

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: FALL FACT SHEET NO. 8a
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
September 12, 2013

Fisheries Under Consideration:	Columbia River Recreational Salmon Columbia River Recreational Sturgeon Non-Indian Mainstem Commercial
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Detailed information on stock status and management guidelines for Columbia River fisheries are presented in Fall Factsheet #1, dated July 25, 2013

STOCK STATUS

Fall Chinook and Coho

- Passage of adult fall Chinook at Bonneville Dam through September 11 totals 573,600 fish. Chinook passage has far exceeded preseason expectations, and daily counts during the past week have been record-setting. Typically, passage is 57% complete by September 11 (range 43%-73%).
- Return projections for Lower River Hatchery (LRH) fall Chinook cannot be updated inseason. Adult returns to Big Creek Hatchery are well below expectations. Chinook escapement includes 400 adult females compared to the goal of 1,500 adult female fish.
- Chinook escapement to Spring Creek Hatchery through September 11 totals 4,600 females (4,000 goal), 4,900 males, and 1,500 jacks. Broodstock collection is ongoing (~50% complete) and the goal is expected to be met.
- Fall Chinook passage (adults) through September 11 is 92,200 fish at McNary Dam and 8,100 fish at Lower Granite Dam (through September 10).
- Coho passage at Bonneville Dam through September 11 total 19,410, which is much less than expected (45,100 expected by this date). Passage is typically 50% complete by September 17. Preseason passage expectation for adult coho at Bonneville Dam was 124,000 fish.

Upriver Summer Steelhead

- Passage of upriver summer steelhead at Bonneville Dam through September 11 totals around 196,947 fish. Counts have been less than expected since the beginning of the counting period on July 1.

Run size updates

- On Tuesday (Sept. 10), the *U.S. v. Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) reviewed Chinook and steelhead run status. TAC can only update forecasts for the upriver stock components of the fall Chinook return. Given the unprecedented high counts at Bonneville Dam, and the uncertainty in determining the timing of run, TAC provided estimated ranges for the Upriver Bright (URB) and the Bonneville Pool Hatchery (BPH) stocks.
- TAC's inseason run size update for the Columbia River return of URBs ranges from 664,000 to 835,000 adult fish. The BPH run size update is a range from 70,000 to 80,000 adult fish. These updates compare to the preseason forecasts of 434,600 URBs and 36,300 BPHs.

- TAC updated the Group A steelhead return to 205,000 fish (86,000 wild). This compares to the preseason expectation of 291,000 fish (83,500 wild). The Group B return continues to track behind expectations, although it is still too early to provide an in-season update.
- TAC will continue to review the status of salmon and steelhead on a weekly basis and is scheduled to meet again on Monday September 16.

NON-INDIAN FALL SALMON FISHERY REVIEW

Recreational Fisheries

Recreational Fall Salmon Fisheries

- The Buoy 10 fishery was open for Chinook retention August 1 through September 1 with a daily bag limit of two fish/one Chinook. Chinook retention during August 23-September 1 was limited to hatchery Chinook (mark-selective). The fishery is currently scheduled to re-open October 1 with a two fish/one Chinook adult bag limit. Preseason catch expectations were 20,000 Chinook and 13,100 coho. Catch (plus release mortalities) through September 8 includes 25,000 Chinook and 6,800 coho. Chinook catch was the highest on record since 1988.
- The lower Columbia River (LCR) fishery from the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line upstream to Bonneville Dam opened August 1 with a two fish/one Chinook adult daily limit. Chinook retention was allowed through September 12 downstream of the Lewis River (Warrior Rock boundary line); however, from September 6-12 mark-selective regulations are in effect.
 - Chinook retention is currently scheduled to remain open (through December 31) upstream of the Warrior Rock line with a two fish/one Chinook adult daily bag limit. Catch rates improved dramatically in this area beginning late last week.
 - A mark-selective fishery is open from Tongue Point/Rocky Point upstream to Warrior Rock from September 6-12 with a two fish/one adipose fin-clipped Chinook adult bag limit.
 - Beginning October 1, the area from Tongue/Rocky Point upstream to Warrior Rock is scheduled to re-open to Chinook retention (two fish/one Chinook).
 - Preliminary kept catch through September 8 totals 23,100 adult Chinook and 400 coho from 100,500 angler trips.
- The mainstem fishery from Bonneville Dam upstream to Highway 395 Bridge (in Pasco, Washington) began on August 1 with a two fish/two Chinook adult daily limit and an in-season catch expectation of 11,000 Chinook.

Non-Indian Commercial Fisheries

Select Area Fisheries

- Expected returns to the Select Area fishing sites include 35,600 coho and 5,300 Select Area Bright (SAB) fall Chinook. Fisheries began in August and are scheduled to continue through October with specific time, area and gear restrictions for each area.
- Through September 8, landings in Select Area fall commercial fisheries include 17,100 fall Chinook, 11,800 coho, and 44 white sturgeon.

Mainstem Commercial Fall Salmon Fisheries

- The August commercial season consisted of eight fishing periods during August 11-29 in Zones 4-5. Gear was restricted to a 9-inch minimum mesh. Weekly sturgeon landing limits were in place throughout the season. Catch included 45,600 Chinook compared to the preseason catch expectation of 38,800 Chinook. A total of 700 sturgeon and 380 coho were also landed.
- Preseason planning for the late fall season included an expectation to begin the week of September 15 in Zones 4-5 and continue through September and possibly extend into October. No Zone 1-5 target Chinook season was planned for 2013 due to expected LCR tule limitations. The preseason catch expectation for the late fall Zones 4-5 fishery was 13,200 Chinook
- Based on pre-season planning, coho fishing in 2013 is expected to include a full-fleet pilot coho fishery during early October using 3.75-inch tangle nets. After two weekly fishing periods additional target coho periods may occur with unslackened 6-inch maximum mesh if coho remain available for harvest. Coho fisheries will likely occur in Zones 1-3 during daylight hours.
- The 2013 annual commercial allocation of white sturgeon is 2,021 fish. Select Area commercial fisheries were allocated 400 of those fish. A total of 300 fish remain on the mainstem commercial allocation and 120 fish remain on the Select Area allocation.

Non-Indian Fisheries Stock Composition

- Coded-wire tag (CWT) data is complete for the August commercial fishery and the August portion of the LCR recreational fishery. Only partial CWT data for the Buoy 10 fishery is available (~200 tags in hand, 100 tags pending). No CWT data from September is currently available. Based on CWT data, URB and BPH Chinook stocks have comprised a higher than expected percentage of the catch in fisheries, while LRH have been consistently less than expected.

Non-Indian Fisheries ESA Impact Estimates

- Considering all the data in hand, non-Indian fisheries (including complete, on-going and planned fisheries) are expected to remain within the ESA constraints for both salmon and steelhead.
- Based on the updated run size and actual and planned (pre-season) fishery structure, additional Chinook (especially URBs) are available for both commercial and recreational fisheries with the following considerations:
 - Including completed and currently planned fisheries, impacts to lower Columbia natural (LCN) Chinook are currently projected at 38.2% compared to the 41% limitation. The preseason forecast of 86,900 is only 1,900 fish greater than the 85,000 fish threshold where available impacts decrease to 38%. This stock is the most constraining Chinook stock.
 - Impacts to wild Group B steelhead are currently projected at 1.8% compared to the 2.0% allowable take limitation. Impacts to wild Group B steelhead are currently based on a reduced run size (5,000 wild fish) to buffer against a potential run-size downgrade. TAC will likely provide a Group B runsize update next week.
 - URB impacts are based on the low-end of the current runsize estimate from TAC (664,000). URB impacts are projected to be 12% compared to the 15% available.

SALMON FISHERY RECOMMENDATIONS

Mainstem Commercial

<i>Recommendation: 2013 Non-Indian Mainstem Commercial Late Fall Fishery</i>	
Season:	9 PM Sunday September 15 to 3 AM Monday September 16 (6 hours) 9 PM Tuesday September 17 to 5 AM Wednesday September 18 (8 hours)
Area:	Zones 4-5. The deadline at the lower end of Zone 4 is defined as a straight line projected from the Warrior Rock Lighthouse on the Oregon shore easterly through the green navigation Buoy #1 and continuing to the Washington shore.
Sanctuaries:	Washougal and Sandy Rivers
Gear:	Drift gillnets only. 8" minimum mesh size restriction. Multiple net rule in effect, which means nets not specifically authorized for use in this fishery may be onboard the 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. Nets fished any time between official sunset and official sunrise must have lighted buoys on both ends of the net. If the net is attached to the boat, then one lighted buoy on the end of the net opposite the boat is required.
Allowable Sales:	Salmon and white sturgeon. A maximum of 2 white sturgeon may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel during each calendar week (Sunday through Saturday) in the remaining openers. This white sturgeon possession and sales limit applies to mainstem fisheries only.
Additional Rules:	24-hour quick reporting required for Washington buyers, pursuant to WAC 220-69-240

- The proposal is consistent with the preseason plan in regards to timing and fishing area.
- Estimating combined catch for the two proposed fishing periods is challenging since the upriver run size exceeds levels previously experienced. Alternate catch predictors did not produce consistent results. The combined catch estimate for the proposed fishing periods is 18,000-25,000 Chinook and 125 white sturgeon.
- Additional commercial fishing opportunity is expected, but the extent will be dependent upon future in-season run updates and Chinook harvest to date.

Mainstem Recreational Salmon

Recommendation: 2013 Columbia River Fall Chinook Recreational Fishery	
<i>Buoy 10 upstream to Warrior Rock line</i>	
Season 1:	Friday September 13 through Monday September 30, 2013
Daily bag limit:	Two adult hatchery (adipose fin-clipped) salmon or steelhead. All other permanent rules apply, including no retention of Chinook jacks (<24-inches) downstream of the Tongue Point-Rocky Point line until October 1.
Season 2:	Tuesday October 1 through Tuesday December 31, 2013
Daily bag limit:	Two adult salmon or steelhead. All other permanent rules apply.
Area	Buoy 10 upstream to the Warrior Rock line (a line from the Warrior Rock Lighthouse on the Oregon shore through red buoy #4 to the orange marker atop the dolphin on the Washington shore).

- The proposed fishery modifications will allow retention of hatchery Chinook for the rest of September from Buoy 10 upstream to Warrior Rock while limiting impacts to LCN Chinook.
- The adult bag limit is increased for the remainder of the season to maximize harvest opportunity.

Recommendation: 2013 Columbia River Fall Chinook Recreational Fishery	
<i>Warrior Rock line upstream to Bonneville Dam</i>	
Effective Friday September 13 through Tuesday December 31: the daily bag limit will include up to two adult Chinook in the area from the Warrior Rock line upstream to Bonneville Dam.	

- The proposed season modifications maximize harvest opportunity upstream of Warrior Rock where impacts on LCN fall Chinook are limited.

Recommendation: 2013 Columbia River Fall Chinook Recreational Fishery	
<i>Tongue Point/Rocky Point Line upstream to the Highway 395 Bridge near Pasco, WA.</i>	
Effective Friday September 13 through Tuesday December 31: Each legally-licensed angler aboard a vessel may continue to deploy angling gear until the daily limit of fish for all anglers aboard has been achieved.	

Non-Indian Fisheries ESA Impact Estimates

- Non-Indian impacts, including the completed, proposed and potential future fisheries, are projected to be 14% for URBs, 38.5% for LCN Chinook, 1.98% for Wild B steelhead.

WHITE STURGEON RECREATIONAL FISHERY REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION

- The white sturgeon retention fishery below Wauna was scheduled to be open January 1 – April 30 and May 11 – June 30, but closed 10 days earlier on June 20. The kept catch for this fishery was 4,559, or 113% of the 4,042 fish guideline. Due to the different slot limit, the 517 fish overage in this fishery results in a 620 fish overage when applied to other fisheries with a 38-54 inch fork length.
- The sturgeon retention fishery above Wauna was open three days a week (Thu-Sat) during January 1-June 15 (38-54 inch fork length) and is currently scheduled to re-open (Thu-Sat) October 19 - December 31. The kept catch for this fishery through June 15 was 1,942, or 96% of the 2,021 fish guideline.
- In the lower Willamette River, sturgeon retention was allowed for three, 3-day periods during July resulting in a kept catch of 224 fish, or 13% of the 1,733 fish guideline.

2013 Recreational White Sturgeon Guidelines and Catch-Below Bonneville				
	Below Wauna	Above Wauna	L. Willamette	Total
Guideline	4,042	2,021	1,733	7,796
Harvest	4,559 (4,662) ^a	1,942	224	6,725 (6,828) ^a
Balance (38-54 FL)	-517 (-620) ^a	79	1,509	1,071 (968) ^a
%	115%	96%	13%	86% (88%)

^a Below Wauna harvest with overage (517) converted to 38-54 FL equivalents.

- Based on the net overage for mainstem recreational fisheries of 541 fish, staff recommends the Above Wauna retention season scheduled to start October 19 be rescinded.

<i>Recommendation: 2013 Sturgeon Recreational Fishery - Above Wauna</i>
Rescind the previously adopted white sturgeon retention season scheduled for October 19-December 31 in the area from Wauna powerlines upstream to Bonneville Dam.

- Applying the mainstem overage (541 fish) to the remaining Willamette guideline (1,509 fish) leaves 968 fish available for additional sturgeon retention opportunity in the lower Willamette River.
- Based on the available balance, Oregon staff have adopted the following Willamette River recreational white sturgeon retention fishery:

<i>Willamette River Recreational White Sturgeon Retention Fishery</i>
Effective Saturday, October 19, 2013 only, allow retention of white sturgeon (38-54 inch fork length) in the lower Willamette River downstream of Willamette Falls, including the Multnomah Channel and the Gilbert River.

- Oregon staff intends to monitor harvest and recommend additional Saturday openings on the following weekend(s) within the remaining harvest balance.

Future Meetings

- The Joint Staff is recommending a Compact hearing be scheduled for late Wednesday or Thursday morning of next week to review stock status and consider additional non-Indian commercial fisheries.