

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: SUMMER FACT SHEET NO. 2
Joint State Hearing
June 18, 2013

Fisheries under consideration: Below Wauna recreational sturgeon fishery Bonneville Pool recreational sturgeon fishery

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

Recreational White Sturgeon Fisheries Above Wauna

- The 2013 white sturgeon retention seasons for the lower Columbia River were adopted at the January 30 Compact hearing. The fishery above Wauna was open for retention three days a week (Thu-Sat) during January 1-June 15 and is currently scheduled to re-open (Thu-Sat) October 19 - December 31 (38-54 inch fork length). The harvest guideline for this area is 2,021 fish.
- The kept catch during January through April was similar to preseason expectations but the May harvest was much higher (280%) than anticipated.
- Through June 16, anglers have kept an estimated 1,981 white sturgeon from 15,073 trips, leaving a balance of only 40 fish for the fall.
- The 2013 white sturgeon retention season in the lower Willamette River is scheduled for two, 3-day periods of July 11-13 and July 18-20 (38-54 inch fork length). The guideline for this fishery is 1,733 fish.

Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery Below Wauna (Estuary)

- The 2013 retention fishery adopted for below Wauna is January 1 – April 30 (38-54 inch fork length) and May 11 – June 30 (41-54 inch fork length). The catch guideline for this fishery is 4,042 white sturgeon.
- Catch and effort during January 1 – April 30 was minimal as expected. The kept catch in May (487 fish) was very close to expectations (497 fish). Effort and catch rates have since improved during the first half of June with an average of 174 fish kept/day. Effort peaked at 377 boats counted on Saturday, June 15. Catch estimates from January 1 – June 16 total 3,265 white sturgeon from 11,753 angler trips (0.28 catch per unit effort (CPUE)).
- Based on a guideline of 4,042 fish and a cumulative harvest of 3,265 through June 16, only 777 (19%) fish remain on the guideline. Assuming current catch rates continue, the Estuary fishery will be within 100 fish of the guideline by the end of Thursday, June 20; ten days prior to the scheduled end date.
- Staff is recommending the currently adopted Estuary sturgeon fishery be modified as follows:

<i>2013 Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery Below Wauna - Recommendation</i>

Prohibit retention of white sturgeon effective 12:01 AM Friday, June 21, 2013 in the mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines downstream to the mouth at Buoy 10, including Youngs Bay, and all adjacent Washington tributaries.

- If the proposed season modification is adopted, the expected kept catch for the Estuary fishery would be 3,945 white sturgeon, or 98% of the 4,042 guideline.
- Adding Friday (June 21) would bring the season total kept catch to an estimated 4,160 fish, or 103% of the guideline.

Recreational White Sturgeon Fisheries in Zone 6 (Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Dam)

- Under permanent rule, the 2013 Zone 6 recreational white sturgeon fisheries opened for retention effective January 1. The fisheries in The Dalles and John Day pools remain open for sturgeon retention until the annual guideline for each pool is met.
- In Bonneville Pool, the 2013 guideline was reduced from 2,000 fish (2011-12) to 1,100 fish based on the most recent population estimate. Similar to 2011 and 2012, the Bonneville harvest quota provides for a winter and summer retention period as requested by the public. The winter fishery closed effective February 11 with a harvest of 335 fish, with the balance (765 fish) available for summer retention fishery previously adopted for June 14-15 and June 21-22
- Fishery status for Zone 6 pools are as follows:

2013 Recreational Sturgeon Harvest in Zone 6				
Pool	Guideline	Catch	Balance	Comments
Bonneville ¹	1,100	335	765	Closed February 11
The Dalles ¹	300	69	231	Ongoing
John Day ¹	500	211	289	Ongoing

¹ Bonneville through February 10. The Dalles and John Day through May 31.

- The initial 2-day summer retention period in Bonneville Pool occurred this past Friday-Saturday. Effort and catch were higher than expected with an estimated 508 fish harvested, bringing the season total to 843 fish. The average daily catch was 254 fish per day, with 46% of the catch on Friday and 54% on Saturday. With a balance of only 257 fish, the season will need to be modified to remain within the available guideline.
- Staff is recommending the currently adopted sturgeon fishery in Bonneville Pool be modified as follows:

<i>2013 Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery in Bonneville Pool - Recommendation</i>
Prohibit retention of white sturgeon effective 12:01 AM Saturday, June 22, 2013 in the mainstem Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to The Dalles Dam (Bonneville Pool) including all adjacent tributaries.

- Assuming similar effort, rescinding the final day allows the fishery to continue with an expected season total catch of 1,077 fish, or 98% of the guideline.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- A Compact hearing is scheduled for 2 PM Thursday June 26 to consider Treaty fisheries.
- A fall Compact hearing is scheduled for 10 AM Thursday July 25 at the Wahkiakum County Courthouse (3rd Floor) in Cathlamet, Washington.