

COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION
JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 3
September 2, 2026

<i>Fisheries under consideration:</i> 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 2026 Fall Report was distributed on July 10, 2026. 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 outflow at Bonneville Dam is 101.7 kcfs compared to a five-year average of 121.2 kcfs for these days. The summer spill program at Bonneville Dam ended on September 1.
- The recent five-day average water temperature at the Bonneville Dam forebay is 70.7°F compared to a five-year average of 70.5°F.
- The five-day average visibility at Bonneville Dam is 7 feet.

STOCK STATUS

- Run size forecasts for 2026 and stock descriptions for salmon and steelhead encountered in fall-season fisheries were presented in Fall Fact Sheet #1a.

Fall Chinook

- Through September 1, a total of 178,881 adult-sized fall Chinook have passed Bonneville Dam. Based on recent 10-year average run timing, the adult fall chinook run would be expected to reach 50% complete September 8. The adult count is comprised of 98,112 bright stock fish, 52,249 adult sized tule stock fish and 28,520 jack aged tules that are just over the adult size limit. The jack count at Bonneville totals 54,257. The ad-clip rate for adult chinook is 65.0% which is higher than average.
- Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery is currently collecting broodstock. Through August 31, hatchery staff estimate that 11,765 adult and jack fish have returned to the hatchery.
- The McNary Dam count of adult fall chinook totals 15,305 through September 1. Based on 10-year average run timing, the run would be expected to reach 50% complete on September 18.
- The adult fall chinook count at Lower Granite dam through September 1 is 5,976. Based on 10-year average run timing, the run would be expected to reach 50% complete on September 16.

Upriver Summer Steelhead

- Passage of summer steelhead at Bonneville Dam during July 1 – September 1 totals 45,522 A- and B-Index fish (including 16,265 unclipped fish).

- From July 1 through August 26, CRITFC staff have sampled 334 total A and B-Index steelhead at Bonneville Dam including 323 A-Index fish (153 unclipped) and 11 B-Index fish (5 unclipped). Stock composition is generally tracking as expected for this point in the run.

Coho

- Coho counts at Bonneville Dam through September 1 total 18,422 adult early-stock coho (defined as coho passing prior to October 1). Passage of upriver early-stock coho is typically about 18% complete by September 1 based on 10-year average run timing. The coho jack count totals 2,123. The Ad-clip rate for coho to date is 11.7% which is lower than average.

In-Season Run Size Updates

- Preseason abundance estimates for upriver-origin fall Chinook stocks (BPH, PUB, and URB) and upriver summer steelhead (A- and B-Index) are updated in-season by the *U.S. v. Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
- TAC met on August 31 to review and discuss information relative to the upriver A-/B-Index summer steelhead and upriver fall Chinook returns including Bonneville Dam passage information and outputs from passage projection models. In addition to reviewing run size information, TAC also discussed ongoing fall fisheries.
- Based on the passage to date and assumptions of passage timing, TAC updated the expected A-Index steelhead abundance at Bonneville Dam to 57,500 total fish including 18,100 unclipped fish. It is too early to provide an in-season assessment of the B-Index return.
- It is too early in the upriver fall Chinook return to provide an updated abundance expectation.
- TAC will continue to monitor and assess the upriver A-/B-Index summer steelhead, upriver fall Chinook, and upriver coho returns during the fall management period and will provide updates as appropriate. TAC is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, September 8.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Based on the 2017-2027 *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement the treaty fishery has a 30% harvest rate on the URB run based on the pre-season forecast. Additionally, based on the pre-season forecast for B-Index steelhead, the allowed treaty harvest rate is 20%. However, if the run comes in lower than forecast, the allowed harvest rates could range from 13% to 15%.
- There is also a 60,000 fall Chinook management goal at McNary Dam.
- The broodstock goal at Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery is 6,000 fish although in order to collect fish from throughout the run, more than 6,000 fish need to be collected at the hatchery.

2026 TREATY FALL FISHERIES

Treaty Mainstem Fall Management Period Commercial Fisheries

- The treaty tribes allowed fall season commercial sales of platform and hook and line fish on August 1 which was a continuation from sales from the summer management period. The tribes expect sales to run continuously through the end of the fall management period. The treaty platform and hook and line fisheries harvest only a small portion of the total allowed impacts in fall season fisheries. Most impacts occur in the fall season commercial gillnet fishery.

- During the fall season, some tribes may open fisheries in the area below Bonneville Dam consistent with tribal regulations and MOUs/MOAs between the states and tribes. Harvest downstream of Bonneville Dam is expected to be relatively low. Catch downstream of Bonneville is counted as part of the total tribal mainstem catch.
- The treaty tribes previously set three initial commercial gillnet openings for the fall management period and the third opening is currently in progress.
- The tribes use a spreadsheet model to project catches in the fall fisheries. The model also tracks catches to date. The model uses 3-year average set net counts as an index of expected fishing effort as well as recent average weekly harvest rates. The model will be adjusted for future openings to account for actual fishery performance and actual run sizes. The projected catches for weeks with commercial gillnet openings include the expected catches in the platform and hook and line fishery during those weeks. Due to the large expected remaining allowed catch after these openings, the model is sufficiently precautionary for early season fisheries.
- Fishing plans include using the standard Spring Creek Hatchery Sanctuary until such time as there is certainty that the broodstock needs will be met. These plans also include using an 8" minimum mesh size restriction to help control the harvest of B-Index steelhead.
- Catches to date along with modeled catches are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Projected 2026 Fall Season Treaty Harvest (Using preseason forecasts for all stocks)

2026 Treaty Indian Fall Season Fisheries (Catch to date plus Modeled catches)									
Week		Gillnet Fishery	Dates	Set Net Count	Total Adult Chinook	URB Chinook	Total Steelhead	B Steelhead	Coho
31-33	Preliminary	Platform/H&L	August 1-15	na	966	402	656	91	6
34	Preliminary	8/17	8/20	161	5,518	2,296	348	29	45
35	Preliminary	8/24	8/29	216	11,382	4,535	319	35	259
36	Projected	8/31	9/5	241	26,700	8,400	700	300	800
				Subtotal	44,566	15,633	2,023	455	1,110
37	Projected	9/7	9/11	320	38,300	11,700	1,000	480	1,080
38	Projected	9/14	9/18	310	32,300	10,500	1,440	790	1,270
				Total	115,166	37,833	4,463	1,725	3,460
				Allowed at Forecasted URB and B run sizes		81,264		8,020	
				Harvest Rate as of Sept 5		5.8%		1.1%	
				Remaining after Sept 5		65,631		7,565	
				Expected Harvest Rate by Sept 19		14.0%		4.3%	
				Remaining Available After Sept 19		43,431		6,295	

- With the modeled gillnet fisheries, the remaining Chinook and steelhead available after these planned gillnet openings is sufficient to provide a large buffer to address uncertainties in catch projections as well as available impacts for additional commercial gillnet fisheries which are expected to be set later.
- The four Columbia River treaty tribes have or will adopt gillnet regulations consistent with the following:

<i>2026 Fall Season Treaty Commercial Gillnet Fishery</i>		
Season	6:00 AM Monday September 7 to 6:00 PM Friday September 11 6:00 AM Monday September 14 to 6:00 PM Friday September 18	(4.5 days) (4.5 days)
Area	Zone 6	
Sanctuaries:	Standard river mouth and dam closed areas applicable to gillnet gear. The standard Spring Creek Hatchery sanctuary is also in effect.	
Gear:	Set and Drift Gill nets with an 8” minimum mesh size restriction	
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 may not be sold, but 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 and may be kept for subsistence purposes.	
Additional:	24-hour quick reporting is required for Washington wholesale dealers for all areas as provided in WAC 220-352-315, except that all landings from treaty fisheries described above must be reported within 24-hours of completing the fish ticket. Oregon buyers are required to electronically submit fish receiving tickets pursuant to OAR 635-006-0210.	

- The impacts associated with the proposed fisheries fit within the harvest limits for URB run sizes down to 165,000 and for B-Index steelhead run sizes down to 13,300. These run sizes are 61% of the URB pre-season forecast and 33% of the B-Index steelhead pre-season forecast.
- Catch and effort will be monitored to ensure the fishery remains within management limits. Total catch is determined through a tribal creel program. Fish ticket data are used to supplement to the creel program. Set net effort will be monitored by aerial surveys each week. Drift net effort is estimated through the creel monitoring program. Catches for the platform fishery are typically summed with and reported with gillnet catches for any week with a commercial gillnet opening. Any harvest downstream of Bonneville Dam is part of the total allowed mainstem catch for any species. Tributary harvest is managed under separate limits.
- No Compact action is needed for Zone 6 platform fisheries, fisheries downstream of Bonneville Dam or Yakama tributary fisheries.
- Treaty commercial fishing provides important economic benefits to tribal members and their families as well as to communities along the river and on reservations.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- The tribes request another Compact Hearing during the week of September 14 to present plans for additional fall season commercial gillnet fisheries.