

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT - SUMMER FACT SHEET NO. 3
Joint State Hearing/Columbia River Compact
June 27, 2006

Fisheries under Consideration:

Below Bonneville Summer Chinook Sport Fishery
Estuary Sturgeon Sport Fishery
John Day Pool Sturgeon Sport Fishery
SAFE Commercial Fisheries

Management guidelines, stock status and past fisheries are described in Summer Fact Sheet #1, dated June 15, 2006.

STOCK STATUS

- Bonneville Dam counts from June 16-26 total 28,931 Chinook, with a daily average passage of 2,630 fish and a peak count to date of 4,038 for June 26.
- Based on the 5-year average, the cumulative count through the same date is 24,845 fish with a daily average passage of 2,259 fish. The average run size during this period was 71,272 (including harvest). Passage is typically 36% complete by June 26 and 50% complete around July 1.
- TAC met this morning and concluded that the run will most likely exceed the preseason forecast. TAC estimated a minimum run size of 70,000 fish at the river mouth. TAC will meet July 5 to update the run again.
- TAC also looked at the sockeye run and concluded that it was too early for a formal update, but the run did appear to be tracking slightly ahead of forecast.

SUMMER SEASON FISHERIES

Non-treaty Sport Salmon Fisheries

- Summer Chinook sport fisheries are non-selective and are scheduled from the Tongue Pt./Rocky Pt. line upstream to Priest Rapids Dam during June 16-July 31, and from Priest Rapids Dam to Chief Joseph Dam during July 1 through October 15.
- Based on the preseason run size of 49,000 fish, an estimated 1,500 fish were available for harvest to sport fisheries occurring below Priest Rapids Dam. For runs of 70,000 fish, sport fisheries would be allocated around 3,100 fish and for runs over 80,000 the allocation could be as high as 4,300 fish, based on the draft WDFW upper Columbia management plan.
- Catch rates since June 16 have remained high in areas below Bonneville Dam. The estimated catch through June 25 is 2,527 Chinook from 14,451 angler trips (0.175 Chinook/angler).
- Projected catch through Friday, June 30 below Bonneville Dam is 3,392 Chinook kept. Projected catch through Sunday July 2 is 4,137 Chinook.
- Catch is averaging about 250 fish per day, with about 38% of the fish being harvested in the area between I-5 and Bonneville Dam
- Mark rates observed in the fishery have further declined, from 41% during June 11-18 to 30% between June 19-25

- Catch and effort above Bonneville Dam has remained minimal, with a projected total catch of 100-300 Chinook for the season, based on past years.
- With the warm weather, increasing river temperature, and the reduced number of Chinook expected in the river typical for July, effort and angler success is expected to decrease.
- Catch in July during past years when Chinook retention was allowed is typically about 900 fish for the month, but has gone as high as 1,600 fish handled (2002).

Estuary Sturgeon Sport Fishery

- The recreational sturgeon fishery downstream of the Wauna powerlines is scheduled to be open for retention from May 13 through July 4. The preseason management target was for a harvest of 15,000 fish, and a total guideline of 16,000, which includes a 1,000 fish management buffer.
- The projected catch through July 4 for this area is 14,600 fish, which represents 97% of the management target and 91% of the harvest guideline.
- Based on current catch rates and the management target, approximately 1,400 fish will remain available for harvest in the estuary fishery after the scheduled July 4 closure date.
- Based on average June catch rates, the remaining fish would allow for additional days of fishing. Weekday catches are projected to average 230 fish/day and weekend catches are projected to average 650 fish/day.

John Day Pool Sturgeon Sport Fishery

- The John Day Pool has been open for retention of sturgeon since January 1, 2006. The management target is for a harvest of 165 fish.
- Catch to date is 160 fish and it is likely the catch guideline will be reached by Friday June 30.
- The Dalles Pool closed to retention effective April 8 with a catch of 93 sturgeon (100 fish guideline).
- Bonneville Pool remains open for sturgeon retention with 390 fish harvested as of June 25, which is 56% of the 700 fish guideline.

Non-treaty Commercial Summer Chinook Fishery

- A Commercial fishing period took place on June 26-27 in Zones 1-5 between 7 PM and 5AM. Preliminary landings are estimated at about 1,184 Chinook and 104 white sturgeon.
- A second fishing period is scheduled to occur the evening of July 5.

Select Area Commercial Summer Fishery

- Summer season SAFE fisheries were adopted at the January 26, 2006 Compact hearing. Weekly fishing periods are scheduled in Youngs Bay between June 21 through July 27.
- A total of 400 sturgeon have been allocated to Select Area commercial fisheries with 300 set aside for Winter/Spring/Summer fisheries.
- Combined sturgeon landings to date in Select Area fisheries total 301 fish.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below Bonneville Summer Chinook Sport Fishery

- Close the area from Tongue Pt./Rocky Pt. line upstream to Bonneville Dam for the retention of Chinook effective 12:01 AM Saturday July 1.
- The area from Bonneville Dam to Priest Rapids Dam will remain open until further notice.
 - The catch above Bonneville Dam is projected to be minimal.

Estuary Sturgeon Sport Fishery

- Extend the ongoing recreational sturgeon retention fishery downstream of the Wauna powerlines through 11:59 PM Friday July 7.
 - Projected catch through July 7 is 15,300 fish, providing a buffer for final catch numbers.
 - Staff will review final catch estimates to consider additional opportunity.

John Day Pool Sturgeon Sport Fishery

- Prohibit the retention of sturgeon in the Columbia River and tributaries between John Day and McNary dams (John Day Pool) effective 12:01 AM Saturday July 1, 2006.
 - The guideline is projected to be achieved by June 30.

Future Regulation Change -- Commercial Fisheries Notification

Green sturgeon will be ESA-listed as threatened effective July 6, 2006 and prohibiting retention in Columbia River commercial fisheries is consistent with the Green Sturgeon Biological Assessment.

- Effective July 7, 2006 prohibit the retention of green sturgeon in all Columbia River mainstem and Select Area commercial fisheries until further notice.

Yongs Bay SAFE Commercial fishery

- Prohibit the retention of sturgeon effective noon, Wednesday June 28-July 31, 2006

FUTURE MEETINGS

- Staff recommends a hearing be scheduled for 2:00 PM Thursday July 6 via teleconference to review fisheries and stock status.
- A Columbia River Compact hearing has been scheduled for 10 AM Thursday, July 27, 2006 located at the River Street Building, 25 River Street in Cathlamet, Washington. The purpose of the hearing will be to review stock status of fall Chinook and consider non-Indian fall commercial fisheries.