

**JOINT STAFF REPORT
Fall FACT SHEET No. 5
Columbia River Compact**

September 17, 2003

<p>Purpose: To review chinook salmon stock status and consider non-Indian commercial fishing options for the mainstem Columbia River.</p>
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MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Salmon and Steelhead

- The Biological Opinion concerning treaty Indian and non-Indian fall season fisheries was signed by NOAA Fisheries on July 30, 2003.
- A Management Agreement for upper Columbia River fall chinook, steelhead, and coho was reached by the *U.S. v Oregon* parties for fall fisheries occurring in 2003.
- The 2003 Fall Management Agreement allocates the 31.29% URB impact rate 23.04% for treaty Indian fisheries and 8.25% for non-Indian fisheries; however, sharing impacts could change based on inseason updates.
- Treaty Indian fall fisheries will be managed to limit impacts on wild Group B index steelhead to no greater than 15%. All non-Indian fisheries outside the Snake River basin will be managed for an upriver wild steelhead impact rate to not exceed 2% on wild Group B index steelhead.
- Upriver fall chinook escapement goals include 7,000 adult fall chinook (4,000 females) to Spring Creek Hatchery and 43,500 adult fall chinook (natural and hatchery included) for spawning escapement above McNary Dam.
- Ocean and lower river fisheries will be managed to provide for Bonneville Dam escapement of at least 50% of the upriver coho salmon return.
- Non-Indian fisheries will be managed for an impact rate of less than 5% for Columbia River chum salmon.
- Based on the 2003 Incidental Take Permit issued by the OFWC, combined ocean and freshwater fisheries will be managed to limit impacts on wild coho destined for Oregon tributaries to no more than 29.2% and the freshwater fishery impacts shall not exceed 11.5% of the run entering the Columbia River.
- Non-Indian fisheries occurring during August will be managed in accordance with the "2003 Non-Indian Columbia River Fall Fishery Chinook Allocation Agreement" completed through the North of Falcon negotiation process.

Excerpts From the 2003 Non-Indian Columbia River Fall Fishery Chinook Allocation Agreement

- ✓ URB fall chinook impacts in fisheries downstream of the Snake River are allocated pre-season at 52% (4.29%) to the sport fishery and 48% (3.96%) to the commercial fishery. The Columbia River Compact/Joint States will use this URB impact allocation as guidance for making in-season management decisions concerning the Columbia River sport and commercial fisheries. Actual URB impacts in the fisheries may differ from pre-season estimates based on actual fishery catches, stock composition, and run-size updates. The *U. S. v. Oregon* TAC will update the URB run-size beginning in mid-September.
- ✓ Expected total catch of fall chinook in the mainstem Columbia River downstream of the Snake River, in lower Columbia River tributaries, and Select Areas is 84,300 of which 41,400 (49%) are expected to be harvested by the sport fishery and 42,500 (51%) by the commercial fishery. These catch estimates are based on pre-season abundance forecasts and fishery estimates. Actual harvest sharing will be influenced by stock specific fall chinook abundances and relative harvest rates by each respective fishery.
- ✓ The Buoy 10 sport fishery is modeled at 77% of the chinook catch estimated for a full fishery. The fishery will begin on August 1 with a two fish daily limit; only one may be a chinook. Chinook retention will continue through at least Labor Day (September 1). Beginning August 16, the daily limit will increase to three fish; only one may be a chinook. URB impacts with this fishery are projected to be 1.56%, or 36% of the total sport impact of 4.29%.
- ✓ The mainstem sport fishery below Bonneville Dam is modeled at 90% of the chinook catch estimated for a full fishery to the end of the year (with a two fish daily limit), which is expected to provide enough chinook to continue the fishery through mid-September when URB run size and fishery updates occur. URB impacts associated with this fishery are 2.28%, or 53% of the total sport impact of 4.29%.
- ✓ Expectations for the commercial fishery include:
 - Late fall fishery to begin the week of September 14. Fishery to occur in as much of Zone 1-5 as possible and will include some target chinook fishing. Fishery will target coho or chinook as determined by remaining impacts and in-season run strength. The late September chinook harvest will be determined by the mid-September URB run size update and the actual URB impacts remaining that can be used by the commercial fishery.
 - Sturgeon management will be consistent with sturgeon protocol adopted at the February 6, 2003 Compact hearing.

Sturgeon

- Sturgeon fisheries between the Columbia River mouth and Bonneville Dam during 2003-2005 are guided by a Joint State Sturgeon Fishery Management Agreement adopted by the Oregon and Washington Fish and Wildlife Commissions and the Columbia River Compact.
- The Joint State Sturgeon Fishery Management Agreement sets forth an annual harvestable number of 40,000 white sturgeon and allocates the harvestable number 80% sport (32,000 fish) and 20% commercial (8,000 fish).
- Commercial fisheries will be further managed based on a protocol adopted at the February 6, 2003 Compact hearing.

Protocol for Management of White Sturgeon in 2003-2005 Commercial Fisheries

- ✓ Fisheries should be managed for white sturgeon catch expectations of 2,000 for the winter-summer timeframe (January-July), 2,000 for the early fall timeframe (August), and 3,600 for the late fall timeframe (September-October).
- ✓ Landings during SAFE fisheries are not to exceed 400 white sturgeon for the entire year with winter/spring/summer fisheries not to exceed 300.
- ✓ Allow some level of incidental sturgeon harvest to occur during all target salmon seasons.
- ✓ Conduct limited target sturgeon fisheries during winter and early fall timeframes if feasible.
- ✓ Conduct target sturgeon fisheries during October if necessary to access commercial allocation.
- ✓ Adopt white sturgeon possession and landing limits if necessary to remain within season specific catch expectation or to provide white sturgeon for harvest during subsequent salmon seasons.
- ✓ Until further discussion occurs with the OFWC and the WFWC regarding sturgeon allocation among individual commercial fishers, landings and possession limits will be in the form of per vessel limits and these limits will include both mainstem and Select Area fisheries.
- ✓ Joint Staff will conduct an annual post-season evaluation of white sturgeon retention with industry.

STOCK STATUS

Fall Chinook

- The 2003 preseason forecast for fall chinook salmon was near 600,000 adults and was comprised of 376,400 brights (63%) and 218,800 tules (37%).

<i>Adult Fall Chinook Dam Counts</i>					
		Sept. 16 Daily	Cumulative through September 16		
			2003	2002	1997-2001 Average
Bonneville	Bright	13,300	334,700	267,500	163,000
	Tules	4,700	150,200	139,800	44,300
	Total Counts	18,000	484,900	407,300	207,300
		15,000	200,900	186,500	95,300
The Dalles		11,200	115,300	115,500	65,400
John Day		9,600	83,300	85,300	41,700
McNary		1,200	22,200	18,900	15,200
Priest Rapids		900	9,000	9,200	3,200
Ice Harbor		500	3,400	5,400	1,300
Lower Granite					

- Observation of fall chinook passing Bonneville Dam began on August 15 to determine tule/bright stock separation and adult passage through September 16 has included 334,714 brights (69%) and 150,187 tules (31%). Typically about 81% of the bright passage and 89% of the tule passage occurs prior to September 17.
- Based on counts through September 16, the TAC updated the river mouth run size to 813,300 adults, including 569,400 brights and 297,900 tules.
- Based on dam counts to date, the bright and BPH forecasts were upgraded to 426,000 and 188,000 adults at Bonneville Dam, respectively.

<i>Fall Chinook Adult Returns to the Columbia River Mouth</i>					
Stock	1997-2001 Average	2002 Return	2003 Preseason Forecast	9/11/03 Update	9/17/03 Update
URB	171,600	276,900	258,400	263,600	372,000
SRW	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
MCB	52,000	106,000	86,600	88,700	112,000
BPH	48,700	160,800	101,900	101,900	181,000
LRH	52,800	156,400	116,900	116,900	116,900
LRW	9,900	24,900	23,400	23,400	23,400
LRB	NA	2,400	1,800	1,800	1,800
SAB	4,100	5,700	6,200	6,200	6,200
Total	339,100	733,100	595,200	602,500	813,300

FISHERY UPDATES

September Non-Indian Commercial Fisheries

- Preseason modeling projected landings of 11,080 chinook, including 4,940 URBs (45%) during September commercial fisheries. The commercial white sturgeon protocol allocated 3,600 white sturgeon to September and October fisheries.
- Based on the current run size upgrades and results of August fisheries, modeling results indicate that 24,000 chinook, including 12,100 URBs, are available for harvest during September fisheries.

- At the September 12 hearing the Compact adopted two fishing periods: (1) a 12-hour fishery downstream of the Longview Bridge with a 6-inch maximum mesh size restriction in effect and (2) a 4-hour fishery upstream of the I-5 Bridge with an 8-inch minimum mesh size restriction in effect.

<i>September Non-Indian Commercial Fishery Landings</i>					
Dates	Deliveries	Chinook	Coho	White Sturgeon	Green Sturgeon
Zones 1-3	19	646	1,961	0	1
Zones 4-5	20	1,699	104	44	0
Total	39	2,345	2,065	44	1

- A coho price dispute resulted in minimal effort and catch from the fishery below the Longview Bridge and the short 4-hour fishing period limited effort above the I-5 Bridge.
- Based on preseason stock compositions and inseason catch estimates, landings during fisheries on September 15 totalled 2,345 chinook, including 1,180 URBs. An estimated 10,900 URBs remain available for harvest during September commercial fisheries. The total catch estimate associated with 10,900 URBs is 21,700 adult fall chinook.

<i>Non-Indian Commercial Fisheries Update</i>								
Stock	Early	Late	Late	Select Areas				
	August	August	September	Y.B.	T.P.	B.S.	D.R.	S.S.
URB	357	1,155						
BPH	2,624	3,218						
MCB	377	1,368						
LRH	3,004	1,203						
LRW	0	0						
LRB	NA	NA						
SAB	1,130	4						
Others	623	260						
<i>Total Chinook</i>	<i>8,115</i>	<i>7,208</i>	<i>2,345</i>	<i>4,173</i>	<i>2,311</i>	<i>1,879</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>44</i>
Coho	159	152	2,065	46,547	12,513	390	219	107
W. Sturgeon	2,161	38	44	45	96	28	3	0
G. Sturgeon	10	1	1	0	1	0	0	0

FISHERY PROPOSALS

September Non-Indian Commercial Salmon Fishery

<i>Recommendation</i>	
The Joint Staff recommends adoption of the following salmon fishing periods for the mainstem Columbia River:	
Season:	7 PM Wednesday September 17 to 7 AM Friday September 19 (36 hours) 5 PM Sunday September 21 to 5 PM Monday September 22 (24 hours)
Area:	Mouth upstream to Beacon Rock (Zones 1-5)
Sanctuaries:	Elokomin-A, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-A, Lewis-A, Washougal River, and Sandy River.
Gear:	No minimum and 9¾-inch maximum mesh size restrictions downstream of the Longview Bridge and 8-inch minimum and 9¾-inch maximum mesh size restrictions upstream of the Longview Bridge.
Allowable Sales:	Salmon and sturgeon. A maximum of three sturgeon may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel during each calendar week (Sunday through Saturday) that the fishery is open.
Miscellaneous Rules:	Quick Reporting Rules will be in effect for Washington buyers.

- ✓ The proposed fishery is consistent with the Fall Management Agreement and results of the North of Falcon negotiation process.
- ✓ The proposed season provides an opportunity to harvest surplus hatchery produced coho and chinook salmon.
- ✓ The proposed 36-hour fishery provides two night fishing periods to target chinook and one daylight fishing period to target coho salmon.
- ✓ The 8-inch minimum mesh size restriction for above the Longview Bridge protects state-listed coho salmon.
- ✓ No minimum mesh size restriction below the Longview Bridge allows fishers to target either chinook or coho salmon in the lower river.
- ✓ Initiating the proposed fishery at 5 PM on Sunday will allow fishery to access that evenings low water tide.

Impacts Summary

<i>Summary of Fishery Impacts During Fall of 2003</i>			
Fishery	Chinook Catch	URB Impacts	
		No.	%
Treaty Indian Fisheries			
August C&S	670	590	0.23
Commercial through Sep 12 (Proj. Total)	54,700	25,600	9.71
Treaty Indian Total	55,370	26,190	9.94
Non-Indian Fisheries			
Early August Commercial	8,100	360	0.10
Late August Commercial	7,200	1,160	0.31
Select Area Commercial (Proj. Total)	11,500	950	0.26
Buoy 10 Sport (Proj. Total)	16,800	1,400	0.39
LCR Sport (Proj. Total)	28,000	12,300	3.29
Zone 6 Sport (Proj. Total)	2,500	1,680	0.45
September Commercial Fisheries (Proj. Total)	24,000	12,100	3.25
October Commercial Fisheries (Proj. Total)	4,800	760	0.20
Non-Indian Total	102,900	30,710	8.25
Grand Total	158,270	56,900	18.19

- Freshwater fishery impacts to Oregon state listed wild coho destined for Lower Columbia River tributaries are projected to total 7.6% as compared to the ESA-related impact limit of 11.5%.

Scheduled Compact Hearing

- A Columbia River Compact hearing is scheduled for 10 AM Friday, September 19, 2003 at the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Region 5 office, Vancouver, Washington for the purposes of updating salmon and steelhead stock status and considering treaty Indian and non-Indian commercial fishing seasons in the mainstem Columbia River.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
September 17, 2003