Columbia River spring chinook season re-opens

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

May 16 from Tongue Point to the I-5 Bridge

State fishery officials met this week and decided to re-open the mainstem Columbia River to retention of adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon from the Tongue Point/Rocky Point line upstream to the I-5 Bridge effective May 16 through May 31, 2007, or until the harvest guideline is reached.

The salmon fishery in this area closed April 16 based on catch projections that indicated the fishery would reach the ESA-listed upriver spring Chinook impact allocation by April 15. Although actual harvest fell somewhat short of the guideline, passage at Bonneville Dam wasnâ€™t strong enough to assure the run would meet the pre-season forecast of 78,500 upriver spring Chinook until recently. â€œThe Technical Advisory Committee met Monday and concluded the run should be close to the pre-season forecast, give or take a couple thousand fishâ€• says John North, ODFW Columbia River Fisheries Manager. â€œWith that range, we were able to safely recommend re-opening this fishery with limited risk of exceeding ESA harvest limitations. Depending on catch rates and stock composition, we may be able to continue fishing into June.â€•

Oregon anglers may keep two adult adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon per day. Catch limits for jacks remain in effect as per permanent regulations. The steelhead season will also open May 16 from Tongue Point to the I-5 Bridge and on June 16 from I-5 upstream to Bonneville Dam. Shad angling is open all year except during April 1-May 15 from Buoy 10 upstream to Bonneville Dam.

All non-adipose fin-clipped Chinook salmon and non-adipose fin-clipped steelhead must be released immediately unharmed. It is unlawful when fishing from vessels which are less than 30 feet in length, substantiated by Coast Guard documentation or Marine Board registration, to totally remove from the water any salmon or steelhead required to be released.

The next Joint State hearing is scheduled for 11:00 a.m. Tuesday May 22 via teleconference to review spring Chinook stock status and the John Day recreational sturgeon fishery.

Fish managers set the Columbia River spring Chinook fishery based on the number of fish expected to return from the ocean and the allowable impact to wild salmon and steelhead stocks listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.

"Impacts" are the unintended mortalities associated with handling and releasing wild fish. This year, non-Indian impacts are limited to 1.5 percent of the total upriver run that includes ESA-listed Snake River spring/summer Chinook and Upper Columbia River spring Chinook.

Additional information about the Columbia River spring Chinook season also may be found on ODFW's Web page at http://www.dfw.state.or.us/OSCRP/CRM/action_notes.html.

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