



# PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

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

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**NEWS RELEASE**

**Aug 21, 2015**

The Fraser River Panel met today to review assessment data for Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon. Test fishing catches continue to indicate that the abundances of both species remain less than expected for the time of year relative to pre-season expectations of abundance and arrival timing. Levels of sockeye salmon escapement past lower river assessment areas are also tracking less than pre-season expectations. Over 100,000 pink salmon have been estimated to have migrated into the Fraser River over the past three weeks. Over the past week, the observer at Hells Gate reported an increase in both sockeye and pink salmon migration past that site.

DNA analysis of a fish sample recently collected from the Area 12 purse seine test fishery indicated Fraser sockeye contributions of approximately, 10% Early Summer-run, 78% Summer-run, and 11% Late-run sockeye. Analyses of recent DNA samples collected from the Area 20 test fishery indicate that 75% of the pink salmon encountered are of Fraser River-origin, 17% are from Puget Sound, and 7% are from Canadian South Coast stocks.

The estimated diversion rate of sockeye salmon through Johnstone Strait has increased to 90% while the diversion rate of Fraser River pink salmon is estimated to be 53% based on recent seine test fishery catches in the two approach areas.

There were no changes to the Early Summer run-size estimates today, but small changes to future estimates are possible as the migration through assessment areas is not yet complete. The estimated escapement of Early Summer-run sockeye past Mission through August 20<sup>th</sup> is 304,100 fish.

The continued presence of low proportions of Early Summer-run sockeye and high proportions of Summer-run sockeye indicate a protracted migration profile for both groups and later timing than expected pre-season. At Tuesday's meeting, the Panel increased the Summer-run run size to 1,500,000 sockeye with August 11 marine timing. The run-size estimate was further increased today to 1,600,000 but run timing remains unchanged. Further changes to estimates for this group are anticipated due to the protracted nature of its migration. The estimated escapement of Summer-run sockeye past Mission through August 20<sup>th</sup> is 828,600 fish.

To date, only 86,000 Late-run sockeye are estimated to have migrated through marine assessment areas. These observations, coupled with observed low returns and apparent low productivity of Early Summer-run groups originating from the same production areas as the majority of late-run fish expected in this year's return, led the Panel to adopt the one in ten probability level forecast of 419,000 sockeye for the Late-run aggregate at last Friday's meeting. At these low abundances, the Gulf Troll test fishery has been delayed as there is an insufficient abundance of holding fish to assess. Similar to Summer-run sockeye, models used to estimate both run size and timing suggest that the Late-run may also be later-timed than expect pre-season. These models also suggest relatively equal likelihood that the Late-run run-size could be greater than or less than the current adopted value. Thus, there were no changes to run size estimates today. Further changes to Late-run run size are anticipated next week. The estimated escapement of Late-run sockeye past Mission through August 20<sup>th</sup> is 20,700 fish.

The abundance of Fraser River pink salmon encountered in assessment area test fisheries is less than expected for the time of year, but current data are insufficient to generate a credible in-season estimate of the total return. If arrival timing is as forecast (median date through Juan de Fuca Strait of August 29), the earliest in-season update of run size would not be expected until later next week.

In response to much lower than expected sockeye run-sizes, the management actions that the Panel implemented last week to restrict harvests in all fisheries that impact Fraser River sockeye remain in place. Given current circumstances, it is anticipated that the issue of acceptable incidental mortality impacts for sockeye encountered in the conduct of fisheries directed at Fraser River pink salmon will be a major factor in the Panel's decision-making process regarding future proposed fisheries.

On August 20<sup>th</sup>, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was 2,203 cms, which is approximately 28% lower than average for this date. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark Creek was 19.7°C on August 20<sup>th</sup>, approximately 1.7°C higher than average for this date. River conditions continue to be less than ideal for successful upstream migration, and the Panel remains concerned for the survival of migrating sockeye. Observations of fish condition continue to suggest that river conditions are not having significant impacts on sockeye migration in most areas of the watershed. Therefore, the Panel decided to leave the Summer-run management adjustment factor at the pre-season agreed upon level. There were no changes made to management adjustments for the other run timing groups as well 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](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 1,999 cms by August 26<sup>th</sup>. Fraser River temperatures are forecast to decrease to 18.3°C through August 26<sup>th</sup>, as a result of a more seasonal weather forecasts and the longer cooler nights typical of this time of year. 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.

Spawning escapement assessment programs are underway throughout the Fraser watershed. The following summarizes DFO's fourth weekly report. Early Stuart sockeye are reported to be past the peak of die-off. Given the very high Fraser river temperatures this stock group encountered during its upstream migration, cumulative live counts from visual surveys of the spawning grounds are encouraging. The first aerial and ground survey of the Upper Chilliwack River was conducted August 18<sup>th</sup> while the first survey of Chilliwack Lake was conducted the next day. Sockeye are reported to be in generally good condition in the Upper Chilliwack River and in the early stages of spawning. The Nadina River Channel was operational the evening of August 14<sup>th</sup>. There is no update from the channel for the current reporting period; however, approximately 500-700 Sockeye were reported milling around the channel outflow and the lower end of the falls on August 14<sup>th</sup>. The counters at Gates Creek and the Gates Creek spawning channel were operational August 7<sup>th</sup>; no Sockeye have been loaded into the channel to date. The channel operator reports that 118 Sockeye have been counted into the creek upstream of the channel to date. The counting fence on Scotch Creek was operational on Aug 9<sup>th</sup>; 3 sockeye have passed through the fence to date and sockeye are reported holding off the creek mouth. Visual surveys of Early Summer-run streams that are tributary to the North and South Thompson Rivers began on August 10<sup>th</sup>. No sockeye have been observed in spawning areas during the current reporting period. The Chilko River hydroacoustic site was operational on August 8<sup>th</sup>. Sockeye migration past the site is reported to be steadily increasing with no signs of pre-spawn mortality observed to date. The Quesnel River hydroacoustic site was operational August 13<sup>th</sup>. Sockeye are in the early stages of migration into the system. The Stellako River hydroacoustic site is planned to be operational this week. Visual surveys of Summer-run sockeye streams in the North Thompson drainage began Aug 11<sup>th</sup>. Sockeye have been observed in Raft River during the current reporting period. Sockeye are reported to be generally in good condition, predominately holding in deep pools. The counting fence at Sweltzer Creek (Cultus sockeye) was operational as of July 20<sup>th</sup>. Eighteen sockeye have passed through the fence 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:**

Remain closed to commercial salmon fishing.

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on Tuesday August 25<sup>th</sup>. 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](http://www.psc.org/news_frpnews.htm) or by subscribing to our eNews <http://tinyurl.com/PSCeNews>.

**2015 Run status of Fraser sockeye and pink salmon**

Date: Aug. 21, 2015

Week of: Aug. 16 - Aug. 22, 2015	Sockeye				Total Fraser	Pink Total Fraser
	Management Group					
	E.Stuart	E.Summer	Summer	Late		
Mission passage (includes Pitt, Alouette, Coquitlam)	31,900	304,100	828,600	20,700	1,185,300	0
Catch downstream of Mission	200	24,300	120,600	5,500	150,600	143,700
Accounted run-to-date	32,100	328,400	949,200	26,200	1,335,900	0
<b>Run size adopted in-season<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>32,000</b>	<b>350,000</b>	<b>1,600,000</b>	<b>419,000</b>	<b>2,401,000</b>	<b>na</b>
Run size forecasted pre-season	16,000	837,000	4,675,000	1,236,000	6,764,000	14,455,000
<b>Area 20 timing adopted in-season</b>	<b>6/Jul</b>	<b>29/Jul</b>	<b>11/Aug</b>	<b>na</b>		<b>na</b>
Area 20 timing expected pre-season	8/Jul	1/Aug	7/Aug	17/Aug		28/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.

## 2015 Catch-to-date by fishery

Date: Aug. 21, 2015

Week of: Aug. 16 - Aug. 22, 2015		Sockeye		Pink	
		Total	Fraser	Total	Fraser
<b>Canada</b>		<b>139,400</b>	<b>138,000</b>	<b>15,900</b>	<b>2,700</b>
	<b>Commercial</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	B Purse Seine	0	0	0	0
	D Gillnet	0	0	0	0
	E Gillnet	0	0	0	0
	F Troll	0	0	0	0
	G Troll	0	0	0	0
	H Troll	0	0	0	0
	<b>First Nations</b>	<b>138,900</b>	<b>137,500</b>	<b>15,900</b>	<b>2,700</b>
	Food, Social & Ceremonial (FSC)	138,900	137,500	15,900	2,700
	Marine	45,000	43,600	15,700	2,500
	Fraser R.	93,900	93,900	200	200
	Economic Opportunity (EO) & Demonstration (Demo)	0	0	0	0
	Marine	0	0	0	0
	Fraser R.	0	0	0	0
	<b>Recreational</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	Marine	0	0	0	0
	Fraser R. *	0	0	0	0
	<b>Charter (Albion gillnet test fishery)</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>United States</b>		<b>43,600</b>	<b>42,500</b>	<b>364,400</b>	<b>111,300</b>
	<b>Commercial</b>	<b>42,500</b>	<b>41,400</b>	<b>342,200</b>	<b>108,600</b>
	Treaty Indian (TI)	31,400	30,600	251,300	80,200
	All Citizen (AC)	11,100	10,800	90,900	28,400
	<b>Treaty Indian Ceremonial &amp; Subsistence (C&amp;S)</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>22,200</b>	<b>2,800</b>
	<b>All Citizen Recreational</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Alaska *</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>
<b>Panel-approved Test Fisheries</b>		<b>37,100</b>	<b>33,300</b>	<b>95,600</b>	<b>29,800</b>
	<b>Panel Waters</b>	<b>18,100</b>	<b>15,100</b>	<b>54,200</b>	<b>19,800</b>
	<b>Non-Panel Waters</b>	<b>19,000</b>	<b>18,200</b>	<b>41,400</b>	<b>10,000</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>220,000</b>	<b>213,700</b>	<b>475,800</b>	<b>143,800</b>

\* Recent LFA Recreational catches may be projected based on a scalar applied to Mission Escapement.

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