

COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION
JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 3
Columbia River Compact Hearing
August 16, 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 flows at Bonneville Dam as of August 15 is 144.8 kcfs which is less than the five-year average of 150.2 kcfs on this date. Water temperature at the Bonneville Dam forebay is 72.2°F¹, which is above to the recent five-year average of 71.6°F. Current water temperature measured this morning is just over 73°F. Water temperatures typically peak in mid-August.
- River temperatures in the lower Columbia measured near Tongue Point have averaged 71°F over the past 3 days². The peak temperature over this time was just over 72°F.

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 15 totals 16,975 adult and 1,661 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 44%, which is near average. Adult Chinook passage is typically 2.2% complete on August 15.
- Based on Bonneville Dam Observation sampling data collected by WDFW and ODFW, the adult counts through August 14 include 11,840 adult bright stock fish, 1,937 adult tules, and 187 “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 steelhead primarily return to Snake River tributaries in Idaho. A-Index steelhead return to tributaries throughout the Columbia and Snake river basins.

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

² Data from http://www.stccmop.org/datamart/observation_network

- Counts of steelhead at Bonneville Dam since July 1 total 53,116 fish, which is 65% of the recent 10-year average (140% of recent 5-year). Passage of the total run at Bonneville Dam (July–October) is typically 46% complete by August 15 (recent 10-year average). The count of unclipped steelhead since July 1 totals 24,151 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 60% complete on August 15 based on 10-year average run timing. The ad-clip rate to date is 55% which is slightly higher than expected for this period.
- During July 1-August 11, 232 steelhead have been sampled at the Bonneville Dam Adult Fish Facility (AFF). All but seven of the steelhead sampled since July 1 have been A-Index fish (110 clipped and 115 unclipped). One of the seven B-Index fish was unclipped. The proportions of A- and B-Index fish in the sample are typical for this point in the run. Sampling at the AFF is limited at water temperatures above 70° F and is stopped if temperatures reach 72° F. There has been no sampling this week.
- It is too early to assess the size of the A-Index and B-Index run sizes individually.

Coho

- Through August 15 a total of 190 adult and 65 jack coho have passed Bonneville Dam for this run year. This is the third highest count to date in the last 10 years. The coho run at Bonneville is typically only 0.1% complete by this date. The adult coho clip rate is 5.4% which is very low for this time of year, but there has been limited clip sampling to date.

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 are not yet available.

- The table below shows planned 2023 fall season treaty fisheries and projected catches. The model uses higher than recent average net counts and has scalars adjusted higher to account for under predictions in catches in spring and summer fisheries. This was done to reduce chances that the model will continue to under predict catches. The model is based on pre-season forecast run sizes. As 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.

2023 Treaty Indian Fall Season Fisheries									
Week	Gillnet Fishery	Dates	Set Net Count	Total Adult Chinook	URB Chinook	Total Steelhead	B Steelhead	Coho	
31-33	Preliminary	Platform/ H&L	August 1-12	na	583	401	450	0	0
34	Projected	Platform/ H&L	13-19	na	700	400	310	10	0
35	Projected	8/21	8/24	400	16,900	10,600	530	40	660
36	Projected	8/28	8/31	490	41,000	15,900	750	130	2,630
				Total	59,183	27,301	2,040	180	3,290
					Allowed at Projected URB and B run size	83,550		1,040	
					Harvest Rate as of Sept 2	9.8%		2.3%	
					Remaining after Sept 2	56,249		860	

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 117,000 and a B-Index steelhead run size down to 1,135.

- 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 August 21 through 6:00 PM Thursday August 24 (3.5 days) 6:00 AM Monday August 28 through 6:00 PM Thursday August 31 (3.5 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.
- Aerial 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 August 30.