Sea lions and the tribal fishery
a continuing problem

The spring Chinook are returning to the Columbia River and so are the sea lions. The traps have been set and hazing boats are back on to the river.

Last year, sea lions found their way above Bonneville Dam in the Zone 6 fishing area and tribal fishers reported seeing sea lions prey on salmon throughout the Bonneville pool from Cascade Locks to Stanley Rock. Any information tribal fishers can provide tribal biologists on the sea lion presence in Zone 6 would be useful in the continuing effort to deal with this problem.

If you see a sea lion while out on the river in Zone 6, please:
• Record the date, time, location, and what the sea lion is doing.
• Note any distinguishing marks or brands, locations where they have hauled out (come out of the water to rest), and take photos if possible.

This information is important for managers and will be useful in the ongoing efforts to remove sea lions below Bonneville.

If sea lions are spotted around tribal fishing gear or interfering with tribal fisheries, fishers may attempt to chase away the sea lion using slingshots, fireworks, other noisemakers, or rocks. However, federal law prohibits anyone, including tribal fishers, from injuring or killing a sea lion. Anyone caught injuring or killing a sea lion can be charged with a felony and the penalties are quite substantial.

To report a sea lion above Bonneville Dam please contact CRITFE: (800) 487-3474 or (541) 386-6363 or CRITFC’s Stuart Ellis: (503) 731-1312, ells@critfc.org.
executive director’s message

Returning Home

Recently, I was coming home from a trip to Washington D.C. when I was struck by the fact that tribal fishers will soon be taking to the Columbia River to fish for spring Chinook. In D.C., I am always fighting for the tribe’s treaty rights—fighting for funding and fighting for salmon and the resources that we rely on. The start of fishing season, however, always humbles me.

Tribal fishers, taking to the Columbia River and risking your lives for your families and communities is very honorable. You provide for them just as generations did before you. CRITFC and our staff will do everything in our power to ensure that those opportunities are available to you.

I wish you a successful fishing season and please be safe out there.
—Paul Lumley

New Employees
CRITFC gains two new department managers

Watershed Department
Aja (pronounced like “Asia”) K. DeCoteau, a Yakama Nation tribal member, joined the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission as the new manager for CRITFC’s Watershed Department. DeCoteau, 29, has been serving as the program manager for the Yakama Nation’s Environmental Management Program in Toppenish, Washington for the past two years.

DeCoteau comes to CRITFC with a strong background in regional water and air quality issues, environmental review, and environmental health issues. She will oversee restoration and protection of fish habitat projects under the tribes’ salmon restoration plan while providing technical and funding support to CRITFC’s member tribes. DeCoteau will take a leadership role in the implementation of the Northwest Power and Planning Council’s Fish and Wildlife Program and will be essential to CRITFC’s implementation of Wy-Kan-Ush-Mi Wa-Kish-Wit (Spirit of the Salmon, tribal restoration plan) and the Columbia Basin Fish Accords.

Enforcement Department
Davis Washines, a Yakama Nation tribal member, has taken the lead on CRITFC’s enforcement responsibilities as the Commission’s new chief of law enforcement. Washines, whose tribal name is Yellowash, comes to CRITFC with extensive history in tribal law enforcement and over 25 years of experience.

Washines lived at Celilo Falls as a child and relocated with his family after the inundation of Celilo Falls in 1957. He began his career in law enforcement in 1973 as a dispatcher and jailer for the Yakama Nation. Washines served as a patrol officer, a criminal investigator, and was appointed by the Yakama Tribal Council as the tribe’s chief of police in 1986.

As the chief of law enforcement, Washines is responsible for the overall management of CRITFC’s law enforcement branch known as CRITFE.

“Traditional tribal knowledge knew of the holistic nature of the water, land, and air and how they impact and complement one another. It is our duty to use this knowledge to address modern tribal concerns regarding these natural resources—resources that lie at the foundation of tribal culture.”

Aja DeCoteau

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
Yakama · Umatilla · Warm Springs · Nez Perce

“To ensure a unified voice in the overall management of the fishery resources, and as managers, to protect reserved treaty rights through the exercise of the inherent sovereign powers of the tribes.”

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CRITFC Chairman
McCoy Oatman

CRITFC Chairman
McCoy Oatman
Salmon Marketing Tips
get the most for your fish

By Les Brown
As this next fishing season approaches we thought it good idea to give you some marketing tips and information so you can be on top of your game and get the most for your fish.

This is even more important this year as many consumers are still not out of the financial woods yet. They are still out there, just not as many so every sale is important as much as maintaining a price as high as possible. Here are a few tips that top fishers do to get the most for their fish.

Tip 1: Build good customer relationships.
Do the easy lifting first. Contact customers (over-the-bank, wholesale, or commercial buyers) you already do business with now rather than wait for the season to start. One reason: With cash being in short supply, many people and businesses are planning their larger purchases in advance. This will give them time to plan you into their purchases. Also keep good records of your sales this year since finding new customers may be a little tougher to do. Repeat sales take less time than trying to always find new ones. If needed contact CRITFC Salmon Marketing for a customer sales and receipt booklet (while supplies last). This booklet has a carbon copy record of each sale so you can follow up for more repeat business.

Tip 2: Sell Quality
Over the years I have observed fishers who receive top dollar for their fish and they all sell the quality of their catch. They let their customers know why their fish is the best. To ensure the highest quality, they pick their nets often, ice and bleed their fish as soon as possible, handle the fish in a way as to not bruise it and avoid as much scale loss as possible, and slush ice the fish while on their boats. A fish picked out of the net in a timely fashion and handled properly and slush iced can have a shelf life of 10-14 days in the marketplace. This length of time is necessary for buyers who are sending the fish to Midwest and East Coast markets.

Tip 3: Harvest a cold whole resource
Ice, ice, ice! Reducing the core temperature of your fish is paramount to maintaining quality. Fishers committed to high quality always find a way to ice their fish. Fish begin to loose significant shelf life if their core temperature is more than 40°F for any length of time. Whether it comes from the plant at White Salmon, off the shelf from a store, from Koldkist Ice in Portland (503) 285-2800, from your own source, or from a fish buyer, ice is the key ingredient to quality. The first thing buyers often asked me when deciding to buy tribal fish is if the fish is being iced. Poorly iced fish can hurt everyone in the marketplace. Icing fish should be done on the boat. Even store-bought cubed ice can work in an ice/slush solution if no other ice is available.

Tip 4: Have a reliable delivery system
Develop and maintain a reliable delivery system for your fish. This all begins with pre-season boat and motor maintenance. Also, if you are delivering fish, your truck and trailer need to be in top shape.

The reputation in the marketplace for tribal caught Columbia River salmon has been on the rise. In a recent trip to San Francisco to look for more buyers, one buyer I spoke with noted the improved quality of the fish and his willingness to purchase more.

Now is the time to seize the day and keep moving forward. Hats off to all fishers who are making this happen.

Next month: Boater safety

HACCP Certification
Class for Tribal Fishers
The U.S. Food and Drug Administration requires all seafood sold or produced in the United States be processed under a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan and under the supervision of a HACCP-trained individual. This two-day class will train attendees with the skills to meet these federal food safety regulations. There are no examinations; attendance and participation in the whole program fulfills the requirement. Lunch will be provided both days.

When: April 7-8 (8am to 5pm both days)
Where: Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Enforcement, 4270 Westcliff Drive, Hood River
Registration: For more information or to register contact Kris Sampson at (503) 238-0667
Class size: limited to 35 on a first come/first served basis
Cost: CRITFC will cover class fee (normally $250/person)

Outboard Engine Maintenance Class
Marine engine mechanic Larry Blais will conduct a half-day outboard engine repair workshop for tribal fishers. The workshop covers a variety of topics including basic engine maintenance, batteries, fuel quality and mixture, and troubleshooting engine problems. Following this workshop, a second class is tentatively planned that focuses on boat safety. Look for details. Lunch will be provided.

When: April 12, 10am-1pm (boat safety workshop tentatively planned for 1pm-1pm)
Where: Celilo Community Center
Registration: For more information or to register contact Les Brown at (503) 238-0667
Cost: Class cost covered by Washington Sea Grant (normally $50-100/person)
2010 Summer and Fall Forecasts predicting a solid year for salmon runs

By Stuart Ellis

As the highly anticipated spring Chinook are making their way back to the Columbia, TAC representatives released their forecasts for summer and fall runs. Summer and fall runs are looking solid:

- The **upper Columbia summer Chinook** forecast is 88,800 adults. This would be a significant increase over the 53,900 that returned last year,
- The **sockeye** forecast for 2010 is 125,200 adults—another solid run.
- **Fall upriver brights** are forecast to come in at 310,800. A strong return, 2010 could be the best return since 2004. This forecast is much greater than the 10-year average.
- An estimated 169,000 **Spring Creek tules** are expected to return this year. Again, this would be the best run since 2004 and much greater than 2009.

Both treaty and non-treaty fisheries are managed based on the actual river mouth returns rather than the pre-season forecasts. The runs are normally updated when about half the run has passed Bonneville Dam.

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**2010’s First Spring Chinook**
The first spring Chinook in an anticipated run of 470,000 passed Bonneville Dam on February 27. Since the salmon was PIT-tagged, we know it was a four-year-old fish released on April 12, 2007 from the Carson Hatchery on the Wind River in Washington.

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