

**11. Columbia River Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery Allocation –  
(Briefing and Public Hearing)**

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## Summary

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<b>Meeting dates:</b>	February 7, 2014 Commission Meeting
<b>Agenda item:</b>	Columbia River Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery Allocation, Policy C-3620
<b>Presenter(s):</b>	Ron Roler, Columbia River Policy Coordinator

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### **Background summary:**

Commission Policy C-3620 calls for the Department to provide the Commission an annual briefing on the effectiveness of fishery management actions in meeting spring Chinook recreational fishery allocation objectives throughout the Columbia River basin, including recreation fisheries below Bonneville Dam, above Bonneville Dam, and in the lower Snake River. The Commission Policy also progressively shifts overall upriver spring Chinook ESA allocation to the recreational fishery, increasing to 70% during 2014-16 and 80% beginning in 2017.

The Commission Policy calls for the Columbia River spring Chinook recreational fishery allocation to be shared 75% below Bonneville Dam and 25% above Bonneville Dam. The above Bonneville Dam portion split is 40% Zone 6 and 60% in the lower Snake River. The sharing formula is based on percent of ESA impacts to wild Snake River and upper Columbia Spring Chinook as a result of catch and release mortality in selective fisheries, not on percent of harvested chinook. Total harvest includes hatchery stocks from lower Columbia, upper Columbia, and Snake River facilities. The total harvest is also limited by a *U.S. v. Oregon* catch balance agreement where total harvest in non-Indian mainstem Columbia and lower Snake River fisheries cannot exceed the treaty Indian harvest limit.

In recent years, the Department has received correspondence from local government and citizens from eastern Washington concerned about the ability of the current management strategies to meet spring Chinook fishery objectives in recreational fisheries in the lower Snake River. Department representatives attended meetings in Walla Walla in August, 2012 and in Dayton January, 2013 to discuss the issue. At a Columbia River Recreational Advisory Group (CRRAG) meeting on January 23, The Department and Eastern Washington representatives recommended that a Recreational Sub-Allocation Advisory Group be formed to review past performance of the fishery, harvest shares, and discuss potential options for change in the current management structure. This recommendation was endorsed by the CRRAG and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

The Recreational Sub-Allocation Advisory Group, consisting of representatives from the three geographic areas of the fishery, was unable to reach a consensus on alternative recommendations for equitable sharing. The options requested for analysis and discussion included the status quo (with increased recreational allocation), sharing fish 60% below Bonneville and 40% above Bonneville, sharing impacts based on the five year average of peak daily effort in each area, and removing the lower Snake River portion of the fishery from catch balance limits.

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**Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:**

Effectiveness of fishery management actions in meeting recreational fishery allocation objectives throughout the Columbia River basin.

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**Public involvement process used and what you learned:**

A seven member Spring Chinook recreational Sub-Allocation Advisory Group was established by WDFW and ODFW to review the effectiveness of fishery management actions in meeting allocation and recreational opportunity objectives below Bonneville Dam, above Bonneville Dam, and in the lower Snake River. The group included three representatives from below Bonneville Dam and four representatives from above Bonneville Dam (two from Zone 6 and two from the Snake River). WDFW and ODFW staff convened the group on September 16, 2013 and again on January 3, 2014.

At the first meeting, past performance of fisheries, ESA limitations and catch balance calculations were discussed. Staff received requests for additional data and analysis and committed to delivering a data package prior to the second meeting. At the second meeting, two data packages were reviewed and results discussed, including alternative management scenarios. There was no consensus reached on change to the current management structure.

Key summary points from the data package include:

- Since the 30% run size buffer has been utilized (beginning in 2010), the non-Indian ESA allowed impacts have not been exceeded.
- Allowed harvest and actual harvest for 2010-2013 (See attached table).
- A 60%/40% catch share of last year's return (requested analysis) would have increased the above Bonneville allowed harvest by as much as 4,100 spring Chinook and reduced the below Bonneville harvest by about 3,600 spring Chinook.
- The Columbia Basin Salmon Management Policy allocates spring Chinook ESA impacts 70% sport and 30% commercial in 2014. Based on a run size of 220,000, this change would add 461 chinook to the below Bonneville sport fishery, 61 chinook to the Zone 6 sport fishery, and 47 chinook to the Snake River sport fishery.
- Keeping the current ESA split of 75%/25%, but not applying catch balance limits to the Snake River area would move the additional spring Chinook transferred from the commercial fishery (allocation shifts in Policy C-3620) to the Snake River. The lower river would not receive additional fish from the allocation change in the policy.
- The single day peak angler effort for the five years has averaged 7,411 for below Bonneville Dam, 320 for the Zone 6 area, and 843 for the Snake River.
- The percentage of recreational harvest of upriver salmonids (all species) has averaged 54% below Bonneville Dam and 46% above Bonneville Dam for the last five years (does not include tributary harvest).
- The Washington Columbia River salmon/steelhead Endorsement sales are 63% westside and 37% eastside (above Bonneville). This is the first year of endorsement sales for Oregon.

The options discussed included the status quo, sharing fish 60% below Bonneville and 40% above Bonneville, sharing impacts based on the five year average of peak daily effort in each area (89% below Bonneville Dam), and managing the Snake River portion of the fishery for ESA impacts only without the catch balance burden .

The CRRAG discussed the options in January and did not support an allocation or management change from status quo. Representatives were concerned that the alternatives that shift allocation above Bonneville Dam result in loss of all fish gained in the lower river from the recent policy change in sport/commercial allocation. , whereas the status quo distributes those fish gained to the recreational fishery throughout the basin. The alternative that re-aligned allocation with Spring Chinook effort was also not supported as it re-distributed fish from above Bonneville Dam to below Bonneville Dam recreational fisheries, reducing opportunity upstream of Bonneville Dam. ODFW has also expressed support for continuing the status quo.

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**Action requested:**

No action, information only

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**Draft motion language:**

NA

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**Justification for Commission action:**

NA

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**Communications Plan:**

The Department will continue to work with ODFW, stakeholders, and the Columbia River Recreational Advisory Group and will monitor the effectiveness of fishery management actions in meeting allocation and recreational opportunity objectives below Bonneville Dam, above Bonneville Dam, and in the lower Snake River. The Department will provide a briefing to the Commission in 2015.

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*Form revised 12/5/12*



## Allowed and Actual Upriver Spring Chinook Harvest by Area.

### POST Season ALLOWED Catch Balance for Adult Upriver Spring Chinook in Non-Indian Fisheries \*

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Mainstem salmon Winter/Spring	12,057	6,494	4,454	2,439
SAF Commercial Winter/Spring	473	333	305	185
<b>Commercial Total</b>	<b>12,530</b>	<b>6,827</b>	<b>4,759</b>	<b>2,624</b>
Lower Columbia Rec (below Bonn)	16,996	12,649	11,260	6,168
Bonneville to McNary Rec	2,266	1,686	1,340	822
Snake River Spt/Wanapum Tribal	2,228	1,012	1,120	603
<b>Recreational Total</b>	<b>21,490</b>	<b>15,347</b>	<b>13,720</b>	<b>7,593</b>
<b>Total allowed</b>	<b>34,020</b>	<b>22,174</b>	<b>18,479</b>	<b>10,217</b>

\* Remember ESA could be more constraining than allowed CB

### POST Season ACTUAL Catch Balance for Adult Upriver Adult Upriver Spring Chinook in Non-Indian Fisheries

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Mainstem salmon Winter/Spring	7,458	3,411	4,269	1,498
SAF Commercial Winter/Spring	1,475	295	327	259
<b>Commercial Total</b>	<b>8,933</b>	<b>3,706</b>	<b>4,596</b>	<b>1,757</b>
Lower Columbia Rec (below Bonn)	23,535	9,506	10,422	5,343
Bonneville to McNary Rec	3,930	2,379	886	613
Snake River Spt/Wanapum Tribal	2,110	1,953	2,317	374
<b>Recreational Total</b>	<b>29,575</b>	<b>13,838</b>	<b>13,625</b>	<b>6,330</b>
<b>Total take</b>	<b>38,508</b>	<b>17,544</b>	<b>18,221</b>	<b>8,087</b>

Includes kept and released mortalities of adults only.