

2022 fall lower Columbia River recreational mainstem fishery closure update

Background to Columbia River Fall Fishery Management

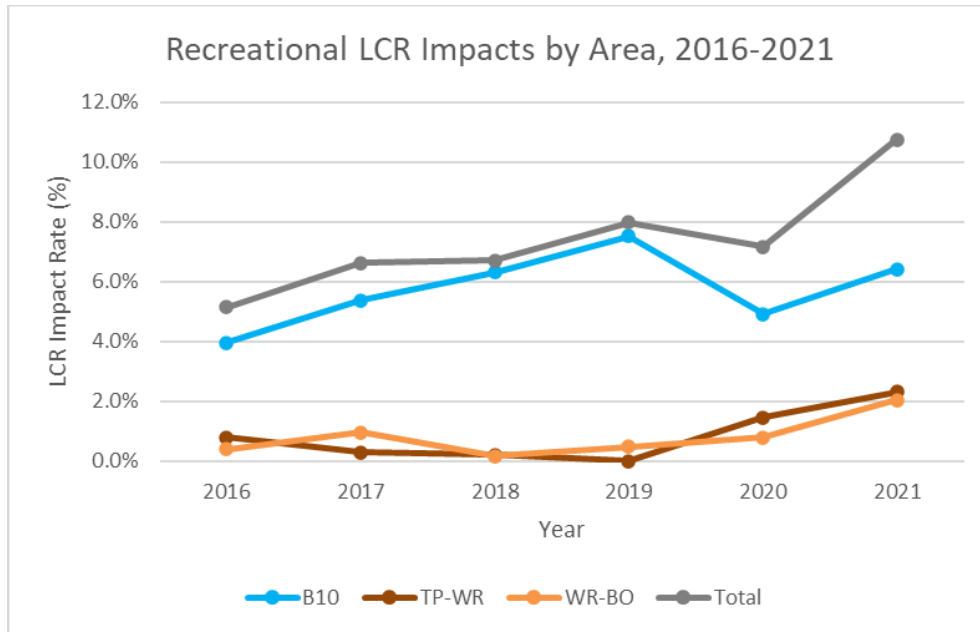
- Pacific Salmon Treaty agreement provides sharing of harvest and escapement targets for salmon stocks between the U.S. and Canada.
- Components of the Columbia River salmon and steelhead runs are federally-listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
- The 2018–2027 *U.S. vs. Oregon* Management Agreement (MA) provides for treaty Indian and non-treaty fishery harvest constraints (e.g., ESA impact limits) for salmon and steelhead stocks destined for areas upstream of Bonneville Dam.
- North of Falcon/Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) are salmon season setting processes for the upcoming fisheries using public input.
 - ✓ Joint staff (ODFW/WDFW) develop Non-Treaty Columbia River Summer/Fall Fishery Plan: In-season management decisions for non-treaty commercial and recreational fall-season fisheries will be based on the *U.S. vs. OR* MA, ESA-impact limits, the state commissions' policies/rules, and the preseason plan.
- Compact/Joint State Hearing adopts rules for fisheries within OR/WA concurrent waters of the Columbia River.
 - ✓ Used to set seasons, in-season management, and authorize the non-treaty purchase of commercially caught fish in treaty fisheries.
 - ✓ Joint staff provide recommendations to decision makers (one for each state) based on catch and impact estimations within management guidelines and as outlined in the preseason Fishery Plan.
 - ✓ Open to the public and allows for public testimony. Public can register to be included on the email distribution list for either or both states.
- Joint staff estimate catch, effort, and impact estimates through a variety of tools.
 - ✓ Angler surveys (i.e., creel) are conducted to generate a representative sample of the harvest, release, and effort data. These surveys also collect biological data, including mark status, species, adult/jack classification, and fish snouts with coded wire tags (CWT). CWTs are a small tag with a unique numerical code associated with a group of fish (e.g., Cowlitz River hatchery) that was implanted into the juvenile fish's snout.
 - ✓ Effort counts (e.g., trailer counts and aerial flights) are used to estimate total fishery estimates by means of expanding the harvest, release and effort data collected from angler surveys.
 - ✓ Snouts with CWTs are sent to each state's lab to dig out the tag and generate the associated data from each tag. Data is used to apply stock composition of the catch.
 - In-season assessment of stock composition from CWTs is unique to the Columbia River fisheries; most other fisheries assess CWTs post-season.

Fall Management Guidelines

- Columbia River fall Chinook are comprised of multiple management components: Select Area Brights (SAB), Lower River Hatchery (LRH), Lower River Wild (LRW), Bonneville Pool Hatchery (BPH), Upriver Bright (URB), Pool Upriver Bright (PUB), and Lower River Bright (LRB). The LRH and BPH stocks are referred to as tule stock and the remaining stocks are referred to as bright stock.
- The allowable harvest rate (HR) for combined treaty Indian and non-treaty fisheries is 45% of the URB run based on the 2022 preseason forecast (URB stock is the surrogate for Snake River wild (SRW) Chinook). This HR is allocated 30% for treaty Indian fisheries and 15% for non-treaty fisheries.
- The allowable non-treaty impact rates for wild summer steelhead (A-Index and B-Index) during fall fisheries is 2% each.
- The escapement goal at Spring Creek Hatchery is 7,000 adult fall Chinook (BPH stock).
- The management goal for adult fall Chinook passage at McNary Dam is 60,000 fish.
- The goal for upriver Coho passage at Bonneville Dam is 50% of the ocean abundance.
- The exploitation rate (ER) limit to Lower Columbia River (LCR) natural tule fall Chinook was 38% in 2022 given the preseason forecast. **LRH is the surrogate stock used to estimate impacts to LCR tule fall Chinook.** The LCR ER limit includes impacts in ocean and Columbia River fisheries combined.
- In 2022, fishery impacts to Lower Columbia Natural (LCN) Coho are limited to a 23% ER for combined ocean and Columbia River fisheries.
- The respective Washington and Oregon Fish and Wildlife commission policies provide guidance for 2022 non-treaty fall fisheries management which includes the following:
 - ✓ Current policy guidance regarding fall Chinook allocation is concurrent. Allocation of fall Chinook ESA impacts for the most constraining stock is no more than 70% to recreational fisheries and no less than 30% to commercial fisheries.
 - ✓ Guidance for recreational Chinook fishery objectives is not concurrent. The OR rules provide guidance, while the WA policy does not.

2022 Preseason Planning Process – Recreational Fall Chinook Fisheries

- **For 2022 in-river fisheries, the most constraining stock was LCR tule fall Chinook with a 9.82% ER, and 70% was planned for recreational (6.87%) consistent with Commission guidance.**
- Recreational Chinook fishery season objectives as described in the OR policy were not expected to be achievable in 2022.
- Recreational LCR impact rate by area has increased in nearly every year since 2016 and most dramatically in 2021.



- The following issues/options/comments were raised during NOF#1 meeting regarding the fall recreational Chinook fishery.
 - ✓ Ocean/in-river sharing balance
 - ✓ Mark-selective fishery (MSF) at Buoy 10
 - ✓ Delay start date
 - ✓ Days per week
 - ✓ Sub-area closures
 - ✓ Overlap fisheries to limit effort shift
- Public input generally supported the resulting Chinook retention seasons with the associated LCR ER.
 - ✓ Buoy 10 to west Puget Island: Aug. 1-24 MSF with an estimated mark-rate of 65%, Aug. 25-Sept. 7 non-MSF, Sept. 8-30 coho only, and Oct. 1-Dec. 31 non-MSF
 - ✓ West Puget Island to Warrior: Aug. 1-Sept. 7, Sept. 8-30 closed, Oct. 1-Dec 31 non-MSF
 - ✓ Warrior to Bonneville: Aug. 1-Sept. 13, Sept. 14-30 closed, Oct. 1-Dec 31 non-MSF
- 2022 Fishery Plan was posted on the OR/WA websites on May 24 and incorporated into the annual Fall Joint Staff Report that was distributed on July 19.
- Recreational fisheries resulting from the Fishery Plan are adopted through the North of Falcon permanent rule-making and listed in the sportfishing pamphlet for WA.

Stock Status updates

- Fisheries are managed based on preseason forecasts until in-season run size updates become available.
- Preseason abundance estimates for upriver-origin fall Chinook stocks (BPH, PUB, and URB) and upriver summer steelhead (A- and B-Index) are updated in-season by the *U.S. vs. OR* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Lower river Chinook stocks (SAB, LRH, LRW, and LRB) are not updated in-season.

- The table below provides the pre-season forecast, and where available, the updated run size provided by TAC.

2022 Columbia River salmon and steelhead returns: Pre-season forecasted and TAC updated									
		Pre-season	8/22	8/29	9/6	9/12	9/19	9/26	10/3
Fall Chinook	Total	485,500	-	-	-	745,800	672,800	647,800	637,800
	LRH	73,600	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	LRW	10,900	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	BPH	92,200	-	-	-	144,000	146,000	142,000	206,000
	URB	229,700	-	-	-	398,000	339,000	323,000	267,000
	SRW	11,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	LRB	8,700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	PUB	69,800	-	-	-	110,000	94,000	89,000	71,000
	SAB	600	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Coho	Total	683,700	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Early	431,400	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Late	252,300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Summer Steelhead	Total	96,600	127,600	113,600	110,100	111,500	130,300	125,000	122,500
	A-index	81,000	112,000	98,000	94,500	95,900	95,900	92,000	91,000
	wild	28,100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	B-index	15,600	-	-	-	-	34,400	33,000	31,500
	wild	1,900	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Columbia River mouth run size, except steelhead to Bonneville Dam.
 **Wild components included in the stock total.

August 29 Joint-State Action

Chinook retention in buoy 10 closed effective August 31.

- Buoy 10 MSF (Aug. 1-24) remained open as planned and resulted in 2.05% LCR ER as compared to the planned 1.85%. The MSF portion of the fishery performed similar to expectations and was successful in moderating ESA impact accrual resulting from the three highest Buoy 10 Chinook handle days on record.
- Buoy 10 non-MSF was originally scheduled to be open Aug. 25-Sept. 7 but Chinook retention was closed effective Aug. 31 due to Chinook handle being 219% higher than expected.

September 1 Compact Hearing

OR/WA closed angling for and retention of salmonids from Buoy 10 to Bonneville Dam effective September 2.

- LRH handle in the Buoy 10 non-MSF was much higher than expected based upon preliminary analysis of CWT data. Staff estimated the non-MSF from Aug. 25-30 resulted in 4.66% LCR ER as compared to the expected 2.02% from Aug. 25-Sept. 7.
- Given the LCR ER overage in the Buoy 10 fishery, plus the expected total catch for the LCR recreational Chinook fisheries, harvest was projected to exceed the recreational allocation of LCR ER. This would result in exceeding the total allowable LCR ER for all in-river fisheries if a closure did not occur.
 - ✓ No ocean roll-over of unused impacts was expected to be available in 2022 due to LCR tules being the most constraining stock in ocean fisheries.

- Staff estimated that the recreational fishery would accrue 7.46% LCR ER of the allowed 6.87% recreational allocation. This estimated LCR ER accrual exceeded the recreational allocation at 76% and reduced the available commercial allocation to 24% (2.36% LCR ER as compared to the preseason allocation of 2.95%).
- Staff expected to finalize preliminary catch estimates and CWT analyses from all Columbia River recreational fisheries by the following week and would then determine what opportunities existed for re-opening salmon retention.

September 13 Compact Hearing

OR/WA opened Buoy 10 coho and upstream of Reed Island for Chinook and coho effective September 15.

- Total LCR ER in the recreational fishery was estimated to be 7.29% of the allowed 6.87% recreational allocation.
- Based on CWT data, LCR tulle Chinook are typically present in the Columbia River mainstem through the month of September, although abundance declines in the latter half of the month especially in the lower river. Higher LCR tulle abundance occurs near the mouths of tributaries where LCR tulle return (e.g., Cowlitz, Washougal).
- Although fall recreational fisheries exceeded the LCR tulle recreational allocation, staff assessed multiple recreational fishery options that had either no additional LCR ER impact or extremely low impacts that would not affect the ability to prosecute commercial fisheries.
 - ✓ A Chinook directed fishery in the Columbia Gorge would have the least likelihood of accruing any additional LCR impacts. During the past 20 years, only one LRH CWT has been recovered in the recreational fishery upstream of Reed Island (located ~6 miles upstream of the Washougal River), and none after September 1.
 - ✓ A coho-directed fishery in Buoy 10 during late September would be expected to handle <1,000 Chinook, and staff estimated the proportion of LRH stock fall Chinook at 5-10% of the total Chinook present for an LCR ER of 0.02%.
- With this Compact action, staff estimated that the recreational fishery would accrue 7.31% LCR ER of the allowed 6.87% recreational allocation. The overage reduced the commercial allocation of LCR ER by 0.44% (as compared to the preseason allocation of 2.95% LCR ER).

September 28 Compact Hearing

OR/WA opened Chinook retention (including coho where applicable) from Buoy 10 to Bonneville Dam on October 1.

- Staff continued to assess recreational fishery options that either had no additional LCR ER impact or extremely low impact, which would not affect the ability to prosecute commercial fisheries.
- Based on the updated URB run size, updated catch projections, and past CWT data that indicated the majority of LCR tulle Chinook have entered the tributaries by late September, re-opening Chinook retention in the lower Columbia River could be considered.
- With this Compact action, staff estimated no change in LCR ER impacts compared to the previous Compact.
- Staff estimated the URB harvest rate for the non-treaty fisheries to be 13.6% out of the 15% allowed down to an URB run size of 289,000.

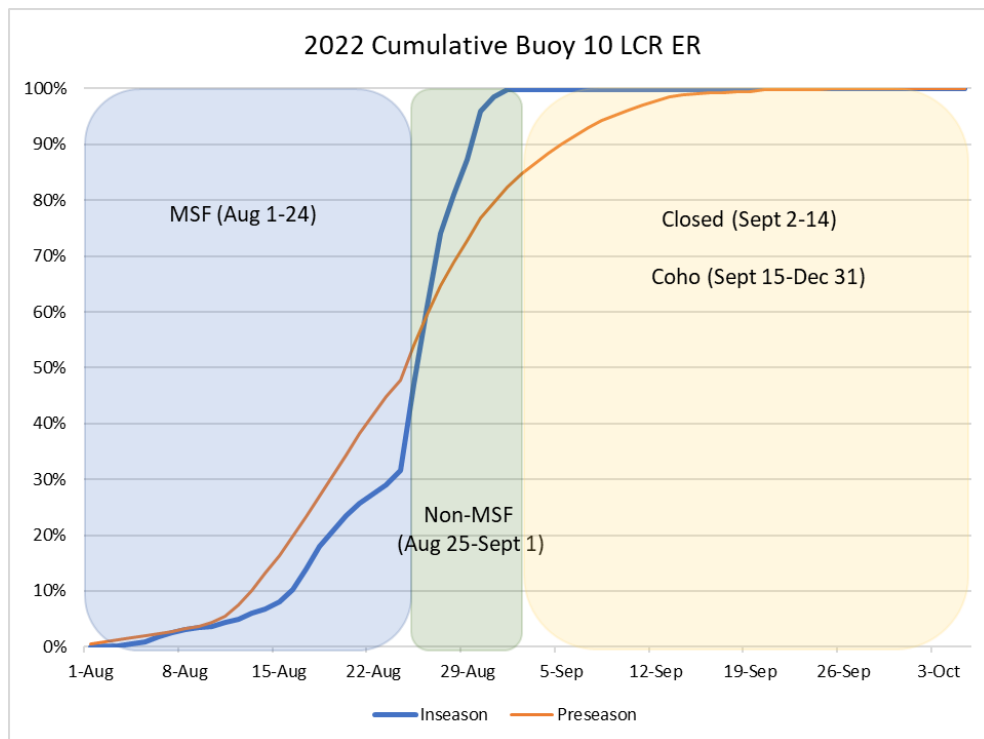
October 5 Compact Hearing

OR/WA rescinded two Zone 4/5 commercial fishing periods and Chinook retention from Buoy 10 to Highway 395 Bridge at Pasco, WA beginning October 8.

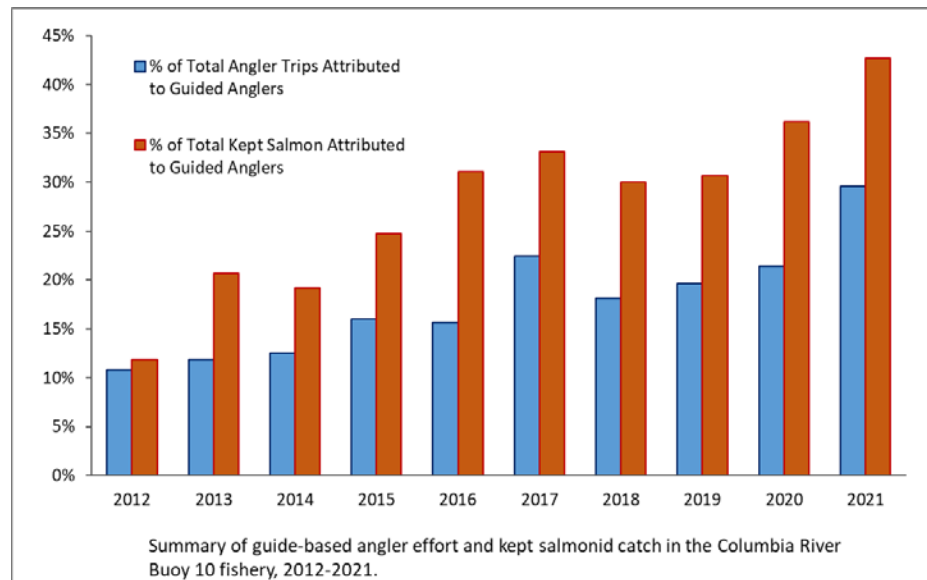
- URB run size was modified by TAC to 267,000. Updated catches to-date and full-season projections for non-treaty fisheries resulted in a projected 15.96% URB HR as compared to the limit of 15.0%.
- Staff’s estimate for LCR ER remained unchanged from the previous Compact Hearing.
- With this Compact action, staff estimated the URB harvest rate for the non-treaty fisheries to be 14.75% out of the 15% allowed down to an URB run size of 262,500 to account for some run estimate uncertainty evidenced by the decreasing abundance projections provided by TAC during the fall season.

Additional Information

- MSF in Buoy 10 has not been consistently implemented. This management tool is primarily used when Chinook impacts constraints limit the ability to have a meaningful non-MSF fishery for August through early September.
- Below is a figure showing the cumulative accrual of LCR ER during the 2022 Buoy 10 fishery.
 - ✓ A similar pattern occurred in 2021 with the MSF portion accruing LCR ER similar to preseason expectations, but the non-MSF accrued much more than anticipated; 2021 was able to re-open several weeks later due to an ocean roll-over of unused impacts (2.2% ER).
 - ✓ 2nd highest Chinook catch rate on record with 0.38 Chinook kept per angler day.



- WDFW-licensed guides cannot operate downstream of the Longview Bridge on the Columbia River for food fish; logbooks are required to be filled out daily statewide. WDFW-licensed charters can operate in Buoy 10.
- ODFW does not manage the OR-licensed guides (Oregon Marine Board is the oversight agency); OR guides can fish throughout the Columbia River. The following figure provides the proportion of catch over time attributed to OR-licensed guided trips in the Buoy 10 fishery.



Feedback

- OR/WA Compact Hearing Decision Makers during the September 1 hearing asked the public to provide suggestions to staff for fishery modifications and/or management options ahead of the 2023 preseason salmon season setting process.
- OR/WA joint state staff are developing an online survey to be distributed, via state list servs and websites, prior to 2023 to solicit input from all sectors of the recreational fishing community on future actions.
- Columbia River Recreational Advisors are jointly managed by ODFW/WDFW and regularly participate at Compact Hearings and preseason setting process to provide input. Advisors dedicate their time, share their knowledge and experience, and communicate stakeholder suggestions to joint state staff.

Resources

WDFW Columbia River Compact websites: [Columbia River Compact | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#) & [WDFW mailing lists | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)

Columbia River Recreational Advisory Group: ODFW & WDFW. [Columbia River Recreational Fishing Advisory Group | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)

Joint Columbia River Management Staff: ODFW & WDFW. 2022 Non-Treaty Columbia River Summer/Fall Fishery Plan. May 24, 2022. [Joint state staff reports | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)

Joint Columbia River Management Staff: ODFW & WDFW. 2022 Joint Staff Report: Stock Status and Fisheries for Fall Chinook Salmon, Coho Salmon, Chum Salmon, Summer Steelhead, and White Sturgeon. July 19, 2022. [Joint state staff reports | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)

NOAA Fisheries. 2018-2027 *United States vs. OR* Management Agreement. [2018-2027 United States v. Oregon Management Agreement | NOAA Fisheries](#)

ODFW Columbia River Compact websites: [ODFW Columbia River Management Fact Sheets \(state.or.us\)](#)

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission. Columbia River Salmon Fishery Management, C-3630. [Columbia River Salmon Fishery Management | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)