

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 8
Columbia River Compact
April 8, 2013

<i>Fisheries under Consideration:</i> Non-Indian Mainstem Commercial Salmon
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Stock status and management guidelines for 2013 Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #2 (January 30, 2013).

- Adult Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam through April 7 totals 719 fish. Although it is early in the season, the run appears to be tracking within expectations
- The number of upriver spring Chinook (kept plus release mortalities) available to the mainstem commercial fishery prior to a run size update is 1,200 adult fish. An additional 4,400 Willamette spring Chinook are available to commercial fisheries for the 2013 spring season. Access to the full Willamette allocation is typically constrained by the limited number of upriver fish.
- Test fishing has occurred once weekly since March 3 in Zones 2-3. The most recent test fishery occurred yesterday, Sunday April 7.
- Yesterday's data indicates a stable Chinook abundance and a decrease in steelhead abundance when compared to last week (March 31).

2013 Spring Chinook Observation Summary_ All data preliminary															
						Chinook Adult Data								Steelhead	
						Lower R.		UpRiver							
Fishery	Month	Date	(inches) Mesh	# of Drifts	Zones	Ad- Clip	No Clip	Ad- Clip	No Clip	Ttl Chin	Chin/ Drift	Chin/ Sthd	Sthd/ Drift	Total Sthd	Ad- Clip
Test	Mar	3	4¼	16	2-3	1	1	0	0	2	0.1	0.5	0.3	4	2
Test	Mar	10	4¼	16	2-3	1				1	0.1	0.3	0.3	4	3
Test	Mar	17	4¼	16	2-3	1	1	1		3	0.2	0.4	0.5	8	5
Test	Mar	24	4¼	18	2-3	2		6	2	10	0.6	1.1	0.5	9	4
Test	Mar	31	4¼	16	2-3	4	1	12	8	25	1.6	2.8	0.6	9	5
Test	Apr	7	4¼	16	2-3	11		9	4	24	1.5	6.0	0.3	4	2

- Based on test and recreational fishery data, staff estimates stock composition to be 70% upriver fish and the Chinook mark rate is estimated at 80%. Based on these assumptions, around 1,600 Chinook can be landed in order to remain within the ESA/catch balance limits.
- With Chinook abundance expected to increase, developing a fishing period to allow access to harvestable fish is challenging. Staff continues to put forth recommendations that are very conservative in order to reduce the risk of exceeding pre-update allowances.
- Staff has considered two options for the non-treaty commercial fishery prior to a run update.
 - Short fishing period: A short fishing period could be considered. Based on current test fishing results expanded to reflect potential full fleet handle (2-2.5 Chinook/drift), the period could not exceed 6 hours in duration. Due to the volatile nature of Chinook abundance in early April and full fleet efficiency, catch projections would likely have a wide range. Due to the short duration of the fishery, setting equitable hours for the fleet will be challenging. This option poses the highest risk of exceeding the upriver quota.

- Landing limit: A second option is to implement landing limits on a per vessel basis, similar to what was used in April 2011. The landing limit concept was also discussed at last week's hearing, and was generally considered a viable option to allow access to a low number of harvestable Chinook during periods of increasing abundance. All other regulations typically in place for spring season fisheries would remain in place (recovery boxes, drift times, etc.). Landing limits would be based on the harvestable number of Chinook (all stocks) divided by the expected number of participating vessels. The biggest challenge for this approach is determining the number of vessels expected to participate. This option poses the lowest risk of exceeding the upriver quota.
- Given the limited number of harvestable fish and the volatile nature of Chinook abundance in April, staff recommends the following season:

<i>Joint Staff Recommendations- Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Fishery</i>	
Season:	7:00 AM to 4:00 PM Tuesday April 9, 2013 (9 hours)
Area:	Zones 1-5
Sanctuaries:	Grays River, Elochoman-B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, Lewis-B, Sandy and Washougal.
Gear:	Drift nets only. 4¼" maximum mesh size restriction. Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms. Net length can increase from 150 to 175 fathoms for nets constructed with a steelhead excluder panel, weedlines, or droppers. Nets not specifically authorized for use in these areas may be onboard a vessel if properly stored. A properly stored net is defined as a net on a drum that is fully covered by a tarp (canvas or plastic) and bound with a minimum of ten revolutions of rope with a diameter of 3/8 (0.375) inches or greater.
Allowable Sales:	Adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon, shad and white sturgeon. A maximum of 9 adipose fin clipped adult Chinook may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel. The first 9 adult hatchery fish must be retained and no additional drifts may be conducted once the Chinook limit has been retained. Jack Chinook (Chinook less than 24-inches in total length) are not included in the landing limit.
Regulations:	Standard regulations typically in place for spring Chinook commercial fisheries are in effect, including but not limited to: net length, use of recovery boxes, limited soak times, red corks, lighted buoys, tangle-net certification, etc. Soak times, defined as the time elapsed from when the first of the gill net web is deployed into the water until the gill net web is fully retrieved from the water, must not exceed 45 minutes. Red corks are required at 25 fathom intervals, and red corks must be in contrast to the corks used in the remainder of the net. Lighted Buoys: Nets that are fished at any time between official sunset and official sunrise must have lighted buoys on both ends of the net unless the net is attached to the boat. If the net is attached to the boat, then one lighted buoy on the opposite end of the net from the boat is required.

Recovery Box: Each boat will be required to have on board two operable recovery boxes or one box with two chambers that meet the flow and size requirements standard for the winter/spring season. Each box and chamber and associated pump shall be operating during any time that the net is being retrieved or picked. All non-legal sturgeon, non-adipose fin-clipped salmon, and steelhead must be released immediately to the river with care and with the least possible injury to the fish, or placed into an operating recovery box. Any fish that is bleeding or lethargic must be placed in the recovery box prior to being released. All fish placed in recovery boxes must be released to the river prior to landing or docking.

Additional Rules:

Observer program: As a condition of fishing, owners or operators of commercial fishing vessels must cooperate with department observers or observers collecting data for the department, when notified by the observer of his or her intent to board the commercial vessel for observation and sampling during an open fishery.

Live Capture workshop: Only licensed Columbia River commercial fishers that have completed the required state-sponsored workshop concerning live capture commercial fishing techniques may participate in this fishery. At least one fisher on each boat must have live capture certification.

24-hour **quick reporting** required for Washington wholesale dealers, per WAC 220-69-240.

- The expected kept catch is 1,250 Chinook (range 1,175-1,300). Chinook catch is expected to include 1,140 upriver fish (kept and release mortalities) which represents 93% of the 1,200 upriver Chinook allowed pre-update.
- Wild winter steelhead release mortalities are expected to be less than 20 fish (0.1% impact), or 5% of the 2.00% impact limit for wild winter steelhead.
- A balance of 265 fish, or 95% of the 280 white sturgeon allocated to winter/spring commercial fisheries remain available. Sturgeon harvest is expected to be less than 50 fish.

Future Meetings

- No hearings are currently scheduled.