

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 7
Columbia River Compact
March 22, 2010

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| <i>Fisheries under Consideration:</i> Non-Indian Commercial Salmon |
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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 19 totals 102 adults. Since 2000, the cumulative count through March 19 has ranged from four fish (2006) up to 7,000 fish (2003). Total counts at Bonneville Dam over the past ten years (2000-2009) have averaged 194,200 adults (range 81,000-415,000).
- Bonneville Dam passage of steelhead since January 1 includes nearly 2,861 steelhead (71% mark rate), compared to the recent 5-year average of 1,200 fish. The summer steelhead counting period at Bonneville Dam begins April 1.
- Mainstem sport catch through March 14 includes 700 hatchery Chinook (100 released) from 21,500 angler trips. Stock composition (based on VSI) is 32% upper river stock. Winter steelhead handle includes 150 fish kept and 40 released. Chinook catch and effort is generally in line with pre season modeling.
- In the sport catch, stock composition overall is slightly different from preseason expectations with the lower river component comprising a greater proportion of the catch than expected. Stock composition has gradually been increasing towards upriver as the season progresses.
- Test fishing is expected to occur once a week throughout March to index Chinook and steelhead abundance and stock ratios. All test fishing is conducted with tangle net gear, and typically occurs in Zones 1-3.

| 2010 Spring Chinook Commercial Fishery Observation Data | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-----|------|--------|-------|--------------|---------|---------|-------|---------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Fishery | Month | Day | Mesh | Drifts | Zones | Chinook Data | | | | | | | | Steelhead | | |
| | | | | | | Lower | Upriver | Unknown | Total | Chinook/drift | Mark Rate | % Upriver | Chinook/Sthd | Total Sthd | # unclipped | Sthd/drift |
| Test | Mar | 7 | 4.25 | 11 | 1-3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0.18 | 50% | 0% | 0.13 | 16 | 4 | 1.45 |
| Test | Mar | 14 | 4.25 | 16 | 1-3 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 0.38 | 100% | 17% | 0.35 | 17 | 7 | 1.06 |
| Test | Mar | 21 | 4.25 | 18 | 1-3 | 22 | 25 | 11 | 58 | 3.22 | 86% | 53% | 2.64 | 22 | 7 | 1.22 |

- Results from test fishing on March 21 showed a significant improvement in Chinook catch rates but steelhead catch rates remain high similar to the last two weeks.
- Based on the test fishing results, Chinook abundance, stock composition, and mark rate are adequate to justify a commercial fishing period but the elevated steelhead abundance complicates use of tangle net gear.

- For a 12-hour tangle net fishing period on March 23, staff would predict the following results:
 - Up to 135-150 participants
 - 1,500-3,000 kept Chinook
 - 800-1,300 steelhead handle
 - 260-440 wild steelhead handle
 - 48-81 wild winter steelhead mortalities (12-20% of 2.0% allowable impact rate)
- Based on these predictions, staff believes that a tangle net fishery occurring on March 23 could use up to 20% of the allowable wild winter steelhead impact rate. Steelhead abundance typically declines as March progresses so delaying the fishery until next week should result in a lower steelhead handle.
- Delaying the fishery until next week would mean that future fisheries would likely be more volatile in terms of Chinook catch.
- Test fishing is currently scheduled to occur again Sunday March 28.

Future meetings

- The Joint Staff may recommend a Compact hearing for Monday March 29, dependant on test fishing results from the day prior.