

NO. 6 NEWS RELEASE August 22, 1997

Commission staff reported to the national section managers today that Fraser River sockeye catches in Canadian Johnstone Strait for the week of August 17-23 were lower than expected given the projected total abundance of 12 million Summer run sockeye. However, test fishing and commercial troll fishery catches in the upper portion of Canadian Area 12 suggest that there has been an increase in the abundance of fish entering Johnstone Strait over the past few days. Increased catches were recorded in United States Puget Sound fisheries this week. The run appears to be protracted and may be slightly later arriving than previously estimated, but is expected to reach the current run size estimate. Based on this analysis, the Summer run abundance estimates were not modified by Commission staff.

Summer run sockeye escapement into the Fraser River picked up considerably in mid-week with daily abundances at the Mission hydroacoustic site reaching 300,000 fish on August 21. To date, approximately 1,972,000 Summer run sockeye have entered the Fraser River for spawning escapement and First Nations fisheries catches.

Canadian catches of Fraser River sockeye now amount to 5,630,000 fish while United States catches have reached 815,000. Non-commercial catches, including Fraser River First Nations Pilot Sales fisheries, have reached 890,000 fish. The total Fraser sockeye catch is now 7,335,000 fish and the escapements total 2,839,000, giving an accounted total of 10,174,000 sockeye, to date.

Fraser River pink salmon have been identified in Johnstone Strait and Puget Sound catches, but at levels below recent year averages for this time of the season. The forecast total return of Fraser River pink salmon is 11,387,000 fish, which would make the 1997 return the lowest since 1987. Too little information is available at this point in the season to differentiate between low abundance and late return timing. Commission staff expect to make the first in-season estimate of Fraser pink abundance in the first week of September, or later.

The absence of an agreed management plan between the Parties on allocation of the total allowable catch of Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon continues. This lack of agreement prevents the Fraser River Panel from acting in its normal role as the regulatory authority for sockeye fisheries in Panel Area waters. Regulation of the fisheries is being conducted by the respective United States and Canadian domestic management agencies.

Fraser River Panel Sockeye Review

Week of: Aug. 17 - Aug. 23, 1997

Date: August 22, 1997

Area	Gear	Catch	%Fraser	Fraser Sockeye Catch	
				Weekly	Cumul.
Commercial Catch					
Canada					
Areas 1-10	Net	51,000	100%	51,000	182,700
Areas 1-11	Troll	0	0%	0	167,000
Areas 121-127, 12	Troll	221,000	100%	221,000	820,000
Areas 11-16	Net	758,000	100%	758,000	3,277,900
Areas 12-16	Troll	93,000	100%	93,000	561,000
Areas 17-18-29	Troll			0	0
Area 20	Net			0	42,000
Area 29	Net	250,000	100%	250,000	579,000
Canadian Total				1,373,000	5,629,600
United States					
Alaska (Dist. 104)	Net	115,000	67%	77,050	224,900
Washington					
T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C	Net	2,000	100%	2,000	10,100
T.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net	96,000	100%	96,000	265,500
N.I. Areas 7/7A	Net	42,000	100%	42,000	314,800
U.S. Total				217,050	815,300
Non-commercial Catch					
PSC Test					53,400
Other Test					75,300
Fraser River Indian					677,200
Areas 12-124 Indian					77,100
Recreational/Charter					7,200
Non-comm. Total					890,200
Catch and Escapement					
Catch Accounted-to-date					7,335,100
Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less IF & sport catch above Mission)					2,838,800
Total Accounted-to-date					10,173,900

Gross Escapement (includes Pitt R. sockeye)

Run	Stock/Group	Goal	Mission Esc.	AFS Below Mission	Total Esc.	% Complete
EStu	Early Stuart	n/a	1,093,900	43,000	1,136,900	n/a
ESum	Early Summer	n/a	357,100	8,900	366,000	n/a
Summ	Quesnel/Chilko	n/a	1,397,600	109,800	1,972,300	n/a
	Late Stuart/Stellako	n/a	429,300	35,600		n/a
Late	Bikenhead	n/a	30,000	2,100	48,000	n/a
	Weav/L.Misc.	n/a	13,900	2,000		n/a