



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

**No. 5**

## **WEEKLY REPORT**

**August 9, 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. It is estimated that about 59,000 sockeye will have reached the Big Bar site as of August 8 based on abundances observed at Mission and approximately 6,700 total fish (5,200 sockeye and 2,200 Chinook salmon) have been transported upstream from the slide via helicopter. A fish-wheel, intended to increase the efficiency of capturing salmon prior to transport, has been delivered and will undergo testing soon. As of August 4, a total of 144 salmon had been radio tagged to monitor their upstream movement. Some of the tagged fish have been transported by helicopter to evaluate the success of the upstream relocation efforts. There is now evidence that two radio tagged salmon, transported past the rock slide, made it to the northern portion of the watershed. 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. High water levels at the landslide site due to heavy rainfall in the northern part of the watershed have delayed the rock manipulations required for the completion of the natural fish way and have also required the temporary removal of the hydroacoustics monitoring stations. 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 later than anticipated pre-season. Pink salmon catches in marine area purse seine test fisheries have remained relatively low compared to the cycle average but have increased over the last couple of days to above cycle average. DNA analysis of a fish sample recently collected from the Area 20 purse seine test fishery indicated Fraser sockeye contributions of approximately 10% Early Summer run, 87% Summer run and 3% Late run. These stock proportions indicate a transition to predominantly Summer-run stocks within the catch samples. Analyses of recent DNA samples collected from the Area 20 test fishery indicate that 35% of the pink salmon encountered are of Fraser River origin, 25% are from Puget Sound, and 40% are from South Coast stocks.

The estimated diversion rate of sockeye salmon through Johnstone Strait has increased since last week to 90% while the diversion rate of Fraser pink salmon is 25%, based on recent purse seine test fishery catches in the two approach areas.

### **Management Groups**

#### **Fraser River Sockeye Salmon**

The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through August 8 is 56,900 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 below the p10 forecast of 112,000. Given the accounted for run to date, the Panel adopted the Early Summer-run p10 run-size forecast of 112,000 with an Area 20 date of August 2.

For Summer-run sockeye, abundances have been increasing in the marine test fisheries. At this point, the Summer run is tracking well below the p25 forecast of 2.4 million sockeye. The presence of the Chilko stock group, which was expected to contribute more than half of the total Fraser sockeye return this year has increased in catch samples but associated abundances remain low. Thus far, only a total of 27,800 Summer-run sockeye have been detected at Mission. Given the Summer-run abundance accounted for to date and the on-going fish passage issues due to the Big Bar rock slide, the Panel is not considering near-term sockeye directed fishery openings at this time.

To date, 1,100 Late-run sockeye have been estimated to have migrated past Mission. The current data are insufficient to generate credible in-season estimates of run-size for the Late-run aggregate.

#### Fraser River Pink Salmon

Over the last five pink cycles, the Pacific Salmon Commission's hydroacoustics group has developed a methodology to estimate pink salmon. Like sockeye salmon estimates, the pink salmon estimates are also estimated on a daily basis (time permitting). The estimated escapement of pink salmon past Mission through August 8 is 8,300 fish.

#### Environmental Update

On August 8, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was about 3,921 cms, which is approximately 4% higher than average for this date. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark on August 8 was 19.1°C, which is 1.0°C higher than average for this date. DFO's Environmental Watch program projects that river temperature will decrease slightly to 18.8°C and discharge to also decrease to 3,334 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.

For the Early Summer run, a fence at Scotch Creek has been operational since August 6, but no fish have passed through the fence to date. Visual surveys started August 6 on the Lower Fraser. It has been reported that sockeye are holding in the Upper Chilliwack River. A hydroacoustic site has been operational on the Stellako River since August 1 and no sockeye have been counted past the site as of August 7.

For Late run, the counting fence at Sweltzer Creek has been operational since July 30 and no sockeye have been counted through the fence as of August 7.

#### 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 13. 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

2019 Run status of Fraser sockeye and pink salmon

Date: Aug. 9, 2019

Week of: Aug. 4 - Aug. 10, 2019	Sockeye				Pink	
	Management Group				Total Fraser	Total Fraser
	E.Stuart	E.Summer	Summer	Late	Fraser	Fraser
Mission passage (includes Pitt, Alouette, Coquitlam) <sup>1</sup>	25,900	56,900	27,800	1,100	111,700	8,300
Catch downstream of Mission	0	700	1,100	0	1,800	300
Accounted run-to-date	25,900	57,600	28,900	1,100	113,500	8,600
Run size adopted in-season <sup>2</sup>	27,000	112,000	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	2/Aug	na	na		na
Area 20 timing expected pre-season	5/Jul	30/Jul	10/Aug	18/Aug		28/Aug

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

<sup>2</sup> 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.