

**OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 16
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
October 16, 2019**

<i>Fisheries under consideration:</i>	Non-treaty mainstem commercial salmon Non-treaty recreational Coho Recreational sturgeon above Wauna powerlines
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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 on-line. The 2019 Fall Report was distributed on July 22, 2019. Links to the on-line reports are:

*<https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/management/columbia-river/reports> or
<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/jsmreports.asp>.*

STOCK STATUS

Salmon/Steelhead

- The *U.S. vs Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met October 15, 2019 to review and discuss the upriver A/B-Index summer steelhead return and the upriver fall Chinook return.
 - TAC revised the 2019 aggregate A-/B-Index summer steelhead return expectation to 72,000 fish based on Bonneville Dam passage to date and additional passage expected to occur during the remainder of this month; the passage expectation includes 34,500 unclipped (natural- and hatchery-origin) fish. TAC expects 65,700 of these fish to be A-Index (32,400 unclipped) and 6,300 to be B-Index (2,100 unclipped).
 - TAC expects the Columbia River mouth return of fall Chinook to total 367,600 adult fish (105% of preseason forecast). This total includes 181,800 URBs, 71,800 PUBs, and 33,800 BPH.
 - This was TAC’s final scheduled in-season run update of the year.
- Run year counts for early-stock Coho (fish passing prior to October 1) at Bonneville Dam totaled 54,228 fish. Total adult passage for the 2019 run year is estimated to be 69,900-74,900, based on 10-year average timing.
- *U.S. vs Oregon* management goal of 60,000 fish over McNary Dam has been met.
- Run size forecasts and stock descriptions for salmon and steelhead were presented in the 2019 Fall Fact Sheet #1.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Salmon/Steelhead

- The 2018-2027 *U.S. vs Oregon* Management Agreement (MA) provides specific fishery management guidelines for fall Chinook, summer steelhead, and Coho.
 - The allowable impact rate for combined treaty Indian and non-treaty Chinook fisheries is 31.25% of the URB run based on preseason forecasts (URB stock is the surrogate for SRW

Chinook). This impact limit is allocated 23% for treaty Indian fisheries and 8.25% for non-treaty fisheries.

- The escapement goal at Spring Creek Hatchery is 7,000 adult fall Chinook (BPH stock).
- The management goal for adult fall Chinook at McNary Dam is 60,000 fish.
- The allowable non-treaty impact rates for wild summer steelhead (A-Index and B-Index) during fall fisheries is 2% each.
- Based on the pre-season forecast, treaty Indian impacts are limited to 13% of the total B-Index steelhead.
- The goal for upriver Coho passage at Bonneville Dam is 50% of the ocean abundance.
- The ESA impact limit to LCR tule fall Chinook is 38% in 2019 given the pre-season forecast. Harvest of LRH stock is the surrogate for LCR Chinook. This exploitation rate (ER) limit includes impacts in ocean and Columbia River fisheries combined.
- In 2019, fishery impacts to LCN Coho are limited to a 23% ER for combined ocean and Columbia River fisheries.

2019 NON-TREATY FALL FISHERIES

- Washington and Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission policies/regulations provide guidance for both preseason planning and in-season management of non-treaty fall fisheries. Commission guidance allocates fall Chinook ESA impacts of no more than 70% recreational and no less than 30% commercial of the most constraining stock (Upriver Bright for 2019).
 - Mainstem recreational fisheries are expected to use 5.64% of their 5.77% URB impacts (98% of their maximum allocation). Commercial fisheries are projected to use 2.33% of their 2.47% URB impacts (94% of their minimum allocation). Sport and commercial URB impacts total 7.97% (8.25% allowed).
 - Of the available URB impacts, 68% have been used in recreational fisheries, 28% is expected to be used in commercial fisheries, and <4% is unused.
- Washington policy allows the use of 6-inch gillnets directed at Coho; Oregon rules restrict the use of gillnets to Zones 4-5; however, the adaptive management provision provides reconsideration under certain circumstances, such as lower catch/economic expectations to the commercial salmon fishing industry.

Mainstem Commercial Fall Salmon Fisheries

- Preseason plans for the commercial fishery included an August (Early Fall) Chinook fishery in Zones 4-5, Select Area fisheries, a Coho tangle net fishery to begin in late September/October in Zones 1-3, and if sufficient URBs were available, a Chinook fishery in late September/October in Zones 4-5.
- The August commercial season consisted of four fishing periods during August 14-27 in Zones 4-5. Gear was restricted to 9-inch minimum mesh. Weekly sturgeon landing limits were in place throughout the season (7/vessel/week). Catch included 6,462 Chinook, 509 white sturgeon, and 206 Coho. Deliveries ranged from 37-63 per period.
- Preliminary landings from Select Area fisheries through October 12 include 3,369 Chinook, 212 white sturgeon, and 17,539 Coho.

- The Coho tangle net fishery has been open for six (Sept. 30 & Oct. 2, 7, 9, 11, 14) of the seven scheduled periods. Landings include 1,790 hatchery Coho and 622 Chinook. The Coho catch has been well below expectations.
- The catch rate in the Zone 4-5 large-mesh gillnet opener on October 8 was substantially higher than expected with 1,694 Chinook landed (1,230 URB). As a result, the final three days of large mesh gillnet fishing through October 16 were rescinded.
- The following table summarizes total Chinook and URB mortalities in fall 2019 non-treaty fisheries.

Projected fall Chinook mortalities (kept and release mortalities) in 2019 non-treaty fisheries.				
	Total Chinook	URB	URB %	SRW/URB Impact
Recreational (actual and planned)	27,970	10,250	68.3%	5.64%
August Zone 4-5 (actual)	6,360	2,500		
Late Fall Zone 4-5 (Oct 8 actual)	1,690	1,230		
Select Area (full season)	3,400	80		
Coho tangle net (full season)	670	420		
Commercial Sum	12,120	4,230	28.2%	2.33%
Non-treaty Sum	40,090	14,480	96.5%	7.97%
Non-treaty allowed at 181.8K URB		15,000		
Balance		520	3.5%	

- About 30,500 hatchery Coho were reserved for the tangle net fishery, but catches have been much lower than expected and have been declining through six of the seven planned openings.
 - Several factors have contributed to lower catch rates, including lower than expected Coho abundance, clear water making multi-filament gear visible to the fish, and limited dark hours within the fishing periods.
- Given the low catch rates, room for additional days and hours per day is available for tangle net fishing.

<i>Recommendation: 2019 Non-Treaty Coho Tangle Net Commercial Fishery</i>		
Season:	5:00 AM to 7:00 PM Friday, October 18	(14 hours)
	5:00 AM to 7:00 PM Monday, October 21	(14 hours)
	5:00 AM to 7:00 PM Wednesday, October 23	(14 hours)
	5:00 AM to 7:00 PM Friday, October 25	(14 hours)
Area:	Zones 1-3. Upper deadline defined as a straight line projected from the Warrior Rock Lighthouse on the Oregon shore easterly through the green navigation Buoy #1 and continuing to the Washington shore	
Sanctuaries:	Elokomin-A, Cowlitz River, Kalama-A and Lewis-A	

Gear: Drift nets only. Maximum mesh size is 3-3/4 inches. Unslackened, single-wall, multi-filament floater nets only. Monofilament nets are not allowed. Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms. A red cork must be placed on the corkline every 25 fathoms as measured from the first mesh of the net. Red corks at 25-fathom intervals must be in color contrast to the corks used in the remainder of the net. There are no restrictions on the hang ratio. The hang ratio is used to horizontally add slack to the net. The hang ratio is determined by the length of the web per length of the corkline. The use of slackers or stringers to slacken the net vertically is prohibited. Rip lines are allowed providing they do not vertically slacken the net.

Allowable Sales: Adipose fin-clipped Coho salmon; Chinook salmon, and Pink salmon. Sturgeon and Chum salmon may not be possessed or sold.

Regulations: Regulations typically in place for mark-selective commercial fisheries are in effect, including but not limited to: net length, use of recovery boxes, limited soak times, red corks, 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 30 minutes.

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 fish must be released immediately unharmed to the river or placed into an operating recovery box. All non-legal salmon and all steelhead that are bleeding, lethargic or appear lifeless 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.

Measuring mesh size: Mesh size is determined by placing three consecutive meshes under hand tension and the measurement is taken from the inside of one knot to the outside of the opposite knot of the center mesh. Hand tension means sufficient linear tension to draw opposing knots of meshes into contact

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.

Additional Rules:

Multiple net rule in effect: Which means 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.

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

24-hour quick reporting required is for Washington wholesale dealers, per WAC 220-352-315.

Oregon buyers are required to electronically submit fish receiving tickets pursuant to OAR 635-006-0210. Electronic fish tickets must be submitted within 24 hours of closure of the fishing period, or within 24 hours of landing for fishing periods lasting longer than 24 hours.

- Effort and catches are expected to remain at the levels observed in the past week of this fishery. Landings are expected to include 500 Coho and less than 100 Chinook.
- Steelhead encounters are expected to be low as over 99% of the aggregate run and 97% of the B-Index component has typically passed Bonneville Dam by the start of the proposed fishery.
- An alternative approach is to utilize the adaptive management provision from Oregon rules to allow the use of 6-inch gill nets (with regulations described below) for the proposed fishing periods on October 21, 23, and 25.
 - Given current water clarity, the commercial fishing industry has expressed interest in this approach to allow for use of mono-filament gear which should improve catch rates.
- Total effort and landings of Coho would be expected to increase under this scenario; however, impacts to LCN Coho are expected to be <0.5% higher than the recommended tangle net fishery.
- Due to an expected increase in effort, and the higher release mortality rate, impacts to wild steelhead would be higher but well within allowable limits.
- Due to low abundance of Chinook in Zones 1-3, impacts to URB/SRW and LRH Chinook are expected to be minimal for either option.

Mainstem Recreational Coho Fisheries

- The preseason plan was to remain open for Coho throughout the fall season, and increase the daily limit from one to two fish when Chinook retention closed.
- Recreational fisheries for salmon and steelhead, excluding Buoy 10, were closed effective September 26 due the recreational allocation of URB impacts being exceeded, and the poor returns of steelhead. Fisheries below Bonneville Dam are scheduled to re-open November 1 for winter steelhead and hatchery Coho.
- The majority of late Coho return to Washington tributaries below Bonneville Dam, and to the Klickitat River above Bonneville Dam.

- Although commercial fisheries have not reached their minimum URB allocation, re-opening recreational Coho fisheries through the remainder of October below Bonneville Dam and in the Bonneville Pool through the end of the year is projected to result in limited additional mortalities (78 and 21 URBs, respectively). This would result in a projected impact use of 0.05% URB.

<i>For Consideration: 2019 Mainstem Recreational Fishery Tongue/Rocky Point upstream to Bonneville Dam</i>
Effective Friday, October 18, through Thursday, October 31, angling for and retention of hatchery Coho salmon is permitted in the mainstem Columbia River from the Tongue/Rocky Point line upstream to Bonneville Dam. The daily bag limit is two adult hatchery Coho. Release all steelhead and all salmon except hatchery Coho. All other permanent regulations remain in effect.

<i>For Consideration: 2019 Mainstem Recreational Fishery Bonneville Pool</i>
Effective Friday, October 18, through October 31, angling for and retention of Coho salmon is permitted in the mainstem Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to The Dalles Dam. The daily limit is two adult Coho. All Coho (adults and jacks) retained downstream of the Hood River Bridge must be hatchery fish. Release steelhead and all salmon except Coho. All other permanent regulations remain in effect.

ESA Impact Summary for Non-Treaty Fisheries

- Including all fisheries recommended or listed for consideration above, URB impacts are projected to be 8.02%.
- Lower Columbia River wild tule impacts are projected to not exceed 33.3% for combined in-river and ocean fisheries compared to the ESA limit of 38%.
- LCN Coho exploitation rate (ER) is not projected to exceed 17.0% (ocean and in-river fisheries), based on preseason forecasts and planned fisheries, compared to the allowable ESA limit of 23%.
- Steelhead impacts for combined non-treaty fisheries are projected at 0.5% and 0.9% for A- and B-Index wild steelhead, respectively, compared to the ESA limit of 2% allowed for each stock.

Recreational sturgeon above Wauna powerlines

- Earlier this year, staff provided updates on the LCR white sturgeon status to both Commissions and the Columbia River Advisor groups. Both Commissions supported implementing sturgeon retention fisheries in 2019 similar to what occurred the previous two years. Input from the Advisor groups generally supported implementing 2019 fisheries in a similar fashion to what occurred in 2018. For the area upstream of Wauna powerlines, there was some support for delaying the fishery until late-September or early-October.
- Based on the 2019 abundance forecast of 160,250 fish (38-54 inch FL), a total of 6,160 white sturgeon (44-60 inch FL) are available for harvest downstream of Bonneville Dam.

Estimated Abundance (38-54 inch FL)	160,250
Annual Harvest Guideline	6,160
Commercial (20%)	1,230
Recreational (80%)	4,930
Estuary (spring fishery)	2,960
Above Wauna (fall fishery)	1,230
Lower Willamette River	740

Above Wauna Powerlines (fall fishery)

- Generally, catch rates in this river section are better during the spring and late fall months. The 2019 retention season to date has consisted of three Saturdays (9/21, 9/28, and 10/12). For the first fishing period, catches were similar to expectations with approximately 525 fish kept from approximately 5,100 angler trips. Angler success decreased for the second period with approximately 115 fish kept from about 4,350 angler trips. During the third period, both angler effort and success decreased again with an estimated 29 fish kept from 1,544 angler trips. In addition, approximately 50 sturgeon were kept in the Cowlitz River.
- The combined kept catch for the Above Wauna retention fishery is estimated at 717 fish, leaving 513 fish available for harvest.
- Given the trend in catches, future angler success is not expected to improve but there still appears to be some interest in additional retention opportunity.
- Considering staff resources available to sample the fishery, the following fishery proposal provides some additional opportunity in 2019.

<i>Recommendation - 2019 Sturgeon Recreational Fishery for Above Wauna</i>	
Season:	Saturday October 19 and Thursday October 24 2 days
Area:	Mainstem Columbia River from the Wauna powerlines upstream to Bonneville Dam, including the Cowlitz River
Allowable Catch:	Up to 510 white sturgeon Legal size: 44-inch minimum and 50-inch maximum fork length (Fork length is measured in a straight line from the tip of the nose to the fork in the caudal fin (tail) with the fish laying on its side on a flat surface, with the tape measure/ruler positioned flat <u>under</u> the fish)
Additional Regulations:	Daily bag limit: One fish Annual bag limit: Two fish Retention of green sturgeon is prohibited

- The expected kept catch for the additional 2-day opener is approximately 50 fish, which would bring the total kept catch to 757 fish, or 62% of the guideline.
- Per permanent regulations, catch and release fishing is allowed all year, except angling for sturgeon is prohibited May 1 through August 31 from Bonneville Dam downstream to a line crossing the Columbia River at Navigation Marker 82 on the Oregon shore westerly to a boundary marker on the Washington shore upstream of Fir Point. In addition, anglers are reminded the use of barbless hooks is required when angling for sturgeon.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- The Joint Staff will continue to monitor stock status and fisheries, but do not anticipate additional Compact or Joint State hearings during the fall management period.