

**JOINT STAFF REPORT  
WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 9  
Columbia River Compact  
March 18, 2004**

**Purpose:** To review ongoing commercial fisheries and consider non-Indian commercial fishing seasons for salmon, smelt and sturgeon in the mainstem Columbia River.

**STOCK STATUS**

***Spring Chinook***

- Spring chinook enter the lower Columbia River primarily 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 360,700 upriver stock (94% 4-year old) and 109,400 Willamette stock to the Columbia River mouth.
- The upriver spring chinook count through March 13 at Bonneville Dam was 136 spring chinook compared to 3,441 in 2003 and 636 in 2002.
- Water temperature at Bonneville Dam was 42 F on March 16, compared to the recent 10-year average of 45 F.
- Current dam counts and water temperatures suggest the run timing is later than average.
- Willamette spring chinook began to pass Willamette Falls in early March. As of March 14, 7 spring chinook have been counted at the falls.
- Run sizes cannot be updated until late April for upriver stock and early May for Willamette stock.

***Wild Winter Steelhead***

- Wild winter steelhead migrate through the lower Columbia River primarily during January through early April.
- The preseason forecast was for a return of 32,200 wild winter steelhead to the Columbia River mouth.
- Wild winter steelhead passage over Willamette Falls has been good to date with daily counts in early March ranging between 21-152 fish. The total count through March 14 was 6,085, compared to 4,959 (2003) and 8,986 (2002) by the same date.
- Willamette wild winter steelhead typically represent 55% of the total wild winter steelhead return to the Columbia River with a range of 36-77% during 1993-2002.
- The wild steelhead Bonneville Dam count through March 13 was 255 steelhead, which may include a mix of summer and winter-run fish. This count compares to 459 (2003) and 153 (2002) as of the same date.
- As of February 29, 90 wild winter steelhead have passed over Marmot Dam on the Sandy compared to 119 (2003) and 238 (2002) by the same date; while 95 have passed over North Fork Dam on the Clackamas as of March 9, compared to 115 (2003) and 90 (2002) by the same date.

## FISHERY UPDATES

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

- Four test fishing days have occurred on Sundays beginning February 22. On Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> a fifth test fishery took place. All test fishers are using 4-1/4" tangle nets.
- Two 16 hour fishing periods occurred on March 2 (5:00 AM - 9:00 PM) and March 4-5 (3:00 PM - 7:00 AM), and two 24 hour fishing periods occurred March 9-10 (5 AM - 5 AM) and March 11-12 (10 AM –10 AM). A fifth 15 hour fishing period occurred on March 15-16 (3 PM- 6 AM). All fishing periods had 9" minimum and 9-3/4" maximum mesh size restrictions in effect.
- Long-term mortality rates used to determine impact rates are the same as those recommended by the TAC: 40% for chinook and 30% for steelhead in large mesh (8" -9 3/4"), and 18.5% for chinook and steelhead in small mesh ( $\leq 4\frac{1}{4}$ ").
- Impacts to listed species during the first five fishing periods are estimated to be 0.107% for upriver spring chinook and 0.198% for wild winter steelhead. Total impacts to date represent 13.38% of the upriver spring chinook impact limit (0.80%) and 9.90% of the wild winter steelhead impact limit (2.00%) for non-Indian commercial fisheries.
- Over the five fishing periods, a total of 2,764 chinook were kept with an estimated 17.8% of upriver stock.
- The observed mark rate for chinook was 60% with a total observation of 48 chinook kept and 0 steelhead released for the March 15-16th fishing period. The March 17<sup>th</sup> test fishery observations are shown in the table below.

<i>2004 Spring Chinook Fishery Monitoring Data Summary</i>							
Fishing period (Zones 1 - 4)	Observer Data						
	Gear	Drifts	Chinook Marked	Chinook UnMarked	Chinook Mark Rate *	Steelhead	Steelhead Mark Rate
Test Fishery Feb. 22	4 1/4"	21	3	2	60%	20	45%
Test Fishery Feb. 29	4 1/4"	22	8	2	80%	14	43%
<b>16 hr. Fishery Mar. 2</b>	9"	77	8	4	67%	4	25%
<b>16 hr. Fishery Mar. 4-5</b>	9"	95	26	17	60%	6	33%
Test Fishery Mar. 7	4 1/4"	19	5	4	56%	18	50%
<b>24 hr. Fishery Mar. 9-10</b>	9"	81	42	10	76%	4	0%
<b>24 hr Fishery Mar 11-12</b>	9"	101	35	10	78%	3	33%
Test Fishery Mar. 14	4 1/4"	17	13	8	64%	12	33%
<b>15 hr Fishery Mar 15-16</b>	9"	81	48	32	60%	0	0%
Test Fishery March 17	4 1/4"	12	17	4	81%	7	29%

\*Percents of those fish for which marks could be determined.

- For the five fishing periods a total of 134 sturgeon have been landed which leaves 166 sturgeon on the guideline for the winter-summer timeframe.

<i>Chinook and Steelhead During 2004 Demonstration Fishery</i>											
Fishing Period	Gear	Del	Chinook Kept			Chinook Released			Steelhead Released		White Sturgeon
			Total	Upriver Stock	L River Stock	Total	Upriver Stock	L River Stocks	Total	Wild Winter	
Mar 2 (16 hr) + Mar 4-5 (16 hr)	9"	179	572	64	508	353	92	260	168	110	51
Mar 9-10 (24 hr) + Mar 11-12 (24hr)	9"	291	1,366	258	1,108	408	162	247	143	104	54
Mar 15-16 (15 hr)	9"	127	826	172	654	551	235	316	0	0	29
Total			2,764	494	2,270	1,312	489	823	311	214	134

### ***Select Area Fishery***

- An additional 12-hour and 18-hour fishing period occurred March 13-14 in Blind Slough and Youngs Bay respectively. Landings for this most recent period were 222 chinook in Youngs Bay and 73 chinook in Blind Slough, for season totals of 410 chinook (5.3% UR) in Youngs Bay and 100 chinook (3.5% UR) in Blind Slough.
- An estimated 30 spring chinook of upriver origin have been harvested in Youngs Bay and Blind Slough winter seasons combined through March 14. The estimated combined upriver impact rate is 0.008%.
- A total of 7 white sturgeon have been taken in these fisheries.

### ***Sport Fishery***

- The mainstem Columbia (mouth to Bonneville Dam) chinook sports catch estimate for the period of Feb. 1 - March 16 was 692 fish kept and 164 released in 23,100 angler trips, for an upriver impact rate of 0.009%. The steelhead sports catch for the same period was 291 fish kept and 271 fish released.

### ***Smelt Fishery***

- A Joint State Eulachon Management Plan has been in effect since 2001.
- A strong run of eulachon was expected in 2004 providing for Level 3 fisheries. Current fishery regulations for the January 1, 2004 through March 31, 2004 time frame are as follows:
  - Mainstem CR commercial: 3 AM-9 PM (18 hrs) Sun, Tue, Thu, and Fri.
  - WA tributary commercial: 6 PM Sun-6 PM Tue(48 hrs), 6pm Wed-6pm Fri(48 hrs)
  - WA tributary sport: 6 AM-10 PM, 7 days/wk, 20 lb daily limit
- Run strength has been downgraded to Level 2 or possibly Level 1; however, staff does not believe the fishery to date has resulted in the run being overexploited.
- The Columbia River has averaged around 40° for most of the winter, which is two degrees below minimum temperatures that generally trigger eulachon migration. The Cowlitz has tended to be 2-3 degrees warmer than the Columbia River, but Cowlitz stream flows have often been lower and clearer than preferred for dipping.
- Eulachon have been present in the Columbia River from early-February through mid-March, concentrating in significant numbers at known spawning sites from Clatskanie upstream to

Martin’s Bluff. Commercial landings in the mainstem Columbia River have totaled 15,800 lbs.

- Eulachon were present in the Cowlitz River twice, once in early-February and again in early to mid-March. Commercial landings from the Cowlitz totaled 105,300 lbs during February and 14,700 lbs during March. Fishers reported that both fresh and partially spent fish entered the Cowlitz in February and those landed in March were mostly spent fish. Sport dipping has been poor to good, peaking at limits being dipped in 15 minutes.
- Eulachon were present in the Grays River for at least two weeks in late-February. Sport fishers successfully dipped smelt.

## FISHERY RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

<i>Recommendation</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Joint Staff is proposing the following additional fishing period for the commercial demonstration fishery.</li> </ul>
<b>Season:</b>	<b>3 PM Thursday March 18 through 6 AM Friday March 19 (15 hours)</b>
<b>Area:</b>	<b>Mouth to Kelley Point (Zones 1-4)</b>
<b>Sanctuaries:</b>	<b>Grays River, Gnat Creek, Elokomina –B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, and Lewis-B.</b>
<b>Gear:</b>	<b>Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms. 9” minimum and 9-¾” maximum mesh size restrictions.</b>
<b>Allowable Sales:</b>	<b>Adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon and sturgeon. A maximum of 3 white sturgeon may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel.</b>
<b>Participants:</b>	<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 certificate that allows participation in this fishery.</b>
<b>Miscellaneous Regulations:</b>	<p><b>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.</b></p> <p><b>Red corks are required at 25-fathom intervals and red corks must be in contrast to the corks used in the remainder of the net.</b></p> <p><b>Use of recovery boxes will be required on all lethargic or bleeding salmonids.</b></p> <p><b>Each participant will be required to have 2 operable recovery boxes or one box with two chambers in place to participate in this 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.</b></p> <p><b>Lighted buoys required on each end of nets being fished between sunset and sunrise.</b></p> <p><b>Quick reporting rule in effect for Washington buyers.</b></p>

### *Select Area Fishery*

- Based on continued low impacts on upriver spring chinook, the fishing industry has requested consideration of additional fishing time in these sites to maximize harvest of local stocks while ex-vessel prices are high.

- In some years, the encounter of upriver spring Chinook has increased in Youngs Bay during late March. Additional fishing time may be warranted but should be carefully considered.
- Based on suggestions by the fishing industry, the lower fishing boundary could be moved upstream to the “old Youngs Bay Bridge” to minimize impacts to upriver spring chinook while maintaining harvest opportunity. The estimated catch of spring chinook for one additional 18-h fishing period in Youngs Bay (entire area) would be 275 fish. Assuming a 15% upriver stock component, the projected harvest of upriver spring chinook would be 41 fish (0.01% impact rate).

Recommendation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Joint Staff is recommending one additional fishing period in Youngs Bay upstream of the old Youngs Bay bridge to occur from 6 PM Saturday March 20 to 6 AM Sunday March 21 (12 hours)</li> <li>• The Joint Staff is recommending one additional fishing period in Blind Slough to occur from 7 PM Saturday March 20 to 7 AM Sunday March 21 (12 hours)</li> </ul>

- ✓ This winter season extension is recommended to allow additional harvest opportunity on local stocks when market value is high while minimizing impacts to upriver spring chinook.
- ✓ Moving the lower fishing boundary upstream to the “old Youngs Bay Bridge” will significantly reduce fishing area but should reduce the potential for impacts to upriver stocks and provide an opportunity to evaluate if a full-fleet fishery can operate with minimal impacts in this reduced area.
- ✓ The estimated catch for this recommended season is 150 spring chinook in Youngs Bay and 100 spring chinook in Blind Slough.
- ✓ Expected impacts to upriver spring chinook for the Youngs Bay season extension would be 0.004% and 0.002% in Blind Slough. Combined winter season impacts for all SAFE areas with this extension are expected to be 0.014% (1.8% of the non-Indian commercial allocation).
- ✓ Weekend fishing periods during the winter season eliminate overlapping open fishing periods for mainstem and Select Areas.

### *Smelt Fishery*

- The Joint-Staff recommends modifying the current regulations. The goal of these modifications is to preserve enough fishing time to monitor the remaining portion of the 2004 run.

### **MAINSTEM COLUMBIA RIVER SMELT FISHERY RECOMMENDATIONS**

<i>Joint Staff Commercial Fishery Recommendation</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Joint Staff recommends the adoption of the following commercial smelt fishing periods in the mainstem Columbia River:</li></ul>	
<b>Season:</b>	Close the ongoing 3AM-9 PM (18 hrs) Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday fishery effective 9 PM Sunday March 21, 2004 and adopt a fishery consisting of two 18-hour periods on Friday and Sunday nights during Friday March 26, 2004 through Wednesday March 31, 2004. Open hours are 3 AM to 9 PM.
<b>Area:</b>	Zones 1-5.
<b>Gear:</b>	Gill net, dip nets, or trawls as per permanent regulations.
<b>Participants:</b>	Columbia River commercial fishers with appropriate licenses and legal gear.
<b>Miscellaneous:</b>	Quick Reporting Rule in effect for Washington buyers.

### **WASHINGTON TRIBUTARY SMELT FISHERY RECOMMENDATIONS**

<i>Washington Tributary Commercial Fishery Recommendation</i>	
<b>Season:</b>	Close the ongoing 6 PM Sunday to 6 PM Tuesday (48 hrs) and 6 PM Wednesday to 6 PM Friday (48 hrs) fishery effective 6 PM Thursday March 18, 2004 and adopt a fishery consisting of two 12-hour periods from 6PM Sunday through 6 AM Monday and from 6 PM Wednesday through 6AM Thursday, during Sunday March 21, 2004 through 12 AM (midnight) March 31, 2004. Open hours are 6 PM to 6 AM.
<b>Area:</b>	Cowlitz River (downstream of Peterson's Eddy), Kalama River (downstream of Modrow Bridge), and Lewis River (mainstem and North Fork downstream of overhead power lines near Eagle Island).
<b>Gear:</b>	Dip nets.
<b>Miscellaneous:</b>	Quick Reporting Rule in effect for Washington buyers.

***Washington Tributary Sport Fishery Recommendation***

<b>Season:</b>	Close the ongoing 6 AM to 10 PM 7-day a week sport fishery effective 10 PM Friday March 19 and adopt a fishery consisting of two 16-hour periods from 6 AM to 10 PM Wednesday and from 6 AM to 10 PM Saturday during Saturday March 20, 2004 through 12am (midnight) March 31, 2004. Open hours are 6 AM to 6 PM
<b>Area:</b>	All Washington Columbia River tributaries.
<b>Gear:</b>	Dip nets.
<b>Daily Limit:</b>	20 pounds per person.

**NEXT COMPACT HEARING**

- The Joint Staff is recommending a Compact hearing for 11AM Monday March 22, 2004 if no fishery is set, 1PM Compact if a fishery is set.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
March 18, 2004

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