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No. 4

## WEEKLY REPORT

August 2, 2024

On July 31, a significant landslide event occurred in the lower Chilcotin River, approximately 28 km upstream from the confluence with the Fraser River. This site is located approximately 50 km southwest of Williams Lake, BC. This slide resulted in a deposit of a large volume of debris which has blocked the entire width of the Chilcotin River for several hundred meters, which is holding water upstream and has stopped the Chilcotin River from flowing into the Fraser River. First Nation and Provincial governments have enacted emergency management measures supported by relevant Canadian federal agencies. Several populations of Pacific salmon have been impacted including Summer run sockeye, Summer and Spring Chinook, coho and Steelhead. The Early Summer and Summer run sockeye stocks with spawning grounds above the Chilcotin landslide are Taseko and Chilko, respectively. Preseason expectations for Taseko are very limited given the record low escapement numbers in 2020 following migration challenges due to high water flows in the Fraser Canyon Big Bar landslide area. Based on the preseason forecast, Chilko sockeye account for 46% of the Summer run management group and 31% of the total Fraser sockeye forecast for this season.

The Fraser River Panel (Panel) met today to review in-season assessment data on Fraser River sockeye salmon.

### Test fishing and stock identification information

Marine test fishing catches have remained low throughout the past week and below preseason expectations. The majority of sockeye en route to the Fraser River are currently migrating through Johnstone Strait route rather than through Juan de Fuca with 68% observed on the northern route. DNA analysis of the most recent fish sample collected from the Area 12 purse seine test fishery indicated Fraser River sockeye contributions of 21% Early Summer, 75% Summer run and 4% Late run. Marine test fisheries in Area 12 and 20 will be terminated on August 4 and 5, respectively.

### Assessment results

The estimated escapement plus catch of Early Summer-run sockeye through August 1 is 121,700. Proportions of the Early Summer run stocks are declining in marine areas. Early Summer run abundances are tracking below preseason expectations (median preseason forecast of 159,000). The Nadina stock is returning in abundances greater than forecast. Due to the proportionately larger abundances of the early component of this management group, the overall timing for this group, July 13, is earlier than expected preseason. The Panel adopted an in-season run size estimate of 136,000, with an associated Area 20 timing of July 13.

Summer-run sockeye make up most of the observed sockeye in the marine test fisheries. The estimated escapement plus catch of Summer-run sockeye through August 1 is 75,600. Based on these in-season observations, the Summer run seems to be smaller than preseason expectations (median preseason forecast of 379,000). Late Stuart, Stellako, and Harrison, early-timed stock components, are the most abundant part of this management group. Chilko and Harrison are tracking below preseason expectations. More precise run size estimates for this management group and Chilko in particular are expected to be available in the next two weeks.

Similarly for Late run, few fish have been observed in the marine and in-river test fisheries. The estimated escapement plus catch of Late-run sockeye through August 1 is 400.

### **Migration conditions in the Fraser River**

On August 1, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was about 2,610 cms, which is 38 % below the historical mean discharge level for this date while the temperature was 20°C, which is 1.7°C higher than average for this date. DFO's Environmental Watch program projects that river temperature will increase to 21.3°C by August 7 and discharge is forecast to decrease. These quantitative predictions do not consider the impact of the recent landslide. Observers at Hells Gate continue to see sockeye salmon migrating into the fishways. Current reports from Big Bar similarly indicate no concern with salmon passage. A total of 30,192 sockeye thus far has made it past the Churn Creek sonar site, upstream of Big Bar. The Big Bar program has been decommissioned for the season so there will be no further updates on this program.

The creation of a dam from the recent landslide in the lower Chilcotin River is preventing Chilko and Taseko sockeye from reaching the spawning grounds. On-site monitors report water is slowly leaking through the dam. Until the breach of the dam, it is anticipated that the reduced downstream flow of glacier-fed Chilcotin waters may increase the water temperatures. A flash flood is anticipated once the river breaches the landslide. In addition to high water velocity, it is anticipated that the flash flood would bring along debris and silt, providing challenging migration conditions for sockeye.

Due to the low expected Taseko sockeye return (median preseason forecast of 67 sockeye), it is not possible to provide in-season updates of run size and timing for this stock. Based on historic observations the peak migration of Taseko past the Mission site is July 26. It is estimated that it takes about 12-13 days to migrate from Mission to the landslide area which means that peak migration past the slide area is anticipated to occur August 7-8.

The median pre-season forecast for Chilko sockeye was 176,000 and as of August 1, only 8,100 Chilko sockeye have migrated past Mission. The first 1,000 Chilko sockeye are expected to reach the landslide area in the next 4 days. Based on marine test fishing information, it is anticipated another 17,000 sockeye will reach Mission in the next 6 days.

### **Escapement update**

Visual surveys for Early Stuart began July 20, but no sockeye have been observed in the system. The Upper Chilliwack River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 10 and a total of 2,681 sockeye have been estimated into the river through July 30. Water temperature in the upper Chilliwack River is 11°C. The Stellako River hydroacoustic site became operational July 25, and 4,452 sockeye have been counted as of July 27. Most of the sockeye salmon counted at the Stellako site are assumed to be Nadina River sockeye. The counting fence at Sweltzer Creek (Cultus Lake) began operations July 29 but no sockeye have been counted through the fence 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 and DFO’s environmental watch program can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Regulations & Resources

<b>Fishing Schedule Contacts/Resources</b>	<b>Phone Number/ Website Links</b>
United States fishing schedules (Treaty Tribes)	1-800-562-6142
United States fishing schedules (All Citizen)	1-800-662-9825
Canadian commercial fishing regulations (from the B.C. Lower Mainland)	604-666-2828
Canadian commercial fishing regulations (from outside the B.C. Lower Mainland)	1-866-431-3474
PSC Daily Test Fishing Catch (recorded message or website)	604-666-8200 <a href="http://www.psc.org">Test Fishing Results - Pacific Salmon Commission (psc.org)</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>

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: Mickey Agha, Chair, Fraser River Panel

Canada: Adam Keizer, Vice-Chair, Fraser River Panel

**2024 Run status of Fraser sockeye and pink salmon**

Date: Aug. 2, 2024

Week of: Jul. 28 - Aug. 3, 2024	Sockeye				Total Fraser
	Management Group				
	E.Stuart	E.Summer	Summer	Late	
Mission passage (includes Pitt, Alouette, Coquitlam) <sup>1</sup>	200	120,500	73,800	400	194,900
Catch downstream of Mission	0	1,200	1,800	0	3,000
Accounted run-to-date	200	121,700	75,600	400	197,900
<b>Run size adopted in-season <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>
Run size forecasted pre-season	180	159,000	379,000	29,000	567,180
<b>Area 20 timing adopted in-season</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	
Area 20 timing expected pre-season	7-Jul	19-Jul	30-Jul	7-Aug	

<sup>1</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.

2024 Catch-to-date by fishery

Date: Aug. 2, 2024

Week of: Jul. 28 - Aug. 3, 2024		Sockeye	
		Total	Fraser
<b>Canada</b>		<b>440</b>	<b>440</b>
	<b>Commercial</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	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
	<b>First Nations</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
	Food, Social & Ceremonial (FSC)	6	6
	Marine	0	0
	Fraser R.	6	6
	Economic Opportunity (EO) & Demonstration (Demo)	0	0
	Marine	0	0
	Fraser R.	0	0
	<b>Recreational</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	Marine	0	0
	Fraser R.	0	0
	<b>Charter (Albion gillnet test fishery)</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>
	<b>Other**</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>389</b>
<b>United States</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Commercial</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	Treaty Tribes (TRB)	0	0
	All Citizen (AC)	0	0
	<b>Treaty Tribes Ceremonial &amp; Subsistence (C&amp;S)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Other**</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>All Citizen Recreational</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Alaska *</b>	na	na
<b>Panel-approved Test Fisheries</b>		<b>3,594</b>	<b>3,404</b>
	<b>Panel Waters</b>	<b>1,893</b>	<b>1,842</b>
	<b>Non-Panel Waters</b>	<b>1,701</b>	<b>1,562</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,034</b>	<b>3,843</b>

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

\*\* May include unauthorized directed retention or unauthorized bycatch retention in fisheries directed at other species