

COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSON
JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 5
September 15, 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 77.9 kcfs compared to a five-year average of 88.3 kcfs for these days.
- The recent five-day average water temperature Bonneville Dam is 68.4°F compared to a five-year average of 68.6°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 14, a total of 348,091 adult-sized fall Chinook have passed Bonneville Dam. The adult count is comprised of 205,138 bright stock fish, 94,215 adult sized tule stock fish and 47,738 jack aged tules that are just over the adult size limit. The adult sized jack aged tule count is the largest on record. The jack count at Bonneville totals 105,570 which is also the largest on record. The ad-clip rate for adult chinook is 64.3% which is higher than average.
- Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery staff have indicated that they have collected sufficient fish to meet broodstock needs. Through September 14, hatchery staff estimate that approximately 65,000 adult and jack fish have returned to the hatchery. Spring Creek's 125th Anniversary Open House is this Saturday the 19th from 10am-2pm: <https://www.fws.gov/event/spring-creek-national-fish-hatcherys-125th-celebration-and-open-house>
- The McNary Dam count of adult fall chinook totals 50,900 through September 14. 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 14 is 15,949. 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 14 totals 52,232 A- and B-Index fish (including 17,280 unclipped fish). Both the total and unclipped cumulative count counts to date are the lowest A/B Index counts on record.

- From July 1 through August 26, CRITFC staff have sampled 383 total A and B-Index steelhead at Bonneville Dam including 352 A-Index fish (160 unclipped) and 31 B-Index fish (11 unclipped). The A/B proportion is generally tracking as expected for this point in the run.

Coho

- Coho counts at Bonneville Dam for this run year through September 14 total 48,059 adult early-stock coho (defined as coho passing prior to October 1). Passage of upriver early-stock coho is typically about 44% complete by September 14 based on 10-year average run timing. The coho jack count totals 5,193. The Ad-clip rate for coho to date is 18.8% 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 September 14 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 total expected steelhead return at Bonneville Dam to 61,500 fish which would be the lowest steelhead count since the dam was built in 1938. The total includes 53,400 total A-Index steelhead of which 17,500 are unclipped fish, and 8,100 total B-Index steelhead of which 2,900 are unclipped fish.
- Based on passage to date, assumptions of passage timing at Bonneville Dam, and harvest downstream of Bonneville Dam, TAC expects the total return of adult-aged fall Chinook to be 599,100 fish at the Columbia River mouth. The total includes 226,000 URB, 92,800 PUB, and 140,700 BPH fall Chinook.
- 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 Monday, September 21.

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 updated forecast. Additionally, based on the updated forecast for B-Index steelhead, the allowed treaty harvest rate is 3%.
- 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. No catch downstream of Bonneville has been documented this fall season.
- The treaty tribes previously set five initial commercial gillnet openings for the fall management period and the fifth 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.
- Fishing plans include reducing the Spring Creek Hatchery Sanctuary because the broodstock needs will be met. These plans also include continuing to use 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 updated forecasts for all stocks)

2026 Treaty Indian Fall Season Fisheries (Catch to date plus Modeled catches)									
Week		Fishery	Dates	Set Net Count	Total Adult Chinook	URB Chinook	Total Steelhead	B Steelhead	Coho
31-33	Preliminary	Platform/ H&L Gillnet	August 1- 16 Dates	na	966	402	656	91	6
34	Preliminary		8/17 8/20	161	5,555	2,311	464	38	66
35	Preliminary		8/24 8/29	216	13,896	5,537	319	35	270
36	Preliminary		8/31 9/5	241	23,418	7,801	714	78	918
37	Preliminary		9/7 9/11	290	22,181	7,389	667	46	1,074
38	Projected		9/14 9/18	328	26,900	9,700	1,100	230	2,400
				Subtotal	92,916	33,140	3,920	518	4,734
39	Projected		9/21 9/23	310	14,400	4,600	1,000	200	2,300
				Subtotal	107,316	37,740	4,920	718	7,034
		Late Fall Platforms			300	200	200	100	100
				Total	107,616	37,940	5,120	818	7,134
		Allowed at Projected URB and B run size				67,800		1,053	
		Harvest Rate as of Sept 19				14.7%		6.4%	
		Remaining after Sept 19				34,660		535	
		Expected Harvest Rate by Sept. 26 (plus late fall)				16.8%		10.1%	
		Remaining Available After Sept 26 (minus late fall)				29,860		235	

- CWT stock composition estimates for chinook for last week's opening are not available yet so the stock composition is based on the prior week. Any changes to chinook stock composition estimates are not expected to be significant enough to affect fishery decision making.
- With the modeled gillnet fisheries, the remaining Chinook and steelhead available after these planned gillnet openings is sufficient to provide a buffer to address uncertainties in catch projections and possible changes in run sizes.
- 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>	
Sanctuaries:	Beginning 6:00 AM on Wednesday September 16, the sanctuary at Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery will be reduced to a 150 feet radius around the hatchery ladder. All other regulations for fisheries in Zone 6 remain the same.

<i>2026 Fall Season Treaty Commercial Gillnet Fishery</i>	
Season	6:00 AM Monday September 21 to 6:00 PM Wednesday September 23 (2.5 days)
Area	Zone 6
Sanctuaries:	Standard river mouth and dam closed areas applicable to gillnet gear. The Spring Creek Hatchery sanctuary will be a 150 feet radius around the hatchery ladder.
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 6,300. These run sizes are 73% of the current URB forecast and 78% of the current B-Index steelhead 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 may request another Compact Hearing during the week of September 21 to present plans for additional fall season commercial gillnet fisheries if sufficient impacts remain available.