

**OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT
WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 6
March 20, 2009**

<i>Fisheries under Consideration:</i> Non-Indian Commercial Salmon

- Bonneville Dam passage of spring Chinook through March 19 totals 43 adults.
- The recreational fishery downstream of Hayden Island was open for Chinook angling seven days per week during March 1-15. The area is currently open 3 days per week (Thu-Sat) and is scheduled to remain open through April 18.
- The recreational fishery from Hayden Island upstream to Bonneville Dam is open seven days per week during March 1-22. Effective March 23, this area will be open 4 days per week (Wed-Sat) and is scheduled to remain open through April 22.
- During March 1-15, an estimated 16,400 angler trips resulted in 560 Chinook kept (and 170 released) for both areas. Catch rates appear to be improving as the season progresses, especially in the area above Hayden Island. Currently, catch rates are less than those observed in 2008.
- Test fishing was initiated March 9 in the lower river to index Chinook abundance.

2009 Spring Chinook Commercial Fishery -- Preliminary Observation Data																
Fishery	Date	Mesh size (inches)	Drifts	Lower R. Stock			UpRiver Stock			Total Chinook	Ratio		Steelhead			
				Clipped	No Clip	Unk	Clipped	No Clip	Unk		Chinook/Drift	Chinook / Steelhead	Total Steelhead	Clipped	No Clip	
Test*	09-Mar	4 1/4	16	2				2			4	0.3	0.7	6	4	2
Test*	17-Mar	4 1/4	17	1	1	0	1	2	0	5	0.3	0.7	7	4	3	
Test	19-Mar	4 1/4	8	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0.4	0.0	0	0	0	

**Occurred in Zones 2-3 to maintain historical database*

- Test fishing data from 2008 (March 23) in the Zones 4-5 resulted in a Chinook/drift ratio of 1.6. At that time, a total of 97 Chinook had passed Bonneville Dam.
- During preseason planning, a majority of Columbia River Commercial Advisory Group members expressed interest in starting the 2009 commercial fishery in mid to late March with shorter fishing periods.

Joint Staff Recommendation- Non-Indian Commercial Salmon Fishery		
Season:	1 PM to 11 PM Monday March 23, 2009 1 PM to 11 PM Sunday March 29, 2009	(10 hours) (10 hours)
Area:	West powerlines on Hayden Island upstream to Beacon Rock (Zone 4-5)	
Sanctuaries:	Washougal River and Sandy River.	
Gear:	Drift nets only. 4¼” maximum mesh size restriction (tangle net gear).	

Allowable Sales:	Adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon, shad and white sturgeon.
Additional Regulations:	<p>Multi- Net Rule: Nets not specifically authorized for use in this fishery may be onboard the vessel if properly stored. A properly stored net is defined as a net on a drum that is fully covered by a tarp (canvas or plastic) and bound with a minimum of ten revolutions of rope with a diameter of 3/8 (0.375) inches or greater</p> <p>Use of monofilament tangle nets not allowed.</p> <p>Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms. Net length can increase from 150 to 175 fathoms for nets constructed with a steelhead excluder panel, weedlines, or droppers.</p> <p>Use of recovery boxes is required for all lethargic or bleeding steelhead or salmon that are required to be released.</p> <p>Each participating vessel is required to have 2 operable recovery boxes or one box with two chambers.</p> <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. Two red corks are required at each end of nets fitted with steelhead excluder panels, weedlines, or droppers.</p> <p>Cooperation of vessel operators to allow state monitors onboard to observe and collect data is required.</p> <p>Workshop: Commercial fishers must have successfully completed a state-sponsored workshop concerning live captive commercial fishing techniques.</p> <p>24 hour Quick Reporting Rule for Washington buyers.</p>

- Industry interest in fishing next week is mixed with the majority of callers in favor of delaying the initial fishing period until the last week of March. Chinook abundance is low, which is not indicative of a cost-effective fishery for the majority of the fleet stationed near the estuary. On the other hand, market price is high and some fishers have expressed a preference to provide fish to the market as early in the season as possible.
- Staff has proposed the March 23 fishery based on preseason input from the commercial advisor group and minimal biological risk. However, based on test fishing results a fishery on March 23 may not be cost effective for the majority of the fleet.
- Catch and effort in the proposed March 23 fishery is expected to be low to moderate, considering the low Chinook abundance and the cost/benefit considerations of the down river fleet. Catch and effort is expected to be greater for the proposed fishery on March 29, with the anticipation of increased Chinook abundance in the area. Staff estimates less than 500 Chinook would be landed during the first period and around 1,000 Chinook during the second period.
- The proposed fishing periods are different from the preseason plan, which anticipated Tuesday fisheries. The proposal provides a longer break between the commercial and recreational fisheries (which may not be possible later in the season) and avoids conflict with the North of Falcon schedule (March 31 in Lynnwood, WA).
- The Joint Staff is not recommending a Compact hearing be scheduled at this time if the proposed fishery for March 29 is adopted. A Compact hearing may be necessary on Friday March 27, dependant on the Compact decisions today and test fishing results from March 26