



# PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

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

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**NEWS RELEASE**

**Aug 28, 2015**

The Fraser River Panel met today to review assessment data for Fraser River sockeye and pink salmon. Test fishing catches of sockeye salmon continue to indicate that the abundances remain less than expected for the time of year relative to pre-season expectations of abundance and arrival timing. The estimated level of sockeye salmon escapement past lower river assessment areas to date of 1,700,100 fish is also tracking less than pre-season expectations. Catches of Fraser River pink salmon in the purse seine test fishery in Area 20 have increased in recent days suggesting increasing abundance. Approximately 500,000 pink salmon have been estimated to have migrated into the Fraser River so far this month. 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, 4% Early Summer-run, 73% Summer-run, and 23% Late-run sockeye. Analyses of recent DNA samples collected from the Area 20 test fishery indicate that 67% of the pink salmon encountered are of Fraser River-origin, 24% are from Puget Sound, and 9% are from Canadian South Coast stocks.

The estimated diversion rate of sockeye salmon through Johnstone Strait has increased to 95% while the diversion rate of Fraser River pink salmon is estimated to be only 23% based on recent seine test fishery catches in the two approach areas.

Due to its protracted migration, the numbers of Early Summer-run accounted to date have increased. Consequently, at its meeting today, the Panel adopted an increase in the Early Summer-run run-size from 350,000 to 400,000. 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 27<sup>th</sup> is 348,600 fish.

The daily abundances of Summer-run sockeye also indicate a protracted migration profile. At the meeting today, the Panel adopted an increase to the Summer-run run-size from 1,600,000 to 1,700,000. Further changes to estimates for this group are possible. The estimated escapement of Summer-run sockeye past Mission through August 27<sup>th</sup> is 1,236,100 fish.

To date, only 213,000 Late-run sockeye are estimated to have migrated through marine assessment areas. Run size models are currently suggesting that the total abundance of this aggregate may be less than the one in ten probability level forecast of 419,000 sockeye that was adopted by the Panel two weeks ago. There were no changes to run size estimates today, but further changes are anticipated next week. The estimated escapement of Late-run sockeye past Mission through August 27<sup>th</sup> is 83,500 fish.

The abundance of Fraser River pink salmon encountered in assessment area test fisheries is less than expected for the time of year, but abundance levels have increased in recent days particularly along the Juan de Fuca migration route. Though current data are insufficient to generate a credible in-season estimate of the total return, test fishing catches indicate that approximately 5,958,000 Fraser River pink salmon have migrated through marine assessment areas to date. If arrival timing is as forecast (median date through Juan de Fuca Strait of August 29), an in-season update of run size is expected next week.

In response to much lower than expected sockeye run-sizes, the management actions that the Panel implemented two weeks ago to restrict harvests in all fisheries that impact Fraser River sockeye remain in place. Based on very low sockeye encounter rates along the Juan de Fuca migration route, fisheries directed at Fraser River pink salmon began in US Fraser River Panel waters this week. As announced, All Citizen fisheries were opened with sockeye non-retention and Treaty Indian fishers were permitted to retain sockeye for ceremonial and subsistence purposes only. The potential incidental mortality of sockeye encountered in the conduct of fisheries directed at Fraser River pink salmon will continue to be a major factor in the Panel's decision-making process regarding future proposed fisheries.

On August 27<sup>th</sup>, the Fraser River water discharge at Hope was 1,828 cms, which is approximately 30% lower than average for this date. The temperature of the Fraser River at Qualark Creek was 18.1°C on August 27<sup>th</sup>, approximately 0.9°C higher than average for this date. River conditions are becoming more favorable for successful upstream migration, but 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 1,705 cms by September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Fraser River temperatures are forecast to decrease to levels near average for the time of year by the end of the forecast period. Fraser River discharge levels and water temperatures will continue to be monitored closely 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 fifth weekly report. The Early Stuart sockeye assessment program is now complete. In-season assessments estimate 74% spawning success which is below the long term average of 89% for this system. The first ground survey of the Nahatlatch system was conducted on August 21<sup>st</sup> and the second survey of the Upper Chilliwack River was conducted August 25<sup>th</sup>. Sockeye are reported to be in generally good condition in the Upper Chilliwack River and nearing peak of spawn. The Nadina River Channel was operational the evening of August 14<sup>th</sup>; 12,355 sockeye have been counted into the channel to date. An additional 2,000 to 3,000 sockeye were reported to be holding in front of the channel entrance. The counters at Gates Creek and the Gates Creek spawning channel were operational August 7<sup>th</sup>, and 1,413 sockeye have been counted into the channel with an additional 5,559 sockeye counted into the creek upstream of the channel to date. Many sockeye are reported to have lesions, but are otherwise in generally good condition. The counting fence on Scotch Creek was operational on August 9<sup>th</sup>; 459 sockeye have passed through the fence to date. Most sockeye observed are reported to be in good condition, but some have lesions and other marks. Visual surveys of Early Summer-run streams that are tributary to the North and South Thompson Rivers began on August 10<sup>th</sup>. Sockeye were observed holding in the Upper Barriere River as well as off the mouth of Anstey River during the current reporting period. The Chilko River hydroacoustic site was operational on August 8<sup>th</sup>. Sockeye numbers continue to be steadily increasing with no signs of pre-spawn mortality observed to date. Many of the sockeye are reported to have lesions. The Quesnel River hydroacoustic site was operational August 13<sup>th</sup>. Sockeye migration into the system has steadily increased since last week. The Stellako River hydroacoustic site was operational August 22<sup>nd</sup>. Sockeye are in the early stages of migration into the river. Visual surveys of Summer-run sockeye streams in the North Thompson drainage began Aug 11<sup>th</sup>. Sockeye continue to migrate into the Raft River and are reported to be in good condition. The Birkenhead hydroacoustic site became operational August 26<sup>th</sup>. The counting fence at Sweltzer Creek (Cultus sockeye) was operational as of July 20<sup>th</sup>; 41 sockeye have passed through the fence to date and 6 sockeye have been taken for broodstock.

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. All Citizen 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 drift gillnets 12:00 p.m. (noon), Saturday, August 29, 2015, through 12:00 p.m. (noon) Wednesday, September 2, 2015. Sockeye may be retained for ceremonial and subsistence purposes only.

Areas 6/7/7A:

Open for net fishing 5:00 am Monday, August 31, 2015 through 9:00 a.m. Tuesday September 1, 2015. Sockeye may be retained for ceremonial and subsistence purposes only.

**ALL CITIZEN FISHERY:**

Areas 7/7A:

Open to reef net with non-retention of sockeye 5am-9pm Sunday, August 30, 2015 and 5am-9pm, Monday, August 31, 2015.

Open to purse seine with non-retention of sockeye 5am-9pm Sunday, August 30, 2015.

Open to drift gillnet with non-retention of sockeye 8am-11:59pm Sunday, August 30, 2015.

The next in-season meeting of the Panel is scheduled to occur on Monday August 31<sup>st</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. 28, 2015

Week of: Aug. 23 - Aug. 29, 2015	Sockeye				Pink	
	Management Group				Total	
	E.Stuart	E.Summer	Summer	Late	Fraser	
Mission passage (includes Pitt, Alouette, Coquitlam)	31,900	348,600	1,236,100	83,500	1,700,100	0
Catch downstream of Mission	200	24,700	124,200	6,100	155,200	260,900
Accounted run-to-date	32,100	373,300	1,360,300	89,600	1,855,300	0
Run size adopted in-season <sup>1</sup>	32,000	400,000	1,700,000	419,000	2,551,000	na
Run size forecasted pre-season	16,000	837,000	4,675,000	1,236,000	6,764,000	14,455,000
Area 20 timing adopted in-season	6/Jul	31/Jul	12/Aug	na		na
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. 28, 2015

Week of: Aug. 23 - Aug. 29, 2015		Sockeye		Pink	
		Total	Fraser	Total	Fraser
<b>Canada</b>		<b>151,600</b>	<b>150,200</b>	<b>15,900</b>	<b>3,600</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>151,100</b>	<b>149,800</b>	<b>15,900</b>	<b>3,600</b>
	Food, Social & Ceremonial (FSC)	151,100	149,800	15,900	3,600
	Marine	44,000	42,700	15,500	3,200
	Fraser R.	107,100	107,100	300	300
	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>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>United States</b>		<b>46,400</b>	<b>45,200</b>	<b>479,900</b>	<b>212,100</b>
	<b>Commercial</b>	<b>45,200</b>	<b>44,000</b>	<b>457,700</b>	<b>208,100</b>
	Treaty Indian (TI)	33,900	33,100	282,500	114,000
	All Citizen (AC)	11,300	10,900	175,200	94,200
	<b>Treaty Indian Ceremonial &amp; Subsistence (C&amp;S)</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>22,200</b>	<b>4,000</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>39,300</b>	<b>35,500</b>	<b>114,900</b>	<b>45,500</b>
	<b>Panel Waters</b>	<b>18,800</b>	<b>15,800</b>	<b>73,300</b>	<b>33,800</b>
	<b>Non-Panel Waters</b>	<b>20,500</b>	<b>19,700</b>	<b>41,600</b>	<b>11,700</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>237,200</b>	<b>230,900</b>	<b>610,700</b>	<b>261,100</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.