

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 6 (Revised)
Columbia River Compact
March 26, 2012

<i>Fisheries under Consideration:</i> Non-Indian Mainstem Commercial Salmon
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Stock status and management guidelines for 2012 Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #1 (January 26, 2012).

- Adult Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam through March 23 totals 30 fish. Based on the preseason forecast and 5-year average timing, about 155 fish would be expected at Bonneville Dam by March 23.
- Winter steelhead abundance typically peaks in mid-March, then declines as the fish move into the tributaries. Passage at Bonneville Dam and Willamette Falls indicates run timing and size is normal.
- 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 fish. An additional 9,600 Willamette spring Chinook are available to commercial fisheries for the 2012 spring season.
- 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 March 25 with tangle net gear (18 drifts).
- On March 25, salmonid handle was 38 Chinook and 29 steelhead. Steelhead per drift was 1.6 compared to last week's ratio of 2.2 steelhead/drift, indicating steelhead abundance has decreased since last week.

2012 Spring Chinook Observation Summary_ All data preliminary															
						Chinook Adult Data								Steelhead	
						Lower R.		UpRiver							
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	14-15	4.25	11	2-3					0	0.0	0.0	1.4	15	5
Test	Feb	14-15	8	5	2-3					0	0.0	0.0	0.4	2	
Test	Feb	21	4.25	4	2-3					0	0.0	0.0	0.5	2	1
Test	Feb	21	8	12	2-3	1				1	0.1		0.0	0	
Test	Feb	26	4.25	4	2-3			1		1	0.3	0.1	2.3	9	3
Test	Feb	26	8	12	2-3	2		2		4	0.3	2.0	0.2	2	
Test	Mar	4	4.25	8	2-3			1		1	0.1	0.1	1.0	8	2
Test	Mar	4	8	8	2-3	2	1	1		4	0.5	4.0	0.1	1	1
Test	Mar	11	4.25	12	1-3			4		4	0.3	0.2	2.2	26	16
Test	Mar	11	8	5	1-3	1		2		4	0.8	2.0	0.4	2	2
Test	Mar	18	4.25	18	2-3	11	3	8	3	25	1.4	0.6	2.2	40	25
Test	Mar	18	8	2	2-3	3				3	1.5	0	0	0	0
Test	Mar	25	4.25	18	2-3	21	2	11	4	38	2.1	1.3	1.6	29	20

- Based on the recent decline in the number of steelhead encountered, the increasing number of Chinook per drift, a reasonable Chinook mark rate, and the fact that March 27 is closed to sport angling, staff is presenting two options for a commercial fishing period.

Joint Staff Options- Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Fishery	
Option 1:	10:00 AM to 6:00 PM Tuesday March 27, 2012 (8 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.
Option 2:	10:00 AM to 6:00 PM Tuesday March 27, 2012 (8 hours)
Gear:	Drift nets only. 8-inch minimum mesh size restriction. Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms. Nets not specifically authorized for use in this fishery may be onboard the vessel if properly stored.
Following regulations would apply to both options:	
Area:	Zones 1-5
Sanctuaries:	Grays River, Elochoman-B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, Lewis-B, Sandy and Washougal as applicable.
Allowable Sales:	Adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon, shad and white sturgeon (43-54 inch fork length). 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>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>	
Additional Rules:	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.

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, per WAC 220-69-240.

- Catch estimate for Option 1 is based on the following assumptions: 160 boats, 2.5 Chinook/drift, 84% overall Chinook mark rate and 75% upriver stock. The expected kept catch is 2,000 Chinook (1,700-2,300 range). A Chinook catch of 2,000 fish represents 26% of the allowed 5,900 upriver Chinook allowed pre-update.
- Option 2 (8-inch gear) kept catch estimates are based on the same assumptions, but with a slightly higher expectation for Chinook per drift. Catch is expected to be 2,300 Chinook (2,000-2,700 range). A Chinook catch of 2,300 fish represents 58% of the allowed 0.444% upriver impact (3,150 upriver Chinook using large mesh gear) allowed pre-update.
- Wild winter steelhead release mortalities are expected to be less than 72 fish (0.47% impact) for Option 1 and 8 fish (0.06 % impact) for Option 2. Impact limit for wild winter steelhead is 2.00%.
- A balance of 438 fish, or 91% of the 480 white sturgeon allocated to winter/spring commercial fisheries remain available. Sturgeon harvest is expected to be 50-100 fish.
- If catch is less than expected and all other variables are within expectations, staff may consider recommending a second fishing period for Thursday March 29.

Future Meetings

- Staff is recommending a Compact hearing for 1 PM Monday April 2. Test fishing is scheduled for Sunday April 1.
- A Joint State hearing is scheduled for 10 AM Thursday April 5 to review the ongoing sport fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam.