



PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED BY TREATY BETWEEN CANADA
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
MARCH 18, 1985

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NEWS RELEASE

July 31, 2015

The Fraser River Panel met today to review assessment data on Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon. The migration of sockeye through assessment areas has been increasing in recent days but marine test fishing catch levels are less than expected for the time of year, based on pre-season expectations of abundance and arrival timing. Pink salmon currently predominate in marine approach area purse seine test fisheries, and unusually large abundances of pink salmon for this time of year have been observed in northern Puget Sound and the southern Strait of Georgia. Levels of sockeye salmon escapement past lower river assessment areas, which represent earlier timed components of the migration, are tracking more favorably relative to expectations. The observer at Hells Gate continues to report steady sockeye migration past that site.

DNA analysis of a fish sample recently collected from the Area 20 purse seine test fishery indicated Fraser sockeye contributions of approximately, 18% Early Summer-run, and 81% Summer-run sockeye. Analyses of recent DNA samples collected from the Area 20 test fishery indicate that 23% of the pink salmon encountered are of Fraser River-origin, 21% are from Puget Sound, and 56% are South Coast stocks. Results of DNA analyses of pink salmon samples collected from the Area 12 test fishery will be available next week.

The estimated escapement of Early Stuart sockeye past Mission through July 30 is 31,700 fish. A small increase to the current adopted run size of 30,000 sockeye is anticipated once the migration passed lower river assessments is complete.

All components of the Early Summer-run group are represented in samples from marine test fisheries. Early indications suggest that daily abundances of the Early miscellaneous group's migration, which includes all stock components except Early Thompson, are tracking levels consistent with median forecast (321,000 fish), if arrival timing is as expected (median timing thru area 20 of July 30). An in-season update to the run-size for this group is expected next week. Based on median forecast levels, the Early Thompson component (516,000 fish) is expected to contribute over 60% of the total return of the Early Summer-run sockeye management group (837,000 fish). However, daily abundances of this component are currently tracking well below both the median and p25 (243,000) pre-season forecast levels, if arrival timing is as expected (median timing through Area 20 of August 4th). Run-size estimates for that component should be available in early August after their expected peak migration through marine areas. The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through July 30 is 118,800 fish.

Summer-run sockeye are now the dominant management group in marine area samples. Summer-run sockeye run-size estimates should be available in mid-August, after their expected peak migration through marine areas. The estimated escapement of Summer-run sockeye past Mission through July 30 is 71,600 fish.

On July 30, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was 2,922 cms, which is approximately 34% lower than average for this date. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark Creek was to 19.0°C on July 30, approximately 1.0°C higher than average for this date. There were no changes in management adjustments today. Management adjustments are additional fish that are removed from identified allowable harvest levels and instead allowed to escape upstream to help achieve spawning escapement targets for Fraser River sockeye.

The Pacific Salmon Commission reports daily test fishing catches of sockeye salmon on its recorded message at 604-666-8200 and on the internet at: http://www.psc.org/info_testfishing.htm.

Environmental data collected in the Fraser River watershed through DFO's Environmental Watch program will be included in weekly in-season news releases from the Pacific Salmon Commission (<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/habitat/frw-rfo/index-eng.html>). River discharge level is forecast to drop to 2,582 cms by August 5th. Fraser River temperatures are forecast to increase to 21.5°C by August 5th, as a result of weather forecasts for more warmer than average air temperatures for parts of the Fraser watershed. Fraser River discharge levels and

water temperatures will be monitored closely this summer to guide specific Panel management actions that may be required during the in-river sockeye migratory period to help achieve escapement goals.

The Early Stuart spawning escapement assessment program has begun. All sockeye observed to date are either holding or migrating with only a few reports of sockeye spawning in the nearly 20 streams visited during the first surveys. Sockeye are reported to be in generally good condition on the spawning grounds with no pre-spawn mortalities observed to date.

United States fishing schedules during the season will be available for Treaty Indian fisheries through the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission at 1-800-562-6142. Non-Indian fishing schedules will be available through the National Marine Fisheries Service's Hotline in Seattle at 1-800-662-9825. Canadian commercial fishing regulations will be announced on the Fisheries and Oceans Canada recorded message at 604-666-2828 (from the lower B.C. mainland), and toll free from outside the lower B.C. mainland at 1-866-431-3474, and via fishery notices. Consult the appropriate regulatory agency regarding fisheries regulations pertaining to species other than sockeye and pink salmon in the Fraser River Panel Management Area.

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:

TREATY INDIAN FISHERY:

Areas 4B, 5 and 6C:

Extend for drift gillnets 12:00 p.m. (noon), Saturday, August 1, 2015 through 12:00 p.m. (noon), Wednesday, August 5, 2015.

Areas 6/7/7A:

Open for net fishing 5:00 am Saturday, August 1, 2015 through 11:59 p.m. Saturday August 1, 2015.

Areas 6/7/7A:

Open for net fishing 5:00 am Monday, August 3, 2015 through 11:59 p.m. Monday August 3, 2015.

ALL CITIZEN FISHERY:

Areas 7/7A:

Open to reef nets 9am-9pm Saturday, August 1, 2015.

Open to purse seines 9am-9pm Sunday, August 2, 2015.

Open to drift gillnets 11am-11pm Sunday, August 2, 2015.

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on Tuesday August 4th. News releases 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 runs. News releases and regulatory announcements can be obtained via http://www.psc.org/news_frpnews.htm or by subscribing to our eNews <http://tinyurl.com/PSCeNews>.