

COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION
JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 11
Columbia River Compact
October 1, 2020

Fisheries under Consideration: Treaty Commercial Gillnet

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 2020 Fall Report was distributed on July 22, 2020. 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>

RIVER CONDITIONS

- The recent five-day average Columbia River flow at Bonneville Dam as of September 30 is 108.2 kcfs which is slightly higher than the five-year average flow of 97.6 kcfs on this date.
- The recent 5-day average water temperature at Bonneville Dam is 64.9°F.
- The recent 5-day average river temperature measured at Elliot Point in the estuary by CMOP¹ (Center for Coastal Margin Observation and Prediction) is approximately 65°F.

STOCK STATUS

- Stock status information was presented in Fall Fact Sheet 1.

Fall Chinook

- Bonneville Dam passage through September 30 totals 360,199 adult and 51,956 jack fall Chinook. This is the sixth largest cumulative adult and jack counts to date in the last 10 years. The clip rate is approximately 56.8%, which is higher than average.
- Based on visual stock sampling on September 27, a total of 299,176 adult bright stock fish (comprised of the URB and PUB stocks) have passed Bonneville Dam. A total of 51,396 adult tules (primarily BPH stock) have also passed Bonneville Dam. Bright stock passage is typically 91% complete on September 30 based on 10-year average run timing but has been as much as 95% complete on this date within the last 10 years. Tule passage is typically 94% complete on September 30 based on 10-year average run timing, but has been as much as 98% complete in the last 10 years.
- McNary Dam passage through September 30 totals 152,328 adult chinook. The fall chinook run at McNary is typically 80% complete on this date based on 10-year average run timing.
- Spring Creek Hatchery reports that over 18,000 fish have entered the hatchery, but the male/female/jack composition is not available yet. Spawning began on September 14. USFWS have indicated they will collect sufficient fish to meet their broodstock needs and that they still support the reduced Spring Creek sanctuary.

¹ http://www.stccmop.org/datamart/observation_network

Upriver Summer Steelhead

- Upriver summer steelhead pass Bonneville Dam from April through October of each year. Fish passing during July through October are categorized as A-Index or B-Index based on fork length (A-Index: <78 cm, B-Index: ≥78 cm). Passage during July is primarily A-Index fish; B-Index passage normally begins around the end of August. B-Index steelhead primarily return to Snake River tributaries in Idaho, while A-Index steelhead return to tributaries throughout the Columbia and Snake river basins.
- Counts of steelhead at Bonneville Dam since July 1 total 103,840 fish, which is 49% of the recent 10-year average (79% of recent 5-year). It is the eighth lowest count to date in the last 10 years. Passage of the total run at Bonneville Dam (July–October) is typically 95% complete by September 30 (recent 10-year average). The count of unclipped steelhead since July 1 totals 40,811 fish which is the seventh lowest cumulative count to date in the last 10 years. The ad-clip rate is 60.7% which is slightly lower than average for this time period.

Coho

- For this season's return through September 30, a total of 91,649 adult and 19,616 jack coho have passed Bonneville Dam this run year. The adult count to date is the third highest in the last 10 years and the jack count to date is the highest on record. The early coho run at Bonneville is finished counting on September 30. The adult clip rate is 52% which is higher than average.

Run Size Updates

- TAC met on Monday, September 28 to review salmon and steelhead passage at Bonneville Dam and harvest in fall season fisheries. TAC updated the in-season projections for adult bright and tule fall Chinook returning to the Columbia River mouth. Projections for URB, PUB, and BPH stocks are now 284,000, 86,500, and 54,900, respectively (total of 425,400 upriver fish). Given the preseason forecasts for lower river stocks, the total fall Chinook return is now expected to include 503,500 adults (20% greater than the preseason forecast). Passage of bright and tule components are tracking several days earlier than recent-year averages.

TAC reviewed the in-season projection for A-Index and B-Index steelhead passage at Bonneville Dam. Given current information, TAC did not update the projection from last week. The expectation remains at 79,100 total A-Index fish (including 34,100 unclipped) which is 92% of preseason forecast, and 33,500 B-Index fish (7,900 unclipped) which is 349% of forecast. The A-Index projections are based on the recent 10-year average run timing while the B-Index passage projections assume the timing is five days earlier than the recent 10-year average. The aggregate A-/B-Index abundance is expected to total 112,600 fish.

TAC updated the projected return of early-stock coho (defined as those passing through September 30) to 90,000 adults. The pre-season forecast for coho returning to Bonneville Dam was 42,300 fish (33,880 early stock and 9,400 late stock coho).

TAC will continue to meet weekly throughout the fall management period and will provide further updates as information becomes available.

- If the final steelhead return matches the current TAC projections, the total A-Index return will be 42% of the recent 10-year average and the unclipped A-Index return will be 47% of the recent 10-year average. The total B-Index return would be 114% of the recent 10-year average and the unclipped B-Index return would be 99% of the recent 10-year average.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Salmon/Steelhead

- The 2018-2027 *U.S. v 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 fisheries is 45% of the URB run based on the preseason forecast (URB stock is the surrogate for SRW Chinook). This impact limit is allocated 30% for treaty Indian fisheries and 15% 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 passage at McNary Dam is 60,000 fish.
- Based on the updated forecast, treaty Indian impacts are limited to 15% of the total B-Index steelhead.
- The goal for upriver Coho passage at Bonneville Dam is 50% of the ocean abundance.
- Fisheries are managed based on preseason forecasts until in-season run size updates become available.

2020 TREATY FISHERIES

Fall Season Fisheries

- Treaty platform and hook and line fisheries have been open for both subsistence and commercial purposes since August 1.
- Table 1 below shows preliminary 2020 fall season treaty harvest through September 26 and projected catches for this week and next week. For current and future fisheries, the model assumes average effort and average catch rates for these weeks scaled to actual current catch rates.
- The model uses the TAC updated forecasts for URB chinook, B-Index steelhead, and coho.
- Chinook stock composition estimates are preliminary as CWT data are not finalized.

Table 1. Fall Chinook Harvest Model Output

2020 Treaty Indian Fall Season Fisheries									
Week		Gillnet Fishery	Dates	Set Net Count	Total Adult Chinook	URB Chinook	Total Steelhead	B Steelhead	Coho
31-34	Preliminary	Platform/H&L	August 1-22	na	836	405	630	70	66
35	Preliminary	8/24	8/27	409	7,188	2,195	416	64	178
36	Preliminary	8/31	9/4	489	25,252	13,865	782	161	1,426
37	Preliminary	9/7	9/11	504	24,253	11,002	1,197	424	2,141
38	Preliminary	9/14	9/18	529	23,561	15,580	1,967	876	3,196
39	Preliminary	9/21	9/25	496	11,881	7,856	1,869	1,098	4,238
40	Projected	9/28	10/1	420	6,700	5,200	1,840	1,300	5,100
				Subtotal	99,671	55,953	8,701	3,993	16,345
41	Projected	10/5	10/7	350	5,540	3,090	970	640	1,820
				Subtotal	105,511	59,043	9,671	4,633	18,165
		Late Fall Platforms			300	250	350	200	0
				Total	105,511	59,293	10,021	4,833	18,165
		Allowed at Projected URB and B run size					85,200	5,025	
		Harvest Rate as of Oct 3					19.7%	11.9%	
		Remaining after Oct 3					29,247	1,032	
		Expected Harvest Rate through end of season					20.8%	14.4%	
		Remaining Available at End of Season					25,907	192	

Note: projected catches for statistical weeks with gillnet fisheries include platform and hook and line catch for those entire weeks.

- The four Columbia River treaty tribes have adopted regulations consistent with the following:

2020 Treaty Indian Commercial Gillnet Fishery	
Seasons:	The scheduled gillnet fishery will be 6:00 AM October 5 through 6:00 PM October 7 (2.5 days)
Area:	Zone 6
Gear:	Set and Drift Gillnets with an 8-inch minimum mesh size.
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 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 may be kept for subsistence purposes.
Sanctuaries:	Standard sanctuaries applicable to gillnet gear. The Spring Creek Hatchery Sanctuary will be reduced to 150 feet around the hatchery ladder.
Additional:	24-hour quick reporting required for Washington buyers, pursuant to WAC 220-352-315 except that landings must be reported within 24-hours of completing the fish ticket.

- Fisheries will be monitored, and catches reported regularly. Fisheries will be modified as needed to keep harvest impacts within allowed limits for the treaty fall season fisheries.
- Aerial flights are ordinarily conducted each week to count set nets.
- There is no action needed for platform and hook and line fisheries, Yakama tributary fisheries or fisheries downstream of Bonneville Dam.
- Commercial fishing provides numerous economic benefits for tribal and non-tribal communities.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- The tribes do not expect to need additional Compact Hearings at this time.