

HOW TRIBAL ZONE 6 FISHERIES ARE SET

MIKE MATYLEWICH, CRITFC FISH MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT MANAGER

The authority to set fishing seasons is an important responsibility of the Columbia River treaty tribes. The four member tribes created CRITFC partly to provide a forum where they could coordinate their fishery responsibilities and activities. CRITFC itself has no authority to set fishing seasons or create fishing regulations for any of the member tribes. This power lies solely with the tribes themselves. For example, Yakama fishing seasons and regulations are set by the Yakama Nation only and apply only to Yakama tribal members. The four Columbia River treaty tribes try to keep their Zone 6 fisheries consistent with each other to promote fairness for all of the fishers, reduce confusion, and reduce the level of law enforcement needed to enforce separate regulations. Since tribal fishers are only subject to their own tribe's fishing regulations, any differences between the tribal regulations results in differences in enforcement. For example, the number of hook-and-line gear allowed for tribal fishers fishing in Zone 6 varies by tribe. Therefore, it may appear that CRITFC Enforcement is picking on certain tribal members who have a few poles in the water while ignoring fishers using as many as they want. They are just enforcing a difference in tribal regulations. In general, tribal fishers benefit from having seasons and regulations that don't vary from tribe to tribe.

Establishing a four-tribe agreement in Zone 6 fisheries is a multi-step process and the tribes themselves are in control the entire way. This process begins when the CRITFC commissioners from each member tribe meet. The CRITFC commissioners are tribal elected officials or appointees. The commissioners gather monthly at regular CRITFC commission meetings. During the height of fishing seasons, they also meet via telephone on a weekly or sometimes daily basis to review the latest harvest and run size information that is being continuously gathered by CRITFC and tribal staffs. Using this up-to-the-minute information, the commissioners work together to decide on a common fishery schedule. They take into



Scaffolds below John Day Dam, part of the Zone 6 fishing area that the four tribes all share management authority over.

account their own tribe's priorities in regards to ceremonial, subsistence, and commercial fisheries. (See *Priorities* article on the next page.) Deliberations can be very lengthy at times, but if successful, they arrive at a fishery opening recommendation that they all can support.

The commissioners then take the fishery recommendation back to their tribal councils. Each tribe then deliberates whether or not to set its fishery to the recommendation. If they accept the recommendation, they set their tribe's fishery opening by resolution. It is only at this point that the opening is official. The tribes are not bound to agree with the commissioners' recommendation. If a tribe does not agree on a common season, it is within their rights and authority to adopt differing regulations.

After the tribes have set their fishery, they post the details publicly to ensure that all the fishers are notified. Finally, after all this tribal work and deliberation has been done, CRITFC assists the tribes by sharing the official fishery openings via mailings, Facebook announcements, and text message to the tribal fishers. 🐟



Fishery Priorities

In 2008, CRITFC's member tribes agreed to these priorities concerning the management of spring season fisheries:

Priority #1: Meet the traditional **ceremonial** needs of the tribes. The tribes will issue ceremonial gillnet permits to meet this need. The tribes will meet in the winter/spring to determine the appropriate portion of the total allowed tribal spring chinook harvest that will be set aside for ceremonial use and will agree to a percentage of that total allocation to be harvested by each of the four tribes.

Priority #2: Keep the platform/hook-and-line fishery open for **subsistence** use all year. Generally, the tribes will set ceremonial permit levels and timing of permits so that even if the run size is reduced, the platform fishery will still be able to remain open for subsistence use.

Priority #3: Commercial fisheries. Commercial fisheries may include sales of platform and hook-and-line caught fish and may include commercial gillnet fisheries if there are sufficient impacts. The tribes will pace any commercial fisheries so as to not put the subsistence platform fishery at risk.

Below Bonneville Dam: The tribes generally prioritize the Zone 6 fishery over the fishery below Bonneville Dam.

Fishery Update

BY STUART ELLIS, CRITFC HARVEST BIOLOGIST

Winter Season Fisheries

We are most of the way through the 2015 winter season fisheries. The sturgeon setline fishery in January only caught a few fish, which is usually the case. Only 1 sturgeon was caught in the Bonneville Pool and 81 were caught in the John Day pool. This year, the tribes decided to do things a bit differently with the winter gillnet fishery. Because of a different sturgeon slot limit in the Bonneville pool, the tribes opened the upper two pools first and the Bonneville pool later. The Bonneville Pool opened Monday, February 23 and the upper pools were closed February 24.

The commercial sturgeon guidelines for 2015 are: Bonneville Pool: 1,100 fish; The Dalles: 325 fish; and John Day: 1,000 fish.

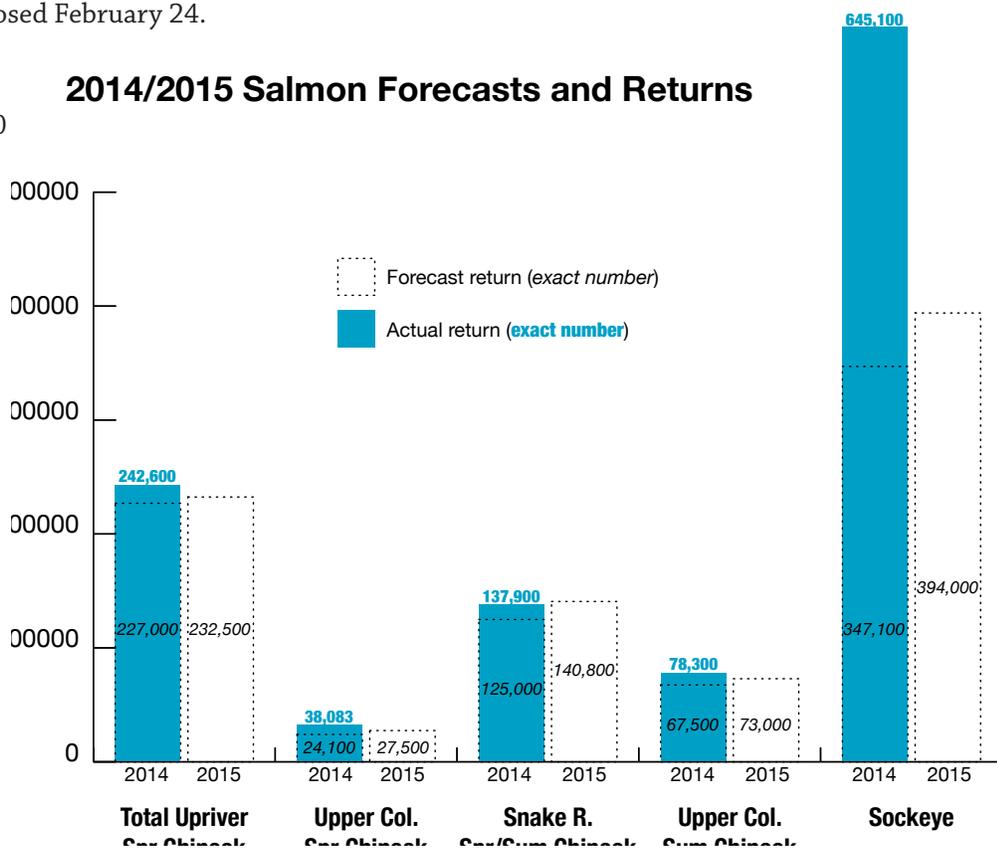
Spring Season Fisheries

The tribes are in the process of planning the upcoming spring season fisheries. No final decisions have been made yet. There will be discussions of all aspects of spring fishing including the Ceremonial Permit fishery, the Zone 6 platform fishery, commercial gillnet fishing, fishing downstream of Bonneville. Commercial sales will certainly be part of these discussions as well. The relatively low allowed harvest rates and run sizes (that are not as big as we would like) do present challenges in giving fishers all the spring fishing opportunity that they would like.

The forecast is for a run similar to

2014. Both treaty and non-treaty fisheries are managed based on the same actual river mouth runs sizes. We won't have a great deal of certainty about the actual run sizes until early May with the first run size updates. If the run comes in near forecast, total catches in the spring will probably be similar to last year. The run could be larger or smaller than forecast. As seen in the graph below, last year's forecast matched the actual return quite well (with the exception of sockeye), however this early in the season it is hard to predict how the fisheries will go. 🐟

2014/2015 Salmon Forecasts and Returns



CRITFC Officers and Commissioners

Warm Springs



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Kahseuss Jackson · Bruce Jim
Scott Moses · Brigette McConville
Jonathan Smith · Ryan Smith
Emerson Squiemphen
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SEA LIONS AND THE TRIBAL FISHERY

BY DOUG HATCH, CRITFC BIOLOGIST

In the past few years, sea lions in the lower Columbia have expanded their range from the area below Bonneville Dam into the Zone 6 fishing area. Fishers have observed sea lions preying on salmon in the Bonneville pool from Cascade Locks to Stanley Rock.

Under the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act, it is illegal for anyone to injure or kill a sea lion. Someone caught injuring or killing a sea lion can be charged with a felony and the penalties are severe: fines of up to \$100,000 and up to one year's imprisonment. However, fishers can do something if sea lions are spotted around their fishing gear or interfering with tribal fisheries. Under these circumstances, fishers may attempt to chase away sea lions with slingshots, noisemakers (such as fireworks), rocks, or other means that don't harm the animal.

CRITFC is working with federal and state agencies to address

this growing problem. Fishers can help in this effort by letting CRITFC know if they've seen sea lion activity in Zone 6.

If you see a sea lion while out on the river, take note of the date, time, location, what the sea lion is doing, and any distinguishing marks or brands. If possible, take photos. All of this information is important for managers and will be useful in the ongoing efforts to remove sea lions from this far up the Columbia River.

To report a sea lion above Bonneville Dam, contact CRITFE at (541) 386-6363 or CRITFC's Stuart Ellis at (503) 731-1312 or ells@critfc.org. 

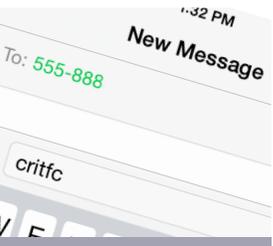


Sea lion C265, weighing over 1,000 lbs. in May 2007 after a two-month feeding spree. When he was initially caught in March 2007, he weighed only 557 lbs.

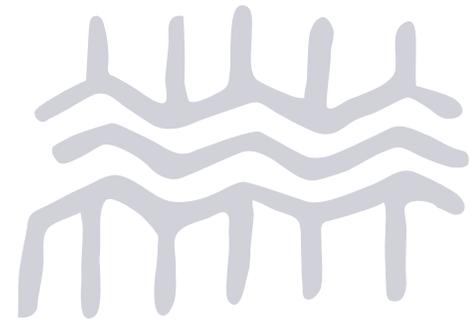


The Dipnetter

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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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CELILO FALLS IN WINTER

A recent report from the US Army Corps of Engineers included a number of historical photos from along the Columbia River. Among them was this rare photograph of Celilo Falls during the winter. The photo was most likely taken in the late 1940s to early 1950s. (Photo from the National Archives; colorized by CRITFC.) 🐟

