

**OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT – SPRING FACT SHEET NO. 1
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
May 15, 2024**

<i>Fisheries under consideration:</i>	Mainstem recreational spring Chinook downstream of Bonneville Dam Non-treaty mainstem commercial 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 online. The most recent report is the 2024 Spring Chinook, Summer Chinook, Sockeye, Steelhead and Other Species Report (February 1, 2024) 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

- As of May 13, the five-day average outflow at Bonneville Dam is 181.3 kcfs compared to the five-year average of 277.1 kcfs. The current five-day average water temperature at Bonneville Dam is 53°F, compared to the five-year average of 54°F. The five-day average visibility at Bonneville Dam is 5.8 feet compared to the five-year average of 4.6 feet.

STOCK STATUS

- Adult Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam through May 13 totals 72,273 fish, which is 89% of the 10-year (2014-23) average cumulative count and 123% of the 5-year (2019-23) average for this date. The recent 10-year average 50% passage date at Bonneville Dam is May 11.
- The *U.S. v. Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met on May 13 to review the 2024 upriver spring Chinook return. Based on the information to date and discussion of the output from several Bonneville Dam passage projection models, TAC updated the expected return of adult upriver-origin spring Chinook from the pre-season forecast of 121,000 adults to 122,400 fish at the Columbia River mouth for the *U.S. v. OR* parties to use for management of fisheries during the spring management period.. TAC’s next scheduled meeting is May 20.
- Steelhead passing Bonneville Dam between April 1 and June 30 (including Bonneville Pool harvest during this timeframe) are considered upriver Skamania stock steelhead. Steelhead caught in the lower Columbia through April are counted as winter steelhead and from May 1-June 30 are counted as lower river Skamania stock steelhead. Through May 13 a total of 752 Skamania steelhead (including 387 unclipped) have been counted at Bonneville Dam, which is 75% of the 10-year average cumulative count to this date. On average, the upriver Skamania run is 18% complete on May 13.
- Weekly test fishing in the lower Columbia River using tangle nets is scheduled to occur primarily on Mondays from mid-March through May. Chinook catch per drift peaked April 22 – May 6 but has recently declined as of May 13. All test fishing results are available on the WDFW test fishing webpage ([click here](#)).

- The 2024 forecasts for the Cowlitz, Kalama, Lewis, and Sandy (CKLS) rivers are sufficient to meet escapement goals. It is too early to estimate spring Chinook hatchery returns to the CKLS rivers but at this time the Cowlitz, Kalama, and Lewis rivers appear to be on track to meet or exceed escapement goals.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Forecasts and management guidelines for 2024 spring Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheets #5 and #6.
- At TAC’s projected upriver spring Chinook abundance, and commission guidance for ESA-impact sharing, allocation of upriver fish (including release mortalities) for non-treaty fisheries is:
 - 906 unallocated non-treaty
 - 5,393 fish for the recreational fishery below Bonneville Dam
 - 770 fish for the recreational fishery from Bonneville Dam to the OR/WA state line
 - 680 fish for recreational fisheries in the Snake River (Washington waters)
 - 24 fish for Wanapum tribe (upper Columbia)
 - 385 unallocated recreational
 - 220 fish for Select Area commercial fisheries
 - 678 fish for mainstem commercial fisheries

2024 NON-TREATY FISHERIES

Mainstem Columbia River Recreational Spring Chinook Fishery

- The recreational spring Chinook fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam was open under temporary regulations March 1 through April 11. Catches through April 11 total 3,688 adult spring Chinook kept (336 released), and 398 steelhead kept (317 released) from about 42,000 angler trips.
- From Bonneville Dam to the OR/WA border, the spring Chinook fishery was initially scheduled to be open April 1 through May 2. However, due to higher-than-expected catch rates the fishery closed early on April 30. Catches through April 29 total 1,440 adult spring Chinook kept (193 released) from about 4,500 angler trips.
- The Snake River recreational fishery (Washington waters) was open May 7-10 on a two day per location schedule (Little Goose and Ice Harbor) with 806 adults kept and 79 released from 7,163 angler hours of effort. Due to higher-than expected catches the fishery closed on May 10.
- Wanapum Band (tribal) fisheries opened May 6 and are expected to fish through June 14. No fish have been harvested.
- Recreational spring Chinook catches as of May 15 are summarized in the table below:

Accounting of upriver spring Chinook mortalities in 2024 recreational fisheries						
Fishery	adult Chinook through May 10			Current Allocation	Percent of Allocation	Balance
	Total Kept	Upriver Kept	Upriver Mortalities (k+r)			
downstream of BON	3,688	2,465	2,479	5,393	46%	2,914
BON - OR/WA border	1,440	1,440	1,459	770	189%	-689
Snake River (WA waters)	806	806	814	680	120%	-134

- The recreational fishery from Bonneville Dam upstream to the OR/WA border achieved its unbuffered catch guideline as of April 30, which does not leave a balance to support additional opportunity at this time.
- Given the balance remaining on the upriver spring Chinook recreational allocation at the current abundance projection, there is potential for additional angling opportunity downstream of Bonneville Dam.
- Staff took a conservative modeling approach which allows for in-season adjustments as needed to remain within the allowable ESA-impacts and catch sharing guidelines. Modeling included recent-year observed May/June effort and catch rates. Chinook abundance, passage expectations, and current river conditions were also incorporated.
- Staff considered the following when developing season structure:
 - Angler interest to begin fishing soon after an in-season upriver spring Chinook abundance expectation was available from TAC.
 - Reserve sufficient ESA-impacts to prosecute hatchery summer steelhead-directed fisheries scheduled to occur May 16 – June 15 downstream of the I-5 Bridge.
 - Provide weekend opportunities in May, in addition to aligning the last portion of the spring season with the planned four-day (June 16-19) summer Chinook retention season.
 - Season structure allows for adaptive management which potentially includes additional opportunities.

<i>Recommendation: 2024 Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery</i>	
Downstream of Bonneville Dam	
Season:	Saturday May 18 through Sunday May 19, Saturday May 25 through Monday May 27, and Tuesday June 11 through Saturday June 15. 10 days
Area:	Tongue Point/Rocky Point line upstream to Beacon Rock (boat and bank) plus bank angling only from Beacon Rock upstream to the Bonneville Dam deadline. 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 hatchery salmonids (Chinook or steelhead) per day, but only one may be a Chinook.

All previously adopted regulations, including permanent regulations, remain in effect.

- This fishery is expected to handle about 3,150 adult Chinook, including 2,463 kept, and would accrue 2,073 additional upriver spring Chinook mortalities. Projected season total upriver spring Chinook mortalities would be 4,552 adults.
- Due to catches in the fisheries between Bonneville Dam and the OR/WA state line and in the lower Snake River, we expect non-treaty recreational fisheries to meet their catch balance allocations given this recommendation.

Non-Treaty Commercial Fisheries

- Combined Select Area landings through May 13 total 7,296 spring Chinook. Chinook landings are over two times greater than the recent 5-year average cumulative total for the same timeframe. Select Area fisheries have accrued an estimated 153 upriver spring Chinook mortalities through May 10.

Accounting of upriver spring Chinook mortalities in 2024 commercial fisheries through May 10						
Fishery	Total Kept	Upriver Kept	Upriver Mortalities (k+r)	Current Allocation	Percent of Allocation	Balance
Select Areas	7,296	153	153	220	70%	67
Mainstem	0	0	0	678	0%	678

- No landings have occurred in the Area 2S commercial shad fishery to date.
- Given the current upriver spring Chinook run size projection, allocation sharing guidance, the post-update timeframe, and expected usage in Select Area commercial fisheries, a mainstem non-treaty commercial fishery could be considered at this time based on the available commercial balance (0.14% ESA impact rate).

Recommendation: 2024 Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Commercial Fishery

Season:	9:00 AM to 9:00 PM Monday May 20	(12 hours)
Area:	Zones 1-5	
Sanctuaries:	Grays River, Elochoman-B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, Lewis-B, Sandy, and Washougal.	
Gear:	Drift tangle nets only. 4¼-inch maximum mesh size restriction. Single-wall multi-filament net only. Monofilament tangle nets are not allowed. Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms. Net length can increase from 150 to 175 fathoms for nets constructed with a steelhead excluder panel, weedlines, or droppers.	
	An optional use of a steelhead excluder panel of mesh may be hung between the corkline and the 4¼-inch maximum mesh size tangle net. The excluder panel web must be a minimum mesh size of 12-inch stretched measure when taut under hand tension. Monofilament mesh is allowed for the excluder panel only. The excluder panel must be a minimum of five feet in depth and	

must not exceed ten feet in depth as measured from the corkline to the upper margin of the tangle net mesh as the net hangs naturally from a taut corkline. Weedlines or droppers (bobber type) may be used in place of the steelhead excluder panel. A weedline-type excluder means the net is suspended below the corkline by lines of no less than five feet in length between the corkline and the upper margin of the tangle net. A dropper-type excluder means the entire net is suspended below the surface of the water by lines of no less than five feet in length extending from individual surface floats to a submersed corkline. The corkline cannot be capable of floating the net in its entirety (including the leadline) independent of the attached floats. Weedlines or droppers must extend a minimum of five feet above the 4¼-inch maximum mesh size tangle net. Tangle nets constructed with a steelhead excluder panel, weedlines, or droppers must have two red corks at each end of the net, as well as the red corks as required below.

Mesh size is determined by placing three consecutive meshes under hand tension, and the measurement is taken from the inside of one vertical knot to the inside of the opposite vertical knot of the center mesh. Hand tension means sufficient linear tension to draw opposing knots of meshes into contact.

There are no restrictions on the use of slackers or stringers to slacken the net vertically. There are no restrictions on the hang ratio. The hang ratio is used to horizontally add slack to the net and is determined by the length of the web per length of the corkline.

Nets not specifically authorized for use in these areas may be onboard a vessel if properly stored. A properly stored net is defined as a net on a drum that is fully covered by a tarp (canvas or plastic) and bound with a minimum of ten revolutions of rope with a diameter of 3/8 (0.375) inches or greater.

**Allowable
Sales:**

Adipose fin-clipped (hatchery) Chinook salmon and shad. A maximum of twenty-five (25) adult adipose fin-clipped Chinook may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel. The first twenty-five (25) adult hatchery fish must be retained and no additional drifts may be conducted once the adult Chinook limit has been retained. Jacks (Chinook less than 24-inches in total length) do not count against the adult landing limit.

Regulations: Soak times, defined as the time elapsed from when the first of the web is deployed into the water until the web is fully retrieved from the water, must not exceed 45 minutes. Red corks are required at 25 fathom intervals, and red corks must be in contrast to the corks used in the remainder of the net.

Lighted Buoys: Nets that are fished at any time between official sunset and official sunrise must have lighted buoys on both ends of the net unless the net is attached to the boat. If the net is attached to the boat, then one lighted buoy on the opposite end of the net from the boat is required.

Recovery Box: Each boat will be required to have on board two operable recovery boxes or one box with two chambers. Each chamber of the recovery box(es) must include an operating water pumping system capable of delivering a minimum flow of 16 gallons per minute, not to exceed 20 gallons per minute of freshwater per chamber. Each box and chamber and associated pump shall be operating during any time that the net is being retrieved or picked. Each chamber of the recovery box must meet the following dimensions as measured from within the box: the inside length measurement must be at or within 39½ inches to 48 inches; the inside width measurements must be at or within 8 to 10 inches; and the inside height measurement must be at or within 14 to 16 inches. Each chamber of the recovery box must include a water inlet hole between ¾ inch and 1 inch in diameter, centered horizontally across the door or end wall of the chamber and 1¾ inches from the floor of the chamber. Each chamber of the recovery box must include a water outlet hole that is at least 1½ inches in diameter located on either the same or opposite end as the inlet. The center of the outlet hole must be located a minimum of 12 inches above the floor of the box or chamber. The fisher must demonstrate to WDFW and ODFW employees, fish and wildlife enforcement officers, or other peace officers, upon request, that the pumping system is delivering the proper volume of fresh river water into each chamber.

All sturgeon, non-adipose fin-clipped salmon, and steelhead must be released immediately to the river with care and with the least possible injury to the fish, or placed into an operating recovery box. Any salmonid that is bleeding or lethargic must be placed in the recovery box prior to being released. All fish placed in recovery boxes must be released to the river prior to landing or docking.

Additional Rules: **Observer program:** As a condition of fishing, owners or operators of commercial fishing vessels must cooperate with department observers or observers collecting data for the department. Additionally, cooperation with department personnel prior to a fishing period is expected.

Live Capture workshop: Only licensed Columbia River commercial fishers that have completed the required state-sponsored workshop concerning live capture commercial fishing techniques may participate in this fishery. At least one fisher on each boat must have live capture certification.

24-hour quick reporting required for Washington wholesale dealers, pursuant to WAC 220-352-315. Oregon buyers are required to submit fish receiving tickets electronically pursuant to OAR 635-006-0210. Electronic fish tickets must be submitted within 24 hours of closure of the fishing period, or within 24 hours of landing for fishing periods lasting more than 24 hours.

- Given the timing, short-notice, and potential for shad encounters in the proposed fishery, effort is expected to be relatively low.
- This fishery is expected to result in a kept catch of about 735 adult spring Chinook, including up to 678 upriver spring Chinook mortalities.

- Additional opportunity may be available if a sufficient balance within the commercial allocation remains after this period.
- Staff intends to conduct onboard observation of the fishery.
- Any steelhead encountered in this fishery would be classified as lower river Skamania stock. Based on observations in prior year fisheries during May, few steelhead are expected to be impacted in this fishery and aggregate impacts to wild lower river Skamania steelhead are expected to remain well within the 2.0% ESA limit for non-treaty fisheries.
- The proposed mainstem fishery overlaps commercial Select Area periods in all sites, therefore staff recommends the following action:

Recommendation: 2024 Select Area Commercial Fisheries

Retention and sales of **non**-adipose fin-clipped Chinook from ongoing Select Area commercial fisheries is prohibited from 9:00 AM Monday May 20 through 12:00 PM (noon) Tuesday May 21.

Catch Balance and ESA

- Catches in all non-treaty fisheries combined are projected to remain within the allowable *U.S. vs. OR* catch balance sharing and ESA impact rate (1.054% as compared to the allowed 1.6%) on the upriver spring Chinook run.

Expected upriver spring Chinook mortalities in 2024 non-treaty fisheries.							
Fishery	Upriver Mortalities (k+r)			Current Allocation	Percent of Allocation	Projected Balance	Projected ESA Impact**
	through May 10	Recommendation	Total Expected				
Downstream of BON*	2,479	2,073	4,563	5,393	85%	830	0.433%
BON - OR/WA border	1,459	na	1,459	770	189%	-689	0.133%
Snake River (WA waters)	814	na	814	680	120%	-134	0.085%
Wanapum Band (upper Columbia)	0	na	24	24	100%	0	0.168%
<i>Recreational & NT tribal subtotal</i>	<i>4,752</i>		<i>6,860</i>	<i>6,867</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>0.734%</i>
Select Areas	153	na	220	220	100%	0	0.180%
Mainstem	0	678	678	678	100%	0	0.140%
<i>Commercial subtotal</i>	<i>153</i>		<i>898</i>	<i>898</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0.320%</i>
<i>Unallocated subtotal**</i>				<i>1,291</i>		<i>1,291</i>	<i>0.216%</i>
TOTAL	4,905		7,758	9,056	86%	1,298	1.054%

* Includes non-target release mortalities during steelhead season.
 ** Unallocated balance between OR/WA Commission guidance (non-concurrence) resulting from 10% difference between recreational/commercial (906 fish) and 5% difference within recreational (385 fish).

- Impacts to other listed stocks, including steelhead, are expected to remain below ESA-impact limitations. Pre-season expectations were outlined in the 2024 Spring/Summer Joint Staff Report in the 2024 Winter, Spring, and Summer Season Expectations section.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- No additional Compact/Joint State hearings are scheduled at this time. Joint staff will monitor fisheries and recommend additional hearings as needed.