

# The Dipnetter

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



February 2012

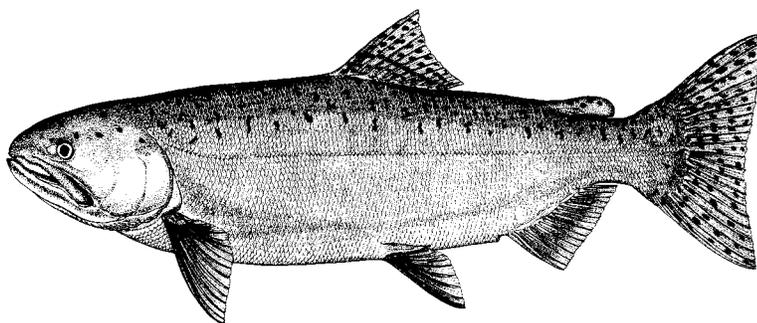
## WINTER AND SPRING FISHERIES UPDATE

BY CRITFC HARVEST BIOLOGIST STUART ELLIS



Stuart Ellis

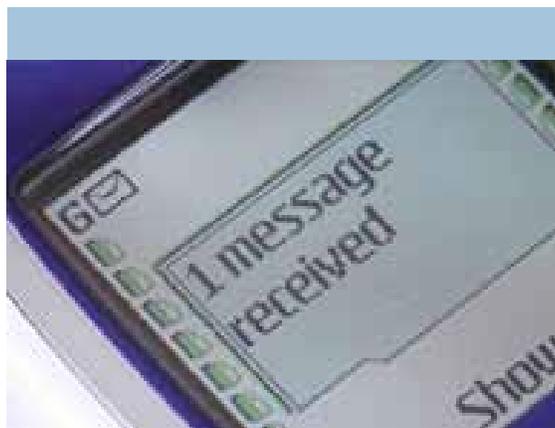
**Winter Fisheries:** The tribes are finishing their January setline fishery for sturgeon. Effort is usually pretty light in this annual fishery, but catch rates seem to have been good. The total catch is still being tabulated, but is over 100 fish which is a much larger than average catch. The tribes will begin the winter gillnet fishery on February 1. Most of the catch in this fishery is sturgeon, but some steelhead are also caught. Occasionally the fishery can go all the way to the end of the winter season on March 21, which it did last year. In many years, the commercial sturgeon guidelines are caught and one or more pools close before March 21.



### **Spring and Summer Fisheries:**

Things are looking good for spring and summer fisheries. The pre-season forecast for upriver spring chinook is 314,200 fish at the Columbia River mouth. This is very close to the actual number of fish that returned in 2010. The tribes have not made any firm decisions about the details of spring fishery management. As soon as the tribes make any decisions, notices will be distributed. With a summer chinook river mouth forecast of

91,200 and a sockeye river mouth forecast of 462,000, tribal fishers can expect good fishing opportunity in summer season fisheries. There should be plenty of opportunity to fish for both subsistence and commercial purposes in the summer season. If the summer chinook and sockeye runs come in at the forecast levels, they will both set records since the construction of Bonneville Dam. 🐟



### **CRITFC TEXT ALERTS**

Rather than waiting for a postcard to find out details about upcoming fisheries, get the information delivered directly to your cell phone. As soon as tribal harvest managers announce a fishery opening, CRITFC will broadcast the information via text message. If you would like to receive these updates and other news of interest to Columbia River Indian fishers, subscribe by sending the keyword "**critfc**" in a text message to the number **55958**.

## Pacific Salmon Commission

BY FISH MANAGEMENT MANAGER MIKE MATYLEWICH

The Pacific Salmon Commission met in Portland January 9-13. The commission recommends harvest levels for British Columbia and Southeast Alaska ocean fisheries based on negotiated agreement between the governments of the United States and Canada. The current agreement runs through 2017. Ocean fisheries in British Columbia and Southeast Alaska harvest Columbia River fall chinook and summer chinook. The current agreement determines allowable harvest of chinook in these fisheries based on an estimate of the total chinook abundance.



*McCoy Oatman*

Newly appointed PSC Commissioner McCoy Oatman (Nez Perce) led the CRITFC delegation. Oatman takes over the position previously held by Olney Patt, Jr. (Warm Springs). Joe Oatman (Nez Perce)

represents the Columbia River Tribes on the Southern Panel, which provides input to the PSC commissioners.

The Southern Panel reviewed the post-season fishing reports from both countries. Joe Oatman presented information on Columbia River fisheries. The fishery off the West Coast Vancouver Island (WCVI) harvested about 206,000 chinook compared to a pre-season target of about 196,000. The US raised concerns about the changing nature of the WCVI fishery. The sport fishery is taking a larger share of the

target chinook catch in the WCVI fishery. The sport fishery in WCVI takes place primarily in the summer, while the commercial fishery takes place in the spring and the fall. Columbia River tulle fall chinook are present in greater numbers in the summer fishery.

PSC meets in Vancouver, BC February 13-17 to continue these discussions. ➡

## Long-time CRITFC Employee Roberta Stone Retires



On January 5, Roberta Stone retired from CRITFC after serving the organization for nearly 32 years. She began working at CRITFC in July, 1980 and served the administrative needs of the organization in various capacities including departmental assistant, travel clerk, and receptionist. An avid artist, Roberta donated watercolors that were sold at every CRITFC fundraising gala art auction. She also designed most of the floral centerpieces that graced the meetings, dinners, and events that CRITFC has held over the years. With her easygoing and friendly nature and the duration of her service, Roberta got to know all the commissioners and staff well enough to create personalized birthdays cards for them. We wish her well as she enters this next stage of her life. ➡

## CRITFC Officers and Commissioners

### YAKAMA



**Gerald Lewis**, CRITFC chairman  
Richard George · Johnny Jackson  
Sam Jim Sr · Virgil Lewis Sr  
Wilbur Slockish Jr  
(509) 865-5121

### UMATILLA



**Kathryn Brigham**, CRITFC vice-chairwoman  
James Marsh · Mitch Pond  
Vince Sohapp · Chris Williams  
(541) 276-3165

### NEZ PERCE



**Joel Moffett**, CRITFC secretary  
Roberta Bisbee · Julia Davis-Wheeler  
Larry Greene Jr · Dan Kane  
Joanna Marek · McCoy Oatman  
Allen Slickpoo Jr · Marie Arthur  
Quentin Ellenwood · Erik Holt ·  
James Holt · Herb Jackson  
(208) 843-2253

### WARM SPRINGS



**Bruce Jim**, CRITFC treasurer  
Leslie Bill · Rafael Queahpama  
Ryan Smith · Emerson Squiemphen  
Donnie Winishut, Sr  
(541) 553-3257

## Winter Fishing Access Site Clean-up

The winter 2011-2012 access site clean-up is now completed. Thank you for your patience as we completed major maintenance and clean ups at six sites. The next round of work on this project will begin in November 2012. The entire 3-year project will run through winter 2013-14. Below are photos taken after the cleanup at each of the sites.



*Preacher's Eddy*



*Pasture Point*



*LePage*



*Celilo*



*Stanley Rock*



*North Bonneville  
(still in progress at time of publication)*

## CRITFC EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION AWARDS

BY CRITFC EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT LEA FOSTER

The 2011 Employee Appreciation Awards and Holiday Event on December 15 acknowledged CRITFC employees for their dedication and commitment throughout the year. This year we had six awards and were honored to accompany these awards with artwork created by Doe Stahr, a Northwest artist who has worked with us on previous occasions.

Laurie Jordan received the CRITFC Advocate Award for keeping the CRITFC mission in mind when considering her work, particularly in her part in getting the treaty fishing access sites built.

David Graves received the "Cutting Edge Award" for advancing in his area of expertise of GIS mapping by growing and using new technology and methodologies.

Neil Graham received the "Outstanding Field Worker Award" for his dedication and commitment during his short employment time with CRITFC working as a fish

technician on CRITFC field studies.

The "Employee of the Year Award" went to Aja DeCoteau, YAKAMA, for her consistent dedication to CRITFC. She brought unique skills, interests and talents to her job, which expanded it into something much more than the one she was originally hired to do.

CRITFC chairman Gerald Lewis, YAKAMA, received the "Commissioner of the Year Award" for his enthusiastic participation in CRITFC meetings and events. His compassion to the mission of CRITFC has benefitted the organization as well as its member tribes.

The "CRITFC Tribal Partnership Award" went to the University of Idaho for its collaboration with CRITFC in operating the Hagerman Fish Research Laboratory, a facility that helps further scientific knowledge of fish biology and genetics and thereby facilitating the rebuilding of salmon runs. 🐟



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Yakama • Warm Springs  
Umatilla • Nez Perce



## Preparing for Spring

As I reviewed the spring salmon forecasts, I thought of all the fishers who will be out on the river soon. Even though the numbers of fish predicted by these forecasts can be off the mark, this looks like it will be a very good fishing season for the tribes. It hasn't been too long since there was no spring fishery on the Columbia River. I remember in 1995 when only 13,000 adult spring chinook crossed Bonneville Dam. This year, 314,200 spring chinook are predicted to enter the river. After we honor the first salmon by ceremony, there should be enough fish for commercial sales. However, we probably won't be able to set commercial seasons until after the first run size update.

Looking forward to a good season reminds me of all the preparations that need to be happen so we can be ready when the salmon arrive. Getting boats and nets ready, coordinating fishing crews, and lining up supplies seems like more work than the actual fishing, but the pay-off for good preparation is worth it. CRITFC has also been busy this winter preparing for the upcoming

## CRITFC Executive Director's Message

season. Most of this work has been behind the scenes: we've been carefully monitoring the fish forecasts, the text message alert system for fishers is now fully operational, and we've been preparing for a market to sell fish at the best price possible. Probably the most visible project has been the major maintenance and clean up effort that the Fishing Site Maintenance Department has been working on since last November. Over the past three months, maintenance crews have completed extensive repairs, clean up, and upgrades at six access sites. The project was extensive enough that each site was closed for a short time. We hope that this wasn't too disruptive to the fishers who use the access sites. Now that the work is done, the sites will be able to provide even better services and support to fishers as you head back out on the water in the upcoming months.



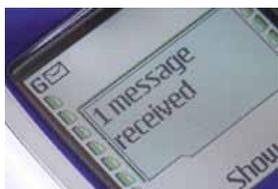
Paul Lumley  
YAKAMA



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