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No. 9

WEEKLY REPORT

September 4, 2020

The Fraser River Panel (Panel) met for the last in-season meeting earlier this week to review assessment data on Fraser River sockeye salmon. The Fraser River run size was increased slightly to 293,000 which is still the lowest run size on record (16,000 Early Stuart, 72,000 Early Summer run, 191,000 Summer run and 14,000 Late run). Further minor changes to total sockeye run size estimates may occur later in the season following the completion of the salmon's migration into the Fraser River. Given the low abundances this year, no directed sockeye fisheries have been licensed and authorized to date. Fisheries directed on other salmon species have required the non-retention of sockeye. To date, approximately 10,600 Fraser sockeye have been caught and kept in either Chinook directed fisheries or unlicensed/unauthorized fisheries. An additional 4,610 Fraser sockeye have been caught in Panel-approved test fisheries.

Management Groups

Daily in-river gill net test fisheries at Whonnock and Qualark Creek continue as does the Qualark hydroacoustics program. The Mission hydroacoustic program was terminated on August 31 and the Qualark hydroacoustic program is expected to be terminated on September 5. As of September 3, the total accounted run to date is estimated to be 289,700 sockeye salmon (16,000 Early Stuart, 69,300 Early Summer run, 190,100 Summer run and 14,300 Late run).

Environmental Update

On September 3, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was about 2,546 cms, which is approximately 4% greater than average for this date. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark on September was 16.9°C, which is 0.4°C higher than average for this date. DFO's Environmental Watch program projects that river temperature will increase and discharge is forecast to decrease to 2,462 cms over the next 10 days.

Big Bar Update

About 50% of the total sockeye return will need to pass the Big Bar area to reach their spawning grounds. Discharge levels continue to decrease throughout the Fraser River watershed and the majority of the sockeye currently reaching the Big Bar slide area seem to be able to make it past the slide using the natural fish way. Of the 141,609 salmon observed below the slide, 128,888 have been accounted for at Churn Creek, 40 km upstream of the slide as of September 2. Currently, the majority of the salmon migrating past Big Bar are sockeye while earlier in the season, during higher river discharge, natural migration past Big Bar was dominated by Chinook. In addition to using the natural fish way, 8,270 salmon been transported through the Whooshh™ system to date.

Escapement Update

DFO reports that the Early Stuart spawning escapement assessment program which began on July 26 has concluded for the season. Sockeye were observed in certain tributaries but in very low abundances.

For Early Summer run stocks, the counting fence at Scotch Creek was fish tight as of August 7 and 1,314 sockeye have passed by the fence. Visual surveys of the Early Summer populations in the North/South Thompson began on August 24 and sockeye in the Upper Barriere River are in peak spawning. Surveys started August 28-29 in the Upper Pitt River and tributaries and sockeye in Upper Pitt River mainstem are primarily holding but sockeye in Corbold Creek are nearing peak spawning. In the Nahatlatch River and Lake, visual surveys started on August 19 and 26 respectively and sockeye are primarily holding. The Upper Chilliwack River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 16 and 30,083 sockeye have been observed as of September 1 which is above the in-season run size estimate of 25,000. Sockeye are past peak spawning. The Nadina River channel has been operational since September 1 and 3,602 sockeye have been counted into the channel to date. The Stellako River hydroacoustic site was operational since August 7. As of September 1, 33,330 sockeye have passed the hydroacoustic site, and they are a mix of Nadina and Stellako bound fish. The first visual survey for Gates was conducted on August 23 and sockeye in the creek are nearing peak spawning.

For Summer run sockeye, visual surveys for several Nechako River tributaries started on August 14. The Chilko River hydroacoustic site has been operational since August 7, and 17,205 sockeye have passed the hydroacoustic site as of September 1. Cyclic visual surveys in the North Thompson system began August 25 and sockeye in the Raft River are nearing peak spawning. The second visual survey at Bridge River was conducted on September 1 and the sockeye are currently in peak spawning.

For Late run sockeye, the Birkenhead hydroacoustic site has been operational since August 22. The sockeye are in the early stages of migration into the system and 433 sockeye have been observed through September 1. Cyclic visual surveys in the Harrison-Lillooet system started September 1 and sockeye in Big Silver Creek are holding. The counting fence at Sweltzer Creek (Cultus Lake) was fish tight as of July 27 and 44 sockeye have been observed through the fence as of September 2. In addition, 23 have been retained for brood stock.

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 Panel will be updated periodically on run status and test fishing updates. This is the last in-season Weekly Report for the 2020 season. 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 https://www.psc.org/publications/fraser-panel-in-season-information/test-fishing-results/
DFO's Environmental Watch program	http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/habitat/frw-rfo/index-eng.html
Province of B.C.: Big Bar Landslide Incident	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/fish/aquatic-habitat-management/fish-passage/big-bar-landslide-incident
DFO: Salmon counts at the Big Bar landslide site	https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pacific-smon-pacifique/big-bar-landslide-eboulement/smon-count-denombrement-eng.html
MacDonald, B.L., Grant, S.C.H., Wilson, N., Patterson, D.A., Robinson, K.A., Boldt, J.L., King, J., Xu, Y., Davis, B., Decker, S., Leaf, B., Pon, L., Selbie, D.T. (2020) State of the Salmon: Informing the survival of Fraser Sockeye returning in 2020 through life cycle observations. Can. Tech. Rep. Fish. Aquat. Sci. (in press)	https://waves-vagues.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/Library/4088546x.pdf

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

2020 Run status of Fraser sockeye salmon

Date: Sep. 4, 2020

Week of: Aug. 30 - Sep. 5, 2020	Sockeye				Total Fraser
	Management Group				
	E.Stuart	E.Summer	Summer	Late	
Mission passage (includes Pitt, Alouette, Coquitlam) ¹	15,900	68,200	187,600	14,200	285,900
Catch downstream of Mission	100	1,100	2,500	100	3,800
Accounted run-to-date	16,000	69,300	190,100	14,300	289,700
Run size adopted in-season ¹	16,000	72,000	191,000	14,000	293,000
Run size forecasted pre-season	13,000	218,000	611,000	99,000	941,000
Area 20 timing adopted in-season	6/Jul	15/Jul	28/Jul	2/Aug	
Area 20 timing expected pre-season	4/Jul	24/Jul	31/Jul	6/Aug	

¹ 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.

2020 Catch-to-date by fishery

Date: Sep. 4, 2020

Week of: Aug. 30 - Sep. 5, 2020		Sockeye	
		Total	Fraser
Canada		10,690	10,690
Commercial		0	0
	B Purse Seine	0	0
	D Gillnet	0	0
	E Gillnet	0	0
	F Troll	0	0
	G Troll	0	0
	H Troll	0	0
First Nations		10,630	10,630
	Food, Social & Ceremonial (FSC)	10,630	10,630
	Marine	0	0
	Fraser R.	10,630	10,630
	Economic Opportunity (EO) & Demonstration (Demo)	0	0
	Marine	0	0
	Fraser R.	0	0
Recreational		10	0
	Marine	10	0
	Fraser R.	0	0
Charter (Albion gillnet test fishery)		50	50
United States		0	0
Commercial		0	0
	Treaty Indian (TI)	0	0
	All Citizen (AC)	0	0
Treaty Indian Ceremonial & Subsistence (C&S)		0	0
All Citizen Recreational		0	0
Alaska *		na	na
Panel-approved Test Fisheries		4,760	4,610
	Panel Waters	2,780	2,690
	Non-Panel Waters	1,980	1,920
Total		15,450	15,300

* Alaska catch is processed post-season and so is unavailable in-season.