

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 7
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
April 8, 2015

<i>Fisheries under Consideration:</i>	Recreational Salmon downstream of Bonneville Dam Bonneville Pool Recreational Sturgeon Bonneville Pool Recreational Salmon Above Bonneville Recreational Salmon
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Stock status and management guidelines for 2015 Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #2a (January 28, 2015).

- Adult Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam through April 7 totals 3,352 fish. Based on the pre-season forecast and 5-year average timing, about 1,000 fish would be expected at Bonneville Dam by this date. The (5-yr ave) 50% passage date at Bonneville Dam is May 7.
- River conditions are warmer and clearer than recent five and ten year averages. Current outflow at Bonneville Dam is 234 kcfs, is right between the recent five (218 kcfs) and ten (252 kcfs) averages for April 5. Water temperatures have been approximately three degrees above normal for April and currently measure 49° F.

Below Bonneville Dam Recreational Salmon Fishery

- The recreational spring Chinook fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam is scheduled to remain open through Friday, April 10. The estimated catch through Monday April 6 is 7,097 kept adult fish from 72,116 angler trips. The catch projection for April 8-10 (closed Tuesday April 7) includes 2,600 kept adults from 14,700 angler trips.
- Combined kept and release mortalities of upriver fish through April 10 is projected to be 7,462 fish, or 72% of the 10,318 available to this fishery prior to a run update.
- Given the volatile nature of fisheries in mid-April, the most conservative approach is to apply the remaining balance of upriver spring Chinook to fishing opportunity after the run update.
- However, with a balance of 2,856 (28%) upriver fish available to the recreational fishery below Bonneville, there is potential for some additional angling opportunity. Based on increasing Chinook abundance and expected high effort, catch rates are expected to be high. Due to these factors, staff is only able to recommend a brief season extension to remain consistent with the management guideline.

<i>Staff Recommendation: 2015 Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery</i>	
Season:	Saturday April 11 and Sunday April 12, 2015
Area:	Buoy 10 upstream to Beacon Rock (boat and bank) plus bank angling only from Beacon Rock upstream to the Bonneville Dam deadline. Legal upstream boat boundary defined as: “A deadline marker on the Oregon bank (approximately four miles downstream from Bonneville Dam Powerhouse One) in a straight line through the western tip of Pierce Island to a deadline marker on the Washington bank at Beacon Rock.”
Daily Bag limit:	Two adult salmonids per day, but only one may be a Chinook. Only adipose fin-clipped fish may be kept. All other permanent regulations apply.

Additional Rules: The mainstem Columbia River will be open for retention of adipose fin-clipped steelhead and shad only during days and seasons open for retention of adipose fin-clipped spring Chinook.

When the recreational fishery below Bonneville Dam is open to retention of Chinook, the salmonid daily bag limit in Oregon and Washington Select Areas will be the same as mainstem Columbia River bag limits. On days when the mainstem Columbia River fishery is closed to Chinook retention, permanent salmonid bag limit regulations apply.

- The catch estimate is 3,650 Chinook (2,940 kept), including 2,350 upriver mortalities from 12,000 angler trips. This would bring the fishery to 95% (9,813) of the 10,318 available to the recreational fishery below Bonneville prior to a run update.
- An alternative option is to let the fishery close as scheduled on Saturday April 11, and then re-open the following Monday. This scenario would allow for a three-day extension (Monday through Wednesday). Catch estimates for this alternative are 3,980 Chinook (3,200 kept), including 2,524 upriver mortalities from 13,400 angler trips. The projected upriver mortalities would represent 97% (9,986) of the 10,318 available to the recreational fishery below Bonneville prior to a run update.

Bonneville Recreational Sturgeon Fishery

- Under permanent rule, the 2015 Zone 6 (Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Dam) recreational white sturgeon fisheries opened for retention effective January 1. The fishery in Bonneville Pool has a split winter/summer season. The winter season closed to retention on March 2. The other fisheries remain open until the annual guideline for each pool is met. Fishery status for all pools are as follows:

2015 Recreational Sturgeon Harvest in Zone 6				
	Guideline	Catch ¹	Balance	Season
Bonneville Pool	1,100	155	945	Closed
The Dalles Pool	100	48	52	Ongoing
John Day Pool	500	114	386	Ongoing

¹ Catch for Bonneville Pool through March 1, and The Dalles and John Day pools through April 5.

- In Bonneville Pool, kept catch during the 2015 winter season was 155 fish, or 14% of the 1,100 fish guideline leaving a balance of 945 sturgeon for a summer retention season.
- Harvest per day in the Bonneville Pool winter fishery declined the past two years from the previous two-year average, by 74% in 2014 and 81% in 2015.
- Harvest per day during the Bonneville Pool summer fishery declined in 2014, to 81 fish/day, which is 64% of the 2012-2013 average of 225 fish/day. Two factors likely contributed to this decrease: 1) implementation of a 1.8 mile-long May-July spawning sanctuary downstream of The Dalles Dam, and 2) the prevalence of windy conditions during open days in 2014.
- If harvest per day matches the 2012-2013 average (225 fish/day), the remaining 945 fish would allow for approximately 4-5 retention days.
- If harvest per day matches the 2014 rate (81 fish/day), the remaining 945 fish would allow for approximately 11-12 retention days. This catch rate is considered more likely based on

the annual catch-rate pattern observed in the winter fishery and the presence of the spawning sanctuary implemented in 2014.

- Considering the balance of harvestable sturgeon remaining on the Bonneville Pool guideline and expected catch rates, staff proposes the following season recommendation:

<i>Staff Recommendation: 2015 Bonneville Pool Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery</i>	
Season:	Friday June 19 through Sunday June 21 Friday June 26 through Sunday June 28 Friday July 3 through Sunday July 5
Area:	Mainstem Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to The Dalles Dam, including adjacent tributaries.
Sanctuary:	Angling for sturgeon prohibited during May through July from The Dalles Dam downstream 1.8 miles to a line from the east (upstream) dock at the Port of The Dalles boat ramp straight across to a marker on the Washington shore
Allowable Catch	White sturgeon between 38-inches and 54-inches fork length.

- The proposal for three, 3-day retention periods provides meaningful summer opportunity while allowing staff to monitor the fishery as it progresses and recommend any changes if needed.

Bonneville Pool Recreational Salmon Fishery

- Since 2008 the Joint States have adopted regulations which include the Washington shore between Bonneville Dam and Tower Island Powerlines (Bonneville Reservoir) as part of the area open to hatchery spring Chinook retention. The justification was that anglers would be centralized around the mouth of the tributaries, and vast majority of the fish encountered would be non-ESA listed Chinook destined for hatcheries within the tributaries.
- In recent years, the Washington bank-only fishery, primarily near the mouth of Drano Lake, has become very popular and successful. Some anglers use boats to set their lines several hundred feet from the bank to improve their success.
- Based on recent coded-wire tag and genetic analyses, the majority of the fish caught have been destined to areas other than local tributaries. These fish are included in the overall Zone 6 recreational allocation.
- Anglers further upriver, in particular those just below John Dam and McNary dams, are impacted by the reduced number of harvestable fish available from the overall allocation. This has been problematic in recent years with the later run timing; by the time good numbers of fish reach this upper area, the allocation has been met and the fishery closed.
- In an effort to moderate harvest and spread the catch more evenly throughout the mainstem Columbia, the Washington staff is recommending the ongoing recreational salmon fishery in Bonneville Pool be modified.
- Washington staff is also recommending that this regulation is adopted as permanent effective annually when the area is open for hatchery spring Chinook retention.

Washington State Recommendation: 2015 Bonneville Pool Recreational Salmon Fishery

Effective April 13 through June 15: When the mainstem Columbia River from the Tower Island Powerlines (located approximately 6 miles below The Dalles Dam) downstream to Bonneville Dam is open to fishing from the Washington bank for hatchery spring Chinook, only hand-casted lines may be used. It is unlawful to use a floating device to set lines for salmon and steelhead.

- All other regulations previously adopted for this fishery remain in place.

Above Bonneville Mainstem Recreational Salmon Fishery

- The ‘Above Bonneville’ fishery (which includes the area from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Oregon/Washington state line), is a destination fishery for many anglers. Anglers camp locally and fish for multiple days at a time, especially in the upper pools.
- Possession limits under Washington regulations allow two daily limits in fresh form. This fishery switched from a two adult Chinook to a one adult Chinook daily bag limit. The result of the decreased bag limit affected the possession limit so that anglers could now only possess two adult hatchery Chinook (two daily limits), instead of four fish (two daily limits of two fish).
- In an effort to promote this fishery as a destination fishery and to allow anglers to possess a reasonable amount of fish during their stay, Washington staff is making the following recommendation to the 2015 fishery.
- The Washington staff is also recommending that this regulation be adopted as permanent effective annually when the area is open for hatchery spring Chinook retention.

Washington State Recommendation: 2015 ‘Above Bonneville’ Recreational Salmon Fishery

Effective April 13 through June 15: When the mainstem Columbia River from the Tower Island power lines (approximately 6 miles below The Dalles Dam upstream to the Washington/Oregon state line is open to fishing for hatchery spring Chinook, the possession limit will allow up to four adult Chinook salmon in fresh form. Anglers aboard a boat may only possess one daily limit of salmon in fresh form.

- Snake River fishery managers may also consider the same type of regulations when that fishery is set later this month.
- Oregon does not have possession limit restrictions so the action applies only to Washington.

Future Meetings

- Staff is not proposing any hearings at this time. Staff will plan on distributing a “Fishery Update” by April 21 if no other hearings occur prior to that date.