



600 – 1155 ROBSON STREET  
VANCOUVER, B.C. V6E 1B5  
TELEPHONE: (604) 684-8081  
FAX: (604) 666-8707

**No. 2**

## **WEEKLY REPORT**

**July 19, 2019**

The Fraser River Panel (Panel) met today to review assessment data on Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon. The landslide at Big Bar continues to be a major source of concern for the Panel as migrating sockeye salmon will need to pass this area to reach their spawning grounds. Of the various options currently considered to improve fish passage past the rock slide, priority is given to manual manipulations of rocks at the base of the slide to create a rock fish ladder and using rocks from the cliff face to augment the available rocks to create this ladder. The options currently considered for fish transport include transport of fish by helicopter or truck and moving fish using the WHOOSHH cannon. Fish monitoring plans include hydroacoustics above and below the slide, radio-tagging and PIT tagging, blood sampling and the installation of a camera to provide video footage of the passage at different water levels. In the past few days, high water levels have challenged the collection of hydroacoustic data but current conditions are improving which should enable hydroacoustic assessment. The radio-tagging of Chinook salmon has commenced but low abundances of Early Stuart sockeye thus far has meant that not many of these fish have been encountered in the catches and subsequently tagged and released. At this point, there is no information regarding the expected success of Early Stuart migration past the landslide. For further information on the landslide please see the web link in Table 1 at the end of this report.

### **Run Status**

The migration of sockeye through both marine and Fraser River assessment areas has been low to date, as indicated by the low sockeye catches in all areas which have been lower than observed on past cycle years. DNA analysis of a fish sample recently collected from the Area 20 gillnet test fishery indicated Fraser sockeye contributions of approximately 34% Early Stuart, and 66% Early Summer-run. Given the current data it is unlikely that the number of returning Early Stuart sockeye will reach the median pre-season forecast of 41,000. The Early Stuart run size is more likely to be in the range of 27,000 sockeye (25% probability level forecast).

The estimated diversion rate of 43% of sockeye salmon through Johnstone Strait is very similar to pre-season expectations for this time of year. Due to low catches in Area 20 and concerns regarding the impact of the landslide at Big Bar, the Panel agreed to delay the start of the Area 4B5 gillnet test fishery until July 22 at the earliest and also decided to delay the purse seine test fisheries by one day with start dates for the purse seine test fishery in Areas 12 and 20 now scheduled to begin Wednesday July 24 and Thursday July 25, respectively.

### **Management Groups**

The Early Stuart migration through the marine approach areas is winding down. The estimated escapement of Early Stuart run sockeye past Mission through July 18 is 20,200 fish. While the run size for Early Stuart is uncertain given the limited catch samples on which the run size estimate is based, as described above, it is unlikely that the run size will reach the median forecast of 41,000. During the meeting today, the Panel reduced the Early Stuart run size to the p25 forecast level of 27,000 with an associated Area 20 timing of July

8.

Most components of the Early Summer-run group are represented in samples from marine test fisheries. The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through July 18 is 10,000 fish.

### **Environmental Update**

On July 18, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was about 4,456 cms, which is approximately 14% lower than average for this date. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark on July 18 was 18.0°C, which is 1.4°C higher than average for this date. DFO's Environmental Watch program projects that river temperature and discharge is forecast to increase over the next 10 days.

### **Regulatory Announcements & Resources**

The Panel announced the following regulations for commercial salmon fisheries in Panel Area waters:

#### **CANADIAN FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:**

Remain closed to commercial salmon fishing.

#### **UNITED STATES FRASER RIVER PANEL AREA WATERS:**

Remain closed to commercial salmon fishing.

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on July 23. 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, DFO's environmental watch program as well as information on the Big Bar landslide 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 <a href="http://www.psc.org/info_testfishing.htm">http://www.psc.org/info_testfishing.htm</a> .
DFO's Environmental Watch program	<a href="http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/habitat/frw-rfo/index-eng.html">http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/habitat/frw-rfo/index-eng.html</a>
Big Bar Landslide Incident	<a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/emergency-response-and-recovery/incident-summaries/big-bar-landslide-incident">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/emergency-response-and-recovery/incident-summaries/big-bar-landslide-incident</a> .

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

**Contacts**

Canada: Jennifer Nener, Chair, Fraser River Panel  
 United States: Lorraine Loomis, Vice-chair, Fraser River Panel