

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 9
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
September 18, 2019

<i>Fisheries under consideration:</i>	Non-treaty mainstem recreational salmon
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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 2019 Fall Report was distributed on July 22, 2019. Links to the on-line reports are:
<https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/management/columbia-river/reports> or
<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/reports.asp>.

STOCK STATUS

Salmon/Steelhead

- Through September 17, an estimated 178,885 adult fall Chinook have passed Bonneville Dam which is similar to preseason expectations. Over the last 10 years, the average 50% complete date has been September 9.
- Passage of upriver summer steelhead at Bonneville Dam since July 1 totals 60,328 total A/B-Index fish.
- The *U.S. vs OR* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met on September 16, 2019 to review the upriver A-/B-Index summer steelhead and the upriver fall Chinook returns. TAC updated the expected river mouth return of fall Chinook to 344,600 (99% of the forecast), including 167,200 URB, 66,200 PUB, and 31,000 BPH which are 105%, 107%, and 64% of preseason expectations, respectively. The bright return is expected to exceed the preseason forecast while the tule return is expected to be less than forecast. TAC downgraded the total expected A/B-Index steelhead return to 69,200 fish. The update includes an expectation of 66,700 A-Index fish (33,000 unclipped) and 2,500 B-Index fish (1,300 unclipped).
- Counts at Bonneville Dam from August 1 through September 17 total 35,395 adult early stock Coho. Passage of upriver early stock Coho is typically 50% complete by September 10.
- Run size forecasts and stock descriptions for salmon and steelhead were presented in the 2019 Fall Fact Sheet #1.

RIVER CONDITIONS

- The Columbia River flows at Bonneville Dam are currently 99.7 kcfs, which is similar to the recent ten-year average for this date.
- Water temperature at Bonneville Dam is currently 70°F which is higher than the recent 10-year average for this date.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Salmon/Steelhead

- The 2018-2027 *U.S. vs Oregon* Management Agreement (MA) provides specific fishery management guidelines for fall Chinook, summer steelhead, and Coho.
 - The allowable impact rate for combined treaty Indian and non-treaty Chinook fisheries is 31.25% of the URB run based on preseason forecasts (URB stock is the surrogate for SRW Chinook). This impact limit is allocated 23% for treaty Indian fisheries and 8.25% for non-treaty fisheries.
 - The escapement goal at Spring Creek Hatchery is 7,000 adult fall Chinook (BPH stock).
 - The management goal for adult fall Chinook at McNary Dam is 60,000 fish.
 - The allowable non-treaty impact rates for wild summer steelhead (A-Index and B-Index) during fall fisheries is 2% each.
 - Based on the pre-season forecast, treaty Indian impacts are limited to 13% of the total B-Index steelhead.
 - The goal for upriver Coho passage at Bonneville Dam is 50% of the ocean abundance.
 - The ESA impact limit to LCR tule fall Chinook is 38% in 2019 given the pre-season forecast. Harvest of LRH stock is the surrogate for LCR Chinook. This exploitation rate (ER) limit includes impacts in ocean and Columbia River fisheries combined.
 - In 2019, fishery impacts to LCN Coho are limited to a 23% ER for combined ocean and Columbia River fisheries.

2019 NON-TREATY FALL RECREATIONAL FISHERIES

Buoy 10 Recreational Fishery

- The Buoy 10 fishery was open to adult Chinook retention during August 1–20 as planned preseason. The fishery is currently open to retention of hatchery Coho with a two-fish daily bag limit.

Mainstem Recreational Salmon Fisheries

- The lower Columbia River salmon fishery from Puget Island upstream to Warrior Rock was open to Chinook retention August 1–27 as planned preseason; Chinook retention in the area from Tongue Point to Puget Island was open concurrent with the Buoy 10 fishery. The fishery is currently open to retention of hatchery Coho with a two-fish daily bag limit.
- For the area from Warrior Rock upstream to Bonneville Dam, Chinook retention was open through Thursday, September 5. The fishery is currently open to retention of hatchery Coho with a two-fish daily bag limit.
- The fishery from Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Dam is ongoing and is currently open for Chinook and Coho with a one salmonid daily bag limit. The fishery was planned to be managed in-season based on actual catches and the URB run size.
- Steelhead retention is currently closed through September from Buoy 10 to McNary Dam. Additional retention closures in October and November are currently scheduled for areas between the John Day Dam and the Highway 395 Bridge near Pasco, WA. Given the suite of

steelhead fishery regulations in place for 2019, non-treaty fisheries are expected to remain well within the allowable ESA impact limits.

- A summary of actual and projected fall Chinook and URB mortalities through September 20 in mainstem recreational fisheries is provided below:

Total fall Chinook mortalities (kept and release mortalities) in 2019 mainstem recreational fisheries (projected through Sept. 20)		
Area	Total Mortalities	URB Mortalities
Buoy 10	14,764	2,167
TP-WR	2,481	1,702
WR-Bonn	5,467	3,669
Bonn-McNary	3,046	925
Sum	25,758	8,463
Total Allowable URBs (9/16 TAC update)		9,606
URB Balance		1,142
Non-retention URBs needed thru December		≤390
Remaining URBs		752

- Although preseason plan included managing non-treaty fisheries to approximately 80% of the allowed SRW/URB take limit, impacts to date in combined recreational fisheries have exceeded those preseason expectations. This resulted from a combination of higher-than-expected kept catches during Chinook retention fisheries in some river sections along with substantially more Chinook being handled and released post Chinook retention.
- Even though the recent URB run update provides for some additional SRW/URB take, the current balance for mainstem recreational fisheries of approximately 750 URB mortalities limits the available options.
- Since Chinook retention seasons for most river sections have or will meet preseason expectations, staff recommends that future Chinook retention opportunity should be shared throughout all river sections/areas.
- Considering these various factors, as well as other logistical issues such as availability of flights for effort counts, staff provides the following fishery recommendation:

<i>Recommendation: 2019 Buoy 10 and Mainstem Recreational Fisheries</i>	
Action:	Retention of Chinook is allowed Saturday, September 21 (1 day)
Area:	From a true north and south line through Buoy 10 upstream to the Bonneville Dam angling deadlines.
Daily Bag Limit:	Daily limit is two adult salmon (Chinook and hatchery Coho only) of which only one may be a Chinook. All steelhead must be released. Jacks (Chinook and Coho) may be retained except in the Buoy 10 area where only adults may be kept. All other permanent rules apply.

- The expected kept catch for the proposed fishery is 950 adult Chinook, resulting in 667 additional URB mortalities, bringing the expected season total to approximately 9,520 URB mortalities, or 99% of allowed for recreational fisheries.
- Anglers are expected to target Chinook during open Chinook retention seasons and shift to targeting Coho during Chinook non-retention seasons. Steelhead impacts are not expected to increase if this recommendation is adopted.
- Since the LCR sturgeon retention fishery upstream of the Wauna powerlines is set for the same day (Saturday 9/21), staff considered other near-term options (Friday 9/20 and Sunday 9/22) to avoid over-crowding, but struggled to resolve staff scheduling and flight availability complications. A flight is currently scheduled for Saturday and sampling effort will be high due to the planned sturgeon fishery.
- Given there is still some uncertainty in the URB run size, an alternative approach would be to delay a decision until early next week following the next TAC run update.
- In order to provide some additional opportunity throughout all river sections, staff recommends the mainstem recreational fishery from Bonneville Dam upstream to Highway 395 close to Chinook retention. Due to increasing catches in this river section, the current balance of URB mortalities for mainstem recreational fisheries is not sufficient to allow this fishery to remain open and provide additional opportunity throughout the mainstem Columbia River.

***Recommendation: 2019 Mainstem Recreational Salmon Fishery
Bonneville Dam upstream to Highway 395***

Effective 12:01 AM Sunday, September 22 retention of all Chinook salmon is prohibited in the mainstem Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Highway 395 Bridge near Pasco, WA. The daily bag limit is two adult Coho. All Coho (adults and jacks) retained downstream of the Hood River Bridge must be hatchery fish. All other permanent regulations remain in effect.

- Staff is also recommending a two-fish daily bag limit above Bonneville beginning September 22 to be consistent with the rest of the mainstem.
- Dependent on the results of mainstem recreational fisheries through September 20, and subsequent run size updates, additional Chinook retention opportunity in this area will be considered.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- The Joint Staff will continue to monitor stock status and the recreational salmonid fisheries, and recommend additional hearings as needed. Staff recommends a hearing be scheduled for next week (September 25 preferred) to consider mainstem non-treaty commercial fisheries.