

COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION
JOINT STAFF REPORT - WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 2
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
February 11, 2021

<i>Fisheries under consideration:</i>	Zone 6 treaty commercial fisheries
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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 most recent report is the 2021 Sturgeon/Smelt Report (January 14, 2021) available at:

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

The 2021 Winter/Spring/Summer Staff Report is scheduled to be distributed prior to the February 16 Compact hearing which will address Select Area commercial spring Chinook and treaty fisheries.

RIVER CONDITIONS

- As of February 11, Columbia River discharge at the John Day Dam is similar to the five year average for this time in January, but the current five day average water temperature of 40.2° F is warmer than the five year average of 39.5° F. The five day average outflow is 146.3 kcfs, which is less than the recent 5-year average of 184.0 kcfs.

STOCK STATUS

- Sturgeon stock status was discussed in Winter Fact Sheet 1b and in the Joint Staff Report.
- Winter steelhead counts at Bonneville Dam through February 9 total 767 including 358 unclipped fish. These are the lowest cumulative counts to date since complete winter season counts became available in the 2002-2003 run year.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Zone 6 Sturgeon

- The Sturgeon Management Task Force (SMTF), a joint state/tribal body, met on January 20, 2021 and recommended new harvest guidelines for 2021-2023 in The Dalles Pool (750 fish total guideline, 560 for treaty commercial and 190 for recreational retention) which the states and tribes have adopted based on the improved legal-size population estimate.
- The SMTF did not modify 2021 harvest guidelines for Bonneville (500 each for treaty and recreational) or John Day (210 for treaty and 105 for recreational) pools.
- There is no harvest guideline for the treaty subsistence catch of sturgeon, but these catches are accounted for and used in population assessments. Subsistence harvest typically occurs in association with fisheries targeting other species and is generally low. The 2020 subsistence harvest estimate is 295 fish for all three Zone 6 reservoirs combined.

2021 TREATY INDIAN WINTER FISHERIES

- A setline fishery occurs each January in all three Zone 6 pools under permanent regulations. This fishery generally has low effort and catch. This year’s catches were slightly below average in the Bonneville and John Day pools and above average in The Dalles Pool, but they were within past ranges.
- A commercial gillnet fishery was set from February 1 through February 6. Current catch estimates for the season are shown in the table below. These include both ticketed landings and direct to public sales.

Reservoir	January	Winter	Total	Guideline	Remaining	% of guideline
	Setline	Gillnet				
Bonneville	34	0	34	500	466	7%
The Dalles	130	393	523	560	37	93%
John Day	18	101	119	210	91	57%
Total	182	494	676			

- The Dalles Pool has approached its guideline for 2021 and will remain closed for commercial fishing. Based on the first week’s catch rates for the John Day pool along with expected effort, the tribes anticipate there is room for up to one additional 3-4 day fishery. If there are remaining available fish after the planned opening, then additional fishing time could be scheduled.
- Steelhead caught upstream of The Dalles Dam from November 1-June 30 are counted as part of the A/B-Index summer steelhead return. There are no specific harvest limits for steelhead in winter season fisheries, but the steelhead catch is low averaging 59 fish annually in The Dalles and John Day pools combined since 2001 with no recorded catch during the winter gillnet fishery in the past eight years. The highest observed catch since 2001 was 306 in 2008. Because of generally low steelhead harvest in the winter gillnet fishery, no specific management actions regarding steelhead are expected. Chinook are not expected to be present during the winter gillnet fishery. To date in 2021 we have no observed steelhead catch upstream of The Dalles Dam.
- Steelhead caught in the Bonneville Pool from November 1 through March 31 are counted as winter steelhead. There is no specific harvest limit for winter steelhead, but harvest is generally low. Winter steelhead harvest has averaged 107 fish per year since 2001 and was 61 fish in 2020. Because harvest is generally low, no specific management actions regarding steelhead are expected to be needed. No Chinook are expected to be harvested in the Bonneville Pool during the winter gillnet fishery. The current harvest estimate for winter steelhead in the Bonneville pool from November 1 to present is 20 steelhead (all ad-clipped).

The four Columbia River treaty tribes will adopt regulations consistent with the following:

<i>2021 Treaty Indian Winter Season Commercial Gillnet Fishery</i>	
Season:	6 AM Friday February 12 to 6 PM Monday February 15 (3.5 days)
Area:	The John Day pool only
Gear:	Gillnets with no minimum mesh size restriction
Sanctuaries:	Closed areas include standard closed standard dam and river mouth areas applicable to gillnet gear
Allowable Sales:	Salmon (any species), steelhead, shad, yellow perch, bass, walleye, catfish, and carp may be sold or retained for subsistence. Sturgeon from 43 to 54 inches fork length in John Day pool may be sold or kept for subsistence purposes. Fish landed during the open periods are allowed to be sold after the period concludes.
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.

- The intent of the platform fishery regulation is to allow any sturgeon caught incidentally with platform or hook and line gear to be sold if they are caught in a pool with an open commercial gillnet fishery and to allow the sale of any steelhead that may be caught.
- Catch will be monitored to ensure the tribal fisheries remain within management limits. The tribes expect to set additional fishing time after this period or may extend this period if appropriate. The tribes will take action to close fisheries early if harvest limits are projected to be met early.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- There is a Compact hearing scheduled for 10 AM February 16, 2021 via teleconference to consider Select Area (winter-summer) commercial fisheries.
- A Joint State hearing is scheduled for 10 AM February 23, 2021 via teleconference to consider mainstem Columbia River recreational spring Chinook fisheries.
- The tribes may have a commercial winter gillnet fishery plan for the February 23 hearing or may ask for a Compact on Monday February 22.