

Sturgeon managers add Sundays to fishery from Wauna power lines to Bonneville Dam

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Starting Feb. 1, Columbia River anglers will be able to fish for white sturgeon four days per week — including Sundays — between the Wauna power lines near Cathlamet and Bonneville Dam.

The decision to add Sundays to the fishing schedule for that stretch of the river was made by fishery managers from Washington and Oregon during a meeting of the bi-state Columbia River Compact here Jan. 25.

Since the recreational fishery opened Jan. 1, sturgeon fishing has been limited to Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays each week. The four-day fishing schedule approved by fishery managers today will be in effect from Feb. 1 through July 31 and from Oct. 1 through Dec. 31.

Anglers must release any sturgeon they catch in the area during August and September.

The extra weekend day of fishing is designed to give anglers an opportunity to make up for about 4,200 sturgeon remaining under the area's recreational catch guideline from last year, said Brad James, a fish biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

“Those fish are still available for harvest, and both states agreed to roll that additional fishing opportunity forward for the next two years,” James said.

Based on past experience, an extra weekend day of fishing will translate into a catch of approximately 2,000 fish each year, said James, noting that this year's adjusted recreational catch guideline from the Wauna power lines to Bonneville Dam is now 14,900 fish.

As before, anglers in that area are limited to catching one sturgeon — measuring a minimum of 42 inches and a maximum of 60 inches — per day. The spawning sanctuary from Marker 85 upstream is closed to all fishing from May through July.

Sturgeon-fishing regulations approved by the two states in December for other areas of the Columbia River also remain the same, James said. Fishing is currently open:

From the mouth of the Columbia River upstream to the Wauna power lines seven days per week through April 30. It will then reopen from May 12 through July 4. Through April 30, anglers may retain one sturgeon per day provided that it measures at least 42 inches and does not exceed 60 inches in length. The minimum size limit switches to 45 inches from May 12 through July 4. Catch-and-release fishing is allowed May 1-11 and from July 5 through December 31.

Above Bonneville Dam in the Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day pools will be open seven days per week until catch guidelines are met. From Bonneville Dam to The Dalles Dam, the minimum size is 42 inches. From The Dalles Dam to McNary Dam, the minimum size is 48 inches. Fishing will be closed from May through July in the two spawning sanctuaries, located below John Day Dam downstream 2.4 miles and McNary Dam downstream 1.5 miles.

Effective Jan. 1, 2007, retention of green sturgeon is prohibited.

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