

**COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION**  
**JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 4**  
**Columbia River Compact Hearing**  
**August 30, 2023**

Fisheries under consideration: Treaty commercial gillnet
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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 2023 Fall Report was distributed on July 10, 2023. 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 outflow at Bonneville Dam as of August 29 is 124.4 kcfs which is less than the five-year average of 138.0 kcfs on this date. Water temperature at the Bonneville Dam forebay is 71.5°F<sup>1</sup>, which is above to the recent five-year average of 70.2°F. Current water temperature measured this morning is just under 71°F. Water temperatures typically peak in mid-August.
- River temperatures in the lower Columbia measured near Tongue Point have averaged 68.7°F over the past 3 days<sup>2</sup>. The peak temperature over this time was just over 70°F.
- Visibility at Bonneville Dam as averaged 6.8 feet over the past 5 days

### **STOCK STATUS**

- Stock status information was presented in Fall Fact Sheet #1.
- TAC will be meeting throughout the fall management period and will provide updates on the run sizes as the runs progress.

#### ***Fall Chinook***

- Bonneville Dam passage through August 29 totals 111,458 adult and 10,314 jack fall Chinook. This is the third highest cumulative count to date for adult Chinook in the last 10 years. The clip rate is approximately 56.6%, which is higher than average. Adult Chinook passage is typically 16.3% complete on August 29.
- Based on Bonneville Dam Observation sampling data collected by WDFW and ODFW, the adult counts through August 29 include 81,148 adult bright stock fish, 26,875 adult tules, and 3,436 “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 from 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 begin around the end of August. B-Index

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

<sup>2</sup> Data from [http://www.stccmop.org/datamart/observation\\_network](http://www.stccmop.org/datamart/observation_network)

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

- Counts of steelhead at Bonneville Dam since July 1 total 69,938 fish, which is 67% of the recent 10-year average (130% of recent 5-year). The total count is greater than the preseason forecast of 63,400. Passage of the total run at Bonneville Dam (July–October) is typically 76% complete by August 29 (recent 10-year average). The count of unclipped steelhead since July 1 totals 28,895 fish which is greater than the pre-season forecast for unclipped A- and B-Index fish (21,700). The unclipped run at Bonneville is typically 73% complete on August 29 based on 10-year average run timing. The ad-clip rate to date is 58% which is slightly higher than the 10-year average for this date.
- During July 1-August 24, 258 A-Index steelhead have been sampled at the Bonneville Dam Adult Fish Facility (AFF). The unclipped A-Index sample included 121 fish. The B-Index sample included 18 fish of which 4 were unclipped. Sampling at the AFF is limited at water temperatures above 70° F and is stopped if temperatures reach 72° F. There was no sampling Monday or Tuesday this week, but sampling resumed this morning.
- TAC updated the A-Index steelhead run size expectation at Bonneville Dam to 91,300 including 34,000 unclipped A-Index fish. This compares to a pre-season forecast of 55,400 total A-Index and 19,700 unclipped A-Index steelhead. It is too early to assess the size of the B-Index run size.

### ***Coho***

- Through August 29 a total of 7,325 adult and 932 jack coho have passed Bonneville Dam for this run year. This is the second highest adult count to date in the last 10 years. The coho run at Bonneville is typically only 5.5% complete by this date. The adult coho clip rate is 56.7% which is high for this time of year.

## **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 adults, 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 6,000 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.

## 2023 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 early fall platform and hook and line fisheries and the first week of gillnet fishing are available. Chinook stock composition is preliminary since full CWT data are not yet available.
- Fisheries downstream of Bonneville Dam have harvested 414 adult chinook, 26 steelhead, and 41 coho.
- The table below shows planned 2023 fall season treaty fisheries and projected catches. The model shows actual set net counts for the first two weeks. It uses a higher than recent average net count for next week. Scalars continue to be adjusted higher to account for under predictions in catches in spring and summer fisheries. Higher scalars are used to reduce chances that the model will continue to under predict catches. The model is based on pre-season forecast run sizes. As more actual effort and catches become available, projected future catches will be scaled to actual catch rates.
- The tribes have chosen to set two initial openings to begin the fall season. The tribes anticipate commercial gillnet fisheries should be able to occur through at least mid to late September.

<b>2023 Treaty Indian Fall Season Fisheries</b>									
Week	Gillnet Fishery	Dates	Set Net Count	Total Adult Chinook	URB Chinook	Total Steelhead	B Steelhead	Coho	
31-34	Preliminary	Platform/ H&L	August 1-22	na	1,958	1,203	570	0	77
35	Preliminary	8/21	8/24	171	7,210	3,694	169	19	28
36	Projected	8/28	9/1	299	32,100	10,200	770	90	210
				Subtotal	41,268	15,097	1,509	109	315
37	Projected	9/4	9/8	400	44,100	16,900	1,100	90	200
				Total	85,368	31,997	2,609	199	515
				<b>Allowed at Projected URB and B run size</b>		83,550		1,040	
				<b>Harvest Rate as of Sept 2</b>		5.4%		1.4%	
				<b>Remaining after Sept 2</b>		68,453		931	
				<b>Expected Harvest Rate by Sept 9</b>		11.5%		2.5%	
				<b>Remaining Available After Sept 9</b>		51,553		841	

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

- The table above shows modeled fisheries based on the pre-season forecasts for Chinook, coho and steelhead. Set net counts are the surrogate for effort in the model used to plan fisheries. The tribes increased the scalars in the model to reflect higher than expected catch rates seen in fisheries earlier in the year and incorporated set net projections that are higher than the recent year average.
- The proposed fishery impacts are within the allowed harvest rate limits for an URB run size down to 139,000 and a B-Index steelhead run size down to 1,330.

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

<i>2023 Treaty Indian Commercial Gillnet Fishery</i>	
Seasons:	Extend the ongoing fishery through 6:00 PM Friday September 1 (1 additional day) 6:00 AM Monday September 4 through 6:00 PM Friday September 8 (4.5 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.
- 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 September 7.