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No. 6

WEEKLY REPORT

August 16, 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. Recent updates on the slide can be found here: [Communications - T̓silhqot̓'in National Government \(tsilhqotin.ca\)](https://tsilhqotin.ca).

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

Test fishing and stock identification information

DNA analysis of the most recent sockeye samples collected on August 13 from Brownsville Bar test fishery indicated Fraser River sockeye contributions of 6% Early Summer run, 80% Summer run and 14% Late run. The in-river test fisheries are scheduled to operate until August 25 and September 10 at Brownsville Bar and Whonnock, respectively.

Assessment results

As of August 15, a total of 363,500 Fraser River sockeye have passed Mission, consisting of 141,800 Early Summer run, 213,800 Summer run and 7,700 Late run. The overall run size is unlikely to reach the median preseason forecast of 567,000 sockeye but is expected to exceed the run size of the brood year (396,000).

The Early Summer run has nearly completed its migration into the river and is smaller than the preseason estimate of 159,000. The Panel adopted an updated run size estimate of 142,000, with a timing of July 14.

The Summer Run is smaller than the preseason estimate of 379,000. The migration timing of the Summer run seems to be tracking two days later than expected preseason. Delaying Harrison sockeye (estimated to be up to 9,000) now seem to be gradually moving into the Fraser River.

The Late run appears to be smaller than the pre-season expectations (median preseason forecast of 29,000 sockeye). The majority of these Late run fish (85%) are not expected to delay their upstream migration into the Fraser River as the forecast consists primarily of Birkenhead and Big Silver sockeye who are not observed to delay. As of August 15, 7,000 Birkenhead, Big Silver fish has been accounted for in catch plus escapement. The remainder of Late Run (Late Shuswap, Portage, Weaver, Cultus) is expected to be very small, about 4,000 sockeye based on the median preseason forecast. The in-season ability to accurately assess these delaying Late run stocks is limited given the very low abundances. The Panel adopted an updated run size for the Late run of 18,000, with a timing of August 9.

The current in-season run size estimate for total Fraser River sockeye based on adopted run size estimates is 460,000 with a timing of July 29, which is less than the pre-season forecast of 567,000 and one day later.

Migration conditions in the Fraser River

Migration conditions in the Fraser River are expected to be worse than forecast as a consequences of the Chilcotin slide. The amount of sediment in the river has continued to decrease over the last week but is still not back to pre-event levels. Increased sediment and turbidity have negative impacts on salmon, can lead to physiological damage and can delay migration to the spawning grounds.

On August 15, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was about 2,267 cms, which is back to pre-event levels and 29% below the historical mean discharge level for this date while the temperature was 21.2°C, which is 2.6°C higher than average for this date, a temperature at which successful migration is impeded. The negative impacts of high temperatures on migration success are likely to be exacerbated by high sediment loads and water turbidity. DFO's Environmental Watch program projects that river temperature will decrease slightly to 19.7°C by August 21. Within the Chilcotin, there may be episodic pulses of sediment from continued sloughing, but this impact is greatly diluted once the water hits the Fraser mainstem. Water conditions have improved at Hells Gate and observers are able to see fish passage through this area of difficult migration.

Taseko and Chilko sockeye assessment and migration within the Chilcotin River

The current in-season run size for Chilko is 117,000 sockeye. At the hydroacoustic site at Lingfield (5 migration days upstream of the slide area), a total of 512 sockeye have been observed to date, while under normal migration conditions 2,664 sockeye would have been expected. It is assumed that the salmon currently counted at Lingfield had migrated past the slide site prior to the landslide. Peak migration of Chilko sockeye in the landslide area is expected to occur around August 25-26.

Due to the low expected Taseko sockeye return, it is not possible to provide in-season updates of run size and timing for this stock. The Tsilhqot'in National Government, in partnership with DFO, monitor Taseko sockeye arriving at the spawning grounds.

Escapement update

Surveys for Early Stuart began July 20, a few sockeye have been observed in the system. Sockeye in Sidney Creek are in the early stages of spawning, but are observed to be holding in other survey locations. The Upper Chilliwack River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 10 and a total of 16,169 sockeye have been estimated into the river as of August 13. The Nadina River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 26 and as of August 11, 23,252 sockeye have been estimated. The Stellako River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 25, and 56,116 sockeye have been estimated as of August 13. Most of the sockeye salmon estimated at the Stellako site in early August are assumed to be Nadina River sockeye. The Chilko River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 31 and as of August 13, 512 sockeye have been estimated. The counting fence at Sweltzer Creek (Cultus Lake) has been operational since July 29 but no sockeye have been counted through the fence.

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 20. Weekly reports in this series will be provided by the Panel through the Commission every Friday during the in-season management period to report on 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 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 Test Fishing Results - Pacific Salmon Commission (psc.org)
DFO’s Environmental Watch program	http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/habitat/frw-rfo/index-eng.html

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. 16, 2024

Week of: Aug. 11 - Aug. 17, 2024	Sockeye				Total Fraser
	Management Group				
	E.Stuart	E.Summer	Summer	Late	
Mission passage (includes Pitt, Alouette, Coquitlam) ¹	200	140,500	210,800	7,600	359,100
Catch downstream of Mission	0	1,300	3,000	100	4,400
Accounted run-to-date	200	141,800	213,800	7,700	363,500
Run size adopted in-season ¹	na	142,000	300,000	18,000	na
Run size forecasted pre-season	180	159,000	379,000	29,000	567,180
Area 20 timing adopted in-season	na	14-Jul	2-Aug	9-Aug	
Area 20 timing expected pre-season	7-Jul	19-Jul	30-Jul	7-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.

2024 Catch-to-date by fishery

Date: Aug. 16, 2024

Week of: Aug. 11 - Aug. 17, 2024		Sockeye	
		Total	Fraser
Canada		1,162	1,158
	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	0	0
	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
	Recreational	0	0
	Marine	0	0
	Fraser R.	0	0
	Charter (Albion gillnet test fishery)	169	169
	Other**	993	989
United States		0	0
	Commercial	0	0
	Treaty Tribes (TRB)	0	0
	All Citizen (AC)	0	0
	Treaty Tribes Ceremonial & Subsistence (C&S)	0	0
	Other**	0	0
	All Citizen Recreational	0	0
	Alaska *	na	na
Panel-approved Test Fisheries		5,163	4,955
	Panel Waters	3,020	2,969
	Non-Panel Waters	2,143	1,986
Total		6,325	6,113

* 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