

Meeting Date: March 20, 2020

Agenda Item No. 5.A.

Agenda Item: Season Setting, Spring Season Chinook
Salmon Fisheries

Bureau Chief Approval: GB for 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, Little Salmon River, Mainstem Clearwater River, North Fork Clearwater River, Middle Fork Clearwater River, and South Fork Clearwater River. For all proposed fishing areas, staff is forecasting that a sufficient number of hatchery salmon will return in 2020 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:

Public meetings to seek input on 2020 spring season Chinook salmon fisheries were held during February in Nampa, Cascade, Riggins, Lewiston, Orofino, and Coeur d'Alene. Idaho Department of Fish and Game Regional staffs hosted each of the meetings to provide information on 2020 projected salmon returns and to allow for public comment on potential 2020 seasons.

Staff Recommendation:

Approve the proposed 2020 fishing seasons for Chinook Salmon in the Snake River, Lower Salmon River, Little Salmon River, Mainstem Clearwater River, North Fork Clearwater River, Middle Fork Clearwater River, and South Fork Clearwater 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.