

COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION
JOINT STAFF REPORT – SUMMER FACT SHEET NO. 2a
Columbia River Compact Hearing
June 28, 2023

Fisheries Under Consideration: Summer 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 most recent report is the 2023 Spring Chinook, Summer Chinook, Sockeye, Steelhead and Other Species Report (February 2, 2023) available at:

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/management/columbia-river/compact/other-information#2023> and <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/jsmreports.asp>

STOCK STATUS AND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Upper Columbia Summer Chinook, Sockeye, and Steelhead

- Pre-season salmon and steelhead forecasts applicable to the summer management period were provided in Fact Sheet #1.

Upper Columbia Summer Chinook

- Upper Columbia Summer Chinook are counted at Bonneville Dam from June 16 through July 31. Chinook salmon passing Bonneville Dam or harvested during this time period are managed as Upper Columbia summer Chinook and are not ESA listed. These fish are destined for mainstem and tributary areas from the Yakima River upstream to the Okanagan River as well as Chief Joseph Hatchery. Based on 10-year average run timing the run at Bonneville would be expected to be 50% complete on June 29. Through June 27, a total of 23,858 adult and 2,642 jack summer Chinook have passed Bonneville Dam. The adult clip rate is 79.3% which is higher than average. The run would be expected to be 45% or 43% complete respectively on June 27, based on the 5 or 10-year average run timing. The 5 and 10-year average 50% complete date at Bonneville are both on June 29.
- TAC has indicated that the summer Chinook run is tracking less than pre-season forecast and expects to update the run size when they meet tomorrow.

Sockeye

- Sockeye caught during any management period all count as part of the current year's sockeye run. All sockeye in fisheries and dam counts are treated as adult fish. Through June 27, a total of 138,537 sockeye have been counted at Bonneville Dam which is the sixth highest count in the last ten years. Based on 5 or 10-year average run timing the run is expected to be 51% or 54% complete on June 27. TAC has indicated that the sockeye run is tracking consistent to the pre-season forecast and expects to update the run tomorrow.
- Fourteen sockeye have been counted at Lower Granite Dam to date.

Steelhead

- Steelhead passing Bonneville Dam from April 1 through June 30 or that are caught in this time period in the Bonneville Pool are considered upriver Skamania stock steelhead. Through June 27, there have been a total of 2,457 Skamania steelhead counted at Bonneville Dam including 1,117 unclipped fish. The total count and unclipped count are both the third lowest

steelhead count to date in the last 10 years. Based on the 10-year average timing, the total run would be about 82% complete and the unclipped run would be about 79% complete at Bonneville on June 27. While TAC has not updated the Skamania run size, tribal staff estimate that both the total run and the unclipped run are tracking at less than 70% of the pre-forecast.

- Steelhead passing Bonneville Dam from July 1 through October 31 are considered part of this year's A and B-Index steelhead run. Steelhead caught upstream of the Dalles Dam from January 1 through June 30 are considered part of the previous year's A and B-Index steelhead run.

Summer Management Limits

- Any sockeye harvested in mainstem fisheries downstream from the mouth of the Snake River count against the Sockeye harvest rate limit. Based on the pre-season forecasts the harvest rate limit will be 7% for treaty fisheries and 1% for non-treaty fisheries. Based on the pre-season forecast this equates to harvest limits of 16,415 and 2,345 respectively. Actual harvest limits are determined based on in-season run sizes.
- Treaty and non-treaty summer Chinook impacts are shared equally. Both PFMC non-treaty ocean fisheries and in-river fisheries count as part of the non-treaty share. Based on the pre-season forecast, both treaty and non-treaty fisheries expect to be allowed to harvest 25,765 fish each. The actual harvest limits are based on the in-season abundance estimates and will be less if the run size is less.
- There is no specific harvest rate limit for steelhead in summer season treaty fisheries, but harvest of steelhead is low in the summer and is expected to remain within recent average rates.

SUMMER SEASON TREATY FISHERIES

Treaty Mainstem Summer Management Period Commercial Fisheries

- The treaty tribes allowed commercial sales of platform and hook and line fish on June 16 and expect sales to run continuously through the summer management period and into the fall.
- The treaty tribes began commercial gillnet fisheries on June 19. As a precautionary step, the tribes only authorized two short gillnet openings to start the season compared to the three initial openings authorized last year. Set net effort was less than projected at the beginning of the season and normally begins to decline after the second week of fishing.
- Fisheries have been modeled and projected catches are shown in Table 1 below. The tribes have chosen to model fisheries based on a presumed Summer Chinook run size of 55,000 at the Columbia River mouth which is a cautious approach. Catches for Chinook, sockeye, and steelhead were all less than projected through June 24. Instead of scaling down future harvest projections in the model based on these early catches, tribal staff have continued to use the pre-season harvest scalars which is also a cautious approach. TAC indicated on Monday that the sockeye run is tracking consistent with the pre-season forecast, however the Bonneville counts in the last two days suggest the sockeye run may actually be tracking above the pre-forecast. Because of this tribal staff have continued to model sockeye fisheries using the pre-season forecast. The projected sockeye catches for weeks with commercial gillnet fisheries include the expected catch in the platform and hook and line fishery. The tribes are planning fisheries using conservative estimates to avoid catches being higher than expected.

Table 1. Preliminary Catch to Date and Projected 2023 Summer Season Treaty Harvest Using Pre-season Forecast Abundance for Sockeye and a River Mouth Run size of 55,000 for Summer Chinook

2023 Treaty Indian Summer Season Fisheries									
Fishery					Adult Chinook	Harvest Rate	Sockeye	Harvest Rate	Steelhead
Platforms June 16-17 (preliminary)					440	0.8%	451	0.2%	88
Week	Gillnet Fisheries	Start	End	Effort (Set Nets)					
26	Preliminary	19-Jun	21-Jun	206	2,389	4.3%	1,417	0.6%	11
27	Projected	26-Jun	28-Jun	233	2,500	4.5%	3,600	1.5%	60
28	Projected	3-Jul	6-Jul	235	2,500	4.6%	2,400	1.0%	170
Platforms after Planned Gillnet Fishing					2,500	4.5%	3,500	1.5%	450
Total Projected					10,344	18.8%	11,388	4.9%	783
Allowed at Pre-Season Sockeye Forecast and 55K Chinook run size					14,164	25.8%	16,415	7.0%	
Remaining After Planned Fisheries					3,820	6.9%	5,027	2.1%	

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

- The projected total Chinook catch of 10,344 would be within the allowed harvest down to a river mouth run size of 44,400. The projected total sockeye catch of 11,388 would be within the allowed harvest down to a river mouth run size of 162,700.
- If the modeled fisheries sockeye and Chinook harvest is accurate, the remaining Chinook and sockeye after these planned openings would be sufficient to keep the platform fishery open through the remainder of the summer management period and will likely be sufficient to provide additional commercial gillnet opportunity.

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

<i>Recommendation: 2023 Summer Season Treaty Commercial Gillnet Fishery</i>		
Season	6:00 AM Monday July 3 to 6:00 PM Thursday, July 6	(3.5 days)
Area	Zone 6	
Sanctuaries:	Standard river mouth and dam closed areas applicable to gillnet gear, except the Spring Creek Hatchery sanctuary is not in effect during the summer management period.	
Gear:	Set and Drift Gill nets with a 7” minimum mesh size restriction	
Allowable Sales:	Salmon (any species), steelhead, shad, yellow perch, bass, walleye, catfish and carp may be sold or retained for subsistence. Sturgeon may not be sold, but 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 and may be kept for subsistence purposes. Fish landed during the open periods are allowed to be sold after the period concludes.	
Additional:	24-hour quick reporting is required for Washington wholesale dealers for all areas as provided in WAC 220-352-315, except that all landings from treaty fisheries described above must be reported within 24-hours of completing the fish ticket.	

- Zone 6 platform and hook and line fisheries, Yakama Zone 6 tributary fisheries, and treaty fisheries downstream of Bonneville Dam do not require Compact action at this time.
- Catch and effort will be monitored to ensure the fishery remains within management limits. Total catch is determined through a tribal creel program. Fish ticket data are used as a supplement to the creel program. Set net effort will be monitored by aerial surveys each week. Drift net effort is estimated through the creel monitoring program. Catches for the platform fishery are typically summed with and reported with gillnet catches for any week with a commercial gillnet opening. Any harvest downstream of Bonneville Dam is part of the total allowed catch for any species. Tributary harvest is managed under separate limits.
- Treaty commercial fishing provides important economic benefits to tribal members and their families as well as to communities along the river and on reservations.

Future Meetings

- The tribes request another Compact Hearing on July 6 to consider additional commercial gillnet openings that may begin on July 10 assuming sufficient impacts remain.