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WEEKLY REPORT

August 23, 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://www.tsilhqot'in.ca/communications).

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

Test fishing and stock identification information

In-river test fishing catches have remained steady over the last week. DNA analysis of the most recent sockeye samples collected on August 20 from Brownsville Bar test fishery indicated Fraser River sockeye contributions of 79% Summer run and 21% Late run. The last day of operations for the Brownsville Bar test fishery will be August 25. The test fishery at Whonnock will continue its operation until September 10.

Assessment results

As of August 22, a total of 414,300 Fraser River sockeye have passed Mission, consisting of 141,900 Early Summer run, 258,000 Summer run and 19,100 Late run. Harrison sockeye, which had previously delayed their in-river migration, continue to move into the river. Birkenhead and Big Silver sockeye appear to have later timing than forecast and are tracking above the pre-season forecast (24,000). The run size of Late run stocks that traditionally delay their upstream migration (Weaver, Cultus, Late Shuswap, Portage) is expected to be very small (median pre-season forecast of 4,000) and difficult to assess in-season. 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.

On Friday the Panel adopted updated run sizes for three management groups: the Early Summer run was updated to 143,000 (increase of 1,000); the Summer run was lowered to 275,000 (down from 300,000), with a run timing of August 1; and the Late run was increased to 38,000 (up from 18,000) with a timing of August 15. Currently only the Late run is trending at or above the pre-season forecast (p50), with the total Fraser River sockeye run closer to the p25 abundance level.

Migration conditions in the Fraser River

Migration conditions in the Fraser River continue to be worse than normal as a consequence of the Chilcotin slide and above average temperatures. Within the Chilcotin River, turbidity levels remain high, and turbidity monitoring sensors have been installed at five locations ranging from Big Bar to Chilko Lake. As turbidity disrupts migration, these monitoring sites will help determine when fish movement may be expected.

Sediment levels in the river are gradually decreasing but have not yet returned to pre-event levels. Observers at Hells Gate now report active fish passage. To better monitor fish passage past the slide area, the Fisheries Department of the T̓silhqot̓'in National Government in collaboration with their technical partner EcoFish has

deployed a new sonar at Hanceville, upstream of the slide site. As of August 20, only 31 Chinook and 16 sockeye have been detected passing through the slide area, indicating probable delay and an interruption of fish migration.

On August 22, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was about 1,915 cms, which is 33% below the historical mean discharge level for this date while the temperature was 19.4°C, which is 1.1°C higher than average and is expected to decrease to 18.1°C by August 28.

On Friday the Panel adopted a revised pMA for Late run (lowered to 0.43 from 0.49), with the higher abundances in the Birkenhead and Big Silver stocks than forecast.

Taseko and Chilko sockeye assessment and migration within the Chilcotin River

The current in-season run size for Chilko is 99,000 sockeye. At the hydroacoustic site at Lingfield (5 migration days upstream of the slide area), a total of 515 sockeye have been observed to date, while under normal migration conditions 17,100 sockeye would have been expected. Peak migration of Chilko sockeye past the landslide area (normally around August 25-26) may be delayed due to the current migration conditions in the Fraser River.

Due to the low expected Taseko sockeye return, it is not possible to provide in-season updates of run size and timing. The Tsilhqot'in National Government, in partnership with DFO, monitor Taseko sockeye arriving at the spawning grounds. In late July, a few sockeye were detected by the sonar and seemed to have reached the spawning ground prior to the slide. Taseko sockeye has been identified as an endangered stock by COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife) and emergency enhancement had been planned prior to the occurrence of the slide.

Escapement update

Surveys for Early Stuart began July 20, and small numbers of sockeye, past peak spawning, have been observed in various tributaries. At Scotch Creek no sockeye have passed the counting fence to date which has been operational since August 16. Visual surveys of the North/South Thompson system began on August 21. The Upper Chilliwack River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 10 and a total of 19,205 sockeye have been estimated into the river as of August 17. The first visual survey of Gates Creek was conducted on August 17 and no sockeye were observed. Water conditions at Gates Creek are characterized as very turbid with higher water levels than in previous years. The Nadina River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 26 and as of August 17, 63,307 sockeye have been estimated. The Stellako River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 25, and 91,754 sockeye have been estimated as of August 20. Most of the sockeye salmon estimated at the Stellako site in August are assumed to be Nadina River sockeye. The Chilko River hydroacoustic site has been operational since July 31 and as of August 20, 515 sockeye have been estimated. The Birkenhead hydroacoustic site was operational on August 14 and an estimated 77 sockeye have been counted as of August 20. 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 27. 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. 23, 2024

Week of: Aug. 18 - Aug. 24, 2024	Sockeye				Total Fraser
	Management Group				
	E.Stuart	E.Summer	Summer	Late	
Mission passage (includes Pitt, Alouette, Coquitlam) ¹	200	140,500	254,700	18,900	414,300
Catch downstream of Mission	0	1,400	3,300	200	4,900
Accounted run-to-date	200	141,900	258,000	19,100	419,200
Run size adopted in-season ¹	na	142,000	300,000	18,000	460,000
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. 23, 2024

Week of: Aug. 18 - Aug. 24, 2024		Sockeye	
		Total	Fraser
Canada		1,929	1,911
	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)	201	201
	Other**	1,728	1,710
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		5,671	5,463
	Panel Waters	3,345	3,294
	Non-Panel Waters	2,326	2,169
Total		7,600	7,374

* 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