

ACTION ALERT: Spring Chinook Allocation decreases to Sport and increases to Gillnetters!

Recent announcements by WDFW and ODFW staff indicate they will be moving to cut recreational sport fishing seasons on the Columbia River for spring chinook. Specifically, for 2012 the harvest matrix the agencies use to allocate Spring Chinook ESA impacts in the Columbia **decreases sport fisheries by nearly 17%**! Last year, the sharing agreement for ESA impacts was 60% sport and 35% commercial. This year the sport share of the ESA impacts **decreases to 50% and the gillnet share increases to 45%**!

This recommendation punctuates just how flawed and broken the system of allocation and management of these stocks is. Adopting their proposal would mean unnecessarily forfeiting tens of millions of dollars of economic benefit that comes to Oregon and Washington through much-needed tourism and direct benefits to a broad range of local industries and interests. The agency's proposal to cut sport fishing opportunities, and increase mainstem gillnet fisheries is completely unfair and an example of a broken process that is begging to be fixed.

During this great recession, in a river full of ESA listed fish, it's hard to believe we are seeing a proposal to grow this archaic and outdated fishery management. The SAFE (or terminal commercial fishing) areas successfully deliver tens of thousands of Willamette and Columbia River salmon to the market. **For the last several years the commercial gillnet fleet has harvested more fish in the SAFE areas than the sport fleet is allocated in 140 miles of fishing below Bonneville dam.** But growing mainstem non-treaty gillnet fisheries is killing jobs and killing the conservation benefits to wild fish that the SAFE areas were designed for.

You might ask yourself how this can be and the simple answer is: **The squeaky wheel gets the grease!**

This decision will be made soon~within the next couple weeks. We need your voice now to help overcome this setback. Please, today, contact your state legislators, that is, your state representative and state senator. Here's a link to help you identify who your state legislators are and how to contact them - <http://www.leg.state.or.us/findlegsltr/> Please contact the Governor's office too. The contact there is the Governor's Natural Resource Director, Richard Whitman, his contact email address is Richard.M.Whitman@state.or.us and his phone number at the Capitol is **503-378-5145. The contact for the Washington Commission is below.**

A personal letter (email) in your own words is always best. Tell about yourself, **stay polite and professional and seek a response.** Do not rip on the gillnetters. Their harvest in the SAFE areas is providing important jobs and hatchery fish to the market.

The message is: on what is forecast to be the 4th largest run of spring chinook since 1938, sports anglers and the regional sport fishing industry are facing potential reductions in

their season. Last year, the sports anglers only received 65% of their 60% allocation because of the way this fishery is managed. It's patently unfair and needs attention now. With these reductions come significant impacts in revenue to the state, rural and urban communities, revenue to ODFW through license sales, tourism and expenditures related to boating, fishing and outdoor recreation. These impacts could easily total into the tens of millions of dollars at a time when Oregon and Washington can ill-afford to be forfeiting economic opportunities.

SAMPLE (again, your own words are best):

In Washington, send your message to:

Miranda Wecker, Chair
Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission
commission@dfw.wa.gov

Dear WDFW Commission Chair Miranda Wecker and fellow Commissioners,

In Oregon: Please write all three!

Governor John Kitzhaber,
c/o Richard Whitman
Richard.M.Whitman@state.or.us

Honorable Governor Kitzhaber,

AND Please also write separately to your State (NOT Federal) Sen and Rep:

Honorable Senator (insert your state Senator's name), And
Honorable Representative (insert your state Representative's name,
Find them at <http://www.leg.state.or.us/findlegsltr/>

I am writing today in response to a January 10th presentation by ODFW limiting sports fishing on the Columbia River in 2012 by 17%. We need your help to restore fairness and balance in the Columbia River and put an end job killing fishery management practices that are also harming ESA listed stocks. **(Finish this paragraph by letting the commissioner/governor/legislator know who you are and why this is important to the economy, culture and environment. If you own or work in a sport fishing company, explain the impact of these decisions and the tens of millions we are losing.)**

On January 10th at a recreational advisor group meeting, the agency staff of WDFW and ODFW informed the public that they would be cutting the sport fishing share of spring Chinook and transferring substantial additional fishing to the mainstem gillnet fleet. This is completely unfair and an example of a broken system that is crying out to be fixed.

In a bad economy, in a river full of ESA listed fish, the agencies are proposing to cut sport fishing opportunities, and increase mainstem gillnet fisheries. The SAFE (or terminal commercial fishing) areas successfully deliver tens of thousands of Willamette

and Columbia River fish to the market. For the last several years the commercial gillnet fleet harvested more fish in the SAFE areas than the sport fleet is allocated in 140 miles of fishing below Bonneville dam. But by growing non treaty gillnet fisheries outside of the SAFE areas, we are killing sport fishing jobs throughout the state and not providing the conservation benefits to wild fish that the SAFE areas were designed to deliver.

We need help to do what is best for jobs in Oregon and Washington and do a better job of protecting ESA-listed salmon and steelhead. Please help us resolve this conflict, grow jobs, and provide better protection to wild fish. The fish and the economy need your help today!

Thank you,

YOUR NAME,
YOUR TITLE
ADDRESS
PHONE