

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 6
Columbia River Compact
March 8, 2010

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

Stock status and management guidelines for 2010 Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #3(February 18, 2010).

- Bonneville Dam passage of Chinook between January 1 and March 5 totals 8 adults.
- Test fishing is expected to occur once a week throughout March to index Chinook and steelhead abundance and stock ratios.
- The first test fishery occurred on March 7 (5p-8p) in Zones 1-3. A total of 11 drifts resulted in 2 Chinook and 16 steelhead handled. Both Chinook were lower river stock (1 unmarked) and 4 of the 16 steelhead were unclipped.
- Test fishing data indicates that at this time it is not conducive to fish, considering the low Chinook to steelhead ratio (1 Chinook for 8 steelhead).

Smelt Fishery Update

- The 2010 return was projected to be a weak run, similar to the past few years. Preseason run size indicators for the 2010 smelt return suggested a slight improvement compared to 2009.
- Commercial and recreational seasons were adopted for the mainstem Columbia River and Cowlitz River under reduced “Level One” fisheries, which is a very conservative level, allowing for minimal fishing to maintain collection of data on run size.
- Fisheries in the Cowlitz River were restricted to the month of February. No commercial landings were reported. Recreational effort was light with only minimal catch reported.
- Currently, commercial and recreational smelt fisheries are in place in the mainstem and scheduled to continue through March 31. The commercial fishery is open for two (7-hour) periods per week. Recreational fisheries are open in the Columbia River 24-hours per day seven days per week.
- Commercial catch is estimated at 3,400 pounds with peak landings occurring on January 21. No catch has been reported since February 11. As typical for the mainstem recreational fishery, no catch or effort has been observed or reported.
- Cumulative mainstem landings and commercial CPUE indicate that the 2010 run is smaller than expected.

<i>Washington Staff Recommendation - Mainstem Smelt Fisheries</i>
Close the ongoing 7-day per week recreational fishery and the 2-day per week commercial fishery effective 12:01 am March 11, 2010.

- The 2010 smelt run is likely complete and no additional fishing time is required to determine the magnitude of the run.

Future meetings

- The Joint Staff may recommend a Compact hearing for Monday March 15, dependant on test fishing results.
- Staff recognizes the importance of industry participation in the ongoing North of Falcon process. A NOF meeting is scheduled for 9A- 3P Monday March 15 in Vancouver, WA.