

**WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 4
Columbia River Compact
Joint State Sport Hearing
February 23, 2005**

**Fisheries under Consideration: Non-Indian commercial and sport smelt
Non-Indian commercial sturgeon**

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Smelt

- A Joint State Eulachon Management Plan has been in effect since 2001.
- The Joint State Eulachon Management Plan provides for three levels of fishing based on 1) parental run strength, 2) juvenile production, and 3) estimates of ocean productivity.

Recommended Fisheries Contained in the Joint State Eulachon Management Plan

- Fishery recommendations apply to the January - March timeframe, otherwise permanent regulations remain in effect.

Level One

- ✓ Great uncertainty in run strength or indications of a poor return.
- ✓ Commercial fisheries are limited to one 12-24 hour fishing period per week for the Columbia and Cowlitz rivers.
- ✓ Tributary sport fisheries would also consist of one 12-24 hour fishing period per week in the Cowlitz River.

Level Two

- ✓ Promising abundance in the spawning return and productivity indices that are favorable, yet it is still uncertain whether the run is moderate or strong.
- ✓ Commercial fisheries would consist of two or three days per week in the Columbia and Cowlitz rivers.
- ✓ Tributary sport fisheries could be increased to two or three days per week.
- ✓ Consider expansion of sport and commercial fisheries into other lower Columbia River tributaries.

Level Three

- ✓ Very positive indicators of strong abundance and productivity.
- ✓ Commercial fisheries would consist of up to four days per week in the Columbia River and all lower Columbia River tributaries.
- ✓ Tributary sport fisheries should be opened in all tributaries for four to seven days per week.

Sturgeon

- 2005 will be the ninth consecutive year in which a Joint State Agreement is used to guide Columbia River sturgeon fishery management
- The harvestable number of 40,000 white sturgeon is to be allocated 80% (32,000 fish) sport and 20% (8,000 fish) commercial with specific size limits in place for both user groups.
- Season allocations within the sturgeon commercial fishery protocol were modified for 2005 at the December 2, 2004 Columbia River Commercial Advisory Group meeting.

Protocol For Management of White Sturgeon Retention in Commercial Fisheries During 2005.

- ✓ Fisheries should be managed for white sturgeon catch expectations of 2,000 for the winter-summer timeframe (January-July), 2,600 for the early fall timeframe (August), and 3,000 for the late fall timeframe (September-October).
- ✓ Landings during SAFE fisheries are not to exceed 400 white sturgeon for the entire year with winter/spring/summer fisheries not to exceed 300.
- ✓ Allow some level of incidental sturgeon harvest to occur during all target salmon seasons.
- ✓ Conduct limited target sturgeon fisheries during winter and early fall timeframes if feasible.
- ✓ Conduct target sturgeon fisheries during October if necessary to access commercial allocation.
- ✓ Adopt white sturgeon possession and landing limits if necessary to remain within season-specific catch guidelines or to provide white sturgeon for harvest during subsequent salmon seasons.
- ✓ Until further discussion occurs with the OFWC and the WFWC regarding sturgeon allocation among individual commercial fishers, landings and possession limits will be in the form of vessel limits and these limits will include both mainstem and Select Area fisheries.

FISHERY UPDATES

2005 Winter Commercial Sturgeon Fishery

- At the December 16 hearing, the Compact adopted five 24-hour (6 AM Tuesday-6 AM Wednesday) fishing periods for sturgeon from January 18 through February 16.
- At the February 18 Compact hearing, two additional 24-h (6 AM-6 AM) fishing periods for sturgeon were adopted for February 22-23 (Tuesday-Wednesday) and February 24-25 (Thursday-Friday).
- Preliminary landings for the February 23-24 fishing period include 33 white sturgeon and 44 spring chinook resulting in preliminary season total landings are 430 white sturgeon and 61 spring chinook. The allocation for this fishery is 1,800 sturgeon.

2005 Winter Commercial Salmon Fishery

- Test fishing is scheduled to occur on Sunday February 27 as per The Winter Season Commercial Fishing Plan.
- Depending on test fishing results the first commercial fishing period could occur on Tuesday March 1.

2005 Smelt Fisheries

- Pre-season abundance indicators for 2005 were mixed but supported a Level Two abundance expectation.
- Mainstem commercial and sport fisheries for 2005 were set consistent with Level Two fishery guidelines described in the Joint State Eulachon Management Plan.
- The Columbia River is currently open to commercial fishing 3 AM to 9 PM Mondays and Thursdays (18 hours) through March 31, 2005.
- The Columbia River is currently open to sport fishing 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with a daily limit of 25 pounds per person.

- Commercial landings to date have totaled 81 pounds, all from the mainstem Columbia River. No mainstem landings have been reported since January 31st.
- Smelt moved upstream to within 13 miles of the Cowlitz River in late January, then dropped back to the estuary.
- Water temperatures in the lower Columbia River have ranged between 38-41°F since mid-January, slightly below optimum temperatures associated with smelt migration.
- February water temperatures and flow to date have averaged 40°F and 144 kcfs. During 1995-2004, average water temperature and flow for the month of February were 41°F and 205 kcfs.
- Water temperatures in the Columbia River on Tuesday February 22 were 40°F at Beacon Rock and 41°F at Elliot Point
- Currently, there is little sign of smelt in the Columbia River.

FISHERY PROPOSALS

<i>2005 Commercial Mainstem Smelt Fishery Recommended Modification</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Joint Staff recommends the adoption of the following modification to the ongoing commercial smelt fishery in the mainstem Columbia River: 	
Season:	Close ongoing 2-day per week fishery effective Wednesday February 23, 2005 and adopt a Level One fishery consisting of one 18-hour fishing period (3 AM – 9 PM) per week on Thursdays during February 24, 2005 through March 31, 2005. Open hours are 3 AM to 9 PM.
Area:	Zones 1-5.
Gear:	Gill net, dip nets, or trawls as per permanent regulations.
Participants:	Columbia River commercial fishers with appropriate licenses and legal gear.
Miscellaneous:	Quick Reporting Rule in effect for Washington buyers.

- ✓ The lack of significant signs of smelt abundance in the Columbia River and tributaries as of mid-February supports reverting to a Level One fishery.
- ✓ The proposed modified season fits the requirements of a Level One fishery as described in the Joint State Eulachon Management Plan.
- ✓ Commercial smelt landings will be monitored weekly for the purpose of tracking run status and making in-season fishery management decisions.

FUTURE MEETINGS

- The Joint Staff is recommending a potential Compact hearing (via telephone) be scheduled for 2:00 PM February 28, 2005 to review test fishing results and consider a commercial fishing period for Tuesday, March 1.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
February 22, 2004

Washington Tributary Smelt Fisheries

2005 Commercial Fisheries

- Tributary commercial fisheries for 2005 were set consistent with Level Two fishery guidelines described in the Joint State Eulachon Management Plan.
- The Cowlitz and Lewis rivers are open to commercial fishing 6 PM Sunday through 6 AM Monday (12 hours) and 6 PM Wednesday to 6 AM Thursday (12 hours) through March 31, 2005.
- No smelt have been landed in tributary commercial fisheries to date.

2005 Washington Tributary Commercial Fishery Recommended Modification

- Staff recommends the adoption of the following modification to the ongoing commercial smelt fishery in the Cowlitz River:
Season: Close ongoing 2-day per week fishery effective Wednesday February 23, 2005 and adopt a Level One fishery consisting of one 12-hour fishing period per week from 6 PM Wednesday to 6 AM Thursday from February 23, 2005 through March 31, 2005.
Area: Cowlitz River (downstream of Peterson's Eddy).
Gear: Dip nets.
Miscellaneous: Quick Reporting Rule in effect for Washington buyers.

- ✓ The proposed modified season fits the requirements of a Level One fishery as described in the Joint State Eulachon Management Plan.
- ✓ Commercial smelt landings will be monitored weekly for the purpose of tracking run status and making in-season fishery management decisions.

2005 Sport Fisheries

- Tributary sport fisheries for 2005 were set consistent with Level Two fishery guidelines described in the Joint State Eulachon Management Plan.
- Washington tributaries are open to sport dipping 6 AM-10 PM on Tuesdays and Saturdays through March 31, 2005.
- The daily limit in Washington tributary sport fisheries is 10 pounds per person.

2005 Washington Tributary Sport Fishery Recommended Modification

- Staff recommends the adoption of the following modification to the ongoing sport smelt fishery in the Cowlitz River:
Season: Close ongoing 2-day per week fishery effective Wednesday February 23, 2005 and adopt a Level One fishery consisting of one 18-hour fishing period per week, 6 AM to 10 PM Saturdays, from February 26, 2005 through March 31, 2005.
Area: Cowlitz River.
Daily Limit: 10 pounds per person.

- ✓ The proposed modified season fits the requirements of a Level One fishery as described in the Joint State Eulachon Management Plan.