



## IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

**May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Commission Conference Call**

**Agenda Item No.: 1**

**Agenda Item: Summer Chinook Salmon Seasons (Action)**

**Supervisor Approval: LH**

**Presented by: Lance Hebdon**

**Position/Title: Bureau Chief, Fisheries**

### **Background:**

This agenda item concerns the setting of Chinook Salmon fishing seasons targeting anadromous Chinook Salmon in the Upper Salmon, South Fork Salmon, and Lochsa rivers. Fisheries staff will brief the Commission on the in-season run size estimates for Snake River summer Chinook Salmon returns and propose summer salmon seasons based on the run size information and public input. For all proposed fishing areas, sufficient numbers of hatchery salmon are forecasted to return in 2026 to provide sport fisheries that target the non-tribal harvestable share after brood stock targets are considered.

Staff will also review the harvest matrix table for the South Fork Salmon River that outlines the framework for season structure. Staff will recommend delegating authority to the Director to make in-season adjustments to seasons based on the harvest matrix tables including increases or decreases in geographic extent, fishing days of the week, fishing hours, bag limits, and season suspension and closures.

### **Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:**

Idaho Statute 36-104(b)2 gives the Commission the authority to make a rule or proclamation establishing seasons and methods for the taking of fish. Fishing Rules are provided in IDAPA 13.01.11

### **Public Involvement Process:**

Public meetings to seek input on 2026 Chinook Salmon seasons were held in Riggins, Lewiston, Orofino, Coeur d'Alene, Moscow, Cascade, and Nampa during February. Fish and Game Regional staff hosted each of the meetings to provide information on 2026 projected salmon returns and to allow for public comment on potential 2026 seasons.

### **Justification:**

Salmon and steelhead mitigation hatcheries were built to mitigate or compensate for fishing opportunity lost as a result of hydropower development. The proposed season would provide anglers the opportunity to fish for returning adult hatchery Chinook Salmon produced at Idaho mitigation hatcheries.

### **Staff Recommendation:**

The Department recommends the Commission approve the proposed 2026 fishing seasons for Chinook Salmon in the Upper Salmon, South Fork Salmon, and Lochsa rivers. The Department also recommends the Commission delegate authority to the Director to adjust seasons and rules following the guidelines in the harvest matrix tables.



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### **Suggested Motion:**

I move the Commission adopt Chinook Salmon seasons as recommended by the Department, and to promote effective use of the state of Idaho's share of salmon harvest, I further move the Commission delegate authority to the Director to make in-season adjustments based on the harvest matrix tables presented by the Department, including increases or decreases in geographic extent, fishing days of the week, fishing hours, bag limits, and season suspension and closures, with the Director to promptly notify to the Commission of such in-season adjustments, and the Department to comply with Idaho Code Section 36-105 for publication and notice for proclamation amendments or orders.