

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT
WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 6
Columbia River Compact
March 7, 2007

<i>Fisheries under consideration:</i>	<i>Non-Indian commercial</i> <i>Treaty Indian commercial</i>
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Management guidelines and run forecasts for the 2007 spring season were presented in the Winter Fact Sheet #2 (January 25, 2007)

Columbia River Water Conditions

- Temperature during early March (1-5) has averaged 41 °F, which is under (-3°F) under the 5- and 10 year averages for this period.
- Flow has averaged 158 kcfs, which is midway between the 5- and 10-year averages. Water clarity is improving with visibility currently at 7.0 feet.

Non-Indian Commercial Fisheries

2007 Winter Commercial Sturgeon Fishery

- The winter commercial sturgeon fishery concluded on February 23 with landings of 1,424 white sturgeon and 194 Chinook. Based on VSI sampling, 48% of the spring Chinook were of upriver origin.

2007 Winter Select Area Fisheries

- Preliminary landings for winter SAFE fisheries through March 1 include 100 spring Chinook in Youngs Bay, four in Blind Slough and zero in Deep River. Of 62 fish sampled for VSI, 2 (3.4%) were determined to be of upriver origin. Landings and stock composition to date are average.

2007 Commercial Smelt Fisheries

- The Level 1 mainstem Columbia River commercial fishery currently consists of two 9-hour fishing periods per week (7 AM-4 PM Mondays and Thursdays) through March 31.
- The Compact modified the smelt season by rescinding Monday March 12 and opening Sunday March 11 in the mainstem Columbia River to accommodate attendance at the NOF meeting.
- Landings through March 1 total 6,575 pounds (about 50% of 2006) with some additional minor landings reported in recent openers.
- The Level 1 commercial fishery in the Cowlitz River is currently open through March 31 and consists of two, 6-hour fishing periods weekly (6 PM-Midnight; Sundays and Wednesdays). Landings through February 28 total 1,199 pounds.

2007 Winter Salmon Commercial Fishery

- Test fishing conducted on February 25 and March 5 indicated abundance of spring Chinook was low and steelhead abundance was moderately high. All Chinook (12) were estimated to be of lower river origin.

- An initial 12-hour (noon-midnight) commercial fishing period with large mesh gear took place on March 6 with preliminary landings of 415 Spring Chinook and 18 white sturgeon. Based on visual observations, upriver Chinook comprised 41% of the landed catch.

2007 Spring Chinook Commercial Fishery -- Preliminary Observation Data																			
Fishery	Date	Mesh Size	# Drifts	Lower R.			UpRiver			No VSI			% Upriver	Total Chinook	Chk /Sthd	Total Steelhead	Steelhead		
				Clipped	No Clip	Unknown	Clipped	No Clip	Unknown	Clipped	No Clip	Unknown					Clipped	No Clip	Unknown
Test	25-Feb	4¼"	14	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	4	0.8	5	1	3	1
Test	04-Mar	4¼"	16	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	8	0.7	11	3	8	0
Full Fleet	06-Mar	≥8	59	13	9	0	7	3	0	15	2	0	31%	49	8.2	6	1	5	0

- To date, non-Indian commercial fishery upriver spring Chinook impacts are estimated to be 0.206%, or 43% of the 0.48% mainstem commercial impact guideline.
- Impacts to wild winter steelhead are 0.109%, or 5% of the 2.00% ESA limit.
- Given the preseason run size, stock composition in the fishery to date, and the upriver spring Chinook impact limit allocated to this fishery, the season total mainstem spring Chinook catch would be less than 1,400 fish if large-mesh gear were used exclusively for the remainder of the season.
- Based on this, staff recommends postponing additional fishing periods until steelhead abundance favors use of tangle net gear in order to maximize Chinook harvest.
- Test fishing will occur Sunday March 11, 2007

2007 Summary of Upriver Spring Chinook ESA Impacts from Non- Indian Fisheries					
Non-Indian Fisheries	Preseason	To Date	Proposed	Total	Remaining
Mainstem	0.480	0.206	0.000	0.206	0.274
SAFE	0.100	0.004	0.000	0.004	0.096
Commercial Total	0.580	0.021	0.000	0.210	0.370

Treaty Indian Fisheries

2007 Mainstem Winter Commercial Fishery

- The ongoing commercial fishery opened 12 PM (noon) February 1 and is scheduled to continue through 6 PM March 21.
- Harvest of white sturgeon through March 5 is 96 in the Bonneville Pool, 425 in The Dalles Pool, and 167 in John Day Pool. These catches represent 24%, 77%, and 50% of the pool-specific guidelines of 400, 550, and 335, respectively.

<i>Treaty Indian Winter Commercial Fishery Recommendation</i>
• The fishery in the Dalles Pool will close for sturgeon retention effective 6 PM Friday March 9, 2007. Bonneville and John Day pools will remain open through 6 PM March 21, or until pool-specific guidelines are reached.

- White sturgeon catch in Bonneville and John Day pools will be monitored and appropriate action will be taken by the Tribes as the catch approaches each respective guideline

Future Hearings

- A Compact hearing is scheduled for **5:00 PM** Monday March 12. The hearing will take place at the WDFW Region 5 office located at 2108 Grand Blvd., Vancouver, WA 98661