

**OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**  
**JOINT STAFF REPORT: WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 8**  
**Columbia River Compact**  
**March 29, 2010**

<b><i>Fisheries under Consideration:</i></b> Non-Indian Commercial Salmon
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*Stock status and management guidelines for 2010 Chinook fisheries were presented in Winter Fact Sheet #3(February 18, 2010).*

- Bonneville Dam passage of Chinook between January 1 and March 26 totals 251 adults. Since 2000, the cumulative count through March 26 has ranged from nine fish (2006) up to 9,000 fish (2003). The cumulative counts averaged 63 fish during the most recent five years (all late years).
- Bonneville Dam passage of steelhead since January 1 includes nearly 3,519 steelhead compared to the recent 5-year average of 2,000 fish, and includes 998 unclipped fish (28% wild). The summer steelhead counting period at Bonneville Dam begins April 1.
- Mainstem sport catch through March 21 includes 2,500 hatchery Chinook kept (350 released) from 43,000 angler trips. This total includes an upriver Chinook catch (kept plus release mortalities) of 1,100 fish, or 6% of the 17,200 available prior to a run update. Winter steelhead handle includes 300 fish kept and 100 released.
- The recreational effort and total Chinook catch is tracking closely with preseason expectations. The March fishery has totaled 35,000 trips and 2,600 Chinook handled through March 21, compared to an expected 31,000 trips and 2,900 Chinook handled. Catch rates increased markedly during the week of March 22-28 and effort remains high; however, formal estimates will not be available until mid-week.
- Stock composition was comprised of a higher proportion of lower river stocks than expected through mid March, but catches of upriver stocks have increased since then. Stock composition (based on VSI) is 46% upper river stock for the full season, and 53% during the week of March 15-21.
- Test fishing has occurred once a week throughout March to index Chinook and steelhead abundance and stock ratios. All test fishing is conducted with tangle net gear, and has occurred in Zones 2-3.

2010 Spring Chinook Commercial Fishery Observation Data															
						Chinook Data							Steelhead		
Fishery	Month	Day	Mesh	Drifts	Zones	Lower	Upriver	Total	Chin/Drift	Mark Rate	% Upriver	Chinook/Sthd	Total Sthd	# unclipped	Sthd/drift
Test	Mar	7	4.25	11	2-3	2	0	2	0.18	50%	0%	0.13	16	4	1.45
Test	Mar	14	4.25	16	2-3	5	1	6	0.38	100%	17%	0.35	17	7	1.06
Test	Mar	21-22	4.25	18	2-3	33	26	59	3.28	86%	44%	2.57	23	7	1.28
Test	Mar	28	4.25	21	2-3	23	43	66	3.14	92%	65%	4.71	14	4	0.7

- Results from test fishing on March 29 continued to show improvement in Chinook catch rates compared to the first two weeks in March. Steelhead abundance appears to be past peak, which would be typical for the last week in March. Steelhead abundance in the Columbia River is expected to decrease as the fish move into the tributaries.

<i>Joint Staff Recommendation- Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Fishery</i>	
Season:	12:00 PM (noon) to 12:00AM (midnight) Tuesday, March 30, 2010 (12 hours)
Area:	Mouth upstream to the I-205 Bridge
Sanctuaries:	Grays River, Elochoman-B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, Lewis-B, Sandy River and Washougal River as applicable.
Gear:	Drift nets only. 4¼” maximum mesh size restriction. Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms. Net length can increase from 150 to 175 fathoms for nets constructed with a steelhead excluder panel, weedlines, or droppers.
Allowable Sales:	Adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon, shad and white sturgeon. A maximum of <b>five white sturgeon</b> may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel during each calendar week (Sunday through Saturday) that the fishery is open. The sturgeon possession/sales limit includes both mainstem and Select Area fisheries.
Additional Regulations:	Standard regulations typically in place for spring Chinook commercial fisheries are in effect, including but not limited to: net length, use of recovery boxes, limited soak times, red corks, lighted buoys, tangle-net certification, etc.  Nets not specifically authorized for use in this fishery may be onboard the vessel if properly stored. A properly stored net is defined as a net on a drum that is fully covered by a tarp (canvas or plastic) and bound with a minimum of ten revolutions of rope with a diameter of 3/8 (0.375) inches or greater  12-hour Quick Reporting Rule for Washington buyers.

- Staff estimates Chinook kept catch would be 8,000 fish (6,000-10,000 range).
- The upriver Chinook catch (kept plus release mortalities) is projected to be 5,320 fish, or 63% of the 8,300 available prior to a run update.
- Steelhead handle is projected to be 800 fish including 41 wild mortalities (0.2% impact).
- Depending on the actual catch, future fishing periods may need to be of short duration (≤6 hours) to remain within catch limitations.
- Another fishing period could be considered as early as Thursday night.

#### **Future meetings**

- The Joint Staff may recommend a Compact hearing for the afternoon of Wednesday March 31 or Monday April 5.