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No. 9

WEEKLY REPORT

September 7, 2018

The Fraser River Panel (Panel) met today to review assessment data on Fraser River sockeye salmon. The migration of sockeye through both marine areas is virtually complete, but gulf troll surveys indicate there is a large proportion of Late run holding in the Georgia Strait. Escapement past Mission has been low over the last week however it is expected that these numbers will increase once the Late-run migrate into the river. Marine area test fishing catches indicate that most Fraser River sockeye are migrating via the Johnstone Strait route.

Run Status

DNA analysis of a fish sample recently collected from the Area 12 purse seine test fishery indicated Fraser sockeye contributions of approximately 4% Early Summer-run, 23% Summer-run and 73% Late-run sockeye. The annual diversion rate is 33%.

Management Groups

The Early Summer-run run size is nearing completion. The estimated escapement of Early Summer run sockeye past Mission through September 6 is 1,099,500 fish.

The Summer-run run size is nearing completion, and only small changes to the estimate are anticipated. The estimated escapement of Summer-run sockeye past Mission through September 6 is 2,006,600.

Late-run sockeye abundances have decreased in marine areas and some Late-run sockeye have migrated past Mission. Catches from the third troll survey indicate an estimated Late-run delay of 1.8 to 6.6 million in the Strait of Georgia. The estimated escapement of Late-run sockeye past Mission through September 6 is 551,200.

Environmental Update

On September 6, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was about 1,695 cms, which is approximately 30% lower than average for this date. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark on September 6 was 15.7°C, which is 0.5°C below average for this date. DFO's Environmental Watch program projects that river temperature will decrease to 15.5°C by September 12, while discharge is forecast to decrease to about 1,490 cms over the next 10 days. Fraser River discharge levels and water temperatures will be monitored closely to guide specific Panel management actions that may be required during the in-river sockeye migratory period to help achieve escapement goals. To date fish condition throughout the Fraser River has been good.

Escapement Update

For the Early Summer run, a fence at Scotch Creek has been operational since August 9, and 75,487 sockeye have passed through the fence to date and the Eagle River sonar site estimates 202,452 sockeye past the site through September 4. On the Seymour River, a mark recapture project commenced August 21 and 2,189 tags have been applied and 621 carcasses have been recovered to date. Sockeye are reported to be healthy and vigorous and in the early stages of spawning. The incidence of net marks, hook marks, gill abnormalities, general disease, and wounds during the current reporting period are 17%, 4%, 1%, 1% and 9%, respectively. Visual surveys started August 15 in the South Thompson, and sockeye are reported to be past peak spawning. Visual

surveys have also been occurring on the Lower Fraser since August 7. Sockeye are reported to be past peak of spawn in the Upper Chilliwack River. Sockeye in the Upper Pitt River and Nahatlatch River are at or nearing peak of spawn. Due to wildfire activity, the Nadina River Channel continues to not be operational, but on a recent escorted visit DFO Salmonid Enhancement Program staff estimated 19,000 sockeye in the channel on August 31. A hydroacoustic site has been operational on the Stellako River since August 1 and 178,085 sockeye have been estimated as of August 28. Aerial live counts and carcass recovery surveys of the Nadina River will be conducted during the spawning and die off period. Sockeye have arrived at Gates Creek and are reported to be primarily holding. To date, 846 sockeye have been counted into Gates channel. Sockeye in the Upper Bowron River are in peak of spawn.

For the Summer run, sonar systems have been operational on the Chilko and Quesnel Rivers since August 3 and August 7, respectively, with the system at Chilko estimating 396,525 sockeye and that at Quesnel estimating 664,311 sockeye. On August 21, cyclic surveys started in the North Thompson at Raft River and the sockeye are reported to be in peak of spawn. Since August 29, it is estimated that a total of 65,775 Stellako River sockeye have passed by the sonar site. To date, no live sockeye have been observed at Bridge River.

For the Late run, the Birkenhead River hydroacoustic site has been operational since August 23 and a total of 2,852 sockeye have been estimated as of September 4. Visual surveys have started on the Harrison Lillooet and sockeye in Big Silver Creek are primarily holding. The counting fence at Sweltzer Creek has been operational since July 31 and fourteen sockeye were counted through the fence as of September 4. The water temperature in Sweltzer Creek is 22.0°C.

Regulatory Announcements & Resources

No new fisheries were announced by the Panel this week.

CANADIAN FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

Remains closed to fishing

UNITED STATES FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:

Treaty Indian Fishery:

Remains closed to fishing

All Citizen Fishery:

Remains closed to fishing

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on September 11. Weekly reports in this series will be provided by the Panel through the Commission every Friday during the in-season management period to inform those interested in the progress of the Fraser River sockeye salmon run. Weekly reports and regulatory announcements can be obtained via <http://www.psc.org/publications/fraser-panel-in-season-information> or by subscribing to our eNews <http://tinyurl.com/PSCeNews>. Regulations and resources for fishing schedules, test fishing catch and DFO's Environmental Watch program can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Regulations & Resources

Fishing Schedule Contacts/Resources	Phone Number/ Website Links
United States fishing schedules (Treaty Indian)	1-800-562-6142
United States fishing schedules (Non-Indian)	1-800-662-9825
Canadian commercial fishing regulations (from the lower B.C. mainland)	604-666-2828
Canadian commercial fishing regulations (from outside the lower B.C. mainland)	1-866-431-3474
PSC Daily Test Fishing Catch (recorded message)	604-666-8200 http://www.psc.org/info_testfishing.htm .
DFO's Environmental Watch program	http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/habitat/frw-rfo/index-eng.html

Note: For species other than sockeye salmon consult the appropriate regulatory agency regarding fisheries regulations in the Fraser River Panel Management Area.

Contacts

United States: Kirt Hughes, Chair, Fraser River Panel
 Canada: Jennifer Nener, Vice-chair, Fraser River Panel