

The Dipnetter

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



August 2012

THIRD ANNUAL COLUMBIA RIVER INDIAN FISHERS EXPO

SARA THOMPSON, CRITFC PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

Over 170 Warm Springs, Umatilla, Yakama, and Nez Perce fishers, tribal leaders, and community members descended on Hood River for the third annual Columbia River Indian Fishers Expo on July 27. Hosted by CRITFC, the one-day event focused on river safety and quality food handling. Expo participants learned about cold-water survival techniques, boating safety, maintaining and repairing boat engines, and basic fiberglass repair. Classes were also offered on different ways to increase the quality of products they sell to the public

and discussed various marketing techniques for Indian-caught salmon.

The mayor of White Salmon and local officials from Hood River and White Salmon came out to the event to mingle with tribal leaders and fishers. Many of the projects in the Columbia River Gorge require close coordination with Gorge communities.

“We have a lot of things on the horizon for the tribal fisheries. We are working to restore the production/harvest connection

and rebuild naturally spawning salmon populations,” said CRITFC chairwoman Kat Brigham during her luncheon address. “There are still threats to the tribal fishery. We will do everything that we can to protect our treaty rights, that includes our tribal fishery.”

(cont. on next page)



University of Washington SeaGrant trainer Sarah Fiskin is rescued from the Columbia River by CRITFC Officer Larry Risley during a boat rescue demonstration. Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Enforcement and Washington's SeaGrant Water Safety program conducted the demonstration.



CRITFC officer Jerrod Daniels shows how to properly fit a life jacket at the safety station of the “School of Fish.” Twenty middle school and junior high students participated in this new addition to the Fishers Expo. They learned about river and boat safety, what CRITFC Enforcement officers do, and conducted water quality tests on the Columbia River.



Donella Miller of the Yakama Nation Fisheries sturgeon project displayed an aquarium filled with juvenile sturgeon.



(cont. from page 1)

CRITFE officer Dana Journey (center) takes his oath from CRITFC Chairwoman Kat Brigham (left) and CRITFC Chief of Enforcement Davis Washines (right).

The Expo also featured a trade show of sixteen vendors. Attendees browsed displays on water safety, packaging materials, tribal fisheries program information, and fishing supply businesses. Expo

vendors included the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, The Dalles Marine Supply, Oregon SeaGrant, A-1 Scales.

During the Columbia River Indian Expo, CRITFC Executive Director Paul Lumley announced that CRITFC has received a \$44,400 Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative grant from the First Nations Development Institute of Longmont, Colorado. One of eleven recipients, CRITFC will use the grant to improve tribal salmon marketing efforts through an entrepreneurial program that teaches proper food handling, harvest safety practices, and business and marketing strategies.

“This grant is a tremendous opportunity to improve our salmon marketing resources to the tribal fishers,” said Lumley. “We have made a lot of progress over recent years, but this grant will allow us to take the program to the next level.”

Summer Fishery and Fall Preview

MIKE MATYLEWICH, CRITFC FISH MGMT. DEPT. MANAGER

The 2012 summer season was a mixed bag. The return of 528,300 sockeye, compared to a pre-season forecast of 462,000, was the largest since the construction of Bonneville Dam. On the bright side, most of the sockeye are returning to the Okanagon system in Canada. Also, 800 ESA-listed Snake River sockeye returned, which is an increase from the single sockeye that passed Lower Granite in 1992. The Upper Columbia summer chinook return was 57,300, compared to a pre-season forecast of 91,000.

There were four commercial gillnet seasons from June 18 through July 11, catching 45,750 sockeye and 7,800 chinook. The treaty sockeye catch was the largest since 1985. However, the sockeye harvest rate exceeded the ESA limit (8.7% vs. 7%) and all fishing was closed on July 12. Platform and hook-and-line fishing reopened on July 27 with no retention of sockeye and a minimum 5" mesh size for dipnets and hoopnets.

The structure of the 2012 Fall Season will be similar to recent years if the pre-season forecasts for fall chinook and steelhead materialize. The pre-season forecast for fall chinook is 419,500 to Bonneville Dam. The expectation is for 373,200 bright fall chinook and 46,300 tule fall chinook. The pre-season forecast for steelhead is 364,600, including 52,800 group B steelhead. The ESA limitations are 32% harvest rate for bright fall chinook and 20% harvest rate for group B steelhead. Expected catches are around 170,000 fall chinook and 30,000 steelhead.

CRITFC Officers and Commissioners

UMATILLA



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

NEZ PERCE



Joel Moffett, CRITFC vice-chairman
Brooklyn Baptiste · Roberta Bisbee
Dan Kane · McCoy Oatman
Samuel Penney · Allen Slickpoo Jr
Silas Whitman · Marie Arthur
Quintin Ellenwood · Erik Holt ·
Herb Jackson · Timothy Wheeler
(208) 843-2253

WARM SPRINGS



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

YAKAMA



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

Fishers catch monster invasive fish

BLAINE PARKER, CRITFC FISH BIOLOGIST



Kim Brigham, UMATILLA, holding up the 38 lb. grass carp she caught at Cascade Locks.

Last month, Umatilla fisher Kim Brigham and her kids Brigham and Peighton were checking hoop nets off their family scaffold near the Bridge of the Gods when they thought they had caught a big salmon. “At first thought it was a big chinook,” Kim explained, “but when it was closer to the surface, we saw the big scales. I knew it was a carp, but not a regular carp.” After they landed the fish, Kim sent a picture of it CRITFC, where it

was immediately recognized as a grass carp—an invasive species. CRITFC biologist Blaine Parker contacted Kim and asked her if he could examine the fish himself.

In his examination, Parker opened up the fish to see what sex it was and immediately saw eggs. This was troubling as all grass carp stocked in Oregon and Washington must come from a federally managed hatchery that certifies that all the fish purchased for release are triploid, which makes them unable reproduce. The fish was brought back to the CRITFC lab, where a variety of tests and examinations will determine its age, growth patterns, and whether it came from Oregon or Washington. We will follow up with our results in a future issue.

Parker had seen grass carp before after a number were accidentally introduced into the Columbia River from the 1996 and 1997 floods. Indian fishers caught several in the following years and the fish counters at Bonneville Dam even documented them moving upstream past the counting windows.

Grass carp are native to eastern Asia, but have been in the United States since the 1963,

when they were first imported by aquaculture facilities in Alabama and Arkansas and were widely stocked as a biological control for aquatic plants, hence the name. However, illegal releases, flood events on the Mississippi river, and escapees from aquaculture facilities have spread these fish



This gray mass is the female fish's ovaries. A grass carp can produce up to one million eggs a year!

to most of the lower 48 states, and established reproducing populations in the Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio rivers.

Kim Brigham offered to give CRITFC the fish, but Parker insisted on paying her for it as it is very important that finds like this are properly documented. If you catch an unusual fish, you maybe eligible for a cash reward as well. Keep the fish on ice, unfrozen if possible, and contact Blaine Parker at CRITFC. (503) 238-0667 or parb@critfc.org. 🐟

Get fisheries announcements right on your cell phone

If you would like to get fisheries announcements via text message, send a text message to the number **55958** with “**critfc**” in the body of the text. Calling the number will not work. This must be done as a text message from your cell phone.



The Dipnetter

Yakama • Warm Springs
Umatilla • Nez Perce



Carrying on Our Traditions

CRITFC Executive Director's Message

One of the key pieces of information in fishery planning is the pre-season forecast—a guess of how many salmon will be returning. Unfortunately in the past few years, these forecasts have been way off.

Forecasts are based on the historical relationship between age classes. For example the number of spring chinook jacks returning in one year is used to forecast the number of four-year-old fish in the next year. This method assumes that the future will behave just as it has in the past. These forecast techniques are all based on the assumption that survival rate, particularly in the juvenile life stages, remains relatively constant over time. As with many other things in life, conditions vary over time, resulting in these guesses to be not at all what occurs when the fish actually come in.

During the past few years, we have seen very high spring chinook jack returns—more than we have ever seen before. While we still saw large spring chinook adult returns, the proportion between adults

and jacks did not match up with the proportions seen in the historical data. Jack counts is one of the most important methods we use to predict the adult returns, and with their numbers abnormally high, our adult returns were “over projected.” We’re still studying why so many jacks returned in recent years.

Despite being imprecise, forecasts are a valuable tool for fishery planning. We know that the actual returns will vary from the forecasts; we just can't tell by how much and in what direction until the fish start to show up. Setting fishing seasons depends on the ability to adjust the pre-season forecasts as information on the actual returns becomes available. Tribal staffs analyze the information and provide the information to decision makers in a timely manner. We are constantly trying to make these forecasts as accurate as possible, but with the major changes that are affecting the river, the salmon, and the climate, this is turning out to be harder than it was in the past.



Paul Lumley
YAKAMA



The Dipnetter

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
729 NE Oregon, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97232
www.critfc.org • (503) 238-0667

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PORTLAND, OR
PERMIT #11

