

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: SPRING FACT SHEET NO. 3
Columbia River Compact
April 16, 2012

<i>Fisheries under Consideration:</i>	Non-Indian Mainstem Commercial Salmon
--	--

Stock status and management guidelines for 2012 Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #1 (January 26, 2012).

Water Conditions

- The Willamette River crested at 16.2 feet on April 2, dropped to 9.1 feet on April 11, but is projected to rise to 11.8 feet by Saturday April 20. Visibility measured at Willamette Falls was 2.6 feet this morning.
- The Columbia River crested at 16.0 feet (Vancouver), dropped to 9.0 feet by April 16 and is projected to rise to 11.0 feet by Saturday April 21. Discharge at Bonneville Dam is currently at 303 kcfs (93 kcfs of which is spill) compared to a 5-year average of 215 kcfs for this date. Discharge in 2011 ranged from 303 kcfs on April 13 to 232 kcfs on April 30. Water temperature is currently 48.0°F compared a 5-year average of 47.2°F for this date. So far, monthly (Jan-Apr) average water temperatures have been colder than both the 5 and 10-year averages.

Stock Status

- Bonneville Dam passage of Chinook through April 15 totals 502 adults. Based on the 5-year average, passage at Bonneville averages 4% complete by this date, but has been late-timed for four of the past five years. The average 5-year 50% passage date is May 7, ranging from May 1 to May 12. It is still too early in the run to make any conclusions regarding run size; however, passage to date is less than expected.

Mainstem Commercial Fisheries

- The number of upriver spring Chinook (kept plus release mortalities) available to the mainstem commercial fishery prior to a run size update is 5,900 adult fish. An additional 9,600 Willamette spring Chinook are available to commercial fisheries for the 2012 spring season.
- Two commercial fishing periods have been conducted to date. Both periods occurred in Zones 1-5 (Buoy10-Beacon Rock) with tangle net gear (4 ¼" mesh) during daylight hours. Landings from the April 3 period totaled 2,551 Chinook (63% upriver) and an additional 3,628 Chinook (72% upriver) were landed on April 10 (6,179 total).
- Upriver spring Chinook mortalities total 4,366 fish, or 74% of the pre-update allocation for mainstem commercial fisheries. Impacts to wild winter steelhead total 0.46%.
- Test fishing has occurred once weekly since February 14 mainly in Zones 2-3. Test fishing has been conducted with both tangle net (4.25-inch mesh) and large mesh gear (8-inch gear). The most recent test fishery occurred on Sunday April 15 with tangle net gear. The Chinook catch rate increased substantially similar to mid-April (12th) of 2011.

2012 Spring Chinook Observation Summary_ All data preliminary															
Chinook Adult Data															
						Lower R.		UpRiver						Steelhead	
# of						Ad-	No	Ad-	No	Ttl	Chin/	Chin/	Sthd/	Total	Ad-
Fishery	Month	Date	Mesh	Drifts	Zones	Clip	Clip	Clip	Clip	Chin	Drift	Sthd	Drift	Sthd	Clip
Test	Mar	25	4.25	18	2	21	2	11	4	38	2.1	1.3	1.6	29	20
Test	Apr	1	4.25	16	2	25	3	24	2	55	3.4	4.6	0.8	12	8
FullFleet	Apr	3	4.25	99	1-5	82	14	93	15	213	2.2	5.2	0.4	41	27
Test	Apr	8	4.25	17	2	23	2	31	6	62	3.6	3.4	1.1	18	15
FullFleet	Apr	10	4.25	85	1-5	112	20	141	36	327	3.8	5.0	0.8	65	49
Test	Apr	15	4.25	18	2	63	10	128	11	218	12.1	13.6	0.9	16	14

- Based on the remaining pre-update upriver commercial quota (~1,550), expected mark rates, and upriver Chinook stock proportions, staff is estimating about 1,900 total Chinook remain available for commercial harvest.
- With Chinook abundance increasing, options for developing a fishing period to allow access to the remaining harvestable fish are limited.
- Staff has considered two potential options for the non-treaty commercial fishery prior to a run update.
 - Wait until post-update: The most conservative approach is to not recommend any additional fishing prior to the run-update given passage to date. The balance of upriver Chinook could be accessed later (prior to the run-update) or carried over to the post-update period.
 - Landing limit: A second option is to implement landing limits on a per vessel basis. This concept was implemented in April 2011 to allow the mainstem commercial fishery to access the pre-update balance. All other regulations typically in place for spring season fisheries would remain in place (recovery boxes, drift times, etc.). Landing limits would be based on the remaining balance (all stocks) divided by the expected number of participating vessels. The biggest challenge for this approach is determining the number of vessels expected to participate.
- If additional fishing time is considered instead of waiting until post run update, staff recommends a landing limit of no more than 9 adipose fin-clipped Chinook per vessel. The expected kept catch is about 1,600 Chinook including 1,440 upriver fish (kept and release mortalities) which represents 24% of the 5,900 upriver Chinook allowed pre-update and 24% of the 0.444% impact allowed pre-update. Combined with the commercial catch to date, the mainstem commercial fishery would be at 98% of the pre-update upriver spring Chinook allocation if a nine fish landing limit fishery was adopted.
- If a landing-limit fishery were to be considered, the following season structure is provided.

<i>Joint Staff Option- Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Fishery</i>	
Season:	8:00 AM –2:00 PM Tuesday April 17, 2012 (6 hours)
Gear:	Drift nets only. 4¼” maximum mesh size restriction. 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. Nets not specifically authorized for use in this fishery may be onboard the vessel if properly stored.

Area:	Zones 1-5
Sanctuaries:	Grays River, Elochoman-B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, Lewis-B, Sandy and Washougal.
Allowable Sales:	<p>Adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon, shad and white sturgeon (43-54 inch fork length).</p> <p>A maximum of 9 adipose fin clipped Chinook may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel. The first 9 adult hatchery fish must be retained and no additional drifts may be conducted once the Chinook limit has been retained. Adipose fin- clipped jack salmon (less than 24 inches) may be sold and do not count against the adult salmon landing limit.</p> <p>A maximum of 6 white sturgeon may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel during each calendar week (Sunday through Saturday) that the fishery is open.</p>
Additional Rules:	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p> <p>Recovery Box: Each boat will be required to have on board two operable recovery boxes or one box with two chambers that meet the flow and size requirements standard for the winter/spring season. Each box and chamber and associated pump shall be operating during any time that the net is being retrieved or picked. 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.</p> <p>Observer program: As a condition of fishing, owners or operators of commercial fishing vessels <u>must cooperate</u> 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>24-hour quick reporting required for Washington wholesale dealers, per WAC 220-69-240.</p>

- A balance of 423 fish of the 480 white sturgeon allocated to winter/spring commercial fisheries remain available. Sturgeon harvest is expected to be less than 25 fish.

Preliminary Summary of 2012 Non-Indian Upriver Chinook Catch

Fishery	UR Catch (kept + rel mort)	% of Allowable CB	Upriver Impact %	% of Allowable Impact
L. Col. R. Sport (Feb)	20	0.16%	0.001%	0.15%
L. Col. R. Sport (Mar)	1,072	8.46%	0.040%	6.10%
L. Col. R. Sport (April 1-8)	453	3.58%	0.017%	2.58%
<i>L. Col R. Sport (April 9- 13, proj.)</i>	363	2.87%	0.013%	2.03%
<i>L. Col R. Sport (April 14-22 proj.)</i>	1,946	15.36%	0.072%	10.85%
L. Col. R. Sport Cum Total	3,854	30.43%	0.143%	21.70%
Mainstem Commercial (April 3)	1,650	27.90%	0.089%	19.95%
Mainstem Commercial (April 10)	2,716	45.92%	0.151%	33.93%
Mainstem Commercial Cum Total	4,366	73.82%	0.240%	53.88%
Select Area Commercial and Above Bonneville Sport (pre-update allowed)	3,414	100%	0.370%	100%
Actual and Projected Season Totals	11,634	52.90%	0.752%	51.02%
Allowable Pre-Update	21,994		1.474%	
Remaining	10,360		0.722%	

- A final upriver run size of 141,000 is required to remain within catch balance and impact limitations for the completed mainstem commercial and ongoing recreational fisheries downstream of Bonneville Dam and pre-update allocations for Select Area commercial and above Bonneville recreational fisheries.

Select Area Commercial

- All Select Area fisheries (except Tongue Point/South Channel) are scheduled to open Thursday April 19, including a six hour (6 PM-midnight) period in Youngs Bay.
- In 2011, a nearly identical period resulted in 35% of the Select Area impacts being used and subsequent periods in multiple sites being rescinded and/or modified.
- Based on the apparent late run timing of this year's upriver run, staff is recommending the Youngs Bay fishing period scheduled for Thursday April 19, be modified to minimize the potential for upriver impacts.

Oregon Staff Recommendation – Youngs Bay Commercial Fishery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oregon Staff is recommending that the Select Area commercial fishing period scheduled for Thursday April 19 from 6 PM to midnight be revised to 4-9 PM.

- The proposed modification will focus the fishing period on the ebb and low water timeframe rather than the flood tide.

Future Meetings

- A Joint State hearing is scheduled for 1 PM Thursday April 19.