

NO. 7 NEWS RELEASE August 21, 1998

Fraser River sockeye daily abundance reached a second peak this week in both the Juan de Fuca and Johnstone Strait migration routes. Season high purse seine test fishing catches were recorded in Johnstone Strait Areas 12 and 13. These sockeye were a mixture of Summer-run stocks (primarily Quesnel and Chilko) and Late-run sockeye, principally Adams River, Lower Shuswap River, Birkenhead River and Weaver Creek sockeye. The Summer-run component has proceeded upstream on arrival in the Strait of Georgia. Escapements of Summer-run sockeye at Mission, B.C. on August 18 and 19 were 251,000 and 282,000 fish, respectively. The current best estimate of Summer-run sockeye total abundance remains at 6.0 million fish. The cumulative gross escapement of these stocks stands at 2,800,000 fish compared to the goal of 3,536,000. Additional Summer-run sockeye are expected to arrive in the lower Fraser River over the next ten days and will provide sufficient fish to reach the gross escapement goal.

Salmon Commission staff reported that the escapement of Late-run sockeye into the Strait of Georgia has reached approximately 700,000 fish with additional arrivals over the next two weeks expected to bring the total to near Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans gross escapement goal of 2,563,000 fish. However, the current estimate of only 3.0 million total Late-run sockeye abundance is insufficient to allow additional harvest without jeopardizing the escapement goals.

Catches in United States fisheries in the week of August 16-21 are projected to total approximately 191,000 Fraser River sockeye. An Area E gillnet fishery in the Fraser River on August 20-21 yielded a catch of approximately 110,000 fish, primarily Summer-run sockeye. Canadian commercial fishery catches now total 1,281,000 sockeye while Canadian First Nations catches stand at 404,000 in marine areas and the Fraser River. Washington State landings amount to 577,000 fish and approximately 114,000 Fraser River sockeye have been taken in Alaskan fisheries. Escapement of sockeye past the Pacific Salmon Commission's hydroacoustic site at Mission, B.C. now totals 3,807,000 sockeye, including 671,000 of Early Summer stocks, 2,798,000 Summer-run sockeye and 169,000 Late-run sockeye.

Run size estimates presented today are as follows: Early Summer – 850,000; Summer-run – 6,000,000; Late-run – 3,000,000. At these returns, the total Fraser River sockeye abundance in 1998 would be 10,025,000 fish compared to the preseason forecast of 11,218,000 fish.

Environmental conditions in the Fraser River and tributaries have improved in the past week, but water temperatures remain well above average for the time of year. Concern for the health of migrating and spawning sockeye remains high. Additional escapement has been allowed in the Summer-run sockeye stock group to compensate for expected en-route and pre-spawning mortality which typically occurs at high water temperatures.

The Panel announced that all Panel Area waters would remain closed until further notice.

The next meeting of the Panel will be at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday, August 25, by telephone conference.

Fraser River Panel Sockeye Review

Week of: Aug. 16 - Aug. 22, 1998

Date: August 21, 1998

Area	Gear	Weekly Catch	%Fraser	Fraser Sockeye	
				Weekly	Cumul.
Commercial Catch					
Canada					
Areas 1-10	Net			0	9,000
Areas 1-10 "F"	Troll			0	82,000
Areas 11-12 "G"	Troll	11,000	100%	11,000	206,000
Areas 11-16	Net			0	626,000
Areas 12-16 "H"	Troll			0	106,000
Areas 17-18-29 "H"	Troll			0	22,500
Area 20	Net			0	0
Area 29	Net	110,000	100%	110,000	229,000
Canadian Total					1,280,500
United States					
Alaska	Net				114,000
Washington					
T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C	Net	4,000	100%	4,000	24,600
T.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net	127,000	100%	127,000	285,200
N.I. Areas 7/7A	Net	60,000	100%	60,000	267,300
U.S. Total				191,000	691,100
Non-commercial Catch					
PSC Test					58,100
Other Test					33,200
Fraser River Indian					284,100
Areas 12-124 Indian					119,700
Recreational					10,100
Charter					0
U.S. Ceremonial					0
Non-comm. Total					505,200
Catch and Escapement					
Catch Accounted-to-date					2,476,800
Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less IF & sport catch above Mission)					3,635,400
Total Accounted-to-date					6,112,200

Gross Escapement (includes Pitt R. sockeye)

Run	Stock/Group	Gross Esc. Goal	Mission Esc.	AFS Below Mission	Total Esc.	% Complete
EStu	Early Stuart	170,000	169,100	100	169,200	100%
ESum	Early Summer	445,000	670,900	21,200	692,100	156%
Summ	Quesnel/Chilko	3,536,000	2,195,700	74,700	2,893,600	82%
	Late Stuart/Stellako		602,400	20,800		
Late	Birkenhead	2,563,000	137,800	5,600	175,400	7%
	Adam/Lshu		30,900	1,100		
	Weav/L Misc.		0	0		