



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

No. 4

WEEKLY REPORT

August 2, 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. Based on abundances observed at Mission, it is estimated that about 38,000 sockeye will have reached the Big Bar site as of August 2, of which 23,000 are Early Stuart sockeye. Since July 12, 2019, approximately 40,000 salmon, both sockeye and Chinook, have been accounted for at the hydroacoustic site downstream of the slide. As of August 1, approximately 2,300 sockeye and Chinook salmon have been transported upstream from the slide via helicopter. A fish-wheel has been delivered to aid with the capture of fish to move them upstream. Rock manipulations in the slide area continue to facilitate the restoration of a natural fish passage. Salmon also continue to be radio tagged to monitor the upstream movement of salmon. Some of the tagged fish have been transported by helicopter to evaluate the success of the upstream relocation efforts. Excluding the salmon transported by helicopter, none of the radio tagged salmon released below the slide have been detected above the Big Bar slide thus far. A total of 177 Early Stuart sockeye have been transported to Cultus Lake lab for a pilot enhancement program. 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 very low to date, as indicated by the low sockeye catches in all areas. In addition to abundances being very low, the migration timing seems much later than anticipated pre-season as well as in previous cycle years. DNA analysis of a fish sample recently collected from the Area 20 purse seine test fishery indicated Fraser sockeye contributions of approximately 36% Early Summer run and 57% Summer-run. The limited proportions of the later timed Summer-run stocks, in particular Chilko, Quesnel, confirm the lateness and perhaps weakness of the Summer-run group.

The estimated diversion rate of 59% of sockeye salmon through Johnstone Strait is very similar to pre-season expectations for this time of year.

Management Groups

The Early Stuart migration through the marine approach areas is winding down. No changes were made to the Early Stuart run size which remains at 27,000 sockeye with a 50% marine timing through Area 20 of July 8. The estimated escapement of Early Stuart run sockeye past Mission through August 1 is 25,800 fish.

The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through August 1 is 42,600 fish. While most of the Early Summer-run groups have been represented in the catch samples from marine test fisheries, thus far a limited number of Early Thompson sockeye have been detected. The Early Summer run group is currently tracking around the p10 forecast of 112,000. During the meeting today, the Panel reduced the Early Summer-run run size to the p25 forecast level of 221,000 with an associated Area 20 timing of August 8.

For Summer-run sockeye only a very limited number of fish have been observed both in the marine and in river test fisheries. At this point, the Summer run is tracking well below the p10 forecast of 1.6 million sockeye. The fact that mainly the earlier timed Summer-run groups (Harrison and Late Stuart/Stellako stocks) have been represented in samples from marine test fisheries suggests that the run may be later than expected pre-season. The Chilko stock group, which was expected to contribute more than half of the total Fraser sockeye return this year has been virtually absent thus far, totaling only 300 sockeye at Mission.

Environmental Update

On August 1, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was about 4,011 cms, which is approximately 6% lower than average for this date. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark on August 1 was 18.2°C, which is 0.2°C higher than average for this date. DFO's Environmental Watch program projects that river temperature will increase to 18.5 °C and discharge to also increase to 4,125 cms over the next 10 days.

Escapement Update

DFO reports that the Early Stuart spawning escapement assessment program has begun. Cyclic visual surveys began July 24, and no sockeye have been observed in the system to date.

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 August 6. 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 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
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 .

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

2019 Run status of Fraser sockeye and pink salmon

Date: Aug. 2, 2019

Week of: Jul. 28 - Aug. 3, 2019	Sockeye				Pink	
	Management Group				Total Fraser	Total Fraser
	E.Stuart	E.Summer	Summer	Late	Fraser	Fraser
Mission passage (includes Pitt, Alouette, Coquitlam) ¹	25,800	42,600	7,600	400	76,400	0
Catch downstream of Mission	0	500	400	0	900	100
Accounted run-to-date	25,800	43,100	8,000	400	77,300	100
Run size adopted in-season ²	27,000	221,000	na	na	na	0
Run size forecasted pre-season	41,000	465,000	3,930,000	359,000	4,795,000	5,018,600
Area 20 timing adopted in-season	8/Jul	8/Aug	na	na		na
Area 20 timing expected pre-season	5/Jul	30/Jul	10/Aug	18/Aug		28/Aug

¹ Mission passage includes 1700 Early Stuart run assumed to have migrated past Mission prior to the start of the Whonnock test fishery.

² Run sizes are usually not adopted until after the peak of the run has passed through marine test fishery areas in Juan de Fuca and Johnstone straits.