

OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
JOINT STAFF REPORT - SPRING FISHERY UPDATE #2
May 15, 2019

RIVER CONDITIONS

- Columbia River conditions recently measured at Bonneville Dam are lower and more turbid than recent 5-year averages for this date in May. Current outflow is 308 kcfs (including 120 kcfs spill), which is lower than the recent 5-year average of 327 kcfs. Visibility is 3.0 feet which is less than the average of 3.8 feet. Water temperature currently measures 56° F, which matches the recent 5-year average. The river stage at Vancouver is currently about 8.8 feet and is forecasted to increase to about 10 feet for the coming weekend.

STOCK STATUS

- Adult Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam through May 14 totals 39,681 fish, which is the 2nd lowest passage in the last 10 years and 35% of the 10-year (2009-2018) average cumulative count (114,531) for this date. On average, 60% of the run has passed Bonneville Dam by May 14 (range: 29%–77%). As evidenced by the variability in proportion passage complete by this date, cumulative counts at this time are not a reliable indicator of final passage. The recent 10-year average 50% passage date at Bonneville Dam is May 9.
- The *U.S. v Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met on Monday, May 13 to review information relative to the upriver spring Chinook return. Average daily passage of adults at Bonneville Dam improved from 2,202 over the week of April 30 - May 5 to 2,665 during May 6-12. This year's return will need to be later-timed than average to meet the preseason forecasted return of 99,300 adult upriver spring Chinook to the Columbia River mouth.
- Test fishing in the lower Columbia River occurred weekly from March 18 through May 6 (8 weeks). Catch rates were provided in 2019 Spring Fact Sheet #4.
- Through May 14, Cowlitz and Lewis hatcheries report 416 and 421 adults have returned, respectively.
- Based on current passage, projected returns to some upriver hatcheries may not meet escapement goals. Shortages in some hatchery programs may increase the hatchery broodstock needs at other hatchery facilities.
 - Carson National Hatchery escapement needs for hatchery broodstock collection is about 1,500 adult Chinook and currently 51 adult Chinook have been collected. Little White Salmon Hatchery escapement needs for hatchery broodstock collection is about 1,000 adult Chinook and currently 1,342 adult Chinook have been collected. Escapement needs at Carson are expected to be met with surplus broodstock from Little White Salmon Hatchery.
 - Clearwater River hatcheries escapement needs for hatchery broodstock collection is about 4,700 adult Chinook. PIT tag analysis of Clearwater destined fish indicates about 3,500 have passed Bonneville Dam to date. Regardless of run timing, there is risk of not meeting 2019 brood goals.

- Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery escapement needs for hatchery broodstock collection is about 1,000 adult Chinook. No fish have been collected to date. Current PIT passage projections indicate the escapement goal may be met.
- Staff will continue to monitor returns/projections for these and other upriver spring Chinook hatchery programs.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Forecasts and management guidelines for 2019 spring Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #4 (February 20, 2019).

2019 NON-TREATY FISHERIES

Select Area Commercial Fisheries

- Select Area commercial fisheries are currently open in all Oregon sites.
- Winter season landings totaled 695 spring Chinook (74% of recent 5-year average) and 18 sturgeon. Spring season landings through May 10 include 1,097 Chinook, which is well below average, and 119 sturgeon.
- Upriver mortalities through May 12 are estimated at 171 fish, or 54% of the 318 available at the preseason run size. Interception of upriver-origin Chinook has been low since the spring season began.

Mainstem Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery – Bonneville Dam to OR/WA Border

- The recreational spring Chinook from Bonneville Dam upstream to the OR/WA border was open under temporary regulations through May 5, and May 11-12.
- The estimated catch through May 12 totals 274 adult Chinook kept and 80 released from 2,458 angler trips.
- Upriver mortalities are estimated to be 282 adult Chinook, or 57% of the 492 available to this fishery prior to a run update.

Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery - Below Bonneville Dam

- The lower Columbia River (LCR) recreational spring Chinook fishery was open under temporary regulations from March 1 – April 10, April 13-14, April 20-21, and April 27-28. Due to low projected returns to the Cowlitz and Lewis rivers, the fishery was restricted to the area from Warrior Rock line (just upstream of the Lewis River) upstream to Bonneville Dam.
- The combined season kept catch is estimated at 1,676 adult spring Chinook from 31,707 angler trips.
- Upriver mortalities are estimated to be 1,471 adult Chinook, or 40% of the 3,689 available to this fishery prior to a run update.

Snake River Spring Chinook Recreational Fishery – Washington waters

- The spring Chinook salmon fishery was open in two sections of the lower Snake River during May 11-12, and has been reduced to one section on a two days per week schedule

(Saturday and Sunday) beginning May 18. A total of 50 Chinook were kept and 7 released from the first opener of that fishery, using 14% of 367 upriver mortalities available for this fishery at the buffered run size.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- No additional Compact or Joint State hearings are scheduled at this time. The Joint Staff will monitor stock status and projected hatchery returns, and may recommend additional hearings, which could occur as early as next week.