and 19 followed by one 10-hour (9 am-7 pm) fishing period on March 21. Gear regulations included an 8" minimum mesh size restriction during the first two fishing periods and a 4¼" maximum mesh size restriction during the final fishing period. Other selective fishery regulations in effect during 2002 (i.e. short soak times, short nets, and use of recovery boxes) were adopted for 2003.
- Staff monitored a total of 108 boats and 237 drifts during this fishery. Total landings were similar to preseason expectations but handle of upriver spring chinook was significantly higher than expected.

<i>Chinook and Steelhead Catch During the 2003 Demonstration Fishery</i>									
Fishing Period	Chinook Kept				Chinook Released			Steelhead Released	
	Total	Upriver Stock	Willamette River Stock	Other Lower River Stock	Total	Upriver Stock	Lower River Stocks	Total	Wild
Feb 17-19	539	389	113	37	587	548	39	174	141
March 21	2,634	1,623	805	206	1,907	1,655	252	2,010	945
Total	3,173	2,012	918	243	2,494	2,203	291	2,184	1,086

- Based on an upriver run size of 174,000 adults and preseason run size forecasts wild winter steelhead and Willamette spring chinook, impacts to listed species are estimated to be 0.74% on upriver spring chinook, 0.30% on Willamette spring chinook and 1.54% on wild winter steelhead.
- The kept catch of 1,100 Willamette hatchery spring chinook was much less than the 17,500 allocated to the commercial fishery by the WFMP.

### *Select Area Commercial Fisheries*

- Winter season commercial fisheries occurred in the Select Area fishing sites of Youngs Bay and Blind Slough. Total spring chinook landings were less than preseason expectations while handle of upriver spring chinook was larger than expected.
- Landings totaled 63 spring chinook in the Youngs Bay fishery of which 29 were upriver stock and totaled 4 spring chinook in the Blind Slough fishery of which zero were upriver stock.
- Winter season fisheries in both Select Areas combined resulted in an estimated 0.017% impact on upriver chinook.
- Currently adopted spring seasons in the Tongue Point and Blind Slough Select Areas consist of 16 nightly fishing periods (7 PM-7 AM) that are scheduled to begin on 7 PM Thursday April 17 and end on 7 AM Friday June 13. A total of two fishing periods per week are scheduled to occur on Tuesday and Thursday nights except for the first two weeks when the weekly fishing period is scheduled for Thursday night only.
- The currently adopted Youngs Bay spring season is scheduled to begin on noon Wednesday April 16 and continue through 6 PM Thursday June 12. Fishing periods are scheduled to consist of two days per week during the first two weeks, three days per week during the third week, four days per week during weeks 4-8, and 3 days per week during the ninth week.
- An experimental spring chinook commercial fishery has also been adopted for Deep River in 2003. The currently adopted season consists of 25 nightly fishing periods (7 PM-7 AM) that are scheduled to occur between 7 PM Thursday April 17 and 7 AM Friday June 13. Fishing periods are scheduled to occur on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights throughout the duration of the fishery.
- Preseason catch expectations are for spring chinook landings of 1,500-2,500 in Tongue Point and Blind Slough, 6,000-8,000 in Youngs Bay, and 800-1,000 in Deep River for a total catch of 10,000-14,000 spring chinook. During 1999-2001, impacts in Select Area spring season fisheries averaged 0.05%.
- Typically 20%-50% of the impacts to upriver spring chinook occur during the first fishing period. For 2003 impacts to upriver spring chinook during the first fishing period are projected to total 0.009% in the Tongue Point fishery, 0.004% in the Youngs Bay fishery, and 0.001% in the Blind Slough fishery for a grand total impact of 0.014% for all Select Areas combined.

***Below Bonneville Spring Chinook Sport Fishery***

- The mainstem Columbia River was originally scheduled to be open for adipose fin-clipped salmon, adipose fin-clipped steelhead, and shad angling from the mouth at Buoy 10 upstream to McNary Dam (excluding salmon angling from a boat and from the Washington shore between Bonneville Dam and Tower Island power lines) during January 1-May-15 below I-5 Bridge and during February 15-May 15 above I-5 Bridge.
- Fishing was typically slow during February but improved significantly during March, especially in the gorge just below Bonneville Dam. Poor water conditions reduced fishing opportunities below the mouth of the Willamette during the last half of March and focussed the fishery to the gorge where fishing conditions were good.

<b><i>Catch and Effort During the 2003 Mainstem Spring Chinook Sport Fishery Below Bonneville Dam</i></b>					
Time	Angler	Total	Kept	Upriver Stock	
Period	Trips	Catch	Catch	%	Impact
February	9,600	432	209 (48%)	100%	0.025%
March	68,000	9,096	5,758 (63%)	80%	0.419%
April 1-12	45,100	9,959	6,224 (63%)	65%	0.373%
Total	122,700	19,487	12,191 (63%)	73%	0.817%

- Due to large catches and high proportion of upriver fish in the catch a Joint State meeting was held on Tuesday April 1 to consider modifications to the ongoing spring chinook sport fishery. At this meeting the states of Oregon and Washington modified the ongoing season to be closed between the I-5 Bridge and Bonneville Dam seven days per week and remain open between the mouth at Buoy 10 and the I-5 Bridge four days per week (Wednesday through Saturday). The modified season was adopted with the intent of maintaining a partial sport fishery until the first upriver run size update that was expected to occur in mid to late April.
- Fishing remained good during April 1-5 with a 0.30% impact on upriver spring chinook during the first five days of April.
- Fishing conditions deteriorated during April 9-12 with increased turbidity and poor fishing tides. Catch and effort dropped significantly during these four days and the impact to upriver spring chinook also dropped to 0.07% during this time period.

***Bonneville to McNary Spring Chinook Sport Fishery***

- Preseason expectations were for a catch of 1,600 spring chinook in this fishery, which would result in a 0.9% impact on upriver spring chinook.
- Effort and catch in this fishery are typically minor prior to mid-April.
- The fishery will intensify in late April and May coincident with increased passage of upriver spring chinook.
- Through April 13 a total of 340 spring chinook have been handled with 199 kept, which results in a 0.02% impact on upriver spring chinook.

<i>Spring Chinook Catch and Impacts Summary</i>				
Fishery	Total Handle	Kept Catch		Upriver Impact
		Total	Upriver	
Commercial Demonstration	5,700	3,200	2,000	0.74%
Winter Select Area Commercial	67	67	29	0.02%
Below Bonneville Sport (thru 4/12)	19,500	12,200	7,900	0.82%
Bonneville to McNary Sport	340	199	199	0.02%
<b>Total to Date</b>	<b>25,300</b>	<b>15,500</b>	<b>9,929</b>	<b>1.60%</b>
Spring Select Area Commercial	12,000	12,000	87	0.05%
Below Bonneville Sport (4/16-4/19)	5,200	3,700	1,500	0.15%
Bonneville to McNary Sport	1,200	700	700	0.07%
<b>Projected Total</b>	<b>18,400</b>	<b>16,400</b>	<b>2,287</b>	<b>0.27%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>43,700</b>	<b>31,900</b>	<b>12,216</b>	<b>1.87%</b>

***Lower Willamette Spring Chinook Fishery***

- The mainstem Willamette River below Willamette Falls is open for adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon and adipose fin-clipped steelhead the entire year.
- Poor fishing conditions have limited effort and catch during March. Fishing conditions have been good during early April and catches have increased dramatically in response to improved fishing conditions.
- During last week fishing was excellent throughout the entire lower river, including Multnomah Channel, with catch rates ranging between one chinook per every 1-5 boats.

**FISHERY RECOMENDATIONS**

***Below Bonneville Spring Chinook Sport Fishery***

<i>Recommendation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Joint Staff is recommending no modifications to the ongoing four-day per week sport fishery in the lower Columbia River.</li> </ul>

- ✓ The fishery is consistent with guiding principles, fishery management objectives, and allocation plan adopted by the Oregon and Washington Fish and Wildlife Commissions.
- ✓ The fishery provides a sport fishing opportunity to access surplus hatchery spring chinook and limits impacts to listed species.
- ✓ Allows fishery to remain open until next upriver run size update which is scheduled for Monday April 21.

***Select Area Commercial Fisheries***

<i>Recommendation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Joint Staff is recommending no changes to the currently adopted Select Area commercial fisheries.</li> </ul>

- ✓ The currently adopted fisheries are consistent with guiding principles, fishery management objectives, and allocation plan adopted by the Oregon and Washington Fish and Wildlife Commissions.

- ✓ Currently adopted fisheries allow the commercial fishery access to net pen-reared spring chinook while minimizing impacts to listed species.
- ✓ Currently adopted fisheries maximize economics of the fisheries by landing spring chinook when market value is high.
- ✓ Currently adopted fisheries are consistent with past Select Area spring seasons.

### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

- The Joint Staff recommends that the next Joint State Sport hearing to update spring chinook stock status, review ongoing spring chinook sport fishery, and consider modifications to the ongoing sport fishery occur via telephone at 2 pm Tuesday April 22.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
April 15, 2003