

**OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 3  
Columbia River Compact  
March 15, 2011**

***Fisheries under Consideration:*** Non-Indian Commercial Salmon

*Stock status and management guidelines for 2011 Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #2 (February 8, 2011).*

- Test fishing has occurred once a week since February 22 to index Chinook and steelhead abundance and stock ratios. All test fishing is conducted with tangle net gear, and has occurred in Zones 2-3.
- Recent test fishing results show an improvement in the Chinook stock composition, Chinook mark rate, and the Chinook to steelhead ratio.

2011 Spring Chinook Observation Summary All data preliminary																
						Chinook Data					Steelhead					
						Lower R.		UpRiver		Ttl Chin						
Fishery	Month	Date	Mesh	# of Drifts	Zones	Ad-Clip	No Clip	Ad-Clip	No Clip		Ttl Chin	Chin/ Drift	Chin/ Sthd	Sthd/ Drift	Total Sthd	Ad-Clip
Test	Feb	22	4.25	13	2-3	1		1	1	3	0.2	0.4	0.6	8	1	7
Test	Feb	27	4.25	12	2-3		1	4		5	0.4	0.7	0.6	7	4	3
Test	Mar	6	4.25	17	2-3	3	1	1	2	7	0.4	0.8	0.5	9	6	3
Test	Mar	13	4.25	17	2-3	13	2	4	1	20	1.2	2.9	0.4	7	4	3

- Although the Chinook stock ratio (lower to upriver) has improved to the desired target ratio (3:1) recommended by the Columbia River Commercial Advisory Group, the overall Chinook catch rate remains modest.

<b><i>Joint Staff Recommendation- Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Fishery</i></b>	
Season:	2:00 PM to 12:00 AM (midnight) Wednesday, March 16, 2011 (10 hours)
Area:	Zones 1-4, upstream to Kelley Point
Sanctuaries:	Grays River, Abernathy Cr, Elochoman-B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, Lewis-B
Gear:	Drift nets only. 4 ¼” maximum mesh size restriction. Multifilament web required for the 4-¼ inch mesh.  Nets not specifically authorized for use in this fishery may be onboard the 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  <b>Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms</b> , except tangle nets constructed with an optional steelhead excluding device (large mesh panel, weedlines, or droppers) hung between the corkline and the 4¼” maximum mesh size tangle net may extend to a maximum length of 175 fathoms. The excluder panel web must be a minimum mesh size of 12” 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" 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 required under miscellaneous regulations

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.

Allowable  
Sales:

Adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon, shad and white sturgeon.

Additional  
Regulations:

Standard regulations typically in place for spring Chinook commercial fisheries are in effect, including but not limited to: net length, use of recovery boxes, limited soak times, red corks, lighted buoys, tangle-net certification, etc.

**Soak times**, defined as the time elapsed from when the first of the gill net web is deployed into the water until the gill net 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 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(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 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 39 ½ 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 a 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 non-legal 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 fish 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.

**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, when notified by the observer of his or her intent to board the commercial vessel for observation and sampling during an open fishery.

**Live Capture workshop:** Licensed Columbia River commercial fishers that have completed the required state-sponsored workshop concerning live capture commercial fishing techniques. At least one fisher on each boat must have live capture certification.

24-hour **quick reporting** will be required for Washington wholesale dealers, per WAC 220-69-240.

- Although the test fishing results are mostly favorable, setting a fishery is not without complications:
  - Earlier this week, the mainstem Columbia was forecast to rise from about 235 kcfs to 360 kcfs. Current predictions are much more moderate with an expected peak flow of 255 kcfs by Thursday am.
  - Due to expected river conditions, there was concern about safety while monitoring if the fishery occurred at night. Having a few hours of daylight allows observers to get to the monitoring sites and vessels safely.
  - A daylight fishery may result in some sport-commercial conflicts, especially upstream of St. Helens.
  - Commercial opinion regarding whether to fish this week is mixed based on the modest Chinook catch rate and potential river conditions.
  - If the proposed fishery is adopted, staff recommends the Select Area fisheries in Youngs Bay (Thur 2-8 pm) and Blind Slough/Deep River (7 pm Wed-7 am Thu) may need to be re-scheduled to avoid conflict.
- Staff estimates Chinook kept catch would be less than 1,500 fish (1,000-1,200 likely range).
- Based on kept catch of 1,200 fish, the upriver Chinook catch (kept plus release mortalities) is projected to be 360 fish, or 19% of the 1,900 available prior to a run update.
- Wild winter Steelhead release mortalities are expected to be less than 50 fish (0.33% impact).
- An alternative would be to wait an additional week which may:
  - allow for river conditions improve,
  - allow more steelhead to migrate out of the mainstem and
  - improve Chinook per drift ratios

### **Future meetings**

The Joint Staff may announce a Compact hearing for Monday March 21 pending test fish results.