



PSC Chinook Technical Committee

TO: Principal Investigators and agency representatives involved with Bonneville Sampling
FROM: Dell Simmons and John Carlile, USCTC co-chairs
DATE: June 30th, 2008.
SUBJECT: Adult Chinook sampling at Bonneville Dam

Over the last nine years, the United States section of the Pacific Salmon Commission has funded a number of research and monitoring projects related to abundance based management of Chinook under the Pacific Salmon Treaty Agreement with Canada. Some of these projects have been and are related to collecting vital biological information on Chinook returns to the Columbia river.

PIT tagging of returning Chinook at Bonneville dam is used to obtain age and abundance information by stock that is critical to successful harvest management. However, it our understanding that information critical to Chinook salmon management in the US-Canada arena is not being collected due to perhaps overly strict sampling criteria being applied at Bonneville dam.

Of particular concern are maximum fish density standards that make it difficult to obtain desired sample rates of Chinook. Adequate sampling rates are critical as the precision of stock abundance estimates and age structure is directly related to sample size. Of course, we realize that sampling in conditions that are detrimental to salmon survival should be limited. However, we think exceptions to the normal criteria should be considered on a case by case basis to help attain adequate sample sizes. We hope that issues such as fish densities of healthy stocks of non-salmonid species (e.g. shad) would not impede sampling of returning summer Chinook. We hope that the relevant parties will allow exemptions to the normal sampling protocols such that a sample rate on summer Chinook of at least 1% of the return across Bonneville dam can be attained.

The data collected are vital for Chinook fishery management in the Columbia and for the estimation of Chinook ocean abundance and target catches in Alaska, British Columbia and the waters of Oregon and Washington. We believe that the data collection at Bonneville dam will be done in an efficient manner with the least possible stress to the sampled fish, and appreciate any assistance you can provide.