

The Dipnetter

News of the River from the
Columbia River Inter-Tribal
Fish Commission



August 2014

2014 COLUMBIA RIVER SOCKEYE RUN SETS A RECORD

JOHN HARRISON, NORTHWEST POWER & CONSERVATION COUNCIL

The 2014 sockeye run in the Columbia River is the largest since fish-counting began at the dam in 1938.

By July 21, 605,860 fish had passed the dam on their way to spawn in British Columbia, north-central Washington, and Idaho. The previous record was 516,000 in 2012.

Next year's run could be even bigger, based on the number of jacks in this year's return. Jacks are a predictor of the next season's run size.

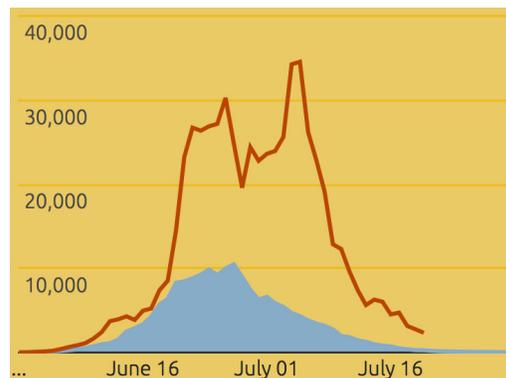
Sockeye return from the ocean to spawn in July and August. By far, the largest share of the Columbia sockeye run originates in Lake Osoyoos on the Okanagan River in British Columbia. The second-largest component returns to Lake Wenatchee—expected to be about 64,000 fish this year—and the smallest component returns to Idaho's Redfish Lake. An endangered species, the Snake River component is expected to be about 1,200 fish counted at Lower Granite Dam this year. The number of Wenatchee and Snake River sockeye could increase, however, as the estimates were part of a forecasted total return of 347,100 fish, now greatly exceeded.

The big Okanagan run resulted from about 4 million sockeye juveniles that are estimated to have left Lake Osoyoos in 2012. Howie Wright, fisheries program manager for the Okanagan Nation Alliance, which is directing the

Okanagan sockeye restoration program, said 80-85 percent of the 2014 Okanagan component are estimated to be natural-origin fish, as opposed to hatchery-origin fish. He credited the big

run to improvements in water management and habitat in the Okanagan River Basin in British Columbia, favorable ocean conditions, and improvements in fish passage at Columbia River mainstem dams downriver in the USA.

He said descaling of juvenile sockeye continues to be a problem, though. Sockeye are particularly sensitive to descaling, which can weaken the fish and make them more susceptible to disease. Descaling occurs when fish bump against the walls of bypass systems at dams or pass through turbines or strike debris that accumulates in the forebay of a dam. 🐟



The sockeye run window from June 1 through July 31. The red line is the 2014 count and the blue area is the 10-year average.

FISHERY UPDATE

STUART ELLIS, CRITFC HARVEST MANAGEMENT BIOLOGIST

The tribes have nearly finished their summer season fisheries. The summer management period goes from June 16 through July 31. The chinook and sockeye run sizes were both larger than forecast. The chinook run was only a bit larger, but the sockeye run was by far a record run since at least the construction of Bonneville Dam. The tribes have had 24 days of commercial gillnet fishing this summer with preliminary harvest of 18,000 chinook and almost 35,000 sockeye. Prices have generally been pretty good this summer. Fall season begins August 1. We are expecting a record run of bright fall chinook but a B steelhead run

that will be closer to average sized. The actual allowed catch for both of these species depends on the actual run size, not just the forecast run sizes. It is likely that it will be challenging to catch all the harvestable chinook while staying within the steelhead harvest limits. We are still looking forward to a very good fall season with plenty of fish to catch. Announcements will be made regarding the structure of fall season fisheries as the decisions by the tribes are made. Subscribe to text message alerts to get these announcements on your cell phone. Subscription instructions are on the back page of this newsletter. 🐟

TRIBAL LAMPREY FILM “THE LOST FISH” SELECTED FOR FESTIVAL

The film “The Lost Fish” about tribal Pacific lamprey restoration that was produced by CRITFC and Freshwaters Illustrated was selected for inclusion in this year’s Portland Ecofilm Festival. The festival features screenings of new films covering topics of nature conservation, environmental activism, agriculture, and community wellness.



“The Lost Fish” was selected for telling the story of “the people working to raise public awareness of the ecological importance, conservation needs, and cultural significance of Pacific Lamprey to Pacific Northwest Tribes.”

In addition to screening the film on July 24, the festival selected Nez Perce tribal elder Elmer Crow, who was featured in the film, to receive this year’s EcoHero Award. The award was accepted by Elmer’s widow Lynda. Elmer perished while saving his grandsons from drowning last year. Elmer was selected for his lifetime of conservation work benefiting Pacific Lamprey. Elmer’s family, the Freshwaters Illustrated filmmakers, and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission participated in a post-film panel to discuss the film and Mr. Crow’s legacy.

“The Lost Fish” has been shown at locations throughout the Columbia Basin. It was premiered on the reservations of the four CRITFC member tribes first. Since then, it has been screened at cities and events in Oregon, Idaho, and Washington. The most recent event was in Portland, where the film was presented at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) as part of the museum’s new Roots of Wisdom exhibit. This exhibit features examples of how Native Americans and native Hawaiians are developing innovative solutions to



▲ A scene from “The Lost Fish” of Elmer showing lamprey collected for the Nez Perce Tribe’s translocation efforts. Photo courtesy Freshwaters Illustrated.

▼ Elmer’s grandson Henry FiveCrows holding lamprey models to scan at the new OMSI exhibit Roots of Wisdom.



tackle current environmental challenges. The exhibit also presents how native people are combining traditional knowledge with modern science to restore ecosystems. The Umatilla Tribe’s lamprey restoration efforts are featured in the exhibit, which includes an activity where visitors take a lamprey model and scan it in a reader to see where in the Columbia Basin each one came from and how far it had migrated. 🐟

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HOW ARE TRIBAL FISHING SEASONS SET?

We occasionally hear the misperception that CRITFC sets Zone 6 tribal fishing seasons. CRITFC does not have this power or authority. The power to set fishing seasons and create regulations lies solely with the tribes themselves. For example, Yakama fishing seasons and regulations are set by the Yakama Nation only. CRITFC only provides a forum where the tribes can discuss fishing season options of mutual interest. The four tribes coordinate with each other with the objective of adopting consistent seasons. CRITFC, in collaboration with tribal staff, provides commissioners from the four tribes with updated harvest and run

size information and an analysis of different fishery options. CRITFC commissioners from the individual tribes make recommendations on the fishery structures but individual tribes—and *only individual tribes*—have the authority to set tribal fishery regulations for their members. In some cases the tribes may not agree on a common season, and each tribe has the authority to adopt differing regulations. In general, tribal fishers benefit from a common set of regulations. Consistent seasons and regulations promote fairness for all of the fishers, reduce confusion, and reduce the level of law enforcement needed to enforce separate regulations. 🐟

FARMERS MARKETS: BRINGING YOUR HARVEST TO CUSTOMERS

LES BROWN, CRITFC SALMON MARKETING SPECIALIST

Farmers markets in the Northwest are popular and located in a growing number of communities. Many of today’s consumers appreciate local and seasonal products and will pay premium prices for premium products. Over 30 farmers markets operate within a 100-mile radius of Columbia River Indian fishing sites. Currently the closest large markets are in Portland, Gresham, Beaverton, Lake Oswego, and Hillsboro. Other cities in Oregon, including Hood River, The Dalles, Troutdale, have smaller markets. In Washington, Goldendale, Prosser, the Tri-Cities, Camas, Vancouver and others have small markets within reach of tribal fishers.

While you can sell directly to consumers at farmers markets and avoid intermediaries, you must compare the cost of transportation, the selling station and vendor application fees (usually small) with potentially higher prices. There may also be requirements for having potable water on-site, keeping totes covered during non-sale periods, and using state-certified scales for sales.

Each market requires a separate application.



Keep in mind that transporting your harvest to these markets adds cost. Below is a table to help calculate how to recover your mileage through properly pricing your fish.

Increase price per pound by listed amount to recover mileage.*

*mileage amount is the 12/2011 federal reimbursement rate of 55.5¢/mile

lbs. of fish in delivery	84 miles R/T (Cascadia Locks to Portland)	200 miles R/T (The Dalles to Portland)	300 miles R/T (Boardman to Portland)	600 miles R/T (The Dalles to Seattle)
100	\$0.47	\$1.11	\$1.67	\$3.33
200	\$0.23	\$0.56	\$0.83	\$1.67
300	\$0.16	\$0.37	\$0.56	\$1.11
400	\$0.12	\$0.28	\$0.42	\$0.83
500	\$0.09	\$0.22	\$0.33	\$0.67

Other tips and calculators are available in the CRITFC Salmon Marketing booklet “Tribal Fisher’s Handbook.” This free publication is available to tribal fishers to help improve the quality and safety of tribally harvested salmon through sanitation and proper handling.

If you would like one, send a note to:

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CRITFC Salmon Marketing
700 NE Multnomah St, Suite 1200
Portland, OR 97232
(503) 238-0667





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Text "critfc" to the number 555-888 to start getting fishery announcements on your cell phone. It's free!



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Yakama • Warm Springs
Umatilla • Nez Perce 

Message from the Executive Director

ADVOCATING FOR COLUMBIA BASIN FISH PASSAGE

PAUL LUMLEY, CRITFC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As the tallest lower Columbia River dam, John Day has long been a serious threat to salmon, particularly to juveniles migrating downstream. The tribes have long advocated for the Corps of Engineers to address this problem. Last month, tribal representatives toured the dam with other federal partners to see some of their recent structures and efforts to help



The John Day Dam juvenile bypass structure, which hopes to carry smolts more safely than having them go through the spillways or the turbines, is over a half mile long.

reduce the number of salmon smolts that die attempting to migrate past this dam on their way to the ocean.

One of CRITFC's priorities is to monitor the effectiveness of fish passage at each of the mainstem dams. We will be carefully watching how structures like the John Day Dam juvenile passage structure are helping salmon and reporting this information to the tribes. We will also continue to advocate for more efforts at dams throughout the Columbia River Basin to increase, improve, or reopen fish passage. We are especially working to improve conditions for lamprey, since very few dam passage systems were originally designed with them in mind at all.

These efforts are all part of our neverending quest to put fish back in the rivers and restore the watersheds where fish live. 🐟