

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT - WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 2
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
January 10, 2023

Fisheries under consideration: Bonneville Pool recreational white sturgeon

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 relevant to these fisheries is the 2022 Sturgeon/Smelt Report (January 14, 2022) available at:

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

RIVER CONDITIONS

- As of January 10, the five-day average outflow at Bonneville Dam is 140.5 kcfs compared to a five-year average of 171.3 kcfs. The five-day average water temperature at Bonneville Dam is 37°F compared to a five-year average of 42°F.

STOCK STATUS and MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

White Sturgeon

- White sturgeon stock status and management guidelines for populations and fisheries upstream of Bonneville Dam were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #1, dated November 9, 2022.

2023 RECREATIONAL FISHERIES

White Sturgeon – Bonneville Pool

- Under permanent regulations, the area from Bonneville Dam upstream to McNary Dam opens January 1 each year for white sturgeon retention. Since 2019, all three Zone 6 reservoirs (including Bonneville Pool) have been managed to remain open until pool-specific guidelines are met.
- At the Joint State Hearing on November 9, 2022 the states modified the Bonneville Pool retention fishery to open on Sunday, January 1 and then move to a three day-per-week (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays) fishery from January 2 through March 22. These changes were made due to the volatility and short duration of this recreational fishery in recent years. Preseason modeling indicated that the guideline of 675 fish for the Bonneville Pool fishery would be achieved by March 22, 2023.
- Actual harvest in Bonneville Pool has accrued much more quickly than originally projected, and through January 9 harvest was 554 fish or 82% of the guideline (Table 1).

Table 1. Current recreational sturgeon harvest summary in Zone 6 reservoirs (January 1-9, 2023).

Pool	Angler Trips	Harvest	Recreational Guideline	Percent of Guideline
Bonneville	1,903	554	675	82%
The Dalles	618	61	190	32%
John Day	833	33	105	31%

- Projected catch through Saturday is 769 fish or 114% of the guideline, indicating that there is not a sufficient amount of fish remaining on the guideline to support the ongoing fishery. Staff recommend the following action to stay within the harvest guidelines.

Recommendation - 2023 Bonneville Pool Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery

Effective 11:59 PM Wednesday, January 11 the retention of sturgeon is prohibited in the mainstem Columbia River from Bonneville Dam upstream to The Dalles Dam (Bonneville Pool) and all adjacent tributaries.

- The expected kept catch through Wednesday, January 11 is 588 fish (87% of the guideline).
- Given The Dalles and John Day pools have additional catch remaining on their guidelines, these fisheries can remain open at this time. Staff will monitor harvest closely and will recommend management action when needed.
- The duration of the retention seasons will be adjusted if catch rates and effort are much different than projected, based on pool-specific catch guidelines. The current days-per-week structure in The Dalles Pool retention fishery will allow staff sufficient time to produce and monitor daily harvest estimates and recommend action necessary to stay within the harvest guidelines.
- Permanent regulations allow for catch-and-release sturgeon angling all year, except angling for sturgeon is prohibited May 1 through August 31 within the sanctuary areas designated below each of the dam tailraces. Daily and annual sturgeon bag limits apply to all fisheries statewide.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- A Compact Hearing is scheduled for 2 PM January 24, 2023 to consider non-treaty Columbia River commercial smelt fisheries and Zone 6 treaty commercial fisheries.
- A Compact Hearing is scheduled for 10 AM February 14, 2023 to consider Select Area (winter-summer) and treaty commercial fisheries.
- A Joint State Hearing is schedule for 10 AM February 22, 2023 to consider mainstem Columbia River recreational spring Chinook fisheries.