

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT – SPRING FACT SHEET NO. 2
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
May 13, 2020

Fisheries under consideration: Mainstem recreational salmon

Detailed information on stock status and management guidelines for Columbia River fisheries are presented in Joint Staff Reports, which are produced annually and available online. The most recent reports are the 2020 Sturgeon/Smelt Report (January 17, 2020) and the 2020 spring/summer report for Chinook, sockeye, steelhead, and other species (February 7, 2020). Links to the online reports are <https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/management/columbia-river> and <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/jsmreports.asp>

RIVER CONDITIONS

- Columbia River conditions as measured at Bonneville Dam are currently lower and clearer than recent 5-year averages for early/mid-May. Current outflow is 313 kcfs, which is lower than the recent 5-year average of 330 kcfs. Water temperature currently measures 55° F, slightly below the 5-year average of 56° F. Visibility is 5.0 feet, clearer than the 5-year average of 3.7 feet. The river stage at Vancouver is currently about 9.0 feet and is forecasted to remain relatively stable for the next several days (Action Stage is 15.0 feet and Flood Stage is 16.0 feet).

STOCK STATUS

- Adult Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam through May 12 totals 35,608 fish, which is one third of the 10-year (2010-19) average cumulative count and roughly half of the 5-year (2015-19) average for this date. Based on the preseason forecast and 5-year average timing, about 38,100 fish would be expected at Bonneville Dam by this date. The recent 5-year average 50% passage date at Bonneville Dam is May 12.
- The *U.S. v. Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met on Monday, May 11 to discuss the upriver spring Chinook return. Given the variable passage recently at Bonneville Dam, and the increase in daily counts over the prior weekend, TAC concluded that it was too early to provide an in-season update to the run-size. TAC's next scheduled meeting is Monday, May 18.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Forecasts and management guidelines for 2020 spring Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheets #2b and #3a on February 11 and February 19, respectively.

2020 RECREATIONAL FISHERIES

Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Fishery

- The lower Columbia River recreational spring Chinook fishery was open under temporary regulations from March 1 through March 25, prior to being closed due to concerns regarding the potential spread of COVID-19. Due to low projected returns to the Cowlitz and Lewis

rivers, the fishery was restricted to the area from Warrior Rock/Lewis River upstream to Bonneville Dam in order to maximize hatchery returns.

- The spring Chinook fishery from Bonneville Dam upstream to the OR/WA border was initially scheduled to open April 1 but due to public safety concerns related to COVID-19, this did not occur.
- At a Joint State hearing on May 1, the states authorized a four-day reopening of the spring Chinook recreational fisheries downstream and upstream of Bonneville Dam (May 5, 7, 9, 13). The lower river fishery was still restricted to the area between Warrior Rock and Bonneville Dam.
- Through May 9, the estimated catch in the recreational fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam includes 877 kept adult Chinook (253 released) from approximately 17,900 angler trips. Given a projected 142 upriver Chinook mortalities for May 13, this fishery is expected to have accumulated a total of 970 upriver mortalities, or 33% of the 2,899 available to this fishery prior to a run update.
- For the three days open so far in the Bonneville-OR/WA border recreational fishery, an estimated 315 adult Chinook have been kept and 45 released from approximately 2,900 angler trips. Including projected catches for May 13, kept plus release mortalities total 427 adult Chinook which is 110% of the 387 fish available prior to a run update.
- The state of Washington opened the recreational Chinook fishery in the lower Snake River on May 5 on a days per week schedule in limited areas. Through May 9, this fishery has accumulated 84 of the 400 mortalities available to it prior to a run update.
- Given the balance remaining on the pre-season buffered allocation of upriver spring Chinook, there is potential for additional angling opportunity. However, to consider an extension of the fishery between Bonneville Dam and the OR/WA border, fish would need to be provided from the LCR fishery’s allocation. Considering the limited in-season information currently available regarding the abundance and timing of the upriver spring Chinook run, staff continues to recommend a conservative approach moving forward with these fisheries, including a limited days-per-week structure. This will provide additional recreational opportunity while allowing staff the time to monitor the run and harvest.

<i>Recommendations: 2020 Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery</i>		
Downstream of Bonneville Dam		
Season:	Friday, May 15 through Sunday, May 17 and Tuesday, May 19	4 days
Area:	Warrior Rock line upstream to Beacon Rock (boat and bank) plus bank angling only from Beacon Rock upstream to the Bonneville Dam deadline.	
	Legal downstream boundary defined as: A line projected from the Warrior Rock lighthouse on the Oregon shore through red USCG buoy #4 then to the piling dolphin on the lower end of Bachelor Island (Warrior Rock line).	
	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 (Chinook, sockeye or steelhead only) per day, but only one may be a Chinook. Retained Chinook and steelhead must be hatchery fish. All sockeye are considered adults. Shad may also be retained. All other permanent regulations apply.
Bonneville Dam to Oregon/Washington Border	
Season:	Friday, May 15 through Sunday, May 17 and Tuesday, May 19 4 days
Area:	Tower Island power lines (approximately 6 miles below The Dalles Dam) upstream to Oregon/Washington border, plus the Oregon and Washington banks between Bonneville Dam and the Tower Island power lines.
Daily Bag Limit:	Two adult hatchery salmonids (Chinook or steelhead only) per day, but only one may be a Chinook. All other permanent regulations apply.

- Projecting the kept catch for the proposed fisheries is complicated by circumstances associated with the current COVID-19 situation such as reduced bank access, boat ramp closures, and recommendations for restricted travel.
- Considering these factors and catch rates during the recent reopening, the proposed fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam is expected to handle about 765 adult Chinook, with 600 kept, and would accrue an additional 568 upriver mortalities. The recommended fishery upstream of Bonneville Dam is projected to handle just over 600 adult Chinook (500 kept) and result in an additional 512 upriver mortalities.
- With the proposed extensions, projected cumulative upriver mortalities (2,477 adults) would represent 75% of the 3,286 mortalities available to the combined recreational fisheries downstream of the OR/WA border prior to a run update.
- 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 these fisheries.
- Staff will be prepared to review fishery results on May 18 to determine if catch rates align with expectations and consider if any season modifications are needed.
- An upriver spring Chinook run size of 53,300 adults would cover the projected cumulative mortalities for these fisheries and pre-update set-asides for other non-treaty fisheries.
- The most conservative approach is to postpone additional Chinook openings until an in-season upriver run update is available (likely May 18). At that time, additional information will be available regarding updated allocations of upriver Chinook and abundance of Cowlitz and Lewis river hatchery fish. This information would help inform decisions regarding additional angling opportunity.
- Retention of adult spring Chinook remains closed downstream of Warrior Rock, but retention of hatchery steelhead, sockeye, and jack Chinook is scheduled to open on May 16 from the

Tongue Point/Rocky Point line upstream to the I-5 Bridge. Shad angling and retention opens throughout the lower Columbia below Bonneville Dam on May 16.

- Impacts to other listed stocks are expected to remain within take limitations based on recent year results. Fishery-specific impact rate expectations can be found in the latest Spring/Summer Joint Staff Report in the 2020 Winter, Spring, and Summer Season Expectations section.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- No additional Compact/Joint State hearings are currently scheduled. The Joint Staff anticipate a hearing may be needed next Tuesday (May 19) to consider Columbia River salmon fisheries.