

**JOINT STAFF REPORT
WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 10
Columbia River Compact
March 22, 2004**

Purpose: To review ongoing commercial fisheries and consider non-Indian commercial fishing seasons for salmon 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 19 at Bonneville Dam was 253 spring chinook.
- Current dam counts suggest the run timing is later than average.
- Willamette spring chinook began to pass Willamette Falls in early March with 22 spring chinook counted through March 17.
- 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 through March 17 was 6,599 wild fish, indicating a strong run into the Willamette Basin.
- The wild steelhead Bonneville Dam count through March 19 was 272 steelhead, which may include a mix of summer and winter-run fish.
- Run updates in Oregon tributaries will be available the end of March. Information available to date indicate the lower Columbia River winter runs are similar to recent averages.

FISHERY UPDATES

Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Demonstration Fishery

- Five test fishing days have occurred on Sundays beginning February 22, with an additional test fishery on Wednesday, March 17th. 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); two 24 hour fishing periods occurred March 9-10 (5 AM - 5 AM) and March 11-12 (10 AM –10 AM); and two 15 hour fishing periods occurred on March 15-16 (3 PM- 6 AM) and March 18-19 (6 PM- 9AM). All fishing periods had 9" minimum and 9-¾" 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" -9¾"), and 18.5% for chinook and steelhead in small mesh (≤4¼").
- Impacts to listed species during the first six fishing periods are estimated to be 0.154% for upriver spring chinook and 0.198% for wild winter steelhead. Total impacts to date represent 19.25% 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 six fishing periods, a total of 3,601 chinook were kept . During the most recent fishing period, 32% of the chinook handled were upriver stock.
- The observed mark rate for chinook was 63% with a total observation of 90 chinook kept and 1 steelhead released for the combined March 15-16 and March 18-19 fishing periods. The March 21 test fishery observations are shown in the table below.

<i>2004 Spring Chinook Fishery Monitoring Data Summary</i>							
Fishing period (Zones 1 - 4)	Gear	Drifts	Observer Data				Steelhead Mark Rate
			Chinook Marked	Chinook UnMarked	Chinook Mark Rate *	Steelhead	
Test Fishery Feb. 22	4 ¼"	21	3	2	60%	20	45%
Test Fishery Feb. 29	4 ¼"	22	8	2	80%	14	43%
16 hr. Fishery Mar. 2	9"	77	8	4	67%	4	25%
16 hr. Fishery Mar. 4-5	9"	95	26	17	60%	6	33%
Test Fishery Mar. 7	4 ¼"	19	5	4	56%	18	50%
24 hr. Fishery Mar. 9-10	9"	81	42	10	76%	4	0%
24 hr Fishery Mar 11-12	9"	101	35	10	78%	3	33%
Test Fishery Mar. 14	4 ¼"	17	13	8	64%	12	33%
15 hr Fishery Mar 15-16	9"	81	48	32	60%	0	0%
Test Fishery March 17	4 ¼"	12	17	4	81%	7	29%
15 hr Fishery Mar 18-19	9"	64	42	20	68%	1	100%
Test Fishery March 21	4 ¼"	18	30	8	79%	17	53%

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

- For the six fishing periods a total of 159 sturgeon have been landed which leaves 141 sturgeon on the guideline for the winter-summer timeframe.

Chinook and Steelhead During 2004 Demonstration Fishery											
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	71	501	370	106	264	168	110	51
Mar 9-10 (24 hr) + Mar 11-12 (24hr)	9"	291	1,366	232	1,134	408	150	258	143	104	54
Mar 15-16 (15 hr) + Mar 18-19 (15 hr)	9"	258	1,663	386	1,277	961	443	518	18	0	54
Total			3,601	689	2,912	1,739	699	1,040	329	213	159

Select Area Fishery

- An additional 12-hour and 18-hour fishing period occurred March 20-21 in Blind Slough and Youngs Bay respectively. Landings for this most recent period were 631 chinook in Youngs Bay and 191 chinook in Blind Slough, for season totals of 1,041 chinook (5.7% UR) in Youngs Bay and 291 chinook (9.4% UR) in Blind Slough. The estimated upriver impact rates are 0.016% for Youngs Bay and 0.007% for Blind Slough.
- A total of 8 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 (Smelt) Management Plan has been in effect since 2001.
- Two 18-hr commercial smelt fisheries (3 AM - 9 PM) are scheduled for March 26 and March 28 on the mainstem Columbia.

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"> The Joint Staff is proposing the following season options for the commercial demonstration fishery.
Season:	1) 9 AM - 5 PM Tuesday March 23 (8 hours)
Options	2) 9 PM Tuesday March 23 to 5 AM Wednesday March 24 (8 hours)
	3) Test Fish on Tuesday with possible fishery on Thursday
Area:	Mouth to Kelley Point (Zones 1-4)
Sanctuaries:	Grays River, Gnat Creek, Elokomina –B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, and Lewis-B.
Gear:	<p>Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms. 4 ¼" maximum mesh size restrictions. Use of monofilament nets is prohibited.</p> <p>Optional use of a steelhead excluding panel hung between the cork line and the tangle net mesh. Excluder panel must be a minimum of 5' in depth and not exceed 10' in depth with a 12" minimum mesh size restriction in effect.</p> <p>Use of weedlines or droppers, used in smelt bobber nets, are allowed in place of a steelhead excluder panel. Weedlines or droppers must extend a minimum of 5' above the tangle net mesh.</p> <p>Net length can increase from 150 to 175 fathoms for nets constructed with a steelhead excluder panel, weedlines, or droppers.</p>
Allowable Sales:	Adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon and sturgeon. A maximum of 3 white sturgeon may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel.
Participants:	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.
Miscellaneous Regulations:	<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>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.</p> <p>Use of recovery boxes will be required on all lethargic or bleeding salmonids.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Lighted buoys required on each end of nets being fished between sunset and sunrise.</p> <p>Quick reporting rule in effect for Washington buyers.</p>

NEXT COMPACT HEARING

- To be announced.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
March 22, 2004