

The fisheries management implications of the continued early migration of Late-run Fraser River sockeye salmon, dominated the Fraser River Panel's focus over the past week. After careful review of the stock composition in migratory areas, the Panel approved fisheries directed at Summer-run sockeye that would constrain the harvest of Late-run sockeye. The total catch of Fraser River sockeye thus far by Canadian commercial fishers is 653,000 fish and in United States Panel Area waters, commercial fishers have harvested 293,400 sockeye. The average weight of age 4 Fraser sockeye caught in the Canadian Area 20 commercial fishery on August 1 was approximately 3.17 kg (7.0 lbs.), which is about 0.44 kg (0.97 lb.) larger than normal for this cycle and is attributable to productive marine conditions during their ocean residency period.

The Panel approved an increase in the aggregate run-size of Early Summer-run sockeye today to 700,000 fish, as a result of the sustained strength in the migration of the later-timed component (Scotch and Seymour) through the marine approach areas over the past week. Catches of Early Summer-run sockeye in all fisheries total 201,000 fish to date. The escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission has reached 415,000 fish.

An in-season estimate of the run size of Summer-run sockeye of 8,000,000 fish was approved, which is slightly lower than the 50% probability level forecast (9,006,000). The escapement of Summer-run sockeye past Mission to date has reached 1,092,000 fish, which is 31% of the gross escapement target. Conservation requirements on Late-run sockeye have increased the likelihood that the gross escapement target for Summer-run sockeye will be exceeded.

Late-run sockeye (Late Shuswap, Cultus, Portage, and Weaver stocks) are of paramount management and conservation concern to the Panel at the present time. Based on past observations, it is probable that a significant proportion of the Late-run sockeye currently migrating into the Fraser River early will die without successfully spawning. A total of 66 Late-run sockeye have been enumerated at the Cultus Lake fence to August 8, with the first of these sockeye arriving at the fence on August 3, which is 13 days earlier than when they were first observed in 2001 and approximately two months earlier than "normal" years (pre-1996). The extremely early migration of Late-runs through marine approach areas over the last several days, coupled with their confirmed entry into the Fraser River, adds credence to the Panel's pre-season development of a tightly constrained harvest strategy on Late-run sockeye. Based on analyses of the large abundance of Late-run sockeye observed in the marine assessment areas over the last several days, the Panel adopted a provisional run-size estimate of 4,300,000 Late-run sockeye. Total catches of Late-run sockeye thus far are 54,000 fish by United States fishers and 226,000 sockeye by Canadian fishers. The escapement of Late-runs to date is 194,000 fish. The high abundance of Late-run sockeye observed in the marine approach areas thus far increases the probability that they will approach the 50% probability level forecast (3,578,000 fish). A clearer indication of their run size will be available next week as a larger proportion of the run is enumerated.

The Late-run tagging program (www.psc.org/pubs/laterun/LaterunTagNotice2002.pdf) commenced this week with the radio tagging of 415 sockeye in Canadian Areas 13 and 20 (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). The migration of these fish will be closely monitored over the next several weeks in an effort to obtain valuable data on their migratory behavior. This information will aid in the development of future management approaches and in research attempting to identify the cause(s) of their abnormal behavior.

Panel-authorized gillnet test fisheries in Canadian Areas 12 and 20 were terminated earlier (August 6) than planned in order to conserve Late-run sockeye. The remaining test fisheries will provide sufficient data for monitoring the Summer-run and Late-run migrations. Sockeye caught in the remaining Panel-authorized troll and purse seine test fisheries that are surplus to those required for biological sampling, are being released alive.

Larger catches of sockeye in the Area 12 purse seine test fishery since August 4 suggest that the diversion rate through Johnstone Strait is currently increasing above approximately 15%.

Migration conditions for sockeye in the Fraser River were favorable over the past week and observations of fish passage at Hells Gate has increased significantly in recent days. Discharge levels at Hope have declined to 3,200 cms, which is almost 20% lower than normal for this date. Unusually cool weather in the Fraser River watershed over the last several days has caused water temperatures in many of the tributaries, including the mainstem of the

Fraser River to decline approximately 3°C cooler than normal. The water temperature in the Fraser River at Qualark Creek is currently 15.2°C.

The Panel announced the following regulations for Panel Area waters:

United States Fraser River Panel Area Waters:

Treaty Indian Fisheries:

Areas 4B, 5, and 6C:

Open for drift gillnets from 4:00 p.m. Friday, August 9 to 12:00 p.m. (noon) Tuesday, August 13.

Areas 6, 7 and 7A:

Open for net fishing from 5:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Sunday, August 11, southerly and easterly of the Iwersen's Dock Line.

Non-Indian Fisheries:

Areas 7 and 7A:

Reef nets open 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Saturday, August 10. Gillnets open 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday, August 12, southerly and easterly of the Iwersen's Dock Line.

Canadian Fraser River Panel Area Waters:

Area 20 – 1, 3, and 4:

Open for gear license Area "B" purse seines, 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday, August 12. Details concerning specific regulations for this fishery will be announced by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Area 29:

Open for Area "E" licensed gillnets, Monday, August 12 from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Details concerning specific regulations for this fishery will be announced by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Area 18 – 1, 4, and 11:

Open for Area "H" licensed troll vessels 00:01 a.m. Saturday, August 10 to 11:59 p.m. Sunday, August 11.

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 will meet again Monday, August 12 at 10:00 a.m. to consider regulations for the remainder of the week.

2002 Fraser River Panel Sockeye Review

Week of: Aug. 4 - Aug. 10, 2002

Date: August 9, 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				113,800
B Areas 11-16	PS				22,400
D Areas 11-16	GN				103,800
H Areas 12-16	Troll				5,400
H Areas 18-29	Troll				11,600
B Area 20	PS				187,000
E Area 29	GN				142,600
Canadian Selective					66,800
Canadian Total					653,400
United States					
Alaska	Net&Troll				0
Washington					
T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C	Net				31,900
T.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net				143,400
N.I. Areas 7/7A	Net				117,200
Washington Total					292,500
U.S. Total					292,500
Non-commercial Catch					
PSC Test					110,400
Other Test					10,000
Fraser River Aboriginal					206,500
Areas 12-124 Aboriginal					39,500
Recreational					0
Charter					1,600
U.S. TI Ceremonial					14,300
Non-comm. Total					382,300
Catch and Escapement					
Catch Accounted-to-date					1,328,200
Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less Aboriginal & sport catch above Mission)					1,675,900
Total Accounted-to-date					3,004,100

Gross Escapement (includes Pitt R. sockeye)

Run	Stock/Group	Adjusted Target	Mission Esc.	FN Below Mission	Total Esc.	% Complete
EStu	Early Stuart	62,000	60,900	0	60,900	98%
ESum	Early Summer	363,000	415,200	20,300	435,500	120%
Summ	Quesnel/Chilko	3,828,000	825,400	73,600	1,180,400	31%
	L.Stu./Stel.		266,500	14,900		
Late	Birkenhead	2,942,000	4,300	100	205,700	7%
	Adams/L.Shuswap		149,100	10,100		
	Weav/L.Misc.		40,900	1,200		