

COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION
JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 2a
Columbia River Compact Hearing
August 18, 2022

Fisheries under consideration: Treaty commercial gillnet
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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 online. The 2022 Fall Report was distributed on July 19, 2022. Links to the 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 flows at Bonneville Dam as of August 16 are 171 kcfs which is greater than the five-year average of 143 kcfs on this date. Water temperature at the Bonneville Dam forebay is 71°F¹, which is equal to the recent five-year average of 71°F. Water temperatures typically peak in mid-August.
- Visibility at Bonneville Dam over the past seven days has averaged 6 feet.
- River temperatures in the lower Columbia measured near Tongue Point have averaged 71°F over the past 5 days². The peak temperature over this time was 72°F.

STOCK STATUS

- Stock status information was presented in Fall Fact Sheet #1.
- TAC will be meeting throughout the fall management period and will provide updates on the run sizes as the runs progress.

Fall Chinook

- Bonneville Dam passage through August 16 totals 14,857 adult and 1,746 jack fall Chinook. This is the fourth highest cumulative count to date for adult chinook in the last 10 years. The clip rate is approximately 42%, which is near average. Adult Chinook passage is typically 2.4% complete on August 16.
- Based on Bonneville Dam Observation sampling data collected by WDFW and ODFW, the adult counts through August 14 include 10,697 adult bright stock fish, 119 adult tules, and 79 “stubby” tules which are jack-aged fish that grow to just over the adult size criteria for window counts.

Upriver Summer Steelhead

- Upriver summer steelhead pass Bonneville Dam from April through October of each year. Fish passing from 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 and early August is primarily A-Index fish; higher levels of B-Index passage normally begin around the end of August. B-Index steelhead primarily return to Snake River tributaries in Idaho but can return to any tributary. A-Index steelhead return to tributaries throughout the Columbia and Snake river basins.

¹ Data from <http://pweb.crohms.org/tmt/documents/ops/temp/>.

² Data from http://www.stecmop.org/datamart/observation_network

- Counts of steelhead at Bonneville Dam since July 1 total 58,267 fish, which is 70% of the recent 10-year average (152% of recent 5-year). Passage of the total run at Bonneville Dam (July–October) is typically 48% complete by August 16 (recent 10-year average). The count of unclipped steelhead since July 1 totals 22,110 fish which is near the expected passage based on the forecast assuming average run timing. The unclipped run at Bonneville is typically 61% complete on August 16 based on 10-year average run timing. The ad-clip rate to date is 62% which is higher than expected for this period.
- It is too early to assess the size of the A-Index and B-Index run sizes individually.

Coho

- Through August 16 a total of 163 adult and 19 jack coho have passed Bonneville Dam for this run year. This is the third highest count to date in the last 10 years. The coho run at Bonneville is typically only 0.2% complete by this date. The adult coho clip rate is 25% which is close to average for this time of year.

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. If the actual URB return is less than 200,000 adults, the impact limits drop to 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 passage at McNary Dam is 60,000 fish.
 - 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.
 - Fisheries are managed based on preseason forecasts until in-season run size updates become available.

2022 TREATY FISHERIES

Fall Season Fisheries

- Treaty platform and hook and line fisheries have been open for both subsistence and commercial purposes since August 1. Preliminary catch estimates for the early fall platform and hook and line fisheries are not yet available.
- The table below shows planned 2022 fall season treaty fisheries and projected catches. The model assumes highest recent weekly effort and average catch rates. The model is based on pre-season forecast run sizes. As actual effort and catches become available, projected future catches will be scaled to actual catch rates.
- The tribes have chosen to set three initial openings to begin the fall season. The tribes anticipate commercial gillnet fisheries should be able to occur through at least mid to late September.

2022 Treaty Indian Fall Season Fisheries (Modeled Catches)									
Week		Platform/ H&L	Dates	Expected Effort (Set Nets)	Total Adult Chinook	URB Chinook	Total Steelhead	B Steelhead	Coho
31-34	Projected		August 1-20	na	300	170	140	0	0
Gillnet Fishery									
35	Projected	8/22	8/25	450	13,200	7,000	700	60	580
36	Projected	8/29	9/2	550	26,300	11,900	900	120	2,400
37	Projected	9/5	9/10	650	38,900	18,300	1,100	150	3,500
Total					78,700	37,370	2,840	330	6,480
Allowed at Forecast run size						68,907		2,028	
Expected Harvest by Sept 10						37,370		330	
Remaining after Sept 10						31,537		1,698	
Expected Harvest Rate by Sept 10						16.3%		2.1%	
Remaining Harvest Rate After Sept 10						13.7%		10.9%	

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

- The table above shows modeled fisheries based on the pre-season forecasts for Chinook, coho and steelhead. Set net counts are the surrogate for effort in the model used to plan fisheries. The highest weekly effort in the past five years was used as a precautionary approach. Set net counts have been below average so far in 2022.
- The proposed fishery impacts are within the allowed harvest rate limits for an URB run size down to 163,000 and a B-Index steelhead run size down to 2,550.
- The four Columbia River treaty tribes have adopted regulations consistent with the following:

2022 Treaty Indian Commercial Gillnet Fishery	
Seasons:	6:00 AM Monday August 22 through 6:00 PM Thursday August 25 (3.5 days) 6:00 AM Monday August 29 through 6:00 PM Friday September 2 (4.5 days) 6:00 AM Monday September 5 through 6:00 PM Saturday September 10 (5.5 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 standard Spring Creek Hatchery Sanctuary is in place.
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 will be conducted each week to count set nets.
- There is no Compact action needed for platform and hook and line fisheries, Yakama tributary fisheries or fisheries downstream of Bonneville Dam.
- Fall Management Period fisheries are the most economically valuable for tribal fishers. Commercial fishing provides numerous economic benefits for tribal and non-tribal communities.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- A Compact hearing is scheduled for 1 PM on Thursday September 8 to consider Treaty commercial gillnet fisheries.

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 2b
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
August 18, 2022

<i>Fisheries under consideration:</i>
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Recreational white sturgeon upstream of Wauna powerlines
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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 online. The most recent report relevant to these fisheries is the 2022 Sturgeon/Smelt Report (January 14, 2022) available at:

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/management/columbia-river/reports> or

<https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/jsmreports.asp>

RIVER CONDITIONS

- Current river conditions are presented in Fall Fact Sheet #2a.

STOCK STATUS

White Sturgeon

- Stock status information for white sturgeon was presented in Winter Fact Sheets #5a and #8.
 - Abundance estimates for white sturgeon in the lower Columbia River (LCR) are derived from annual mark/recapture studies. Recent abundance estimates for the traditional legal-size slot (38-54 inches fork length (FL)) declined to a low of 72,700 in 2012 but increased steadily through 2016, reaching a peak of 224,000 fish. Since 2016, the abundance estimate of this size group has declined with a 2021 estimated abundance of 122,395 legal-size fish (95% CI: 66,322–181,468). Catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) data provide supporting evidence of a decreasing trend in legal-size abundance since 2016.
 - Abundance metrics for other size groups of white sturgeon in the LCR remain mixed. The current three-year running average abundance of adult-sized fish (≥ 167 cm FL) is 11,064 fish, which exceeds the desired status threshold identified in the Oregon White Sturgeon Conservation Plan. However, the proportion of juvenile fish in the population (56% in 2021) remains below the conservation status threshold of 60% juveniles for the third consecutive year.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

White Sturgeon

- For years when white sturgeon retention is allowed downstream of Bonneville Dam, current Commission guidance on white sturgeon management includes:
 - Assign 80% of the white sturgeon available for harvest to recreational fisheries and 20% to commercial fisheries.
 - Oregon Commission guidance requires that a 10% conservation buffer be applied if the maximum harvest rate (16%) identified in WSCP is utilized.
 - Washington Commission guidance requires that we manage with a precautionary approach due to uncertainties in population parameters.

- Earlier this year, staff provided updates on the LCR white sturgeon status to each state’s Commission and the Columbia River Fishery Advisor groups, which all supported implementing sturgeon retention fisheries in 2022 similar to what occurred in 2017–2021.
- To maintain a cautious approach, staff assumed the following when initially modeling 2022 LCR sturgeon fisheries:
 - Continued use of the new standardized legal slot of 44-50 inches FL for all LCR fisheries to facilitate management and provide escapement of larger-size white sturgeon by excluding them from harvest.
 - Modeled a conservative 4.0% harvest rate using the narrower 44-50 inch FL (equivalent impact to broodstock escapement of a 4.8% harvest rate on the traditional 38-54 inch size slot).
 - Used the previous harvest allocation distribution for recreational fisheries of 48% Estuary, 20% Above Wauna, and 12% in the lower Willamette River.
- Based on the harvest-adjusted 2022 abundance projection of 100,014 fish (38-54 inch FL), a total of 4,000 white sturgeon (44-50 inch FL) would be available for harvest downstream of Bonneville Dam.

Estimated Legal Abundance	100,014
Annual Harvest Guideline	4,000
Commercial (20%)	800
Recreational (80%)	3,200
Estuary	1,920
Above Wauna	800
Lower Willamette River	480

2022 NON-TREATY FISHERIES

Recreational White Sturgeon Fisheries

- In the Columbia River estuary (downstream of Wauna powerlines), a retention fishery was open for 11 days between May 11 – June 11. During this time, anglers harvested 1,292 fish from approximately 12,000 angler trips. The kept catch represents 67% of the 1,920 fish harvest guideline for this fishery. This season had variable weather and river flows were higher and cooler than recent years, which may have contributed to the lower-than-expected angler effort and catch rates.
- Joint State staff are not recommending an additional sturgeon retention season for the Columbia River estuary at this time.
- No white sturgeon fishery has been set for the lower Willamette River in 2022. Oregon staff are not recommending a sturgeon retention season for the Willamette River at this time.

Upstream of Wauna powerlines

- Generally, catch rates in this river section are highest during the spring and early fall months. In 2021, anglers made approximately 10,100 angler trips during a six-day retention season upstream of Wauna powerlines in September, harvesting 866 white sturgeon on the mainstem Columbia River and an estimated 18 white sturgeon on the Cowlitz River. Throughout the season, there was a steep decline in both angler effort and catch rates.
- Results of the 2017-2021 retention fisheries upstream of the Wauna powerlines provided useful data for designing the 2022 fishery, but modeling this fishery remains challenging due to uncertainty in predicting effort. However, staff believes the following fishery proposal represents a reasonable approach for this year.

<i>Recommendation: 2022 Recreational Sturgeon Fishery for Upstream of Wauna Powerlines</i>	
Season:	Saturday, September 10, Wednesday September 14, and Saturday September 17 3 days
Area:	Mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines upstream to Bonneville Dam, including the Cowlitz River
Allowable Catch:	Up to 800 white sturgeon Legal size: 44-inch minimum and 50-inch maximum fork length (Fork length is measured in a straight line from the tip of the nose to the fork in the caudal fin (tail) with the fish laying on its side on a flat surface, with the tape measure/ruler positioned flat <u>under</u> the fish) Daily bag limit: One fish Annual bag limit: Two fish Retention of green sturgeon is prohibited

- The proposed fishery is based on several modeling assumptions. The duration of the retention season will likely need to be adjusted if catch rates and effort are much different than projected. If a significant catch balance remains after the proposed fishery, staff may consider additional days on a Wednesday/Saturday rotation.
- The expected kept catch for the 3-day season is approximately 747 fish (93% of the guideline).
- Green sturgeon are unlikely to be encountered in this stretch of river during this time of year, therefore, no impacts are anticipated.
- Per permanent regulations, catch and release fishing is allowed year-round, except angling for sturgeon is prohibited May 1 through August 31 from Bonneville Dam downstream to a line crossing the Columbia River at Navigation Marker 82 on the Oregon shore westerly to a boundary marker on the Washington shore upstream of Fir Point.

FUTURE MEETINGS

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