

**OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT - WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 10
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
April 10, 2019**

<i>Fisheries under consideration:</i>	Mainstem recreational salmon downstream of Bonneville Dam Bonneville Pool recreational sturgeon
--	--

Detailed information on stock status and management guidelines for Columbia River fisheries are presented in Joint Staff Reports, which are produced annually and available on-line. The most recent reports are the 2019 Sturgeon/Smelt Report (January 18, 2019) and the 2019 spring/summer report for Chinook, sockeye, steelhead and other species (February 8, 2019). Links to the on-line reports are: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/crc/> or <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/reports.asp>

RIVER CONDITIONS

- Columbia River conditions as measured at Bonneville Dam are currently slightly lower and colder than recent 5-year averages for this date in April. Current outflow is 261 kcfs (including 12.3 kcfs spill), which is lower than the recent 5-year average of 274 kcfs. Water temperature currently measures 46° F, which is colder than the average of 48° F. Visibility is 4.0 feet which is about average. The river stage at Vancouver is currently 12.9 feet and is forecasted to crest at 15.5 feet on April 11 and then recede through the weekend (Action Stage is 15.0 feet and Flood Stage is 16.0 feet).

STOCK STATUS

- Adult Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam through April 9 totals 184 fish, which is the 8th lowest passage in the last 10 years and only 13% of the 10-year (2009-2018) average count (1,461) for this date. On average, 0.7% of the run has passed Bonneville Dam by April 9. Based on the preseason forecast and 10-year average timing, about 640 fish would be expected at Bonneville Dam by this date. The recent 10-yr average 50% passage date at Bonneville Dam is May 9.
- Weekly test fishing in the lower Columbia River began on Monday, March 18, with four days completed so far. Catch rates (Chinook per drift) increased for the first three Mondays (0.3, 0.7, and 0.9) consistent with 2018, but dropped to 0.5 on April 8 (2.3 in 2018).
- Tributary returns of spring Chinook are typically minimal this early in the year; a handful of fish have already returned to the Lewis and Cowlitz hatcheries.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Forecasts and management guidelines for 2019 spring Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #4 (February 20, 2019).

2019 NON-TREATY FISHERIES

Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery - Below Bonneville Dam

- The lower Columbia River recreational spring Chinook fishery was opened under temporary regulations from March 1 – April 10 (today). Due to low projected returns to the Cowlitz and Lewis rivers, the fishery was restricted to the area from the Warrior Rock line (just upstream of the Lewis River) upstream to Bonneville Dam.
- Water temperatures for a majority of the season were much colder than average but otherwise favorable for fishing, until the recent heavy rains and runoff. The estimated recreational Chinook catch through Sunday April 7 is 1,282 kept adult fish and 238 released from 21,442 angler trips. Sixteen steelhead have been released. The projected catch through Wednesday April 10 is about 1,800 adult spring Chinook from approximately 25,700 angler trips.
- Upriver mortalities through April 10 are projected to total 1,661 adult Chinook, or 45% of the 3,689 mortalities available to this fishery prior to a run update.
- Given the significant balance on the pre-season buffered allocation of upriver spring Chinook (2,028 fish remain available), there is potential for additional angling opportunity. Considering the limited in-season information available regarding the upriver spring Chinook run, staff recommends a conservative approach moving forward with this fishery, including shifting to a limited days-per-week structure for any additional fishery openings. This will provide additional recreational opportunity while allowing staff the time to closely monitor the run and harvest.

<i>Recommendation: 2019 Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery</i>	
Downstream of Bonneville Dam	
Season:	Friday April 12 through Sunday April 14 3 retention days
Area:	<p>Warrior Rock line upstream to Beacon Rock (boat and bank) plus bank angling only from Beacon Rock upstream to the Bonneville Dam deadline. Angling for and retention of steelhead, salmon, and shad is prohibited from the Warrior Rock line downstream to Buoy 10.</p> <p>Legal downstream boundary defined as: A line projected from the Warrior Rock lighthouse on the Oregon shore to red USCG buoy #4, then to the piling dolphin on the lower end of Bachelor Island (Warrior Rock line).</p> <p>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.</p>
Daily Bag Limit:	Two adult salmonids (Chinook or steelhead) per day, but only one may be a Chinook. Only hatchery fish may be kept. Shad may also be retained. All other permanent regulations apply.

- The estimated kept catch for the proposed fishery of 1,290 adult Chinook (1,221 upriver mortalities) is based on an expected handle of 500 fish per day (1,500 total), which is likely conservative given current poor river conditions downstream of the Willamette River.
- With the proposed extension, projected cumulative upriver mortalities (2,882 adults) would represent 78% of the 3,689 mortalities available to the recreational fishery below Bonneville prior to a run update.
- An upriver spring Chinook run size of 58,000 adults would cover the projected cumulative mortalities for this fishery and pre-update set-asides for other non-treaty fisheries.
- Shifting to a limited days-per-week structure provides a controlled and systematic approach for progression of the season while allowing staff to manage within the buffered upriver spring Chinook allocation for this fishery. The Columbia River Recreational Advisory Group has previously prioritized weekend day re-openings when possible.
- Impacts to other listed stocks are expected to remain within take limitations based on recent year results. Fishery-specific impact rate expectations can found in the latest Spring/Summer Joint Staff Report in the 2019 Winter, Spring, and Summer Season Expectations section.

Bonneville Pool Recreational Sturgeon

- Under permanent rule, the 2019 Zone 6 (Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Dam) recreational white sturgeon fisheries opened for retention effective January 1. The Dalles Pool closed to retention on January 7 and the John Day Pool closed April 3. The Bonneville Pool is currently open but harvest is approaching the guideline. Fishery status for all pools are as follows:

2019 Preliminary Recreational Sturgeon Harvest in Zone 6				
	Guideline	Catch	Balance	Season
Bonneville Pool	500	409 (thru 4/9)	91	Currently open
The Dalles Pool	135	78	57	Closed January 7
John Day Pool	105	132	-27	Closed April 3

- Kept catch during the Bonneville Pool season through April 9 totals 409 fish, or 82% of the 500 fish guideline.
- Staff project 100% of the guideline will be reached on Tuesday, April 16 based on current harvest rates.
- Last year, 452 sturgeon were harvested in Bonneville Pool which equates to 139% of the 2018 guideline (325 fish).
- Although the harvest guideline has increased for the Bonneville Pool, staff are taking a conservative approach to minimize the risk of exceeding the target catch in two consecutive years by recommending a closure.

Recommendation: 2019 Bonneville Pool Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery

Effective 12:01 AM Sunday April 14, the retention of sturgeon is prohibited in the mainstem Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to The Dalles Dam (Bonneville Pool), including adjacent tributaries.

- Catch and release will continue to be allowed, except in the spawning sanctuary closure areas.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- The Joint Staff request a hearing be scheduled for late afternoon Tuesday April 16, 2019 to consider Select Area commercial fisheries and possibly the lower Columbia River recreational salmon fishery.