

**COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION
JOINT STAFF REPORT - WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 6b
Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing
February 22, 2023**

<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 online. The most recent report relevant to this fishery is the 2023 Sturgeon/Smelt Report (January 13, 2023) available at:

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

RIVER CONDITIONS

- The recent 5-day average river temperatures at The Dalles and Bonneville Dams have averaged approximately 38 degrees which is very close to the 5-year averages for these dates.
- The recent 5-day average outflow at Bonneville Dam is approximately 130 kcfs which less than the recent five year average flow of over 180 kcfs.

STOCK STATUS

Zone 6 Sturgeon

- Stock status for sturgeon has been described in previous fact sheets (3b and 4b)

Steelhead and Salmon

- From November 1 through February 18, a total of 831 winter steelhead, including 356 unclipped fish, have been counted at Bonneville Dam (43% unclipped). The total count is the second lowest to date in the last 10 years and the total unclipped count is the lowest to date in the last 10 years. There are normally no dam counts available this time of year for The Dalles, John Day, or McNary dams. This year is one of the periodic years where counts are being made at The Dalles and McNary dams. Since January 1, a total of 54 summer steelhead (24 unclipped) have been counted at The Dalles Dam and 229 summer steelhead (91 unclipped fish) have been counted at McNary Dam. These fish are summer steelhead from the 2022-23 run year.
- Chinook counts at Bonneville Dam in January total one fish which may have actually been a fall Chinook.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Zone 6 Sturgeon

- Winter Fact Sheet #3b contains information on Zone 6 sturgeon harvest guidelines. The treaty commercial guidelines are shown in the harvest table below.
- 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.

Steelhead and Salmon

- 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 51 fish annually in The Dalles and John Day pools combined since 2008 with no recorded catch during the winter gillnet fishery in the past nine years, although there has been some harvest in spring fisheries. The highest observed catch since 2001 was 306 fish in 2008.
- 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 104 fish per year since 2001 and was 40 fish in 2022. Because harvest is generally low, no specific management actions regarding steelhead are expected to be needed.
- Chinook are not expected to be present during the winter fishery.

2023 TREATY INDIAN WINTER FISHERIES

- A setline fishery occurs each January in all three Zone 6 pools under permanent regulations through January 31. This fishery generally has low effort and catch. This year, setline catches were above average in the Bonneville Pool, average in the John Day Pool, and below average in The Dalles Pool. The Bonneville Pool setline catch was the highest in recent record, but The Dalles and John Day pool catches were within past ranges. A gillnet fishery was set in The Dalles Pool from February 4 through February 6 and in the John Day Pool from February 1 through February 13. Preliminary catch estimates through February 13 are shown in the table below. These include both ticketed landings and direct to public sales. No steelhead have been recorded caught in winter gillnet fishing this year. The estimate of steelhead harvest in platform fisheries is also zero. Normally, catches and effort are very low in the winter.

Table 1. Preliminary sturgeon harvest to date and modeled additional catch with proposed fisheries.

Reservoir	January Setline Total	Gillnet to date	Total to date	Modeled additional Setline Catch	Total after Planned Fisheries	Guideline	Remaining	% of Guideline Harvested after planned fisheries
Bonneville	485	0	485	100	585	675	90	86.7%
The Dalles	65	260	325	160	485	560	75	86.6%
John Day	16	235	251		251	210	-41	119.5%
Total	566	495	1,061	260	1,321			

- Sturgeon catch rates in any gear type generally start out low and increase over time as water temperature and effort increase. Recent catch rates have been higher than average.

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

<i>2023 Treaty Indian Winter Season Commercial Setline Fishery (Bonneville Pool)</i>	
Season:	6 AM Monday, February 27 through 6 PM Wednesday March 1 (2.5 days)
Area:	Bonneville Pool only
Gear:	Standard setline gear including no more than 100 single-point hooks per setline and a minimum hook size of 9/0
Sanctuaries:	Closed areas include standard closed areas applicable to setline gear
Allowable Sales:	Sturgeon from 38 to 54 inches fork length in Bonneville 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.

<i>2023 Treaty Indian Winter Season Commercial Setline Fishery (The Dalles Pool)</i>	
Season:	6 AM Monday March 6 to 6 PM Thursday March 9 (3.5 days)
Area:	The Dalles Pool only
Gear:	Standard setline gear including no more than 100 single-point hooks per setline and a minimum hook size of 9/0
Sanctuaries:	Closed areas include standard closed areas applicable to setline gear
Allowable Sales:	Sturgeon from 43 to 54 inches fork length in The Dalles 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 expected sturgeon catch in Bonneville Pool fishery at the end of the planned opening is 585 fish based predicted catch rates which were scaled to this year’s higher catch rates. The expected sturgeon catch at the end of The Dalles Pool fishery is 485 based on similar predicted catch rates. Salmonid catch does not occur with setline gear.
- Sturgeon catch will be monitored and reported regularly. The tribes may set additional fishing time after these periods if appropriate.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- The tribes may request any additional hearings if there are sufficient fish available after these openings.