

Smelt Update

Thursday – March 5, 2009

Conditions:

Sport fishers did very well this past weekend; however, commercial fishing effort in the Cowlitz River was negligible. Most of the fish on Saturday were spawned out. As this week progressed, seals and birds began to move downriver to feast on these spent fish. About ten sea lions were hauled out on docks down towards Kelso/Longview the past couple of days.

The Cowlitz River discharge has been low all week, with the gauge reading 7,430 cfs (still less than the median daily discharge of 8,980 cfs for this date). The water is very clear, with the turbidity dropping to 28 fnu. Water temperatures increased, reaching 45°F (7.0°C) in the Cowlitz River and 43°F (6.1°C) in the Columbia River.

WDFW test dipped early Wednesday, March 4th at various sites from Kelso up to Castle Rock. No fish were caught. Birds and marine mammals were less prevalent in the river than this past weekend.

The sport fishing prospect for this coming Saturday is poor.

Catches:

Columbia River:

Sport: There were no reports of sport dipping this past week.
Commercial: No reported landings for Monday, March 2nd. No reports from today, so far. Season total adjusted to 5,319-lbs.

Cowlitz River:

Sport: Considerable effort. Most people able to get their 10-lbs limit on Saturday, February 28th.
Commercial: 14-lbs landed Sunday, March 1st, and no reported landings Wednesday, March 4th. Cumulative catch since January 3rd is 12,093-lbs.
Treaty Tribe: 1,500-lbs landed Wednesday, February 18th and 2,000-lbs landed Tuesday, February 24th. Cumulative Ceremonial and Subsistence take is 3,500-lbs.

Sport Seasons/Regulations:

Tributaries - Sport dipping is only allowed on the Cowlitz River, from 6 AM to 10 PM Saturdays through March 31st. The daily limit is 10 lbs per person per day. This is equivalent to ¼ of a 5-gallon bucket.

Mainstem Columbia River daily limit is 25 lbs per person per day and the fishery is open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Commercial Seasons:

Columbia River: 7-hour fishing periods on Mondays and Thursdays.

Cowlitz River: 6-hour fishing periods on Sunday and Wednesday nights.

Fishing Rule updates are also available by calling (360) 696-6211, then press *1010

Here are some web sites that provide daily river data:

Cowlitz River water flow and levels: USGS Web site:

http://waterdata.usgs.gov/wa/nwis/uv/?site_no=14243000&PARAMeter_cd=00060.00065

Columbia River estuary water temperature: CORIE Web site:

<http://www.ccalmr.org.edu/CORIE/network/woody/>