

**COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION**  
**JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 7a**  
**Columbia River Compact Hearing**  
**September 20, 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 7b.

**STOCK STATUS**

- Stock status information was presented in Fall Fact Sheet #1.
- TAC will continue 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 19 totals 454,249 adult and 48,454 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 79% complete on September 19 based on the 10 year average.
- McNary Dam passage through September 19 includes 126,192 adult and 10,857 jack fall Chinook. Adult passage at McNary Dam is typically 54% complete on September 19 based on 10 year average run timing.
- Lower Granite Dam passage through September 19 includes 33,771 adult and 3,222 jack fall Chinook. Adult passage at Lower Granite Dam is typically 55% complete on September 19 based on 10 year average run timing.
- Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery staff have reported that 28,587 Chinook have entered the hatchery as of September 16. These include 12,669 females, 7,941 males and 7,977 jacks. They have begun to surplus fish so they can spawn fish from throughout the run. They expect to meet their broodstock needs (6,000) this year.

***Upriver Summer Steelhead***

- Counts of steelhead at Bonneville Dam since July 1 total 101,414 fish, which is 73% of the recent 10-year average (135% 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 87% complete by September 19 (recent 10-year average). The count of unclipped steelhead since July 1 totals 36,327 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 90% complete on September 19 based on 10-year average run timing. The ad-clip rate to date is 64% which is slightly higher than the 10-year average for this date.

- TAC met on September 18 and reviewed Chinook and steelhead run size information and lower river Chinook harvest data. TAC estimates through September 17, a total of 82,473 A-Index steelhead (including 31,331 unclipped fish) and 17,601 B-Index steelhead (including 4,690 unclipped fish) have passed Bonneville Dam. TAC maintained the A-Index steelhead run size update at Bonneville Dam of 91,300 total A-Index fish including 34,000 unclipped A-Index fish. TAC updated the total B-Index steelhead run size to 24,100 including 6,000 unclipped fish. TAC also updated the upriver fall chinook run to 394,000 URBs, 64,000 PUBs and 155,000 BPH at the mouth of the Columbia River. TAC will continue to meet weekly and provide run size updates as appropriate during the fall management season.

### *Coho*

- Through September 19 a total of 85,818 adult and 9,230 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 42.6% which is higher than 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 four 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 through week 37 and projected catches for planned fisheries. Set net counts for the first three weeks were less than recent year averages. 273 set nets were counted this week, but the counts were adjusted upwards based on information from treaty creel monitors that more nets were set after the count was made due to windy conditions early in the week. Set net effort projections were increased for week 39 and then slightly decreased for week 40. Additionally, the model has been scaled for updated run sizes and recent weeks average catch rates since actual catches have been close to projections.
- Projections for late fall platform fisheries after the conclusion of gillnet fishing and the remaining available fish thereafter provide a buffer if catches are higher than projected and/or if run sizes change.
- The tribes have chosen to set two additional openings for the next two weeks.

2022 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	7,135	3,460	169	19	28
35	Preliminary	8/28	9/1	299	22,553	10,482	497	81	412
36	Preliminary	9/4	9/8	298	38,400	17,847	1,207	332	1,879
37	Preliminary	9/11	9/15	351	34,212	15,901	889	314	2,261
38	Projected	9/18	9/22	300	30,100	14,700	1,300	360	3,000
				Subtotal	134,373	63,347	4,632	1,106	7,657
39	Projected	9/25	9/29	350	21,500	11,900	2,200	720	5,560
40	Projected	10/2	10/6	300	11,200	5,900	2,600	1,070	9,440
				Subtotal	167,073	81,147	9,432	2,896	22,657
		Late Fall Platforms			250	200	400	200	500
				Total	167,323	81,347	9,832	3,096	23,157
				<b>Allowed at Projected URB and B run size</b>		118,200		3,615	
				<b>Harvest Rate as of Sept 23</b>		16.1%		4.6%	
				<b>Remaining after Sept 23</b>		54,853		2,509	
				<b>Expected Harvest Rate by October 7</b>		20.6%		12.8%	
				<b>Remaining Available After October 7</b>		36,853		519	

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 in-season run size updates for Chinook and steelhead and the preseason forecasted run sizes for coho. Set net counts are an index for total effort in modeled fisheries.
- The proposed fishery impacts are within the allowed harvest rate limits for an URB run size down to 271,000 and a B-Index steelhead run size down to 20,650, which are both less than current run size updates.

- 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 25 through 6:00 PM Friday September 29 (4.5 days) 6:00 AM Monday October 2 through 6:00 PM Friday October 6 (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 may request a Compact Hearing on October 4.