



Columbia River Angler Opinion Survey

Summary of Responses

Prepared by Joint State Staff
March 10, 2023

Introduction

The Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) and the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) recently conducted an online survey intended to gather perspectives from anglers who participate in Columbia River recreational fall Chinook fisheries. The survey asks about potential management strategies and priorities to inform Columbia River fishery managers as they work to develop future fall recreational Chinook seasons. The survey will inform pre-season planning for future fall Chinook fishing seasons and provides valuable insight into those things anglers value in fall fisheries. However, several of the potential strategies presented in the survey will not be considered this year (e.g., area specific endorsements, limits on guides/charters, gear modifications) given the need for further discussion and exploration with co-managers and stakeholders to determine if and/or how strategies could be successfully implemented, including potential statutory hurdles. Additionally, survey results will not be used by managers to consider specific options but will help managers create sideboards on approaches to consider in support of effective, enforceable regulations for fall recreational Chinook fisheries.

The survey was distributed through WDFW and ODFW Columbia River fishery announcement distribution lists, ODFW's fish and wildlife e-mail list, and posted on each state's corresponding website. Responses were collected from December 14, 2022 to January 15, 2023. During that time 7,619 people completed the survey. The following provides a set of survey highlights and a summary of survey responses in the order questions were asked. The survey provided managers with a tremendous amount of information and co-managers are still examining the data gathered. This is a preliminary summary of the information gathered.

The survey also provided the opportunity for respondents to provide a comment on questions that included "other" as an answer choice, or to provide a final comment or question. Over 5,700 comments were received. The Departments are still reviewing these comments and thus they are not included in the following summary.

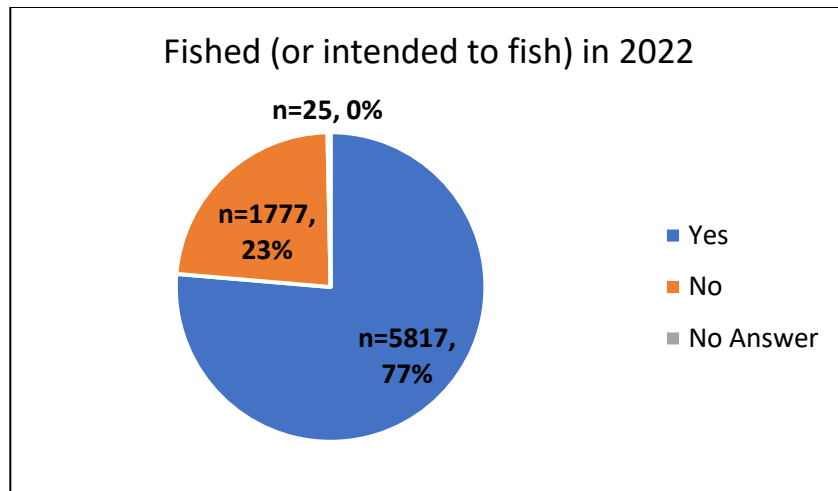
Survey Highlights

- More than 7,500 anglers responded to the survey.
- Most (> 90%) respondents were annual license holders.

- Respondents fish for fall Chinook throughout the lower Columbia River, with many fishing in more than one area, but the most popular areas amongst respondents were downstream of Bonneville Dam.
- Opinions varied on the fall fishery characteristics that respondents value most highly, though year-to-year season consistency appeared to be favored above others.
- Angler opinions on specific regulatory and management strategies were varied and broadly distributed, but reflect an interest in incorporating additional strategies to achieve fishery goals.
- Respondents were relatively evenly split on whether they would prefer a longer (more days) “hatchery only” or shorter (fewer days) “any Chinook” angling regulations.
- Staff have gained valuable information from the survey and are considering ways to refine survey questions and potentially use similar surveys as a regular tool moving forward.

Survey Results

1. Did you fish for salmon, or did you intend to fish for salmon on the Columbia River this past fall?



2. Which type(s) of fishing license do you hold? (Select all that apply)

Type of License	# Responses	Percentage ¹
Recreational license (annual)	7404	97.2%
Guide/Charter license	149	2.0%
Recreational license (daily/multiday)	127	1.7%
None	89	1.2%
No answer	33	0.4%
Total	7802	102.4%

3. In which state did you purchase a recreational fishing license?

State of License	# Responses	Percentage
Oregon	5828	76.5%
Washington	901	11.8%
Both	798	10.5%
None	57	0.7%
No answer	35	0.5%
Total	7619	100.0%

4. If you fished recreationally on the Columbia River mainstem in 2022, what method of transportation did you use? (Select all that apply)

Method of Transportation	# Responses	Percentage ²
Boat angler (personal boat and/or charter/guide service)	5608	73.6%
Bank angler	1534	20.1%
Other	348	4.6%
No answer	837	11.0%
Total	8327	109.3%

¹ Percentages are based on the number of survey respondents (7619). For example, 97.2% of people who completed the survey hold an annual recreational license. Because some people hold more than one type of recreational license the percentages total more than 100%.

² Percentages are based on the number of survey respondents (7619). For example, 20.1% of people who completed the survey fish from the bank of the river (i.e., bank anglers). Because some people indicated using more than one mode of transportation the percentages total more than 100%.

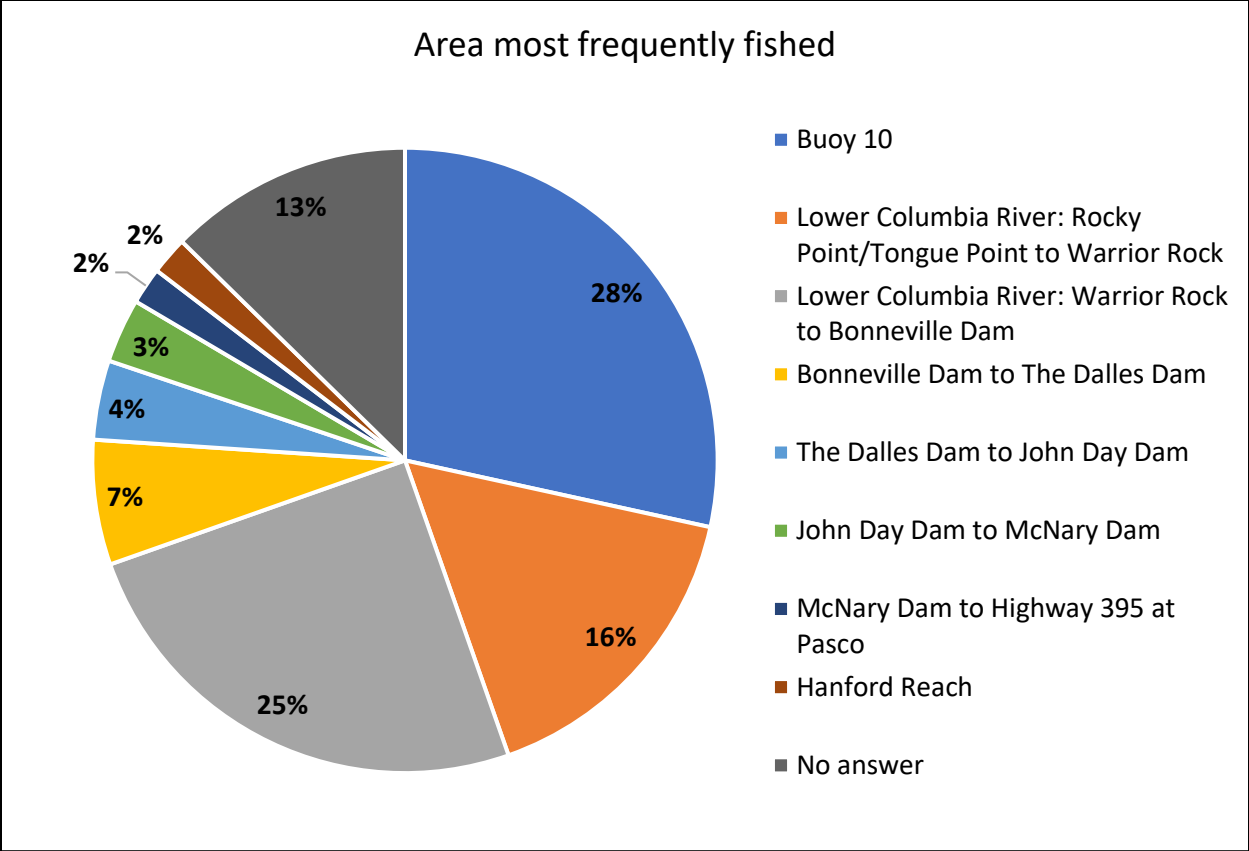
5. Which section(s) of the Columbia River mainstem do you typically fish in the fall? (Select all that apply)

Fishing areas typically fished (select all)		
Mainstem fishing area	# Responses	Percentage³
Buoy 10	3304	43%
Lower Columbia River: Rocky Point/Tongue Point to Warrior Rock	2283	30%
Lower Columbia River: Warrior Rock to Bonneville Dam	2877	38%
Bonneville Dam to The Dalles Dam	1109	15%
The Dalles Dam to John Day Dam	603	8%
John Day Dam to McNary Dam	422	6%
McNary Dam to Highway 395 at Pasco	263	3%
Hanford Reach	260	3%
All areas	483	6%
No answer	890	12%
Total	12494	164%

6. Of the areas above, where do you most frequently fish? (Select one)

Fishing area most frequently fished (select one)		
Mainstem fishing area	# Responses	Percentage
Buoy 10	2166	28%
Lower Columbia River: Rocky Point/Tongue Point to Warrior Rock	1234	16%
Lower Columbia River: Warrior Rock to Bonneville Dam	1903	25%
Bonneville Dam to The Dalles Dam	492	6%
The Dalles Dam to John Day Dam	313	4%
John Day Dam to McNary Dam	253	3%
McNary Dam to Highway 395 at Pasco	145	2%
Hanford Reach	149	2%
No answer	964	13%
Total	7619	100%

³ Percentages are based on the number of survey respondents (7619). For example, 43% of people who completed the survey indicated they fish at buoy 10. Because approximately 40% of survey respondents selected two or more fishing areas, these percentages add up to more than 100%.



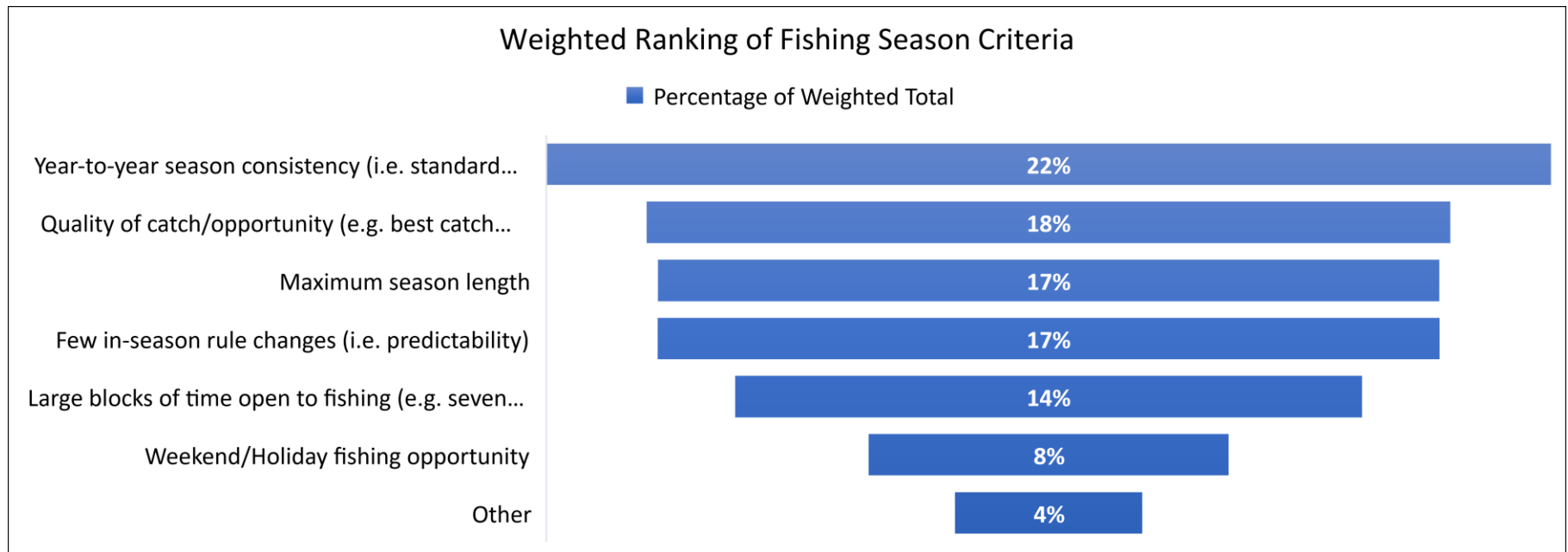
7. Please rank the following Chinook fishing season criteria in order of personal importance to you.

In this question we asked anglers to select and then order the fishing season criteria that are most important to them. Approximately 74% of those who participated in the survey provided a response to this question. Some respondents selected and ranked a single criterion while others ranked several or all criteria.

The following table (next page) shows the frequency with which the seven fishing season criteria were ranked as either 1, 2 or 3, and should be interpreted by looking down the columns for each respective ranking. For example, 30% of respondents felt that year-to-year season consistency was the most important criteria (i.e., rank 1) while 20% of respondents felt that quality of catch/opportunity was the most important criteria.

Fishing Season Criteria Ranked as 1, 2 or 3						
Fishing Season Criteria	Rank					
	1		2		3	
	# Responses	% #1 Rankings	# Responses	% #2 Rankings	# Responses	% #3 Rankings
Year-to-year season consistency (i.e., standard seasons)	1657	30%	670	21%	459	17%
Quality of catch/opportunity (e.g., best catch rates)	1133	20%	510	16%	439	16%
Maximum season length	971	17%	586	19%	497	18%
Few in-season rule changes (i.e., predictability)	791	14%	730	23%	617	22%
Large blocks of time open to fishing (e.g., seven days per week)	460	8%	462	15%	529	19%
Weekend/Holiday fishing opportunity	233	4%	145	5%	166	6%
Other	364	6%	62	2%	49	2%
Total responses per ranking position	5609	100%	3165	100%	2756	100%

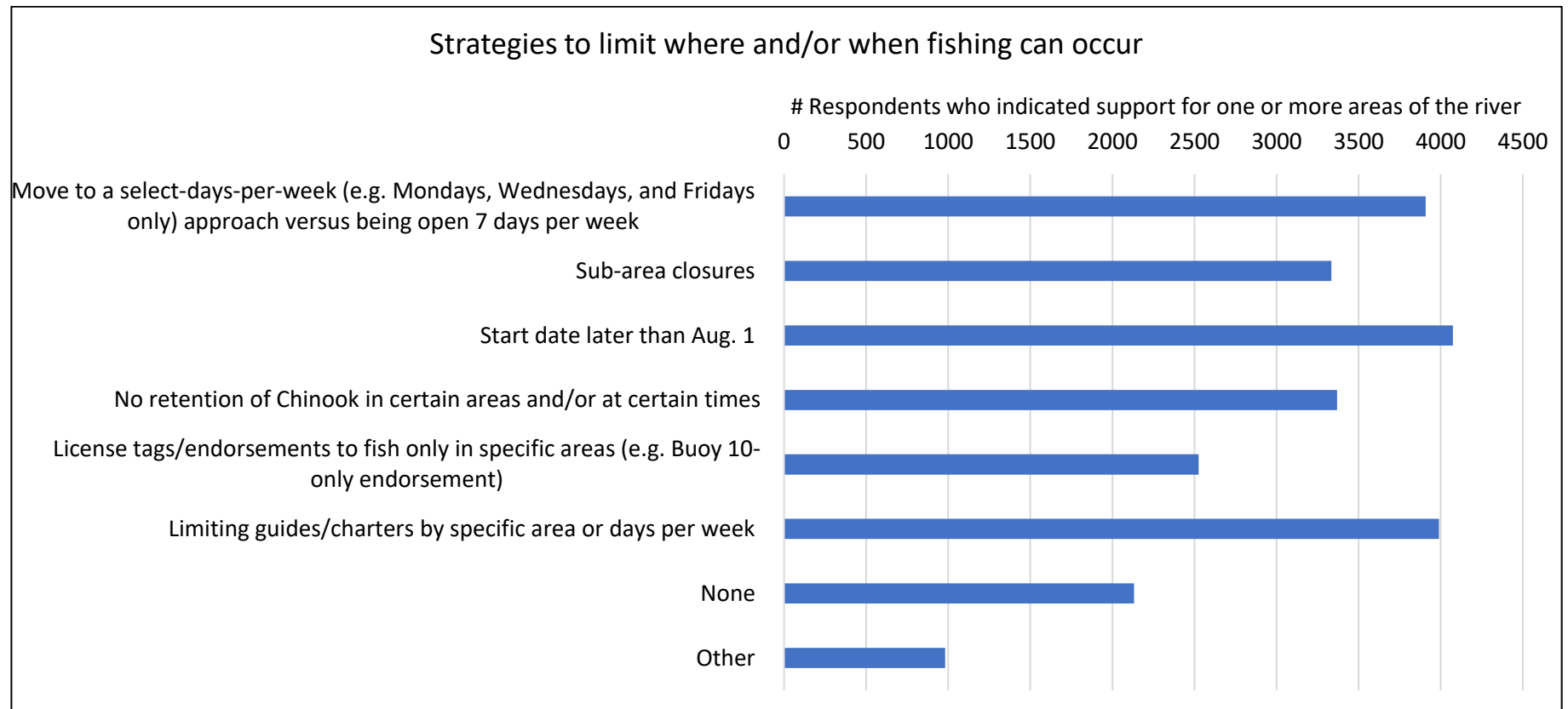
The following graph shows the weighted average of ranking responses to this question. This was calculated by assigning a weight to each ranking position (e.g., rank 1 = 7 points; rank 2 = 6 points, etc.), calculating the number of weighted points for each season criteria, and dividing that by the total weighted responses (i.e., total number of weighted points across all criteria). This shows that year-to-year season consistency was valued highest overall, with the next 3 criteria all valued strongly but relatively equally.



8. Would you support any of the following potential strategies to limit where and/or when fishing can occur and in which section(s) of river would you support the option?

In this question we asked anglers to indicate which strategies they would support to limit where and/or when fishing can occur. Approximately 84% of survey participants provided a response to this question. Some provided feedback on all or most strategies while others only provided feedback on one or a subset of the listed strategies.

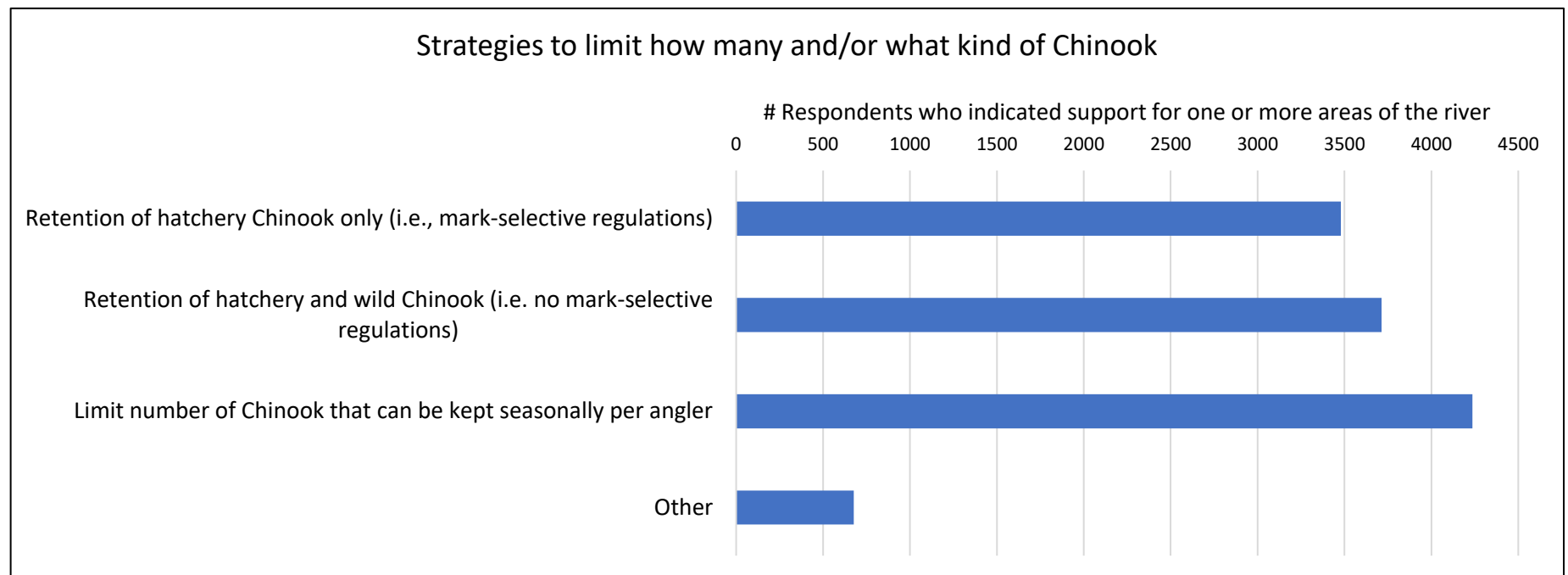
The following graph shows the number of survey respondents who indicated support for the listed strategies for one or more sections of the river. Managers will continue reviewing responses to this question to glean insight from the area-specific preferences shared and engage in further dialogue with stakeholders regarding the appropriate geographic scope for these management strategies.



9. Would you support any of the following strategies to limit how many and/or what type of Chinook can be kept?

In this question we asked anglers to indicate which strategies they would support to limit how many and/or what type of Chinook could be kept in mainstem recreational fisheries. Approximately 74% of survey participants provided a response to this question. Some provided feedback on all or most strategies while others only provided feedback on one or a subset of the listed strategies.

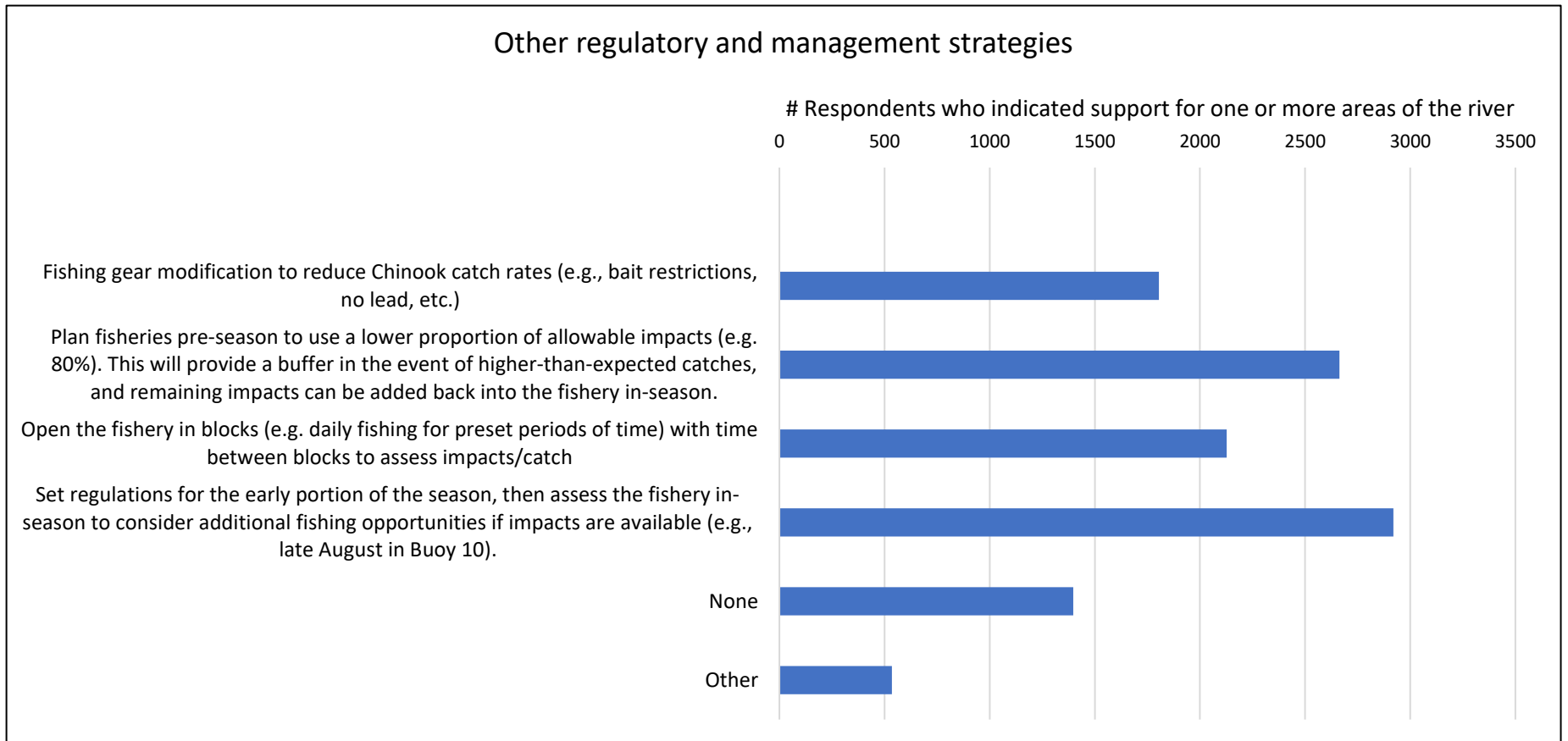
The following graph shows the number of survey respondents who indicated support for the listed strategies for one or more sections of the river. Managers will continue reviewing responses to this question to glean insight from the area-specific preferences shared and engage in further dialogue with stakeholders regarding the appropriate geographic scope for these management strategies.



10. There are other regulatory and management strategies that could be considered. Would you support any of these other options?

In this question we asked anglers to indicate which other regulatory and management strategies they would support. Approximately 64% of survey participants provided a response to this question. Some provided feedback on all or most strategies while others only provided feedback on one or a subset of the listed strategies.

The following graph shows the number of survey respondents who indicated support for the listed strategies for one or more sections of the river. Managers will continue reviewing responses to this question to glean insight from the area-specific preferences shared and engage in further dialogue with stakeholders regarding the appropriate geographic scope for these management strategies.



11. Would you prefer a longer season at Buoy 10 with mark-selective Chinook regulations, or a shorter season where any Chinook (marked or unmarked) can be retained?

In this question we asked anglers to indicate whether they would prefer a longer or shorter season for the Buoy 10 recreational fishery, but with different retention regulations for Chinook. Approximately 70% of survey participants provided a response to this question. The following chart shows the number of responses and percentage for those that indicated their season length preference in this question.

