

The Fraser River Panel received an update on the progress of the Fraser River sockeye runs of current management interest at the Panel meeting today. Summer-run sockeye have comprised most of the catch of Fraser River sockeye this season. The current estimated catch of Fraser sockeye by Canadian fishers has reached 2,862,000 fish, and United States fishers have harvested an estimated 442,000 sockeye to date.

The diversion rate of Fraser River sockeye through Johnstone Strait increased over the previous week and is currently estimated at 90%. This is much higher than the pre-season forecast of an average diversion rate for the season of 27%. The high diversion rate contributed to the relatively large, sustained test fishing catches of sockeye in the Areas 12 and 13 purse seine test fisheries over the last several days. The estimated daily sockeye escapements past Mission have remained strong (averaging approximately 220,000 sockeye per day) over the past week and as expected, large numbers of sockeye continue to be observed migrating upstream past Hells Gate.

Most Early Summer-run sockeye have entered the Fraser River and many have now begun to arrive at their spawning grounds. The current, accounting-based estimate of their run size is now 860,000 fish and the gross escapement of these sockeye into the Fraser River to date has reached 609,000 fish.

The present run-size estimate of Summer-run sockeye remains at 6,000,000 fish, which is substantially lower than the 50% pre-season forecast abundance for these sockeye. DNA analysis of sockeye from test fishing samples collected in Areas 12, 13, and 20 indicate that the proportion of Summer-run sockeye migrating through these assessment areas has declined over the past week from approximately 40% to about 30%. The gross escapement of Summer-run sockeye into the Fraser River now totals 3,524,000 fish.

At the Panel meeting today, an increase in the run-size estimate of Late-run sockeye (excluding Birkenhead sockeye) to 5,800,000 fish was approved. This increase in run-size is attributed primarily to the sustained migration of larger than anticipated numbers of Late-run sockeye through the Johnstone Strait assessment sites (Areas 12 and 13) over the past week. The proportion of Late-run sockeye in marine areas (Areas 12, 13, and 20) has increased from approximately 50% last week to over 60%. The proportion of Late-run sockeye migrating through the lower Fraser River in recent days has varied between 10% and 20% of the daily passage, with the remainder being primarily Summer-run sockeye. Current estimates suggest that over 2,000,000 Late-run sockeye are delaying in the lower Strait of Georgia. Although it is encouraging that a portion of Late-run sockeye are presently delaying, it is disturbing that an estimated 818,000 Late-run sockeye (excluding Birkenhead) have already migrated into the Fraser River, which is at least one month earlier than "normal" years (prior to 1996). Late-run sockeye migrating into the Fraser River prior to early September are expected to experience significant en route and pre-spawning mortality rates (as observed in recent years).

The current estimate of the total run of Fraser River sockeye this year based on the run sizes noted above (and a current accounting-based estimate of 62,000 Early Stuart sockeye and Birkenhead sockeye returning at 227,000 fish) is 12,949,000 fish, which is approximately 97% of the pre-season forecast abundance (13,366,000 sockeye at the 50% probability level forecast). The current estimates of run size by timing-group compared to the 50% probability level forecasts are as follows: Early Stuart sockeye, 60% of forecast; Early Summer-run sockeye, 127% of forecast; Summer-run sockeye, 67% of forecast; and Late-run sockeye (excluding Birkenhead sockeye), 184% of forecast. Given the considerable in-river mortality rate that Late-run sockeye could experience again this year, and the intense conservation efforts focused on these fish, it is fortunate that they are returning in numbers almost double the pre-season expectations. However, even with nearly double the forecast total return of Late-run sockeye, if mortality

rates are similar to recent years, effective spawning escapements could be substantially below average for this cycle.

The Late-run tagging program (www.psc.org/pubs/laterun/LaterunTagNotice2002.pdf) has now detected 23 Late-run sockeye in various locations in the Fraser River watershed that were radio-tagged in marine areas (fishers are reminded to remove the radio tag and spaghetti tag from tagged fish upon their capture and contact appropriate personnel at the numbers noted in the website above). Monitoring of radio-tagged sockeye will be continuing over the next several weeks and Late-run sockeye from the "late" portion of this timing-group will be radio-tagged from August 21 to 24.

Favorable migration conditions for Fraser River sockeye continued throughout much of the watershed over the past week. The water temperature of the Fraser River (measured at Qualark Creek) is currently 16.5° C, and the river discharge at Hope is 2,500 cms.

DFO's spawning ground enumeration of Early Stuart sockeye indicates that spawning is nearing completion and that there has been high spawning success. Early Summer-run sockeye have begun arriving in many streams and early indications of abundance are encouraging. Summer-run sockeye were first observed on August 16 at both Henry's Bridge on the Chilko River and from the Likely Bridge on the Quesnel River. Late-run sockeye enumeration at Cultus Lake now totals 515 fish to August 22.

The Pacific Salmon Commission provides daily test fishing catches of sockeye salmon and fishery regulations on its recorded message at (604) 666-8200. These and other data are available on the Internet at: <http://www.psc.org/testfish/> United States fishing schedules during the season are available for Treaty Indian fisheries through the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission at 1-800-562-6142. Non-Indian fishing schedules are available through the National Marine Fisheries Service's Hotline in Seattle at 1-888-858-9319. Canadian fishing regulations will be announced on the Fisheries and Oceans Canada recorded message at (604) 666-2828.

The Panel announced the following regulations for Panel Area waters:

United States Fraser River Panel Area Waters:

Non-Indian Fisheries:

Area 7A: Gillnets open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Saturday August 24th and Sunday August 25th, southerly and easterly of the Iwersen's Dock line.

Areas 7 and 7A: Gillnets open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday August 26th, southerly and easterly of the Iwersen's Dock line.

All other Treaty Indian and Non-Indian fisheries in United States Panel Area waters remain closed to fishing.

Canadian Fraser River Panel Area Waters:

Remain closed to fishing.

The next meeting of the Fraser Panel will be Sunday, August 25, 2002.

2002 Fraser River Panel Sockeye Review

Week of: Aug. 18 - Aug. 24, 2002

Date: August 23, 2002

Area	Gear	Weekly Catch	%Fraser	Fraser Sockeye	
				Weekly	Cumul.
Commercial Catch					
Canada					
A & C Areas 1-10	Net				0
F Areas 1-10	Troll				0
G Areas 123-127,11-12	Troll				123,500
B Areas 11-16	PS				456,500
D Areas 11-16	GN				178,200
H Areas 12-16	Troll				55,000
H Areas 18-29	Troll				15,500
B Area 20	PS				228,500
E Area 29	GN				934,700
Canadian Selective					72,600
Canadian Total					2,064,500
United States					
Alaska	Net&Troll				0
Washington					
T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C	Net				43,600
T.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net				254,600
N.I. Areas 7/7A	Net				127,900
Washington Total					426,100
U.S. Total					426,100
Non-commercial Catch					
PSC Test					129,000
Other Test					14,800
Fraser River Aboriginal					536,500
Areas 12-124 Aboriginal					213,700
Recreational					45,000
Charter					2,300
U.S. TI Ceremonial					15,400
Non-comm. Total					956,700
Catch and Escapement					
Catch Accounted-to-date					3,447,300
Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less Aboriginal & sport catch above Mission)					4,460,600
Total Accounted-to-date					7,907,900

Gross Escapement (includes Pitt R. sockeye)

Run	Stock/Group	Adjusted Target	Mission Esc.	FN Below Mission	Total Esc.	% Complete
EStu	Early Stuart	61,100	60,900	0	60,900	100%
ESum	Early Summer	383,300	583,000	26,000	609,000	159%
Summ	Quesnel/Chilko	2,713,000	2,825,900	127,400	3,524,600	130%
	L.Stu./Stel.		548,100	23,200		
Late	Birkenhead	4,964,600	29,300	600	847,600	17%
	Adams/L.Shuswap		703,000	24,100		
	Weav/L.Misc.		88,500	2,100		