

NO. 9 NEWS RELEASE August 20, 1999

The Fraser River Panel met today to receive reports from PSC staff on the assessment of Summer and Late-run sockeye salmon abundance and initial indicators of pink salmon abundance. The escapement of sockeye salmon past the Mission echo sounding site remained low over the past week. Purse seine test fishing in Juan de Fuca and Johnstone Straits showed a continued flow of sockeye toward the Fraser, but numbers were not large. Pink salmon numbers now exceed sockeye in Juan de Fuca Strait purse seine catches.

The total Summer-run sockeye (Chilko, Quesnel, Stellako and Late Stuart) abundance is now projected to reach 1,300,000 fish, down from the earlier projection of 1,400,000. The catch of these stocks in all areas other than Fraser River First Nations fisheries totals 124,000 fish and the gross escapement stands at 894,000 fish.

PSC staff reported that Late-run Adams River and Weaver Creek sockeye have begun migrating into the Fraser River. These stocks traditionally hold off in the Strait of Georgia for three to six weeks before entering the Fraser. However, the early entry of Late-run stocks into the Fraser River has been observed for the past three years. The abundance of Late-run sockeye stocks (including Birkenhead) has been set at 1,100,000 fish, unchanged from the earlier provisional estimate. The gross escapement of this group now stands at 276,000 fish. Troll test fishing in the Strait of Georgia this week indicated that relatively small numbers were present, confirming the observation that most Late-run sockeye are migrating upstream without significant delay outside the Fraser River.

The total return of Fraser River sockeye salmon for 1999 is now projected at approximately 3,020,000 fish compared to the pre-season forecast of 8,248,000 sockeye salmon. This total includes an estimate of 470,000 Early Summer sockeye, an increase of 70,000 from the previous update.

The arrival timing of sockeye salmon continues to be close to the long-term average as forecast by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Late-run sockeye appear to have had peak arrival timing of August 12 (Area 20), two days earlier than the average for the cycle. The Johnstone Strait diversion of sockeye has increased sharply over the past two weeks. Approximately, 75% of the migration of Fraser sockeye has arrived via the northern (Johnstone Strait) approach this week.

Pink salmon catches have increased this week in purse seine test fishing in both Juan de Fuca and Johnstone Strait; Fisheries and Oceans Canada forecast that the 1999 Fraser River pink salmon run size will reach 8,148,000 fish, with a peak in Area 20 on approximately August 28. An in-season estimate of pink salmon abundance will be available within the next two weeks.

The accumulation of sockeye salmon in the Fraser Canyon between Yale and Hells Gate cleared Hells Gate early this week and current daily passages of fish is commensurate with the estimates of escapement at Mission. River water levels have dropped, and due to the cooler weather this week, water temperatures are 17° C, thus current temperatures and discharge should not present a problem to the migrating sockeye.

The Panel announced that all Panel Area commercial fisheries remain closed. The Panel will meet again Tuesday, August 24, to review the progress of Late-run sockeye and pink salmon returning through Juan de Fuca and Johnstone Straits.

Fraser River Panel Sockeye Review

Week of: [Aug. 15 - Aug. 21, 1999](#)

Date: August 20, 1999

Area	Gear	Weekly Catch	%Fraser	Fraser Sockeye	
				Weekly	Cumul.
Commercial Catch					
Canada					
Areas 1-10	Net				0
Areas 1-10	Troll				0
Areas 124-27,11-12	Troll				2,300
Areas 11-16	Net				39,000
Areas 12-16	Troll				12,000
Areas 17-18-29	Troll				0
Area 20	Net				0
Area 29	Net				600
Canadian Total					53,900
United States					
Alaska	Net				0
Washington					
T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C	Net				18,600
T.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net				0
N.I. Areas 7/7A	Net			0	0
U.S. Total				0	18,600
Non-commercial Catch					
PSC Test					44,000
Other Test					46,100
Fraser River Aboriginal					200,400
Areas 12-124 Aboriginal					57,700
Recreational					0
Charter					0
U.S. TI Ceremonial					0
Non-comm. Total					348,200
Catch and Escapement					
Catch Accounted-to-date					420,700
Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less Aboriginal & sport catch above Mission)					1,524,300
Total Accounted-to-date					1,945,000

Gross Escapement (includes Pitt R. sockeye)

Run	Stock/Group	Esc. Goal	Mission Esc.	AFS Below Mission	Total Esc.	% Complete
EStu	Early Stuart	146,000	146,200	200	146,400	100%
ESum	Early Summer		432,200	12,000	444,200	n/a
Summ	Quesnel/Chilko		645,000	10,900	894,200	n/a
	Late Stuart/Stellako		231,000	7,300		
Late	Birkenhead		62,400	1,000	275,900	n/a
	Adam/Lshu		171,400	600		
	Weav/L Misc.		40,500	0		