

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 11
Columbia River Compact Hearing
November 23, 2010

Fisheries under consideration:	Non-Indian commercial smelt
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MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Eulachon (Columbia River Smelt)

- Since 2001, the Washington and Oregon Eulachon Management Plan (WOEMP) has been used to establish commercial and recreational smelt fishing seasons in the Columbia River and Washington tributaries. The plan provides for three levels of fishing during the January through March timeframe based on abundance indicators (parental run strength, juvenile production, and ocean productivity).
- Since February 2004, eulachon fisheries during January-March have been managed at the most conservative level (Level 1) prescribed in the WOEMP.
- Effective May 17 2010, Columbia River eulachon were federally-listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

2010 FISHERIES REVIEW

Columbia River Smelt Fisheries

- Beginning January 1 2010, the Compact initiated a conservative Level One fishery, in accordance with the WOEMP. The fishery consisted of two 7-hour weekly fishing periods (7 a.m. to 2 p.m.) on Mondays and Thursdays from January 1 through March 10. The fishery was closed prior to the historical closing date of March 31, partially due to the minimal amount of effort and landings in the fishery since mid-February.
- Landings totaled 3,600 pounds, of which the majority (2,200 pounds) was landed on January 21. Deliveries ranged from 0-9 per fishing period.
- Recreational smelt fisheries were open continuously, except for March 11-31 on the Oregon portion of the Columbia River. The Washington portion of the Columbia River was open 7 days per week during January 1-March 10. The daily limit was 10 pounds per person. As typical for this fishery, no effort or catch was observed or reported.

Tributary Smelt Fisheries

- In 2010, the only Washington tributary open to smelt fishing was the Cowlitz River. Both commercial and recreational seasons were very conservative compared to past Level One fisheries, with the intent to minimize impacts to the population while providing information on run strength. The commercial season consisted of two 3-hour fishing periods per week during February 3-28. The recreational fishery was only open on four Saturdays (7 AM-3 PM) during February with a 10-pound daily limit.

- The Sandy River (downstream of the U.S. 30 Alternate Highway Bridge) in Oregon was open year-round, 7 d/week, 24 h/day under permanent regulations.
- Commercial effort in tributary fisheries was minimal and no smelt were landed.
- Recreational effort in the Cowlitz River was low and catch was minimal. No recreational harvest was reported in the Sandy River.

FISHERY PROPOSALS

<i>2010-2011 Columbia River Commercial Smelt Fishery</i>	
Season:	Effective December 1, 2010: Rescind the Columbia River commercial smelt (Columbia River eulachon) fishery and adjacent tributary fisheries on the Washington shore scheduled to occur under permanent regulations during December 1- March 31.

- Under permanent rule, the Columbia River is scheduled to open for commercial smelt fishing effective December 1, 2010.
- Due to the recent listing, it is highly unlikely the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) would support fisheries with direct take of eulachon; therefore, the states are proposing to close all eulachon-directed fisheries.
- Recreational smelt fisheries in Oregon tributaries and the Oregon portion of the Columbia River will close effective January 1, 2011, and pending action by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission, commercial smelt fisheries in the Sandy and Umpqua rivers may also close effective December 2010.
- Recreational smelt fishing in the Washington portion of the Columbia River and Columbia River tributaries are closed under permanent regulations.
- The states will be working with NMFS in developing and expanding research activities to provide information on adult and juvenile eulachon abundances and distribution. This will include discussions about using catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) data in the mainstem Columbia.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- A Compact/Joint State Hearing is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Friday December 17 (via teleconference), to consider the following issues/fisheries:
 - ✓ Winter non-Indian commercial sturgeon fishery
 - ✓ Recreational sturgeon fisheries
 - Willamette River sturgeon fishery (Oregon State consideration)
 - Sand Island Slough (Joint State consideration)