

Columbia River Summer Chinook Commercial Non-Indian Fishery Considerations for 2018
Fact Sheet

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission Conference Call, May 18, 2018

April 13, 2018 FWC Meeting, Olympia

- Mr. Robert Sudar testified during the open public comment period requesting a policy decision in favor of a commercial gillnet fishery in Zones 1 -5 of the Columbia River, providing various justifications and rationale and citing the adaptive management provisions in Policy 3620 (the Columbia River Policy).
- In the spirit of “trust and verify”, the Commissioners asked staff to verify the information provided by Mr. Sudar and review the adaptive management provisions as to applicability in this situation, and to report back during the meeting debrief agenda item. This report was later postponed until the April 20, 2018 conference call.
 - See below for the verbal report provided April 20, 2018.

April 20, 2018 FWC Conference Call

- Staff responses to matters brought up at the April 13, 2018 FWC Meeting:
 - Does the Columbia River Policy allocate about 708 summer chinook to the non-Indian commercial fishery? Yes.
 - Were 708 summer chinook presumed to be taken by this fishery in the final 2018 North of Falcon negotiations and not reallocated to escapement or other fisheries because it was expected the fishery would not occur? True.
 - Does the Columbia River Policy presume these fish would be taken by alternative gear, and not traditional gillnets, and that the fishery would be selective to hatchery origin fish only? Yes. However, see below on the possible flexibility under the Columbia River Policy’s adaptive management provisions.
 - Is it expected that there will be alternative gear authorized and fished in a 2018 commercial fishery? No.
 - Is it true that large mesh gillnets would avoid capture of ESA-listed or otherwise non-target populations of sockeye and steelhead? The take of these species would not be completely avoided but the incidental handling mortality would be expected to be minimal.
 - Is it true that the escapement goal for summer chinook in the *U.S v Oregon* Agreement is 20,000 adult fish over Priest Rapids Dam, that this goal has been exceeded regularly and that it is expected to be exceeded in 2018? Yes.
 - Is it true that approximately 9,700 summer chinook have been authorized for non-selective fisheries in the ocean south of the Canadian border, and an additional significant amount are expected to be taken by non-selective Tribal fisheries above Bonneville Dam in Zone 6? Yes. Authorized PFMC ocean fishery impacts north and south of Cape Falcon are approximately 11,000 summer chinook; these and the Zone 6 Tribal fisheries are not selective to hatchery fish only.

- Do the adaptive management provisions in the Columbia River Policy provide for an allowance of a commercial large mesh traditional gillnet fishery on summer chinook if the Commission wished to explore opening a fishery? The adaptive management provisions appear to provide sufficient flexibility for this if the Commission wished to consider the policy decision of opening such a fishery. The relevant language is as follows.
 - " Uncertainty exists in some aspects of the presumptive path, including the development and implementation of alternative selective fishing gear, the securing of funding for enhanced hatchery production, and the expansion or development of off-channel fishing areas. Under these conditions, adaptive management procedures will be essential to achieve the purpose of this policy. As indicated in the General Policy statement, management actions will be evaluated and, as appropriate, implemented in a progressive manner."
- Additional information requests were posed by the Commission to be answered on the May 18 FWC conference call, where a decision will be considered on whether or not to place a fishery decision on the June 14-16 FWC Meeting agenda with an opportunity for comment and input from the public.
- See below for the information requests and the staff response on the information request.

May 18, 2018 FWC Conference Call

- Staff responses for additional information:
 - What are the incidental impacts to non-target species in large mesh traditional gillnets during the summer period, in comparison to the kind of alternative gear originally envisioned when the Columbia River Policy was adopted? This comparison will be presented at the June FWC meeting if this matter is scheduled on the agenda for that meeting.
 - Did Mr. Sudar make the same request to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife on April 19 and 20 and if so, what was their response? Yes. Their response can be heard at <https://www.periscope.tv/ODFW/1jMKggEbDXYJL> or at <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/agency/commission/minutes/> (audio recording part 1) beginning at just after Mr. Sudar’s testimony that begins at about the 1:16:30 mark. When polled by their Chair, the Oregon FWC in general indicated they would be “...comfortable with looking at” providing policy direction for a summer commercial fishery using large mesh traditional gillnet fishing gear, but did not take any specific action and were interested in what the Washington FWC position is.
 - Summer chinook escapement data requests.
 - Priest Rapids adult counts:

Year	Adult Count
2012	50,700
2013	71,100

2104	78,400
2015	78,100
2016	80,300
2017	53,000
2018 (projected)	58,300

- Tributary natural spawner estimates:

Upper Columbia Summer Chinook Returns to the Columbia River and to Escapement Areas

	Columbi River	Priest Rapids	Wild Fish Escapement					
	Run Size	Dam	Wenatchee	Entiat	Chelan	Wen,Ent, Che Combined	Methow	Okanogan
2012	58,300	50,667	7,327	1,063	262	8,651	1,680	4,688
2013	67,603	71,083	7,449	843	606	8,898	1,720	5,818
2014	78,254	78,434	9,607	594	583	10,784	1,463	10,583
2015	126,882	78,139	4,070	269	719	5,058	3,162	10,706
2016	91,048	80,288	5,321	613	396	6,330	1,457	9,014
2017	68,204	52,981	6,534	415	378	7,327	1,056	8,098
Goal						13,500	1,500	2,000

- Projected impacts in a 708 adult fish catch in a large mesh gillnet fishery in Columbia River Zones 1-5:

Run Segment	Number Caught	% impact to run segment
Hatchery	389	0.96%
Wild	319	1.18%
Wenatchee	33	0.47%
Entiat	3	0.47%
Chelan	2	0.47%
Methow	8	0.47%
Okanogan	38	0.47%

- What is the number of commercial license holders expected to participate in the fishery and fishery economic yield information? 2013-16 July fisheries averaged 44 landings per day open with 949 fish per day. This information will be provided at a June FWC meeting if this topic is scheduled to be on the agenda.
- What is the number of wild summer chinook mortalities projected in Columbia River recreational fisheries, including in the selective fisheries below Priest Rapids Dam and any fisheries above Priest Rapids Dam, and how does it compare to the number of wild summer chinook mortalities projected in a take of 708 total fish in a large mesh gillnet fishery below Bonneville Dam that is not

selective for hatchery fish? Answer. Wild summer Chinook mortalities in sport fisheries scheduled for 2018 are estimated to be 515 fish. This includes sport fisheries from the mouth upstream Chief Joe Dam. Wild summer Chinook mortalities from a commercial fishery estimated to harvest a total of 708 fish would be 319 mortalities.

Decision for the Commission: should this matter be placed on the June 14-16 Commission Meeting agenda, noticed for public comment and a decision by the Commission on whether or not to delegate to the Director to work with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Director towards opening a commercial fishing season?

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