

**OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
JOINT STAFF REPORT - SUMMER FACT SHEET NO. 7  
July 7, 2009**

***Fisheries under consideration: Recreational white sturgeon below Wauna***

*Stock status and management guidelines and season recommendations for 2009 sturgeon fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #1 (December 18, 2008).*

**Management Guidelines and Fishery Review**

- 2009 is the final year of the Joint State Accord on 2006-2009 Columbia River Sturgeon Fishery Management. Harvest must remain within the limits outlined in the agreement, therefore harvest above/below the 2009 guideline is not transferable to 2010.
- Sturgeon management protocol for recreational fisheries includes the objectives to minimize emergency in-season action, balance the catch above/below Wauna at a 40/60 ratio, and maintain fishery monitoring and management capabilities.
- Based on the agreement and catch during 2006 through 2008, a total of 15,529 fish are available for 2009 fisheries below Wauna.
- Seven-day/week retention fisheries were adopted for January 1-April 30 and May 9-June 28, and daily for July 2-5 based on this available harvest.
- An estimated 1,125 white sturgeon were kept during January through May.
- Based on preliminary data, the catch during June 1-28 was about 9,000 fish, and the catch for July 2-5 was about 1,300 for a season total of 11,400 white sturgeon, leaving about 4,100 fish available for the remainder of 2009.

<b>2009 Below Wauna White Sturgeon Catch Summary</b>			
<b>Period</b>	<b>Catch</b>	<b>Number Remaining</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Guideline		15,529	4-year cumulative guideline of 64,000 minus 2006 - 2008 harvest
January 1 – May 31 (actual)	1,125	14,404	
June 1-28 (preliminary)	9,000	5,504	Preliminary in-season estimate
July 2-5 (preliminary)	1,300	4,104	Preliminary in-season estimate
Projected Balance		<b>4,104</b>	Unused balance

- Catch rates in the estuary averaged about 350 kept white sturgeon per day during mid-late June but decreased to 325 kept per day during July 2-5. These catch rates are lower than observed in 2007 and 2008 but catch can increase rapidly as the summer progresses. For instance, catch rates in mid-late July 2008 averaged 648 kept white sturgeon/day. Assuming an average catch of 500 kept white sturgeon per day, the remaining balance equates to about 8 additional retention days.

## Recommendations

<i>Recreational Sturgeon Fishery Below Wauna</i>	
<b>Area:</b>	Mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines downstream to the mouth at Buoy 10, including Youngs Bay, and all adjacent Washington tributaries.
<b>Option #1</b>	Thursday July 9 – Saturday July 11 (3 days) Thursday July 16 – Saturday July 18 (3 days)
<b>Option #2</b>	Friday July 10 – Sunday July 12 (3 days) Friday July 17 – Sunday July 19 (3 days)
<b>Size limit</b>	41-inch fork length minimum and 54-inch fork length maximum size limit
<b>Additional Regulations</b>	Retention of green sturgeon prohibited as per permanent regulations
<b>Estimated catch</b>	Option 1: 2,750 kept white sturgeon Option 2: 3,000 kept white sturgeon

- Given 2009 is the final year of the agreement and the potential for July catch rates to increase, staff recommends a conservative approach for setting the balance of the 2009 estuary season.
- The two season scenarios presented provide additional harvest opportunity with little risk of exceeding the guideline.
- The catch rates modeled by staff project an unused balance of 1,100-1,350 fish.
- The options allow for weekly catches to be reviewed after each fishing period.

### Future Hearings

- Staff recommends a Joint State hearing be tentatively set for Tuesday July 21 to review catch rates in the estuary recreational white sturgeon fishery and consider additional fishing opportunity.
- A fall Compact hearing is scheduled for July 29, 2009 at 10:00 AM at the Seafood Consumer Center, located at 2021 Marine Drive, Suite 200, Astoria, Oregon.