COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION
JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 7
Columbia River Compact
September 16, 2020

Fisheries under Consideration: Treaty Commercial Gillnet

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 2020 Fall Report was distributed on July 22, 2020. 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/jsmreports.asp

RIVER CONDITIONS

- The recent five-day average Columbia River flow at Bonneville Dam as of September 16 is 114 kcfs which is slightly higher than the five-year average flow of 99 kcfs on this date.
- The recent 5-day average water temperature at Bonneville is 67.7°F, which is slightly lower than the five-year average (68.6°F).
- The recent 5-day average temperature measured at Elliot Point in the estuary by CMOP[1] (Center for Coastal Margin Observation and Prediction) is approximately 64°F.

STOCK STATUS

- Stock status information was presented in Fall Fact Sheet 1.

Fall Chinook

- Bonneville Dam passage through September 15 totals 276,533 adult and 36,938 jack fall Chinook. This is the fifth largest cumulative adult count to date and seventh largest jack count to date in the last 10 years. The clip rate is approximately 70%, which is higher than average.
- Based on visual stock sampling on September 13, a total of 211,466 adult bright stock fish (comprised of the URB and PUB stocks) have passed Bonneville Dam. A total of 46,781 adult tules (primarily BPH stock) have also passed Bonneville Dam. Bright stock passage is typically 68% complete on September 16 based on 10-year average run timing but has been as much as 80% complete on this date within the last 10 years. Tule passage is typically 89% complete on September 16 based on 10-year average run timing but has been as much as 95% complete in the last 10 years.
- McNary Dam passage through September 15 totals 85,649 adult chinook. The fall chinook run at McNary is typically 41% complete based on 10-year average run timing.
- Spring Creek Hatchery reports that over 13,000 fish have entered the hatchery, but the male/female/jack composition is not available yet. Spawning began on September 14. USFWS have indicated they will collect sufficient fish to meet their broodstock needs and that they support reducing the Spring Creek sanctuary.

[1] http://www.stccmop.org/datamart/observation_network

Upriver Summer Steelhead

- Upriver summer steelhead pass Bonneville Dam from April through October of each year. Fish passing during July through October are categorized as A-Index or B-Index based on fork length (A-Index: <78 cm, B-Index: ≥78 cm). Passage during July is primarily A-Index fish; B-Index passage normally begins around the end of August. B-Index steelhead primarily return to Snake River tributaries in Idaho, while A-Index steelhead return to tributaries throughout the Columbia and Snake river basins.
- Counts of steelhead at Bonneville Dam since July 1 total 89,354 fish, which is 85% of the recent 10-year average (82% of recent 5-year). It is the eighth highest count to date in the last 10 years. Passage of the total run at Bonneville Dam (July–October) is typically 85% complete by September 16 (recent 10-year average). The count of unclipped steelhead since July 1 totals 36,850 fish which is the seventh highest cumulative count to date in the last 10 years. The ad-clip rate is 58.8% which is slightly lower than average for this time period.
- During July 1-September 11, 810 steelhead have been sampled at Bonneville Dam by CRITFC. 31 unclipped B-Index steelhead and 68 clipped B-Index steelhead have been sampled in this timeframe. All of the other steelhead sampled since July 1 have been A-Index fish (373 clipped and 338 unclipped). A and B sized fish proportions are not unusual for this point in the run.

Coho

- For this season's return through September 15, a total of 56,462 adult and 11,974 jack coho have passed Bonneville Dam this run year. The adult count to date is the third highest in the last 10 years and the jack count to date is a record high count. The coho run at Bonneville is typically 49% complete by this date based on 10-year average run timing. The adult clip rate is 44% which is higher than average.

Run Size Updates

- TAC met on Monday, September 14 to review and discuss salmon and steelhead passage at Bonneville Dam and harvest in fall season fisheries. TAC updated the expected Columbia River mouth abundances of URB, PUB, and BPH stock fall Chinook to 267,300, 80,100, 51,100 adults, respectively (total of 398,500 upriver fish). Given the preseason forecasts for lower river stocks, the total fall Chinook return is now expected to include 476,680 adults (13% greater than the preseason forecast). Passage of bright and tule components are both tracking several days earlier than recent-year averages. A-Index and B-Index steelhead passage at Bonneville Dam was also updated. Given current information, TAC now expects 81,300 total A-Index fish (including 34,400 unclipped) which is 95% of preseason forecast and 28,800 B-Index fish (6,100 unclipped) which is 300% of forecast. The A-Index projections were based on the recent 10-year average run timing while the B-Index passage projections assumed their timing is five days earlier than the recent 10-year average. The aggregate A-/B-Index abundance is expected to total 110,100 fish. TAC updated the projected return of early-stock coho (defined as those passing prior to September 30) to a minimum of 66,700 adults. The pre-season total coho forecasted return to Bonneville Dam was 42,300 fish (33,880 early stock and 9,400 late stock coho). TAC will continue to meet weekly throughout the fall management period and will provide further updates as information becomes available.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Salmon/Steelhead

- The 2018-2027 *U.S. v 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 fisheries is 45% of the URB run based on the preseason forecast (URB stock is the surrogate for SRW Chinook). This impact limit is allocated 30% for treaty Indian fisheries and 15% 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 passage at McNary Dam is 60,000 fish.
- Based on the updated forecast, treaty Indian impacts are limited to 15% of the total B-Index steelhead.
- The goal for upriver Coho passage at Bonneville Dam is 50% of the ocean abundance.
- Fisheries are managed based on preseason forecasts until in-season run size updates become available.

2020 TREATY FISHERIES

Fall Season Fisheries

- Treaty platform and hook and line fisheries have been open for both subsistence and commercial purposes since August 1.
- Table 1 below shows preliminary 2020 fall season treaty harvest through September 12 and projected catches for this week and next week. The model assumes average effort and average catch rates scaled to actual current catch rates.
- The model uses the TAC updated forecasts for URB chinook, B-Index steelhead, and coho.
- Chinook stock composition estimates are preliminary as CWT data are not finalized.
- The tribes anticipate commercial gillnet fisheries should be able to occur through at least late September.

Table 1. Fall Chinook Harvest Model Output

2020 Treaty Indian Fall Season Fisheries									
Week		Gillnet Fishery	Dates	Set Net Count	Total Adult Chinook	URB Chinook	Total Steelhead	B Steelhead	Coho
31-34	Preliminary	Platform/ H&L	August 1-22	na	715	232	630	70	66
35	Preliminary	8/24	8/27	409	6,654	2,158	416	64	178
36	Preliminary	8/31	9/4	489	24,869	14,808	782	161	1,512
37	Preliminary	9/7	9/11	504	21,978	13,086	1,186	420	1,634
38	Projected	9/14	9/18	600	28,600	16,100	1,900	840	5,500
				Subtotal	82,816	46,384	4,914	1,555	8,890
39	Projected	9/21	9/25	500	18,400	8,700	2,100	1,070	5,990
				Total	101,216	55,084	7,014	2,625	14,880
		Allowed at Projected URB and B run size				80,190		4,320	

Harvest Rate as of Sept 19	17.4%	5.4%
Remaining after Sept 19	33,806	2,765
Expected Harvest Rate by Sept 26	20.6%	9.1%
Remaining Available After Sept 26	25,106	1,695

Note: projected catches for statistical weeks with gillnet fisheries include platform and hook and line catch for those entire weeks.

- The four Columbia River treaty tribes have adopted regulations consistent with the following:

2020 Treaty Indian Commercial Gillnet Fishery	
Seasons:	The scheduled gillnet fishery will be 6:00 AM September 21 through 6:00 PM September 25 (4.5 days)
Area:	Zone 6
Gear:	Set and Drift Gillnets with an 8-inch minimum mesh size.
Allowable Sales:	Salmon (any species), steelhead, shad, yellow perch, bass, walleye, catfish, and carp may be sold or retained for subsistence. Fish landed during the open periods are allowed to be sold after the period concludes. Sturgeon from 38 to 54 inches fork length in the Bonneville Pool and sturgeon from 43 to 54 inches fork length in The Dalles and John Day Pools may be kept for subsistence purposes.
Sanctuaries:	Standard sanctuaries applicable to gillnet gear. The Spring Creek Hatchery Sanctuary will be reduced to 150 feet around the hatchery ladder.
Additional:	24-hour quick reporting required for Washington buyers, pursuant to WAC 220-352-315 except that landings must be reported within 24-hours of completing the fish ticket.

- Fisheries will be monitored, and catches reported regularly. Fisheries will be modified as needed to keep harvest impacts within allowed limits for the treaty fall season fisheries.
- Aerial flights are ordinarily conducted each week to count set nets. Due to wildfire smoke a flight may not be possible this week. If it does not occur, effort estimates derived from the creel monitoring program will be used.
- There is no action needed for platform and hook and line fisheries, Yakama tributary fisheries or fisheries downstream of Bonneville Dam.
- Commercial fishing provides numerous economic benefits for tribal and non-tribal communities.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- The tribes request a Compact hearing on Thursday, September 24 to consider additional treaty Indian commercial gillnet fisheries.