

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 7
Columbia River Joint State Hearing
April 3, 2013

<i>Fisheries under Consideration:</i> Recreational salmon downstream of Bonneville Dam

Stock status and management guidelines for 2013 Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #2 (January 30, 2013).

Water Conditions

- River conditions are clear and low. The water temperature in the Columbia River has been at or slightly above normal for March and is currently 47° F. Average outflow during March at Bonneville Dam was 77% of the 5-year average, measuring 135 kcfs compared to 169 kcfs.

Stock Status

- Bonneville Dam passage of Chinook through April 2 totals 402 adults. Over the past ten years passage at Bonneville has averaged around 1% complete through April 2, and the average 50% passage date is May 7, ranging from April 24 to May 12. It is still too early in the run to make any conclusions regarding run size.

Lower Columbia River Recreational Fishery

- The Columbia River downstream of Bonneville Dam is scheduled to close for Chinook retention effective Saturday April 6. The area from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Oregon/Washington border is scheduled to be open for Chinook retention through May 5.

- Catch expectations for this fishery included a kept catch of 6,100 Chinook. A total of 4,900 upriver Chinook (including release mortalities) are available to this fishery until a run update is available in early May.

Preliminary Summary of the Lower Columbia Recreational Fishery during Feb 1 – Apr 5, 2013.			
	Angler Trips	Total Kept Catch	UR Catch (kept + rel mort)
Feb	4,856	46	15
Mar	42,289	1,473	1,054
Apr 1-5 (proj.)	10,225	620	503
Total	57,370	2,139	1,572

- Through March, angler effort was tracking similar to expectations, while catch rates were much lower. So far in April, effort and catch rates have picked up a bit, especially in the estuary, but remain less than expected. An unusually high abundance of Columbia River Eulachon (smelt) in the river possibly contributed to the lower catch rates in late March.

- Preliminary catch estimates of spring Chinook (all stocks) in the Columbia River downstream of Bonneville Dam through March 31 total 1,982 fish (1,519 kept) from 47,145 angler trips. The projected catch for April 1-5 is an additional 810 fish (620 kept)

- Of the total projected catch (kept and released) through April 5, 73% are estimated to be upriver stock. The estimated kept and release mortality for upriver fish represents 32% of the 4,900 available for the recreational fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam prior to a run update.

- Assuming the favorable river conditions persist, catch rates are expected to improve in the upcoming week as Chinook abundance increases.
- Given the remaining balance of upriver fish, there is the potential for additional angling opportunity in the lower river. Unfortunately, predicting catches is difficult without knowing if, and how much, catch rates will improve. Therefore, staff is proposing an extension based on improved catch rates and increasing upriver stock composition.

2013 Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery - Staff Recommendation	
Downstream of Bonneville Dam	
Season:	Extend the ongoing fishery from Saturday April 6 through Friday April 12, 2013, except closed Tuesday April 9 (6 days)
Area:	Buoy 10 upstream to Beacon Rock (boat and bank) plus bank angling only from Beacon Rock upstream to the Bonneville Dam deadline. Legal upstream boundary defined as: "A deadline marker on the Oregon bank (approximately four miles downstream from Bonneville Dam Powerhouse 1) in a straight line through the western tip of Pierce Island to a deadline marker on the Washington bank at Beacon Rock."
Daily Bag limit:	Two adult salmonids per day, but only one may be a Chinook. Only adipose fin-clipped fish may be kept. All other permanent regulations apply.
Additional regulations:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective through June 15: for the mainstem Columbia River salmon and steelhead fishery from the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line upstream to OR/WA border, it is unlawful when fishing from vessels which are less than 30 feet in length (substantiated by Coast Guard documentation or Marine Board registration) to totally remove from the water any salmon or steelhead required to be released. • Effective through May 15: the mainstem Columbia River will be open for retention of adipose fin-clipped steelhead and shad <u>only</u> during days and seasons open for retention of adipose fin-clipped spring Chinook. • Effective through June 15: on days when the mainstem Columbia River recreational fishery below Bonneville Dam is open to retention of Chinook, the salmonid daily bag limit in Oregon and Washington Select Areas will be the same as mainstem Columbia River bag limits. On days when the mainstem Columbia River fishery is <u>closed</u> to Chinook retention, permanent salmonid bag limit regulations apply. 	

- The proposed extension would provide six additional days of opportunity. If adopted, on Tuesday April 9 Staff would review catch and stock composition to determine if the catch is tracking within expectations.
- The catch estimate for the proposed fishery is 3,350 Chinook (2,560 kept), including 2,080 upriver mortalities.
- Through April 12, the projected upriver mortalities would represent 75% of the 4,900 available for the recreational fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam prior to a run update. The corresponding upriver impact rate would represent 49% of the 0.684% pre-update impact rate allowed for the mainstem recreational fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam.
- Even at the highest projected catches for the proposed season extension, the projected upriver mortalities would total 4,060 fish, or 83% of the 4,900 available.

2013 Effort, Catch and ESA impact for the Lower Columbia Recreational Fishery (Actual, Projected and Proposed)				
	Angler Trips	Total Kept Catch	Upriver Catch (kept + rel mort)	ESA Impact
Feb	4,856	46	15	
Mar	42,289	1,473	1,054	
Apr 1-5 (proj.)	10,225	620	503	
Thru April 5. Total	57,370	2,139	1,572	
Proposed (Apr 6-12)	24,000	2,560	2,080	
Thru April 12 Total			3,652	0.335%
Allowed			4,900	0.684%
Balance			1,248	0.316%
% Used			75%	49%

Future Meetings

- A Compact hearing is scheduled for 2 PM Monday April 8, 2013 via teleconference to consider mainstem commercial fisheries.