

THE 2014 PILOT COMMERCIAL SEINE FISHERY IN THE COLUMBIA RIVER DOWNSTREAM FROM BONNEVILLE DAM

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO THE OREGON
FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION
AUGUST 1, 2014**

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BACKGROUND

- Framework initially discussed with Columbia River Commercial Fishery Advisory Group
- Framework finalized through the North of Falcon process
- Discussions focused on a research approach
- Discussing details with NOAA Fisheries; including using a proportion of ESA impacts set aside for research

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APPROACH

- In 2014, the pilot seine fishery will be in addition to, not instead of fall gill net fisheries
- Because the fishery will use a proportion of ESA impacts set aside for research, harvest opportunity is limited
- Because of limited opportunity the fishery is limited-entry
- As a limited-entry fishery, participants were selected by lottery

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PARTICIPATION IN THE FISHERY

- Four purse and six beach seiners were selected randomly by lottery
- Candidates must have possessed or operated under a current Columbia River commercial salmon license
- Candidates must have landed salmon from mainstem Columbia River or Select Area fisheries within the past two calendar years (2012-2013)

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KEY ELEMENTS OF THE FISHERY

- ESA impacts will come from the allotment set aside for fish research
- The allotment of ESA impacts set aside for gill net fisheries will not be affected
- Given the available ESA impacts, the allowed take of Chinook is 6,000
- Although the take limit for coho is 3,300, the expected harvest of marked fish is 2,100 (harvest likely constrained by Chinook limit)

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KEY ELEMENTS OF THE FISHERY

- Individual Fishing Quotas (IFQ) for Chinook were defined for each permit holder based on a total available take of 6,000 fish
- The IFQ for Chinook will be 750 for purse seiners and 500 for beach seiners
- The IFQ for coho will be about 450 for purse seiners and 250 for beach seiners; the harvest expectation is about 280 marked fish for purse seiners and 160 for beach seiners
- Each permit holder will be allocated a steelhead handling quota

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KEY ELEMENTS OF THE FISHERY

- Fishing will occur in early September
- Each permit holder has been assigned to one of five fishing zones downstream from Bonneville Dam
- In all zones, fishers will only be allowed to retain marked coho
- In Zones 1-3 fishers will only be allowed to retain marked Chinook; some unmarked Chinook may be allowed in Zones 4-5
- Department monitors will be on board all vessels

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RECRUITMENT TO THE FISHERY

- A notification letter describing the pilot seine fishery and soliciting applications was sent out and posted on agency websites in early June
- Twenty-eight applicants qualified for the drawing for beach seine permits
- Ten applicants qualified for the drawing for purse seine permits
- Eleven beach seine applicants were licensed in Oregon
- Five purse seine applicants were licensed in Oregon

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SELECTION OF FISHERS

- All qualified applicants were sorted by gear; purse vs. beach seine
- Each applicant was assigned a rank based on their order of random selection from the gear-specific applicant pool
- The number 1 ranked applicant in each pool was assigned his/her first choice of fishing area
- Each succeeding applicant in each pool was assigned his/her highest ranked choice of fishing area from those still available

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How are Chinook catch rates in the seine fisheries affected by the historically large forecasted run size of Upriver Bright stock?
- How are coho catch rates in the seine fisheries affected by the relatively large forecasted run size?
- How do immediate mortality rates of Chinook, coho and steelhead in the pilot seine fishery compare with those observed in previous test fisheries?

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How well can commercial fishers visually distinguish between tule and bright stocks of Chinook?
- How do large discrepancies in run sizes of steelhead and Chinook affect our ability to estimate steelhead handle in fisheries using Chinook landings?

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RELEASE MORTALITY

- Based on the WDFW study, long-term release mortality rate estimates of Chinook and coho may be 4 to 7 times greater than the 5% used in original analyses
- Consequently, at the ESA-impact level originally assigned to the seine fishery, the number of marked fish harvested may be less than 20% of original expectations

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IMPLICATIONS FOR 2014

- The pilot seine fishery will harvest fewer marked fish than originally expected
- However, harvest in the seine fishery is a “bonus” for commercial fishers because we’re using ESA-impacts reserved for research
- Overall commercial harvest expectations for fall fleet fisheries remain unchanged
 - All ESA-impacts set aside for commercial fisheries will be used in gill net and coho tangle-net fisheries

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REVISED TABLES C4 AND C5

- Request by the Columbia River Commercial Fishery Advisory Group
- How do new Chinook and coho long-term release mortality rate estimates affect seine fishery estimates in Tables C4 and C5
- Revised harvest estimates for Chinook and coho in the seine fisheries are about 16% of the original estimates
- Revised estimates of overall ex-vessel value are less than original estimates; and in the long-term (2017-2021) are less than the modeled base or “current” value

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POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

- The values in Tables C4 and C5 are modeled estimates assuming constant recent average run sizes, stock composition and mark rates
- The purpose of Tables C4 and C5 is to examine how harvest and ex-vessel value change if reduce commercial share of harvest and ESA-impacts and enhance off-channel production levels
- Although much different than in original analysis, except for 2017, changes in ex-vessel value remain within the Workgroup guideline ($\leq 5\%$ decline)

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IN CONCLUSION

- The seine fishery remains an important part of the mix of alternative commercial fishing gear we're testing during the Transition Period
- Tests may include another year of study of release mortalities using seines
- Use of alternative gears and techniques is necessary in the long term to fully access harvestable surplus of hatchery Chinook and coho because of constraints on the take of ESA-listed wild Chinook and coho

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THE END

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