

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 1
Columbia River Joint State Hearing
December 18, 2014

Fisheries under consideration:	Bonneville Pool Recreational Sturgeon
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- Under permanent rule, Zone 6 (Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Dam) recreational white sturgeon fisheries open for retention effective January 1. The fisheries typically remain open until the annual harvest guideline for each pool is met. Since 2011, the Bonneville Pool fishery has been managed to provide retention opportunity during winter and summer seasons, with the guideline being shared ~ 50/50 between winter and summer seasons.
- In 2014, the winter fishery in Bonneville Pool was open to retention from January 1-19, February 1-17, and February 24 to March 9 (50 days). The summer season was open June 13-14, June 20-21, July 11-12, and July 18-19 (8 days). Estimated harvest totaled 910 fish, 190 fish shy of the 1,100 fish guideline.
- The Sturgeon Management Task Force will meet in January to discuss and develop management recommendations for 2015 white sturgeon fisheries in Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day pools, including potential modifications to harvest guidelines based on updated population assessments.
- In the interim, the 2014 recreational fishery harvest guidelines remain in effect:

Interim 2015 Zone 6 Recreational Sturgeon Harvest Guidelines		
Bonneville Pool	The Dalles Pool	John Day Pool
1,100	300	500

- Weekly harvest in Bonneville Pool has ranged from 0 – 78 fish/day the past four winters. Rates the past two years have been the lowest, averaging 7 fish/day (9 fish/day in 2013 and 5 fish per/day in 2014).
- A 7 fish/day catch rate would produce a harvest of 420 fish by Sunday, March 1; or 38% of the guideline. However, if catch rates return to the 2011-2014 winter season average of 14 fish per day, 50% of the guideline would be reached in about 40 days.
- Based on the recent catch rates, staff is proposing the following winter season for Bonneville Pool:

<i>Staff Recommendation: 2015 Bonneville Pool Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery</i>		
Season:	Thursday January 1 through Sunday March 1, 2015	(60 days)
Area:	Mainstem Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to The Dalles Dam, including adjacent tributaries.	
Allowable Catch:	White sturgeon between 38-inches and 54-inches fork length.	
Expected Harvest	420 white sturgeon	

- In order to achieve a split season, staff's intent is to manage the winter season for a harvest of approximately 400-550 fish or a March 2 end date, whichever comes first.
- Staff will monitor the fishery as it progresses and provide updates as needed.
- Any changes to the current Bonneville Pool harvest guideline from the SMTF will be reflected in the summer season structure
- Staff anticipates re-opening Bonneville Pool for a summer retention season during June 2015.
- Staff is not recommending any changes for fisheries in The Dalles Pool and John Day Pool at this time.
- Anglers should be aware that a sturgeon research program may still be ongoing in Bonneville Pool in early January. Tribal fishers will be deploying gillnets in designated areas to collect and tag white sturgeon for multi-agency stock assessment work.

Future Meetings

- The Winter Compact Hearing is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Wednesday January 28, 2015 at the Clark Regional Wastewater District office, 8000 52nd Court, Vancouver, Washington.