

NO. 4 NEWS RELEASE August 8, 1997

Canada Department of Fisheries (DFO) staff reported this week that Early Stuart sockeye have begun to arrive at their spawning grounds, but in lower numbers than anticipated. Most of the fish of this stock that passed through the lower Fraser River in the first three weeks of July were adversely affected by high river levels in mid- to late July. Sockeye have been observed in many Fraser Canyon streams from Hope to Lillooet that have no native runs of sockeye. Sampling of carcasses showed that all females were unspawned. Racial analysis of scales from these fish shows that they are primarily Early Stuart sockeye. These fish were unable to complete their migration and have strayed to areas that are unsuitable for sockeye survival. Significant on route migratory losses of this sort have been noted in the past. Thus, the evidence that a substantial loss of Early Stuart sockeye is occurring is a reminder of the delicate balance between these fish and the river environment.

Commission staff reported to national section managers today that the number of Early Summer sockeye (primarily Fennell, Bowron, Nadina, Gates, Pitt, Seymour and Scotch stocks) will reach 650,000 fish. Currently, escapements of these stocks through the lower Fraser River is estimated at 357,000 fish. The run has been drawn out and approximately four days later than normal. While additional catch and escapement of these stocks will take place over the next week, Early Summer stocks are only a minor component of the sockeye in marine areas at this time.

Summer run sockeye stocks now predominate in those commercial fishing areas on the south coast of British Columbia and northern Puget Sound where Fraser River sockeye are the target stocks. Catches of these stocks (Quesnel, Chilko, Late Stuart and Stellako) have reached 1,500,000 fish in all fisheries other than Fraser River First Nations fisheries. Gross escapements now total 475,000 fish, giving a total accounted Summer run of 1,975,000 fish, to date. Staff reported that the peak of the Summer run is expected to arrive in south coastal areas next week, at which time estimates of the abundance of these stocks will be calculated and reported to national section managers.

As was forecast by DFO, Fraser River sockeye are approaching the river primarily via Johnstone Strait. Current week estimates of the Johnstone Strait diversion rate are that approximately 80 to 90% of sockeye are entering via this route. Timing of Summer run sockeye appears to be later than normal due to the northerly landfall and small fish size.

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 regulatory bodies. Conservation goals established by Canada are, however, being met.

Fraser River Panel Sockeye Review

Week of: Aug. 3 - Aug. 9, 1997

Date: August 8, 1997

Area	Gear	Catch	%Fraser	Fraser Sockeye Catch	
				Weekly	Cumul.
Commercial Catch					
Canada					
Areas 1-10	Net			0	123,100
Areas 1-11	Troll	0		0	160,000
Areas 121-127, 12	Troll	91,000	100%	91,000	190,000
Areas 11-16	Net	560,000	100%	560,000	907,500
Areas 12-16	Troll	40,000	100%	40,000	195,100
Areas 17-18-29	Troll			0	0
Area 20	Net			0	0
Area 29	Net	20,000	100%	20,000	205,900
Canadian Total				711,000	1,781,600
United States					
Alaska (Dist. 104)	Net			0	84,300
Washington					
T.I. Areas 4B/5/6C	Net	4,000	100%	4,000	6,400
T.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net	10,000	100%	10,000	93,400
N.I. Areas 6/7/7A	Net	31,000	100%	31,000	118,300
U.S. Total				45,000	302,400
Non-commercial Catch					
PSC Test					42,200
Other Test					4,300
Fraser River Indian					393,600
Areas 12-124 Indian					33,800
Recreational/Charter					0
Non-comm. Total					473,900
Catch and Escapement					
Catch Accounted-to-date					2,557,900
Potential Net Escapement (Mission esc. less IF catch above Mission)					1,577,900
Total Accounted-to-date					4,135,800

Gross Escapement (includes Pitt R. sockeye)

Run	Stock/Group	Goal	Mission Esc.	AFS Below Mission	Total Esc.	% Complete
EStu	Early Stuart	n/a	1,098,500	43,400	1,141,900	n/a
ESum	Early Summer	n/a	349,600	6,500	356,100	n/a
Summ	Quesnel/Chilko	n/a	305,800	7,900	473,500	n/a
	Late Stuart/Stellako	n/a	155,200	4,600		n/a
Late	Bikenhead	n/a	0	0	0	n/a
	Weav/L.Misc.	n/a	0	0		n/a