

# The Dipnetter

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



May 2013

## CALIFORNIA SEA LIONS ABOVE BONNEVILLE DAM TO BE TRAPPED

DOUG HATCH, CRITFC FISHERIES BIOLOGIST



*A California sea lion resting near Boat Rock, one of the outcroppings in the Columbia River just upstream of Bonneville Dam.*

Sea lions have been a recurring problem in the Bonneville Pool for the last three years. They have damaged fishing gear and stolen fish from nets. There are an estimated four sea lions in the Bonneville Pool this spring. After the four Columbia River treaty tribes requested that this growing problem be addressed, the National Marine Fisheries Service paid for construction of a trap to try to remove problem sea lions from the Bonneville Pool.

“Tribal fishers have grown frustrated with the sea lions above Bonneville Dam and the damage they cause to their fishing gear,” said Paul Lumley, CRITFC executive director. “We are happy that something is being done to address the situation and that there is now a method to remove animals that have been trapped in the Bonneville Pool.”

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is operating the trap, but trapping is being done in coordination with tribal fishery managers. The trap was deployed on April 17 at The Dalles Marina. The trap needs to be deployed in an area where sea lions haul out. There have been at least three sea lions that have been hauling

out at The Dalles Marina. Trapping also needs to be done where the trap can be kept secure and where sea lions can be removed from the trap for transport. The Dalles Marina also meets this requirement.

Once trapped, each animal will be removed from The Dalles area and later examined for brands or natural markings. These markings determine if the animal is on the list for removal. Unknown or unmarked animals will be branded and released into the Columbia River below Bonneville Dam. Marked animals on the removal list will undergo a health assessment and, if found healthy and meeting a series of health criteria, could be considered for transfer to the Queens Zoo in New York. All marked animals on the removal list are subject to possible euthanasia.

There are plans to install another trap possibly in the Stevenson area.

Fishers should be aware that there is no guarantee trapping will be successful. It may take a long time to catch the animals. There may be logistical limits that prevent

trapping in all areas where problem sea lions are. Fishers are encouraged to continue to report sightings of sea lions. We recognize the frustration of fishers, but these reports have helped a great deal in getting support for trapping efforts. Call CRITFC Enforcement (800) IT'S FISHY if you spot a sea lion in Zone 6 stretch of the Columbia River. Fishery managers are especially interested in locations where sea lions haul out as it may

be possible to trap them in these locations. By compiling as much data about the size and nature of the sea lion problem, the tribes hope to have more information to come up with an effective and suitable solution.

For information on non-lethal hazing techniques from NFMS, please visit: [bit.ly/hazingmethods](http://bit.ly/hazingmethods). 🐟

## A Second Time Around for Steelhead

SARA THOMPSON, CRITFC PUBLIC INFORMATION

Unlike other salmon species, about 10 to 15 percent of steelhead don't die after spawning. These steelhead that survive after spawning are called "kelts." They can swim back to sea and return to spawn again. CRITFC is working with the fisheries staffs from the Yakama Nation and Nez Perce Tribe to increase steelhead abundance in the Columbia Basin by reconditioning kelts so they can

reproduce again.

CRITFC and tribal staff also collaborated on the article "Survival and Traits of Reconditioned Kelt Steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) in the Yakima River, Washington" that was recently accepted for publication by the *North American Journal of Fisheries Management*. 🐟

*Yakama, Nez Perce, and CRITFC staff gathered at Dworshak National Fish Hatchery in Orofino, Idaho to air spawn adult steelhead. This live spawning technique uses a small injection of compressed air into the female's body cavity to press the eggs out without harming the fish. (Male fish are milked for their milt without being killed first.) This allows the spawned out adults to be reconditioned to improve their odds of survival.*



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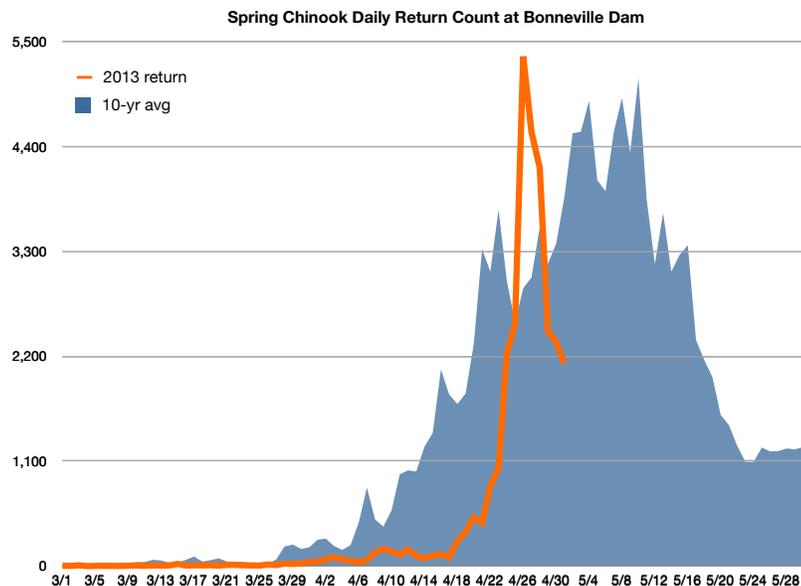


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# 2013 Spring Salmon Run and Fishery Update

STUART ELLIS, CRITFC FISH MGMT. DEPT.

The spring chinook counts are well under the 10-year average. They have been increasing some, but remain below average, although it is still early in the run. The river flow and temperature are fairly typical for this time of year. Half of the run may not pass Bonneville until around May 6. The Ceremonial Permit catches remain low - fewer than 100 fish have been caught. Platform fisheries in Zone 6 have harvested only a very small number of fish. Two tribes allowed some fishing downstream of Bonneville Dam, but this was closed on April 27. The tribes are still discussing the overall management of spring fisheries. Decisions will be announced as they are made. A continuously updated Bonneville Dam count and graph is on the CRITFC homepage ([www.critfc.org](http://www.critfc.org)). 🐟



## Hood River Port Jetty

The Port of Hood River would like river users to please refrain from taking rocks from the Hood River Port jetty. For years, port officials had marvelled at how quickly the end of the jetty seemed to be eroding into the river. It turned out that the rocks weren't sloughing off into the river from wave action but were being taken by Indian fishers who saw the jetty as a convenient source of buoy anchors. After getting so reduced that it was impacting the usability of the jetty, the Port of Hood River rebuilt the structure in 2010. The Port hopes to avoid having to rebuild anytime soon and is asking fishers to please get rocks at another location to ensure that the Port of Hood River jetty will be usable and functional for everyone. 🐟



## River Safety Tips

JERROD DANIEL, CRITFC ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

As this year's fishing season starts to ramp up, now is a good time to check your safety gear and make any necessary repairs or replacements before you head down to the river. If you have self-inflating life jackets, do a check of the CO<sub>2</sub> cartridge. Instructions on how to do this test are provided with the documentation that came with your life jacket. If you have standard life jackets, inspect them for any rips, mildew, mold, or any other problem that could affect the usefulness of the device. Oftentimes, life jackets are left in boats over the winter and it isn't until a fisher is launching the boat that it is discovered that there is a problem, at which point it is all too easy to say, "I'll go without this one time, because I don't want to drive into town to buy another one." By making sure you're ready for anything, you can increase your safety and the safety of your boat crew. 🐟



*If your life vests look like this you should get a new one. What life vest is recommended? The one you're willing to wear.*

# The Dipnetter

Yakama • Warm Springs  
Umatilla • Nez Perce



## First Salmon



Salmon roasting at this year's Celilo First Salmon Feast.

Last month saw the start of the Columbia River First Salmon feasts of the year, first in Lyle, then in Celilo the following week. This year, the fish have been slow coming and there have been low numbers of ceremonial fish available for the feasts. Despite this, though, the

## CRITFC Executive Director's Message

gatherings have gone on, just as they have for thousands of years.

To me, the feasts are a reminder of how truly blessed tribal people are to have salmon return each year to feed and provide for our physical and spiritual needs. They are also a reminder of the resilience of tribal culture, a culture that it is still strong and connected to the land that we call home.

In my meetings with state and federal agency representatives and officials, I often encourage them to take part in one of these ceremonies. Too often, in the day-to-day fights over the salmon as a resource, they can lose sight of the fact that the salmon are a gift. When non-Indians witness and take part in a First Salmon ceremony, they not only see how important these sacred fish are to the tribes, they see *salmon and tribal people* in a whole new light. The tribes do not have a monopoly on caring for and honoring the salmon. However, we've been doing it for a long time and have a lot of wisdom to share with the region on what we've learned.



Paul Lumley  
YAKAMA



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