

COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION
JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 5a
Columbia River Compact Hearing
September 7, 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

- River conditions will be presented in fact sheet 5b.

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 September 6 totals 251,799 adult and 24,458 jack fall Chinook. This is the second highest cumulative count to date for adult Chinook in the last 10 years. The clip rate is approximately 56%, which is higher than average. Adult Chinook passage is typically 39.4% complete on September 6 based on the 10 year average.
- McNary Dam passage through September 6 includes 51,805 adult and 3,854 jack fall Chinook. Passage at McNary Dam is typically 17% complete on September 6.
- Lower Granite Dam passage through September 6 includes 11,303 adult and 965 jack fall Chinook.
- Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery staff have reported that 12,660 Chinook have entered the hatchery. They have not estimated the proportions of males, females, and jacks yet, but they have begun to surplus fish so they can spawn fish from throughout the run. They expect to meet their broodstock needs this year.

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 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 85,792 fish, which is 72% of the recent 10-year average (134% 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 72% complete by August 29 (recent 10-year average). The count of unclipped steelhead since July

1 totals 32,538 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 80% complete on August 29 based on 10-year average run timing. The ad-clip rate to date is 62% which is slightly higher than the 10-year average for this date.

- TAC met on September 5 and reviewed Chinook and steelhead passage at Bonneville Dam and associated sampling data. TAC estimates that through September 4, a total of 73,558 A-Index steelhead (including 29,513 unclipped fish) and 10,119 B-Index steelhead (including 2,562 unclipped fish) have passed Bonneville Dam. TAC did not make any changes to the A-Index steelhead run size expectation at Bonneville Dam provided on August 21 (91,300 total A-Index fish including 34,000 unclipped fish), nor did it make any other run size updates. Currently, the hatchery B-Index run is tracking ahead of the pre-season forecast, while the wild B-Index run is tracking near the pre-season forecast. TAC will continue to monitor and assess the A/B-Index steelhead, upriver fall Chinook, and upriver coho returns. TAC will provide updates to Chinook and A and B-Index steelhead as warranted. TAC is scheduled to meet again next Monday, September 11

Coho

- Through September 6 a total of 40,980 adult and 3,358 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 adult coho clip rate is 38.7% which is close to average 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 two weeks 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 440 adult chinook, 30 steelhead, and 50 coho. These catches are included in the totals presented below.
- The table below shows actual 2023 fall season treaty fisheries to date and projected catches for planned fisheries. The model shows actual set net counts for the first two weeks, which were less than recent year averages. It uses a higher than current net counts for next two weeks based on past patterns for relative counts between these weeks compared to earlier weeks. 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 under predict catches. The model is based on pre-season forecast run sizes and TAC run size updates as available. As more actual effort and catches become available, projected future catches will be scaled to actual catch rates. The model has a B-Index run size that has been adjusted to 10,000 which is approximately the current actual passage to date. This can be thought of as a minimum possible B-Index run size.
- The tribes have chosen to set two additional openings for the next two weeks.

2023 Treaty Indian Fall Season Fisheries									
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	1,973	957	570	0	77
34	Preliminary	8/21	8/24	171	7,113	3,449	169	19	28
35	Preliminary	8/28	9/1	299	22,513	10,916	497	81	412
36	Projected	9/4	9/8	298	66,400	13,800	860	190	1,300
Subtotal					97,999	29,122	2,096	290	1,817
37	Projected	9/11	9/15	375	54,400	21,600	1,100	220	1,500
38	Projected	9/18	9/22	375	35,000	11,900	1,400	310	3,000
Total					187,399	62,622	4,596	820	6,317
Allowed at Projected URB and B run size						83,550		1,300	
Harvest Rate as of Sept 9						10.5%		2.9%	
Remaining after Sept 9						54,428		1,010	
Expected Harvest Rate by Sept 23						22.5%		8.2%	
Remaining Available After Sept 23						20,928		480	

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 proposed fishery impacts are within the allowed harvest rate limits for an URB run size down to 209,000 and a B-Index steelhead run size down to 5,470 which is less than the current B-Index steelhead passage at Bonneville.

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

<i>2023 Treaty Indian Commercial Gillnet Fishery</i>	
Seasons:	6:00 AM Monday September 11 through 6:00 PM Friday September 15 (4.5 days) 6:00 AM Monday September 18 through 6:00 PM Friday September 22 (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 reduced to a 150 foot radius around the hatchery ladder.
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 20.