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**No. 4**

**WEEKLY REPORT**

**July 31, 2020**

The Fraser River Panel (Panel) met today to review assessment data on Fraser River sockeye salmon. Fraser River discharge levels have continued to decrease over the past several days; however, they are still at levels that will have a negative effect on the upstream migration of sockeye, especially Early Stuart and Early Summer run sockeye. Sockeye have started to arrive within the Big Bar slide area, and some sockeye have passed the slide area with the assistance of the Whooshh™ system. Due to the high discharge at Big Bar, no sockeye salmon have been observed passing the slide area using the natural fishway thus far.

#### **Run Status**

The Area 12 and Area 20 gillnet fisheries ended on July 28 and July 30, respectively. Sockeye catches in the marine purse seine test fishery have been low and dominated by Early Summer and Summer run fish. DNA analysis of a samples recently collected from the Area 20 purse seine test fishery, where most of the migration is occurring, indicated Fraser River sockeye contributions of approximately 8% Early Summer, 90% Summer and 2% Late run.

The estimated diversion rate of sockeye salmon through Johnstone Strait has remained relatively low at 31% based on recent seine test fishery catches in the two approach areas.

#### **Management Groups**

The estimated escapement of Early Stuart sockeye past Mission through July 30 is 13,300 with very few Early Stuart fish remaining in the marine areas. At Tuesday's meeting, the Panel adopted an in-season run size estimate of 14,000 with a 50% marine timing through Area 20 of July 7 which is slightly greater than the p50 median forecast (13,000) and three days later.

All components of the Early Summer-run group are represented in samples from marine test fisheries. Daily abundances of the Early Summer-run group appear to be tracking well below pre-season expectations (p50 forecast of 218,000 sockeye) and are more in line with p25 forecast estimates (116,000 sockeye). The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through July 30 is 47,700 fish.

Daily abundances for Summer-run sockeye are equally tracking well below median pre-season run size expectations (611,000 sockeye) and 36,800 have passed Mission as of July 30.

### **Environmental Update**

On July 30, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was about 6,412 cms, which is approximately 46% greater than average for this date. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark on July 30 was 17.1°C, which is 0.9°C lower than average for this date. DFO's Environmental Watch program projects that river temperature will increase, while discharge is forecast to decrease to about 5,730 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 26, and no sockeye have been observed in the system to date. The Upper Chilliwack River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 16 and 926 sockeye have been observed as of July 28. The counting fence at Sweltzer Creek (Cultus Lake) was fish tight as of July 27.

### **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 4. 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 <a href="https://www.psc.org/publications/fraser-panel-in-season-information/test-fishing-results/">https://www.psc.org/publications/fraser-panel-in-season-information/test-fishing-results/</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>
Province of B.C.: Big Bar Landslide Incident	<a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/fish/fish-passage/big-bar-landslide-incident?keyword=big&amp;keyword=bar&amp;keyword=landslide">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/fish/fish-passage/big-bar-landslide-incident?keyword=big&amp;keyword=bar&amp;keyword=landslide</a>
DFO: Salmon counts at the Big Bar landslide site	<a href="https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pacific-smon-pacifique/big-bar-landslide-eboulement/smon-count-denombrement-eng.html">https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pacific-smon-pacifique/big-bar-landslide-eboulement/smon-count-denombrement-eng.html</a>

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