

**JOINT STAFF REPORT  
WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 3  
Columbia River Compact  
March 4, 2003**

**Purpose:** To review salmon and steelhead stock status, review ongoing commercial fisheries, and consider commercial fishing options in the mainstem Columbia River.

**TAC:** This Fact Sheet was not reviewed by the TAC.

**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; however, the fishery will be managed for a range of 1.6%-1.8% as a buffer against unforeseen circumstances.

***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, Select Area Fisheries, and 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.

### ***Zone 6 Sturgeon Management***

- The SMTF met on February 5 to discuss harvest guidelines and sharing options for 2003 fisheries. Guidelines in effect for Bonneville and John Day pools during 2002 were readopted for 2003; however, no catch guideline was adopted for The Dalles Pool at that time.
- In 2002 The Dalles Pool included a total harvest of 1,800 that was allocated 1,100 commercial and 700 sport.
- At the February 5 SMTF meeting the technical staff recommended a total harvest guideline of about 690 fish for The Dalles Pool in 2003. Several other harvest guideline options were also considered at this meeting.

## **STOCK STATUS**

### ***Spring Chinook***

- Spring chinook primarily enter the lower Columbia River during March and April with upriver stock abundance peaking during the late March to early April timeframe.
- The preseason spring chinook run size forecasts include returns of 145,400 upriver stock and 109,800 Willamette stock to the Columbia River mouth.
- Run sizes cannot be updated until late April for upriver stock and early May for Willamette stock.

### ***Wild Winter Steelhead***

- Wild winter steelhead pass through the lower Columbia River primarily during January through early April and peak during late March.
- The preseason forecast was for a return of 15,500 wild winter steelhead to the Columbia River mouth.
- Wild winter steelhead passage over Willamette Falls has been good to date with daily counts ranging between 10-289 during the month of February.
- Through February 27 a total 3,930 wild winter steelhead have passed Willamette Falls. During 1996-2002 passage over Willamette Falls prior to March 1 comprised 25-50% of the total count.
- The wild winter steelhead passage over Willamette Falls is expected to total 11,000 and range between 8,000-15,000.
- Willamette wild winter steelhead typically represent 55% of the total wild winter steelhead return to the Columbia River. During 1993-2002 Willamette wild winter steelhead comprised 36-77% of the Columbia River wild winter steelhead return.
- This years wild winter steelhead returns to the Clackamas and Sandy rivers are generally similar to those observed in recent years.
- Unmarked winter steelhead passage over North Fork Dam on the Clackamas River totaled 98 through January 31 as compared to 2001-2002 when cumulative counts totaled 17 and 113, respectively and passage over Marmot Dam on the Sandy River totaled 119 through February 27 as compared to 2000-2002 when cumulative counts totaled 148, 145, and 691, respectively.
- In recent years less than 10% of the Clackamas run had passed North Fork Dam prior to February 1 and approximately 30% of the Sandy run had passed Marmot Dam prior to February 28.

## WATER CONDITIONS

- Columbia River flow, as measured at Bonneville Dam, ranged between 110 kcfs and 135 kcfs during the last half of February. Flows typically range between 180 kcfs and 215 kcfs during the month of February.
- Water temperatures measured at Bonneville Dam have ranged between 40°F and 42°F during the last half of February. Temperatures typically do not exceed 42°F in February.
- Visibility measured at Bonneville Dam increased from three feet on February 16 to six feet on February 26.
- The Willamette River has been dropping and clearing. Flow measured at Salem dropped from 32,000 cfs on February 19 to 21,300 cfs on February 25 and visibility at Willamette Falls increased from <1 foot on February 20 to 2.5 feet on February 25.

## FISHERY UPDATES

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

- At the February 6, 2003 Compact hearing six 16-hour daylight fishing periods were adopted for the area below Kelley Point. Gear regulations included an 8" minimum mesh size restriction to minimize steelhead handle. Other selective fishery regulations in effect during 2002 (i.e. short soak times, short nets, and use of recovery boxes) were adopted for 2003.
- During the first two fishing periods staff monitored a total of 72 boats and 156 drifts. Total landings were similar to preseason expectations but handle of upriver spring chinook was significantly higher than expected.

<i>Chinook and Steelhead During 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	Other Lower River Stocks	Total	Wild
Feb 7-19	506	365	106	35	551	521	30	164	134

- Long-term mortality rates used to determine impact rates are the same as those recommended by the TAC: 50% for chinook and 35% for steelhead in large mesh (8" -9¾"), and 25% for chinook and 20% for steelhead in small mesh (≤4¼").
- Impacts to listed species during the first two fishing periods are estimated to be 0.305% for upriver spring chinook, 0.057% for wild Willamette spring chinook, and 0.303% for wild winter steelhead. Total impacts to date represent 52% of the upriver spring chinook impact limit, 2% of the wild Willamette spring chinook impact guideline, and 17%-19% of the wild winter steelhead impact limit.
- Based on the higher than expected impact rate on upriver spring chinook the Compact subsequently met on February 20 and rescinded the final four fishing periods of the adopted season.
- In conjunction with this decision two test fishing periods were scheduled for Tuesday February 25 and Monday March 3. These test fisheries utilized volunteer commercial fishers with six boats participating during each test fishing period.
- Catches during the test fishery totaled 22 chinook (11 upriver stock) and 20 steelhead (12 unmarked) on February 25 and 13 chinook (8 upriver stock) and 8 steelhead (3 unmarked) on March 3.

<i>Results From 2003 Demonstration and Test Fisheries</i>						
Date	Mesh Size	Boats	Drifts	Chinook		Catch Ratio Marked Chinook: Unmarked Steelhead
				Mark Rate	Percent Upriver	
Feb 17	8"-9¾"	36	72	44%	78%	2.5:1
Feb 19	8"-9¾"	36	84	50%	85%	4.4:1
Feb 25	≤4¼"	6	22	76%	50%	1.1:1
Mar 3	≤4¼"	6	21	46%	75%	2.0:1

- The Compact met on February 26 to evaluate the results of the first test fishing period and consider additional commercial fishing opportunities.
- The Compact did not adopt any additional fishing periods because the chinook stock composition (50% upriver) precluded use of large mesh nets (8"-9¾") and the low marked chinook to unmarked steelhead catch ratio precluded the use of small mesh nets (≤4¼").

### ***Select Area Commercial Fisheries***

- The Youngs Bay Select Area fishery was initially scheduled to be open for six fishing periods: 5 AM - 9 PM Tuesdays (16 hours) and noon Saturday - 6 PM Sunday (30 hours) during February 18- March 9.
- Initial catches in the Youngs Bay fishery were low with 64 spring chinook landed during the first two fishing periods. Catch of upriver stock spring chinook was unusually high with upriver fish comprising 60% of the landed catch during the first two fishing periods. Landings dropped to zero during the third fishing period.
- At the February 26 Compact hearing the final three fishing periods were rescinded due to the unusually high number of upriver spring chinook handled in this fishery.
- The Blind Slough Select Area fishery was open for three 12-hour fishing periods (7 PM Saturday to 7 AM Sunday) per week from February 15 through March 2. Landings totaled 12 chinook for the season, all of which were lower river stock.
- A total of one white sturgeon was landed during Select Area winter seasons.

### ***Treaty Indian Winter Commercial Fishery***

- The winter commercial season is scheduled to be open in all of Zone 6 from noon Saturday February 1 through noon Friday March 21.
- Through February 27 landings have totaled 646 white sturgeon, zero chinook, 169 steelhead, and 11 walleye.
- Pool specific white sturgeon landings to date, including the winter setline fishery, are estimated to be 170 in Bonneville Pool, 431 in The Dalles Pool, and 65 in the John Day Pool which represent 14% of the Bonneville Pool guideline, 43% of The Dalles Pool 2002 guideline, and 19% of the John Day Pool guideline.
- Landings in John Day and The Dalles pools are tracking behind 2002 while landings in Bonneville Pool are tracking ahead of 2002.

### ***2003 Mainstem Spring Chinook Sport Fishery***

- The mainstem Columbia River is open to salmon, 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 generally slow during February with sampling data indicating that 538 anglers were sampled, including boat and bank anglers from both states, with a catch of six chinook kept and four chinook released. All chinook kept were classified as upriver stock based on visual stock identification methodology.
- Beginning Saturday March 1 fishing improved significantly just below Bonneville Dam but remained slow in the area below the I-5 Bridge.
- Bank fishing in the gorge was excellent over the weekend with 283 anglers sampled producing catches of 26 spring chinook kept and 27 spring chinook released.
- Fishing was slow downstream of the I-5 Bridge with 151 boats sampled providing a catch of 5 chinook kept and 2 chinook released. A total of 286 bank anglers were sampled with a catch of 4 chinook kept and 3 chinook released. Based on visual stock identification methodology upriver stock comprised about 50% of the catch below the I-5 Bridge.

### **FISHERY RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

- The Joint Staff is recommending the following fishing periods to allow the commercial fishery access to their Willamette River hatchery spring chinook allocation.

<b><i>Recommendation</i></b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Joint Staff is proposing additional fishing periods for the commercial demonstration fishery.</li> </ul>
<b>Season:</b>	9 AM - 7 PM Monday March 10 (10 Hours)
<b>Area:</b>	Mouth to Kelley Point (Zones 1 - 4).
<b>Sanctuaries:</b>	Grays River, Gnat Creek, Elokomina-A, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-A, and Lewis-A, sanctuaries.
<b>Gear:</b>	Net not to exceed 150 fathoms in length. 4¼" maximum mesh size restriction.
<b>Allowable Sales:</b>	Adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon and sturgeon.
<b>Participants:</b>	Columbia River commercial fishers with appropriate licenses and legal gear that attended a state-sponsored workshop concerning live captive commercial fishing techniques and possess a permit that allows participation in this fishery.
<b>Miscellaneous Regulations:</b>	<p>Soak times, defined as time elapsed from when first mesh enters the water to when last mesh leaves the water, must not exceed 45 minutes.</p> <p>Use of recovery boxes will be required on all lethargic or bleeding fish.</p> <p>Each participant will be required to have 2 operable recovery boxes or one box with two chambers in place to participate in fishery. Operable recovery boxes will require a flow of 16-20 gallons per minute to the box or each chamber. Each box shall be operating during any time that the net is being retrieved or picked.</p> <p>Lighted buoys required on each end of nets being fished between sunset and sunrise.</p> <p>Quick Reporting Rule remains in effect for Washington buyers.</p> <p><b><i>Maximum Chinook catch expectations and impact rates:</i></b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">2,200 chinook handled 1,000 chinook kept 0.24 wild Willamette impacts (0.297 cum) 0.245 upriver impacts (0.55 cum)</p> <p><b><i>Winter steelhead catch expectation and impacts</i></b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">500 steelhead handled 0.55 wild winter impacts (0.853 cum)</p>

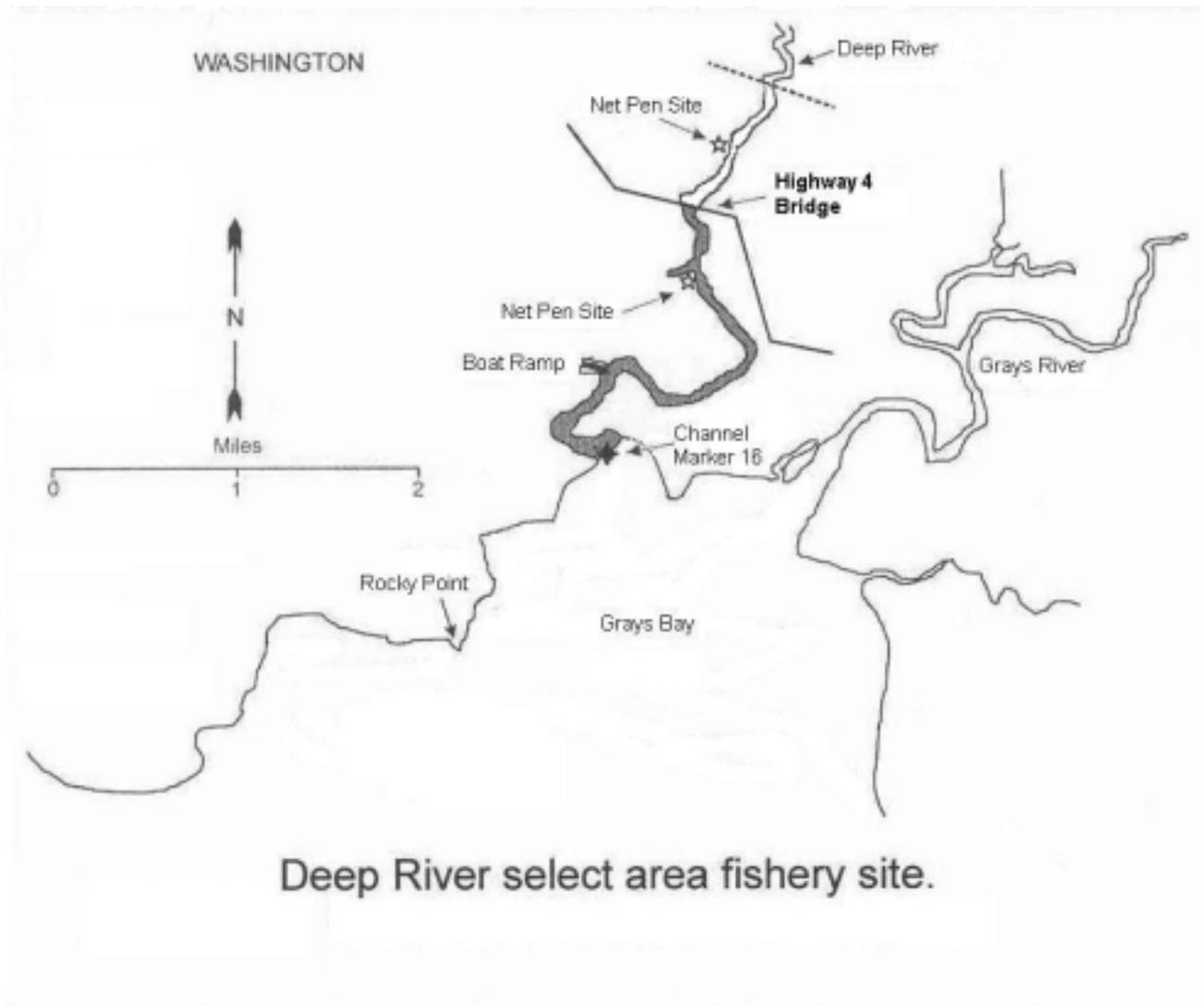
- Mark rate observed in the most recent fishery is not sufficient to adopt a fishery this week.
- Data from the most recent test fishing period suggests that the marked chinook to unmarked steelhead catch ratio would be sufficiently high for adopting a small mesh fishery.
- Impacts to listed salmon and steelhead will remain within ESA-related catch limits.
- The proposed fishery will occur during a time when Willamette stock abundance should be increasing and prior to peak steelhead abundance.
- Proposed fishery will provide valuable information regarding chinook and steelhead catch during this time period.
- Daylight fishing period allows for effective monitoring of the fishery.
- Restriction of fishing area to below Kelley Point reduces impact on upriver stocks.
- White sturgeon landings are expected to be low in this fishery.

***Deep River Select Area Experimental Fishery***

- All waters in this area are concurrent jurisdiction waters and require Compact action.
- A license from either Oregon or Washington is required to participate in this fishery.

<b><i>Recommendation</i></b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Joint Staff is recommending the following season for the Deep River Select Area.</li> </ul>
<b>Season:</b>	April 17 <sup>th</sup> through June 13 <sup>th</sup> , weekly: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (12 Hours) nights. Fishing hours are 7 p.m. to 7 a.m.
<b>Area:</b>	Deep River Select Area upstream of a line from Channel Marker 16 southwesterly to a fishing boundary marker on the opposite bank, to the Highway 4 Bridge.
<b>Gear:</b>	7" minimum and 9¾" maximum mesh size restrictions. Restrict net to maximum length of 100 fathoms with no weight restriction on leadline.
<b>Allowable Sales:</b>	Salmon, sturgeon, and shad
<b>Miscellaneous Regulations:</b>	Transportation of fish outside the fishing area (except to the sampling station) is unlawful until WDFW staff has biologically sampled fish. After sampling, fishers will be issued a transportation permit by agency staff. A sampling station will be established upstream of the Highway 4 Bridge at the upper pen site at Kato's dock.

- ✓ The 7-inch minimum mesh size restriction is recommended to target salmon not sturgeon.
- ✓ Night fishing and weekend closures will minimize interaction with recreational boaters.
- ✓ Transportation restrictions will allow for complete catch accounting and catch sampling during research phase of this fishery.



### **NEXT COMPACT HEARING**

- The Joint Staff recommends that the next Compact hearing occur at 1 PM Tuesday March 11 at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife headquarters Commission room, located at 2501 SW First Avenue, Portland, Oregon for the purpose of reviewing ongoing fisheries and considering commercial fishing options in the mainstem Columbia River.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
March 4, 2003