

Meeting Date: March 18, 2021

Agenda Item No. 5a

Agenda Item: Season Setting, Spring Season Chinook
Salmon Fisheries

Bureau Chief Approval: JF

Prepared by: Lance Hebdon, Anadromous Fish Manager

Background:

This agenda item concerns the setting of Chinook salmon fishing seasons targeting adult anadromous Chinook salmon in the Snake River, Lower Salmon River, and Little Salmon River. No fisheries are being proposed in the Clearwater River basin at this time because forecasted returns are below broodstock needs. We will monitor Chinook Salmon returns to the Clearwater, South Fork Salmon, and Upper Salmon River run in-season and may propose a season at a later date if returns are sufficient. For all proposed fishing areas, staff is forecasting that a sufficient number of hatchery salmon will return in 2021 to provide sport fisheries that target the non-tribal harvestable share after brood stock targets are considered.

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:

A public meeting to seek input on 2021 spring season Chinook salmon fisheries was held virtually on February 11th and an open comment period lasted from February 11-21..

Staff Recommendation:

Approve the proposed 2021 fishing seasons for Chinook Salmon in the Snake River, Lower Salmon River, and Little Salmon River.

Justification:

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