

**COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION**  
**JOINT STAFF REPORT - WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 3**  
**Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing**  
**February 9, 2022**

|  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <b><i>Fisheries under consideration:</i></b> | Zone 6 treaty commercial fisheries |
|--|------------------------------------|

*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 report is the 2022 Spring Chinook, Summer, Chinook, Sockeye, Steelhead and other species Report (February 3, 2022) available at:*

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/management/columbia-river/reports> and  
<https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/jsmreports.asp>

**RIVER CONDITIONS**

- The recent five-day average river temperature at the John Day Dam tailrace is 37.4 degrees which is 2 degrees cooler than the recent five-year average for this time period.
- The recent five-day average outflow at the John Day Dam is approximately 170 Kcfs, which is not unusual for this time of year.

**STOCK STATUS**

***White Sturgeon -- Zone 6 (Bonneville Dam to McNary Dam)***

- The states and tribes work cooperatively to complete white sturgeon stock assessments, which are rotated between the three Zone 6 reservoirs on an annual basis. The 2021 survey was conducted in Bonneville Pool and indicated a 22% increase in the abundance of legal sized sturgeon (38–54 inch fork length), but a 13% decline in the overall population (fish greater than 21 inch fork length).
- The Dalles and John Day pools white sturgeon stock status were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #1.
- The Sturgeon Management Task Force, a joint state/tribal body, met on January 19, 2022 and recommended new harvest guidelines for 2022–2024 in Bonneville Pool (1,350 fish total guideline: 675 for treaty commercial and 675 for non-treaty recreational) based on the improved legal-size population estimate. The states and tribes have adopted these guidelines:

Current sturgeon harvest guidelines in Zone 6 reservoirs.

| Pool       | Recreational Guideline | Treaty Guideline | Total Guideline |
|------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Bonneville | 675                    | 675              | 1,350           |
| The Dalles | 190                    | 560              | 750             |
| John Day   | 105                    | 210              | 315             |

***Steelhead and Salmon***

- Through February 6, a total of 1,584 including 676 unclipped winter steelhead have been counted at Bonneville Dam (42.7% unclipped). The total count and the unclipped count are the fourth highest to date in the last 10 years. There are no dam counts available this time of year

for The Dalles, John Day, or McNary Dams. TAC does not forecast winter steelhead at Bonneville Dam although the river mouth forecast for winter steelhead is 13,400.

- TAC has recently completed summer steelhead forecasts. The Skamania stock forecasts are shown in the table below. Skamania stock steelhead are counted at Bonneville between April 1 and June 30.

| <b>Group</b>        | <b>2021 Bonneville Dam Forecast</b> | <b>2021 Bonneville Dam Return</b> | <b>2021 Return as a percent of the Forecast</b> | <b>2022 Bonneville Dam Forecast</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Skamania</b>     | <b>4,600</b>                        | <b>1,917</b>                      | <b>42%</b>                                      | <b>3,100</b>                        |
| Total Hatchery      | 2,500                               | 798                               | 32%   | 1,500                               |
| Ad-Clipped Hatchery | 2,200                               | 798                               | 36%   | 1,300                               |
| Unclipped Hatchery  | 300                                 | 0                                 | 0%  | 200                                 |
| Natural Origin      | 2,100                               | 1,119                             | 53%   | 1,600                               |

- Chinook counts at Bonneville Dam in January include one fish passing downstream and one upstream. These fish may have actually been fall chinook.

## **MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

### ***Zone 6 Sturgeon***

- Fact sheet 2a contains information on Zone 6 sturgeon harvest guidelines. The treaty commercial guidelines are shown in the harvest table below.
- There is no harvest guideline for the treaty subsistence catch of sturgeon, but these catches are accounted for and used in population assessments. Subsistence harvest typically occurs in association with fisheries targeting other species and is generally low. The 2021 subsistence harvest estimate was 233 fish for all three Zone 6 reservoirs combined.

### ***Steelhead and Salmon***

- Steelhead caught upstream of The Dalles Dam from November 1-June 30 are counted as part of the A/B-Index summer steelhead return. There are no specific harvest limits for steelhead in winter season fisheries, but the steelhead catch is low averaging 51 fish annually in The Dalles and John Day Pools combined since 2008 with no recorded catch during the winter gillnet fishery in the past nine years, although there has been some harvest in spring fisheries. The highest observed catch since 2001 was 306 in 2008. Because of generally low steelhead harvest in the winter gillnet fishery, no specific management actions regarding steelhead are expected. There are no dam counts available this time of year for The Dalles, John Day, or McNary Dams.
- Steelhead caught in the Bonneville Pool from November 1 through March 31 are counted as winter steelhead. There is no specific harvest limit for winter steelhead, but harvest is generally low. Winter steelhead harvest has averaged 104 fish per year since 2001 and was 40 fish in 2021. Because harvest is generally low, no specific management actions regarding steelhead are expected to be needed.
- Chinook are not expected to be present during the winter gillnet fishery.

**2022 TREATY INDIAN WINTER FISHERIES**

- A setline fishery occurs each January in all three Zone 6 Pools under permanent regulations through January 31. This fishery generally has low effort and catch. The setline catches were below average in the Bonneville and John Day Pools, and near average in The Dalles Pool. But they are within past ranges. A gillnet fishery was set in The Dalles Pool from February 1 through February 5 and also in the John Day Pool from February 1 through February 12. Preliminary catch estimates through Monday are shown in the table below. These include both ticketed landings and direct to public sales. There may be some landings in the last few days that have not been recorded yet.

|            | January<br>Setline | Winter<br>Gillnet | Total | Guideline | Remaining | % of<br>guideline |
|------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| Bonneville | 12                 | 0                 | 12    | 500       | 488       | 2%                |
| The Dalles | 96                 | 182               | 278   | 560       | 282       | 50%               |
| John Day   | 0                  | 18                | 18    | 210       | 192       | 9%                |
| Total      | 108                | 192               | 300   |           |           |                   |

- Gillnet catch rates generally start out slow and increase over time as water temperature and effort increase. Catch rates in the commercial gillnet fishery were less than modeled, but the weather is expected to be moderate this week and catches may increase to levels near the catch rates modeled pre-season.
- No steelhead have been reported caught in the winter gillnet fishery to date.

The four Columbia River treaty tribes will adopt regulations consistent with the following:

| <b><i>2022 Treaty Indian Winter Season Commercial Gillnet Fishery – The Dalles Pool</i></b> |  |
|---|--|
| Season:   | 6 AM Thursday February 10 to 6 PM Saturday February 12 (2.5 days)  |
| Area:   | The Dalles Pool only   |
| Gear:   | Gillnets with no minimum mesh size restriction   |
| Sanctuaries:  | Closed areas include standard closed standard dam and river mouth areas applicable to gillnet gear   |
| Allowable Sales:  | Salmon (any species), steelhead, shad, yellow perch, bass, walleye, catfish, and carp may be sold or retained for subsistence. Sturgeon from 43 to 54 inches fork length in The Dalles Pool may be sold or kept for subsistence purposes. Fish landed during the open periods are allowed to be sold after the period concludes. |
| 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.   |

| <b><i>2022 Treaty Indian Winter Season Commercial Gillnet Fishery – John Day Pool</i></b> |   |
|---|---|
| Season:   | Extend the ongoing fishery until 6 PM Saturday February 19 (7 additional days for a total of 18.5 days) |
| Area:   | The John Day Pools only   |
| Gear:   | Gillnets with no minimum mesh size restriction  |
| Sanctuaries:  | Closed areas include standard closed standard dam and river mouth areas applicable to gillnet gear      |

Allowable Sales: Salmon (any species), steelhead, shad, yellow perch, bass, walleye, catfish, and carp may be sold or retained for subsistence. Sturgeon from 43 to 54 inches fork length in The John Day Pool may be sold or kept for subsistence purposes. Fish landed during the open periods are allowed to be sold after the period concludes.

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.

- No action regarding the platform and hook and line fishery is needed at this time.
- The intent of the platform fishery regulation is to allow any sturgeon caught incidentally with platform or hook and line gear to be sold if they are caught in a Pool with an open commercial gillnet fishery and to allow the sale of any steelhead that may be caught.
- At the end of the proposed fisheries, the expected sturgeon catch in the Dalles Pool fishery is 458 fish based on an average of the 2020 and 2021 average catches per day. The expected sturgeon catch in the John Day Pool fishery is 163 based on recent average catches per day. The expected catch of steelhead is zero.
- Catch will be monitored to ensure the tribal fisheries remain within management limits. The tribes expect to set additional fishing time after this period or may extend this period if appropriate. The tribes will take action to close fisheries early if harvest limits are projected to be met early.

#### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

- The tribes may request a Compact Hearing on Wednesday February 16 or on Thursday February 17 in case there is an opportunity for remaining fish on The Dalles Pool guideline or if adjustments are needed John Day Pool fishery.
- A Joint State hearing is scheduled for 10 AM February 23, 2022 to consider mainstem Columbia River recreational spring Chinook fisheries.