

**JOINT STAFF REPORT  
WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 13  
Columbia River Compact  
March 31, 2004**

**Purpose:** To review the ongoing commercial fishery 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 pre-season 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.
- Counts at Willamette Falls are picking up. The count through March 26 was 159 fish, indicating a strong run into the Willamette. The Willamette count is expected to reach its mid-point in mid May.
- The upriver spring chinook count through March 28 at Bonneville Dam remains below average for this time of the year with 348 fish. This count is about 30% of average for this time of year (based on an average run size with an average run time, as measured since 1987). The Bonneville count is expected to reach its mid-point in late April.
- 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 pre-season 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 26 was 7,785 wild fish. The Willamette run has just past its average mid-point and a large return is indicated.
- The Bonneville Dam steelhead count through March 28 was 376 wild 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***

- Weekly test fishing has occurred from February 22 through March 21 with all test fishers using small mesh 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 - 9 AM). These fishing periods had 9" minimum and 9-¾" maximum mesh size restrictions in effect.
- Two 8-hour fishing periods occurred on March 23-24 and March 25-26 (9 PM - 5 AM) and a 10-hr fishing period occurred on March 29-30 (7 PM - 5 AM), all with a 4 ¼" maximum mesh size restriction 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").
- Mainstem non-Indian commercial fishery impacts to listed species are estimated to be 0.502% for upriver spring chinook and 0.754% for wild winter steelhead through the March 29-30 fishing period. Total impacts to date represent 62.75% of the total upriver spring chinook impact limit (0.80%) for non-Indian commercial fisheries and 37.70% of the wild winter steelhead impact limit (2.00%) for non-Indian fisheries.
- Over the nine fishing periods, a total of 13,292 chinook were kept, with 4,924 fish kept during the most recent 10-hr small mesh fisheries. Sampling of landed catch from the three small mesh fishing periods showed 48% percent were upriver fish.
- For the March 29-30 fishing period the observed mark rate for chinook was 75% with a total observation of 400 chinook kept and 48 steelhead released. More information from the individual 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 ¼"	26	3	2	60%	20	45%
Test Fishery Feb. 29	4 ¼"	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 ¼"	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 ¼"	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 ¼"	12	17	4	81%	7	29%
<b>15 hr Fishery Mar 18-19</b>	9"	64	42	20	68%	1	100%
Test Fishery March 21	4 ¼"	20	30	8	79%	17	53%
<b>8 hr Fishery Mar 23-24</b>	4 ¼"	80	176	62	74%	32	38%
<b>8 hr Fishery Mar 25-26</b>	4 ¼"	80	141	42	77%	53	24%
<b>10 hr Fishery Mar 29-30</b>	4 ¼"	91	400	135	75%	48	30%

- For the nine fishing periods a total of 174 sturgeon have been landed.

<b>Chinook and Steelhead During 2004 Demonstration Fishery</b>												
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	1,648	356	1,262	952	437	536	18	0	54	
Mar 23-24 (8 hr) + Mar 25-26 (8 hr)	4 ¼"	322	4,782	2,213	2,575	1,569	1,112	457	1,282	665	14	
Mar 29-30 (10 hr)	4 ¼"	163	4,924	2,364	2,757	1,662	1,201	461	591	303	1	
<b>Total</b>			13,292	5,236	8,056	4,961	2,985	1,976	2,202	1,182	174	

### **Select Area Fishery**

- Youngs Bay and Blind Slough Select Area winter fisheries landed 1,341 chinook, with a combined upriver impact of 0.023%. Total impacts to date represent 2.88% of the total upriver spring chinook impact limit (0.80%) for non-Indian commercial fisheries.
- The majority of the upriver impacts for Select Area Fisheries are expected to occur in spring seasons set to open the third week in April.
- A total of 9 white sturgeon have been landed in these fisheries.

### **Sport Fishery**

- The mainstem Columbia (mouth to Bonneville Dam) recreational spring chinook catch estimate for the period of Feb. 1 - March 21 is 1,097 fish kept and 329 released for 35,291 angler trips, for an upriver impact rate of 0.017%. In addition, 431 steelhead were kept and 368 steelhead were released during this same time period.
- Of the total mainstem Columbia (mouth to Bonneville Dam) recreational spring chinook catch, 46 of the chinook were kept and 22 released for 2,413 angler trips in the area from the I-5 Bridge upstream to Bonneville Dam.

## **MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- Non-Indian commercial fisheries are being managed for an overall 0.8% upriver impact with 0.2% reserved for Select Areas and as a management buffer. The mainstem upriver impact through the March 29-30 fishing period is estimated to be 0.502%, which is 83.67% of the 0.6% impact reserved for this fishery.
- Non-Indian fisheries are being managed for an overall 2.0% impact on wild winter steelhead. The mainstem commercial impact through the March 29-30 fishing period is estimated to be 0.754%, which is 37.70% of the 2.0% impact.

## 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>	<p><b>Option 1. A four hour fishery;</b></p> <p><b>Option 2. A fishery with a per-boat limit;</b></p> <p><b>Option 3. No further season.</b></p>
<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>	<p><b>Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms.</b>  <b>4 ¼" maximum mesh size restrictions. Use of monofilament nets is prohibited.</b></p> <p><b>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.</b></p> <p><b>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.</b></p> <p><b>Net length can increase from 150 to 175 fathoms for nets constructed with a steelhead excluder panel, weedlines, or droppers.</b></p>
<b>Allowable Sales:</b>	<b>Adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon and sturgeon.</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 is required on all lethargic or bleeding salmonids.</b></p> <p><b>Each participant is required to have 2 operable recovery boxes or one box with two chambers in place to participate in this fishery. Operable recovery boxes 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>

### NEXT COMPACT HEARING

- To be announced.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
 March 31, 2004