

COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION
JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 2
Columbia River Compact
August 11, 2021

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 online. The 2021 Fall Report was distributed on July 19, 2021. Links to the 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 flows at Bonneville Dam as of August 10 are 123 kcfs which is less than the five-year average of 147 kcfs on this date. Water temperature at the Bonneville Dam forebay is 72°F¹, which is equal to the recent five-year average of 72°F. Temperatures have been above the five-year average throughout much of the summer of 2021. Water temperatures typically peak in mid-August.
- River temperatures in the lower Columbia measured at Woody Island have averaged 72.5°F over the past 5 days². The peak temperature was 73.7°F.

STOCK STATUS

- Stock status information was presented in Fall Fact Sheet 1.
- TAC met on August 9, 2021 and reviewed information for the summer steelhead run. The cumulative passage remains the lowest on record since 1943, and the cumulative unclipped passage is the lowest since clipped/unclipped counting began in 1994. Based on the range of run timing in recent years, TAC currently expects the total run to be less than the 2021 forecast

Fall Chinook

- Bonneville Dam passage through August 10 totals 3,310 adult and 644 jack fall Chinook. This is the third lowest cumulative count to date in the last 10-years. The clip rate is approximately 37.4%, which is slightly lower than average. Adult passage is typically 1.2% complete on August 10.
- Based on sampling by WDFW, the adult counts to date include 1,665 bright stock fish, 824 adult tules and 822 “stubby” tules which are jack aged fish that grow to just over the adult size criteria for window counts.

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 and early August is primarily A-Index fish; higher levels of B-Index passage normally begins around the end of August. B-

¹ Data from <http://pweb.crohms.org/tmt/documents/ops/temp/>.

² Data from http://www.stccmop.org/datamart/observation_network

Index steelhead primarily return to Snake River tributaries in Idaho can return to any tributary. A-Index steelhead return to tributaries throughout the Columbia and Snake river basins.

- Counts of steelhead at Bonneville Dam since July 1 total 16,369 fish, which is 19% of the recent 10-year average (28% of recent 5-year). It remains the lowest count to date since 1943 and less than expected (~41,400) given the 2021 forecast assuming average run timing. Passage of the total run at Bonneville Dam (July–October) is typically 43% complete by August 10 (recent 10-year average). The count of unclipped steelhead since July 1 totals 8,990 fish which is also less than the expected passage (~18,500) based on the forecast assuming average run timing. The unclipped run at Bonneville is typically 55% complete on August 10 based on 10-year average run timing. The ad-clip rate is 45% which is lower than average for this period.
- It is too early to assess the size of the A-Index and B-Index run sizes individually.

Coho

- Through August 10 a total of 25 adult and 12 jack coho have passed Bonneville Dam for this run year. This is the fourth lowest count in the last 10-years. The coho run at Bonneville is typically 0.03% complete by this date.

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. If the actual URB return is less than 200,000, the impact limits drop to 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 passage at McNary Dam is 60,000 fish.
 - 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.
 - Fisheries are managed based on preseason forecasts until in-season run size updates become available.

2021 TREATY FISHERIES

Fall Season Fisheries

- Treaty platform and hook and line fisheries have been open for both subsistence and commercial purposes since August 1. Preliminary catch estimates for the first week of fall season fisheries are not yet available.
- Table 1 below shows projected 2021 fall season treaty harvest and projected catches. The model assumes average effort and average catch rates. As actual effort and catches become available projected future catches will be scaled to actual catch rates.

- The tribes have chosen to set just two initial openings as a cautionary approach to beginning the fall season. The tribes anticipate commercial gillnet fisheries should be able to occur through at least mid to late September.

Table 1. 2021 Treaty Indian Fall Season Fisheries (Modeled catches based on Pre-season forecasts)								
Week	Gillnet Fishery	Dates	Expected Effort (Nets)	Total Adult Chinook	URB Chinook	Total Steelhead	B Steelhead	Coho
31-34	Preliminary	Platform/H&L August 1-22	na	697	255	590	30	66
35	Projected	8/23 8/26	420	13,200	9,815	700	60	3,360
36	Projected	8/30 9/2	530	24,000	16,437	800	90	6,166
Total				37,897	26,507	2,090	180	9,592
Allowed at Forecast run size					108,462		988	
Expected Harvest by Sept 4						26,507	180	
Remaining after Sept 4						81,955	808	
Expected Harvest Rate by Sept 4						7.3%	2.4%	
Remaining Harvest Rate After Sept 4						22.7%	10.6%	

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

- Table 1 shows modeled fisheries based on the pre-season forecasts for Chinook, coho and steelhead. Because TAC expects the steelhead run to be less than forecast, the tribes modeled these fisheries assuming both A and B-Index steelhead return at 40% of their pre-season forecasts (35,680 A-Index and 3,040 B-Index). Using this run size results in an allowed harvest of 395 B-Index steelhead. The projected harvest through September 4 would be 75 fish resulting in a 2.5% harvest rate which is also well within the 13% limit. With the modified steelhead run sizes, the B-Index steelhead harvest rate for the proposed fisheries increases by 0.1% compared to modeling with the pre-season forecast.
- The proposed fisheries are well within the allowed harvest rate limits even if the B-Index steelhead run size is substantially less than forecast.

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

<i>2021 Treaty Indian Commercial Gillnet Fishery</i>	
Seasons:	6:00 AM Monday August 23 through 6:00 PM Thursday August 26 (3.5 days) 6:00 AM Monday August 30 through 6:00 PM Thursday September 2 (3.5 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 standard Spring Creek Hatchery Sanctuary is in place.
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 will be conducted each week to count set nets.
- There is no Compact action needed for platform and hook and line fisheries, Yakama tributary fisheries or fisheries downstream of Bonneville Dam.
- Fall Management Period fisheries are the most economically valuable for tribal fishers. Commercial fishing provides numerous economic benefits for tribal and non-tribal communities.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- The tribes request a Compact hearing on Wednesday afternoon September 2 or on Thursday, September 3 to consider additional treaty Indian commercial gillnet fisheries.