

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 9a
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
September 18, 2013

Fisheries under consideration:	Non-Indian mainstem commercial salmon
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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 passage at Bonneville Dam since August 1 totals nearly 717,500 adults. Counts remain strong, and cumulative passage has reached a record high. The run is typically around 80% complete by now.
- Steelhead passage at Bonneville Dam since July 1 totals 204,200 fish. Counts have been less than expected throughout the season. The run is typically about 90% complete by now.
- On September 16, TAC provided an inseason run size update for upriver fall Chinook which included a Columbia River return of 832,500 URB and 69,000 BPH adult Chinook.
- Based on TAC's inseason forecasts for upriver stocks and the preseason forecasts for the lower river stocks, the Columbia River return is projected to reach nearly 1,200,000 adult fall Chinook in 2013.
- TAC's current projection for steelhead returns to Bonneville Dam includes 205,000 Group A and 20,000 (5,000 wild) Group B fish; both are significantly less than preseason.
- The LRH stock is the indicator stock for LCN tule stock. The pre-season forecast for LRH adults to the Columbia River is 86,900 fish, which allows for an ESA exploitation rate (ER) of 41%. For runs that are 85,000 fish or less, the ESA limit is reduced to 38%. Updating the run in-season is challenging since escapement is based on hatchery returns, which are typically not complete until after the fall fishing season concludes.
- Indicators for the run size status are mixed for the LRH stock. Escapement data to hatcheries and weirs is just beginning to become available as the fish move into the tributaries.
 - Escapement to Washington tributaries is currently tracking ahead of expectations, although it is too early in the season to make any conclusion regarding run size.
 - In Oregon, Big Creek escapement is tracking less than expected.
 - CWT data shows that the LRH stock component is representing a lower proportion of the overall catch compared to pre-season modeling.
 - Ocean fisheries are ongoing, and the number of Chinook (if any) potentially available for in-river fisheries is limited by stipulations in the North of Falcon agreement.

Non-Indian Commercial Fishery

- 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.

- Late Fall commercial periods occurred on September 15 and 17 in Zones 4-5 with an 8-inch minimum mesh requirement and a 2-fish weekly sturgeon landing limit. Catch estimates for these two periods combined is 14,000 Chinook compared to an expected range of 18,000 to 25,000 Chinook.
- Based on catch to date and TACs run size upgrades, additional Chinook remain available for commercial fisheries. A balance of 300 sturgeon remain available for mainstem commercial harvest in 2013.

<i>Recommendation: 2013 Non-Indian Mainstem Commercial Late Fall Fishery</i>		
Season:	8 PM Thursday September 19 to 6 AM Friday September 20	(10 hours)
	8 PM Sunday September 22 to 6 AM Monday September 23	(10 hours)
	8 PM Tuesday September 24 to 6 AM Wednesday September 25	(10 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	

- Catch estimates include about 12,000 Chinook and 200 sturgeon.
- ESA impacts which include completed, ongoing, planned and proposed fisheries are expected to be within the limits prescribed to non-Indian fisheries. Estimates include 11% URB (15% limit), 38% LCN tule Chinook (41% limit) and 1.86% for wild Group B steelhead (2% limit)
- Staff will continue to monitor the progress of the salmon and steelhead run sizes, especially LRH Chinook and wild Group B steelhead. Additional information will be available early next week that will help determine the structure of upcoming non-Indian fisheries while remaining within the ESA constraints.

Future Meetings

- The Joint staff recommends a hearing via teleconference for 1:00 p.m. Tuesday September 24 consider non-Indian fisheries.