



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

No. 5

## WEEKLY REPORT

August 9, 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. Updates on the slide can be found here: <https://chilcotin-river-landslide-2024-bcgov03.hub.arcgis.com/>.

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 fisheries concluded August 3 and 4 in Area 20 and Area 12, respectively. The annual diversion rate through Johnstone Strait of 42% is higher than the preseason expected 33%. DNA analysis of the most recent fish sample collected on August 6 from Brownsville Bar test fishery indicated Fraser River sockeye contributions of 12% Early Summer, 82% Summer run and 5% Late run.

### Assessment results

The estimated escapement plus catch of Early Summer-run sockeye through August 8 is 132,600. Based on the latest in-season assessment provided by the PSC staff, the Panel adopted a revised run size of 140,000 for the Early Summer-run, with an associated Area 20 run timing of July 14. Proportions of the Early Summer run stocks have declined substantially in marine areas.

The estimated escapement plus catch of Summer-run sockeye through August 8 is 144,300. Based on in-season observations, the Summer run seems to be smaller than preseason expectations (median preseason forecast of 379,000). Late Stuart and Stellako are the most abundant part of this management group. Chilko and Harrison are tracking below preseason expectations. Overall, the migration timing of the Summer run seems to be tracking three days later than expected preseason. The Panel adopted a revised run size for the Summer run of 300,000, with an associated Area 20 run timing of August 2, which is below the preseason median run size forecast (p50) of 396,000.

For Late run, preseason expectations have been limited for this group. The median preseason forecast was 29,000 sockeye and to date few fish have been observed in the marine and in-river test fisheries. This run is expected to be smaller or later than forecast or a combination of both. The majority of these Late run fish (85%) are not expected to delay their upstream migration into the Fraser River given that the forecast consists primarily of non-delaying Birkenhead and Big Silver sockeye. The estimated escapement plus catch of Late-run sockeye through August 8 is 3,100.

### Migration conditions in the Fraser River

Migration conditions in the Fraser River this week have been impacted by the consequences of the Chilcotin slide which had blocked the entire width of the Chilcotin River. On August 5, the dam was breached, initially resulting in

a flood surge, in particular in the Chilcotin itself. It is assumed that the slide area will be cleared of acute hydraulic challenges for migrating salmon within the week. In the mainstem of the Fraser River, including at Hells Gate and at Big Bar flows have already receded back to pre-event levels. While there was not a significant increase in water levels, the amount of debris and sediment in the river has been extreme. Increased sediment and turbidity have negative impacts on fish and can lead to physiological damage. There have been no obvious changes to fish migration behavior in the lower Fraser River, but reports from the Qualark program, which is near Yale, indicate that fish passage has slowed considerably in the last couple of days.

On August 8, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was about 2,711 cms, which is back to pre-event levels and 26% below the historical mean discharge level for this date while the temperature was 19.8°C, which is 1.2°C higher than average for this date, and considered a temperature at which successful migration is impeded. The negative impacts of high temperatures on migration success are further compounded by the current impact of high sediment loads and water turbidity. DFO's Environmental Watch program projects that river temperature will decrease slightly to 19.4°C by August 14. Given the elevated temperatures and very low flows in the Fraser River, the Panel adopted a revised management adjustment (pMA) from 0.28 to 0.56 for the Summer run. For this year, the small overall run sizes do not allow for any harvest but in a year where harvest was a potential, the increased pMA would provide more fish to spawning escapement to compensate for migratory loss from the environmental conditions. It is expected that the sediment and turbidity will improve once the main slide material has pushed through the system. Within the Chilcotin, there might still remain episodic pulses of sediment from continued sloughing, but this impact is greatly diluted once the water hits the Fraser mainstem. Due to the turbid water conditions observers at Hells Gate are finding it difficult to see fish at this time.

#### **Taseko and Chilko sockeye assessment and migration within the Chilcotin River**

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 would have occurred around August 7-8. Based on current migration conditions, migration past the slide area is expected to be delayed. In partnership with DFO, Tsilhqot'in National Government monitor the number of Taseko sockeye arriving at the spawning grounds.

Based on current in-season assessments, a total of 125,000 sockeye are expected to migrate to the Chilko spawning grounds this year which is below the preseason forecast of 176,000. As of August 8, 34,000 Chilko sockeye have migrated past Mission and approximately, 4,600 Chilko sockeye are expected to reach the landslide area in the next 4 days. Peak migration of Chilko sockeye at the landslide area, assuming normal migration speeds, is expected to occur around August 25-26. It would normally take sockeye about five days to migrate from the Chilcotin landslide to Lingfield, the spawning ground monitoring site. The 250 sockeye currently counted at Lingfield are assumed to have migrated past the slide area prior to the landslide.

#### **Escapement update**

Visual surveys for Early Stuart began July 20, and a few sockeye have been observed in the system. These sockeye have been holding and no spawning behaviour has been observed. The Upper Chilliwack River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 10 and a total of 8,714 sockeye have been estimated into the river as of August 7. The Nadina River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 26 and only a few targets have been detected by the sonar. The Stellako River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 25, and 11,706 sockeye have been counted as of August 4. Most of the sockeye salmon counted at the Stellako site are assumed to be Nadina River sockeye. The Chilko River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 31 and as of August 6, 250

sockeye have been counted. The counting fence at Sweltzer Creek (Cultus Lake) has been operational since 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 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 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">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. 9, 2024

Week of: Aug. 4 - Aug. 10, 2024	Sockeye				
	Management Group				Total Fraser
	E.Stuart	E.Summer	Summer	Late	
Mission passage (includes Pitt, Alouette, Coquitlam) <sup>1</sup>	200	131,300	141,700	3,000	276,200
Catch downstream of Mission	0	1,300	2,600	100	4,000
Accounted run-to-date	200	132,600	144,300	3,100	280,200
<b>Run size adopted in-season <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>na</b>	<b>140,000</b>	<b>300,000</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>14-Jul</b>	<b>2-Aug</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. 9, 2024

Week of: Aug. 4 - Aug. 10, 2024		Sockeye	
		Total	Fraser
<b>Canada</b>		<b>855</b>	<b>851</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>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	Food, Social & Ceremonial (FSC)	0	0
	Marine	0	0
	Fraser R.	0	0
	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>122</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>Other**</b>		<b>733</b>	<b>730</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>		<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>
<b>Panel-approved Test Fisheries</b>		<b>4,554</b>	<b>4,346</b>
<b>Panel Waters</b>		<b>2,545</b>	<b>2,494</b>
<b>Non-Panel Waters</b>		<b>2,009</b>	<b>1,852</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,409</b>	<b>5,197</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